

Route 6 Economic Development Planning Project (Managed and Administered by the Route 6 Economic Development Council)

The Towns of Andover, Bolton, Coventry and Columbia have retained a consultant to study the Route 6 corridor as it relates to economic development. The study goals include:

- Re-visioning the future of Route 6 through the use of public input and consensus building
- Creating a Master Plan of Route 6 that provides targeted areas of development for each Town in the Corridor
- Preserving the historic, scenic, and environmental resources of the corridor in a manner that identifies those resources as potential revenue positive elements
- Balancing the investment potential and costs among the four towns
- Identifying kick-off projects that should be done first and which will provide the best foundation for future projects.

The project consists of five phases generally summarized below:

Phase 1 – Establishment of Project Goals and Corridor Branding

This phase will involve brainstorming sessions to identify needs, wants, and wishes for study. A stakeholder list will be established. Preliminary logos for corridor branding will be developed and a project website will be established.

Phase 2 – Data Gathering

Data will be collected as it relates to the following: Existing Land Use, Traffic Flow (DOT ADT Data), Accident Data, Curb Cuts/individual Site Access/Parking, Building Facades, Pedestrian Facilities & Use, Bike Paths & Use, Existing Street Intersections, Zoning, Slopes, Wetlands/Streams/Water Bodies, Visible Rock Outcrops, Soils, Vegetative Communities (general), Views. Maps will be prepared using Town provided mapping including topography, tax mapping parcels, wetlands, utilities, and any other information available as a base.

Research will be conducted to identify recent economic growth trends, emerging opportunities, and future possibilities for the corridor as a whole, for the communities comprising the corridor, and for specific sites along the corridor. This research will include, but is not limited to:

- Meetings with the Economic Development Commissions of each Town.
- Meeting with DECD, Metro Hartford Alliance, and utility company economic development representatives familiar with the area.
- Interviews with selected commercial and industrial real estate brokers with property listings within the corridor or who work regularly in the region.
- Obtain and review all relevant reports, studies, plans, and data relevant to the area.
- Based on above research, identify economic growth trends and energy opportunities; identify possibilities for corridor as a whole. Provide list of possible uses and square footages.

Existing regulations (zoning, subdivision, wetland, etc.) for each Town affecting properties along Route 6 and within the project area will be reviewed. These regulations will be evaluated to determine how the corridor might be developed under existing regulations and analyze the interface areas at Town lines.

Uses, bulk requirements, and other regulations that support or impede future development will be identified.

Manual turning movement traffic counts (AM, PM and Saturday Peak Hour) will be done at 6 intersections: Route 6 / Route 44; I384 / Notch Road; Route 6 / South Street; Route 6 / Shoddy Mill Road; Route 6 / Route 316 (Hebron Road); Route 6 / Route 66

A Community Open House will be held for all four communities to introduce the project, corridor branding, and begin to get initial comments regarding typical questions such as:

- Why do you use the Corridor?
- What do you like about the Route 6 Corridor?
- What do you wish was on Route 6?
- What do you not like about the Route 6 Corridor?

After this open house a follow up survey will be posted on the website.

Phase 3 – Analysis

The Team will prepare a Site Analysis Map for each segment of the corridor to identify physical constraints and opportunity.

Key sites for development using a variety of factors including site characteristics, market demand, and compatibility with surrounding uses will be identified. This evaluation process will be documented in a matrix identifying and rating issues such as viability, proximity, etc. The matrix will identify areas of opportunity, and initial improvements needed.

Site-specific preliminary economic recommendations for development parcels within the corridor that best meet economic needs, fit within site physical features, and are compatible with community and surrounding neighborhood desires will be identified. The process will include annual and cumulative 10-year estimates for building costs, property taxes, new employment (including workforce management), wage rates, etc.

The team will evaluate where utility upgrades and improvements would positively affect the economic development of individual parcels and the corridor as a whole.

Before/after views and /or 3-D modeling will be developed using Sketch-Up.

Phase 4 – Draft Report and Censuses

A Preliminary Corridor improvement Plan will be prepared identifying the key sites for development; access issues and recommendations. Recommended utility improvements will be identified. A Community Open Houses will be held in each Town.

Phase 5 – Final Report

A final report will be prepared providing detailed recommendations for economic development within the corridor. The Final plan will include a schematic site plan for one area in each Town. This will typically be the most critical or “hinge” property to ensure successful completion of the Final Plan.