

Hartford, Vermont

Town Plan Economic Development Chapter

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Acknowledgement

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1 Introduction



Hartford is the largest town in the Two Rivers-Ottauquechee Region, and together with Lebanon and Hanover, New Hampshire serve as the functional capital of the Upper Valley area. Hartford is distinguished by its vibrant community spirit, highly educated, highly engaged workforce, and exceptional quality of life.

As Hartford looks to the future, it must adeptly navigate broad macroeconomic shifts, such as technological advancements and the changing housing and work style preferences of younger generations. These shifts present both challenges and opportunities.

This chapter provides an overview of Hartford's current economic landscape, identifies key economic drivers, and outlines strategic goals and actions to foster economic growth. Emphasis is placed on supporting existing businesses and ensuring that economic development efforts are aligned with the community's core values and needs. The strategic direction of this plan is rooted in extensive community engagement and a thorough industry analysis, which are detailed in the Appendix. This foundational work ensures that the strategic goals and actions outlined in this chapter are not only responsive to current economic conditions but also reflective of the community's aspirations and priorities. By leveraging its inherent strengths and proactively addressing challenges, Hartford will create a vibrant and resilient economy that benefits all residents.

It must be noted that the current housing shortage and dramatic increase in home prices, highlighted in the Housing Chapter of this plan, directly impacts the local economy. The lack of affordable and sufficient housing options strains the workforce and makes it difficult for employers to attract and retain talent. Higher housing costs also affects consumer spending within the community as residents have less to spend on local goods and

services. The Housing Chapter provides an in-depth analysis of this issue, and it will not be further elaborated upon here to avoid redundancy and confusion.

Process for Updating the Economic Development Chapter

The process of updating the Economic Development Chapter of Hartford's Town Plan was a collaborative effort led by the Planning and Development Department, the Planning Commission and the Economic Development Steering Committee. This significant update was funded by a Vermont Municipal Planning Grant, supplemented with Town funds, and facilitated by the consulting firm Better City.

Community Engagement

To ensure that the Economic Development Chapter reflects the priorities and character of the community, extensive community outreach was conducted including two community forums, four focus group discussions, fifteen interviews, and a town-wide survey that garnered 139 survey responses from residents, property owners, businesses, and workers in Hartford.

Data Analysis

An economic and industry analysis was conducted that included comparisons with the 2002 Town Plan Economic Development Chapter and utilized data from the U.S. Census, the American Community Survey, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and OnTheMap. The analysis provided a foundation for understanding local economic conditions and trends.

Review of Past Plans

To ensure alignment with broader regional and local planning efforts, several key documents were reviewed, including the 2019 Town Plan, the 2023 Draft Town Plan Housing Chapter, the 2020-2025 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), and the Two Rivers-Ottauquechee Regional Plan.

The Planning and Development Department and the Planning Commission/ Economic Development Steering Committee were involved throughout the process. These entities helped determine which goals and strategic actions best reflect the needs and aspirations of the community. Fifteen meetings and discussions were held to refine these goals and actions and ensure they accurately reflect the community's priorities.

The goals, objectives, and strategic actions presented in this chapter reflect the diverse perspectives and insights gathered from the community and are designed to promote sustainable and inclusive economic growth in Hartford.





2 Economic Profile

During the background research, extensive analysis was conducted that looked at demographic, social, industry, and economic data. The following are the curated observations that were most relevant and salient.

Demographics

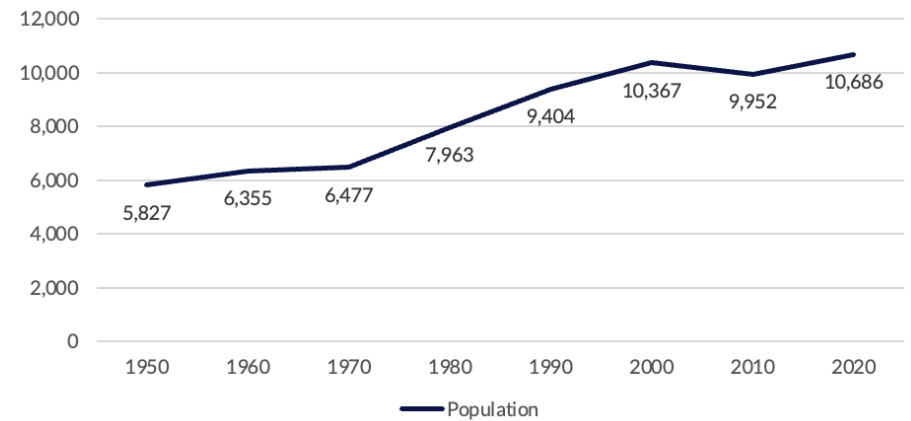
Since the beginning of the 21st century, Hartford's total population size has remained relatively stable, though there have been significant changes in the age demographics of its residents. The character of the Town's residents has remained consistent, with a significant portion of the community that is educated, highly engaged, and self-sufficient and values a high quality of life.

Between 1970 and 2000, Hartford experienced an average annual population growth rate of 2%. However, from 2000 to 2020, this growth nearly stagnated, averaging only 0.2%. While the overall population numbers remained largely static, there was considerable movement of residents in and out of the Town during this period. By 2020, the number of residents over the age of 65 increased by 821, with this age group growing from 14.6% to 22.4% of the total population. At the same time, the Town experienced a net loss of 502 residents under the age of 65.

Hartford's residents can be characterized as follows:

- **Educated:**
 - 34% more residents hold bachelor's degrees or higher compared to the national average (see Figure 14).
- **Highly engaged workforce:**
 - The labor force participation rate is 67.5%, which is 6% higher than the national average, despite the median age being nearly four years older and fewer people

Figure 1: Population Growth by Decade



Source: U.S Census Bureau

Figure 2: Labor Participation Rates, 2022

	Hartford	Vermont	U.S
Labor Force Participation Rate	67.5%	64.9%	63.5%

Source: American Community Survey

being in the traditional working ages.

- The poverty rate is 9.2%, which is 36% lower than the national average.
- The percent of local students receiving free and reduced lunches is 41.84% - 12.4% lower than the state average (47.8%).¹
- The unemployment rate is only 3.4%, which is 65% below the national rate.

¹ <https://education.vermont.gov/sites/aoe/files/documents/edu-report-nutrition-2024-free-and-reduced-corrected.pdf>

Figure 3: Poverty Rates, 2022



Source: American Community Survey

Figure 4: Income Levels, 2022

	Hartford	Vermont	U.S
Median Income (Dollars)	69,138	74,014	75,149

Source: American Community Survey

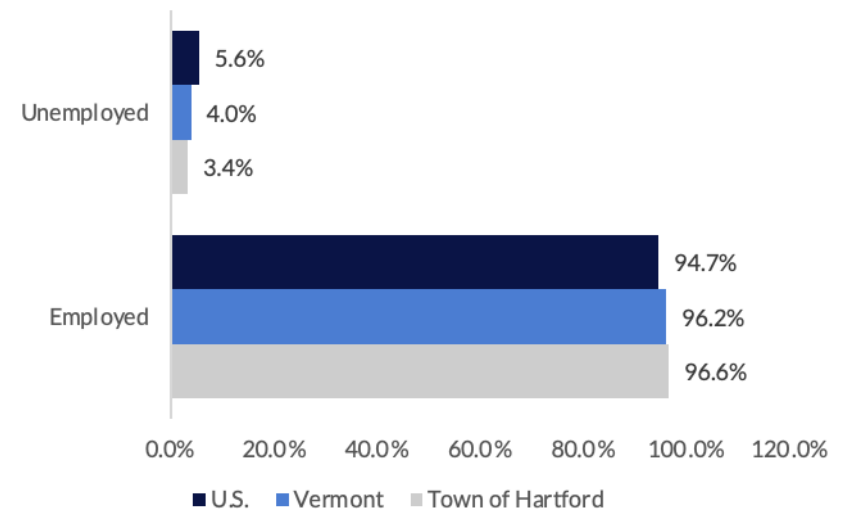
● **Quality of life focus:**

- Assuming that workers are mobile and can decide where to live, the disproportionately high educational attainment and the low median income would indicate that workers chose to live in Hartford for other than purely economic reasons. The Town’s exceptional quality of life may provide an explanation as rational workers chose to prioritize the Town’s strong sense of community, vibrant cultural scene, and access to nature over opportunities to earn higher income elsewhere

- It should also be noted that historically Hartford was considered an affordable location within the Upper Valley. Social and family support structures and the costs and inconvenience of moving may make it difficult for workers to relocate to areas with higher incomes.

Hartford is home to many long-term residents and seniors who have lived in the Town for generations. These individuals are deeply rooted in the community and continue to contribute to its social fabric. This mix of new arrivals and long-term residents has become a strength of the community because of an environment where diversity of background and experience is embraced.

Figure 5: Employment Status, 2022



Source: American Community Survey

Labor Market

Hartford serves as a regional employment hub, with the total number of jobs in the Town (10,604) nearly exceeding the number of residents (10,686). The number of people employed in Hartford is growing rapidly. From 2002 to 2021, the number of jobs in the Town nearly doubled, increasing by 82% from 5,842 to 10,604.

Figure 6: Labor Market, 2021

Town of Hartford Labor Market (All Jobs)		
In-Hartford Labor Force Efficiency (All Jobs)		
Living in Hartford and Employed in Hartford or Outside	4,567	100%
Living and Employed in Hartford	1,162	25.4%
Living in Hartford but Employed Outside	3,405	74.6%
In-Hartford Employment Efficiency (All Jobs)		
Employed in Hartford	10,604	100%
Employed and Living in Hartford	1,162	11.0%
Employed in Hartford but Living Outside	9,442	89.0%

Source: On the Map

However, there is a significant mismatch between the skills and career paths of Town residents and the jobs available locally. While there are 2.4 jobs in the Town for each of its 4,567 employed residents, only 25% (1,162) work within the Town. Every workday, 3,405 residents commute outside of Hartford for work, while 9,442 workers from surrounding areas commute into the Town.

As a result, 75% of Hartford's workers commute out of the Town daily, passing three times their number headed in the opposite direction.

Figure 7: Jobs by Worker Age

Jobs by Worker Age				
	2021		2002	
	Count	Share	Count	Share
Age 29 or younger	1,892	17.8%	1,330	22.8%
Age 30 to 54	5,110	48.2%	3,525	60.3%
Age 55 or older	3,602	34.0%	987	6.9%

Source: On the Map

Figure 8: Jobs by Earnings

Jobs by Earnings ¹				
	2021		2002	
	Count	Share	Count	Share
\$1,250 per month or less	3,610	34.0%	2,606	44.6%
\$1,251 to \$3,333 per month	2,805	26.5%	2,110	36.1%
More than \$3,333 per month	4,189	39.5%	1,126	19.3%

¹The numbers have not been adjusted for inflation and the count reflects the individuals.

Source: On the Map

The Area Profile from 2021 compared to previous years shows the following trends:

- **Increase in Local Jobs:** From 5,842 in 2002 to 10,604 in 2021
 - 94% of the new jobs are in the Health Care and Social Assistance industries
- **Ageing Workforce:** The share of workers aged 55 or older increased from 16.9% in 2002 to 34.0% in 2021
- **Increased Earnings:** The share of jobs paying more than \$3,333 per month has increased from 19.3% in 2002 to 39.5% in 2021

Several key findings emerge from the economic performance analysis:

- Despite lower income levels relative to state and national averages, Hartford's high quality of life makes it an attractive place to live. This underscores the importance of maintaining and enhancing factors that contribute to this quality, such as community services, recreational opportunities, and environmental stewardship.
- With its high employment rates, Hartford remains a strong economic performer within the region.
- The low unemployment rate indicates that residents have good access to jobs, though this also points to a tight labor market that could hinder the attraction of new employers.
- Income levels in Hartford have not kept pace with state and national averages, suggesting a need for economic strategies that support higher wages and job diversification.
- Limited housing availability and rising living costs continue to be significant obstacles, affecting both the attraction of new workers and the living standards of current residents.

Industry

The story of Hartford's job growth over the last 20 years has been heavily influenced by the healthcare sector. Of the 4,762 new jobs added in Hartford from 2002 to 2021, 94% (4,483) were in the healthcare field. Although the VA White River Junction Medical Center has been a key driver of this growth, it now accounts for only approximately 19% of healthcare employment in the Town.

Figure 9: Jobs by NAICS Industry Sector by Years

Jobs by Earnings							
	2002		2010		2021		Difference (2002 and 2021)
	Count	Share	Count	Share	Count	Share	
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	35	0.6%	27	0.2%	16	0.2%	-19
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	7	0.1%	7
Utilities	23	0.4%	24	0.2%	17	0.2%	-6
Construction	196	3.4%	224	2.0%	204	1.9%	8
Manufacturing	134	2.3%	76	0.7%	118	1.1%	-16
Wholesale Trade	198	3.4%	185	1.7%	262	2.5%	64
Retail Trade	637	10.9%	551	5.0%	591	5.6%	-46
Transportation and Warehousing	408	7.0%	484	4.4%	328	3.1%	-80
Information	96	1.6%	91	0.8%	79	0.7%	-17
Finance and Insurance	109	1.9%	194	1.7%	281	2.6%	172
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	87	1.5%	65	0.6%	128	1.2%	41
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	235	4.0%	392	3.5%	530	5.0%	295
Management of Companies and Enterprises	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	55	0.5%	55
Administration & Support, Waste Management and Remediation	140	2.4%	146	1.3%	149	1.4%	9
Educational Services	470	8.0%	575	5.2%	440	4.1%	-30
Health Care and Social Assistance	1,910	32.7%	6,766	61.0%	6,393	60.3%	4,483
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	68	1.2%	115	1.0%	202	1.9%	134
Accommodation and Food Services	574	9.8%	680	6.1%	381	3.6%	-193
Other Services (excluding Public Administration)	378	6.5%	367	3.3%	327	3.1%	-51
Public Administration	144	2.5%	126	1.1%	96	0.9%	-48
Total	5,842	100%	11,088	100%	10,604	100%	4762

* Industries with the largest changes are highlighted in bold.

Source: On the Map

The remaining growth is distributed across various healthcare providers, non-profits, and human resources services, reflecting a broader diversification within the sector. This expansion has led to a significant concentration of employment in healthcare and social assistance, which now represents 60.3% of all jobs in Hartford.

The Location Quotient (LQ) is an analysis tool used to compare the concentration of employment in a community to that of the state. An LQ of 1 indicates that the percentage of workers employed in a particular industry cluster is the same in Hartford as it is at the state level. An LQ of 2 signifies double the state percentage, while an LQ of 0.5 means the concentration of employment is half that of the state.

Hartford's Location Quotient for the healthcare industry is 3.24, indicating that the Town has more than triple the percentage of its workers in this industry compared to the state average. Such a high concentration of employment in a single industry sector poses an economic risk to the community should there be a dramatic shift in the industry or the entity.

When excluding the healthcare industry, the adjusted Location Quotient analysis reveals that the groups of industries with the highest concentrations of employment in Hartford are:

- **Arts & Entertainment:** 3.03
- **Professional Services:**
 - Real Estate: 2.36
 - Finance & Insurance: 1.78
 - Professional & Scientific: 1.72

- Management: 1.44
- **Logistics:**
 - Transportation and Warehousing: 2.61
 - Wholesale Trade: 1.63

A high Location Quotient in Arts and Entertainment aligns with Hartford's concentration of artists, craftspeople, entertainment venues, and establishments. These businesses are a key part of Hartford's identity, character, and economy.

The overrepresentation of professional industries corresponds with the high education levels of the workforce. These industries have also experienced strong growth over the past 20 years.

Industries with low concentrations in Hartford include:

- **Manufacturing:** 0.23
- **Agriculture and Forestry:** 0.28
- **Public Administration:** 0.42
- **Education:** 0.65

There are proportionally fewer jobs in the Public Administration and Education sectors in the Town compared to the state average.

Figure 10: Location Quotient Analysis by 2021

Jobs by NAICS Industry Sector by 2021 (Town/State Comparison)	Town of Hartford (Share)	Vermont (Share)	Location Quotient
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	0.20%	1.10%	0.18
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	0.10%	0.20%	0.50
Utilities	0.20%	0.50%	0.40
Construction	1.90%	5.40%	0.35
Manufacturing	1.10%	9.90%	0.11
Wholesale Trade	2.50%	3.10%	0.81
Retail Trade	5.60%	12.60%	0.44
Transportation and Warehousing	3.10%	2.40%	1.29
Information	0.70%	1.50%	0.47
Finance and Insurance	2.60%	3.00%	0.87
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1.20%	1.00%	1.20
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	5.00%	6.00%	0.83
Management of Companies and Enterprises	0.50%	0.70%	0.71
Administration & Support, Waste Management and Remediation	1.40%	3.90%	0.36
Educational Services	4.10%	13.00%	0.32
Health Care and Social Assistance	60.30%	18.60%	3.24
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1.90%	1.30%	1.46
Accommodation and Food Services	3.60%	8.40%	0.43
Other Services (excluding Public Administration)	3.10%	2.80%	1.11
Public Administration	0.90%	4.40%	0.20

* Industries with the largest changes are highlighted in bold.

Source: On the Map

Figure 11: Location Quotient Analysis (Excluded Health Care and Social Assistance) by 2021

Jobs by NAICS Industry Sector by 2021 (Town/State Comparison)	Town of Hartford (Share)	Vermont (Share)	Location Quotient
Manufacturing	2.8%	12.2%	0.23
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	0.4%	1.4%	0.28
Public Administration	2.3%	5.4%	0.42
Utilities	0.4%	0.7%	0.62
Educational Services	10.4%	16.0%	0.65
Construction	4.8%	6.6%	0.73
Administration & Support, Waste Management and Remediation	3.5%	4.8%	0.73
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	0.2%	0.2%	0.77
Accommodation and Food Services	9.0%	10.3%	0.88
Retail Trade	14.0%	15.5%	0.91
Information	1.9%	1.9%	0.99
Management of Companies and Enterprises	1.3%	0.9%	1.44
Wholesale Trade	6.2%	3.8%	1.63
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	12.6%	7.3%	1.72
Finance and Insurance	6.7%	3.7%	1.78
Other Services (excluding Public Administration)	7.8%	3.4%	2.30
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	3.0%	1.3%	2.36
Transportation and Warehousing	7.8%	3.0%	2.61
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	4.8%	1.6%	3.03

* Industries with the largest changes are highlighted in bold.

Source: On the Map

Overall, several important findings and takeaways emerge from the industry analysis¹:

- **Health Care and Social Assistance** is the largest industry sector, with employment nearly doubling from 32.7% in 2002 to 60.3% of all jobs in 2021.
- The **Professional Services** sector added 235 jobs from 2002 and has grown by 20%. This growth in higher-skilled jobs aligns with the Town's educational resources and proximity to Dartmouth College.
- **Manufacturing** remains a small part of the economic base at 1.1%, indicating that Hartford has not significantly increased its manufacturing sector since 2002.
- Diversifying the economic base by attracting industries such as **Innovative High-tech Manufacturing** and **Professional Services** can reduce dependency on the **Health Care Sector** and provide higher-paying job opportunities.
- Enhancing **Creative Sectors** and **Retail Trade** around rivers and Village Centers can further diversify the economy and improve the quality of life for residents.
- Leveraging regional partnerships with regional bodies can help address broader economic and infrastructural challenges.

¹Disclaimer: Any of the recent data used throughout this plan include the years impacted by COVID-19. These severe economic disruptions of the COVID years create distortions in data trends. The most recent data points largely indicate that the economy has largely recovered with few long-term impacts from the anomalous years of the pandemic. It will take several more years of historical data, however, to be able to conclusively understand the full effects.





3 Strategic Plan

The data collected through community forums, focus group discussions, interviews, and the town-wide survey were shared with residents during public forums and Steering Committee meetings. This input was instrumental in refining the goals and actions presented in this chapter. The process was also guided by the previous Town Plan, insights from the resident survey, and state economic development policies.

The goals, objectives and strategic actions outlined below are designed to foster economic growth across various sectors, increasing support for existing businesses and promoting more innovation while maintaining Hartford's unique character.

To ensure accountability and track the success of the proposed actions, specific metrics are provided at the end of the strategy. These metrics will measure progress and effectiveness in achieving the outlined goals, allowing for adjustments and improvements over time.

The table on the right provides explanations of the key terms used in the strategies and outlines the hierarchy and definitions.

Figure 12: Strategic Planning Framework

Goals	Broad primary outcome that sets the direction for more specific objectives and actions.
Objectives	Specific and more precise steps that are taken to achieve the larger goals.
Strategic Actions	Specific practical activities or initiatives that will be undertaken to meet the objectives.
Key Metrics	Indicators that are used to measure the effectiveness of the strategic actions and the progress towards achieving the goals.

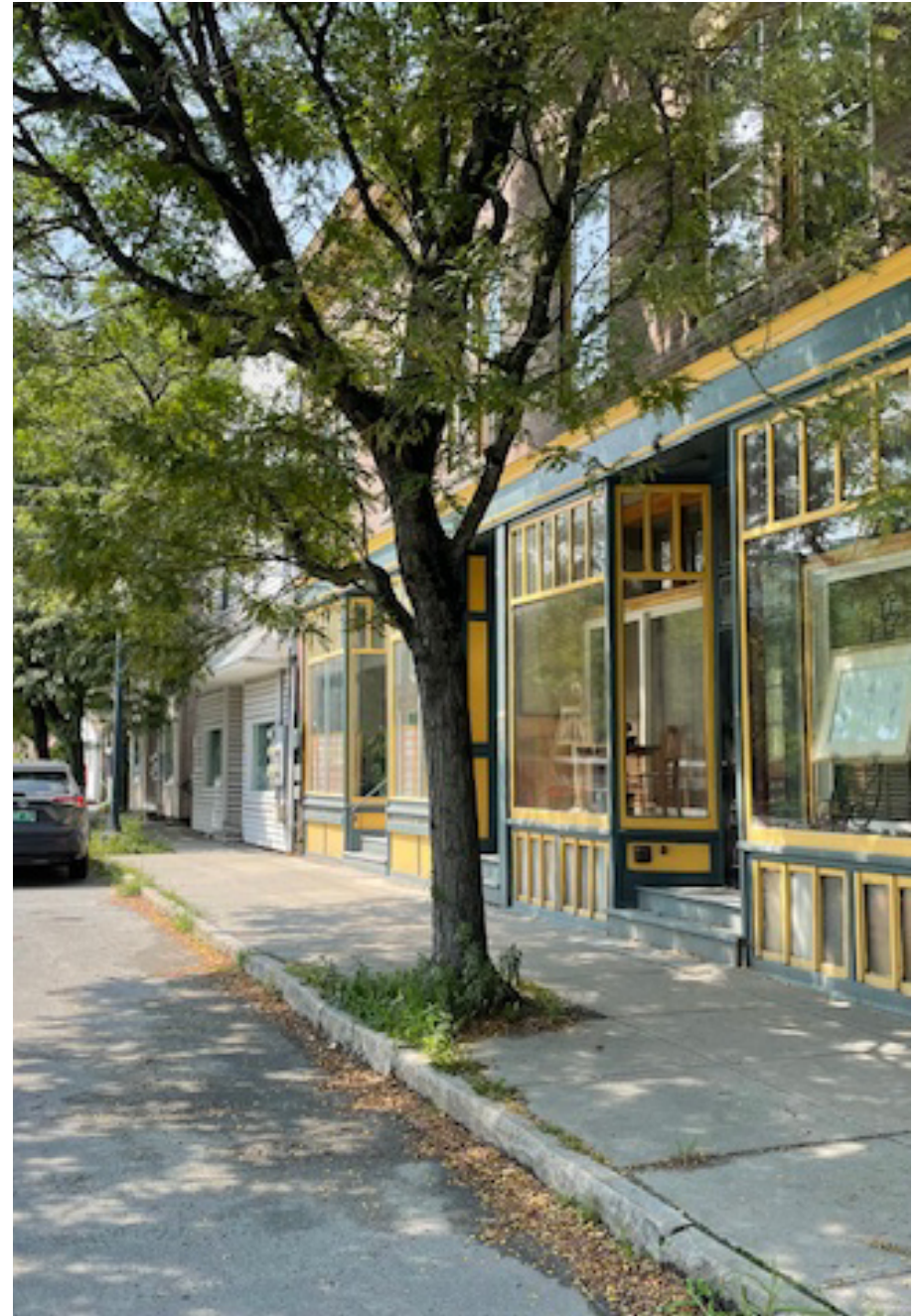
1. Identity / Positioning

Goal

Establish and communicate a clear, compelling identity for Hartford that unifies the community and guides economic development decisions.

Identity and positioning help the community understand and agree on shared economic goals, creating a unified vision for the Town's development. This consensus ensures that all stakeholders are aligned and working towards common objectives. Additionally, a well-defined identity provides a competitive advantage, distinguishing Hartford from neighboring communities. By highlighting its unique strengths and opportunities, Hartford can attract businesses, investors, and visitors.

A strong identity also instills a sense of pride and ownership among residents, enhancing community engagement and support for local initiatives. Finally, this strategy directs efforts and resources toward specific economic outcomes, ensuring that investments are strategically aligned with Hartford's long-term vision.



Objectives

- **Define Hartford's Unique Identity:**
 - Identify and articulate the Town's core economic values, strengths, and future aspirations to create a cohesive and inspiring vision for economic development.
- **Communicate the Positioning and Unity:**
 - Foster a sense of pride, cohesion, and shared purpose among residents and businesses by effectively communicating Hartford's economic positioning.
 - Engage diverse community groups in the communication process to enhance inclusivity and representation.
- **Inform Decisions:**
 - Ensure that economic development decisions are consistently aligned with the community's core identity and values.

Strategic Actions

- **Identity Positioning Statement**
 - Establish a Town appointed Economic Development Committee staffed by the Department of Planning and Development.
 - Use the input from the visioning workshops to create a clear and compelling economic positioning statement that captures Hartford's unique identity and vision for the future, ensuring it represents all community segments.

- **Communication Plan**

- Formulate a plan to share the identity with the community. Utilize town meetings, social media, local media, and printed materials to ensure widespread awareness and engagement.

- **Policy Alignment**

- Integrate core values and vision into the decision-making process for economic development policies and initiatives.

Metrics

- **Adoption of Identity Positioning Statement**

- The Selectboard establishes the Economic Development Committee.
- Hartford Identity Positioning Statement is formally adopted by the Town Selectboard.

2. Village Centers

Goal

Establish a procedural and organizational framework to enable Hartford's Village Centers to become vibrant, economically dynamic hubs that enhance community life for villages and surrounding areas and cater to contemporary preferences for density and diverse amenities.

The concept of Village Centers is to create a hub that serves as the heart of the community and embodies its character and culture. These authentic spaces provide a place where people come together for shopping, dining, socializing, and participating in cultural activities. The concentration of diverse uses and amenities within a walkable area creates a vibrant and dynamic environment, fostering a strong sense of place and community identity.

Within Hartford, each of the five villages has its distinctive characteristics. Each Village Center should be developed to amplify its unique identity while complementing the overall character of the Town. Improving multi-modal connectivity between the Village Centers will encourage greater community engagement, stimulate local economic activity, and making it easier for residents to access services and participate in local events. The Transportation Chapter of the Town Plan provides strategies for creating greater connections and these strategies have clear economic benefit.



Objectives

- **Foster Community Leadership and Engagement:**
 - Strengthen the role of community leaders to enhance representation and participation in decision-making processes.
- **Streamline Project Support and Development:**
 - Promote systematic and collaborative development that aligns with the unique characteristics and needs of each village center.
- **Enhance Economic Vitality:**
 - Attract new businesses and residents to the Village Centers.

Strategic Actions

- **Village Ambassadors Program**
 - Create the program.
 - Define the role of village ambassadors as liaisons between the community and the Town Village Coordinator. Ambassadors will represent community interests, gather feedback, and communicate project updates.
 - Establish a transparent process for selecting Village Ambassadors. This could include nominations from community members, application reviews, and selection criteria based on community involvement and leadership.
 - Develop a formal process for ambassadors to petition the Town for support on projects. This process should include guidelines for submitting

proposals, obtaining necessary endorsements, and presenting to relevant town committees.

- Establish the Role of Village Coordinator.
 - Formally integrate the role of a Village Coordinator within the Planning and Development Department. The Village Coordinator will work with village ambassadors, facilitate project approvals, and ensure alignment with Town goals.
- **Visioning**
 - Use the 2011 Visioning Project and 2018 community engagement documents as a foundation. Incorporate recent community feedback to ensure the vision reflects current needs and aspirations.
 - Create dedicated sections for each Village within the updated vision document. Highlight unique characteristics, historical elements, and future goals for each area.
 - Ensure the updated vision and Village-specific sections are accessible to the public via the Town's website. Use this platform to gather ongoing feedback and keep the community informed.
- **Village Project Application Process**
 - Establish a formalized process for Village Ambassadors to seek support for their projects. This should include clear steps for project proposal submissions, review, and approval.
 - Encourage Ambassadors to collaborate with residents, business owners, property owners, and local stakeholders.
 - Each project proposal should include a specific timeline, detailed steps, and measurable objectives.

Ambassadors should work closely with the Village Coordinator to ensure feasibility and alignment with town goals.

- **Funding**

- Identify and apply for grants, private investments, and public funds to support the development of Village Centers such as Better Places. Apply for grants and funds for village green initiatives such as Village Greens Initiative.

- **Phased Development**

- Begin with pilot projects in selected Village Centers to demonstrate success and gradually scale up the development efforts.

- **Private - Public Partnership**

- Establish policies and parameters for engaging in Private Public Partnerships (PPPs).
 - Clear and transparent objective principles and parameters engaging in PPPs should be agreed upon before any project is presented to ensure decision-making is objective. Include criteria for evaluating projects, defining roles and responsibilities, and ensuring accountability.
 - Ensure that every potential PPP project aligns with the broader community goals and delivers tangible benefits to the public.
 - Recognize legitimate and compelling reasons for municipal involvement in real estate projects, such as when a project will have a large, lasting impact on the community, when there is potential downside from non-optimized development, or when the cost of desired community features makes the project unfeasible for private developers alone.

- Identify and secure diverse funding sources and resources such as TIF, revenue bonds based on projections of future tax revenues, and property acquisition.

Metrics

- **Village Ambassador Engagement**

- Track active village ambassadors and their participation in community meetings and projects.

- **Community Satisfaction and Involvement**

- Conduct annual surveys to gather feedback on the effectiveness of village center initiatives and community involvement.
- Monitor engagement through website analytics and social media interactions.

- **Funding and Resource Allocation**

- Track the total funds received from grants, private investments, and public funds.
- Record the number of grants applied for and awarded and evaluate the utilization of these funds in village center projects.

3. Nature Economy

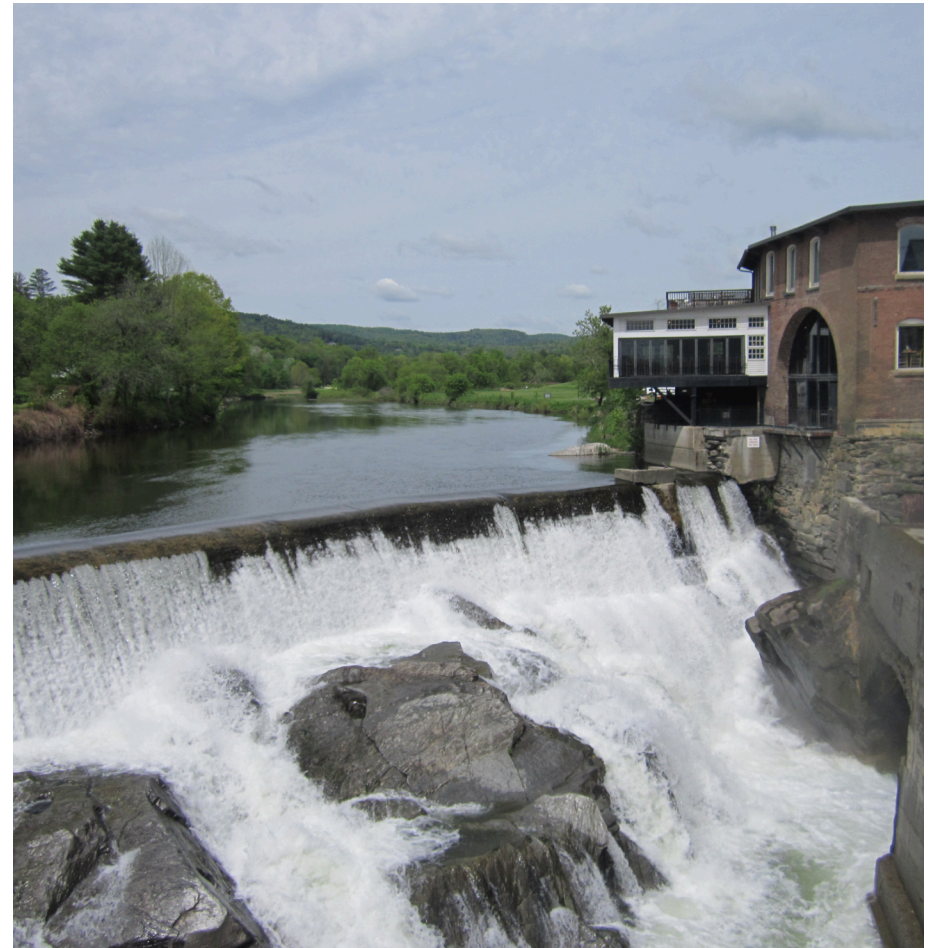
Goal

Expand and improve access to nature: the rivers, parks, and trails to increase the community's desirability as a place to work and live.

The presence of natural amenities such as parks, rivers, trails, hills, ridges, and green spaces significantly enhances residents' quality of life. These natural assets provide recreational opportunities, scenic beauty, and a peaceful environment that are highly valued by the community.

Natural amenities influence economic factors. Studies have shown that communities with more natural amenities are more desirable as places to live, and residents are willing to pay higher housing prices and accept lower wages to enjoy the quality of life offered. It is also reflected in Hartford's economic data, where labor force participation and educational attainment are high, and unemployment remains low despite lower income levels compared to state and national averages.

The impact of Hartford's Parks & Recreation Program on the local nature economy is considerable, as the agency employs seasonal and part-time workers, engages vendors who complete work for the Town, and purchases products and services that support the use of natural amenities. Many of the Town's natural resources



and park amenities enhance local tourism, generating significant economic benefits for the business community.

The increased volatility in weather patterns and recent historic flooding will necessitate prudent precautions when considering developments proximate to the rivers. Temporary retail structures that can be easily relocated during flood events and other such accommodations may be necessary to protect the

businesses while also enhancing access to the rivers.

Hartford's trail network is another key asset that contributes to both residents' well-being and the local economy. The extensive system of trails provides opportunities for hiking, biking, and cross-country skiing, drawing both local and regional outdoor enthusiasts.

Trail tourism has become increasingly important nationally. As visitors come to experience Hartford's scenic landscapes, they will also visit local businesses such as retail shops, restaurants, and lodging. Expanding and enhancing the trails not only strengthens Hartford's position as a destination for eco-tourism but also promotes active, healthy lifestyles for residents. As more communities seek to invest in sustainable tourism, Hartford's trail network can become a model of how outdoor recreation can blend seamlessly with economic development and environmental stewardship.

Objectives

- **Improve Access to Natural Assets and Improve User Experience:**
 - Enhance and expand river access and trail points and amenities.
 - Enhance connections between parks and trails through expanded multi-modal trail networks.
- **Promote Environmental Stewardship:**
 - Ensure all river and trail development projects integrate environmental protection measures to preserve natural habitats.
- **Boost Economic Activity:**

- Increase local economic activity by attracting businesses through temporary retail structures and tourists to the riverfront areas.

Strategic Actions

- **Feasibility Study and Design**
 - Assess existing river access points and conditions to identify gaps, opportunities, and areas for improvement. Collaborate with the Parks and Recreation Department to ensure alignment with local recreational goals.
 - Assess opportunities to expand some river access points for commercial activities such as kayaking rentals, fishing excursions, and riverfront food trucks to boost economic activity, in collaboration with the Parks and Recreation Department to ensure community and environmental interests are balanced.
 - Conduct Feasibility Studies on expanding trail networks between natural amenities.
- **Construction**
 - If determined feasible, plan and build additional river access points or trail networks.
 - Install amenities like picnic areas, benches, informational signage, and restrooms at strategic locations along the riverfront or trails to enhance user experience.
 - Protect natural habitats and comply with relevant regulations, promoting sustainability in all projects.
- **Promotional Resources**
 - Develop brochures, booklets, and online resources

highlighting existing and new river access points and trails to raise awareness and attract visitors.

- **Maintenance Plans**

- Create and implement long-term maintenance plans to ensure the sustainability and upkeep of new infrastructure, preserving quality over time.

Metrics

- **River Access and Amenity Usage**

- Track the construction and enhancement of river access points and amenities and miles of new trails.
- Monitor usage rates through visitor counts and surveys.

- **Environmental Impact**

- Conduct regular environmental assessments and audits to ensure that development projects comply with regulations and effectively protect natural habitats.

- **Economic Activity**

- Track the number of new businesses (e.g., kayaking rentals, fishing tours, food trucks) established along the riverfront and monitor their revenue and economic impact through business reports and local economic data.



4. Creative Economy

Goal

Strengthen the Town's creative economy.

Vermont's creative economy is a network of artisans, innovators, educators, performers, designers, writers, and preservationists, all contributing to the state's cultural and intellectual landscape. This sector accounts for 9.3% of the state's employment and contributed 2.85% to Vermont's GDP in 2022. 85% of Vermonters recognize art as an important part of their community, and 94% value arts in education.

Over the past two decades, the creative economy has blossomed particularly in Downtown White River Junction and been an integral part of the village's revitalization. Hartford's unique retail landscape benefits the creative economy as smaller; artisan shops don't have to compete with big-box stores. Residents and visitors support unique, locally owned businesses, performing arts, and visual arts that reflect the Town's character and creativity. By promoting a vibrant creative sector, Hartford presents a unique experience that attracts tourists, new residents, and businesses who value its distinctive and vibrant cultural offerings.

The creative economy's emphasis on diversity, inclusivity, and collaboration aligns well with the Town's character. By promoting and investing in the creative sector, Hartford can enhance these

cultural assets, create job opportunities, strengthen its unique identity and heritage, and continue to improve quality of life in the Town.

Figure 13: Creative Economy in Vermont, 2022



9.3% Employment in creative firms



3.2% of Vermont's GDP



85% of Vermonter's say art is an important part of community



\$79 million creative economy employment earnings

Source: Think Vermont

The Business Revolving Loan Fund (BRLF) is a local financial resource designed to support the Town's businesses with low-interest loans. The primary aim of the fund is to help businesses grow, create jobs, and stimulate the local economy. Loans can be used for improvements, equipment, expansion, or working capital.

The BRLF operates on a revolving basis, meaning that as businesses repay their loans, the money is returned to the fund and made available to other businesses in need of financial assistance.

Objectives

- **Increase community engagement and collaboration:**
 - Foster deeper collaboration between local government and the creative community to drive the development of the creative economy.
- **Strengthen cultural infrastructure:**
 - Develop and enhance the infrastructure necessary to support and grow the creative sectors within Hartford.
- **Promote and Support Local Creatives:**
 - Encourage the growth of local businesses and entrepreneurs within the creative sectors to diversify and strengthen Hartford's economy.

Strategic Actions

- **Creative Economy Steering Committee**
 - Form a committee, under the Planning and Development Department, to develop cultural infrastructure and integrate the creative sector into broader economic initiatives.
 - Determine actions to promote the creative economy, such as creating websites, brochures, and other promotional materials.
 - Establish a network for local creatives to share resources, collaborate on projects, and support each other's work. Regular networking events, collaborative projects, and a shared online platform can facilitate community building.
 - Partner with the regional Cornerstone Creative

Community (3CVT) to enhance collaborative efforts.

- Host and expand annual cultural festivals and markets to celebrate local talent and attract visitors.
- Promote the Hartford Business Revolving Loan Fund to provide financial and coordinative support for new creative ventures.
- **Inventory and Mapping**
 - Perform a detailed inventory of creative assets in Hartford, including artists, resources, and venues, to identify strengths, gaps, and opportunities for growth. This initiative could be a collaborative cross-class project or internship with educational institutions such as Dartmouth College.
- **Education and Training in the Creative Sector**
 - Collaborate with local educational institutions to offer courses and workshops that enhance skills in the arts. This could include artist residencies where experienced artists mentor emerging talent.
- **Creative Spaces**
 - Sustain and develop incubators, maker spaces, and studios in Hartford to support local artists and entrepreneurs, thereby preserving and building upon the Town's creative infrastructure.

Metrics

- **Cultural Infrastructure Development**
 - Track the development and improvement of cultural infrastructure, including maker spaces, and studios.
 - Monitor the usage rates and occupancy of these spaces.
- **Support and Growth of Local Creatives**
 - Track the number of artists and creative entrepreneurs receiving support through initiatives like the Hartford Business Revolving Loan Fund.
 - Measure the economic impact of these creatives on the local economy through business growth and revenue generated.



5. Innovative Economy

Goal

Leverage Hartford’s high-skilled local talent and its proximity to world class educational institutions to foster innovation, increase wages and reduce commute times.

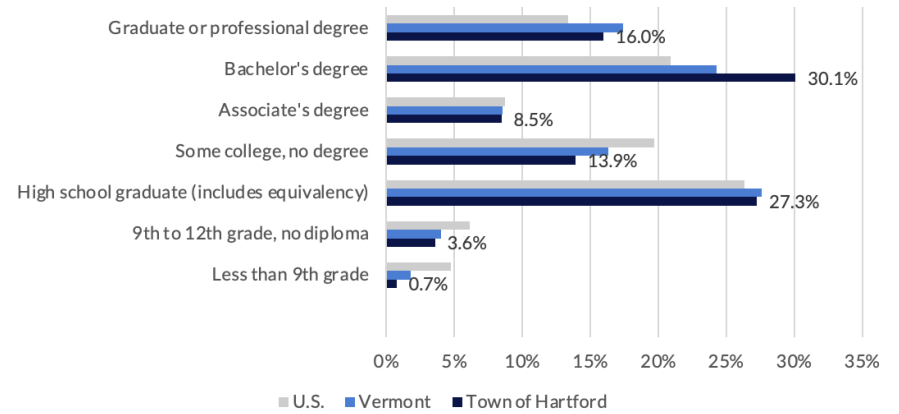
The Innovative Economy leverages creativity, technology, entrepreneurship, and sustainable practices to drive economic growth and development. This economy enhances productivity, creates high-quality jobs, and improves the overall quality of life in the community. Hartford's educational attainment levels support the foundation for an innovative economy, with 30% of Hartford’s workforce holding a bachelor’s degree and 16% a graduate/professional degree—far higher than national and state averages (see Figure 14). A high level of educational attainment is a critical asset that enables innovation.

Technology and innovation-based jobs tend to offer significantly higher wages compared to other sectors. For example, the median annual wage for technology-related jobs in the U.S. was \$104,420 in 2023, more than twice the median wage for all occupations, which stood at \$48,060.¹ This wage disparity highlights the importance of fostering tech jobs as they can significantly boost local incomes and improve the overall economic health of Hartford.

Hartford also has a robust entrepreneurial ecosystem. The total value of loans to small businesses per civilian labor force in the Town (\$3,195) was 43% higher than the national average (\$2,230)

¹ <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/Computer-and-Information-Technology/>

Figure 14: Educational Attainment by Population 25 Years and over, 2022



Source: American Community Survey

Figure 15: Small Business Loans Distribution

	U.S.	Vermont	Windsor County	Town of Hartford
Amount of Loans to Businesses with Gross Annual Revenues <= \$1M (Thousands)	374,445,725	537,829	56,164	19,157
Civilian Labor Force	167,857,207	350,677	30,316	5,995
Total Amount of Loans per Civilian Labor Force	\$2230	\$1533	\$1852	\$3195

Source: FFIEC, CRA Aggregate Data

and 108% higher than Vermont (\$1,533). This strong financial support for small businesses is indicative of an entrepreneurial spirit and a vibrant ecosystem that forms the backbone of an innovative economy.

Implementing an innovative economy strategy will help Hartford build on these strengths by creating an environment that supports startups, remote workers, and unique entrepreneurial ventures. Expanding this focus on technology jobs and innovation will further accelerate wage growth, benefiting both the local workforce and the broader economy.

Objectives

- **Develop entrepreneurial infrastructure:**
 - Establish facilities and support systems that encourage the creation and growth of innovative startups and businesses.
- **Increase quality of life:**
 - Increase quality of life by reducing commute times and increasing wages of local high-skilled talent.
- **Enhance collaboration with educational institutions:**
 - Strengthen ties with educational institutions such as Dartmouth College, Vermont Community Colleges, Center for Cartoon Studies, Community Colleges of New Hampshire and other educational entities to align with local business needs.

Strategic Actions

- **Audit and Development of Resources**
 - Perform a detailed audit of existing resources to identify potential resources for development that support startups and innovative businesses.
- **Transformation of Non-Traditional Spaces**
 - Explore non-traditional spaces in the Town, such as public libraries, to incorporate workspaces for startups, entrepreneurs, and remote workers, thereby enhancing accessibility and resource availability.
- **Dedicated Shared Maker Spaces**
 - Collaborate with county and regional resources and the Green Mountain Economic Development Corporation to program and fund these initiatives.
 - Convert underutilized properties into shared maker spaces tailored to the needs of Hartford's entrepreneurs. Ensure these spaces provide necessary amenities and equipment.
 - Actively promote these new spaces and programs to foster a collaborative entrepreneurial ecosystem and attract participants.
 - Develop marketing strategies to attract and retain talent, emphasizing Hartford's innovative environment and opportunities.

Metrics

- **Resource Utilization and Development**
 - Track the completion of the resource audit and the subsequent development of identified resources. Monitor the usage rates of these resources by local startups and entrepreneurs.
- **Community Engagement and Collaboration**
 - Record the number of formal partnerships established with organizations and property owners. Track the usage rates of non-traditional spaces converted into workspaces for startups, entrepreneurs, and remote workers.
- **Maker Space Utilization and Economic Impact**
 - Track the development of shared maker spaces and monitor their occupancy rates. Measure the economic impact of these spaces through business growth, job creation, and local economic activity.

While the current plan focuses on five primary areas, it is important to acknowledge that there are other sectors within Hartford that, while not prominent today, have the potential to become significant contributors to the local economy in the future. These evolving industries, such as clean energy and agrotourism, may not yet be at the forefront, but they hold promise as mainstays of Hartford's economic landscape. As the community continues to grow and adapt, this plan can be revisited and updated to reflect emerging trends and opportunities. The Economic Development Committee will monitor and evaluate these evolving sectors regularly, ensuring that the Town remains flexible and proactive in its approach. This will help Hartford to pivot and support new industries as they rise to prominence,

allowing all residents, regardless of their job type or income level, to continue thriving in this dynamic and eclectic community.

Workforce training plays a critical role in supporting Hartford's evolving innovative economy - especially as technology and entrepreneurship increasingly shape the local job market. As Hartford seeks to maintain its competitive edge, the Planning and Development Department could become a key facilitator and collaborator in workforce development efforts. By working with local educational institutions, businesses, and workforce organizations, the Department can help bridge skills gaps, ensuring residents are prepared for high-demand fields like technology and sustainable industries. In this capacity, the Department can support training programs that align with the Town's economic development goals, fostering a more adaptable and skilled workforce for the future.



4 Metrics



		Stewardship	Timeline
1. Identity / Positioning			
Adoption of Identity Positioning Statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hartford Identity Positioning Statement is formally adopted by the Town Select Board. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town Selectboard Planning and Development Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Q4 2024
2. Village Centers			
Village Coordinator Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track village coordinator's participation in meetings and projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning and Development Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Starting from Q4 2024 Ongoing, with quarterly reviews
Community Satisfaction and Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct annual surveys to assess village center initiatives and community involvement. Monitor engagement using website analytics and social media interactions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning and Development Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Starting from Q4 2025 Annual survey in Q4
Funding and Resource Allocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track funds from grants, private investments, and public sources. Record grant applications and awards; evaluate fund utilization in projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning and Development Department Finance Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual review and reporting

		Stewardship	Timeline
3. Nature Economy			
Nature Access and Amenity Usage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track construction of river access points, amenities, and new trails. Monitor usage with visitor counts and surveys. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parks and Recreation Department Planning and Development Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Starting from Q2 2025 Ongoing, with semi-annual reports
Environmental Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct regular environmental assessments to ensure regulatory compliance and habitat protection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning and Development Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual assessments
Economic Activity	Track new riverfront businesses and monitor their revenue and economic impact.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning and Development Department Finance Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Starting from Q4 2025 Annual review in Q4
4. Creative Economy			
Cultural Infrastructure Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track development and improvement of cultural spaces. Monitor usage and occupancy rates. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning and Development Department 3CVT Steering Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Starting from Q1 2025 Ongoing, with annual reports
Support and Growth of Local Creatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track creatives receiving support through local initiatives. Measure their economic impact through business growth and revenue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning and Development Department 3CVT Steering Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Starting from Q1 2025 Ongoing, with annual reports

		Stewardship	Timeline
5. Innovative Economy			
Resource Utilization and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track resource audit completion and usage by startups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning and Development Department Green Mountain Economic Development Corporation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit completion by Q4 2025 Ongoing usage tracking
Community Engagement and Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record partnerships with libraries and usage by startups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning and Development Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Starting from Q3 2025 Ongoing, with annual reviews
Maker Space Utilization and Economic Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track maker space development and measure economic impact. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning and Development Department Green Mountain Economic Development Corporation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Starting from Q3 2026 Ongoing, with annual economic impact report

5 Appendix



Focus Group Analysis

Highlighted Topics

Small Businesses Focus Group

Support for Businesses

- Town Support and Infrastructure: Focus on all villages (not just WRJ)- shuttle services between villages and updating zoning codes
- Marketing and Branding: National advertising and marketing through Vermont branding, creating a networking channel for small businesses, utilizing platforms like podcasts for storytelling to elevate Hartford's profile
- Tourism and Accessibility: Emphasizing missing tourism opportunities, improving transportation for visitors, and better snow removal to support businesses year-round.

Positive Aspects of Doing Business

- Community and Safety: Creative economy, community spirit, feeling of safety.

Economic Opportunities

- Natural and Locational Advantages: Opportunities tied to river kayaking, leveraging Hartford's location for busy tourist seasons, and focusing on marketing and nature to attract visitors and economic activity.

Desired Industries

- Diverse Industries: Interest in establishing small manufacturing such bike industry, supporting startups, galleries, and technology companies.

Challenges in Doing Business

- Workforce and Demographic Issues: Challenges include

- finding loyal employees, insufficient public transportation.
- Infrastructure and Community Dynamics: Concerns about aging buildings, such as the Coalage building, and the broader impact on culture and community stability, and the potential negative impacts on gentrification.

Workforce Dynamics

- Support and Accessibility: The need for support and improved accessibility for workers, including transportation and housing.
- Demographic Concerns: Facing an aging population, a shortage of younger residents, childcare issues, and the potential to attract labor through welcoming policies for immigrants and refugees.
- Technology and Innovation: Debating the role of automation in labor and the desire to maintain Vermont's character while also attracting the younger generation.

Branding and Community Identity

- Hartford's Identity: Discussions on how Hartford is perceived, with a focus on its creative economy, arts community, and the unique identity of each village within Hartford. The emphasis on culturally stable and diverse opportunities highlights a vision for a community that values its individual parts while working towards a cohesive brand.

Developers Focus Group

Market General Trends

- Growth and Demographics: Observations include incremental growth, high property appreciation due to demand, and increases in second homeowners affecting the local real estate market.
- Population Dynamics: Decrease in average home size, an aging population, and specific demand from sectors like healthcare due to the presence of three hospitals.

- **Geographical and Economic Considerations:** The impact of the local school systems on housing costs, with Norwich and Hanover having higher property taxes and housing costs due to perceived better quality, and the choice of Lebanon and Hartford for those less concerned with school quality.
- **Housing Market Expectations:** Developers do not expect home prices to decrease, anticipating continued demand and population increase, driven by high-paying jobs in the area but also noting challenges such as high housing costs and childcare.

Business of Development

- **Economic Challenges:** Material costs doubling due to COVID-19, land costs rising.
- **Housing Development Concerns:** The challenges and costs associated with zoning, tearing down buildings for new units, and the attractiveness of multi-family housing in green environments.

Organizations Focus Group

Workforce and Economic Challenges:

- **Childcare and Transportation:** Significant non-housing issues impacting the workforce include the lack of affordable childcare, inadequate transportation options, and the absence of services like Uber and Lyft.
- **Demographic and Economic Concerns:** An aging population, insufficient workforce, high cost of living, and difficulty in job mobility. Regulatory environments and tax systems are seen as impediments to business and economic development.

Community Organization Ecosystem:

- **Collaboration and Networking:** The need for greater collaboration among community organizations, revitalizing downtown coalitions, and the chamber of commerce to

create a more centralized and efficient ecosystem.

- **Challenges in Collaboration:** Difficulties in networking, competition among non-profits, and the necessity for staff dedicated to fostering collaboration.

Roles of Community Organizations:

- **Community Building and Services:** Organizations are viewed as essential for community building, acting as the "glue" of the community, providing services, bridging municipal boundaries, and attracting donations to support local needs.

Key Issues Facing Hartford:

- **Housing and Infrastructure:** Housing affordability, childcare, and infrastructural issues like sidewalks and walkability.
- **Environmental and Educational Challenges:** Climate change resilience, particularly flooding, along with education quality and property taxes.
- **Village Competition and Identity:** There is a perception of competition among villages within Hartford, with different areas receiving varying levels of attention and resources, affecting overall community cohesion and identity.

Underutilized Resources:

- **Recreational and Cultural Assets:** Potential for better utilization of riverfront access, local media like the Valley News, gyms, parks, libraries, and the trail system connecting to Lebanon.
- **Community Spaces and Access:** Emphasis on the underutilized potential of natural resources and community spaces that could enhance quality of life and attract more visitors and residents.

High School Focus Group

To stay in Hartford as an Adult:

- **Affordability and Entertainment:** More affordable home prices and a broader range of activities beyond shopping, such as recreational centers and specific attractions like RC car tracks.
- **Community and Recreation:** More community spaces like recreation centers, which are currently seen as impractical or expensive, and suggestions for amenities like bowling alleys and teen centers.

Leisure and Socialization:

- **Current Activities:** Students often find themselves driving around or leaving Hartford due to limited local options, with some citing poor sidewalk conditions as a barrier to enjoying activities in WRJ downtown.
- **Outdoor Preferences:** Outdoor activities like snowboarding and enjoying nature, highlighting the value placed on Hartford's environmental assets.

Vision for Hartford's Future:

- **Infrastructure Improvements:** Better walkability and improved public spaces - enhancements to sidewalks and the creation of more public meeting spaces.
- **Technological Impact:** Mixed views on future technologies, recognizing the potential of green technology and AI to make life more efficient but also cautious about possible disadvantages.

Employment and Economic Opportunities:

- **Job Accessibility:** Finding jobs is perceived as relatively easy, particularly around Hanover, but there's a noted absence of tech shops and a desire for more diverse employment opportunities.

Pros and Cons of Hartford:

- **Pros:** The natural environment, friendly community, outdoor activities (hiking, skiing, snowboarding), and the small-town feel.
- **Cons:** A lack of accessible trails and recreational facilities, too many auto dealerships, a limited variety of cuisines, and concerns about homelessness.

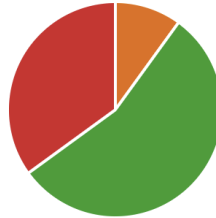
Suggestions for Improvement:

- **Housing and Development:** The necessity of affordable housing to retain young adults in the future, utilization of abandoned properties, and the need for more public transportation options.
- **Education and Recreation:** Calls for more technical and trade schools, along with better access to recreational facilities like Maxfield for younger demographics.

Community Survey Analysis

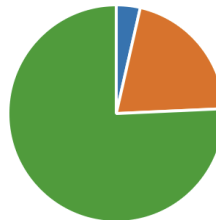
Age group

Under 18	0
18-35	14
35-65	77
65+	49



Length of residency in Hartford

Less than 1 year	5
1-5 years	29
6+ years	106



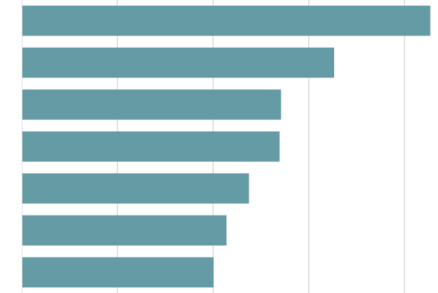
Quality of life in Hartford

Very Satisfied	24
Satisfied	78
Neutral	29
Dissatisfied	8
Very dissatisfied	1



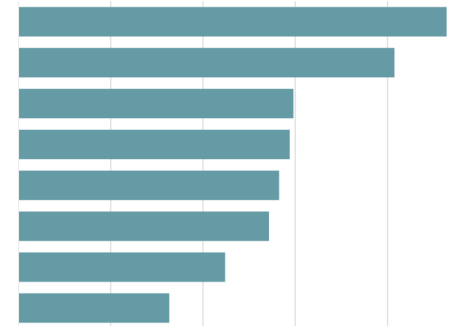
Challenges facing Hartford today

- 1 Housing Affordability
- 2 Workforce Availability
- 3 Employment Opportunities
- 4 Education
- 5 Aging Population
- 6 Climate Change
- 7 Transportation



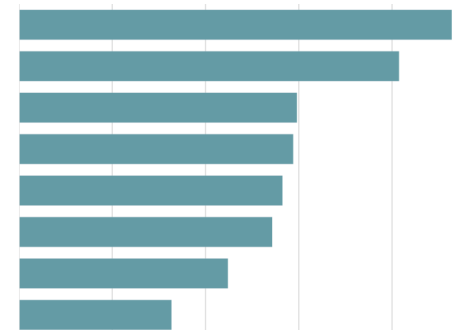
Prioritization areas for economic development

- 1 Small business support
- 2 Workforce
- 3 Technology and innovation
- 4 Tourism
- 5 Arts and Culture
- 6 Manufacturing and industry
- 7 Agriculture
- 8 Branding



Satisfaction with amenities

- 1 Small business support
- 2 Workforce
- 3 Technology and innovation
- 4 Tourism
- 5 Arts and Culture
- 6 Manufacturing and industry
- 7 Agriculture
- 8 Branding



Amenities that you feel are lacking or need improvement in Hartford

Recreation and Leisure

- **Outdoor and Sports Facilities:** Requests for river access, bike paths, recreational centers (including an affordable option for families), and specific sports facilities (bowling alley, indoor golf, RC car track).
- **Arts and Culture:** Desire for more art attractions, movie theaters, and spaces for artisans to sell their work.
- **Entertainment and Dining:** Calls for broader dining options, cafes, nightlife including pubs and casual dining, and entertainment venues like escape rooms and game centers.

Infrastructure and Transportation

- **Public Transit and Walkability:** A broader reach of public transit covering all villages, safe pedestrian pathways, better sidewalks, and bike ped infrastructure enhancements.
- **Parking and Accessibility:** Concerns about parking availability and safety, especially in downtown areas, and the need for more EV/e-bike charging infrastructure.

Community Services and Facilities

- **Education and Childcare:** First-class public schools, more childcare options, and educational facilities for both children and adults.
- **Health and Safety:** Community-based nurse services, more accessible healthcare, and considerations for aging support and independent senior living.
- **Public Spaces:** A modern and centralized library, community centers (with no religious affiliation), and green spaces including dog parks.

Housing and Urban Development

- **Affordable Housing:** A strong call for affordable housing, including strategies to utilize abandoned properties and incentives for high energy-efficient buildings.
- **Zoning and Development:** Concerns about strict zoning affecting housing and business development, and a vision for zoning reforms to support more walkable commercial areas.

Business and Economic Development

- **Small Businesses and Markets:** Support for small businesses, opportunities for artisans, farmers markets, and the development of practical shops that meet everyday needs.
- **Work and Education:** The necessity for more technical and trade schools, opportunities for job creation especially in tech and green industries, and spaces for co-working and community interaction.

Environmental and Public Health

- **Green Spaces and Access to Nature:** Emphasizing the underutilized riverfront, the need for more parks and trails, and addressing climate change resilience.
- **Safety and Inclusivity:** Addressing targeted violence and ensuring safe, inclusive spaces for all community members.

Governance and Communication

- **Transparency and Information:** Calls for more transparency from town boards, better use of public information systems, and improved town branding to attract newcomers.

Initiatives or improvements would make Hartford more attractive to the younger generation

Housing and Affordability

- **Affordable and Diverse Housing:** Emphasis on affordable housing options, including starter homes and diverse housing options for various income levels. Initiatives like loan repayment programs for college tuition and strategies to increase the supply of affordable housing are frequently mentioned.
- **Accessible Home Ownership:** Making home ownership more accessible to the younger generation, potentially through incentives or innovative housing solutions.

Transportation and Infrastructure

- **Sustainable Transportation:** The need for car-sharing services, EV/e-bike charging infrastructure, and safe biking and bus infrastructure, including late-night services.
- **Walkability and Public Spaces:** Enhancing walkability through better sidewalks and creating walkable routes between key areas of Hartford. The removal of parking meters to encourage downtown visits was also suggested.

Social and Recreational Opportunities

- **Social Spaces and Entertainment:** Calls for more social gathering spots such as cafes, bars, ice cream shops, and nightlife options that stay open past 9pm. Interest in recreational centers, community solar access, and activities like skate parks.
- **Cultural and Community Engagement:** Encouraging economic opportunities and social interconnectedness, with specific suggestions for outdoor recreation opportunities and engaging young professionals through local business highlights.

Employment and Economic Development

- **Job Opportunities:** The necessity for job opportunities particularly in tech and green industries, alongside general business development to sustain a young workforce.
- **Support for Small Businesses:** Encouragement for small business growth and innovation hubs, as well as youth entrepreneurship programs.

Education and Family Support

- **Schools and Childcare:** Investment in school infrastructure and improvements, along with affordable childcare options, are highlighted as crucial for attracting young families.
- **Cultural and Educational Shifts:** Suggestions for promoting arts, culture, diversity, and progressive values within the community.

Environmental and Community Health

- **Green Initiatives:** A focus on climate action policies and infrastructure to support environmentally friendly transportation and living.
- **Inclusive and Safe Community:** Initiatives for more equity and inclusion, welcoming campaigns for LGBTQ & BIPOC community members, and ensuring community safety and resilience.

Governance and Community Planning

- **Lower Taxes and Efficient Governance:** Calls for lower taxes and more efficient, transparent governance to make living in Hartford more attractive and sustainable for younger generations.
- **Land Conservation and Urban Development:** Suggestions for land conservation efforts alongside thoughtful urban development that prioritizes pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods and less reliance on fossil fuels.

Reasons Hartford is unique & special

Community and Culture

- **Vibrant Community Spirit:** A strong sense of community and support among residents, including a welcoming atmosphere towards diverse community members.
- **Arts and Creativity:** The presence of a vibrant arts community, including artisans, galleries, theaters, and cultural events, contributing to a rich cultural scene.
- **Historical and Educational Value:** The historical significance of Hartford and its villages, alongside the importance placed on education, including schools and community centers.

Natural Beauty and Recreation

- **Access to Natural Resources:** Appreciation for the town's natural beauty, including riverfronts, landscapes, and outdoor recreational opportunities.
- **Outdoor Activities:** The availability of various outdoor activities, such as hiking, kayaking, and skiing, supported by local parks and recreation departments.

Economic and Social Diversity

- **Economic Class Diversity:** The presence of a middle class and more socioeconomic diversity compared to neighboring communities, contributing to a varied community fabric.
- **Small Business Ecosystem:** Downtown areas and villages thriving with small businesses, from food co-ops to local agriculture, supporting a strong local economy.

Strategic Location and Accessibility

- **Proximity to Major Amenities:** Hartford's location near interstate highways, offering easy access to larger urban centers, hospitals, colleges, and surrounding community activities.

- **Unique Village Dynamics:** The distinctive character and offerings of Hartford's five villages, each contributing different aspects to the town's overall identity.

Infrastructure and Services

- **Transportation and Infrastructure:** Notable for its advanced transit bus service, train access, and well-positioned highways and river junctions, facilitating connectivity and mobility.
- **Community Services:** The role of non-profits and community services as central to Hartford's social fabric, despite the challenges related to tax income and resource allocation.

Vision for Hartford in the next 5-10 years

Housing and Urban Development

- **Affordable and Diverse Housing:** A strong emphasis on creating more housing options that are affordable and accessible, alongside developments that cater to a variety of community needs.
- **Sustainable Urban Growth:** Visions for growth that respect the environment, including more EV/bike charging stations, preservation of walkable and bikeable areas, and the use of existing buildings for housing to prevent unnecessary expansion.

Community and Culture

- **Enhanced Community Spaces:** The creation of cultural centers, community centers, and places for arts and artisanal activities, aiming to foster community building and support for local talent.
- **Youth and Family-Friendly Amenities:** More amenities and services catering to families and younger populations, such as playgrounds, recreational centers, and activities that encourage social interaction.
- **Desire for Preservation:** A wish to preserve Hartford's

unique character and history while carefully managing growth and development.

Environment and Recreation

- **Natural Resource Utilization:** Embracing Hartford's rivers and natural surroundings by enhancing riverfront access, creating more green spaces, and developing parks and playgrounds.
- **Transportation and Connectivity:** Improving public transportation, developing more bike paths and pedestrian areas, and focusing on connectivity between different parts of Hartford.

Economic Development

- **Job Creation and Entrepreneurship:** Encouraging the development of industries and services that offer good-paying jobs and support for entrepreneurship, moving beyond reliance on traditional businesses like car dealerships.
- **Support for Local Businesses:** A vision for a thriving local economy with a broad range of businesses, including retail options, grocery stores, and more nightlife venues.

Inclusion and Diversity

- **Inclusive Community Efforts:** Efforts to create a more inclusive and diverse community, including welcoming campaigns for diverse individuals and ensuring accessibility for people with disabilities.
- **Youth Engagement:** Encouraging the involvement of younger generations through education, arts, and entrepreneurship programs.

Governance and Infrastructure

- **Effective Local Governance:** Calls for stabilization of local government, and transparency.

- **Infrastructure Improvements:** Upgrades to local infrastructure, including roads, sidewalks, and public utilities, with an eye towards sustainable and green initiatives.

Specific projects or initiatives that would benefit Hartford's economic development

Housing and Urban Planning

- **Affordable and Diverse Housing:** Projects aimed at increasing the availability of affordable housing, including middle-income housing, tiny home parks, and mixed-income developments to support a diverse population.
- **Urban Vitality and Accessibility:** Initiatives to renew urban centers, improve walkability, and create livable town centers with pedestrian-friendly amenities.

Infrastructure and Environment

- **Sustainable Transportation:** Development of bike and pedestrian projects, including trails and bridges, to promote alternative modes of transportation and connectivity between areas.
- **Climate Resilience and Environmental Preservation:** Efforts to prepare for climate change, support climate-resilient infrastructure, and enhance access to natural resources like rivers.

Economic and Community Development

- **Small Business and Entrepreneurship Support:** Creation of incubation centers, co-working spaces, and small business incubators, along with starter funds and marketing support for local businesses.
- **Community Amenities and Facilities:** Projects to develop community centers, artisan fairs, river eateries, and live music venues that could attract residents and visitors alike.

Education and Workforce Development

- Educational Improvements and Job Training: Investments in schools and job training programs to attract families and support a skilled workforce.
- Innovative Employment Opportunities: Attracting high-tech and innovative businesses, along with initiatives to promote tourism and agriculture/industry/tourism coordination.

Social and Cultural Inclusivity

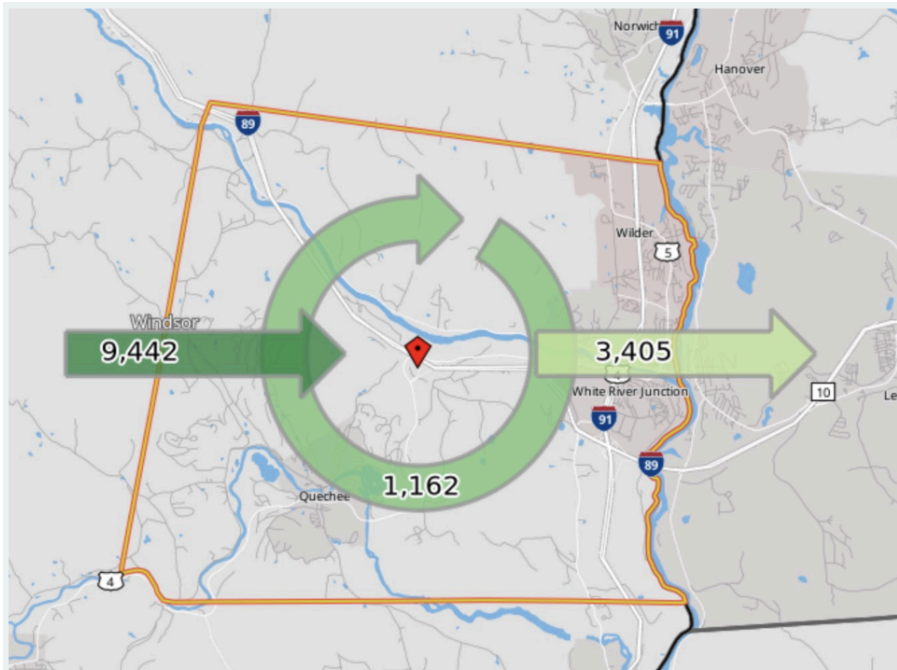
- Support for Diversity and Inclusion: Projects that foster a more diverse, inclusive community, including efforts to attract a younger, culturally diverse population.
- Health and Well-being: Implementation of community-based health support services and facilities that cater to a wide range of community needs.

Governance and Policy Initiatives

- Tax Stability and Incentive Programs: Creation of transparent tax stability programs and incentives for development aligning with community goals, such as affordable housing and small business spaces.
- Regulatory and Zoning Reforms: Calls for reducing regulatory burdens to enable housing and business growth, emphasizing the need for balanced development that prioritizes affordability and climate resilience.

Industry Analysis

Inflow / Outflow



Source: On the Map, Census

Town of Hartford Labor Market (All Jobs)				
	2021		2015	
	Count	Share	Count	Share
Employed in Hartford	10,604	100.0%	11,100	100.0%
Living in Hartford	4,567	43.1%	4,587	41.3%
Net Job Inflow (+) or Outflow (-)	6,037	-	6,513	-

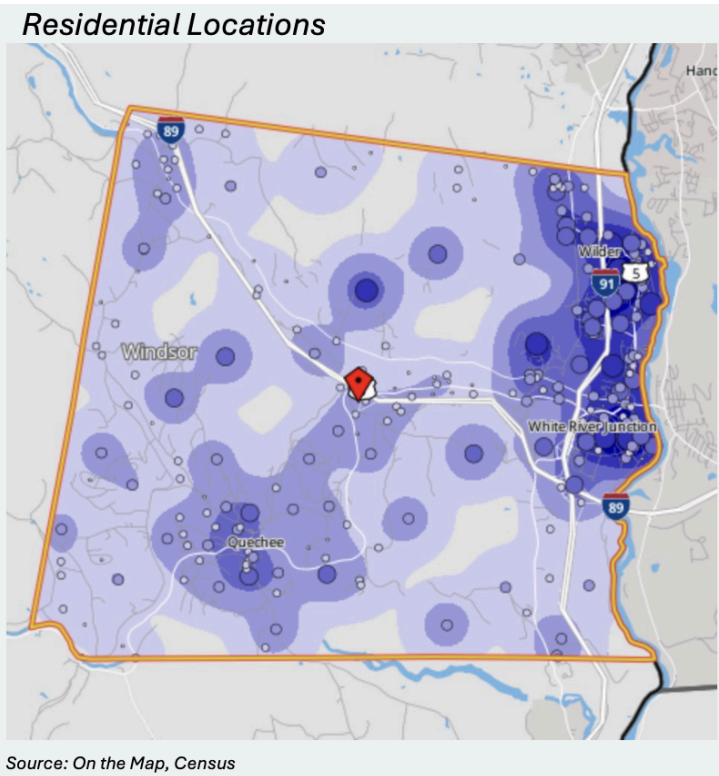
In-Hartford Labor Force Efficiency (All Jobs)

	2021		2015	
	Count	Share	Count	Share
Living in Hartford	4,567	100.0%	4,587	100.0%
Living and Employed in Hartford	1,162	25.4%	1,099	24.0%
Living in Hartford but Employed Outside	3,405	74.6%	3,488	76.0%

In-Hartford Employment Efficiency (All Jobs)

	2021		2015	
	Count	Share	Count	Share
Employed in Hartford	10,604	100.0%	11,100	100.0%
Employed and Living in Hartford	1,162	11.0%	1,099	9.9%
Employed in Hartford but Living Outside	9,442	89.0%	10,001	90.1%

Workers living in Hartford



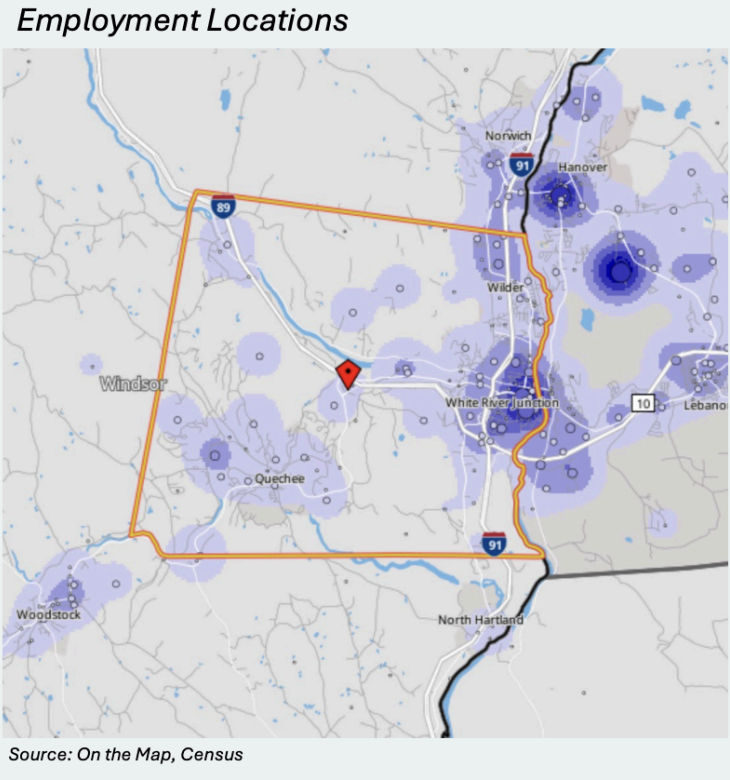
Source: On the Map, Census

Workers living in Hartford

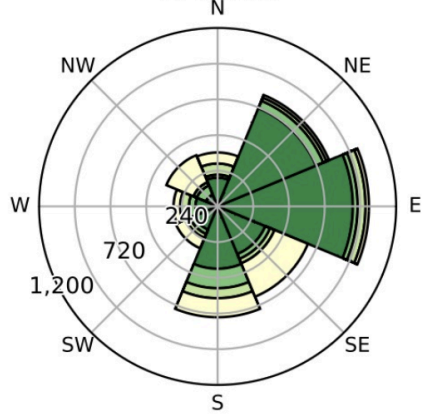
Total All Jobs				
	2021		2015	
	Count	Share	Count	Share
Total All Jobs	4,567	100.0%	4,587	100.0%

Jobs by Worker Age				
	2021		2015	
	Count	Share	Count	Share
Age 29 or younger	911	19.9%	989	21.6%
Age 30 to 54	2,315	50.7%	2,362	51.5%
Age 55 or older	1,341	29.4%	1,236	26.9%

Jobs by Earnings				
	2021		2015	
	Count	Share	Count	Share
\$1,250 per month or less	867	19.0%	1,081	23.6%
\$1,251 to \$3,333 per month	1,194	26.1%	1,456	31.7%
More than \$3,333 per month	2,506	54.9%	2,050	44.7%

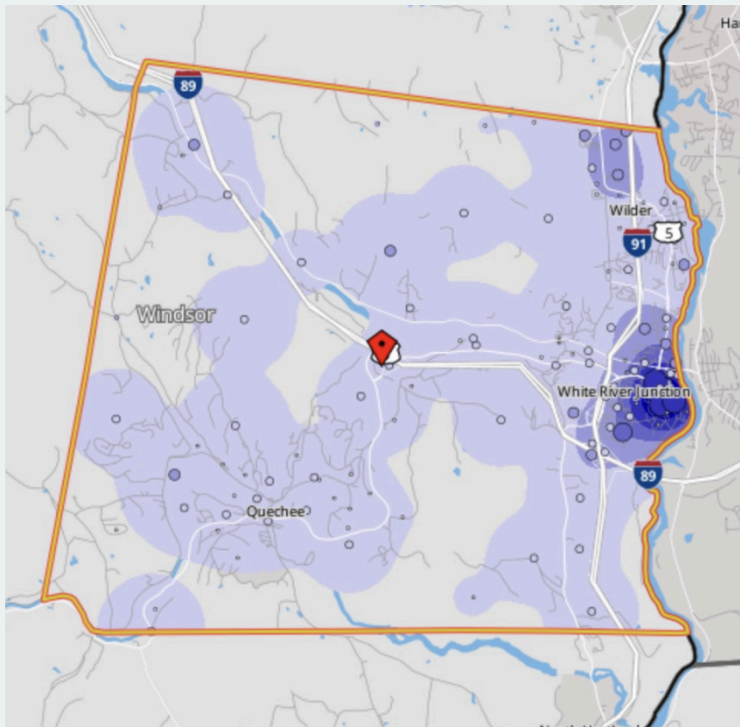


Job Counts by Distance/Direction in 2021
All Workers



Employed in Hartford

Employment Locations

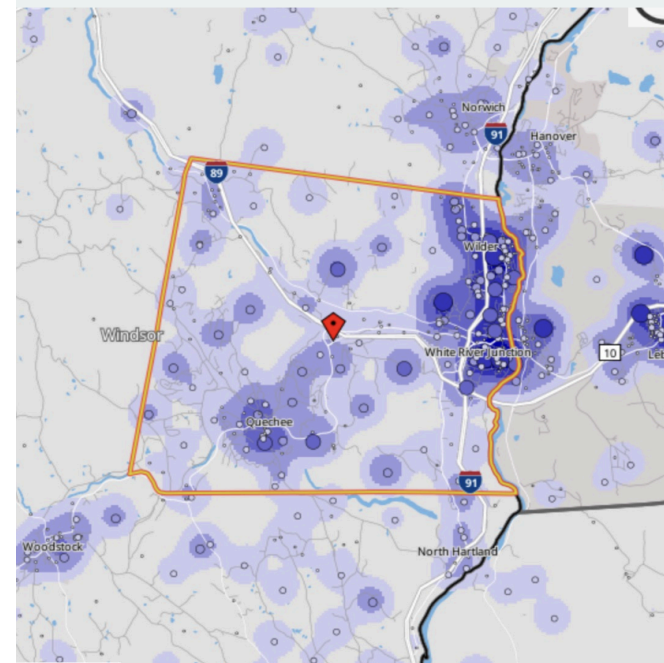


Source: On the Map, Census

Jobs by Worker Age				
	2021		2015	
	Count	Share	Count	Share
Age 29 or younger	1,892	17.8%	2,321	20.9%
Age 30 to 54	5,110	48.2%	5,477	49.3%
Age 55 or older	3,602	34.0%	3,302	29.7%

Jobs by Earnings				
	2021		2015	
	Count	Share	Count	Share
\$1,250 per month or less	3,610	34.0%	5,159	46.5%
\$1,251 to \$3,333 per month	2,805	26.5%	3,119	28.1%
More than \$3,333 per month	4,189	39.5%	2,822	25.4%

Residential Locations

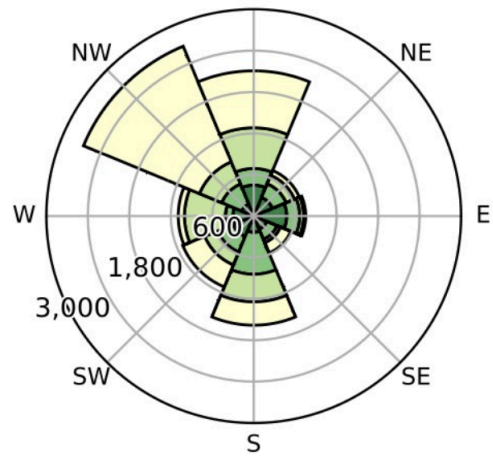


Source: On the Map, Census

Total All Jobs

	2021		2015	
	Count	Share	Count	Share
Total All Jobs	10,604	100.0%	11,100	100.0%

Job Counts by Distance/Direction in 2021
All Workers



Job Counts in Home Blocks by Distance Only				
	2021		2015	
	Count	Share	Count	Share
Total All Jobs	10,604	100.0%	11,100	100.0%
Less than 10 miles	2,466	23.3%	2,326	21.0%
10 to 24 miles	2,080	19.6%	1,904	17.2%
25 to 50 miles	2,380	22.4%	2,521	22.7%
Greater than 50 miles	3,678	34.7%	4,349	39.2%