

Market Assessment and Marketing Plan for the Town of Cheshire, CT

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PREPARED FOR
The Town of Cheshire



PREPARED BY



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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The Town of Cheshire, Connecticut is a community of just under 30,000 residents according to the 2010 US Census. Cheshire has continued to grow as a community over the years as residents have located here to enjoy high quality schools, a strong local government, community amenities, and proximity to the urban centers of Central Connecticut.

Cheshire is not simply a residential community however, employment in the town is robust with over 16,000 jobs residing within the Town Limits. Long a center of the bedding plant industry, Cheshire maintains a farm culture that provides the region with plants throughout the year. Distribution is also a major distribution center as the home to several important companies serving the Mid-Atlantic and New England states.

Recognizing the need for external expertise to better understand the economic development opportunities in the Town of Cheshire, the Cheshire Economic Development Commission alongside the Town itself embarked on this Economic Development Marketing Analysis and Marketing Plan for the community. The Economic Development Commission established a steering committee with broad representation from the community to serve as the executive body to direct the economic development plan. With the uncertainty of state funding for municipalities, the goal of this effort is to explore ways to preserve and expand the Town's Grand List, allowing for a balance of uses so not to place an undue tax burden on the Town's residents.

1.2 Process

The process included an immersive three-day visit to Cheshire in late September 2016 that included a series of over twenty individual and small group interviews with business owners and stakeholders, roundtable sessions with key industry groups such as economic development officials and commercial real estate brokers, and meetings with elected and appointed officials. The purpose of the visit was to engage a variety of stakeholders across the community to discuss economic development conditions, opportunities, challenges, and ideas. These interviews included business owners, public officials, real estate professionals, regional economic development partners, and others with a stake in the Cheshire economy. The study continued with additional interviews following the theme of the first round alongside a data presentation to the Steering Committee in November.

1.3 Report Format

This report represents the findings of the Economic Development Market Study and Marketing Plan. Chapter one is a summary of stakeholder input organized around themes. Chapter two includes analysis of the community's demographics and a review of policies and initiatives at the local and state level. Chapter three is a retail market analysis with conclusions on key retail opportunities. Chapter four is a synopsis of the office/flex/industrial market along with key opportunities in these sectors. Chapter five includes a series of recommendations that revolve around four key themes. Chapter six presents a conclusion along with an implementation strategy and action plan.

2 *Input Summary*

2.1 Observations

- Cheshire has been viewed as a “bedroom community” by some in the community and it competes with Branford, Guilford, and Madison as a place to live.
- Connecticut is/has transitioned into a service state from a manufacturing state. This requires a new way of looking at Economic Development.
- Locals want to have growth but don’t want change, this is an unusual paradox in the community.
- Changing retail dynamics don’t favor major retail at the Interchange as prior envisioned.
- While school enrollment has been declining, there is a forecast for that it to stabilize and begin to increase.
- The prison does buoy the economy through State of Connecticut formulas although this may change with state policy.
- The farming community in Cheshire has a “unique” status among other businesses in the community.
- Cheshire has a Defense Plant Zone under Connecticut’s enterprise zone program.
- Young employees are looking for a more urban experience drawing them to places like West Hartford and New Haven.

2.2 Assets

- Stronger relationships than in the past – strong Town Leadership, cooperative with Schools, partner with Chamber.
- Sense of optimism that the Town is proactive, staff acts with professionalism.
- Strong family feel to the community, sports oriented, kid oriented.
- Cheshire is a stable, clean, and relatively affluent community.
- Imports more jobs than it exports.
- Quality and diverse employers with major players in distribution (food and dry goods), agriculture (bedding plants), flex/office space, engineering/construction.
- Real and personal business property accounts for 18.96% of 2015 gross taxable Grand List.
- Has excellent schools with a strong reputation.
- Town is making changes to the zoning regulations to allow for more flexibility in industrial zones. This includes a reduction in minimum acreage in the I-2 zone and an increase in lot coverage in the industrial zone.
- Cheshire Chamber is growing and active.
- Strong active library.

- Easy access to the region – Hartford and New Haven (and on to NYC).
- As a suburban community the quality of Cheshire is good.
- Elim Park is a strong asset and is continuing to grow.
- Cheshire Academy is experiencing strong growth.

2.3 Challenges

- Central Connecticut is challenged economically – wedged between the vibrancy of NYC and Boston, echoes through the entire region. Difficult time to lease space.
- Ageing population is a hindrance to future growth – lack of families with children moving to town.
- Retail development is “near enough” to allow people to leave and still be convenient.
- There is no “downtown” district where people can gather to walk, shop, and dine. Residents leave for West Hartford or New Haven for that experience.
- Lack of dining diversity forces residents to leave town for food away from home.
- Difficult regulatory environment at the state level (DEEP) and at times even at the local level. Entitlement process is long and drawn out – multi agencies. Commissions cause delays, not user friendly.
- Ageing school facilities are reaching levels of obsolescence.
- Developing the interchange site will take utility funding – water/sewer. This will be critical.
- Only one corner of the 691 Route 10 corridor is “ripe” for development right now.
- Large scale development has been difficult in Cheshire and there is a sense that there is not an appetite for it.

2.4 Opportunities

- In spite of past failures, the interchange of 691 and 10 represents a major development site.
- Should re-examine the interchange zone for more flexible uses.
- Opportunity to better manicure the community especially at the interchange of 691 and Route 10.
- Ball and Socket property represents huge opportunity for Cheshire.
- Should be looking at advanced healthcare/health sciences as opportunity for Cheshire, surrounded by healthcare services expanding.
- There is an opportunity to better communicate the land, buildings, sites, and economic development opportunities in Cheshire.
- This opportunity extends to the local population who may not see or understand what is available in the community.

- Further opportunity to educate the citizenry on the importance of Economic Development on the Grand List and tax stabilization.
- Opportunity for Cheshire to capitalize on its income levels and families to create more specialty shopping, dining, etc.
- Cheshire should capitalize on home based businesses, telecommuting, “lone wolf” businesspeople.
- Need more options for children and families to have places to go and “hang out.”
- Can Cheshire increase cultural opportunities?
- Introduce a “downtown” walkable accessible district – West Main?
- Balance the rural/suburban feel with economic development.
- Biotech Corridor/Advanced Manufacturing – some debate/discussion on this.

2.5 Desired Uses

- More restaurant options.
- Better grocery options.
- Walkable downtown area.
- More activities for kids who aren’t athletes.
- More cultural activities.
- Place with public meeting rooms and a commercial kitchen.
- More public activities and events.
- Brewery.
- More housing variety for seniors/empty nesters/workforce housing.

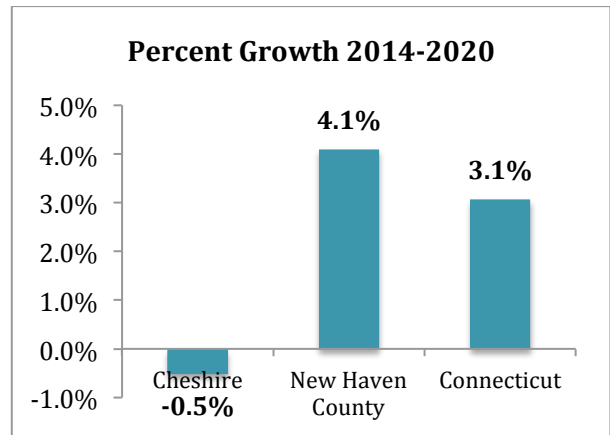
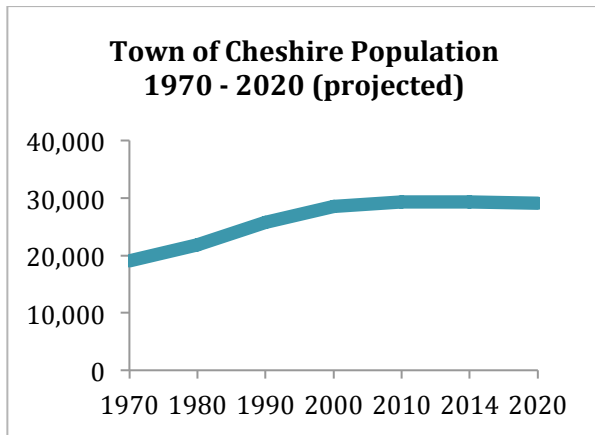
2.6 Input Summary and Emerging Themes

- Developing the Interchange – Cheshire’s economic development centerpiece.
- Telling the story – educating the community on Economic Development.
- Creating a downtown – building sense of place.
- Building the case – marketing to recruit new investment.
- Fostering the environment – regulations, incentives, and initiatives.

3 Demographic Analysis

3.1 Town Population

Cheshire’s population grew steadily from 1970 until 2000, when it began to level out. Growth slowed to 2.5% from 2000 to 2010, compared to 4.7% for New Haven County and 4.9% for Connecticut. The population in Cheshire has remained fairly constant since 2010 and is expected to decrease slightly between 2014 and 2020. In the Naugatuck Valley Region, population has shifted away from the urban areas towards the inner and outer ring suburbs which favors Cheshire in the long run..



Sources: American Community Survey; CERC Town Profile 2016

3.2 Trade Area Population

Population trends for the 10-minute and 20-minute travel time trade areas follow similar patterns to Cheshire and the overall region. The trade areas experienced strong population growth from 2000 to 2010, but have either remained flat or declined slightly since 2010.

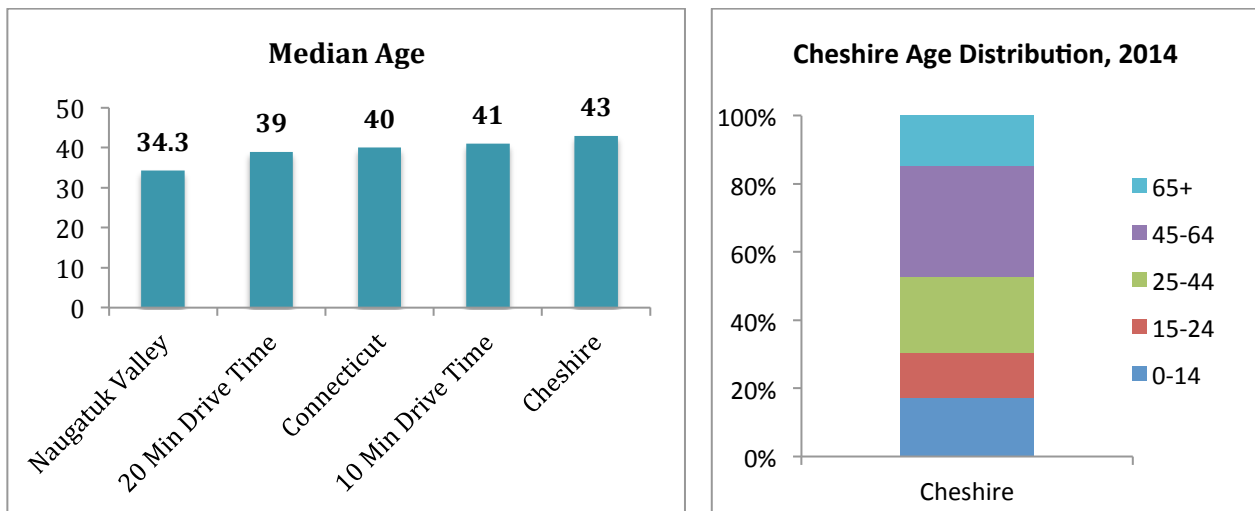
Description	10 Minute Travel Time		20 Minute Travel Time	
	Total	Percentage Change	Total	Percentage Change
Population				
2021 Projection	181,581	0.83% (2016-2021)	850,534	0.13% (2016-2021)
2016 Estimate	180,085	0.95% (2010-2016)	849,471	-0.15% (2010-2016)
2010 Census	178,386	6.41% (2000-2010)	850,716	5.11% (2000-2010)
2000 Census	167,648		809,333	
Households				
2021 Projection	68,798	0.74% (2016-2021)	331,219	0.14% (2016-2021)
2016 Estimate	68,291	0.77% (2010-2016)	330,741	-0.14% (2010-2016)
2010 Census	67,769	8.30% (2000-2010)	331,190	5.12% (2000-2010)
2000 Census	62,577		315,057	
Family Households				
2021 Projection	46,017	0.70% (2016-2021)	210,639	0.05% (2016-2021)
2016 Estimate	45,698	0.69% (2010-2016)	210,541	-0.28% (2010-2016)
2010 Census	45,383	3.87% (2000-2010)	211,136	2.87% (2000-2010)
2000 Census	43,692		205,237	

Source: Nielsen

3.3 Age and Population Trends

Throughout the region, the population is becoming both more diverse and older. The region, and Cheshire in particular, will be faced with an aging population in coming years. The town's median age of 43 is already significantly higher than the national median age. In addition to having an increasing number of senior citizens. The result has been a decline in the enrollment in public schools from school year 2005-2006 through school year 2014-2015 from 5,174 to 4,524 students (source: Urbanomics, Cheshire Public Schools).

However, the same enrollment analysis recently completed Cheshire public schools indicates a reversal of this trend largely based on potential build out of residential development in the next ten years and on projected job growth both locally and regionally. The result points to a reversal of enrollment decline and a rebound to 5,069 students by 2025. (source: Urbanomics, Cheshire Public Schools)



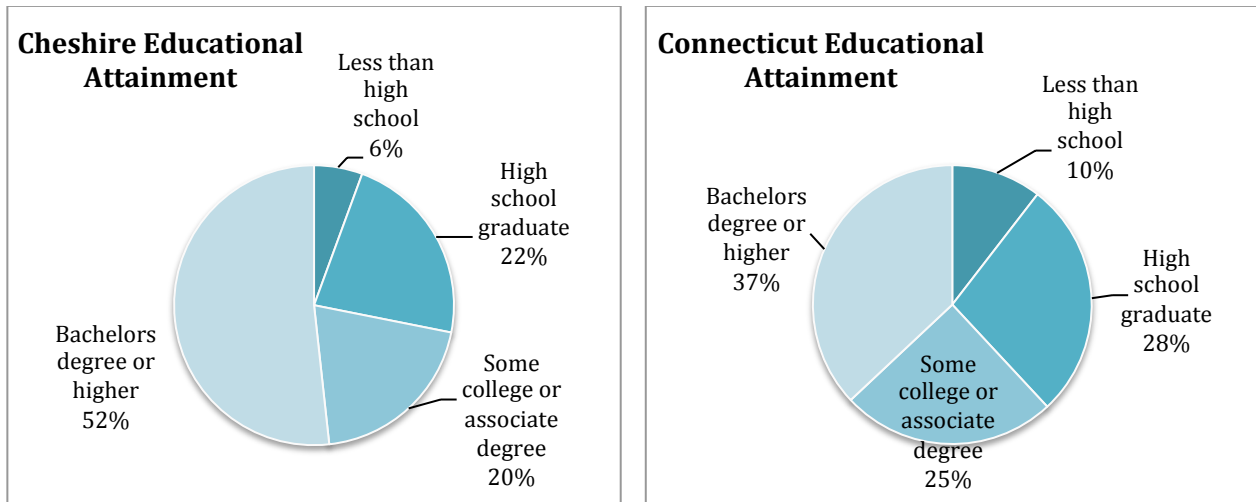
Source: 2014 American Community Survey

School Year	Enrollment by Division				Percent Change			
	PK-6	7-8	9-12	Total	PK-6	7-8	9-12	Total
2015-16	2,209	759	1,562	4,530				
2016-17	2,108	832	1,584	4,524	-4.6%	9.6%	1.4%	-0.1%
2017-18	2,020	846	1,596	4,462	-4.2%	1.7%	0.8%	-1.4%
2018-19	1,996	774	1,702	4,472	-1.2%	-8.5%	6.6%	0.2%
2019-20	1,985	733	1,730	4,448	-0.6%	-5.3%	1.6%	-0.5%
2020-21	2,028	704	1,743	4,475	2.2%	-4.0%	0.8%	0.6%
2021-22	2,051	712	1,723	4,486	1.1%	1.1%	-1.1%	0.2%
2022-23	2,164	738	1,654	4,556	5.5%	3.7%	-4.0%	1.6%
2023-24	2,357	711	1,681	4,749	8.9%	-3.7%	1.6%	4.2%
2024-25	2,604	713	1,752	5,069	10.5%	0.3%	4.2%	6.7%

Source: Urbanomics

3.4 Educational Attainment

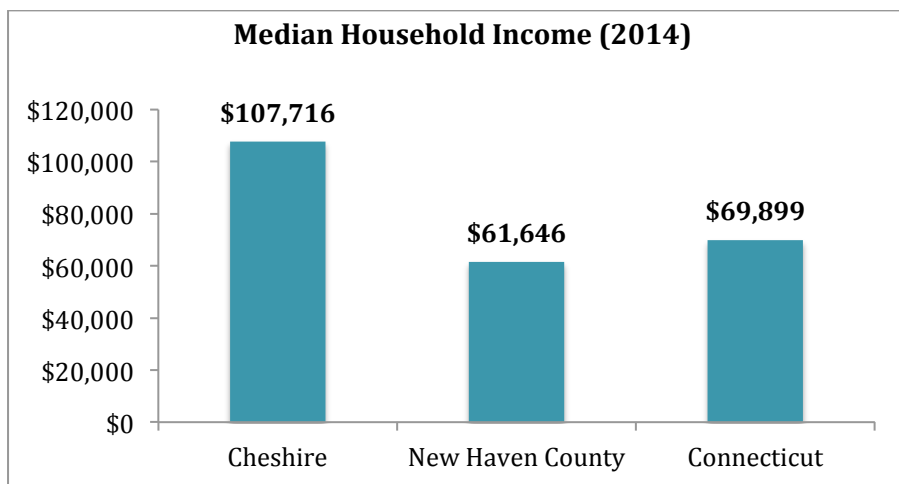
Cheshire’s highly educated population has a direct effect on the town’s high incomes and low poverty rates. In Cheshire, 52% of residents have a Bachelors degree or higher, compared to 37% in Connecticut and 29.3% in the nation. This points to an opportunity to capture highly educated residents who currently commute out of Cheshire to jobs in other parts of Central Connecticut and even to New York.



Source: 2014 American Community Survey

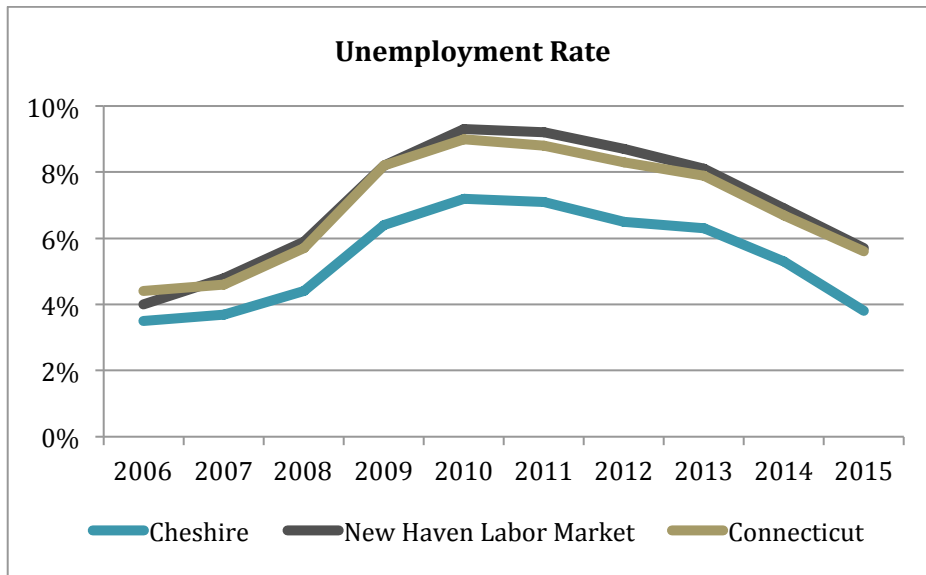
3.5 Income and Employment Rate

The median household income in Cheshire is \$107,716 and is 75% higher than the median household income in New Haven County. This median household income places Cheshire 23rd out of 179 incorporated county subdivisions in the state of Connecticut. The town also enjoys low poverty rates and a low unemployment rate. According to the 2010-2014 American Community Survey, only 2.1% of individuals in Cheshire lived below the poverty level, compared to 10.5% in Connecticut and 15.6% in the United States.



Source: CERC Town Profile

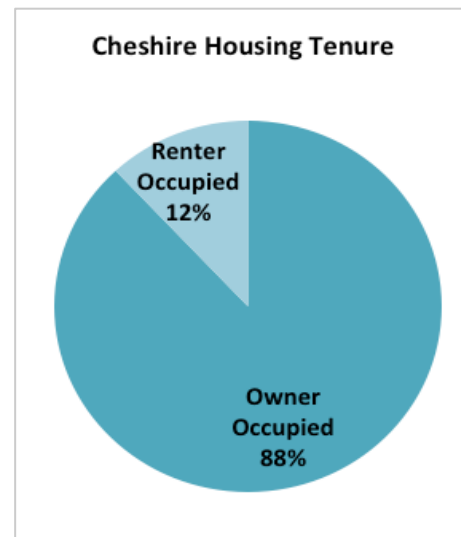
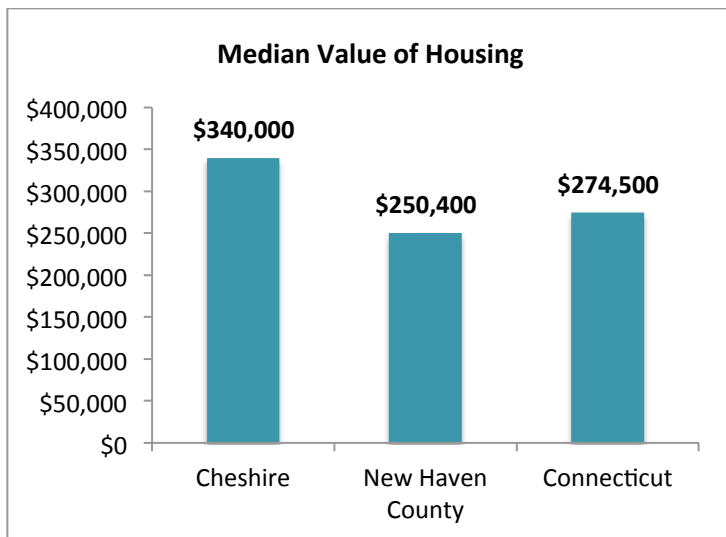
Unemployment rates in Cheshire followed a similar pattern to those of the New Haven Labor Market and Connecticut, though historic rates in Cheshire were consistently lower as shown in the graph below. According to the Connecticut Economic Resource Center, Cheshire’s unemployment rate in 2014 was 4.6% compared to 7.2% in New Haven County and 6.6% in Connecticut.



Source: Connecticut Department of Labor

3.6 Housing

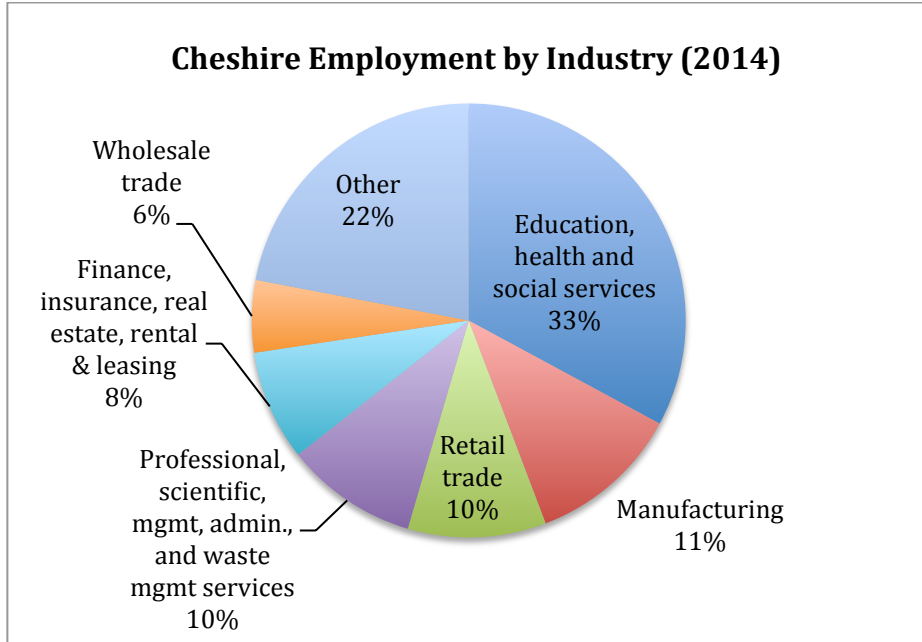
Homeownership in Cheshire is at 88% and the town’s median housing value is \$340,000. The housing value is significantly higher than that of New Haven County (\$250,000) and Connecticut (\$274,500). According to HUD, Cheshire has issued an average of 35 residential permits per year over the past five years indicating ongoing growth in the housing market (Source: SOCDS Building Permits Database, HUD)



Source: 2014 American Community Survey

3.7 Employment

One third of the jobs in Cheshire are in the education, health and services sector. Manufacturing (11%) and retail trade (10%) are also key employment sectors.



Source: 2014 American Community Survey

The following tables show Cheshire's major employers and top ten taxpayers. The first list highlights the importance of manufacturing and distribution to Cheshire's employment base.

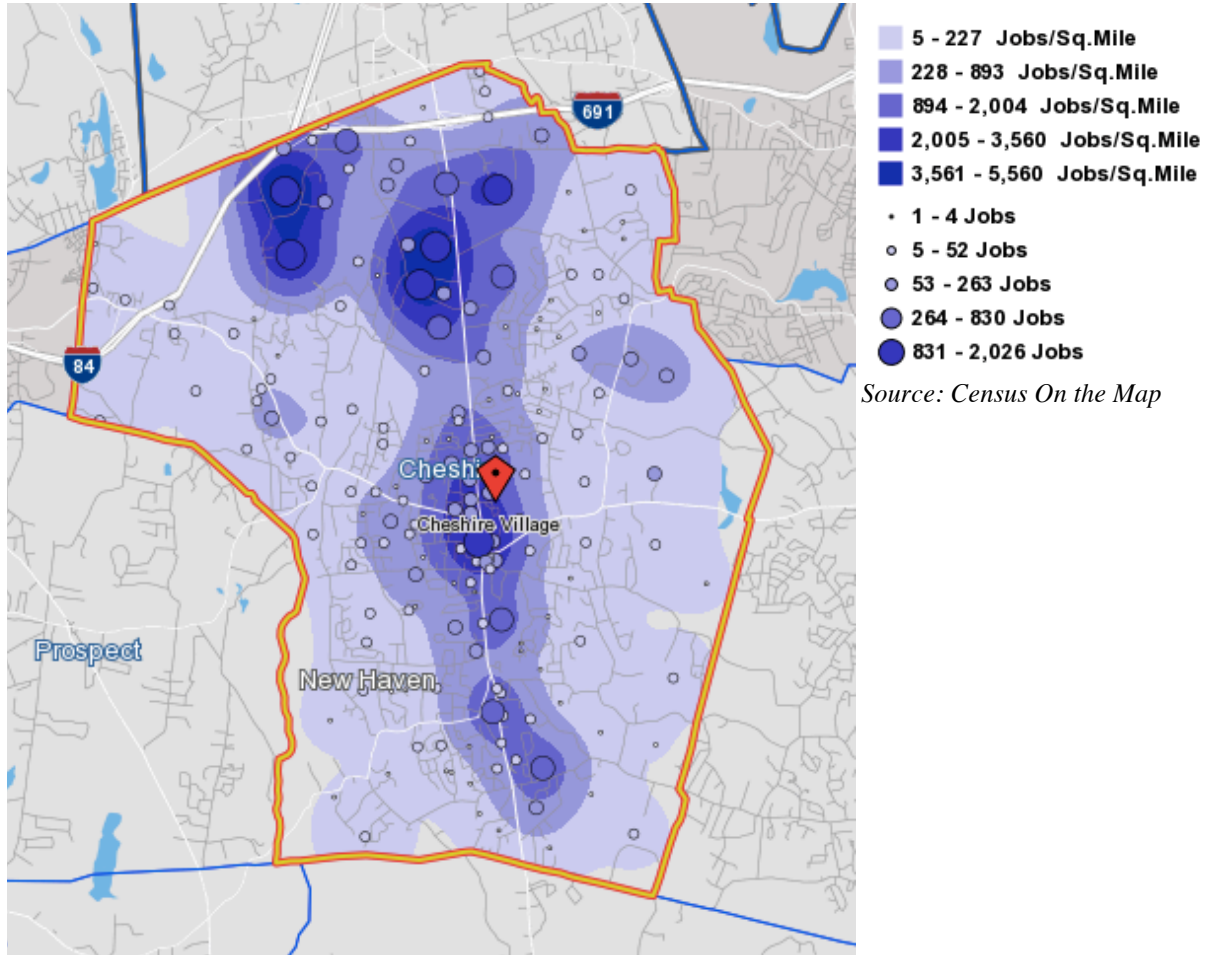
Major Employers in Cheshire		
Employer	Nature of Business	FT Employees
Bozzuto's Inc	Wholesale Food Distribution	1,266
Town of Cheshire	Municipality	839
State of Connecticut	Correctional Facilities	717
Macy's Logistics	Distribution	450
UTC Aerospace	Manufacturing	285
Omnicare	Pharmaceutical Services	220
Whole Foods	Distribution	220
EDAC Technologies	Manufacturing	203
Elim Park	Retirement Community	190
HAI	Insurance	158

Source: Town of Cheshire

Top Ten Grand List 2015			
Taxpayer	Nature of Business	Taxable Valuation	Percent of Net Taxable Grand List
CONNECTICUT LIGHT & POWER COMP	Utility	\$40,668,260	1.48%
INDUSTRIAL AVE INC	Wholesale Food Distribution	\$37,812,800	1.37%
BOZZUTO'S INC	Wholesale Food Distribution	\$31,659,060	1.15%
WE 350 KNOTTER CHESHIRE LLC	Office/Research/Development	\$18,328,880	0.67%
MACY'S CORP SERVICES INC	Warehouse/Distribution	\$17,131,539	0.62%
CT INDY CH LLC	Office/Research/Development	\$15,981,780	0.58%
YANKEE GAS SERVICE SVC	Utility	\$13,023,440	0.47%
ALEXION PHARMACEUTICALS	Office/Research/Development	\$11,828,100	0.43%
WFM PROPERTIES CHESHIRE LLC	Wholesale Food Distribution	\$7,972,910	0.29%
MARSHALL ENTERPRISES LIMITED	Real Estate	\$7,844,040	0.29%
Total of Top Ten Grand List		\$202,250,809	7.35%

Source: Town of Cheshire Assessor's Office

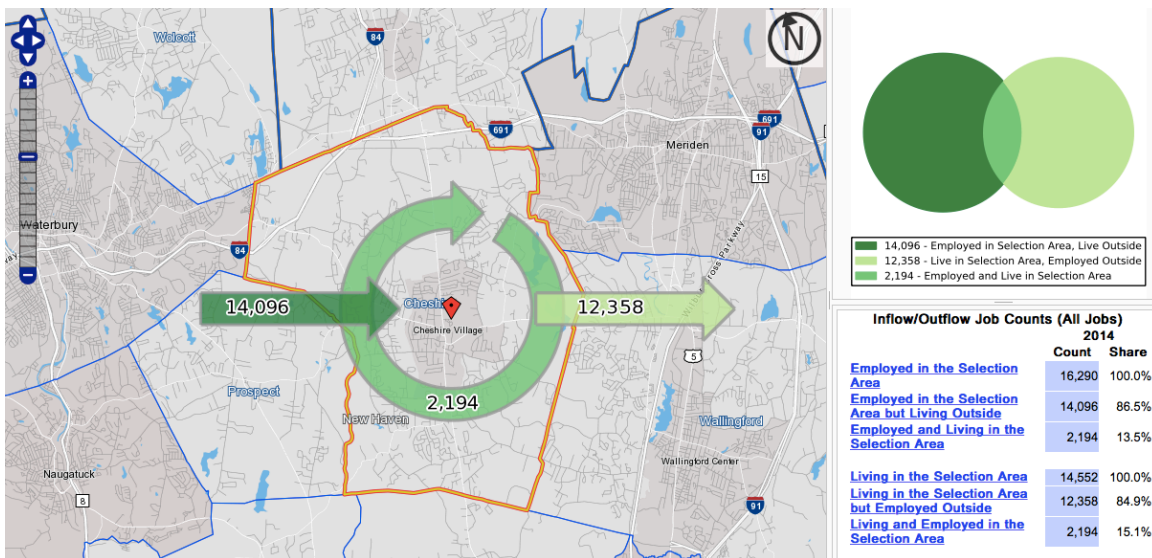
The following “heatmap” shows the concentration of employment centers in the Town of Cheshire. As would be expected, the north end of Cheshire has the largest concentration of jobs along with a node of employment centered in the core of the community where governmental and educational jobs concentrate. Land use patterns and zoning will continue to focus on Cheshire’s north end as a growing employment center.



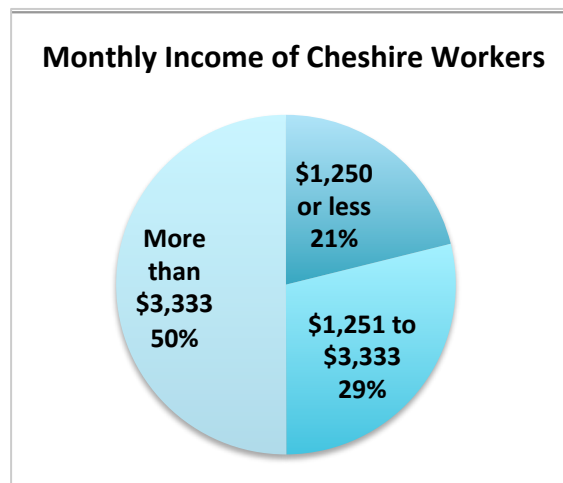
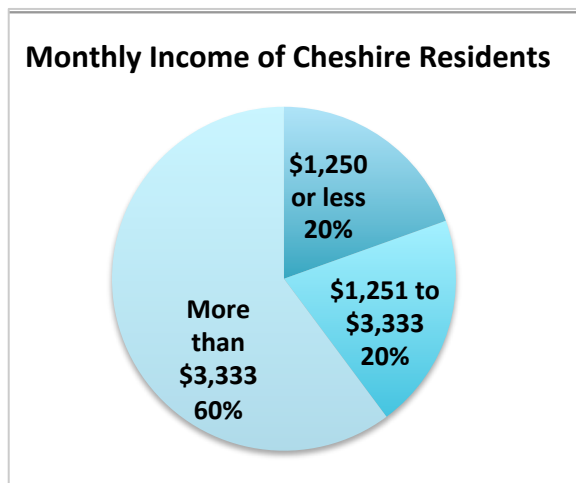
3.8 Commuting Patterns

According to the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments, nearly 60% of residents living in the Naugatuck Valley region commute to jobs outside the region. In Cheshire, 72.6% of working residents are employed outside the region (Source: Connecticut Economic Resource Center). The top three towns where Cheshire residents commute are to New Haven, Wallingford and Waterbury respectively. This outflow of jobs indicates a potential to retain workers within Cheshire as economic development efforts provide additional job options in the community.

Despite the fact that most Cheshire residents commute outside the region for employment, Cheshire remains a net importer of jobs. In fact, Cheshire is the only net importer of jobs in the Naugatuck Valley region. The incommuting pattern for Cheshire has increased over the past five years while the external commuting has remained relatively stable. However, on average, the jobs Cheshire imports have a lower wage than the jobs it exports, as shown in the pie charts below.



Source: US Census On the Map



Source: US Census On the Map

4 Industry Targets and Policy Review

This section explores some of the regional and local initiatives that may have an impact on the economic development efforts of Cheshire. An economic development strategy garners strength when it can capitalize on existing programs, efforts, and partnerships within the region.

4.1 Bioscience

The bioscience industry has a strong presence in Connecticut with over 18,000 employed (2012). A location quotient is a valuable way to quantify how concentrated a particular industry is in a locale. A location quotient of 1 (one) means that the industry is roughly similar in the particular location than it is to a larger or comparative location. Any location quotient higher means that the industry has a stronger cluster. Compared with the nation, Connecticut has a location quotient of 1.88 in Pharmaceutical and Medicine Manufacturing and 1.92 in Medical Equipment and Supplies Manufacturing meaning that these industries are particularly strong in the state when compared to the nation. The University of Connecticut and Yale both play a strong role in partnering to foster the bioscience industry in the state and several programs benefit the industry as well including:

- Connecticut Innovations which provides venture capital for bioscience,
- CURE: The Bioscience Network of Connecticut was founded in the 1980s by the major pharmaceutical companies in Connecticut and Yale to form a network for life sciences research and development. Since then, it has promoted policy changes and funding initiatives to make Connecticut more attractive to entrepreneurs in the bioscience industry, and
- The Connecticut Bioscience Innovation Fund provides financial assistance to start-ups, non-profits and universities to support bioscience breakthroughs. The fund hopes to provide \$200 million in grants over a 10 year period. Connecticut Innovations has some great info <http://ctinnovations.com/>.

In Cheshire, the bioscience industry did suffer a setback as Alexion Pharmaceuticals moved from Cheshire to New Haven to expanded facilities. Real estate professionals see bioscience concentrating in New Haven and around the Jackson Laboratory for Genomic Medicine in Farmington rather than spinning out into adjacent communities. However, if the industry continues to grow and Cheshire cultivates partnerships with universities, and the entities above there may be longer term opportunities to expand this segment in the market.

Moreover, Cheshire is ideally located at the center of several medical facilities' service areas. The community's location could position it for more direct care services in the region.

4.2 Finance, Insurance, Real Estate

The finance, insurance, and real estate industry in Connecticut represents 27.6% of of the gross state product in 2015 (Source: US Department of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis). The state is home to 6,552 finance and insurance establishments and leads the nation in insurance

carrier employment as a percent of total employment and the number of actuaries. However, the health insurance industry in the state has witnessed steep declines in recent years as companies have relocated out of state.

To stem the tide of this decline, the State of Connecticut has created the Connecticut Insurance and Financial Cluster to promote economic and workforce development in the industry through partnerships between business, academia and state government. <http://www.connecticutifs.com/> and <https://www.metrohartford.com/initiatives/ifs-cluster>.

Finance and Insurance is a major industry sector in Connecticut. In Cheshire, 8% of jobs are in finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing.

4.3 Distribution

Wholesale trade, transportation, warehousing, and utilities account for 8% of the employment in the New Haven Labor Market Area according to the Connecticut Department of Labor. This number has increased year over year. Cheshire has a strong concentration of distribution, wholesale trade, and warehousing in the north end of the town. The community's proximity to the 691 corridor which provides easy access to the Mid-Atlantic and New England regions place the community in a prime location for future growth in this sector.

4.4 Cheshire Incentive Program

In 2014 the Town of Cheshire affirmed the continuation of policy of granting incentives to keep the town competitive with surrounding communities – particularly those with Enterprise Zones. The policy exempts 45% (taxing 55 percent) of the assessed value of new construction for seven years provided the cost of the improvements is greater than \$3 million. If the cost of the improvements is less than \$3 million, the town exempts 45 percent of assessed value of the improvements for 3 years.

The policy requires a ten-year commitment to remain in the Town of Cheshire and maintain original staffing levels. In addition, the Town of Cheshire will consider the following additional incentives:

- Off-site infrastructure improvements to facilitate investment.
- As mentioned above, real property tax incentives for commercial and industrial uses pursuant to section 12-65b of the Connecticut General Statutes (this section was subsequently modified by the General Assembly).
- Tax incentives for information technology personal property pursuant to 12-81t of the statutes.
- Where appropriate and necessary, a combination of infrastructure and tax incentives.

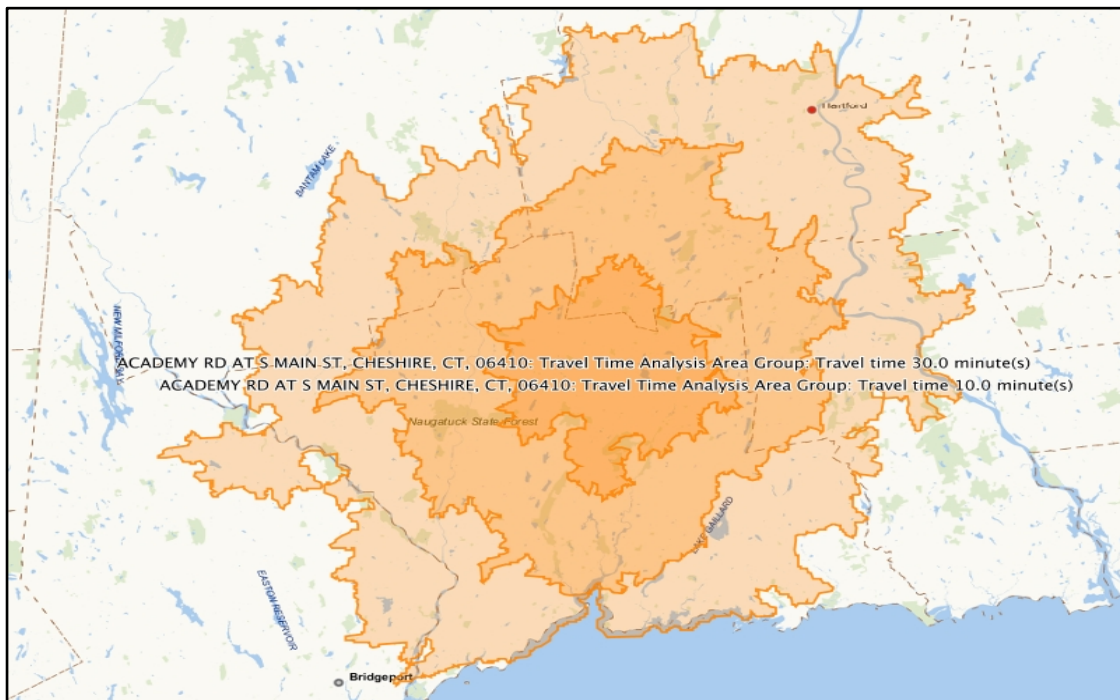
5 Retail Market Analysis

5.1 Introduction

This section of the report presents the findings of the market research for Cheshire and sets the stage for further analysis that can be used to recruit business, and enhance existing retail and restaurant businesses. The goal of the retail analysis is to show community stakeholders and potential investors how to capitalize on retail market opportunities and to leverage investments that will sustain the Cheshire community while preserving the character that the community values.

5.2 Trade Area Definition

The trade area for Cheshire was defined using a drive time analysis from the corner of Academy Road and South Main Street in the core of the community. The first drive time analysis looks at a 10-minute drive time and includes the entire Town of Cheshire and some parts of adjacent communities. The 20-minute drive time extends outward to include adjacent communities including New Haven, Meriden, Southington, New Britain, and Waterbury. (A thirty-minute drive time is illustrated but not factored into the study as it includes Hartford.)



Source: Nielsen and Arnett Muldrow

5.3 Retail Trade Leakage

Retail leakage refers to the difference between the retail expenditures by residents living in a particular area and the retail sales produced by the stores located in the same area. If desired products are not available within that area, consumers will travel to other places or use different methods to obtain those products. Consequently, the dollars spent outside of the area are said to be “leaking.” If a community is a major retail center with a variety of stores it will be “attracting” rather than “leaking” retail sales. Even large communities may see leakage in certain retail categories while some small communities may be attractors in categories. As might be expected for a small community adjacent to a large metropolitan area, Cheshire’s primary and secondary trade areas leak significant sales.

Such an analysis is not an exact science. In some cases, large outflow may indicate that money is being spent elsewhere (drug store purchases at a Target or apparel purchases through the internet). It is important to note that this analysis accounts best for retail categories where households (rather than businesses) are essentially the only consumer groups. For example, lumberyards may have business sales that are not accounted for in consumer expenditures. Stores such as jewelry shops and clothing stores are more accurately analyzed using this technique.

The leakage study for Cheshire is a “snapshot” in time. Consequently, there are factors that point to this being a more conservative look at retail potential depending on what factors are examined. This examination does not consider the potential for population growth in the trade areas examined nor does it account for visitor activity that may result in retail transactions in the trade area.

This section explores the retail trade patterns in aggregate. The tables on the following pages explore the individual retail categories where Cheshire is leaking and gaining sales in both a ten and twenty-minute drive time from the center of town. This data **should** be used as an overall guide to retail market potential and **should not** substitute for detailed market research on the part of any business wishing to open in the area.

Please note that some categories are subsets of larger categories. The numbers next to each store type represent the North American Industrial Classification System code (NAICS). Red numbers indicate an inflow of dollars and black numbers indicate market leakage.

Within the 10-minute drive time of the center of Cheshire is a \$3.02 billion dollar sales market. Consumers in that same trade area spend \$3.35 billion on retail goods. Each year this 10-minute drive time leaks \$325 million in retail sales.

Within a 20-minute drive time the retail market expands significantly to a \$13.98 billion dollar market (over four times that of the 10-minute drive time). The natural expectation is that the market would “equalize” and create more equilibrium between sales and expenditures. However, precisely the opposite occurs – consumers in this drive time spend \$14.85 billion in goods creating a leakage of \$874 million each year.

This indicates a shortfall of retail trade in the greater region. Granted, the Hartford/West Hartford market may make up for some of this trade outflow but the sheer volume of retail

outflow points to potential for additional retail development in Cheshire. (Which is likely the impetus for prior development proposals for a super-regional retail destination at the intersection of Route 10 and Interstate 691.)

While the prior paragraphs explore the retail trade patterns in aggregate. The tables on the following pages explore the individual retail categories where Cheshire is leaking and gaining sales in both the primary and secondary trade areas. Once again this data **should** be used as an overall guide to retail market potential and **should not** substitute for detailed market research.

The numbers next to each store type represent the North American Industrial Classification System code (NAICS). Red numbers indicate an inflow of dollars and black numbers indicate market leakage. Please note that some categories are subsets of larger retail categories.

Opportunity Gap - Retail Stores	10 Minute Travel Time			20 Minute Travel Time		
	(Consumer Expenditures)	(Retail Sales)	Leakage (Inflow)	(Consumer Expenditures)	(Retail Sales)	Leakage (Inflow)
Total Retail Sales Incl Eating and Drinking Places	3,350,444,034	3,025,207,564	325,236,470	14,853,987,340	13,979,595,006	874,392,334
Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers-441	638,867,654	459,967,372	178,900,282	2,795,320,429	2,725,340,876	69,979,553
Automotive Dealers-4411	530,350,874	424,827,354	105,523,521	2,315,227,063	2,496,770,401	(181,543,338)
Other Motor Vehicle Dealers-4412	59,463,400	6,694,190	52,769,210	256,709,063	60,051,476	196,657,587
Automotive Parts/Accsrs, Tire Stores-4413	49,053,380	28,445,829	20,607,551	223,384,303	168,518,999	54,865,304
Furniture and Home Furnishings Stores-442	69,337,855	39,377,420	29,960,435	303,680,726	278,820,074	24,860,652
Furniture Stores-4421	37,887,488	20,110,359	17,777,129	165,836,711	177,402,004	(11,565,292)
Home Furnishing Stores-4422	31,450,368	19,267,061	12,183,306	137,844,015	101,418,071	36,425,944
Electronics and Appliance Stores-443	62,657,663	39,284,518	23,373,145	275,568,896	182,925,543	92,643,353
Electronics & Appliances Stores-44314	62,657,663	39,284,518	23,373,145	275,568,896	182,925,543	92,643,353
Household Appliances Stores-443141	8,092,408	5,282,920	2,809,488	35,326,741	31,872,295	3,454,446
Electronics Stores-443142	54,565,256	34,001,599	20,563,657	240,242,155	151,053,248	89,188,907
Building Material, Garden Equip Stores -444	357,921,840	253,332,300	104,589,540	1,552,708,413	1,337,149,703	215,558,710
Building Material and Supply Dealers-4441	305,779,416	241,394,591	64,384,825	1,323,587,847	1,281,416,758	42,171,089
Home Centers-44411	123,044,206	87,292,543	35,751,663	534,361,604	500,386,716	33,974,888
Paint and Wallpaper Stores-44412	5,711,880	2,817,072	2,894,808	23,761,851	28,798,127	(5,036,276)
Hardware Stores-44413	30,655,572	36,240,520	(5,584,948)	135,361,142	103,783,784	31,577,358
Other Building Materials Dealers-44419	146,367,758	115,044,455	31,323,302	630,103,251	648,448,130	(18,344,880)
Building Materials, Lumberyards-444191	54,430,626	42,988,289	11,442,337	239,335,353	242,303,488	(2,968,136)
Lawn, Garden Equipment, Supplies Stores-4442	52,142,424	11,937,709	40,204,715	229,120,566	55,732,945	173,387,621
Outdoor Power Equipment Stores-44421	16,575,270	3,729,406	12,845,863	70,720,074	22,171,772	48,548,303
Nursery and Garden Centers-44422	35,567,154	8,208,302	27,358,852	158,400,491	33,561,173	124,839,318
Food and Beverage Stores-445	438,036,826	206,522,323	231,514,503	1,983,580,181	1,454,141,912	529,438,269
Grocery Stores-4451	282,648,223	175,894,075	106,754,148	1,280,827,652	1,139,660,036	141,167,616
Supermarkets, Grocery (Ex Conv) Stores-44511	264,108,805	168,721,787	95,387,018	1,196,419,746	1,098,689,425	97,730,321

Opportunity Gap - Retail Stores	10 Minute Travel Time			20 Minute Travel Time		
	(Consumer Expenditures)	(Retail Sales)	Leakage (Inflow)	(Consumer Expenditures)	(Retail Sales)	Leakage (Inflow)
Convenience Stores-44512	18,539,418	7,172,288	11,367,130	84,407,906	40,970,611	43,437,295
Specialty Food Stores-4452	35,601,015	2,581,968	33,019,047	161,980,462	33,536,928	128,443,534
Beer, Wine and Liquor Stores-4453	119,787,588	28,046,280	91,741,308	540,772,067	280,944,948	259,827,119
Health and Personal Care Stores-446	174,710,986	370,199,891	(195,488,905)	763,505,051	1,576,164,206	(812,659,154)
Pharmancies and Drug Stores-44611	138,563,431	335,547,328	(196,983,897)	605,390,378	1,419,294,068	(813,903,691)
Cosmetics, Beauty Supplies, Perfume Stores	12,056,379	2,552,532	9,503,847	52,547,200	32,714,636	19,832,564
Optical Goods Stores-44613	8,703,559	8,690,886	12,673	38,165,414	41,433,153	(3,267,739)
Other Health and Personal Care Stores-44619	15,387,616	23,409,145	(8,021,529)	67,402,060	82,722,348	(15,320,289)
Gasoline Stations-447	236,195,183	178,446,683	57,748,500	1,060,839,814	688,770,200	372,069,614
Gasoline Stations With Conv Stores-44711	172,910,067	133,275,697	39,634,370	776,803,369	507,681,537	269,121,831
Other Gasoline Stations-44719	63,285,117	45,170,986	18,114,131	284,036,446	181,088,663	102,947,783
Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores-448	159,715,874	154,475,842	5,240,032	714,159,851	685,585,492	28,574,359
Clothing Stores-4481	85,859,061	34,096,452	51,762,610	386,408,190	277,292,424	109,115,767
Men's Clothing Stores-44811	5,142,321	2,935,075	2,207,246	23,134,299	16,272,811	6,861,488
Women's Clothing Stores-44812	20,358,078	10,929,980	9,428,098	90,916,471	64,196,206	26,720,264
Childrens, Infants Clothing Stores-44813	4,966,640	1,281,413	3,685,227	22,987,748	18,242,117	4,745,632
Family Clothing Stores-44814	44,459,070	8,837,082	35,621,988	200,645,022	147,893,726	52,751,296
Clothing Accessories Stores-44815	3,708,795	1,896,946	1,811,849	16,582,255	7,770,807	8,811,448
Other Clothing Stores-44819	7,224,157	8,215,956	(991,799)	32,142,396	22,916,756	9,225,639
Shoe Stores-4482	12,743,344	3,952,747	8,790,597	58,549,711	35,709,325	22,840,386
Jewelry, Luggage, Leather Goods Stores-4483	61,113,469	116,426,643	(55,313,175)	269,201,951	372,583,744	(103,381,793)
Jewelry Stores-44831	55,132,332	116,426,643	(61,294,311)	241,992,496	365,753,642	(123,761,146)
Luggage and Leather Goods Stores-44832	5,981,137	0	5,981,137	27,209,454	6,830,101	20,379,353
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book, Music Stores-451	62,660,320	20,306,230	42,354,090	278,919,031	147,822,182	131,096,849
Sportng Goods, Hobby, Musical Inst Stores-4511	52,680,784	18,730,444	33,950,339	236,123,075	119,448,401	116,674,674
Sporting Goods Stores-45111	27,687,828	11,204,770	16,483,057	125,993,390	61,795,958	64,197,431

Opportunity Gap - Retail Stores	10 Minute Travel Time			20 Minute Travel Time		
	(Consumer Expenditures)	(Retail Sales)	Leakage (Inflow)	(Consumer Expenditures)	(Retail Sales)	Leakage (Inflow)
Hobby, Toys and Games Stores-45112	14,964,794	3,829,298	11,135,496	66,625,614	35,183,834	31,441,780
Sew/Needlework/Piece Goods Stores-45113	3,988,353	410,574	3,577,779	17,560,742	6,130,668	11,430,074
Musical Instrument and Supplies Stores-45114	6,039,809	3,285,802	2,754,007	25,943,329	16,337,940	9,605,389
Book, Periodical and Music Stores-4512	9,979,536	1,575,786	8,403,750	42,795,956	28,373,781	14,422,175
Book Stores and News Dealers-45121	8,648,712	253,747	8,394,965	37,009,609	23,326,898	13,682,711
Book Stores-451211	7,793,303	253,747	7,539,555	33,145,312	22,792,964	10,352,347
News Dealers and Newsstands-451212	855,410	0	855,410	3,864,297	533,934	3,330,363
Prerecorded Tapes, CDs, Record Stores-45122	1,330,824	1,322,038	8,786	5,786,347	5,046,883	739,464
General Merchandise Stores-452	378,508,665	442,656,464	(64,147,799)	1,698,008,373	1,470,142,535	227,865,838
Department Stores Excl Leased Depts-4521	160,826,896	177,989,017	(17,162,121)	717,256,694	866,150,796	(148,894,102)
Other General Merchandise Stores-4529	217,681,769	264,667,446	(46,985,678)	980,751,679	603,991,739	376,759,940
Miscellaneous Store Retailers-453	91,348,802	60,564,032	30,784,770	408,685,277	300,164,940	108,520,337
Florists-4531	3,612,759	3,805,641	(192,882)	15,727,357	13,171,408	2,555,949
Office Supplies, Stationery, Gift Stores-4532	44,240,169	35,581,067	8,659,101	198,491,533	193,062,437	5,429,096
Office Supplies and Stationery Stores-45321	21,491,017	21,472,481	18,535	96,231,613	90,149,914	6,081,700
Gift, Novelty and Souvenir Stores-45322	22,749,152	14,108,586	8,640,566	102,259,920	102,912,523	(652,603)
Used Merchandise Stores-4533	7,325,423	2,687,304	4,638,119	32,568,201	13,900,234	18,667,966
Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers-4539	36,170,451	18,490,019	17,680,431	161,898,186	80,030,860	81,867,326
Foodservice and Drinking Places-722	397,155,378	378,297,606	18,857,772	1,761,890,588	1,626,310,308	135,580,279
Full-Service Restaurants-7221	180,256,466	140,103,521	40,152,945	798,295,596	720,032,709	78,262,887
Limited-Service Eating Places-7222	157,485,424	159,443,504	(1,958,081)	699,829,980	639,440,834	60,389,146
Special Foodservices-7223	43,524,956	73,889,640	(30,364,684)	193,487,950	237,502,121	(44,014,171)
Drinking Places -Alcoholic Beverages-7224	15,888,532	4,860,940	11,027,592	70,277,061	29,334,644	40,942,417

5.4 Retail Capture Scenario and Potential

The retail market potential for Cheshire combines many different facets of the data gathered above. Not simply a collection of numbers, retail markets depend on both quantitative and qualitative information. Moreover, just because there is retail market potential for a potential retail store type in no way ensures that success of that store type in the community. There are many reasons why a business might succeed or fail and the retail market is but one of those factors. However, this does provide a synopsis guide for the “best potential” retail opportunities in Cheshire.

The retail capture scenario accounts for the fact that retail leakage is still going to occur in almost every category listed above. The capture scenario attempts to zero in on the best potential retail uses and assign a capture rate that is conservative and realistic for Cheshire.

The capture scenario for Cheshire assumes that the community might be able to regain 20% of the outflow of retail sales in certain categories from the 10-minute drive time and 10% of the retail sales from the 20-minute drive time.

The scenario then assigns sales per square foot number based on research by Arnett Muldrow & Associates for typical store of the same type combined with information from the Urban Land Institute’s “Dollars and Cents of Shopping Centers.”

The table on the following page presents the key opportunities for Cheshire using this conservative estimate. Several of the key opportunities are expanded upon in the categories below:

- *Specialty Food Stores* is a potential category for Cheshire in that the community is served well by mainline grocers but could be augmented by the growing trend of independent locally owned stores that provide a particular specialty food item such as a butcher, seafood vender, and cheese shop.
- *Restaurants* – This category has very strong pent-up demand which confirms much of the discussion in the community about a lack of dining diversity. Restaurants are a “clustering” business type where more begets more. This does not mean that every restaurant will be successful of course and will require deft market research with any new restaurateur. The market data shows leakage overall for Cheshire \$19 million locally and \$135 million in a twenty-minute drive time. The greater region appears to be grossly underserved by restaurants (please bear in mind that New Haven will remain a dining cluster nearby).
- *Clothing Stores* – This store type which include family clothing noted above severely leaks sales in Cheshire. This type of leakage is to be expected in a market the size of the town but does present opportunities both for specialty retail in the core of the community and also in new development potentially at the interchange of route 10 and 691.
- *Miscellaneous Retail* – This is a broad and inclusive category that is geared toward the highly niche oriented retail that tends to cluster in a downtown setting. Specialty retail can be an opportunity in Cheshire provided it is clustered in a walkable, attractive district. Some specialty retail seen in other communities are oil and vinegar stores, running stores, niche gifts, and many more.

Retail Stores	10 Minute Travel Time	20 Minute Travel Time	20% of PTA Outflow	10% of STA Outflow	Potential Capture	Sales per Square Foot	Calculated Square Foot Capture
Selected Retail Categories Below							
Home Furnishing Stores	12,183,306	36,425,944	2,436,661	3,642,594	6,079,256	167.75	36,240
Electronics Stores	20,563,657	89,188,907	4,112,731	8,918,891	13,031,622	207.17	62,903
Grocer/Specialty Food Stores	106,754,148	141,167,616	21,350,830	14,116,762	35,467,591	371.79	95,397
Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores	5,240,032	28,574,359	1,048,006	2,857,436	3,905,442	164.60	23,727
Hobby, Toys and Games Stores	11,135,496	31,441,780	2,227,099	3,144,178	5,371,277	146.28	36,719
Sew/Needlework/Piece Goods Stores	3,577,779	11,430,074	715,556	1,143,007	1,858,563	261.54	7,106
Book Stores	7,539,555	10,352,347	1,507,911	1,035,235	2,543,146	161.16	15,780
General Merchandise Stores	(64,147,799)	227,865,838	(12,829,560)	22,786,584	9,957,024	133.90	74,362
Florists	(192,882)	2,555,949	(38,576)	255,595	217,018	149.82	1,449
Gift, Novelty and Souvenir Stores	8,640,566	(652,603)	1,728,113	(65,260)	1,662,853	168.55	9,866
Foodservice and Drinking Places	18,857,772	135,580,279	3,771,554	13,558,028	17,329,582	201.63	85,947

6 *Overall Observations*

- Cheshire is a market with a significant population that is affluent, skewed toward an older demographic, but showing potential of changing over time to attract a younger population base. However, the housing stock in Cheshire is almost exclusively single family detached housing which will continue to attract a more homogenous population base. The community has the opportunity to explore a variety of housing types.
- Input indicates that while the community is highly regarded for its professional government, its high quality schools, its great location, and general quality of life – the community lacks a center (a downtown) where people gather on a regular basis. This lack of a center is an obstacle to attracting younger families, clustered retail and restaurant development, and may serve as a hindrance to attracting bioscience firms and other upstart businesses that desire to be near walkable mixed use districts.
- Cheshire’s job migration pattern is unique. Most residents of Cheshire commute outside of the community to work while many residents from other communities commute into Cheshire to work. This creates a disconnect between the residential base of the community that views Cheshire as a place to live and the business community of Cheshire that sees it as a location that offers advantages for distribution, warehousing, and traditional farming in bedding plants.
- Cheshire has been successful at attracting economic development in the past and continues to be a location for consideration for new businesses. Much of the commercial/industrial development in Cheshire is not visible to residents or to potential investors. While it clusters on the north end of town, much of the industrial and office development is located off of main roads creating the image that Cheshire is more rural in nature than it really is. There is an opportunity to re-examine the Interchange area for development that includes more visible economic development opportunities that may occur in a phased manner.
- Input from community stakeholders Cheshire’s is affirmed by the market leakage numbers for retail trade in Cheshire. With over a third of a billion dollars in annual leakage within a 10-minute drive time of the core of Cheshire; the potential for retail and restaurant development is strong. It should be cultivated and promoted.
- It is imperative that Cheshire provide a clear way to communicate its economic development potential with potential investors in a clear and concise way, that the community continue to work to improve what has already been identified as a professional approach to development, and share the important role that Economic Development plays in Cheshire to the residents of the community who may not fully understand that continuing to grow the Grand List for the community is dependent on non-residential development in order to maintain reasonable taxes for local residents.

7 Recommendations

7.1 Introduction

This section presents eleven recommendations that revolve around four themes that address specific economic development in the Town of Cheshire. Each theme is explained based on the data and input gathered through the plan process. The recommendations are explained and where necessary are augmented by specific tactics that can be deployed to accomplish them.

Over and above these themes, however, is the overall goal of Economic Development for Cheshire, Connecticut:

“Cheshire, Connecticut will pursue a proactive economic development strategy to retain existing business, attract new business, and enhance the quality of life for the community while maintaining a fiscally sound community.”

In achieving this goal Cheshire will work toward the following:

- Developing the North End: Cheshire’s Economic Development Centerpiece.
- Telling the Story: Marketing Cheshire’s Economic Development Opportunities
- Building a Sense of Place: West Main Street as Cheshire’s Walkable Commercial District
- Fostering the Environment: Ensuring Proactive Policies to Encourage Economic Development

7.2 Developing the North End: Cheshire’s Economic Development Centerpiece

The north end of Cheshire is clearly the employment center of the community. As the home of traditional greenhouse and farming facilities, major warehousing and distribution centers, and office space; this area represents potential for ongoing investment because of its access to the Route 10 interchange with Interstate 691.

This area has long been considered one of the regions premier locations for additional development as the interchange is one of the few in the entire region with undeveloped property on all four corners along with connection to two major interstate routes. In addition to the interchange itself, frontage along Route 10 and development parcels in existing business parks represent strong potential for ongoing investment.

Ultimately, this area will continue to be the economic engine that fuels the Grand List for Cheshire in order to stabilize the tax base, provide regional employment, and balance the land uses in the community.

7.2.1 Recommendation: Commission a Master Vision Plan for the Interchange Properties

While many prior plans have been completed for the northwest corner of the Route 10 and Interstate 691 interchange, economic circumstances have intervened to prevent two major retail developments from coming to fruition in this area. Retail development has changed dramatically since the 2008 recession and while there is pent up demand for retail development in Cheshire, it is unlikely that a regional or super-regional center will develop on the northwest corner.

There are several options for developing the interchange site that will not be dependent on retail as a major component. A plan should consider the option such as a phased development that not only includes the northwest corner but also inholdings in the northeast corner as well. Ultimately, the southern portion of the interchange will become ripe for development as ownership interests see the value of developing these sites as well.

Why? Without a vision plan for the area, development of the Interchange Property puts the Town of Cheshire in the position of having to react to development proposals rather than be proactive about the potential for the site.

Who? Town Staff/Economic Development Commission/Planning Commission

Tactics:

- Complete a vision plan for the site that looks at land uses, phasing strategies, public investment required, and development potential return on investment.
- Create illustrative drawings that can clearly communicate the potential to the public and investors.
- Include options in the plan that may have a different balance of uses that could include but not be limited to: office development (signature/medical/headquarters), research and development park, hotel(s), retail, mixed use residential.
- Consider additional permitted uses such as warehouse and distribution.
- Consider development of a corporate/industrial park.
- Reach an understanding with the property owners relative to the plan.
- Revise cost estimates for utility service for the site in 2017 numbers and explore funding options.

7.2.2 Recommendation: Develop a Floating Zoning District Over the North End

A Floating Zoning is a tool authorized in the State of Connecticut that allows local governments to create a zone that does not have a geographic relationship when it is adopted. Within the zone are parameters that allow for a mixture of uses that would occur as a result of a plan presented by a developer. The tool mitigates the onerous process of a full rezoning while still allowing local control over the master plan for the site along with public input. The north end of the Town of Cheshire is ideally suited for such a floating zone as the current industrial zoning classification limits the kind of development that may take place without a full rezoning.

The purpose of adding a floating zone is to create flexibility without sacrificing staff and community input. In doing so, the Town has a direct role in the development, and can work with a developer to create a mutually beneficial project.

Why? The existing zoning on the north end of the Town of Cheshire limits the potential for development in the area without a full rezoning process which may inhibit future investment from occurring in a timely manner.

Who? Town Staff/Planning Commission

Tactics:

- Amend the zoning regulations with the appropriate language.
- Conduct a public hearing to evaluate the language and seek input.
- Promote the floating zone as an option to be used in the north end of the Town.

7.3 Telling the Story: Marketing Cheshire's Economic Development Opportunities

Cheshire is in the unique position of being a community that has the enviable position of being a high quality place to live in close proximity to the regional job market while also being an economic development center for the region as well.

With that said, Cheshire's residential population primarily leaves to the community to work while other workers from the region come into the Town of Cheshire to work each day. This disconnect – not often found in a community may result in confusion about the role of economic development in stabilizing the Grand List for the town and protecting residents from a tax burden to maintain the services to which they have become accustomed.

Additionally, the economic development activity in Cheshire is located in places where it may remain “under the radar” of many who look at economic development sites and locations. The community has a wealth of buildings and sites for future development. The history of the community as a bedding plant and farming town remains the primary identity for the community. This is still a vital industry for Cheshire and will remain so in the future. There is an opportunity, however to market Cheshire as a center of economic development activity in Central Connecticut.

7.3.1 Recommendation: Prepare an Easy to Understand Tax Implication Table for Commercial/Industrial/Office Development On the Residential Tax Base.

While the staff, elected officials, and many members of Cheshire's boards and commissions may have a clear understanding of the tax implications for supporting economic development, many residents of the community may not fully understand how their tax burden is relieved by the retail, service, office, and industrial uses in the Town.

Moreover, as economic development continues and the tax burden continues to shift, local officials (and citizens) would be well served to have a baseline analysis of the impact that economic development activity has so that when growth occurs ongoing analysis of the tax relief to the resident can be clearly understood. This is especially helpful when vetting new projects, evaluating incentives, and encouraging investment.

The Town of Cheshire should create an annual Economic Development Impact Report that can be distributed to citizens and stakeholders in the community.

Why? Having clearly articulated data about the impact of economic development on the residential tax base for the Town of Cheshire helps clarify the role of non-residential investment in the community in supporting the services residents have come to expect.

Who? Town Staff/Economic Development Commission

Tactics:

- Evaluate the percentage of Grand List revenue from non-residential development in Cheshire.
- Compare that revenue to the cost of services to non-residential development.
- Perform a similar analysis for residential development that looks at the costs and benefits of residential development in the community.
- Publish an annual report that can be distributed online or in print.
- Use the baseline data to provide updates on an annual basis or to evaluate development proposals for the benefit to the tax base.

7.3.2 Recommendation: *Develop a clear economic development marketing package for Cheshire.*

Cheshire has a significant opportunity to showcase the diverse business community that exists in the Town while also promoting future investment with a thorough marketing package for the community. The marketing package should contemplate a marketing message for the Town that is clear, concise, and direct. The message should resonate with both businesses and with residents to articulate the kind of economic development that is supportable in the community.

Ideally, a marketing package should be a partnership between the Town of Cheshire and the Chamber of Commerce so that the messaging is consistent and applicable for businesses large and small.

Why? Most communities with economic development programs have a clear marketing program that succinctly explains the opportunities for investment in the community. Currently, Cheshire does not have a clear marketing package to deliver to investors.

Who? Economic Development Commission, Chamber of Commerce, Real Estate Community

Tactics:

- Enhance the single landing page for Cheshire Economic Development to provide quick links to site information, permitting, and other relevant material (as part of new Town website).
- Include a community profile.
- Showcase available sites and buildings in partnership with local commercial brokers.
- Consider a new brand identity for economic development in Cheshire (without giving up the “Bedding Plant Capital” tagline that is used locally)

- Consider partnership with Chamber to tell individual business stories in order to showcase them to residents.
- Review Town incentive package to be competitive with nearby communities.

7.4 Building a Sense of Place: West Main Street as Cheshire’s Walkable Commercial District

One of the most often cited challenges for Cheshire is its lack of a clear, walkable, district where shops and restaurants cluster like many traditional downtowns. The Town Green is an important symbolic center of the community and the adjacent governmental and institutions make this an important gathering place for residents. However, this location does not offer a great deal of visible retail/restaurant sites that could be easily used as a walking district. The busy nature of Route 10 hampers the ability for this to be a walking district as well.

West Main Street has recently undergone improvements that have enhanced the pedestrian nature of the district. Moreover, West Main Street is bisected by the new Cheshire Trail and is also home to the unique and historic Ball and Socket Plant now envisioned as a multi-use center for the arts.

With these improvements coupled with the potential for vacant and underutilized sites within the district, West Main Street represents the single most important location for Cheshire to create an authentic “downtown” district that is walkable, accessible, and ripe for investment.

Note: This theme does not mean that the Town Green portion of Cheshire should be neglected, but rather, it should continue to thrive as a civic, business, and traditional center for the community.

7.4.1 Recommendation: Develop a Concept Plan for West Main Street Redevelopment

A conceptual master plan for the West Main Street area should be completed that would evaluate existing buildings stock, sites for infill development, the incorporation and development of the Ball and Socket plant, and pedestrian links to adjacent neighborhoods. The plan should have extensive stakeholder involvement, result in a clear phased vision for ongoing private investment in the district that will build off of the recently completed public sector streetscape improvements. The plan should include ways for the Town and its partners to encourage investment in the area including public private partnerships, façade improvement programs, and other time tested techniques.

Why? The public sector improvements to West Main Street present an opportunity for substantial correlative private sector investment. A master plan for that investment would stimulate investment, provide a vision for the district, and ultimately set the stage for future investment.

Who? Economic Development Commission, Planning Commission, Private Sector

Tactics:

- Inventory properties in the West Main Street District.

- Consult with property owners about their properties.
- Provide “before and after” renderings of key properties.
- Examine parking resources to serve a redeveloped district.
- Include within the plan a detailed implementation strategy.
- Contemplate a West Main Street association to assist with redevelopment.
- Contact the Connecticut Main Street program for guidance and assistance.
- Explore incentive programs such as a façade improvement program for the area.

7.4.2 Recommendation: Consider a co-working space for those who may telecommute.

Coworking spaces have moved from what some might consider a fad into a full-blown national trend with over 80% growth in available spaces during the past two years. According to the Commercial Real Estate Development Association report: Between 2005 and 2014 the number of coworking spaces has gone from 1 to 781. Deskmag monitors coworking spaces nationally and cites that 60% of existing coworking spaces will expand in 2015 and that 4.5 new coworking spaces are being created each day and 245 people become members globally each day.

Coworking Spaces provide locations for individuals or small companies to work in a shared environment. Companies can interact with one another in informal ways, form collaborations, or simply share in the creative atmosphere of the space. Coworking spaces may host events and activities, but rarely provide formal business coaching.

For Cheshire, the West Main Street area represents an excellent location for a potential coworking space. Such spaces take very little upfit to make them function but the key would be flexible space for many office type configurations and excellent internet access. The space could take on multiple partnerships, so the community should be prepared to engage in a discussion with partners such as institutions of higher education on the endeavor. Ultimately the goal is to have flexible space both for entrepreneurs as well as space for those who may live in Cheshire, commute to New York periodically, and need local space to work.

Most importantly, coworking spaces are attractive to young professionals, spouses of those with full time positioned based careers, and active empty nesters pursuing the next phase of their career. The West Main Street area is ideally suited for such a space but this does not preclude other locations from being considered provided they are within walking distance of amenities such as restaurants, shops, and residential uses.

Why? Coworking space would provide an alternative space that could accommodate home based businesses, commuters, entrepreneurs, and those pursuing a second career. These spaces are becoming “incubators” for small businesses who want to be in a unique location.

Who? Economic Development Commission, Chamber of Commerce, Institutions of Higher Education

Tactics:

- Examine existing coworking spaces in nearby communities. The Grove in New Haven and reSET in Hartford are nearby examples that are worthy of a visit.

- Explore locations in Cheshire for a facility (consider a portion of the Ball and Socket facility)
- Examine business plans for a facility.
- Inventory home based businesses to evaluate potential tenants.
- Host a community discussion on creating a coworking space to determine local interest.
- Consider existing coworking spaces as partners for expansion into Cheshire.

7.4.3 Recommendation: Take a Proactive Role in the Mixed Use Redevelopment of the Ball and Socket Property

The Ball and Socket property is one of the most unique properties in Cheshire. It presents an excellent opportunity to explore renovation of an historic building into a mixture of uses that will enhance the cultural amenities of Cheshire, reinforce an emerging center of independent shopping and dining in the West Main Street area, and create a dynamic gathering place for the town and the greater area.

The Ball and Socket Arts group has already embarked on extensive research on this site including a planning study that evaluates the feasibility of reusing the site, explores peer models, and identifies potential uses. This study was funded through a partnership with the Town of Cheshire, the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation, and the Community Investment Act through the Department of Economic and Community Development. The site does have environmental issues that will need to be mitigated which represent the biggest challenge to its redevelopment.

The study identifies that best practices include having a strong capital campaign and operating budget that is dependent not solely on donors but also on revenue generation within the facility itself. Studio space, coworking, restaurant space, and rental space for events and activities are all identified as potential uses. Ultimately, the success of the Ball and Socket Arts project will be dependent on continuing partnership between the Town of Cheshire, the Ball and Socket Arts group, the state of Connecticut and private sector partners.

Why? The Ball and Socket plan presents a singular opportunity for a mixed use arts and cultural center for Cheshire that will enhance its standing as a place to live, work, and invest. It will create spaces for entrepreneurs while fostering pride of place and providing a needed venue for cultural activities in Cheshire.

Who? Ball and Socket Arts, The Town of Cheshire, Economic Development Commission, State of Connecticut, private sector investors.

Tactics:

- Continue dialogue between the Town of Cheshire and Ball and Socket Arts.
- Identify funding techniques to mitigate environmental issues.
- Ensure that private sector revenue streams are included in the tenant mix for the facility.
- Ensure ongoing operational budget to support the renovation.

7.5 Fostering the Environment: Ensuring Proactive Policies to Encourage Economic Development

Throughout the interview process, many stakeholders expressed enthusiasm about the proactive approach toward economic development that the Town of Cheshire is taking. Moreover, interviewees cited the professionalism of Town staff and commitment to a transparent process that is demanding yet fair.

Even within organizations with proactive initiatives, growing partnerships, and local enthusiasm, there is always room to explore more streamlined ways to enhance economic development processes, new incentives to contemplate taking advantage of, and organizational strategies that will enhance economic growth.

Cheshire should explore continuous improvement to its economic development program to build on the successes it has already enjoyed.

7.5.1 Recommendation: Continue to examine regulatory framework at the local level.

The Town of Cheshire is in the process of making some significant changes to policy that will encourage more flexibility in development. The first is a clarification of the industrial zoning classification that eliminates confusion between two similar zones that occur on the north end of town. The second is a relaxation of the lot coverage requirements to allow for more development flexibility for future investment.

These improvements will result in a more streamlined process for applicants. The Town staff, Planning Commission, and Economic Development Commission should join together to evaluate other potential regulatory changes that might continue to encourage economic development while maintaining the high level of development quality expected in the Town of Cheshire.

Why? Zoning, building, and development regulations play an important role in preserving town character and encouraging quality development. These regulations should be constantly under review to ensure they are creating the desired outcomes while encouraging quality investment.

Who? Town Staff, Planning Commission, Economic Development Commission

Tactics:

- Host an informal joint meeting of the Planning Commission and the Economic Development Commission to discuss issues and share goals.
- Examine regulations that may be causing delays or inhibiting development to see if there may be appropriate remedies.
- Clearly articulate local regulatory processes to applicants (and be clear what requirements occur at the local versus the state level).

7.5.2 Recommendation: Consider an Economic Development Authority for Cheshire

Chapter 130 section 8 of Connecticut state statutes allows for the creation of a Redevelopment Agency by any local government in the state. A Redevelopment Agency has many powers that can be employed to participate in economic development, redevelopment, and public private partnerships.

Redevelopment Agencies are “creatures” of the local government and exist at the pleasure of the local governing body. However, they can operate at arms length from the typical political processes and are able to hold land, enter into agreements with private developers, and participate in projects.

As Cheshire examines its Town Charter, there may be an opportunity to create an Economic Development authority under the state statute.

Why? An Economic Development Authority would provide the Town of Cheshire a flexible tool under state statute that could work as an intermediary to facilitate public/private partnerships in future development in the community.

Who? Cheshire Town Council, Charter Revision Committee, Planning and Zoning Commission, and EDC

Tactics:

- Review state statute.
- Examine peer authorities in Connecticut.
- Make a go/no go decision about creating an authority.
- If the decision is a go, explore powers and limitations of such a body.
- Consider vesting the Economic Development Commission with the status of serving as the Authority board if desired.

7.5.3 Recommendation: Examine Tax Increment Financing as a Tool for Economic Development

P.A. 15-57: An Act Establishing Tax Increment Financing Districts was adopted by the state in October of 2015. The revised law allows Connecticut municipalities the ability to create Tax Increment Financing districts that capture incremental revenue from development and redevelopment projects and use the revenue for improvements that will facilitate development within a district.

Cheshire has two locations that may be prime for Tax Increment Financing Districts. The first is the interchange area which could create a rather robust district if new investment takes place. The second is the West Main Street area where tax increment financing may allow for improvements and support in this district as well.

Connecticut statute is generous in its powers allowing for not only infrastructure improvement, but also revolving funds, investment funds, equipment for training, and other programs.

As this is new legislation in the state, Cheshire should explore this option as a way to help finance improvements in the Town that would facilitate new investment.

Why? Tax Increment Financing is a time tested tool in many states for economic development projects. Connecticut has now passed legislation that clarifies Tax Increment Financing for municipalities and allows for its use in a much easier way.

Who? Economic Development Commission, Town Staff.

Tactics:

- Review tax increment statute.
- Determine district(s) where the benefits of TIF may be useful.
- Use plans cited elsewhere in this report as basis for a TIF plan for the district(s).

7.5.4 Recommendation: Continue Economic Development Retention Efforts

While recruitment, enhancing the climate, and proactive development efforts are critical to the success of any economic development program. Retention and expansion of existing businesses remains paramount for the success of a community.

Cheshire is fortunate to have many longstanding businesses and industry leaders who have made significant contributions to the business community and over time to the Grand List of the Town of Cheshire. Through a partnership between the Economic Development Commission, the staff of the Town of Cheshire, and the Chamber of commerce, ongoing efforts should be made to continue working with existing businesses to see that they expand, succeed, and thrive.

Why? Business retention and expansion represent a critical tool in economic development as it recognizes the commitment and investment of existing businesses in a place.

Who? Economic Development Commission, Town Staff, Chamber of Commerce

Tactics:

- Continue to conduct surveys with existing businesses.
- Continue to host interviews and roundtable sessions with existing businesses.
- Recognize businesses through a partnership with the Chamber of Commerce and the EDC through the Businesses Appreciation Day Program.
- Review town incentive program to explore local retention/expansion assistance.

8 Implementation Strategy and Action Plan

In order for this plan to be successful, it must have specific responsibilities and a consensus as to how those responsibilities will be implemented. Several points must be considered:

- The Town of Cheshire, the Cheshire Economic Development Commission, the Cheshire Chamber of Commerce, and many other partners (including the private sector) will ultimately play a critical role in the implementation of the plan. Ongoing communication among groups will be essential to the success of the plan.
- This plan is very forward thinking and no one entity can or should carry the workload by itself. The plan outlines overall recommendations that should be augmented with very specific actions, strategies, and realistic timeframes. Ongoing discussions should occur to assign and distribute responsibilities to appropriate partners.
- All of these are recommendations for action and they will not happen without the cooperation of many people. The recommendations are also subject to change as new circumstances arise. Just because a recommendation is made in this report, does not mean that it is etched in stone or that it can't be modified, changed, or eliminated. Moreover, opportunities may present themselves that this plan never anticipated. These should always be pursued provided they fit in the broad goals of enhance the Town of Cheshire.
- An Economic Development Summit should be held every year to evaluate the progress of this effort and share it with partner stakeholders and the public. The Economic Development summit would celebrate new businesses, recognize investment, outline plans for the future, and prepare the community for next steps.

The attached Strategy Board summarizes all of the projects and recommendations included in the plan. The board is designed as working document for benchmarking and ongoing evaluation of the implementation process. Each recommendation that is presented in brief on the strategy board is supported in recommendations above.

8.1 Strategies and Visions

Each of the four themes are outlined in the strategy board. It is important to remember the ultimate marketing and development theme that each recommendation supports. Of course, each of these themes is linked with one another, but failure to achieve any one goal does not negate the ability to achieve others.

8.2 Time Frames – A Multi-Year Process

The tactics are divided into three time frames. The first series of projects are short term projects that should begin immediately. For the most part, these are simple projects that will be highly visible, have significant impact and should be completed within the first year after the plan is adopted. The second set of projects is labeled “next steps.” Some of these are more advanced projects, while others are continuations of projects that began during the demonstration period. The next step projects should be completed within the second and third year of the plan. The final steps are long term and forward thinking. They may evolve into shorter term projects as opportunities present themselves.

The strategy board and its recommendations represent a “living document.” As time goes by and implementation proceeds, some priorities will shift while other ones will arise. The implementation strategy board should be evaluated periodically, no less than annually. This evaluation process will allow for finished tasks to be indicated on the board, for responsibilities to be assigned to or shifted between parties, and for time frames to be adjusted for individual projects.

Cheshire is poised for ongoing economic development success dependent on continued partnerships among many different groups. It is only through this continued spirit of partnership and commitment to a vision that the recommendations in this study can be successful. Fortunately, Cheshire is poised to succeed in these efforts as it has in so many others.

Town of Cheshire Economic Development Strategy

Strategies	Short 3-6 Months	Med. 6 Months-1 Year	Long 1-5 Years	Goal
Developing the North End: Cheshire's Economic Centerpiece	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Commission a vision plan for the Interchange properties. ▪ Revise estimates for utility service to the northwest corner of the interchange site. ▪ Amend the zoning code to consider different uses at the interchange. ▪ Explore floating zones in other communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop illustrative drawings that clearly communicate potential development options for the Interchange site. ▪ Promote floating zone to recruit investment to the north side. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue to develop the north end with a mixture of uses that contribute to the grand list. ▪ Develop the northwest corner in phases as a mixed use center with office, hotel, retail, and market rate dense housing. 	The North End of Cheshire will thrive as the economic engine that fuels the grand list for Cheshire in order to stabilize the tax base, provide regional employment, and balance the land uses in the community.
Telling the Story: Marketing Cheshire's Economic Development Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evaluate the grand list to determine the percentage derived from non-residential uses. ▪ Compare costs with residential uses. ▪ Create a single web page for Cheshire Economic Development. ▪ Partner with the Chamber to showcase individual businesses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Publish an annual report on the tax base and economic development. ▪ Use baseline data to update the information yearly. ▪ Work with local brokers to showcase available properties. ▪ Consider a branding program for Cheshire. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue to publish annual report tracking economic development. 	Market Cheshire as a center of economic development opportunity in Central Connecticut.
Building a Sense of Place: West Main Street as Cheshire's Walkable Commercial District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inventory properties in the West Main Street District. ▪ Consult with property owners about their properties. ▪ Contact the Connecticut Main Street Center for assistance. ▪ Explore existing coworking spaces in the region. ▪ Discuss partnership with universities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide before and after renderings of key properties. ▪ Explore parking resources to serve the district. ▪ Create a West Main Street association. ▪ Explore locations for coworking space in West Main area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Launch coworking space in the West End (or other area) ▪ Revitalize the Ball and Socket plant into a mixed use art, retail, and restaurant district. 	West Main Street will emerge as the single most important location for Cheshire to create an authentic “downtown” district that is walkable, accessible, and ripe for investment.
Fostering the Environment: Ensuring Proactive Policies to Encourage Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Host informal meeting of commissions. ▪ Examine regulations that may be causing delays or inhibiting development. ▪ Clearly articulate local regulatory processes to applicants. ▪ Explore Development Authority for Cheshire. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create development authority for Cheshire. ▪ Review tax increment statute. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implement tax increment financing district. 	Partners will join together to evaluate potential regulatory changes that might continue to encourage economic development while maintaining the high level of development quality expected in the Town of Cheshire.