Striking the Right Balance in Land Use and Economic Development

Center for Land Use Education and Research Webinar Series

April 28, 2021
1:00 – 2:00 pm
ABOUT THE SPEAKERS

Courtney Hendricson
Vice President of Partnerships, AdvanceCT

• Courtney has 20 years of experience as a local economic developer with expertise in commercial real estate and business retention and attraction.
• She is passionate about local government and its direct impact on residents and business.
• She oversees AdvanceCT’s Partnerships Team by fortifying relationships within Connecticut’s economic development community and ensuring all state and local stakeholders are working collaboratively to solve business issues.

Kristen Gorski
Economic Development Coordinator, Town of West Hartford

• Kristen provides outreach to enhance the relationship between the Town of West Hartford and local businesses.
• She is responsible for business retention and expansion, new business attraction, small business and entrepreneurial support, and commercial and multi-family development.
• She is a liaison between the Town and its businesses and non-profit organizations as well as the real estate and development community.

Laura Brown, CEcD
Community & Economic Development Educator, UConn Extension

• Laura’s work focuses on asset-based community and economic development, regionalism, sustainability, active transportation, and economic development education with a focus on equity and justice.
• Recent projects include the Connecticut Trail Census project, CT Trail Finder, the First Impressions Program and the Best Practices in Economic Development and Land Use Committee.
The land on which conduct our programs is the territory of the Sequin including Quinnipiac and Tunxis, Matabesec, Mohegan, Mashantucket Pequot, Eastern Pequot, Schaghticoke, Golden Hill Paugussett, Nipmuc, and Lenape Peoples, who have stewarded this land throughout the generations. We thank them for their strength and resilience in protecting this land, and aspire to uphold our responsibilities according to their example.

https://native-land.ca/
A not-for-profit membership organization committed to advancing the practice and process of economic development in Connecticut.

Members include:

➔ Municipal economic development professionals, practitioners and local economic development commissioners
➔ State economic development professionals
➔ Regional economic development practitioners
➔ Private sector businesses
➔ Educators from colleges and universities

www.cedas.org
• Independent, private nonprofit focused on economic development
• Collaboration between, and funded by, the State of CT and the private sector
• Focus: business engagement, retention, and recruitment
• Repurposed mission to jumpstart economic growth and job creation in CT
• Fee-based membership organization 501(c)(6) with a 501(c)(3) foundation
GOALS FOR THIS SESSION

How can I balance planning and economic development in my community?

How can I encourage and attract the appropriate type and amount of non-residential development for my community?

What tools are available to help me find the balance between planning and economic development?
WHAT DOES ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT LOOK LIKE FOR MY COMMUNITY?

Four Key Functions

- Business Retention
- Business Expansion
- Business Recruitment
- Business Creation

KEY CONCEPTS:
- Not one size fits all
- Transactional versus transformational
WHAT ARE COMPANIES REALLy LOOKING FOR IN A COMMUNITY?

- Location
- Suitable real estate
- Predictable and consistent land use process
- Skilled employees
- Transit and housing access
- Incentives?
- Industry sector needs vary
WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND THE REGULATORY PROCESS?
HOW DO I KNOW IF MY COMMUNITY IS READY FOR A DESIRED DEVELOPMENT PROJECT?

- What is my community’s vision for economic development?
- Does the land use regulatory process support this vision?
- Do I know my community’s real estate opportunities?
- Do I know what resources are available to support this project?
WHEN AND HOW SHOULD MY COMMUNITY SAY NO TO A DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL?

Does it align with the community’s vision for economic development?

Is the site being proposed a good fit?

Is there political support for the project?

KEY CONCEPTS:
- Business-friendly ≠ no regulation
- Over-communicate with the applicant
Best Practices in Economic Development and Land Use

CLEAR Webinar - April 28, 2021
Laura Brown - University of Connecticut Extension Community & Economic Development Educator, Kristen Gorski, President, Connecticut Economic Development Association & Economic Development Coordinator, West Hartford, CT
PROGRAM GOALS

Improve the overall quality of economic development services by creating process standards;

Drive communities to pursue excellence in land use and economic development by recognizing communities with best practices

Accelerate sharing of best practices among community decision-makers

More transparent, efficient, community engaged economic development
Communities review criteria and do a community scan

Communities contact and coordinate with relevant departments/committees

Communities complete an application including documentation and submit a PDF

Applications reviewed by team of peers

Awards issued
Communities submit narrative and images demonstrating how they meet criteria

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<tr>
<th>POINTS BREAKDOWN</th>
<th>TOTAL POINTS</th>
<th>PERCENT OF TOTAL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presentation of Application</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>28%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coordination &amp; Collaboration</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>24%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organizational Capacity &amp; Strategy</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>28%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Policies and Programs</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>14%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Choice</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minimum points required to qualify for award in 2019 = 70</strong></td>
<td>70</td>
<td>28%</td>
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COMMUNICATIONS

Offers pre-application meetings
Web page for planning & economic development
Uses social media to communicate with stakeholders
Land use regulations are available online
Communicates within 72 hours
GIS land use and parcel information online
Shares applications and renderings online
Offers online permitting that allows for electronic signatures
Coordinates meetings between relevant municipal departments

Actively participates in regional economic development initiatives

Publishes a check list demonstrating required permit

Works collaboratively with partners

Encourages applicants to conduct community and neighborhood meetings

Offers coordinated inspections

Hosts interdepartmental staff meetings
ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY & STRATEGY

- Has a point person dedicated to economic development
- Has a mission statement for economic development
- Ongoing training/professional development for economic development and land use staff
- Has completed a standardized economic development self-assessment
- Asks applicants to provide feedback on the application process
- Reviews zoning and land use regulations at minimum every five years
- Has an economic development strategic plan
Has municipal incentive policies posted
Publishes design and signage guidelines
Has a formal business retention and expansion plan
Zoning codes provide reliability, predictability and transparency
Demonstrates movement towards administrative review
Other innovative and creative ideas not previously accounted for in other criteria
INNOVATIVE IDEAS
Student internships in public policy and economics

◆ Jade Hardrick (2020)
◆ Kevin Fitzgerald (2019)

Four community case studies

Development of the annotated tool library with descriptions and resources at communities.extension.uconn.edu/bestpractices/
BEST PRACTICES IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & LAND USE COMMUNITY TOOL-BOX

This program is intended to drive communities to pursue excellence in land use and economic development practices and to recognize the communities that have established best practices. Planners and economic developers use this program to engage community stakeholders in discussions about how to achieve higher standards and develop creative, community-specific ways to implement them. The three goals of this program are to: accelerate the sharing of best practices across the State of Connecticut; improve the overall quality of economic development services at the local level; and ultimately, improved economic development in Connecticut. This guide provides tools and resources for communities interested in implementing best practices criteria.

https://guides.lib.uconn.edu/EDLUMain
## 2021 ACCREDITATION TIMELINE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Range</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>MAY – OCT, 2021</td>
<td>Education, training &amp; webinars</td>
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<tr>
<td>NOVEMBER, 2021</td>
<td>Applications open</td>
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<tr>
<td>JANUARY, 2022</td>
<td>Application period closes</td>
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<tr>
<td>FEBRUARY, 2022</td>
<td>Application reviews</td>
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<tr>
<td>MARCH, 2022</td>
<td>Award announcements</td>
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BEST PRACTICES COMMITTEE

- Review and update program criteria and application guidelines
- Make program policy decisions
- Cultivate program partnerships
- Market and conduct outreach
- Serve as peer reviewers for applications

Laura Brown - Co-Chair
Kimberly Parsons-Whitaker
- Co-Chair
Garrett Sheehan
Paige Bronk
Kevin Fitzgerald
Rich LoPresti
Kristen Gorski
Kelly Buck
Mark Waterhouse
Rebecca Nolan
Courtney Hendricson
Mike Andreana
Shelly Saczynski
Donald Poland
Michael Piscitelli
Lindy Lee Gold
Sadie Colcord
Caitlin Styrczula
2019 PILOT PROGRAM

Implemented through $6,000 sponsorship

24 communities accredited in 2019

Program received bronze award for Innovative Programs and Initiatives by International Economic Development Council
When asked if they had made any changes as a result of participating, 73% indicated they had and improvements included improving systems for accepting applications and permits fully online, starting a business visitation program, and updating our land use permit flow chart to better guide the applicants through the permitting process.

“I believe it is important to share knowledge and best practices amongst communities to elevate the practice of economic development.”

“We welcome the opportunity to evaluate our practices as a municipality. We hope that the receipt of this accreditation can be leveraged to obtain grants...that will support and improve our town.”

Best Practices in Land Use and Economic Development Short-term Program Evaluation, Conducted October 2019, n=16,
Municipal economic developers have been tapped out - Potential need for re-tooling after COVID

Long-term evaluation needed

Need for administrative support - Engagement of Connecticut Conference of Municipalities

Additional education programs around criteria
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