



# THE ROUTE 6 HOP RIVER CORRIDOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND MASTER PLAN STUDY



## VOLUME 1 - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Edith G. Prague, State Senator  
Joan Lewis, State Representative  
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Development



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**State of Connecticut Office of Policy and Management**

**State of Connecticut Department of Transportation**

**Capital Region Council of Governments**

**Windham Region Council of Governments**

**Metro-Hartford Alliance**

**Town of Bolton**

**Board of Selectmen**

**Planning and Zoning Commission**

**Economic Development Commission**

**Town of Coventry**

**Town Council**

**Planning and Zoning Commission**

**Economic Development Commission**

**Town of Andover**

**Board of Selectmen**

**Planning and Zoning Commission**

**Economic Development Commission**

**Town of Columbia**

**Board of Selectmen**

**Planning and Zoning Commission**

**Economic Development Commission**

**Members of the Public and Residents who were participants  
at the Public Meetings**

**Business Owners along the Corridor**



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Carol Polsky  
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Donna Caliskan  
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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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This is the Executive Summary of the Route 6 Hop River Corridor Economic Development Strategy and Master Plan (Master Plan) prepared for the Route 6 Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) in October 2010. This report is the completion of over 15 months of study to develop a new vision for the 12.4+ mile long Route 6 Hop River Corridor through the Towns of Bolton, Coventry, Andover and Columbia, Connecticut (Towns from west to east along the corridor) as Route 6 and Route 66 East in the east central portion of the State of Connecticut as shown on Exhibits ES-1 and ES-2.

The Master Plan was developed with the cooperation of the four towns (Bolton, Coventry, Andover, and Columbia), significant public input, review and input from the four Planning and Zoning Commissions, Economic Development Commissions and governing Boards (Board of Selectmen from Bolton, Andover and Columbia and Town Council from Coventry). The work by these four towns in a cooperative planning project represents an extraordinary effort that may be one of the first in the State of Connecticut. The Route 6 Hop River Corridor Master Plan presents a new vision for a roadway that has a long history of negative attitudes, safety issues and contentious town policies. This project has required the participating towns to join together to find common ground and actively work together to find a positive vision which, hopefully, will spark and drive economic development along this neglected economic resource. One of the difficulties faced during this collaborative effort is that the roadway serves a different purpose in each of the Towns. In Bolton, Route 6 has been a secondary commercial corridor to Route 44. In Columbia, Route 6 / Route 66 East represents the primary commercial area and source of employment and revenue for the Town. In Andover, Route 6 travels through the beginning of the historic core and contains many of the Town's civic focal points (library, church, and post office) as well as being the commercial corridor for the Town. In Coventry, Route 6 is the less important cousin to Route 44 in the northern part of the Town. But the limited area on the Corridor which is in Coventry contains one of the largest developable parcels in the Corridor. For this reason, all four Towns are considered to be equal partners in this endeavor and have worked together to prepare this Master Plan.

The Master Plan consists of four volumes:

- Volume 1 - Executive Summary
- Volume 2 - Report Chapters 1 - 11
- Volume 3 - Report Chapters 12 - 23
- Volume 4 - Appendices



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This Executive Summary includes the major topics, conclusions, and maps from the main body of the Master Plan Report but does not include the supporting explanations, maps, and figures. The reader is directed to the other three volumes for a substantive amount and breadth of information. In addition, the Consultant Team compiled a large number of photographs of the corridor and uses and activities which occurred during the study. These are included throughout the report text.

The maps and figures contained in this Executive Summary follows the text as Exhibits.

## **HISTORY OF THE ROUTE 6 REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL**

The Route 6 Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) was formed in 2005 under a Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Towns of Bolton, Coventry, Andover, and Columbia, Connecticut which is included in the Appendix. According to the agreement between the Towns of Bolton, Coventry, Andover, and Columbia, Connecticut (the Four Towns), the charge of the REDC was to:

1. *Create a unified vision for the Route 6 Corridor*
2. *Make recommendations to Member Towns for appropriate economic development within the Route 6 Corridor.*
3. *Make recommendations to Member Towns for coordinated zoning within the Route 6 Corridor.*
4. *Market properties within the Route 6 Corridor through literature, web sites, and other appropriate media.*
5. *Apply for grants where appropriate or recommend grants to Member Towns.*



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In the early 2000s, the State of Connecticut Department of Transportation made a determination that the Route 6 Expressway (connecting the existing highway section of Route 6 in Columbia directly to I-384 in Bolton) was no longer a viable project and was dropped from the list of state projects.

Because of this, the future nature of the Route 6 Corridor would be limited to the existing pavement and right of way of Route 6 and Route 66 East as it travels through Bolton, Coventry, Andover, and Columbia, Connecticut. The existing 12.4+ mile road corridor (named in this report – The Route 6 Hop River Corridor), extending from Route 6 in Bolton to Route 66 at the Windham Town line, would not see significant change. The existing Route 6 Hop River Corridor was to remain an active transportation corridor and would not be supplemented with an Expressway. Coincidentally, the Four Towns individually determined that the Route 6 Hop River Corridor was also an important economic development asset which is described in each Town's Plan of Conservation and Development. The Route 6 Hop River Corridor now must serve both as an east/west connector, and as a local street.

In 2009, the REDC received a grant from the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development to prepare a Master Plan for the Route 6 Hop River Corridor. Over the course of a year, the REDC worked to arrive at creating a clear vision of what the Corridor could be and establishing the mechanisms to help each of the Four Towns start to implement that vision. This report has been prepared to describe the process used to establish the new vision for this important road corridor and to assemble the results into a comprehensive Economic Development Strategy that would be suitable for use to begin to establish one of the first multi-town joint project as a Economic Development District (EDD) to be recognized by the State of Connecticut.

Although this study has taken more than two years to get to completion, it is just the beginning. As this study concludes, a Transportation Study is underway by the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) which will act as the interface between the REDC and the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CONNDOT) to implement the streetscape improvements identified in the Master Plan and to continue to focus on improving safety throughout the Corridor. The REDC will also continue to work with each of the individual towns to implement the vision described in this report and the many recommendations listed in Chapters 16, 19, and 22.



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## PROJECT PROCESS

Preparation of the Route 6 Hop River Corridor Master Plan required many steps to be able to envision a new future for the Corridor. In June 2009, the Route 6 Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) selected a Consultant Team to complete this portion of the project consisting of:

LADA, P.C Land Planners Simsbury, CT	Project Management Landscape Architecture Planning and Graphics
Garnet Consulting Services, Inc. F.P. Clark Associates Nathan L. Jacobson, Associates	Economic Development Traffic Utilities

Meetings were held generally every two weeks on Monday mornings over a 15+ month period allowing the REDC to review the work completed, provide direction and address issues raised at each step of the project. The Consultant Team visited the Corridor dozens of times from June, 2009 to September, 2010. This included different times during the day and night, weekdays, and weekends, and in a variety of weather.

All maps, chapters, and completed work was reviewed more than once, revised, and resubmitted. The REDC reviewed all documentation several times, as well as seeking comments from the individual Town Planning and Zoning Commissions, Board of Selectmen/Town Council, Economic Development Commissions, and members of the public.

The scope of the Master Plan project consisted of five parts:

1. Project Goals and Branding
2. Data Gathering
3. Analysis
4. Workshops
5. Master Plan and Final Report



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The Master Plan project officially started in June 2009. The first several months of the project were devoted to data gathering and trying to shake off old and obsolete views and opinions of the Route 6 Hop River Corridor. This involved extensive site visits for both the REDC and Consultant Teams to begin to consider the Corridor as a whole, rather than small sections of road, where one travels daily or periodically. Eventually, a picture of the Route 6 Hop River Corridor began to emerge.

The first part of the project – Project Goals and Branding – enabled the REDC to establish a new name and graphic image (logo) for the Corridor to reflect the renewed commitment to its importance within the Four Towns. The establishment of a logo which uses existing buildings set against a backdrop of the environment (road, hill, sky, and river) captures the enthusiasm and new direction which came out of the first part of the project.

During this time, the Consultant Team began to compile the extensive information contained in Chapter Nine as well as the background Traffic Report (Chapter 10) and Economic Development data (Chapters 11 and 16). Chapter Nine consists of descriptions and maps which include a detailed look at environmental constraints and existing conditions, worked to form the foundation of the Corridor Master Plan. The Analysis Phase of the project resulted in the identification of developable land and the preparation of Site Analysis Maps. These maps formed the basis of a Preliminary Corridor Improvement Plan (CIP) which was the subject of Workshops in December, 2009.

Comments from these Workshops were used to revise and refine the CIP into a Master Plan. This phase also included the preparation of individual site plans and many visioning graphics (known as Before and After pictures) showing how the ideas in the Master Plan might look on the Corridor. These items were reviewed and revised several times before including them into the Master Plan. The Master Plan was the subject of an additional set of Workshops in May and June 2010. The Master Plan was then refined several additional times until it was considered complete and accepted on August 23, 2010.

In order to promote the vision of the Route 6 Hop River Corridor described in the Master Plan, the next step was the development of a draft Zoning Regulation and Zoning Map to be presented for consideration for adoption by each of the Four Towns. The discussion regarding the Proposed Zone text and Zoning Map is just beginning and will require extensive review by the Four Towns. Final recommendations were defined and described





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and are included in Chapter 22. Chapter 23 discusses the next steps to be completed by REDC to continue the momentum gained through this process and to protect and promote the valuable economic and environmental resource that is the Route 6 Hop River Corridor by seeing the Master Plan implemented.

## **PROJECT GOALS**

Beginning in July 2009, the Consultant Team worked with the Route 6 Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) to establish a set of Goals for the project (Exhibit ES-4). The process had several steps:

1. Encourage the Members to become familiar with the full length of the Corridor
2. Define how members/residents use the Corridor
3. Identify current perceptions and feelings about Corridor as a whole and individual sections
4. Begin to define vision after thoroughly understanding current conditions
5. Develop these initial thoughts and ideas into Goals for the project

A draft set of Goals was established which included five goals reflecting the diverse range of opinions about the Corridor. These Draft Goals were presented to each of the four Listening Sessions discussed in Chapter 8. At each of the Listening Sessions, the participants agreed that the Draft Goals were consistent with their understanding of the project. The Goals were formally adopted by the Route 6 Regional Economic Development Council on October 5, 2009. They are:

## **PROJECT GOALS**

- ◆ Re-vision the future of Route 6 through the use of public input and consensus building.
- ◆ Create a Master Plan of Route 6 that provides targeted areas of development for each Town in the Corridor.



- ◆ Preserve the historic, scenic, and environmental resources of the corridor in a manner that identifies those resources as potential revenue positive elements.
- ◆ Balance the investment potential and costs among the four towns.
- ◆ Identify “kick-off” projects that should be done first and which will provide the best foundation for future projects.

## PROJECT NAME AND LOGO

Once the Project Goals were established, the Route 6 Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) started working on Goal #1 – to Re-Vision the Future of the **Route 6 Hop River Corridor**. As part of Goal #5 – **To Identify “Kick-Off” Projects**, the REDC decided that the first step toward re-visioning the Corridor was to establish a new name and logo. Meetings were held with the REDC as well as a series of Listening Sessions with each Town.

Based on the discussions in these Listening Sessions, it was clear that Route 6 had a long history of contradictions and difficulties. The road is both a pass-through route for commuters and the local road for the Four Towns; development on the road was both encouraged and suppressed by the DOT Route 6 Expressway project which is now abandoned; the towns along the Expressway had a difficult relationship with each other and with DOT related to the Expressway; prior to the recent safety improvements, Route 6 was considered very dangerous and despite significant safety improvements to Route 6, the old moniker remains. Overall, there was a unanimously declared need to think differently about the Corridor which would help the rest of the residents in the Four Towns to look to the future.



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As requested, LADA P.C. Land Planners created a series of logos based on the discussions to date. These logos were based on features within the Corridor, historic references, and possible new names for the project.

The REDC reviewed the original seven logos and decided to present four for review by the public as part of the Phase 1 Listening Sessions. By the end of the Workshops and review process, three of the original designs remained under consideration.

The REDC then investigated a variety of wording options with the remaining three designs. Based on the discussion regarding project goals and the desire to have Route 6 and the Hop River be closely associated with the logo, the name “**The Route 6 Hop River Corridor**” was chosen. The final logo design was intended to tie the roadway, the Hop River and the Hop River Trail together with the architectural character of the Corridor in a positive image. The tag line “Live, Work, Shop, Play” was added to reflect that each of these elements affects the quality of life in Town and must be balanced along the Corridor.

The final project name and logo is shown as Exhibit ES-5 and is used throughout this Report.

## **DATA GATHERING**

The Route 6 Hop River Corridor Study Area is defined as Route 6 from Notch Road in Bolton to the Route 6 / 66 East Intersection and continuing east on Route 66 to the Windham Town line. The western limit did not include lands on Notch Road but does recognize that the “highway” portions of the road as it transitions from I-384 to Route 6 past Notch Road does set the tone for traffic and development along the Bolton section of Route 6.

Similarly to the east, the REDC determined that the eastern end should continue past the Route 6/Route 66 East Intersection along Route 66 to the Windham Town Line. This segment represents the eastern leg of the corridor in Columbia and provides the opportunity for gateway elements at the Route 6 “Expressway” / Route 66 Intersection and the Windham Town Line.



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All properties fronting on Routes 6/66 are considered to be part of the project. In addition, parcels off the road to the north and south within 100'-500' depending on the size of the frontage parcels were also included at various times during the study. The Study Area is shown by the green area defining the parcels considered to be part of the Corridor on Exhibit ES-5.

The Route 6 Hop River Corridor is over 12.4 miles in length and includes Route 6 from the intersection of Route 44 to the intersection of Route 66 and Route 66 East from the intersection of Route 6 to the Windham/Columbia Town line. The road is a two way (one lane each way) paved hard surface with occasional left turn and right turn lanes. Traveling west to east, the road travels through the Town of Bolton, to the Town of Coventry, to the Town of Andover, and through the Town of Columbia, to the Town of Windham, CT. The Route 6 Hop River Corridor (Corridor) is considered to be a major east/west collector road connecting Providence, RI on the east with Hartford, CT on the west. According to the project Traffic Report, the average daily number of trips is approximately 19,000 trips per day.

The maps and figures prepared during the Data Gathering Phase are included in Chapter 9 (Existing Environmental Features) and Chapter 7 (Description of the Existing Corridor).

### **Intersections**

The Corridor includes twenty-nine full intersections as shown on the Maps in Chapter 7. These are (from west to east):

Bolton: (Hop River Road)	I-384 / Route 6 / Route 44	(Highway Intersection)
	I-384 / Route 6 and Notch Road	(Local Road connecting south)
	Route 6 and Stony Road	(Local Road connecting north)
	Route 6 and Johnson Road	(Local Dead End Road)
	Route 6 and South Road	(Local Road connecting north)
	Route 6 and Mark Anthony Lane	(Private Dead End Road)
	Route 6 and Steele's Crossing Road	(Local Road connecting south)
Coventry: (Willimantic Road)	Route 6 and South Street	(Local Road connecting north)



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Andover:	Route 6 and Bailey Road	(Local Road connecting south)
(Jonathon Trumbull Highway)	Route 6 and Hickory Hill Road	(Local Dead End Road)
	Route 6 and Hendee Road	(Local Road connecting north)
	Route 6 and Aspinal Drive	(Local Dead End Road)
	Route 6 and Burnap Brook Road	(Local Road connecting south)
	Route 6 and Wales Road	(Local Road connecting south)
	Route 6 and Shoddy Mill Road	(Local Road connecting south)
	Route 6 and Long Hill Road	(Historic Andover Intersection)
	Route 6 and Hebron Road (Rt. 316)	(State Road connecting south)
	Route 6 and Bunker Hill Road	(Local Road connecting north)
	Route 6 and Lake Road	(Local Road connecting south)
	Route 6 and Route 87	(State Road connecting south)
	Route 6 and Parker Bridge Road	(Local Road connecting north)
Columbia:	Route 6 and Woodward Road	(Local Road connecting north)
(Willimantic Road)	Route 6 and Whitney Road	(Local Road connecting south)
	Route 6 and Hop River Road	(North / Oakwood Lane / south)
		(Local Roads connecting north, Local Dead End Road to south)
	Route 6 and Strickland Road	(Local Dead End Road)
	Route 6 and Edgarton Road	(Local Road connecting south)
	Route 6 and Roses Bridge Road	(Local Road connecting north)
	Route 6 and Route 66 Intersection	(4-Way State Road Intersection)
(Willimantic Rd East)	Route 66 and Flanders Road	(Local Road connecting north)
	Route 66 and Cards Mill Road	(Local Road connecting south)



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## **Traffic Lights**

The corridor includes one flashing light (at the driveways of Munson's Chocolates and the Bolton Ice Palace) and five full movement stop lights (Long Hill Road, Hebron Road, Lake Road and Route 87 in Andover, and the Route 6 / 66 Intersection in Columbia). There is one crosswalk which is located at the traffic light at Long Hill Road in Historic Andover. This crosswalk connects Andover Center (Center Street) and the Hop River Trail with the Andover Library and Post Office.

## **Hop River Trail**

There are no sidewalks along the Route 6 Hop River Corridor, although there is, generally, a large shoulder area (more than 5'). Overall, however, the Corridor is not pedestrian friendly. The adjacent Hop River Trail provides a good alternative for pedestrians, bicyclists, etc. except that portions of the trail are unfinished, and others are not maintained as shown in Chapter 9. The connection to Bolton Notch, the bridge at Hebron Road, and the bridge over the Willimantic River are significant obstacles to enjoy access to the full length trail. The trail runs under Route 6 between Lake Road and Route 87 in Andover.

## **Parcels**

There are 351± parcels of land which have frontage on Route 6 / 66 East as shown in Chapter 7 and Chapter 9. Of these parcels, 70 are in Bolton (20%), 10 are in Coventry (3%), 126 are in Andover (36%), and 145 are in Columbia (41%). Land within these parcels totals approximately 2,592± acres. Land in Bolton is approximately 500± acres or 23%, Coventry is about 200± acres (7%), and Columbia and Andover have slightly less than 1,000± acres each (33% and 37% respectively). Andover has the largest amount of land along the corridor.

Within the Corridor, there are 13 automotive uses, 197 residential houses, and 72 vacant or agricultural parcels. Current uses include 82 commercial parcels. These existing uses generate approximately 285 curb cuts of which there are 45 in Bolton (16%), 12 in Coventry (5%), 92 in Andover (32%), and 135 in Columbia (47%).



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Of the 351± parcels, the average lot size is 7± acres. Only 8 property owners control 60 acres or more which includes 3 property owners with 100+ acres. Two of these properties are the Post Farm in Andover and the Coventry parcel.

### Historic and Cultural Resources

The Route 6 Hop River Corridor includes a number of Historic and Cultural Resources based on a windshield survey. These include the Hop River and the Hop River Trail. Historic resources include the historic homes such as the Patriot Farm and the Post Farm; the marker at Hendee Road noting George Washington and Rochambeau's route through Connecticut; the house formerly known as Whites Tavern (on Hutchinson Road and Route 6), a significant stop on the Route including two stone markers at the house and one at the driveway to the Post Farm from the new eastern Hutchinson Road cul-de-sac.

South Street continues north to the Nathan Hale's birthplace and burial site. Cultural resources include Historic Andover with its library and church, the war memorial at Hebron Road, and the Andover Museum. There are also numerous stone walls along the Corridor and extending throughout the parcels within the study area. These resources are shown in Chapter 9.

### Existing Environmental Features

The Existing Environmental Features are described in Chapter 9. This chapter included a narrative description and maps and figures describing the following environmental features:

- ◆ Drainage Areas and Surface Water
- ◆ Vegetative Communities
- ◆ Soils
- ◆ 100-Year Floodplain
- ◆ Slopes
- ◆ Wetlands
- ◆ Existing Land Use
- ◆ Commercial Uses Along Route 6
- ◆ Institutional Ownership





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- ◆ Existing Zoning
  - ◆ Existing Street Intersections and Curb Cuts
  - ◆ Pedestrian Facilities and Use
  - ◆ Recreational Trail Use
  - ◆ Bike Trails
  - ◆ Significant Views
  - ◆ Historic / Cultural Resources
  - ◆ Utilities

### **Site Analysis**

The Consultant Team created composite maps or Site Analysis Plans showing those features that the Route 6 Regional Economic Development Council felt were limiting factors to future development or environmental constraints requiring additional information. These maps are included on Exhibits ES-9 through ES-17. These maps highlight the following potential environmental constraints:

- ◆ Slopes over 20%
- ◆ 100-Year Floodplain
- ◆ Topographic Differential (a significant difference in elevation between road and building or buildable area)
- ◆ Poorly drained and/or very poorly drained soils
- ◆ Alluvial and floodplain soils
- ◆ Institutional Ownership (for potential use and/or conservation)

### **Developable Area**

Maps showing the potential Developable Area along the Corridor were prepared based on the Site Analysis Plans (Exhibits ES-18 through ES-25). These maps show a green colored hatch over lands which have environmental constraints. This includes steep slopes, wetlands, streams, and floodplains as defined in the Site Analysis Plans in Chapter Nine. The tan colored areas show those areas that do not have environmental constraints, but which are currently residential uses. The REDC has identified existing single family uses as a lower intensity development level which should remain as a contrast to existing or future



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commercial development. The lower intensity use provides a visual break between commercial development areas or nodes and should be maintained. Therefore, the land which is not environmentally sensitive or currently residential is identified in the reddish color as potential Development Areas. Based on these maps, of the 2,592± acres of land along the Route 6 Hop River Corridor, nearly 40% has environmental constraints including slopes and wetlands, which leaves approximately 1,500± acres of developable land. Of the available developable land, approximately 60% of that is currently residential or has existing commercial uses or other active uses on it. This leaves approximately 500 acres of vacant, usable land with frontage across the entire corridor. It should be noted that most of this land is located at Bolton Crossroads (lands of the State of Connecticut and LAN Holdings), the Coventry parcel, the Post Farm, land to the south of the Hop River Trail in Andover (lands of J. Phelps and J. Bolton), lands of J. Proll and Rosewood Enterprises at Route 87, land owned by the Town of Columbia at the Town Garage, and the northwest and southwest quadrants at the Route 6 / Route 66 Intersection. A summary of developable areas by lot is included in Chapter 12 as Table 12-1.

It is important to note that the Developable Areas Map were prepared based on Statewide level data available and should be used for planning purposes only. The REDC acknowledges that site specific wetland mapping and topographic surveys should be completed prior to determining the actual usable area of land.



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## **PRELIMINARY CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CIP)**

From the Site Analysis plans and the Developable Area maps, the Consultant Team prepared a Preliminary Corridor Improvement Plan (CIP) which was reviewed by the REDC and the Public in Workshop #1. The CIP was considered to be the Working Draft for the preparation of the Master Plan and is included in Chapter 12. The Preliminary Corridor Improvement Plan was based on the following design directives from the REDC:

- ◆ Identify vacant land, available land (by the For Sale signs), and parcels that may be suitable for new development or expansion of existing use.
- ◆ Identify potential gateway locations.
- ◆ Provide potential connection to Route 44 if possible.
- ◆ Find suitable locations for new placemaking efforts which should include new mixed-use villages.
- ◆ Consider existing businesses as potential first phase development (as expansions).
- ◆ Identify areas for conservation or limited development reflecting environmental, visual, or agricultural/cultural resources.
- ◆ Confirm realistic development potential based on environmental constraints (do not focus on grandiose ideas, but realistic development opportunities and costs).
- ◆ The development potential of a site would be based on individual subsurface sanitary disposal systems, or small package wastewater treatment systems.
- ◆ Create places that were more pedestrian friendly, but don't put sidewalks everywhere for the sake of putting in sidewalks. Sidewalks should link destinations.



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Other design directions from the Listening Sessions and other comments were:

- ◆ Limit big box development
- ◆ Limit streetscape / road improvements to existing right-of-way and minimize changes to existing pavement edge.
- ◆ Look at focused node-based development areas.
- ◆ Look for suitable locations for a pharmacy, bank, medical offices, and professional offices.

Based on these design directives and the information collected during this phase of the project, the Consultant Team started to prepare a series of design recommendations. These were:

1. Road improvements prior to the Route 6 / Route 44 Intersection should be considered to slow traffic down. The improvements should continue down the hill to the traffic light at Munson's / Ice Palace.
2. Notch Road should be realigned.
3. The light at Munson's / Ice Palace should be moved further east and left turns out of Munson's parking area should be redesigned.
4. Existing auto uses should be encouraged to reduce curb cuts and park vehicles out of the road R-O-W / front yard.
5. Provide Town and gateway signs at the beginning and end of the Corridor.
6. Access to potential new projects between Stony Road and Johnson Road should be limited to a single curb cut.
7. The South Street Intersection should be reevaluated to integrate access to the Coventry parcel.
8. Consider developing the State of Connecticut Land in Bolton as a Business Park.
9. A connection between Route 6 westbound and Route 44 should be established. This may be done through the possible Business Park.
10. Lands of the State of Connecticut at the Windham Town line should be developed as a parking area for access to the Hop River Trail.
11. Consider a façade improvement program for Andover Plaza, the flat roof buildings at Cards Mill Road and automotive uses throughout the Corridor



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12. Develop a new design for the Route 6 / Route 66 Intersection to reduce pavement and create a gateway for the Corridor.
  13. Review the Route 6 / 66 Intersection properties for new commercial development / missed use village.
  14. Identify potential development areas in Andover where environmental constraints would allow new construction.
  15. Identify locations for new senior housing and other higher density housing, but limit new single-family development along the Corridor.
  16. Identify environmental features which should be protected as part of the new vision for the Corridor as a balance to increased development.

These preliminary recommendations were just the start of the discussion which was more fully detailed and illustrated in the Master Plan Sheets.

## **LISTENING SESSIONS/WORKSHOPS**

Three sets of Workshops were organized to solicit comments from the Public throughout the project. These were:

LISTENING Session - Columbia      August 12, 2009 at Columbia Town Hall.  
(Phase 1)

Bolton	August 18, 2009 at Bolton Town Hall
Coventry	August 27, 2009 at Coventry Town Hall
Andover	October 1, 2009 at Andover Town Hall

**Purpose:** These workshops were held to gather initial data regarding the use of Route 6 / 66 East by residents of the four towns. As a part of the data gathering process, questions were asked of the participants regarding regular and periodic use of Route 6 / 66 East; impressions of the Route 6 / 66 East corridor and what types of future development should be encouraged. The workshops were held to meet two of the project goals - first, to gather information to help re-vision Route 6 / 66 East; and second, to encourage public input and participation.



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WORKSHOP #1 - REDC      November 30, 2009  
(Phase 3)

Bolton      December 8, 2009  
Andover      December 17, 2009

**Purpose:** Three Public Workshops were intended to give the public a glimpse into the work done to date by the Route 6 EDC; ask for the participant's opinion about several important issues which have begun to coalesce in the process and to confirm that some of the preliminary recommendations identified as part of the data gathering phase were on the right track.

WORKSHOP #2 -

Andover      May 13, 2010  
Columbia      June 29, 2010

**Purpose:** These workshops were held to present the initial Route 6 Hop River Corridor Master Plan and to use that feedback to refine the Master Plan into its final form.

**The Results**

Based on the questions asked at the Listening Sessions, it became apparent that the residents of the four towns were very consistent in their ideas for Route 6 even though residents from each of the four towns use Route 6 very differently. For example, the representatives from Coventry rarely used Route 6 but those from Columbia and Andover regularly used Route 6. The common remarks made during this session were:

- ◆ Routes 6/66 Pedestrian unfriendly.
- ◆ Businesses are mostly small / local, or auto related
- ◆ No sense of identity / place
- ◆ Poor reflection on Towns
- ◆ Too many curb cuts



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- ◆ Hard to make left turns
  - ◆ No destinations except Ice Palace and Munson's
  - ◆ Sense of rural density should be preserved (trees, stone walls, small buildings, architectural form, hide higher density)
  - ◆ Roadway is dominated by pass-through traffic; locals want to take back control!
  - ◆ Concerned about cost, buildability, reality check of elaborate or massive change
  - ◆ No on-street parking
  - ◆ Concerned about pushing out existing businesses
  - ◆ A valuation of sewer service
  - ◆ Important to slow traffic down especially at Bolton Notch.

Based on the discussion at the Listening Seminars, there are several important conclusions:

1. The Route 6 Hop River Corridor is an important part of the communities it passes through, and it establishes a sense of identity for those communities. Based on participant feedback, the current image projected by the corridor is considered attractive for its natural landscapes but unattractive architecturally. Architectural Guidelines are needed for future development as well as to upgrade existing commercial establishments.
2. For three of the four towns, Route 6 / 66 East is the economic center for those towns. Therefore, everyone acknowledged that additional growth should be allowed. However, there was a unanimous belief that continuous linear development of the Corridor was unacceptable. The participants proposed that development occur in nodes along the road. The focus of one of these nodes should be Andover between Hebron Road and Shoddy Mill Road. Other nodes should be expanded such as the gateway elements at Munson's and the Windham Town line.
3. The existing businesses on Route 6 / 66 East should be encouraged to stay and expand. Upgrades to parking, facade treatments, and general streetscape upgrades should be considered.





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4. Consider allowing some of the larger historic homes in the corridor to be converted to offices. Also, use this kind of building size and form as an architectural guideline for future new building.
  5. Provide gateway elements to frame the road - such as at Munson's and at the Windham town line.
  6. Preserve the scenic character of the roadway while allowing more development
  7. New development is likely to be smaller scale. Larger size buildings should be placed off the road or designed to look smaller.
  8. Several Design Directives were derived from these Listening Sessions. These are:
    - ◆ Create a sense of rhythm along road balancing development / nature.
    - ◆ Hide larger buildings / multiple buildings from road using single access point.
    - ◆ Create new places and enhance existing places, encourage pedestrians in specific locations, but do not extend sidewalks / use beyond these places.
    - ◆ Create new destinations
    - ◆ Simplify regulatory environment for existing businesses by allowing them to expand, but require uniform architecture.
    - ◆ Limit new big box development. Smaller mixed-use (2-story house-type architecture) would be acceptable.
    - ◆ Minimize view of parked cars from street.
    - ◆ Need new name and vision for Route 6 / 66 East.



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From Workshop #1, the participants indicated that the Preliminary Corridor Improvement Plan and design recommendations were a movement in the right direction. The discussion was very lively over the course of two evenings and several common elements were identified:

1. Need pharmacy, bank, medical office, professional office, office.
2. Prefer upscale smaller retail like bookstore, sporting goods, small grocery stores.
3. Architectural preference is for use of historic houses such as Patriot Farm, Post Farm, and other similar structures.
4. Development should be focused into limited areas.
5. Environmental features such as agricultural fields, wetlands, trees, streams should be preserved.
6. Views along roadway should remain a rural setting.
7. Focus of development should be Historic Andover, Bolton at Ice Palace, and Route 6 / 66 Intersection.
8. Limit disturbance to roadway itself.
9. Participants were opposed to major improvements which would require taking of land.
10. Certain areas should not be developed, such as Post Farm, Hutchinson Farm, steep slopes, along Hop River, floodplains, and wetlands.
11. Need to slow traffic down at the nodes and, in general, along the Corridor.

The Design Directives which were derived from Workshop #1 were:

- ◆ Limit improvements to existing Right of Way and minimize changes to existing pavement edge.
- ◆ Develop focused node areas at Bolton (Ice Palace), Historic Andover and Route 6 / 66 East Intersection.
- ◆ Architectural preferences are for buildings that are based on the residential farm and massing of a Corridor Farmhouse.



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- ◆ The Master Plan should accommodate / encourage the following uses first:
    - ◆ Pharmacy
    - ◆ Bank
    - ◆ Professional Offices in Multiple Buildings
    - ◆ Offices
  - ◆ Improve streetscape and reduce pavement where possible.
  - ◆ Protect environmental features such as wetlands, Hop River, experience of the Hop River Trail, tree lined roadway, views of undeveloped areas, and agricultural uses (fields) by creating potential Conservation Areas.
  - ◆ Design Directives 1-7 from the Listening Sessions were reconfirmed.
  - ◆ The new name – The Route 6 Hop River Corridor and logo were confirmed to reflect the possibility of new future.
  - ◆ Areas to limit development include:
    - ◆ On South Street
    - ◆ Parts of the Route 6 / 66 Intersection where there are wetlands / floodplains
    - ◆ In existing residential areas.
    - ◆ Avoid sprawl along the Corridor
    - ◆ Existing farmland
    - ◆ Any place too close to the Hop River
  - ◆ Existing uses close to Route 6 / 66 Intersection should be required to increase open space and reduce curb cuts.

At the final set of workshops (Workshop #2), participants provided their opinion of the Proposed Master Plan, architectural styles to be used in the Architectural Guidelines and light fixtures. The Bolton Crossroads site plan, the need for architectural guidelines; streetscape improvements; and use of nodes to focus development; were unanimously liked. There were mixed comments about sidewalks and the potential road realignment at Lighthouse Corners and continued concerns about the need to reduce speed at Bolton Corners. Overall, the visualizations of the Master Plan (Site Plans and Before / After Pictures) were considered to accurately represent the new vision for the Route 6 Hop River Corridor.



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At Workshop #2, participants were also asked to give their opinion about specific details. They were asked to consider what light fixture would be appropriate for the Corridor, as well as to confirm a preferred architectural type.

1. Use a single uniform light fixture for the entire Corridor.
2. An historic farmhouse architectural form was preferred for any building near the street regardless of the use.

These elements were integrated into the final visioning graphics (Exhibits ES-41 through ES-55).



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## **PROJECT SMART GROWTH PRINCIPLES**

Chapter 14 includes a three step process which identifies the project Smart Growth; considers the character of the Corridor, and includes a Smart Growth Audit to determine if the project meets the criteria of the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD). DECD provided the grant which funded this report, and which required that the principles of “Responsible Growth” be applied. To start, Chapter 14 includes an extensive discussion of the terms Responsible Growth and Smart Growth as a foundation for the project smart growth principles. In March 2010, the Route 6 Regional Economic Development Council accepted the Project Smart Growth Principles shown as Exhibit ES-6. These sixteen principles reflect both DECD requirements and the RECD’s vision of the new Route 6 Hop River Corridor.

Based on the Project Smart Growth Principles, the Consultant Team evaluated the existing Route 6 Hop River Corridor to determine the Existing Corridor Character. Three types of development patterns were identified. These are:

Residential Zones – Areas where uses are primarily residential. This includes single family and occasionally multi-family structures. This zone may include small scale home businesses with no separate land uses (such as parking or an isolated building).

Node – A defined area of businesses including retail, office, warehouse, manufacturing, gas stations, as well as town and institutional facilities.

Transition Zones – A mixed residential and business area. Many businesses are interspersed with single family uses and may, in fact, be located on small former residential lots. Buildings and businesses are small and are often in converted single family residential buildings.

Based on these categories, there are five existing nodes of development (Bolton, Historic Andover, Columbia West (now at the Town Garage), Lighthouse Corners (Route 6 / 66 East Intersection), and Columbia East (at the Windham Town Line); four transition areas (Bolton at Stony Road, Hendee Road, Columbia East (from Route 6 / 66 East Intersection to Cards Mill Road), and four residential areas (Bolton, Andover West, Andover East, and Columbia).



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The existing land use pattern is not consistent with the Project Smart Growth Principles as the development pattern extends in a linear fashion rather than discrete nodes between reduced developed areas as shown on the Existing Corridor Character Map (Exhibit ES-7).

Therefore, a Proposed Corridor Character Map was prepared to illustrate the preferred pattern of development for the future to reflect the new vision of the Corridor (Exhibit ES-8). In addition, the REDC began to identify place names for the various future nodes.

The Proposed Corridor Character Map - identifies six development nodes and two transition areas which reflect the project Smart Growth Principles. The remainder of the land is to remain primarily residential. The future development nodes are:

- ◆ Bolton Crossroads – east of Notch Road to Stony Road
- ◆ Hendee Rode Node – from Network, Inc. to the east side of Hutchinson Road
- ◆ Historic Andover – from Shoddy Mill Road to Center just east of Hebron Road
- ◆ Lake Road Node – both sides of Route 6 at the intersection of Lake Road
- ◆ Columbia Meadows – from Strickland Road to Hop River Road
- ◆ Lighthouse Corners – from Roses Bridge Road to the power lines on Route 66
- ◆ Columbia East Node – commercial lands at the Windham Town Line.

This plan identifies the existing residential areas as areas of lesser development intensity to offset the density of the nodes.

The major residential areas are proposed to remain residential in the future. These areas are the West Residential Area, the Andover West Residential Area, the Andover East Residential Area, and the Columbia Meadows Residential Area. These existing residential areas are generally stable and well maintained. To encourage the implementation of the Proposed Corridor Character Map and the modification of the Project Smart Growth Principles, the Report includes a Draft Proposed Zoning Map and Zoning Regulations. The proposed Zoning Map shows an increased development intensity and focus at the proposed nodes.



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Also, one of the major changes between the Existing Corridor Character Plan and the Proposed Corridor Character Plan is the transformation of transition zones in the interior of the Corridor into nodes. This is intended to focus development more intensely in these areas and avoid the parcel by parcel sprawl of commercial development along the entire corridor.

The Proposed Corridor Character Map (Exhibit ES-8) will be used as the foundation for the new Master Plan to promote compliance with the project Smart Growth Principals.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT**

Garnet Consulting Services prepared a two part Economic Development Report which is included in Chapters 11 and 16. According to the report:

The types of uses that are most likely – because they have some market strength and fit best within the character of the Corridor – include the following:

1. A mixture of smaller (perhaps up to 30,000 square feet, but most less than that) manufacturers, office uses and distribution firms that are looking for a location that provides a desirable quality of place. There may also be interest by technology oriented firms, including research and development, because of the proximity of the many colleges and universities nearby. Some of these firms may seek a reasonable proximity to Hartford, while others may have a similar orientation to The University of Connecticut. Many of the smaller businesses will be suitable for multi-occupant, flex-space buildings. Some of these firms will prefer to own their property, while others will prefer to lease; both preferences can be accommodated in a business park.

Many of these firms may already be in the area and want to stay there because of family or other lifestyle considerations by their owners. These firms will prefer a location in a master-planned and well-managed business park with good local roads, reasonable proximity to the state's Interstate system, full utilities, and strong



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telecommunications capabilities. Across the country, sanitary waste needs of this type of development are increasingly being met by package treatment plants where access to more typical sewage treatment plants is not possible and on-site soils or water bodies support them. The importance of the road system serving the location they choose will come from both access to customers and suppliers, as well as convenient commuting for their labor force. Lower development and/or occupancy costs (in particular, rent and/or taxes) compared to those in Hartford or its immediate suburbs may be a factor in choosing a Route 6 Hop River Corridor location. Visibility to drive-by traffic will not be important to most of these firms, but park locations that allowed such visibility might be of interest to some companies.

2. Some of the same kinds of businesses discussed in the prior section may be more inclined to locate as a freestanding use on its own lot. For some this will be because of a security concern that makes it less desirable to have nearby business neighbors. Some of these firms may want visual exposure to pass-by traffic as part of their marketing. For others, it will be a cost consideration because development and occupancy costs for a single lot may be less than the premium (both for the land itself and annual common area costs) inherent in a business park environment.

These firms will have the same basic infrastructure and labor requirements and mix of ownership preferences as those preferring the business park location, although on-site wells and septic systems will work for many of these firms if site characteristics support them because of their relatively small water needs.





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3. There will be a wide mix of retail, service (both business and personal) and restaurant operations that seek to serve the growing population in the region, the drive-by traffic on Route 6, tourists or other visitors drawn to the region, and other businesses and institutions in the broader area. Three factors make strip development preferable for these firms:
- ◆ Visual exposure is very important. Locations offering building frontage visible from Route 6 will be necessary.
  - ◆ Many of these types of businesses are in economic sectors with small profit margins; therefore, the economy of scale from the construction of buildings larger than what any individual occupant needs means they will prefer being occupants of a multi-business building.
  - ◆ The business synergy that comes from having multiple establishments in the same location helps each establishment. Businesses may serve each other, or customers coming to one business may end up visiting others at the same location.

Strip development is not inherently bad if properly designed, constructed and maintained. The Route 6 Economic Development Council and its constituent Towns must make clear to developers the requirement that aesthetics of building design and signage is very important; that attractive landscaping of visible portions of lots and parking areas is essential; and that the property must be adequately maintained.

4. The Route 6 Hop River Corridor may be of interest to developers of residential or quasi-residential uses. From an economic development perspective, uses such as assisted living facilities or age-restricted housing may be more desirable than single family homes, apartments or condominiums because of the tax ratables created by such uses without additional children in the school system. It should be noted that national research by Robert Burchell of Rutgers University's



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Center for Urban Policy Research has found that high value studio apartments and 1 or 2 bedroom garden apartments also resulted in a tax gain (that is, taxes less municipal service costs) and that 1 and 2 bedroom studio condominiums were breakeven for the host municipality.

Because of the density of use and related water and wastewater needs, sites for such uses must be carefully selected. As with business parks that cannot be served by connection to an existing wastewater treatment plant, the use of a package treatment plant to serve this type of use should be considered if site characteristics support such a plant.

### **Implementation Recommendations**

From an economic development perspective, implementation of this plan has two separate but mutually supportive elements:

1. The identification of recommended uses for specific properties in the Route 6 Hop River Corridor. Such site specific recommendations appear elsewhere in the Route 6 Hop River Corridor Master Plan report and reflect the consultant team's collaborative evaluation of market needs, site characteristics, traffic impacts, and community/neighborhood desires and compatibility factors.
2. The identification of specific initiatives that are necessary or advisable for promoting effective and desirable economic development along the Corridor. These initiatives are the type that would typically appear in an economic development strategic plan or action agenda for driving an area's economic development efforts.

The first phase of this economic development element of the master plan on Economic Development Challenges and Opportunities provides twenty-one (21) recommendations related to economic development. While all are important, not all require a detailed discussion as an economic development



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initiative. These include elements that are general philosophies that should guide future development, are general marketing supportive, are intergovernmental coordination needs, are addressed in other sections of this report, or are activities already underway. These include the following:

- ◆ For future marketing purposes, the Route 6 Regional Economic Development Council should assure that data provided on the region by the MetroHartford Alliance, Connecticut Economic Resource Center (CERC) or other data sources is the most accurate possible.
- ◆ Since CERC's Site Finder Inventory is a primary online tool used to look for available commercial and industrial properties, the 4 towns of Route 6 Regional Economic Development Council should assure that all available properties are included in this information source.
- ◆ New development in the corridor should generally be small scale, high quality and visually attractive and/or unobtrusive.
- ◆ The 4 towns of the Route 6 Hop River Corridor should agree on a definition of "big box", and if these are not desired at all in the corridor, this should be reflected in the zoning regulations for the corridor.
- ◆ A site should be sought for development of at least one modestly sized, high quality, mixed use business park.
- ◆ Marketing of the Route 6 Hop River Corridor should include its many outdoor recreation opportunities. A cluster of businesses catering to this market should be sought.



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- ◆ Because of the mixed-use nature of the corridor (including clusters of residential, business, agriculture, and open space) and varying land characteristics, future development should be clustered in nodes.
  - ◆ Package treatment plants should be used to provide sewage treatment in suitable locations.
  - ◆ The region will need to work with the Connecticut Office of Policy and Management and the state's Office of Responsible Growth to assure that additional nodal development along Route 6 is seen as appropriate in the state plan and supported by the state.
  - ◆ Zoning regulations for the Route 6 Hop River Corridor should allow for the conversion of residential structures to business uses, while at the same time preserving the historic architecture of these structures.
  - ◆ The Route 6 Hop River Corridor needs to be “rebranded”. Overcoming the “Suicide 6” image requires aggressive image repositioning marketing. Appropriate gateway signage should be installed.
  - ◆ Future development must be guided by a widely shared vision that both reflects the desires of the 4 communities comprising the Route 6 Hop River Corridor and clearly conveys the types and characteristics of desired growth to prospective businesses and developers.



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## **THE ROUTE 6 HOP RIVER CORRIDOR MASTER PLAN**

The Route 6 Hop River Corridor Master Plan (Master Plan) is the culmination of over five years of work by the Route 6 Regional Economic Development Council (REDC). The Master Plan provides a vision for over 12.4 miles of road as it passes through four distinctly different Towns: Bolton, Coventry, Andover, and Columbia, Connecticut. The Route 6 Hop River Corridor Master Plan represents a new vision, shared by these four Towns, for the future of this important local commercial corridor and east / west commuter route. The Master Plan attempts to introduce streetscape and design elements to increase the walkability and sense of place to the Corridor by establishing focused nodes of development. The Master Plan looks to improve aesthetics and to identify important resources to be protected. Based on extensive public workshops, it is clear that the residents of these four Towns want the Corridor to reflect their sense of aesthetics, to act as gateways to their communities and to create a Corridor where one can live, work, shop, and play like the Corridor logo proclaims.

The Route 6 Hop River Corridor Master Plan articulates both general and site specific recommendations which reflect the extensive work of the REDC and input from the public. The Corridor Master Plan may be the first of its kind in Connecticut. By joining together four towns, two Regional Councils of Governments across two counties, and multiple state voting districts, the REDC has accomplished a task whose value is only beginning to be apparent to other towns in the state and to the State of Connecticut itself. By setting aside past differences between towns formerly split over the construction of Expressway 6, and by continuing the support of this project across multiple election cycles, the continued and ongoing recognition of the importance of the REDC's mission is extraordinary.

Reflecting the unprecedented work that went into the effort, the Route 6 Hop River Corridor Master Plan is an unusual document. Exhibit ES- 31 shows a detailed, almost property by property, design reflecting the Proposed Corridor Character Plan (Exhibit ES-8) developed as part of the project Smart Growth Audit (Chapter 15). Exhibits ES-28 through ES-30 show these proposed improvements in more generalized terms so that the proposed Corridor improvements can be understood on an overall Corridor-level before delving into the parcel level detail. Exhibits ES-32 through ES-41 show the detailed level design recommendations. The Corridor Master Plan integrates the Project Smart Growth Principles by identifying targeted areas (or nodes) of development as well as resources important for conservation.



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It is the opinion of the REDC that balancing areas of development and areas for conservation will encourage the kind of economic development that is appropriate for the Route 6 Hop River Corridor. This balance will create a future corridor that is livable and reflects a positive image of the towns through which it passes.

The Route 6 Regional Economic Development Council approved the Route 6 Hop River Corridor Master Plan on August 23, 2010.

In order to fully articulate the contents of the Master Plan and the new vision for the Route 6 Hop River Corridor, multiple site plans and visualizations were prepared, presented to the REDC and Workshops, and then modified in response to comments from the reviewers. Modifications included – sidewalk locations and colors, building types, plant material, light fixtures, location names, sign designs, site plan layouts, uses, etc. These modifications were important to the ongoing discussion of the Route 6 Hop River Corridor Master Plan (Master Plan) and to illustrate the New Vision for the Corridor.

In addition, these images were presented to the public in the May/June Workshops and received very favorable feedback. These images and site plans also form the basis of the draft Route 6 Hop River Corridor Zone and Architectural Guidelines which are included in Chapter 20.

#### **Bolton Gateway Sign** (Exhibit ES-41)

The proposed Gateway Sign is a dry laid cut field stone wall which is integrated into the existing rock cut at the top of the hill before entering Bolton Crossroads. This area is located just beyond the DOT Right-of-Way on land of the Hop River Trail. The sign includes the name of the Corridor. Letters should be at least 12-15” high to be visible by traffic entering from the west. The Corridor Logo will also be included with the name of the Town (BOLTON) in a contrasting color. If possible, this sign wall should be illuminated with ground mounted lights. Due to its location on the north side of the wood’s edge, it is unlikely that solar lighting will work at this location. As an alternate, with approval by CONNDOT, the sign wall can be placed in the center island between the eastbound and westbound lanes. Use of the stone for the material is consistent with the types of materials the REDC and public have identified as materials suitable for the Corridor and reflective of the Corridor character



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### **Bolton Crossroads Site Plan** (Exhibit ES-42)

As identified in the Preliminary Corridor Map, the area of Route 6 where Munson's and the Bolton Ice Palace are located is the western most node on the Corridor. This area has been named 'Bolton Crossroads' by the Consultant Team and the name was enthusiastically embraced by the public.

The Bolton Crossroads Site Plan includes two areas of development (Exhibit ES-42), Bolton Crossroads Corporate Park, and Bolton Crossroads Mixed Use Village.

The Bolton Crossroads Corporate Park is proposed on land currently owned by the State of Connecticut (at Route 6) and a northern parcel which fronts on Route 44 owned by LAN Holdings, LLC. The LAN Holdings parcel is a remnant parcel from the development of a multi-building Business Park on Howard Road. Unfortunately, the grade at the end of Howard Road is very steep and connection to Howard Road is unlikely. Also, this road is not widened to Town Standards and the sight line / geometry at Route 44 is very poor. Therefore, the Consultant Team looked at grading a road from Route 6 to Route 44 opposite Vernon Road. A road can be graded at 10% or less and would provide individual lot locations that would be suitable for several buildings of 15,000 – 25,000 SF in size with associated parking and individual subsurface sanitary disposal systems (SSDS). In the event that the municipal sewer line was to be extended from Route 44 to Route 6, these buildings could be allowed to be larger. This location for a Corporate Park is ideal because it is set off of both Route 6 and Route 44, and would be unlikely to be visible from either; provides a connection for pedestrians, bicycles, and vehicles between Route 44 and Route 6; can be developed slowly as individual buildings to accommodate market conditions; and could accommodate a variety of uses.

In addition, this new connecting road would allow for the creation of new four-way intersection which would be designed with raised medians (as a boulevard) in all four directions. The new location would provide Munson's with the opportunity to purchase more land to the east for a new showroom and parking thereby eliminating potentially dangerous driveway curb cuts. A new focal building could be built on the east side of the new road at the northeast quadrant of the new intersection. In addition, shared fire ponds are proposed to address those requirements from the Bolton Regulations. Preferred uses for these



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buildings would be office, office / warehouse, office / light assembly, medical office, professional office, and research.

The proposed Corporate Park is also an ideal location for the first joint efforts for the REDC and the four Towns to share costs and benefits. The Bolton Crossroads Corporate Park could become the first multi-town municipal owned Corporate Park. The first task required to accomplish this would be the transfer of land from the State of Connecticut to the REDC or Town of Bolton.

On the south side of Route 6 is a proposed mixed-use village. The new mixed-use village would include retail / office on the lower floor, and office / residential on the second or third floor. Buildings would be located to create a sense of a village where buildings are accessible from multiple small parking areas and the view from the main entrance is terminated with a focal architectural building or possibly a municipal use building such as a library or community center. This level of development would be possible if the properties are combined and treated as a single overall development that supports and enhances the Bolton Ice Palace.

Sidewalks would be provided throughout the n. A crosswalk at the traffic signal would extend access from the Corporate Park through the new village, and eventually extend to the Hop River Trail which is uphill of the village. Additional development opportunities may be available across a small stream and wetland which would provide parking for Trail access as well as be a great location for a restaurant or food/beverage concessions for weary hikers / bicyclists.

Exhibit ES-43 shows how Route 6 would change to accommodate the new signal light and boulevard access to the corporate park and mixed-use village. Streetscape improvements on Route 6 would include raised medians, wood guiderails, the inclusion of crosswalks, ornamental light fixtures, and banners with the Route 6 Hop River Corridor logo. Sidewalks would extend into both Bolton Ice Palace and Munson's for the new village and Corporate Park. Munson's existing curb cuts would be reduced to one right-turn-only driveway and the intent would be to move customer parking to the lower level where a new showroom could be built. A new access drive to the Bolton Ice Palace from the new Village access drive would be provided. The view in Exhibit ES-43 would be one which would occur before new





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buildings at the mixed-use village are built but the infrastructure for the new intersection was in place.

The proposed Corporate Park Boulevard would be graded (fill) to reach the current level of Route 6. The road would then fall away from Route 6 to better match the existing grades on the State of Connecticut land.

The light fixture shown in these images was chosen as part of the workshops held in May and June and after extensive discussion with the REDC. There was a general consensus that the light fixture used should be suitable for use throughout the Corridor. Therefore, a single fixture is used throughout the images in this Chapter and is included in the Architectural Guidelines in Chapter Twenty. The light fixture is considered ornamental and is designed to light the sidewalk, not Route 6 / 66 East itself. The fixture should be Dark Sky compliant and can be on timers to shut off after midnight where appropriate.

The Bolton Crossroads Mixed-Use Village will likely require a small package wastewater treatment plant or connection to the sewer line in Route 44 in order to be built at the density shown on the Site Plan.

### **Coventry Parcel** (Exhibits ES-44 through ES-46)

Two different Site Plan options were developed for the 110± acre parcel known as the Coventry Parcel as shown on Exhibits ES-44 and ES-45. These site plans show two possible access roads up to the northern portion of the site (the right side of the page) where the most developable area is. Based on soil types, this parcel seems to have soils suitable for subsurface septic, but depending on the intensity of use, the project may benefit from a small package wastewater treatment plant (WWTP). These plans show a variety of uses which could be accommodated on this parcel, including:

#### **Community Destination Area Uses**

- ◆ Library
- ◆ Science Center
- ◆ College Classrooms



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#### Mixed-Use Retail Area (retail / residential)

- ◆ 37,000 SF Retail in Small Buildings
- ◆ 51 Apartments
- ◆ Movie Theater

#### Office Park

or

#### Professional Office Park

- ◆ Office and or  
Warehouse Uses

- ◆ Lawyer
- ◆ Architect
- ◆ Medical Office

#### Recreation

- ◆ Ice Rink
- ◆ Pool
- ◆ Ballfields

#### Housing

- ◆ Fee Simple Single Family/Duplex
- or
- ◆ Senior Housing

This parcel can accommodate a large amount of development, but access to the parcel is expected to be very difficult and costly. In order to access the parcel, a road will need to be built to cross the Hop River and its associated wetlands. This road will need to stay elevated in order to catch the grade on the side of the Hop River. This will be an expensive access road so the development level and fiscal return will need to be high. Exhibit ES-46 shows other alternate routes which were considered as part of this study.



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### **Andover Gateway – Shoddy Mill Road** (Exhibit ES-47)

As noted in the Preliminary Corridor Map, a Gateway Sign announcing that the visitor is approaching Andover is recommended at Shoddy Mill Road. Exhibit ES-47 shows a possible option for this sign.

After significant discussion, the REDC decided that the area of Andover between Shoddy Mill Road and Hebron Road was to be called “Historic Andover”. This name was to distinguish the Route 6 land and uses from the area known as Andover Center (Center Street). Therefore, the proposed sign shows the Route 6 Hop River Corridor logo and the words “Historic Andover”. A two post bed-post type mortared and cut stone pillar sign was determined to be appropriate based on feedback to the REDC and public. This sign design also accommodates a message board at this location.

### **Historic Andover** (Exhibits ES-48 through ES-50)

Exhibits ES-48 and ES-49 show what the Historic Andover area could look like with the introduction of sidewalks, light fixtures, banners, and flowering trees. This improvement would require limited changes along the road frontage. One change recommended is the enlargement of the green island in front of the autobody use and the reduction of the width of the curb cuts on that property. This enables the sidewalk to continue to the Post Office and allows the continuation of the rhythm of the light fixtures. The view to the west also shows the addition of flowering trees, light poles and banners, and sidewalks along the front of the Library.

### **Andover Gateway – Hebron Road** (Exhibit ES-50)

Exhibit ES-50 shows a combination of streetscape improvements along Route 6 and a new Gateway Sign at Hebron Road. Streetscape improvements include a sidewalk to the 7/11, a raised median with plantings at Hebron Road, and the placement of light poles and banners along the sidewalk. The sidewalk to the 7/11 would be located at the curb at this location only to avoid many electrical poles and installation of a retaining wall.



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The new Gateway Sign at Hebron Road would be similar to the one at Shoddy Mill Road except that there would be no message board. This sign would be located east of the war memorial so as not be in the viewshed for that monument. There is electricity in this area so the sign could easily be illuminated.

### **Columbia Meadows** (Exhibit ES-51)

Continuing east along Route 6 in Columbia is the land occupied by the Town Garage. This area is open with limited trees and the working yard is considered unattractive. This view shows an increased island width with street trees, screen shrubs, and light fixtures designed to improve the view at the street.

Opposite to the Town Garage is a grouping of 6-7 residential properties which are currently zoned Business. These properties could be developed as a 2-3 story mixed-use village. The design idea captured in this image is that buildings would be “residential” in style and be located at the street. Parking would be at the rear and there would be multiple buildings linked by small parking areas. SSDS would serve the building located south of the parking areas. This small village, known as Columbia Meadows, would be primarily professional office with more offices or apartments above. Restaurants or limited retail would be appropriate here.

### **Lighthouse Corners** (Exhibit ES-52)

Identified throughout this report as the Route 6 / 66 Intersection, this area has been known historically as Katzman’s Corners, or more recently Lighthouse Corners. Due to the distinctive octagon building known as the “Lighthouse”, the REDC has determined that this area should be known as Lighthouse Corners.

This area is one of the existing Corridor nodes and the Route 6 Hop River Corridor Master Plan increases its importance as a critical node in the future. Providing a counterweight to Bolton Crossroads, Lighthouse Corners could be developed as a Mixed-Use Village with the reconfiguration of the Route 6 / 66 Intersection. At this time, the Route 6 / 66 Intersection is large, restrictive, and heavily paved. One proposed alternative is a roundabout configuration which would eliminate the traffic light but provide for continuous movement through the intersection. Using green planted traffic flow delineators (islands) and a planted



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circle, a new configuration would highlight the importance of this intersection as a gateway to the Route 6 Hop River Corridor. A Gateway Sign with Corridor logo could be placed at the center of the circle or at the entry lanes. In addition, the Lighthouse building at the Route 6 / 66 Intersection has been identified as a significant architectural element. Efforts should be made to develop this area to present the building as a more prominent location and as an architectural focal point.

Development in this node could include the creation of a new retail oriented mixed-use village which would connect to the existing Leventi's Plaza. The existing shopping center could be reconfigured and connections made between the new properties. A new center focused development would be prepared at the old gravel operation site. Buildings would be located on a new 'Main Street' with sidewalks on multiple small parking areas. These buildings will be visible both internally and from Route 6 so the architectural detail and style should be high quality on all four sides and human scale. This area would be ideal for restaurants with decks looking over the pond and for enjoying the pedestrian environment. Development of this level of intensity would require a community subsurface sanitary disposal system or small package wastewater treatment plant.

In the northwest quadrant of this intersection, a multi-building Corporate Park is proposed. These buildings would be served by individual subsurface sanitary disposal systems (SSDS) and buildings would range in size from 24,000± SF to 90,000± sf. Office, research, and medical office are the preferred uses for this Corporate Park. A tree lined boulevard is proposed with trails and sidewalks. Access to the river should be provided and public parking as a commuter lot and river access should be integrated into the design.

This parcel of land was the subject of many discussions during this project. The amount of development possible on this parcel would need to be balanced by the on-site wetlands. There is currently insufficient reliable information to accurately anticipate the areas of developable land. Due to the proximity of the river, studies should be done to identify the flood levels affecting this property before approvals are granted. This property was considered to be both ideal for development and ideal for conservation. Additional work to define the environmental constraints should be undertaken in the future.



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### **Columbia East Gateway** (Exhibit ES-53)

Currently, Route 66 at Cards Mill Road is an intersection of conflicting right-of-ways, overhead utilities, and auto-related uses. There are no visual clues that this is the gateway to the Route 6 Hop River Corridor. Exhibit ES-53 shows how this area could be improved with a reconfiguration of the road access to potentially create a “T” intersection rather than an island. This would alter the sign and planting to be located on a new peninsula rather than an island. The new design would allow the introduction of sidewalks, light poles and banners, and flowering trees. In addition, the overhead power lines have been placed underground in this picture to show what a positive visual effect that would be. A Corridor Gateway Sign is proposed at the new reconfigured intersection at Cards Mill Road. This Gateway Sign and streetscape improvements would provide a notable beginning or end to the Corridor. Also, the sidewalk, sign, and streetscape improvements on the north side of Route 66 would allow and encourage pedestrian traffic from the proposed trail access and parking area on lands of the State of Connecticut to uses at this intersection.

### **Andover Plaza Façade Improvements** (Exhibits ES-54 and ES-55)

As part of the discussion regarding Architectural Guidelines for the Corridor, the REDC requested that LADA prepare some new facades options for an existing building. As Andover Plaza is one of the few shopping centers on the Corridor, this building was used as an example of how various architectural elements could be used to change the appearance of the Plaza.

Architectural elements used to change the appearance of the façade were:

- ◆ Vary the roof line
- ◆ Provide a visual hierarchy and focal points
- ◆ Use a consistent sign background
- ◆ Add vertical elements



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## Summary

The figures and maps included in this Executive Summary and in Chapter 17 capture the visual character of the design ideas which evolved through the project. These images and ideas were then integrated into the Route 6 Hop River Corridor Master Plan included in Chapter Nineteen.



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## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the extensive work by the Route 6 Regional Economic Development Council, the input of the public through workshops, emails, phone conversations, and feedback throughout the process, the Consultant Team recommends the following actions to complete this phase of the project and to continue to reach the full implementation of the new vision for the Route 6 Hop River Corridor.

### **Goal #1 – Re-vision the future of the Route 6 Hop River Corridor through the use of public input and consensus building.**

#### **Recommendation #1-1**

Maintain website with updated news and information to keep the public informed of progress on this project.

#### **Recommendation #1-2**

Install new gateway signs at Bolton Notch, Columbia East, and the Route 6 / 66 Intersection.

#### **Recommendation #1-3**

Install Historic Andover Gateway Signs.

#### **Recommendation #1-4**

Continue to contact property owners to act as advocates for the proposed new Corridor Zone, Unified Zoning and a simplified review process.





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#### Recommendation #1-5

Establish a program of banners welcoming new businesses and/or announcing major events for existing companies.

#### Recommendation #1-6

Establish a Hop River Days Festival which would include such events as a trail run, sidewalk sales, craft fair and other festivities which would include all four towns and the entire length of the corridor.

#### Recommendation #1-7

Establish a four town Route 6 Hop River Corridor Chamber of Commerce to advocate for the interests of the corridor businesses.

#### Recommendation #1-8

Work with CONNDOT to add signage on I-384 to identify the Route 6 Hop River Corridor and the towns it passes through.

#### Recommendation #1-9

Work with CONNDOT to remove the 'Headlights On' sign at Bolton Notch.

**Goal #2 – Create a Master Plan of the Route 6 Hop River Corridor that provides targeted areas of development for each Town in the corridor.**

#### Recommendation #2-1

Prepare an overall Master Plan for the Route 6 Hop River Corridor to target areas of future growth, define the proposed use of those areas, and provide a road map for the new vision for the Route 6 Hop River Corridor.



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This Master Plan has been prepared as part of this study and is included in Chapter Nineteen.

**Recommendation #2-2**

Continue to refine the ideas and designs shown in the Master Plan, individual Site Plan, and Before-and-After pictures to encourage CONNDOT to improve safety, aesthetics, and developability of the Route 6 Hop River Corridor.

**Recommendation #2-3**

Prepare new text to establish a Route 6 Hop River Corridor Zone to be implemented in a consistent form in all four individual towns (see Chapters Twenty and Twenty-One).

**Recommendation #2-4**

Generate Architectural Guidelines for future growth and retrofit of existing buildings for the entire corridor based on the input from the public during the public workshops (see Chapter Twenty).

**Recommendation #2-5**

Implement the Streetscape Guidelines for the Route 6 Hop River Corridor based on the defined corridor preferences for light fixtures and poles, sidewalk width and treatment, and their locations within the DOT Right-of-Way (see Architectural Guidelines).

**Recommendation #2-6**

Establish locations for streetscape improvements along the corridor to be integrated into the next stage of Connecticut Department of Transportation (CONNDOT) road improvements including new raised medians with planting, street tree planting, sidewalks, and light fixtures (see Recommendation #2-44, above).



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### Recommendation #2-7

Coordinate the review, approval, and implementation of a common and consistent Route 6 Hop River Corridor Zone text including the architectural guidelines in each of the four individual towns (see Chapters Twenty and Twenty-One).

**Goal #3 – Preserve the historic, scenic, and environmental resources of the corridor in a manner that identifies those resources as potential positive elements.**

### Recommendation #3-1

Contact the property owners of the Post Farm and Hutchinson Farm to begin to work together to preserve these agricultural uses. This may require the creation of a program to allow transfer of development rights to the Route 6 Hop River Corridor Development Agency (or similar organization). If the individual property owners are inclined to preserve the use under current State programs, there are a number of programs available from the State of Connecticut which preserves the existing agricultural use by substantially reducing the development potential and as a consequence-significantly reduces property taxes.

### Recommendation #3-2

Efforts should be made to open the Hop River trail from Bolton Notch to the Willimantic River. Several critical pieces are missing at this time.

- 1) Consistent trail surface—the surface should be suitable for pedestrians, mountain bikes, horses, etc. We do not recommend a paved surface except where emergency vehicles could access the trail— such as at the below grade crossing at Merritt Valley Road.
- 2) Bolton Notch –access to the trail should begin on the north side of Route 44 with a large parking area for access on the western edge. Connection to one



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new Bolton Crossroads should be designed to allow and encourage trail users to access this new village area through the construction of a new parking area.

- 3) Bridges –the bridge at Historic Andover should be completed. The new parking area to be completed at the Andover Museum should have additional signage on Route 6. The bridge over the Willimantic River should be updated to a pedestrian bridge similar to the new metal bridge in East Granby on the Farmington Valley Trail.
- 4) Some parts of the trail are extremely remote and feel both out of the way and potentially unsafe. Signage to inform the user of the distance to the next road crossing would be reassuring without being intrusive. Additionally, police call boxes should be installed where phone lines are available at the road crossings.
- 5) Trail access signs should be installed throughout the Corridor at all road intersections where parking is available to access the Trail.

#### Recommendation #3-3

Businesses which support or enhance use of the Hop River Trail should be encouraged. Such businesses as sporting goods, bicycle shops, kayak sales and rentals, etc. or businesses which cater to users such as ice cream, restaurants, notions, etc. are considered highly desirable.

#### Recommendation #3-4

Install light poles and banners at significant points along the corridor—Bolton Crossroads, Hendee Road Node, Historic Andover, Columbia Meadows, Lighthouse Corners and Columbia East Node. All light fixtures are to be Dark Sky compliant and should be shut-off from midnight to 5-am.



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#### Recommendation #3-5

Encourage existing automotive uses to expand green islands along their road frontage by reducing the opening of curb cuts and providing green space and/or planting along the road edge. Park vehicles to the side and rear of buildings wherever possible.

#### Recommendation #3-6

Establish a long-term street tree planting program.

#### Recommendation #3-7

Avoid construction on steep slopes and large scale removal of trees on Corridor hillsides without street level wooded buffers.

#### Recommendation #3-8

Avoid new construction in residential areas where possible. Encourage shared driveways where possible.

#### Recommendation #3-9

Preserve the identified significant views through the use of limited building envelopes or more positive programs which reward the preservation of these properties through increased density or reduced setbacks at targeted locations.

#### Recommendation #3-10

Place larger buildings/density off the road served by a single driveway or street. Maintain street level wooded buffers.



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### Recommendation #3-11

Work with the property owners of the northwest quadrant at Lighthouse Corners to identify the wetlands and floodplain issues which will affect development uses. This might be accomplished through a DEP grant to develop an access road to provide public access to the Hop River.

## **Goal #4 – Balance the investment potential and costs among the four towns.**

### Recommendation #4-1

Expand the charge of the Route 6 Regional Economic Development Council to include the ability to review plans based on the proposed new Zone and architectural guidelines; create and implement new business parks using an economic model to share costs and revenues among the four towns; control and/or hold property to be developed as a business park alone or in collaboration with private land owners; submit grant applications; enter into agreements with the individual towns, private property owners, governmental agencies, and quasi-governmental agencies or organizations such as CRCOG, WINCOG, or the Metro-Hartford Alliance.

### Recommendation #4-2

Submit this finished document as an Economic Development Strategy for designation as a Regional Economic Development Area eligible for State and Federal grants and funding. Continue to work with CRCOG or the Metro Hartford Alliance to be classified as an Economic Development District (EDD) as defined by the State of Connecticut and Federal Government (see Initiative # 2 in Chapter Sixteen).



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### Recommendation #4-3

Identify one area in each town to be developed as a shared cost/benefit project guided by the Route 6 Economic Development Council or its future successor as the Route 6 Hop River Corridor Redevelopment Agency. The Consultant Team recommends the following properties/areas be included as part of the Four Town Economic Development District:

Bolton Crossroads – Lands of the State of Connecticut and  
LAN Holdings, LLC  
Coventry – The 110 acre parcel that is the part of this report  
Andover – Lake Road Node  
Columbia – Lighthouse Corners

**Goal #5 – Identify “kick-off” projects that should be done first and which will provide the foundation for future projects.**

### Recommendation #5-1

Establish the new streetscapes for Bolton Crossroads, Hendee Road, Historic Andover, Lighthouse Corners, and Columbia East. This includes streetlights, banners, and street trees. Sidewalks should be added as development occurs.

### Recommendation #5-2

Work with CONNDOT to install the raised medians with planting at Historic Andover, Hendee Road, and Columbia East.

### Recommendation #5-3

Contact the State of Connecticut to transfer ownership of the large parcel of land on the north side of Route 6 at Bolton Crossroads. This parcel is a critical component to the development of Four Town Corporate Park. Once ownership of this parcel is



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secured, contact the owner of LAN Holdings, LLC to establish a jointly held and financed Corporate Park.

Recommendation #5-4

Continue with the next phase of this project—the CROCG Transportation Study. This study should establish CONNDOT endorsement for the following items for the Master Plan:

- 1) Gateway signs location and design.
- 2) Planted raised medians at significant locations.
- 3) Signal location and new intersection at Bolton Crossroads.
- 4) Sidewalks, light fixtures, and street tree planting in DOT right-of-way as shown in the Master Plan.
- 5) The Bolton Crossroads Corporate Park boulevard- type road between Route 6 and Route 44.

The CRCOG study will work with the REDC, Stakeholders, Town Staff, members of the public, and CONNDOT to perform additional analysis on transportation-related items. This work may result in changes to locations of some of the proposed streetscape items based on CONNDOT review.





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## NEXT STEPS

Based on discussions with the Route 6 Regional Economic Development Council, the following are the Priority Actions to be taken next. They are:

1. A review of the current Zoning Regulations, Town Plans of Conservation and Development, WINCOG and CRCOG Plan of Conservation and Development and the State of Connecticut Conservation and Development is included in Chapter 14. This review is then used to establish a draft of new Zoning Regulations for a new Route 6 Hop River Corridor Zone in Chapters 20 and 21. The next step is for the Route 6 Regional Economic Development Council to work with the Planning and Zoning Commissions in each Town to establish a consistent Zoning Regulation and Zoning Map for all Towns along the Corridor.
2. In addition, CRCOG is working with the Route 6 Regional Economic Development Council to complete the Transportation Study which focuses on additional safety improvements and the DOT review and endorsement of streetscape improvements proposed as part of the Master Plan.
3. Other Priority Actions include coordinating with the State of Connecticut to transfer control of the Bolton Crossroads land to the REDC (as well as other parcels at the trail crossing at Route 87 and the potential trail parking area at the Windham Town Line); working with CT DEP to make the installation of small package wastewater treatment plants more feasible in the Corridor; work to extend sewers at the east and west ends of the Corridor; make modifications to the CT Plan of Conservation and Development to allow the sewer extensions and continue to submit for grants to fund the continuation of this project; implement a Façade Improvement Program, a Street Tree Planting / Beautification Program, and the construction of the Gateway signs.

