

B. Project narrative (not exceeding 10 pages) that includes the following:

a. Section 1 – Project Need and Purpose

***i. Economic and social concerns-** Discuss the economic and social challenges within the project area by providing census-based demographic data as requested in the table below. Additional information can also be provided to highlight the reason for selecting the BAR project area. Include information (including dates) of events within the project area that triggered significant local job loss or other economic disruption. Also describe how these events and other factors limit the ability to draw on other sources of funding for conducting the BAR Planning project.*

East Hartford is a predominantly residential community consisting of a variety of subdivisions containing either exclusively single-family homes and/or single- and two-family homes. Several pockets of apartment complexes and publicly assisted housing developments are located in East Hartford, which add density and housing choice within an overall suburban setting.

Single-family homes comprise the greatest percentage of the town's land use. In fact, of the town's total land area of almost 12,000 acres (18.8 square miles), about 30% is developed as detached single-family homes, with an additional 7% developed in other residential uses, bringing the total land in East Hartford dedicated to residential use to nearly 38%.

With only 12% of total land area vacant, very little development can be expected to occur on raw, undeveloped land. Furthermore, the 12% figure does not take into consideration the physical development constraints found on many vacant properties, such as wetlands, floodplains or steep slopes. If these potential constraints are accounted for in the calculation of vacant land, it is estimated that about one-half of the vacant land would be developable, accounting for just 6% of the town's total land area.

This severe lack of developable land makes it imperative for East Hartford to focus commercial and industrial development on parcels already designated for those purposes. The declining amount of vacant land in the Town dictates that future growth will need to involve reuse of properties already designated as commercial and/or industrial.

As seen in the Table below, the Town of East Hartford is in worse economic shape than the State of Connecticut as a whole in terms of unemployment, poverty and median household income. The picture is even worse in the Silver Lane Corridor, which is the focus of this application. The Silver Lane Corridor is divided almost equally between Census Tracts 5105 and 5106. Both have been designated as low-to-moderate income census tracts by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The poverty rate in these two combined Census Tracts is nearly twice that of the State of Connecticut, and the median household income is more than \$25,000 lower than that of the State as a whole.

| | Census Tracts 5105 and 5106 | Town of East Hartford | Connecticut | United States |
|--|--------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Population ¹ | 8465 | 51,252 | 3,596,677 | 318,857,056 |
| Unemployment ² | Not available | 7.6% | 5.4% ² | 5.3% ² |
| Poverty Rate ³ | 18.0% | 13.4% | 10.2% | 11.3% |
| Median Household Income ⁴ | \$44,437 | \$50,400 | \$69,461 | \$53,046 |
| ¹ Data is from the 2010 U.S. Census data and is available at http://www.census.gov/ . ² Data is from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and is available at http://www.bls.gov/cps/ ³ Data is from the Current Labor Force Data for Connecticut Towns and is available at http://www1.ctdol.state.ct.us/lmi/laus/lmi123.asp ⁴ Data is from the U.S. Census 2012 American Community Survey and is available on American FactFinder at http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml | | | | |

ii. Environmental concerns and brownfield challenges- Discuss environmental concerns and brownfield challenges in the BAR Project Area that provide a compelling reason for selection of the project area and application for BAR funds.

The wide variety of property uses in the Corridor is reflected in the wide variety of contamination concerns. With a mix of residential, commercial, industrial and agricultural uses, the Corridor contains concerns that range from a lack of developable land to agricultural and public health impacts.

b. Section 2 – Project Description and Vision

i. Broad description of project and BAR Project Area (include demographic information, whether located within a 100-year or 500-year flood plain, presence of historic resources, presence of an existing or planned commuter rail or bus rapid station and other important information).

Silver Lane is a major mixed-use corridor running from Main Street south of I-84 to the Manchester Town line. The roadway, containing an eclectic range of residential and commercial uses, runs along I-84 and the Hockanum River to the north and the Pratt & Whitney complex to the south, providing access to Rentschler Field, I-84 and the key north-south arterials of Simmons Road/Hillside Street and Forbes Street. The Corridor also includes major recreational and open space assets such as Shea Park, the Pratt & Whitney Aircraft Club and the DiPietro passive open space property, as well as agricultural properties at its eastern end.

Land uses along Silver Lane vary greatly in type, scale and intensity. West of Route 15 (Wilbur Cross Highway), the Corridor is heavily residential, including a significant concentration of multifamily uses. Continuing eastward to Roberts Lane, uses are more mixed, including commercial and office as well as residential, with low- to medium-density housing found to the south. The area between Roberts Lane and Forbes Street contains the greatest commercial concentration, with three large strip commercial complexes located on the northern side.

However, this part of the Corridor also contains a substantial number of vacant and underutilized properties, including large portions of shopping centers. It also includes a newly developed age-restricted condominium complex, Phillips Farm, as well as the Pratt & Whitney recreational fields.

Silver Lane is also one of the main access points to Pratt and Whitney and Rentschler Field. The approximately 1,000-acre Rentschler Field property represents one of East Hartford's greatest areas of development potential. Since the closure of the former airfield in 1995 by United Technologies Corporation (UTC), the site has been the focus of master planning activities. In 2006, UTC joined with a master developer to create an overall site plan encompassing a mix of uses to accompany the 6 million-square-foot Pratt & Whitney office and manufacturing complex remaining on the western portion of the property. Under that plan, and as approved under to the Design Development District I (DDD-1) Zone regulations, the University of Connecticut constructed its 40,000-seat football stadium in 2002, and the outdoor recreation retailer Cabela's opened a flagship store in 2007. These uses, together with the Pratt & Whitney complex and a designated 130-acre wildlife preserve, make up about half of the site, leaving some 500 acres remaining for additional development.

In March 2014, the Rentschler Field master developer reached agreement with Horizon Group Properties, Inc., a Michigan-based company, to develop a 350,000-square-foot outlet center on the site of the former airstrip. The center, to be named "The Outlet Shoppes at Rentschler Field," is scheduled to open in summer 2016, and also contemplates a 50,000-square-foot expansion.

The Silver Lane Corridor contains a number of assets that greatly enhance its potential for redevelopment. The area has excellent access to the regional highway system as well as to the rest of East Hartford. In addition, the proximity to Rentschler Field creates economic development possibilities stemming from current and anticipated future development there. Silver Lane is also well-served by transit, with numerous bus stops located along the Corridor. The Corridor could also play a role in the extension of CTfastrak, Fastrak East. The planned Fastrak East would extend rapid transit service from East Hartford to Manchester and ultimately the University of Connecticut at Storrs. A likely stop along Fastrak East is at the western end of the Silver Lane Corridor, at the intersection with Route 5 (Main Street).

The Silver Lane Corridor is significantly affected by frequent flooding from Willow Brook, a watercourse that drains the central portion of Town and flows generally along Silver Lane westward to the Connecticut River. The Town is in the final stages of completing a state-funded, \$250,000 hazard mitigation plan that analyzes flooding within a portion of the Willow Brook watershed and includes a plan to minimize the effects of flood waters within the vicinity of the Silver Lane Corridor.

Finally, Silver Lane has a strong residential core that provides a consumer population for additional commercial uses. The neighborhoods to the east of Forbes Street are attractive and

well-maintained, and many individual homes all along the Corridor have been upgraded by their owners, while the new Phillips Farm condominium complex near the eastern end of the Corridor provides an example of the type of infill residential development that should be encouraged.

The combination of all of these factors makes it imperative that the Silver Lane Corridor be studied in a comprehensive manner.

ii. Approach and vision, long term goals and objectives-

The vision of this project is to examine as a whole East Hartford's Silver Lane Corridor, highlighting the area's strengths, weaknesses, challenges and opportunities. Currently, funding restrictions have caused the Corridor to be examined in a piecemeal fashion. The goal of this project is to bring the results of these and other studies under one umbrella to create a comprehensive plan that will guide future development of this important asset.

iii. Expected outcomes and impacts to project area

The main expected outcome is the creation of a comprehensive planning document that can be used to guide development in a critical area of the Town's economic development efforts.

iv. Ongoing brownfield planning efforts including progress with EPA/DEEP's PREPARED workbook

In May, 2015, the Town was the recipient of a \$200,000 Brownfields Assessment Grant for the U.S. Environmental Agency. As this is the Town's first community-wide Brownfields grant, the Town is in the process of hiring a Licensed Environmental Professional (LEP) to perform a Town-wide Brownfields Inventory.

v. Identification and description (owner, current use, whether Superfund site, whether enrolled in a liability relief program, level/progress of assessment and clean up etc.) of known brownfield sites in the area

The Town intends to use part of its \$200,000 USEPA Brownfields Assessment Grant to conduct a community-wide Brownfields inventory. Until that project is completed, the number or level of contamination of Brownfield sites within the Silver Lane Corridor is unknown. However, possible Brownfields in the Corridor include:

Silver Lane Plaza, 818-850 Silver Lane - The Silver Lane Plaza is a 153,200 square foot retail & The largely vacant property consists of 3 separate buildings, (2) retail centers and (1) mixed use building. The property is comprised of 141,090 square feet of retail space and 12,110 square feet of 2nd floor office. Current Owner: Solar Todd Trust

Futtner Farm, 910-914 Silver Lane- Possible pesticide contamination. Current Owner: Robert F. Futtner

Five Star Cleaners, 832 Silver Lane- Dry cleaning establishment; possible volatile organic compounds (VOCs) contamination (Perchloroethylene). Current Owner: Solar Todd Trust

The Silver Lane Corridor contains a number of assets that greatly enhance its potential for redevelopment. The area has excellent access to the regional highway system as well as to the rest of East Hartford. In addition, the proximity to Rentschler Field creates economic development possibilities through current and anticipated future development there. Silver Lane is also well-served by transit, with numerous bus stops located along the Corridor. Finally, Silver Lane has a strong residential core that provides a consumer population for additional commercial uses. The neighborhoods to the east of Forbes Street are attractive and well-maintained, and many individual homes all along the Corridor have been upgraded by their owners. The new Phillips Farm condominium complex on Silver Lane provides an example of the type of infill residential development that should be encouraged.

vi. Legible map of the proposed BAR Project Area with names of streets, important landmarks, brownfield properties, etc.

See attached

c. Section 2 – Project Work Plan

i. Project Budget (including sources and uses of funds)

See attached

ii. Description of proposed activities and tasks (and estimated costs for each activity). The proposed Work Plan should include the applicant's full vision (i.e., 1. all project activities and tasks accomplished to-date (if any); 2. The current proposed activities to be accomplished utilizing the BAR Planning Grant and corresponding matching funds; and 3. Project implementation activities and tasks proposed to be accomplished post-project period) for the BAR Plan program.

| Project Tasks Completed to Date | Anticipated Outputs (projected activities, deliverables, reports) and Anticipated Outcomes (projected results, effects, improvements) | Anticipated Accomplishment Date(s) (Month/Year) | Funding Source |
|---|---|---|--|
| Willow Brook Flood Study | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study of the floodplain in the Willow Brook Watershed • Application to FEMA for Letter of Map Revision (LOMR) • Accurate documentation of the Willow Brook Floodplain | Nearly Complete | DEEP-funded Urban Act Grant |
| EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant Application | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding for Brownfields Inventory, • Funding for Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessments | Application approved in March, 2015 | Town funds and in-kind used to prepare application |
| Project Tasks To Be Completed | Anticipated Outputs (projected activities, deliverables, reports) and Anticipated Outcomes (projected results, effects, improvements) | Anticipated Accomplishment Date(s) (Month/Year) | Funding Source |
| Brownfields Inventory | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of Brownfields sites within project area | February, 2016 | EPA Grant |
| Phase I and Phase II assessments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase I and Phase II Reports • Improve knowledge of contamination at examined properties | June, 2016 | EPA Grant |
| Maximum Build-Out Scenario | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased knowledge of the condition and status of key parts of the Silver Lane Corridor infrastructure. | December, 2016 | BAR grant |
| Comprehensive Roadway Modifications Study* | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examination of possible widening to five lanes, to improve traffic flows, especially between Simmons Road and Forbes Street. | May 2017 | BAR Grant |

| | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|-----------------|-----------|
| Landscape Plan* | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study of buffering, landscaping and screening options to ease the visual transition between residential and commercial/industrial properties and enhance urban design. | July 2017 | BAR Grant |
| Site Design Regulations Study* | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examination of limitations on excessive curb cuts and reduction of impervious surface area. | September, 2017 | BAR Grant |
| Zoning Review* | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of the appropriateness of the B-1, I-2 and I-3 zones in the Corridor, given the type and scale of existing development. | November, 2017 | BAR Grant |

**Studies in priority order, if funding allows*

iii. Project timeline, schedule and description of deliverables

See Workplan above.

d. Section 3 – Applicant Capacity and Capability

i. Organizational capability

The Town of East Hartford successfully administers millions of dollars in federal, state and taxpayer funds each year. The Town recently completed the \$1.5 million reconstruction of Riverside Drive, which involved funding from the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA) the state Department of Transportation and Goodwin College. East Hartford was also recently awarded a \$900,000 grant from the state Department of Social Services (DSS) for planning and improvements to senior citizen facilities in town. Each year, the Town administers state grant programs such as the Town Aid Road grant, the Local Capital Improvement (LoCIP) grant, the Youth Task Force Grant and many others.

ii. Committed staff

The development of the plan will be managed by East Hartford Development Director Eileen Buckheit. Grant reporting and administration will be handled by Grants Manager Paul O’Sullivan. The Town also has other staff who possess a wide range of experience in fields such as engineering, planning and zoning and others.

iii. Experience and past performance

Town staff will provide considerable Brownfields experience to the study. The project will be managed by Eileen Buckheit, Director of Development. Ms. Buckheit has more than 10 years of

experience with brownfields grants, first in the City of Bridgeport, where she oversaw one of the first assessment grants awarded in the country.

Following her tenure with the City of Bridgeport, Ms. Buckheit successfully administered an assessment grant for the Regional Growth Partnership. Ms. Buckheit also was awarded a million dollar revolving loan fund for the region. In addition to administering these grants, Ms. Buckheit assisted several other communities with EPA grants programs, including a targeted site assessment grant for the Town of North Haven, and a cleanup grant for the City of New Haven.

As Commissioner of Planning and Development for the City of West Haven, Ms. Buckheit successfully obtained \$600,000 in Brownfields funding for the assessment of hazardous substances and petroleum sites, as well as a cleanup grant for a key parcel in the City's number-one economic development project.

Along with implementation of these EPA programs, Ms. Buckheit has experience in performing over fifty site assessments with State of Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development grant funds.

e. Section 4 – Partnerships, Collaboration, Leverage and Site Access

i. Establishment of advisory/steering committee-

Mayor Leclerc has selected Robin Pearson to head the Silver Lane Corridor Study Committee. Ms. Pearson currently serves as chairperson of the East Hartford Redevelopment Commission and is a partner in the law firm of Alter & Pearson, LLC. Ms. Pearson practices land use law, including permitting with regard to zoning and environmental matters. Ms. Pearson is currently a member of the Connecticut Bar Association's Planning and Zoning Section (Chairperson: 1991-1994) and was admitted as a member of the American College of Real Estate Lawyers in 2006. She has been rated as one of the best land use attorneys in Connecticut by New York Magazine, Super Lawyers and Best Lawyers in America.

Mayor Leclerc and Ms. Pearson are in the process of selecting other members of the Study Committee.

ii. Potential public-private partnerships- The largest public partnership would be with the EPA. The Town intends to use part of its \$200,000 Brownfields Assessment Grant to perform Phase I and Phase II studies on properties inside the Silver Lane Corridor.

Potential private partners include Corridor property owners.

iii. Leveraging of resources- The Town intends to leverage this grant with its EPA Brownfields Grant and the \$250,000 study of the Willow Brook Floodplain, which impacts many property owners within the Corridor.

f. Section 5 – Relation to State Policies, Programs, Initiatives and Projects

i. Description of how the proposed project is supportive of State policies:

- Transit-oriented development – Silver Lane is well-served by transit, with numerous bus stops located along the Corridor. The goals of transit-oriented development (invigorating neighborhoods, providing sustainable housing, retail and commercial options and creating lively, attractive gathering places) are an excellent match for the opportunities that exist along the Silver Lane Corridor.
- Job creation – One of the goals of the revitalization effort for the Silver Lane Corridor is to attract new commercial development that will provide employment opportunities for East Hartford residents. This effort has already resulted in a commitment to develop a 350,000-square-foot outlet center on the site of the former Pratt & Whitney airstrip. The center, to be named “The Outlet Shoppes at Rentschler Field” is scheduled to open in summer 2016, and also contemplates a 50,000-square-foot expansion. The developer has estimated that the center will generate more than \$1.2 million in annual property taxes and \$8.2 million in sales taxes upon completion.
- Affordable housing – The state Department of Housing’s 2013 Affordable Housing Appeals List shows that 16.7% of East Hartford’s housing stock consists of affordable housing units or 3,509 of 21,328 units. For this reason, East Hartford is exempt from the State of Connecticut Affordable Housing Land Use Appeals Act (see Connecticut General Statutes, Chapter 126a, Section 8-30g). Residential development will, however, be a key component in the revitalization of the Silver Lane Corridor.
- Historic preservation – The Russell Smith House, located at 502-504 Silver Lane was built in 1740. It is one of the many historic structures that can be found in the Town of East Hartford.
- Development of distressed municipalities – The Town of East Hartford has been designated a “Distressed Municipality” by the State of Connecticut. State statutes define distressed municipalities cities or towns suffering from “high unemployment and poverty, aging housing stock and low or declining rates of growth in job creation, population, and per capita income.” (Connecticut General Statutes Section 32-9p) East Hartford is in the bottom 11 percent of Connecticut municipalities when measured against this standard.
- Other public investments (infrastructure, etc.) – The State has invested heavily in the development of the Rentschler Field property, evidenced by the University of Connecticut’s construction of its 40,000-seat football stadium in 2002.

ii. If BAR Project Area includes an existing or planned commuter rail or bus rapid transit station

The westernmost area of Corridor includes the intersection of Silver Lane and Route 5 (Main Street). This area has been cited as a possible station on the proposed Fastrak East Transit system.

iii. Existing plans and programs or designations for the project area (MDP, NRZ, TOD Plan)

Part of Silver Lane has been designated an Incentive Development Zone, designed to encourage reinvestment in selected commercial areas that are primarily built-out. The zone may be applied to any area. The zone has a minimum lot size of 10,000 square feet, and parcels designated for the Incentive Development Zone must have frontage on a State highway or a Town-designated arterial or collector road.

iv. Past and ongoing state/DECD funding in project area

The state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) recently invested \$250,000 for a Flood Hazard Mitigation Study of the Willow Brook Watershed. The report, which is nearly complete, includes a plan to minimize the effects of flood waters within the vicinity of the Silver Lane Corridor.