

Community and Economic Vitality



This document provides a basic blueprint for long-term economic growth and sustainability in the Nashua Region. The plan is structured around five core goals including job creation and Workforce Development, Infrastructure Development, Quality of Place, Environmental Protection and Regional Coordination.

Adopted December 17, 2014

Image: Downtown Nashua.(NRPC)

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3	Retail Centers	21	Assets.....	43
Goals and Vision	5	Arts/Cultural Amenities.....	21	Challenges.....	46
Vision	6	Labor Force Characteristics.....	22	Opportunities	48
Goals and Strategies	6	Employment by Industry in Nashua Region,.....	22	Threats.....	49
Workforce Development and Job Creation	6	Age of the Labor Force	22	Plan Review and Public Outreach.....	52
Infrastructure Development.....	7	Regional Employment Trends	23	Role of the advisory committee	53
Quality of Place.....	8	Unemployment	25	Major themes from public outreach ..	53
Environmental Preservation	9	Median household Income	26	A vote for asset-based planning: Economic development that enhances downtowns, town centers, and natural features	53
Regional Coordination	10	Poverty	27	A consistent regulatory structure that allows for economic innovation, walkable development	53
Existing Conditions.....	11	Industry cluster analysis.....	27	Concern regarding demographic trends, desire to maintain multi- generational region	53
Regional Economic Profile	12	Job Creation	29	A focus on livability: Building a great region to live, work and play	53
Aging Population.....	13	Unemployment	31	More Options!	54
Young Adults.....	15	Employment Trends	32	Review of State and Local Economic Development Plans.....	54
Built and Natural Environment.....	16	Education and Training	32	BIA State Economic Development Plan	54
Natural Environment	16	Education Affordability	37	From Tailwind to Headwind: New Hampshire’s Shifting Economic Trends –	55
Built Environment.....	17	Infrastructure	37		
Downtowns and Village & Neighborhood Centers	18	Transportation	37		
Real Estate	19	Water and Sewer.....	38		
Destinations.....	20	Energy.....	39		
Historic Sites	20	Energy Costs	39		
		Broadband.....	40		
		Commercial and industrial real estate	41		

Arts and Economic Prosperity IV: Report for the State of New Hampshire.....	55
Local Plans	56
Conclusions	58
Priority Projects	59
Milford Commerce and Community District.....	60
Keyes Field Expansion, Milford Community Center.....	60
Wilton Town Hall Theater Conversion to Digital Technology	61
Bridge Street Waterfront Redevelopment.....	61
Front and Franklin Street Redevelopment.....	62
Mohawk Tannery Cleanup and Redevelopment.....	62
Pelham Water and Sewer Feasibility Study	63
Performance Measures	64
Sources.....	64
Appendix.....	64

Executive Summary

The American author Helen Keller, herself deafblind, once noted “The only thing worse than being blind is having sight but no vision.” This plan strives to integrate the economic development goals and strategies of 13 different municipalities, objectives and needs identified by residents across the area, and a thorough and honest analysis of current and forecast conditions to provide a series of goals, objectives, regional strategies and a shared vision to enhance community and economic development at the regional level. In short, it seeks to provide residents and policymakers a basic and impartial roadmap in which to structure and measure economic development efforts.

The plan endeavors to provide a thorough foundation upon which to measure future progress related to community vitality and economic development and offers strategies for advancing progress in strategic areas. It is also designed to provide guidance regarding what long-term investments will prove most successful in driving economic development.

This plan is also designed to meet the requirements of a Regional Economic Development Strategy as outlined by the U.S. Economic Development Administration to ensure that municipalities in the region enjoy access to federal grant and loan programs.

This plan celebrates the successes of the region in building a diverse and vibrant economy rich in high-paying skilled industries. It notes the value of the region’s impressive demographic markers, its rich historic and natural environments, strong community foundations and established infrastructure systems in pursuing economic development. It also recognizes the sincere love and sense of stewardship for the region’s future that its residents possess and the invaluable nature such efforts contribute to a stable and prosperous future.

This plan also recognizes that significant challenges will test the durability of the regional economy and its ability to adapt to new demographic conditions as well as national economic trends. It notes that issues like high utility rates, restrictive land use and zoning codes, increasing higher education costs and student loan debt burdens, and significant unmet infrastructure maintenance needs present potential barriers to continued economic growth.

The success of the Nashua regional economy rests on its ability to negotiate and adapt to changing conditions. The ability to adapt is well-developed in this region. When textile mills, once the foundation of the regional economy, closed up shop and moved to lower-cost areas, the region’s people stayed

and built a more resilient and diversified economy. When Digital Equipment Corp. closed its facilities and dealt a devastating blow to the regional economy, the region’s people stayed and built a successful network of start-up companies which cultivated an even stronger technology-centered economy.

While change is inevitable, the ability to adapt and even thrive in the wake of those changes has characterized the history of the development of the regional economy. This plan is designed to provide a roadmap of kinds to negotiate additional changes on the horizon. While no plan can foretell the future, an analysis of demographic trends and historical conditions provides a strong foundation in which to offer a number of strategies and recommendations. As Alan Turing, credited with the development of computer science once noted, “We can only see a short distance ahead, but we can see plenty there that needs to be done.”

Goals and Vision

Vision

The Nashua Region will foster economic growth while maintaining a high quality of life for residents, including preserving rural character, supporting vibrant town centers and downtowns, and promoting a creative economy

Goals and Strategies

Workforce Development and Job Creation

Leverage educational and job training resources in the region to support a highly skilled regional workforce that meets the needs of existing employers and supports new ones. Promote an environment that encourages and incentivizes entrepreneurial innovation in order to support balanced municipal tax bases.

What can NRPC do?

- Identify **industry clusters** in the region and partner with employers in the region to evaluate needs relating to job

training, workforce development, infrastructure and livability.

- Support and foster **workforce development and training program partnerships** between community colleges and universities and regional employers, including apprenticeship and internship opportunities.
- Promote the continued development of **diverse housing options** in the region, including workforce housing, to meet the needs of the regional workforce through continued outreach and technical support to municipalities.
- Develop a **toolkit of strategies and incentives** municipalities can leverage to support development on specific parcels

Tools for Municipalities

- [The New Hampshire Small Business Development Center](#)

provides existing and new businesses professional management advice and guidance as well as educational programming at no cost.

- [StayWorkPlay New Hampshire](#) focuses on retaining and attracting young workers to New Hampshire.
- [The NH Community Loan Fund](#) provides business loans between \$1,000 and \$500,000 to grow and improve small businesses.
- The Business and Industry Association of New Hampshire
- [STEM in New Hampshire: A Labor Demand-Supply Analysis](#)

Considerations for municipalities

- Consider expedited permitting and review processes for development projects that generate high quality employment opportunities.
- Consider scaling land use regulations and

impact/permitting fees to the size and intensity of developments, easing startup costs for small businesses.

- Consider updating municipal Internet sites to improve navigability and highlight the technological savvy, livability, and community values of a municipality.

Infrastructure Development

Leverage existing infrastructure and plan cost-effective infrastructure investments to support continued economic development in the region.

What can NRPC do?

- Plan for a diversity of **transportation options**, including increased public transit and pedestrian and bicycle offerings, to meet the mobility needs of all residents, including those without access to, or those who prefer to forgo the use of, an automobile.

- Continue to provide technical support to the New Hampshire Rail Transit Authority
- Plan improvements to **broadband access** in the region to ensure that residents and businesses are afforded swift access to communications and technological resources regardless of where they are situated.
- Facilitate a forum for municipalities to consider **shared municipal facilities** in order to reduce long-term infrastructure costs and improve service quality to taxpayers.

Tools for municipalities

- [NRPC Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan](#)
- [New Hampshire Rail Transit Authority](#)
- Several NH municipalities have adopted Complete Streets policies, including [Portsmouth](#), or are planning major complete streets projects, including [Concord](#).

- [NRPC LiveMaps](#) is an open source program that provides current GIS data to users in an interactive and user-friendly format.
- [NRPC Broadband Plan for the Nashua Region](#)

Considerations for municipalities

- Review municipal regulations to ensure that realistic opportunities are afforded to expand broadband access, particularly in those areas where access is limited or unavailable.
- Consider waiving impact fees and/or easing regulatory requirements for new development and redevelopment projects in strategic growth areas, including downtowns/town centers and brownfield sites, where infrastructure is already concentrated.
- With road maintenance consuming as much as 35 percent of municipal budgets in the NRPC Region,

focusing development on existing corridors, cluster provisions, and the easing of minimum lot sizes in strategic areas will help reduce road maintenance costs over the long term.

- Consider expanding data analytics capabilities to ensure that municipal services are deployed as appropriately and efficiently as possible.
- Consider leasing or selling surplus municipal land or facilities.
Example: Providing space for a coffee shop inside a municipal library

Quality of Place

Preserve and enhance the area's unique and attractive quality of place by supporting economic development that will enhance, and not diminish, the region's high quality of life.

What can NRPC do?

- Provide outreach to municipalities regarding context-sensitive design strategies relating to transportation, land uses and site design.'
- Partner with municipalities and community organizations to promote and market destinations in the region, including **arts and cultural venues and historic sites**.
- Consider a marketing strategy that leverages the region's retail destinations by outlining proximate post-shopping destinations for visitors to the region.
- Assist communities to develop targeted **design guidelines and master plans** for smaller geographies including neighborhoods, corridors and village areas
- Assist communities in **identifying funding sources** for

projects that enrich a community's quality of place, including those that incorporate historic preservation, land conservation, and expanded recreational offerings.

Tools for municipalities

- The NHDOT maintains a [context-sensitive design page](#) with guidance related to transportation investments that compliment surrounding natural and built features.
- The NH State Council for the Arts calculated the economic impact of arts and culture organizations in its "[Arts & Economic Prosperity Report for the State of New Hampshire IV.](#)"
- The [NH Creative Communities Network](#) outlines steps to consider in adopting an Arts and Cultural Plan.

- [NH Creative Communities Toolkit](#)

Considerations for municipalities

- Consider waiving impact fees, easing regulatory requirements, and/or awarding density bonuses for development proposals that address broader community livability goals. Communities might award incentives in support of a variety of objectives, including the preservation of historic structures and the provision of arts and cultural performance and programming space, among others.
- Consider showcasing a municipality's support for historic preservation and/or arts and cultural programming by including information on local artists, cultural venues and historic sites in municipal websites or publications. Consider partnering with local organizations to install public

art installations in areas where appropriate.

- Consider adopting a 'Complete Streets' policy to ensure that roadway projects incorporate all transportation users.
- Consider asking municipal Heritage Commission representatives to provide input relating to development applications and major community policy proposals.
- Consider working with developers to provide affordable housing options to artists and those involved in the creative fields.
Examples: Mennino Place, Concord, N.H. Western Avenue Lofts, Lowell, Mass.

Environmental Preservation

Strive to protect undeveloped areas and minimize environmental impacts associated with economic development.

What can NRPC do?

- Review and update the regional **open space** plan and assist communities to develop open space and conservation plans.
- Encourage economic development in already developed areas, particularly downtowns, to **minimize impacts to existing open space and animal habitats**.
- Update the region's bicycle and pedestrian plan and promote alternative travel mode use to **reduce emissions** associated with automobile use.
- Provide technical support to municipalities in meeting federal stormwater regulations.

Tools for municipalities

- [UNH Stormwater Center](#)
- The [New Hampshire Stormwater Manual](#) is a

planning and design tool for communities, developers, designers and members of regulatory boards, commissions, and agencies involved in stormwater programs in New Hampshire.

- The NH Association of Conservation Commissions provides guidance and support to conservation commissions and to conservation-related efforts across the state.

Considerations for municipalities

- Review environmental regulations and zoning to ensure they are consistent with long-term environmental and livability goals. Consider consolidating environmental regulations when feasible.

Regional Coordination

Recognizing that all major economic development incurs regional benefits and impacts, the region will support continued collaboration across municipalities

between municipal officials, employers, members of the regional workforce, educators, and regional and state partners.

What can NRPC do?

- Partner with communities and major business and trade organizations in the region, including chambers of commerce, rotaries and civic clubs, to better **market and brand the region**
- Form a **regional economic development committee** to stimulate coordination and discussion to improve the region's economic competitiveness.
- **Provide a regional forum** for communities to collaborate on issues of economic development and a platform to promote and advertise community events

Tools for municipalities

- The [New Hampshire Municipal Association](#) provides a database of cooperative sharing

agreements between municipalities in New Hampshire as well as potential impediments to review before considering such agreements.

- The [NH Office of Energy and Planning](#) includes a list of regional and state planning resources

Considerations for municipalities

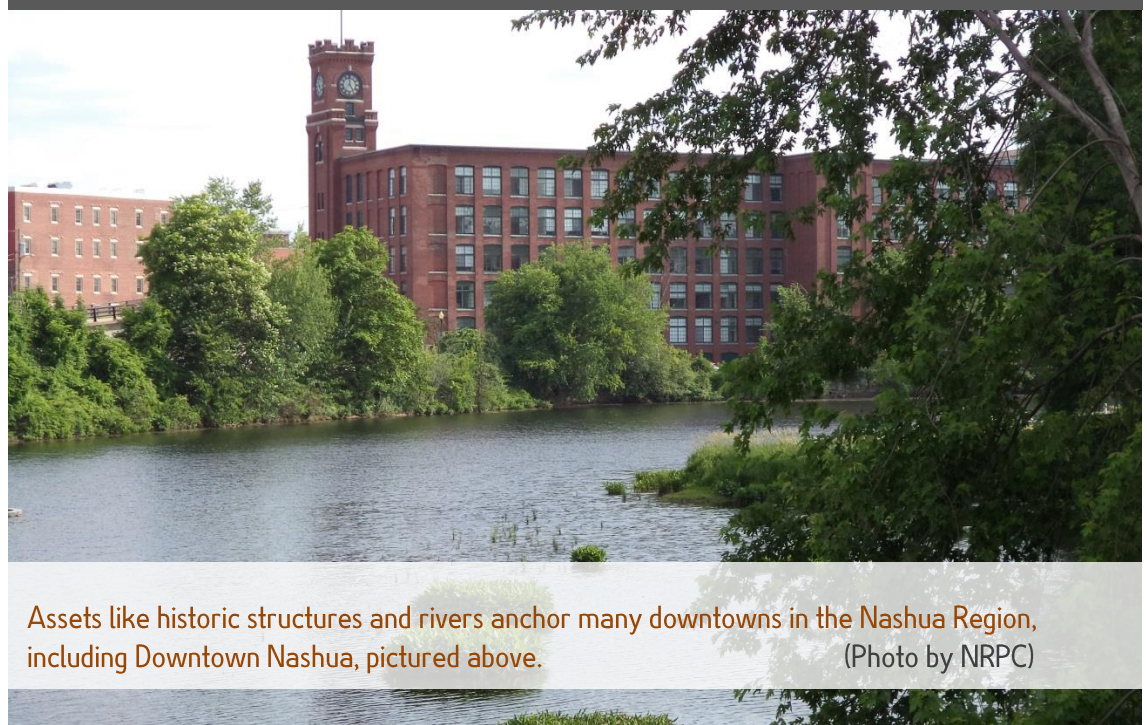
- When feasible, investigate opportunities for shared municipal services or facilities to reduce long-term infrastructure costs and improve service quality to taxpayers.
- Consider partnering with other municipalities to help accomplish broad regional goals including implementing environmental best practices, promoting economic development or improving transportation efficiency.

Existing Conditions

Regional Economic Profile

The Nashua Region's small geographic size – with 13 municipalities traversing just over 346 square miles, it the smallest planning region in the state – is overshadowed by its much larger population and economic profile. While the region makes up just 3.7 percent of New Hampshire's land area, it is home to more than 15 percent of all residents and jobs in the state (NH Department of Employment Security, 2012). Residents benefit from a healthy, diversified economy with strong footprints in the manufacturing, information technology and finance sectors and close access to surrounding employment centers.

Anchored by Nashua, the second largest city and employment center in the state, the region comprises a diversity of landscapes and environments, including urban, suburban and rural communities. Open space and relatively undisturbed natural areas, so prized by residents of the region, exist near population and employment centers. Many small historic town centers from the Colonial era remain intact and relatively undisturbed, while larger downtowns offer residences, services and employment opportunities within relatively compact and walkable



Assets like historic structures and rivers anchor many downtowns in the Nashua Region, including Downtown Nashua, pictured above. (Photo by NRPC)

environments. The region borders the Boston labor market, the eighth largest in the United States (according to Bureau of Labor Statistics 2013 figures), and its economy is closely tied to developments there.

On average, residents are significantly wealthier than their peers nationally and are measurably more likely to possess undergraduate and professional degrees. Children enjoy access to public schools which outperform state and national peers in standardized test scores. Poverty rates, for

both children and adults, remain well below state and national rates. Despite these many significant advantages, the region does face economic challenges, including an aging workforce, slowing and often scattered population growth, unmet infrastructure needs, limited housing and transportation options, and an economy that has not yet fully recovered from the punishing effects of the Great Recession.

Population Demographics

Information in the Existing Conditions and Needs chapter provides an analysis of population distribution in the region and growth trends. Changes in the region's population are dependent on two factors; the rate of natural change (births and deaths) and migration.

"I WANT TO MAKE SURE THAT MY KIDS CAN AFFORD TO LIVE HERE WHEN THEY GRADUATE COLLEGE

-Merrimack resident

Growth Trends

Like the rest of New Hampshire and much of the Northeastern region of the country, population growth in the region has subsided significantly in recent years. This is a departure from previous years, particularly the latter half of the twentieth century, when the region's population grew at a significantly higher rate than both the state and the nation. While demographers expect

population growth to increase somewhat in future years, it is not expected to rival growth rates experienced from the 1960s to the 1990s.

Aging Population

The Nashua Region, like New Hampshire, is aging at a faster rate than our peers across the nation. As noted in the Existing Conditions and Needs chapter, between 1990 and 2010 the share of the region's population under age 45 declined, while older cohorts grew significantly. This trend was particularly pronounced among those aged 20 to 44, which declined as a share of the population from 44.5 percent in 1990 to 31.5 percent in 2010.

Population projections forecast that older age cohorts will increase between 2010 and 2040, with the largest increases centered in the population age 70 and over. Most notably, the region's population age 69 and under is projected to decline by approximately 3 percent, while the population aged 70 and over are is projected to jump by more than 300 percent. The share of the population under age 40 in 2040 is projected to remain relatively flat with a 1.3 percent decrease in that cohort projected.

Births and Deaths

Between 1995 and 2013, births in the Nashua Region have consistently outpaced deaths, contributing to natural increases in the population every year. From 2011 to 2013, 6,108 births occurred in the region relative to 3,870 deaths, producing a total natural increase of 2,238. However, the difference between births and deaths in the region has narrowed significantly over the last two decades. Between 1995 and 1997, births in the region totaled 7,843; by 2011-2013 that figure declined by 22 percent to 6,108. During the same period, deaths increased by 23 percent, jumping from a total of 3,141 in 1995-1997 to 3,870 for the 2011-2013 period. These trends have helped reduce the region's rate of natural increase by 52.4% from 1995-97 to the 2011-13 period.

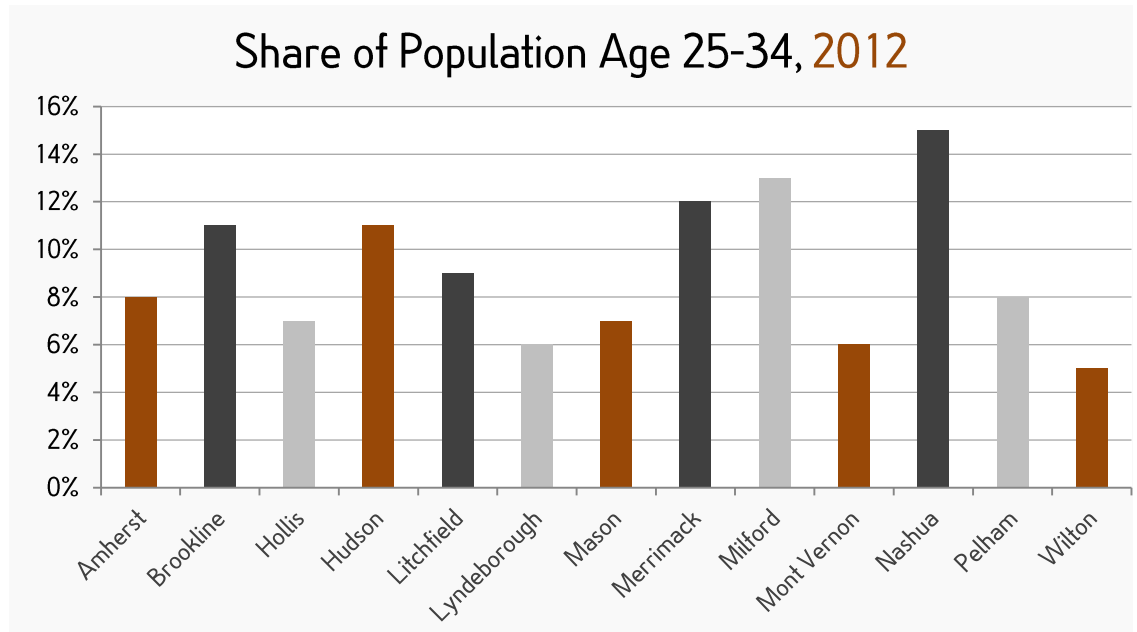
Should this trend continue, the region may experience no natural increase in the population due to deaths matching the number of births. It is also possible that deaths may outnumber births over time, leading to a natural decrease in the population.

Migration

The region experienced the net outmigration of 3,424 people between 2000 and 2010, as

noted in the Existing Conditions and Needs chapter. This was driven by out-migration in the City of Nashua, where those moving out of the city outnumbered those moving in by a margin of 5,114. Three additional municipalities experienced out-migration, including Merrimack (-1,323), Wilton (-268), Amherst (-58) and Hudson (-50). Eight of the region’s municipalities experienced net in-migration, led by Pelham (+1,138) and Milford (+722).

In most of the region’s municipalities net migration changes were relatively minor. For example, net migration did not exceed a margin of 500 in nine of the region’s 13 municipalities.



The region’s young adult population is most concentrated in higher population municipalities, including Nashua, Merrimack and Milford.

"I LOVE THE LANDSCAPES HERE AND THE RURAL CHARACTER, BUT I ALSO LIKE THAT BASIC CONVENIENCES ARE CLOSE BY."

-Amherst resident

According to an analysis of migration patterns between 2010 and 2013 performed by the New Hampshire Employment Security Economic and Labor Market Information Bureau, international migration trends have been positive in Hillsborough County, meaning that more people from abroad are moving into the county than county residents

moving abroad. At the same time, the county has registered a higher level domestic out-migration; meaning that fewer people

from within the United States are moving into the county than county residents moving out. Hillsborough County was one of six NH counties to experience net out-migration during the period.\

Table Hillsborough County Population Indicators, 2010-2013

Natural Change	5,095
Domestic Migration	-5,022
International Migration	3,242

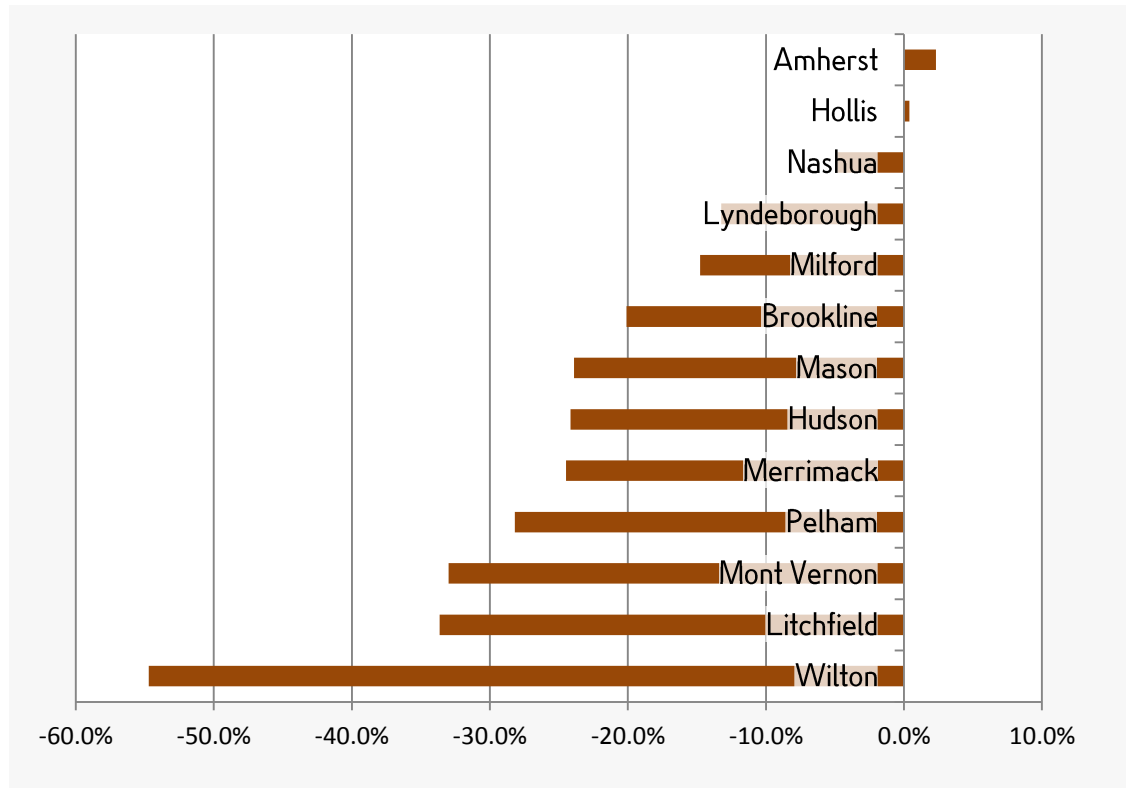
Like the Nashua Region, population growth across Hillsborough County has subsided significantly over the last ten years (the Nashua Region constitutes approximately 51 percent of the county's population). This is due largely to a sharp drop in domestic migration, which slipped from +2,379 between 2000 and 2003 to -5,022 between 2010 and 2013. The rate of natural increase and international migration also subsided, but those decreases were far less than the change recorded in domestic migration. These decreases are likely somewhat attributable to the effects of the Great Recession.

Young Adults

The Commission was asked to examine the region's young adult population and how trends related to the cohort's growth or contraction compared to other parts of New Hampshire. Below are the rates of change in the age 25-34 population in the Nashua Region's 13 municipalities as well as for the ten largest employment centers in the state. New Hampshire's ten largest employment centers, in order, are Manchester, Nashua, Concord, Portsmouth, Salem, Keene, Lebanon, Merrimack, Dover and Bedford.

Within the Nashua Region, many outlying communities experienced the steepest drops

Change in Age 25-34 Population, Nashua Region 2000-2012



The region's young adult population fell most dramatically in rural communities between 2000 and 2012 including Wilton, Litchfield and Mont Vernon.

Source U.S. Census 2000, American Community Survey 2008-2012

in the young adult population, notably Wilton at over -50 percent, but also Litchfield and Mont Vernon. Drops in the population were far less severe in communities like Amherst, Hollis, Lyndeborough, Nashua and Milford. In the case of Amherst and Hollis, growth might be partly attributable to the fact that the

towns experienced steep population jumps in the 1980s and early 1990s. Young families who moved in during those eras may have been replaced by similarly aged families over the last 12 years.

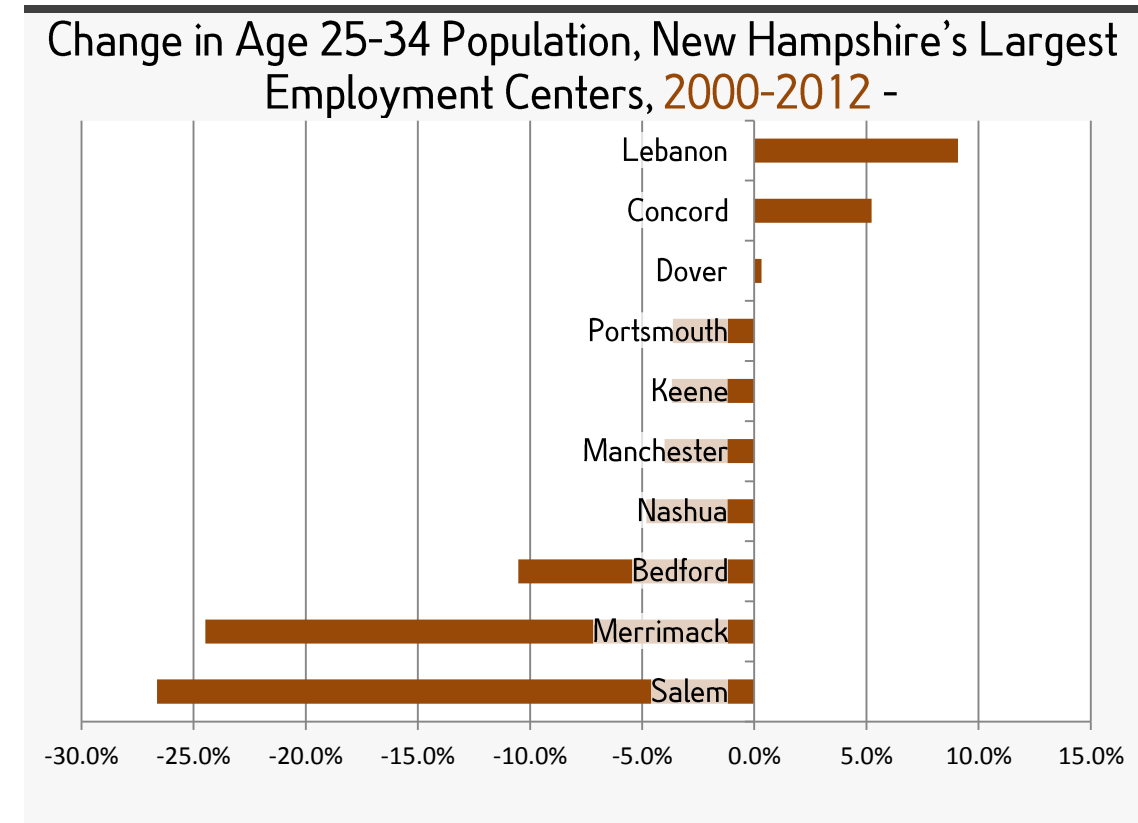
Looking at the state’s 10 largest employment centers, one clear pattern is apparent. For at least six of the seven municipalities which experienced growth or minimal losses in the 25-34 demographic, all contain some urban characteristics and a diversity of housing options. The three communities with the steepest losses are more low density in nature and dominated by single-family residential markets.

Built and Natural Environment

It is not possible to place an accurate value on how significantly the region’s built and natural environments impact the region’s economy and its quality of life, but both clearly play a significant role in shaping the livability and desirability of the region. Residents consistently reported that the region’s rural and historic character, as well as convenient access to amenities, accounted for their favorite characteristics of the region.

Natural Environment

The Nashua Region’s diverse topography, the heavily forested nature of the terrain and a number of rivers, lakes, and other water bodies contribute to a natural environment



Among New Hampshire’s largest employment centers, Lebanon and Concord gained more young adults between 2000 and 2012, while Merrimack and Salem saw the largest declines.

Source U.S. Census 2000, American Community Survey 2008-2012

that has helped make the region a sought after place to live. The region’s topography slopes from 85 feet to nearly 1,800 feet and accommodates a number of rivers and lakes, as well as diverse animal and plant life. More than any other single attribute, the region’s

“rural character” was cited by residents as their favorite characteristic of the region. Additionally, the protection of rural character is noted as a goal in the master plans of 12 of the 13 municipalities in the region.

Although many areas of the region have undergone development, many tracts remain

undeveloped, and a significant portion of land is preserved as open space in perpetuity. More than 26,000 acres of land is protected as permanent open space and there are 6,800 acres of land across the region dedicated to agricultural use.

While it is difficult to fully quantify the effect of the region's natural environment on its economy, it does not appear to play a significant direct role in the region's employment profile. Agriculture and forestry is a very small share of the region's workforce, employing only 72 people in the region, according to 2012 New Hampshire Employment Security figures. This is not to suggest that agriculture is not an important part of the region's landscape. In fact, in a telephone survey, residents cited "protecting local agriculture" as the most significant environmental priority in the region.

And while the region includes several unique natural features, it is not a major resort or tourist destination and has relatively few hotels and inns. Most of the region's major hotels are located in Nashua and Merrimack and appear most oriented to business stays. It is likely that the region's natural environment offers its largest economic contributions in indirect economic benefits

by vastly enhancing the region's quality of life.

Built Environment

Settled in the mid to late 1600s, many Colonial-era homes, churches and meetinghouses intersperse the region's landscape and contribute to an attractive architectural aesthetic consistent with other New England communities. Most towns in the region remain centered around their original colonial-era town centers or villages.

In other communities, the industrial revolution dramatically impacted the built environment. This is particularly true of the City of Nashua and the Towns of Milford and Wilton where water power from rivers was harnessed to run textile mills. These mills powered the economies of the communities and supported surrounding commercial and residential development. Several of these mills remain standing and have been repurposed into housing and office spaces.

Since 1960, population growth in the region has consistently migrated from the City of Nashua to outlying communities. While Nashua housed 61 percent of the region's population in 1960; the city accommodated only 42 percent in 2010. During the same period, population growth in outlying

communities, particularly those located nearest the City of Nashua and along major transportation corridors, experienced rapid growth. Notably, Merrimack's population increased from fewer than 3,000 residents in 1960 to more than 25,000 in 2010. Similarly, Hudson grew from fewer than 6,000 residents in 1960 to nearly 25,000 in 2010. Growth in suburban communities was largely driven by single family home construction.

In response to continued growth, many communities enacted minimum lot sizes for residential construction in addition to other land use and growth management regulations. These minimums vary significantly by municipality. While many communities enforce one and two acre minimum lot requirements for large swaths of their land area, such requirements rise to five acres in parts of the region, including for a large section of Amherst.

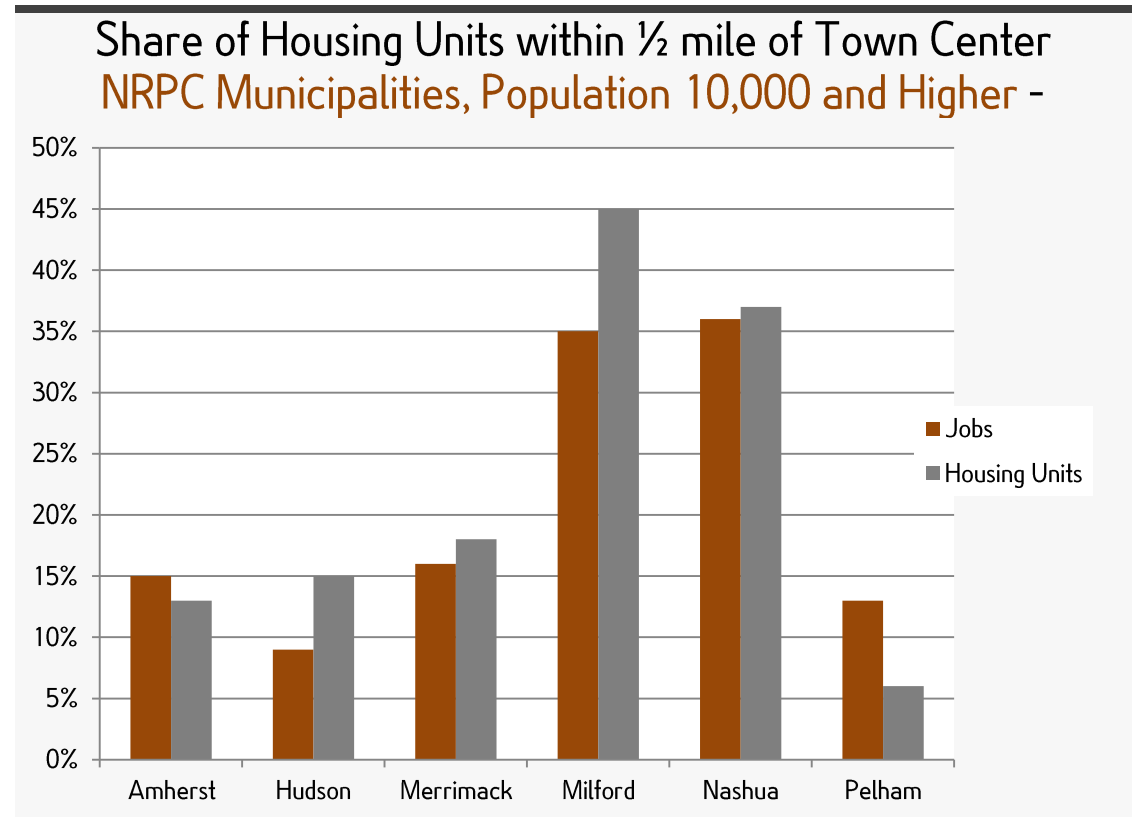
While these regulations have helped promote a sense of a more rural landscape, they have also placed pressure on residential development to scatter across larger geographic areas. Over time, this pattern of development can be increasingly expensive for communities to provide services to. For example, costs related to road maintenance, trash pickup, and school transportation are

increasingly expensive in sparsely populated areas. Refer to the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, for a comparison of annual municipal road maintenance costs by municipality.

Additionally, while residents have consistently noted that they value the region’s rural landscape and many of its suburban conveniences, many have also raised concerns regarding sprawl patterns of development, limited transportation options and a lack of affordable housing units in suburban and rural areas and a general concern that dominant development patterns threaten the natural and historic character of communities.

Downtowns and Village & Neighborhood Centers

Some municipalities in the region, including Nashua, Milford, and Wilton, provide a significant level of employment and residential opportunities within close proximity of their downtowns. All three communities developed significantly during the rapid industrialization of the nation in the late 1800s and early 1900s before the automobile became a dominant form of transportation. In the 1900 Census, the three communities together comprised 79 percent of the region’s population. A lack of mobility



Among larger population municipalities, Milford and Nashua retain the highest share of housing units and jobs within close proximity of their downtowns.

Source NRPC GIS

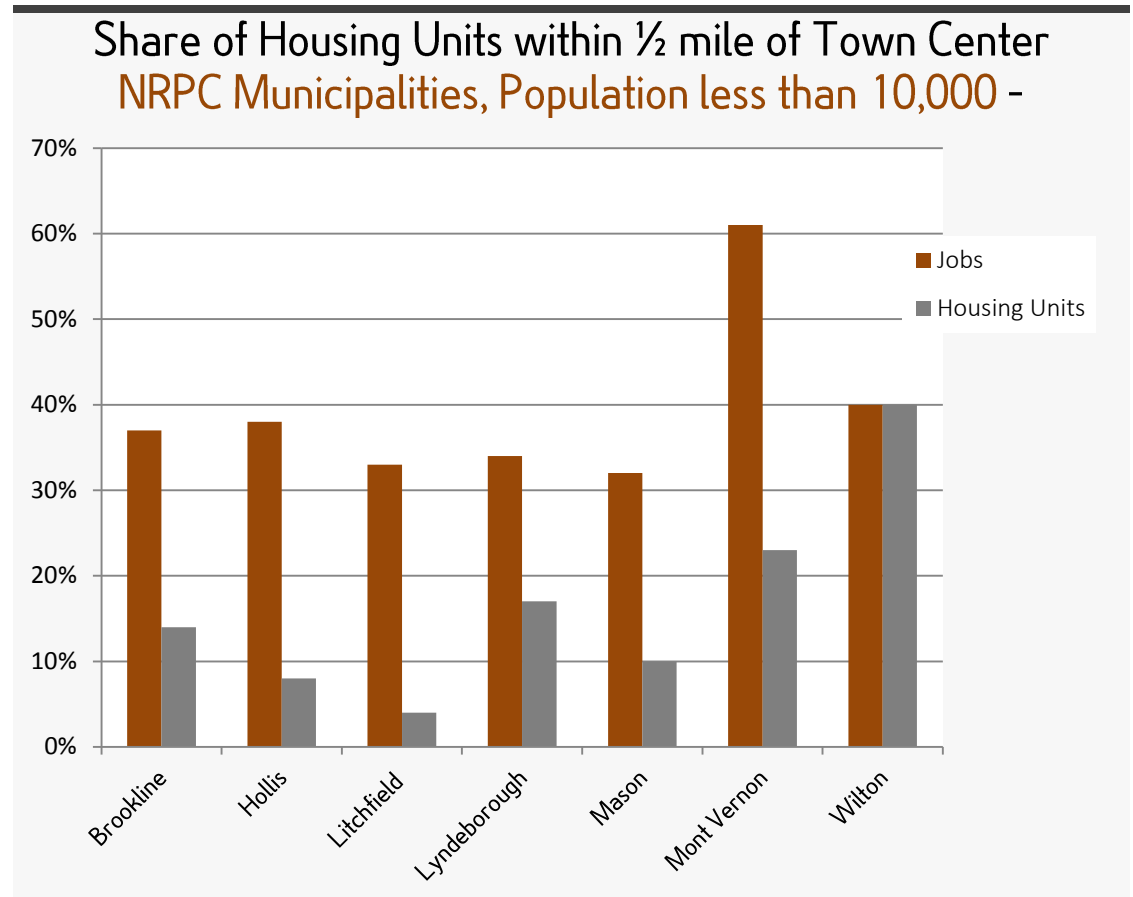
during that period forced residential and commercial areas to be located within walking distance of major employment centers, then largely made up of textile mills and centered along rivers in downtown areas.

While economic and mobility advances have surely influenced these communities over time, much of their respective built forms were shaped prior to the introduction of the automobile. Thanks significantly to that influence, many services and employment opportunities in those communities remain

located within walking distance of residential areas.

Most municipalities in the region experienced rapid residential growth post 1960, during periods when automobile travel was firmly integrated in the region's transportation system. Mobility provided by car travel as well as real estate preferences favoring large lot single-family housing contributed to decentralized growth in these communities. While town centers remain important historical landmarks and centers of municipal government in such communities, they are generally not major residential or services centers and many lack walkable environments.

Some of the region's communities remain quite rural, largely untouched by the industrial revolution and less impacted by population growth after 1960. Mont Vernon is a good example of such a community, in which 23 percent of the town's homes are located within close proximity of the town center. The town's historical building stock remains largely intact and much of the remaining land area maintains a distinctly rural quality. Notably, Mont Vernon has very few jobs (under 125 total), with most of them concentrated in the Village School or municipal facilities in the center of town.



Among small population municipalities, Mont Vernon and Wilton retain the highest share of residences and jobs within close proximity of their town centers.

Source NRPC GIS

Real Estate

The region's built and natural environments clearly impact the region's real estate values. Real estate listings in the region often market a property's proximity to surrounding built or

natural areas (often downtowns or town centers). Additionally, through public outreach efforts associated with the regional plan, residents consistently noted that they believed the region's rural character, as well as its well-defined and historic town centers

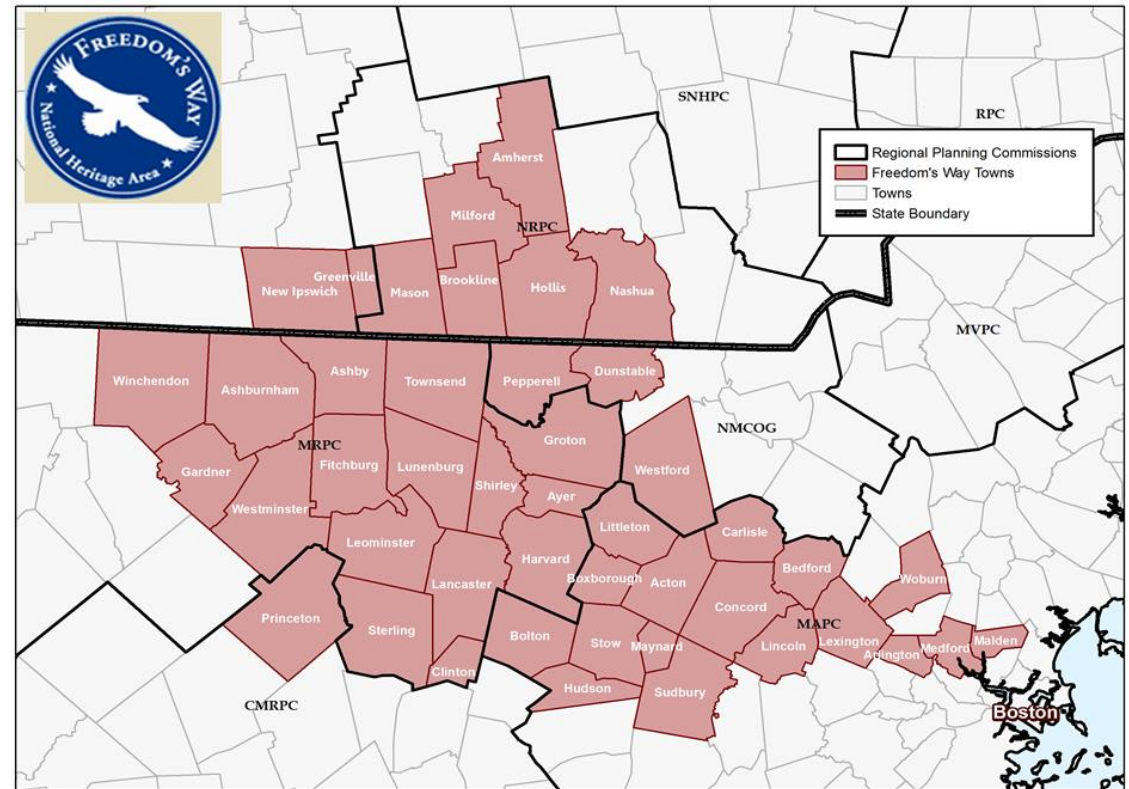
and downtowns, contributed significantly both to the region’s livability and its economy, through higher real estate values.

Destinations

While retail centers in the region are a destination, particularly for many Massachusetts-based residents, the area is not a significant tourist destination. Community and civic events, like the Milford Pumpkin Festival and the Nashua Christmas Stroll, attract visitors for limited periods. Additionally, certain businesses, including Parker’s Maple Barn and the Milford Drive-In, are significant regional draws, but a network of tourist destinations is not well articulated in the region.

In public outreach efforts associated with the regional plan, many residents, noting that the region contains a wealth of historic structures and attractive natural features, indicated that they would like to see the region better avail itself to tourism. Many noted that a more comprehensive marketing campaign as well as infrastructure investments to support visitors would help improve the region’s tourism standing.

Freedom’s Way National Heritage Area -



The Freedom’s Way National Heritage Area includes the Nashua Region municipalities of Mason, Brookline, Milford, Hollis, Amherst and Nashua.

Source: Freedom’s Way National Heritage Area

Historic Sites

The region’s storied Colonial past as well as its history as an economic power during the Industrial Revolution combine to help provide residents a wealth of historic sites to

enjoy today. In many areas, historic areas have been relatively undisturbed for centuries. Both the Amherst and Hollis Villages are designated National Historic Districts and provide visitors a sense of a community center as it existed in the Colonial era.

In Mason, the boyhood home of Samuel Wilson (1766-1854) graces the town center. Wilson, who supplied rations for soldiers during the War of 1812, is believed to be the source of the moniker 'Uncle Sam.' The Town of Merrimack includes the former home of Matthew Thornton, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. Additionally, the former center of Monson, N.H. – the state's only abandoned town from the Colonial era - straddles the Milford and Hollis border and is protected today for visitors to enjoy.

Many of the mills that powered the region's economy during the Industrial Revolution, including several located directly alongside rivers and canals, remain standing in the region. Densely clustered residential and commercial districts help provide some glimpse today of life during that period.

During outreach efforts, many members of the public advocated better coordination and marketing of the region's historic sites. The Freedom's Way National Heritage Area is one unique regional effort already underway. This cross-border coordination covers 994 square miles and includes 45 towns, including eight in New Hampshire and six in the Nashua Regional Planning Commission area (Amherst, Brookline, Hollis, Mason, Milford,

and Nashua). Created by an act of Congress in 2002, the heritage area recognizes the critical role the region played in shaping American Democracy, including some of the nation's earliest guarantees of self-governance, property rights and religious freedoms. The area also recognizes the region's unique role in the American Revolutionary War and later political and social movements, including abolitionism, labor rights, women's suffrage and religious movements.

While it is difficult to quantify the economic value of historic preservation, some efforts have been undertaken in that area. A 2013 study commissioned by the Utah Heritage Foundation and conducted by a real estate consulting firm, found that for \$1 million invested in historic preservation, 17 direct and indirect jobs were created, resulting in \$850,554 in salary and wages and \$100,000 in economic activity in other areas (PlaceEconomics, 2013).

Retail Centers

The State of New Hampshire does not levy a sales tax on retail purchases. The lack of a sales tax, coupled with the fact that the region is located on the heavily populated Massachusetts border (a state which levies a 6.25% sales and use tax on many purchases),

has helped make the Nashua Region a center for retail trade. Major retail centers include the Pheasant Lane Mall, a one million square foot enclosed shopping mall, and the Merrimack Premium Outlets, a 560,000 square foot outlet mall of 100 stores.

Additionally, a significant diversity of independent retail stores are scattered throughout the region, with concentrations in the downtowns of Nashua, Milford and Wilton.

Cross-border traffic clearly helps sustain the region's retail base, as a significant cluster of commercial activity is centered within one mile of the Massachusetts border. In public outreach for the regional plan, several members of the public noted that while the region has proven successful in attracting retail visitors, not enough effort has been providing entertainment and sight-seeing options for such visitors.

Arts/Cultural Amenities

The Nashua Region is home to a number of arts and cultural destinations. Residents enjoy offerings like the Northern Ballet Theater, Andy's Summer Playhouse, Andres Institute, Nashua Theatre Guild, Nashua Chamber Orchestra, Souhegan Valley Dance Theater, Peacock Players, and Riverbend

Theater Company. The City of Nashua's International Sculpture Symposium, an annual event designed to elevate the awareness and appreciation of sculpture, is the only one of its kind in the country.

One measure of the breadth of arts and cultural offerings in a community is the number of workers employed in the Arts, Entertainment and Recreation sector. According to the New Hampshire Department of Employment Security, Nashua and Milford account for the largest workforce in this area. Together, the two municipalities support more than 68 percent of all arts, entertainment and recreation jobs in the region (NH Department of Employment Security, 2012).

A recent report by the New Hampshire State Council on the Arts found that arts related organizations employ more than 13,000 people directly in the state. Additionally, more than 3,500 additional jobs are made possible in New Hampshire through spending by arts and culture organizations. Finally, patrons of the arts spend more than \$22 every time they attend an arts or cultural event, excluding the cost of admission. This provides a steady stream of revenue to restaurants, shops and hotels which depend on such spending.

Labor Force Characteristics

The City of Nashua marks the center of employment in the region, accounting for over 52 percent of jobs in the region. Employment centers, both in the City of Nashua and across the region, are largely centered along major transportation corridors, including the F.E. Everett Turnpike, Route 101A and the Main Street corridor in Downtown Nashua. Approximately 85 percent of all jobs within the region are located within one-quarter mile of these three routes. Secondary routes, including NH State Routes 3A, 13, 28, and 111 provide most of the remaining employment in the region.

In addition to Nashua, the Town of Merrimack is a significant employment center in the region, supplying 18 percent of all jobs. This is primarily due to the presence of a few very large employers, including Fidelity Investments, the Merrimack Village Outlets, Anheuser-Busch, BAE Systems and PC Connections, Inc. Together Nashua and Merrimack provide approximately 72 percent of all employment in the region (NH Department of Employment Security, 2014).

Employment by Industry in Nashua Region,

The Existing Conditions chapter details the major industries in the Nashua Region. The largest employment industries in the region include manufacturing, retail trade, health care and social assistance and educational services.

Age of the Labor Force

In the Nashua Region, 47 percent of workers are over the age of 44. Workers age 55 and over represent 20 percent of the region's workforce (*Reference Existing Conditions and Needs chapter*). Only 17 percent of workers are aged 25-34. Some of the region's largest industries employ large shares of workers who will approach retirement age over the next 10-15 years. This is particularly true of manufacturing, in which 26.5 percent of workers are between the age of 55 and 64 (NH Department of Employment Security).

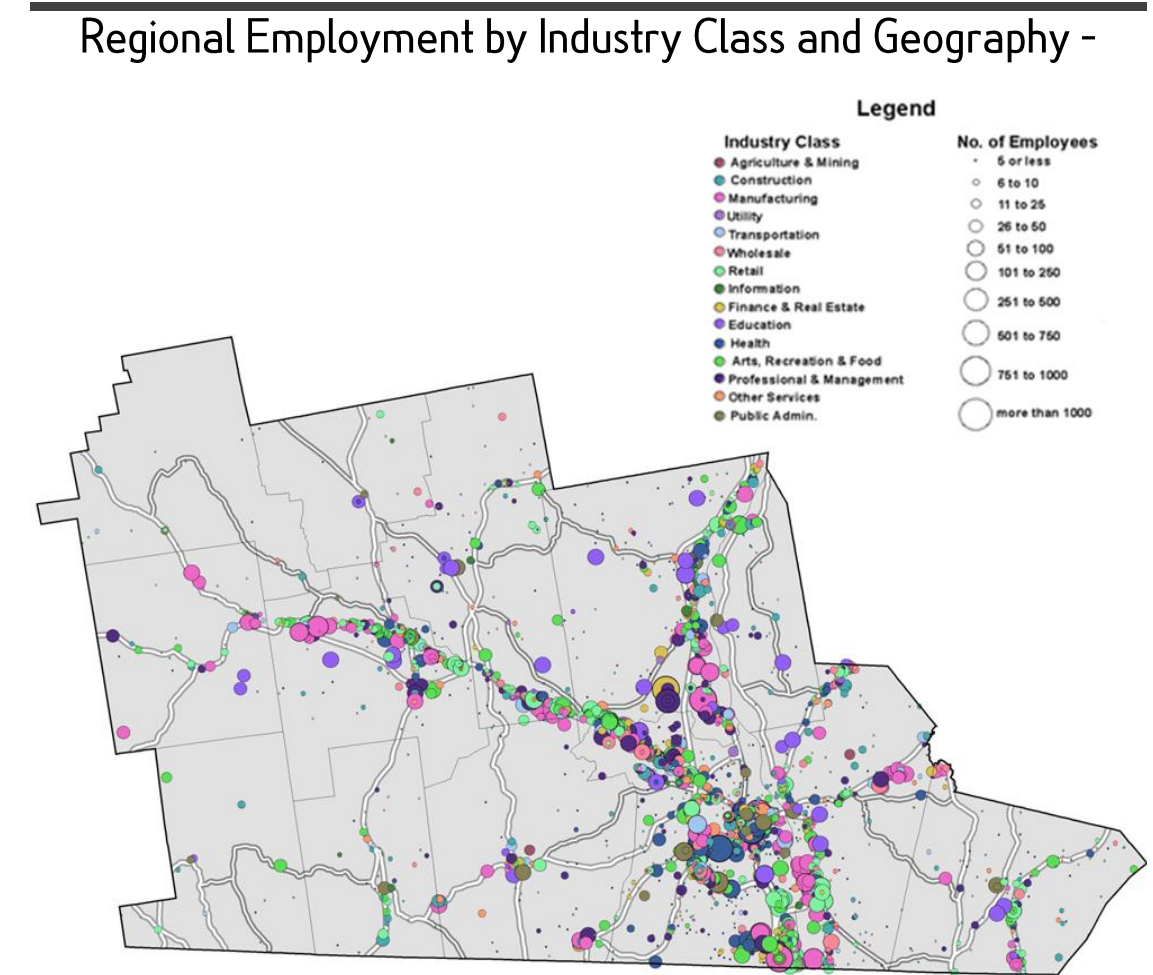
As members of the workforce retire, it will become increasingly important that employers maintain access to a younger pool of workers to replace them. Should the region experience a labor shortage to fill such positions, the region's desirability to prospective employers may diminish over time.

Regional Employment Trends

Many employment industries were somewhat buffered by the effects of the Great Recession, including government, healthcare and educational services; demand for such services was relatively constant, or even positive, through the recession. While the Nashua Region includes tens of thousands of jobs in these industries, they make up a proportionately smaller share of the employment base than in other regions of the state.

In fact, the region has a comparatively large footprint in industries that were particularly hard hit by the recession. These industries include manufacturing, finance and insurance. As a consequence of the region's employment profile, job losses were more pronounced in the Nashua Region than in many other surrounding areas in New Hampshire and Massachusetts.

Regional employment statistics in this plan are aggregated by two sources; the New Hampshire Department of Employment Security and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The Department of Employment Security calculates employment statistics based on municipal and regional planning commission (RPC) boundaries. Municipal figures are updated more frequently while



Employment in the region is concentrated along major transportation corridors including the F.E. Everett Turnpike, Route 101A and the Daniel Webster Highway.

Source: NH Dept. of Employment Security 2010

those aggregated by RPC boundaries date to 2012.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics uses both state and U.S. Census-defined New England City and Town Areas (NECTAs) to aggregate

economic indicators. NECTAs are similar to metropolitan statistical areas, however they are divided by town and city and not county boundaries. This reflects the reality in New

England that municipal boundaries best define regions, relative to counties which are larger and whose boundaries can appear arbitrary.

The Nashua NECTA area includes all NRPC Region towns, with the exception of Pelham, which is classified as part of the Lowell-Billerica-Chelmsford NECTA area. The Nashua NECTA area also includes additional municipalities, including Greenfield and Greenville to the west, Pepperrell and Townsend, Massachusetts to the south, and Londonderry, Windham, Derry, Chester and Raymond to the east (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012).

As of 2012, the region had not yet recovered all of the jobs it lost in the recession. In fact, the region will not reach 2007 employment levels without the creation of approximately 5,000 additional jobs. However, since 2010 the region has enjoyed job growth. For example, in 2011 and 2012 the region recovered approximately 2,844 jobs, or about 36 percent of the jobs it lost in the recession.

Regional Employment by Municipality, 2005-2013 -

	2005	2007	2009	2011	2013
Amherst	4,413	4,818	4,579	4,458	4,318
Brookline	749	746	612	565	631
Hollis	2,393	2,351	2,393	2,014	2,022
Hudson	11,231	10,952	10,358	10,670	9,478
Litchfield	838	748	898	900	977
Lyndeborough	137	134	137	113	107
Mason	150	141	165	168	178
Merrimack	16,607	17,446	15,078	14,991	16,999
Milford	6,912	6,662	6,232	6,320	6,097
Mont Vernon	145	153	170	157	145
Nashua	52,826	51,997	48,965	49,675	51,397
Pelham	2,070	2,197	2,186	2,175	2,395
Wilton	1,674	1,789	1,637	1,342	1,311
TOTAL	100,145	100,134	93,410	93,548	96,055

As of the fourth quarter of 2013, only employment in Pelham and Litchfield had fully recovered beyond pre-recession levels

Source: NH Dept. of Employment Security

Despite job creation since 2010, the economic recovery in the Nashua Region has slightly trailed growth in surrounding regions. Under New Hampshire planning commission boundaries, the Nashua Region had 5.1 percent fewer jobs in 2012 than it did in 2007. Comparatively, the Strafford Region had only 1.5 percent fewer jobs, the Southern New Hampshire Region (Manchester Area) 2.8% fewer jobs, and the

Rockingham and Central New Hampshire Regions 1.7 percent and 1.8 percent fewer jobs respectively.

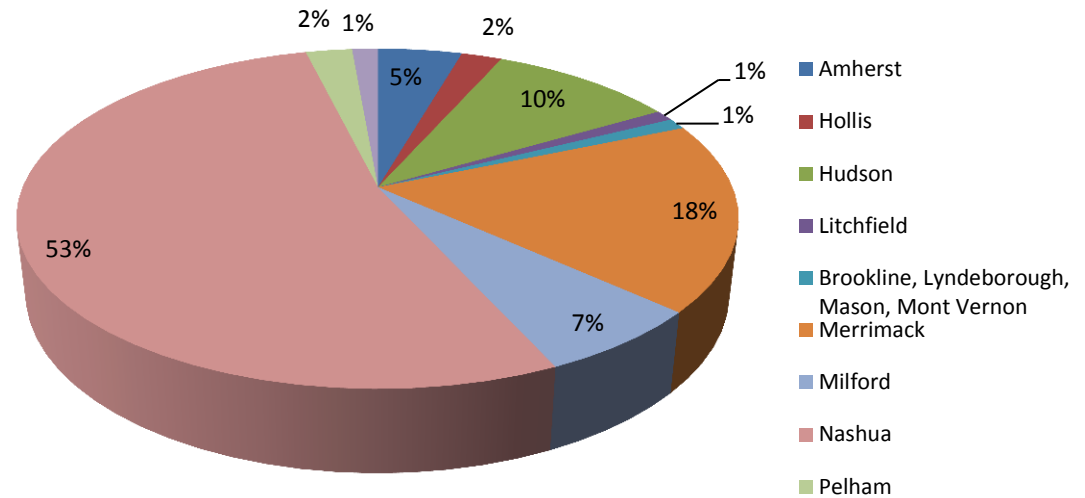
The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics calculates employment levels using slightly different area boundaries. Utilizing those boundaries to analyze growth in the Nashua Region relative to surrounding regions supports a similar conclusion. A loss of 4.9 percent of

jobs in the Nashua Region since 2007 is more severe than the 1.6 percent drop in the Manchester Area or the 0.5 percent drop in the Lowell Area. Moreover, it appears particularly low relative to the Boston/Cambridge Area and the Portsmouth, NH Area, where job growth has actually exceeded 2007 levels by 1.6 percent and 0.9 percent respectively.

Within the region, very few communities have recovered all of the jobs they lost during the recession. Only Litchfield and Pelham, which in 2012 comprised only 4 percent of the region’s employment, offered more jobs in 2012 than they did in 2007. In the City of Nashua, the region’s employment center, job losses were less severe. By 2012 the city had nearly recovered all of the jobs lost during the recession, falling just 2.8 percent short of peak levels in 2007.

Job losses were more pronounced in Hudson and in many of the region’s most rural communities. Hudson housed 11 percent fewer jobs in 2012 than in 2007, while job losses exceeded 10 percent in Hollis and in the communities of Brookline, Mason, Lyndeborough and Mont Vernon (the four communities combined comprise less than 1.5 percent of the region’s employment, however). Job losses were most pronounced

Regional Employment by Municipality, 2012 -



Nashua and Merrimack account for over 70 percent of employment in the Nashua Region.

Source: NH Dept. of Employment Security

in Wilton, which in 2012 had 28 percent fewer jobs than in 2007.

Unemployment

In 2012, the annual average unemployment rate in every municipality in the region registered below the national unemployment rate. Moreover, in 10 of the region’s 13 municipalities, rates tracked below the state average, which is nearly two percentage points lower than the national rate.

Lyndeborough and Mont Vernon boasted the lowest rates, at 4.2 percent and 4.6 percent respectively.

In three municipalities – Hudson, Nashua and Pelham – the rate exceeded six percent. However, only Pelham, with an unemployment rate of 7.3 percent came close to matching the national rate of 7.4 percent. Unemployment rates in most municipalities remained below the state

average and well below the national average despite a loss of nearly 8,000 jobs in the region to 2010 and a tepid recovery to 2012. This is likely evidence that residents of the region increasingly relied on surrounding labor markets for employment during this period, particularly the healthy Boston-Cambridge market. In 2007, before the onset of the Great Recession, unemployment rates in the region were particularly low. In fact, in a majority of municipalities the rate registered at or below 3 percent, a rate that is historically low; for example, the national unemployment rate has never once registered below 3.9 percent since 1969 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics).

Unemployment levels in the region were dramatically impacted by the recession and spiked upward in 2009 and 2010, though they remained well below national rates during those years. In 2011, the rate fell in 12 of the region’s 13 municipalities, and in 2012, the rates remained level or improved slightly in most communities. The nation experienced a dramatic drop in unemployment from 2011 to 2012, when the rate dropped from 8.9 percent to 7.4 percent. The drop was far less dramatic in the Nashua Region, though that is likely attributable to the fact that unemployment

Unemployment by Municipality, 2005-2013

	2005	2007	2009	2011	2013
Amherst	3.1%	3.0%	5.0%	4.9%	4.7%
Brookline	3.3%	3.0%	5.6%	5.0%	5.4%
Hollis	3.3%	3.1%	5.3%	4.9%	4.9%
Hudson	4.2%	3.8%	6.7%	5.9%	5.8%
Litchfield	3.4%	3.2%	5.7%	5.5%	5.1%
Lyndeborough	2.8%	2.8%	5.5%	5.0%	4.9%
Mason	4.2%	4.0%	5.9%	5.7%	5.1%
Merrimack	3.1%	3.0%	5.8%	5.0%	4.9%
Milford	3.1%	2.9%	6.0%	5.0%	5.1%
Mont Vernon	2.9%	2.7%	4.8%	4.5%	4.3%
Nashua	4.1%	3.8%	7.0%	6.1%	5.9%
Pelham	5.4%	4.9%	8.2%	7.1%	7.2%
Wilton	3.1%	3.1%	6.5%	5.2%	4.7%
NEW HAMPSHIRE	3.6%	3.5%	6.2%	5.5%	5.3%
UNITED STATES	5.1%	4.6%	9.3%	8.9%	7.4%

Unemployment rates across the region continue to track well below the national rate.

Source: NH Dept. of Employment Security

rates never peaked in the region to the degree they did on the national level.

Median household income

In 2012, median household incomes in every municipality in the Nashua Region tracked higher than both the state and national averages. Four communities – Amherst, Brookline, Hollis, and Litchfield – boasted

median incomes over \$100,000 that were nearly, or more than, double the national median household income of \$53,046.

Median household incomes in Nashua and Milford were lowest in the region, though both registered above the state level and both had relatively small household sizes.

Household income growth was strong across the region between 2000 and the 2008-2012 period. All but two municipalities in the region, Hollis and Wilton, matched or surpassed the national rate of income growth. Eight of the region's 13 municipalities also matched or surpassed New Hampshire's rate of income growth.

Poverty

Poverty rates in all of the region's communities, when measured at the municipal level, track well below the national poverty level of 14.9 percent. In three of the region's municipalities, poverty rates register above the state level of 8.4 percent; they include Mason (10.9 percent), Nashua (9.3 percent), and Wilton (7.1 percent). Notably, poverty rates in eight of the region's municipalities register below five percent (U.S. Census American Community Survey, 2008-2012).

Analyzing poverty levels on the census tract level indicates that concentrated poverty remains a challenge in Central Nashua. In four census tracts blanketing Downtown Nashua, an area constituting 22 percent of the city's population, poverty rates far exceed the national average, measuring between 27.2 and 30.5 percent. In Nashua's remaining 13 census tracts, poverty rates do

Household Size and Poverty Rate -

	Median Household Income	Average Household Size	Poverty Rate
Amherst	\$113,260	2.8	3.6%
Brookline	\$102,785	3	2.9%
Hollis	\$102,159	2.8	1.2%
Hudson	\$85,500	2.8	3.9%
Litchfield	\$108,466	3.1	4.8%
Lyndeborough	\$85,457	2.5	5.2%
Mason	\$88,750	2.7	10.9%
Merrimack	\$90,114	2.6	2.8%
Milford	\$68,451	2.5	5.9%
Mont Vernon	\$93,828	2.9	4.3%
Nashua	\$65,671	2.4	9.3%
Pelham	\$96,852	3	3.6%
Wilton	\$68,693	2.6	8.7%
New Hampshire	\$64,925	2.5	8.4%
United States	\$53,046	2.6	14.9%

Litchfield boasts the largest average household size while Nashua is home to the smallest.

Source: American Community Survey, 2008-2012

not exceed 9.8 percent. Areas of South Nashua (U.S. Census American Community Survey, 2008-2012).

Industry cluster analysis

An industry cluster analysis compares shares of employment within a designated region to the nation's employment profile. For those industries in the region which have a higher

share of workers than the nation, a location quotient of 1 or higher is computed. The higher the location quotient, the higher the share of workers in a particular industry is relative to the nation's employment composition. For example, a location quotient of 2 for retail trade would indicate that the region has twice as many workers in the retail industry than the nation.

Industry Location Quotient Analysis -

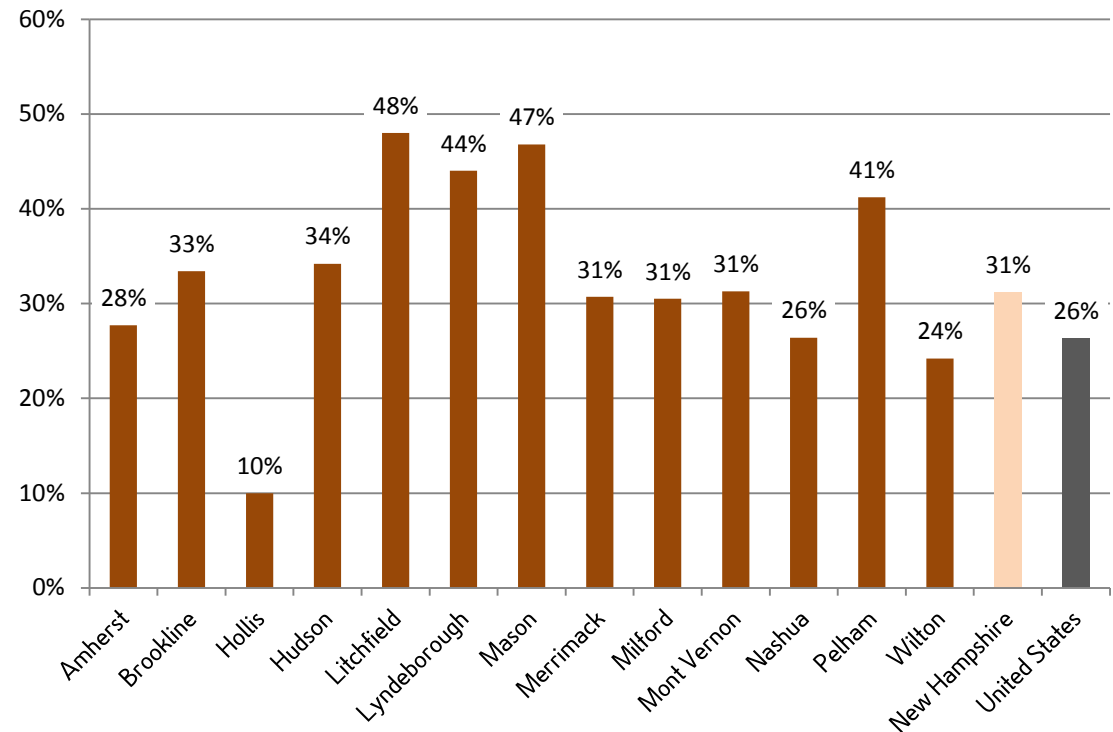
ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT & RECREATION	0.87
FINANCE & INSURANCE	1.49
INFORMATION	1.01
RETAIL TRADE	1.50
WHOLESALE TRADE	0.97
CONSTRUCTION	0.69
AGRICULTURE, FORRESTRY, FISHING	0.07
TRANSPORTATION & WAREHOUSING	0.56
HEALTHCARE & SOCIAL ASSISTANCE	0.85
ADMINISTRATIVE & SUPPORT SERVICES	0.80
PROFESSIONAL & TECHNICAL SERVICES	1.02
MANUFACTURING	1.99
ACCOMODATION & FOOD SERVICES	0.82

The region has comparatively large employment footprints in retail trade, manufacturing and finance and insurance.

Source: NH Dept. of Employment Security

For industries which have a lower share of workers in a particular industry relative to the nation, a location quotient of lower than 1 is computed. A location quotient of 0.6 for agriculture indicates that a region has 40%

Growth in Median Household Income, 2000-2012 -



Litchfield, Mason and Pelham have recorded the highest growth in median household incomes in the region since 2012.

Source: U.S. Census 2010 and ACS 2012

fewer jobs in agriculture relative to the nation.

A location quotient analysis of the Nashua Region indicates that the region enjoys proportionately higher shares of employment in manufacturing, retail trade

and finance and insurance. The region's manufacturing industry is particularly robust; its location quotient of 1.99 indicates that the share of employment in manufacturing is approximately twice the national share. The region's location quotient by industry is included below.

Computer and Electrical Manufacturing

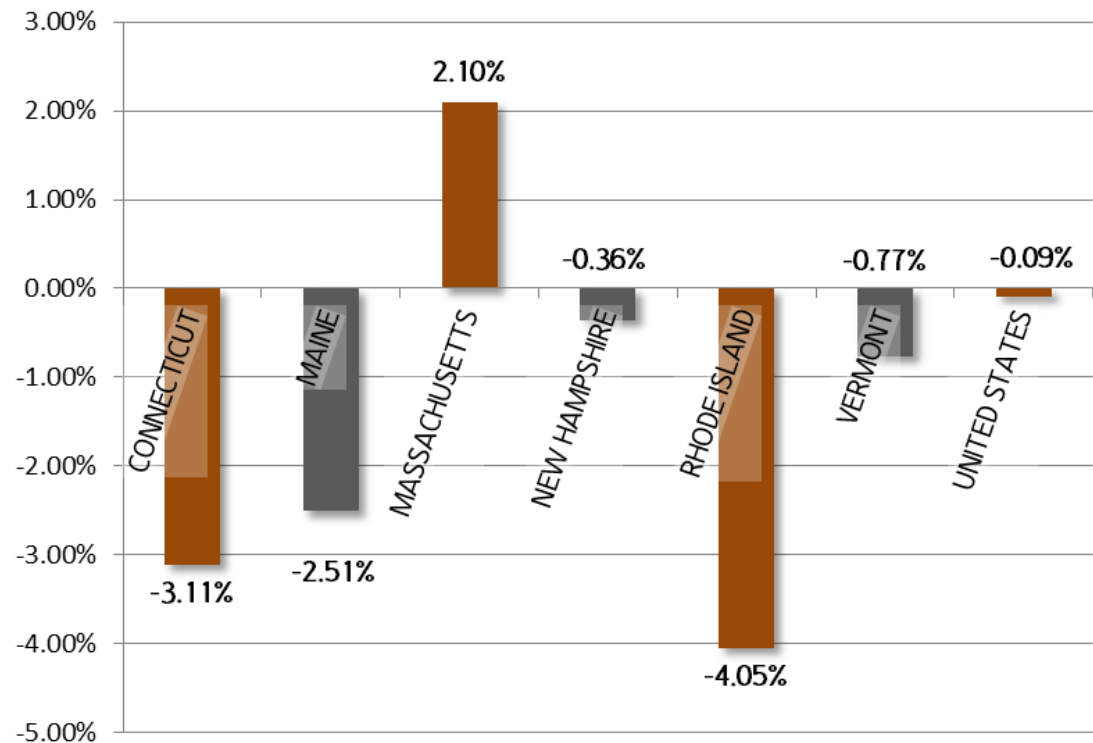
When examining employment in sub-industries in the region, one particular field stands out. The Nashua Region employs over 9,600 workers, or more than 10 percent of its workforce in computer and electrical manufacturing. Compared to the nation, the Nashua Region's location quotient for this sub-industry of manufacturing is **11.65**, indicating that nearly 12 times as many of the region's workers work in this field relative to the nation.

Computer and electrical manufacturing is a highly skilled field. The region's workers in the industry earn an average weekly wage of nearly \$1,900 (NH Employment Security). While the region's strong foothold in this high paying sub-industry represents an economic strength, it could become a weakness should external factors negatively impact the industry. For a discussion of factors influencing employment in computer and electronic manufacturing, please see the State of the Economy section of this plan.

State of the Economy

One purpose of a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy is to analyze major state and national economic trends and consider how they might impact, or are already impacting, the regional economy.

Employment Change Pre-recession peak-2014 -



In terms of job creation, Massachusetts is leading the New England region out of the recession, while New Hampshire is closely tracking the national recovery.

Source: U.S. Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Economic Analysis

This portion of the chapter explores trends in job creation, employment by sector and unemployment levels on the state and national level and analyzes their potential impacts to the region.

Job Creation

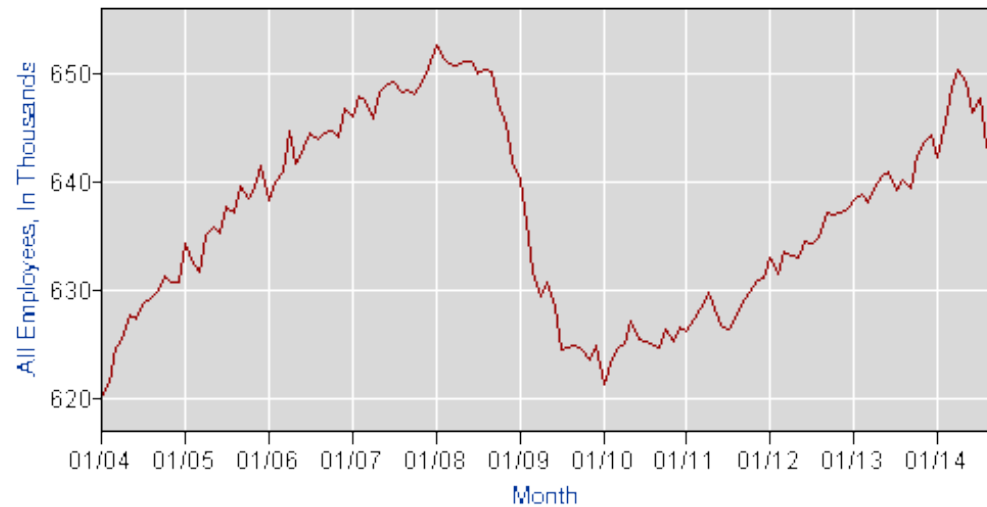
In March 2014 the U.S. economy reached a significant milestone. After more than six arduous years, the nation finally recovered all of the private sector jobs it lost during the Great Recession. Between 2007 and 2009 the

nation shed 8.8 million private sector jobs. It took from 2009 to 2014 to recover 8.9 million jobs. However, as of April 2014, total non-farm national employment still trailed peak pre-recession employment due to cuts in public sector jobs (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014).

In New Hampshire, where population growth has been very slight and even in decline in some areas - the U.S. Census estimates that four of New Hampshire's 10 counties, all located in the western or northern part of the state, have lost population since 2010 - job creation has generally kept pace with national growth. As of early 2014, private sector employment in New Hampshire now slightly surpasses peak pre-recession levels. However, overall employment remains slightly below 2008 levels due to cuts in government employment. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, New Hampshire reached its peak level of employment in January 2008 with 652,700 total nonfarm jobs. The state lost 31,400 jobs (or approximately 4.8 percent of its workforce) between that peak and January 2010.

While New Hampshire's recovery has been consistent, the state, like the nation, has not observed speedy job growth. By April 2014,

NH Non-Farm Employment, Seasonally Adjusted -



Employment has steadily grown in New Hampshire since 2010, although the recovery in 2014 has been somewhat uneven.

Source: U.S. Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Economic Analysis

the state reached 650,300 jobs, recovering approximately 94 percent of jobs lost during

the recession but still approximately 2,400 short of its peak level in 2008. Fortunately, job growth since January 2013 has been more robust; the state added approximately 10,000 jobs over the 15 month period or approximately 800 jobs per month. Some parts of the state, including the Portsmouth area, have recovered all jobs lost in the

recession and experiencing additional growth.

New Hampshire has performed relatively well compared to its New England neighbors in job creation since the Great Recession, though it has trailed behind growth in Massachusetts. As of April 2014, all states in New England, with the exception of Massachusetts, boasted fewer jobs than they did at their peak pre-recession levels. Massachusetts, which recovered all of the

jobs it lost during the recession in November 2012, posted 2.1 percent more jobs in April 2014 than it did during its peak prior to the recession. The Nashua Region has benefitted from its proximity to the Boston Metropolitan Area where job growth has outpaced growth in other parts of the state.

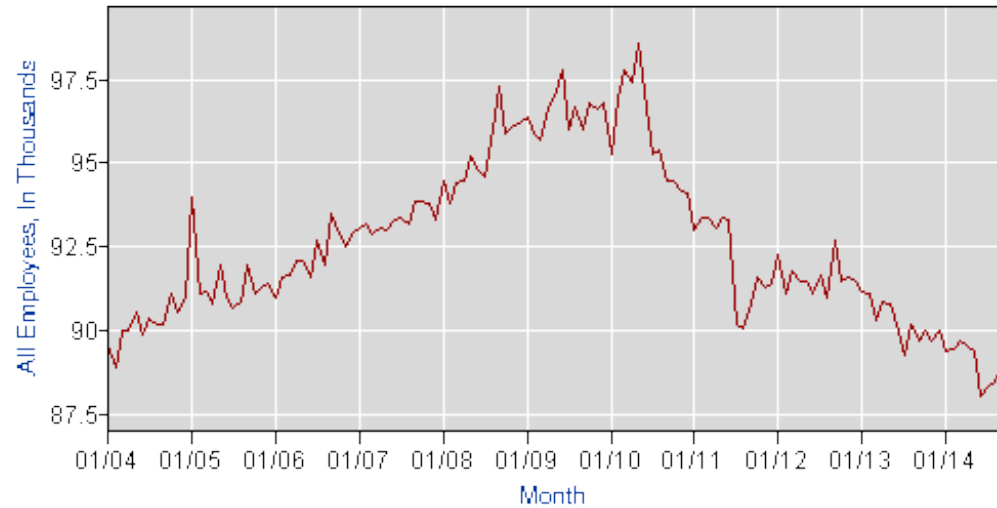
The recession was particularly hard on the Southern New England states of Connecticut and Rhode Island which combined had 73,300 fewer jobs in April 2014 than they did at their peak levels prior to the recession.

While private sector employment in New Hampshire now exceeds its pre-recession levels, government employment has experienced significant reductions. In April 2014, there were approximately 5,000 fewer government jobs in the state than in January 2008 and 9,000 fewer government jobs in the state than in May 2010. Government employment increased slightly in the immediate wake of the recession, thanks in part to a higher demand for services and passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, before falling sharply in 2010 and subsequent years.

Unemployment

New Hampshire has long enjoyed an unemployment rate that compares very

New Hampshire Government Employment -



A steep drop in government employment in New Hampshire since 2010 has contributed somewhat to total employment levels not yet reaching pre-recession levels in the state.

Source: U.S. Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Economic Analysis

favorably to other states and the nation. In February 2014, New Hampshire’s unemployment rate was estimated at 4.7 percent, or a full two points below the national rate of 6.7 percent. Over the last 10 years, New Hampshire has historically enjoyed an unemployment rate that ranks among the lowest of all states. Still the unemployment rate remains above rates of 3.4 percent experienced in 2007. Unemployment in the Nashua Region, as

noted in the Existing Conditions chapter, generally tracks slightly below state levels.

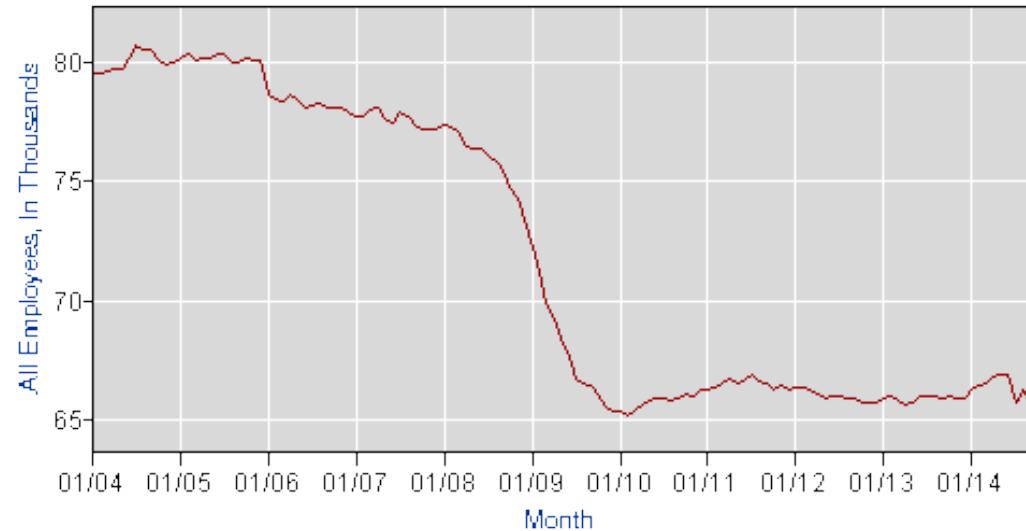
While low unemployment rates are generally regarded as a positive development, it’s important to monitor the rates over time to ensure stability. Very low unemployment rates suggest a labor shortage while high rates indicate a deteriorating employment situation.

Employment Trends

Manufacturing employment in the United States has declined consistently over the last 60 years, though the sector has enjoyed a bit of a recovery since 2012. Here in the Nashua Region, manufacturing, and particularly computer and electronic manufacturing, is a lynchpin of the regional economy. A location quotient analysis found that manufacturing accounts for approximately double the rate of employment than it does on a national scale. Moreover, computer and electronic manufacturing, which employs more than 9,000 workers in the region, enjoys a regional location quotient of 11.7, suggesting that the region employs nearly 12 times as many workers in the sector than are on the national scale.

Unfortunately, manufacturing in the region, like across the nation, has declined somewhat over the last 12 years. Two major factors, offshoring of labor and improved productivity through technological innovation, have exerted downward pressure on manufacturing employment. It is notable however that the region enjoyed growth in manufacturing employment from 1992 to approximately 2001. In order to maintain a presence in associated fields, the region might consider calibrating workforce training

New Hampshire Manufacturing Employment -



New Hampshire's high utility rates may be impacting employment growth in the manufacturing sector..

Source: U.S. Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Economic Analysis

efforts to associated advanced fields which enjoy a more positive growth outlook.

Education and Training

One of the Nashua Region's most significant economic strengths is its well educated workforce. In every single one of the region's municipalities, four-year college graduates make up a larger share of the population

than the national average. Additionally, in a healthy majority of the region's municipalities – nine of 13 – four-year college graduates exceed the state average, including in Nashua, the region's largest municipality by far. Amherst and Hollis accommodate the largest share of the population with four-year degrees; more than 60 percent of residents in each community have at least a bachelor's degree. Moreover in three of the region's

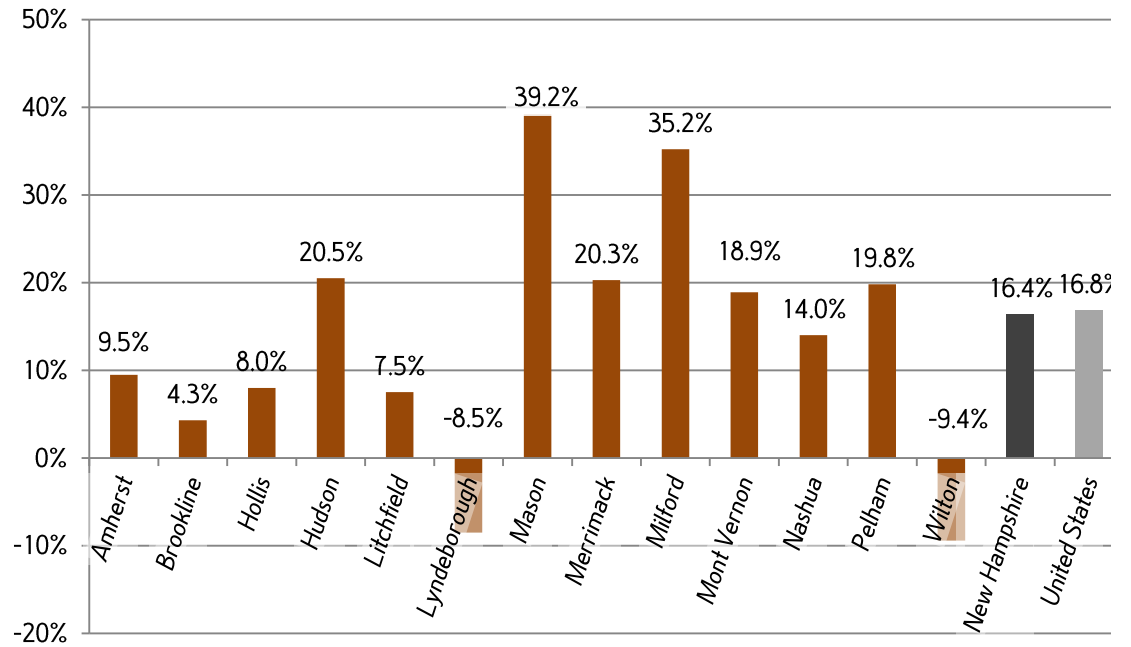
municipalities, more than 20 percent of residents have a professional or master’s degree; a rate that exceeds the national share more than twofold.

Pelham’s population has the smallest share of residents with at least a bachelor’s degree; slightly fewer than 30 percent of residents have earned one. Additionally, in Hudson, Lyndeborough and Wilton, slightly fewer residents have a bachelor’s degree than the state average.

A significant share of the region’s workforce is made up of highly-skilled workers. Historically, major employers have been attracted to the region, to a large degree, by the large pool of highly educated workers. More than 38 percent of residents have a bachelor’s degree and 14 percent have a graduate or professional degree.

Traditionally, younger workers are the most highly educated members of the workforce, and this is particularly true of the Nashua Region. For example, 44.2 percent of residents age 25-34 in the region have earned at least a four-year degree, according to the U.S. Census American Community Survey 2012 figures; a higher share than the general population by a margin of approximately 6 points.

Percent Change in Educational Attainment, 2000-2012 -



Mason and Milford recorded the highest growth in the share of the population with a bachelor’s degree or higher between 2000 and 2012.

Source: U.S. Census, ACS 2012

Moving forward, it is likely that employers in the region will continue to demand highly skilled workers and that such demand will only increase over time. Many overhead expenses associated with industry in the region – including utility costs and employer health insurance costs - exceed the national average, and thus the region is not

particularly attractive for the growth of low skilled industries. Therefore it is likely that an increasing share of economic growth will be attracted to the region by the highly skilled nature of the region’s workforce. As such, it is critically important to maintain and strengthen the region’s ‘talent edge’ over time.

Between 2000 and 2012, the share of the population with at least a bachelor’s degree increased in 11 of the region’s 13 municipalities. In Mason and Milford, increases were so high that they exceeded growth in both the state and nation more than twofold. In four additional communities – Hudson, Merrimack, Mont Vernon and Pelham – growth in the share of the population with at least a four-year degree also exceeded the national and state averages.

However, in seven of the region’s municipalities, including in its largest city, growth in the share of the population with a four-year degree trailed the state and national averages. In three of those municipalities – Amherst, Hollis and Mont Vernon - the share of the population with at least a four year degree already exceeds 50 percent of the population, thus maintaining high rates of growth is not feasible. However, it is notable that in Nashua, the engine of the regional economy, did not match state and national growth in this important measure. Additionally, it presents some concern that in two communities, Wilton and Lyndeborough, the share of the population with at least a bachelor’s degree actually declined over the 12 year span.

Technical Programs Offered by High School -

	<i>Applied Technology Center</i> <small>Milford High School</small>	<i>Wilbur Palmer Vocational-Tech Ctr</i> <small>Alvirne High School, Hudson</small>	<i>Nashua Technology Center</i> <small>Nashua North & South High Schools</small>
Advanced Manufacturing	X		
Agricultural Production		X	
Automotive Technology	X		X
Biotechnology	X		X
Computer Science & Technology	X	X	
Cosmetology			X
Computer Drafting & Design	X	X	X
Computer Networking	X		X
Education	X	X	X
Electrical Trades			X
Fire Science	X		
Forrestry		X	
Health Sciences		X	X
Heating & Air Conditioning			X
Heavy Duty Mechanics	X	X	X
Horticulture		X	
Landscaping		X	
Multimedia/Digital Communications	X	X	
Precision Machining	X		X
Pre-Engineering	X	X	X
Veterinary Science		X	
Video Production & Broadcasting	X	X	X

Source: High School Programs of Study, 2013-2014 School Year

One important reason that cities and region fight to attract young professionals is that they are often some of the best trained and educated members of the workforce.

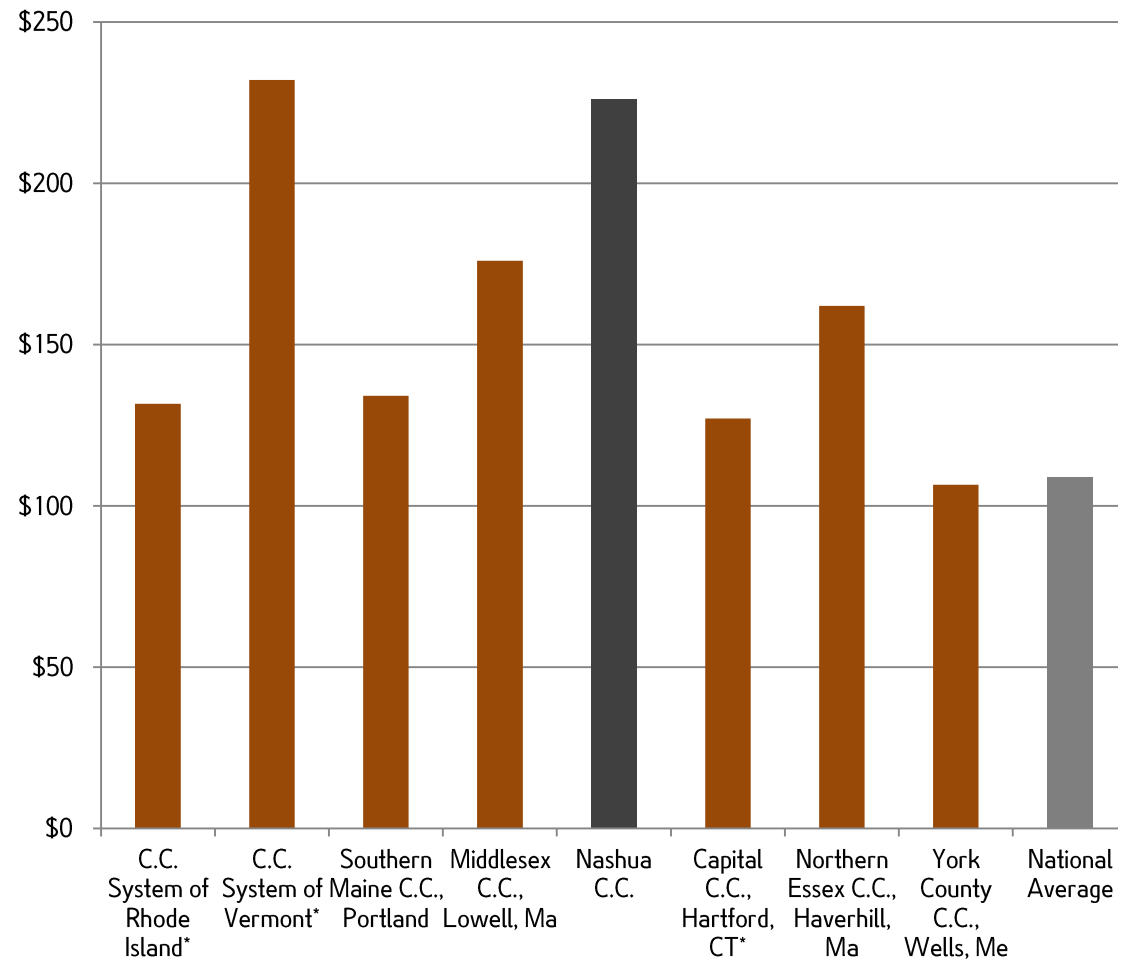
Specifically the 25-34 demographic is more likely to hold a four-year or graduate degree than the rest of the population. This is especially true in the Nashua Region where 44.2 % of 25-34 year-old hold at least a bachelor’s degree, while only 38.2 percent of the general population over age 25 has earned such degrees. Therefore, working to attract highly skilled workers is heavily correlated with attracting younger populations.

Secondary School System in the Region

The Nashua Region enjoys access to a public school system that performs well relative to surrounding areas. In the Nashua Region, most municipalities operate their own elementary schools, while cooperative or regional schools serve high school students.

There are three technical programs in the region, offered at Alvirne High School in Hudson, the Milford Applied Technology Center and the Nashua Technology Center operated at both Nashua North and Nashua South High Schools. These schools accept students from surrounding schools for

Tuition, Selected Community Colleges, 2013-2014 -



Nashua Community College tuition is more than double the national average for a two-year institutions

* =These schools offer discounts for full-time students. Cost per credit hour was calculated by dividing full-time cost by 15.

Sources: School internet sites, 2013-2014 school year data

programs that are not traditionally offered in high schools. For a complete

New Hampshire students complete the New England Common Assessment Program

(NECAP) tests in grades 3, 4 (for Science only), 5, 8 (for Writing only), and 11. This allows policymakers to compare educational progress by district across the state. A regional assessment for the year 2011, the most recent available, was created by analyzing proficiency scores by district which were then weighted by student population.

The analysis indicates that grade 11 students are 5.8 percent more likely to test as proficient in math and 5.5 percent more likely to test as proficient in reading. Writing scores tracked the state average.

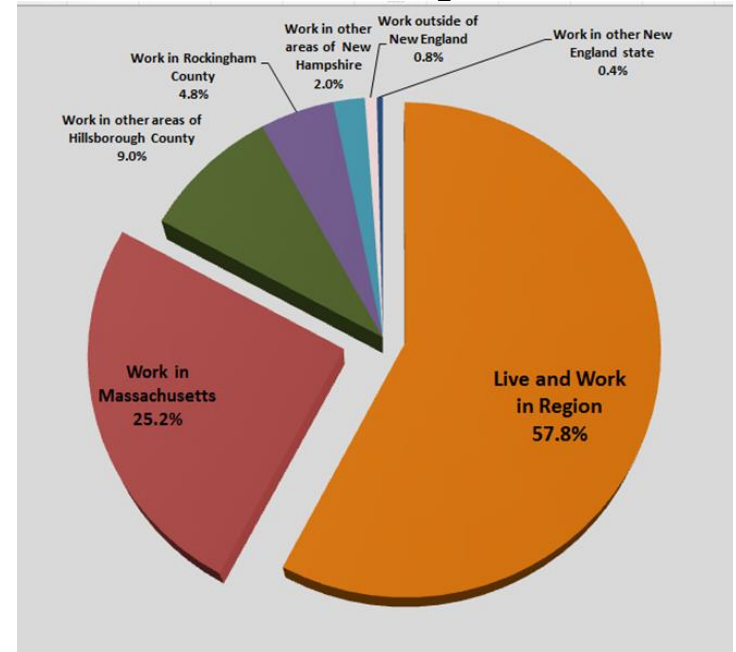
Higher Education in Region and Surrounding Areas

The Nashua Region is home to one public community college, Nashua Community College with an enrollment of approximately 2,000 part- and full-time students. Four institutions; Daniel Webster College, Rivier University, The Thomas More College of Liberal Arts and Granite State College maintain campuses and offer four-year degrees in the region.

- Daniel Webster College is a for-profit institution with academic schools in Aviation Studies, Engineering and Computer Sciences, Business and Management, and Arts and Sciences. The 54 acre Nashua campus accommodates approximately 700 students, including both resident and commuter students.

- The Thomas More College of Liberal Arts is a Catholic institution emphasizing classical education in the Roman Catholic intellectual tradition. The school offers a liberal arts program with all students required to study for at least one academic semester in Rome. The school enrolls approximately 100 students on its 14-acre campus in Merrimack. In 2009, the college announced plans to relocate its undergraduate programs to a new campus in Groton, Mass., with the

Places of Work for Region Residents -



While more than a quarter of residents work in Massachusetts, a strong majority live and work within the region.

Source: ACS 2007-2011

Merrimack campus retained to house graduate programs.

- Rivier University is a Catholic University with approximately 2,400 students enrolled in undergraduate, graduate and doctoral programs. The 68-acre Nashua campus offers undergraduate programs in Biology, Business, Education, Nursing, Criminal Justice and several Liberal

Arts concentrations. The school also offers online programs as well as professional programs in the evenings and weekends.

- Granite State College is a public institution with an academic center located in Nashua. The college offers online programs oriented to older adults and other students desiring a lower cost alternative to traditional university programs. The college offers a wide diversity of undergraduate programs as well as master's programs in Leadership, Management, and Project Management.
- Several colleges or universities maintain satellite campuses in the region, including Southern New Hampshire University and Mount Washington College (formerly Hesser College), which both maintain classroom facilities in Nashua. The St. Joseph School of Nursing in Nashua also offers an Associate of Science degree in nursing program from the St. Joseph Hospital campus in Nashua.

- The University of Massachusetts Lowell is the largest four-year institution within a 20-mile radius of the region. The university, boasting an enrollment of 17,000, offers 120 bachelor's, 39 master's and 33 doctoral programs across a diversity of fields of study including engineering, business, fine arts, humanities, education and health sciences. The UMASS Lowell campus is located approximately 13 miles from Downtown Nashua. Notably, there is no public transit option linking the university or the City of Lowell to the Nashua Region.

Education Affordability

One perceived barrier to higher education and job training is affordability. During public outreach efforts associated with the regional plan, several members of the public indicated that public higher education programs were not affordable. The cost per credit hour to attend Nashua Community College is \$226 per credit hour. For a full-time student taking 15 credit hours, the cost per semester would equate to \$3,390 (Nashua Community College, 2014).

Tuition at Nashua Community College was compared to rates at similar institutions in

surrounding states. That analysis found that tuition at Nashua Community College is measurably higher than those colleges. Only the Community College System of Vermont charges a higher rate of tuition than Nashua; costs there are \$6 more per credit hour than Nashua. All other colleges charge tuition that is between 22 and 53 percent lower than that of Nashua. Additionally, the national average rate of tuition at a community college is 51 percent less than that charged at Nashua Community College.

Infrastructure

A well-developed infrastructure, including transportation networks, utilities, broadband and commercial and industrial real estate, is critical to maintaining and attracting regional economic development. This section briefly describes the state of infrastructure relating to five key areas as they relate to economic development.

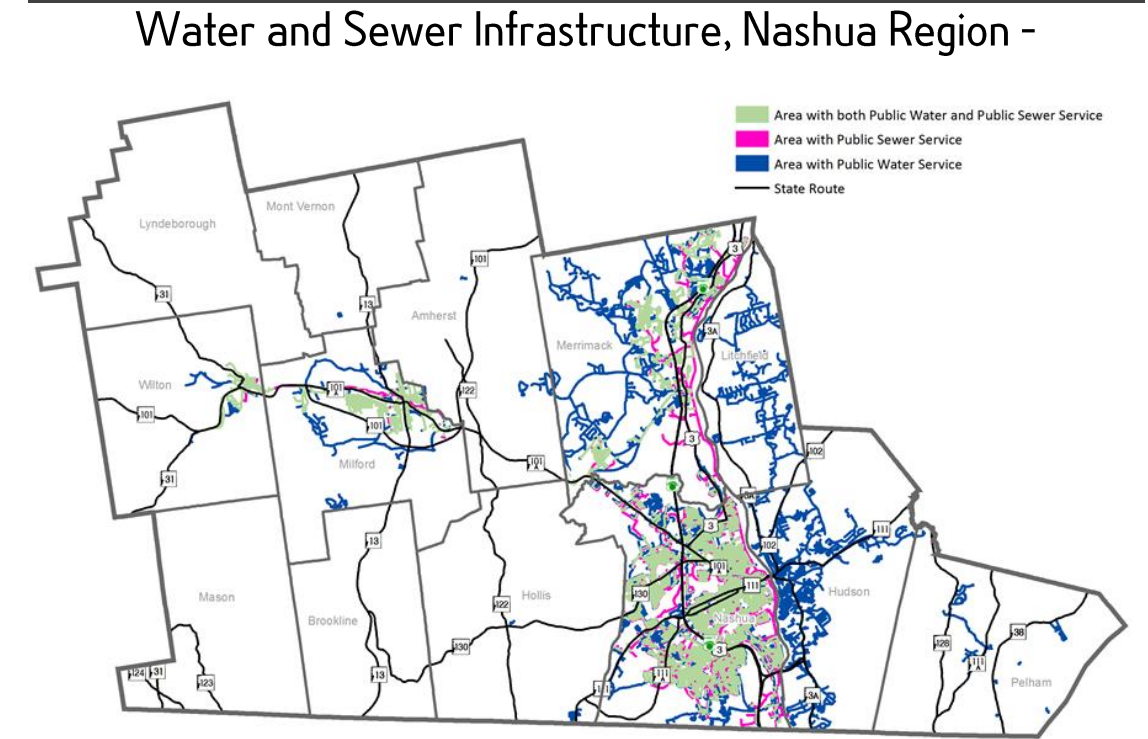
Transportation

The Nashua Region enjoys access to a comprehensive transportation network, particularly relating to its road and highway network. As indicated in the Existing Conditions and Needs chapter, residents are

much more likely to commute to work by driving alone than their national counterparts. A bus transit network is well developed in the City of Nashua; a NRPC GIS analysis indicates that more than 88 percent of residents live within one-quarter mile of a bus stop. Regular bus service operates from the hours of 6 a.m. to 7 p.m., with a reduced schedule night service operating from 7 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. Through public outreach efforts for the plan, many residents noted that the service is effective and efficient.

No regular public transit service is provided in the region outside the Nashua city boundaries. Through public outreach efforts, residents noted the lack of service as a significant limitation of the region’s transportation infrastructure. With 58 percent of the region’s population and 47 percent of the region’s jobs located outside of Nashua, a significant proportion of employers remain unserved by public transit, including major employment centers in Hudson, Merrimack and Milford.

Approximately 25 percent of residents of the region commute to jobs in Massachusetts; most in the Boston Metropolitan Area. The region does provide Boston Express, a bus service that provides regular service from Nashua to South Station, a major



A majority of municipalities in the Nashua Region lack access to public sewer service

Source: NRPC GIS

transportation center in Downtown Boston, and Logan International Airport. The service is the result of a public-private partnership; it is operated by a private company but public subsidies help it maintain operations. The service accommodated approximately 192,000 riders in 2013.

Water and Sewer

A lack of water and/or sewer service is a significant constraint to economic development in many areas of the region. This is particularly true in Amherst and Pelham, two historically rural communities that have experienced significant residential growth in recent decades based in part on

their locations along major transportation corridors or adjacent to heavily developed areas. In Amherst, Route 101A, by far the region’s busiest east-west corridor, bisects the town. Commercial development has intensified along the corridor over the last three decades, however the Amherst portion of the corridor remains unserved by sewer.

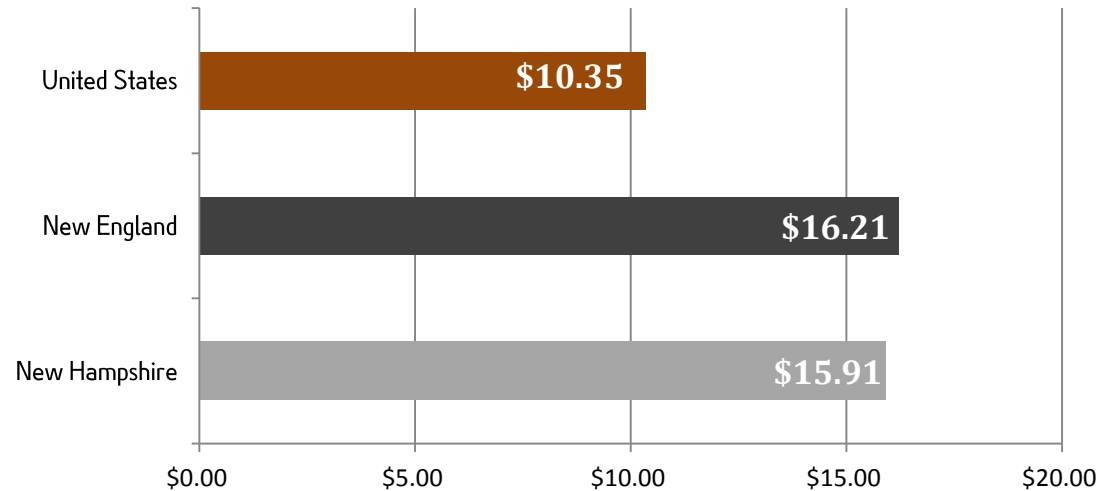
In Pelham, the growth of Salem to the east and Nashua to the west, as well as torrid residential growth in town, has heightened demand for more commercial and industrial activity. However, much of the town remains without water and sewer infrastructure, handicapping economic development efforts.

Additionally, no water and sewer service extends into the Brox property in Milford, a large town-owned parcel centered along Route 101 in the western part of the community that the town hopes to develop as an industrial park. The parcel has remained undeveloped for 15 years as the town studies cost-effective mechanisms to extend infrastructure to the site.

Energy

Energy sources and costs can significantly impact economic development efforts. A thorough discussion of energy issues is

Average Price of Electricity to End Users, All Sectors, 2014



Electricity costs in New England are much higher than the national average.

Measured in cents per kilowatt

Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, costs for February 2014

included in the Energy Efficiency chapter of this plan. For the purposes of this chapter, only sources of energy consumption and energy costs are discussed.

According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, New Hampshire’s largest sources of energy consumption includes nuclear electric power, motor gasoline, and natural gas. Distillate fuel oil, biomass, and

coal also constitute significant sources of energy consumption (for a complete spreadsheet of energy consumption, refer to

the Energy chapter of this plan). New Hampshire has a negative net flow of interstate energy, meaning that more electricity (including associated losses) went out of the state than came into the state.

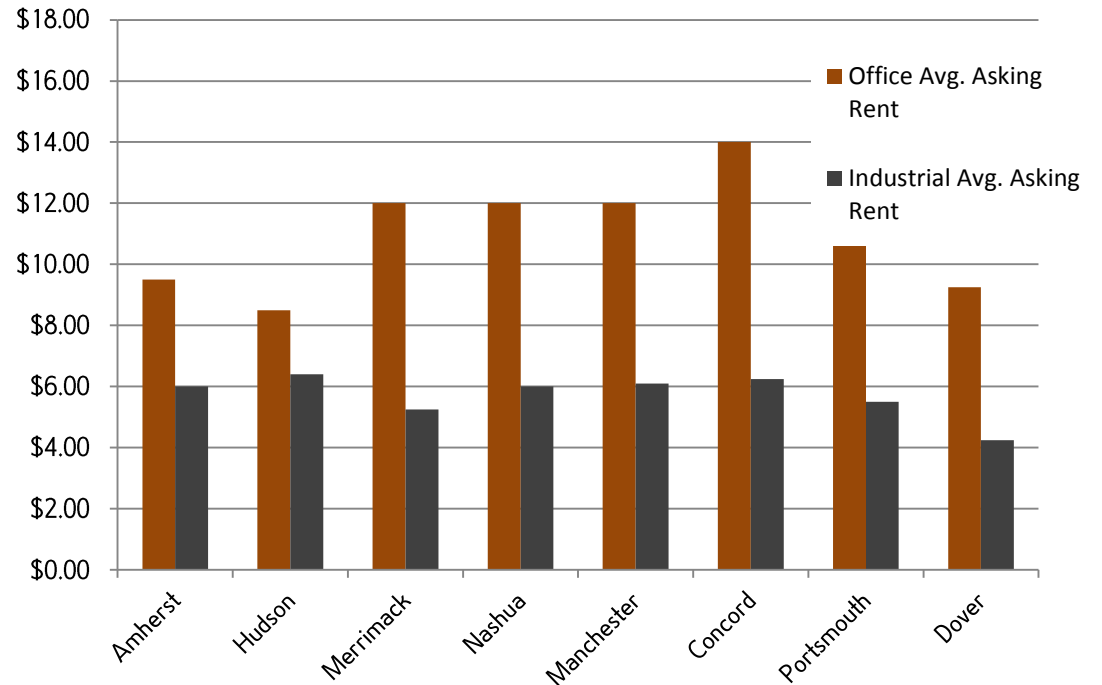
Energy Costs

Utility costs in the New Hampshire, and the New England region as a whole, track significantly higher than the nation, due largely to limited energy production and distribution capacity in the region. This represents a barrier to economic growth as many industries, particularly manufacturing facilities and information and data centers, consume large quantities of electricity. Additionally, higher utility costs may deter immigration into the region as such costs contribute to a higher cost of living. Moving forward, the region may wish to partner with officials from the state and across the New England region to consider options to expand energy production and distribution facilities in order to reduce utility costs.

Broadband

A regional broadband plan was completed in 2013. The plan concluded that most of the region enjoyed access to a well-developed high-speed broadband network, but that gaps in service, particularly in rural areas, represented a quality of life issue and significant constraint to economic development. Limitations in broadband service were most pronounced in the western parts of the region, including in the municipalities of Brookline, Mason, and Lyndeborough.

Average Asking Commercial and Industrial Rents, 2013



Average asking office and industrial rents appear to generally track with peer cities across New Hampshire.

Source: *New Hampshire Market Outlook 2014, CBRE/New England, Portsmouth, NH*

The plan recommended focusing resources to rural areas where gaps in service were prevalent as well as updating municipal zoning, land use codes and master plans to ensure that municipalities allowed opportunities for investment and expansion of broadband infrastructure. Continued

monitoring of broadband conditions as well as educational efforts aimed at strengthening public understanding of the importance of broadband to economic development were also recommended.

Commercial and industrial real estate

An analysis of the region's largest commercial and industrial markets from the real estate firm CBRE in 2013 found that asking commercial and industrial rents closely tracked averages in the Merrimack Valley, though office rents were slightly lower in Amherst and Hudson (likely owing to their greater distance from limited access highways).

Regional Assets, Challenges, Threats and Opportunities

Assets

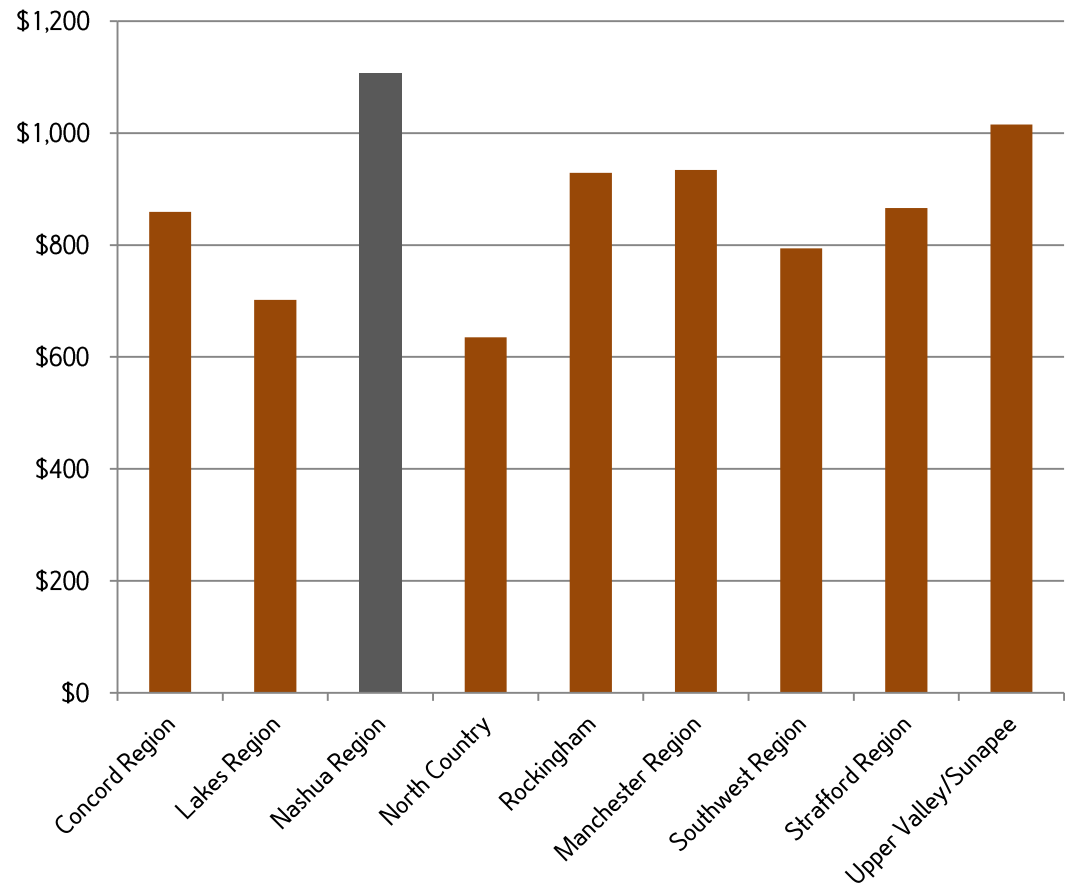
Employment Clusters in high-paying industries

A location quotient analysis conducted in the Existing Conditions chapter of this plan indicated that the region had particularly strong footholds in the manufacturing, finance/insurance and retail trade sectors. An analysis of average wages in these sectors shows how important these industries are to the regional economy. Manufacturing workers earn 45 percent more, and finance/insurance workers earn more than double, the average weekly wage in the region (NH Department of Employment Security, 2012).

Moreover, the manufacturing industry boasts a strong multiplier effect, meaning that every manufacturing worker helps directly support the creation of approximately one additional job in the region. Thus, the growth of the manufacturing industry can support job growth in other industries.

Due in part to the strength of the manufacturing and finance/insurance industries in the region, the Nashua area boasts the highest average weekly wage of any planning area in New Hampshire at

Average Weekly Wage by Planning Region, 2012



Workers in the Nashua Region earn the highest average wages in the state

Source: NH Department of Employment Security, 2012

\$1,107, or nearly 85 percent higher than the lowest paid region in the state. The increased purchasing power provided by higher wages helps the region to make important

investments to enhance the quality of life in the region, including in public schools, parks and transportation infrastructure.

Moreover, the manufacturing industry boasts a strong multiplier effect, meaning that every manufacturing worker helps directly support the creation of approximately one additional job in the region. Thus, the growth of the manufacturing industry can support job growth in other industries.

By working to provide a strong foundation for growth in these industries, the region can help ensure its continued economic health.

Ease of access to Boston Market

The Nashua Region enjoys a close geographic location to the Boston area. This location provides the region several distinct and significant economic advantages. The Boston Region makes up the eighth largest labor market in the United States, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and with more than 100 colleges and universities, the area enjoys a highly-skilled workforce with strong footholds in biotechnology, education, and financial services. Middlesex and Suffolk Counties, the engines of the Boston regional economy, are located within convenient commuting distance of the Nashua Region (Middlesex County borders the region). Average weekly wages in both counties

ranked among the highest in the Northeastern United States in 2013 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages*).

Approximately 26 percent of Nashua Region residents commute to Massachusetts for work. This allows such workers to concentrate their purchasing power in the region, though their earnings are made across the border. Additionally, many employers choose to locate in the region due, in part, to the accessibility of the Boston Region. The Exit 1 area of South Nashua, located within one mile of the Massachusetts border, is one of the region's largest employment clusters.

It is important to recognize the important economic advantages afforded by the region's location. Should a company decide to locate its headquarters in the Lowell, Massachusetts area, some might see the development as a lost economic opportunity for the Nashua Region. But in reality, such a development would provide significant indirect economic benefits to the region. For example, the company might contract some of its work to Nashua Region-based employers, and undoubtedly many of its workers would choose to live in the region or shop and purchase services here. These

economic benefits would not have been possible had the company selected a more distant location for its headquarters.

By the same token, many employers choose to locate in the region due to our proximity to Boston. Access to a large international airport, major convention center and a significant pool of talent in the form of college students and a younger workforce draw are important to many employers. The region's economic development strategy should market access to those assets while also spotlighting some of the region's unique qualities, including a manageable tax burden and an attractive largely rural environment. The region may also work to improve multi-modal connections between the region and the Boston market as an economic development tool.

Attractive environment, strong community character

As noted in the Existing Conditions and "Telling Our Story" chapters of this document, the region's open space and rural qualities as well as its historic character, sense of community, and well demarcated downtowns and town centers significantly influence the region's quality of life and its

economy. Efforts to protect and promote these attributes while still providing realistic opportunities for new and innovative development, should enhance economic growth moving forward.

High educational attainment

As noted extensively in the Existing Conditions chapter of this document, the region enjoys an economic advantage in that a higher proportion of its residents have earned two-, four-year, and graduate and professional degrees. This makes the region more attractive to potential employers whose labor needs are centered around knowledge-based, high-paying careers. Additionally, because some factors unique to the region might dissuade lower skill industries from locating here, including very high utility rates and higher than average median wages, it is especially important to attract highly skilled jobs.

Low business costs/taxes

New Hampshire is currently one of only six states in the nation not to levy a state sales tax and one of just ten states not to levy a state income tax on wages (the state does however tax interest and dividends income at 5 percent). New Hampshire and Alaska are the only states in the nation not to levy

either a state income or sales tax, although Alaska does allow municipalities to levy local sales taxes up to a rate of 7 percent (Tax Foundation, 2012).

For fiscal year 2011, the most recent year for which data was available, the Tax Foundation, an independent national tax policy research organization, calculated the total share of income consumed by state and local taxes for each state. In New Hampshire, residents on average contribute 8 percent of their incomes to state and local taxes, according to the foundation. This marks the sixth lowest state and local tax burden in the nation and makes New Hampshire the only Northeastern state to rank below the U.S. average rate of 9.8 percent. Every neighboring state collected shares of at least 10.2 percent.

New Hampshire's lack of a state tax on sales or earned income means it depends significantly on property taxes for revenue. For most residents, this is the single largest source of state or local tax burden. New Hampshire is one of 37 states to charge property taxes at both the state and local level, however it is generally regarded as imposing one of the highest overall rates of an state. These are paid directly by property

owners, or integrated into the cost of rent for property renters.

Manchester-Boston Regional Airport

Most of the Nashua Region's population is located within a 15-mile radius of Manchester-Boston Regional Airport (some communities are located within 5 miles of the facility), the largest commercial airport by passenger traffic in Northern New England. This facility offers the region outstanding access to major business and tourism destinations. It also serves as a major cargo facility. The airport currently provides non-stop service to 11 cities via four airlines including Atlanta, Baltimore-Washington, Charlotte, Detroit, Chicago-O'Hare, Newark, New York-LaGuardia, Orlando, Philadelphia, Tampa, Washington-National. The airport also provides seasonal service to Fort Lauderdale and Las Vegas.

Many businesses require significant travel for the presence of the airport, and vastly improved access to it thanks to the 2011 opening of Raymond Weiczorack Drive, provides the region a strong asset in which to recruit businesses.

Challenges

Lack of Transportation Options

In the Nashua Region, the car is the mode of choice for most trips; U.S. Census data indicates that more than 88 percent of residents drive alone to work. While public transit access is relatively extensive within the City of Nashua, it is not offered in the region's 12 other municipalities.

Additionally, there is consistent evidence, from both within in the region and across the country, that transportation preferences may be changing somewhat. See section X of the Regional Transportation Plan, for an analysis of these trends.

To ensure economic development is accessible to all residents of the region, to satisfy changing consumer preferences and to meet the demands of employers for enhanced connections to surrounding communities and regions, the expansion of transportation options should be directly tied to regional economic development policy.

Housing options and affordability

During public outreach efforts, residents consistently advocated the development of more rental housing with modern amenities,

as well as a greater diversity of housing options at varying cost levels. Approximately sixty-one percent of the region's housing supply is made up of single-family homes. However, in some communities single-family homes make up over 91 percent of the total housing supply (NH Department of Employment Services, 2014). Approximately 72 percent of multi-family housing is located within the City of Nashua alone. Additionally, much of the region's housing is over 50 years old. In Nashua, 24 percent of the

With demand rising across the nation for modern housing options in walkable communities, the region's economic health may hinge, in part, on its ability to provide new residential options accessible to town and neighborhood centers (Leinberger & Lynch, 2014). While some projects in the region are illustrative of this trend, including Nashua's Bridge Street and Cotton Mill housing developments, planning boards in the region may consider adjusting their zoning and land use codes to encourage greater development.

Challenges to manufacturing industry

The Nashua Region depends on manufacturing as a significant foundation of its economy. However, increased

productivity through technological advancements and offshoring of labor to low-cost countries has negatively impacted manufacturing employment in the region from a high of 32,400 in 2000 to 20,100 in 2013.

While recognizing the importance of manufacturing to the regional economy, the region may wish to ensure the recalibration of workforce development and training opportunities to align with growth industries.

Affordability of higher education programs

One persistent barrier to higher education can be its cost. Tuition and fees at public four-year higher education institutions in New Hampshire are the highest in the nation, averaging \$14,665 for the 2013-2014 school year. That figure is more than double the average public cost of tuition of in 17 states and is more than five times higher than the rate of tuition at public institutions in the lowest cost state, Wyoming, which boasts an average public tuition rate of \$2,607. New Hampshire is one of only five states where public tuition costs exceed \$12,000, and the only state where such costs exceed \$14,000.

Average tuition costs at public two-year institutions in New Hampshire are the second highest in the nation. Tuition costs averaged \$6,736 at the state's two-year institutions for the 2013-2014 school year, exceeded only by Vermont. New Hampshire and Vermont are the only two states where two-year institution tuition rates exceeded \$6,000 in 2013-2014. In 13 states, average tuition costs at public four-year institutions were actually lower than tuition charged at public two-year institutions in New Hampshire for the 2013-2014 school year.

Additionally, while tuition alone can be costly, attendance in higher education programs can incur significantly higher indirect costs including transportation and childcare costs and reduced productivity and wages necessitated by coursework. Due in some part to comparatively high tuition rates, college graduates in New Hampshire carry the highest average student loan debt burden in the nation at over \$31,000.

There is a growing body of literature that rising tuition costs and student loan debt burdens may impede economic growth. Total student loan debt in the United States tripled from 2004 to 2013, growing from approximately \$350 billion to between \$1- \$1.2 trillion (the Federal Reserve Bank of

New York reports \$1 trillion while the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau notes it as \$1.2 trillion). The share of 25 year olds with student debt increased from 25 percent to 43 percent between 2003 and 2012 (Federal Reserve Bank of New York, 2013). The Federal Reserve Bank of New York reported that in 2012, for the first time ever, student loan borrowers

In 2013, the University System of New Hampshire agreed to freeze tuition rates for two years and in 2014, New Hampshire's community college system agreed to reduce tuition rates by five percent for the 2014-2015 school year.

Infrastructure

Infrastructure limitations, and particularly a lack of sewer facilities in all communities outside of Nashua, Milford and Wilton, represent a major constraint to economic development. While this lack of infrastructure can help stem uncontrolled commercial development and sprawl patterns of development, it is consistently noted by the communities of Amherst and Pelham as major barrier to economic growth.

Funding for unmet transportation maintenance needs continue to challenge policymakers on all levels of government.

Although New Hampshire state lawmakers approved raising the state gasoline tax by 4.2 cents per gallon in 2014, it is unclear if that will allocation will prove sufficient to meet a backlog of needs. A well-maintained and high functioning transportation system is critical to the health of the regional economy. More than 85 percent of the region's employers are located within one-quarter mile of its major transportation corridors of the F.E. Everett Turnpike and Route 101A (NRPC GIS analysis). Additionally, in evaluating "America's Best States for Business" in 2014, the CNBC network ranked New Hampshire's Infrastructure and Transportation network as the third worst in the nation, based in part on "the quality of the roads and bridges" (CNBC, 2014).

Low population growth/out-migration

The economic growth of a region depends largely on both growth in productivity and growth in population. As noted in the Existing Conditions chapter of this document, while the Nashua Region was a very fast growing area in the latter half of the twentieth century, that growth has ebbed significantly since 2000. Between 2000 and 2010, the region's growth rate registered below the state and national growth rates for the first time in many decades.

Demographic and housing forecasts indicate that household sizes will continue to contract, that the senior population will grow significantly and that more financially-strapped first-time home-buyers will be entering the housing market. It is important that the region's municipalities consider these developments moving forward and adjust their zoning and land use codes if necessary to respond to them. Zoning and land use adjustments, made after thoughtful and careful deliberation, offer the potential to recoup some of the population growth the region has lost by reacting to current market conditions.

Opportunities

Potential for stronger connections to Boston, Manchester and Lowell markets

The Nashua Region is located within a relatively dense cluster of neighboring regional economies. Manchester and Lowell, both major regional anchors, are located only approximately 15 to 18 miles from Downtown Nashua. Both Boston and Concord, NH are located within 42 miles of the region. The regional centers of Portsmouth, NH, Dover, NH and Lawrence-Haverhill, Mass. are also located within commuting distance. Approximately 42

percent of the region's residents commute outside the region for work, while many from surrounding areas commute in to the region for work.

Recognizing the importance of accessibility to the regional economy, many efforts have been made in recent years to strengthen transportation connections between the region and other areas. In 2007, the Boston Express Service began offering direct bus service from Nashua to the Boston area via a public-private partnership. The Manchester Transit Authority also now offers transit service from Downtown Manchester to the Exit 6 area of Nashua, allowing Nashua-based travelers to make transfers to access the MTA network or connections to private bus operators. Additionally NHDOT is working more collaboratively with partners in Massachusetts and other neighboring states to share traffic and incident information to provide commuters real-time advance data regarding roadway conditions, so that travelers may adjust their commute times or access alternative routes.

Still, it is recognized that there are significant gaps in connections to other neighboring labor markets. Recurring congestion can often double the length of time trips take from the region to Boston. Connections

between the region and Manchester and Boston, as well as to Lowell, of which there is currently no public transit connection, are notably deficient. There is no direct public transit link from Downtown Nashua to Downtown Manchester. Additionally, Boston Express buses often encounter significant congestion delays, particularly during peak hours, because they encounter the same highway congestion that motorists do.

The potential Capitol Corridor rail project is unique in that it offers the potential to offer vastly improved public transit connections between the region and Boston, Lowell and Manchester. These connections would be particularly valuable in that they would not be impacted by traffic congestion conditions. The project would also offer a direct connection to Manchester-Boston Airport; identified as a significant regional need during public outreach efforts.

Potential for increased creative offerings and artistic outlets

While many residents noted the importance of arts and cultural attractions to the regional economy and its quality of life, several also noted that cultural and arts outreach and infrastructure spending could be significantly expanded.

Many residents noted the success of communities like Peterborough and Portsmouth, New Hampshire in helping build an economy with a strong foundation in arts and culture. As an initial step, many members of the public recommended an expanded coordination and marketing to promote the arts and cultural institutions already operating in the region.

Investments in green technologies and energy production

Interest in alternative and sustainable sources of energy production continues to increase. Many jurisdictions, including the State of New Hampshire, have set benchmarks relating to how much energy will be produced from alternative sources in coming years. Additionally, solar production needs are projected to outstrip current manufacturing capacity over the next two to three years (Hall, 2014). One of the region's largest employers, Merrimack-based GT Advanced Technologies with over 540 employees, is a major solar and LED electronics manufacturer, positioning the region well to enjoy growth in this industry.

Downtown redevelopment opportunities

In public outreach efforts associated with the development of this plan, members of the public made it clear that they would like to focus new development in downtowns and along already developed corridors. The region boasts several downtowns which offer convenient services and residential options, most notably Milford and Nashua, but also smaller communities like Hollis and Wilton. Redevelopment opportunities in these areas are extensive, however municipal

Projects like Cotton Mill Square in Nashua and the Pine Valley Lofts in Milford are excellent examples of developments that meet many of the livability goals residents outlined as important. Both projects embody historic preservation and redevelopment, contribute to the vibrancy of neighborhoods or downtowns and are located along well-developed corridors or centers. Additionally, these projects have the potential to reduce taxpayer costs over time, in that roadway expansion or water and sewer extensions were either very modest or entirely unnecessary, minimizing additional municipal maintenance costs over time.

Marketing of Historic Destinations

The rich history of the Nashua Region is evident in virtually all corners of its landscape. Several town centers and villages remain relatively intact and undisturbed from their agrarian and Colonial roots. Several towns also include stops in the Underground Railroad, important landmarks in the Abolitionist movement to end slavery, and structures and landscapes that stand as hallmarks to America's Industrial Revolution.

Unfortunately, for some visitors, the region's history goes untold. Better marketing and promotion of historical resources across municipalities, similar to efforts already performed by the Freedom's Way consortium of communities, will help the region capitalize off its history.

Threats

Region is susceptible to national downturns and is very tied to developments in Boston market

The integrated nature of the region's economy, with both surrounding labor markets and national economic developments, offer many benefits, but it also represents a threat as well. The region is

particularly exposed to national economic downturns and, as noted in the Existing Conditions chapter of this document, the region suffered higher job losses than surrounding areas during the Great Recession. The region lacks strong footholds in industries which are somewhat buffered from national economic conditions, including government, agriculture, higher education and healthcare. However, employment figures do indicate that the region's economy continues to diversify, which should help mitigate the economic impacts of changes that directly affect a particular industry.

Economic impacts of aging population

Through public outreach efforts associated with the development of this plan, residents consistently noted concern surrounding the region's aging population and its declining young adult population. These concerns related not only to the potential impacts on the regional economy but also on the region's status as a family-friendly area that is attractive to all generation groups. The results of a regional employment scenario model run, conducted in partnership with the New Hampshire Department of Employment Services, indicated that the region would suffer significant declines in its economic output if employers were not able to replace

retiring manufacturers workers were not replaced as they retired.

Climate Change

The threat of climate change presents potential challenges to the region's economic health in many spheres.

Flood insurance rates may rise as the frequency and severity of precipitation increases across the region. All of towns in the region participate in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). According to Flood Smart, a program of the NFIP, at least 25 percent of businesses that close after events, like a flood, never reopen. From 2008 to 2012, the average commercial flood claim was more than \$87,000. Exacerbated street, basement and sewer flooding can lead to structural damage to infrastructure.

Historical development in the region is concentrated along rivers and their flood plains due to the flat land area for easy building and favorable agriculture soils. According to the Southern New Hampshire Climate Assessment, the frequency of extreme precipitation events is projected to more than double by then end of the century for the region. More intense precipitation events will mean greater flood risk to businesses, infrastructure and agriculture.

Property insurance and reinsurance companies across the region experienced a significant increase in severe weather damage claims paid where the risk of loss and damage has increase (Melillo et al., 2014) (IPCC, 2007).

Vulnerability to heat may become a major issue for businesses and small towns in the region since air conditioning is currently not prevalent as heat waves have been rare (Melillo, Richmond, & Yohe, 2014). The 1960-2012 average for days less than 32 degrees Fahrenheit in the region is 154 and has been declining by five days per decade. According to the Southern New Hampshire Climate Assessment, the number of very hot days is expected to become more frequent and the hottest days hotter, while extreme cold is expected to become less frequent and the coldest days less severe. Currently, heating costs can be prohibitive for businesses and industries with volatile fuel pricing. Costs once reserved for heating will be used for cooling during the summer months as winter temperatures continue to rise. Blackouts from power shortages due to air conditioning requirements could become an issue especially for IT and technology industries that require cooling for servers.

There are many businesses in the region which benefit from snow and snow removal. The number of snow covered days has decreased across most of the region over the past four decades. Most of the reduction in snowfall is driven by decreases in December snowfall and increases in rainfall. Less snow may be beneficial for businesses with outdoor facilities since there will be less repair and building maintenance. Conversely, snow plowing and snow recreation businesses will decrease due to the lack of snow. A warmer winter will increase the growing season for regional farms which could provide the opportunity for increased productivity but can also alter habitats to favor invasive species and pests. Temperature increases are expanding the number of growing days per year. The Nashua region supports a robust agriculture economy which has seen an increase in ten growing days per year since 1960. The increase in nighttime and extreme temperature in summers will be hotter by 16-47 days above 90 degrees F for southern NH (compared to 7 currently). The increase in temperatures and the aging population in the region could require the creation of new health care facilities and health care jobs. (Wake, C. et al., 2014)

Plan Review and Public Outreach

As noted in previous sections of this plan, public outreach efforts associated with development of the regional plan were extensive in both duration and scope. The two-year effort included efforts specific to economic and community development including the commission's hosting of a half-day Community and Economic Vitality Public Workshop, featuring guest speakers and facilitated group conversations. The commission also targeted its outreach efforts at community business development events and expositions. Additionally, residents' opinions on issues related to economic development were collected via a scientifically weighted telephone poll.

Role of the advisory committee

A sub-committee consisting of private and public officials oversaw publication of the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. Committee members helped identify priority projects and advised the commission on the structure and content of the plan. Committee members met five times between 2013 and 2014. A list of committee members is included in the appendix of this document.

Major themes from public outreach

Several major themes emerged from the commission's outreach efforts. Documented in more significant detail in the appendix of this document, these public sentiments have been grouped into the following five topic areas for convenience:

A vote for asset-based planning: Economic development that enhances downtowns, town centers, and natural features

Residents consistently noted just how important the many different parts of the region's natural and built environment were to the region's quality of life. From its meandering river ways and Colonial-era town centers to its farms and bustling downtowns, residents were clear that development should enhance the region's built characteristics and focus recreational development along riverfronts while preserving its pristine natural areas and unique rural charm.

A consistent regulatory structure that allows for economic innovation, walkable development

Residents consistently called for greater flexibility in the region's municipal ordinances, zoning and land use codes. Many noted that such regulations can discourage

or stifle innovative development plans as well as community-based efforts including volunteer improvement efforts or community forums and events.

Concern regarding demographic trends, desire to maintain multi-generational region

Residents consistently expressed concern regarding the region's long-term demographic trends and suggested efforts be focused to attract young workers. On a statewide level, many called for assistance in addressing high tuition and student loan burdens. Residents also noted that efforts should be made to ensure retirees enjoy access to all of the region's amenities through improved transportation options and partnerships allowing them to pursue post-retirement work opportunities.

A focus on livability: Building a great region to live, work and play

Discussions on economic development frequently centered on arts, cultural, educational and recreational offerings. Residents made clear that economic development must be coupled with efforts to enhance the region's entertainment options to ensure that residents enjoy not only lucrative employment, but thriving restaurants and nightlife, attractive parks, and social networks oriented for all ages.

More Options!

Residents consistently noted the need for more housing and transportation options. Commuter rail to Boston was identified as a major regional need; many residents noted concern that a lack of rail access stymied the regional economy. Residents also advocated the creation of more modern and affordable rental residential options near downtown areas

Review of State and Local Economic Development Plans

Statewide Economic Development Plans

The New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning (OEP) is charged with developing a comprehensive state development plan (see NH RSA 9:A) which establishes state policy on development related issues and proposes new or expanded programs to implement such policies. The plan provides a basis for identifying critical issues facing the state, determining state priorities, allocating limited state resources, and taking into account the plans of various state, regional, and local governmental units. The last state development plan was created in 2000 under the administration of Governor

Jeanne Shaheen and had an economic development focus (see www.nh.gov/oep/planning/resources/documents/state-development-plan.pdf).

In 2014, the NH Legislature passed legislation directing the Department of Resources and Economic Development, Division of Economic Development, to develop a state economic development strategy and plan. The purpose of the plan is to create a blueprint that functions as a rolling two year process from which systematic and sustainable economic development initiatives are developed and executed in response to current and anticipated economic circumstances. The plan is to be developed under the guidance of the state Economic Development Advisory Council (see NH RSA 12-A:62).

BIA State Economic Development Plan

In 2013, in the absence of a recent and specific strategic direction for economic development in the State, the Business and Industry Association of NH (BIA) conducted a strategic planning process and developed a statewide strategic economic plan. The overall vision for the state is:

To ensure New Hampshire provides meaningful advantages for businesses through a vibrant, sustainable economy and the nation's best environment in which our residents can prosper.

The plan sets forth nine strategic goals:

Business growth, retention and attraction – New Hampshire offers the best environment for innovation and entrepreneurship in the Northeast United States, consistently growing, creating and drawing in successful businesses and the people that create and lead them.

Education, workforce skills and labor pool – New Hampshire possesses a high-quality, cost effective, lifelong educational system that provides access and affords all residents the same educational opportunities to create a robust, innovative, flexible and productive workforce.

Energy – New Hampshire businesses have access to reliable, high-quality, low-cost, diverse energy sources.

Fiscal policy – New Hampshire encourages business growth and retention by maintaining a state tax structure that is simple and equitable and by efficiently operating state and local governments.

Health care – All New Hampshire residents are among the healthiest in the nation and have lifelong access to a high-quality, affordable, integrated and preventive health and community support system.

Infrastructure – Safe, reliable multi-modal transportation; high bandwidth, high-speed communication; and improved water supply, wastewater and storm water systems able to meet the needs of businesses and residents throughout New Hampshire.

Natural, cultural and historic resources – New Hampshire values, stewards and enhances its natural, cultural and historic resources, making them available for current and long-term public benefit to foster vibrant communities, engaged citizens and economic vitality.

Regulatory environment – New Hampshire’s regulations are clear, appropriate and consistently applied,

providing the state’s businesses with objective, predictable and consistent outcomes while protecting the state’s natural resources, workers and residents.

Workforce housing – New Hampshire’s workforce has access to diverse, attractive housing options that are affordable to the full range of incomes for working men and women throughout the state.

In addition, the NH Center for Public Policy Studies developed an Economic Dashboard for the BIA to compare and rank New Hampshire’s key economic indicators and to monitor progress over time. (see: www.biaofnh.com/CWT/EXTERNAL/WCPAGES/STRATEGIC/INDEX.ASPX)

In the absence of an official and recently updated statewide development plan, several other recent reports and plans provide a statewide perspective on developing demographic and economic trends with economic guidance and recommendations for policymakers

From Tailwind to Headwind: New Hampshire’s Shifting Economic Trends –

This 2012 report, authored by the New Hampshire Center for Policy Studies, notes that several demographic and economic forces which helped make New Hampshire the engine of the Northeast’s economy through the 1980s to the early 2000s have largely run their course. Because most local and state policy is predicated on above average economic growth, the report’s authors call on policymakers to recalibrate and adjust to an era of economic headwinds, including out-migration and an aging labor force. The authors call for an analysis of state economic investments including investments in human capital, a shift of state tax policy or investments in infrastructure and transportation.

Arts and Economic Prosperity IV: Report for the State of New Hampshire

In 2012, the N.H. State Council on the Arts released a study detailing how arts and culture organizations affect New Hampshire’s economy. Prepared by Americans for the Arts, the report collected economic information from 161 of the

773 nonprofit arts and culture organizations identified by the N.H. State Council on the Arts. Through this relatively small sample, a portrait emerged of how strongly arts programming impacts economic development in the state. The organizations were found to create more than \$115 million of total economic activity in New Hampshire and support the equivalent of 3,493 full-time jobs.

Municipal Economic Development Plans

The Nashua Region enjoys the involvement of many organizations, councils and commissions, both philanthropic and governmental in nature, which advise policymakers on issues relevant to economic development and community vitality. Many of these organizations have adopted strategic or master plans to provide specific recommendations to municipalities on such issues. Every municipality also addresses economic development to varying degrees in their master plans.

Local Plans

The Nashua Regional Planning Commission reviewed the goals and objectives of these plans to help identify shared goals and objectives among them. The following common themes emerged:

- Support economic development of appropriate scale and character
Many communities in the Nashua Region, and particularly rural ones, are careful to note that some economic development is simply not compatible or consistent with the town's character or its long-term development goals. Brookline's Master Plan is illustrative in articulating that "Big box stores and chains... should not be encouraged."
- Support diversified municipal tax base
Many communities note that municipal property taxes present a hardship for a large share of residents and

that therefore efforts to diversify the tax base with more commercial and industrial uses are necessary. Many communities also note that expanded commercial offerings will improve convenience for residents and foster greater independence and a renewed sense of community.

- Preserve rural and historic character, showcase natural features
Virtually every municipality in the Nashua Region has adopted an assets-based approach to economic development efforts. Communities want economic development to help showcase, or at least be compatible with, the town's natural and built features. Milford's 'Recommendations to Foster Economic Development' notes the importance of "integrating the Souhegan River and its tributaries into the public

realm” as an economic development strategy.

- Maintain and enhance downtowns and town centers
All communities in the Nashua Region support the enhancement of their town centers or downtowns, and most support focusing new development or redevelopment in such areas. Municipalities note the importance of town centers as the social, commercial, civic and residential hearts of their communities. Many also note that focusing new development in such areas will reduce long-term infrastructure costs over time.
- Ensure land uses, land use regulations support economic development vision
Many communities in the Nashua Region acknowledge that their zoning or land use regulations, many dating back several decades, are

not consistent with promoting the economic development visions outlined in their master plans. Efforts to better align zoning and land use regulations with long-term visions and goals have taken on a greater sense of urgency in many communities.

- Support arts and cultural events and institutions
Many communities in the Nashua Region place a special emphasis on support of the arts in their master plans, however very support of the arts with economic development efforts. The Town of Pelham is illustrative, in its support of a community arts council. “A volunteer non-profit organization, perhaps a Pelham Arts Council, could be established to foster the arts as a vital component of Pelham’s community fabric.

- Improve marketing/public outreach
Many communities note the importance of ‘branding’ to foster economic development. In order to differentiate themselves from other communities, many master plans note that marketing and outreach efforts must be aggressive and consistent.
- Partner with community organizations, including school districts, to support economic development
Many communities note the importance of partnering with community and regional partners in advancing economic development goals. Several communities note that enhanced coordination is necessary both in entertaining long-term economic development discussions as well as reviewing current proposals.

Conclusions

To a large degree, public opinions on economic development issues collected in coordination with the development of this plan are consistent with goals and objectives outlined in municipal economic development and master plans. Some areas of conflict do exist however. While regional discussions on economic development focused extensively on enhanced livability and the fostering of a region attractive for living, working and recreating, those issues are generally not wholly integrated with economic development planning at the municipal level. While topics like arts, cultural, recreational and entertainment offerings are often noted, it is generally not clear how such areas are aligned with economic development policy. Additionally, the public perception and the municipalities' acknowledgment that land use and zoning codes are not consistent with communitywide and economic development visions may stifle long-term economic development prospects. Finally, while a variety of statewide plans help inform local, regional and state policy, the state is hampered by the lack of an official, current and coordinated state plan related to economic development.

Priority Projects

Priority Projects are local or regional development projects and/or studies that meet one or more of the Five Regional Goals denoted in this plan. While priority projects are deliberately kept loosely defined, they often consist of infrastructure projects necessary to fuel community and economic development which offer some form of regional benefit. The Nashua Region CEDS goals are:

- Workforce Development and Job Creation*
- Infrastructure Development*
- Quality of Place*
- Environmental Preservation*
- Regional Coordination*

Milford Commerce and Community District

Background: *In 2000, Milford voters authorized the acquisition of 270 acres of land in the western part of the town to provide for foreseeable future community needs, open space and natural resource protection, and to provide the opportunity for tax positive commercial and industrial development. In 2001, the Heron Pond Elementary School was built on a small parcel*

of that land. Other acreage has been set aside to meet future recreational, school and town facility needs.

In the ensuing years, Milford voters have approved a series of actions to enhance the viability of the BROX property as well as adjoining privately-owned properties to private investment. In 2004, voters approved consultant work to draft a master plan for the property. In 2006, voters supported designating the area a tax-increment financing district. In 2007, voters approved the creation of Capital Reserve Fund for the property as well as a rezoning of the area to support mixed-use development. In 2010, voters approved the diversion of funds from the sale of the town's former police station to support infrastructure work in the area (those efforts are currently on hold, pending an environmental review). The town has also drafted conceptual development plans outlining site layout,

The Project: Milford officials recognize that private development in the district is hampered by its lack of infrastructure, including a lack of a road network, limited access to the Route 101 bypass, and no water and sewer facilities. This project would fund infrastructure work in the district to support private economic development.

Milford officials estimate that the extension of transportation and water and sewer facilities to the district would cost approximately \$5,000,000.

Total Estimated Cost: \$5,000,000.00

Jobs Generated or Retained: 1,500

Goals Advanced: (1) *Workforce Development and Job Creation*, (2) *Infrastructure Development*

Keyes Field Expansion, Milford Community Center

Background: Cleanup of the Fletcher's Paint Works in Milford, a 2-acre federal Superfund site, is scheduled to begin in 2015 and will require closure of the only direct access road to Keyes Field, the town's primary recreational area. The Town of Milford is planning to purchase a former manufacturing facility located just west of Keyes Field in order to maintain access to the park and expand playing fields. The property is approximately 6 acres and the manufacturing structure dates to 1963. The property owner has offered to sell it to the town at a reduced rate provided the sale is completed this year and the town has begun the process of holding an emergency town meeting to purchase the property this September.

The Project: Provided the land purchase is approved by voters, the town would like to phase in development of the site. Initial improvements would include the addition of parking and the expansion of playing fields at the site. A second phase would include the construction of a community center at the site. Investments would be supplemented by private fundraising activity.

Total Estimated Cost: Phase I (Parking and Playing Fields): \$650,000, Phase II (Community Center): \$3,500,000.00

Jobs Created or Retained: Phase I: 10 (mostly seasonal employees), Phase II: 2

Goals Advanced: (2) Infrastructure Development, (3) Quality of Place, (5) Environmental Preservation

Wilton Town Hall Theater

Conversion to Digital Technology

Background: The Wilton Town Hall theater is a two-screen movie theater (of 312 and 68 seats) located in Wilton's 128-year-old Town Hall showing primarily independent films. The theater itself has been in operation for at least 100 years. The theater employs approximately 4-5 people (all part-time). In recognition of the theater's positive impact to Wilton and its economic development, the

town charges the operator only \$1 each year to lease the theater space (the operator owns most of the theater equipment). The town believes the theater has significant indirect economic benefits, in that it's located downtown and attract visitors to shops and restaurants located there - one selectman described it as the town's "Only major destination" – and enhances the region's arts and cultural economy. The operator would like to upgrade the theater to digital technology as it is one of the very few remaining with 35 mm projectors and it is increasingly difficult to obtain 35 mm films, however he lacks the resources to make such a significant investment. A very preliminary cost estimate to convert one of the screens to digital technology is \$60,000. Should enough resources become available, the cost of converting both projectors would be \$120,000.

The Project: Invest in the conversion of the theater's projectors to digital technology. Investment would be supplemented by private fundraising efforts. An investment of this magnitude would be unlikely to attract private capital, as the theater is not a major income generator. However, because it promotes significant indirect economic investment, supplements the region's arts and cultural economic, and is vital to Wilton's

economic development efforts, the project is an important one. NRPC will investigate potential grant opportunities including those available from the NH Community Development Finance Authority.

Total Estimated Cost: \$60,000-\$120,000

Jobs Generated or Retained: 4-5 (mostly part-time workers)

Goals Advanced: (1.) Workforce Development and Job Creation, (3.) Quality of Place

Bridge Street Waterfront Redevelopment

Background: The East Hollis Street of eastern Nashua, located between the Merrimack River and Downtown Nashua, is a historically industrial area that has suffered from some degree of disinvestment due to limited access to the area, poor infrastructure and the existence of significant brownfields. Due to its strategic location, the city has long identified the area as an economic development priority.

The Project: Development of a mixed-use multi-structure site on the Merrimack River. Project is made feasible by construction of combined sewer overflow system at site and the construction of a roundabout to improve

traffic flow at the eastern terminus of the Taylor Falls Bridge. The City of Nashua signed a project agreement with NH DOT for a \$3.5MM transportation improvement at the intersection of Bridge and East Hollis Street. A developer, Renaissance Downtowns, received site plan approval by the City Planning Board in April of 2013. Groundbreaking is anticipated in 2015. The City is in the process of constructing a CSO Screening and Disinfection Facility, which will be built underground, below the Bridge Street site.

Total Estimated Cost: \$4.3 million (infrastructure only)

Total Jobs Created or Retained:

Goals Advanced: (2) Infrastructure Development, (3) Quality of Place, (4) Environmental Preservation

Front and Franklin Street Redevelopment

Background: Nashua officials have long sought to enhance the city's downtown riverfront and historic mill structures through expanded public access and adaptive re-use efforts. However, floodplain issues and a lack of access have stymied such efforts along the Front and Franklin Street area. Nashua

officials have taken major steps to address both issues, through the addition of the Broad Street Parkway, greatly improving access to the area, and re-engineering of Jackson Falls to alleviate floodplain constraints. A private developer recently redeveloped the Cotton Mill into mixed-income apartments.

The Project: This project continues to improve infrastructure along Front and Franklin Streets as well as the Nashua River riverfront to support continued private investment.

Total Estimated Cost: \$3.1 million (infrastructure only)

Total Jobs Created or Retained:

Goals Advanced: (2) Infrastructure Development, (3) Quality of Place, (4) Environmental Preservation

Mohawk Tannery Cleanup and Redevelopment

Background: The former Mohawk Tannery Site is located on approximately 30 acres at the end of Fairmount Street in Nashua. The US EPA added the site to its National Priorities List in 2000, because of the direct

discharge of wastewater containing hazardous substances including chromium, zinc, and phenol into the Nashua River and the disposal of sludge containing hazardous substances into a number of unlined disposal areas at the site. The site is located adjacent to the proposed route of the Broad Street Parkway, a major new roadway currently under construction. Access to the site will be greatly enhanced by the parkway.

The Project: The City of Nashua is working with a local developer and US EPA to develop a site cleanup plan. Development plans are contingent upon cleanup of the site and any potential limitations required by cleanup. The Broad Street Parkway project is underway; completion is expected in late 2015.

Estimated Cost: \$5.7 million

Total Jobs Created or Retained: Contingent upon cleanup of site

Goals Advanced: (1) Job Creation and Workforce Development, (2) Infrastructure Development, (3) Quality of Place, (4) Environmental Preservation

Pelham Water and Sewer Feasibility Study

Background: *Pelham officials have long recognized that the town's lack of water and sewer facilities negatively impact economic development efforts. As the town's population has increased, the need for more commercial services and local job opportunities has also grown. As communities surrounding Pelham build out and as the Interstate 93 expansion project nears completion, pressure for expanded commercial and industrial development in the community will likely only increase.*

The Project: A study to examine the feasibility and funding mechanisms available to expand water and sewer facilities to the Route 38 corridor in Pelham.

Estimated Cost: \$30,000-\$40,000

Total Jobs Created or Retained: Contingent upon study results

Goals Advanced: *(2) Infrastructure Development*

Performance Measures

Over time it is important to evaluate the progress and development of the regional economy to ensure that it enjoys economic growth, the economic growth is broad-based and that all communities enjoy opportunities for advancement and that progress is made in advancing core livability goals outlined in this plan. As indicated by the Economic Development Administration, there are five core performance measures the region must track after implementation of this CEDS to ensure that the region is advancing in meeting economic development benchmarks. Those metrics are:

Number of jobs created after implementation of the CEDS;

Number and types of investments undertaken in the region;

Number of jobs retained in the region;

Amount of private sector investment in the region after implementation of the CEDS; and

Changes in the economic environment of the region.

Additionally, NRPC will track quantifiable metrics to ensure that progress is made in

advancing the five goals outlined in this CEDS document. Those five goals are:

1. Workforce Development and Job Creation
2. Infrastructure Development
3. Quality of Place
4. Environmental Protection
5. Regional Coordination

By tracking the progress of the following metrics, the region will work to ensure that economic growth is broad-based and inclusive and to confirm that is helping advance the livability goals outlined in the CEDS and other chapters of the regional plan. In doing so, the region recognizes that the health of the regional economy is directly integrated to the region's high quality of life and the richness of its built and natural environments. It also recognizes that not all short-term economic growth may be beneficial in helping address long-term economic, livability, or environmental goals. Economic growth which inflicts damage on natural resources, negatively impacts public health, or growth which results in the loss of historical structures or public spaces may ultimately inflict more damage to long-term economic prospects than good.

The following metrics were devised to ensure broad-based economic growth and development which contributes to a higher quality of life and the protection and enhancement of environmental and environmental qualities so vital to the region's economic health:

1. Number of jobs and residential units created and retained within region's downtowns or town centers. Goals: Workforce Development & Job Creation, Quality of Place
2. Rate of unemployment Goal: Workforce Development & Job Creation.
3. Number of households and commercial facilities served by broadband access. Goal: Infrastructure Development
4. Share of commute trips that are non-driving alone. Goals: Infrastructure Development, Environmental Preservation
5. Number of acres of open space protected from development. Goals: Environmental Preservation, Quality of Place
6. Number and acreage of agricultural operations in region.

Goal: Quality of Place,
Environmental Preservation

7. Number of jobs created and retained in the arts and entertainment sector. Goal: Quality of Place.
8. Number of municipal cost sharing agreements. Goal: Regional Coordination

Sources

Sources

Alvirne High School & Wilber H. Palmer Vocational and Technical Center. (2014). Program of Studies, 2014-2015. Retrieved from http://www.edline.net/files/wQLaH/c3ea880b964849a03745a49013852ec4/pos_14-15_Final.pdf

Americans for the Arts. (2012). *Arts & Economic Prosperity IV, The Economic Impact of Nonprofit Arts and Culture Organizations and their Audiences: Report for the State of New Hampshire*, Washington, D.C.

City of Concord, NH. (2008). *New Hampshire's Creative Crossroads: The Concord Creative Economy Plan*, Concord, NH

City of Lowell, Mass. (2013). Sustainable Lowell 2025. Retrieved from <http://www.lowellma.gov/dpd/Documents/Sustainable%20Lowell%202025.pdf>

City of Nashua, NH and Nashua Regional Planning Commission. (2012). Nashua Tree Streets Neighborhood, Analysis and Overview. Nashua, NH

Cohn, Scott. (2014, June 3). America's Top States for Business: Our Methodology. *CNBC*. Retrieved from [www.](http://www.cnbc.com/id/101723185)
<http://www.cnbc.com/id/101723185>

CNBC. (2014, June 3). America's Best States for Business, 2014. Retrieved from <http://www.cnbc.com/id/101723185>

Daniel Barrick, Denis Delay & Steven Norton. (2012). From Tailwind to Headwind: New Hampshire's Shifting Economic Trends. NH C Center for Public Policy Studies. Retrieved from <http://www.nhpolicy.org/report/from-tailwind-to-headwind-new-hampshireamp39s-shifting-economic-trends>

Dennis Delay, & Russ Thibeault. (2014). The Evolving Environment and Housing's Future: Housing Needs in New Hampshire Part 3. NH Center for Public Policy Studies. Retrieved from <http://www.nhhfa.org/housing-data-needs.cfm>

IPCC. (2007). *Climate Change 2007: Synthesis Report. Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*. Geneva, Switzerland: IPCC. Retrieved from http://www.ipcc.ch/publications_and_data/ar4/syr/en/spms4.html

Melillo, J., Richmond, T., & Yohe, G. (2014). *Climate Change Impacts in the United States: The Third National Climate Assessment (Climate Assessment)*. Washington, DC: U.S.Global Change Research Program. Retrieved from <http://nca2014.globalchange.gov/downloads>

Milford Economic Development Advisory Council. (2009). *Recommendations to Foster Economic Development in Milford*. Town of Milford, NH.

Milford High School and Applied Technology Center. (2014). Program of Studies, 2014-2015. Retrieved from <http://mhs.milfordk12.org/files/2014/02/Program-of-Studies-2014-20151.pdf>

Nashua Community College. (2014) Tuition and Fees, 2013-2014. Retrieved March 30 at <http://www.nashuacc.edu/current-students/23>

Nashua Regional Planning Commission. (2013). Draft Broadband Plan for the Nashua Region. Retrieved from http://www.nashuarpc.org/files/7713/9299/8236/BroadbandPlan_021214.pdf

Nashua School District. (2014). Program of Studies, 2014-2015. Retrieved from <http://nsd-schools.nashua.edu/highschool/NHSS/Class%20Documents/2014-2015%20Footsteps%20Jan%202014.pdf>

New Hampshire Department of Employment Services. (2014). Amherst Community Profile. Retrieved from <http://www.nhes.nh.gov/elmi/products/cp/profiles-pdf/merrimack.pdf>

New Hampshire Department of Employment Services. (2014). Merrimack Community Profile. Retrieved from <http://www.nhes.nh.gov/elmi/products/cp/profiles-pdf/merrimack.pdf>

New Hampshire Department of Employment Services. (2014). Milford Community Profile. Retrieved from <http://www.nhes.nh.gov/elmi/products/cp/profiles-pdf/merrimack.pdf>

New Hampshire Department of Employment Services. (2014). Nashua Community Profile. Retrieved from <http://www.nhes.nh.gov/elmi/products/cp/profiles-pdf/merrimack.pdf>

New Hampshire Department of Employment Services, Economic and Labor Market Information Bureau. (2013). *Quarterly Covered Employment and Wages*. Accessed July 1, 2014 at <http://www.nhes.nh.gov/elmi/statistics/qcew-data.htm#quarterly>

New Hampshire Department of Employment Services, Economic and Labor Market Information Bureau. (2014). *Local Area Unemployment and Wages*. Retrieved from <http://www.nhes.nh.gov/elmi/statistics/laus-data.htm#citytown>

New Hampshire Department of Employment Services, Economic and Labor Market Information Bureau. (2012). *Covered Employment and Wages, Annual Averages 2012*. Retrieved from <http://www.nhes.nh.gov/elmi/statistics/qcew-data.htm#quarterly>

PlaceEconomics. (2013). *Profits through Preservation: The Economic Impact of Historic Preservation in Utah*. Retrieved from http://www.utahheritagefoundation.com/images/Executive_Summary_FINAL.pdf

Urban Design Associates (2003). Nashua Downtown Master Plan, Nashua, NH. Retrieved from http://www.gonashua.com/Portals/0/DOWNTOWN_MASTER_PLAN_2003.pdf

U.S. Census Bureau. (2010). *2010 Decennial Census*.

U.S. Census Bureau. (2012). *2008-2012 American Community Survey*.

U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2013). *Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages*. Accessed April 15, 2014 <http://www.bls.gov/cew/#databases>

U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2014). *State and Area Employment, Hours, and Earnings*. Retrieved May 15, 2014 <http://www.bls.gov/eag/eag.nh.htm>

U.S. Energy Information Administration. (2014). Natural Gas Prices, New Hampshire. Retrieved March 11, 2014 http://www.eia.gov/dnav/ng/ng_pri_sum_dcu_snh_m.htm

U.S. Energy Information Administration. (2014). Average Retail Price of Electricity to Ultimate Customers by End-Use Sector. Retrieved March 11, 2014 http://www.eia.gov/dnav/ng/ng_pri_sum_dcu_snh_m.htm

Vanasse Hangen Brustlin Inc. (2013). Merrimack Master Plan Update Draft. Retrieved May 10, 2014 at <http://www.vhb.com/merrimackmasterplan/reports.asp>

Wake, C., Burakowski, E., Wilkinson, P., Hayhoe, K., Stoner, A., & Keeley, C. (2014). Southern New Hampshire Climate Assessment (Climate Assessment). NH: Carbon Solutions New England, University of New Hampshire. Retrieved from <http://ClimateSolutionsNE.org>

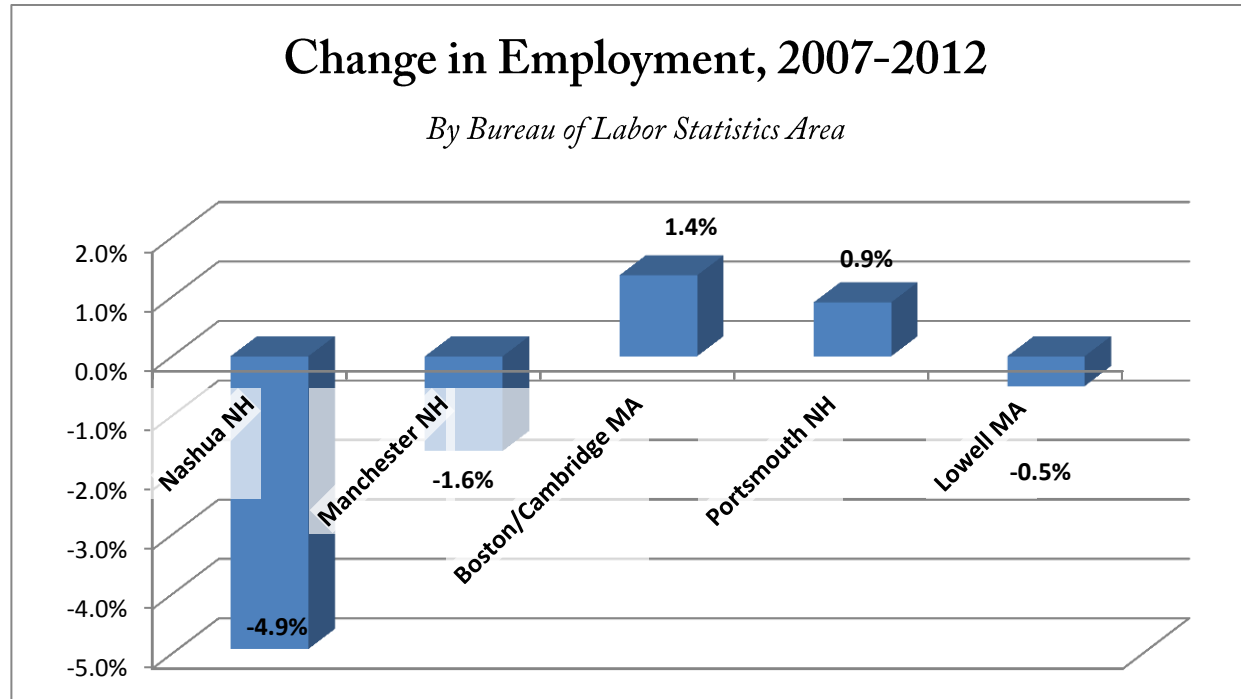
Appendix

Geographic Distribution of Jobs and Households, NRPC Region Table

Table 2: Geographic Distribution of Jobs and Households, NRPC Region

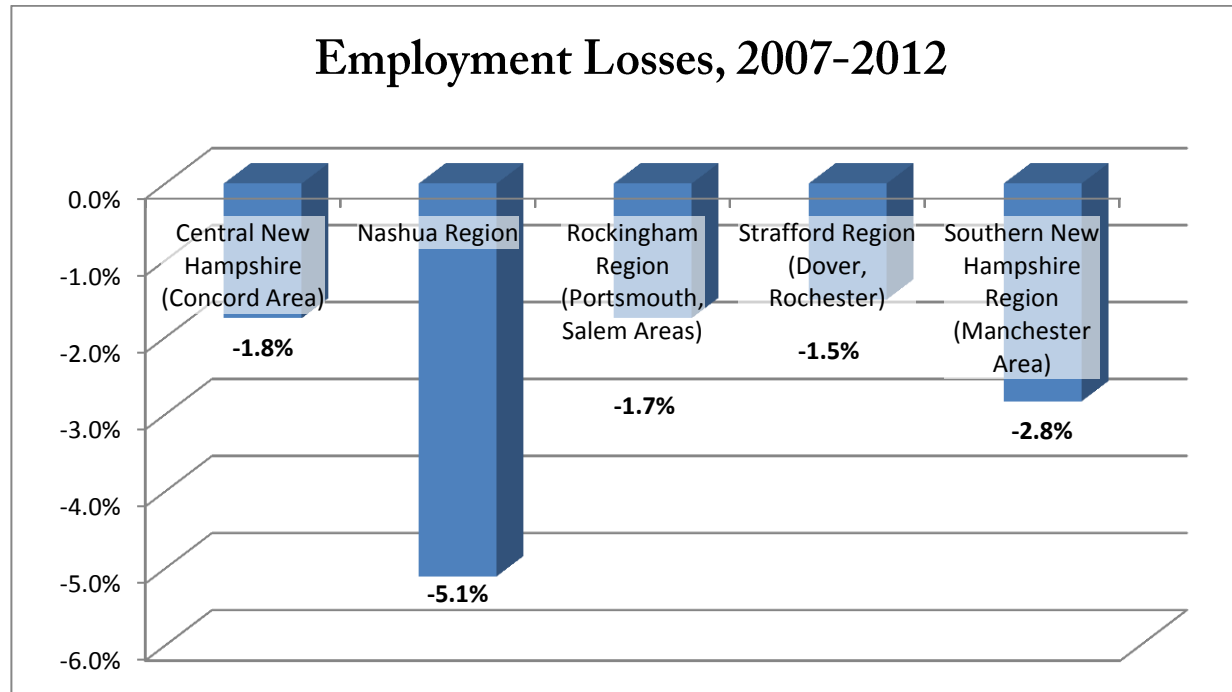
	Total Jobs	Town Center Jobs	Total Households	Town Center Households
Amherst	4,265	652	4,351	574
Brookline	360	133	1,743	251
Hollis	1,736	657	2,935	226
Hudson	10,003	892	9,396	1,419
Litchfield	5,958	250	3,016	120
Lyndeborough	94	32	663	112
Mason	147	47	573	58
Merrimack	14,402	2,351	9,910	1,685
Milford	5,958	2,104	6,243	2,834
Mont Vernon	142	87	889	206
Nashua	44,767	15,977	37,377	13,791
Pelham	2,047	268	4,631	300
Wilton	1,173	473	1,593	630
REGION				
TOTAL	91,052	23,932	83,320	22,206

Regional Employment Growth vs. Peer Regions



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Employment Losses, 2007-2012



Source: NH Employment Security

Employment Change, New England States

Table 7: Employment Change, New England States

<i>Pre-Recession – 2014</i>	<i>Peak</i>
CONNECTICUT	
Peak Pre-Recession Employment (March 2008)	1,713,000
April 2014 Employment	1,659,700
Difference	-53,300
MAINE	
Peak Pre-Recession Employment (February 2008)	621,000
April 2014 Employment	605,400

Table 7: Employment Change, New England States

<i>Pre-Recession – 2014</i>	<i>Peak</i>
Difference	-15,600
MASSACHUSETTS	
Peak Pre-Recession Employment (April 2008)	3,325,000
April 2014 Employment	3,395,500
Difference	70,500
NEW HAMPSHIRE	
Peak Pre-Recession Employment (January 2008)	652,700
April 2014 Employment	650,300
Difference	-2,400
RHODE ISLAND	
Peak Pre-Recession Employment (January 2008)	494,600
April 2014 Employment	475,600
Difference	-20,000
VERMONT	
Peak Pre-Recession Employment (June 2007)	309,600
April 2014 Employment	307,200
Difference	-2,400
UNITED STATES	
Peak Pre-Recession Employment (January 2008)	138,365,000
April 2014 Employment	138,246,000
Difference	-119,000