Connecticut Resource Conservation & Development Area, Inc.

Concept Siting & Evaluation
For

Connecticut Agriculture and Conservation
Rural Economic Innovation
Education Center
“CACEE”

A Planning Study for Connecticut Rural Growth & Innovation

June 30, 2018

Project Funding Provided By

USDA
Rural Development

Committed to the future of rural communities.

Prepared by
Connecticut Resource Conservation and Development’s
CACEE PROJECT TEAM in Collaboration with the Conway School of Landscape Design
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A. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project was developed through a brainstorming session with the USDA’s Southern New England Office and the Connecticut Resource Conservation and Development on methods to promote rural small business growth as well as existing condition and demand for small business/food incubators in Connecticut.

The CACEE project evaluated existing conditions and potential sites to optimize new business development and incubator space in rural Connecticut with a mission toward the following:

1. Build a collaborative leadership between Connecticut’s agriculture business sector, conservation, outdoor eco-tourism and planned economic growth initiatives.
2. Adaptive reuse of underutilized a vacant building, brownfield or a parcel of land in need of reclamation to create space for new rural entrepreneurial innovation.
3. Conduct research into economic conditions and potential for expansion and utilization of agriculture and conservation within Connecticut’s rural economy.

CTRC&D would like to acknowledge and express appreciation for the important work of the following professional volunteers and partners. Their expertise was critical for insight, analysis and options to evaluate the potential sites and concepts for a future CACEE Center. Also, thank you to Christie LaBella, CTDOT, who took time out of her day to open the Scovil Hoe Site on April 17, 2018 for the CACEE Committee members and the Conway School.

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B. INTRODUCTION

THE CACEE CONCEPT

The concept for CACEE mirrors the advent and growth of “Innovation districts and spaces” in the U.S. and throughout the world. These spaces have the unique potential to spur productive, inclusive and sustainable economic development. At a time of sluggish growth, they also provide a resilient foundation for creation and expansion of local business and jobs by helping grow small business to meet evolving markets.

The success of innovation districts over the last few decades within suburban areas of the U.S has led to increased awareness about the importance of innovation centers as a catalyst for new business startups.

Urban centers, especially those in Connecticut, are embracing innovation centers and districts to provide a mechanism for expanding employment and education for both entrepreneurs and disadvantaged small business growth in urban centers. In Connecticut, innovation centers such as the CLICK in Willimantic, New Haven’s REX Innovation Hub, Yale’s Origami Innovations, Hartford’s Billings Forge and Swift Factory Redevelopment–Community Solutions projects are a few examples of successful structural innovation projects that seek to foster new job and business growth. These places are also succeeding through encouraging public involvement, awareness and engagement.

In 2016, CTRC&D Executive Director, Jeanne Davies, CTRC&D Agriculture Programs Manager, Amanda Fargo Johnson and John Guszkowski, CTRC&D President met with USDA administrators to discuss the merits of building a rural innovation center with a mission to provide access to Connecticut’s rural budding entrepreneurs and innovators seeking to experiment with concepts for a new product or business, especially those looking to collaborate with agriculture or natural resource based organizations and amenities.

With the overall goal to foster, enhance, yet preserve the farms, natural and cultural resources of Connecticut’s rural communities, CTRC&D and USDA agreed on the need to explore options and potential sites for a future center to encourage collaboration and create an environment for new rural business startups in Connecticut’s small towns and rural areas.

“Innovation districts constitute the ultimate mashup of entrepreneurs and educational institutions, start-ups and schools, mixed-use development and medical innovations, bike-sharing and bankable investments—all connected by transit, powered by clean energy, wired for digital technology, and fueled by caffeine.”

An ideal formula for densely populated urban centers with an abundance of opportunity for new business and start-ups, the solution for rural areas and village centers is more complex. Transit access, digital technology, fiber optics as well as medical and educational institutions is a challenge for rural Connecticut communities.

Specialized planning, land use models and rural transit access are important factors to foster rural economic growth. Managing inefficient land use patterns/zoning, utilities, fiber optic, rural design and sprawl are other mechanisms to support sustainable rural small business growth as well as agriculture land preservation and outdoor eco-tourism resources. Often, rural towns in Connecticut lack planning and resources to provide long term solutions for locally generated economic growth. They are primarily dependent on outside corporate retail or manufacturing investment to sustain tax base.

Evaluating the options and future site characteristics for a rural innovation center or district to foster new ideas and solutions was a potential solution. In 2017, CTRC&D received a USDA grant to select and investigate potential rural sites located within central Connecticut to build a rural economic growth and small business innovation center. (See Appendix C)
“All good things which exist are the fruits of originality.”
John Stuart Mill

The concept for a Connecticut Agriculture and Conservation Rural Economic Innovation Education Center “CACEE” is based on an ongoing need for low cost rural incubators in Connecticut to promote creativity, innovation and growth toward rural business startups focusing on agriculture and resource conservation.

CACEE will be a non-profit center where a consortium of partnering organizations provide a cooperative structure for farmers, conservationists, and residents to explore resource based economic innovation, new concepts and ideas for economic growth on their farm, start up ideas for eco & agriculture based business, experiment with regional solutions for marketing and provide education toward cooperative practices for conservation and agriculture.
C. OBJECTIVES

The process for determining objectives for a future CACEE Center involved numerous discussions with USDA, CTRC&D Council members, partners, stakeholders, farmers, farm market vendors, and small homebased business owners. CTRC&D staff toured several incubator spaces, including an in-depth tour of a successful USDA sponsored culinary incubator in Warren, Rhode Island. Overall, the proposal to successfully build a rural Connecticut space/district to foster innovation focused on seven primary objectives:

Agriculture: Building and site characteristics to foster the agriculture industry, to support start-ups and training in various forms of agriculture, including aquaculture, hydroponics, greenhouse management, regional food hub, food processing and agriculture product market space.

Natural Resource Economics: Located near or adjacent to trail/river/public parks/forests/open space preserves to foster recreational and tourism public engagement and education to foster eco-tourism based business start-ups as well as create physical trail statewide connections with other rural areas and stakeholder organizations, such as the Last Green Valley, the Mystic area or the Litchfield Hills.

Economic Markets: New rural business start-ups require access to an affluent target market to provide the optimal avenue for success in product development and the center should be located near those markets.

Eligibility: Rural siting of the CACEE center in a USDA eligible community is mandatory for potential support and grant/loan funding from USDA for both the center, infrastructure, new business startups, and potential co-housing.

Access: The site will be located within fifteen minutes of a limited access highway to ensure easy access to supplies as well as distribution and commodity movement. Conversely, the CACEE site should be convenient to the public, clientele for the business startups and product marketing. Ideally, there will be access to co-housing and public transit to accommodate an emerging generation of no-car-access area residents who may become members of the CACEE center.

Affinity: The site will have unique characteristics, historic or geography which would generate ongoing public enthusiasm for CACEE fundraising, marketing of client products, interest by young entrepreneurs and events. Site dynamics should encourage interest in agriculture and natural resource innovation and education to students, entrepreneurs and the public. Most important, the host community must unequivocally support the center and its mission.

Flexibility: Site and building design must be flexible for evolving uses, need of members and always evolving toward changing markets, members, client and public interests to generate enthusiasm and interest in the ongoing mission.
Innovation districts, incubator space, maker space, food hubs; numerous terms for the type of space, structure or location that generates entrepreneurial innovation, collaboration, growth and training. Below are definitions for these often used lexicons as described by the Brookings Institution:

- **Innovation Districts**: Are geographic areas where leading-edge anchor institutions and companies cluster and connect with start-ups, business incubators and accelerators.
- **Incubators**: An industrial park or building subdivided into small units to house small, growing companies who wish to share office, clerical, or meeting room space.
- **Accelerators**: Business incubators and business accelerators provide advice, guidance and various forms of support for businesses in the startup phase. The key difference between them is that business accelerators, as the name suggests, compress the timescale for starting up by operating as a type of boot camp.
- **Maker Space/Hacker Space**: Also referred to as hacklabs, hackspace, is a community-operated, often by a not for profit (501c(3)), work space where people with common interests, often in computers, machining, technology, science, digital art or electronic art, can meet, socialize and collaborate.
- **Culinary Incubator/ Food or Kitchen Incubator**: Provide kitchen rental but additional services like business development training, access to ecosystem services such as legal aid, packaging, label printing, and distribution.
- **Food Hubs**: A centrally located facility with a business management structure facilitating the aggregation, storage, processing, distribution, and/or marketing of locally/regionally produced food products

In many ways these different avenues can provide a linear support system for growing start ups. "Makerspaces are unique in creating an environment to play, learn, test and grow ideas. Incubators are springing up in engineering, management, design to help innovators commercialize technology.
Accelerators at the national and global level engage with startups and drive them to scale stage via corporate customer connects. Co-working spaces create fertile breeding grounds for co-creation between startups and corporates.” [https://yourstory.com/2018/04/innovation-ecosystems-rise/](https://yourstory.com/2018/04/innovation-ecosystems-rise/)

The CACEE Center project would integrate several of these approaches into one space to support flexibility toward sustaining evolving market demands and collaboration across business and innovation disciplines. In addition, the CACEE space structure would be designed to allow maximum space flexibility to match entrepreneurial needs. An example is the current market enthusiasm for new breweries or coffee roasting. Within CACEE, there could be a flex space designed for experimentation in new markets such as: small batch brewery, coffee roasting, hydroponics or wood product design. Should market conditions evolve into a new market fads, the space can be affordably transformed to meet new entrepreneurial ventures.

“The year 2017 goes down in history as the most important ever in grocery. The food world around us is changing at incredible speed, and the industry must evolve. Grocery, now “cool,” is an industry that is attracting talent from the best schools and companies who would not even have thought about a career in grocery or food a few years ago (let alone raising millions for their own food startups).”
(Forbes—P. Lempert—12/2017)

Connecticut has numerous innovation center programs in development, primarily located in urban spaces. The CACEE is unique as its concept seeks to support and foster new business built off Connecticut’s agriculture industry and the sustained economic value of Connecticut’s natural resources and conservation amenities. Within this report, all the terms referenced as well as CACEE will be collectively categorized and referenced as “incubator space.”

Figure 7: The CACEE model is an interlocking adaptable fluid system to allow for ongoing diverse use options and clients.
Market Demand

Incubator space in Connecticut is primarily focused in urban centers and some sectors of suburban business districts within Connecticut. Connecticut hosts approximately thirty-six government, higher education or non-profit “incubators”. Of these, over twenty-six are dedicated to technology innovation space, high tech innovation space, small business support centers and accelerators. At the time of this report, there are six non-profit kitchen incubators and four food hubs. The Connecticut Small Business Development Center also lists twenty-seven shared workspaces throughout the state.

From this list of “incubator” spaces, the majority are located in densely populated urban areas. Eight are located in a USDA eligible area. Of those eight, four are high tech incubator centers located at the University of Connecticut in Storrs, CT, three are food hubs and one is a nonprofit commercial kitchen incubator. Currently there are no small business incubator spaces of the type described in this report within either Connecticut’s rural USDA identified areas, suburban or urbanized locations.

The overall demand for the use of a rural innovation incubator such as CACEE is predicated on the lack of this type of facility in Connecticut. The CACEE Center growth can be
mirrored on the successful growth of CLICK (Commercially Licensed Co-Operative Kitchen, Inc.). CLICK is a non-profit food product and processing incubator located in Windham, Connecticut, just outside Willimantic center. The CLICK cooperative opened in 2012 and became fully operational for membership in 2014 enrolling five members. By 2018, there are over thirty members with six applications for additional membership pending at the time of this report. The primary concern with membership expansion at CLICK is square footage of space for food processing. CLICK offers only food processing as a culinary incubator only. The cooperative is geographically limited for lateral site and building expansion and is currently evaluating the option of building a second story on the building to accommodate the growing demand by membership. CLICK provided town origin of member information for this report to help illustrate distance of membership travel: (Figure 12)

Another important report used for evaluating market demand for this report was the New England Food Hub Site Suitability Analysis (2/2014), which provided valuable data and GIS mapping about food systems and transportation in New England. The data depicts modeling for important factors such as proximity, transportation and processing capabilities. If food processing or commodity processing is considered, the CACEE sample sites are centrally located to major transportation routes as well as densely populated areas.

As part of the CACEE site evaluations, potential partnerships were explored for non profits or budding altruistic environmental and agriculture organizations interested in co-locating in a future CACEE center. As will be noted in the site evaluations, several environmental organizations expressed interest in renting or creating a partnership with CTRC&D to build/improve a site for the CACEE center.
Market Area

The first stage CACEE market area for the products generated by the CACEE center includes urban, suburban, and rural towns in eastern and central Connecticut, including the Connecticut River Valley. Membership for the CACEE center would draw on the same area with strong encouragement toward rural towns and their residents in eastern Connecticut. (See Figure 13). Other than designated urban areas, this area roughly correlates with the largest area of USDA interconnected rural communities in Connecticut. These areas are eligible for housing community development/infrastructure loans (See Figure 14). Additionally, this area contains reasonable probability of a site with agriculture soils and farms.

Sample CACEE site locations were selected for their central location within Connecticut to ensure proximity with potential markets in nearby affluent communities and access by residents in Connecticut’s rural towns with populations under 10,000. (See Figure 15) An economic study conducted for the Lower CT River Valley noted that over 24,000 full or part-time jobs are classified as self-employment. A recommendation from the study was to encourage and assist the creation of professional and/or entrepreneurial opportunities for everyone in the region. (See Figure 11C) The natural resource amenities in rural Connecticut have tremendous potential for eco-tourism based business start-ups.

Affluent communities in the lower Connecticut River Valley provide a potential focused market for commodities produced by the new product startups. “The high quality of life in the region attracts people who could work and live anywhere. The second home residents in the region are also contributors to this economy.” (GrowSmart Report, Hively) Public transit access will continue to be a challenge to outlying areas, but the site ideally would be located near a public transit line. (See Figure 16)

In eastern Connecticut, CACEE could partner with CLICK, the Willimantic CO-OP, the Last Green Valley or other organizations to expand space to meet client demand. There are additional opportunities to partner with existing educational institutions and incubators or makerspace in more urbanized areasas satellite support organizations.
**Build on Existing Economic Assets**

**RECOMMENDATION 2.1**

Create and integrate as necessary a full continuum of business creation, launch and bridge services to support a new generation of entrepreneurs and business owners in the region.

**RATIONALE**

Self-employment is a major economic driver for the region. Discussions during the project also suggested a strong desire among some millennials and members of the minority community to pursue starting their own businesses to create desired opportunities. For the Lower Connecticut River Valley this promotion of entrepreneurship and its ongoing support is critical to providing the necessary career and job opportunities needed to retain and attract the next generation of business and community leaders.

Efforts should be made on not only assisting with “entrepreneur self discovery” and basic business education but also with downstream activities such as favorable leasing arrangements, ongoing mentoring, customer development activity including supplier qualification. Given the diversity of employment in the region, a mix of programs to support everything from retail, manufacturing and professional/technical services should be considered. Where possible existing programs should be stitched together into a support network for entrepreneurs.

**EXAMPLES & ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

**Virtual Retail Incubator**

http://dtsf.com/doing-business-downtown/dtsf-retail-incubator-program/

**Manufacturing & Hardware**


**CT Supplier Connection**

https://www.supplier-connection.net/SupplierConnection/opportunity-marketplace.html
Figure 12: Current 2018 CLICK Membership By Town

Figure 13: CACEE Service Area and Project Impact Map
Figure 14: USDA Eligible towns for loans/grants for housing. Infrastructure eligible area closely correlates with housing areas.

Figure 15: Connecticut Rural Towns with population less than 10,000 and population density of 500 or less per square mile.
Figure 16
Transit Access and Limitation for Access from Rural Areas
E. CRITERIA FOR SITE SELECTION

In determining the CACEE model, both location and structure for the center, CACEE objectives, potential demand, market area, income generation, place affinity, and geography also influenced site selection criteria. Other factors were used to select sample sites for evaluation (Figure 18) CTRC&D researched real estate databases, consulted with real estate agents and queried partner organizations for potential sites. The goal in sample site selection was to explore a variety of site designs and location options, including partnerships.

Overall, the CACEE structure and property would be located and evaluated using a list of criteria. A few key factors: the site area would have either agriculture soils or space for a greenhouse to allow for expansion and a diversity of agriculture innovation options for potential business startups.

While the site and building do not have to meet all needs listed in Figure 18 or uses as yet identified, the site would allow enough room for expansion and flexibility. The site optimally would have an existing building, with historic character to inspire creativity and adaptive reuse. The building would be renovated to accommodate offices for CTRC&D and partnering organizations as well as a large shared meeting and event areas and a start-up workshop space for product development as well as a future commercial kitchen. The site would be large enough for event parking and freight delivery, outdoor education meeting/event space and market area.

The CACEE Committee evaluated three types of properties:

1) Three rural large acreage accessible and affordable parcels with either buildings and/or outbuildings. One site was owned by the state. Another was owned by a out-of-state developer and the third was owned by a local landowner.
2) Two rural village center parcels with vacant factory structures with enough property and building space to accommodate a greenhouse and/or food hub as well as expansion for additional uses.
3) One smaller acreage rural property was evaluated with a large structure which was move-in ready.

Beyond specific criteria, another goal was to evaluate each site for avenues of partnership and the CACEE Committee was fortunate to evaluate two of the parcels in collaboration with the Eight Mile River Wild and Scenic organization, the Lyme Land Trust and the East Haddam Land Trust, three organizations who were also seeking office space within the Eight Mile River watershed. (See Appendix D)

To better understand potential construction, phasing, and cost for the CACEE project, CTRC&D staff developed a sample development plan in phases. This process allowed varied ideas and concepts to be explored and discussed by the CACEE committee. (See Figures 17 A and 18)

Upon completion of the site evaluations, the CACEE Committee would provide a recommendation for which site to explore in more detail with the assistance of graduate students from the Conway School of Landscape Design. The Conway School provides in-depth analysis and examination of site logistics in context with a clients proposed use of the property. (Appendix A)
Sample Project and Program Development
Phases I – III

Figure 18

Phase I— Site, Funding & Construction
- Concept design and evaluate partnership options
- Identify funding source(s)
- Property research and project cost development
- Property & Program Design
- Property purchase & fundraising
- Renovate/Construct Offices

Phase II
- Build education center and agriculture storage
- Expand conservation education program & outreach staff
- Construct shared office and resource support space for agriculture and local source new business startups
- Agriculture field leases
- Hiring Caretaker
- Open trails & Eco-Tourism waystation

Phase III
- Build barn—offices for rural business incubator, workshop space & commercial grade kitchen for food business accelerator and food programs
- Expand on programs for best practices and innovation for conservation protection, resource management, and sustainable rural growth.

Figure 17-A: Sample Phasing Framework To Promote CACEE Committee Discussions and Options Available
Figure 19

Programs Phase I (First Two Years)

⇒ Education programs for conservation and sustainable use of land & water
⇒ Research and demonstration of agriculture practice projects in critical habitat and watersheds area.
⇒ CT Farm Energy (Education, Assistance, Outreach, Demonstrations)
⇒ Recreational Trail System and connection to larger Eastern CT Trail System
⇒ Establish partnership with local farmers and growers for use of agriculture soils
⇒ Agriculture soil reclamation project & permanent Soil Health Workshop Center
⇒ Demonstration projects (on-site water recycling, rain gardens, compost heat recovery, solar, green building, )
⇒ Campsite construction (near outdoor amenities - scenic river or vista)

Programs Phase II (Second Two Years)

⇒ Rural startup business cooperative space and assistance center
⇒ Regional winter market
⇒ Education programs for conservation and agriculture based businesses for sustainable practices (e.g., low water landscaping, green building practices, no-till planting, soil restoration, water, energy conservation)
⇒ Rental space for events (limited based on host town permitting)
⇒ Fiber optic connection: expansion of research & education facility (where nearby)

Programs Phase III (Third Two Years)

⇒ Expanded eco-tourism center (education– trip planning, shuttle, and facilities for thru hikers/bicyclists/kayaks/canoes. (connections to major water body—CT River)
⇒ Local Foods Business Accelerator - a cooperative commercial kitchen space for area residents to experiment and make food products for future business development

“If we are bold in our thinking, courageous in accepting new ideas, and willing to work with instead of against our land, we shall find in conservation farming an avenue to the greatest food production the world has ever known “

Hugh Hammond Bennett
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Functions and Access Supported Matrix for Site Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>700-800 Sq. Ft - Core Office Space (minimum 5 offices)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-20 person conference room (14’x20’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large event, education, &amp; meeting space (50-150 person)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Kitchen - Food Based Business Innovation Startups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co− Housing Options on site or nearby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking with Partner - Collaboration - Brainstorming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location - East of the River - But Centralized - USDA Eligible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiber Optic or Internet Speeds over 100 mbps—Cell Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Quality—Septic/Sewer Capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture Land on site or nearby for demonstration use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Interface - Easy Access for public to visit site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Next to Trail System - Regional Preferred - Water for recreational access a plus for promoting business kick start</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place Affinity - Site needs to have a compelling public draw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor Education Space  Picnic Tables—Permanent Education Signs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking - Freight Delivery/Pickup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sufficient Storage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism - Eco-Center- opportunities for outdoor recreation (hiking, canoeing, xskiling, etc)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transit Availability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access for income and diversity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
F. SITE EVALUATIONS

Over six months, the CACEE committee evaluated six sample sites. The goal was to examine each site with serious intent to move forward with a CACEE center. The matrix of site criteria were important, but not as critical as the discussion and collaboration that occurred between potential partners, stakeholders on the CACEE committee and within the CTRC&D Council.

Each site was unique and provided opportunities to explore unique opportunities for education, innovation, partnerships and business development. The CACEE Committee had a final project goal of selecting the top two sites for a in-depth site evaluation and landscape design report, including cost estimates by graduate students at the Conway School of Landscape Design.

At the outset of the site tours, CACEE Committee members were ranking sites for place affinity, town enthusiasm, partnership potential and ability to generate income to support loan payments and property maintenance. These factors were the top criteria in ranking the properties.

As will be noted in the site descriptions, the CACEE Committee had strong affinity toward different sites for varied reasons, but overall the Committee was unanimous in ranking the sites and selecting the final site for the Conway Report.

Ultimately, the final site selected was the former Scovil Hoe Factory, a Connecticut Department of Transportation property in Higganum, CT. Appendix A provides the Conway School of Landscape Design site design for property improvements for the site. The site improvements were predicated on the overall goals and uses for the CACEE Center outlined in this report.
1. East Haddam

A. Sunrise Resort– East Haddam, CT

One of the first sites considered was the former Sunrise Resort property, owned by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. The advantages to the property included:

- The site was located next to a state highway and within fifteen minutes of a limited access highway, Route 9. There is a history of the former owner using the site as both an event space for a state jazz festival and the historic use of the property during the 1900s as a recreational resort destination. (Figure 19)
- Valuable natural resources amenities are available at the site for environmental education, agriculture education, tourism promotion, and historic preservation. The Salmon River is adjacent to the property and currently a kayak rental business, leases an option on the small state beach within the property to rent kayaks to visitors.
- Two historic building were still standing and although there was a need for substantial rehabilitation, the potential for a partnership between CTRC&D, CTDEEP, the East Haddam Historical Society and USDA seem an ideal solution for preservation of these historic structures. The first building was inspected by a volunteer building contractor who estimated $200,000 to renovate the building toward building code and occupancy compliance.
- Affordability: The site is owned by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CTDEEP). A partnership with the CTDEEP and USDA would have potentially provided improved use and affordable maintenance of the property to the state, increased business growth within the town, supporting town character with historic uses and rural community context.

Limitations: The CACEE Committee toured the site and subsequent conversations with the CTDEEP indicated that a long term leasing arrangement with CTRC&D had political challenges. At the time of the site evaluation and this report, the State of Connecticut was not interested in a partnership for a future CACEE center.

Ranking: Medium—while the site had the necessary amenities such as agriculture land, proximity to trails and river as well as historic buildings, without State of Connecticut enthusiasm, the bureaucratic negotiations and contractual agreements were seen as a major hindrance to use of the site.
Figure 20: Sunrise Resort Site Evaluation
Above—Open Space Map. Green areas depict prime agriculture soils. Yellow areas depict prime cropland soils. Below—Map of Natural Diversity Database and connection to Salmon River and CT River. Photo of building on site—renovation potential & kayak rental on site. Salmon River.
B. Johnsonville, East Haddam, CT

The second site in East Haddam that generated enthusiasm for the CACEE committee and potential partners was the “ghost town” of Johnsonville, a small cluster of abandoned buildings owned by an out-of-state developer. The price on the property was listed at $1,900,000. The advantages to the property for the CACEE center included:

- The site was 62 acres in a size with numerous buildings of historic and recreational interest, located next to a state highway and within fifteen minutes of a limited access highway, Route 9. The property was designed by a former owner in the 1960s as a tourist destination similar to the popular Mystic village in Mystic, Connecticut.

- There were numerous advantages to the natural resources amenities on the property including proximity to Machimoodus State Park, the Salmon River, a small lake and prime agriculture soils. The buildings and the site were optimal for all aspects of the CACEE Center objectives including environmental education, agriculture education, tourism promotion, and historic preservation. The numerous buildings on the property were unique and would have provided an opportunity for a varied number of start-up spaces, from an incubator kitchen, to a restaurant training facility, a woodworking or mechanical workshop, a space for high tech exploration, agriculture projects as well as many other diverse and ongoing uses. (see Figure 22)

- Affordability: The site was owned by an out-of-state developer. At the time of the site visit, the CACEE Committee wanted to proceed with contacting the owner to explore the options for donation or a formula for purchase/donation. The buildings would require substantial investment and fundraising, but the CACEE Committee was interested in the “place affinity” of the small village and the potential for enthusiastic participation in site renovation from potential donors.

Limitations: Despite the high cost for property renovation, the CACEE Committee was interested in using the site as a finalist for the Conway School study with the property owner’s permission.

Ranking: High, even with limitations on cost. After almost five years on the real estate market and numerous unsuccessful project development attempts, the site was sold within one month of the CACEE Committee’s site visit. The property was removed from consideration.
Figure 22: Photos of Building Variety at Johnsonville Site
C. Baker Lane, East Haddam, CT

The third site in East Haddam was a smaller site explored after the sale of Johnsonville. The property referral was provided by the East Haddam Land Trust and the Eight Mile River Wild Scenic as an opportunity for potential collaboration within the Eight Mile River watershed. The owner, an enthusiastic conservationist was interested in working with a potential partnership to explore a reasonably priced sale of the property for use as a non-profit outdoor education, office space and incubator. The CACEE Committee toured the site and noted the following:

- The site is approximately six acres in a size. The building is 4,400 square feet, separated into three apartments. One apartment was rented at the time of the site visit. The owner was amenable to a lease/purchase option and there was income generating potential.

- There were numerous advantages to the natural resources amenities, as the property was adjacent to a large open space parcel owned by the East Haddam Land Trust, near the Eight Mile River and within the inter-regional Goodwin Trail system. There was a spring fed small pond and area for a future outdoor education/event pavilion.

- Affordability: The property was within a price range that was advantageous to a quick turn-around for building a CACEE center. The building was also move-in-ready and potential income from partnership rentals would augment a loan repayment plan over thirty to forty years. Future improvements to build amenities for incubator space and a commercial kitchen could be constructed as fundraising and need permit. Fundraising options were advantageous with a proposed partner collaborative.

Limitations: Despite the reasonable cost for property acquisition, building condition, and excellent prospects for partner collaboration, the CACEE Committee was concerned with small property size parking, access and visibility. The property was located on a small rural lane off Connecticut Routes 156 and 82. Isolated parcels of residential use and conflict with neighbors over use of the property as a small business incubator space were also of concern.

Ranking: Medium due to rural road location and parcel size
2. LYME

A property in Lyme at 576 Connecticut Route 156 was an optimal property for consideration. The site was located prominently on a frequently traveled rural state highway along a scenic corridor linking the Old Lyme shoreline, Hamburg Cove, north to Devil’s Hopyard State Park, Fox Hopyard golf course and State Route 11, a limited access highway north to Hartford. The Eight Mile River bounded the property to the west and agriculture soils owned by the Lyme Land Trust were located to the northwest.

- **Site:** The site was approximately sixty acres in size. While the site had been mined for topsoil and gravel, there were unique opportunities for soil reclamation projects. The property contained a small house that could have been renovated for starter offices and a large outbuilding/stable that could have been renovated for rural incubator space and a large covered pavilion for outdoor education/events.

- **Amenities:** On the market for approximately $300,000, numerous partners were interested in collaboration and purchase of the property. The property was near a large open space parcel owned by the East Haddam Land Trust, adjacent to the Eight Mile River and within the inter-regional Goodwin Trail system.

- **Affordability:** Property would have been approximately $100,000 to purchase with partnership contributions. Fundraising options were advantageous with the proposed partner collaborative.

**Limitations:** One limitation was the presence of high tension electrical system as well as understanding town support of a large non-profit center in a highly affluent rural area.

**Ranking:** Very high with the CACEE Committee meeting frequently with partners and town officials to tour the site and explore the regulatory and funding options to purchase. The site was sold within three months of the CACEE site tour and was subsequently taken off the list for consideration.

Figure 24 Aerial Map view of 576 Hamburg Road, Lyme, CT
Figure 25: Site Amenities Including Goodwin Trail Map

- Octagonal Outdoor Pavilion
- Tour with High Tension Wires
- Meeting with Lyme Town Officials
- Outbuilding/Former Horse Stable
3. East Hampton

The site selected at 101 Main Street in East Hampton was chosen due to its prominent location at a major crossroads in the town village center. The property was privately owned, so the CACEE Committee worked closely with the East Hampton Town Planner, Jeremy DeCarli to contact the owner and assemble site data and information the property.

- **Site:** The site is 2.52 acres in size with 16,640 square feet of building area. The building was constructed in 1900, adjacent to Pocotopaug Creek. The site is industrial and commercially zoned for use. There is public water and sewer available to the site, a transit route and potential for fiber optic connections.

- **Amenities:** A parking lot with access to a cross state bike trail, the Airline Trail, is a block away, providing access to state park amenities for potential recreational based small business startups. The town has projected a positive response to the potential of the CACEE center locating in the East Hampton village area, offering additional options for sample sites.

- **Affordability:** The property was previously listed for $140,000, but was taken off the market prior to the site tour. The building is situation for optimum visibility within the town center and has potential for a food hub distribution layout and regional food market. There also town building available nearby for future expansion of small business incubator space.

- **Limitations:** A major limitation is the high cost of building and site reclamation with the potential for industrial contaminants on site and existing stream impairment. There was discussion with in the CACEE committee about potential collaboration toward a brownfield assessment grant to perform an Phase I and II Environmental Assessment in collaboration with the town. The property owner was unavailable for discussion despite efforts to contact.

**Ranking:** High with the CACEE Committee considering the potential for high profile activities in a village center, access to the Airline Trail, access to transit and population density that would support the center. The CACEE Committee thought this area of East Hampton would make an excellent satellite site if not the primary site.
Figure 27:
Google Aerial Map View of 101 Main Street
Airline Trail Map Segment (East Hampton)
Photos of Airline Trail and 101 Main Street Property
Figure 27-A
Google Aerial Map View of 101 Main Street and Alternative Town Owned Properties
4. Haddam/Higganum Village

The final site to be investigated was the former Scovil Hoe Factory site, property currently owned by the Connecticut Department of Transportation. This site was recommended by THE CONNECTIONS, Inc., a CACEE stakeholder with interests in co-housing opportunities. After discussions with Haddam Town Planner, Liz Glidden about town vision for the property and the village of Higganum, the CACEE Committee was provided with access to numerous documents from the town via their website: Scovil Hoe Marin Environmental Phase 1- Environmental Site Assessment - January 2001, Scovil Hoe Environmental Condition Assessment Report - April 2002, Scovil Hoe Water Quality Monitoring Report - November 2005, Scovil Hoe Exploratory Site Investigation - January 2007, Scovil Hoe DOT Study Cover Letter - March 2007, Scovil Hoe DOT Study - July 2006, Scovil Hoe Factory Study - September 2016. In addition, the town was in the process of completing a final report for the property: 2018 Scovil Hoe Studies by Fuss and O’Neill for CT DECD Brownfield Grant.

The Scovil Hoe site was selected as the finalist by the CACEE Committee and the CTRC&D Council voted to move forward with the Conway School of Landscape Design toward an in-depth design for property improvements for this property. The CACEE Committee met with Conway School and town officials to tour the site and explain the mission of the CACEE center: education based site design, promoting environmentally sustainable and economically resilient site design, flexibility for varied and changing demand for innovation and integration with village center.

- **Site:** The site is 4 acres in size with 18,500 square feet of building area. The building was constructed in the 1800s with renovations and additions in early 1900s. The building’s original architecture is unique and highly suitable for the CACEE space needs. The town is anticipating a potential commercial—residential reuse of the property and conducting studies to support that use. There has been some discussion by the town about public water connections and improvements to wastewater in the Higganum Village area.

- **Amenities:** The site opportunities are described in detail within the Conway School report (Appendix A) and the PowerPoint Summary, presented by Fuss and O’Neill on July 12, 2018. (Appendix B). The building amenities viewed by the CACEE Committee members on the site tour included: unique architectural amenities, transit access, proximity to Middletown’s urban center, proximity to rural areas in eastern Connecticut, fundraising and event potential, optimal space for diverse small business incubators, market area, office space, proximity to potential environmental technology education (stream, solar, the Connecticut River and Higganum Cove), connections to large areas of open space and state forests.

- **Affordability:** The State of Connecticut is seeking options for transfer of the property to either the town or a private entity. The cost, as yet, is undetermined. It is anticipated that if the property were transferred to the Town of Haddam, the price would be nominal, allowing funds to be diverted to site reclamation.

- **Limitations:** The major limitation for the site is the cost for site and building reclamation. The Town of Haddam, through its 2018 Study, is exploring the option for application to the State of Connecticut Brownfield Grant Program. While the disposition of the town on future ownership of the property,
public, non-profit, or private, the CACEE Committee was enthused about the options available and the model that the site would offer for a future center. Conway School of Landscape Design was hired in March 2018 and the two graduate students, Renee Ruhl and Dan DeLago submitted the report to CTRC&D on June 26, 2018.

Ranking: Very High with the CACEE Committee considering the potential for high profile activities in a village center, access to transit, Valley Railroad, proximity to urban center, the UConn Extension Center and Middlesex Community College, Wesleyan University, ecological and agriculture education as well as a population density that would support activities and fundraising while also maintaining rural center integrity.

Figure 28
1st Site Tour SCOVIL FACTORY TOUR—April 17, 2018
Representatives from the CACEE Committee and Conway School students
Figure 28 – A
Aerial View of Higganum Center in Context with Scovil Hoe Site
SCOVIL MILL
Public Meeting | Charrette
Fostering the local economy

Join the Discussion!
Thursday, May 10, 2018
6:00 – 7:15 pm
Haddam Elementary School
272 Saybrook Road
Higganum, CT

What are your ideas for the Scovil Mill?
What would you like preserved?
What should be created?
How can we connect people & place?

Help us understand how this site could meet the needs of the community. For more information, contact Jeanne Davies, Executive Director, CTRC&D at jdavies@ctrcd.org or Renee Ruhl / Dan Delago, Conway School at scovilmill2018@csld.edu.

Public Charrette Workshop with Stakeholders and Haddam Residents
Connecticut Resource Conservation & Development

Scovil Factory Exploration
2nd Public Workshop
Conway School Site Design Draft

May 31, 2018 - 6-7:15 pm
Community Center
7 Candlewood Hill Rd, Higganum

Evaluation of Scovil Property for Future
Connecticut Agriculture and Conservation
Rural Economic Innovation
and Education Center

Study Funded by

Renee/Dan’s Presentation of Preliminary Design
to Conway Faculty & Design Professionals

Post Presentation Meeting
With CTRC&D Staff
RECOMMENDATION FOR NEXT STEPS

• Establish CACEE Task Force to Create Business Plan, Build Operational Partnerships and Fundraising Capacity

• Meet with town officials to discuss project

• Establish sequencing and source of funding for environmental remediation, site and building design, infrastructure, technology and construction

• Discussion with CT Department of Economic and Community Development and USDA Rural Development: funding options for site construction

• Funding plan for staffing, operations and endowment fund for ongoing development and maintenance
Research References

Documents and Websites

• New England Food Hub Site Suitability Analysis
• NY Farm Viability Institute - Agriculture Innovation Center
• The Rise of Innovation Districts: A New Geography of Innovation in America
• Counting Values: Food Hub Financial Benchmarking Study
• Zwick Center for Food and Resource Policy (Website Information)
  • Artisan’s Asylum (website)
• Makezine: 2013 Website Post :Making Makerspaces: Creating a Business Model
• UConn College of Agriculture, Health & Natural Resources: Economic Impacts of Connecticut’s Agriculture Industry 2015
  • Land for Good (Website) - Legal Food Hub,CT
• KNG (BLOG) - The Food Truck Explosion: How Much Does It Affect the Restaurant Business?
• NEDA - Crash Course on Economic Development: Planning for Economic Development
• An Analysis of New England Food Hubs: Worcester Polytechnic Institute: Authors - Tara Shewchuk, Brandon Okray, Robert Mahoney and William Frankian
• UConn Department of Agriculture: Food Marketing Policy Center: A Town Level Assessment of Community Food Security in Connecticut
• 2015 Annual Report: Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development
• NWCT Food Hub Feasibility Study: Executive Summary of Results
• East Hampton Market Assessment Update- September 2015
  • Connecticut Food Hub Stud, CTRC&D 2018

Additional Websites

⇒ http://www.local-matters.org/
⇒ https://ilsr.org/
⇒ https://artisansasylum.com/about/
⇒ https://makezine.com/2013/05/22/the-difference-between-hackerspaces-makerspaces-techshops-and-fablabs/
⇒ https://makezine.com/2013/05/22/the-difference-between-hackerspaces-makerspaces-techshops-and-fablabs/
⇒ https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/242890
⇒ http://www.ctbusstudy.com/about.php
⇒ http://www.ruralhealthct.org/towns.htm
⇒ https://www.fastcompany.com/3043850/meet-the-startup-that-wants-to-make-vertical-farming-mainstream
APPENDIX A

Scovil Mill Center
Fostering the Local Economy
Higganum, CT

Authors
Renee Ruhl - Dan DeLago
Graduate Students
Conway School of Landscape Design
APPENDIX B

Scovil Hoe Mill
Reuse Planning Project
Public Presentation
July 12, 2018
Higganum, CT

Consultant
Fuss and O’Neill, Inc.
APPENDIX C

CACEE PROJECT ANNOUNCEMENT
APPENDIX D

OUTLINE FOR POTENTIAL PARTNER ENGAGEMENT