

City of Danbury

**2023 Plan of Conservation and Development
Economic Development Focus Group Meeting
1/18/22**



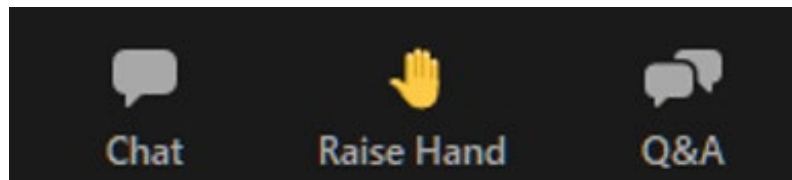
CITY OF DANBURY
Plan of Conservation and Development



Welcome to the Danbury POCD Virtual Workshop!

- This is a Zoom webinar, so all members of the public that are attending but are not invited participants are automatically placed on mute and cameras are disabled.
- If you are an invited panelist, you will be able to unmute yourself and your camera will be operative.
- To preserve bandwidth for a smoother meeting experience, you may need to close other programs on your computer during this session

If you have a technical question, please click on the Q&A icon at the bottom of your screen to send it to us at anytime during the meeting



Agenda

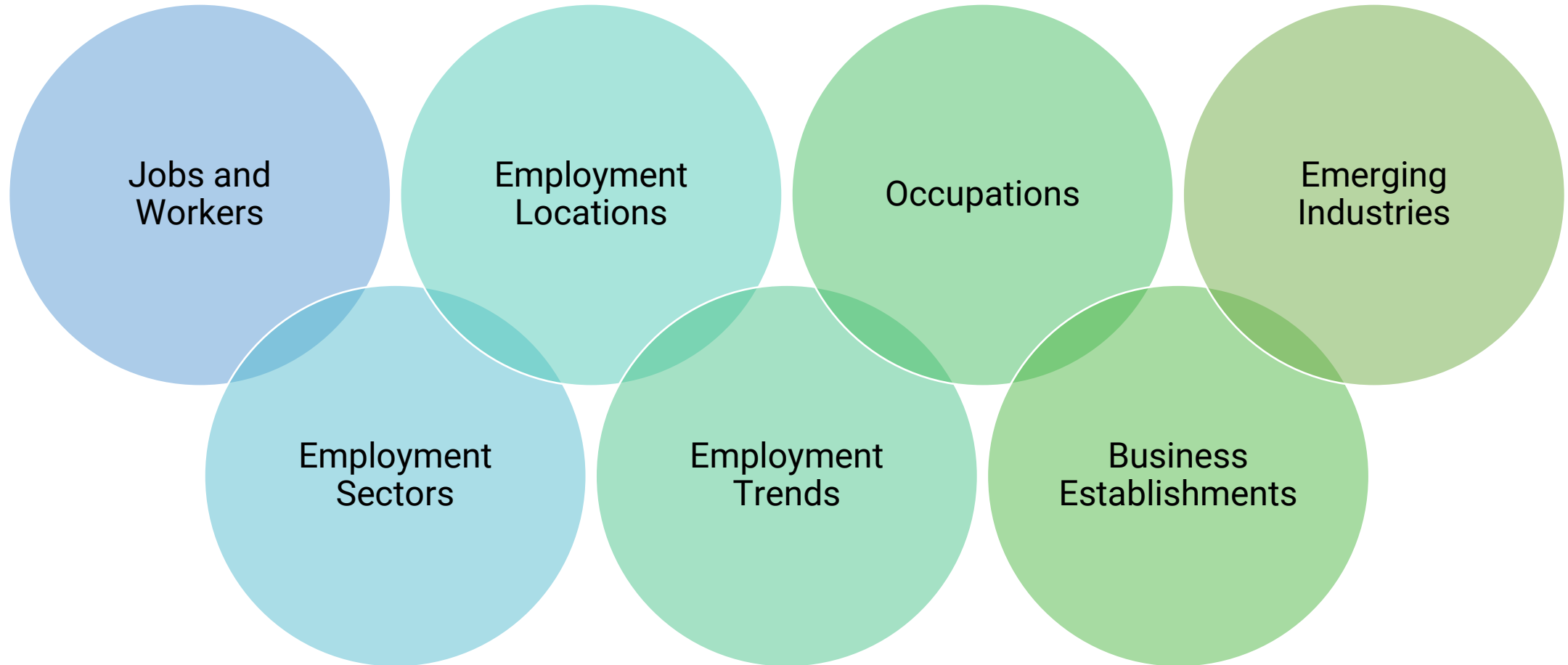
1. Introduction, overview of the planning process, and review of high-level findings from assessment of (5 min.)
2. Review of feedback received from the online survey (5 min.)
3. Review of feedback received from workshops (5 min.)
4. Discussion (70 min.)

Plan Development

- The State of Connecticut requires municipalities to update their POCD at least once every ten years.
- Danbury's plan was last updated in 2013
- The Plan is being guided by the Department of Planning and Zoning and an Oversight Committee comprised of 20 members.
- Oversight Committee meeting materials are available online at danburypocd.com.
- Danbury's Planning Commission is responsible for approving the POCD and the City Council will be engaged in this process.
- The plan will be completed and approved by the end of this year (2022).



Economic Conditions



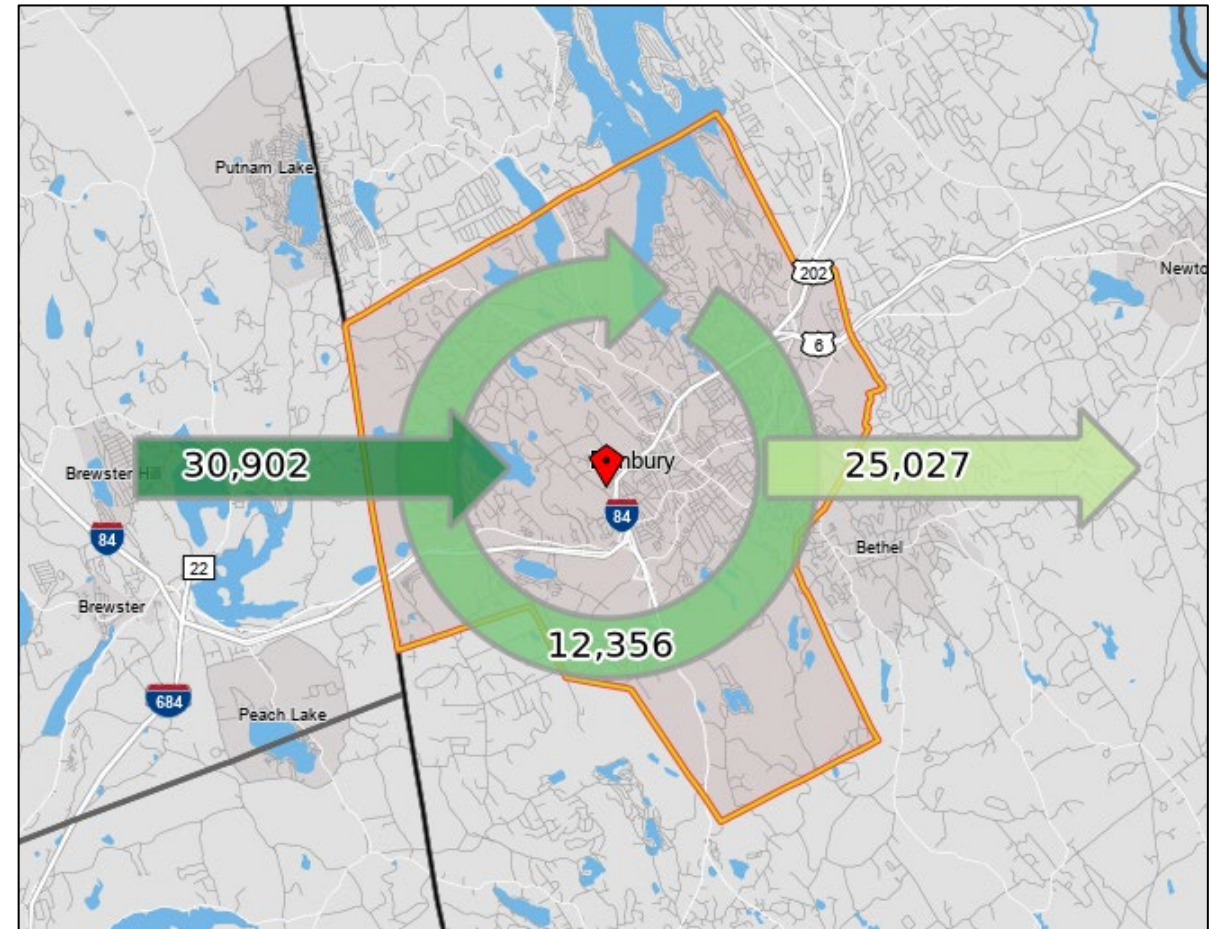
Danbury's Jobs and Workers

Danbury has a positive job inflow.

- 30,902 people are employed in Danbury and live elsewhere.
- 25,027 people live in Danbury and work elsewhere.
- 5,875 more people come into Danbury than leave for work on a daily basis.

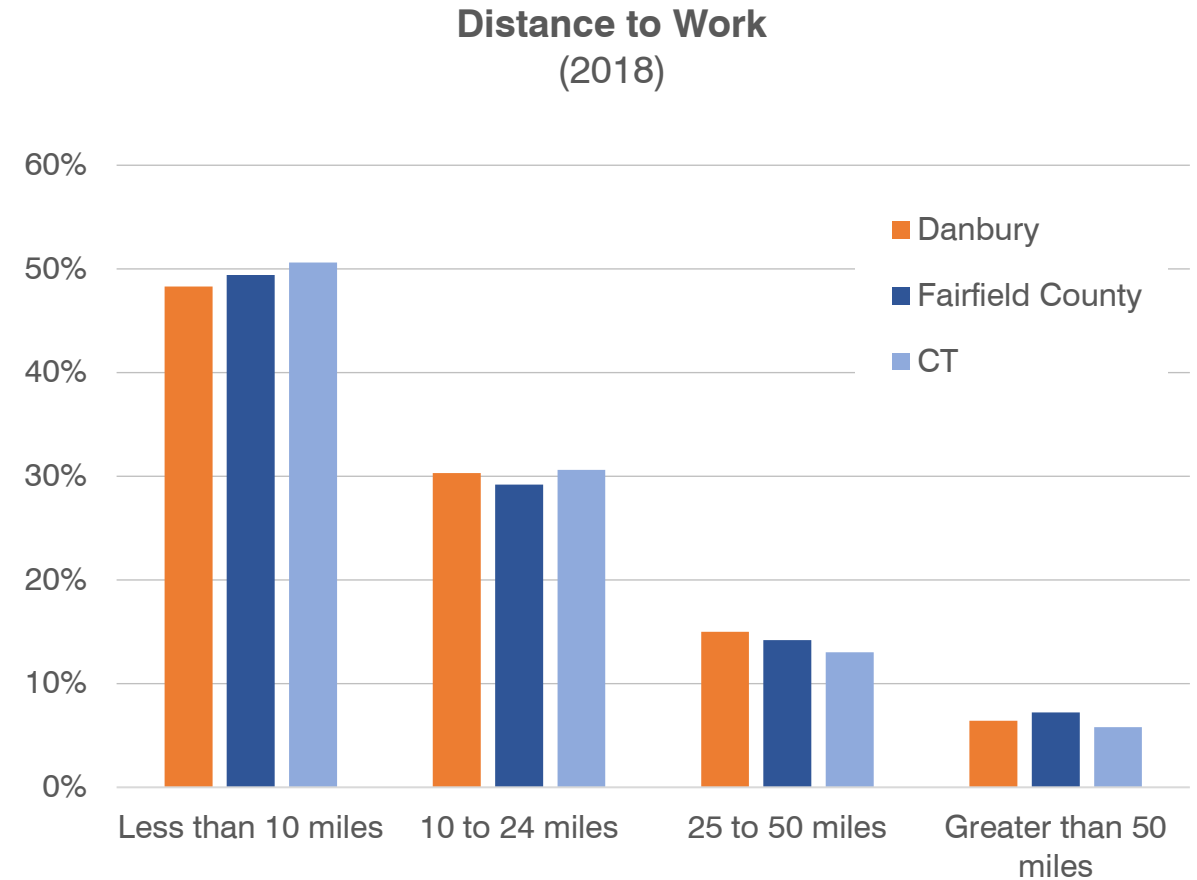
Inflow/Outflow of Workers in Danbury

Source: US Census Bureau OnTheMap 2018



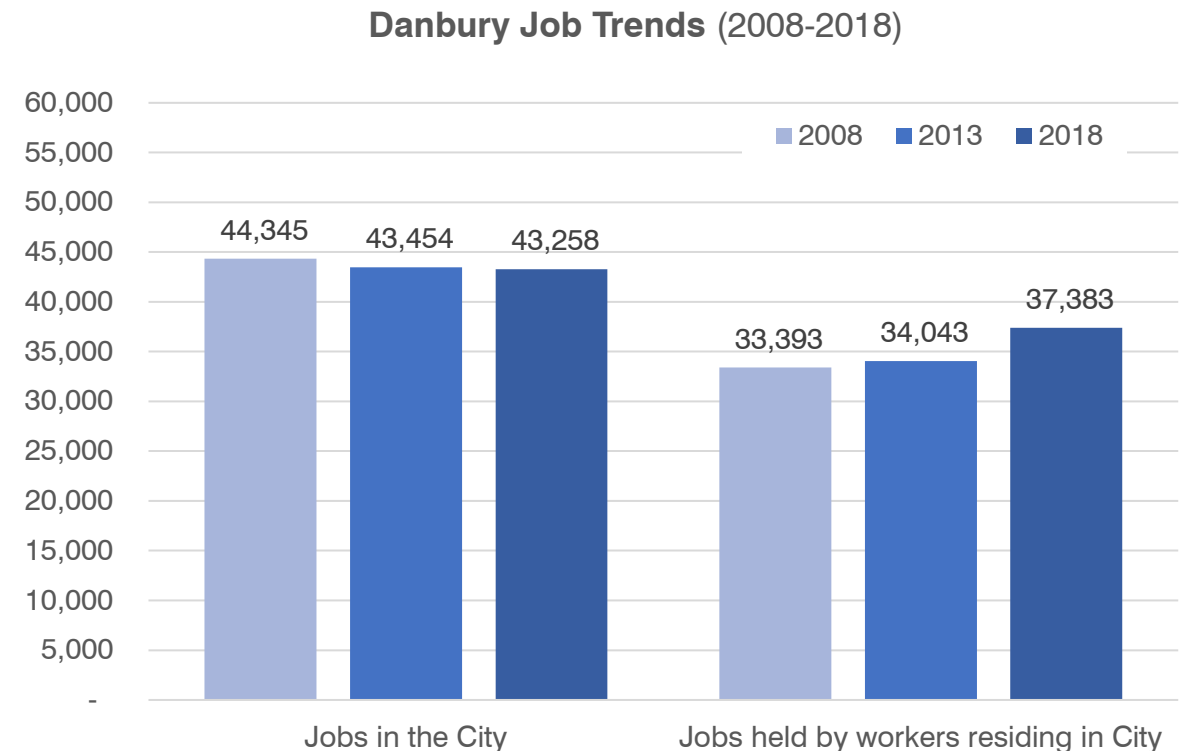
Danbury's Jobs and Workers

- Danbury's residents commute approximately the same distance to work as Fairfield County workers and Connecticut's workers.
- Approximately half of jobs held by Danbury's residents are within 10 miles of the City.



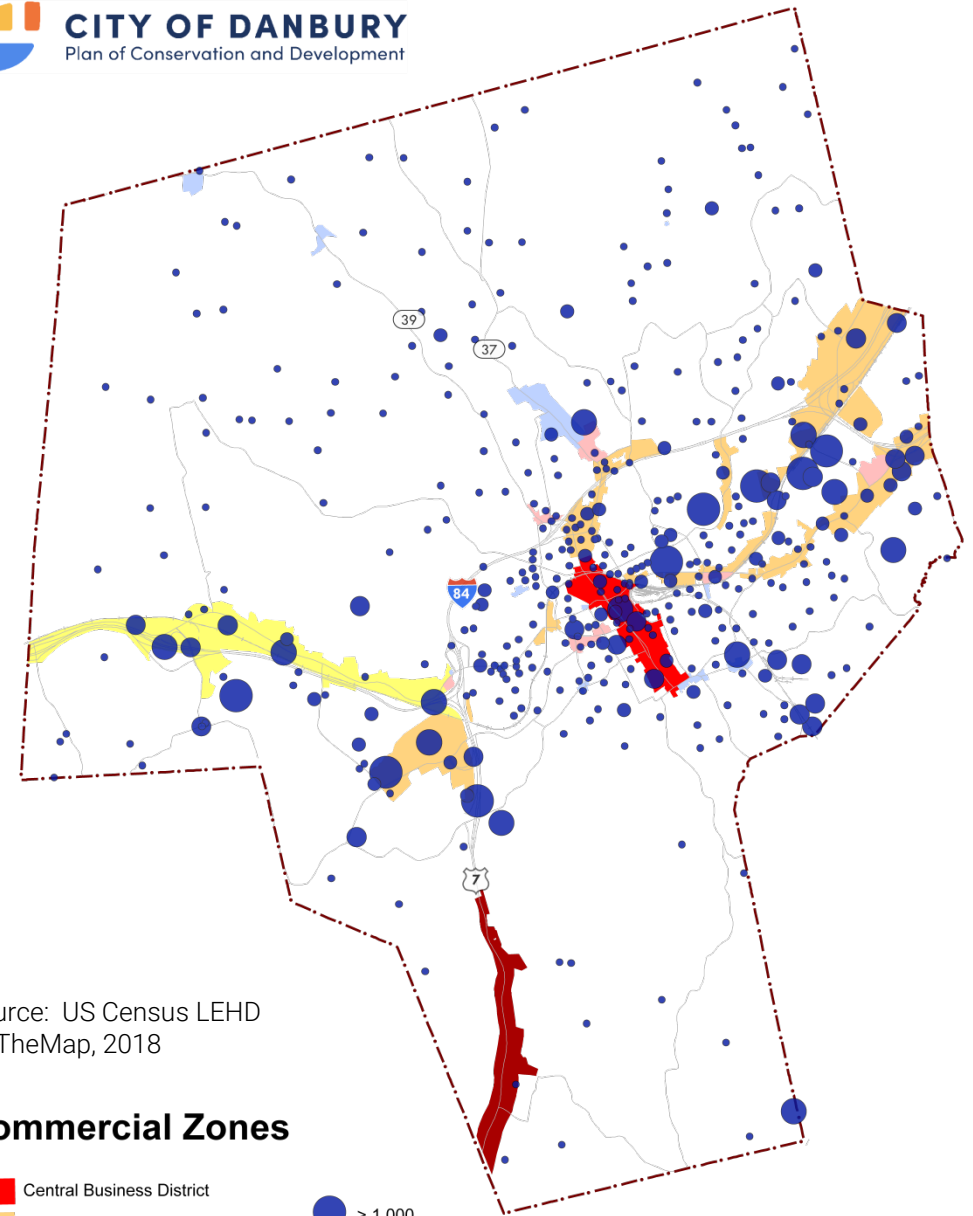
Danbury's Jobs and Workers

- The number of jobs in Danbury has been stable since 2008. (excluding pandemic related job losses).
- The number of jobs held by Danbury's residents grew by 12% since 2008.



Total Employment

- Several large employment nodes are visible surrounding Danbury's commercial districts.
- Larger nodes surround the Danbury Fair mall, the western section of I-84, and the Federal Rd/Newtown Rd area.
- A high concentration of employment nodes surrounds the Downtown area.



Source: US Census LEHD
OnTheMap, 2018

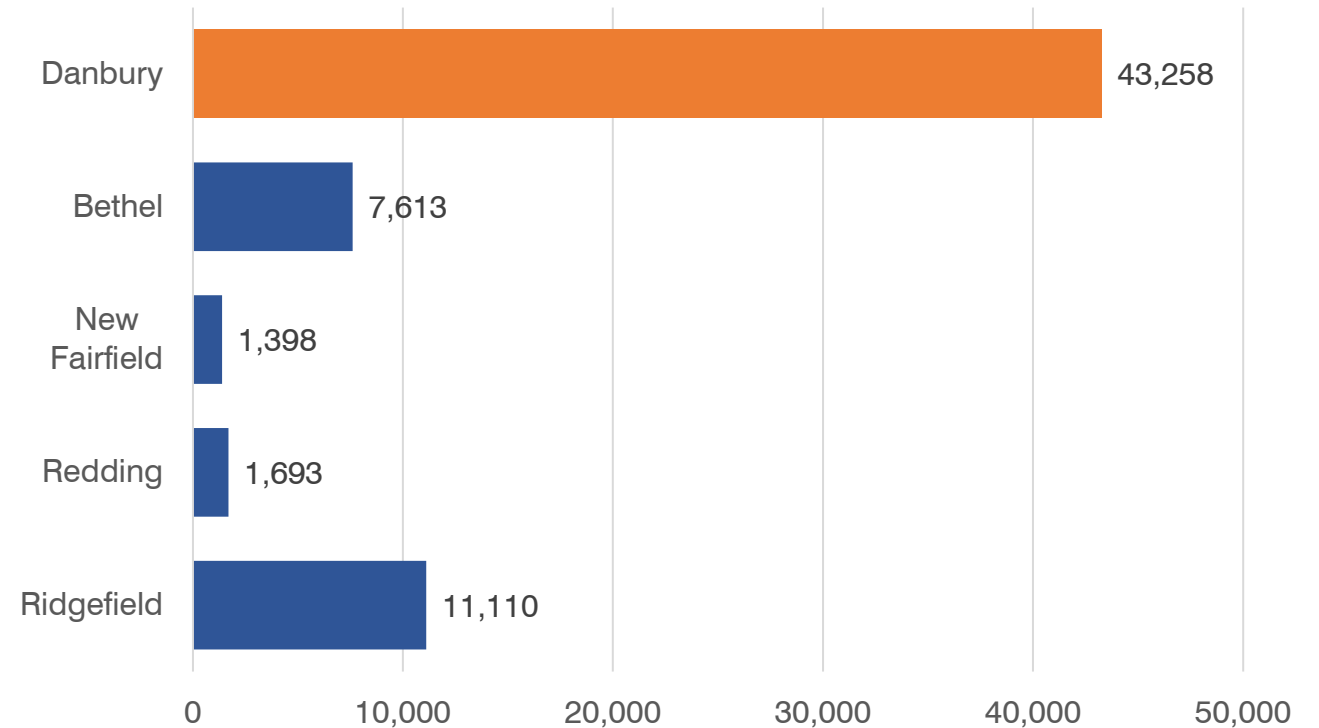
Commercial Zones



Danbury's Economy

- Danbury leads the region in jobs and has twice as many jobs as all surrounding CT towns combined.

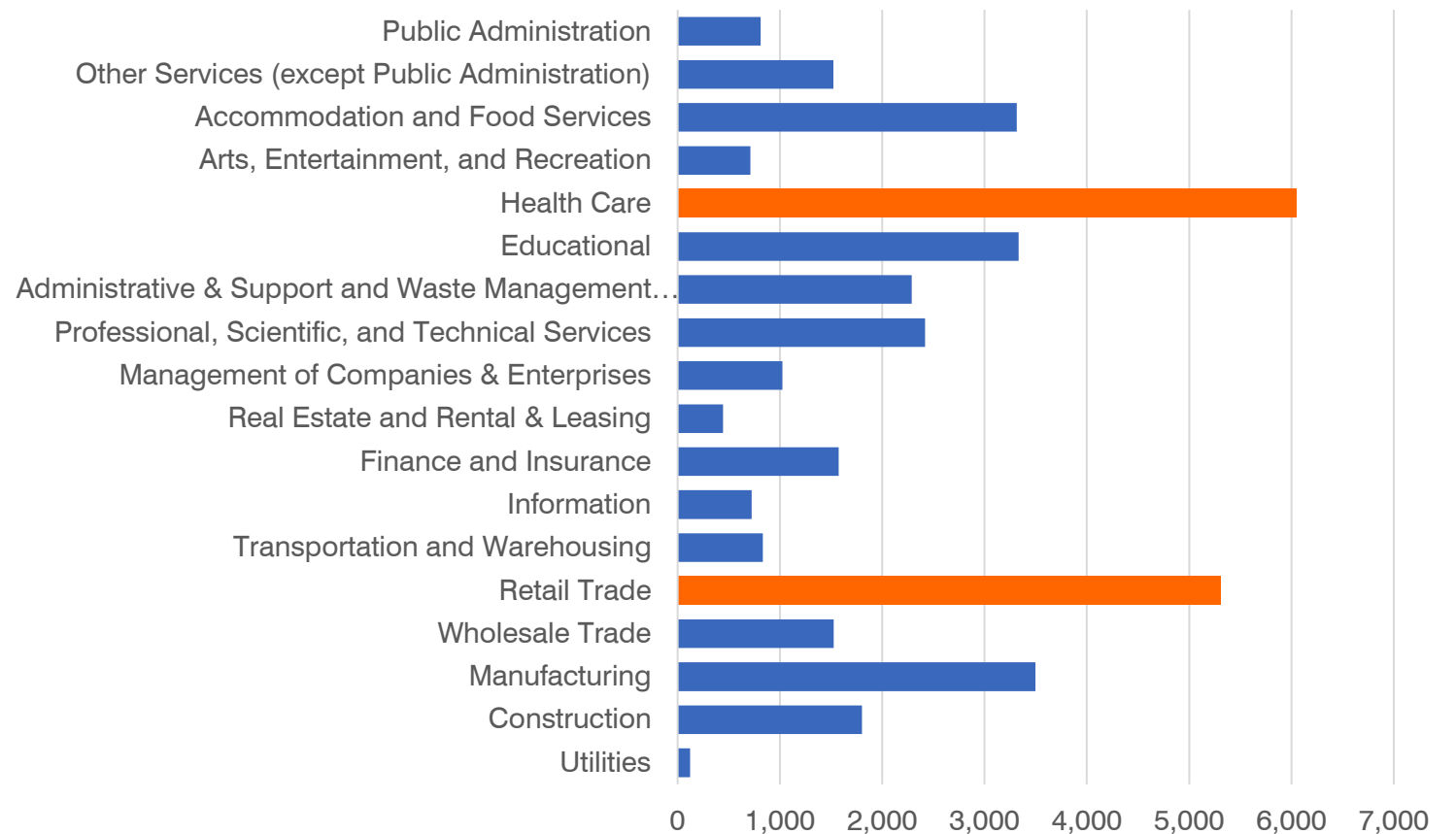
Jobs in Danbury vs Neighboring Towns (2018)



Employment Sectors of Residents

- The largest employment sectors of City residents are in the health care and retail trade sectors.

Danbury Resident Employment by Industry (2018)



Top Resident Occupations

- The top four resident occupations are likely driven by Danbury Hospital, Danbury Fair Mall, and WCSU and the school district.
- General managers are the highest paying among Danbury's top 5 most common occupations.

Top 5 Occupations	2021 Jobs	Avg Wages
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	2,251	\$30,492
Cashiers	1,132	\$30,097
Retail Salespersons	1,093	\$38,043
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	956	\$40,643
General and Operations Managers	709	\$179,420

Source: EMSI, 2021

Top Employment Sectors in Danbury

- Three of the top ten 4-digit industry sectors in Danbury are Education and Health Care-related.
- Several of these sectors offer relatively low annual wages.
- Four of the top ten industry sectors have average annual wages above \$100,000.

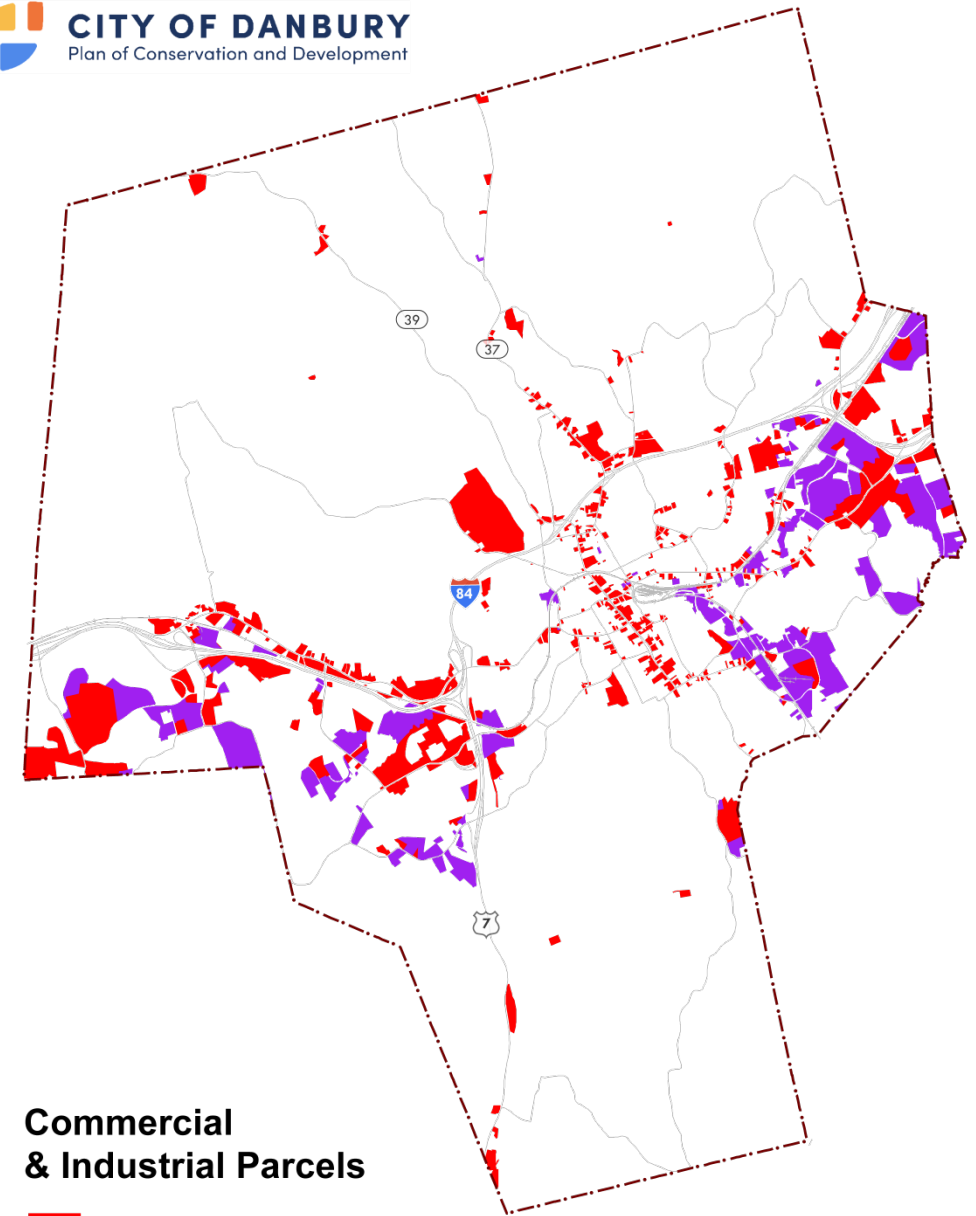
Top 5 Industry Sectors	2021 Jobs	Avg Wages
Individual and Family Services	3,209	\$33,754
Education and Hospitals (incl. Local Government)	2,210	\$107,063
Restaurants and Other Eating Places	1,917	\$30,834
Offices of Physicians	1,690	\$141,715
Grocery Stores	1,218	\$44,377

Source: EMSI, 2021

Commercial & Industrial Property Inventory

- Danbury has 1,109 commercial parcels and 293 industrial parcels.
- The area zoned for commercial and industrial uses is larger.
- Commercial land uses comprise 2,715 acres and industrial land uses comprise 1,391 acres
- Tax Revenue generated by commercial and industrial land uses is approximately \$57 million

Source: *City of Danbury Assessor Database, RKG Associates*



Commercial & Industrial Parcels

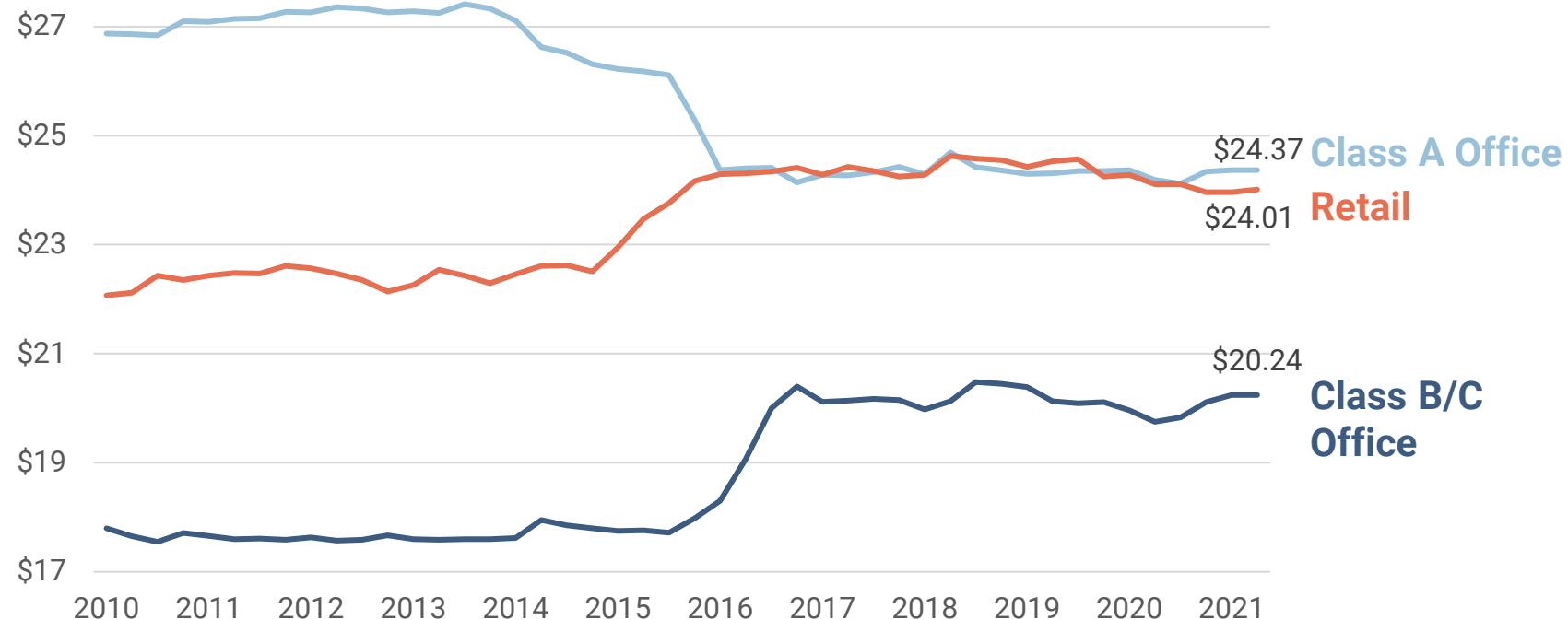


Commercial Market Rents

- The retail market in northern Fairfield County has experienced rising rents over the past decade.
- Class A rents have decreased by 10% since 2010, to the current \$24.37 per square foot in Q2 of 2021.
- Class B and C office space rents have climbed 15% since 2010.

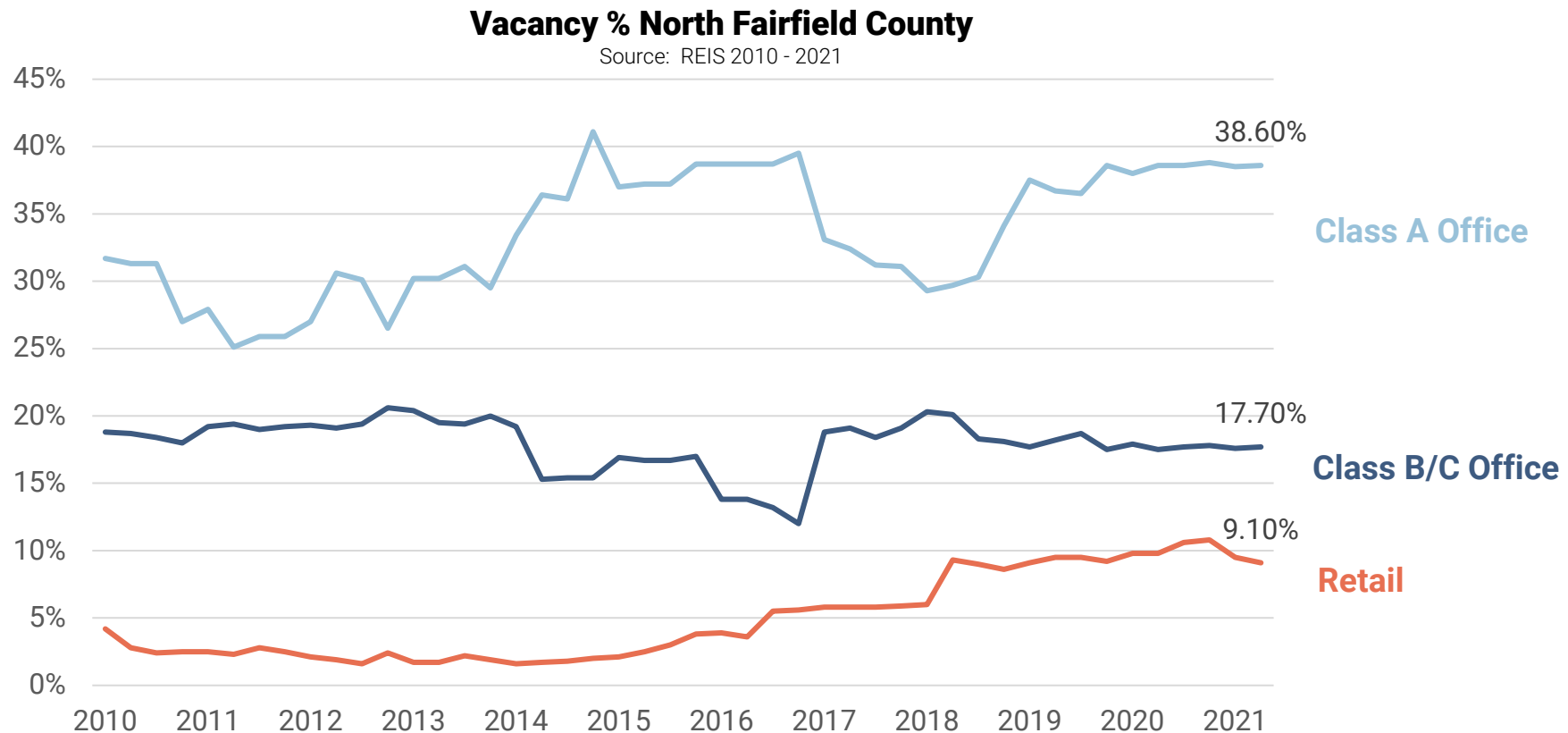
Average Asking Rents (\$/sf) North Fairfield County

Source: REIS 2010 - 2021



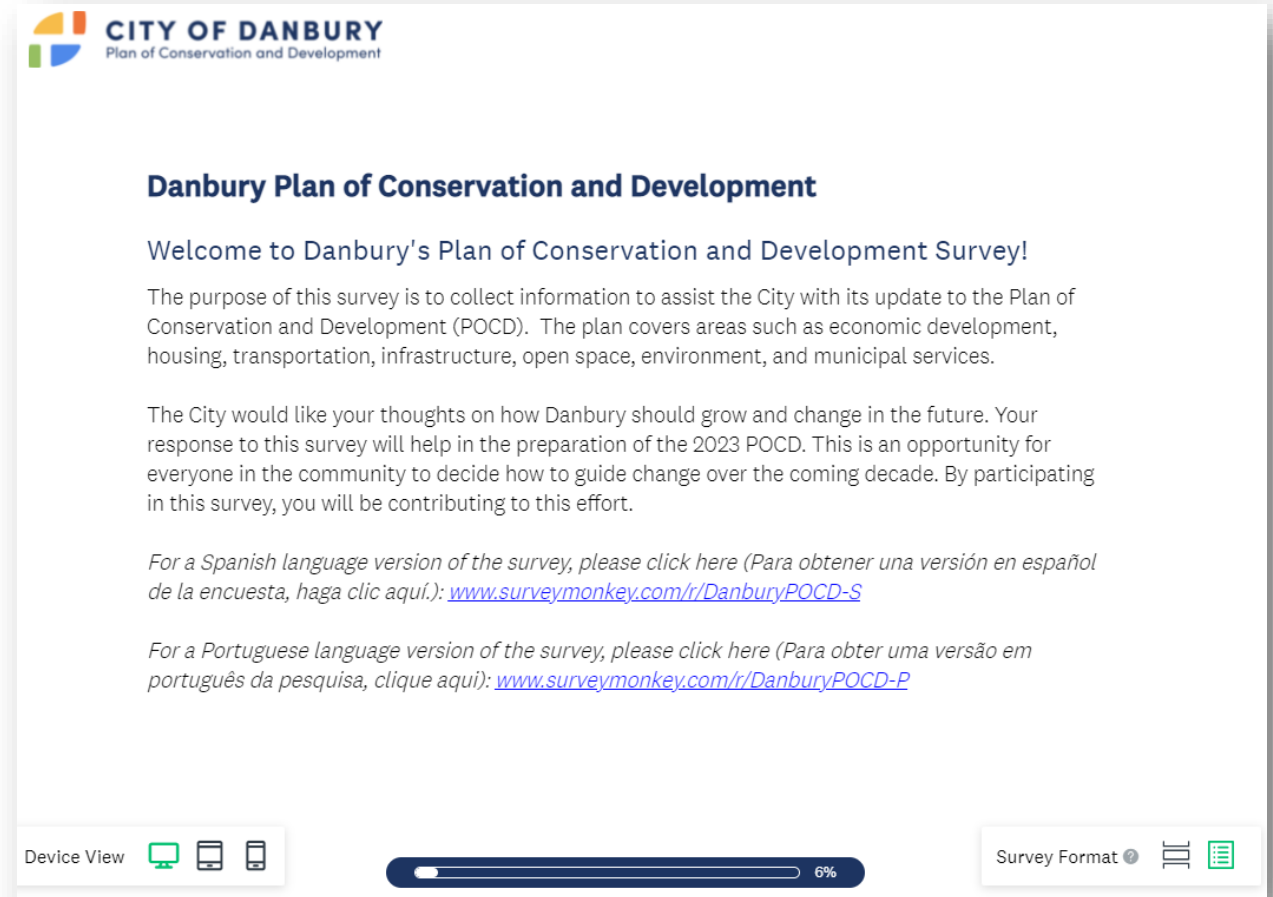
Commercial Market Vacancy

- The retail market in northern Fairfield County has experienced rising vacancy over the past decade.
- The regional Class A office market has climbed 7 percentage points between 2010 and 2021.
- Class B and C office space has maintained a vacancy rate of around 18% since 2010.



Online Survey

- Over 1,200 responses received
- Promotion via social media, POCD website, press releases, email blasts, and through Danbury Board of Education
- Spanish and Portuguese language surveys were provided.



The screenshot shows the title page of an online survey. At the top left is the City of Danbury logo, which consists of three colored squares (orange, green, blue) arranged in a larger square shape. To the right of the logo is the text "CITY OF DANBURY" in bold, with "Plan of Conservation and Development" in a smaller font below it. The main heading is "Danbury Plan of Conservation and Development" in a bold, dark blue font. Below this is a welcome message: "Welcome to Danbury's Plan of Conservation and Development Survey!". The text explains the purpose of the survey: to collect information to assist the City with its update to the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). It lists areas covered: economic development, housing, transportation, infrastructure, open space, environment, and municipal services. It also states that the City wants to know how Danbury should grow and change in the future, and that the survey will help in the preparation of the 2023 POCD. Two links are provided for Spanish and Portuguese versions of the survey. At the bottom, there is a "Device View" section with icons for desktop, tablet, and mobile, and a "Survey Format" section with icons for a list and a grid. A progress bar at the bottom indicates that 6% of the survey has been completed.

CITY OF DANBURY
Plan of Conservation and Development

Danbury Plan of Conservation and Development




Welcome to Danbury's Plan of Conservation and Development Survey!



The purpose of this survey is to collect information to assist the City with its update to the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). The plan covers areas such as economic development, housing, transportation, infrastructure, open space, environment, and municipal services.

The City would like your thoughts on how Danbury should grow and change in the future. Your response to this survey will help in the preparation of the 2023 POCD. This is an opportunity for everyone in the community to decide how to guide change over the coming decade. By participating in this survey, you will be contributing to this effort.

For a Spanish language version of the survey, please click here (Para obtener una versión en español de la encuesta, haga clic aquí): www.surveymonkey.com/r/DanburyPOCD-S

For a Portuguese language version of the survey, please click here (Para obter uma versão em português da pesquisa, clique aqui): www.surveymonkey.com/r/DanburyPOCD-P

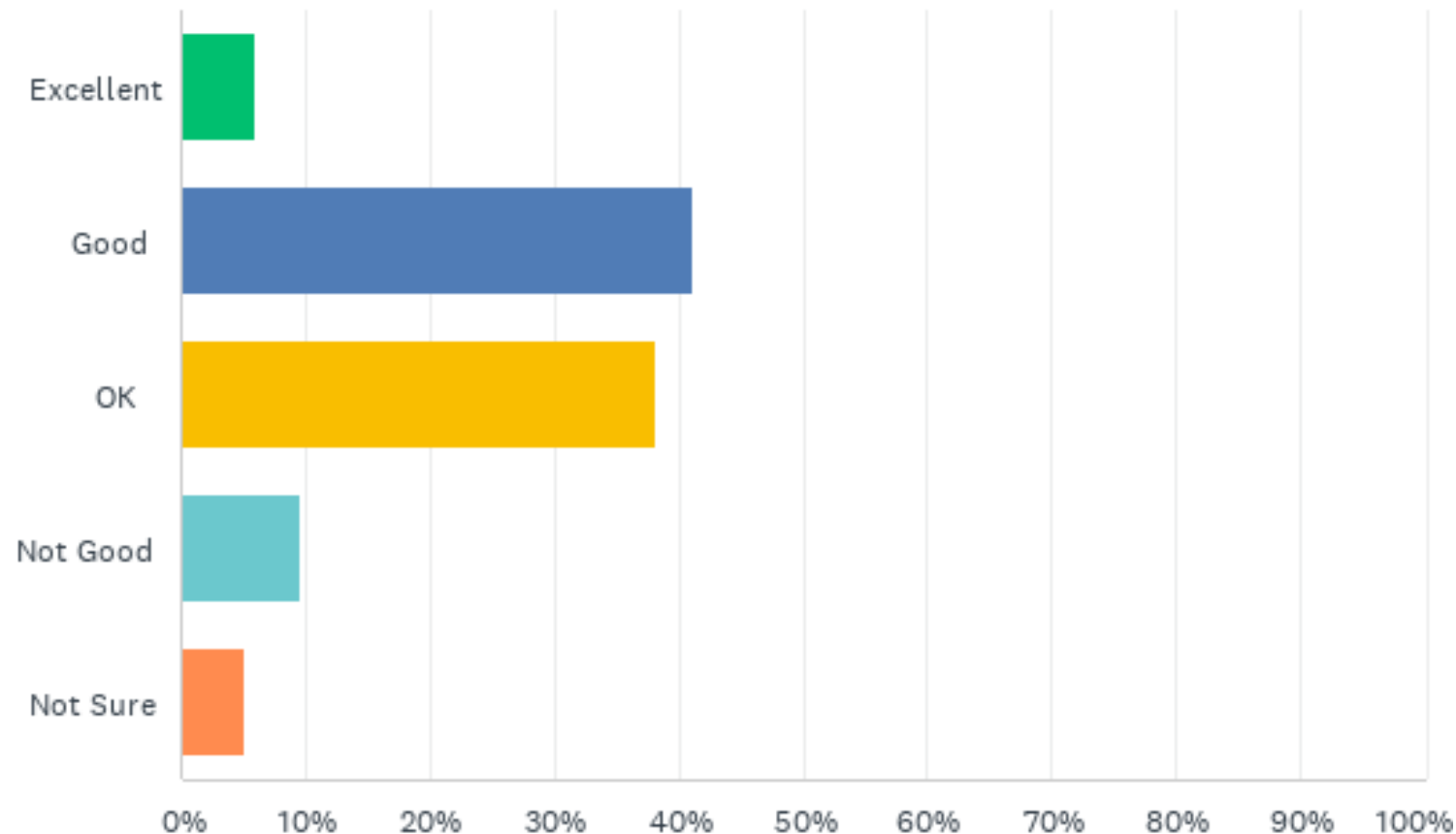
Device View   

Survey Format  

6%

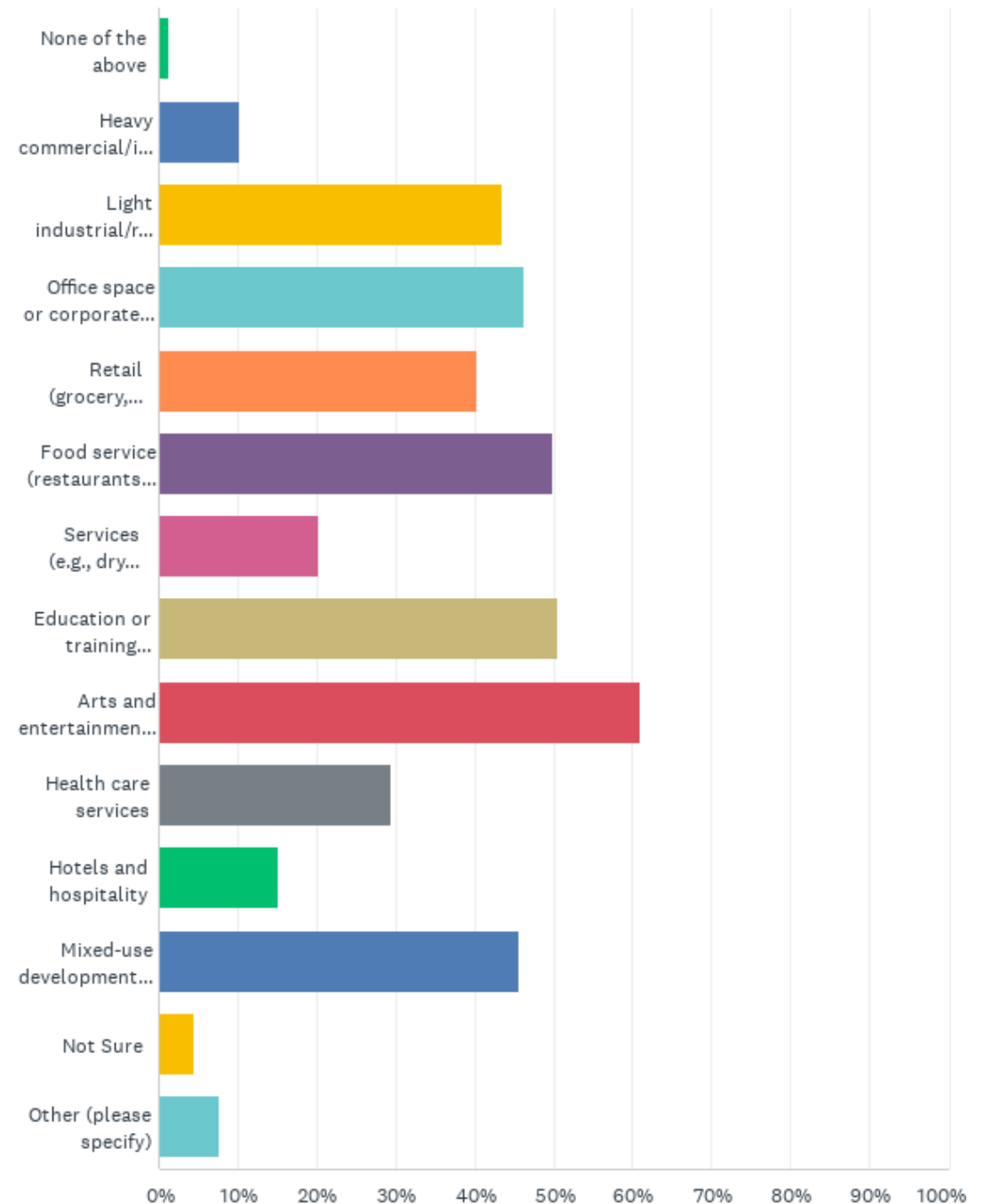
Online Survey: Economic Development

How do you rate Danbury's business environment?



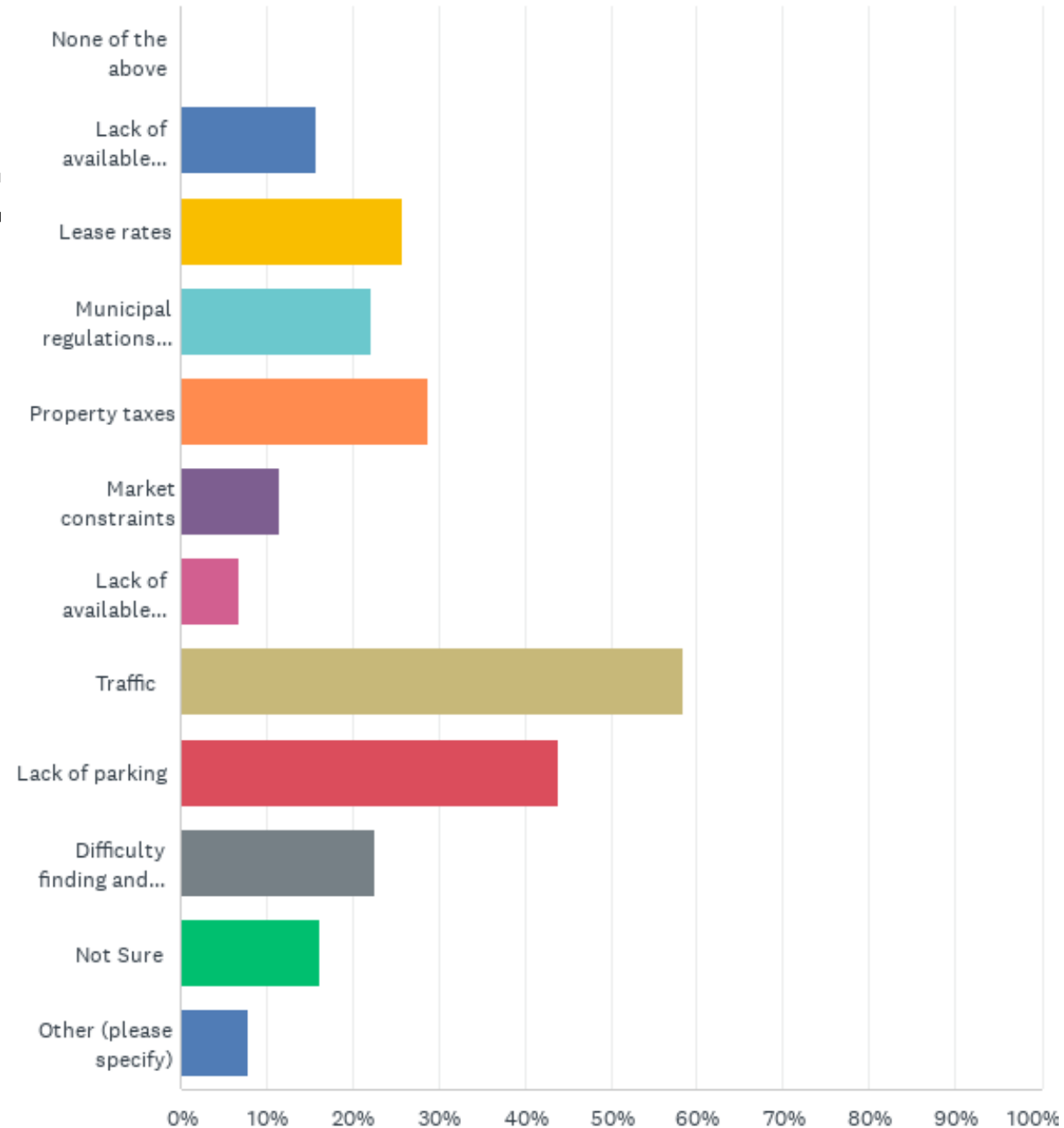
Online Survey: Economic Development

What type of commercial development
should be encouraged in Danbury?
(select all that apply)



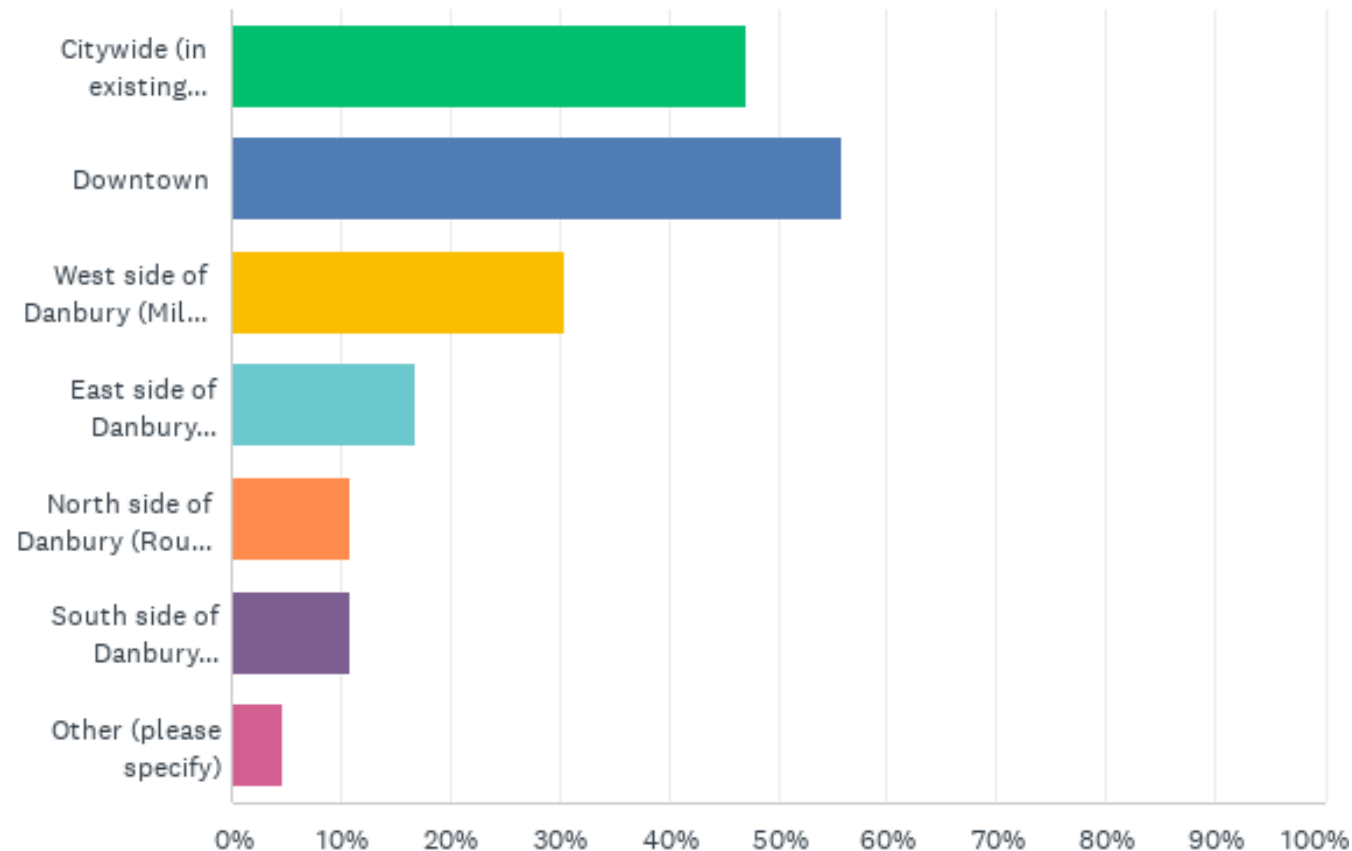
Online Survey: Economic Development

What are the challenges to economic development in Danbury?
(select all that apply)



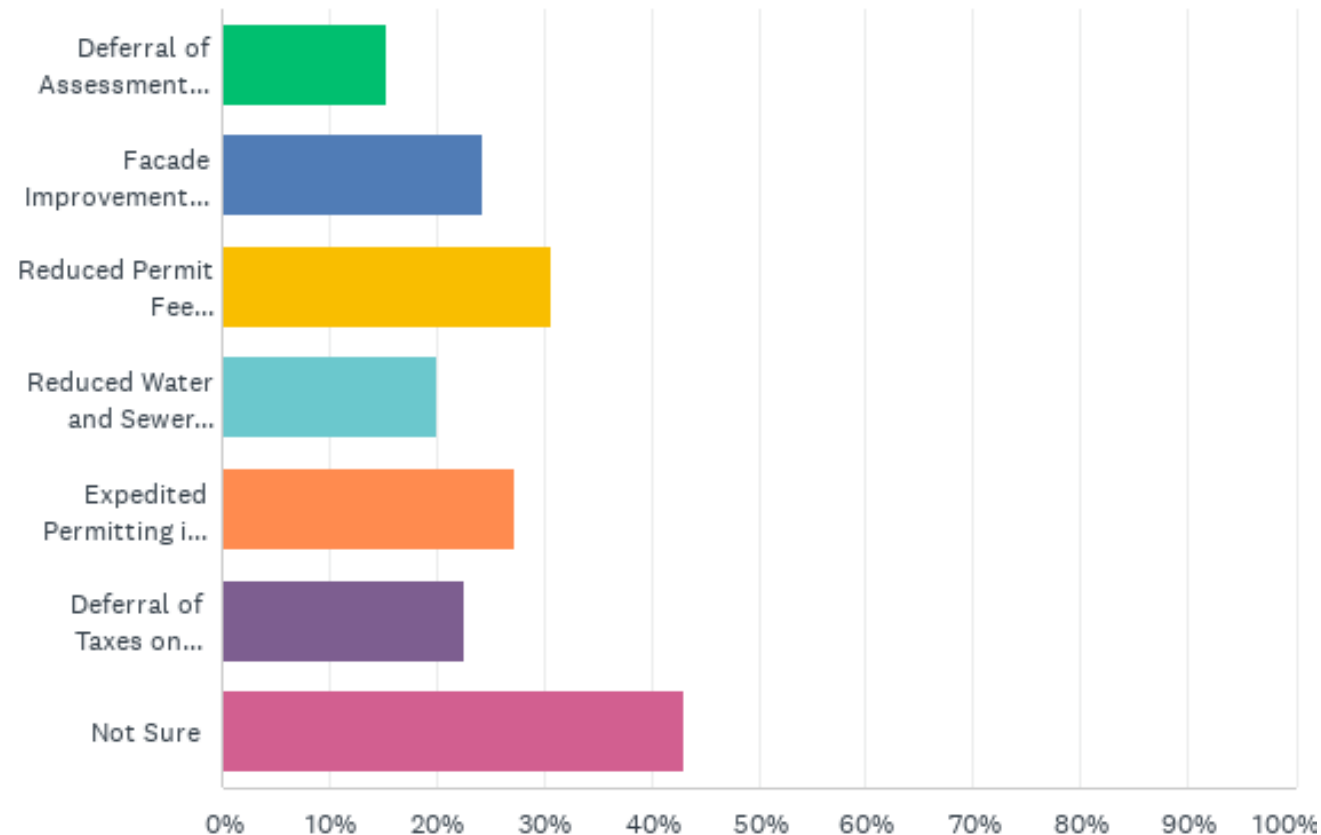
Online Survey: Economic Development

Where should the City focus its economic development (commercial growth) efforts over the next decade? (select up to three items below)



Online Survey: Economic Development

Which economic development incentives do you feel are most effective?
(select all that apply)



Public Workshop Break Out Session Findings

- An in-person public workshop was conducted on 12/2 at the Palace Theater.
- A virtual public workshop was conducted on 12/9.
- Participants of the workshops were asked to participate in topic-based discussions to identify issues and ideas relevant to each topic.



Issues



Ideas



Economic Development: **Issues**

- What does Danbury want to be? The City lack a vision.
- Need to improve buildings downtown, bring them back to life.
- Need affordable housing to allow young people to live and work in the city.
- There is a real negative perception of downtown; people from certain parts of the city won't visit.
- Need to broaden business mix in downtown to keep people downtown.
- Youth need activities downtown, after school work program, YMCA/Gyms.
- Balance job growth with mobility and infrastructure, plan growth areas and support with improved infrastructure.
- Need to protect ourselves from changes in the retail sector, future of the mall?
- Need to master plan our corridors, maybe mixed use, and must include infrastructure to support growth.

Economic Development: **Issues**

- What is Danbury's economic focus, what should we be going after?
- How do we bring in higher paying jobs?
- Invest in downtown aesthetics, consistency of design/signage/facades, improve the reputation.
- Danbury needs a brand.
- How do we keep household spending local to Danbury, bring more spending to our businesses?
- Economic development tends to whitewash communities. Ensure that the diversity of the community is protected and not gentrified out.
- Concern about a focus on economic development without consideration for impacts such as traffic.

Economic Development: Ideas

- Capitalize on having WCU and other colleges in the city.
- Partner with colleges/university to bring learning spaces downtown?
- Grow healthcare jobs, especially given the aging population.
- Continue to improve outdoor dining in downtown.
- Old Feinstein's building is a great opportunity for reuse/redevelopment.
- Bring people downtown with music, events, festivals, outdoor dining, food trucks, pop-ups.
- Figure out how to keep graduates in the city instead of them leaving.
- Create a talent pipeline of high school and college grads directly to businesses.
- Bring a hotel downtown.
- Create more neighborhood serving commercial nodes around the city, with grocery options.
- More entertainment and art downtown to drive visitation.

Economic Development: Ideas

- Extend downtown zoning to I-84 and allow for more growth while we preserve the older, historic portions of downtown.
- Bring more high paying jobs to the city.
- Better support and protect small businesses (particularly given COVID impacts)
- Create corridor plans and direct growth along key corridors.
- Keep up our economic diversity (jobs, businesses, industry sectors). This will protect us against future economic events
- Focus on ways to lure remote workers here; create co-working spaces?
- Work closely with diverse residents to prepare them for the workforce, tap into this population for small business start ups too.
- Build up a pipeline of local labor in the trades.
- Leverage riverfront for economic development and tourism attraction.
- Improve mobility options downtown, make it fun, e-scooters, e-bikes and the like.
- More outdoor dining downtown.
- How about something like city-sponsored local investing cooperatives?

Discussion

- What do you feel are the issues or challenges surrounding economic development in Danbury?

Discussion

- What do you feel are the opportunities for economic development in Danbury?

Discussion

- How can the POCD support economic development in Danbury? What recommendations should be made?

Thank You for Participating!

- Visit www.danburypocd.com for meeting materials and updates regarding the plan.

