RPOCD Public Comment Matrix

Comment	Action
The state direction of increasing housing opportunity = increasing housing density. For towns that have flood zones & river & LI sound frontage, density should not be increase in flood zones that may be cut off by 2031. Is it appropriate for the regional plan, for several towns that are sensitive to sea-level rise, to recommend increasing density away from the areas that will be subjject to sea level rise?	The RPC determined that we must revise the language as necessary to ensure that the plan very clearly is not supporting density in inappropriate locations.
Opposite comment: would like to see more support for helping, and not just in the vague term resiliency. We state under goal 2 that we need to make sure wetlands are restored, enhanced and protected but there is not that strong of a statement for the coastal communities. It is hard for ppl on coastline to get [sea walls] rebuilt and get DEEP to enhance beachfront so they have barriers against erosion. The coastal income of the coastal communities is essential to the shoreline properties. If the coastal people are forced to move away she doesn't understand where thos towns' tax base will come from. Stronger support for the coastal communities is essential. People may be forced to raise houses and towns may be forced to raise roads, but there are other ways of slowing erosion and sea level rise that aren't always supported by the state. Coastal communities are often at odds with the state. DEEP has a strategy of asking them to move away. Ttheir long-term strategy is for the coastline to return to its natural habitat and for people to lose their property because they won't be able to sell it. I understand that you want to decrease density but the fact of the matter is that density already exists. There are only more people moving down the coastline with the intent to settle on the beach. Don't want to see another plan handed down not supportive of coastal communities. and would like to see stronger language such as what is put in for wetlands. Coastline essential to CT and attracting people.	The RPC determined that language should be added to highlight the issues facing shoreline communities. We will incorporate a reference to the Coastal Management Act and Blue Plan. We will also include a recommendation to work with our shoreline communities to address environmental concerns and protection for existing development in a balanced way. Consider recommendation for a future study regarding coastal resiliency.
It would be nice to see shell beds restored: great environmental plus, area attraction. Understand reg plan can't neccessairly address minutaie but coastal communities warrant more attention.	The RPC determined that this should be encouraged.
Page 67 (Sustainable Goals 1 and/or 3): We should express support for the simplification of permitting and construction of reinforcing and protective infrastructure for the properties along our shoreline.	The RPC determined that language should be added to highlight the issues facing shoreline communities. We will incorporate a reference to the Coastal Management Act and Blue Plan. We will also include a recommendation to work with our shoreline communities to address environmental concerns and protection for existing development in a balanced way. Consider recommendation for a future study regarding coastal resiliency.
Pg 19 (and also on page 68 in existing conditions report.) Please reword: "Active commuting, or commuting by walking or bicycling, is not a viable option for most of the region." Instead we might say; Active commuting should be encouraged with the use of walking, biking, and e-biking, and bike/bus/bike modes with the development and expansion of a regional and local active transportation plan. Please don't say NOT VIABLE. In addition the rest of the paragraph can be more encouraging. IE with improvements to the bicycle and walking infrastructor, share mode is likely to increase.	The RPC determined that the language used in the existing conditions summary (and corresponding report page) should make clear that active transportation (not just commuting) is not viable **right now**, but that it is something we need to fix in the future. Include a recommendation to encourage active transportation routes, where safe and appropriate, for children to get to school.
pg 2. 4th P. I think it should read, linked by a multi modal regional Transportation Plan. (not transit, which usually implies some type of vesicle, and or trains and buses)	Make change.
72 Item 1.3 under CONNECTED should be changed from Moderate to "High" and the "Lead must be changed to include the State as well: Many of the "main Streets" of our towns are classified as State Highways (e.g. Route 154 or Rte 1) and it is imperative that the State adopt a more pedestrian-friendly attitude to highway management in those town centers, including provision of well-planned sidewalks, crossings, and devices to slow down vehicular traffic. (An example of total disregard for pedestrian priosities is the recent plan for the roundabouts in Tylerville)	Make change.
54 where it says "Emphasize the movement of people rather than vehicles." you need to add "especially in village and town centers." The focus of making our village and town centers pedestrian-friendly needs to be empasized especially with the DOT, since many "main streets" are state highways, hence state-controlled. The way the statement reads now looks like a platitude because it is so general.	Make change.

Comment	Response
54 Goal 5 should read "Imprve connectivity between AND WITHIN neighborhoods...." And as I comment elsewhere the "emphasize movement of people...." subgoal should say at the end "especially within town and village centers.	Make change.
45 Goal 8 under Connected needs to have "Expand public access to the western shore of the CT River, with shoreline trails parks, picnic areas and canoe & boat launch sites" The River is surprisingly inaccessible to non-boaters, and boaters have limited approved points of access for picnicking etc.	Make change.
Within the Connected area, I believe that the goals around expanded transit, especially reliable transit within and inbound/outbound the region should be a higher priority. The 9TT and Shoreline East transit networks that serve the area do not run frequently or reliably enough to be a viable alternative to car transit.	Make change.
In addition, prior to the pandemic, many commuters who needed to travel to Manhattan would choose to drive to New Haven to catch an MTA train instead of starting at a sooner station. It is a similar situation for commuting to Hartford, there is a commuter bus from Old Saybrook, but it only runs a few times a day and for workers with flexible schedules (which is becoming more common), it's not viable. It also doesn't provide the ability for tourists from Hartford and other parts of Connecticut to easily come visit our region for tourism.	Increase priority for reliable transit. Possible additional goals related to commuter ridership for new flexible work schedules
Pg 19 (from Pg. 61in existing conditions report) Please reword "Because of the large distances between municipalities and the general character of the roads identified, this network would likely be used for recreational purposes, rather than for daily commuting or access to goods and services." There is basis and assumption in this statement. Perhaps you can say, Many of these roads are being used for recreational purposes, and for others daily (or a few times a week) commuting. Improvements to the road conditions, and opportunities for multi modal (bike/bus/Bike) commutes as well as the increasing use of E-bikes, is expected to increase the mode share of those of bike to work, schools, and shopping.	Consider rewording.
Pg 69 1.6 The link between the ALT and FCT should primarily reside in goal 2 as a MUT folks aren't going to walk that distance, they are going to ride. I'm not as familiar with the 1.7 recommendation but is that not a MUT also. Should be under bikes.	Make change.
Throughout the plan, goals withing the themes of sustainable, community and connected highlight the importance of moving away from vehicle-centered transportation to the movement of people. This repeated goal is critical not only for increasing access and connectivity for those without cars but will have implications for the climate crisis and contribute to a stronger connection between communities and their local ecosystems, in turn fostering a greater sense of stewardship.	Noted.
31 I notice my own comments were not included in the map. We need to insure we have a futurevregional transit connection from Mx County to the main trunkline (Washington, DC to Montreal). The only possible train ROW from Middletown to Berlin train station is from Newfield Street, west along Rt 372. It must never be given over to a bike path or other use. This was where the train once went, and is the only place available to rebuild a track.	We are not currently recommending that this route become a bike path. This is also more appropriate for the transportation plan. No change necessary.
65 Just showing a road doesn't mean a connection is possible by every mode. You need to have other ways of biking than these main roads. The ones shown are ones where motorists typically travel 50 mph. Even the most seasoned bikers stay off of these roads. In much of Mx County, the north/south drumlins make biking a challenge traveling east/west, so new paths have to be made to traverse the hills. These may not always fall conveniently along these major roads.	Noted. Consider diversifying symbology for transportation types on the Future LU map and/or explaining with words and images what types of connections we are refering to.
One graph showed 14% vacancy in housing. How could that be?	Confirm that the EC report explains that the vacancy rate includes seasonal properties. This information should be linked to the RPOCD without need to repeat.

Westbrook's parks are not included in map on p. 17	This map was used in the existing conditions report to show a few points of interest. It was not intended to be exhaustive. An asteric can be added to that effect.
Good comparisons between towns w/ demographic data, but it would be nice to have a benchmark as to state averages (ex: income), that would help frame the status of the region.	Where possible, incorporate state data into EC report and corresponding RPOCD EC summary.
4. Finally, the word racism does not appear in this document. The word segregation does not appear in this document. These are words with great weight and I do not heave them in order to crush anyone. However, we now recognize the implicit and explicit ways in which these sins impede our growth in a structural way, and in the year 2021 they are worth including in order to demonstrate that we are doing everything possible to prevent them.	The RPC determined that language should be added to synthsize the historic practices of racism in the region/nation. We must also connect the dots between the data and the recommendations and how they remedy the historically racist practices. Our recommendations should include opportunities to promote diversity in business as well as housing and transportation.
The plan identified lack of racial and ethnic diversity as a weakness under the themes of community and sustainable, which lists several subgoals related to investing in marginalized communities as high urgency. In addition to these goals, I urge to committee to consider goals related to social, environmental and racial justice. For example, in the 202 Middletown PoCD, the authors incorporate goals of social justice into goals related to connectedness and sustainability. The Middletown PoCD also includes a recognition that sustainable development depends on a commitment to addressing systemic racism and income inequality: "The killing of George Floyd and other black men and women, along with the realization that race is a significant factor in the disparate health and economic impacts of COVID-19 and climate change, has galvanized our community. We realize that our city cannot be sustainable if there is systemic racial and concomitant income inequality. In July, the city established a Permanent Task Force on Anti-Racism, with the intention of reducing the corrosive impact that racism has on all residents.	The RPC determined that language should be added to synthsize the historic practices of racism in the region/nation. We must also connect the dots between the data and the recommendations and how they remedy the historically racist practices. Our recommendations should include opportunities to promote diversity in business as well as housing and transportation.
p.36 Sustainable Goal 3 recommendation is to "Promote clean energy sources." Sustainable Goal 5 includes "land use development that contribute to environmental and human sustainability while minimizing environmental impacts." The solar array photo on p. 44 can be viewed two ways - environmentally friendly & sustainable energy production, and / or unsightly and environmentally damaging use of the land. Should the plan discuss the tradeoffs? e.g. if someone were to propose a 500 acre solar array that would be a NIMBY issue. Possibly in the Sustainable SWOT an Opportunity could be added to "use redeveloped land for renewable energy infrastructure", while a Threat could be added for "the use of undeveloped, environmentally sensitive land for impactful renewable energy infrastructure" or similar. A related Sustainable goal could be to "balance the need for renewable energy infrastructure with the need to minimize environmental and adverse land impacts", or similar.	The RPC determined that language should be incorporated to address the tradeoffs. The language presented in the comment was acceptable. We will also incorporate a recommendatino regarding the opportunities for clean energy in affordable housing.
Page 21 (Energy): We should include the High-Voltage Transmission Lines; either as a separate panel, or (preferably) on the same graphic that shows the Gas and Hazardous Liquid Transmission Lines.	Make change.
I think you and the agency will lose a great deal of credibility if you do not withdraw that plan indicating "community" and "innovation."	Noted. The map will not be withdrawn, but will incorporate a better explanation with example images of land uses associated with each theme.
Sustainable, Community Innovative Map Page 64 this map has no meaning	Noted.

Comment	Response
64 Sustainable here is being defined as woodland or agricultural land areas. That is not the definition of sustainable. The whole goal of the plan and this map should be to show where and how we can build truly sustainable places to live, which are downtowns and walkable neighborhoods	Noted. We will work to incorporate a better explanation with example images of land uses associated with each theme.
64 Looking at Middletown just as an example, it shows a nearly completely developed city, with only two natural areas. This is not only not desirable, this is unsustainable. The map is not accurate regarding even state parkland.	Noted. The map is intended to present a non-parcel-specific, visionary, birds-eye view of the region and is not suggesgting that Middletown be fully developed with only two natural areas. We will work to incorporate a better explanation with examples of land uses associated with each theme.
64 The designation of "High Density" as 2 units/acre or more is utterly ridiculous. Even 20 units/acre would be considered a low figure.	Noted. However, high density is a relative term as compared to the region as a whole, which is overwhelmingly low
64 Not sure why the route numbers are on the map, and why 91 is shown in its shield logo. I see these are on every map in the book. There shouldn't be any route number on any map, except on a map of regional routes.	Route numbers are used to orient the reader.
Connected Map Page 65 What are you trying to say with this map? Do the blue lines indicate intention: do you want bike paths on these? Looking at just Middletown, I have no idea what those blue lines are trying to say.	Noted. We will work to incorporate a better explanation with example images of land uses associated with each theme.
67 On the FUURE LAND USE MAP, you still don't show Haddam Town Center (along Rte 154, from the Triangle down to Jail Hill Rd). as a COMMUNITY CENTER, even thoigh this is where all of our institutions are found: town hall, Library, church, Senior Center, etc. What is the matter with you?	Make change.
54 On the FUTURE LAND USE MAP, (as commented earlier) the area in Haddam north of Higganum Center, between Boulder Dell Rd/Rte 154 and Baldwin Hill Rd MUST SHOW SOME GREEN. (See the green in Google map for inspiration). This is where the town recently dedicated its largest preserve (Swan Hill)	Make change.
64The themes of "community" and "innovative" are well-intended, but cannot translate into a legend altogether.	Noted. We will work to incorporate a better explanation with example images of land uses associated with each theme.
54-55 Eliminate maps printed obliquely Example: Pages 54-55 and others These maps are important, perhaps the most substantial information of this report. Please print them head-on, so they can be studied. You can put two per page without any text.	These maps are head-on in the existing conditions report which we will make sure is linked to the RPOCD.
p.17, Recreational Amenities, Parks & Trail Facilities. We have not highlighted our longest State Park: Connecticut Valley Railroad State Park, some 21.7 miles long (mostly linear) totaling 300 acres that is entirely in our region and provides critical potential, non-vehicular connections for our towns between Middletown and Old Saybrook. I believe that especially with the RailBike additions, this could be an important point for VRR.	The RPC expressed support for a multi-use recreational corridor along the river (rather than the specific Green and BlueWay); and expressed support for the goal of creating a regional trails map in the future.
Accordingly, on p. 41, Goal 1, we could insert "Use The Connecticut River Green & BlueWay to connect in Middletown with the Airline Trail, and in Old Saybrook with the Shoreline Greenway."	The RPC expressed support for a multi-use recreational corridor along the river (rather than the specific Green and BlueWay); and expressed support for the goal of creating a regional trails map in the future.
Pg 69 Goal number 2. I think can include further study on the feasibility of the The Connecticut River Green & BlueWay.	The RPC expressed support for a multi-use recreational corridor along the river (rather than the specific Green and BlueWay); and expressed support for the goal of creating a regional trails map in the future.
Page 43 & Page 71: Blue-Green Way concept (Connecticut River Green & Blue Way): Although the concept of a mufti-modal recreational corridor along the banks of the river and rail line is worthy of support in the RPoC&D, we must exercise caution in the terminology we use to express our support. Specifically, the particulars of the proponent's proposals (including insistence on using a particular name) is very concerning because: (1) in reviewing the information provided by the proponent (below) it appears that this is a privately-controlled marketing/branding tool, similar to the place mats and brochures found in many restaurants and hotels, which promotes participating merchants (note the "Your Information Here" section); (2) The proposal potentially gives one business advantage over others (note that the Blue Oar Restaurant is featured, while other nearby restaurants are not); this is both unfair and inappropriate for inclusion in a regional land-use document. Supporting the concept in a general fashion would be appropriate; however, we do not want to appear to be picking winners and losers. (3) Because this is not a municipal or regionally-managed initiative, our municipalities and COG have no control over whom or what is to be included or not included.	The RPC expressed support for a multi-use recreational corridor along the river (rather than the specific Green and BlueWay); and expressed support for the goal of creating a regional trails map in the future.
Images - GB Way	The RPC expressed support for a multi-use recreational corridor along the river (rather than the specific Green and BlueWay); and expressed support for the goal of creating a regional trails map in the future.
p.43, Goal 8:, Recommendations, 4th item: correct spelling is The Connecticut River Green & BlueWay (see pdf).	The RPC expressed support for a multi-use recreational corridor along the river (rather than the specific Green and BlueWay); and expressed support for the goal of creating a regional trails map in the future.
. related to the above Green&BlueWay, we noticed Rep. Joe Courtney's recent recap of Member Designated Projects, totaling $18 million; it includes rivertrails, bridges, & sidewalks, including 2.2 million to revitalize the Quinebaug River Trail in Plainfield. RiverCOG's promotion of this Green&BlueWay concept could help promote the linking of projects throughout our Region (Cromwell, to Middletown, Higganum, Chesterr, Deep River, Essex, Old Saybrook, etc.).	Noted.

Comment	Recommendation
p. 12 Regional Housing Supply. Footnote (1) appears in several places. It contains a date regarding the data. U.S. Census Bureau (2018). 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-year Estimate. In 2017 the IHZ multi-family housing development consisting of 186 units was first occupied. The p12 table shows Old Saybrook as having zero for 20+ units. The estimate from 2018 missed the 2017 event and this 2021 report misses it again. When will the data be updated?	Check the accuracy of the data used in the EC report. Update as necessary.
p. 28 "Spencer's Corner in Centerbrook was cited as a positive example of affordable housing in the Region." Why wouldn't the 38 deed-restricted affordable units out of 186 units in the T.O.D. IHZ in Old Saybrook also be such an example?	Add OS example.
page 51 Goal 4. Should homeownership be an all encompassing goal? Many prefer to rent but still want accessible housing. Check spacing	Re-word goal to encompass both home rental and ownership.
Recommendations re aging population & affordable housing. Reference need for additional services that would allow seniors to stay in their home.	Add recommendation.
The goals and recommendations in the Implementation Plan are incredibly comprehensive. While each recommendation is categorized by urgency level, lead, and collaborative potential, it may be useful to list specific implementation partners beyond only the Lower Connecticut River Land Trust in order to highlight the many major institutions, non-profit organizations, businesses, and advocacy groups in the region.	Lookat places where institutions/non-profits, etc. could be added as partners and update where appropriate.
41 Under SUSTAINABLE, Goal 8, right after Guide growth to regional centers..." Needs to add: "Supply community water and/or sewer services to Village Centers where there is potential for denser, diversified housing mixes with access to public transportation and nearby commerce." Currently, the ability of our more rural towns to develop an appropriate and affordable mix of apartment or cluster housing is severely limited by the lack of such services.	The RPC determined that this recommendation would be too controversial to support region-wide. Instead, we will add a recommendation encouraging consideration of small, high-tech sewer systems to help support density where desired and appropriate. We could also consider a recommendation of supporting creative water and wastewater solutions necessary to acheive our towns' desired density increases in appropriate locations.
Under "sustainable" talking about threat of waste discharge. For implementation we discuss reducing the envrinmental impact of waste, but it is interesting that we do not take a stronger stance on endorsing a certain solution. Waste water discharge along shoreline is huge probalem and this doc doesn't state issue strong enough. Have stronger statement that says it has major impacts for the future of the coastal community. Many properties along hte shoreline have cesspools and/or septic systems 40+ years old. This doc states it's a high priority to make it environ friendly but doesn't do much more than that and doesn't speak to the future of where we should be going with that.	The RPC determined that a recommendation should be added to eliminate reserve septic discharge areas.
One suggestion: I may have missed it, and it may not be the role of a PoCD, but I wonder if the report could use more reference and connection to education (the colleges) and the arts. Perhaps more on healthcare and how it's changing (more decentralized facilities?).	Add additional reference to working with educational institutions and access to healthcare facilities.
3. The word community appears several times, but is only merged with college once. We need to highlight the community college that services the region and should be reinforced in this document as an affordable but quality engine for building skills and ideas. The word technical appears twice and on the same page, but not in reference to the one technical high school in the region, and a second only one town over that has served our students for over 100 years. The word business appears over 20 times which I suppose is understandable, but the word workers only appears once and the context is the transition to remote work in the age of Covid.	This is a land use plan, therefore these issues can only be addressed to the extent that they relate to land use. Make sure we clearly highlight (physical) access to community colleges and technical schools, as well as ways to foster partnerships between businesses and these institutions.

1. First, and most importantly, the word children does not appear in this document. The word youth does not appear in this document. Child care appears once but it's inclusion in Goal 5.8 aligns it with pedestrian and transit solutions that I do not think is relevant. If we want to retain young citizens and attract young innovators and their young families to the region and therefore trend in a younger direction while addressing one of our core weakness we need to become a hub for high quality early childhood education - which some studies show can result in 7 dollars of economic development for every 1 dollar spent.	One of the issues in the region is that we do not have enough young people. Having additional childcare facilities is premature without children to fill them. What we can do with this land use plan is work on making the area more attractive to young people (more affordable, smaller, more dynamic housing options, greater walkability/access to facilities, more entertainment, more business opportunities). To the extent that we can directly address childcare, this is mostly a function of zoning. We can recommend that towns incentivize childcare facilities near businesses and/or within easy access to smaller/more affordable housing units.
Theme 1 Sustainability: The theme of sustainability provides a comprehensive overview of how development in the region is intrinsically linked to the health of the natural environment. In particular, I was encouraged to see Sustainable Goal 1.5 list the protection of biodiversity through control of invasive species as highly urgent. Municipalities should be encouraged to invest in invasive removal and education, using their platforms to conduct outreach along rivers to make visitors and residents aware of the threat of invasive species.	Add recommendation.
Generalized Land Use Map Page 9 This map does not convey the land use adequately. If someone wanted to know where the main streets were, at a quick glance, they would be left with the impression that this red blob between East Hampton and East Haddam and Middlefield and Durham were the downtowns. And the largest blue seems to suggest it's a college or such, but is in fact, Higby Reservoir.	We will be adding a disclaimer explaining this map's utility as well as its shortcomings. This was a large undertaking for the region and is not perfect, but is something we can build upon.
Land Use map p. 9 The map needs to be redone, very thoughtfully. It needs to be less broken up. Typically, land use maps are rendered to indicate main streets to read as the most important centers (dark red), with other commercial areas as a lighter red, then orange to yellow showing residential densities, and a general green showing parks and farms.	We will be adding a disclaimer explaining this map's utility as well as its shortcomings. This was a large undertaking for the region and is not perfect, but is something we can build upon.
9 This map should be completely updated: you should not be recycling a 2013 plan for a 2021-31 plan.	We will be adding a disclaimer explaining this map's utility as well as its shortcomings. This was a large undertaking for the region and is not perfect, but is something we can build upon.
Pg 12-14 There is no mention of the homeless in this section. I think it MUST be included/addressed. Have the numbers changed from existing conditions report due to COVID. What is available in the region or should be available in region for those facing homelessness? I do see it is recognized on pg 38 and 68 as it should be perhaps with more urgency. There are current resources. What and where are they?	We have information on homelessness in the existing conditions report. Add a bullet on homelessness in the summary and link. Look for potential to add additional recommendations.

2. I was pleased with Director Gold's choice to emphasize poverty in his presentation, and more needs to be done to reverse the trend in the region. However, the words affluent, wealth, and inequality do not appear. The words debt and loans do not appear - which I specifically looked for with regard to student debt, a massive issue that I believe needs to be considered and acted upon locally with the same seriousness as we do other massive issues in this document like climate change. I believe that our affluence is a weakness, and the riches of property must be leveled in dramatic ways in order to grow and diversify our population, and share our extraordinary riches of environment and colonial history	This is a land use plan, therefore these issues can only be addressed to the extent that they relate to land use. We do address the need to create more housing for a variety of household types. We also talk, in the existing conditions report, about things that would make it more difficult for young people in particular to purchase homes. We will make sure that student debt, in particular, is clearly mentioned.
Community Vision Plan page 27 This map has good intentions, but looks ridiculous. I think you cannot convey what towns said simply by coloring and entire municipality on color scheme. We know where Old Saybrook is. I would eliminate this, and instead list the ideas.	The RPC determined that the map will be removed.
Page 27. The map is way overly simplified. Maybe classifying by census tracts rather than whole municipalities might be better.	The RPC determined that the map will be removed.
The plan and the process relied too heavily on participant input and did not include any analysis or planning input. It's a real shortcoming and it shows.	Noted. We used public outreach as a visioning tool and believed it critically important to allow the members of the towns in our region to define their own vision. That said, planning analysis was performed by professional planners on RiverCOG staff as well as through our professional planning consultants at FHI. All qualified to conduct that analysis.
Your agency should include planning services who can provide genuine input and insight into solving the housing imbalance, sparking job growth and building in the region's strengths. These towns need models, and demonstration projects so people can see how things can fit together	Noted. Planning analysis was performed by professional planners on RiverCOG staff as well as through our professional planning consultants at FHI. All are qualified to conduct that analysis. In addition, this regional plan is meant to be relatively high level. It is our intention to provide further guidance to achieve our goals as a next step. For example, RiverCOG is currently working on a housing plan that will provide specific guidance to towns regarding the housing imbalance.
Impresssions re: Data, Page 29 It's very peculiar that a plan like this talks about people's impressions with the data. "Participants found the data related to housing supply and market generally consistent with their experience." I'm not certain why time was spent on this in a workshop nor why it is being framed this way in this document. The data should speak for themselves.	Noted. Sometimes the data does not coincide with people's lived expriences. We wanted to be aware of this so that we could bridge any gaps if necessary. In planning, it is important to meet the public where they are and bring them along.

Comment	Response
74 one of the things that would really help advance Goal 8 is the availability of an up-to-date, comprehensive map for the region showing ALL TRAILS and publicly accessible open space. A Regional Guide would, in fact, be more useful (and less cumbersome) than one for the State as a whole. Also; Clearly missing under Goal 8 of Connected (access to open space resources) is "Provide expanded recreational access to the western shore of the CT River. Needed are more public parks on at the water's edge, more canoe-kayak launching sites and picnic areas, and trails along the shoreline. The existing marinas are an important amenity but limited to those who can afford a boat (furthermore there is enough boat traffic on the river as is).	The RPC expressed interest additional trails information. A recommendation will be incorporated to conduct a future comprehensive study of trails in the region. Additionally we can incorporate a cross reference to the Bike/Ped plan which will examine trails in greater detail. Motorized access and self propelled (canoe/kayak) access to the river are different and should be identified and addressed separately.
Access to natural resources can act as a bridge to stewardship and volunteerism, which is identified as a weakness and opportunity in this plan. I encourage the committee to consider further addressing the lack of public access to the Connecticut River and its tributaries. While boating related facilities are mapped out on page 17, many of these appear to be private facilities. Lack of public access to waterways prohibits portions of the population for enjoying these resources and, in turn, developing a sense of connection with their local waterbodies. In addition to physical access barriers, barriers of language, culture, race and economic class may contribute to this disconnection. Similarly, concerns about declining volunteerism and participation in civic institutions in the region should be framed in the context of potential barriers to volunteers, such as lack of childcare, time, knowledge and economic stability.	The RPC expressed interest in further identification of public access to waterbodies. Text will be incorporated to express the importance of public access, as well as concerns related to stewardship. A recommendation will be incorporated that we further study public access. Motorized access and self propelled (canoe/kayak) access to the river are different and should be identified and addressed separately.
Reviewing the plan, I noted with interest, that in response to the question "What is your vision for the lower Connecticut River Valley?" the majority of responses identified 'natural environment' and 'river/waterfront' as priority themes (combined 42% of responses). In contrast with this, responses to "What do you see as your town's role in the region?" did not reflect this same prioritization. Given this dichotomy, increasing access to (physical, cultural, economic) should be a priority action for towns in the region to achieve this vision.	Add recommendation.
Under Sustainable goal 2.4, the reduction of impervious surfaces to mitigate impacts of stormwater runoff is rated at low urgency. Given the prioritization of healthy watersheds and the climate crisis, this goal seems better suited for moderate or high urgency. In 2021, legislative focus centered on, in part, the creation of stormwater authorities as a means of mitigating climate change impacts and improving water quality. Greater focus on reducing impervious surfaces will benefit the region in cross-cutting ways.	Increase priority. Add recommendations if appropriate.
pg 5. The planning area section is missing a comment regarding the difference between region and county in CT. I think you need a brief explanation. AS in page 6 in 2d bullet you mention the county; with no explanation, so a person not familiar with CT regions vs county might assume you are using the two terms interchangeably.	Add description.
33 Eliminate diagram Page 33 When you make such a simple diagram like this this so large, it sets off a warning bell that maybe you are puffing up the plan because you don't have enough substance. This structure for the plan might be appealing at the outset, but the "themes" cannot be carried through. They don't hold up. You can't show all these policy ideas and principles merely with plans on half a page. This Plan should be formed around transit, housing, natural resources, established downtowns and employment centers.	Noted. The themes are used to break down the silos and show interconnectedness between traditional planning categories. That is not to say that transit, housing, natural resources, and economic development are not all represented in the plan.
Goals: How Goals are written Example: page 38, #6 There are too many words in each statement, and too many statements saying the same thing over and over again.	Noted. We will look at the goals and remove repetion if and where appropriate.
Goals: Many of these policy goals come out of thin air. Does each of these refer to some data earlier in the document? Is there a homeless problem in Mx County?	The basis for goals and recommendations stem from the existing conditions report. The summary is in the plan and the existing conditions report is linked throughout.
Goals: These need to be boiled down to the fewest words possible: less than 8 word sentences. These should be discussed in a group in detail, not by the consultant. This is policy, and the commission needs to decide what are priorities.	Noted. The goals have been discussed by the RPC as well as in public outreach and analyzed by professional planners.
53 Remove symbol key Page 53 and elsewhere Why set up a symbol system for something that is only a couple pages long? You are making something simple more cumbersome.	Noted. This is a style choice. No change necessary,

67 on : Implemention Charts Page 67-end Nobody is going to read these. These statements are an exact repeat of the goals, but without further insight. These lists can be printed without the color bands. Use the page space to instead tie goals to concrete action steps and/or cite examples. The only thing useful is what agency would head the initiative. If a goal is a high priority, then list it at the top. Put the lower priorities at the bottom. There is no need to assess the "collaborative potential": you are basically saying no is going to do any of this.	Noted. As this is a regional, high level plan, there are limited concrete action steps that we can propose. We will look into organizing by priority level.
Page "0". As I suggested at the Public Hearing, somewhere at the very beginning, before getting started with all the [necessary] verbiage of the Plan, on a page by itself separated from other distractions, why not begin with a simple statement (in layman's terms) of what this is all about, and who is it for. Think of this as the inside Frontispiece, which will start the reader on a path that concludes with the Implementation Plan. To give you an idea of what I have in mind, I offer here a first draft to what I had in mind when I made that suggestion. If the idea appeals to you, I am sure you will find ways to improve on it. " The Region's many elected and appointed officials are the principal audience of a Regional Plan of Conservation and Development. In this case, we hope it will be an aid to visualizing our region as a whole, what is our identity, and what are the Region's principal challenges and opportunities. On any subject critical to our future, whether this be strengthening the economy, protecting natural resources, upgrading our housing stock so as to make this an attractive and affordable place to live for young and old, or providing the region with an up-to-date 21st century communication and transportation network, let us adopt a unified front, in which our individual efforts are guided by the same common Vision. That is the attitude this Plan seeks to promote." SIGNED: Members of the Regional Plan Committee	We have a purpose statement on page three. We will look into the feasibility of removing this and putting it at the beginning.
Page 3: Preface to the RPoC&D: This information is already largely present on Page 3; but perhaps we could highlight it better. For instance, just the text of the first sub-section appears in bold & italics. Perhaps we could consider using this same font to highlight the remaining four sub-sections.	We have a purpose statement on page three. We will look into the feasibility of removing this and putting it at the beginning.
Plan seems comprehensive and to the point. Exist. Conds. based on pre-Covid and we know things are changing but we don't know how exactly. (Ex. Declining population trend may have turned around). Can refer to fact that there are probably changing trends even though probably can't point to data yet. At least acknowledge.	We have a statement of planning during the pandemic. We will make sure this clearly addresses what we don't know about the post-covid world and our intentions to continue monitoring and updating as necessary.
While it is stated clearly that the RPOCD is non-binding on municpalities, elsewhere it is indicated that state or RiverCOG funds may be prioritized according to municipalities compliance to plan.	This is not entirely accurate. The plan is voluntary, but we do say one of the potential uses of the plan could be to deterimne funding priority for projects that are in furtherance of the plan's recommendations.
RE: Paula Kay's comment about towns being allocated funds might have been more in line w/ legislation that did not pass this time around.	This is not entirely accurate. The plan is voluntary, but we do say one of the potential uses of the plan could be to deterimne funding priority for projects that are in furtherance of the plan's recommendations.
Many of us have been trying to create affordable housing in Middlesex County for a long time. It is heartening to know that your outreach shows that the tide is turning. People are starting to see the negative impacts of relying solely on single family housing and are open to creating affordable housing. Housing is woven throughout the RPOCD, as it should be.	Noted.
Overall, I believe that the RPOCD is very well thought out, comprehensive, and will be useful for the communities within the RiverCOG district.	Noted.
First, I want to thank RiverCOG and the Regional Plan Committee for their work on this plan to create a thoughtful and thorough vision for the region. In particular, I am encouraged to see the inclusion of the Connecticut River and the riverfront as central to the PoCD; as stated in our mission, we fervently believe that healthy rivers support thriving communities and economies.	Noted.
The Office of Policy and Management (OPM) has reviewed the draft Lower Connecticut River Valley Plan of Conservation and Development 2021-2031 (Regional POCD) that you provided by email on April 26, 2021, in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes Section 8-35a(b). OPM hereby determines that the draft plan is not inconsistent with the Conservation and Development Policies: The Plan for Connecticut 2013-2018 (State C&D Plan).	Noted.
OPM would like to commend RiverCOG for preparing an especially thoughtful plan that should prove to be a useful tool for the COG and its member municipalities. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way citizens of the state work, live, and communicate. OPM acknowledges that the timing of the pandemic created a challenging planning process for RiverCOG, as there are many unknowns about the way traditional customs and expectations will evolve in a post-pandemic economy. Undoubtedly trends will evolve, and some predictions or expectations may be wrong. To the extent resources allow, OPM encourages incremental revisions to RiverCOG's Regional POCD in the coming years to account for these anticipated unknowns.	Noted.
Offers support for the plan, the spirit of the plan is in line with City of Middletown POCD. Thanked Staff, RPC & Consultants. Recommendations listed identify municipalities as lead for many of them, he will evaluate his daily work as to whether it supports the regional goals and urges other planners to do the same.	Noted.
Page 2. Line 18. …Sustainable, Connected, Innovative, (and) Community.	Change.

Page 2. Line 30. The importance of both (comma) the built and the natural environment (comma)	No change.
Page 3. Line 5. However, pop-up events (comma) that encouraged in-person interactions between strangers (comma) were not pursued.	Add first comma, but not second.
Page 3. Line 8. high-speed (I)nternet. Internet should be capitalized every time.	As of 2017, Chicago Manual no longer require capitalization of internet. No change.
Page 4. Photo lacks credit, and location.	Make change.
Page 8. Zoning. Line 4. These districts do (comma) however (comma) have comparable characteristics. Page 8. Line 10. …are zoned for agriculture (comma) but allow low-density…	No change.
page 5, 6 and beyond: All figures (graphics, charts, illustrations) should have figure# 1-100 and be referenced in the text. where the text referred it to. If its an appendix/footnotes then make sure this is differentiated from figures. I would like to cross reference the footnotes but cannot as it is not provided in this draft made available to us.	Make change.
You are probably aware but there are many grammar, capitalization, and punctuation errors throughout the document. Too many to like	Noted.
At least pages 2 and 25 reference meetings "via Zoom." Future readers might not know what Zoom is. I suggest something like "virtually" or "online"	Make change.
Page 10. Round acreage to the nearest whole number. The Mixed Use Urban zone takes up a lot of space and messes up the visual appeal of the table	Make change.
Page 12 (and all tables) make sure you consistently use commas when value is greater than 999.	Make change.
Page 29 last paragraph says 55+ developments. Should include "age restricted" or "targeted" or something.	Make change.
Page 33. the last sentence would better read "These four themes are complimentary and describe both current attributes and future aspirations for the region."	Make change.
page 42. Goal 7 margin is out of line with the others. Check spacing on Goal 4 compared to others	Make change.
page 44. "whether water…" should be "including water…" or something like that	Make change.
page 51. Goal 3 last bullet. There's got to be a better way to say "usually low paid."	Revise language.
page 51. Goal 5. Check font. looks inconsistent with other goals	Make change.
It's worth a mention as we talk about water that PFAS problems have recently emerged in Killingworth and will probably affect every town eventually.	Add recommendation.
The best short analysis as to availability is produced by Broadband Now: https://broadbandnow.com/Connecticut NOTE FROM ELIZA - THERE IS MORE TO THIS COMMENT IN AN EMAIL, I CANNOT COPY/PASTE THE IMAGE HERE (email dated 5/18/21)	The RPC determined that a recommendation should be added to advocate for higher speed connection, especially in rural areas.
Broadband Now has a map that differentiates between distribution technologies and shows no Fiber Optic to the home in our region: https://broadbandnow.com/national-broadband-map I strongly suggest we drop the coverage map and state in the discursive section that 100% of the built region has access to 25mbps/3mbps internet today, but we believe this is inadequate to support future economic growth and modern education. The POCD supports a plan to provide 1000mbps download speeds.	The RPC determined that a recommendation should be added to advocate for higher speed connection, especially in rural areas.
(p. 21, Internet) Cell tower locations. The one in northern Westbrook appears just west of Rt 153, it is actually just east of Rt 145.	Check this data and update as necessary.
(p. 21, Internet) The shaded area is labeled "Areas with Fiber to End User Access" The areas in northern Westbrook and Old Saybrook include the Preserve and much open space in Westbrook.	Check this data and update as necessary.
(p. 21, Internet) I cannot find the "Connecticut Statewide Telecommunications Coverage Plan 2013. I did find the 2018 one. It does not have a map of internet coverage and does not mention Fiber Optic End User Access.	Check this data and update as necessary.
75 An essential component of Goal 1 and Goal 3 needs to be "Encourage, via legislative initiatives and/or financial incentives, the development of a modern high-quality digital communication network, with true 5G celular coverage throughout the area, and cable download speeds => 1Gbps " This should be labeled "High" on Urgency level, and "partners" and "High"on the other 2 columns	Make change.