



Regional Housing Plan

Second Regional Presentation and Workshop
January 24, 2022



Lower Connecticut River Valley
Council of Governments

Project Team



Lower Connecticut River Valley
Council of Governments

Consultant Team



Lower Connecticut River Valley
Council of Governments

Municipal Liaisons

- **Chester:** Pat Bandzes
- **Clinton:** Karl Kilduff
- **Cromwell:** Stu Popper
- **Deep River:** Angus McDonald
- **East Haddam:** Jim Ventres
- **East Hampton:** Jeremy DeCarli
- **Essex:** Carey Duques
- **Killingworth:** Tom Hogarty
- **Lyme:** Tim Hildner
- **Middletown:** Marek Kozikowski
- **Old Lyme:** Michael Fogliano
- **Portland:** Mary Dickerson



Agenda

- Introduction and Background
- Regional Methodology
- Baseline Assessment and Data Review
- RPOCD Vision
- Regional Recommendations
- 8-30j Plan Process, Next Steps
- Concluding Remarks



Introduction and Background

About the Regional Housing Plan:

- Comprehensive approach to housing needs at the regional level
- Follow up to the Regional Plan of Conservation and Development (RPOCD)
- Addresses housing needs holistically and in the context of the Region's demographic and economic circumstances
- Completed in two parts: 1) Regional Housing Analysis; and 2) 8-30j plans for 12 participating towns



Introduction and Background

Regional Housing Analysis:

- Overview of current housing conditions
- Projection of future housing needs
- Recommendations for regional cooperation



Regional Housing Plan Methodology

The RHP's methodology includes:

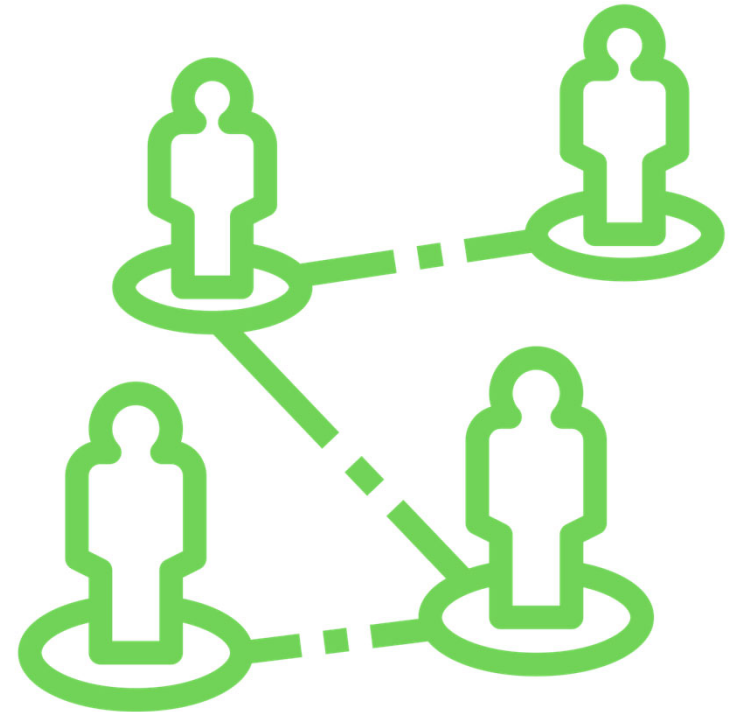
- Baseline assessment of current demographic, housing, and economic conditions
- Assessment of other factors that influence housing production
- Consideration of Regional Housing Objectives from the RPOCD
- Needs Assessment
- Potential Regional and Local Strategies to meet needs



Baseline Assessment

Review of:

- Demographics
- Housing Profile
- Jobs
- Transportation and Access



Demographics

The Region's population is stagnant and verging on decline

- 1% decrease in total population between 2010 and 2020
- **19% decrease** in people under age 18
- **21.4% decrease** in school district enrollment
 - The Region is losing school-aged children, young adults, young families and its workforce population

Location	2015	2040	Change	
Chester	3,982	3,313	-669	-16.8%
Clinton	12,784	9,484	-3,300	-25.8%
Cromwell	14,365	16,160	1,795	12.5%
Deep River	4,458	3,201	-1,257	-28.2%
Durham	7,509	6,791	-718	-9.6%
East Haddam	9,233	8,165	-1,068	-11.6%
East Hampton	13,403	11,543	-1,860	-13.9%
Essex	6,505	5,082	-1,423	-21.9%
Haddam	8,681	8,630	-51	-0.6%
Killingworth	6,522	4,955	-1,567	-24.0%
Lyme	2,499	2,742	243	9.7%
Middlefield	4,446	4,333	-113	-2.5%
Middletown	48,319	57,666	9,347	19.3%
Old Lyme	7,437	6,040	-1,397	-18.8%
Old Saybrook	9,789	6,987	-2,802	-28.6%
Portland	9,695	10,145	450	4.6%
Wesbrook	7,048	6,911	-137	-1.9%
Total	176,675	172,148	-4,527	--

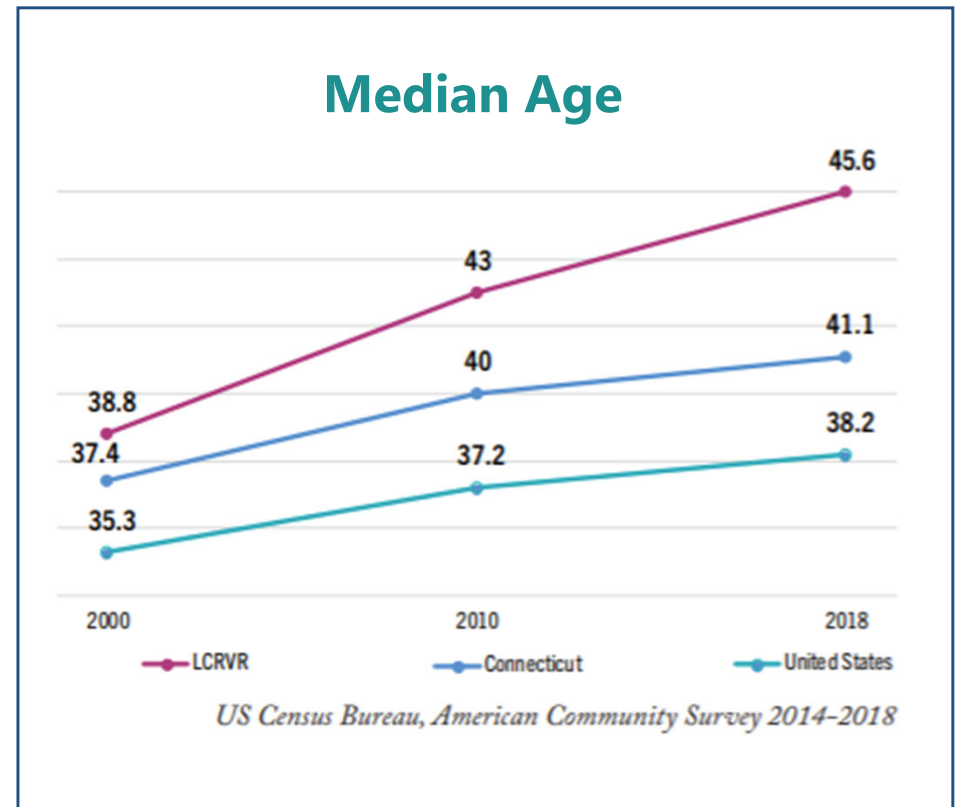
CT State Data Center, 2017



Demographics

The Region is aging

- Senior population continues to grow.
Baby Boomers (1946 – 1965) make up 26.5% of Region.
- Region's population is older than Connecticut's which is older than the U.S. as a whole
- U.S. Median Age = 38.2, **Region's Median Age = 45.6**
- Middletown is the only community in Region with median age below that of the U.S.



Demographics

Household size is shrinking

- Decreasing household sizes is a trend across entire country
- Share of single-person households is increasing
- Share of married couples with children is decreasing
- State average size = 2.54 people, **Region's average size = 2.37 people**
- Region has a predominance of single-family homes which are not matched to these small one or two person households

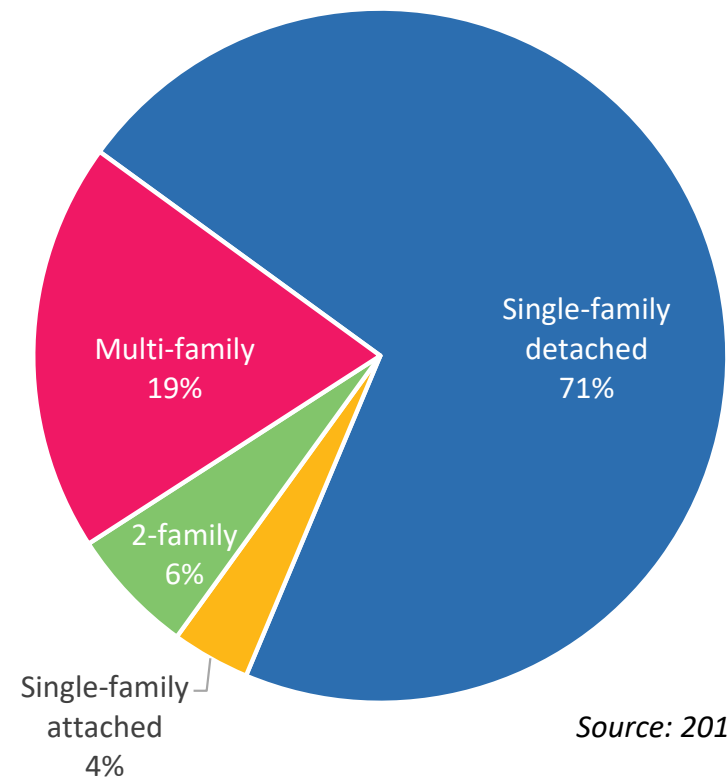


Housing Profile

Housing in the Region is lacking in diversity

- Region has 82,497 total housing units
- **City of Middletown contains 26% of Region's housing units** and most diverse
- Region's smaller towns have much less housing with much less diversity
- Housing growth (i.e. construction) is virtually non-existent
- Low demand for new homes due to stagnant population growth and lack of young people

Housing Unit Types



Source: 2019 ACS



Housing Profile

Housing types are dominated by single-family detached housing

- **71%** of Region's housing is single family.
- At the State level, 58% of housing is single-family
- Lack of multi-family housing options
- **81% of Region's multi-family housing is in Middletown**, which means remaining 19% is spread in very small amounts across remaining towns



Housing Profile

Housing supply is aging, and new construction is limited

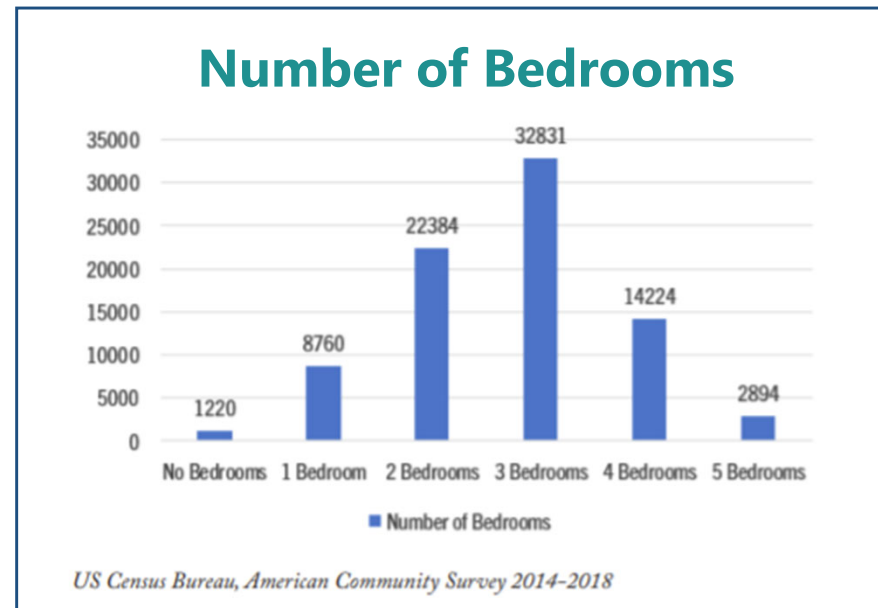
- Prior to 1990, Connecticut was a high-growth housing state but now slow-growth
- Related to the lack of population and job growth
- From 2010 to 2017, every municipality in the Region except for Chester and Essex saw the number of new houses that were built drop by 50% or more. Five municipalities dropped by over 85%.



Housing Profile

The types of housing units that exist in the Region are not necessarily suited to changing household sizes and types

- 60% of the units in the Region have 3 or more bedrooms
- The ratio of homeowners to renters is approximately 3:1
- These conditions show a mismatch between existing supply and current and future demand
- Younger residents, seniors and smaller households are more likely to desire small units and rental options



Housing Profile

Home values vary greatly across the Region by municipality

- Median Home Value is **\$303,031**
- Compared to the State Median Home Value of \$280,700
- Lyme has the highest median value; Middletown has the lowest
- Average rental rate is **\$1,200**

	Median
Middletown	\$227,000
Cromwell	\$245,600
Portland	\$245,800
East Hampton	\$268,100
Deep River	\$271,200
East Haddam	\$278,700
Middlefield	\$280,400
Clinton	\$287,700
Haddam	\$310,400
Durham	\$331,300
Chester	\$346,800
Killingworth	\$365,400
Westbrook	\$365,800
Essex	\$371,300
Old Saybrook	\$381,900
Old Lyme	\$401,000
Lyme	\$555,000
Region	\$325,494



Housing Profile

Although the Region is generally affluent, there is an affordability problem and large differences in where affordable units are found

- Naturally occurring vs. protected affordable units
- 6,733 units in Region are counted by State as affordable (**8% of all units**)
- 71% of these affordable units are in Middletown
- Without Middletown, only **3.31% of Region's units are affordable**
- As of 2020, **31.1% of the Region's households are cost-burdened** by their monthly housing costs – paying more than 30% of income



Jobs

Job growth in the State and the Region has been declining.

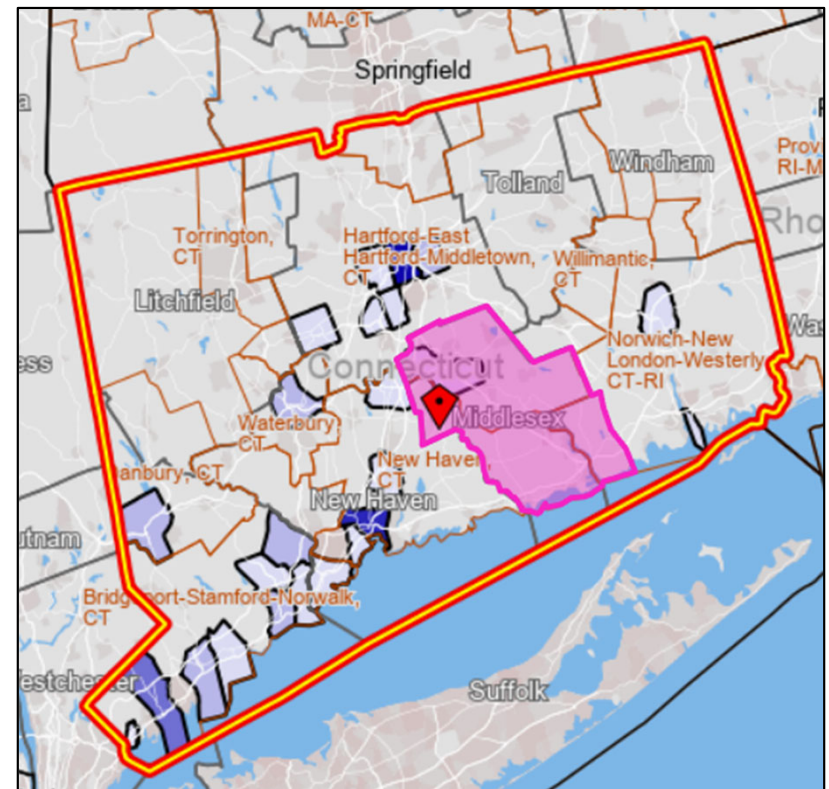
- About 63,000 jobs in the Region
- Middletown is primary employment center with over 1/3 of total jobs
- Cromwell is a smaller center as well as town centers, larger industrial parks and commercial centers along I-95 and Route 9
- Top sectors include manufacturing, tourism and small businesses



Jobs

Most of Region's workforce population commutes out of the Region

- Region has a workforce population of 80,000
- More than half (59%) of Region's jobs are held by people living outside of Region
 - Mainly commuting in from Meriden, New Haven, Hartford
- Those who commute into Region for work are employed at much lower wage jobs than those that live in Region



Source: 2019 US Census/On the Map

Transportation and Access

Car-centric Region with Some Transit Connections

- Easily accessible by car - I-95, Route 9, I-91, Route 66, Route 1 - but heavily dependent on single-occupancy vehicles
- Two bus service districts – Middletown and Estuary
- Three rail stations along the coast connect Region to other metro areas like New York City, Boston, and Springfield, MA.
 - Clinton, Westbrook, Old Saybrook



Other Factors Influencing Housing

Weak Housing Market conditions

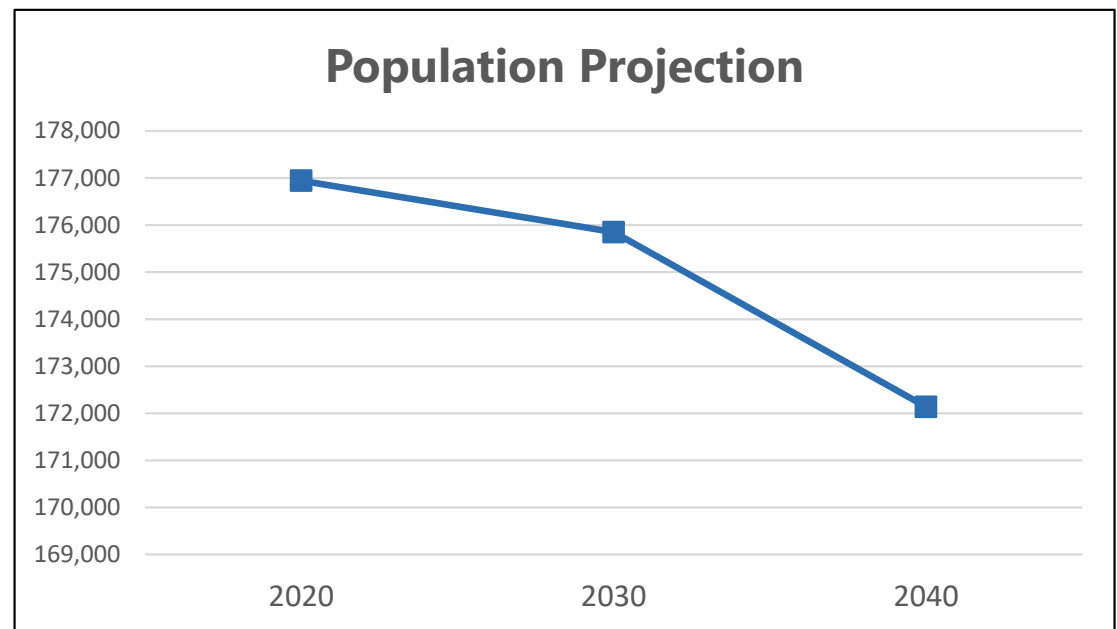
- Region's housing market is weak
- Region is located on the fringe of major metropolitan markets – Hartford, New London, New Haven
- Market is characterized by:
 - Aging population, fewer young people
 - Decreasing household size, lack of rental options
- There is always demand for new, modern housing units but Region is missing out by not capturing this demand



Other Factors Influencing Housing

No growth is not economically sustainable

- Predicted **2.6% population decrease** for Region from 2015 to 2040
- Declining household formation = weaker housing market, resulting in: depreciating property values, grand list values, and taxes.
- Prolonged decline is not sustainable and will have negative economic implications



Source: CT Data Center



Other Factors Influencing Housing

Natural resources limit buildable land

- There are natural and physical constraints as to where housing can be developed such as:
 - Steep slopes, bedrock, wetlands, flood plains, natural habitats, watersheds, etc.
- 16% of Region classified as open space
- Areas for housing should be targeted to reduce impact on these resources



Other Factors Influencing Housing

Limited sewer/water infrastructure

- Sewer and public water connections required for most new housing development, particularly at higher densities
- Important to consider where this infrastructure currently exists
- Most often found near town centers or along major corridors
- About **11% of Region's area is served by sewer** (35% of population)
 - Mostly in northern urban area
- About **46% of Region is on public water supply**



Other Factors Influencing Housing

Zoning limits higher density options

- Municipal zoning determines where residential uses can occur
- **86%** of Region is zoned for residential uses
 - **60%** low-density residential (<1 unit/acre)
 - **20%** medium-density residential (1-2 units/acre)
 - **5%** higher-density residential (>2 units/acre)
 - Higher density concentrated in northern areas – Middletown, Cromwell



Current Trajectory

These conditions reflect existing patterns and contributed to Region's current declining trends.

If the analysis were to stop here:

- Region will face further continued population and economic decline
- At most, Region could absorb maximum of 200 new units per year due to lower demand drivers and lack of growth – not enough to reverse trends
 - This accounts for all unit types and price points across entire Region



RPOCD Vision

Structured around the four themes of **Sustainable**, **Innovative**, **Connected**, and **Community**

Steps toward achieving this vision can alter the Region's trajectory

The Region will



RPOCD Vision

...**grow** and develop in balance with **natural**, **economic**, and **social resources**.

...provide the **stability** necessary to **support social equity** across the Region.

(Sustainable, 34)



RPOCD Vision

... **foster** an environment of **growth** and **opportunity** that supports, encourages, and **attracts innovation**.

...provide a **high-quality of life** that is attractive to a **highly skilled workforce**.

(Innovative, 45)



RPOCD Vision

...be intentional in efforts to become a **better-connected place.**

...be accessible by **all modes of travel** and for **all types of people.**

(Connected, 40)



RPOCD Vision

...be a **welcoming** and **inclusive** place that is home to **diverse communities** that reflect the many cultures, communities, ethnicities, and traditions of its peoples.

(Community, 49)



Regional Objectives

The Region will achieve this by:

- Diversifying population in terms of age, race, and socio-economic status.
- Creating a resilient workforce.
- Ensuring people who work in the Region can live near their jobs
- Diversifying housing stock for non-traditional households.
- Examining ways to make existing housing stock, office, and retail space functional for a changing population.
- Encouraging orderly creation of housing of different styles and types near existing areas of development, employment, and transit.



RPOCD Trajectory

The potential for change does exist

- If we make intentional changes to grow our economic sector and attract more young people, we can mitigate and possibly reverse the Region's decline.
- Housing is a key lever for change



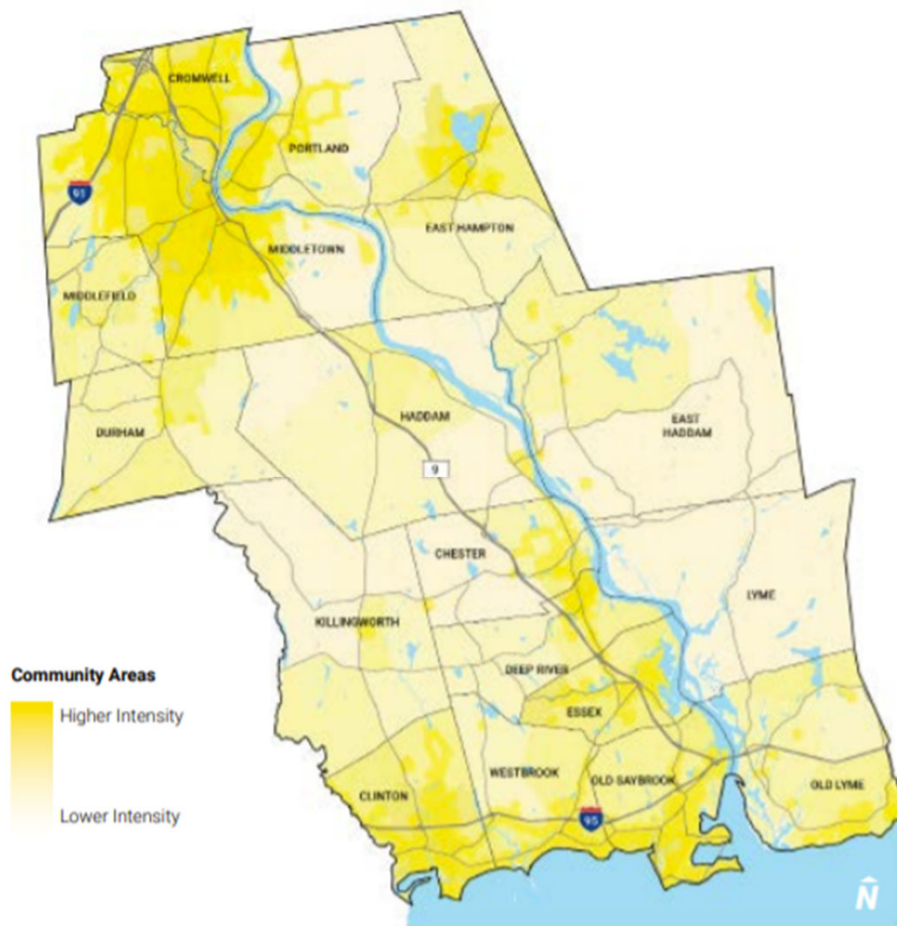
What Kind and How Much?

Housing production in the Region:

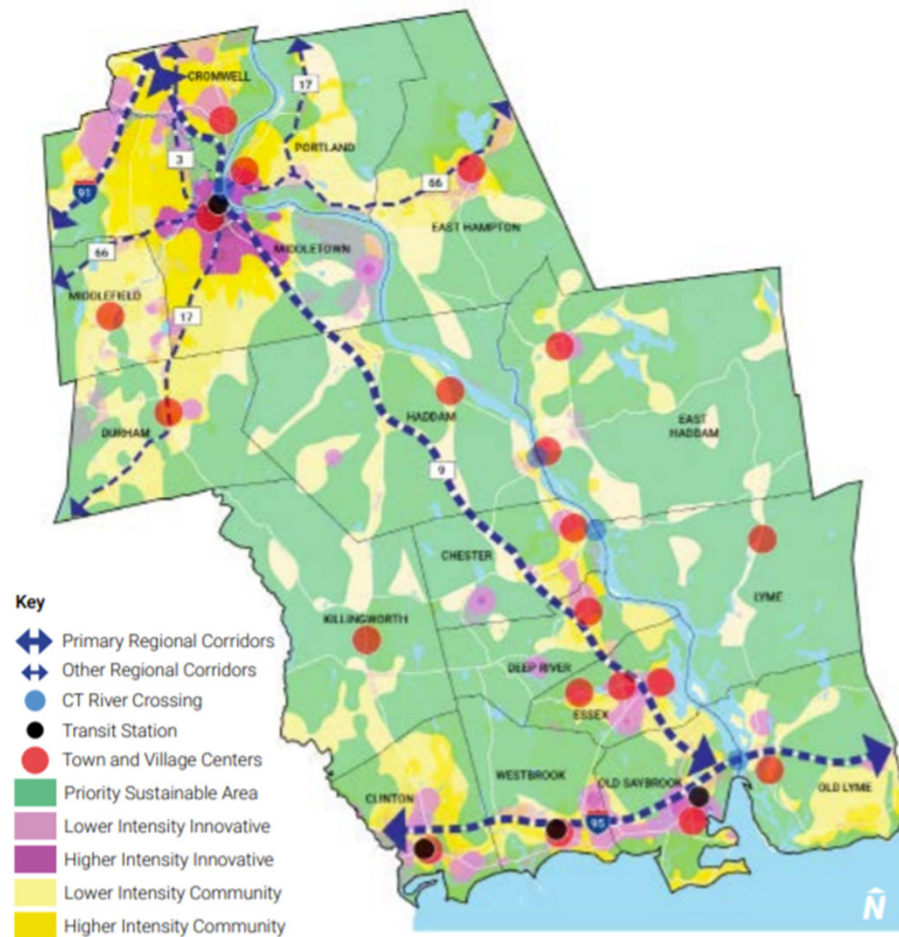
- **600 units per year** for the next ten years
- Housing types should include:
 - Higher-density, medium-density
 - Duplexes, townhouses, semi-detached
 - Modest smaller family
 - New units should consist of:
 - 30% single-family detached homes,
 - 10% single-family attached homes,
 - 5% two-family homes
 - 35% to 45% two-bedrooms,
 - 30% to 40% one-bedrooms,
 - 10% to 15% studios and three-bedrooms



Where to Build?



"Community" concepts map



Future Land Uses Map



Strategic Approach

How will we achieve these targets?

- One approach to consider will be Regional-level strategies
 - These are strategies at a higher level than the local, municipal level
 - Could be overseen by RiverCOG in its role as the regional planning agency
 - Based on regional strategies that are successful in other parts of the U.S.
 - 4 potential strategies to consider



Audience Polling Intro

*We are going to use interactive polling during this workshop.
You will need access to an additional webpage.
Let's get started!*

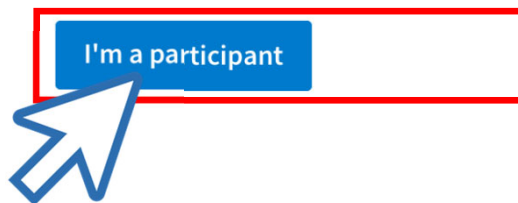
Go to [PolEv.com/SLR2021](https://Pollev.com/SLR2021)



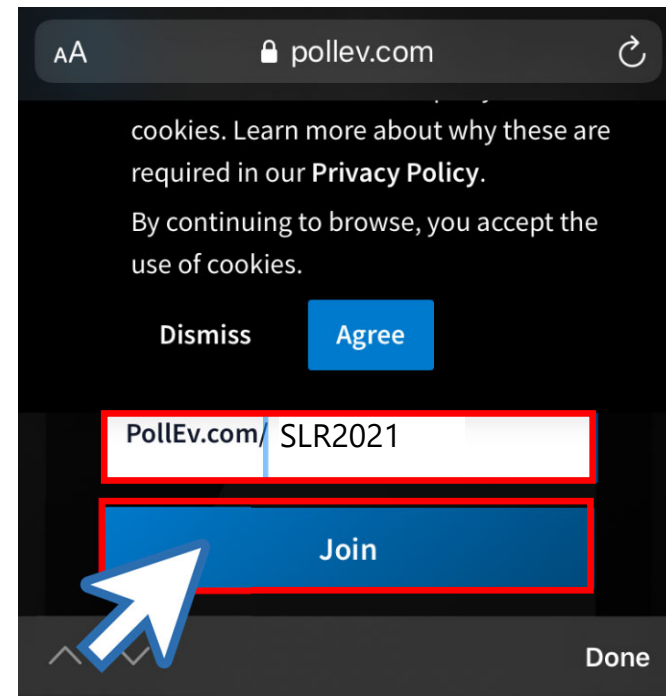
Audience Polling Intro



**Participate in
a presentation**



Click "I'm a participant"



Type **SLR2021 after the
backslash and hit "Join"**



What is your favorite color?

Red

Orange

Yellow

Green

Blue

Purple

Other

Actually, it's spelled "colour"

What best describes your relationship to the Regional Housing Plan?

RiverCOG resident

Employed by a business in RiverCOG

RiverCOG community staff (town/city employee)

Housing Liaison

Member of a RiverCOG community board or
commission (planning and zoning, wetlands, etc.)

Other

What community are you representing tonight? (Where do you live/work?)

Chester
Clinton
Cromwell
Deep River
Durham
East Haddam
East Hampton
Essex
Haddam
Killingworth
Lyme
Middlefield
Middletown
Old Lyme
Old Saybrook
Portland
Westbrook

Were you involved in the 2021 Regional Plan of Conservation and Development (RPOCD)?

Yes, I participated

No, I did not

No, I did not but I read it
and/or I am familiar with it

Regional Recommendations

Regional Land Banks

- Entities that can **hold abandoned, vacant and tax-delinquent properties** for future development
- Can be used **to create housing**, particularly affordable housing
- **At a regional scale**, can be more efficient than municipal level
- Helps **mitigate negative impacts** of foreclosures and vacant properties across a region



Regional Recommendations

CASE STUDY: Finger Lakes Regional Land Bank, NY

- Acquires, improves, and redistributes vacant, blighted, and tax-abandoned properties
- Returns them to productive use, while being consistent with local municipalities' comprehensive plans
- Creates economic development opportunities, accessibility, quality affordable and market-rate housing, commercial development, community amenities, local jobs, and more.



Regional Recommendations

Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authorities

- Regions **combine resources to provide housing authority or redevelopment authority services** for municipalities that don't have the resources to provide their own
- Can provide programming, technical assistance, etc.
- Funding by state and federal funds



Regional Recommendations

CASE STUDY: Berkshire County Regional Housing Authority (BCRHA), Massachusetts

- The Berkshire County Regional Housing Authority (BCRHA) was established in 1980
- Acts as a local housing authority for 23 towns in the county that do not have a local housing authority.
- As a regional agency, BCRHA is mandated to provide housing programming, and related services and technical assistance to all communities in the county.



Regional Recommendations

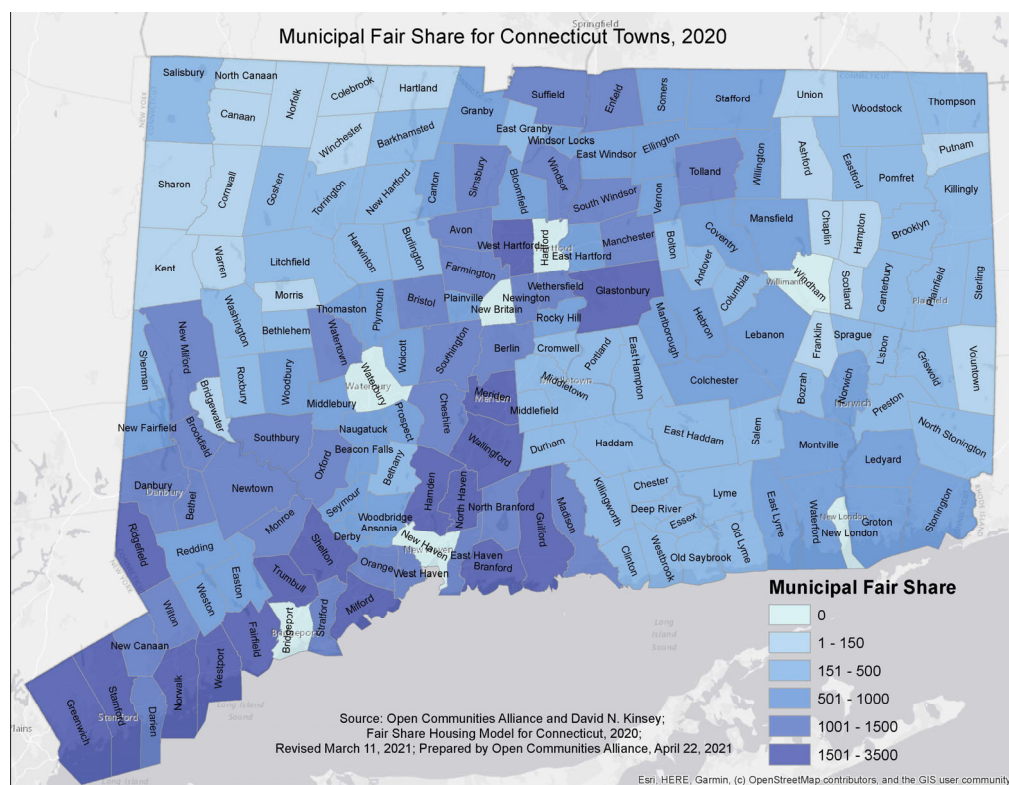
Fair Share Program

- A **methodology that allocates a specified number of units** of affordable housing to towns **based on each town's capacity** to accommodate and built it
- Can be a voluntary target or a mandate
- Gives towns control over how to meet the allocation so long as the number of units is created



Regional Recommendations

CASE STUDY: CT Open Communities Alliance (OCA)



Source: Open Communities Alliance

- OCA has created their Fair Share model/proposal for Connecticut on how to add affordable housing statewide
- Report released in 2020
- Based on COG regions
- Allows planning and zoning commissions flexibility and control over how they achieve their Fair Share of affordable housing



Regional Recommendations

Regional Advocacy Organizations

- **Non-profit groups**
- **Promote and facilitate** the creation of affordable housing
- Offer education, technical assistance, advocacy to the region



Regional Recommendations

CASE STUDY: Southeastern Connecticut Housing Alliance (SECHA)

- SECHA was formed in 2006 as an advocacy organization
- As a response to a study of housing needs in the Region
- SECHA and the Southeastern CT COG work closely together – share administrative support
- Assists municipalities in achieving their housing goals



*Ribbon-cutting at Spruce Meadows, Stonington, March 2017
(Mixed-Income Rentals). Source: SCCOG.*



Do agree or disagree with the following statement: The Regional Housing Plan aligns with the goals of the RPOCD

Strongly Agree

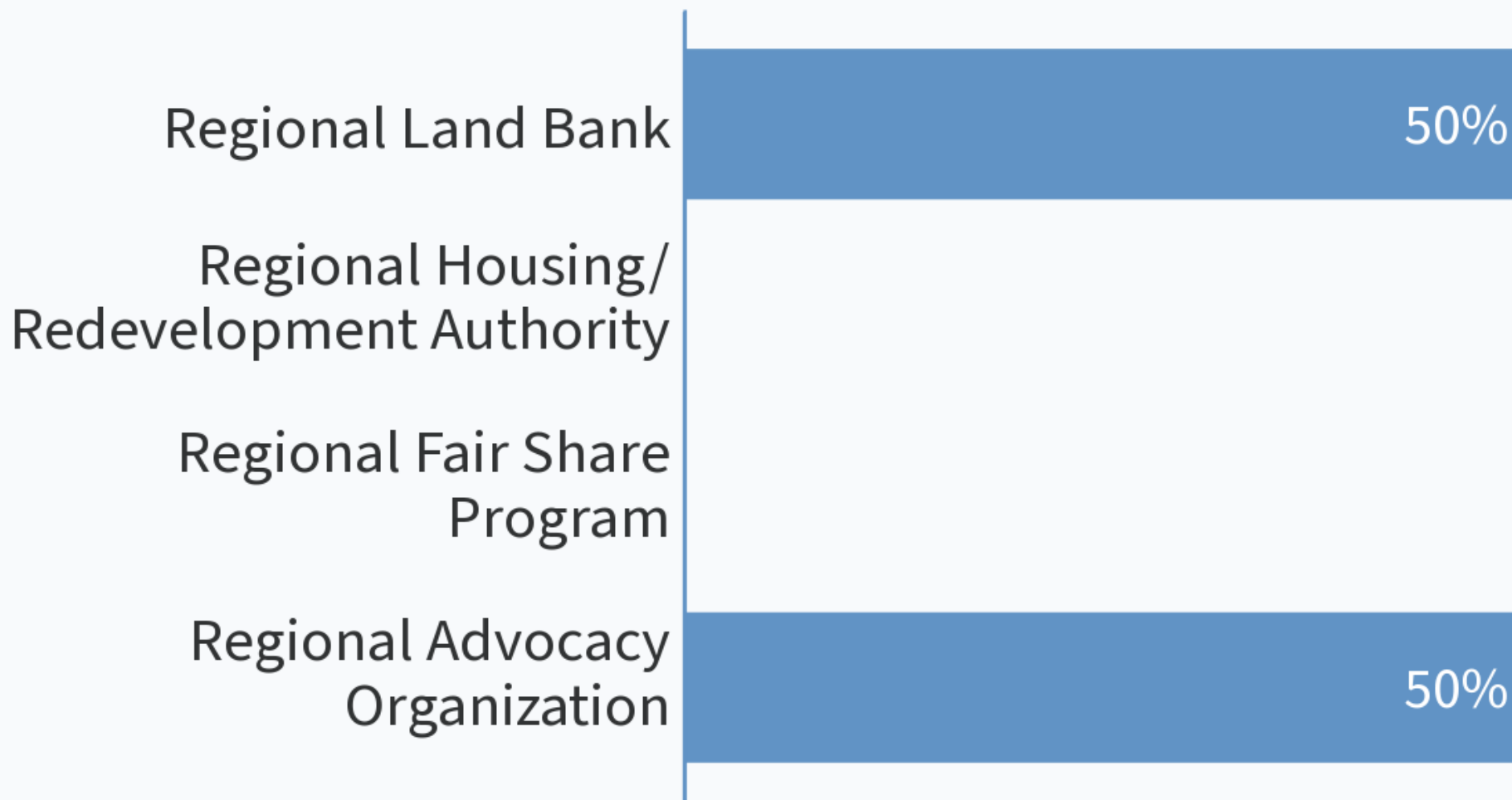
Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

What strategies would you like to see RiverCOG pursue?



What strategies would you like more information on?

Regional Land Bank

Regional Housing/
Redevelopment Authority

Regional Fair Share
Program

Regional Advocacy
Organization

What Comes Next?

- Previous actions were targeted to Regional level
- Key to change will take place at the local level.
- The municipalities in the Region will take their own steps to determine local strategies



8-30j Plans

- 8-30j legislation adopted in 2017
- Requires each municipality to complete an affordable housing plan
- To address how each town “intends to increase the number of affordable housing developments ...”
- Will address strategies for the creation of affordable housing as defined by 8-30g

§ 8-30j LEGISLATION

Affordable housing plan. Hearing and adoption. Amendments. Filing requirement.

(a) At least once every five years, each municipality shall prepare or amend and adopt an affordable housing plan for the municipality. Such plan shall specify how the municipality intends to increase the number of affordable housing developments in the municipality.

(b) The municipality may hold public informational meetings or organize other activities to inform residents about the process of preparing the plan. If the municipality holds a public hearing, at least thirty-five days prior to the public hearing on the adoption, the municipality shall file in the office of the town clerk of such municipality a copy of such draft plan or any amendments to the plan, and if applicable, post such draft plan on the Internet web site of the municipality. After adoption of the plan, the municipality shall file the final plan in the office of the town clerk of such municipality and, if applicable, post the plan on the Internet web site of the municipality.

(c) Following adoption, the municipality shall regularly review and maintain such plan. The municipality may adopt such geographical, functional or other amendments to the plan or parts of the plan, in accordance with the provisions of this section, as it deems necessary. If the municipality fails to amend such plan every five years, the chief elected official of the municipality shall submit a letter to the Commissioner of Housing that explains why such plan was not amended.



8-30j Plans

- Created for 12 participating municipalities in the region:
Portland, Cromwell, Middletown, East Hampton, East Haddam, Chester, Deep River, Essex, Killingworth, Clinton, Old Lyme, and Lyme
- Attached as individual annexes to the Regional Housing Analysis
- Will focus on housing affordability in each community
- Will be created in reference to the recommendations in Regional Housing Analysis
- Will evolve with significant town input led by your town liaisons



Upcoming Municipal Workshops

- Municipal Workshops
 - 12 virtual meetings in February and March
- Goals:
 - Develop community values statement
 - Review data for town
 - Review individual town survey results
 - Gauge appetite for policies for municipality to consider
- Topics to cover in live polling exercises
 - What is important about this community?
 - Public input and preferences
 - How would you like to see your town address affordable housing?
 - Potential zoning and/or policy strategies



Timeline

- Upcoming Municipal Annex Workshops in **February and March**
- We hope to see at your community's workshop soon!

CROMWELL	LYME	EAST HADDAM	EAST HAMPTON	OLD LYME	KILLINGWORTH
FEBRUARY 1	FEBRUARY 7	FEBRAURY 8	FEBRUARY 10	FEBRUARY 15	FEBRUARY 16

DEEP RIVER	PORTLAND	ESSEX	CHESTER	CLINTON	MIDDLETOWN
FEBRUARY 17	FEBRUARY 23	MARCH 1	MARCH 10	TBD	MARCH 16



NEXT STEPS

- Municipal Workshops
- Draft of Regional Housing Analysis (Part 1)
 - Public review mid-March
- Adoption of Regional Housing Analysis by RiverCOG
- Drafts of Municipal Annex Plans (Part 2)
 - Public input on drafts – April - May
- Adoption of Municipal Annex Plans by municipalities
- Submission to State by June 1, 2022



CONCLUDING REMARKS

Please stay involved:

- Visit the project website: www.RiverCOG.org/RHP
- Take the survey
- Email info@rivercog.org with the subject line, "RHP – Questions and Comments."
- Reach out to your town liaisons and attend outreach events in your town

Thank you for your interest in this project!



Your Turn

Questions?

