

# Regional Housing Plan

Public Comment Draft

June 27, 2022



Lower Connecticut River Valley  
Council of Governments

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

**RiverCOG**

# Project Process and Approach

- One of the first plans of its kind in the state
- Created in two parts:
  - Regional Housing Plan
    - Three-part methodology for assessing and addressing housing needs
    - Intended to further the vision in the RPOCD
  - Municipal 8-30j Plans
    - Statutorily required 8-30j plans for twelve municipalities
    - Independently adopted by those municipalities



Regional Plan of Conservation  
and Development



Regional  
Housing Plan



8-30j Affordable  
Housing Plans



# Project Timeline

- Kicked off the project in Summer 2021
- Held the Virtual Public Launch on October 12, 2021
- Worked on regional and town data collection and analysis through Spring 2022
- Held second Regional Presentation on January 24, 2022
- Conducted municipal 8-30j workshops in February and March 2022
- Finalized 8-30j plans in June 2022
- Completed Regional recommendations in June 2022





# Regional Housing Plan

Aims to achieve six objectives in furtherance of the RPOCD:

1. Diversify the Region's population in terms of age, race, and socio-economic status.
2. Create a resilient workforce in the region.
3. Ensure that people who work in the Region can live in close proximity to their jobs.
4. Diversify housing stock for non-traditional households.
5. Examine ways to make the existing housing stock, office, and retail space in the Region functional for a changing population.
6. Encourage orderly creation of housing of different styles and types throughout the Region near existing areas of development, employment, and transit.



# Regional Housing Plan Methodology

- Three phases to assess housing needs and establish a foundational framework for addressing them:
  - Baseline Assessment:
    - Considers the Region's demographics, economic conditions, and current housing stock
    - Identifies the gap between those living and working in the Region and the type of housing that is readily available
  - Suitability Analysis:
    - Considers the environmental assets and constraints, zoning regulations, available infrastructure and transportation access
    - Identifies areas in the Region that are more suitable for housing development
  - RPOCD Vision and Goals
    - Considers the visions and goals in the RPOCD
    - Identifies targeted methods of housing growth in order to further that vision



# Baseline Assessment

## Finding:

- Mismatch between the Region's population, its housing supply, and its jobs
- Larger, older, more expensive houses are:
  - Not well matched to the aging demographic and shrinking household size
  - Not likely to attract or retain a younger population
  - Not attainable to much of the population who work in the Region

## Conclusion:

*The Region needs to increase its supply of smaller, modern, and more affordable units in order to provide housing opportunity for each of these groups.*



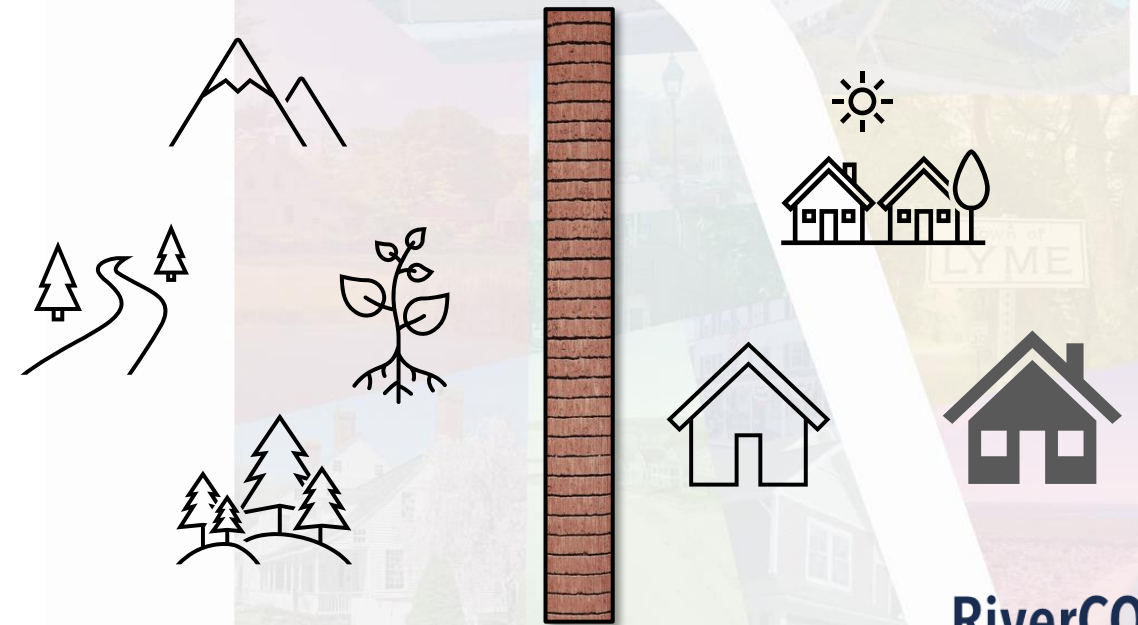
# Suitability Analysis

## Findings:

- Large areas of the Region are zoned single family residential
- Not all of those areas are appropriate for additional housing
- Much of that land:
  - Contains important environmental resources
  - Lacks infrastructure like sewer and water
  - Has limited access to alternative modes of transportation

## Conclusion:

*These areas should be excluded in order to identify locations that are most appropriate to direct housing growth.*





# RPOCD Vision and Goals

- Utilizes aspects from the RPOCD's Sustainable, Innovative, Connected, and Community themes
- Understand how the concepts impact the Region's housing needs
- Inform the Region's approach to addressing housing needs





# Sustainable

- Create a framework of policy recommendations that support a regional goal of improving diversity while focusing on preserving existing natural resources.
- Focusing new housing development into targeted higher-density centers will shift the Region towards more sustainable development patterns
- Development should be context sensitive and scaled appropriately to the surrounding community.
- Additional encroachment into open space should be avoided to the extent possible.



# Connected

- Provide housing in such a way that encourages ease of access to jobs, services, and amenities by all modes of travel and for all types of people.
- Multi-modal transportation is central to issues of equity
- Increasing housing opportunities with access to a broad range of transportation alternatives will be important to attractive a wider diversity of residents.



# Innovative

- Create a housing plan that functions as an economic driver for attracting new residents and businesses and supporting workers for existing local businesses.
- Create a diverse range of housing options that will
  - Provide the opportunity for those who work in the Region to live near their jobs
  - Appeal to young professionals, which will also support and attract quality employers.





# Community

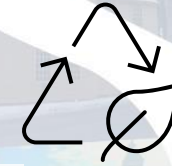
- Provide housing that is attractive to a diversity of residents, including new residents, while supporting and providing existing residents with potential new options.
- Creating more diverse and vibrant communities will require :
  - A range of housing options
  - In and around community centers
  - Supported by multimodal transportation options
  - Attractive to younger residents and supportive of senior populations
  - Affordable to a variety of income levels
  - Suitable for varying household sizes





# Regional Housing Market Capacity

- Largely dependent on the private sector to build housing
- Important to understand what the market will support
- Demand drivers (jobs, population, household formation, income) are indicating a weak market
  - Current Trajectory: 200 units per year
  - Growth Trajectory: 600 units per year
- Must be strategic in the creation of new units to enter growth trajectory



# Municipal 8-30j Plans

- Creation of 8-30j plans followed the initial regional analysis
- Plans were created for: *Cromwell, Portland, Middletown, East Hampton, East Haddam, Killingworth, Chester, Deep River, Essex, Clinton, Lyme, and Old Lyme*
- Once final, plans were analyzed for consensus and overlap
- Plans for municipalities that did not participate were also incorporated



# Municipal Areas of Consensus

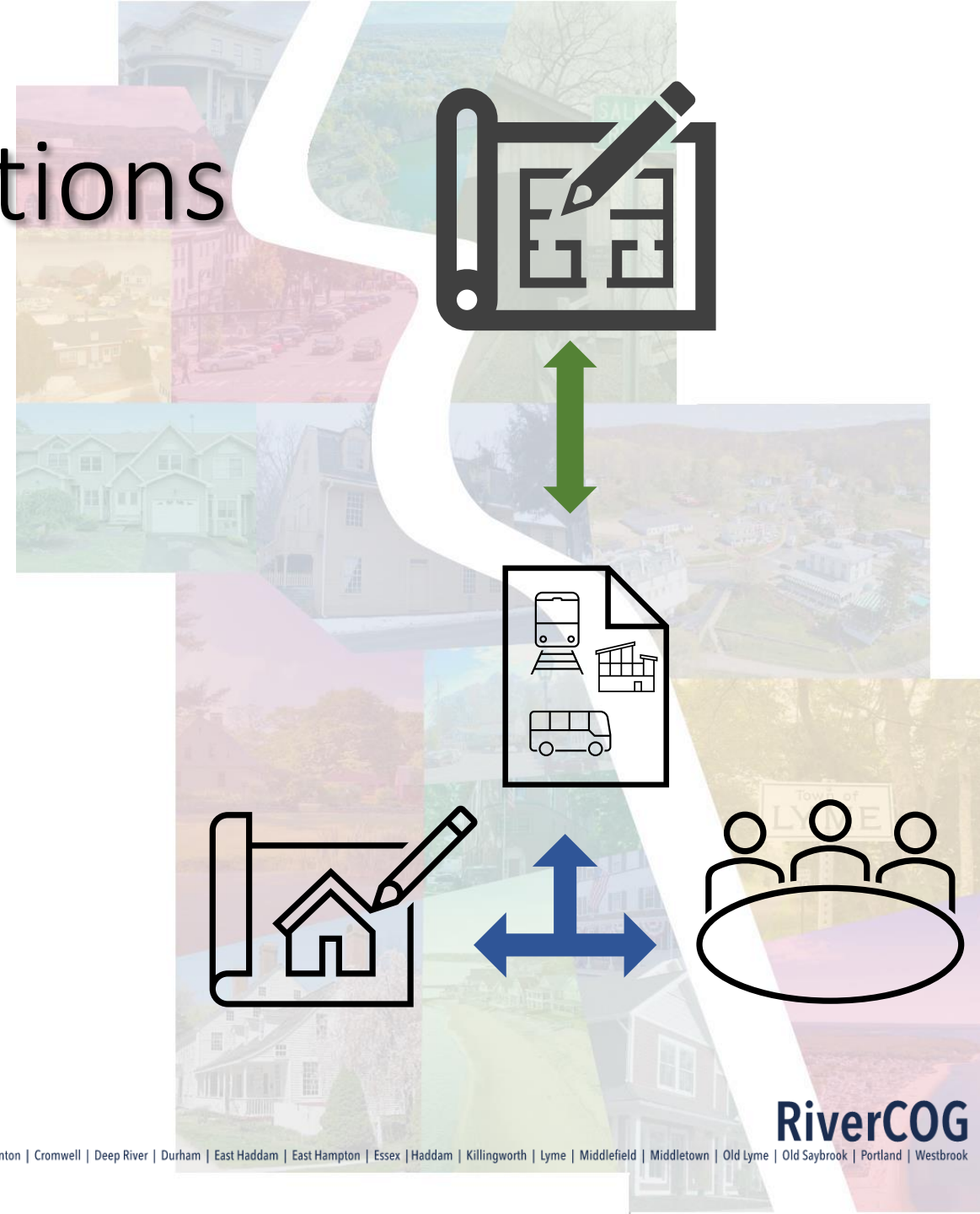
Recommendation	% Recommended in AHP
Establish a Housing Committee/Task Force	76%
Promote USDA and CHFA financing	71%
Promote ADUS	65%
Pursue partnership with non-profits and/or developers	65%
Allow for middle density housing	59%
Designate a housing point person and undertake public education on affordable housing/ Ensure adequate staffing and skill sets	53%
Devote a webpage to highlighting housing development, funding, and information	47%
Consider development of municipally owned land including partnering with developers	47%

Recommendation	% Recommended in AHP
Implement/consider implementing Inclusionary Zoning	47%
Allow conversion of underused office/commercial space for MFR/Retro-fit large single family homes	41%
Create/maintain an affordable housing trust fund	41%
Expand Public Outreach *combine with webpage	35%
Collaborate with the Housing Authority	29%
Incorporate the housing plan into the POCD	35%
Grants of trust funds to help homeowners with repairs	12%
Local Employee Funding Program	6%
Secure CDBG Funding for housing rehabilitation	6%
Seek LITCs for development projects	12%
Shared Parking Opportunities/Evaluation of parking impacts on housing	12%
List of suitable sites near transit and local amenities/Evaluate town properties for housing suitability	6%



# Regional Recommendations

- Ongoing coordination and cooperation will be necessary to grow sustainably
- Areas of alignment are an easy place to begin coordination
- Three overarching recommendations were created to facilitate plan implementation





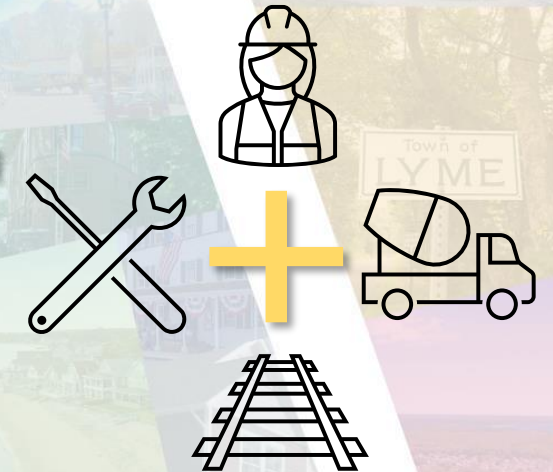
# Create a Housing Toolkit

- Many overlapping goals require regulatory and policy changes
- RiverCOG will create a Housing Toolkit to support this process
- The toolkit will include background information, best practices, and sample language for regulatory and policy changes
- Web-based and available for municipalities to use



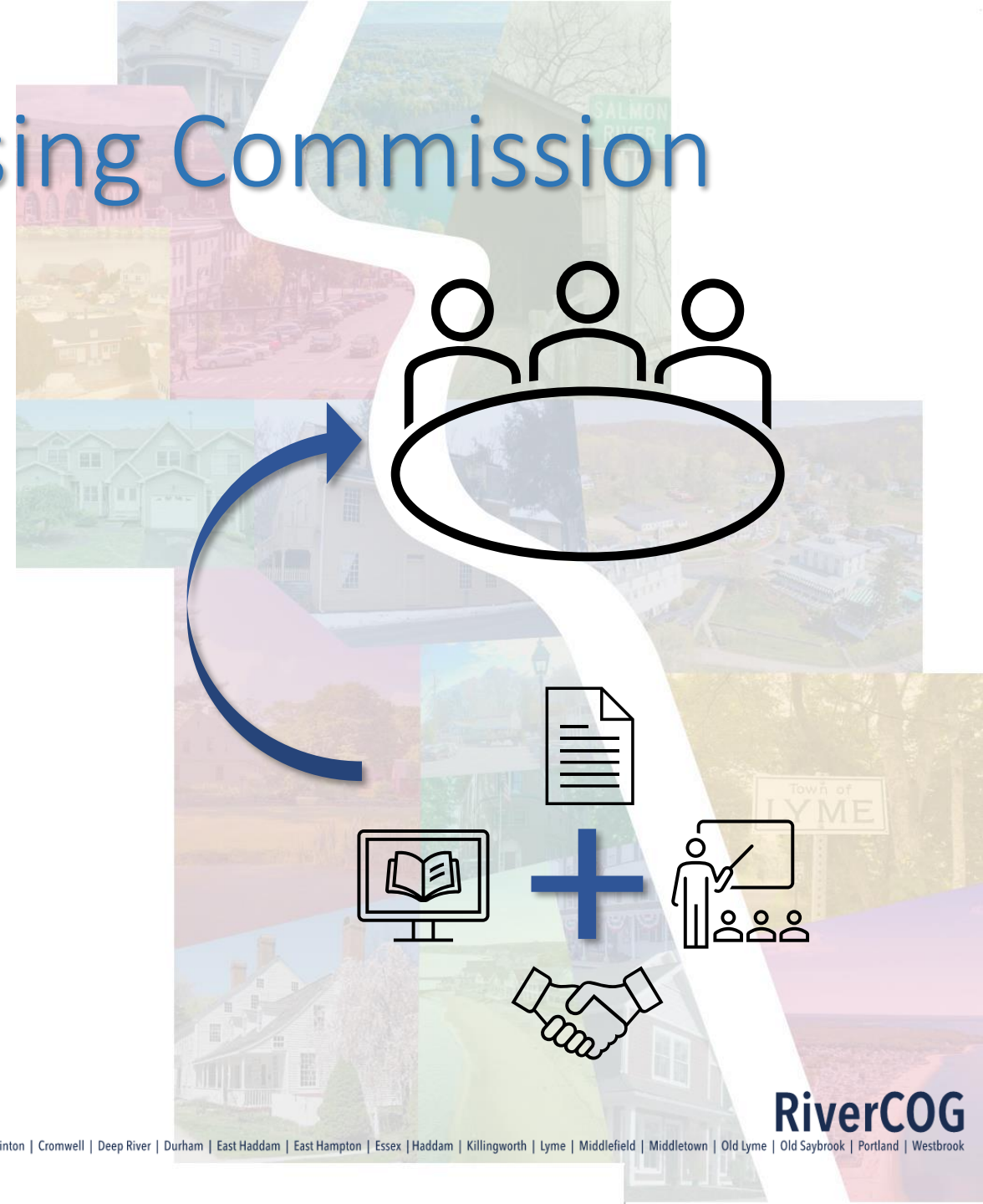
# Study Transit Oriented Development

- Housing opportunity near transit stations is key to sustainable growth
- Locating new housing with a mixture of office and retail near transit can:
  - *Lower the impact of development on the Region's land resources*
  - *Make transit a more viable alternative to cars,*
  - *Create more vibrant and accessible places to live and work across the Region*
- RiverCOG, in coordination with towns with SLE stations, will conduct a TOD study to:
  - *Analyze capacity of the land to accommodate walkable, bikeable, mixed use development*
  - *Consider alternative solutions for using those stations to improve access and connectivity*



# Establish a Regional Housing Commission

- One of the easiest ways to ensure regional coordination on housing issues
- Should be created as a voluntary association of the Region's municipalities with representation from each community.
- Could be hosted by RiverCOG, which would provide staffing and support.
- Should grow in scope and responsibility over time in three suggested phases





# Phase 1

## *Education, Outreach, and Partnership*

- Serve as the “go-to” information resource on housing and community development
- Serve as the primary point of contact for partnering and coordinating efforts with non-profits like HOPE Partnership and Habitat for Humanity
- Serve as a coordinator for developers looking to create affordable housing in the Region





# Phase 2

## *Data Collection and Analysis*

- Should be tasked with creating a Regional Housing Needs Assessment every 5 years to support municipal AHP updates
- Commission should develop a methodology to project housing needs that considers factors like:
  - Population growth, job markets, access to transportation, access to infrastructure, environmental assets and constraints
- Should provide a framework for municipalities to coordinate those needs in a sustainable way



# Phase 3

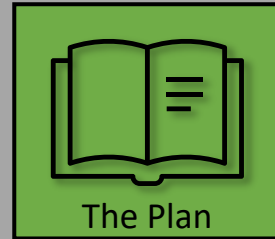
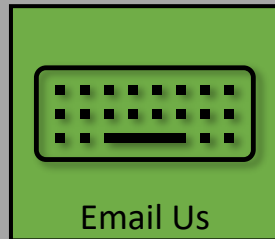
## *Expanding Operations*

- Once established, the municipalities may choose to give the Commission additional authority
  - Could function as or partner with a regional land bank
  - Could create and administer a regional housing trust fund
  - Could operate as or with a regional housing land trust
  - Could act as or partner with a regional or municipal housing authorities
- Potential for each of these options should be explored more by the Commission in order to determine the best fit for the Region



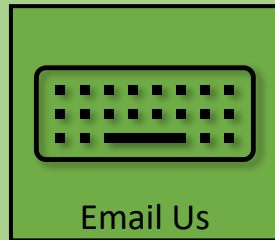
# How to Comment

- Visit: <https://www.rivercog.org/rhp/comments/>
  - Provide your name, email address, town, and page number associated with your comment(s)
- You can also email comments to [info@rivercog.org](mailto:info@rivercog.org)
  - Include the same information as above
  - Subject line should read: RHP - Comments



# Next Steps...

- Read the plan and circulate far and wide!
- Public comment period will be open through July 27, 2022
- Comments will be reviewed at the next RPC meeting and we will provide opportunity for discussion







# Thank You!



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