

## Response to Comments

Town	Page Number(s)	New Page Number(s)	Comment	Response to Comment
Old Saybrook	General	General	<p>Although I believe the Plan is well done, I have a few comments to hopefully improve it and make it more useful going forward.</p> <p>Since a major reason for completing a CEDS is to create eligibility for certain federal funding, EDA in particular, I think you should look at the information required in EDA NOFAs and make sure that it is included in the CEDS. One area that would be useful in the Employment discussion on pg. 8 is determining the number/percentage of the population that is either unemployed or underemployed. This is an important statistic to EDA when applying for grants and having it in the CEDS for reference would be helpful.</p>	<p>The unemployment statistics have been added - see page 15. The information provided in this report will be a point in time snapshot and will not be useful long term for NOFAs. However, this information could be part of the resource sharing as recommended in 1.1 and could be maintained online and updated on an ongoing basis.</p>
East Haddam	General (8, 12, 31, 20, 39 General		<p>After reviewing the report, there are many good ideas to support, but I'd like to focus most of my comments on the jobs and housing numbers. As an elected East Haddam Planning &amp; Zoning official and member of the RiverCog's RPC and Gateway, it's helpful to know about commuting patterns and know that the people we represent, on the whole, prefer to live in rural towns and commute either to the city (ie: Middletown 31% of jobs p10) or travel to work outside the region, as your report data shows..</p> <p>"The Lower CT River Valley's Total Employment is 100,399 jobs. Of those, about 80% of the workforce lives &amp; works here or lives here and works out of the area. (p.10 diagram 25,017 + 54,255 = 79,134) (p.8 Figure 2)</p> <p>(*There is a bit of confusion with jobs numbers in the report - p8 says 100,399 jobs and p.12 total is 116,374 jobs, so it's not clear which is the actual number used in calculating percentages.) The report says the Median Household Income in the region is approximately \$91,000, up from \$77,000 in 2014. Our region's poverty rate is lower than the state level, and has a lower income inequality than the state or the nation. (p.12)</p> <p>So with 80% of the workforce already living here and income up, it's not clear on how the data supports a recommendation of rezoning low density single family zoning to high density/multi-family in all the rural areas, which would have a negative impact on the adjacent houses and single family zones. (cont.)</p>	<p>While the data does show current commuting patterns, it does not necessarily speak to preference and there are many reasons why people may live in one place and commute to another. The plan has been updated to clarify this.</p> <p>The page 10 diagram shows that 37,102 people commute into the region for work, 25,017 live and work in the region, and 54,255 live in the region and commute elsewhere for work. This totals 116,374 employed people who either live or work in the region. Of that, only 21% both live and work in the region.</p> <p>Page 8 is discussing number of in region jobs rather than employed persons.</p> <p>Page 12 is a discussion of wages (for workers in region) and income (for residents in the region).</p> <p>It is not correct to state that the CEDS recommends "rezoning low density single family zoning to high density/multi-family in all rural areas". The strategic growth section specifically analyzes land that is currently zoned commercial or industrial. This land is called out to highlight its potential for future commercial, industrial, or mixed-use development and to emphasize the limited amount of vacant developable land in the region. Any future development on these sites would go through the regular municipal processes.</p> <p>Recommendations regarding housing for workers are supported by stakeholder engagement and are consistent with the recommendations in the RPOCD and RHP. In keeping with the Sustainability theme of the RPOCD, it is recommended that additional development be directed toward existing town centers or other developed areas with access to utilities. Overdevelopment of rural areas and greenfield sites is specifically not recommended. Language was added to this plan to make this clearer.</p>
East Haddam	General (8, 12, 31, 20, 39 General		<p>"Threats to Region: resistance to challenge existing zoning regulations" (p31) "creation of housing of different styles and types throughout the Region", building multi-family in single family zones for the 20% that live elsewhere and commute to the region and who may or may not want to live here. (cont.)</p>	<p>The SWOT analysis used in the CEDS was taken directly from the SWOT analysis in the adopted RPOCD. The RPOCD was created over a multi-year process with over 300 participants. The Regional Planning Committee was the steering committee for that plan and voted unanimously to endorse it. The plan was then unanimously adopted by the RiverCOG board. The RPOCD can be viewed here: <a href="https://www.rivercog.org/plans/rpocd/">https://www.rivercog.org/plans/rpocd/</a></p> <p>In addition, only 21% of residents both live and work in the region. See response above.</p>
East Haddam	General (8, 12, 31, 20, 39 General		<p>The CEDS goal seems to be 100% of the workforce living within the region, while in reality 54% who live in our region choose to live here and not closer to their work outside the region. So I don't think the goal of housing 100% of the workforce in a particular region is realistic, organic, or a natural pattern, and cause for radical rezoning changes in established neighborhoods. (cont.)</p>	<p>This is not a goal in the plan.</p> <p>The plan recommends, based on stakeholder engagement, recommendations of the strategy committee, and previously adopted plans, that the region provide an opportunity for people to live in the region who currently cannot. While this is stated in the plan, additional language has been added to make it clearer.</p>
East Haddam	General (8, 12, 31, 20, 39 General		<p>Regarding commercial, industrial, mixed use, and multi-family apartments development - I'm not sure I agree with the report summary goal that we must find or "create more "Developable land" than the 1200 acres remaining in our region for commercial builders by spot rezoning (cont.)</p>	<p>This is not a goal in the plan.</p> <p>The strategic growth areas identified in the plan are existing parcels in the region that are currently vacant, already zoned commercial or industrial, free of regulatory restrictions, with or near existing utilities, and indicated by the municipality as developable. It is an inventory of currently available commercial and industrial parcels. This analysis has been updated to clarify the purpose, show consistency with the RPOCD Innovative land use layer, and explain the additional options available to towns.</p>
East Haddam	General (8, 12, 31, 20, 39 General		<p>The report goes on to say "The workforce is also getting more diverse: 17% of the workforce was non-white, up from 14% in 2014, with projections over the next several years of 36% Latino and/or nonwhite compared to 26% of the total population." But then the report later lists Threats including the regions' "Failure to address issues surrounding equity and inclusion" (cont.)</p>	<p>The SWOT analysis used in the CEDS was taken directly from the SWOT analysis in the adopted RPOCD. The RPOCD was created over a multi-year process with over 300 participants. The Regional Planning Committee was the steering committee for that plan and voted unanimously to endorse it. The RPOCD can be viewed here: <a href="https://www.rivercog.org/plans/rpocd/">https://www.rivercog.org/plans/rpocd/</a></p> <p>While the workforce and young people overall are becoming increasingly diverse, an increase from a small number does not equal a large number. Stakeholders and previous plans support efforts of the region's municipalities to attract and retain these individuals. In addition, diversity does not necessarily indicate equity or inclusion. Additional language was added to clarify these points.</p>
East Haddam	General (8, 12, 31, 20, 39 General		<p>This GrowSmart/Fair Share type of regional planning although well intentioned, would severely limit the ability to purchase a house and confidently move into a low density SF residential rural area that stays that way. Many see these CEDS growth plans as an ongoing pressure by Hartford legislators and predatory developers on Single Family Residential Zoning and as such, low density, in particular 5 acres + properties in residential zones could be spot-zoned out of existence within three decades. Part 2 (continued from previous submission) (cont.)</p>	<p>There are a few different and unrelated concepts here which we hope to clarify.</p> <p>This document is a CEDS, which is not a product of the state. CEDS is an acronym for Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. It is an economic development plan for an area or region that is submitted to the U.S. Economic Development Administration. Having an adopted CEDS makes towns eligible for federal funding for their projects. Currently, the Lower Connecticut River Valley is the only region in Connecticut without an adopted CEDS. You can read more about what a CEDS is here: <a href="https://www.eda.gov/node/10695">https://www.eda.gov/node/10695</a></p> <p>GrowSMART is an economic development plan for the region, which was completed in 2016. GrowSMART was not a federally recognized CEDS.</p> <p>Fair Share is a type of housing unit allocation, usually determined by a formula, to address a broad range of housing needs. Fair share is not discussed in the CEDS. While the CEDS discusses creating more housing opportunity for the region's workers, the recommendations to support this are covered in the Regional Housing Plan (adopted 2022) which can be read here: <a href="https://www.rivercog.org/plans/rhp/">https://www.rivercog.org/plans/rhp/</a></p> <p>The 5+ acre parcels discussed in the strategic growth section of the plan are existing parcels in the region that are currently vacant, already zoned commercial or industrial, free of regulatory restrictions, with or near existing utilities, and indicated by the municipality as developable. It is an inventory of currently available commercial and industrial parcels. The analysis has been updated to clarify.</p>
East Haddam	General (8, 12, 31, 20, 39 General		<p>The formulas seem arbitrary and the goals don't take into account what is already built in the communities, environmental and traffic impact, or their ability to support the increased density without increasing taxes, which would make housing even more unaffordable. Rather than encourage towns, it serves to alienate the towns and turn this into a confrontation between developers and resident shareholders of towns. Adversarial approaches to local zoning may lead to very costly litigation, and then only the lawyers and developers win. (cont.)</p>	<p>The CEDS does not contain formulas.</p> <p>The strategic growth areas identified in the plan are existing parcels in the region that are currently vacant, already zoned commercial or industrial, free of regulatory restrictions, with or near existing utilities, and indicated by the municipality as developable. It is an inventory of currently available commercial and industrial parcels.</p> <p>The plan also indicates that additional analysis at the local level would be necessary to determine what, if anything could be built on these parcels. No specific development is proposed and any future development would go through regular municipal processes.</p> <p>This analysis has been updated to clarify.</p>

East Haddam	General (8, 12, 31, 20, 39 General	<p>If I were a Builder/Developer, I would be thrilled that this proposed growth plan would open up new "Developable land" and empower developers to build multi-family or mixed use in what was once unavailable land in residential single family zoning, using 8-30G if necessary.</p> <p>It's a Developers dream plan come true. Serving on the RPC committee, I have a responsibility to them to point out what I see as an urban 'mission creep' development plan.</p> <p>If I were a retiree living in a house, finally mtg free, or a family with growing children with a house on an acre or more, paying the incredibly high CT taxes each year, I would be terrified of this growth plan and fearful I may someday be living next door to an apartment complex with big parking lots, bright lighting, new public bus routes, and see my life savings in equity and investment in a modest house with a yard, plummet in value. (cont.)</p>	<p>This plan does not propose opening of "new developable land".</p> <p>The strategic growth areas identified in the plan are existing parcels in the region that are currently vacant, already zoned commercial or industrial, free of regulatory restrictions, with or near existing utilities, and indicated by the municipality as developable. It is an inventory of currently available commercial and industrial parcels. This analysis has been updated to clarify.</p> <p>The goals, recommendations, and analysis in the CEDS are consistent with the Regional Plan of Conservation and Development (2021) for which the Regional Planning Committee (RPC) was the steering committee.</p> <p>The CEDS is an economic development plan intended to support economic resiliency and coordination in the region. This plan does not suggest building apartments with big parking lots in rural residential neighborhoods. For more information about the region's housing recommendations, please see the Regional Housing Plan and Regional Plan of Conservation and Development.</p>	
East Haddam	General (8, 12, 31, 20, 39 General	<p>As a former real estate agent/broker in Florida, I can say if I were a licensed CT brokerage firm, I would be very fearful of lawsuits resulting from my agents selling houses in a low density, rural area - that suddenly wasn't rural or low-density. The prudent brokers would implement new training for their agents, and create disclosure forms that each client must sign, understanding potential zoning issues and changes that may affect their home values in the near future. They might also increase Errors and Omissions Insurance coverage in case some agents forgot to disclose this growth plan and potential change in zoning with each and every buyer.</p> <p>If someone deliberately set out to green-light unbridled development which would forever alter the New England rural charm and 'unique character' of our towns (yes, I'm using the now banished term), this is the blueprint of how it would happen on our watch. "GrowSmart planning, sponsored by your local predatory developers". (cont)</p>	<p>The CEDS has a strong focus on sustainability and does not recommend increasing density in the rural areas of the region. The development patterns of the region are ultimately the purview of the region's 17 municipalities. However, the regional Council of Governments creates advisory plans that are adopted by the Chief Elected or Appointed officials of the 17 municipalities to provide coordination and guidance on issues that effect the region as a whole. The Regional Plan of Conservation and Development, adopted by the COG in 2021, provides general recommendations about the land use patterns in the region, which are consistent with this plan. Any ultimate zoning and development decisions would be subject to the regular processes of the municipality.</p>	
East Haddam	General (8, 12, 31, 20, 39 General	<p>I understand reasonable, organic, market demand development, and I understand there is a housing shortage, but this seems like concerted urbanization of rural CT , with a cut and paste template of affordable housing fuzzy math goals, and new multi-use 'downtowns', all at once being forced on all our towns by administrative planners and builders who don't care about the unique identities of our towns. Once the plan is implemented, and new construction commences, it cannot be 'undone'. Many of the proposed public multi-modal transportation ideas may be well suited for the cities, but should not be forced on the rural towns which may not want it. Exporting the cities' population overflow problems to the rural towns is not the best solution for New England. Maybe these 'professional urban planners and consultants' should watch some 'Green Acres' reruns so they understand that some people like the city life, others prefer country living, and ne'er the twain should meet. (cont.)</p>	<p>The CEDS is an economic development plan. Housing is discussed to the extent that it impacts and is impacted by economic development needs across the region. All housing related recommendations are based on the Regional Plan of Conservation and Development (2021), Regional Housing Plan (2022), and public engagement responses. These plans were adopted unanimously by the RiverCOG Board, which is made up of the chief elected and appointed officials of each of the 17 member municipalities, and were created with broad public participation, including consultation with town staff, committees/commissions, and community members.</p>	
East Haddam	General (8, 12, 31, 20, 39 General	<p>Plans like this will, and I quote CT169Strong.org: "Turn every suburban downtown into a small city, regardless of inadequate infrastructure, environment, historical areas, access to affordable mass public transportation and availability of jobs. Make no consideration of what exponential over-development of housing stock with high rise apartments in downtowns would do, potentially creating greater congestion, stormwater runoff and pollution." (cont.)</p>	<p>This is an economic development plan. Housing is discussed to the extent that it impacts and is impacted by economic development needs across the region. All housing related recommendations are based on the Regional Plan of Conservation and Development (2021), Regional Housing Plan (2022), and public engagement responses.</p> <p>The strategic growth areas identified in the plan are existing parcels in the region that are currently vacant, already zoned commercial or industrial, free of regulatory restrictions, with or near existing utilities, and indicated by the municipality as developable. It is an inventory of currently available commercial and industrial parcels. This analysis has been updated to clarify.</p> <p>More specific housing recommendations can be found in the Regional Housing Plan, which addresses adequacy of infrastructure, access to transportation, and availability of jobs, as well as the housing market conditions of the region.</p>	
East Haddam	General (8, 12, 31, 20, 39 General	<p>I just moved from Southeast Florida where the developers were allowed to go into overdrive for three decades. They built cheap, one size fits all, cookie-cutter designs all over the state, with limited one year warranties on workmanship, and moved quickly onto the next project. Some communities had to sue the builder for shoddy or incomplete work. We had to live in the resulting traffic nightmare for the last 10 years until my husband and I decided to escape the insanity. Many Floridians moved to the west coast or further north. We choose rural Connecticut. Today, many are starting to see this happen in our own towns in the Lower CT River Valley. (cont.)</p>	<p>Sustainability is an important component across all RiverCOG plans, including the Regional Plan of Conservation and Development, the Regional Housing Plan, and this CEDS. Additional language was added to this plan to make the importance of the natural environment to the region clearer.</p>	
East Haddam	General (8, 12, 31, 20, 39 General	<p>Responsible zoning decisions are best made by locally-elected officials, and I think this plan is a gross overreach, pressuring towns into higher density rezoning or offering a run-around loophole in low density areas. Grassroots organizations like CT169strong.org have sprung up to speak to this over-development issue and call out legislation supporting inorganic growth like this proposed plan. (cont.)</p>	<p>RiverCOG is a regional council of governments for the 17 towns in the Lower Connecticut River Valley region. The board of RiverCOG is made up of the chief (locally) elected or appointed official of each of the 17 towns. The RiverCOG board votes on every plan that is created by the professional planning staff and consultant teams. Each plan, including this CEDS, is created with broad outreach to municipal committees, commissions, staff, and the public.</p> <p>The CEDS is an advisor document intended to provide general guidance for the region. Any zoning or development decisions would occur through regular municipal processes.</p>	
East Haddam	General (8, 12, 31, 20, 39 General	<p>Re:Public input - it mentions that "The number of attendees ranged from two to ten per meeting." so I'd really like to see more in depth newspaper article series written about these goals, visioning, and impact on each town that this CEDS plan may have, to increase public awareness and participation. A small legal notice in the paper and a few meetings with town boards isn't really getting the public (stockholders) as aware or involved as they should be with a plan with such long term impacts on towns and single family residential zones. (cont.)</p>	<p>The number of attendees at targeted stakeholder meetings ranged from two to ten. These meetings were intended to be small conversations with key economic stakeholders to provide a better understanding of local priorities and concerns. These stakeholders included each of the region's 17 towns. The chief elected/appointed official, planning and zoning commission chair(s), economic development commission/committee chair, professional planning and economic development staff, and regional planning committee member were all invited to attend a meeting.</p> <p>Information on open public engagement efforts was provided to the regional planning committee, the RiverCOG board members, the municipal planners, and the project mailing list throughout the year-long course of the project. In addition, ads were taken out in the local papers, posted on the town and RiverCOG websites, posted on social media pages, and posted with flyers and road signs. Public outreach efforts are a partnership between RiverCOG and the municipalities, particularly members of the Regional Planning Committee, who keep their municipalities up to date on ongoing planning efforts.</p> <p>RiverCOG does not control the subject of newspaper articles/series written. While no articles were written about the CEDS, many have been written about the Regional Plan of Conservation and Development and Regional Housing Plan, which contain many similar recommendations.</p>	
East Haddam	General (8, 12, 31, 20, 39 General	<p>Sadly, I am seeing the same future for the CT River Valley unless we all, including RiverCog speak up now. My constituents know where I live and how to contact me. They will hold me and others accountable for allowing poor planning. Therefore, I am requesting the same of you. This is NOT GrowSmart. I want to be on the record as not agreeing or approving some key sections of the draft recommendation and goals as is. It still needs to be modified a bit yet. When the good folks (aka the true 'stakeholders') start coming out with pitchforks wondering who was responsible for allowing multi-family or multi-use and new public bus routes running by their single family house zoned for 2 acres, where will you be?</p>	<p>This CEDS does not propose new development in greenfield sites or rural areas.</p> <p>This CEDS is an advisory document intended to coordinate economic development across the region and increase competitiveness of municipalities for federal grant funding. All comments received as part of this public comment period and all public engagement efforts are considered with equal weight and will be made available to view, along with a response, as part of the plan.</p>	
Clinton	8	14 - 16	Is there data available on recovery by sector?	The CEDS analyzed current key employment sectors as compared to 2016 key employment sectors (when they were last analyzed in the GrowSmart report). See pages 14 - 16
Clinton	8	14	Is there a workforce development strategy that matches key existing or targeted employment sectors? Is there a regional organization that focuses on this issue?	The CEDS contains recommendations to improve workforce training (2.3). Currently, there is not a regional organization focused on this issue.
Clinton	8	14	change [5.716] to comma [5,716]	Change made.
Clinton	8	14 - 16	Is there data on what types of jobs were in place at the peak and where those jobs were lost?	The CEDS analyzed current key employment sectors as compared to 2016 key employment sectors (when they were last analyzed in the GrowSmart report), but did not analyze specific jobs. See pages 14 - 16
Clinton	8	14	Is there any data on the size of businesses with payrolls (number of employees)?	This information was added - see page 16.

Haddam	8 to 10	14 to 17	<p>Pages 8-10 present some very important facts which I do not believe are properly reflected in the thrust of the report.</p> <p>According to page 8, a very large fraction of the work-force (27%) is self-employed. This is particularly startling when you compare the number of self-employed (27,481) to the number which, according to page 10, live and work inside the Region (25,017). Compare these numbers because self-employed tend to base their work near where they live. Hence it is apparent that a large proportion of those who live and work in the Region are self-employed. These individuals, if they don't work out of their own home, usually require small spaces for their work location. They could be real estate agents, accountants, beauty practitioners, child care operators, landscapers, writers and designers, or run small shops. Expanded possibilities for such individuals are likely to be found in 2 ways; (1) providing up-to-date services to enable persons to operate out of their homes (good internet, package sending &amp; delivery, compatible zoning regulations, etc.) and (2) opportunities for small commercial/industrial space within the existing urban fabric, with emphasis on efficient rehabilitation and reuse of existing structures and already developed property. Development of new land may be critical for some businesses (e.g. Amazon-type warehouses, or shopping areas) but not for these folk. Who are the others? Well, according to page 10, out of the 79,272 who live in the area, 54,255 (or 68%) commute out of the Region. The reason these commuters keep or want to have their residence in the Region and not closer to their place of work is because this Region is an attractive place in which to live. For the region to stay competitive, it must bolster the amenities that make it attractive, namely such things as good schools, favorable taxes, and a variety of open space amenities, combined with ready access to commerce, doctors, etc.</p>	Additional language was added to make these points. See pages 17, 24, and 28.
Clinton	9	15	Do we have a reason why these sectors have decreased over others?	We do not have conclusive data to explain the decline. Some of the manufacturing loss could be due to the aging of the workforce in this sector (see page 24). Stakeholder outreach revealed that the accommodation and food service sector as well as the healthcare sector are struggling to attract employees due to cost of living and constrained housing supply. The healthcare sector also indicated lack of workforce training opportunities and competition with larger cities that offer better commute times and lower cost of living as ongoing issues. See page 42.
Clinton	11	9, 20 - 22, 72	Reference housing analysis? What is the price point/type/strategic plan to implement planned on a regional basis?	Additional language was added to explain housing conditions and needs. See page 9. The main housing recommendations (4.1) defers to implementation of the Regional Housing Plan with a link. See page 72.
Clinton	12	21	Do these numbers [Poverty Rate and Income Inequality] mesh with the previous statement that the economy has "fully recovered" from the pandemic?	Language was changed to clarify that "fully recovered" means that the region has returned to pre-pandemic levels of GDP, jobs, and income, but still below the 2016 employment peak. The data referenced is consistent.
Haddam	12	9, 15, 21	<p>NON-WORKING POPULATION. - page 12(?)</p> <p>Of course, in addition to the above, the Region also accommodates a substantial non-working population.</p> <p>The report offers no statistics on the number of such people involved, particularly those of working age and higher. The report notes that retirement income has increased from 15% to 16% over 2014-2021, but doesn't say how many people or % of population makes up this group and how it compares to the working population. Clearly, however (judging by population statistics not presented in this report) this is a growing segment of the Region's population, evermore so if the Region fails to attract and retain the other segments discussed above. I wish the balance between these 2 factors was more clearly stated because it is a major economic risk to the community unless it can be turned into an opportunity..</p>	Additional demographic information was added to page 9 which confirms the aging population. Text was also added throughout the document to emphasize the need to attract and retain various segments of the population. We do not have data on the number of people in the region who are retired.
Clinton	13	9, 15, 21	Under incomes on the previous page, the aging workforce and increase in retirement incomes was noted as a possible threat to municipal income and would pose challenges relative to housing affordability.	Additional language was incorporated to draw a clearer connection between the challenges of housing affordability and general spending power to a population increasingly on fixed income.
Clinton	13	9, 55, 59	What specific opportunities? Is there an action item that is tied to this? i.e. provide outreach/training opportunities for specific populations to attempt to address growing income inequality in the region and have a ready workforce to make up for those aging out?	Recommendations 1.4 and 2.3 both relate to training needs in order to replace populations aging out, provide greater opportunities for underserved populations, and generate employee pipelines for important business sectors.
Clinton	14	16	Are we able to dive deeper with local knowledge here and name top employers/industries by town?	This CEDS focuses on high level analysis of industry sectors rather than specific employers. Because this is the first CEDS for the region, it was predominately focused on capacity building and issues effecting all sectors, such as aging population and workforce training.
Clinton	15	23 - 25	Was it determined that these 4 economy types are still valid/the way the region is framing economic growth strategies? It seems like strategies/implementation should reference how recommended actions are tied to economic drivers. Some of the actions seem to tie back, but I think organizing implementation around goals to support known drivers and desired growth (or preventing loss with key sectors/employers) would be helpful.	Additional explanation of the economic drivers was added (see page 24 and 25). Additional language was added throughout to draw clearer connections to the recommendations. The Executive Summary also discusses how the recommendations were created based on the totality of research, input, and previous plans.
Chester	15	23	1st bullet – Traded goods – manufacturing led sector which remains a key driver of the local XXXX (word missing?) with employment base of at least 14,000	Change made.
Clinton	16	25	It would be great to have the GIS for this and create an interactive map from it to support a regional tourism info center... is there an appendix of destinations by Town?	This is not something that we have in the plan, but it is something that RiverCOG will work on creating in partnership with Middlesex Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber already has a list of tourism destinations on its website - <a href="https://www.middlesexchamber.com/">https://www.middlesexchamber.com/</a>
Clinton	16	23	It would be great to have a general idea of distribution of AirBnBs and transient marina slips.	A generalized map of Airbnb locations was added to the appendix.
Clinton	17	29	More detail on what kinds of projects led to growth for the three towns? What about reasons for losses in commercial and industrial tax revenue in other towns? Where is the region seeing success/how can we build on that?	As part of the research, outreach, and engagement process, it was determined that the primary economic development concern facing the region was lack of capacity to pursue economic development. For that reason, much of the CEDS is focused on building the human infrastructure to pursue future economic development projects and goals. Once those systems are in place, the region can focus on more targeted projects economic growth goals.
Clinton	18	11, 12, 13	Resilience is important- but it feels like the plan is jumping around between categories.	The document was reorganized in order to improve narrative flow.
Chester	18	General	2nd sentence – CEDs should be CEDS. Several other pages have "CEDs" that need to be corrected. Chester's 2018 flood damage pics are on this page. Not the prettiest pics of Chester but demonstrates their points.	Change made.
Clinton	18	62	To tie this to previous page data, is there a deeper dive into what commercial/industrial building value risk looks like by town?	This will be addressed in the resiliency study - see recommendation 2.6.
Clinton	19	11	Rather than define FEMA SFHA, can this be updated to show the economic risk in flood zones and include a note about sea level rise projections or possible future risk to commercial/industrial properties or regional economic drivers? Small example- Lobster Landing issue, flooding at parks/tourism sites or marinas, Risks to public infrastructure, etc.	Sea level rise was added. In addition a recommendation of the plan is to complete a separate resiliency study that will look further into natural hazard risk.
Old Saybrook	21	28 - 32	Based on some of the comments received at the Strategic Planning Committee you may be changing page 21, but I believe that the document gives short shrift to the potential of reuse of brownfields and other similar sites. As the analysis shows, we have limited site availability in the region so there should be a focus on getting as many potential sites ready as possible. By excluding them from the final analysis, I am concerned that we are perpetuating the myth that almost all of the developable sites are taken.	Additional text was added to clarify the role of the vacant land analysis and the importance of infill, reuse, and redevelopment to the region. See pages 28 - 35.
Haddam	21 to 25	28 - 32	<p>IDENTIFYING STRATEGIC AREAS FOR GROWTH pp 21-25</p> <p>Without denying the importance of the current content of the Strategic Area section (which is exclusively devoted to picking out the remaining pieces of undeveloped land whose characteristics make it) suitable for medium-to-large-scale industrial and commercial growth) — still this NEGLECTS THE FACT that this Region's economic survival is far more dependent on (1) keeping it as an attractive place to live for people who are either self-employed, work remotely, or commute to outside place of work, and (2) accommodating small businesses, the type that fare best either out of the home, or in already built-up urban areas and village cores.</p> <p>In fact, the very scarcity of such developable property means that our future would be better be found elsewhere!(only 1,485 acres of Vacant land free and clear of regulatory and environmental limitations in the entire Region!)</p>	Additional text was added to clarify the role of the vacant land analysis and the importance of infill, reuse, and redevelopment to the region. See pages 28 - 35. References were incorporated throughout the CEDS to reflect the region's importance as a place "people want to be". See pages 23 - 25 for reference.

Haddam	21 to 25	28 - 32	<p>More needs to be said about revitalization of existing urban spaces, as opposed to just how much useable (and serviceable) undeveloped space remains in the region. Each of the towns has excellent opportunities in this area.</p> <p>More needs to be said about those factors that will make the Region and desirable place in which to live. Why do people want to live here? I suggest a more important strategy centers on the preservation (rather than development) of open space, and doing so by allowing for more compact development combined with ready access to open space amenities, and the development of services and strategies which support small business enterprise, be it in the home or in existing urban and village centers.</p> <p>A strategy that makes this an attractive place to live must also focus on encouraging and maintaining quality recreational, art, educational and medical services. Just read the news about northeastern CT and you see the dire consequences of not having ready access to medical care. We should not neglect the importance of these factors just because we are currently lucky enough to have them, but instead recognize their economic importance (not just for jobs but for their services) and use them as part of the economic development plan. Maybe a preamble would help which points out what are the current strengths (and weaknesses?) of this region and how to capitalize on what we have got..</p> <p>In short, PP 21-25. with its singular focus on undeveloped space suitable for medium-to-large-scale industrial and commercial development, neglects other factors that may ultimately be far more important to the region's long-term economic prosperity.</p>	<p>Additional text was added to clarify the role of the vacant land analysis and the importance of infill, reuse, and redevelopment to the region. See pages 28 - 35. References were incorporated throughout the CEDS to reflect the region's importance as a place "people want to be". See pages 23 - 25 for reference.</p> <p>A context discussion was also added to discuss the many assets of the region and to frame the region's priorities as stated in the RPOCD.</p>
Haddam	21 to 25	28 - 32	Totally agree. More needs to be said about revitalization of existing urban spaces, as opposed to just how much useable (and serviceable) undeveloped space remains in the region. Each of the towns has excellent opportunities in this area.	See response above.
Middletown	36	46	Change the name to the Keating Building or Remington-Rand Building. It goes by both names.	Change made.
Middletown	39ish	General	Somewhat general comment but can be applied to many strategies but what there should be greater emphasis on leaning on our local/regional chambers of commerce and leveraging their resources in furthering the goals	References to partnership with the Middlesex Chamber and other chambers in the region are made throughout the document. Part of the problem that was learned through the engagement process is that the chambers in the region have limited capacity to provide additional support to our towns and in fact need greater support, partnership, and resources from the region.
Old Saybrook	41	52	In 1.1 on page 41 one might consider having a regional development team that can assist the municipalities in evaluating development projects. Most of the municipalities in the Region are too small to have the requisite expertise on staff to evaluate major proposal, which puts them at a disadvantage to the phalanx of "experts" on the developer side. Having a regional resource in place to provide some analysis (as opposed to decision making which is left to the municipality) would be helpful and level the playing field. One could look to the Capital Region Development Authority as an example. It provides this service, on a fee basis, to towns in the Capital Region.	Thank you for the suggestion. This could fall under the role of the economic development coordinator or be an economic development resource offered. It may also fall under the commissioner training recommendation.
Middletown	43	54	Commissioner Fulton spoke to sections 1.3, 1.4, and 3.5 of the draft. For section 1.3, which talks about creating the outreach and advisory program. Who would be responsible for forming this advisory group? Mr. Hively answered at the beginning it would be The RiverCOG. Commissioner Fulton then asked about section 3.5 when you talk about the partnerships, could that be who you would use to form that group? Workforce development agencies would be great on advisory boards.	Text has been added to this effect.
Chester	43	54	section 1.3 – I very much appreciate this, "Create a regional outreach and advisory program that can assist the region in engaging with underrepresented groups and ensure a range of diverse voices have opportunities to influence the direction of the region".	Thank you for your comment.
Chester	44	55	fits right into our CGSC findings. Overall on the same page as Chester's EDC goals.	Thank you for your comment.
Chester	46	65	A) 3rd metrics and milestones, recommend eliminate "municipally" and change to "municipal-owned",  B) would add another metrics and milestones, something along the lines of "partner with communications/ wireless companies/ communication industry to collaborate and problem-solve on identified areas with broadband issues.	Change made.
Clinton	47	General	Comment: When you look at the pics of events/ meetings they've included, there is no diversity.	This was noted by staff and recognized as an issue. Numerous attempts were made to reach out to a greater diversity of residents and workers in the region. A recommendations was added to the plan to create a better network for outreach and engagement in historically underrepresented communities to address this issue.
Clinton	47	66	Is the goal here to review the potential for community septic/alternative treatment for clusters of properties? General technology education is a start, but seems we should go farther here to identify the need for further study of specific sites/areas that support economic drivers in teh region.	
Clinton	50	69	This seems like an opportunity to tie the action to the why. My thought on the why is to support networking and connections that enable and promote a culture of sharing ideas and resources so that ultimately ground-up networks form that generate ideas and capacities to implement them independently.	There is substnatial discussion on this point in the Innovative section of the RPOCD. Some language was added to this effect on page 69. However, while collaboration could be a benefit to remote workers, the thrust of the recommendation is more about making remote work easier and to attract more remote workers.
Chester	51	70	Both Timeframes are too long in my opinion. First one for creating a list of priority infrastructure projects should be Short, and the other – Medium	The long timeframe also encompasses ongoing projects (see page 50). While we see the creation of an initial list as short, the list will need to be regularly evaluated and updated as part of an ongoing process.
Old Saybrook	53	57 - 65	A reader is naturally going to see items listed first in the Strategic Direction section as higher priority than those listed later. Since Section 3 has the Priority items in it, perhaps changing that to Section 1 would give it the focus and exposure it deserves.	The priority items were moved to section 2. While these items were identified as highest priority through the public engagement exercises, the discussion groups and other research revealed lack of capacity as the most pressing issue. Without additional capacity, none of the identified priority issues can be accomplished. For that reason, capacity building was left as the first Strategic Direction.
Old Saybrook	53	59	Although there is mention of Workforce Training as being important to support the local industries, it is buried in the #3 Encouraging Sustainable and Resilient Communities at 3.5. While it may not be the intent to have items listed in priority order, the natural tendency of the reader is to understand that #1 is more important than #5. I suggest giving this one higher visibility maybe moving it to 3.2.	All of the Strategic Direction 3 recommendations were moved to Strategic Direction 2. It is the third item because that was the order of the public engagement exercises. Infill and reuse received a few more votes.
Middletown	53	57	Under encouraging sustainable and resilient communities, Commissioner Johnson asked if they would like to have a map of Middletown showing high priority reuse development opportunities for their plan.	The consultant indicated at the hearing that the map would be included in the appendix if it was sent over. Because this map was not received from the Commissioner, it was not included. However, as we work to implement the plan, this map will be useful to recommendation 2.1 - Identify high priority reuse opportunities.
Old Saybrook	54	58	In 3.2 on page 54, the 4th metric of "providing tools....." is in the Long timeframe defined as 5 years. Given the discussion in the document, and the reality in the towns these days, I would argue that that should be a focus of the River COG and be a Short timeframe.	The long timeframe also encompasses ongoing projects (see page 50). While starting the process will occur soon, it will be ongoing and ever changing.
Clinton	57	57	Add partner names here.	Determining the specific agencies and organizations to partner with will occur as part of implementation.
Clinton	59	60	Asses the viability and need for maker or innovation projects, i.e. centralized facility or network. see Thames River Innovation Place	An additional milestone was added.
Westbrook	61	72	Overall this is well done. However I would encourage you to make 4.1 a priority. It is directly related to attracting a skilled workforce. So much so that I think this topic is probably more appropriately listed in section 2. Thanks for all the work you've done.	Thank you for your comment. Many of these recommendations could fall under multiple categories. We recognize the importance of housing to attracting and retaining a skilled workforce - language was included in the CEDS to make this clear. Because we recently adopted the Regional Housing Plan, which contains many recommendations and strategies for improving housing opportunity, we incorporated it into this plan by reference and focused the CEDS on other priorities.
Middletown	62	73	Commissioner Johnson commented about the promoting mixed use walkable vibrant communities in the region's town centers, she would like to strike the rest of the language on that point and add, 'welcome a diverse population'	Change made.
Clinton	62	52	Review funding opportunities and provide grant writing assistance to design and construct supporting public infrastructure.	Change made.
Chester	Appendix 1	Appendix	Several of the projects listed are consistent with Chester's projects. Were towns asked to provide this list directly? Is it too late for Chester to provide a list of projects?	Thank you for your comment. A list of projects from Chester was received and incorporated into the appendix.
Middlefield	Appendix 2	Appendix	Saw an omission - on the Recreational Destinations, Events and Amenities Map, - Appendix 2, you should add a circle for Indian Springs Golf Course, 123 Mack Road in Middlefield, CT	Change made.