



**THRIVING
COMMUNITIES**
PROGRAM

Complete Transit-Oriented Neighborhoods
Lower Connecticut River COG Community

RiverCOG TOD Vision Plan Community Meeting

August 2024



Introduction

LEAD ORGANIZATION



Lower Connecticut River Valley
Council of Governments

RiverCOG

COMMUNITY PARTNERS



Town of Clinton



Town of Westbrook



Town of Old Saybrook



City of Middletown



Hope Partnership

CAPACITY BUILDING TEAM



WSP



AFA



Miranda Creative



Nathan L. Jacobson
& Associates



THRIVING COMMUNITIES PROGRAM

USDOT's **Thriving Communities Program (TCP)** aims to provide technical tools and organizational capacity building support to communities adversely or disproportionately affected by environmental, climate, and human health policy outcomes so that they are better positioned to compete for federal aid and deliver quality infrastructure projects that enable their communities and neighborhoods to thrive.

Complete Transit-Oriented Neighborhoods

Focused on urban and suburban communities located within metropolitan regions working to advance equitable **Transit-oriented Development (TOD)** and improve safe, reliable and accessible transit service.

LEARN MORE ABOUT
Thriving Communities Program

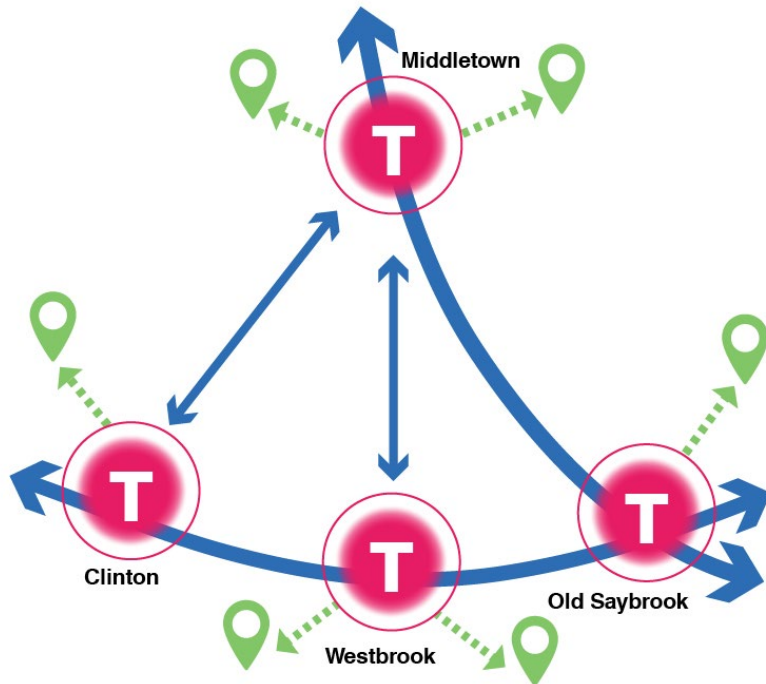




RiverCOG TOD Vision Plan

Through the TCP Program, RiverCOG, in collaboration with Town of Old Saybrook, Town of Westbrook, Town of Clinton, and City of Middletown, is preparing a TOD Vision Plan which encompass three levels of TOD planning to enhance multimodal connectivity and promote walkable, compact, and mixed-use development near region's **three Shore Line East stations** and the **Middletown bus terminal**.

Three levels of TOD planning



Transit Hubs:

Areas located within a one-mile radius of transit stations



Local Destination Corridors:

Corridors that connect or have great potential to connect transit stations to major local destinations related to tourism, housing, and job centers



Regional Connections:

Connections that link transit stations and areas outside of the region



Workshop Agenda



PROJECT OVERVIEW

WHAT IS TOD

WHAT WE'VE LEARNED

STAKEHOLDERS INPUT

INTERACTIVE POLL

DISCUSSION – Passport Game



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Project Overview



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Project Overview

The TOD Vision Plan is ...

- A shared TOD Vision
- Three levels of Planning Framework
- Laying the pathway forward
- Community-based process
- Not a Transit Plan



Transit Hubs:

Areas located within a one-mile radius of transit stations

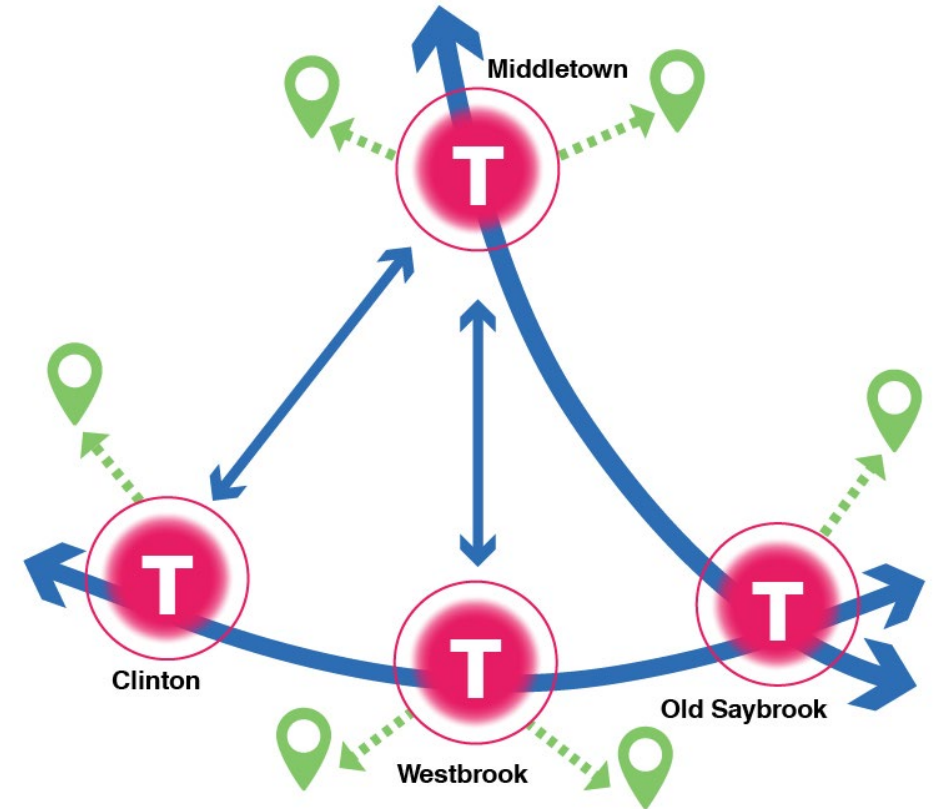


Local Destination Corridors: Corridors that connect or have great potential to connect transit stations to major local destinations related to tourism, housing, and job centers

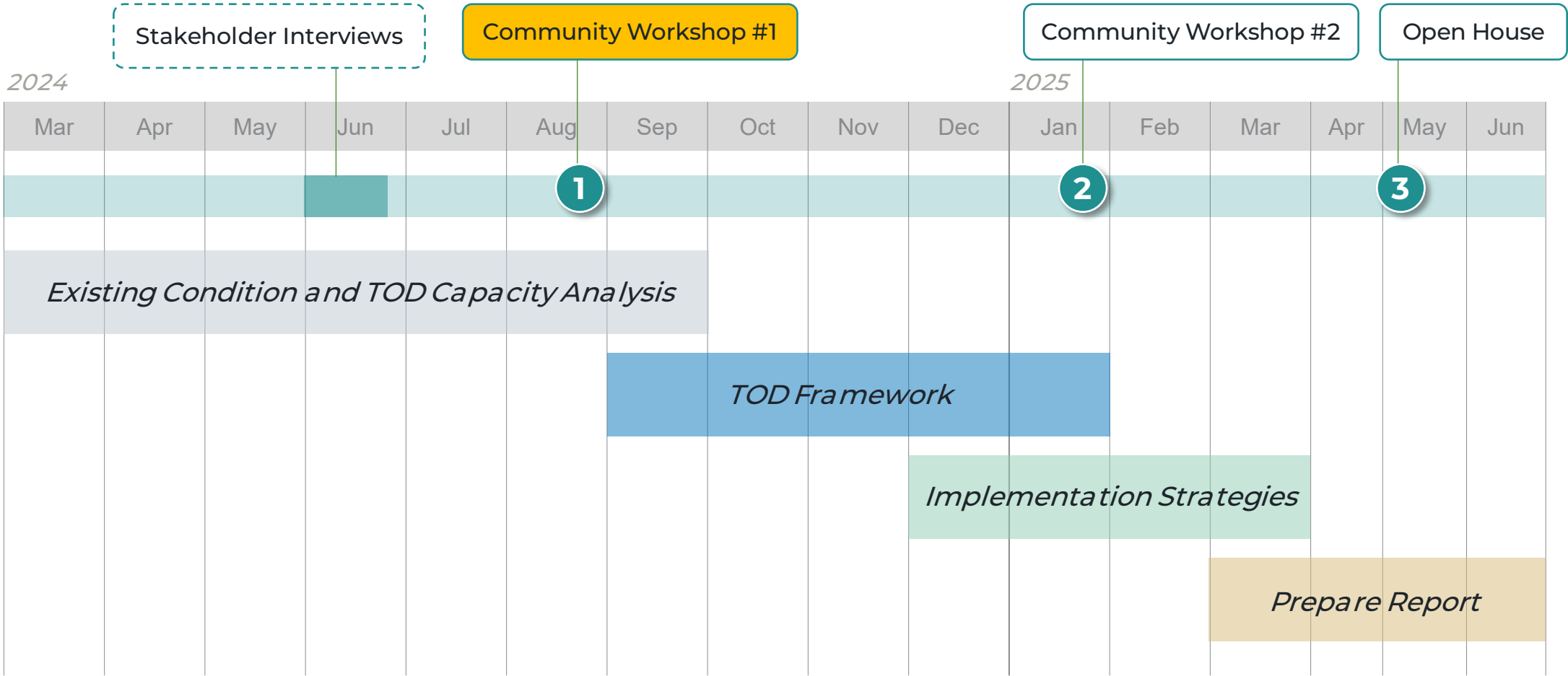


Regional Connections: Connections that link transit stations and areas outside of the region

Three levels of TOD planning



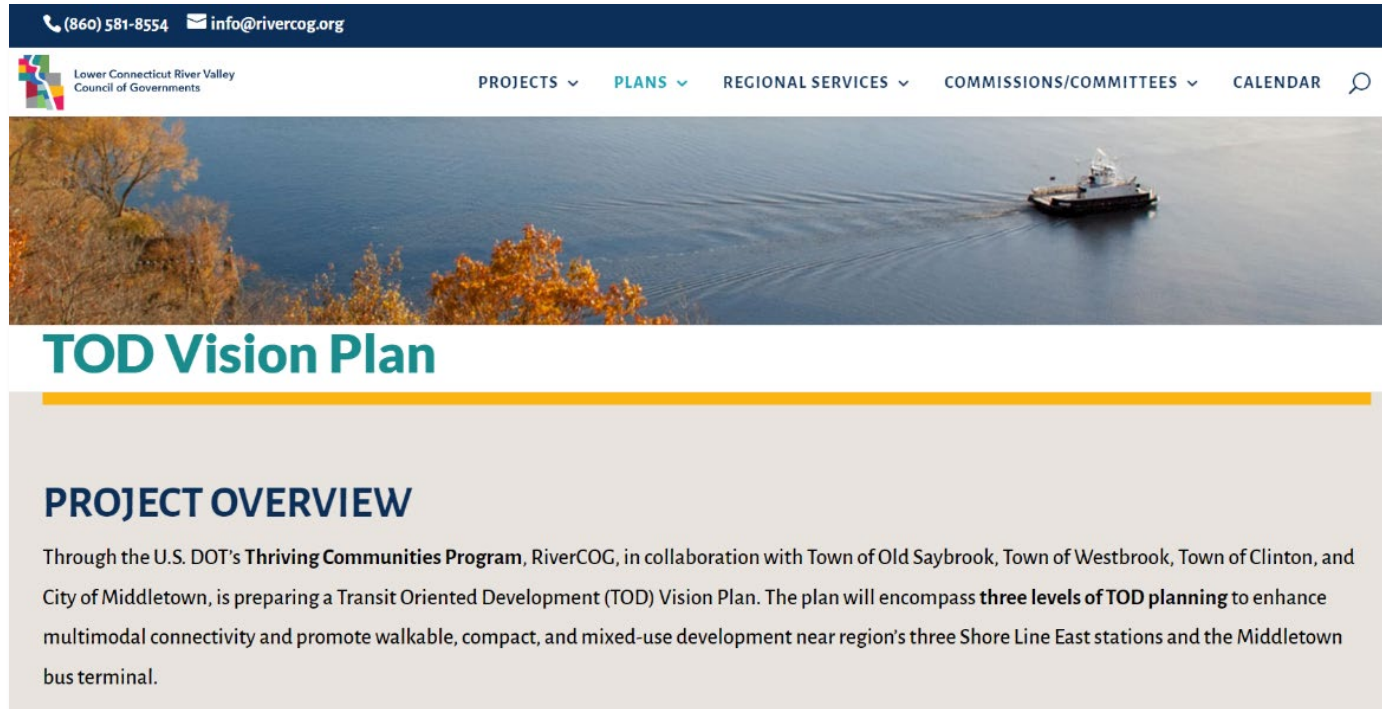
Project Tasks and Schedule



How to Engage?

Visit the Project Website

<https://www.rivercog.org/plans/TOD/>



The screenshot shows the RiverCOG website header with contact information: (860) 581-8554 and info@rivercog.org. The navigation menu includes PROJECTS, PLANS, REGIONAL SERVICES, COMMISSIONS/COMMITTEES, and CALENDAR. The main banner features a boat on a river. Below the banner, the title 'TOD Vision Plan' is displayed in large teal letters. The 'PROJECT OVERVIEW' section states that RiverCOG, in collaboration with Town of Old Saybrook, Town of Westbrook, Town of Clinton, and City of Middletown, is preparing a Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Vision Plan. The plan will encompass three levels of TOD planning to enhance multimodal connectivity and promote walkable, compact, and mixed-use development near region's three Shore Line East stations and the Middletown bus terminal.

Looking to get involved and share your thoughts on the *RiverCOG TOD Vision Plan*? Please reach out to us.

Contact Us

✉ info@rivercog.org

☎ (806) 581-8554

Follow Us

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Participate Survey

<https://thinktod.org/>



The graphic features the 'ThinkTOD' logo with the tagline 'Imagining Transit-Oriented Development throughout the Lower Connecticut River Valley'. The main text reads 'Your Voice MATTERS' in large white letters on a dark blue background. Below this, it says 'Share your thoughts on Transit-Oriented Development opportunities in our communities.' At the bottom, a blue button with white text says 'Take Me to the Survey >'. The graphic is decorated with vertical pink, blue, and yellow stripes and circular accents on the right side.



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What is Transit-oriented Development (TOD)?



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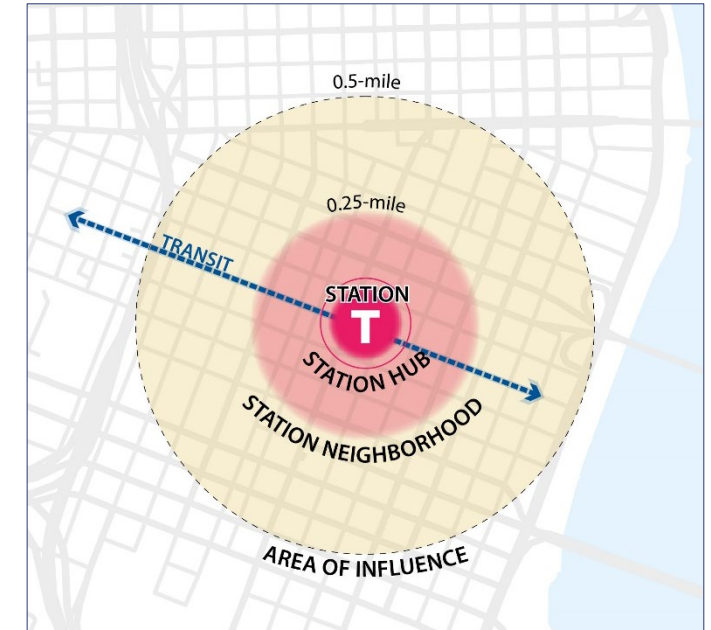


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What is Transit-oriented Development (TOD)?

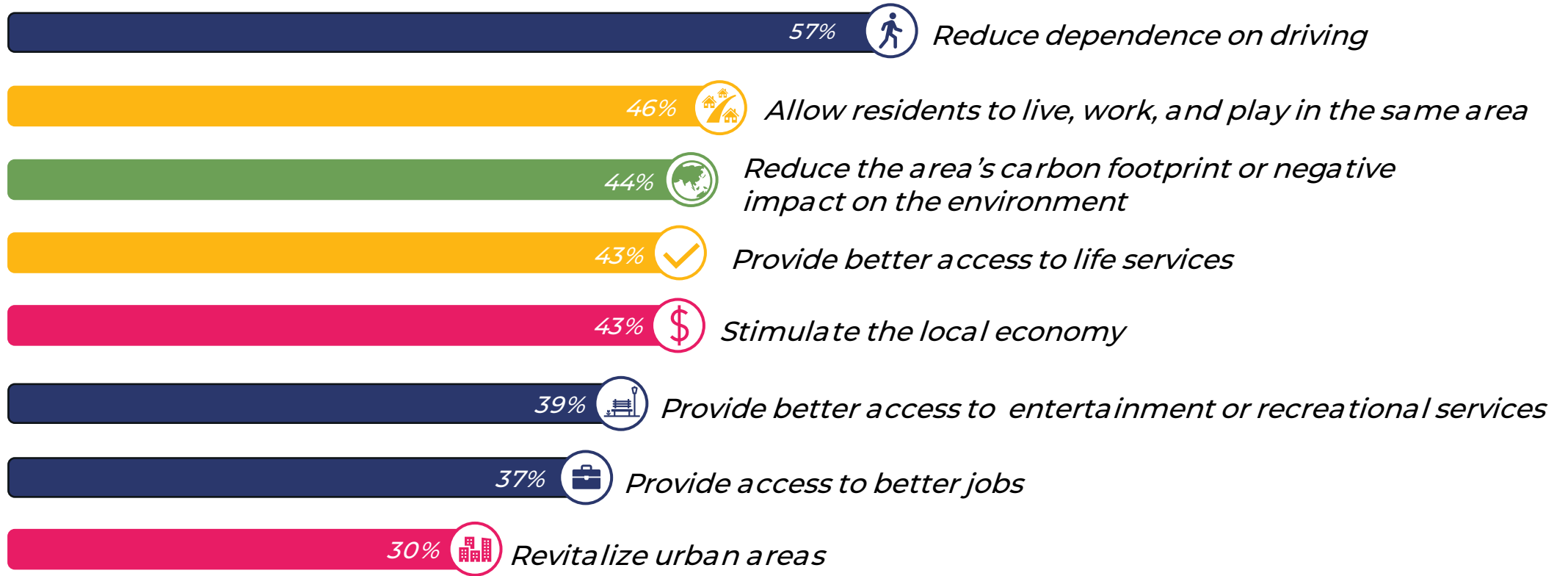
- **Centered around Transit** - within **Walking Distance** of a transit station;
- **Diverse** - a **Mix of Uses** including a variety of housing types, office, and retail;
- **Compact** – bring **More Activities Closer** to the transit hub;
- **Walkable - Complete Streets** for all, and high-quality **Public Spaces**;





Why TOD?

TOD provides an array of benefits ranging from lifestyle to environmental to economic.



Data Source: <http://www.tod.org/>



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How do we get there?

Planning Around Transit



- Promote mix of uses
- Infill and brownfield redevelopment
- Manage parking effectively
- And more...

- Design streets for all
- Create engaging public spaces
- Public / private partnership

One Size doesn't Fit All



What we've studied so far

- Building on previous plans
- Existing condition assessment
- TOD capacity analysis
- Market demand analysis
- Learning from local examples
- Stakeholder interviews

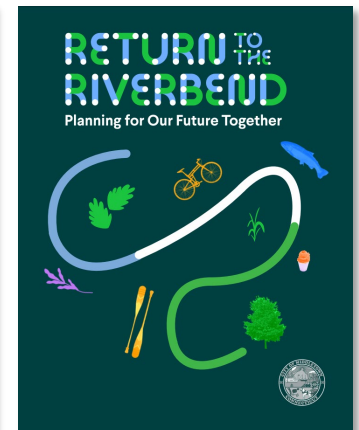
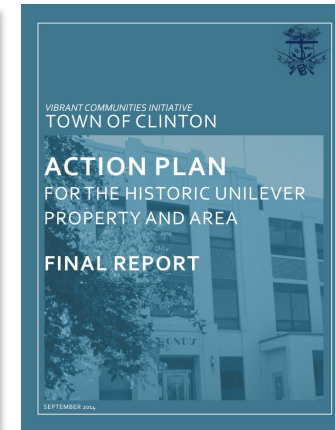
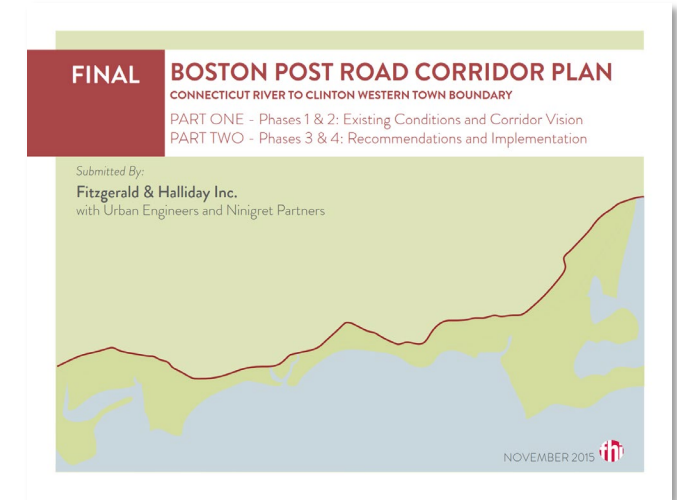
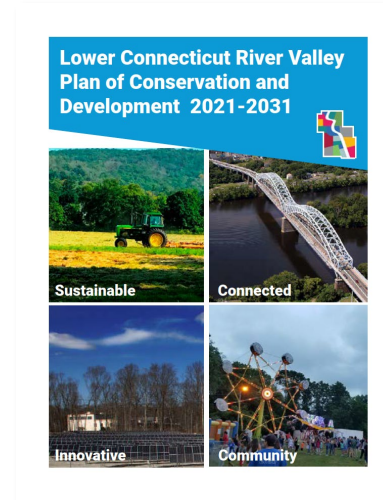
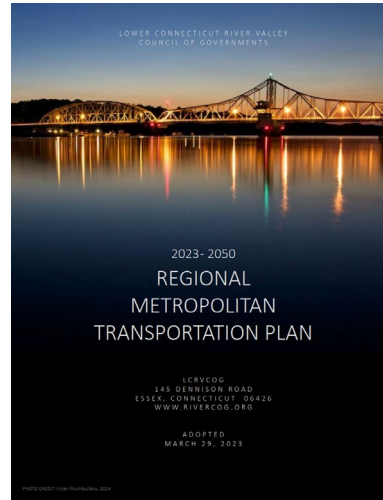




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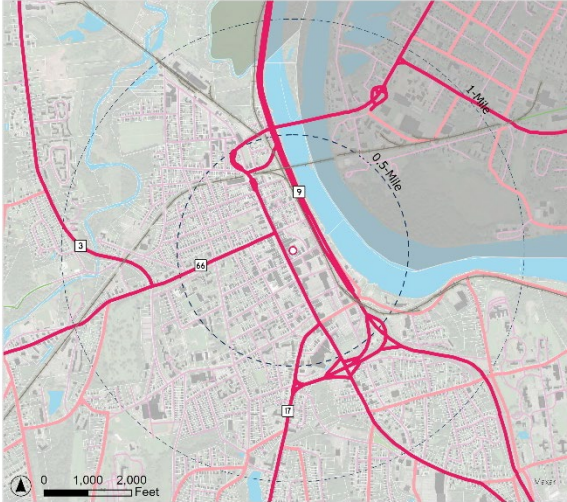
Building on Previous Plans



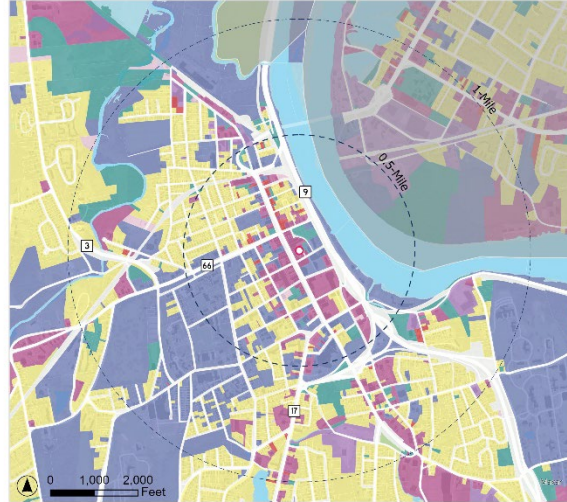


Existing Condition Assessment

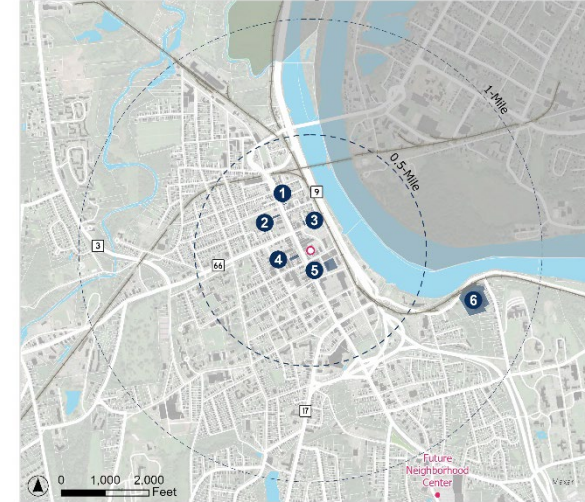
Connectivity



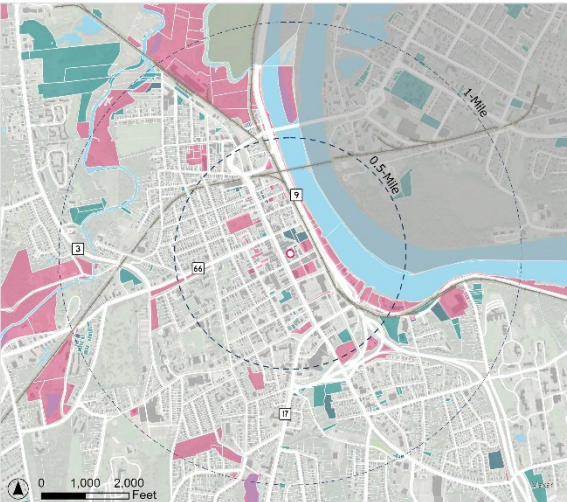
Land Use



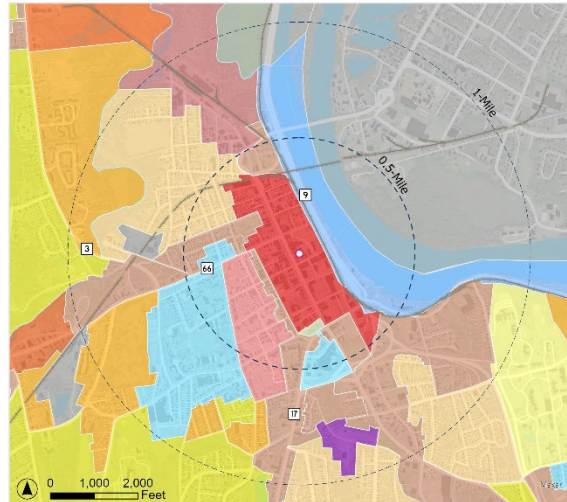
Planned Development



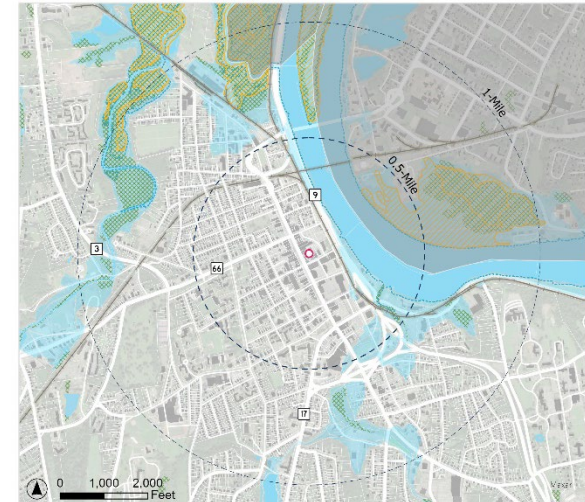
Ownership



Zoning

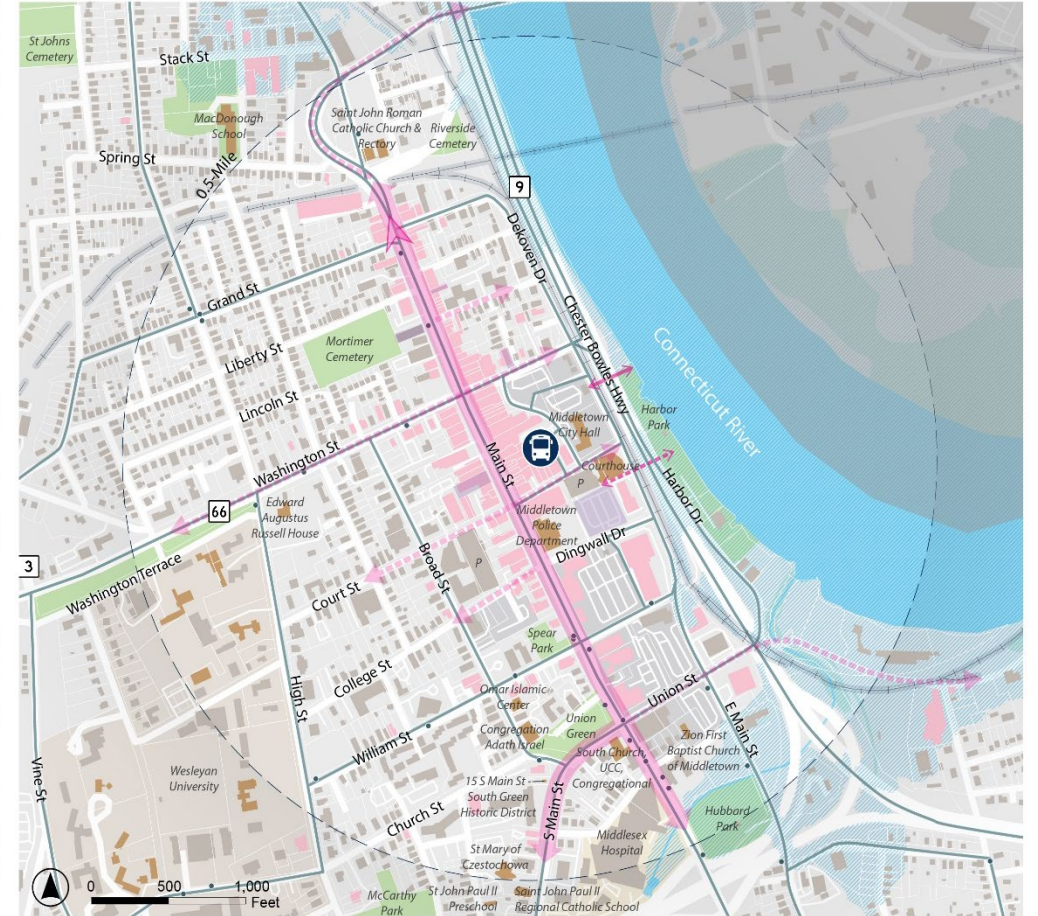
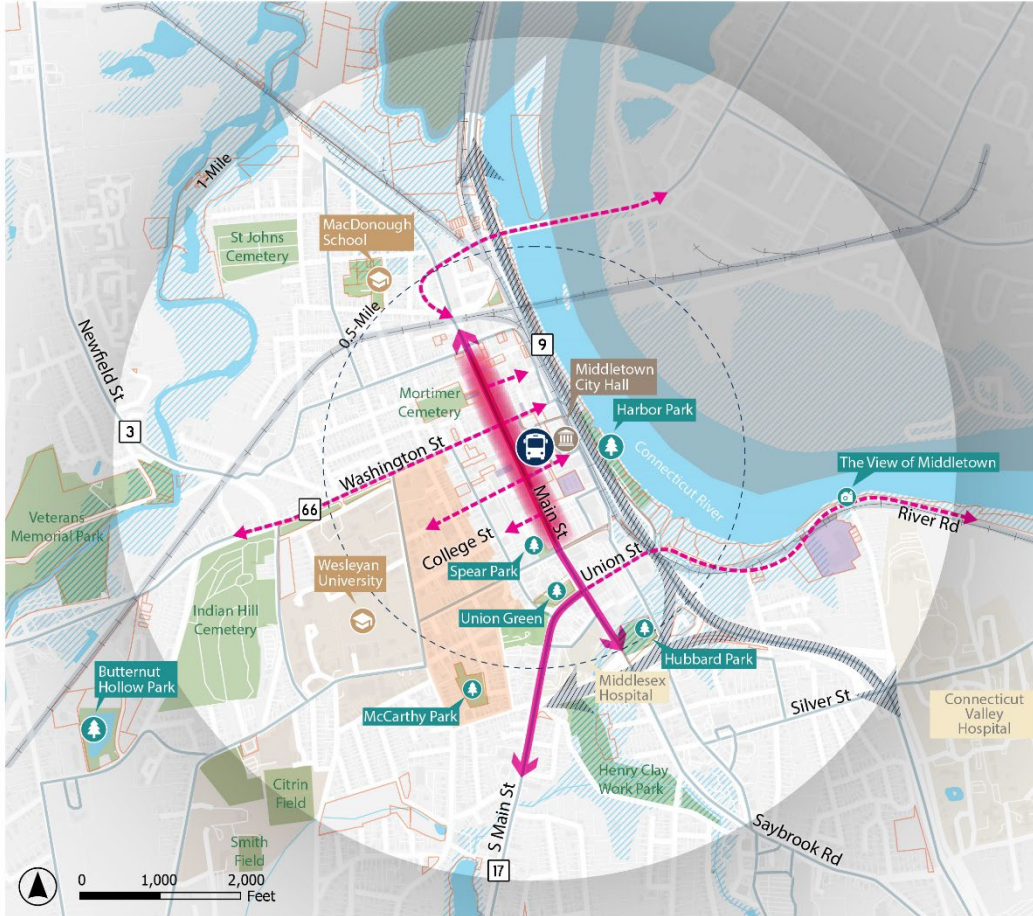


Environmental Constraints



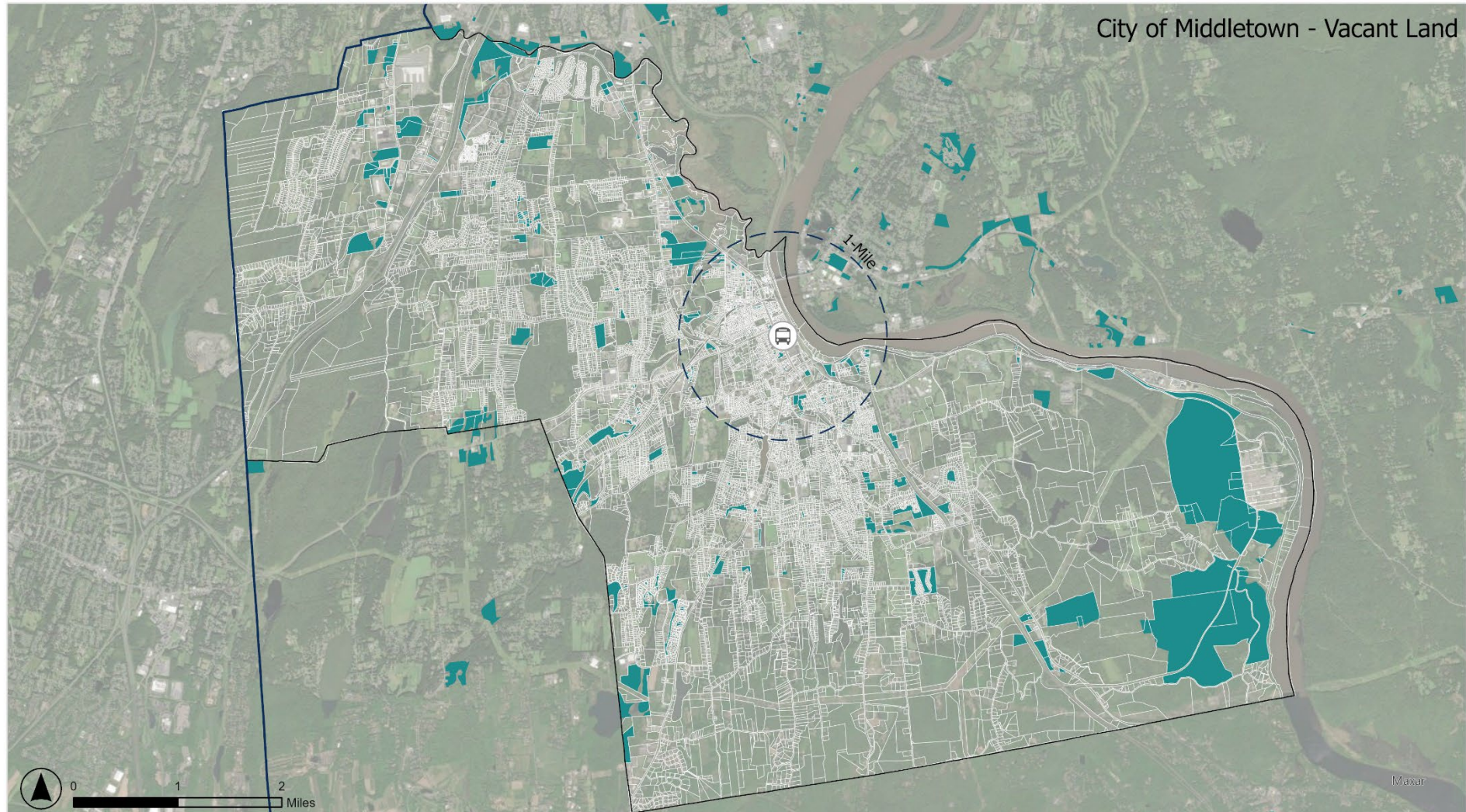


Opportunities and Constraints





TOD Capacity Analysis





Can TOD Work Here? – Middletown

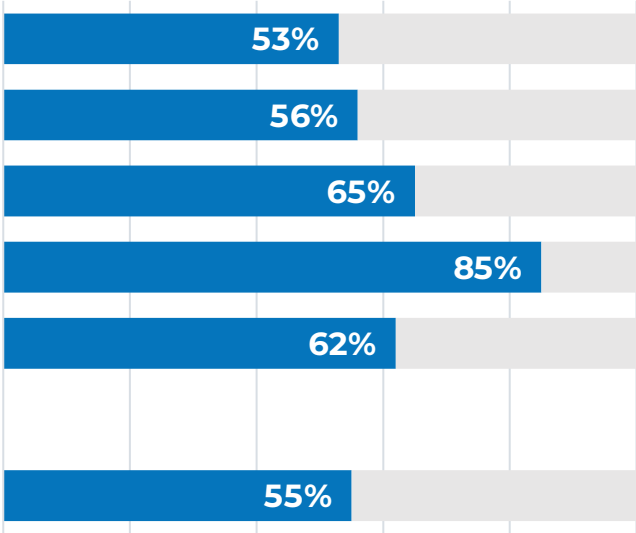
Walkable, Transit-Served Locations in High Demand

Attracting more residents builds more activity and business, which in turn attracts more residents

A positive feedback loop that helps Middletown grow in economic development, reputation, and inclusive prosperity

NAR National Survey

- Prefer attached dwelling if walkable
- Prefer smaller yard if walkable
- Public transport somewhat/very important
- Places to walk to somewhat/very important
- Willing to pay more if in a walkable area



Cato Institute Survey

- Homeowners who say they would not be able to afford to buy their own home today



<https://www.nar.realtor/reports/nar-community-and-transportation-preference-surveys>
<https://siteselection.com/SpecialReports/workforce/2024/closing-the-workforce-housing-gap.cfm>

Who lives in apartments and condos?

- University Staff
- Teachers
- Start-Up Techs & Entrepreneurs
- Paramedics
- Firefighters
- Police officers



Can TOD Work Here? - Shore Line East Towns

Project pipeline demonstrates that the market sees demand here.

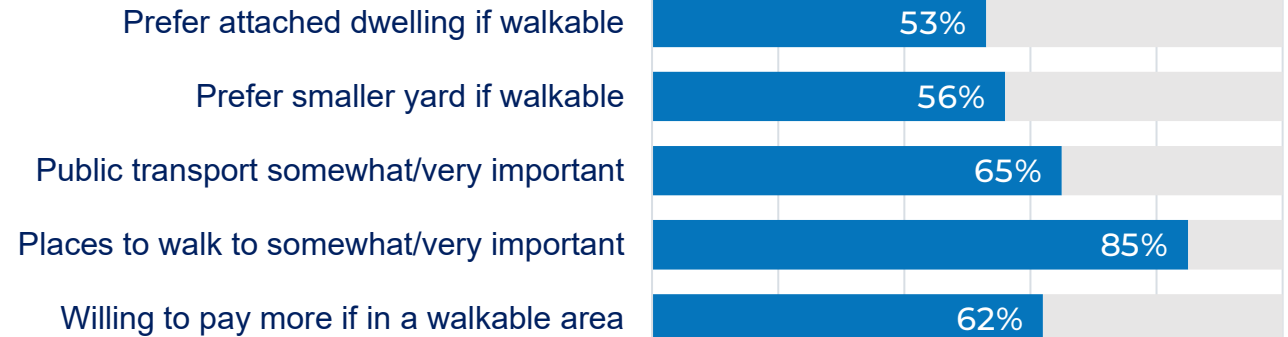
Who lives in apartments and condos?

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US Census Data - Live in Single-Family Home



NAR National Survey



Cato Institute Survey



<https://www.nar.realtor/reports/nar-community-and-transportation-preference-surveys>

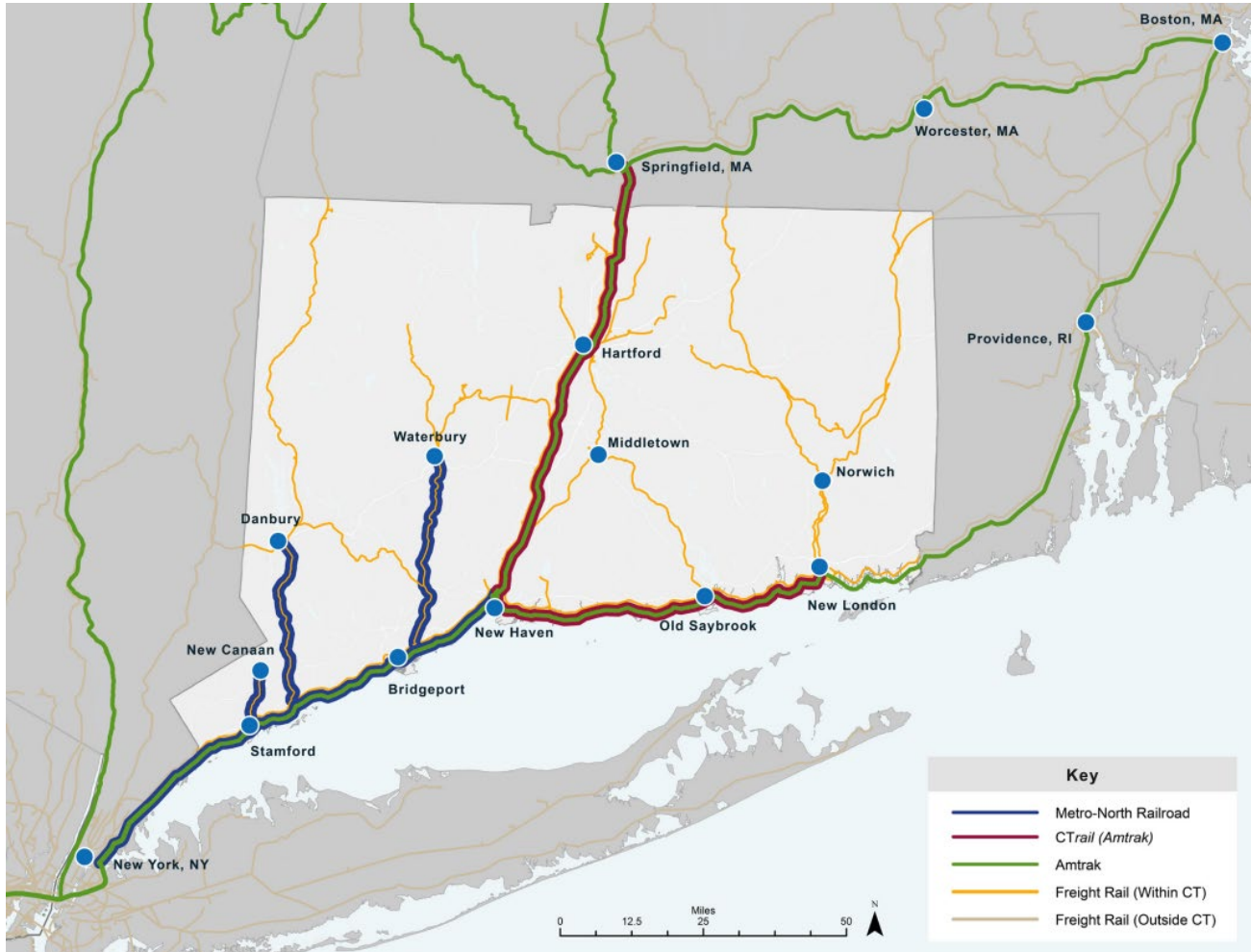
<https://siteselection.com/SpecialReports/workforce/2024/closing-the-workforce-housing-gap.cfm>



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Learn from Local Examples



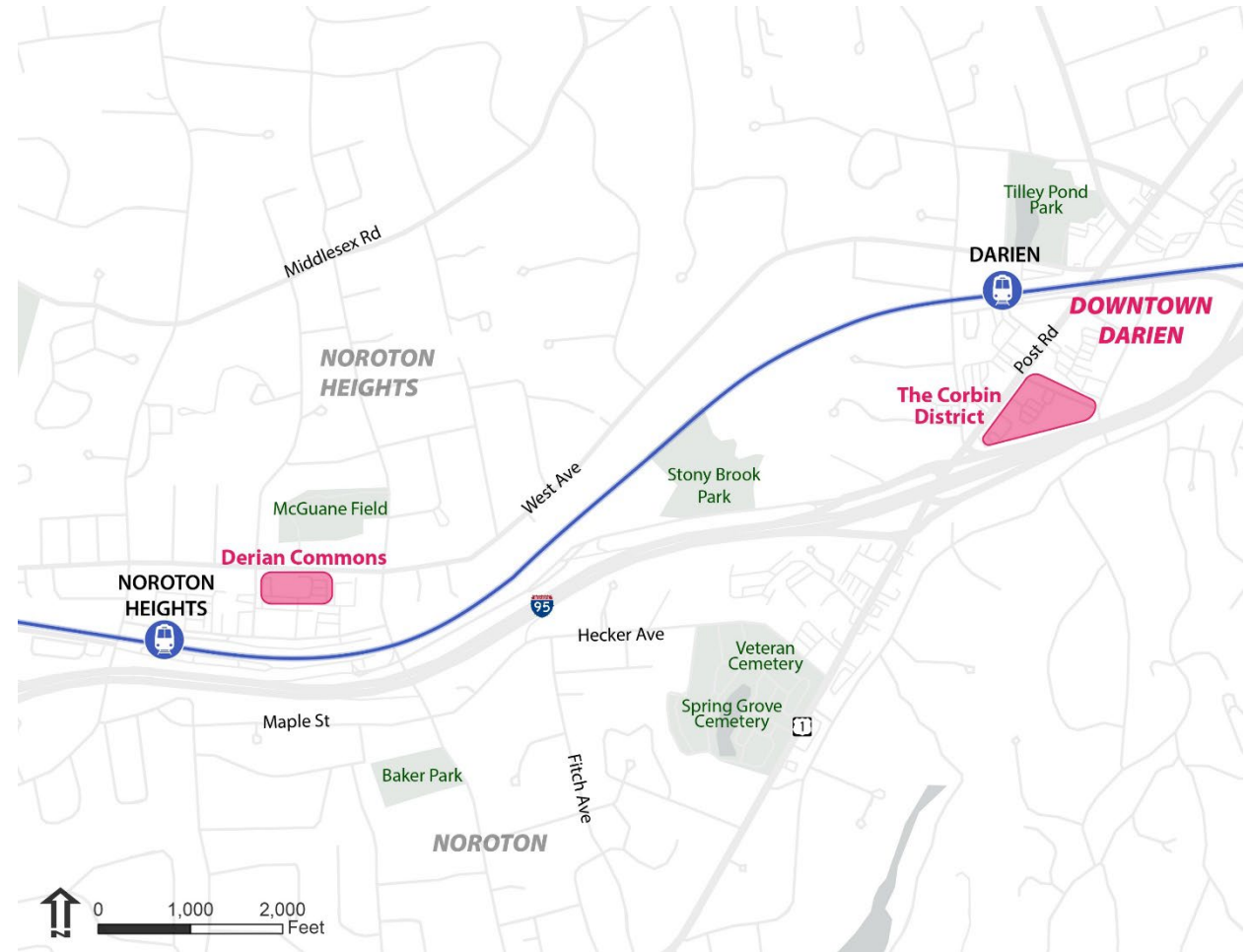
Data Source: Connecticut State Rail Plan (2022-2026)





TOD in Darien, CT

- Located within **walking distance** of Metro-North **Stations** and in **downtown**
- Invests in projects at **multiple scales**, from small “infill” buildings to larger redevelopments
- Expands **housing choice** and range of price points
- Celebrates Coastal New England’s **local architecture**
- Creates new **public gathering spaces**, including town squares and shopping streets
- Brings renewed **vibrancy and local destinations**





TOD in Darien, CT



Local Shops & Services



Restaurants



National Brands

Encourages a Mix of Uses – Residential Above



TOD in Darien, CT



“Infill” Buildings



Shopping Center Redevelopment



Multi-Building Planned Development

TOD at a Variety of Sizes Tailored to Context



TOD in Darien, CT



Parking is Accommodated & Effectively Managed



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TOD in Darien, CT



New Engaging Public Spaces – Town Squares and Shopping Streets



TOD in Darien, CT



Wide & Active Sidewalks



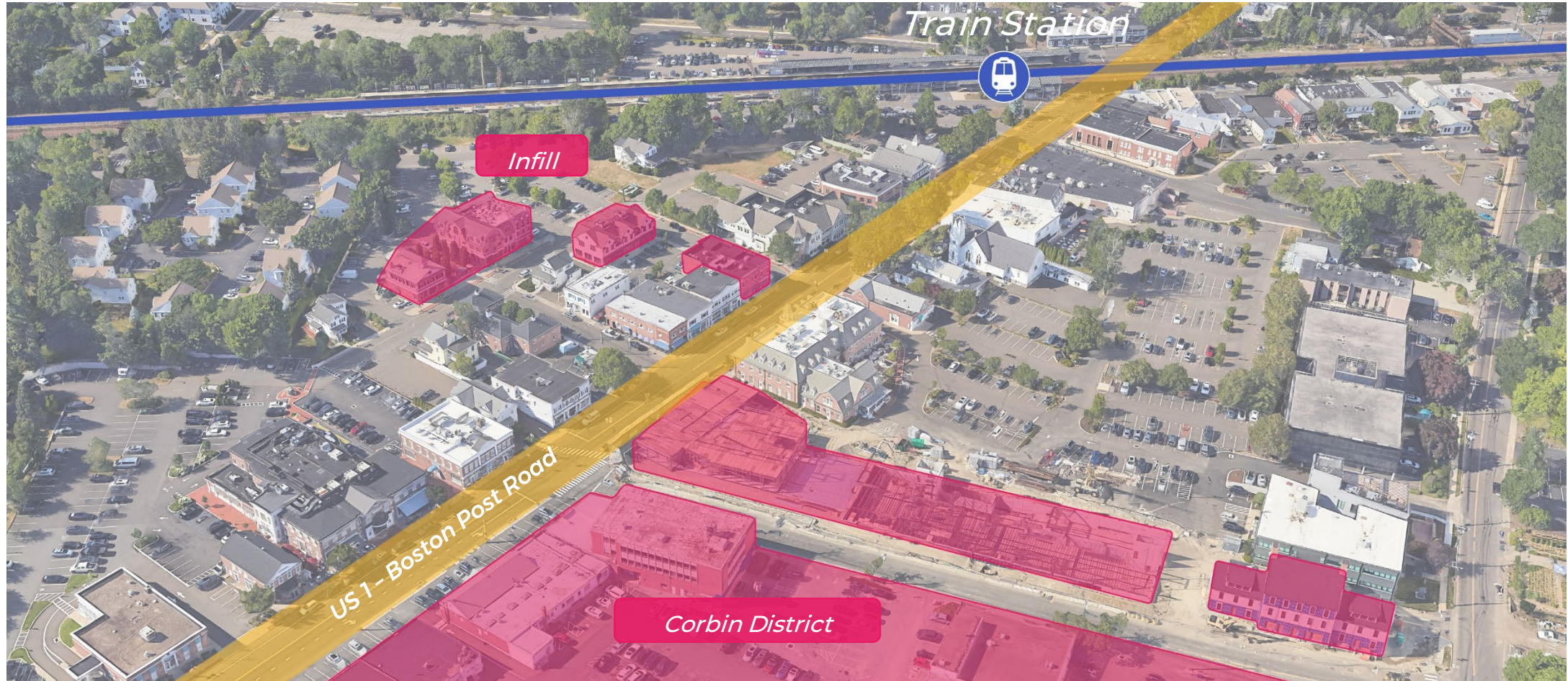
TOD in Darien, CT



Downtown Darien



TOD in Darien, CT



Downtown Darien TOD



TOD in Darien, CT



Darien's "Main Street" (US 1 / Boston Post Road) - 2012



TOD in Darien, CT

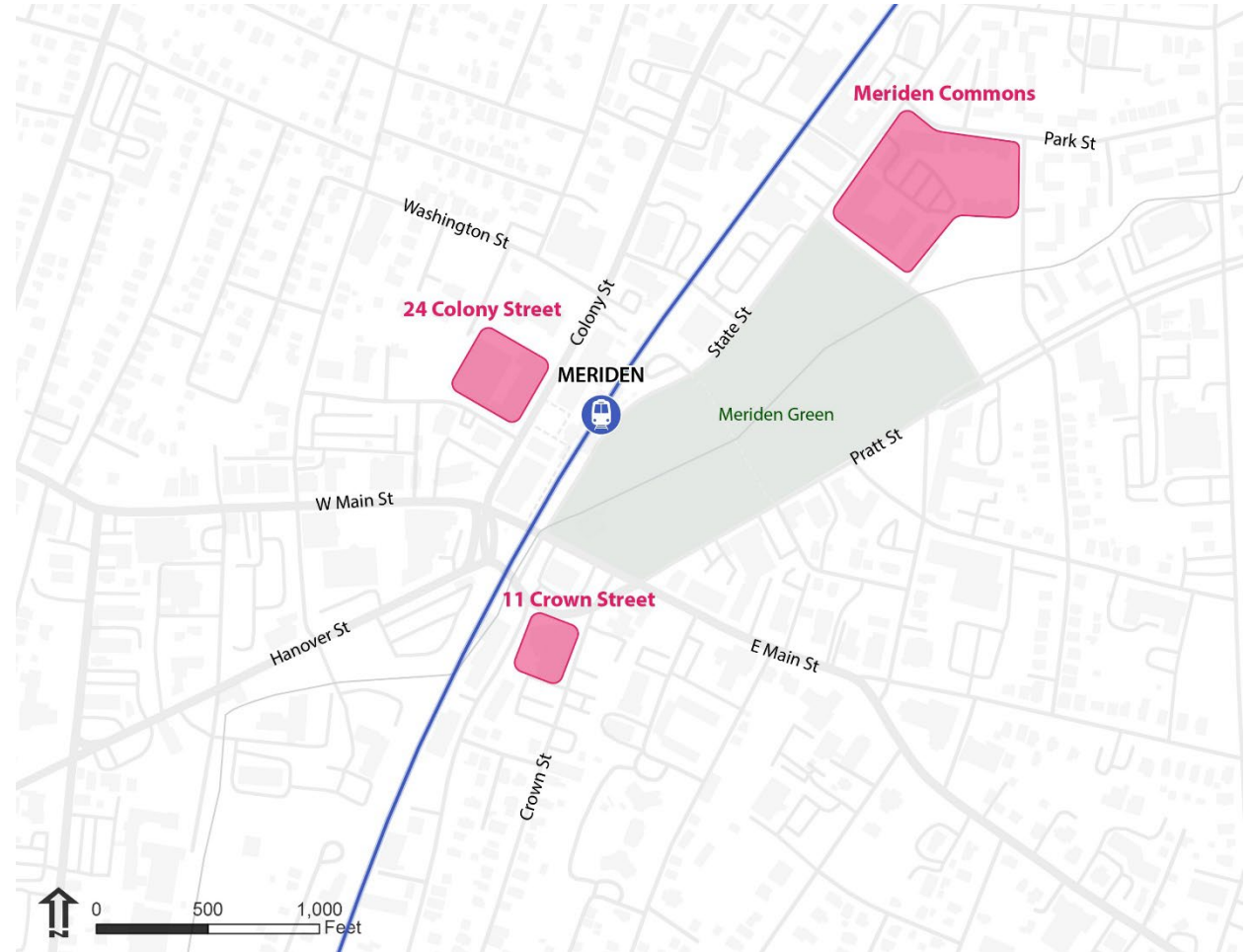


Darien's "Main Street" (US 1 / Boston Post Road) - Today



TOD in Meriden, CT

- Located in downtown within **walking distance** of the Amtrak / Hartford Line station
- Focus on **mixed-income housing**
- **Leveraged public investment** in station enhancements and creation of public park **to spur private investment**

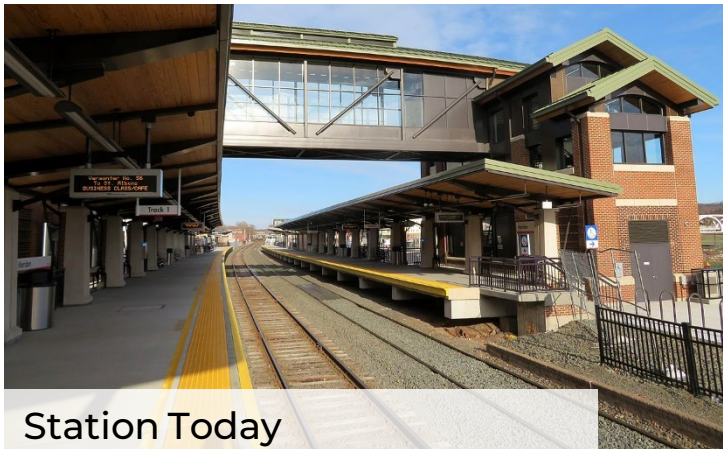




TOD in Meriden, CT



Station in 2015



Station Today



Rebuilt Meriden Transit Center

Enhanced Transit Station and Access



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TOD in Meriden, CT



New Public Spaces Supporting Private Investment



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TOD in Meriden, CT



Prioritized a Variety of Housing Types & Choices



TOD in Meriden, CT



Prioritized a Variety of Housing Prices



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Stakeholders Input



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What did the CEDS tell us?

- The region's population is declining and aging, with more residents relying on retirement income and fewer young residents staying or moving to the region.
- The region's job base recovered from the pandemic and continues to grow – but slowly – and with a greater reliance on self-employment.
- Most workers for the businesses located in the region come from OUTSIDE the region, and most residents of the region COMMUTE to jobs in other communities. This trend is likely to grow as more residents age out of the labor force and are not replaced with younger, working-age residents.
- **Affordable housing supply** and **lack of transit connectivity** are major barriers to attracting/retaining younger residents and those with the skills required for existing local jobs in Healthcare & Social Assistance, Manufacturing (only major sector that pays above the region's average wage of \$62,000), Retail Trade, Accommodation and Food Services.
- Core recommendation for the region is to generate **environmentally sustainable growth through infill, re-use, and redevelopment** that addresses the community's needs for affordable housing, connections to transit, and quality local jobs.

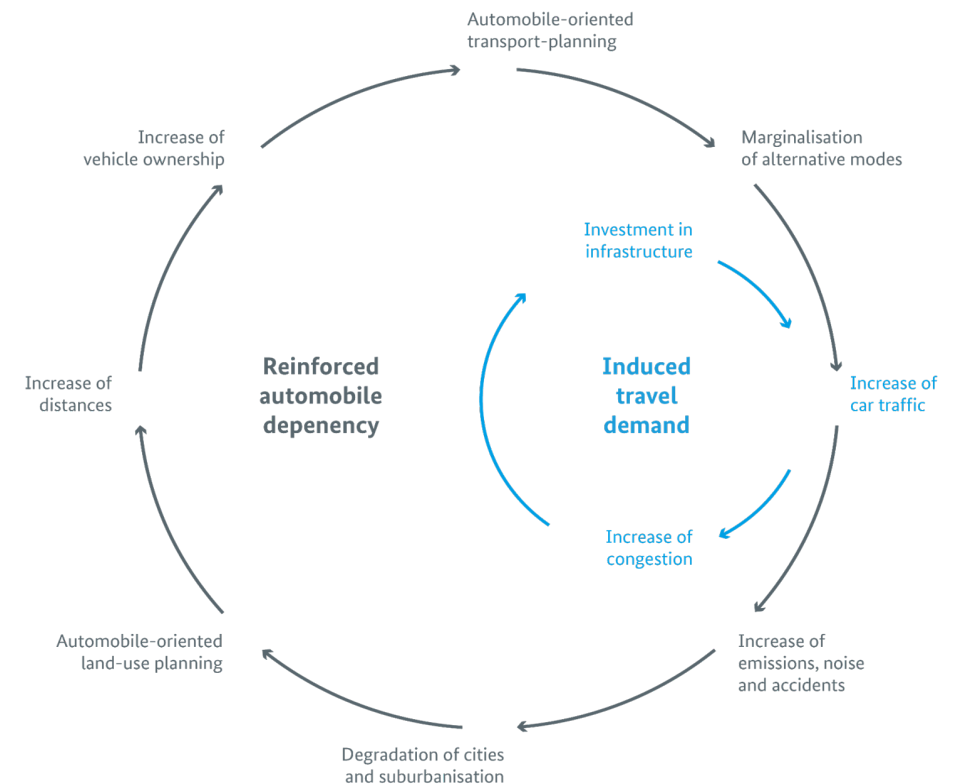




What we've heard from the Stakeholders?

Key Takeaways – Middletown

- Aging and decline population
- Need for affordable housing near transit
- Over reliance on cars vs. public transit
- Lack of accessibility and amenities at bus stops
- Route 9 highway interchange project
- Vibrant downtown, but lacks a full-service grocery store
- Changing preferences of younger generations





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Let us know what YOU think!



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