

THE PLANNING COMMITTEE OF THE COMMON COUNCIL

125 East Avenue
P.O. Box 5125
Norwalk, CT 06856

TO: MEMBERS, PLANNING COMMITTEE OF THE COMMON COUNCIL

FROM: JOHN KYDES, CHAIRMAN

DATE: NOVEMBER 27, 2019

RE: MEETING NOTICE

.....
The next scheduled meeting of the Planning Committee of the Common Council will be held on **Thursday, December 5, 2019 at 7:00 pm** in Room 231 in Norwalk City Hall. Please Note the Time and Location.

PLANNING COMMITTEE OF THE COMMON COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING DECEMBER 5, 2019 7:00 PM A G E N D A

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

CALL TO ORDER

ROLL CALL

I. ADMINISTRATION

A. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. August 28, 2019 Special Meeting
2. September 5, 2019 Public Hearing and Regular Meeting

B. APPROVE 2020 MEETING SCHEDULE

1. Approve schedule of meetings for calendar year 2020

II. BUSINESS

A. EAST NORWALK TOD

1. Presentation by Steve Kleppin (See link)
http://tomorrow.norwalkct.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/20191114_Open-House-Boards.pdf

B. REVIEW OF POTENTIAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOOLS

1. Presentation by Jessica Casey/Sabrina Church

III. OLD BUSINESS

IV. NEW BUSINESS

ADJOURNMENT

**CITY OF NORWALK
PLANNING COMMITTEE OF THE COMMON COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
SEPTEMBER 5, 2019**

ATTENDANCE: John Kydes, Chair; John Igneri, Thomas Livingston, Eloisa Melendez, Barbara Smyth, George Tsiranides

STAFF: Tammy Strauss, Redevelopment Acting Director; Sabrina Church, Community Development Planning, Steve Kleppin, Planning and Zoning Director

PUBLIC HEARING ON PY 44 CAPER

Mr. Kydes called the public hearing for the PY 44 CAPER to order at 7:15 p.m. A quorum was present.

Mr. Kydes asked if there was anyone present who wished to speak to the Committee about the CAPER. No one came forward.

Mr. Kydes repeated his question. Hearing none, he closed the public hearing on the PY 44 CAPER at 7:16 p.m.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr. Kydes asked if there was anyone present who wished to address the Committee.

Ms. Jo-Ann Horvath came forward and read a statement into the record. (See attached)

Mr. Kydes said that if Ms. Horvath would email him, and they will try to get as much information as possible to her. He said he understood it was a hefty document that they were discussing.

Ms. Laura Dunn said that on page 60 of the Plan there were policy notes about the residences including the preservation and maintenance of the overall character of traditional single family neighbors and another bullet point supporting housing policies that promote higher density housing near existing and future and employment centers, and availability of public transportation.

These policies clearly maintain the status quo of Norwalk's segregated areas. Single family neighborhoods can accommodate two family homes without disrupting anyone's way of life, and continuing to promote high density housing and low income areas clearly keeps our community segregated, or this plan touts, Norwalk diversity. It contradicts itself with policies that maintain the segregated areas of our town. Could you explain or tell me how Norwalk neighborhoods could be integrated? Thank you.

Ms. Susan Cole of Mary Street said her comments were a follow up to what Ms. Cole said. In reference to work for housing on page 25 of the manual, she proposed reconsideration of changing the zoning requirements from 10% to 20% to promote more diversity and equity in housing and in a few schools, because the two are clearly connected. In the document it said that Norwalk prides itself in its diversity. It's one of our strengths. Requiring 20% of new multi-unit housing is going to do a lot more good at integrating neighbors. Thank you.

Ms. Audrey Cozzarin, Kendall Court, came forward and said as head of the Norwalk Citizens Traffic Safety Committee, her concern was traffic congestion. (See attached).

Mr. Bob Giuletto stated that currently multifamily housing is not permitted in some Norwalk zones even with a special permit. For example, in the triple A resident zone. Multifamily is permitted by right only in D resident zones, where halfway homes and group homes are also permitted by special permit. This type of zoning tends to have a disparate impact on people of color because it often generates poverty concentration. The Director of Zoning agreed to undertake a study of the Zoning Code to identify zoning elements that have this kind of impact and then work with community members to develop new zoning rules that promote equitable development throughout Norwalk.

Ms. Diane Lauricella of Taylor Avenue came forward and said that she wanted to reiterate a number of items she had mentioned earlier at the public hearing because she had not seen an amendment yet and wanted to get some ideas as to whether they will be changed.

There were some errors and things were left out that are important in order to plan well and one was in listing utilities as assets on page 27. They mentioned the Second and Third Taxing District Electric companies but fail to mention Eversource.

Eversource is the primary supplier to almost every part of Norwalk, north of 95, which is pretty important. Number two, is that with the water utilities, there was only mention of the Second and First Taxing District Water utilities. Ms. Lauricella mentioned that this was what brought her to Norwalk originally when she worked for the First Taxing District Water Company to help them find the pollution source in their wells. The drinking water in wells makes approximately up to 22% of water supply. It's very important that we have it in this document to help plan because those sources are very sensitive. Often they're not from anything more than cracks in the bedrock and they need to be protected. But without people knowing they're there, how can Land Use Commissioners plan and the Health Department plan to educate people or even plan to limit the growth in those areas?

Ms. Lauricella said that she had mentioned this to Marissa, the consultant. Ms. Lauricella feels this is important, and will continue to lobby for it to be added.

The last thing she mentioned was limits to growth and the need for really super duper industrial zone review. She said initially speaking with Mr. Kleppin and others that that was going to be looked at and was very pleased, she had heard that there is going to be zoning. She said she thought they were out dating zoning rules.

It is important to make sure we have a real focused review on the industrial zones, because there was a study done when Mr. Kummel was on the Council so it is now ancient history. A while ago, there was a proposal for a review of every document, however that particular study was never finalized and voted on by the City Council. Now residential and big box development of retail have been allowed in the industrial zones, therefore limiting a very, very good source for the tax base. There will never be belching smokestacks. There were some land use developers like Mr. Zullo that kept crowing about the reduction in industry. Ms. Lauricella said she always disagreed with that. If towns and cities don't look for industry, they are never going to attract it.

Ms. Lauricella said she will be lobbying for industry because there are still zones such as Pearl Street and Emerald Street that are a group of gemstone streets off of Perry Avenue. These are an untapped resource of mostly underutilized industrial zones. Miller Park used to be a thriving industry. Now it's an artist colony, which is great. But the City is not getting what we're doing by not developing our industrial zones and letting them peter out. This is putting more of a burden on the residential homeowners to pay for all the operation of government through their property taxes.

Ms. Lauricella said she would like to know what this committee is going to do about that, whether or not it wasn't mentioned in any part of the 340 pages that she could find, as far as making a big effort to optimize our industrial zones and possibly down zone, former industrial zones that were because of lack of creativity and myopia. They are just observing things when there was an odor instead of ceasing the odor. That's what happened to Miller Park. There was someone that was roasting coffee beans and it stunk to high heaven. This was when Doug Mintz was the chair of the Conservation Committee. They allow grandfathering of industrial uses on that property, but they also will not allow new clean industry in there. Thank you.

ADMINISTRATION

A. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approve Minutes of August 1, 2019.

**** MR.IGNERI MOVED THE MINUTES OF AUGUST 1, 2019.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF AUGUST 1, 2019 AS SUBMITTED PASSED WITH THREE (3) IN FAVOR (KYDES,IGNERI AND**

TSIRANIDES) AND THREE (3) ABSTENTIONS (MELENDEZ, LIVINGSTON AND SMYTH).

Ms. Strauss introduced Ms. Lori Gutman, who is the new Community Development Planner.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM

A. Advance the PY44 CAPER to the Common Council for approval with authorization for the Mayor to sign all forwarding documents required by HUD.

Ms. Church said that the CAPER had met all the goals with the exception of the Walk Bridge. The Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) was approved last year.

Mr. Livingston asked about the funding for Code Enforcement. Ms. Church reviewed the process with him.

Mr. Livingston asked what happened if the organizations did not have space for a homeless individual. Ms. Strauss said that there was a database that had been set up and when there is someone who needs a bed, the system finds space for the person. It may not be in Norwalk, but it will be in the surrounding area.

**** MS. MELENDEZ MOVED TO ADVANCE THE PY44 CAPER TO THE COMMON COUNCIL FOR APPROVAL WITH AUTHORIZATION FOR THE MAYOR TO SIGN ALL FORWARDING DOCUMENTS REQUIRED BY HUD.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT (POCD)

A. Advance the Plan of Conservation and Development (Citywide Plan) to the Common Council for its consideration and adoption, with the following recommended changes:

- 1. Modifications to the Executive Summary, page 180, 182, 188, 191, 192 and 202 to reflect the inclusion of the Vision Zero initiative.**
- 2. Other requested modifications.**

Mr. Kydes asked Mr. Kleppin why Eversource was not included in the POCD. Mr. Kleppin said that he thought it was in Chapter 11, but he could include it on the particular page that had been mentioned. Ms. Smyth pointed out that Eversource and other utilities were listed on page 211.

Mr. Livingston asked about the issues around including the water companies. Discussion followed about the details.

Mr. Kleppin said that he had to compile a list of changes for the POCD and would send those changes to the Committee. Discussion followed about how the follow up will be handled. Mr. Kleppin said that at the start of the budget cycle, there would be a meeting with the Mayor and Department heads to check in about what kind of progress they have made towards the POCD goal. Ms. Strauss pointed out that the Capital Budget request process has been changed to indicate if a project is advancing the POCD goals.

Mr. Kydes asked about the Executive Summary. Mr. Kleppin said that this would essentially be an outline or map along with an abbreviated version with the major bullet points and goals. Those who want more information can go to the specific section of the complete Plan. He gave an example about developing a Master Transportation Plan.

**** MR. KYDES MOVED TO ADVANCE THE PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT (CITYWIDE PLAN) TO THE COMMON COUNCIL MEETING ON SEPTEMBER 24, 2019 FOR ITS CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION, WITH THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDED CHANGES:**

- 1. MODIFICATIONS TO THE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY, PAGE 180, 182, 188, 191, 192 AND 202 TO REFLECT THE INCLUSION OF THE VISION ZERO INITIATIVE.**
- 2. OTHER REQUESTED MODIFICATIONS.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

NORWALK TOMORROW WEBSITE.

A. Advance the Sole Source Procurement approving Snyder Group to update the Norwalk Tomorrow website to the Common Council for approval.

Mr. Kleppin explained that the City's website did not have the flexibility to handle surveys. Ms. Strauss said that the company would be able to allow information to be shared both to and by the public. The way the site was originally designed is no longer functional because there are multiple projects running concurrently. The company will update the site and it requires a highly skilled individual. Mr. Kydes asked if the work could be brought in house. Mr. Kleppin said that once the upcoming studies are completed, it will be less labor intensive, but that is several years down the road.

**** MR. TSIRANIDES MOVED TO ADVANCE THE SOLE SOURCE PROCUREMENT APPROVING SNYDER GROUP TO UPDATE THE NORWALK TOMORROW WEBSITE TO THE COMMON COUNCIL FOR APPROVAL.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

AGREEMENT WITH PLANIMETRICS

A. Approve forwarding to the Common Council authorization for Mayor Rilling to enter into an agreement with Planimetrics to perform the following services:

“Consultation Services for Building Zone Regulations Analysis and Recommendations”

in an amount not to exceed \$20,000.

Mr. Kleppin said that one of his first goals was to update the Zoning Regulations. Planimetrics was chosen and the representative has met with Planning and Zoning Staff about their concerns. Ms. Smyth said that while it is nice to have familiarity with the firm, she had concerns about whether the firm was experienced with a large city with such a diverse population. Mr. Kleppin pointed out that they would not be writing the zoning regulations. He will set up meetings with various focus groups and public open houses to analyze how an application works its way through the process.

Mr. Igneri asked how a zone change would be handled. Mr. Kleppin said that there would have to have a public hearing. He gave a brief overview of the process. There was a very tight timing window and the amount of money expended is not very large. Discussion followed.

**** MR. LIVINGSTON MOVED TO APPROVE FORWARDING TO THE COMMON COUNCIL AUTHORIZATION FOR MAYOR RILLING TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH PLANIMETRICS TO PERFORM THE FOLLOWING SERVICES:**

“CONSULTATION SERVICES FOR BUILDING ZONE REGULATIONS ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS”

IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$20,000.

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

OLD BUSINESS

There was no additional old business to consider at this time.

NEW BUSINESS.

There was no new business to consider at this time.

ADJOURNMENT.

**** MR. LIVINGSTON MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF NORWALK
PLANNING COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING
AUGUST 28, 2019**

ATTENDANCE: John Kydes, Chair; Mayor Harry Rilling; John Igneri; Thomas Livingston;
George Tsiranides

STAFF: Tammi Strauss, Norwalk Redevelopment Agency Acting Executive
Director; Steve Kleppin, Director of Planning and Zoning

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Kydes called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Mr. Kydes called the Roll as indicated above.

REVIEW PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Kleppin gave a run through of the Plan of Conservation and Development. He gave an overview of the process of creating the Oversight Committee. He noted they conducted over 20 meetings with various population groups in the City. The Plan has some major themes, including economic development, education, housing and transportation.

Mr. Kleppin illustrated the difference between the 2008 Plan and the Plan before the Committee this evening. He said the goals in this Plan are more Norwalk specific. Mr. Kleppin suggested creating a Blue-Ribbon Panel made up of local business owners, including businesses in SoNo, Merritt 7, Norwalk center and other areas.

Mr. Kleppin reviewed outstanding issues and the Plan implementation.

PUBLIC HEARING

NORWALK CITYWIDE PLAN: 2019-2029 PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Copies of the Draft Plan are available at the office of the Norwalk Planning Commission at City Hall, 125 East Avenue, Room 223, at the Town Clerk's office at the same address, and on the City's POCD website at: <http://tomorrow.norwalkct.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/complete-POCD-Draft.pdf>

Mr. Kydes opened the public hearing at 6:45 p.m.

Public participation comments are not verbatim and represent a summarization of statements unless otherwise noted.

Mr. Adolph Neaderland said the POCD is supposed to be the vision of the stakeholders, but it is oriented toward City managers. He suggested that less than 5% of the City stakeholders were involved in the process. He said the plan should be sent back for review and more of the population should be included in the review.

Ms. Donna Smirniotopoulos said they need a plan that reflects what the people want. She talked about a plan created in CA in 1986 that developed a growth management program and suggested that the POCD include something like that.

Mr. Tod Bryant said he was involved in the previous Plan and noted that this process was so much better than what he saw in the past. It is much better because it ties everything together. A few tweaks are needed such as a local historical district. Mr. Bryant added that there was a massive amount of outreach.

Ms. Lauricella asked if there was a chance to submit something in writing by Friday. Mr. Kydes said she could. Ms. Lauricella said she participated in various ways in this process as she has in the past 30 years. She offered observations about the document such as adding the Harbor Management plan, inventory of polluted sites and the re-formulation of the Brownfields taskforce. Ms. Lauricella proposed creating a green new deal for Norwalk.

Ms. Lisa Brinton said that the quality of life is going down. Residents are stressed. She said she has been watching for the last six years how traffic studies indicate there will be no impact from development, but that is not the case. Ms. Brinton said there was a great deal of outreach, but it was not strategic. She said it fails to address issues such as tax credits and how they are going to fund the schools. There has always been a disconnect between Planning and Zoning and the school system. She said the City barely brings in enough revenue to support the people in the City.

Ms. Elizabeth Greenwood said the disabled population is growing by leaps and bounds and the City should plan for that such as by better sidewalks and transportation. She said she lives on the water and sees people throw things into the water and people spraying pesticides. Ms. Greenwood talked about noise control. She also said that City Carting is a great issue why things go into the water.

Mr. John Flynn said he has been talking to DEEP for two years, but they were gutted. He said many kids have asthma. There are a lot of contaminated lots and the water report was falsified. Mr. Flynn said there is no conservation in the POCD. He said NEON was contaminated. He said if you read the reports he received from DEEP on Meadow Street, people complained about rock crushing, but if you talk to Health and Safety, they deny it. He described illnesses that residents in his neighborhood have from the uncovered rock crushing operation.

There were no further comments and the public hearing was closed at 7:16 p.m.

A recess took place at 7:16 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 7:19 p.m.

RECEIVE COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS FROM PLANNING COMMITTEE
MEMBERS ON THE PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Mayor Rilling said that in looking at the document it is so much better than the document produced in 2008. He thanked all those involved in creating this document. He noted there were many opportunities for people to come out and participate.

Mayor Rilling said he hoped that in 2029 this document will serve as a foundation for carrying it over for the next 10 years. It was an absolute challenge and was done well; the community input was there.

Mayor Rilling noted that Mr. Neaderland was on the Committee and had the opportunity to reach out to people and get input from them. The public had many opportunities for input.

This is a wonderful document that will not sit on the shelf and gather dust. Everyone who has responsibility for implementation will be held accountable.

Mr. Kydes thanked everyone involved and said this will be continued on September 5th.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. TSIRANIDES MOVED TO ADJOURN**
**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

There was no further business and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi
Telesco Secretarial Services

**THE PLANNING COMMITTEE
OF THE COMMON COUNCIL**

125 East Avenue
P.O. Box 5125
Norwalk, CT 06856

**MEETING SCHEDULE 2020
ROOM 231 - 7:00 P.M.**

DATE OF MEETING

January 2, 2020

February 6, 2020*

March 5, 2020

April 2, 2020

May

7, 2020

June 4, 2020

July 2, 2020

August 6, 2020

September 3, 2020

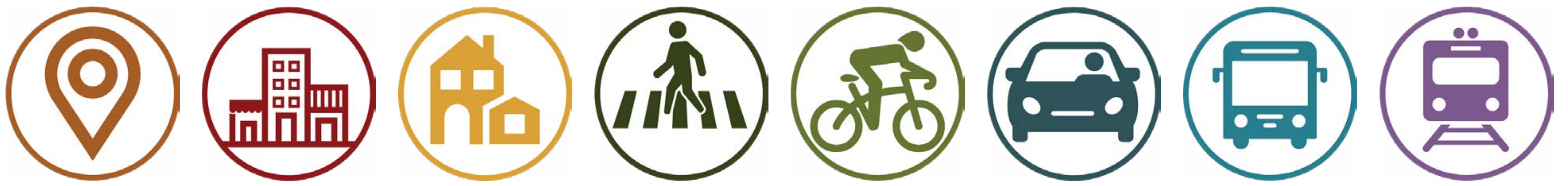
October 1, 2020

November 5, 2020

December 3, 2020

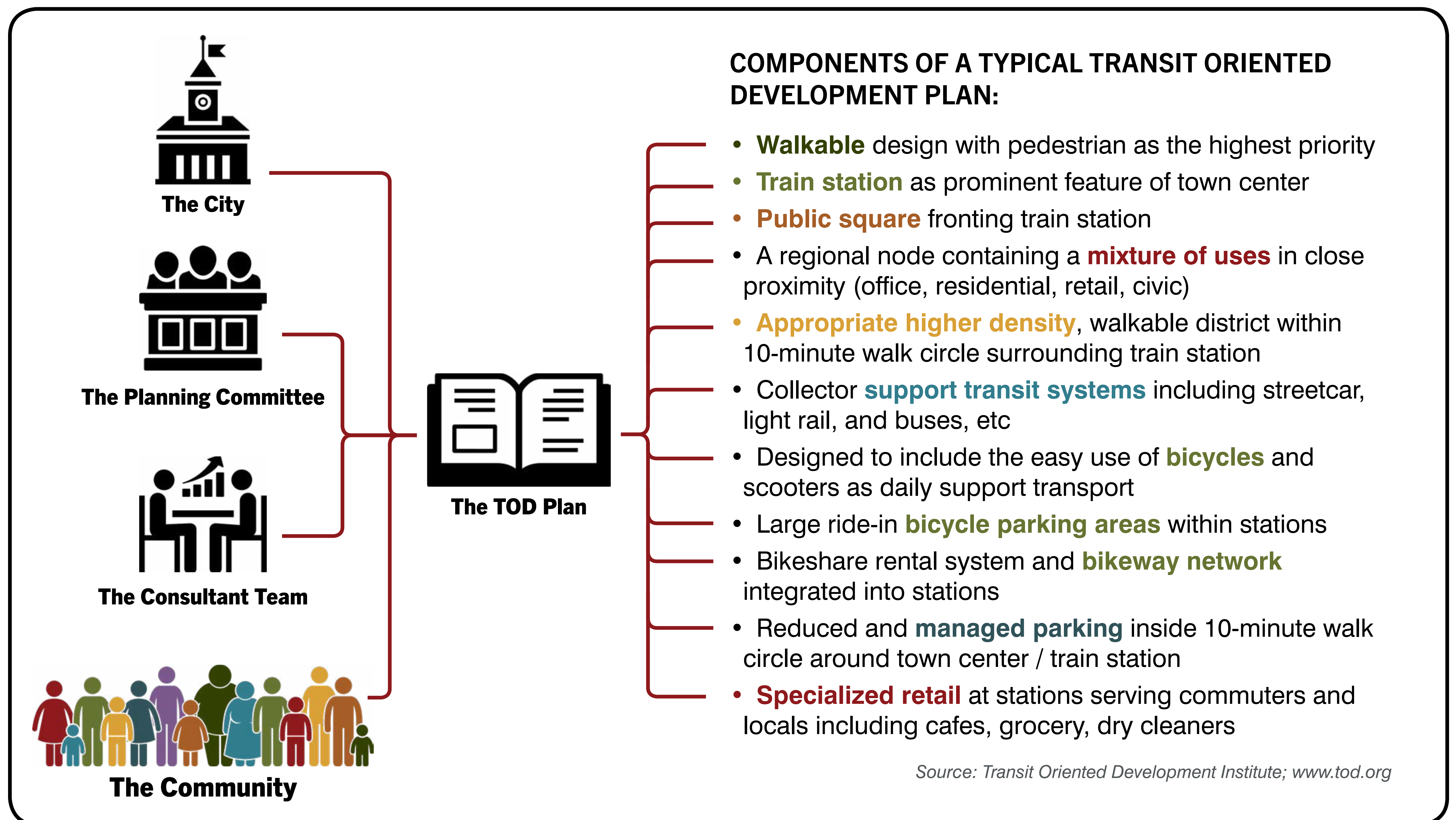
***February 6th Meeting will be held in Room 330 from 6:30 to 10:00 PM for CDBG
Presentations**

WHAT IS A TYPICAL TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT PLAN?



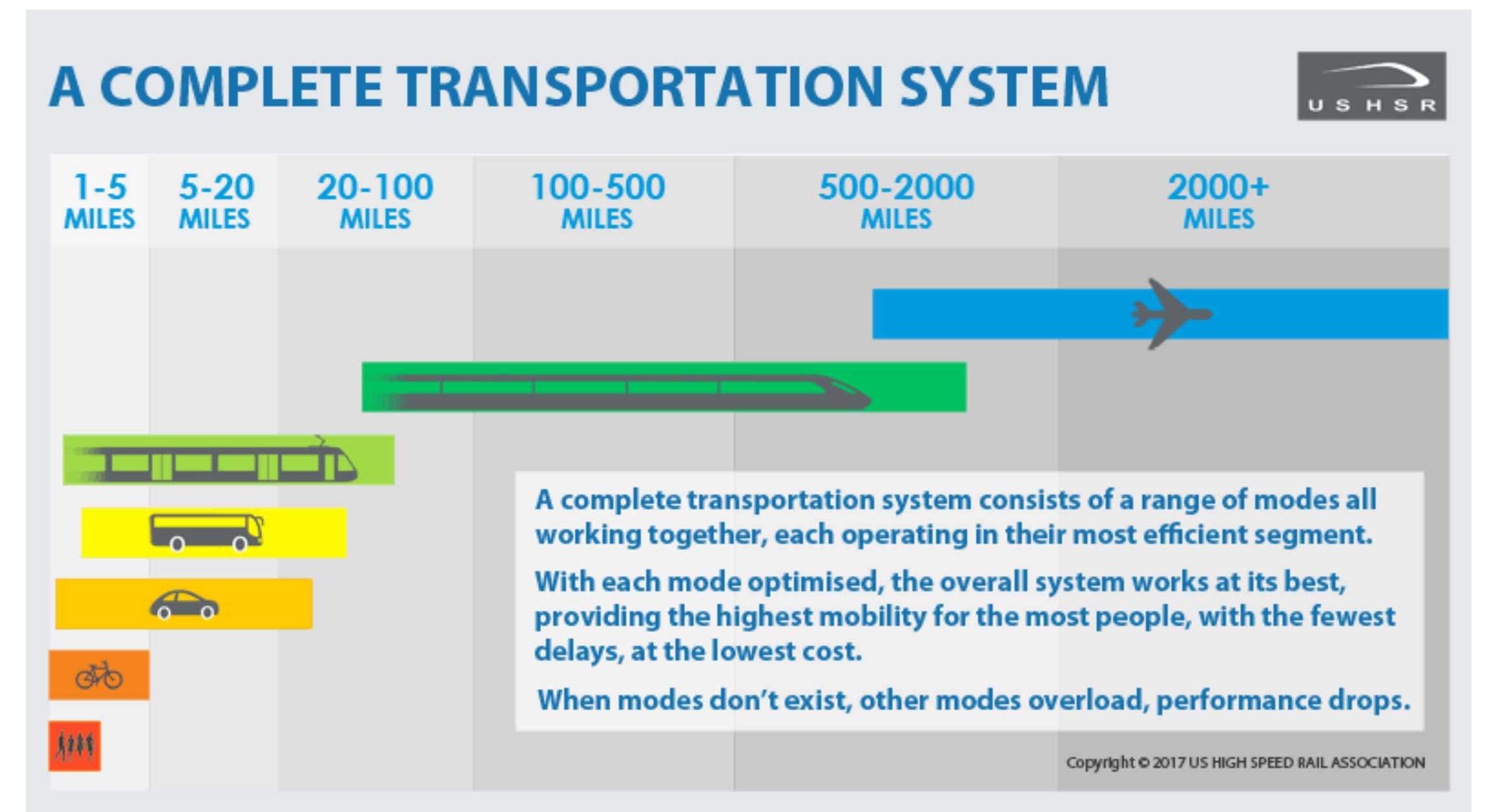
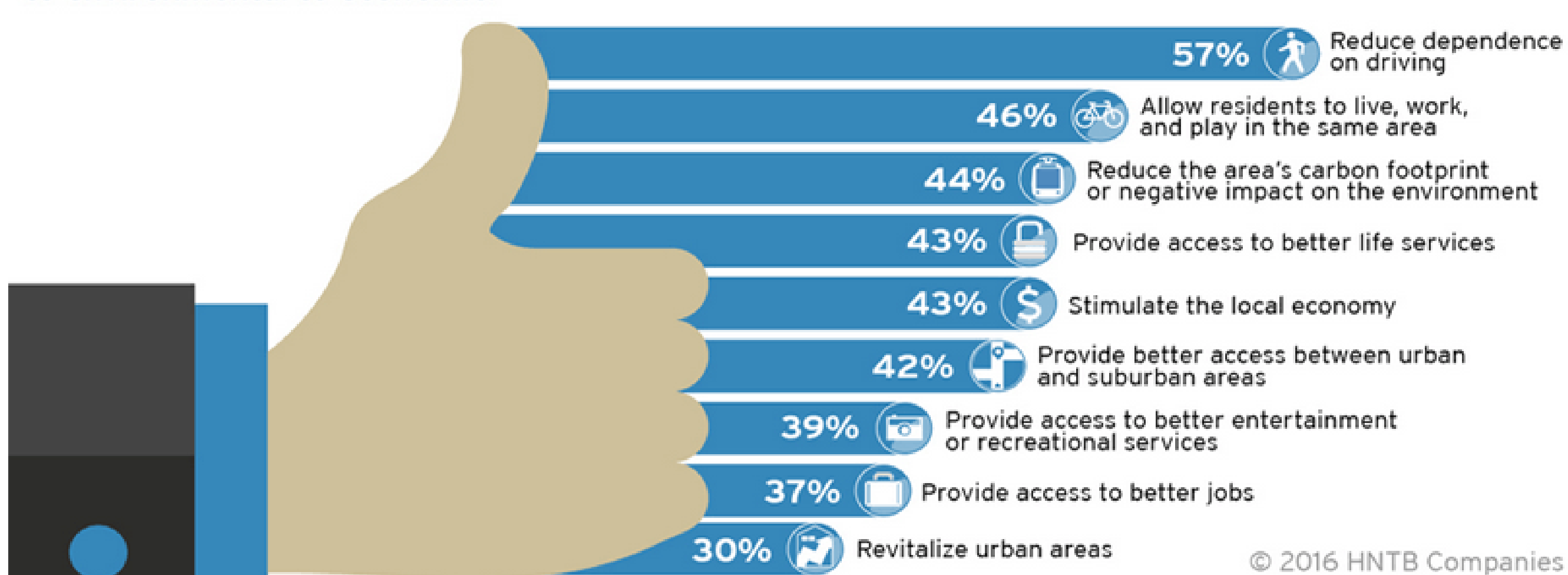
Transit Oriented Development is the creation of compact, walkable, pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use communities centered around high quality train systems.

- Transit Oriented Development Institute www.tod.org

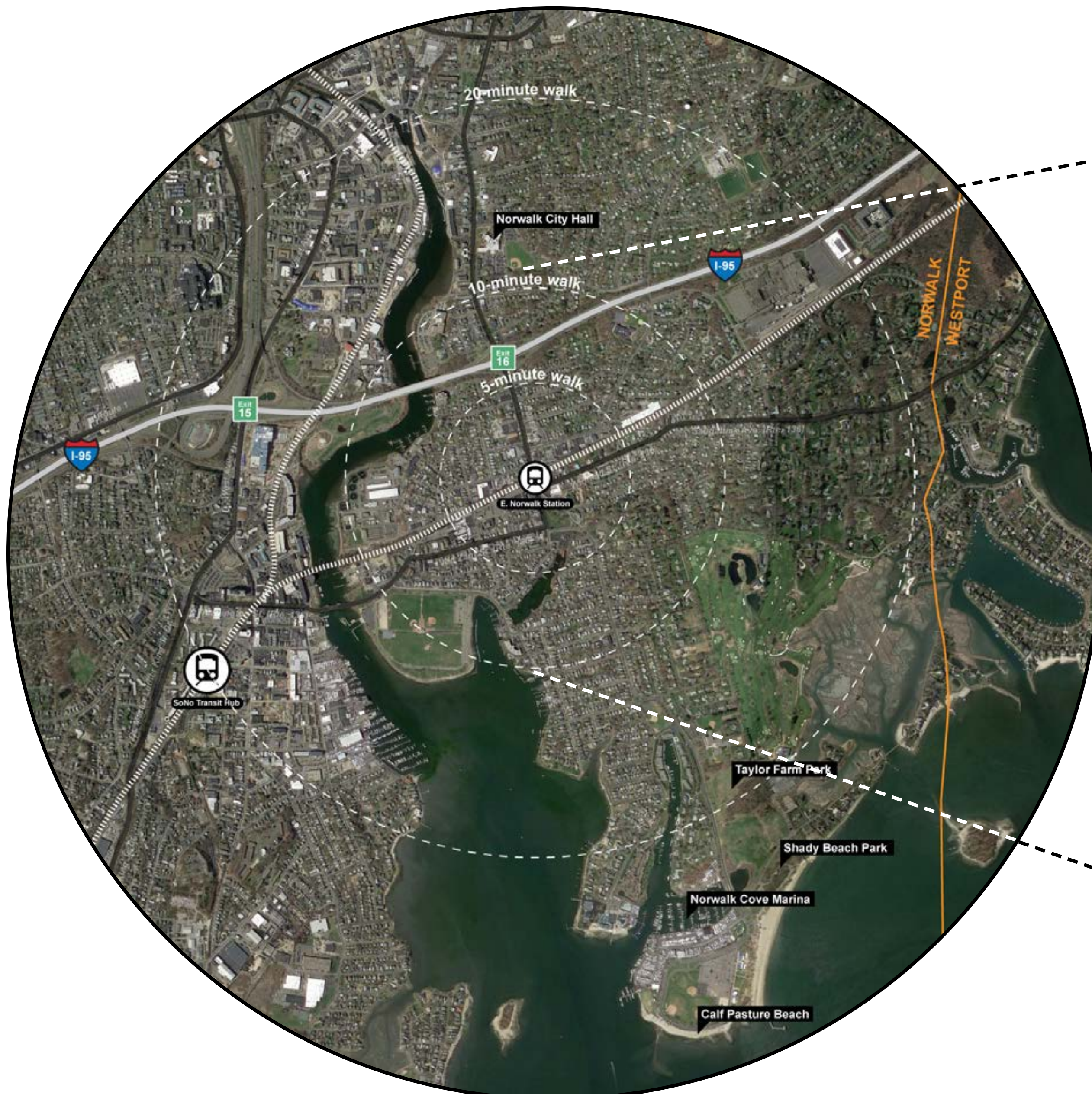


BENEFITS OF TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

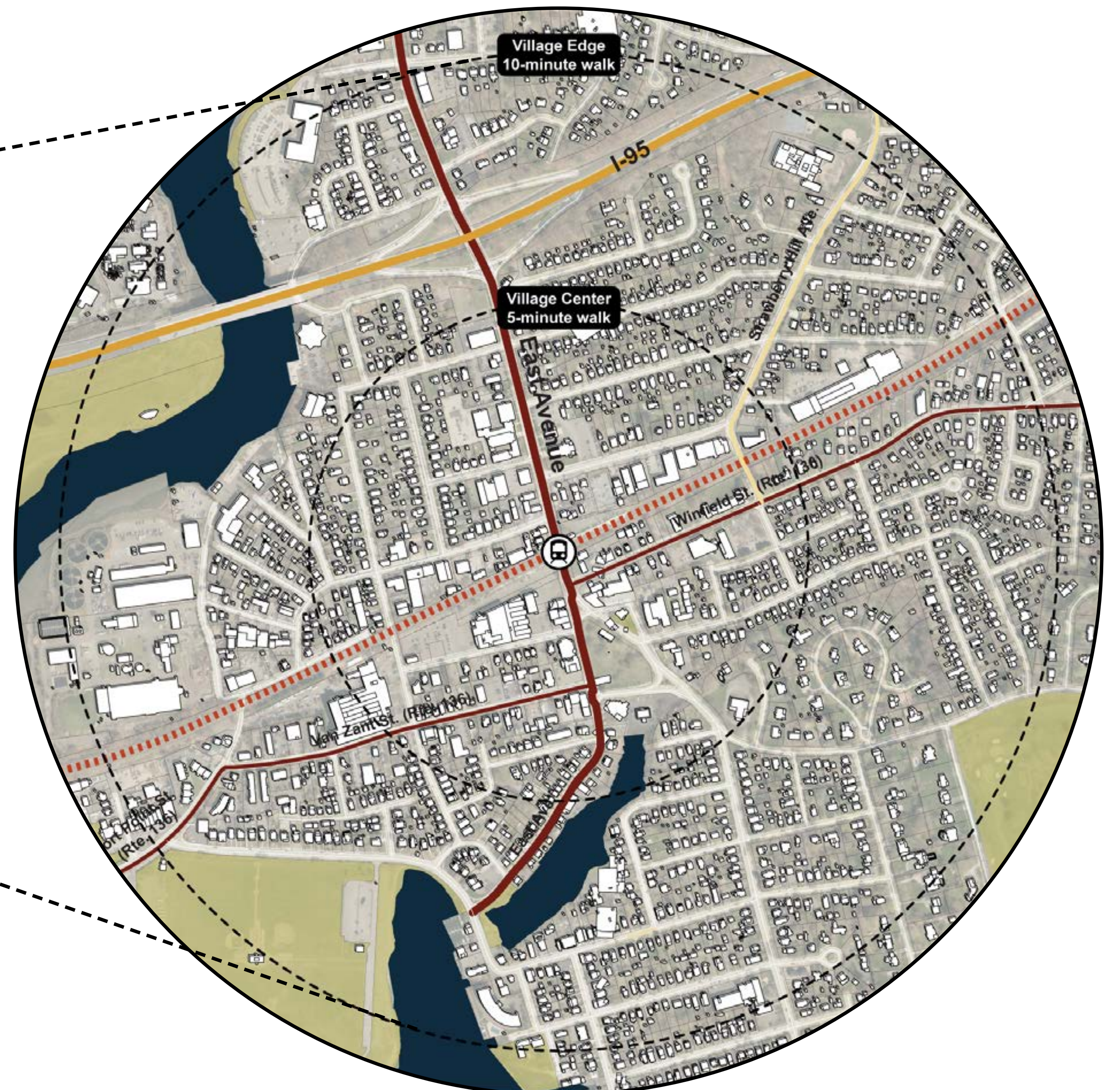
Americans believe transit oriented development provides an array of benefits ranging from lifestyle to environmental to economic.



WHAT IS THE EAST NORWALK TOD PLAN?



Context



Area of Study

WHAT WILL THE TOD PLAN DO?

The TOD Plan will act as a guideline for future development to ensure that any change happening within the East Norwalk neighborhood is compliant with the community's vision for growth.

"[Transit Oriented Development] is a strategy for growth that produces less traffic and lessens impact on roads and highways."

- Transit Oriented Development Toolkit for CT
www.psychousing.org/tod-ct

VISION AND GOALS FOR EAST NORWALK:



Quality of Life

A plan that enhances the quality of life for everyone including residents, visitors, business owners, and property owners.



Community-based

A plan that emerges out of the community engagement process – with participation of residents, business owners and property owners.



Balanced

A plan that balances beneficial economic growth with East Norwalk's neighborhood identity.



Neighborhood- focused

A plan that is focused on East Norwalk as a unique neighborhood within the City of Norwalk.



Co-ordinated

A plan that provides a coordinated basis for reinvestment and redevelopment.



Multi-modal

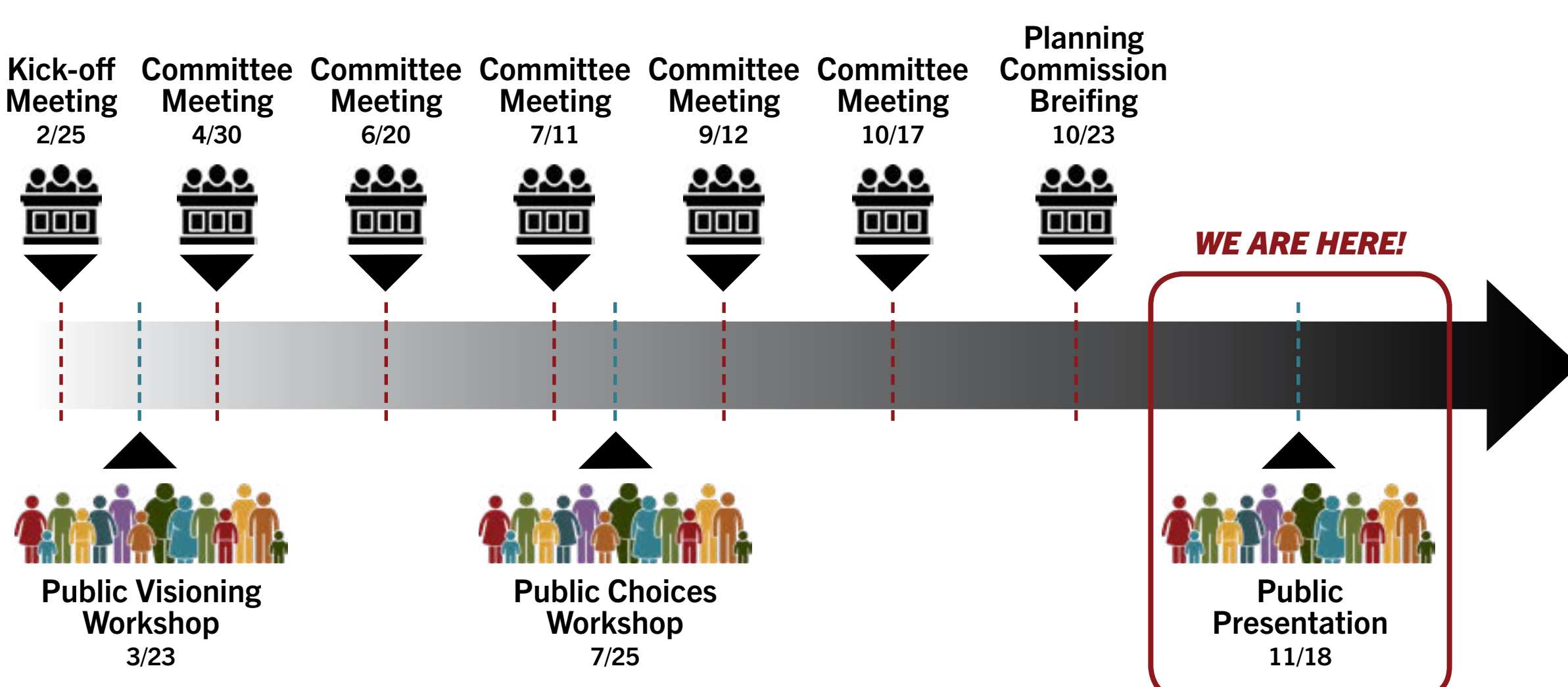
A plan that addresses needs of pedestrians, bikers, transit users and drivers for public health and safety.



New England Aesthetic

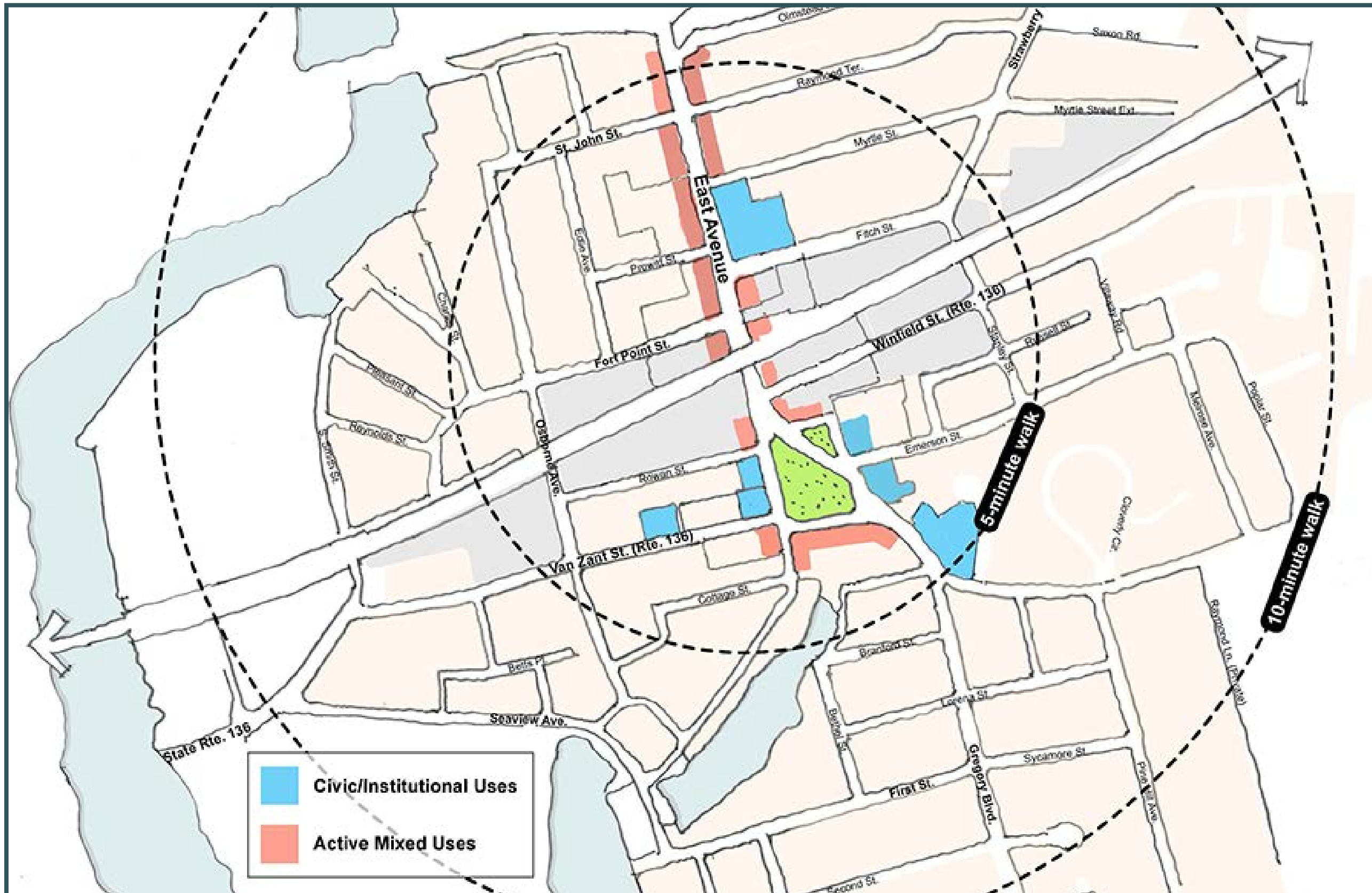
A plan that is contextually appropriate and enhances the local New England vernacular.

TIMELINE



3 CONCEPTS FOR THE EAST NORWALK TOD AREA

1: East Avenue Main Street



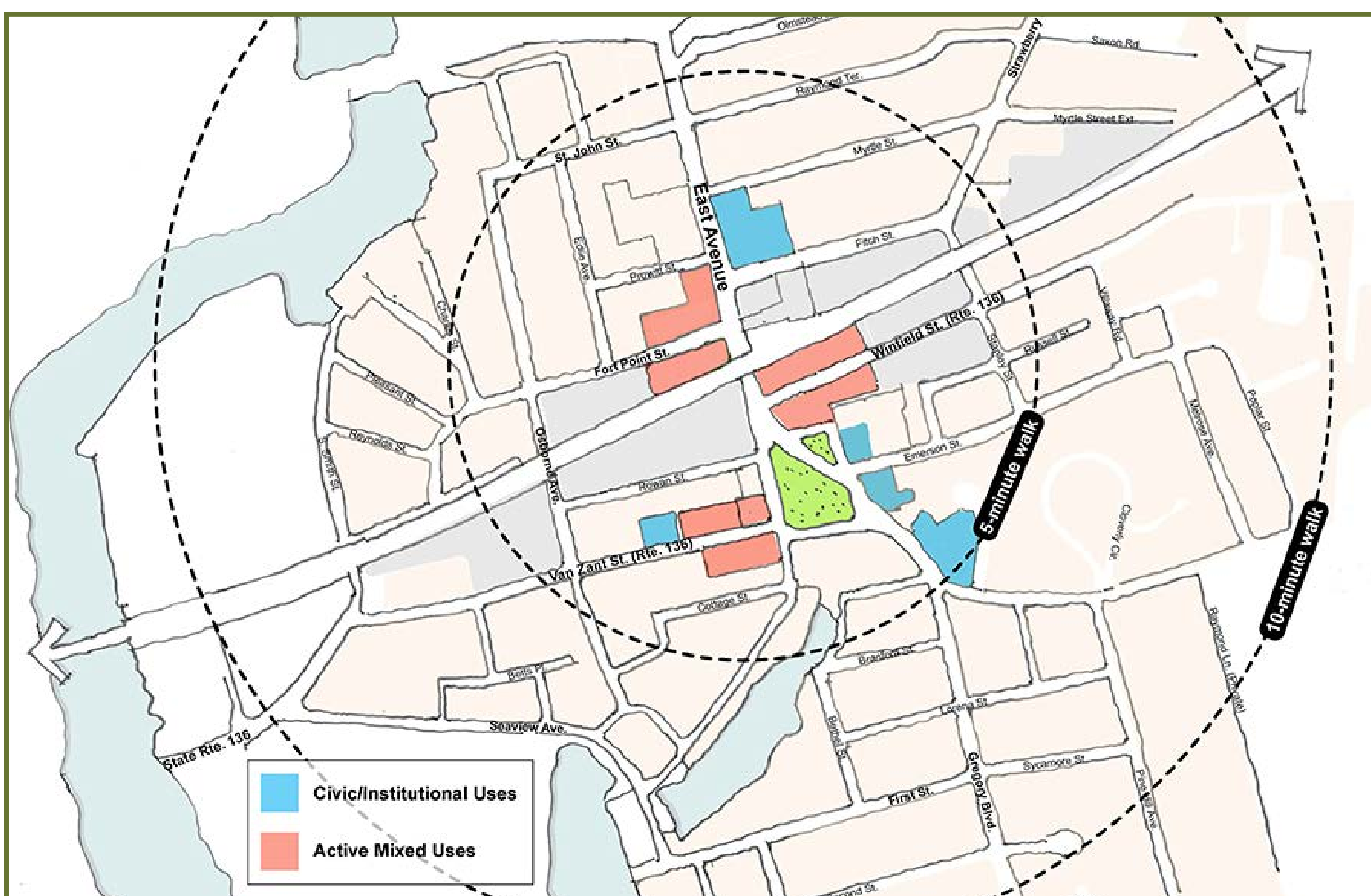
PROS

- Opportunity to develop a “Main Street” for East Norwalk
- Already existing systems of blocks, properties and streets

CONS

- Traffic concerns
- Institutional uses
- Narrow and small parcels on one side

2: Side Street Villages



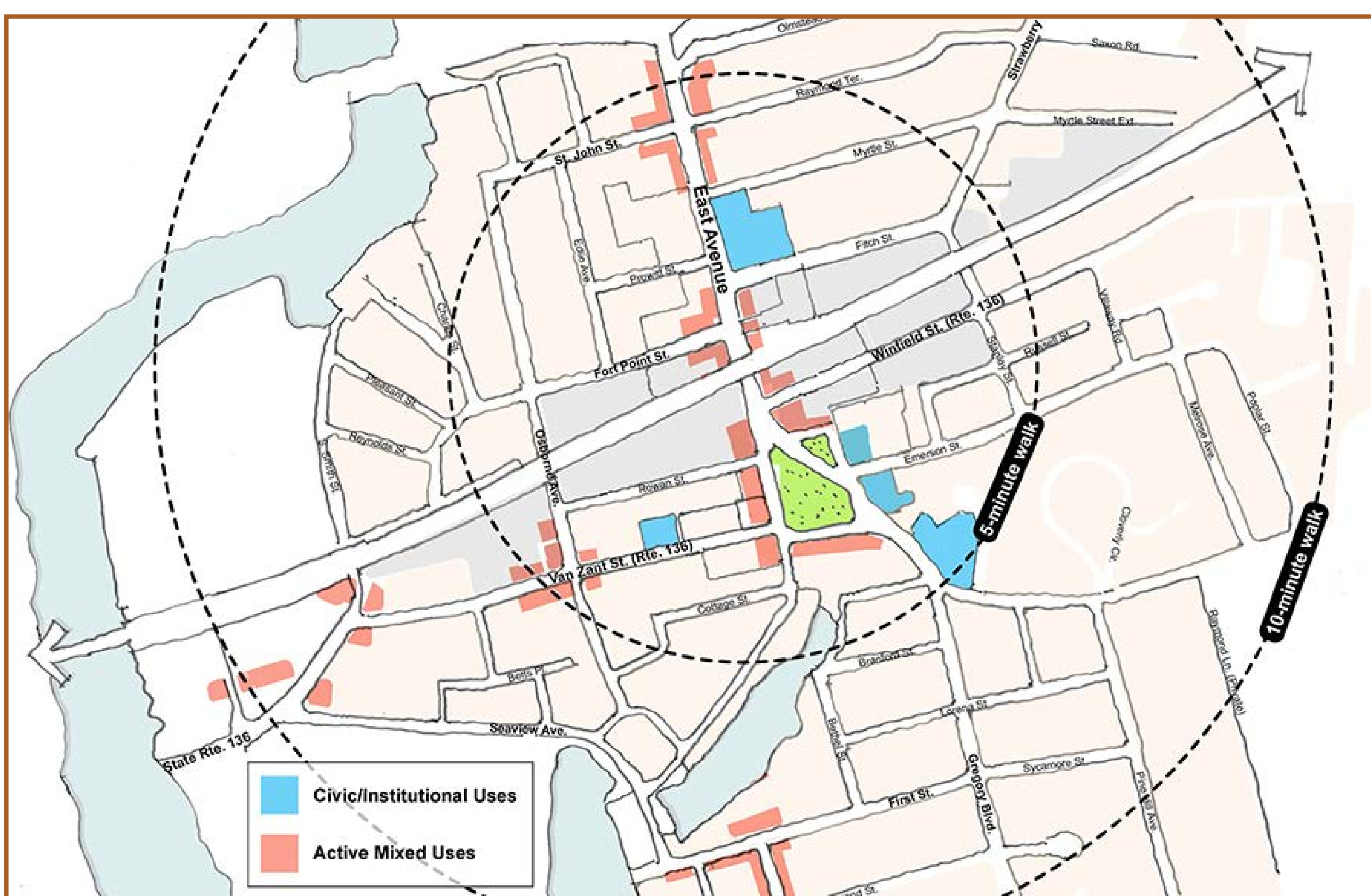
PROS

- Concentrated active land uses on side streets to create focused areas of activities
- Allows for neighborhood amenities to be located on streets with comparatively low traffic

CONS

- Smaller parcel sizes
- Parcel assembly, relaxed parking standards, shared parking may be required.

3: Community of Nodes



PROS

- Active land uses around existing identifiable places in the neighborhood
- Allows for incremental growth and build out of the nodes

CONS

- Smaller parcel sizes
- Relaxed parking standards, shared parking may be required

MARCH VISIONING WORKSHOP - WHAT WE HEARD

What does the area have now that you **want to keep**?

East Norwalk Library
Community
Taylor Farm Dog Park
Neighborhood
Sidewalks/Walkability
Diversity
Mike's Deli
Parks
Gas Stations
Waterfront
The Large Clock
Small Businesses
Restaurants
Don Carmelo's
On-Demand Bus
Village Feel
Beach
The Station House
Ice Cream Shop
Small Town
Train Station

What does the area have now that you **don't want to keep**?

Strawberry Hill/Fitch Ave. Bike Lane
Plan to Lower Train Road
Waste Treatment Plant
Illegal Apartments
1-95 Noise
Broken Sidewalks
Excess Automotive Strip Mall
Churches
5-6 Story Buildings
Crimes
Traffic
Poor Parking
Flooded
Speeding
Lanes Under Bridge
Blight
Excess Gas Stations
Poorly-Timed Traffic Lights
Dirty Underpasses
High-Density Housing
Winfield St. Dunkin Donuts
Liquor Stores
Illuminated Signage
Excess Laundromats
Out-Dated Commercial Spaces

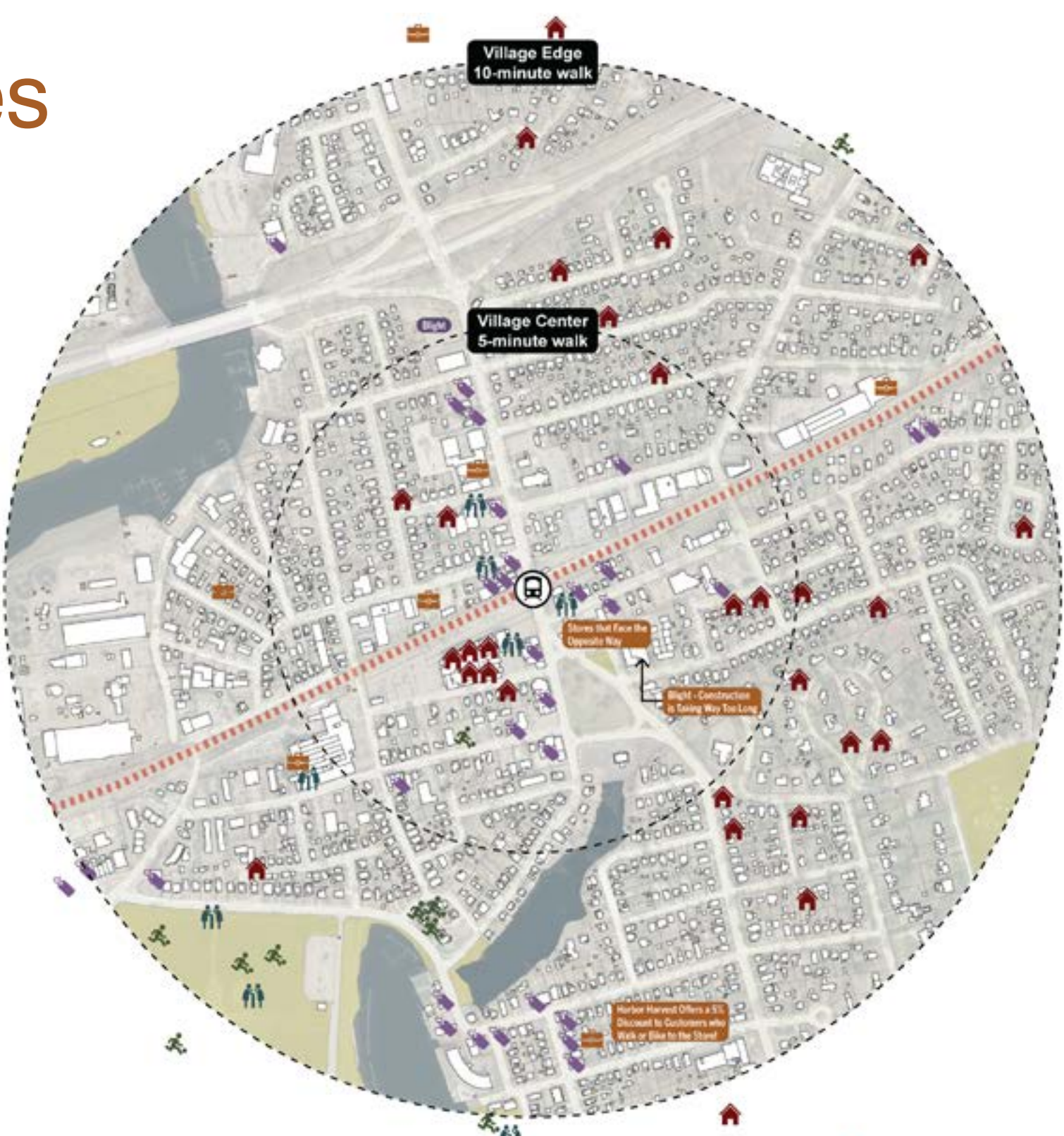
What would you **add to the area** that it doesn't have now?

Pedestrian-Friendly Streets
Community Center
Road Repair
Uniform Storefronts/Village Identity
Increased Security
Restaurants
Trolley
Parks
Traffic Control
Bike Lanes/Paths
Improved Sidewalks
Teen Center
Bike Racks
Grocery Store
Safe Pedestrian Access to Train
Small Businesses
Improved Storm-Water Management
Improved Signage
Police Sub-Station
Improved Recreation Trails

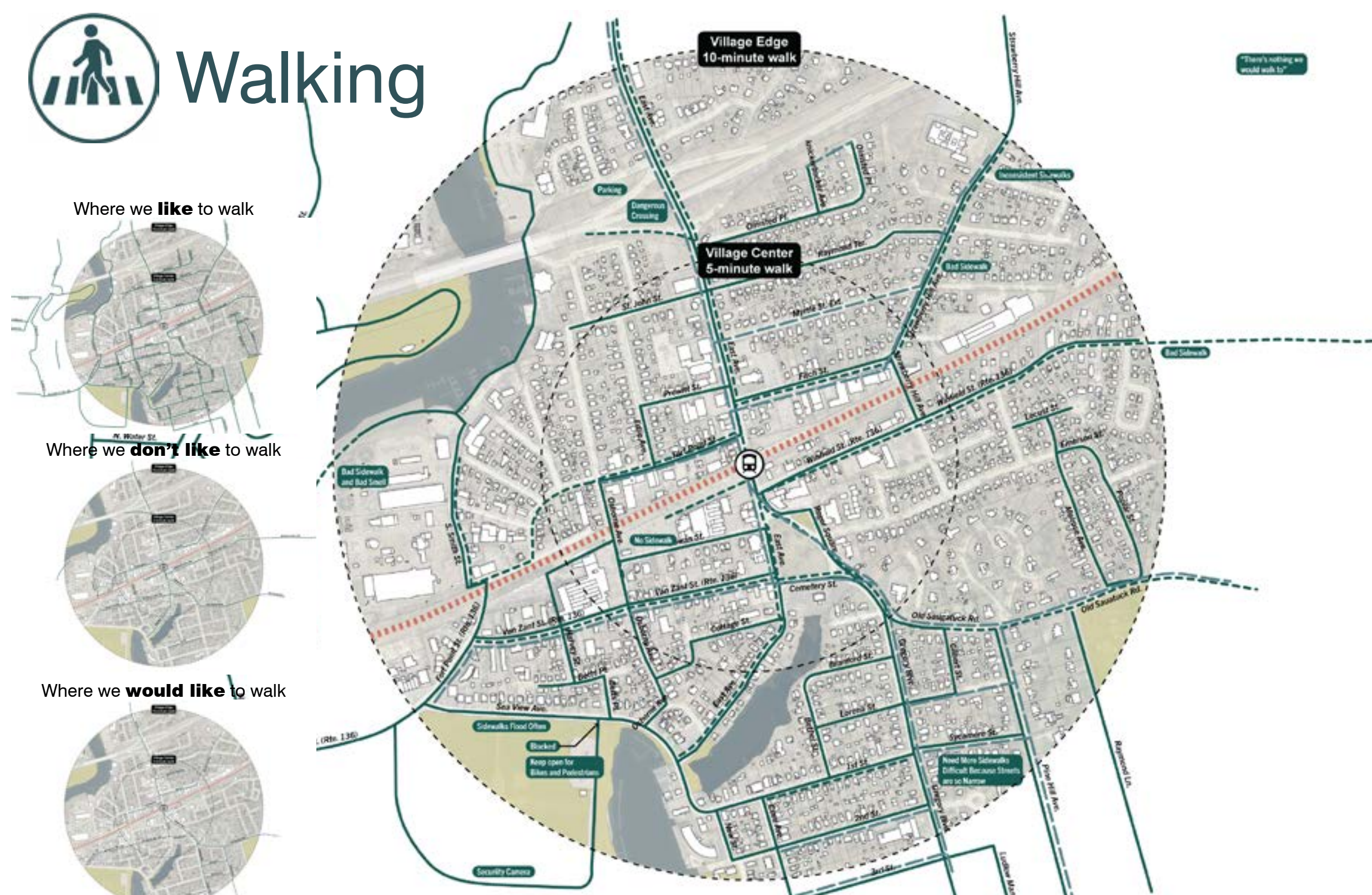
What would you **not add to the area** that it doesn't have now?

Lanes Added on East Ave
Trucks Past Fort Point St
Dense Development
Steel/Glass Buildings
More Traffic Lights
Expansion of Rte. 158
Condos
Bridge Design for Strafford
Sports Arenas
Box Stores (3-4+ Stories)
High-Rises (3-4+ Stories)
Apartments
More Traffic
Chain Retail
Business/Commercial Development
Grocery Store
Diamond Interchange
Deckless Bike or Scooter Share
Increased Vehicular Reliance
New Lift Railroad Bridge
More Housing

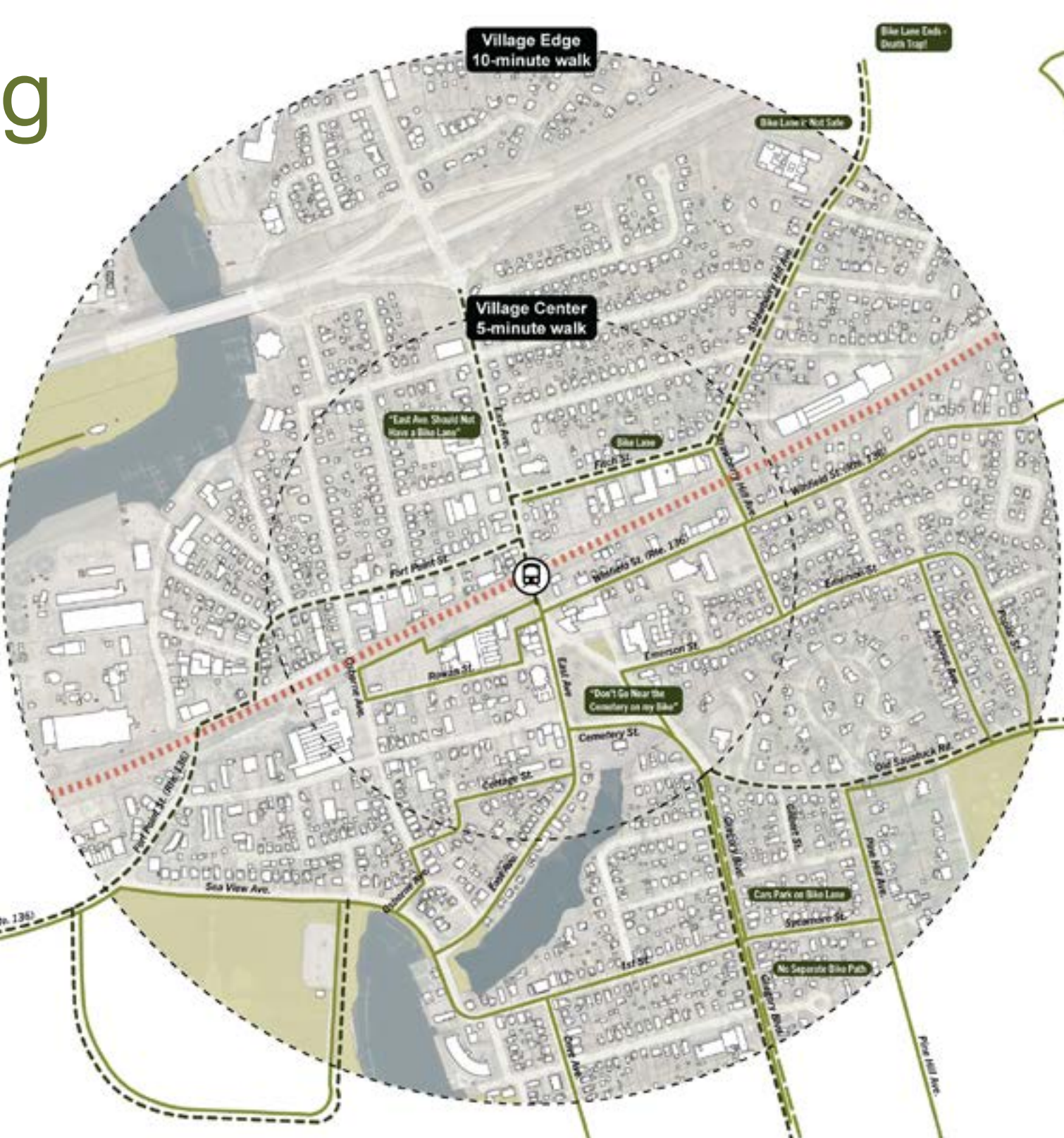
Places



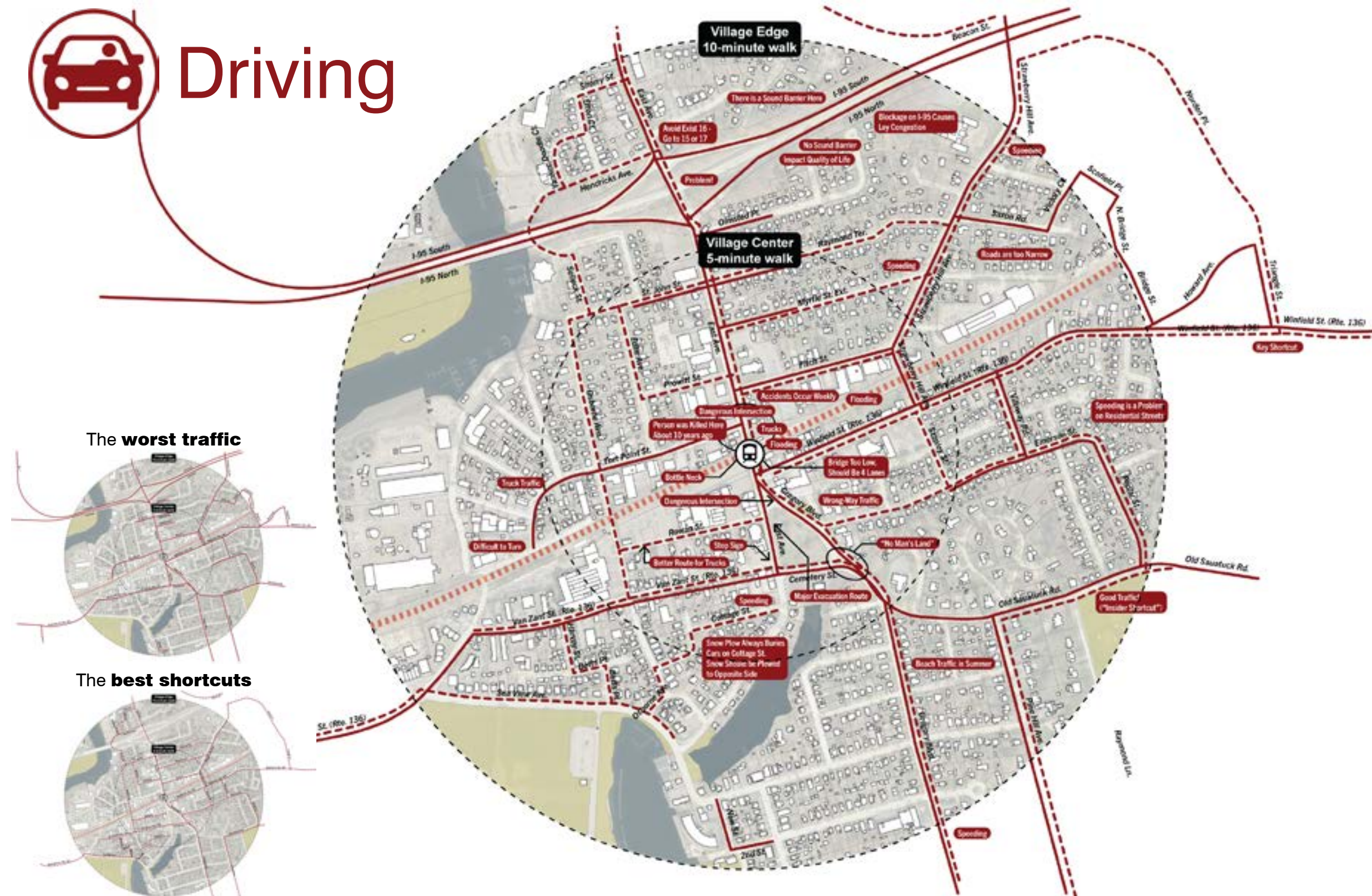
Walking



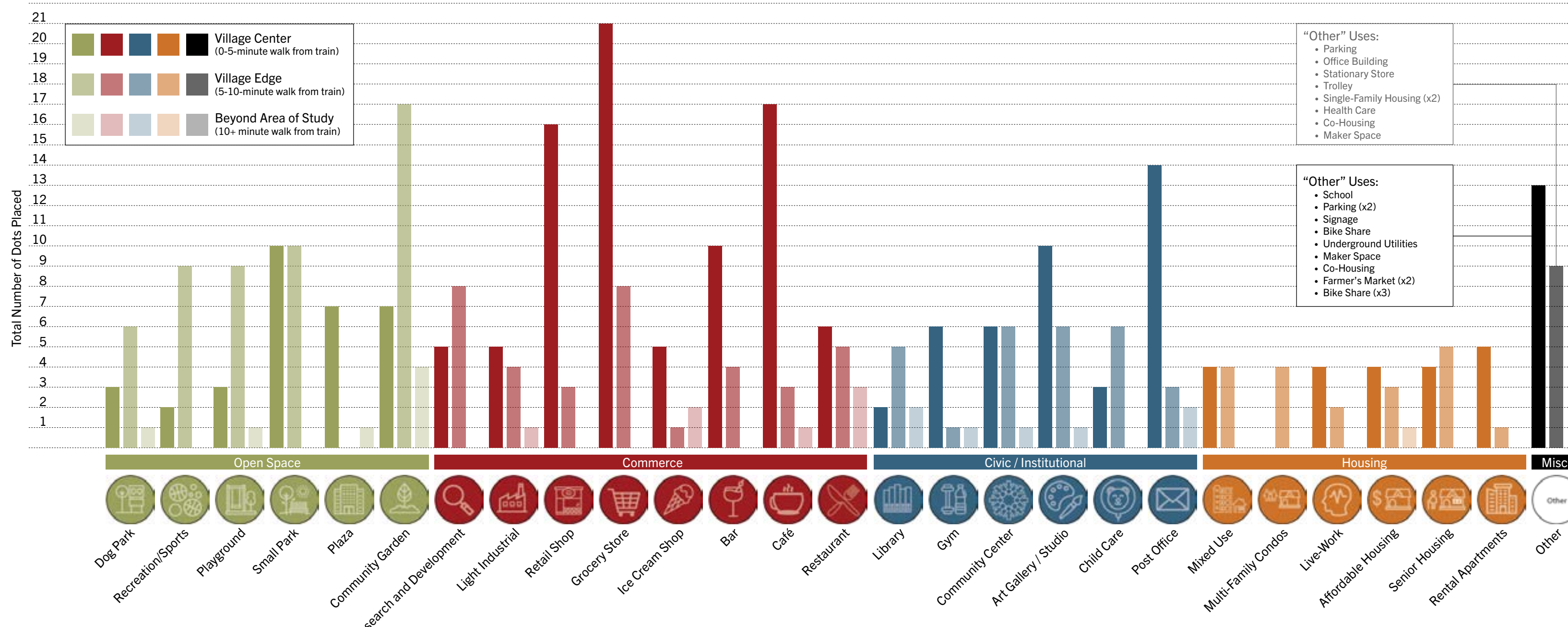
Biking



Driving



WHAT'S MISSING IN EAST NORWALK?

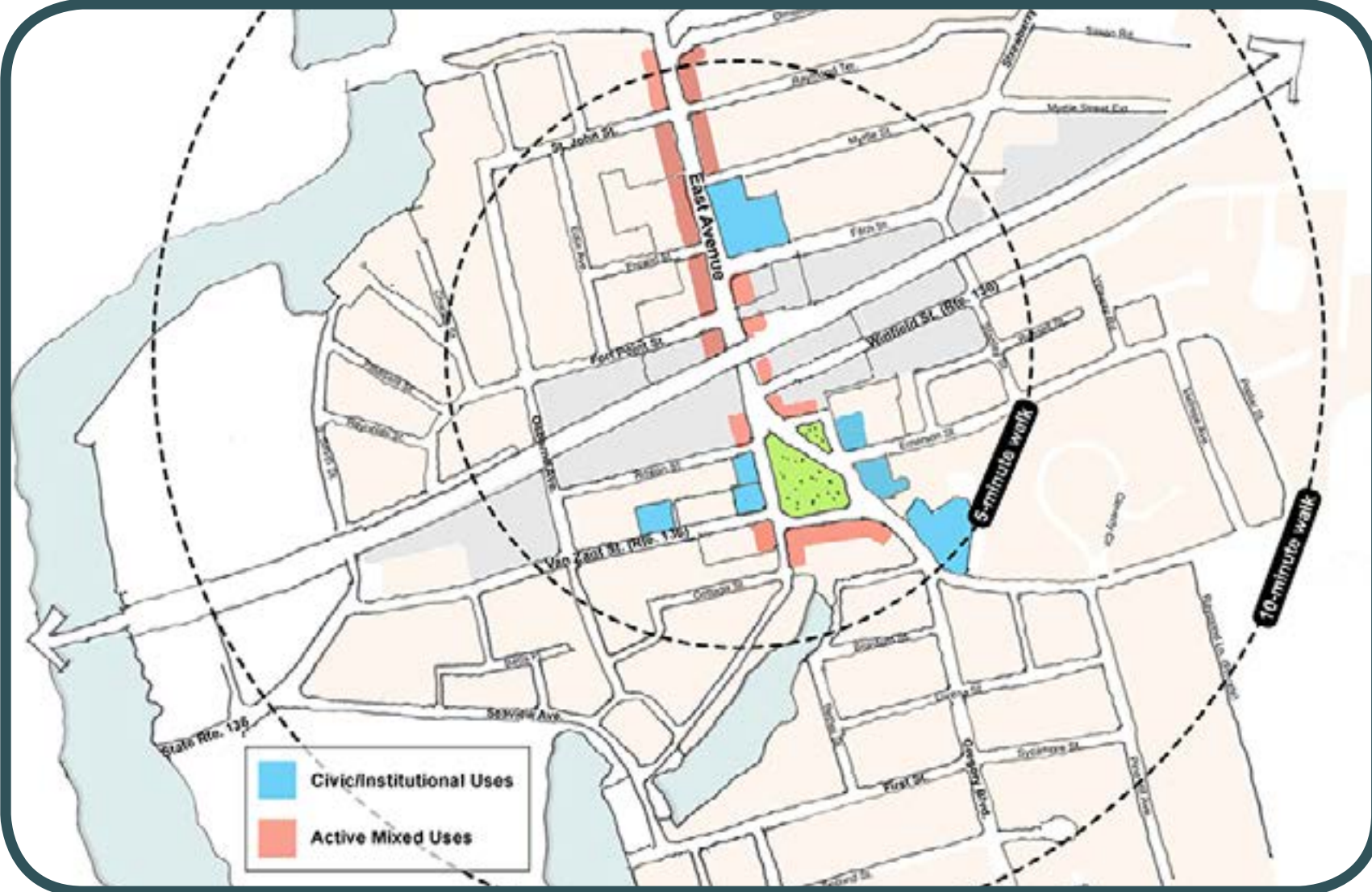
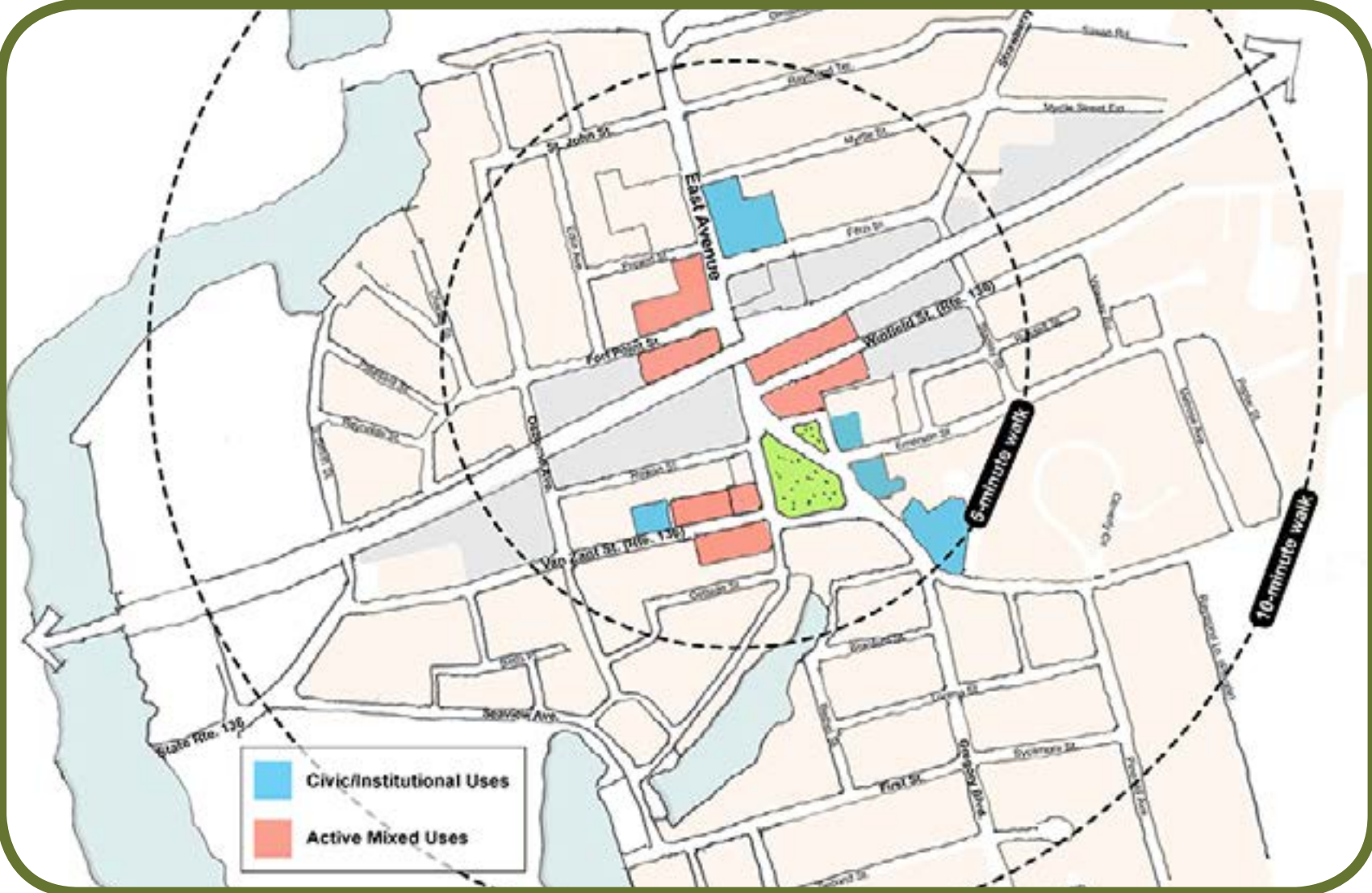
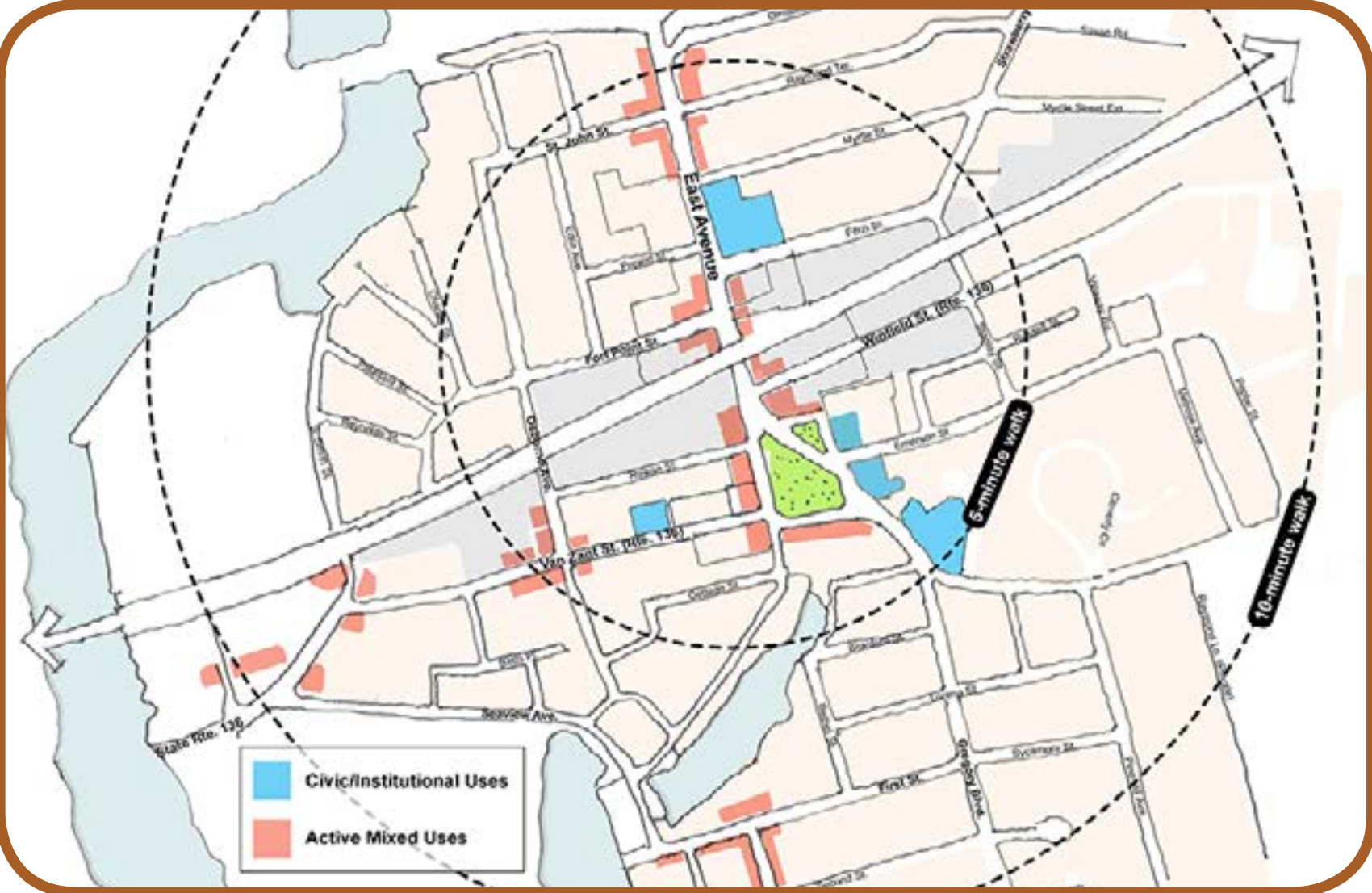


JULY CHOICES WORKSHOP - WHAT WE HEARD

VISUAL PREFERENCE SURVEY

	A: HOUSING	B: COMMERCIAL AND MIXED USES	C: CONNECTIVITY AND ACCESS	D: PUBLIC SPACE
 MOST DESIRABLE IMAGES	 2 Floors A-3	 Retail + 1fl Office B-1	 Crosswalk w/ Flashing Lights C-13	 Sidewalk - Retail Use D-8
	 2 Floors A-9	 Retail B-10	 Improved Signage C-16	 Sidewalk - Residential Use D-5
 LEAST DESIRABLE IMAGES	 4 Floors A-16	 Retail + 3fl Residential B-8	 Painted Sharrow Lane in Car Lane C-8	 Sidewalk - No Planting D-9

CONCEPT COMPARISON

1: EAST AVENUE MAIN STREET	2: SIDE STREET VILLAGES	3: COMMUNITY OF NODES
		
OPPORTUNITIES - Solve traffic problems on East Avenue - Improve pedestrian realm - fix broken sidewalks, add vegetation - Opportunity to revitalize into thriving economic corridor - Provide amenities that benefit all community members - East Avenue is already partially-developed as commercial - build off what is there - Preserve the fabric of the surrounding residential neighborhoods - Implement a trolley to relieve vehicular congestion and parking issues - Enhance ride shares - Support light industry and adaptive re-use with a historic/cultural focus CHALLENGES - The location of East Avenue, between I-95 to the north and the beach to the south, will make it challenging to solve traffic issues, as it will always be a desirable thoroughfare for cut-through traffic - Attracting more businesses and residents to East Avenue could further compound parking issues - Potential infrastructural limitations - sewage and trash removal	OPPORTUNITIES - More practical option - Allows for concentrated development to retain the existing fabric of residential neighborhoods, but doesn't concentrate it all in one place - Fewer traffic and parking issues - Parking requirements could be mandated by business type (20-minute parking at the deli vs. 2-hour parking at restaurants) - Shared parking lots - Build off existing developments underway (ie. Rowan Street across from 230 East Avenue development) - Enhance the public realm and streetscape environment while enhancing character and identities of distinct sub-areas CHALLENGES - Parking enforcement - Lighting - Proximity to residential homes - Traffic impacts on residents and commuters - Traffic - especially on Fort Point Street (alternate route for trucks needed) - Walkability and Safety	OPPORTUNITIES - People could spread out - would be more comfortable - Maintains walkability - Friendlier community environment - More traditional - more suitable to New England coastal village identity - Small neighborhood pockets with amenities - Community garden with a farmer's market - Could be implemented in phases over time, rather than bringing sweeping change to the neighborhood all at once - Enhance affordability and mixed-income character of the neighborhood CHALLENGES - May be difficult for businesses to thrive with this type of sprawl - Mixed-use zoning could lead to undesirable results - rules and incentives could be too complicated - May have a snowball effect leading to more development - By spreading out the development, the look and feel of the overall neighborhood could change drastically - Traffic would also be spread out, rather than remaining on a few challenging roads

HYBRID OPTION

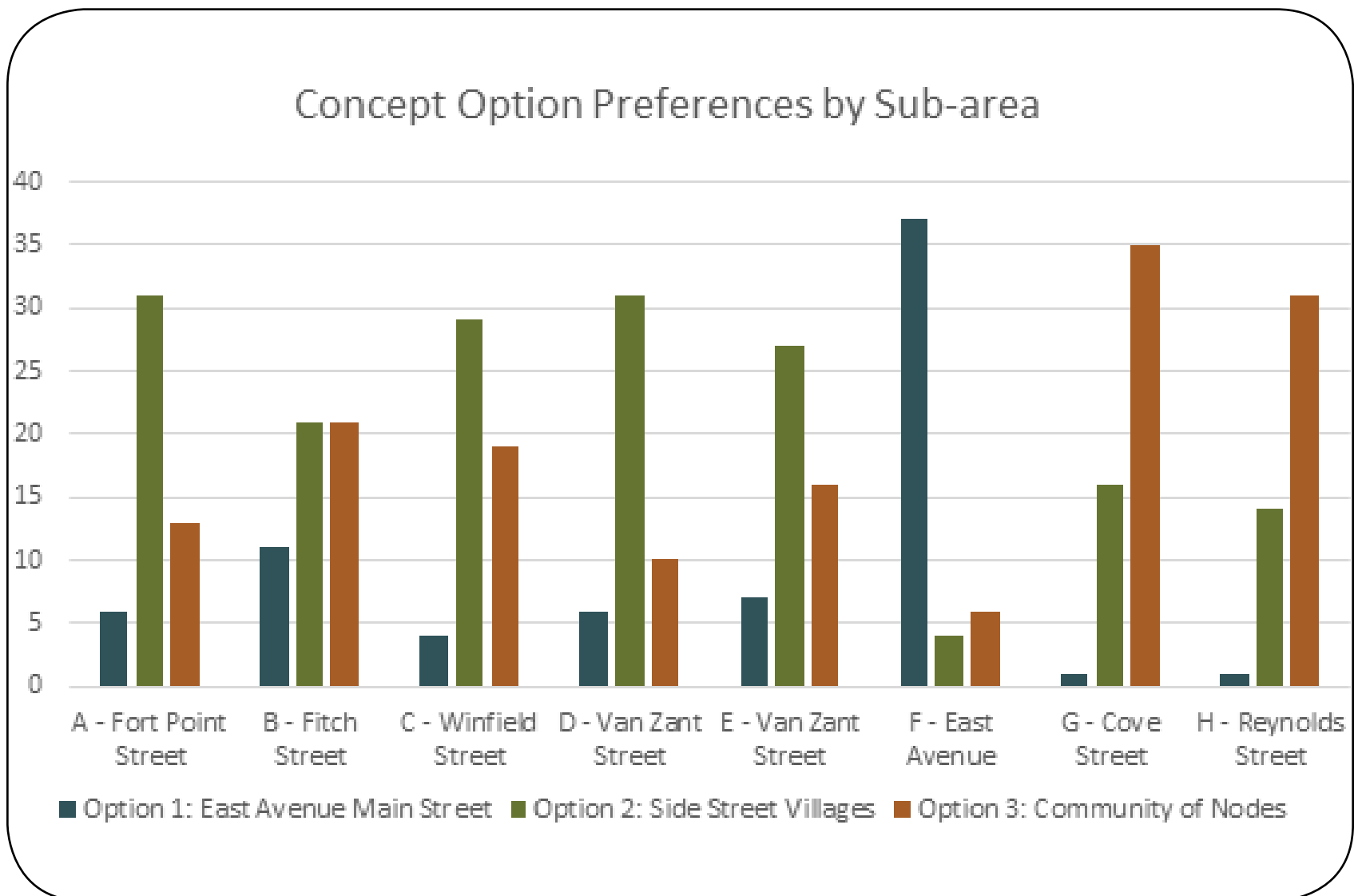
After discussing the potential opportunities and challenges of each of the three proposed approaches to planning the East Norwalk TOD (above), participants were asked to consider which of the 8 identified sub-areas within the study area (see center right map) each option would be most suitable to.

The graph to the far right captures the results of the feedback received and reveals a distinct pattern, offering a clear approach to a hybrid of the three options.

Overall, "Option 2: Side Street Villages" is the most preferred option for areas A (Fort Point Street), B (Fitch Street), C (Winfield Street), D (Van Zant Street), and E (Van Zant Street). "Option 1: East Avenue Main Street" is preferred for area F (East Avenue) and "Option 3: Community of Nodes" was deemed as more appropriate in areas G (Cove Street) and H (Reynolds Street).

Given the distinct character and identity of the 8 sub-areas, a hybrid of the 3 planning approaches would allow future development to achieve a more nuanced contextual fit.

Participants have expressed strong enthusiasm for many of the features and characteristics of the existing East Norwalk neighborhood. Striking a balance between preserving the existing fabric and providing opportunities for equitable economic growth will be key in achieving the community's vision for the future of East Norwalk.





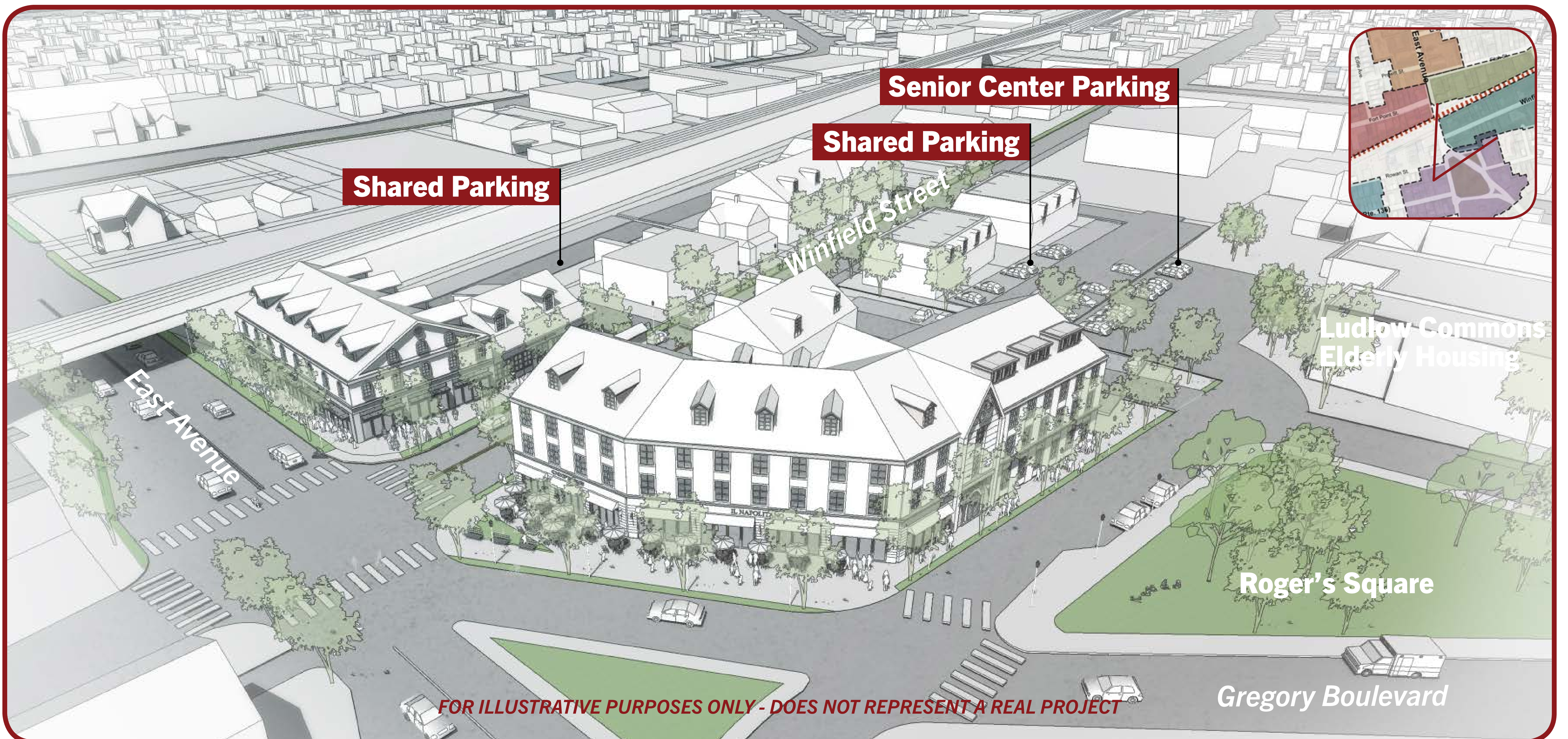
APPROPRIATE STRATEGIES BASED ON COMMUNITY PREFERENCES

Winfield Street Node - Existing Conditions



Keys to Success

- Focused area of activities
- Mix of uses
- Appropriately scaled



SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS



Appropriate Strategies Based on Community Preferences



Preserve and enhance existing residential neighborhoods



Support existing economic development activity along Fort Point Street, Fitch Street, and Van Zant Street



Concentrate active land uses on side streets and important nodes to create focused areas of activities



Encourage neighborhood-scaled built form for future developments with additional height and density closer to the train station and important nodes



Improve Mobility for Everyone



Promote traffic calming on local streets

- Traffic calming tools and methods to slow traffic and discourage cut-through traffic
- Examine two-way traffic circulation options around the Cemetery



Improved pedestrian connectivity and accessibility

- Reduce asphalt area, reclaim excess asphalt area for pedestrians
- Accessibility improvements with sidewalk extensions, new sidewalks



Improve bicycle rider comfort and safety

- Connect bike routes
- Road signage to increase driver awareness



Improve bicycle facilities

- Reconfigured bike lane to improve safety



Manage Parking on City Streets and Lots



Reduce parking conflicts

- Explore the potential for residential/business permit parking program
- Parking management and enforcement of on-street parking



Manage parking supply

- Shared parking and shared curb cuts to manage supply and increase pedestrian safety
- Convenient payment systems, wayfinding, and signage



Reduce parking demand

- Promote walking and bicycle use
- Unbundle parking spaces from future mixed-use developments
- Increase turn-over of prime on-street parking



Enhance Leisure Opportunities



Create active and connected pedestrian realm and open spaces

- Wider sidewalks, mid-block crossings, pocket parks, plazas, community gardens and publicly accessible open spaces
- Restore ground level activity to create attractive street fronts



Enhance access to water

- Connected trail system, improved sidewalks, and wayfinding



Promote new open spaces

- Seaview Avenue as pedestrian promenade for the entire City of Norwalk
- East Norwalk Historical Cemetery as a respectful open space



APPROPRIATE STRATEGIES BASED ON COMMUNITY PREFERENCES

Please vote on your top 10 priorities by placing a dot below the recommendation.



Preserve and enhance existing residential neighborhoods

Two rows of 15 empty circles each for voting.



Support existing economic development activity along Fort Point Street, Fitch Street, and Van Zant Street

Two rows of 15 empty circles each for voting.



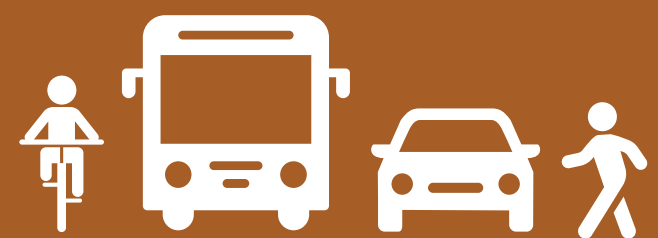
Concentrate active land uses on side streets and important nodes to create focused areas of activities

Two rows of 15 empty circles each for voting.



Encourage neighborhood-scaled built form for future developments with additional height and density closer to the train station and important nodes

Two rows of 15 empty circles each for voting.



IMPROVE MOBILITY FOR EVERYONE

Please vote on your top 10 priorities by placing a dot below the recommendation.



Promote traffic calming on local streets

Traffic calming tools and methods to slow traffic and discourage cut-through traffic

40 empty circles for voting.

Examine two-way traffic circulation options around the Cemetery

40 empty circles for voting.



Improved pedestrian connectivity and accessibility

Reduce asphalt area, reclaim excess asphalt area for pedestrians

40 empty circles for voting.

Accessibility improvements with sidewalk extensions, new sidewalks

40 empty circles for voting.



Improve bicycle rider comfort and safety

Connect bike routes

40 empty circles for voting.

Road signage to increase driver awareness

40 empty circles for voting.



Improve bicycle facilities

Reconfigured bike lane to improve safety

40 empty circles for voting.



MANAGE PARKING ON CITY STREETS AND LOTS

Please vote on your top 10 priorities by placing a dot below the recommendation.



Reduce parking conflicts

Explore the potential for residential/business permit parking program

Two rows of 20 empty circles each for voting.

Parking management and enforcement of on-street parking

Two rows of 20 empty circles each for voting.



Manage parking supply

Shared parking and shared curb cuts to manage supply and increase pedestrian safety

Two rows of 20 empty circles each for voting.

Convenient payment systems, wayfinding, and signage

Two rows of 20 empty circles each for voting.



Reduce Parking Demand

Promote walking and bicycle use

Two rows of 20 empty circles each for voting.

Unbundle parking spaces from future mixed-use developments

Two rows of 20 empty circles each for voting.

Increase turn-over of prime on-street parking

Two rows of 20 empty circles each for voting.



Wider sidewalks, mid-block crossings, pocket parks, plazas, community gardens and publicly accessible open spaces





Review of Economic Development Tools

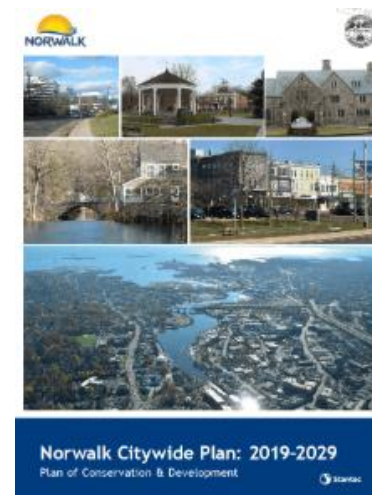
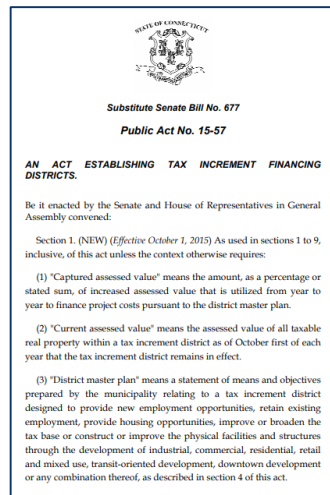
12/5/2019

Overview

- Existing Economic Development Tools
- Expanding the City of Norwalk's Economic Development Tools, for Discussion
 - Enterprise Zone (EZ)
 - Tax Increment Financing District
- Discussion of Possible Next Steps

Economic Development Tools

- Enterprise Zone adoption, adopted in 1982
- Opportunity Zone program, announced in 2017
- Wall Street/West Avenue Redevelopment Plan, May 2019
- Zoning adopted in the Central Business District, June 2019
- Small Business and Main Street Program, November 2019
- Plan of Conservation and Development, December 2019
- New development interest and investment



New Ideas for the Toolkit For Consideration

- To continue further growth and development in the neighborhoods, new tools continue to be explored by the City.
- In this discussion, we will focus on:
 - Expanding the Enterprise Zone to include the Wall Street/West Avenue neighborhood.
 - Adopting a new tool, Tax Incremental Financing.

Enterprise Zone

Goal:

Intended to encourage development in deprived neighborhoods through tax and regulatory relief.

Location:

A geography where taxes are abated, as of right, for a period of seven years. Census Tracts must meet one of the following criteria:

- 25% or more people below the poverty level;
- 25% or more of the families receive public assistance or welfare income; or
- The unemployment rate is at least two hundred per cent of the state's average.

Connecticut:

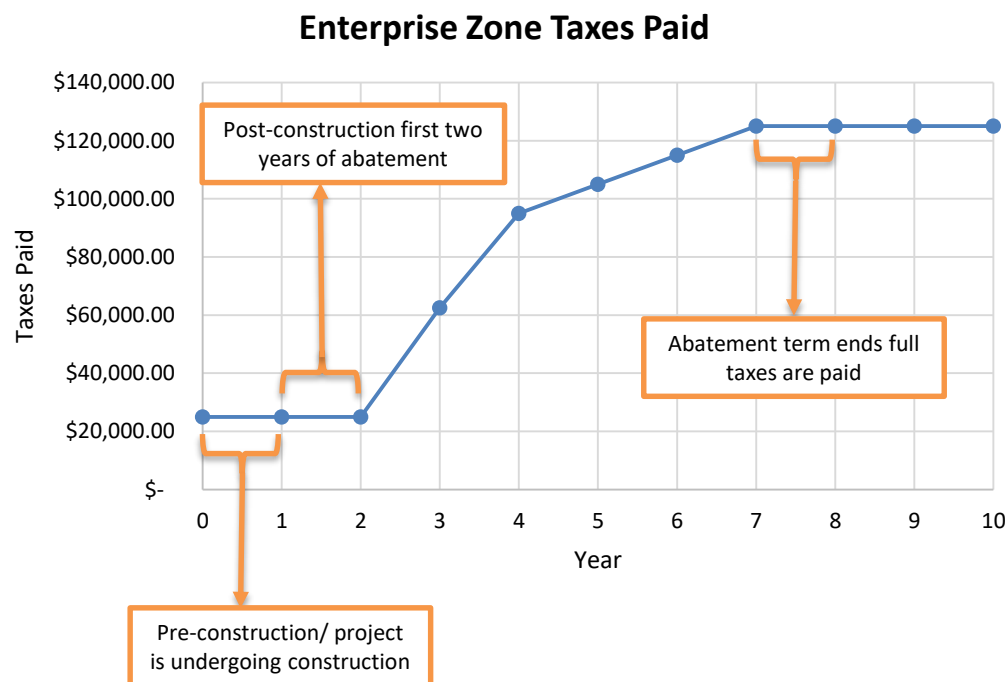
In Connecticut, 17 municipalities have Enterprise Zones

How an Enterprise Zone Works

Taxes on improvements to any property within the geography are deferred for a period of 7 years according to the following schedule:

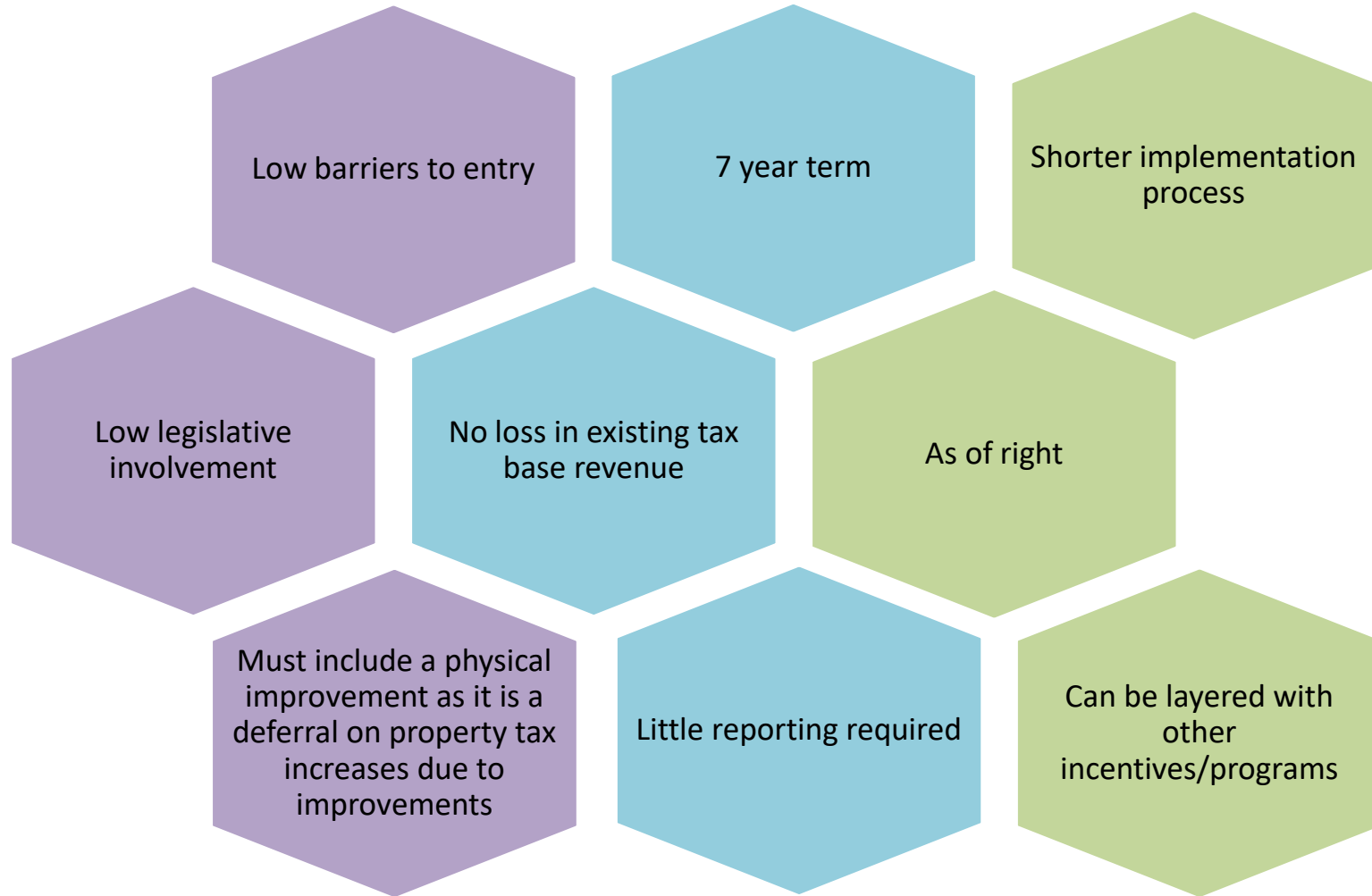
- 100% for the first two years
- 50% for the 3rd year
- 40% for the 4th year
- 30% for the 5th year
- 20% for the 6th year
- 10% for the 7th year
- After the 7 year term, taxes will be at the true rate.

*If used for housing development, units must be affordable to 200% of the area median income or abatement will be revoked.

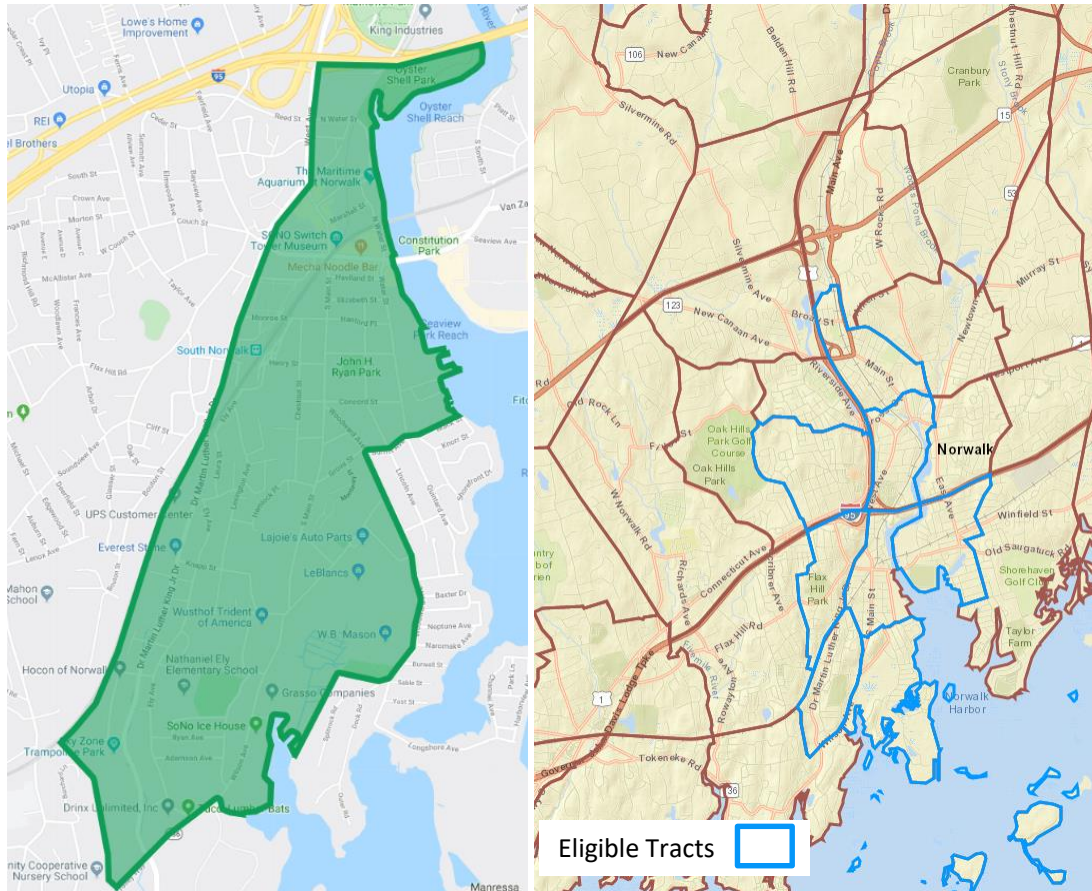


*Note: This graph does not account for property deterioration or mill rate adjustments

Key Facts



If Norwalk was to consider expanding the Enterprise Zone, the Process would include:



If we were to expand the Enterprise Zone, the process would be:

1. Public hearing held at a Planning Committee Meeting
2. Planning Committee votes on the enterprise zone extension to be forwarded to the Ordinance Committee to amend the current EZ ordinance
3. Ordinance Committee holds a public hearing and amends the Enterprise Zone ordinance
4. Common Council votes on the ordinance language
5. If approved, the property owners can take advantage of the tax deferral as of right

The Enterprise Zone in Norwalk, To Date

- Since 2007, four projects have received a tax abatement through the Enterprise Zone program.
- More recent projects include the Iron Works multi use development, the SoNo Hotel and the SoNo Collection
- The program added \$6,855,500 of tax revenue to the grand list while the abatement totaled \$1,341,980*

*this calculation does not yet include the SoNo Collection as it recently completed construction



Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District



Goal:

A public financing method and value capture strategy that is used as a subsidy for redevelopment, infrastructure, and other community-improvement projects or programs in a defined geography.

Location:

Designated through a local process.

Connecticut:

In 2016, the Legislature adopted amendments to the TIF program to ease use at the local level. In Connecticut, 12 municipalities have adopted TIF Districts.



TIF, Eligibility Criteria

1. A portion of the real property within a tax increment district shall meet at least one of the following criteria:
 - a) Be a substandard, insanitary, deteriorated, deteriorating or blighted area;
 - b) Be in need of rehabilitation, redevelopment or conservation work; or
 - c) Be suitable for industrial, commercial, residential, mixed-use or retail uses, downtown development or transit-oriented development.

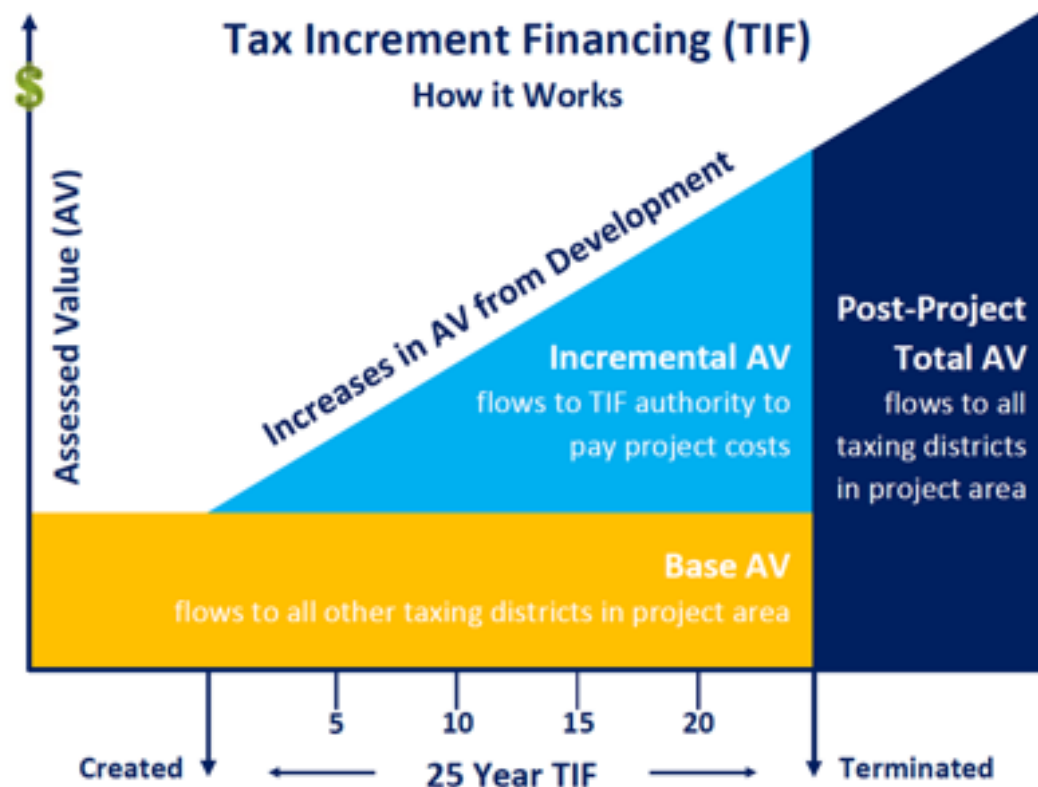
AND

2. Property within the TIF district cannot be more than 10% of the total taxable property in the municipality

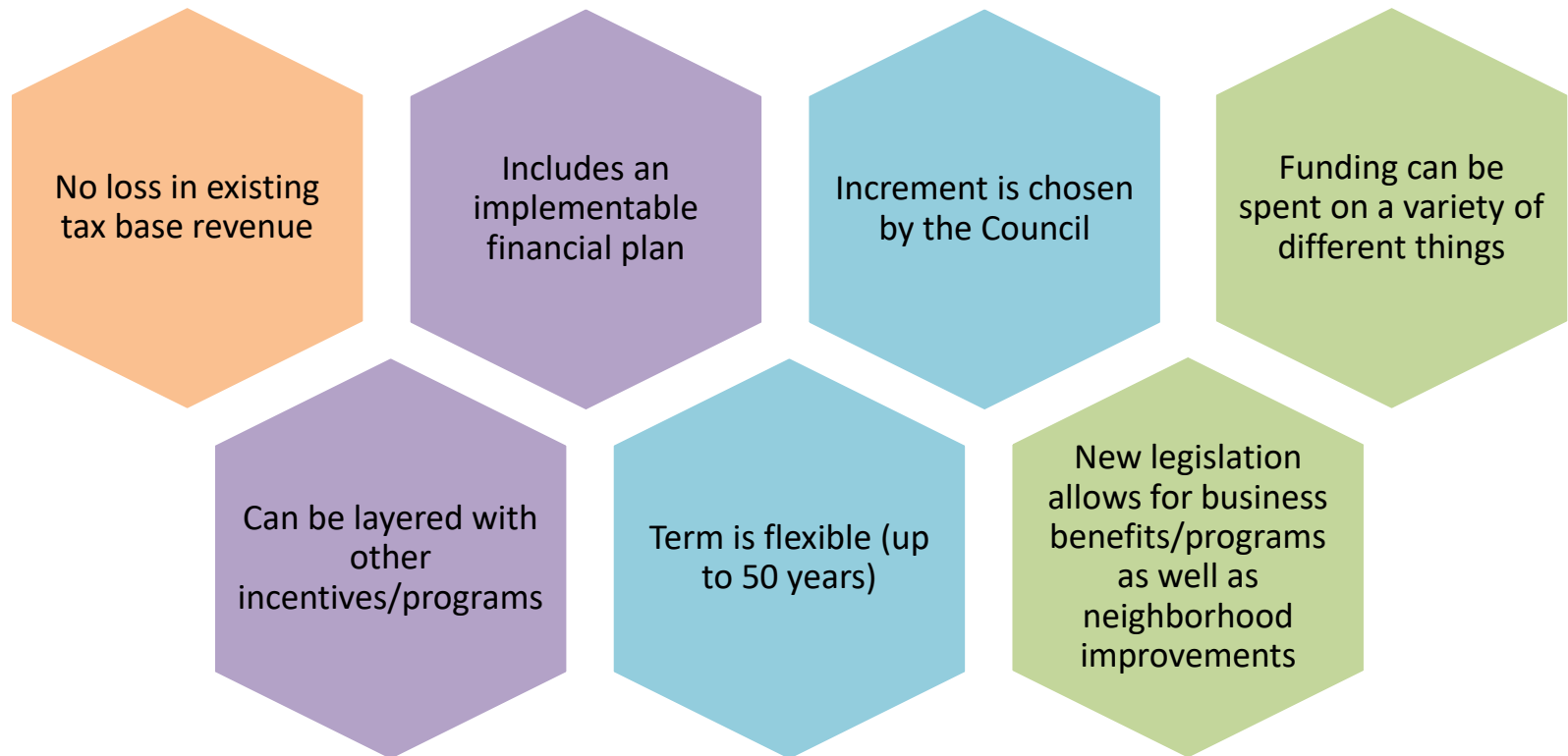


How a TIF Works

- As property values rise, rather than collecting the increased taxes from TIF district properties, the city splits the property tax revenues into **two streams**.
- The first stream is set at the original amount of the property value before the increase, known as the “**base rate**.” This stream continues to go to the general fund.
- The second stream containing the additional tax money generated by the higher property value, or the “**tax increment**”, is kept separate and used to pay for items identified in the TIF financial plan.



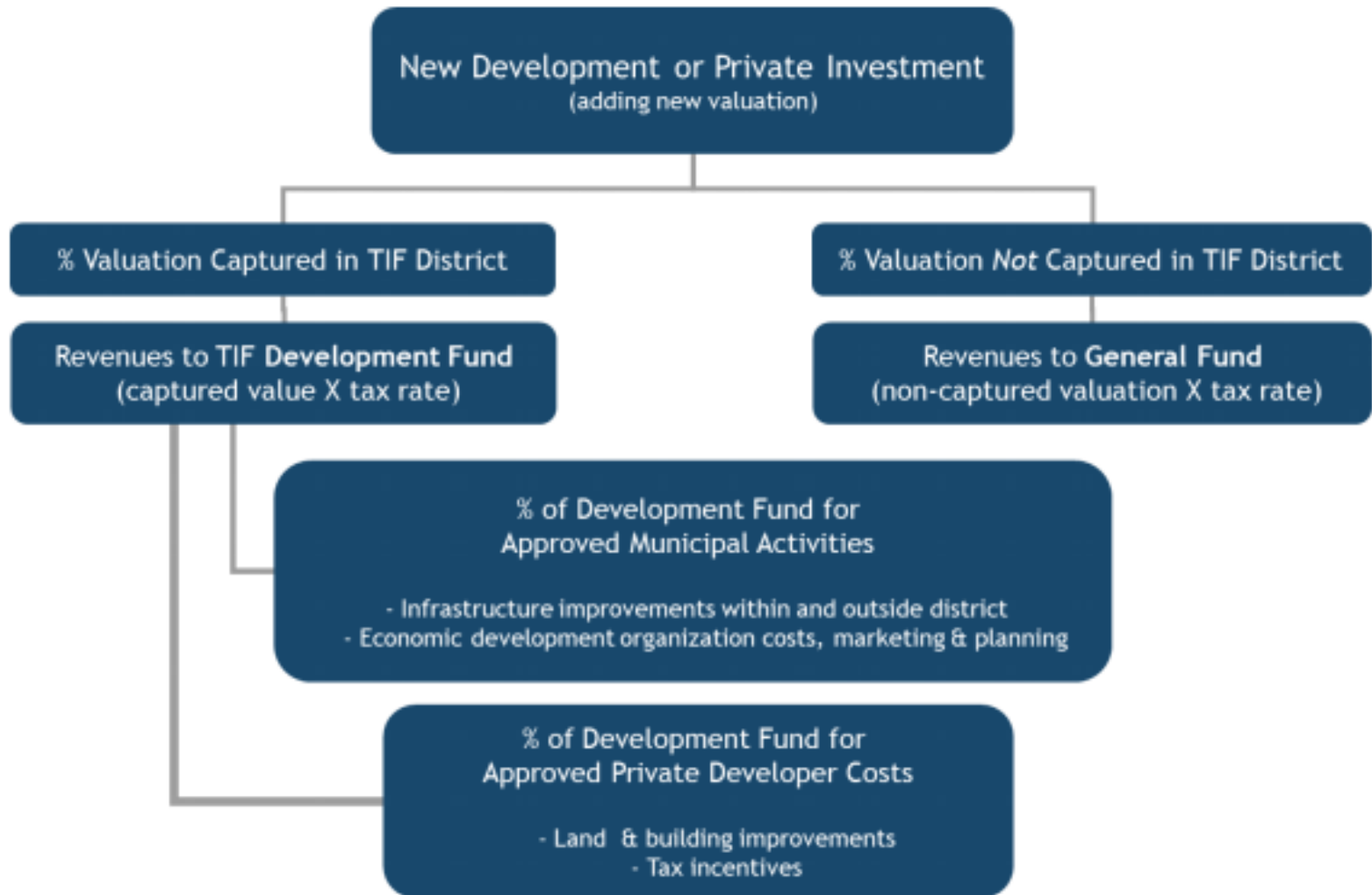
Key Facts



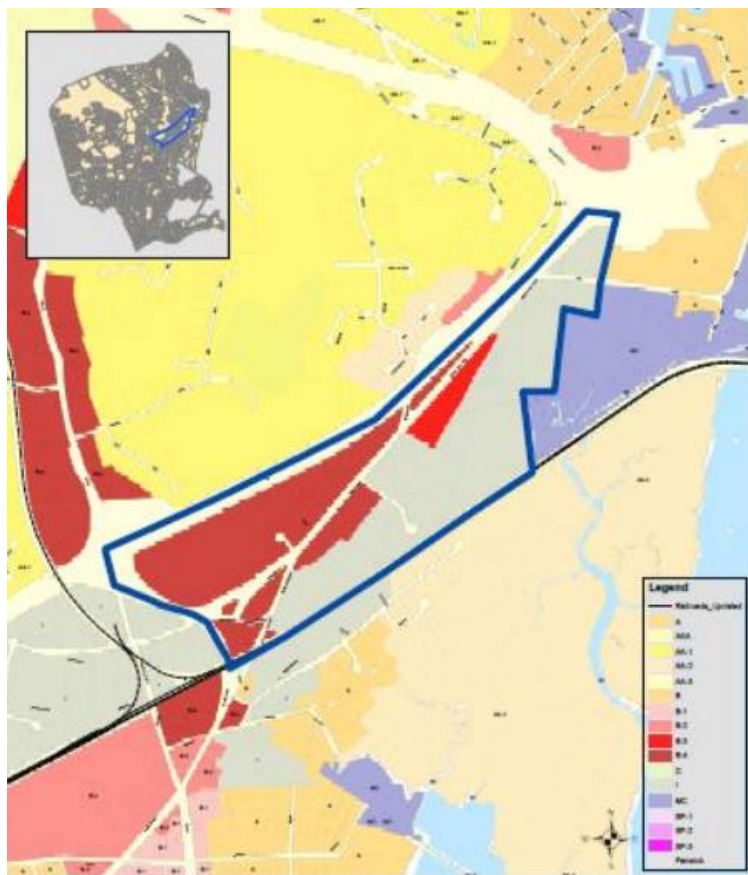
If Norwalk was to consider adopting a TIF District, the Process would include:

1. A consultant would be engaged to produce the TIF financial plan as an addendum to the Wall Street-West Avenue Plan (includes public input, research on infrastructure, capacity, and impact)
2. Planning Commission votes to acknowledge the financial plan is consistent with the Plan of Conservation and Development
3. Planning Committee holds a public hearing and votes on forwarding the amended plan to the Common Council for its consideration
4. Common Council votes to adopt the amended Wall/West Plan that includes the TIF financial plan.
5. If approved, the TIF Fund is created and implemented

TIF Implementation, in Groton, CT



TIF Implementation, in Old Saybrook, CT



Town of Old Saybrook



Mariner's Way Tax Increment Financing District District Master Plan

January 22, 2019

To be adopted at the Town of Old Saybrook Town Meeting
In accordance with Chapter 105b of the Connecticut General Statutes



MARINER'S WAY
OLD SAYBROOK, CT

Discussion of Possible Next Steps

- Potential of expansion of the Enterprise Zone to include the Wall Street/West Avenue area to spur initial growth
- Potential implement a TIF District in the Wall Street/West Avenue area to address infrastructure needs that will support sustainable long term growth.
- Or both



City of Norwalk – Community & Economic Development

125 East Avenue, Norwalk, CT 06851

TO: PLANNING COMMITTEE OF THE NORWALK COMMON COUNCIL

FROM: JESSICA CASEY, CHIEF OF COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
SABRINA CHURCH, DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM

DATE: NOVEMBER 27, 2019

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOOLS

Introduction

Starting in 2016, the Planning Committee has reviewed multiple economic development tools to spur economic growth in the Wall Street-West Avenue area. These options included expanding the Enterprise Zone (EZ), implementing an Innovation District, and implementing a Tax Increment Financing District (TIF). As there was no holistic vision in place for the area, among other reasons, discussions of these topics were halted. With the institution of the Wall Street-West Avenue Neighborhood Plan and a newly implemented Plan of Conservation and Development that supports the adoption economic development tools these topics are being reviewed to start the discussion of their viability and effects both in Norwalk and in other communities. This memo and presentation are informational only. Should the Planning Committee have the desire to proceed with any options (or an alternative option) there would be additional area-specific research needed before approval and inception.

Enterprise Zone

What is an Enterprise Zone(EZ)?:

An enterprise zone is a designated geography in which taxes are abated as of right for a period of 7 years to encourage new development and business growth in underutilized areas. Urban enterprise zone policies generally offer tax concessions, infrastructure incentives, and reduced regulations to attract investments and private companies into the zones. Urban enterprise zones are intended to encourage development in deprived neighborhoods through tax and regulatory relief to entrepreneurs and investors who launch businesses or develop in the area.

Eligibility Criteria:

The census tracts within an EZ must be zoned to allow commercial or industrial activity and meet at least one of the following criteria:

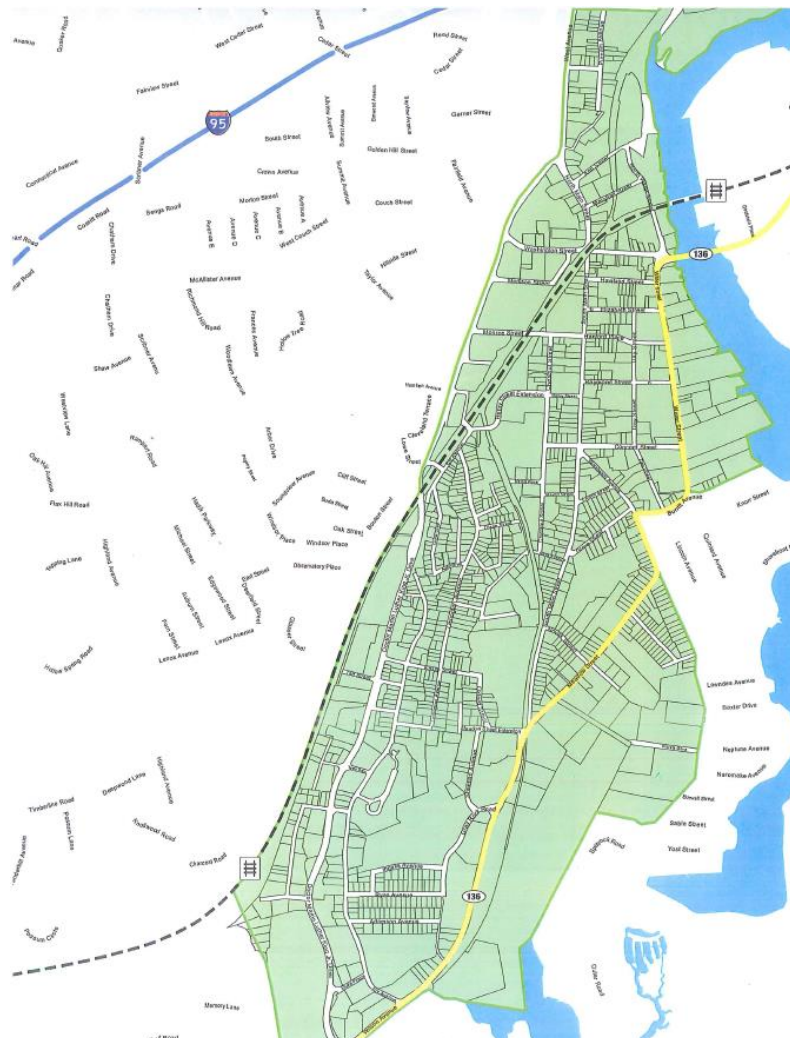
- (1) Twenty-five per cent or more of the persons within the individual census tracts shall have income below the poverty level;
- (2) Twenty-five per cent or more of the families within the individual census tracts shall receive public assistance or welfare income; or
- (3) The unemployment rate of the individual census tracts shall be at least two hundred per cent of the state's average.

How EZs Work:

Within the Enterprise Zone, taxes on improvements to any property within the geography are deferred for a period of 7 years: 100% for the first two years, 50% for the third year, 40% for the 4th year, 30% for the 5th year, 20% for the 6th year, and 10% for the 7th year. After the 7 year term, taxes will be at the true rate. If used for housing development, units must be affordable to 200% of the area median income or abatement will be revoked.

Background:

Norwalk has had Enterprise Zone benefits for many years (since 1982) in the South Norwalk geography (see image below). Since its inception the City has seen only 4 properties take advantage of the program. Recent examples include Ironworks, the SoNo Hotel, and the SoNo Collection. There was interest in 2016 to expand the boundary to the Wall Street-West Avenue area but the Council at the time did not approve of the “as of right” nature of the incentive and hence began exploring other options. Nothing has been adopted in regards to incentives besides the already established EZ and what is offered by the state or Redevelopment Agency (programs mainly focused on historic or residential property improvements).





Implementation Process:

The implementation process for extending the EZ is as follows:

- (1) Public hearing held at a Planning Committee Meeting
- (2) Planning Committee votes of the enterprise zone extension to be forwarded to the Ordinance Committee to amend the current EZ ordinance
- (3) Ordinance Committee holds a public hearing and amends the Enterprise Zone ordinance to include the extended geography
- (4) Common Council votes on the new ordinance language
- (5) If approved, the property owners can take advantage of the tax deferral as of right

Key Facts:

- | | |
|--|---|
| - 7 year term | - Little reporting required |
| - No loss in existing tax base revenue | - Must include a physical improvement as it is a deferral on property tax increases due to improvements |
| - As of right | - Can be layered with other incentives/programs |
| - Low barriers to entry | |
| - Low legislative involvement | |
| - Shorter implementation process | |

Other Precedents:

1. South Norwalk
2. Stamford
3. New Haven
4. Many other CT Municipalities (Hartford, Bridgeport, etc.)

Tax Increment Financing District

What is a Tax Increment Financing District(TIF)?:

A TIF is a public financing method and value capture strategy that is used as a subsidy for redevelopment, infrastructure, and other community-improvement projects or programs in a defined geography. Through the use of TIF, municipalities typically divert future property tax revenue increases from a defined area toward an economic development project or public improvement project or program in the designated geography. TIF subsidies are not appropriated directly from a city's budget but the city incurs loss through foregone tax revenue as tax revenue for that geography is lock boxed for that geography and TIF financial plan. Different approaches to making improvements are possible through a TIF as they allow more local government control rather than only what state statutes allows. TIFs are mainly used to make needed investment in neighborhoods through tax relief in areas that require additional and focused improvements than may occur naturally.

Eligibility Criteria:

A portion of the real property within a tax increment district shall meet at least one of the following criteria:



- (1) Be a substandard, insanitary, deteriorated, deteriorating or blighted area;
- (2) Be in need of rehabilitation, redevelopment or conservation work; or
- (3) Be suitable for industrial, commercial, residential, mixed-use or retail uses, downtown development or transit-oriented development.

Additionally, the original assessed value of a proposed tax increment district plus the original assessed value of all existing tax increment districts within the municipality may not exceed ten per cent of the total value of taxable property within the municipality.

How TIFs Work:

As businesses locate in a TIF district and the area redevelops, the property values rise. Rather than simply collecting the increased taxes from TIF district properties, the city splits the property tax revenues into two streams. The first stream is set at the original amount of the property value before redevelopment, known as the “base rate.” This stream continues to go to the general fund.

The second stream contains the additional tax money generated by the higher property value, or the “tax increment.” This stream does not go to the city or schools, but is kept separate and used to pay for items identified in the TIF financial plan. TIF revenues can be used to fund construction, improvements, repairs, and rehabilitations within the district as well as economic development programs, economic development revolving loan funds, investment funds, services and equipment necessary for employment training, and specific uses associated with the district.

Background:

In 2016 the Planning Committee was presented with the option of establishing a TIF district within the Wall-West geography. The committee at the time was interested in incentives to spur development but did not like that it gave no benefit to smaller properties or small businesses other than indirect benefits such as street and infrastructure improvements. Since 2016, new TIF legislation has been adopted into state statute which expands the use of TIF funds to include smaller scale programs such as workforce development, façade improvements, historic improvements, small business incentives, as well as the traditional uses for redevelopment and infrastructure projects. As a result their popularity as an economic development tool has expanded to over 12 Connecticut municipalities for their implementation.

Implementation Process:

The implementation process for a TIF District is as follows:

- (1) A consultant would be engaged to produce the TIF financial plan as an addendum to the Wall Street-West Avenue Plan (includes public input, research on infrastructure, capacity, and impact)
- (2) Planning Commission considers if the amended plan is consistent with the POCD
- (3) Planning Committee holds a public hearing and votes on forwarding the amended plan to the Common Council for its consideration
- (4) Common Council votes to adopt the amended plan that includes the TIF financial plan
- (5) If approved, the TIF District is created and implemented



City of Norwalk – Community & Economic Development

125 East Avenue, Norwalk, CT 06851

Key Facts:

- Increment is chosen by the Council
- Term is flexible (up to 50 years)
- Funding can be spent on a variety of different things
- Can be layered with other incentives/programs
- No loss in existing tax base revenue
- Includes an implementable financial plan
- New legislation allows for business benefits/programs as well as neighborhood improvements

Other Precedents:

1. Stamford – South End/Harbor Point
2. Groton – Downtown Groton
3. Old Saybrook – Mariner's Way
4. Windsor Locks – Downtown Windsor Locks, Route 20, and Ella Grasso Turnpike
5. Many other CT Municipalities (New Britain, Suffield, Enfield, Cheshire, etc.)

NO ACTION.