



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
STATE OF CONNECTICUT

**Governor's Task Force on Transit Oriented Development in Fairfield County**  
**October 3, 2019, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm**  
**Sacred Heart University Martire Center Forum, 5481 Park Ave., Fairfield**  
**DRAFT Meeting Minutes**

**Task Force Members Present\***

City of Norwalk	Jessica Casey, Chief of Economic and Community Development
JDA Development Company	Robert Wiener
Town of Stratford	Susmitha Attota, Planning Department
Town of Fairfield	Mark Barnhart, Director of Economic Development
City of Stamford	Ralph Blessing, Land Use Bureau Chief
Alpha Community Services/YMCA	Carmen Colon, Executive Director
University of Bridgeport	George Estrada, Director of Facilities
CT Metropolitan Council of Governments	Matt Fulda, Executive Director
City of Bridgeport	Lynn Haig, Director of Planning
Fairfield County Community Foundation	Juanita James, President and CEO
Public Housing Authorities of Westport and Fairfield	Carol Martin, Executive Director
Business Council of Fairfield County	Joe McGee, Vice President, Public Policy and Programs
CT Homebuilders and Remodelers Association	Jim Perras, Executive Director
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development	Suzanne Piacentini, Field Office Director, Hartford Office
CT West Council of Governments	Francis Pickering, Executive Director
Redniss & Mead	Rick Redniss, Principal
Supportive Housing Works	David Rich, Executive Director
Fairfield County Housing Alliance	Christie Stewart, Director
Norwalk Redevelopment Agency	Tami Strauss, Director

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\*Leadership of participating entities may elect to appoint a designee

## State Agency Representatives

Office of the Governor	Lisa Tepper Bates, Governor's Senior Coordinator for TOD and Housing
Department of Transportation	Tom Maziarz, Policy and Planning Bureau Chief
Department of Economic and Community Development	David Kooris, Deputy Commissioner
Department of Administrative Services	Noel Petra, Deputy Commissioner
Department of Energy and Environmental Protection	Betsey Wingfield, Deputy Commissioner
Department of Housing	Shante Hanks, Deputy Commissioner

## Task Force Members Absent

Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)	Jim Horan, Executive Director
Regional Plan Association	Melissa Kaplan-Macey, Vice President and CT State Director
City of Danbury	Lisa Morrissey, Director of Social Services

- I. The Meeting was called to order at 10:05 am. Co-Chairs Bob Wiener (JDA Development – Trout Brook Realty Advisors – Retired) and Jessica Casey (Chief Economic and Community Development, City of Norwalk) welcomed attendees. The goal of the taskforce will be to facilitate and coordinate a regional vision for TOD in Fairfield County in order to advance economic development and sustainability
  - a. Taskforce will explore national best practices/models for TOD appropriate for our region.
  - b. Taskforce will identify specific sites/projects that are responsive to need and can advance TOD for the region, including consideration of state-owned properties that might be appropriate for development and can be leveraged to reduce financial barriers to TOD.
  - c. Taskforce will explore coordination and streamlining of state agency partner actions/tools/processes to realize significant efficiencies in development process and create state incentives that encourage TOD.
- II. Lisa Tepper Bates, Governor's Sr. Coordinator for Housing and TOD, thanked participants and attendees on behalf of the governor and recognized the elected officials in the room. She underscored that the Task Force represents the vision of Governor Lamont: bringing together at one table state agencies, local elected officials, advocates, and other community stakeholders to develop and implement a shared vision responsive to the needs of Fairfield County residents and businesses. Taking action to advance transit oriented development goes hand-in-hand with efforts to improve Connecticut's transportation infrastructure, and is part of the Governor's vision to meet the needs of Connecticut's businesses and workforce leaning into the future: millennials and retirees, alike, are seeking more options to live in walkable communities with a range of available services close to transit hubs.
- III. David Kooris, Deputy Commissioner of DECD spoke to the framework for regional TOD provided by the Regional Plan Association's "Fourth Plan," specifically as outlined in a report titled "Untapped Potential"
  - a. Changing demographics and the changing workplace economy have reshaped what residents want and need in terms of housing choices in their communities.

- b. The single-family home on two acres is no longer consistent with demand of the next generation. Statistically, the U.S. has a sufficient stock of single-family homes to meet demand through 2035.
  - c. To attract and retain residents, Fairfield County will need to meet an increasing demand for higher density neighborhoods that are walkable and connected by multi-modal transportation providing access to employment, education, and community resources. At the same time, there is opportunity: there is sufficient property currently used exclusively for parking at transit hubs in the New York metropolitan area to build 250,000 new units of housing.
  - d. It is critical for CT to act to meet the demands of our workforce and businesses for TOD in order to avoid continued decline in population and talent drain that will impact the state's ability to remain economically competitive in our region.
  - e. Fairfield County needs to craft and drive a regional vision that ensures all 23 towns contribute to this vision in a way that is appropriate for their community.
  - f. State agencies will need to work in concert with one another on this effort to support a regional vision and implementation.
- IV. Christie Stewart, Director Fairfield County's Center for Housing Opportunity, introduced the regional initiative already underway in Fairfield County to promote affordable housing called the Fairfield County Housing Alliance. This is a group of over 65 organizations/stakeholders from the public and private sectors working together to craft a regional response to the affordable housing crisis -- reframing affordable housing as essential to the region's economic growth and sustainability. With one economy and one housing market connected by one transportation system, Fairfield County municipalities should coordinate to advance a regional agenda.
- V. Local Planners and Economic Development directors spoke to their communities' approaches to TOD and their support for a regional effort as outlined in RPA's "Untapped Potential"
- a. Lynn Haig – Director of Planning for City of Bridgeport
  - b. Mark Barnhart – Director of Economic Development for Town of Fairfield
  - c. Sharon Calitro – Director of Planning for City of Danbury
  - d. Ralph Blessing – Land Use Bureau Chief for City of Stamford
  - e. Jessica Casey – Chief Economic and Community Development, City of Norwalk
  - f. Susmitha Attota – Planner Town of Stratford
  - g. All identified the following state supports that would make TOD possible in their towns
    - i. Planning Grants
    - ii. Inter-Agency Coordination
    - iii. Clear prioritization/coordination of state agency funding for projects – need alignment across agencies
    - iv. Infrastructure support/updates/upgrades to allow for TOD
    - v. Access to data
    - vi. Technical Assistance
- VI. State Agency representatives asked to speak to the vision/role of each agency in advancing Fairfield County TOD
- a. CT DOT – Tom Maziarz
    - i. DOT supports better coordination of agencies
    - ii. Meriden TOD project was very successful due to increased coordination
  - b. CT DECD -David Kooris
    - i. DECD support a regional vision for TOD in Fairfield County

- ii. Willing and able to help in any way
- iii. Recognize the critical need to design more dense, walkable communities with access to public transportation, employment, educational opportunity, and community resources that TOD delivers
- iv. In order to attract and retain residents and talent that will drive the economy
- v. Must communicate the changing housing preferences of CT residents
- c. CT DAS – Noel Petra
  - i. DAS committed to providing technical support, capacity building, and exploration of incentives to support TOD in Fairfield County
  - ii. DAS has a vast real estate portfolio
- d. CT DEEP – Betsy Wingfield
  - i. DEEP recognizes the environmental challenges facing Fairfield County
  - ii. DEEP will work to assist with both environmental concerns / remediation (brownfields) as well as climate change mitigation efforts
- e. CT DOH – Shante Hanks
  - i. DOH is committed to ensuring affordable housing is integrated into all TOD
  - ii. DOH will work to find innovative incentives for development of equitable TOD
- f. CHFA – Lisa Tepper Bates
  - i. CHFA has just identified a new executive director whose chief mission will be to re-evaluate CHFA policies and procedures, and to ensure that the agency leverages good ideas from across the nation to be the best possible partner with developers and communities and to build more affordable housing for every dollar of state support
  - ii. Board of CHFA is excited to work on Fairfield County TOD
- g. HUD – Suzanne Piacentini
  - i. HUD has myriad programs that can assist with TOD
  - ii. HUD regional office is a willing and engaged partner and is very open to innovation – happy to explore all options for federal support of Fairfield County TOD projects

VII. Co-Chairs laid out next steps:

- a. 3 subcommittees going forward
  - i. Site Identification – chaired by Jessica Casey
  - ii. Best Practices – chaired by Bob Wiener
  - iii. Efficiencies and Streamlining – chaired by Jim Perras
- b. Taskforce members asked to serve on at least one committee

VIII. The Task Force adjourned at 12:05.