

South Central Region: Plan of Conservation and Development 2018-2028

South Central Regional Council of Governments



The South Central Regional Plan of Conservation and Development is a general guide for land use conservation and development for the 15 town region comprised of Bethany, Branford, East Haven, Guilford, Hamden, Madison, Meriden, Milford, New Haven, North Branford, North Haven, Orange, Wallingford, West Haven, and Woodbridge. The chapters and content of South Central Region: Plan of Conservation and Development 2018-2028 are determined by State Statute (CGS 8- 35a) and must be consistent with the Connecticut Conservation and Development Policies Plan.

Once adopted, this document must be updated every 10 years. This plan was developed through a participatory process, and reviewed extensively with local planning staff and the Regional Planning Commission (RPC) in coordination with local chief elected officials.

The RPC members and Chief Elected Officials for each municipality are as follows:

Regional Planning Commission

Bethany- ----- Michael Calhoun
 Branford - ----- Charles Andres
 East Haven- ----- Sal Brancati
 Guilford- ----- Matthew Yorzinski
 Hamden- ----- Robert Roscow
 Madison- ----- Joel Miller
 Meriden- ----- David White
 Milford- ----- Jim Quish
 New Haven- ----- Kevin DiAdamo
 North Branford- ----- Frances Lescovich
 North Haven- ----- James Giulietti
 Orange- ----- Ralph Aschettino
 Wallingford- ----- Jeffrey Kohan
 West Haven- ----- Kathleen Hendricks
 Woodbridge- ----- Andrew Skolnick

Council of Governments Board Members

Bethany- ----- First Selectwoman Derrylyn Gorski
 Branford- ----- First Selectman James Cosgrove
 East Haven- ----- Mayor Joseph Maturo
 Guilford- ----- First Selectman Matthew Hoey
 Hamden- ----- Mayor Curt Leng
 Madison- ----- First Selectman Thomas Banisch
 Meriden- ----- Mayor Kevin Scarpati
 Milford- ----- Mayor Benjamin Blake
 New Haven- ----- Mayor Toni Harp
 North Branford- ----- Mayor Michael Doody
 North Haven- ----- Mayor Michael Freda
 Orange- ----- First Selectman James Zeoli
 Wallingford- ----- Mayor William Dickinson
 West Haven- ----- Mayor Nancy Rossi
 Woodbridge- ----- First Selectwoman Beth Heller

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The South Central Regional Council of Governments (SCRCOG) was established in 1985 per the Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) with the approval of each legislative body from the following fifteen municipalities: Bethany, Branford, East Haven, Guilford, Hamden, Madison, Meriden, Milford, New Haven, North Branford, North Haven, Orange, Wallingford, West Haven, and Woodbridge. In 1947, the Connecticut General Assembly (CGA) enacted legislation allowing two or more contiguous towns with planning commissions to form a regional planning authority. In 1948, a few municipalities in our region were the first to take advantage of the opportunity and formed the Regional Planning Authority of the South Central Region. By 1960, the authority was serving all fifteen towns in the region.

SCRCOG is one of nine Councils of Governments (COGs) in Connecticut. For federally-mandated transportation planning purposes, SCRCOG has been designated as Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).

SCRCOG provides a platform for inter-municipal coordination, cooperation, and decision making. Over the years, SCRCOG has addressed numerous issues, such as those related to transportation planning, land use planning, and environmental planning. In addition, SCRCOG coordinates the Regional Planning Commission (RPC), which acts as an advisory board on Statutory Referrals. Referrals may include amendments to Zoning Regulations, Subdivision Applications, and Municipal Plans of Conservation and Development. The RPC is responsible for preparing and updating the Regional Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD), per the requirements of CGS Section 8-35a. The regional POCD is updated at least once every ten years is a guidance document that set policy priorities for the future of the region.

The South Central Regional Council of Governments is dedicated to regional cooperation enabling cities and towns to work together to accomplish projects they cannot do as efficiently or cost effectively by themselves; creating a sense of pride in the region by aspiring to the highest quality of life and economic well being that can be achieved and greater accountability through voluntary cooperation in the region with productive results that benefit the entire region.

The regional POCD was last updated in June 2008, and amended in July 2009 to incorporate updated Sewer Service Area Mapping for the fifteen municipalities in the region. Since the adoption of the 2008 regional POCD, the State established new standards around priority funding areas identified within its 2013-2018 State Conservation and Development Policies Plan. Public Act 16-144 requires regional POCDs to consider the need for technology infrastructure. This regional POCD was developed with these changes and requirements in mind.

The data and analysis for this POCD reflect the region's transition out of the Great Recession of the late 2000s. While total population remained flat over the past decade, its composition changed. The population of the region is aging. Yet, the region is home to a larger proportion of younger millennials than other regions, and the State on the whole. The region's economy is diverse. While "Eds and Meds" (Educational and Medical Institutions) and arts, entertainment, and tourism are significant industries, manufacturing, professional services and the financial industry remain important. Through significant planning and investment, transit oriented development is beginning to take root along the two main rail corridors, and is expected to continue over the next decade, helping to diversify the region's housing stock, reduce traffic congestion, and facilitate better connections between housing and employment.

Public engagement throughout the planning process highlighted economic development and innovation as a high priority issue for the region. This priority includes developing an educated workforce, and ensuring that a variety of employment and transportation options exist.

The vision, goals, and strategies presented in this plan reflect the trends, analysis and input obtained from municipal and regional officials and other stakeholders. This plan is organized around three broad themes: the human, natural, and built environments — all of which are integral to one another and include overlapping goals. Ensuring the long-term sustainability of the region is an over-arching objective of this plan that applies to all three thematic areas. Planning strategies focus on promoting growth and transit-oriented development within existing town/village centers; ensuring the protection and preservation of natural resources for the ecological, economic and cultural benefits they offer; increasing housing diversity where it can be supported; and promoting easy access to job centers. The Plan concludes with a framework for implementation ("Action Plan"), which is only possible with continued inter-municipal coordination and cooperation.

INTRODUCTION

South Central Connecticut is a dynamic region that is home to large-scale, nationally recognized businesses and institutions as well as a myriad of smaller biotech, digital, software services and advanced manufacturing companies. Several multi-family housing units and transit-oriented development (TOD) projects are built, under construction or planned, opening up new housing opportunities for current and future residents. The State has made significant investment in regional infrastructure, from the Pearl Harbor Memorial Bridge to the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield (NHHS) Rail line. Bike and pedestrian improvements, and coastal infrastructure improvements have garnered public and financial support. Considerable progress has been made to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and conserve energy over the past five years thus improving the overall public health of the region. The scheduled opening of two new train stations at Wallingford and Meriden in 2018 to serve the NHHS Rail and implementation of potential rail upgrades to accommodate high speed rail service in the Northeast Corridor over the next decade will further open up opportunities for better establishing South Central Connecticut's role within the wider region, as well as attracting new talent and, enhancing employment and housing opportunities within the region.



Photo credit: John Vanacore/Register

Pearl Harbor Memorial Bridge

The region's close proximity to New York and Boston, the presence of high quality educational institutions, successful bio-tech and health industries, internationally recognized arts and cultural destinations, high quality regional parks, a high functioning regional port, one of the nation's busiest commuter rail systems, a growing airport, and a beautiful coastline position the region to serve as one of the major economic and cultural destinations in the northeast.

The plan is organized around three broad themes: the human environment, the natural environment, and the built environment. While these themes help to present the information and objectives of the region in a cohesive manner, no one theme operates independently of the others. The objectives in any one thematic area are intended to support the guiding vision and objectives of all three "environments" of the region.

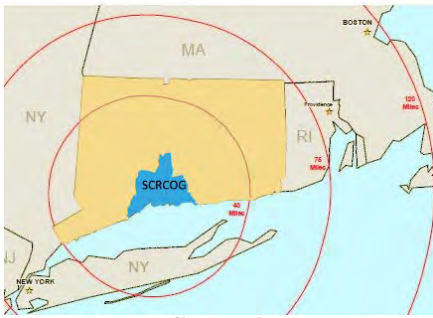


Meriden Green on opening weekend, September 2016

In creating this regional plan, the South Central Regional Council of Governments (SCRCOG) assessed current conditions throughout the region, and engaged its fifteen diverse member municipalities and other regional stakeholders through a variety of methods in discussions about the region's current opportunities and challenges, and its future. The results of this thoughtful dialogue are incorporated throughout the vision, goals and strategies presented in this plan. SCRCOG intends for this plan to promote engagement with and among its members on significant issues facing the region.

OUR REGION TODAY

Home to 570,596 people and covering 370 square miles, the South Central Connecticut Region (SCRCOG) provides varied lifestyle choices in its fifteen diverse towns/municipalities. The presence of world class arts, cultural, and entertainment facilities and, healthcare and educational institutions makes it unique in Connecticut, thus attracting visitors from all over the world. It has the third highest population among the nine regional council of governments in Connecticut.



Surrounding Regions



Connecticut



SCRCOG



1 in 6 (16%)

CT residents live in the region



1 in 6

are seniors aged 65 and over



1 in 8

are millennials between ages 20-29



1 in 7

are Hispanic



1 in 8

are African American



244k

dwellings

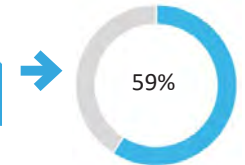


56%

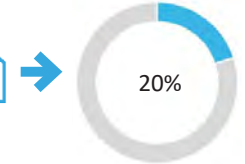
owner occupied



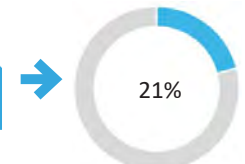
1 Unit



2-4 Units



5+ Units



28%

of the region is open space



359k

jobs



31k

affordable housing units

Top Three Industries



34%

Health care and social services



23%

Educational services



15%

Arts, entertainment and tourism



437k

Drive alone

80%



47k

Carpool

8%



30k

Public Transit

5%



26k

Walking

5%

OTHER

9k

Other

2%

Source: U.S. Census 2010.

THE VISION FOR SOUTH CENTRAL CONNECTICUT

SCRCOG and its members envision South Central Connecticut will be

- **...a region that preserves the character of its unique centers, villages, neighborhoods, and places.**

The region has fifteen diverse municipalities, each with its own values, and unique social, natural and physical attributes. This variety is what makes South Central Connecticut an attractive and livable region. The region maintains this diversity that helps shape its character, even as it continues to grow and evolve.

- **...a region with strong urban cores and thriving suburban/rural communities.**

Many attractive and growing regions in the nation have vital urban cores with supporting suburbs and more rural areas that lend their unique qualities to the identity of the overall region. In the South Central Region, New Haven, Hamden, West Haven, Milford and Meriden represent urban cores providing significant employment and housing opportunity, as well as a higher density of cultural, entertainment and recreational amenities. The South Central Region's more suburban and rural communities provide significant natural and recreational amenities, and diversity in employment and housing opportunities that are critical to the overall function of the region. South Central Connecticut maintains and supports this diversity of successful urban, suburban and rural communities.

- **...a region with several vibrant and livable “centers.”**

Millennials and seniors have a large representation in the region presently. These growing segments of the population typically seek smaller housing units, accessible services, and efficient public transportation systems. Moreover, compact development optimizes public infrastructure investments and promotes public health. Therefore, the region promotes livable centers that are diverse in scale in appropriate village, town and urban locations.

- **...a region with diverse housing choices.**

While housing prices within the region are considered reasonable compared to neighboring counties and regions, affordability remains a concern due to uneven distribution of household incomes and housing choice within the region. South Central Connecticut therefore supports providing a diversity of housing types in appropriate locations that enable all households to access quality educational, employment and transportation opportunities.

- **...a region with high quality transportation and infrastructure systems.**

The region has already seen significant recent investments in aging infrastructure, such as the Pearl Harbor Memorial Bridge/ I-91 and I-95 interchange, improvements to existing transit services along the Shoreline East commuter rail line, and new multi-modal transportation systems, such as the NHHS line, as well as improved public water and wastewater infrastructure. The region continues to support enhancements to its aging infrastructure, as well as the development of new, modern infrastructural assets.

- **...a region with a balanced and globally competitive economy.**

Research indicates that global and major domestic industries across the nation are choosing to locate where skilled labor, low taxes, and a creative culture exist. The region attracts, supports, and promotes the growth and success of existing industries, while attracting new businesses from a variety of economic sectors.

- **...a region that fosters a sense of pride and belonging.**

South Central Connecticut is increasingly demographically diverse. It is imperative to develop a sense of place and belonging for all in order to better attract and maintain residents. South Central CT is a region where individual communities realize that their success is directly linked to the success of the region, thus governmental and community organizations coalesce around and promote an open and inclusive regional identity.

- **...a region that is sustainable and healthy.**

Fostering a sustainable and healthy region requires addressing social, environmental and physical impediments that affect diverse issues such as air quality, coastal resilience, impaired waters, and socio-economic isolation and stratification. The region considers sustainability in all decision-making processes.

- **...a region that is safe and resilient.**

Unfortunately, South Central CT has seen how vulnerable the region is to extreme weather, sea level rise, flooding, and erosion several times over the last few years. The region thus supports land use decisions that reduce vulnerabilities and minimize losses of life and property.

This vision guides the objectives and strategies contained in this plan.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

The process to develop this plan began in May 2017 with a review of the 2008 regional POCD and all 15 municipal POCDs. Common planning themes across the region were identified (see Appendix A). The planning team conducted a series of focus group meetings with a wide variety of municipal and state officials, non-profit organizations active in the region, regional institutions, utility companies, housing developers, and area realtors, among others. Each of these meetings focused on specific planning topics such as demographics, housing, and economic development; TOD, smart growth, and transportation; agriculture, natural resources, open space and recreation; hazard mitigation, public safety, emergency management, utilities, and energy conservation. A summary of meeting minutes is included within Appendix B. Two surveys (one for municipal officials and one for the general public) were made available from April to August 2017 to help inform the POCD update. These were distributed through social media, individual town websites, the SCRCOG website, focus groups, and other avenues. Questions within the survey aimed at identifying issues important to the region, developing a vision for its future. Results of both surveys are available in Appendix C. The planning team also provided regular updates on the planning process and outcomes at RPC meetings and incorporated their feedback within the Plan document.

Summary of Survey Results

The municipal survey garnered 91 responses from elected or appointed officials and municipal staff, including 13 respondents who identified as Planning, Zoning, or Planning & Zoning Commissioners, and 8 Councilmen, Selectmen, or Aldermen. The public survey collected 156 responses, all of which are voluntary responses and therefore should not be considered to be statistical representation of the views of the more than 500,000 residents in the SCRCOG area.

Respondents to the municipal survey rated economic development and innovation as the highest priority issue for the region, followed by developing an educated workforce. They indicated that the region offers a diversity of services and amenities, such as shopping, medical care, educational opportunities, entertainment and recreational opportunities; those who reported not using or having a particular amenity in their local community, generally avail themselves of that amenity elsewhere in the region. Open spaces, natural resources and Long Island Sound were ranked highly as regional features that they were most concerned about losing or degrading. Limited availability of public transit was cited as the reason residents did not use public transit more often in their respective communities. When asked what strategies their communities have used to increase affordable housing supply, the most commonly-cited strategy was to allow mixed-use developments with affordable residential units above commercial, followed by allowing conventional multi-family housing and adopting Incentive Housing Zone regulations. There was a general wide-spread support for building soft-scape natural solutions to mitigate impacts of sea level rise, such as natural berms, requiring setbacks off coastal areas for development, and elevating transportation infrastructure in risk areas.

Respondents most strongly agreed that the region offers a high quality of life and offers an adequate variety of recreational opportunities and open space. They had the least agreement on whether the region had an adequate variety of employment and transportation options, which corresponds with the results of the municipal survey thus indicating these as priorities for improvement. The top two strategies that would encourage respondents to use transit (bus or train) more often are efficient routes and more frequent service. They showed a broad support for TODs. Respondents generally liked the idea of having more open space along waterways, and this may be due in part to a widespread feeling that there are not enough points of public access (such as docks, launches, beaches, and fishing piers) in the region. A full summary of survey results is included within the Appendix of this document.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

The human environment encompasses the people and housing of South Central Connecticut. Roughly one in six Connecticut residents reside within the region. While the total population of 570,000 has not significantly increased recently, turnover in residents has resulted in an increasingly diverse population living in South Central Connecticut. Creating housing and an overall quality of life that enables upward mobility within the region, encourages young working age residents to remain, and attracts new residents is a primary objective of this plan. SCRCOG is well positioned to provide capacity-building and community engagement on broad regional issues impacting the human environment. Strengthening the region's social capital will further help facilitate effective and inclusive governance, which can help shape strategies affecting the built and natural environments. The following broad concerns, identified during the planning process, led to the objectives and strategies under this theme:

- **Vitality.** The people who live, work, and play among the various, distinct neighborhoods of the region make up its human environment and form the backbone of its vitality. Their quality of life and health is directly tied to the built and natural environments and overall economic success of the region. Therefore, it is important to further enhance the quality of life for all, through a variety of physical, social and environmental initiatives, to improve its vitality.

- **Equity.** A large proportion of low-income and minority regional residents are located within the central core and inner ring suburbs of the region, with limited economic and housing opportunities. Planning research indicates that more inclusive regions that engage entire communities in economic opportunities are more prosperous overall. Therefore, there is a need to promote racial and economic integration and reduce socio-economic disparities among the region's neighborhoods.
- **Housing Diversity.** The region's increasing demographic diversity has increased market demand for non-traditional housing types, such as accessory housing units. In addition, an increase in older and younger adults, who tend to desire accessible services in walkable locations has resulted in more demand for urban-style housing. Promoting housing diversity in terms of housing style, tenure, and price is critical not only to help maintain the region's current residents, but also to attract new residents.
- **Housing Affordability.** Housing affordability remains a regional concern not only for low- and very-low income households, but also for middle-income/ working households. When the costs of commuting are factored into housing costs, many households throughout the region's more suburban and rural communities are cost burdened. There is a need to promote safe, adequate and affordable housing, which takes many forms throughout the diverse communities of the region.
- **Sustainability.** There is a need to promote the long-term sustainability of the human environment by ensuring that education, housing and employment opportunities are available and accessible to all.

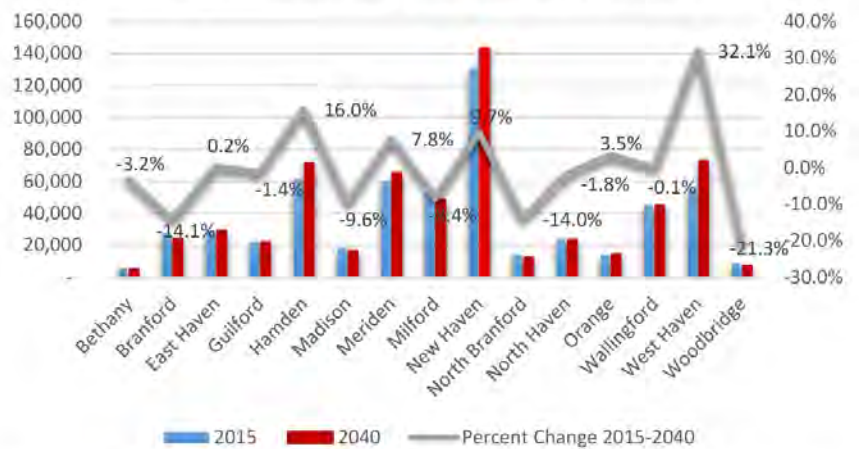
Current Conditions

Demographics

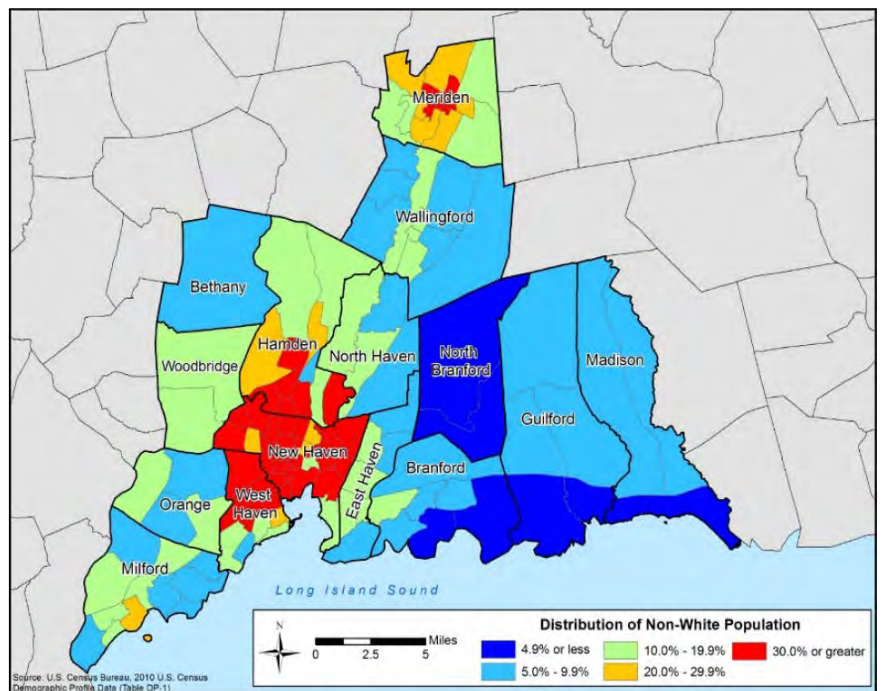
570,596 people were estimated to live in the region in 2015, representing very little growth from 2010; however, the region's population gained nearly four percent from 2000 to 2010. Population forecasts prepared by the State Data Center project the region will grow by another five percent by 2040. Projected growth by municipality indicates that most of this growth will occur in the region's more urbanized communities, such as Hamden, Meriden, New Haven and West Haven.

The highest concentration of non-white (minority) population is located in the central core i.e., New Haven, its inner ring suburbs, and in Meriden. In 2015, about 73.0% of the population in the region identified themselves as white, while roughly 14.0% identified themselves as black or African American. About 15% of the region's population is Hispanic (taking into account all races), an increase of approximately 1% from 2010.

Population Projections 2015-2040

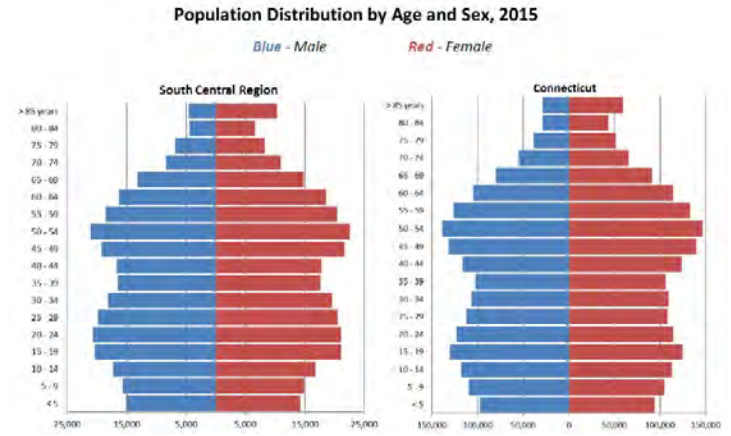


Sources: SCRCOG Demographic & Socioeconomic Trends, March 2017 & Connecticut State Data Center's 2015-2040 Population Projections.



Source: US Census Bureau. Decennial Census Reports, 2010

The region’s population is aging, as evidenced by consistent increases in median age from 36.8 years in 2000 to 39 years in 2010, and to 39.7 years in 2015. However, South Central Connecticut has proportionally more young working age population (ages 20 to 29) than the State, largely due to its concentration of institutions of higher learning. Nevertheless, aging of the Baby Boomer generation will continue to impact the region, as roughly one in six residents of South Central Connecticut are seniors aged 65 and over.

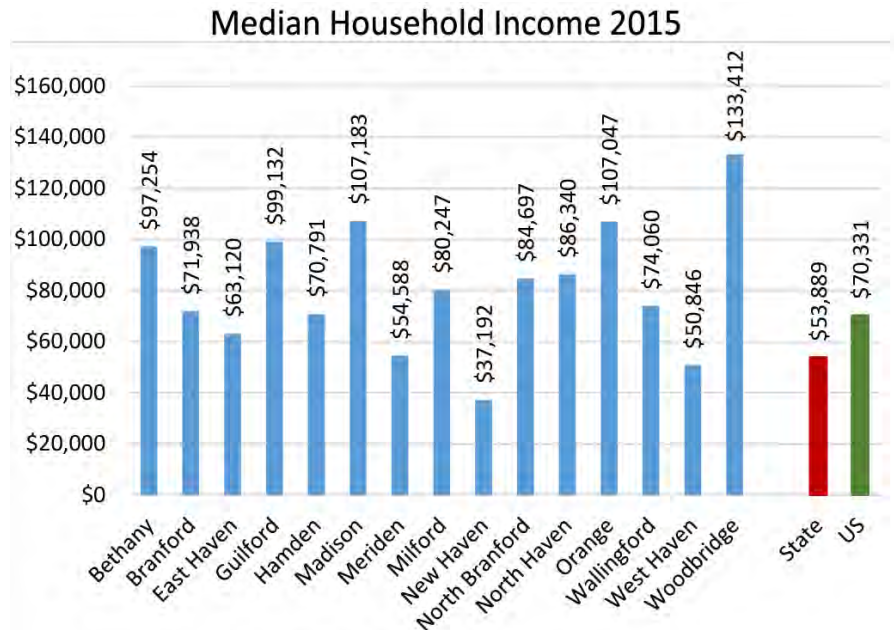


Source: ACS 2015.



Photo credit: City Photo/ Michael P. Walsh
Savin Rock Festival July 2015

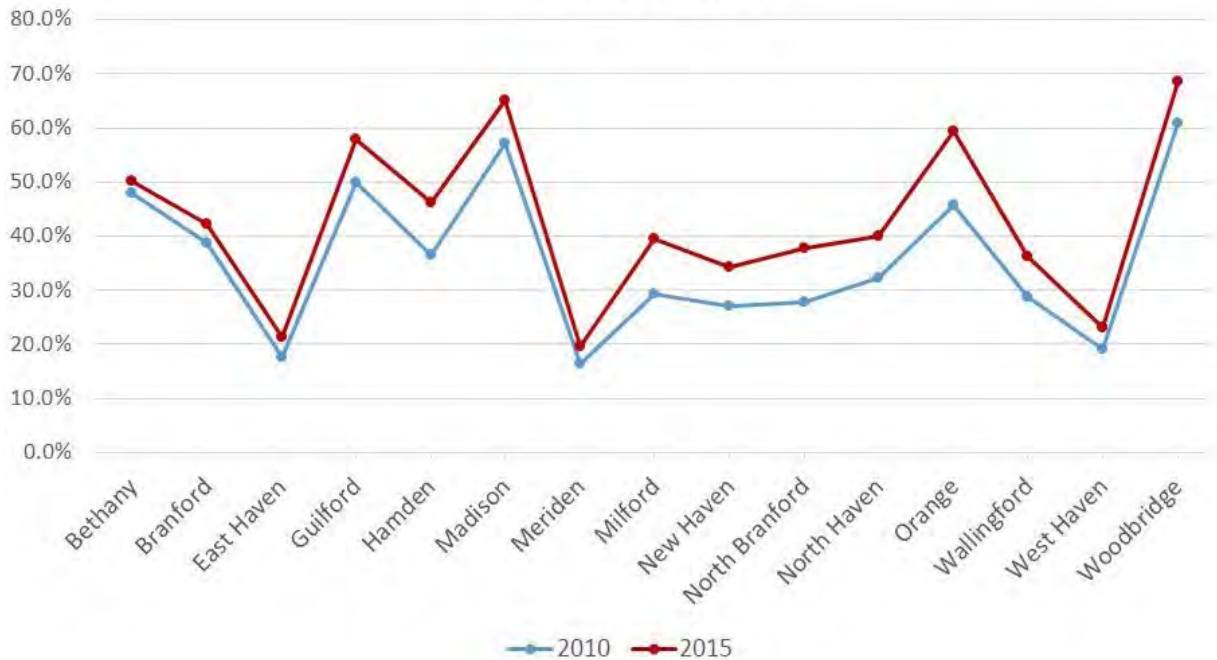
Median household incomes in 2015 reveal socio-economic disparities across the region, with central core and inner ring suburbs having significantly lower values than other communities. Four communities fell below the statewide median household income of \$70,331 - East Haven, Meriden, New Haven, and West Haven.



Source: ACS 2015.

The region is home to eight colleges and universities, enrolling over 50,000 undergraduate and graduate students. Yale University and Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU) have the highest total enrollments with more than 10,000 students each, based on National Center for Education statistics. Therefore, it is not surprising that the region’s population is relatively well educated. Residents with a bachelor’s or higher degree in general increased from 2010 to 2015. The following educational attainment chart mirrors the household income chart above, indicating a relationship between educational attainment levels and household income. Participants in the planning process raised concerns with retaining educated population, after they graduate from regional institutions.

**Educational Attainment of Population 25+ Years:
Bachelor's Degree or Higher,
2010 & 2015**

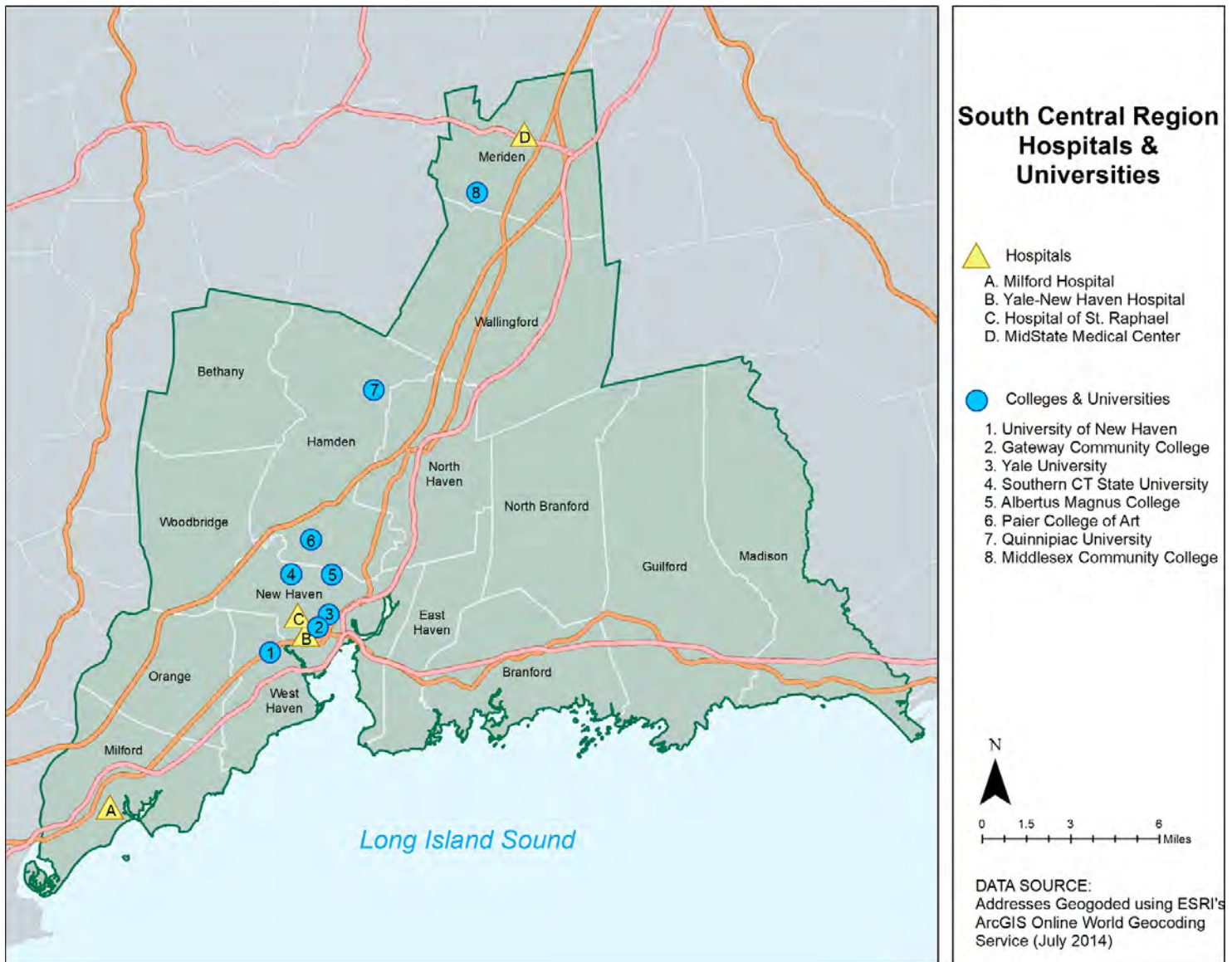


Source: U.S. Census 2010, and ACS 2015.

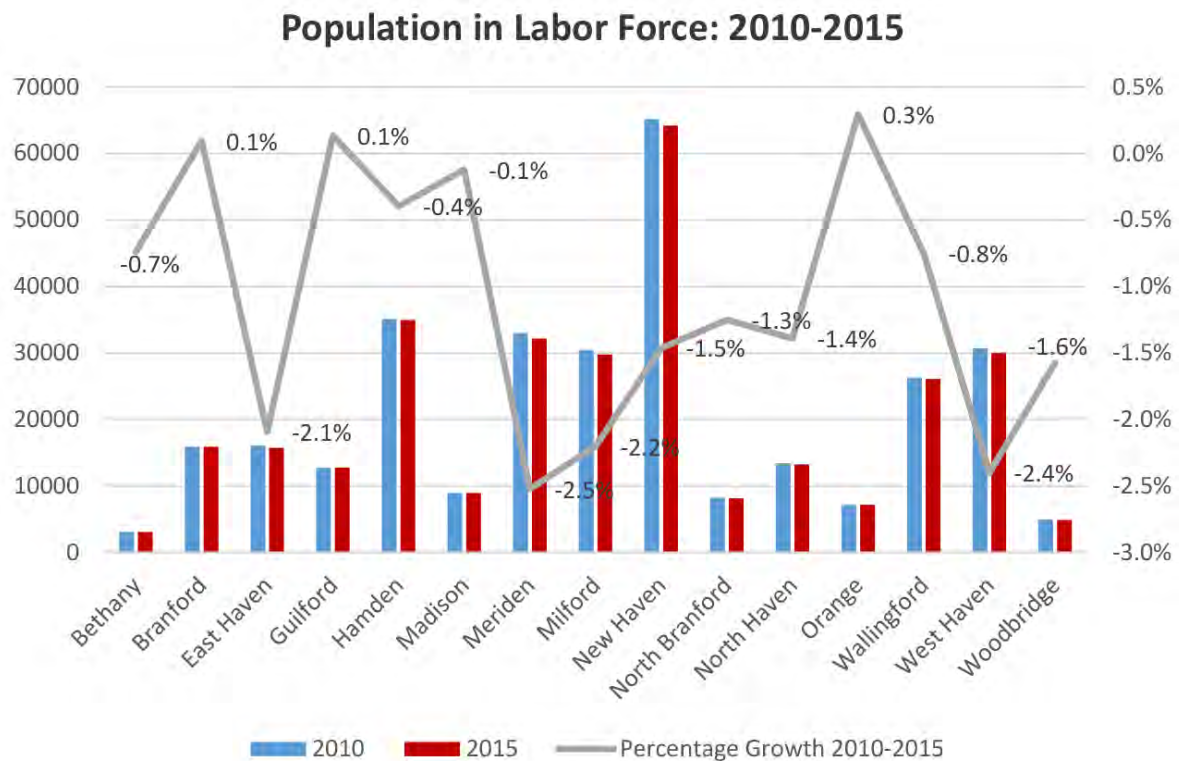
Public school enrollments (PreK-12) are declining at a slightly faster rate in the region than in the state over the last several years. Multiple factors are contributing to this decline such as lower birth rates, the impacts of the economic recession on the housing market and jobs, and migration. In addition, the decrease is not evenly distributed around the region, e.g. New Haven Schools have been gaining students.

PK-12 Public School Enrollments						
District	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
CT	558,377	554,804	549,877	546,347	541,815	538,893
SCRCOG Region	78,790	78,364	77,365	76,524	75,526	74,932
Bethany	492	473	436	407	383	356
Brandford	3,341	3,282	3,245	3,108	3,066	2,983
East Haven	3,297	3,241	3,127	3,011	3,051	2,996
Guilford	3,684	3,597	3,540	3,427	3,419	3,413
Hamden	5,897	5,841	5,811	5,680	5,547	5,493
Madison	3,465	3,390	3,297	3,171	3,027	2,941
Meriden	8,342	8,260	8,183	8,100	7,993	7,950
Milford	6,836	6,670	6,434	6,278	6,152	5,926
New Haven	20,648	21,246	21,420	21,711	21,725	21,981
North Branford	2,187	2,094	2,018	1,969	1,889	1,842
North Haven	3,580	3,537	3,402	3,312	3,188	3,162
Orange	1,273	1,248	1,192	1,180	1,179	1,167
Wallingford	6,435	6,292	6,108	6,105	6,020	5,908
West Haven	6,131	6,079	6,010	5,940	5,842	5,786
Woodbridge	738	745	770	797	775	780

Source: CT State Department of Education.



The region’s labor force (population 16 years and over) has remained fairly stable with only a slight decrease (1.4 percent decrease) since 2010. Nearly all communities in the region experienced decreases in their labor forces. However, some of the region’s more urban cores, such as Meriden, Milford and West Haven experienced more significant decreases of around 2 to 2.5%. Several focus group discussions raised concerns about connecting lower-income laborers with jobs, which is especially important for these more urban communities experiencing a decrease in labor force.



Source: SCRCOG Demographic & Socioeconomic Trends, March 2017

Housing

Housing unit growth was estimated to have outpaced total population growth from 2000 to 2015 with a 7.5 percent increase from 227,660 units to 244,194 units. However, the housing vacancy rate also increased during this period. While 34% of the region’s occupied units is comprised of rental units, those are significantly concentrated in only a few communities within the region, including New Haven, West Haven, Meriden, Hamden, Branford, and East Haven.

Cost-burdened households, or those households that pay more than 30% of income on gross rent or housing costs, are a concern within every community in the region. Households spending that much of their incomes on housing may have little left to cover other necessities such as food, transportation, health care.

Affordable housing, as defined by the Connecticut Affordable Housing Appeals law, includes governmentally assisted housing, housing currently financed by the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority mortgages, and housing subject to deed restrictions regarding affordability. Affordable housing is concentrated within a few communities in the Region, especially those with more diverse housing stock, as is evident from the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development’s inventory of affordable housing.

Cost-Burdened Households as a Percent of All Households

	Owner-Occupied Cost Burdened Households	Renter-Occupied Cost Burdened Households	Total Cost-Burdened Households
Bethany	35%	3%	38%
Branford	25%	14%	39%
East Haven	29%	13%	42%
Guilford	28%	6%	34%
Hamden	24%	18%	42%
Madison	26%	7%	33%
Meriden	24%	21%	45%
Milford	29%	12%	41%
New Haven	13%	41%	54%
North Branford	29%	4%	33%
North Haven	30%	7%	37%
Orange	27%	7%	34%
Wallingford	20%	11%	31%
West Haven	26%	25%	51%
Woodbridge	29%	8%	37%

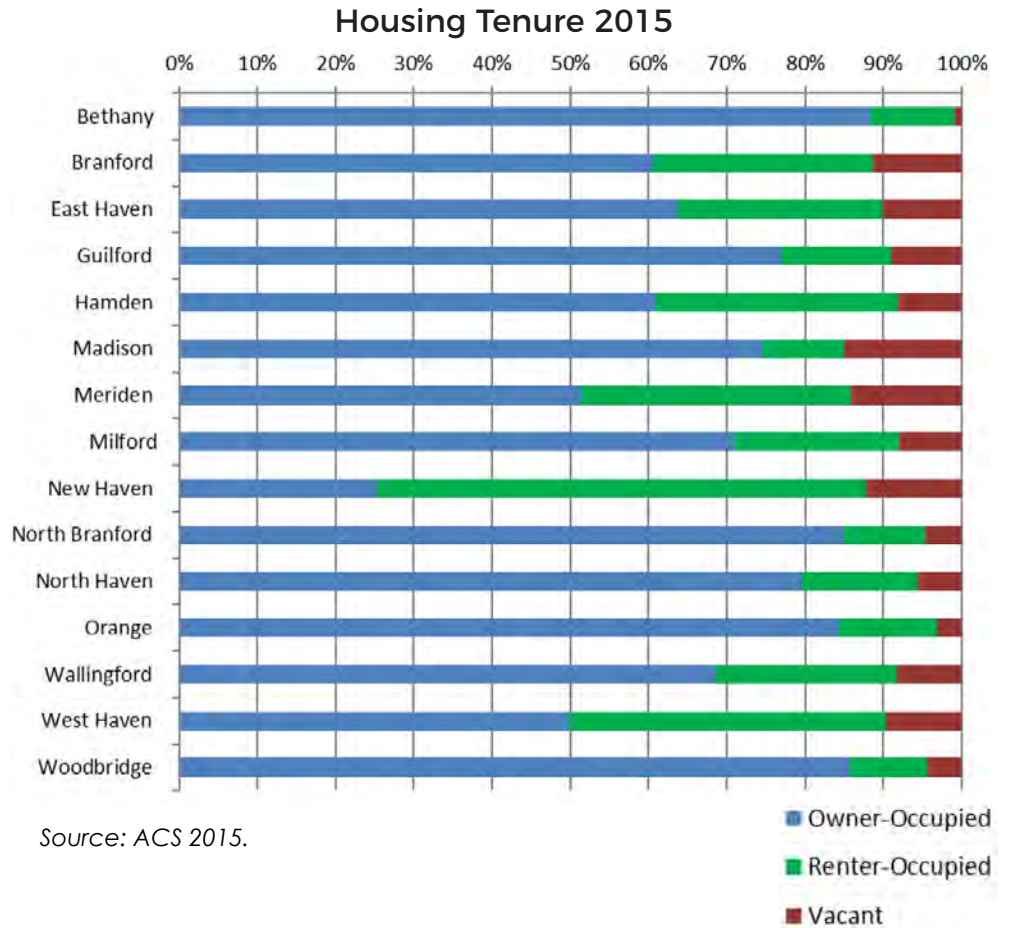
Source: American Community Survey 2009-13.



Photo Credit: Fieldstone Villgae

New active adult condos in Orange

A comparison of median home sales prices for single family homes and median household incomes in 2015 reveals that sales prices range from a low of 2.6 (Hamden) times the local median household income to a high of 4.5 (Branford). The greater the discrepancy between median sales prices and median incomes, the less affordable the community's housing stock generally is.



Source: ACS 2015.

While almost 7% of the region's housing stock is considered affordable under Connecticut's Affordable Housing Appeals law (8-30g), only three communities in the region are exempt from the law (Meriden, New Haven and West Haven). Concerns about adequate housing choices, especially near jobs and transportation centers were evident in the municipal and public survey results.

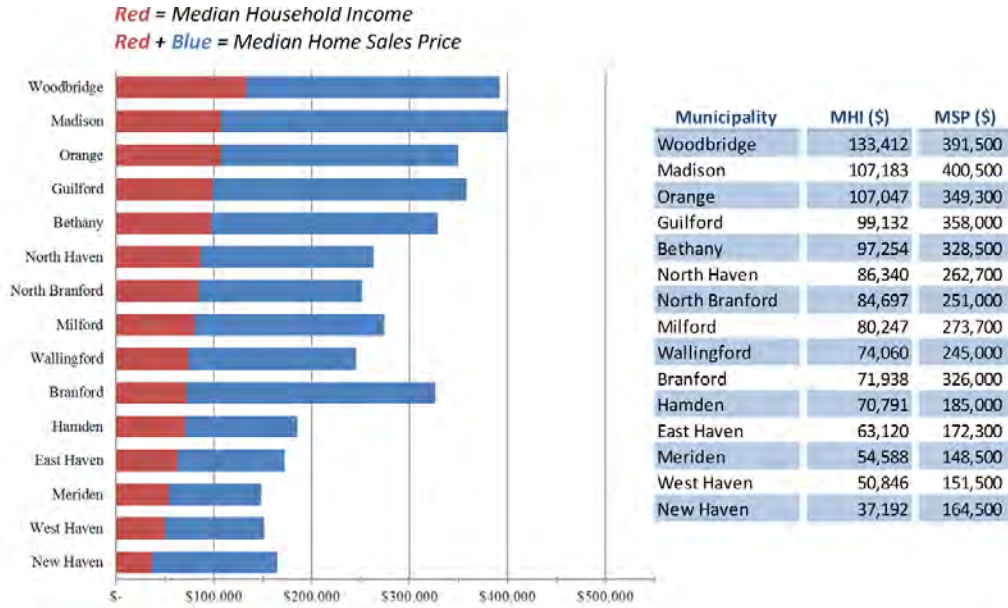
In order to promote more affordable housing opportunities within the state, the State of Connecticut enacted 8-30 g in 1989. The law was intended to encourage affordable housing development; however, the 10 percent threshold of affordable units it established is a struggle for some communities to meet due to their current housing stock, infrastructure, and availability of land. Any actions to modify 8-30g need to be closely monitored with an eye towards improving housing diversity and choice in keeping with other land use and economic development objectives.



Photo Credit: City of Meriden

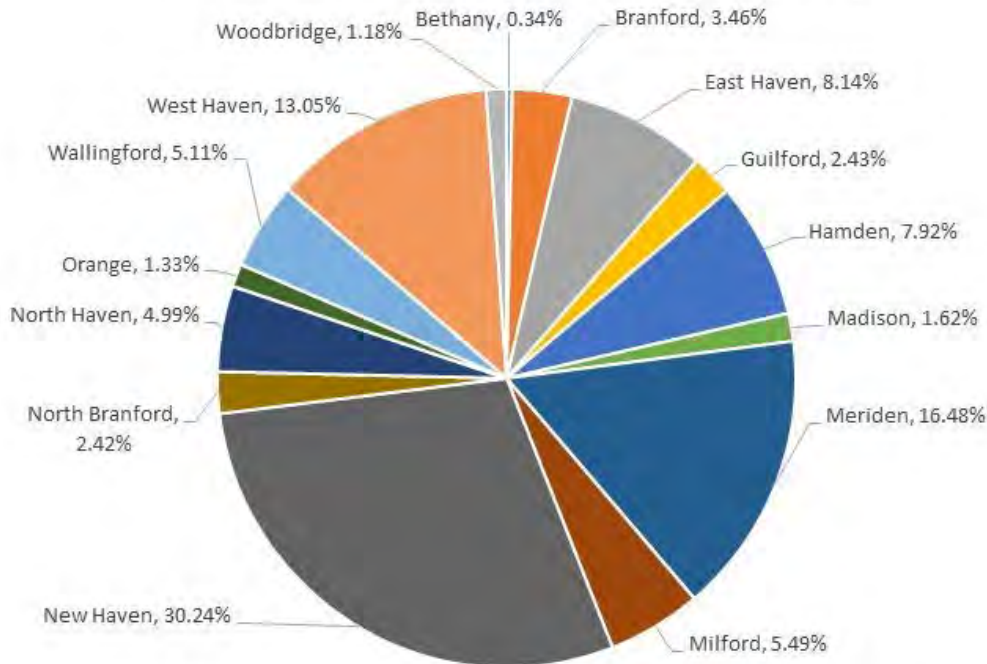
New mixed-use TOD in Meriden

Comparison of Median Home Sales Price and Median Household Incomes, 2015



Source: ACS 2015.

Percentage of Affordable Housing Units, 2015



Source: CT DECD Affordable Housing Appeals List, 2015

Goals and Strategies

Goal 1. Population – South Central CT seeks to be a vibrant, inclusive and livable region that is attractive to an increasingly diverse population.

Strategies:

- Directly engage, and support member municipalities' efforts to engage, under-represented groups, such as, millennials, creative /arts groups, and minorities in planning for the region's future.
- Support training in equity, diversity and inclusion for the staff of SCRCOG, regional municipalities and agencies.
- Support creative financing strategies that seek to connect disadvantaged groups to jobs, transportation, and housing within the region.
- Encourage public-private partnerships to aid in local and regional development through targeted policies and incentives, enhanced commitment to change, dedicated staff, and streamlined financial support.

Goal 2. Housing – The Region contains a diverse and suitable housing supply that provides housing choice for all incomes and age groups.

Strategies:

- Encourage for affordable housing in the region by linking housing to an expanded workforce and economic development; providing technical information and guidance; and, educating communities.
- Promote housing densification in TOD areas, Urban Town and Village Centers, and commercial corridors with existing employment, transportation and utility infrastructure.
- Continue to educate the region's towns about the regional housing market, so that issues of saturation and absorption might be better understood and help towns better plan for and react to housing development opportunities.
- Foster greater cooperation and coordination among anchor institutions, housing, workforce development, and philanthropic agencies on comprehensively addressing housing, employment and transportation needs, and advocating for appropriate local, regional and state policies.
- Continue to support a regional approach to promoting affordable, workforce housing and encouraging new strategies for development.

- Continue to encourage communities to amend local codes and ordinances that help diversify the regional housing stock yet preserve local character, and seek to connect housing with major employment and education centers, neighborhood retail, and childcare and other support services through co-location, and/or transit and transportation linkages.
- Encourage adaptive re-use of historic properties within Urban/Town/Village centers and continue to support preservation of historic structures through necessary technical assistance.
- Promote the use of regional health impact assessments (HIAs) at the local and regional level for developments of regional significance to determine their impacts on access to transportation, jobs, parks and open space, and healthy food within the region; to determine housing quality; and to analyze impacts relating to racial and socio-economic segregation within the region.
- Promote sustainable design and construction practices through education and outreach.

A nationwide study conducted by the Pew Charitable Trusts, a non-profit in Philadelphia, indicates that “even if housing agencies or community developers choose not to conduct a HIA for a particular project or decision, tools such as the San Francisco Indicator Project’s Healthy Development Checklist may prove valuable in identifying and addressing important health issues in the decision-making process.”

Data Haven, an organization with roots in the Greater New Haven region, has conducted multiple Community Wellbeing Surveys in the region and beyond over the last decade. Results from the 2012 regional survey, the 2015 statewide and regional survey and the upcoming 2018 statewide and regional survey are available on Data Haven’s website at www.ctdatahaven.org. Survey results detail a variety of measures of public health and wellbeing, which can help housing officials consider health implications in the decision-making process.

http://www.pewtrusts.org/~media/assets/2016/03/guidance_for_the_public_health_sector.pdf

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

South Central Connecticut's diverse natural environment includes Long Island Sound, rivers, lakes, parks, forests, farm land/ open space and unique terrestrial and marine species. The natural environment contributes to the region's overall quality of life (human environment) as well as its economic prosperity both directly and indirectly.

One of the region's greatest natural assets is Long Island Sound, which enables successful aquaculture and marine-based businesses, as well as offering recreational amenities to regional residents. The agricultural lands within the region are also an important resource for sustainable food production, habitat conservation, and passive recreation.

The region supports green and sustainable design practices that integrate nature and habitat friendly practices in both public and private developments. For example, significant land acquisitions in important watersheds and aquifer protection areas have helped protect drinking water quality and native habitats and species, while simultaneously offering opportunities for passive recreation.

The planning process brought to light the following three concerns for the sustainability of South Central Connecticut’s natural environment:

- Biodiversity.** Long Island Sound is a tidal estuary of the Atlantic Ocean and is home to a variety of diverse habitats, animal and plant life. Even though the health and quality of Long Island Sound has generally improved in recent years due to better coastal management and land use policies, concerns still remain for habitat loss, and risks from air pollution, sea-level rise and climate change. A coordinated regional response is needed to continue to protect and improve the health of Long Island Sound and its biodiversity.
- Water Quality.** While the region’s riverine, estuarine and inland waters’ quality has improved dramatically, and drinking water is generally high quality, there is a long history of land development patterns and pollution that still impact water quality. Many of the region’s municipalities have already improved their storm water regulations and incorporated Best Management Practices (BMPs) for promoting low-impact developments. However, further work can be done to promote the use of green infrastructure, conservation buffers, and green development practices.
- Agricultural Sustainability.** Agriculture is an important component of the region’s history, and remains important to increasing the overall sustainability of today’s population by providing healthy, local foods. Loss of prime farm lands due to development pressure, poor farming techniques that have degraded land quality, and/or the loss of agrarian traditions will decrease overall agricultural productivity of the region, and the accessibility of healthy foods. Therefore, there is a need to promote sustainable agriculture by promoting farmland preservation and agribusinesses; facilitating linkages between agribusiness entrepreneurs and appropriate lands and/or facilities for value-added production; and promoting healthy agricultural practices to help support the overall health and economy of the region.

Current Conditions

Open Space and Recreation

Just over 28% of the region was designated as open space according to 2015 land use data compiled by SCRCOG. This represents an increase of almost 5% since 2008.

CT DEEP recently adopted the 2016-20 Green Plan, in partnership with municipalities and numerous conservation organizations, to guide land acquisitions within the state. The State’s goal is for 21% of land to be protected open space by 2023, with 10% held by the State. As of late 2015, DEEP identified the need for the State to acquire or protect an additional 62,960 acres and its Partners to acquire or protect an additional 108,920 acres to meet their targeted goals. The Green Plan recommends that future acquisitions target natural waters and drinking water resources, areas significant to the coast, natural heritage resources and natural resource based outdoor recreation.

Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grants within SCRCOG Region, 2009-2016

Town	Property	Acreage	Grant
Guilford	Etzel	33	\$392,000
RWA - Hamden	Crosby	60	\$500,000
Woodbridge	Race Brook	53	\$451,000
Madison	Griswold Airport	17	\$500,000
Branford	Peiper	24	\$175,000
Meriden	Finch Ave	3	\$25,000
Madison	Bauermeister	79	\$500,000
Hamden	Whitney Ave	39	\$455,000
Guilford	Westwoods	17	\$60,000
Branford	Kaczynski	22	\$137,500
Bethany	Carrington Preserve	74	\$232,500
Guilford - RWA	Dandio	61	\$396,500
Guilford	Westwoods	15	\$85,000
Hamden	Brooksvale	15	\$67,500
TOTAL:		512	\$3,977,000

Source: CT DEEP

The Regional Water Authority (RWA) has a significant portfolio of protected land in the region. The RWA aims to protect the region's drinking water supply. The Land Use Plan for Regional Water Authority (RWA), adopted in January 2016, addresses the preservation of the Authority's land and guides land use decisions for more than 27,000 acres in the region.

The region has several multi-use trails that can be used for biking, walking and other non-motorized alternative modes of transportation in addition to recreational purposes. In 2016, SCRCOG updated the Regional Recreational Trails Mapping Project in collaboration with municipal staff, land trusts, conservation commissions, the South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority (RWA), and the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. The Update refreshed the design and content of the trail brochures, including a map of the trail(s), descriptive information, directions, parking information,

permitted uses, and contact information. The trail maps and related information are available in two formats – tri-fold brochures and letter-size pages and are featured in the SCRCOG Regional GIS Viewer. The information is available on the SCRCOG Website through the following link:

<http://scrcog.org/regional-planning/regional-trails/>.

Parks, trails, and recreation are among the top three reasons for residents to choose to live in their town and the region, according to the results of the public survey conducted during the planning process. While many respondents of the municipal survey felt that the region has adequate recreational amenities, not all of these amenities are easily accessible.

Regional Greenways and Trails in South Central CT

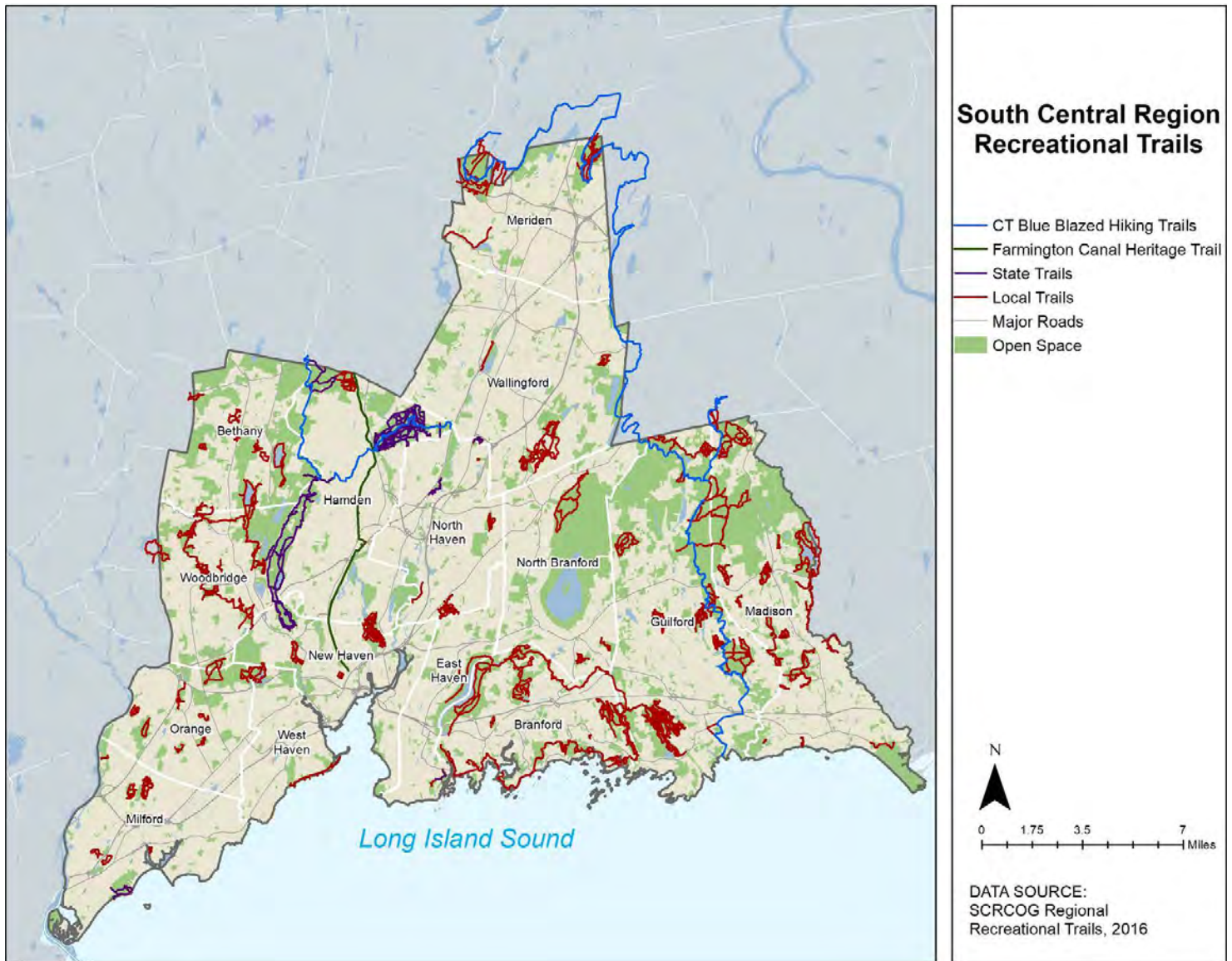
Greenway/ Trail	Location	Description
Farmington Canal Heritage Greenway	The Connecticut section of the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail is a multi-use trail that goes from the City of New Haven to the Town of Suffield; the trail follows the path of the 19th century Farmington Canal.	Much of the 84 miles from Northampton, MA to New Haven, CT is completed as a trail, with the largest gap in the network running from Southington to Farmington. The trail is part of the East Coast Greenway running from Florida to Maine. Within South Central CT, only a 1.6-mile stretch remains to be constructed. Designs are completed and funding is in place.
The New England National Scenic Trail	The 215-mile hiking trail goes from the Long Island Sound communities to the Massachusetts/New Hampshire border, and is comprised primarily of the historic Mattabesett, Metacomet, and Monadnock Trail systems.	Within the region, the trail recently expanded to Chittenden Park in Guilford to run from Long Island Sound north through parts of Wallingford and into Meriden.
Blue Blazed Hiking Trail System	Throughout CT	Working with public and private landowners, the Connecticut Forest and Parks Association (CFPA) maintains over 700 miles of hiking trails, which are a State designated greenway. Within South Central CT, this includes the New England Scenic Trail, and West Rock Ridge trails that extend from New Haven to Sleeping Giant in Hamden and into Wallingford.
Quinnipiac River Greenway	The Quinnipiac River Greenway Watershed from New Haven to Plainville	Trails within this State designated greenway have been developed and are continuing development within New Haven, North Haven, Wallingford and Meriden. An intermunicipal compact drives the provision of public recreation, environmental education, and protection of natural resources in the Quinnipiac River watershed.
Shoreline Greenway Trail	Planned to be a 25-mile multi-use continuous trail from Lighthouse Point on New Haven Harbor to Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison.	The Shoreline Greenway Trail is being pieced together by an all-volunteer, nonprofit organization with an intent of providing recreational, non-motorized transportation and educational opportunities. Nearly 6 miles of the trail has been completed in East Haven, Branford, and Madison.
West River Watershed Greenway	Entire West River Watershed	This greenway encourages the protection of natural resources and promotes sustainable recreational uses.
Milford Greenway System	Wepaug, Beaverbrook and Housatonic, Indian River-Stubby Plan, and Farley Brook/ Crystal River corridors in Milford	This system protects the significant waterways running through the City.
Woodbridge Greenway Trails	12-mile corridor through Woodbridge	This corridor connects open spaces, provides passive recreation and protects natural habitats.

Source: CT DEEP.

Trails

Greenways and recreational trails of local, regional and statewide importance run throughout South Central CT. Greenways are corridors of open space that may be located along a natural feature, man-made corridor or unused right-of-way that protects natural, scenic and historical resources and/or connects protected areas. The Connecticut Greenways Council officially designates Connecticut's greenways in accordance with its criteria. Several such designated greenways run through South

Central Connecticut, including the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail, the Metacomet Ridge System, the Blue Blazed Trail System maintained by the Connecticut Forest and Parks Association, the Quinnipiac River Greenway, Woodbridge Greenway Trails, Milford Greenway System, West River Watershed, and the Shoreline Greenway Trail. Further information on the region's greenways and trails is provided in the Regional Greenways Table on the previous page. The East Coast Greenway, which links 15 states from Maine to Florida, runs through South Central CT, with the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail providing a significant link through the State.

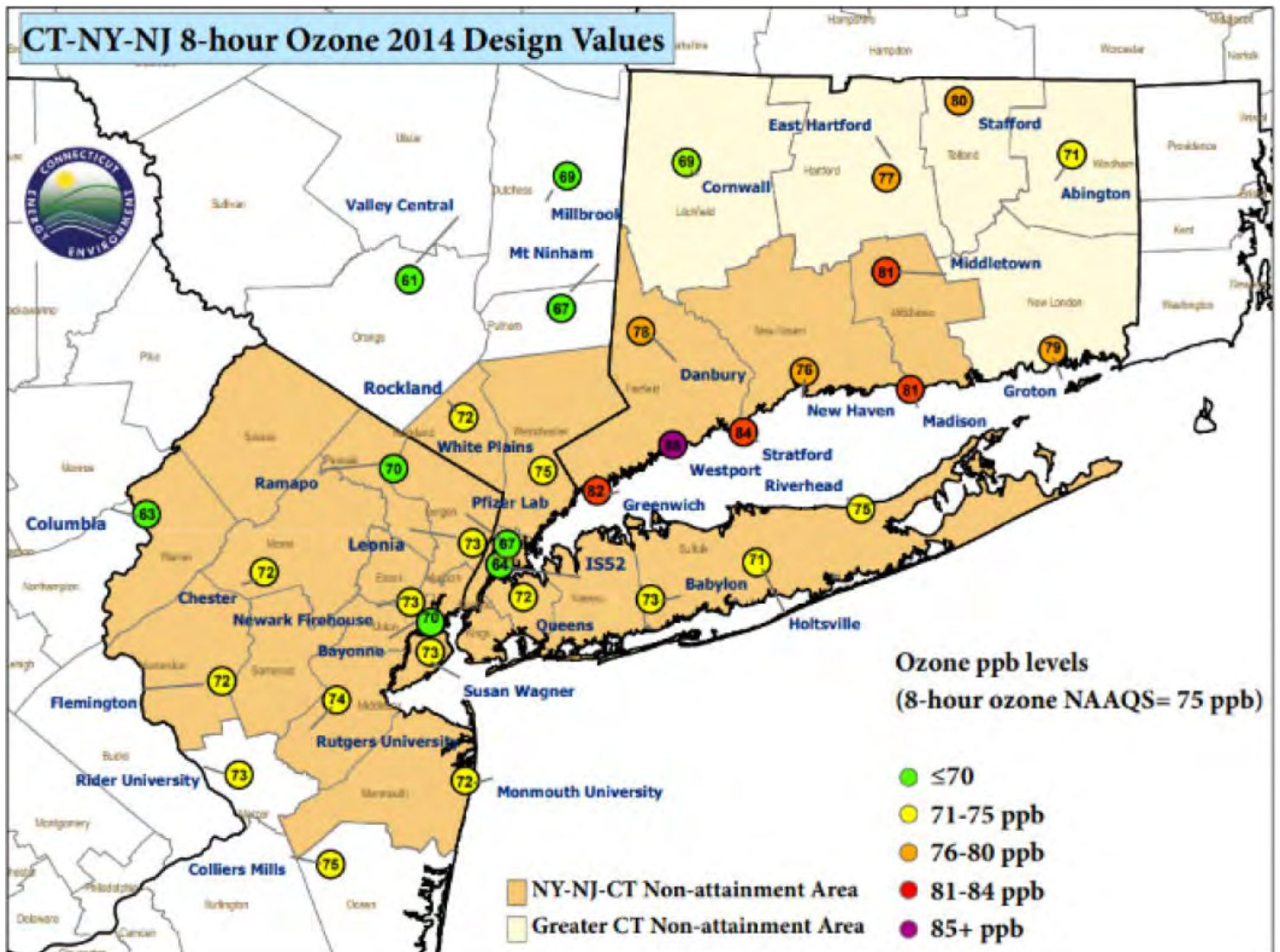


Air Quality

Air quality within the region has generally improved with the region being in attainment for fine particle pollution. Yet, it continues to be in non-attainment for ozone, which indicates that more improvements to air quality are needed.

SCRCOG’s Long Range Transportation Plan undergoes the Transportation Conformity process established by the US Department of Transportation and the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Through that process, SCRCOG must demonstrate that the overall set of investments identified in the Plan will improve air quality, in keeping with EPA policies.

In addition, the Long Range Transportation Plan identifies other programs aimed at improving air quality for the region, including SCRCOG’s ongoing Congestion Management Process, which monitors and evaluates system performance and congestion management to better target investments; the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection’s (DEEP) anti-idling initiative; and DEEP’s diesel retrofit program.

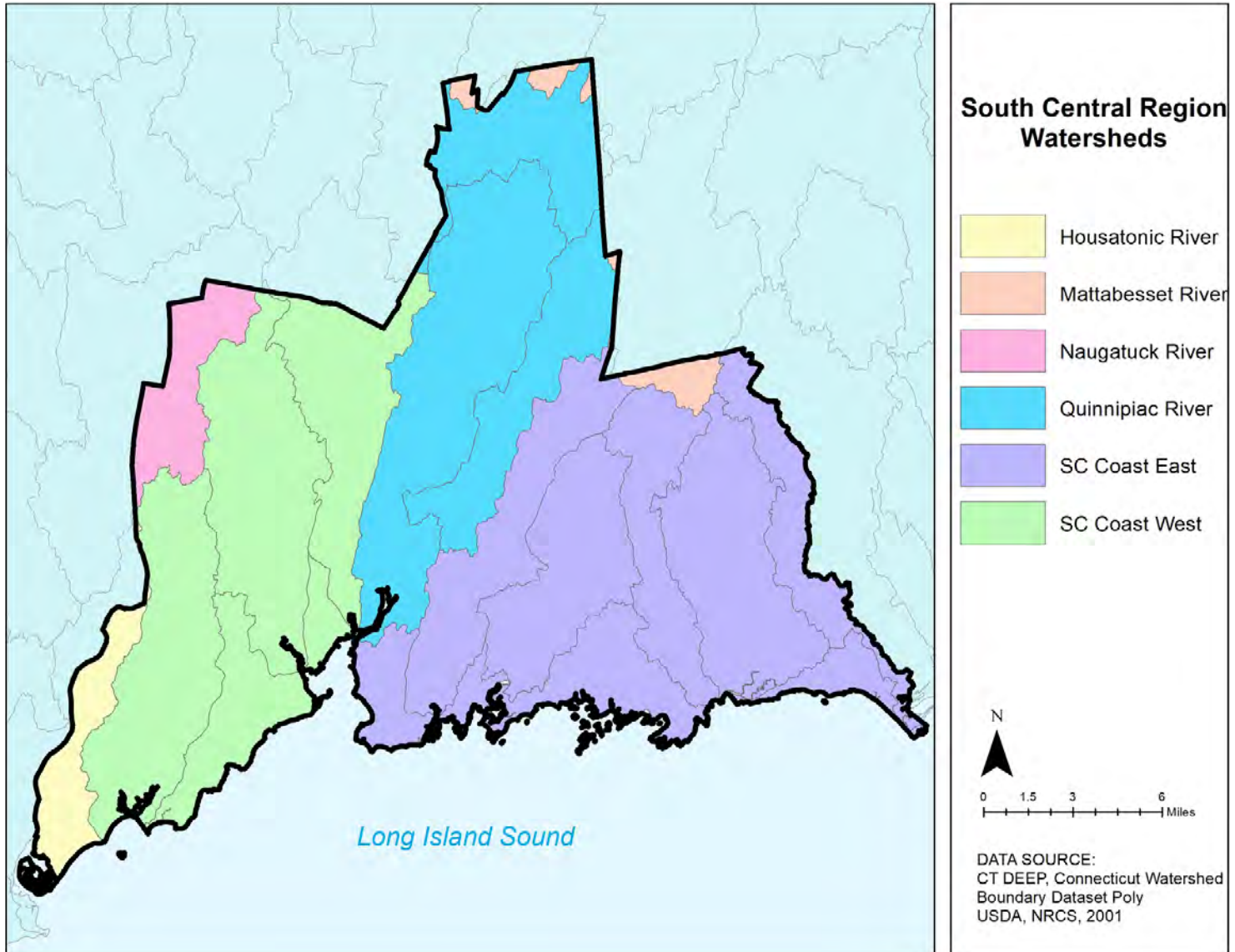


Source: CT DEEP.

Water Resources

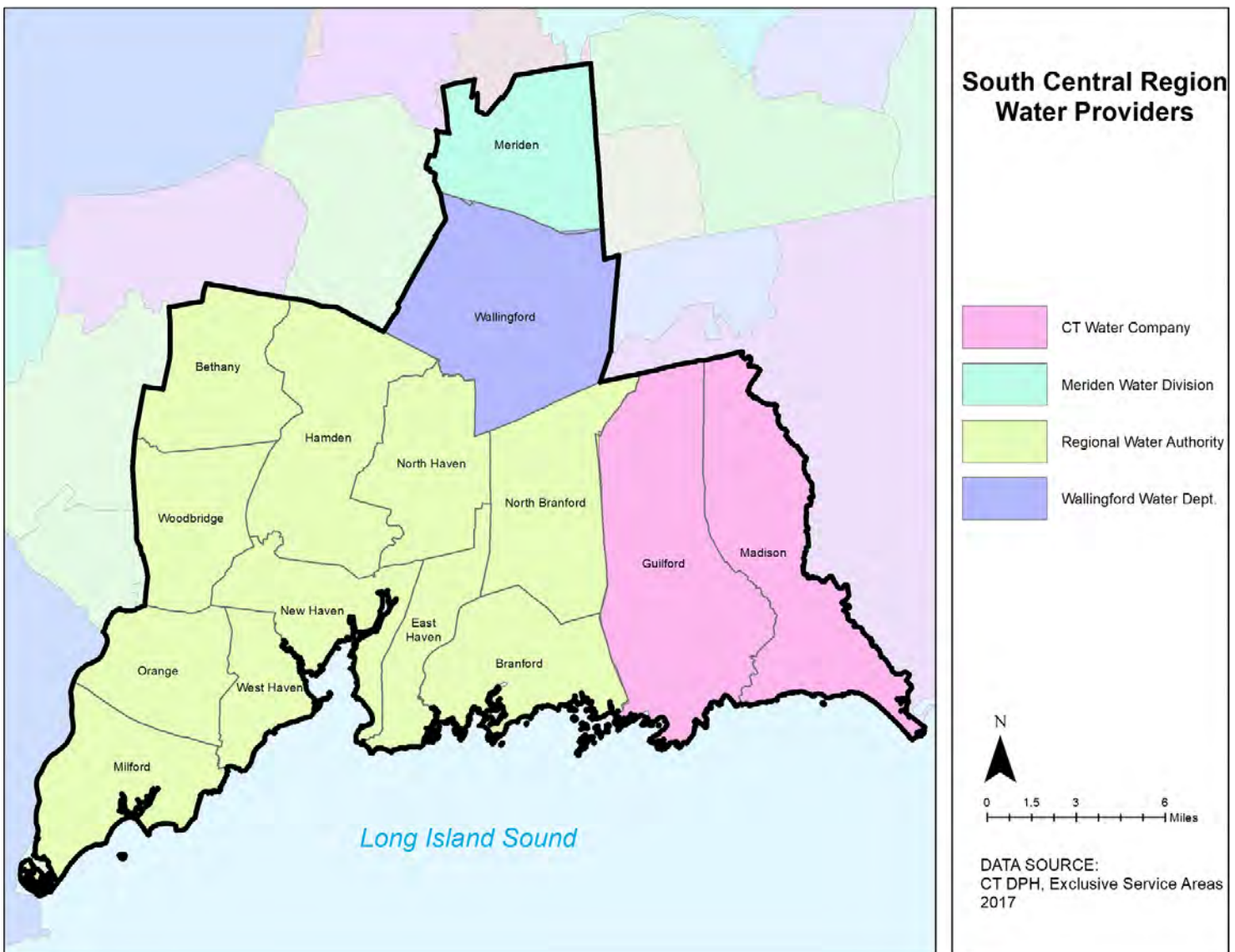
Water quality has generally improved in the region; however, impairments still exist. The CT DEEP recently selected the Farm River and its estuary and the Quinnipiac River as priority waters and embayments to develop Action Plans to restore. All of the region's rivers, streams and waterways eventually feed into Long Island Sound. Recently, the region's most prominent river

– the Quinnipiac has shown signs of water quality improvement due to the efforts of the Quinnipiac River Watershed Association (QRWA) through their continuing education efforts about what impacts water quality, their nature programming that builds civic pride and awareness about this incredible regional resource, and their clean-up and stewardship efforts that ensure the future quality of this waterway. The Quinnipiac River Watershed Based Plan was also completed in December 2013 to address the remaining water quality issues of the Quinnipiac and its tributaries.



The Regional Water Authority (RWA) provides a majority of the region’s public water supply, as shown by the service map below. The RWA also purchased the Birmingham Utility Water company recently, which includes the adjacent service areas in Ansonia, Derby and Seymour, as well as lands in Bethany and Woodbridge (the Ansonia Division properties). The CT Water Company in Clinton, CT provides public water supply service to the southerly areas of Guilford and Madison. Wallingford and Meriden supply water to their own municipalities through their own municipal Water Divisions. SCRCOG, in partnership with RWA, is currently working on a study on the effects of climate change on public drinking water in the region.

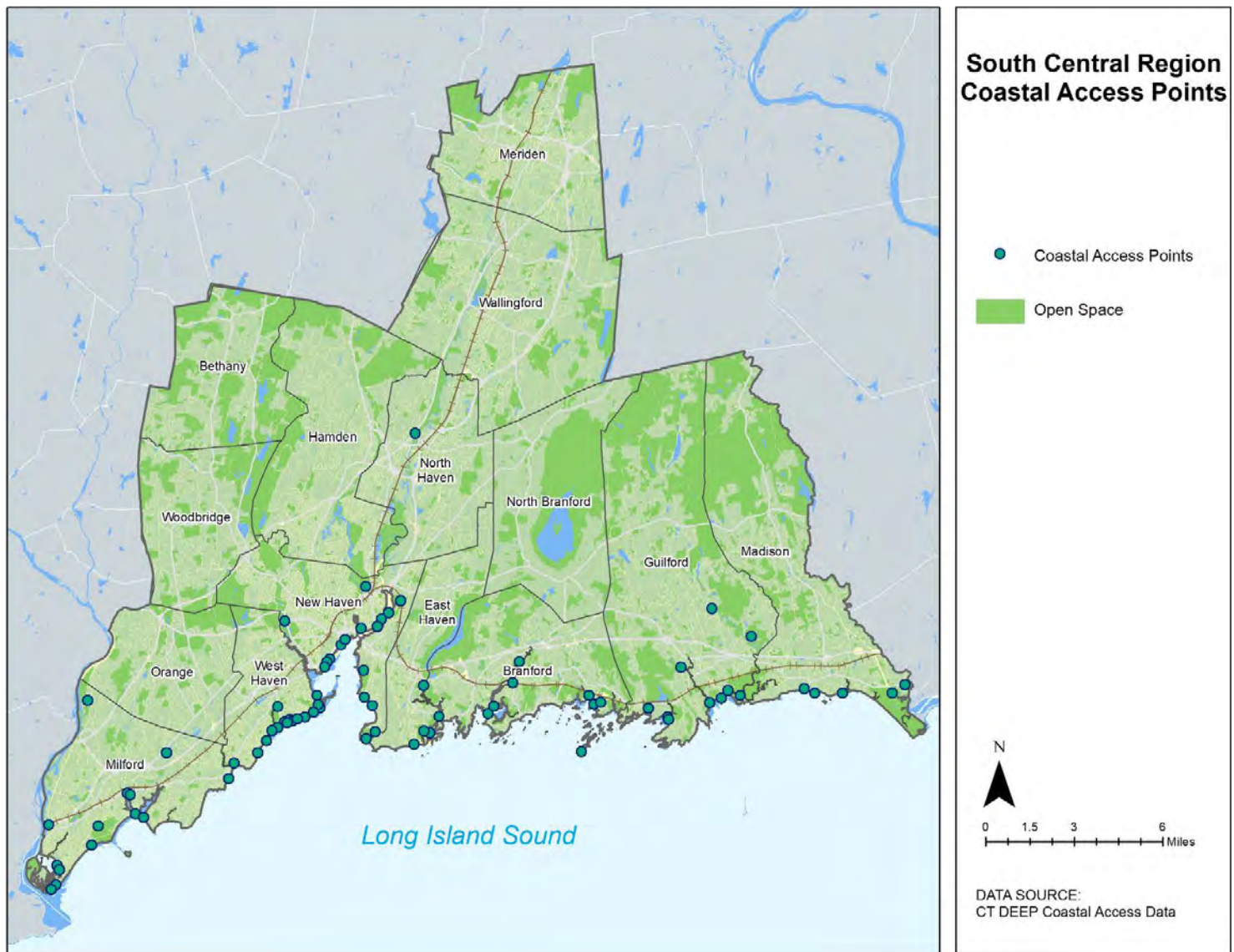
Increased communication and collaboration among various drinking water suppliers in the region is needed to plan for long term adequacy and quality of water resources of the region; to conserve valuable open space; and to plan for response to disasters.



Coastal Resources

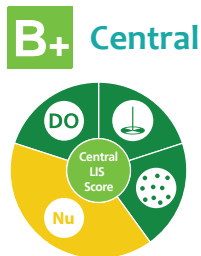
The region’s residents are fortunate to have direct coastal access at several locations across the region. Land use within these coastal areas is regulated by the Connecticut Coastal Management Act (CCMA). The act also regulates work in tidal, coastal and navigable waters and tidal wetlands. The State recently had the Connecticut Institute for Resilience and

Climate Adaptation (CIRCA) prepare sea-level rise projections for official use in state planning efforts. The region faces a number of critical issues with respect to sea-level rise given the proximity of development to the coast, the location of major transportation routes along the coast and the unique and valuable coastal habitats and species that occupy the fringe of land and water, and the inability of residents to access waterfront directly from their neighborhoods. Participants in the planning process also expressed a desire for working waterfronts with enhanced resident access, and water-based recreational opportunities within the region.



DEEP is also currently working on the Long Island Sound Blue Plan, which will include an inventory of Long Island Sound’s natural resources and uses and, ultimately, a spatial plan to guide future use of the Sound’s waters and submerged lands. The primary goal is to minimize conflicts between marine life and human uses of the Sound, such as navigation and aquaculture. Currently, the Blue Plan is in the draft development stage and will potentially address issues of promoting working waterfront, resident access to the waterfront, and deep water ports; reducing climate change implications; conserving energy and infrastructure; protecting marine life health, etc.

Researchers have graded the health of Long Island Sound ranging from “A” to “F” based on water quality and its ability to support aquatic life. The area between Westbrook and Stratford, where the region’s coastal towns are located, received a B+ grade on water quality. The evaluation is based on dissolved oxygen, nitrogen, phosphorus, chlorophyll, and water clarity. While the overall levels of nitrogen in the water improved, the results for phosphorus were less encouraging. The region must continue to make improvements throughout its watersheds to protect coastal waters.



Central Long Island Sound received a B+ (88%). Although nutrients are still a cause for concern in this region, increased exchange with the Atlantic Ocean leads to water quality generally supportive of aquatic life.

Source: Long Island Sound 2016 Report Card. <https://ecoreportcard.org/report-cards/long-island-sound/health/>

Coastal Resilience

Coastal communities in the region have the highest density and most populated coastline between Boston and New York. Flooding and downed trees were identified as the region’s biggest hazard concerns. FEMA has designated many areas along the region’s primary waterbodies either within the 100-year or 500-year flood zone, many of which have been preserved as parks and open space.

FINAL REPORT

TYPE: Hard Infrastructure: (Map #13)
STRATEGY: Road Abandonment and Removal

When roadways are abandoned, associated risk is eliminated. In many cases, road abandonment needs to be paired with increasing the level of service of another road, or creation of alternate access. Examples where roads are candidates for abandonment and removal include:

EAST HAVEN: Fairview Road and Brazos Road Abandonment and Removal
 (Map #13; Section 5; Appendix E)

DESCRIPTION: Fairview road and Brazos Road in East Haven run parallel with each other from north to south. Fairview and Brazos cut across the tidal marsh and intersect Caroline road which runs parallel to the beach. Fairview Road is slightly higher in elevation causing Brazos to flood first. However, during Irene and Sandy, this entire area experienced a significant amount of flooding with both roads completely flooded and unpassable. An existing water main also runs underneath both Caroline and Brazos road. Ideally, this project represents an opportunity to either raise or abandon Brazos road and/or Fairview road. Allowing for improvement to tidal flushing, healthier marsh systems, open space for the advancement of salt marsh, and consequently, enhanced flood protection and wave attenuation for nearby properties.

BRANFORD: Tabor Road Abandonment (Map #13)

DESCRIPTION: Tabor Drive is located immediately southeast of downtown Branford. The road intersects Montowise Street (Route 146) and Tookie Drive at a three-way corner. Tabor Road then rips itself around the tidal marsh and intersects Tabor Drive toward the southern end of Branford. This entire road is extremely low-lying and experienced significant flooding during Sandy. The section of Tabor Drive that has the immediate risk is the area is encompassed by the marsh; located on the opposite side of the Tabor Lutheran Church. Ideally, this section of the road could be retired, providing more flood protection for many access roads, residential homes and neighborhoods within the town of Branford. The remaining portion of Tabor Drive would be accessed by Ark Road. Retiring this section of Tabor Drive would also restore hydrological flow for the watershed and improve drainage and storage during floods.

STRATEGY: Bridge Scour Reduction

Where scour has been observed or is posing risk to bridges, it may be possible to utilize hybrid solutions to stabilize the area subject to scour. Green or solely nature-based solutions may be more challenging to use in these areas, depending on the velocities found in the channels.

BRANFORD: Trolley Pedestrian Bridge Scour Mitigation
 (Map #13; Section 5; Appendix E)



Credit: TNC

DESCRIPTION: The Trolley Pedestrian Bridge project is located at 11 West Point Road. The project is east of the Pine Orchard Golf Course and just northeast of Pleasant Point. The on-site infrastructure consists of an old railroad bridge converted into a pedestrian walkway over the channel and marsh. Over the years, erosion has occurred along the front and bank portions of the abutments as well as areas underneath this important town-owned asset. The causes of erosion and scour appear to be a combination of stormwater runoff from the trail, pedestrian access where people walk from the trail down to the creek, hydrodynamic forces from the tidal flow, as well as other natural processes. Ideally, this coastal restoration project would focus on mitigating future erosion through the installation of green infrastructure techniques and potential bioengineered bank concepts or other hybrid approaches. The result would help protect this vital resource and point of public access for the town of Branford and residents of Pleasant Point. Hybrid approaches would be consistent with the Town’s goal of preserving the Stony Creek estuary and its marshes.

Source: Regional Framework for Coastal Resilience in Southern Connecticut.

SCRCOG, in association with the Metropolitan Regional Council of Governments (MetroCOG), and the Nature Conservancy developed the Regional Framework for Coastal Resilience in Southern Connecticut. The main objective of the project was to comprehensively assess, prioritize and advance resilience opportunities to reduce risk to the 591,000 residents across the project area (Milford, West Haven, New Haven, East Haven, Branford, Guilford, Madison in SCRCOG, and Fairfield, Bridgeport, Stratford in MetroCOG) and increase the viability of natural ecosystems for 30% of Connecticut’s coastline. The project consisted of the following four components:

Green & Natural Infrastructure Assessment – The assessment characterized the coastline based on existing/future habitat type, landform, exposure, condition, and different types of existing structures present. In addition, a Legal, Policy and Regulatory assessment was completed as complementary piece.

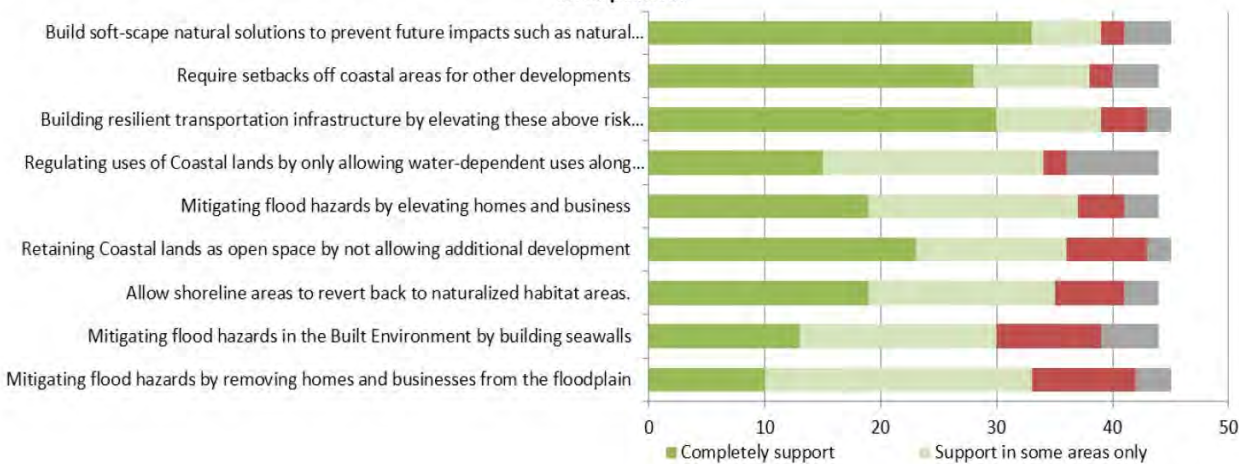
Municipal Engagement Process - Collaborative dialogue to define risk and resilience opportunities around common themes for infrastructure and resilience needs at a municipal and interconnected regional scale.

Design of Coastal Resilience Projects - Conceptual designs were developed for priority

projects identified through the assessment and community engagement process for each of the ten municipalities. **Regional Framework for Coastal Resilience in Southern Connecticut** – Incorporation of outputs from the three previous components. The final report identifies, catalogues, and provides critical information to accelerate the development of resiliency strategies and projects and integrate the information into core hazard mitigation and comprehensive planning and capital expenditure efforts for the ten municipalities and the two regions.

Municipal officials from across the region indicated a need for grant writing assistance to work towards implementing coastal resilience objectives in the survey conducted as part of this planning process. There was a general widespread support (either “completely support” or “support in some areas only”) for building soft-scape natural solutions such as natural berms, requiring setbacks off coastal areas for development, and elevating transportation infrastructure in risk areas.

The region interested in some of the following regional strategies to adapt to the challenges of sea level rise which includes increased coastal and riverine flooding and erosion. Please indicate your level of support for these policies.



Agriculture

Historically, the region has been valued for its numerous agricultural assets. Similar to national trends, small-sized farms (less than 49 acres) are increasing in the region recently. Agri-tourism is one of the fastest growing segments of the CT Tourism industry, growing at about 33% percent annually, and is often a key component of agribusiness viability. However, because agribusinesses are generally located in residential areas, conflicts can arise with agri-tourism activities.

Farmers markets have continued to expand and flourish in the region. In 2011, the five farmers' markets operated by City Seed in New Haven had total sales of more than \$1,000,000 including \$80K from public benefits SNAP/Food Stamps. These markets help support farming as well as connecting residents in urban areas with fresh, healthy food.

Connecticut is a major producer of farm-raised shellfish generating \$30 million plus in farm-gate sales annually. Aquaculture is an important agricultural activity in South Central Connecticut.

While the state and the region have undertaken various initiatives in recent years to preserve farm lands while balancing the need for growth, more support and technical assistance could help communities more actively participate. Many communities have hosted farmers' markets, provided community gardens, and purchased farmland or development rights, as indicated in the results of the municipal survey. Guilford has led the region in farmland preservation, designating 2,700 acres, or 9% of its land, as protected farmland. Some communities are also using strategies to protect water resources, including supporting open space purchases to protect water supplies and aquifers (46% of respondents), limiting water use during drought warnings (39%), and marking storm drains to show that they drain to local water bodies or Long Island Sound (28%).

SCRCOG was awarded a CT Department of Agriculture Farm Viability Grant, in partnership with CT Resource Conservation and Development (CTRC&D), to promote regional collaboration in the agriculture and aquaculture sectors. The program will compile information on resources available from government agencies and nonprofits that would assist farms and agricultural businesses in marketing, sustainable business practice, expansion, and business growth. The grant will also support the expansion of CTCR&D's Farm Energy Program into the SCRCOG region, which provides technical assistance to farms looking to utilize alternative & renewable forms of energy.



North Branford Guide to Local Farms

Goals and Strategies

Goal 1. Open Space - The Region's natural resource systems, water resources, and natural habitats are preserved, protected, and appreciated for their contributions to the environment, economy, and quality of life of current and future generations.

Strategies:

- Encourage resident access to open spaces and recreational assets within the region through the expansion of existing bike/pedestrian network connecting open spaces and other existing/proposed regional trail connections.
- Promote regular updates to the regional open spaces inventory to include most recent information on connections, related amenities and any new acquisitions, and to help identify potential areas for conservation.
- Promote educational and marketing materials on the diverse open space and passive recreational opportunities available in the region to encourage stewardship.
- Support and assist communities in coordinating open space preservation efforts among adjacent municipalities, identifying innovative funding sources for open space acquisition, and in proactively educating major land owners on estate planning.
- Foster collaboration among various agencies that purchase and maintain open space in the region (municipalities, land trusts, water companies, etc.) by convening groups to share information and techniques.
- Explore the feasibility of developing a regional open space plan to promote and expand the regional open space network.

Goal 2. Water resources – Drinking and surface water quality is enhanced and maintained by the preservation and protection of wetlands, floodplains, critical watershed lands, and other resources.

Strategies:

- Protect the quality of regional watersheds through the encouragement of conservation efforts.
- Facilitate coordination and communication between regional water utilities and member municipalities on land use planning and water quality projects.
- Support and promote public access to Long Island Sound and the region's rivers as a way of developing regional stewardship.
- Continue to advocate for improvements to Long Island Sound among elected local, state and federal officials to ensure adequate funding for remediation, education, acquisition, and other projects.
- Support the region's existing and future aquaculture through appropriate land use policies to ensure long term sustainability.

Goal 3. Agriculture – South Central CT’s thriving agri-businesses not only provide residents with access to locally grown foods and recreational opportunities, but also contribute to the regional economy.

- Celebrate the region’s agricultural heritage and support local and state efforts to preserve existing farms through acquisition, transfer/purchase of development rights, historic preservation, and marketing strategies that promote the region’s farms through increased awareness and agri-tourism.
- Support communities in educating major landowners on estate planning and techniques such as the transfer of development rights, as well as CT Farmlink and other programs available to help preserve working farms.
- Encourage communities to adopt land use policies aimed at sustainable food production, and eliminating food deserts and promoting access to healthy food for all.
- Continue to promote and update regional disaster mitigation planning to protect critical agricultural lands and animal species from intensive flooding and to plan for wildfires based on forest and grassland ecosystem management principles.
- Support the retention and expansion of agricultural businesses by continuing to promote available grant programs and incentives.

Goal 4. Coastal Resilience – The Region is continuously evolving to establish long-term resilience to sea level rise and the impacts of flooding and storm damage.

- Continue to update the South Central Region: Multi-jurisdiction Hazard Mitigation.
- Support and promote the education of regional residents and business-owners regarding projected changes to coastal lands and resources, and the need and basis for resiliency strategies.
- Support and promote implementation of identified coastal resilience projects in the Region, including identifying funding and resources to help advance projects.
- Ensure that regional transportation projects consider and incorporate science-based sea level rise and resiliency information and a cost-benefit analysis that includes long-term maintenance costs, as much the Region’s critical infrastructure is located along the coast.
- Encourage updates to local floodplain ordinances to meet or exceed Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) requirements.
- Promote effective stormwater management strategies to reduce runoff from impervious surfaces and minimize flooding; increase the capacity of drainage systems through sewer separation in areas with combined sewers; promote low impact developments.
- Educate communities on the financial benefits of FEMA’s Community Rating System program and assist them in participating in the program.

- Collaborate with partners within and outside the region, including neighboring regions to provide and seek technical assistance, to avoid duplication of efforts, and to develop a coordinated response for dealing with natural disasters.
- Explore funding opportunities to advance conceptual designs developed as part of the Regional Framework for Coastal Resilience in Southern CT, projects identified as part the SCRCOG Multi-Jurisdiction Plan Update, and projects identified as part of the municipal coastal resilience efforts.

The Connecticut Institute for Resilience and climate Adaptation (CIRCA) is a multi-disciplinary, collaborative center located at UCONN whose mission is to increase resilience and sustainability of vulnerable communities along Connecticut's coast and inland waterways to the growing impacts of climate change on the natural, built and human environment. CIRCA recently published sea-level rise projections for use in state and local planning.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Many of the challenges facing the region, such as housing affordability, traffic congestion, climate vulnerability, economic development, and social inequity are rooted in the built environment. The built environment within the South Central Connecticut Region is comprised of a distinctive pattern of housing and commercial/industrial development and infrastructure. The most intense land uses are located along major transportation corridors, including rail, interstate and major state route corridors. These spines reflect the historical development of the region, and explain some of the challenges and opportunities for its future growth.

Planning objectives and strategies for promoting a sustainable built environment arose from the following four concerns identified during the planning process.

- **Land Use Sustainability.**

The region needs to continue to focus redevelopment and infill development in its strong central corridors. Promoting compact, mixed use development with access to services in designated locations will enable a strong employee and customer base for businesses, a diversity in housing choices, and protection of valuable natural resources, such as prime farmland.

- **Balanced Transportation Connectivity.**

A balanced transportation system that promotes neighborhood, town, and regional connectivity through alternative transportation choices will facilitate economic development, promote public health, and help to protect the natural environment. Inefficient connections between existing transit modes, as well as gaps in local and regional sidewalk and bike networks impede true choice in transportation. Efficient, safe and accessible interconnections between walking, bicycling, transit and automobile transportation are needed in order to encourage the use of alternative modes of transportation, increase economic productivity, and improve quality of life across the region.

- **Economic Competitiveness and Sustainability.**

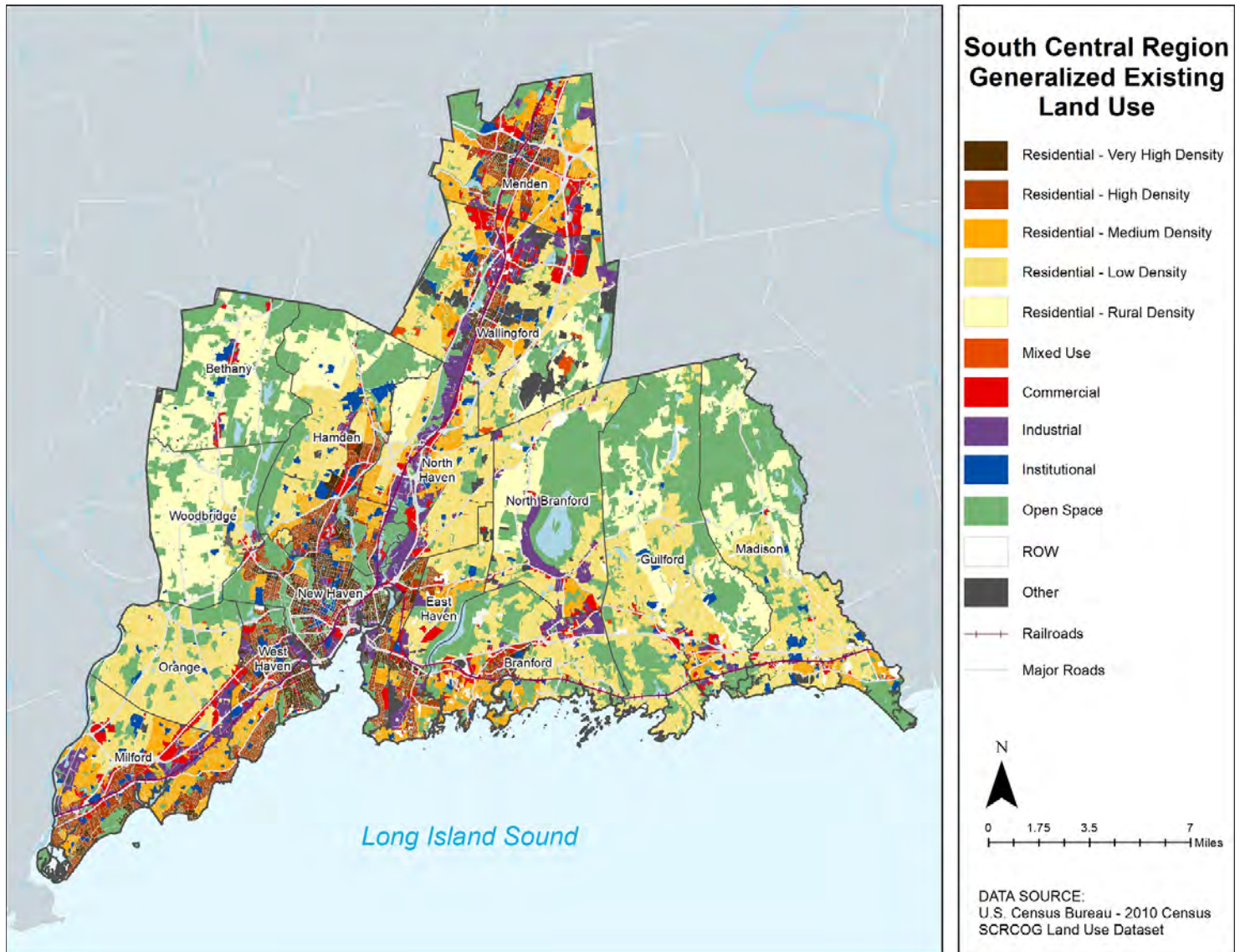
Land use planning and transportation investments significantly influence the economic health of the region by influencing the location, intensity and type of new and expanding businesses. In order to be competitive and to attract new talent to the region, planning for the built environment must focus on the region's unique assets and opportunities, such as the Port of New Haven, robust commuter rail network, numerous TOD areas, attractive educational systems, etc. While a healthy competition among individual communities is unavoidable, the region must plan for its built environment on a regional level as it increasingly functions as one economic place in the global market.

Current Conditions

Land Use

Existing land use in the region shows a direct relationship with the region's transportation network, with significant areas of industrial and commercial uses clustered around the I-91 and I-95 corridors, as well as the Routes 1, 5, 10 and 80 corridors. Almost half the region's land area is devoted to residential use, while almost 30% is open space.

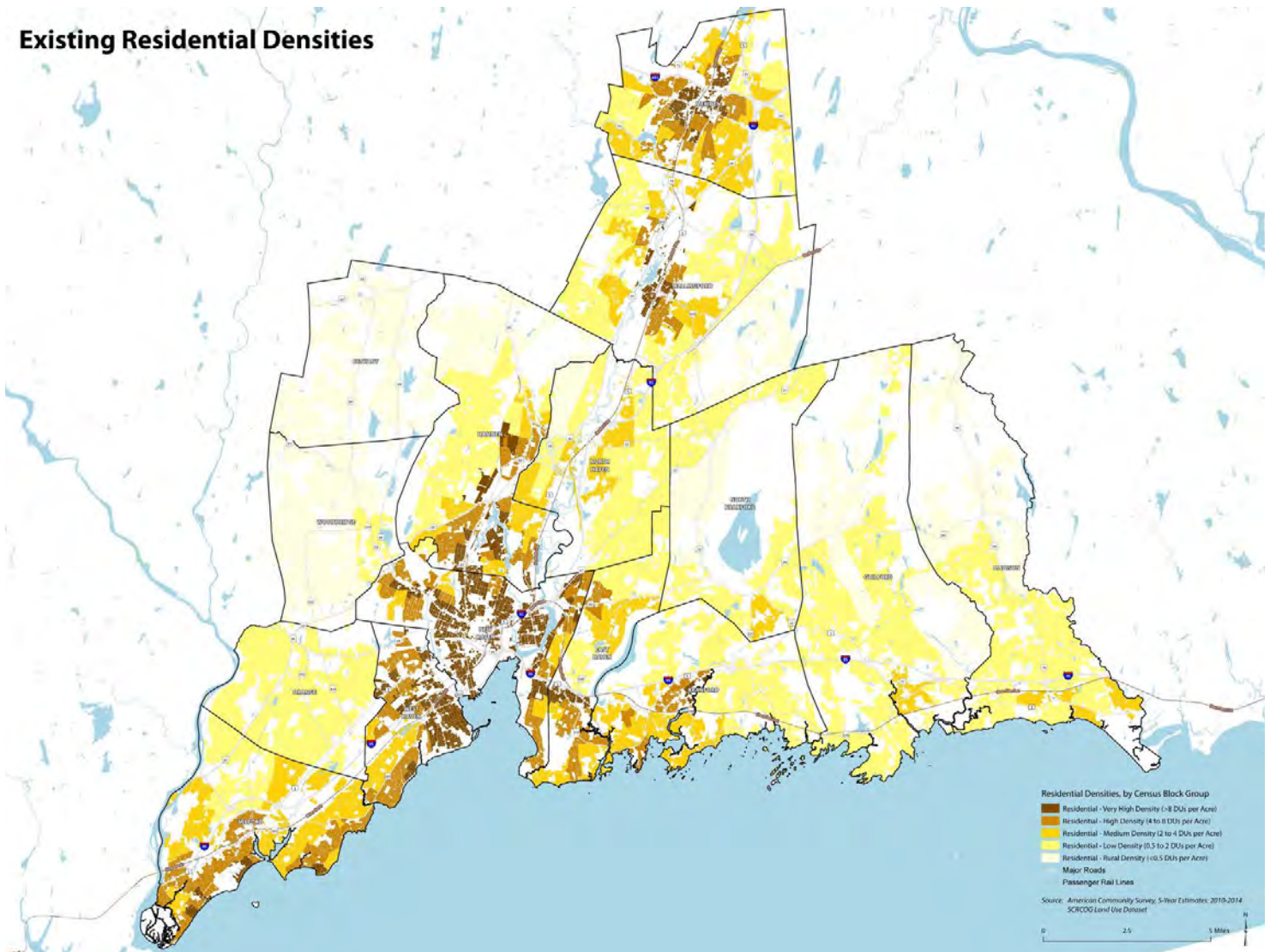
The following residential densities map shows the density of residential units by Census Block Groups throughout the region. As is evident, high and very high density residential uses, ranging from four to eight, or eight or more dwelling units per acre, are found mostly within Branford, East Haven, Hamden, Meriden, Milford, New Haven, Wallingford, and West Haven.



Respondents to the municipal survey were asked to characterize each of the communities within the SCRCOG region by whether the community was a job center, retail/shopping destination, cultural/entertainment center, diverse neighborhoods and housing center, outdoor recreation, transit accessible, or rural. Overall:

- As the region’s largest urban center, New Haven was characterized as the dominant job center, cultural/entertainment center, having the most diverse neighborhoods and housing Center, and being the most transit accessible.
- Respondents identified Hamden, Milford, Orange, North Haven, and New Haven as the region’s retail/shopping destinations.
- Madison, Guilford, Branford, Milford, and New Haven were identified as the region’s best outdoor recreation centers.
- Respondents characterized Woodbridge and Bethany as the most rural.

Existing Residential Densities



Economic Development

REX Development is a quasi-public agency promoting economic development in South Central Connecticut. It is funded by private sector partners and municipalities in the region, and supports programs and policies aimed at making the region more competitive in the global economy. It also coordinates the development and implementation of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), as mandated by the federal government.

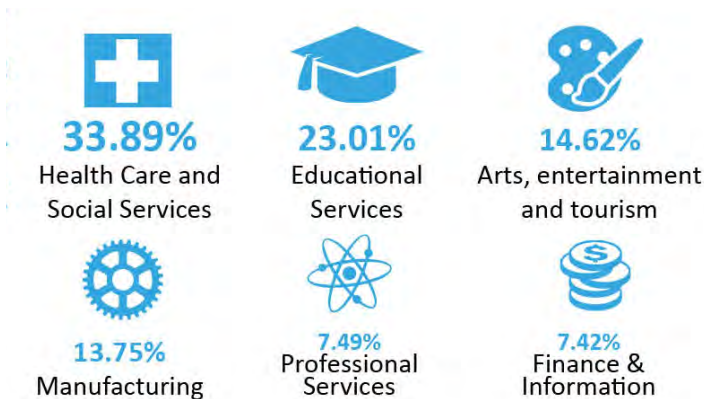
Industry clusters providing the economic base of the region, and targeted for economic development activities in the current regional CEDS (2013-18) are: healthcare, higher education, advanced manufacturing, advanced materials, biomedical/ life sciences, arts, entertainment and tourism, business and financial services, agribusiness/ agri-bioscience, and green technology. The strength of these clusters in terms of employment within the region is shown below.

The region has a diverse economy with no single sector dominating the region. Higher education institutions within the region have responded well to regional workforce development needs, creating new educational and training programs in areas such as bioscience, web development, and utility management.

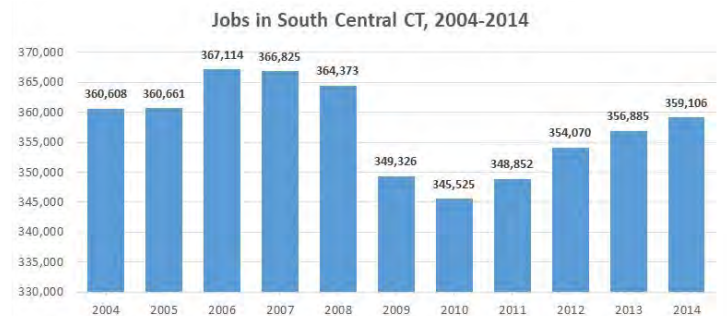
Employment figures continue to recover from the 2010 low of 345,525 total jobs within the region. As of 2014, there were 359,106 jobs in the region, close to pre-recession 2004-2005 levels. The biomedical/ life sciences, and education and knowledge creation clusters showed employment growth from 2006-2010. The top five employment sectors in the region have average wages above the national average. Addressing skills gaps in the regional workforce has been identified as a significant need for continued economic development. According to the Workforce Alliance’s 2016 Local Plan, employers in the region report shortages of qualified workers in priority industry sectors, including health care, manufacturing and information technology.

Economic development and innovation was the top-rated issue for the region, followed by developing an educated workforce, according to the municipal survey results. Respondents of the public survey also indicated that they would like to see “more jobs” when asked for top three things they would like to see in the region.

Top Six Industries



Source: 2016 South Central Connecticut Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Update

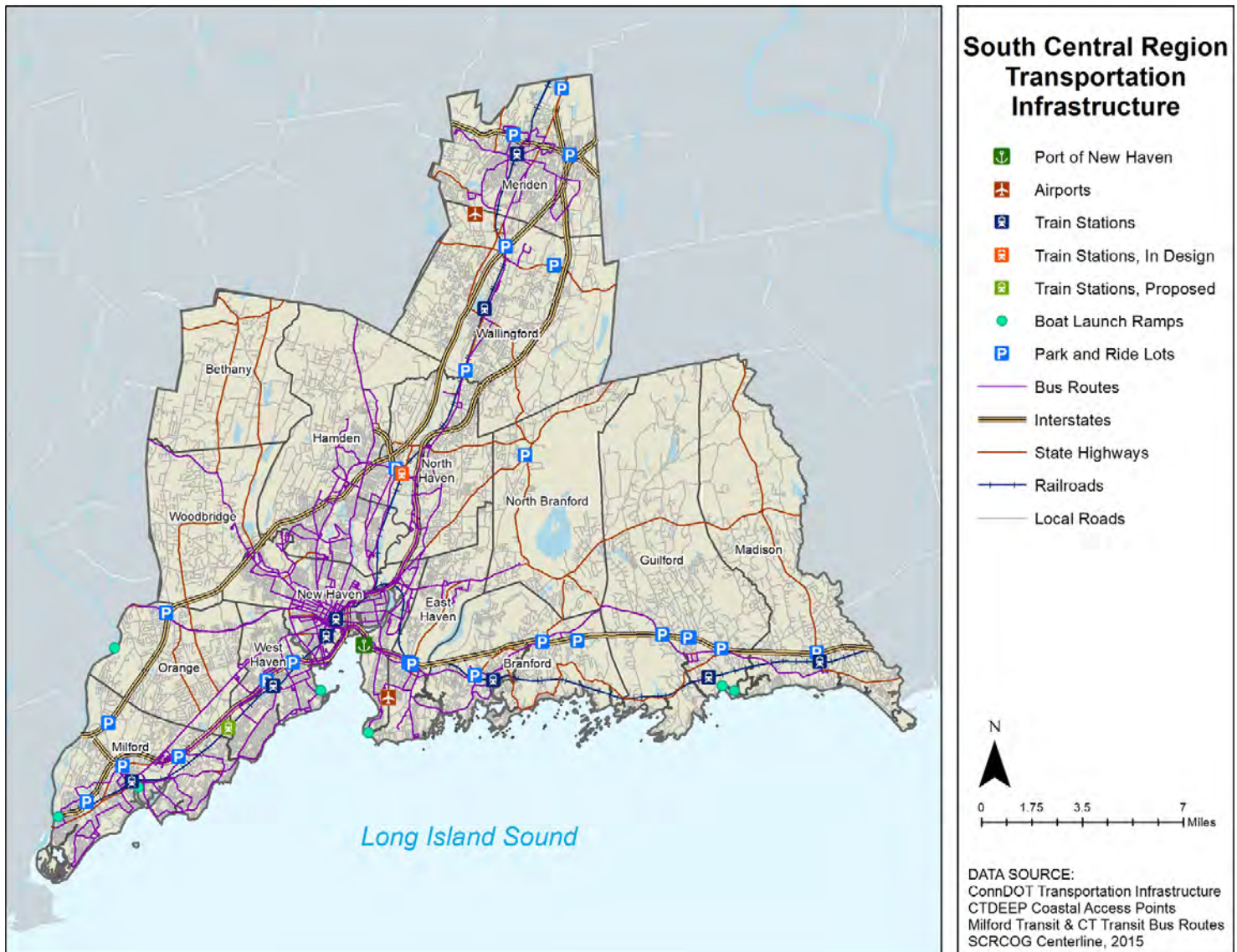


Source: 2016 South Central Connecticut Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Update

Transportation Network

The region has abundant available transportation options in terms of its functional road network and its accessibility by various modes such as: car, rail, transit, and bike. It is served by Interstate 95 running east-west and Interstate 91 and Route 15 running north-south for major vehicular routes; Metro North, Shoreline East, Amtrak, and impending NHHS rail service; Amtrak, CSX, CT DOT, and Tilcon freight rail; the Port of New Haven for freight service, and Tweed New Haven Airport provides commercial air service to neighboring states and regions.

However, an overwhelming majority of respondents (96%) of the municipal survey indicated that most of the residents in their community drive alone to work. Limited availability of public transit was cited most often as the reason residents in their communities did not use public transit more often. Respondents indicated that their communities supported TOD because they believe that TOD will make areas around transit more vibrant, that such development will attract young professionals, expand housing choices, reduced commute times, and allow seniors to be less auto-dependent. The two most-cited reasons that communities do not support



TOD include a lack of transit hubs (whether rail or bus), and a lack of adequate infrastructure such as sidewalks. Respondents of the public survey indicated that the top two strategies that would encourage them to use transit (bus or train) more often are “routes that work with where I need to go” and “more regular service”.

South Central Connecticut is focused on developing complete streets, or a safe transportation network that serves all users. Several complete streets projects are identified in SCRCOG’s Long Range Transportation Plan, and member communities have developed complete street policies and manuals.

Long Range Transportation Plan

The South Central Region Long Range Plan (2015-2040) provides policy direction for the region on major transportation issues. The Plan identifies the need to enhance the efficiency and reliability of available travel options within the region and demonstrates the need for additional funding through a number of proposed enhancements and initiatives. It reaffirms and expands transportation guidance to member municipalities, and acknowledges the need to link transportation decisions with land use, housing, economic, and environmental objectives. The Plan encourages more interagency communication and cooperation, and reiterates the Region’s commitment to TOD through priority investments directed towards regional growth centers.



Photo Credit: WTNH

CT Transit

Public Transportation

CTtransit, an arm of CT DOT, is the primary bus transit provider and operator within the region. According to the 2016 Connecticut Statewide Bus Study, ridership on the CTtransit New Haven division increased 8.2% between 2007 and 2014, causing a strain on some of the existing routes within the region. Ridership on CT Transit buses has increased recently, causing a strain on some of the existing routes within the region. While funding has been secured to provide more service fleet, improvements in bus stop locations and schedule frequency are still necessary. In general, enhancement of efficiency and frequency of service in targeted areas, where there is an increase in demand, is critical to promoting transit as a reliable transportation option with the region.

SCRCOG is providing funding for the second phase of the Move New Haven Transit Mobility Study, which is focused on developing and evaluating alternatives to improve the Greater New Haven regions’ transit system. Through a partnership between SCRCOG, the City of New Haven, the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT), the Greater New Haven Transit District (GNHTD), and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), this two-phase Move New Haven Transit Mobility Study is being conducted to evaluate and recommend improvements to CTtransit New Haven’s system. Improvements may include adapting bus routes to increase ridership and enhancing accessibility to destinations outside the downtown core.”



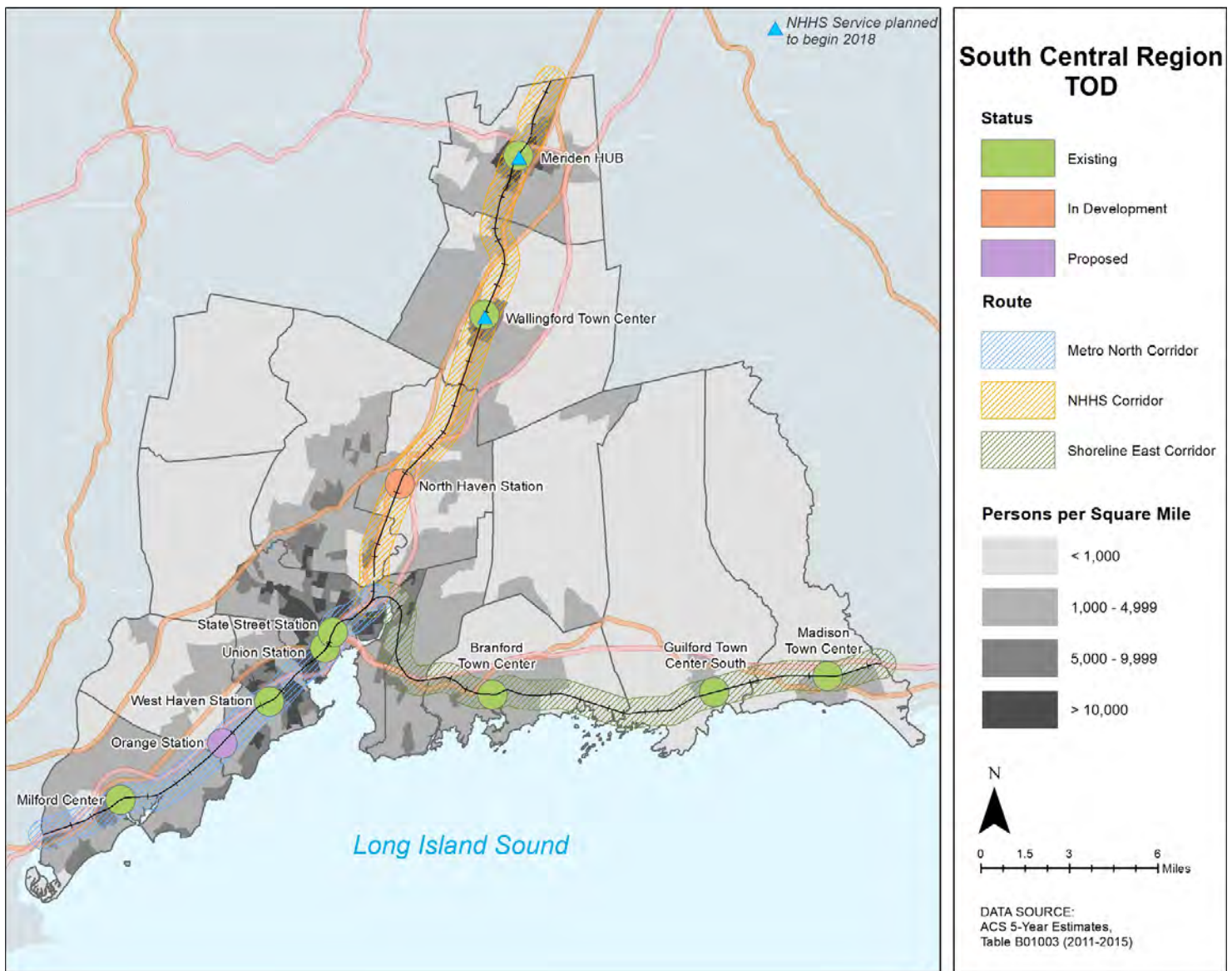
Photo Credit: NHHS Rail

Opening of the Wallingford Train Station, November 2017

The Metro North New Haven rail line set a record ridership of 40.5 million riders in 2016 (20,000 more than 2015)¹ within Connecticut. Ridership on Shoreline East Commuter rail service also has seen significant growth and capital investments over the past few years. Improving efficiency of these modes, providing more connections to surrounding neighborhoods and commercial areas, and further promoting freight-based economic activity are key transportation issues.

The New Haven-Hartford-Springfield (NHHS) Rail line is expected to begin operations in the spring of 2018. With new stations opening in Meriden and Wallingford, and track upgrades throughout the line, this new commuter rail asset opens significant new opportunities in the north-south Interstate 91 corridor throughout the State.

SCRCOG's 2015 Regional TOD Study identified market, land use and regulatory opportunities for promoting Transit Oriented Development (TOD) around the region's three main commuter rail spines (Metro North, Shoreline East and the Hartford Line) and their respective station areas shown in the following map. The Study recommended that SCRCOG facilitate TOD in the region by coordinating with large employers to direct future expansion into station areas, working with transit providers to develop better connectivity between different modes of transit and transportation within station areas, directing discretionary funding towards station areas and providing ongoing technical assistance to communities.



Port of New Haven

The Port of New Haven is a significant deep water port within the region and enables freight transport to and from the Region. The New Haven Port Authority is the responsible entity for the operation of the Port, with individual terminal operators coordinating efforts for the benefit of port operations. In addition, the CT Port Authority, created in 2014, is responsible for coordinating and marketing the State's ports and maritime businesses.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is currently studying the feasibility of deepening the channel from 35 feet to 42 feet to enhance the competitiveness of the port and increase its business use. The reconstruction of the Pearl Harbor Memorial Bridge (Q-Bridge) in recent years has provided improved access to the port area. Rail connections were once critical to the movement of goods to and from the Port. The completion of the new Tomlinson Bridge in recent years has restored that rail connection to the mainline service in New Haven. However, older connections within Waterfront Street could not be restored due to insufficient capacity to accommodate new locomotives and rail cars. Increasing the capacity and connectivity of the Port of New Haven could significantly impact the region's economy.



Photo Credit: Gateway Terminal

Tweed New Haven Airport

Commercial carriers and general aviation users provide transportation services from Tweed New Haven Airport for both people and goods. Jet service recently returned to Tweed, with American Airlines introducing jet service to Philadelphia. In doing so, American expanded the number of seats per day connecting to its national and international hub in Philadelphia, strengthening Tweed's position as a convenient option within the region. The Tweed New Haven Regional Airport Authority (TNHRAA) is planning for a new jet bridge and renovations of the second floor of the terminal to serve American's jets.

The TNHRAA adopted a Master Plan for the Airport in 1999, and is continuously improving runway areas and taxiways for safety as required by the Federal Aviation Agency, and to facilitate expanded services. The TNHRAA has also implemented two phases of a grant-funded residential sound insulation program for noise abatement in residential neighborhoods surrounding the airport, with plans to continue with this program.

Within the current global economy, the airport plays a major role in boosting the economic competitiveness of South Central Connecticut.



Photo Credit: Tweed NH Airport

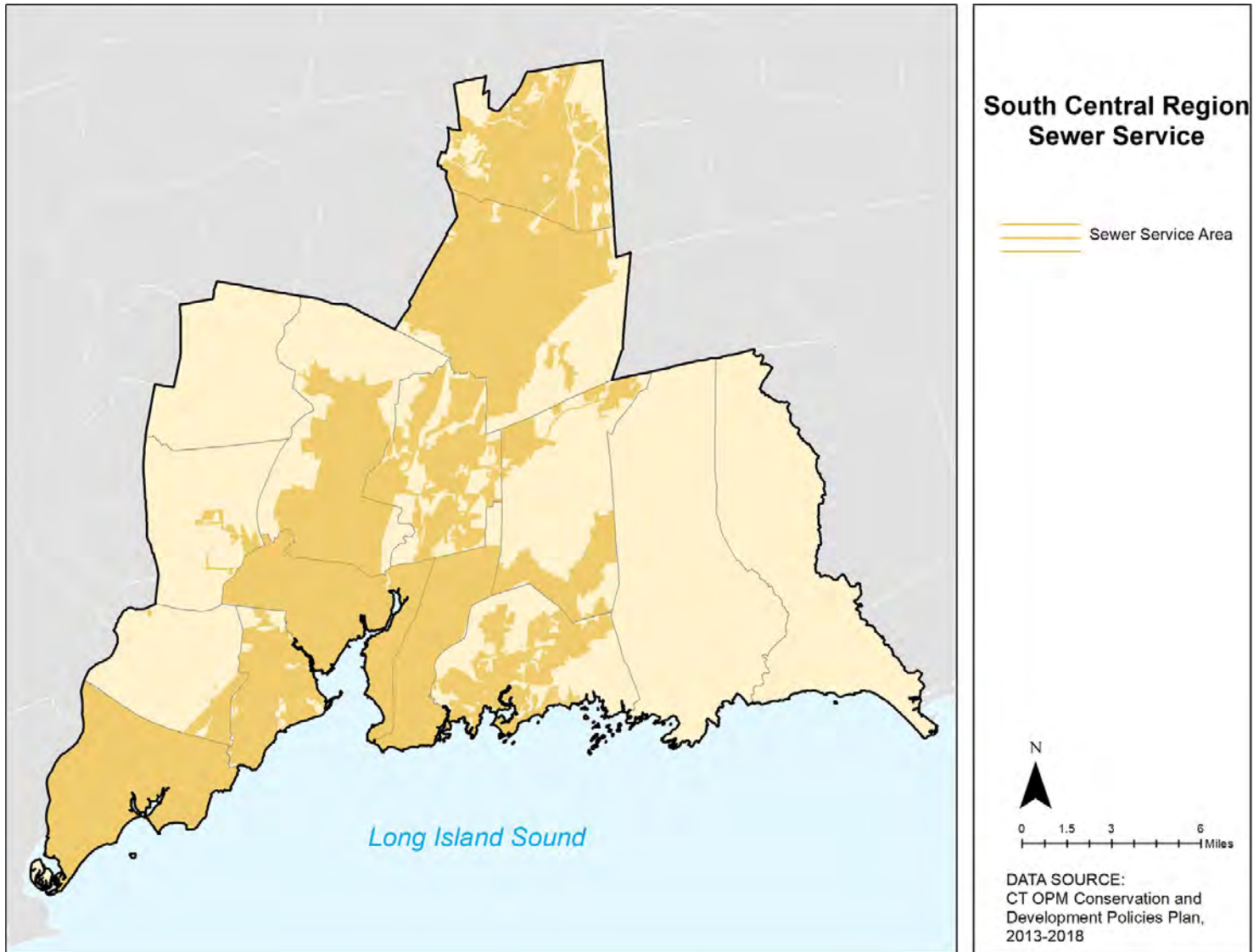
Utilities

Water Supply. The Regional Water Authority (RWA) is the primary water service provider for the region. The CT Water Company in Clinton, CT provides public water supply service to the southerly areas of Guilford and Madison. Wallingford and Meriden supply water to their own municipalities through their own municipal water divisions.

Sewer Service. The region has a total of eight wastewater treatment facilities. Although most service is provided by individual municipal water pollution control authorities, there is one regional agency. The Greater New Haven Water Pollution Control Authority (GNHWPCA) was created by the towns of New Haven, East Haven, Hamden and Woodbridge.

Milford, West Haven, New Haven, and East Haven have comprehensive sewer service throughout most of their neighborhoods with partial service in more highly populated areas of Meriden, Wallingford, Hamden, North Haven, and Branford. North Branford, Orange and Woodbridge have only limited sewer service primarily in commercial or higher density residential areas and Bethany, Guilford, and Madison currently have no sewer service. The Regional Sewer Service Map, which is on the following page represents both the existing and future sewer service areas.

Heating Oil. Nearly half of the state’s households use oil to heat their homes which is still the largest sector of the home heating market. Most home heating oil and petroleum products (automobile gasoline) distributed throughout the region arrive through the Port of New Haven.



Natural Gas. The South Central Region is currently served by two Natural Gas Companies: Southern Connecticut Gas (SCG) and the Yankee Gas Service Company. Within Connecticut, natural gas is primarily used for some gas-fired electric generating facilities (including Milford's Power Plant which is adjacent to the Iroquois Pipeline), besides home heating. Natural gas energy providers have made significant progress in conserving energy, based on 2013 Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS) objectives, converting 58,000 heating customers to natural gas over three years.

Electric. Madison, Guilford, Bethany, Branford and Meriden are serviced by Eversource, Wallingford has its own municipal-owned electric service, and remaining communities within the region are serviced by United Illuminating. United Illuminating is now a part of a larger national energy company AVANGRID. All electricity providers are actively engaged in integrating renewable energies in to the regional grid, and addressing resilience in the face of natural disasters.

Waste Management. All towns in the region have adopted recycling programs since last POCD in 2008. The State's current recycling rate is approximately 30%. The State of CT has a goal of 60% diversion (2005 outputs as a baseline) by 2024.

Communications Infrastructure. According to the Federal Communications Commission, about 97% of the region's population have access to Digital Subscriber Line (DSL), which brings high band width information to homes and businesses via telephone lines. However, A Brief Overview of Broadband Deficiencies in Connecticut (2016) prepared for the State indicated that Connecticut was the only state with a drop in peak broadband speeds in 2015. Furthermore, access to higher quality fiber and cable broadband services is impeded by high costs and confusion over options. Maintaining a high quality broadband network is important to the region's economic competitiveness.

Renewables and Energy Conservation

Several municipalities within the region have undertaken energy conservation efforts in recent years to promote green energy, as listed below.

- Hamden – Solarize Hamden is a community-supported solar campaign that makes it easy for residents to go solar. This program includes community-selected, certified local solar installers, protection against rising energy costs, town-wide educational solar workshops from a neutral nonprofit, \$0 down financing options that require no out-of-pocket expenses and town-approved, high quality equipment at reduced group pricing.
- Meriden Landfill Solar – 4,000 Solar Panels using a setup that allows for installation on landfills. To date, the property yields enough energy to power 150 homes.
- New Haven – The city was the first in the State to install a fuel cell in an elementary/ middle school, when it did so at the Roberto Clemente School in 2010. The New Haven Youth Conservation Corps launched an energy efficiency program for limited income families by visiting an estimated 10,000 New Haven homes and promoting the financial benefits of the Home Energy Solutions – Income Eligible program with no-cost assessments. Through this program, an average of \$1,000 worth of efficiency services were designed to increase comfort and lower monthly energy bills for those meeting certain income requirements.
- North Haven – In addition to developing a solar array on the Town's closed landfill, the Town partnered with Smart Power to run an 18 week program to install solar panels at a reduced cost resulting in 20 contracts which generate 195kW of solar to be installed. North Haven has since received \$30,000 in Energize CT Bright Idea grants to support home energy assessments for 300 homes.

- Wallingford – The Lend Lease Company has received approval from the DEEP to construct a 19.99-megawatt solar installation.
- Woodbridge Fuel Cell – Installed at Amity High School and generates 2.2 megawatts of power and usable heat to the grid and switches to a micro grid during power outages to power town facilities.

The Clean Water Fund has spearheaded the creation of a peer-to-peer network of local energy task forces that is targeting energy resilience and planning for 100% renewable energy.

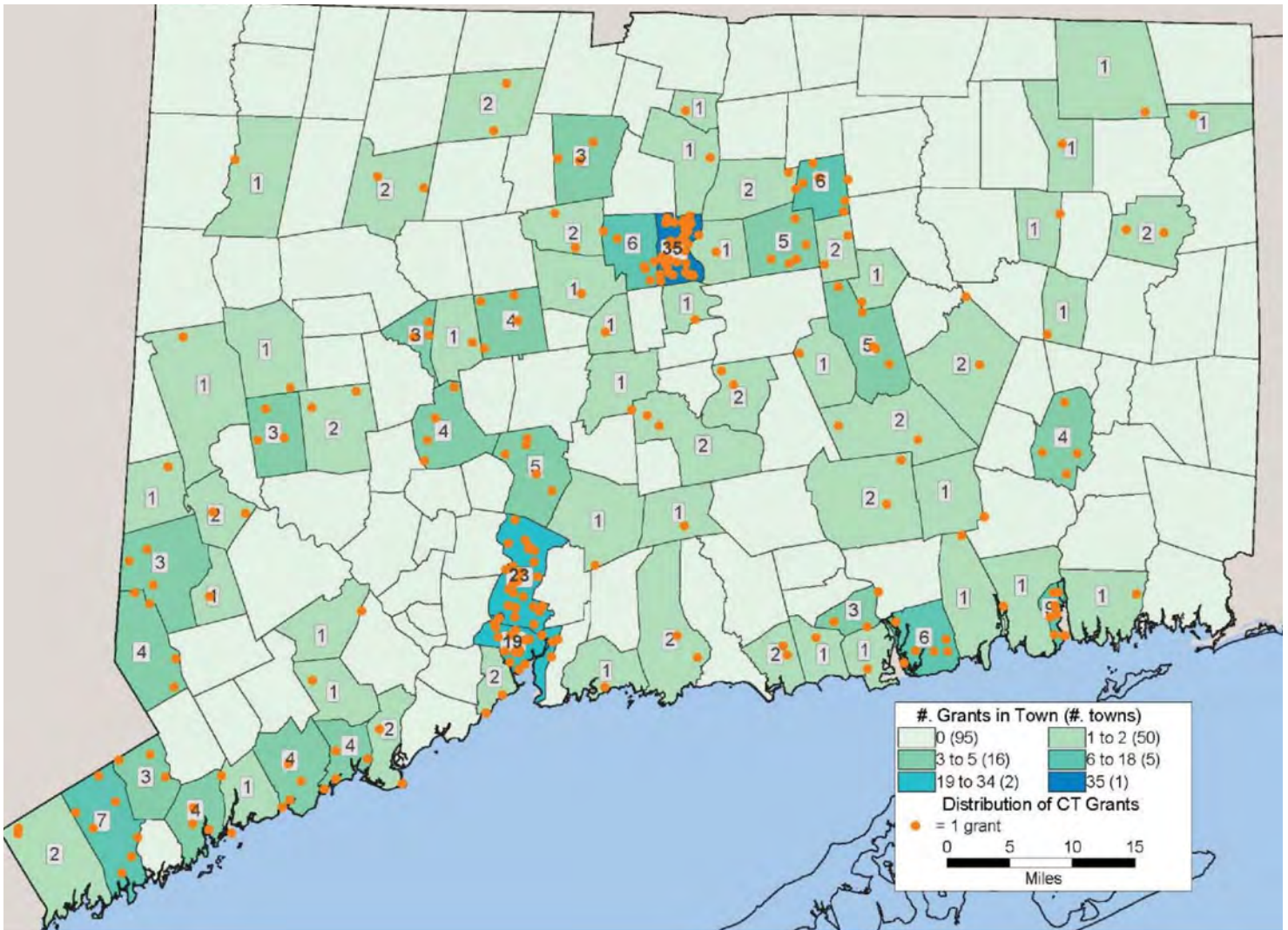
Planning participants indicated there is need for regional education, collaboration and pro-active planning for renewable energy projects, as some member communities do not have the capacity to navigate often complex permitting and siting processes.

Community and Cultural Assets

The region has an abundance of historic and cultural assets, and arts and entertainment facilities that are highly valued by residents. These resources together attract visitors, tourists, and new population/workforce to the region and contribute to the overall quality of life and economic climate. These have been significant contributors to the growing tourism industry within Greater New Haven, as seen in the following chart. Moving forward, the challenge will be to guide growth and development in a manner that does not negatively impact the quality and character of these historic and cultural assets.

From 2000 to 2010, the region received second highest number of historic preservation grants i.e. nearly 50 grants in the state (second only to the much larger Capitol Region) to protect its various historic assets, as can be seen below. Research indicates that historic preservation helps to create jobs, as rehabilitation in CT is estimated to be about 20% more labor intensive than new construction, and promotes enhanced quality of life for residents.

Future growth and development pressures within the region may threaten the quality of historic resources, if unprotected. Therefore, continuation of historic preservation policies are necessary to preserve the region's rich cultural history and heritage.

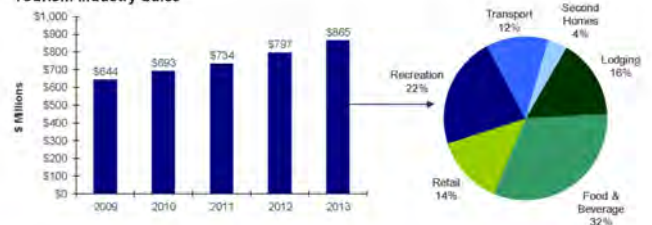


Source: Investment in Connecticut: The Economic Benefits of History

Greater New Haven region, Industry Sales

Greater New Haven							
Tourism Industry Sales, (millions)							
Year	Lodging	Food & Beverage	Retail	Recreation	Transport	Second Homes	Total
2015	\$137.0	\$278.4	\$118.5	\$191.4	\$107.0	\$32.6	\$865.0
2014	\$120.4	\$245.4	\$109.0	\$187.0	\$102.2	\$32.8	\$796.9
2013	\$109.0	\$217.1	\$96.6	\$184.1	\$92.9	\$34.6	\$734.3
2012	\$103.4	\$205.2	\$92.0	\$167.4	\$92.7	\$32.4	\$693.1
2011	\$92.2	\$188.7	\$86.0	\$157.0	\$87.4	\$32.3	\$643.6

Tourism Industry Sales



Source: The Economic Impact of Travel in CT for Calendar Year 2015, Tourism Economics.

Emergency Management

Natural disaster risks, such as potential flooding and storms, are among the region’s most significant public safety concerns due to proximity to Long Island Sound. The region is part of Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS)’s Region 2, a thirty town area. Each DEMHS Region, working with their Regional Emergency Planning Team, made up of representatives from all public safety disciplines and planning organizations, prepare and release their own Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) once every two years.

During emergencies, the DEMHS Region 2 office serves as the Region 2 Emergency Operations Center (EOC). When activated the Region 2 EOC maintains continuous communications with the municipalities to gather up-to-date emergency situational status in order to coordinate activities

within the region and to coordinate emergency responses between the region and the state EOCs. Municipalities also have inter-municipal agreements in place to assist each other in case of emergencies.

The region also prepared and adopted its first ever regional hazard mitigation plan (HMP) including ten municipalities in the region in 2014 since the other five communities have either completed or at that time were in the process of completing their individual hazard mitigation plans. Currently, SCRCOG is in the process of preparing an update to the regional HMP, including four additional towns that were not part of the first HMP process. The strategies from the 2018 updated plan are shown in the table below.

Sea-level rise also poses new concerns for public safety, as the recently prepared Connecticut Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation (CIRCA) projections recommend new standards for elevations of structures along the coast.

Goal Categories	SCRCOG Mitigation Plan Goals
Community Planning	1. Reduce the impact of natural hazards by integrating natural hazard mitigation policies and practices into local community planning.
Flood Hazards	2. Minimize flood hazards in the region by maintaining continued compliance with the National Flood Insurance Program, adopting higher regulatory standards for new floodplain development, and implementing flood mitigation projects for existing flood prone structures.
Trees	3. Support proper care of healthy, native trees across the region to increase their resilience to natural hazards including severe storms, flooding, erosion, and extreme heat. Limit the impact of fallen and other hazardous trees by collaborating with utility companies and property owners to cut limbs and remove trees that pose threats to buildings, infrastructure and utility lifelines.
Regional Collaboration	4. Build capacity for natural hazard mitigation and climate adaptation at the local level through regional collaboration.
Public Awareness and Preparedness	5. Increase public awareness and preparedness for natural hazards by implementing community-based public education programs across the region.

Source: SCRCOG 2018 Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Goals and Strategies

Goal 1. Land Use – Development in the region is focused in existing urban/town/village centers and developed corridors that transportation, employment and utility infrastructure while conserving land areas that are integral for maintaining the region’s unique natural resources.

Strategies:

- Support strategic and catalytic investments and incentives, zoning, and marketing strategies that promote infill, redevelopment and adaptive reuse in regional TOD areas, Town and Village centers, and central corridors that provide existing transportation, employment and utility infrastructure. (May be include images to show rural, suburban, and urban town centers).
- Encourage developments and infrastructure improvements that preserve the unique character of individual communities.
- Seek to connect employment and education centers with housing through co-location, and/or transit and transportation linkages.
- Promote the use of CT DEEP’s natural diversity database map among the region’s communities, especially to preserve open space, especially that which contains valuable natural resources such as, prime farmland soils, wetland and water resources, flora and fauna species of concern, coastal resources, etc.
- Support the use of conservation easements within developments of regional significance to protect environmentally sensitive areas.
- Support brownfield remediation to promote infill development through necessary financial and technical assistance.
- Support historic preservation, historic town centers and possibilities for adaptive reuse. Identify potential funding sources and resources for historic preservation and offer technical assistance, when needed.
- Support communities in identifying appropriate techniques to promote the re-use/ re-purpose of properties with existing infrastructure and utilities, such as under-utilized and/or obsolete commercial office and retail centers.
- Respect slope floodplains, soil and wetland restraints when evaluating public/private investments and encourage communities to amend local regulations to protect such areas.
- Continue to encourage compact/cluster developments and limit development and increased densities outside of areas where public utilities, transportation, and employment infrastructure are not available or with an unsuitable capacity to support such development. (May be include images to show cluster developments examples).
- Continue to discourage developments in source protection areas and groundwater recharge areas and advocate for the timely implementation of sewer separation in areas with combined sewers to protect water quality.
- Encourage joint planning initiatives among member communities to coordinate future land use, development, and transportation policies across jurisdictions and ensure compatibility near town boundaries.

Goal 2. Transportation – The Region’s transportation network supports regional land use objectives, enhances the economic competitiveness of the region, and maximizes transportation choice for the region’s residents.

Strategies:

- Continue to collaborate with communities to plan for significant regional transportation projects that have the potential to have substantial impacts on regional traffic patterns, such as the reconfiguration of the I-91/ I-691 merge, rehabilitation of the West Rock Tunnel or the Northeast Corridor rail expansion.
 - Engage with municipalities to follow up on the SCRCOG Regional TOD Feasibility study to evaluate regional and municipal housing and development trends.
 - Foster improved communications between DOT and member communities and advocate for the consideration of multi-modal transportation options and storage within the major traffic generator permit process required for large developments.
 - Identify funding opportunities to encourage the growth of dynamic regional mobility hubs within member municipalities with a wide range of transportation choices for residents.
- Several municipalities in the region have completed TOD master plans in recent years for areas around stations associated with the Metro North, Shore Line East and New Haven-Hartford-Springfield commuter rail lines. Branford, Meriden, Milford, New Haven, Wallingford and West Haven have all undertaken significant planning processes to establish and encourage an appropriate density and mix of uses, on a site-specific basis, around these transit assets. These TOD area plans support not only the objectives of this regional comprehensive plan, but also the viability of regional public transit.*
- Support the increased use of public transportation as an effective alternative to mitigate traffic congestion and improve air quality through increased frequency of existing services and the development of a more robust and efficient transit network.
 - Support for the timely implementation of high speed rail service connecting the region to New York, Boston, and Washington D.C., with a stop located in the region.
 - Explore opportunities for bus rapid transit service along major regional transit routes and continue to promote and incentivize ride share services.
 - Support for the expansion of private and commercial air services at Tweed New Haven Regional Airport to increase enplanement capacity and connections to at least three other hub cities.

- Continue to encourage the design and development of “complete streets”, where appropriate, to promote opportunities for multi-modal transportation and ensure public safety. To that end, encourage member communities to include bike and pedestrian elements within local comprehensive plans and support walking/biking connections to transit stops, jobs, civic uses, parks, and retail through integrated and continuous sidewalk, bike, and trail connections across the region.
- Consider areas having large concentration of low-income, minority, and elderly residents/workers when targeting public investments for bike/pedestrian/transit infrastructure and support fair and equitable distribution of resources to all users.
- Support major investments to improve the safety and efficiency of existing infrastructure, including investments for non-motorized public improvements where necessary, such as ADA accessible sidewalks.
- Support wayfinding programs and policies that allow residents to make walking/biking part of their everyday lives and raise public awareness on “sharing the road” to promote the safety of all roadway users.
- Continue to support for enhancing state investments in the Port of New Haven to increase access to major consumer markets; to promote ferry services, and shipyard and ship repairs, as recommended within CT Deep Water Port Strategy Study (2012).
- Continue to direct coordinated and catalytic investments in transportation infrastructure to improve the quality of aging infrastructure within the region, and further encourage redevelopment and reinvestment.

The City of New Haven prepared a vision and approach for the 2016 U.S. DOT “Smart City” Challenge grant. The vision outlines a series of neighborhood transportation centers, mobility hubs, intermodal hubs, urban delivery logistics hubs and shared vehicle outlets. While the City’s application was not awarded, the vision and approach will help advance the Go New Haven Go campaign 70 to 70, which is to move from 70% people using single-occupancy cars to travel to and through the City towards 70% of people using transit, shared vehicles, bicycling and walking on a daily basis.

Goal 3. Community and Cultural Assets, Public Institutions – South Central CT’s rich portfolio of cultural, historical and archaeological resources attract and retain residents and businesses, and contribute to the overall vibrancy of the region.

Strategies:

- Promote the region as a world class arts destination within the northeast by coordinating with arts and entertainment facilities in neighboring states/regions such as Providence and New York City, thus enhancing opportunities for arts-based development and enterprises, and local artists.
 - Encourage the preservation and enhancement of cultural, historical and archaeological sites and structures, and the use of these resources in creative placemaking, redevelopment/ revitalization efforts. (Include image of public art integrated within streetscape here)
 - Facilitate greater collaboration between anchor institutions, other major employers, and public education systems to develop innovative arts based programming designed to train a skilled workforce and maintain students in the region.
 - Support regional service/ cost sharing to promote high-quality provision of services and local government operations.
 - Create a marketing strategy for promoting regional arts, cultural, and historic places both digitally and at key locations, and encourage collaborations and partnerships.
- Support the development of regional self-guided tours of the rich culture, arts and entertainment facilities, and heritage of the region through investments in necessary infrastructure improvements (bike/sidewalk connections, provision of segway /bike rentals, etc.), and promotion of innovative smart phone apps indicating direct walking/biking routes to various destinations.
 - Encourage a sustainable arts and cultural environment within the region through appropriate land use amendments that enable live/work spaces for artists and live entertainment venues.

Goal 4. Economic Development – South Central CT capitalizes on its locational, transportation, natural, economic and human assets to position itself as a vibrant and attractive region.

Strategies:

- Connect disadvantaged residents located within the core to jobs through strategic transportation investments.

A recent Jobs Access Study for SCRCOG found, as other recent studies around the country have, that the spread of jobs to suburban areas with limited transportation has been a direct cause of long-term unemployment, particularly in communities with lower household income and fewer cars are available. The majority of entry- and mid-level jobs in Greater New Haven are now in suburban towns where there is limited bus service and fewer affordable housing opportunities for lower-wage workers. The Greater New Haven Job Access and Transportation Working Group continue to advocate for transportation equity, especially when economic stimulus dollars and tax incentives are involved.

- Seek to connect employment with housing and educational opportunities through inclusionary land use practices.
- Foster inter-municipal cooperation and partnerships with regional economic development agencies in assisting employers with space progression planning to connect growing industries with available land/ space, and to market the region as an attractive region for a variety of businesses.
- Facilitate further collaborations between regional employers and universities, and with regional workforce boards to develop a trained workforce.
- Explore economic leakage to help identify new economic opportunities and promote targeted, sector based growth in economy.
- Market the Region's commuter rail and TOD assets to attract potential businesses/investors.
- Promote brownfield remediation and redevelopment through a comprehensive and coordinated brownfields redevelopment strategy within the region.
- Continue to support entrepreneurship and innovation via establishment and promotion of innovation districts, business incubator programs, etc.

Innovation districts are emerging economic models that by definition are geographic areas where leading anchor institutions and companies cluster and connect with start-ups, business incubators, and accelerators. Three basic types of innovation districts exist: anchor plus model (located in town center of downtown), re-imagined urban area (located in urban areas), and urban science park (located in a sub-urban or ex-urban area). Successful Examples: Drexel University in Philadelphia, Raleigh-Durham Research Triangle Park, etc. May be include images here.

The Elm City Innovation Collaborative was recently started i.e., in August 2016 in New Haven city to connect entrepreneurs and major organizations and serve as central hub for art, innovation, craft, and trade.

<https://www.brookings.edu/research/one-year-after-observations-on-the-rise-of-innovation-districts/>

- Support and promote water-dependent businesses through the enhancement of resident access and connectivity to the waterfront with a system of trails and/or bike and pedestrian paths, where necessary, and through the improvement of necessary transportation infrastructure.
- Encourage the development and adoption of local harbor management plans to identify and promote maritime businesses and support the adoption of appropriate land use regulations to prevent land use conflicts with nearby uses.

Goal 5. Energy consumption– The Region minimizes energy consumption through conservation and environmentally sensitive development practices, and facilitates the use of renewable and reliable energy sources.

- Support and promote local energy task forces and the Clean Water Fund's efforts to advance towards 100% renewable energy use.
- Assist members with research and guidance on new technologies, such as floating solar, anaerobic digestion, and assist in navigating the complex regulations and procedures involved in introducing renewable energy into the regional system.
- Facilitate coordination between towns, Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS), Department of Public Health (DPH) and utilities to ensure critical utility infrastructure is prioritized for maintenance and restoration in the event of disasters and emergencies, and to install stronger, storm/flood resistant new infrastructure including telephone poles and transmission wires to prepare for future storms.

Future Development Intensity Plan

The following Future Development Intensity Plan was developed from existing generalized land uses, and the regional goals and strategies identified in this plan. Municipal planning officials reviewed and commented on the consistency of local planning objectives with this Future Development Intensity Plan.

The Future Development Intensity Plan identifies areas for conservation, commercial and industrial development, and residential development of varying intensities based on existing land uses and municipal zoning. Included on the map are the region's major commuting rail corridors and station areas to highlight areas of focus for commercial and residential development in accordance with the goals and objectives of this plan.

High Intensity

High intensity development areas are the population, institutional, commercial, and employment hubs of the region. These areas are characterized by a mix of high density housing, institutions, offices, manufacturing, industry, and retail and are well-served by water and sanitary sewer infrastructure. Mixed-use developments are common along major transportation corridors. These areas are served by a robust multi-modal transportation system including highways, bus routes, bikeways, and commuter railroads. In general, residential densities in these areas exceed five dwelling units per acre.

Medium Intensity

Medium intensity development areas served by sanitary sewer infrastructure but contain lower intensity uses compared to high-intensity areas. These areas are located in close proximity to the regional transportation network, including highways, bus and railroads. These areas include a mix of single- and multi-family housing and are supported by a range of institutional, retail, office, and industrial uses. Residential neighborhoods are typically separated from non-residential areas. Generally, residential densities in these areas range from one to five dwelling units per acre.

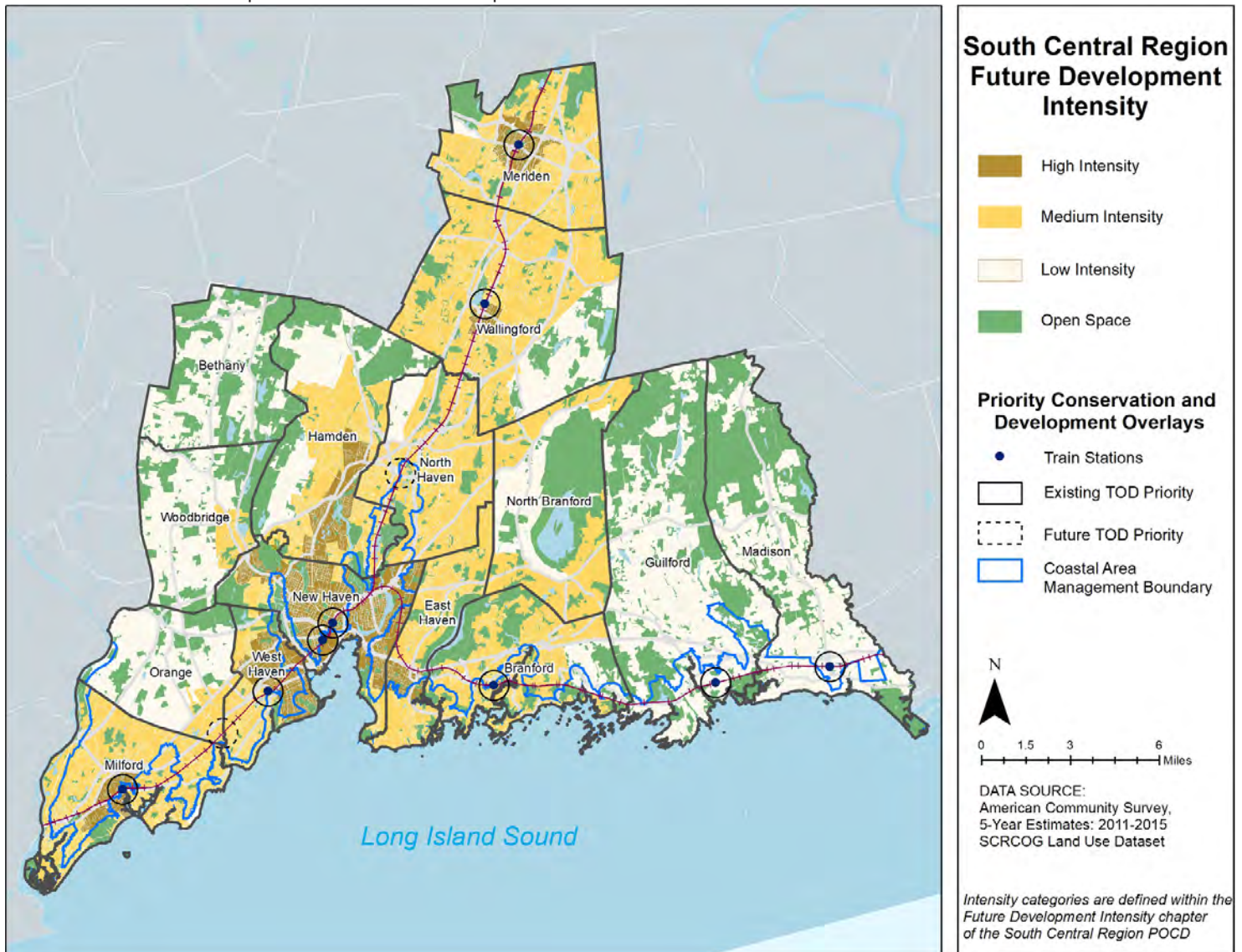
Low-Intensity

Low intensity development areas are found on the fringes of the region and are not served by sewer infrastructure and therefore can't support high density development. Low intensity areas consist primarily of residential uses, agriculture, and preserved open space. Commercial and industrial may also be present, although these uses are concentrated along major roadways in areas with soils that can support subsurface waste disposal systems. In general, residential densities in these areas are less than one dwelling unit per acre.

Methodology

Sewer service area was one of the main drivers of the Future Development Intensities Map.

Sewer service area data was provided by the Connecticut Office of Policy and Management (OPM). Census block groups that were served by sewer were classified as either high- or medium-intensity depending on their population, housing, and employment. Block groups that were not served by sewer were classified as low-intensity areas. There were several instances where census block groups were partially served by sewer. In these instances, we used whichever designation made up a majority of the land area. If a majority of the block group was served by sewers it was classified as medium- or high- intensity, and vice versa. The distinction between high- and medium-intensity areas was determined by population, housing units, and employment information compiled at the block group level. High-intensity areas had greater residential densities (in excess of 5 dwelling units per acre) and/or were major employment, institutional, or commercial centers for the region.



Plan Consistency

The planning process to update the State's 2013-18 Conservation and Development Policies Plan coincides with the planning process for this regional POCD update. Both the existing and May 2017 draft update to the State's plan were reviewed for consistency. Both plans were developed around six growth management principles as listed below:

- 1) Redevelop and revitalize regional centers and areas with existing or currently planned physical infrastructure;
- 2) Expand housing opportunities and design choices to accommodate a variety of household types and needs;
- 3) Concentrate development around transportation nodes and along major transportation corridors to support the viability of transportation options;
- 4) Conserve and restore the natural environment, cultural and historical resources, and traditional rural lands;
- 5) Protect and ensure the integrity of environmental assets critical to public health and safety; and
- 6) Promote integrated planning across all levels of government to address issues on a statewide, regional and local Basis.

The goals and strategies of the current regional POCD update are generally consistent with the above mentioned guidelines of state statute and growth management principles of the draft State POCD update (2018-2023), as discussed within the three broad planning themes i.e., human, natural, and built environment in this document.



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
OFFICE OF POLICY AND MANAGEMENT
Comprehensive Planning and Intergovernmental Policy Division (CPIP)

April 10, 2018

Eugene Livshits
Senior Regional Planner
South Central Regional Council of Governments
127 Washington Avenue, 4th Floor West
North Haven, CT 06473

Re: Draft South Central Region: Plan of Conservation and Development 2018-2028

Dear Eugene:

The Office of Policy and Management (OPM) has reviewed the *Draft South Central Region: Plan of Conservation and Development 2018-2028*, prepared by the South Central Region Council of Governments (SCRCOG) and posted on your website. In accordance with Connecticut General Statutes [Section 8-35a\(b\)](#), OPM hereby determines that SCRCOG’s Draft Plan is not inconsistent with the *Conservation and Development Policies: The Plan for Connecticut 2013-2018* (State C&D Plan).

I would like to commend you and your staff for your efforts in developing this important planning tool for SCRCOG and its member municipalities. For your consideration, I have attached additional comments and recommendations to further improve the Draft Plan.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Matthew J. Pafford
Environmental Analyst

Cc: Carl Amento, Executive Director, SCRCOG

Attachment: OPM comments on Draft SCRCOG Plan of Conservation and Development 2018-2028

The following comments and recommendations are presented in order as they appear in the SCRCOG Draft Plan.

Human Environment

Housing:

- Page 24 of the Draft Plan mentions that *“Housing unit growth was estimated to have outpaced total population growth from 2000 to 2015.... However, the housing vacancy rate also increased during this period”* and the region’s limited number of rental units *“are significantly concentrated in only a few communities within the region”*. Perhaps there is an opportunity for the Draft Plan to specifically address this trend as part of its strategies.

Natural Environment

Coastal Resilience:

- A reoccurring theme within this section, and throughout the Draft Plan, is to support the implementation of projects, particularly infrastructure projects, intended to mitigate the impacts of sea level rise. Given the importance of this topic to the region, and as evidenced by the multiple regional plans directed at this issue, OPM recommends the Draft Plan include additional strategy statements to:
 - discourage new or expanded development in areas at-risk to flooding and/or sea level rise;
 - perform a thorough cost-benefit analysis, inclusive of long-term maintenance costs, before investing in at-risk areas; and
 - develop a strategy to prioritize the implementation of projects identified through the various planning efforts.

Agriculture:

- Similar to the previous comments concerning coastal resilience, strategies intended to promote protection efforts for agricultural properties should also include a thorough cost-benefit analysis, and strategy for prioritizing implementation.

Built Environment

Transportation:

- In discussing the current conditions of transportation, communities and members of the public appear to support public transit, but indicate a desire for increased transit frequency and *“more regular service”*. In addition to its existing strategies promoting the expansion of new transit routes and the development of new infrastructure, OPM recommends the Plan also include a strategy specifically supporting the increased frequency of existing services, where appropriate.
- In Goal 2 of this section the Draft Plan includes a strategy regarding high speed rail service in which the word *“Support”* is misspelled.

Emergency Management

- This section mentions the preparedness of the region in developing its first ever regional hazard mitigation plan (HMP), which includes as part of its Mitigation Plan Goals, *implementing flood mitigation projects for existing flood prone structures*. As discussed in previous comments, OPM

recommends that the Plan include a strategy to conduct a thorough cost-benefits analysis and prioritize implementation projects.

Action Agenda

Built Environment

- One of the strategies in this section prioritizes the redevelopment of suburban office parks, which may or may not be located in areas which are consistent with the broader goals and strategies of this Plan. Instead of putting the emphasis on office parks specifically, SCRCOG may consider revising the strategy statement to focus on properties with facilities or services consistent with the overarching goals of the Plan, such as: *“Support communities in identifying appropriate techniques to promote the re-use/re-purpose of **properties with existing infrastructure and public utility services, and with access to a qualified work-force, housing, public transit, etc** ~~obsolete suburban office parks.~~”*
- Another strategy in this section *advocates for the development of long range plans for utilities expansion that are consistent with future growth projections of the region and improved communication with member municipalities.* SCRCOG may consider revising this strategy, or creating a new strategy, which advocate for long term planning aimed at reducing or limiting the need for utilities expansion while still satisfying the anticipated growth demands of the region.
- OPM suggests the following strategy might be more useful to the region if it is revised as follows: *“Support the increased use of public transportation as an effective alternative to mitigate traffic congestion and improve air quality by developing a better, more efficient, transit network ~~by encouraging transit analysis studies, congestion management studies, comprehensive access and parking management studies, and implementation of intelligent transportation systems (ITS).~~”*
- While enhancing access and connectivity to the waterfront and promoting water-dependent businesses is clearly important for this region, SCRCOG should take caution in how it implements strategies which could be interpreted to encourage the development of new or additional infrastructure in areas at risk to flooding and/or sea level rise.



SOUTH CENTRAL REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Planning for Our Region's Future

Bethany Branford East Haven Guilford Hamden Madison Meriden Milford
New Haven North Branford North Haven Orange Wallingford West Haven Woodbridge

Carl J. Amento, Executive Director

Resolution

Adopting the South Central Region: Plan of Conservation and Development 2018 - 2028

Whereas: The South Central Region: Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) is a guidance document that sets policy priorities for the future of the region and its communities, the Regional Planning Commission (RPC) is responsible for updating the regional POCD at least once every ten years per the requirements of the Connecticut General Statutes 8-35a; and

Whereas: The RPC has guided the update of the regional POCD with the assistance of the consulting firm Milone & MacBroom through a thorough participatory planning process pursuant to CGS Section 8-35a, as amended, to replace the current Regional POCD, which was adopted June 2008, and amended July 2009; and

Whereas: The regional POCD has been submitted to the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) for review and a public hearing was noticed and held on April 30, 2018 per the requirements of CGS 8-35a; and

Whereas: The regional POCD has been found by OPM to be in accordance with CGS Section 8-35a(b), and OPM determined that the Regional POCD is not inconsistent with the Conservation and Development Policies: The Plan for Connecticut 2013-2018 (State C&D Plan); and

Whereas: The RPC voted during the June 14, 2018 meeting to recommend, by resolution, the South Central Region: Plan of Conservation and Development 2018 – 2028 for adoption by the South Central Regional Council of Governments Board.

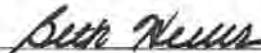
Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved By the Council of Governments

South Central Region: Plan of Conservation and Development 2018 – 2028 is hereby adopted per CGS 8-35a.

Certificate

The undersigned duly qualified and acting Secretary of the South Central Regional Council of Governments certifies that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a resolution adopted at a legally convened meeting of the Council of Governments on June 27, 2018.

Date: June 27, 2018

By: 
First Selectwoman Beth Heller, Secretary
South Central Regional Council of Governments

127 Washington Avenue, 4th Floor West, North Haven, CT 06473

www.scrkog.org T (203) 234-7555 F (203) 234-9850 camento@scrkog.org

Action Agenda

The following matrix identifies the goals and strategies contained in this plan. Implementation of the Plan will require a partnership between SCRCOG, its member municipalities, and other local, regional and state organizations active in the region.

Human Environment	
South Central CT seeks to be a vibrant, inclusive and livable region that is attractive to an increasingly diverse population.	
Strategies	Directly engage, and support member municipalities' efforts to engage, under-represented groups in planning for the region's future, including millennials, creative/ arts groups, and minorities.
	Support training in equity, diversity and inclusion for SCRCOG staff, regional municipalities and agencies.
	Support creative financing strategies that seeks to connect disadvantaged groups to jobs, transit, and housing within the region.
	Encourage public-private partnerships to aid in local and regional development through targeted policies, enhanced commitment to change, dedicated staff, and streamlined financial support.
The Region contains a diverse and suitable housing supply that provides housing choice for all incomes and age groups.	
Strategies	Advocate for affordable housing in the region by linking housing to an expanded workforce and economic development; providing technical information and guidance; and, educating communities.
	Promote housing densification in TOD areas, Town and Village Centers, and commercial corridors with existing employment, transportation and utility infrastructure.
	Continue to educate the region's towns about the regional housing market, so that issues of saturation and absorption might be better understood and help towns better plan for and react to housing development.
	Foster greater cooperation among anchor institutions, housing, workforce development, and philanthropic agencies on comprehensively addressing housing, employment and transportation needs, and advocating for appropriate local, regional and state policies.
	Continue to provide updates to the regional housing market assessment to offer current and comprehensive understanding of housing affordability issues within the region.
	Continue to support a regional approach to promoting affordable, workforce housing and encouraging new strategies for development and advocate at the state level for appropriate affordable housing law.
	Continue to encourage communities to amend local codes and ordinances that help diversify the regional housing stock yet preserve local character, and seek to connect housing with major employment and education centers, neighborhood retail, and childcare and other support services through co-location, and/or transit and transportation linkages.
	Encourage adaptive re-use of historic properties within Town/Village centers and continue to support preservation of historic structures through necessary technical assistance.
	Promote the use of regional health impact assessments (HIAs) at the local and regional level for developments of regional significance to determine their impacts on access to transportation, jobs, parks and open space, and healthy food within the region; to determine housing quality; to analyze impacts relating to racial and socio-economic segregation within the region.
Promote sustainable design and construction practices through education and outreach.	

Natural Environment	
The Region's natural resource systems, water resources, and natural habitats are preserved, protected, and appreciated for their contributions to the environment, economy, and quality of life of current and future generations.	
Strategies	Encourage resident access to open spaces and recreational assets within the region through the expansion of existing bike/pedestrian network connecting open spaces and other existing/proposed regional trail connections.
	Promote regular updates to the regional open spaces inventory to include most recent information on connections, related amenities and any new acquisitions, and to help identify potential areas for conservation.
	Promote educational and marketing materials on the diverse open space and passive recreational opportunities available in the region to encourage stewardship.
	Support and assist communities in coordinating open space preservation efforts among adjacent municipalities, identifying innovative funding sources for open space acquisition, and in proactively educating major land owners on estate planning.
	Foster collaboration among various agencies that purchase and maintain open space in the region (municipalities, land trusts, water companies, etc.) by convening groups to share information and techniques, and to identify opportunities to improve efficiency.
	Explore the feasibility of developing a regional open space plan to promote and expand regional open space network.
Drinking and surface water quality is enhanced and maintained by the preservation and protection of wetlands, floodplains, critical watershed lands, and other resources.	
Strategies	Promote and support environmentally sensitive development to protect the quality of regional watersheds.
	Facilitate coordination and communication between regional water utilities and member municipalities on land use planning and water quality projects.
	Support and promote public access to Long Island Sound and the region's rivers as a way of developing regional stewardship.
	Continue to advocate for improvements to Long Island Sound among elected local, state and federal officials to ensure adequate funding for remediation, education, acquisition, and other projects.
	Support the region's existing and future aquaculture through appropriate land use policies to ensure long term sustainability.
South Central CT's thriving agri-businesses not only provide residents with access to locally grown foods and recreational opportunities, but also contribute to the regional economy.	
Strategies	Celebrate the region's agricultural heritage and support local and state efforts to preserve existing farms through acquisition, transfer/purchase of development rights, historic preservation, and marketing strategies that promote the region's farms through increased awareness and agri-tourism.
	Support communities in educating major landowners on estate planning and techniques such as the transfer of development rights, as well as CT Farmlink and other programs available to help preserve working farms.
	Encourage communities to adopt land use policies aimed at sustainable food production, and eliminating food deserts and promoting access to healthy food for all.
	Continue to promote and update regional disaster mitigation planning to protect critical agricultural lands and animal species from intensive flooding and to plan for wildfires based on forest and grassland ecosystem management principles.
The Region is continuously evolving to establish long-term resilience to sea level rise and the impacts of flooding and storm damage.	
Strategies	Continue to update and adopt natural hazard mitigation plan for the region in a timely manner to prepare, adapt, and recover quickly from severe weather events by securing necessary federal and state grants for pre-/post-disaster mitigation.
	Support and promote the education of regional residents and business-owners regarding projected changes to coastal lands and resources, and the need and basis for resiliency strategies.
	Support and promote implementation of identified coastal resilience projects in the Region.
	Ensure that regional transportation projects consider and incorporate science-based sea level rise and resiliency information and a cost-benefit analysis that includes long-term maintenance costs, as much the Region's critical infrastructure is located along the coast.
	Encourage updates to local floodplain ordinances to meet or exceed Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) requirements.
	Promote effective stormwater management strategies such as, adoption of green regulations and practices, to reduce runoff from impervious surfaces and minimize flooding; increase the capacity of drainage systems through sewer separation in areas with combined sewers; promote low impact developments.
	Educate communities on the financial benefits of FEMA's Community Rating System program and assist them in participating in the program.
	Collaborate with partners within and outside the region, including neighboring regions to provide and seek technical assistance, to avoid duplication of efforts, and to develop a coordinated response for dealing with natural disasters.
Explore funding opportunities to advance conceptual designs developed as part of the Regional Framework for Coastal Resilience in Southern CT, projects identified as part the SCRCOG Multi-Jurisdiction Plan Update, and projects identified as part of the municipal coastal resilience efforts.	
The Region minimizes energy consumption through conservation and environmentally sensitive development practices, and facilitates the use of renewable and reliable energy sources.	
Strategies	Support and promote local energy task forces and the Clean Water Fund's efforts to advance towards 100% renewable energy use.
	Assist members with research and guidance on new technologies, such as floating solar, anaerobic digestion and shared solar systems, and assist in navigating the complex regulations and procedures involved in introducing renewable energy into the regional system.
	Facilitate coordination between towns, Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS), Department of Public Health (DPH) and utilities to ensure critical utility infrastructure is prioritized for maintenance and restoration in the event of disasters and emergencies, and to install stronger, storm/flood resistant new infrastructure including telephone poles and transmission wires to prepare for future storms.

Built Environment

Development in the region is focused in existing town/village centers and developed corridors that have transportation, employment and utility infrastructure while land areas that are integral for maintaining the region's agricultural heritage, drinking water supply, unique natural resources, and coastal resilience are conserved.

Strategies

- Support strategic and catalytic investments and incentives, zoning, and marketing strategies that promote infill, redevelopment and adaptive reuse in regional TOD areas, Town and Village centers, and central corridors that provide existing transportation, employment and utility infrastructure. (May be include images to show rural, suburban, and urban town centers).
- Encourage developments and infrastructure improvements that preserve the unique character of individual communities.
- Seek to connect employment and education centers with housing through co-location, and/or transit and transportation linkages.
- Promote the use of CT DEEP's natural diversity database map among the region's communities, especially to preserve open space, especially that which contains valuable natural resources such as, prime farmland soils, wetland and water resources, flora and fauna species of concern, coastal resources, etc.
- Support the use of conservation easements within developments of regional significance to protect environmentally sensitive areas.
- Support brownfield remediation to promote infill development through necessary financial and technical assistance.
- Support historic preservation, historic town centers and possibilities for adaptive reuse. Identify potential funding sources and resources for historic preservation and offer technical assistance, when needed.
- Support communities in identifying appropriate techniques to promote the re-use/ re-purpose of properties with existing infrastructure and utilities, such as under-utilized and/or obsolete commercial office and retail centers.
- Respect slope, soil and wetland restraints when directing transportation investments and encourage communities to amend local regulations to protect such areas.
- Continue to encourage compact/cluster developments and limit development and increased densities outside of areas where public utilities, transportation, and employment infrastructure are not available or with an unsuitable capacity to support such development. (May be include images to show cluster developments examples).
- Continue to discourage developments in source protection areas and groundwater recharge areas and advocate for the timely implementation of sewer separation in areas with combined sewers to protect water quality.
- Directly engage and support efforts of member municipalities in garnering community support for compact developments thus assisting in an easy approval process.
- Advocate for the development of long range plans for utilities expansion that are consistent with future growth projections of the region and improved communication with member municipalities.
- Encourage joint planning initiatives among member communities to coordinate future land use, development, and transportation policies across jurisdictions and ensure compatibility near town boundaries.

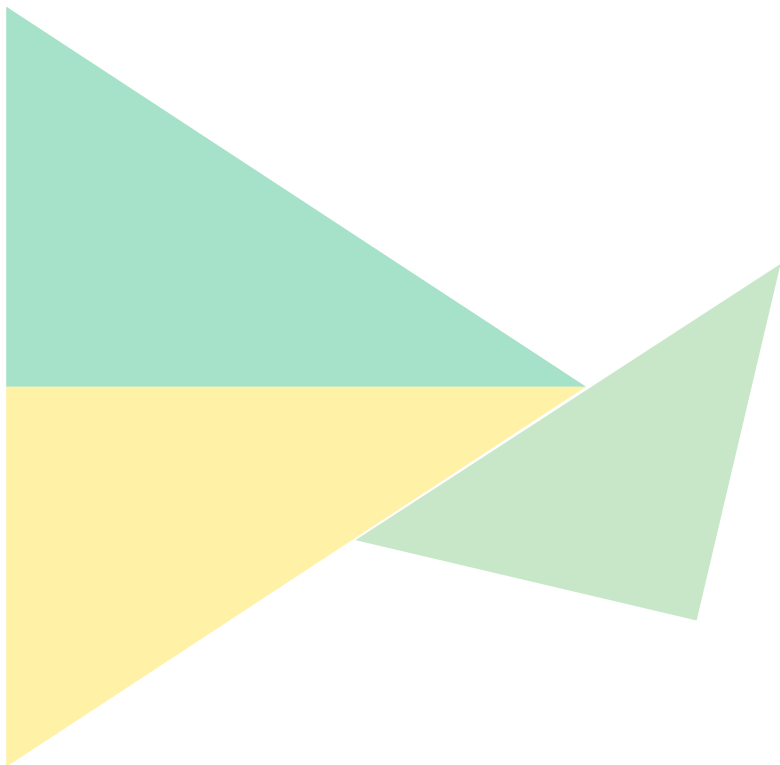
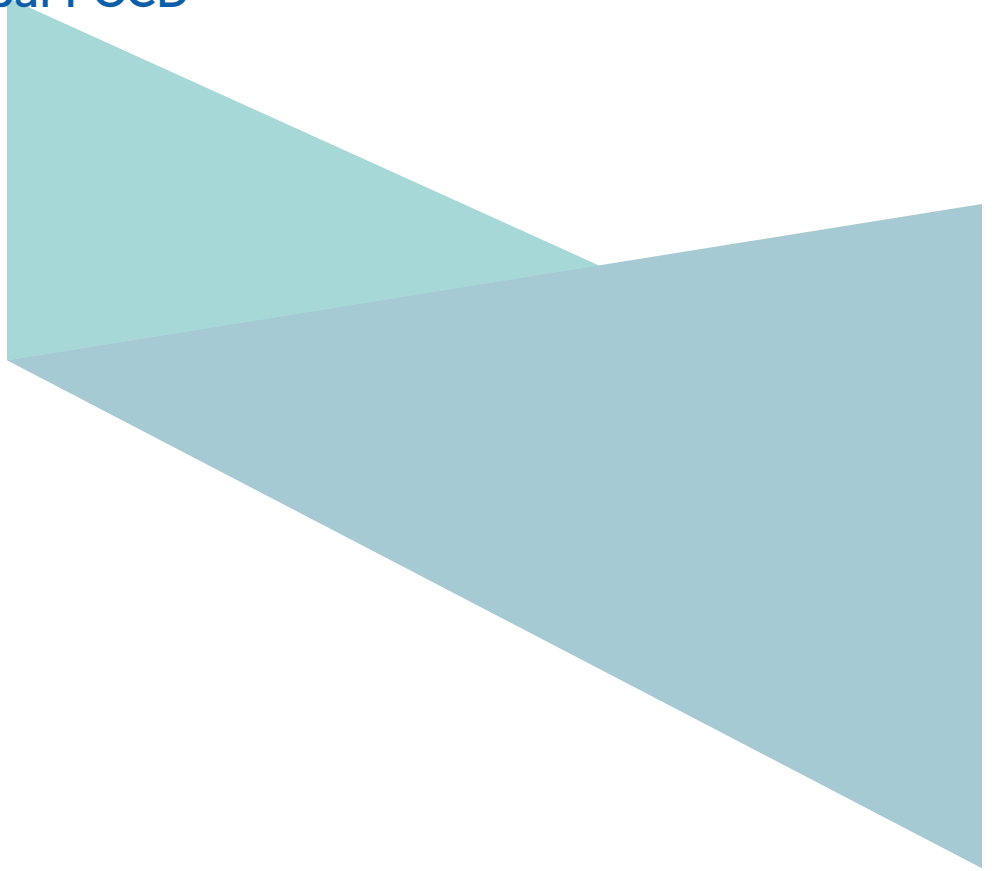
The Region's transportation network supports regional land use objectives, enhances the economic competitiveness of the region, and maximizes transportation choice for the region's residents.

Strategies

- Continue to collaborate with communities to plan for significant regional transportation projects that have the potential to have substantial impacts on regional traffic patterns, such as the reconfiguration of the I-91/ I-691 merge, replacement of the West Rock Tunnel or the Northeast Corridor rail expansion.
- Follow up on regional TOD study to evaluate regional housing demand and absorption rates, and educate individual communities on appropriate scale of development for priority areas based on regional dynamics
- Foster improved communications between DOT and member communities and advocate for the consideration of multi-modal transportation options and storage within the major traffic generator permit process required for large developments.
- Identify funding opportunities to encourage the growth of dynamic regional mobility hubs within member municipalities with a wide range of transportation choices for residents.
- Support the increased use of public transportation as an effective alternative to mitigate traffic congestion and improve air quality through increased frequency of existing services and the development of a more robust and efficient transit network.
- Advocate for the timely implementation of high speed rail service connecting the region to New York, Boston, and Washington D.C., with a potential stop location in the region.
- Explore opportunities for bus rapid transit service along major regional transit routes and continue to promote and incentivize ride share services.
- Advocate for the expansion of private and commercial air services at Tweed New Haven Regional Airport to increase enplanement capacity and connections to at least three other hub cities.
- Continue to encourage the design and development of "complete streets", where appropriate, to promote opportunities for multi-modal transportation and ensure public safety. To that end, encourage member communities to include bike and pedestrian elements within local comprehensive plans and support walking/biking connections to transit stops, jobs, civic uses, parks, and retail through integrated and continuous sidewalk, bike, and trail connections across the region.
- Consider areas having large concentration of low-income, minority, and elderly residents/workers when targeting public investments for bike/pedestrian/transit infrastructure and support fair and equitable distribution of resources to all users.
- Support major investments to improve the safety and efficiency of existing infrastructure, including investments for non-motorized public improvements where necessary, such as ADA accessible sidewalks.
- Support wayfinding programs and policies that allow residents to make walking/biking part of their everyday lives and raise public awareness on "sharing the road" to promote the safety of all roadway users.
- Continue to advocate for enhancing state investments on the Port of New Haven to increase access to major consumer markets; to promote ferry services, and shipyard and ship repairs, as recommended within CT Deep Water Port Strategy Study (2012).
- Continue to direct coordinated and catalytic infrastructure investments to improve the quality of aging infrastructure within the region, and further encourage redevelopment and reinvestment.

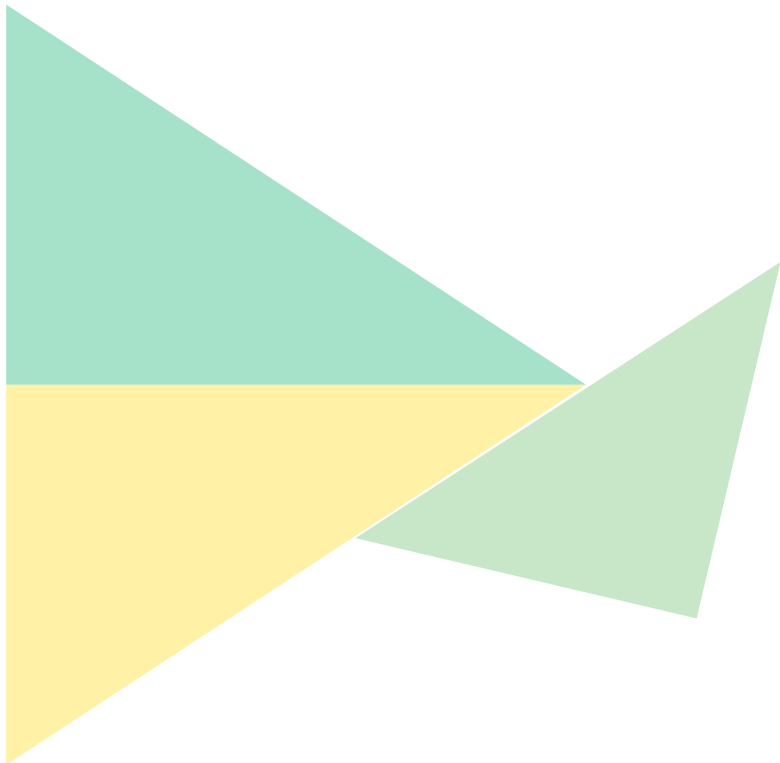
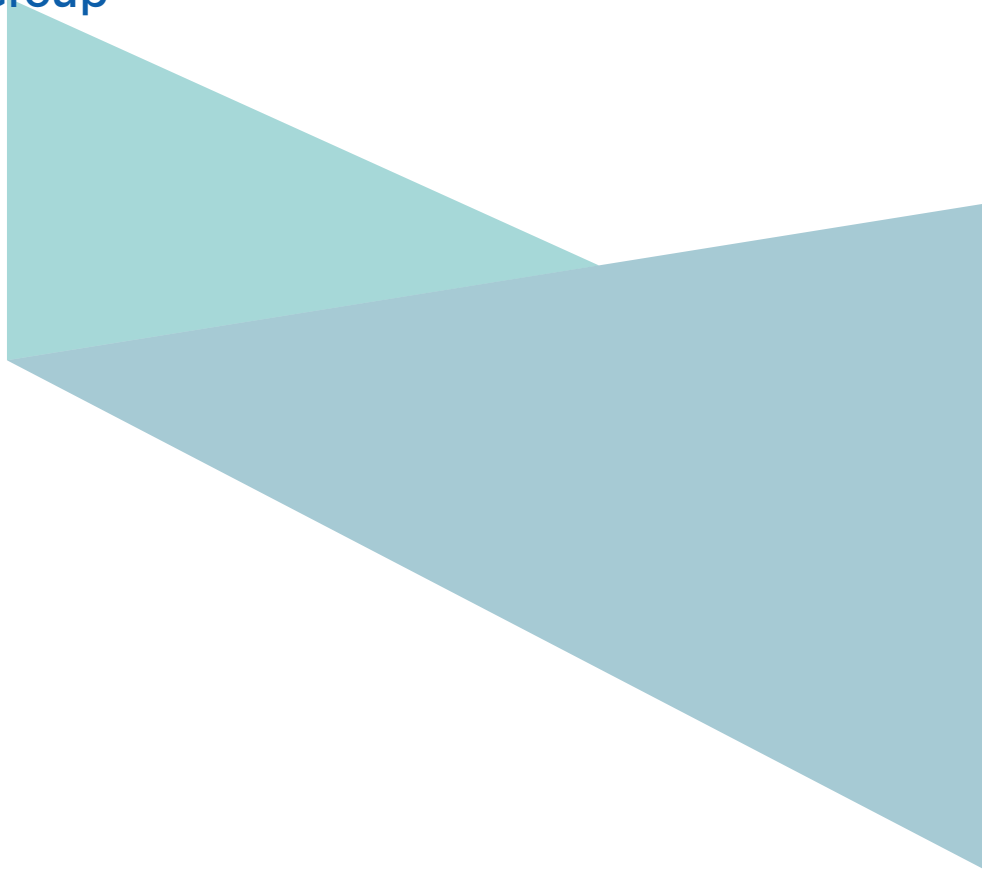
South Central CT's rich portfolio of cultural, historical and archaeological resources attract and retain residents and businesses, and contribute to the overall vibrancy of the region.	
Strategies	Promote the region as a world class arts destination within the northeast by coordinating with arts and entertainment facilities in neighboring states/regions such as Providence and New York City, thus enhancing opportunities for arts-based development and enterprises, and local artists.
	Encourage the preservation and enhancement of cultural, historical and archaeological sites and structures, and the use of these resources in creative placemaking, redevelopment/ revitalization efforts. (Include image of public art integrated within streetscape here)
	Facilitate greater collaboration between anchor institutions, other major employers, and public education systems to develop innovative arts based programming designed to train a skilled workforce and maintain students in the region.
	Support regional service/ cost sharing to promote high-quality public facilities and programming.
	Create a marketing strategy for promoting regional arts, cultural, and historic places both digitally and at key locations, and encourage collaborations and partnerships.
	Support the development of regional self-guided tours of the rich culture, arts and entertainment facilities, and heritage of the region through investments in necessary infrastructure improvements (bike/sidewalk connections, provision of segway /bike rentals, etc.), and promotion of innovative smart phone apps indicating direct walking/biking routes to various destinations.
	Encourage a sustainable arts and cultural environment within the region through necessary land use amendments that enable live/work spaces for artists and live entertainment venues at key locations, with special permissions, and through support and recognition of local artists.
South Central CT capitalizes on its locational, transportation, natural, economic and human assets to position itself as a vibrant and attractive region.	
Strategies	Connect disadvantaged residents located within the core to jobs through strategic transportation investments.
	Seek to connect employment with housing and educational opportunities through inclusionary land use practices.
	Foster inter-municipal cooperation and partnerships with regional economic development agencies in assisting employers with space progression planning to connect growing industries with available land/ space, and to market the region as an attractive region for a variety of businesses.
	Facilitate further collaborations between regional employers and universities, and with regional workforce boards to develop a trained workforce.
	Explore economic leakage to help identify new economic opportunities and promote targeted, sector based growth in economy.
	Market the Region's commuter rail and TOD assets to attract potential businesses/investors.
	Promote brownfield remediation and redevelopment through a comprehensive and coordinated brownfields redevelopment strategy within the region.
	Continue to support entrepreneurship and innovation via establishment and promotion of innovation districts, business incubator programs, etc.
	Support and promote water-dependent businesses through the enhancement of resident access and connectivity to the waterfront with a system of trails and/or bike and pedestrian paths, where necessary, and through the improvement of necessary transportation infrastructure.
Encourage the development and adoption of local harbor management plans to identify and promote maritime businesses and support the adoption of appropriate land use regulations to prevent land use conflicts with nearby uses.	

Appendix A: Municipal POCD Review



Municipal POCD Review		
Municipality	Adoption	Main Goals, Objectives and/or Strategies
Bethany	10/30/2010	Preserve open space/rural character, encourage development that minimizes impact on environment.
Branford	12/15/2008	Protect the physical environment and manage growth to preserve town's heritage and character.
East Haven	9/5/2007	Recognize town as a shoreline community and design development accordingly. Promote diverse housing choices while protecting open space.
Guilford	7/15/2015	Promote multi-modal transportation network. Support higher density development. Encourage affordable housing.
Hamden	1/28/2015	Preserve community character, foster inclusive neighborhoods, encourage infill development.
Madison	11/9/2013	Guide the conservation and development of Madison to maintain and enhance its character and quality of life and help create a sustainable and resilient community.
Meriden	3/14/2009	Be a dynamic regional commercial and service hub, capitalizing on city's central location. Conservation and development should be balanced by land conservation, and neighborhood/business development.
Milford	12/1/2012	Preserve open space, promote commercial corridors and infrastructure improvements including transportation networks. Encourage TOD and plan for climate change.
New Haven	9/1/2015	Encourage affordable and diverse housing, connect community through a multi-modal transportation network, adapt to climate change and sea level rise.
North Branford	12/21/2019	Encourage development in line with market trends. Protect natural resources/open space. Improve transportation network.
North Haven	1/17/2017	Enhance access to open space, promote affordable housing. Work regionally to share resources, promote sustainable development around transportation networks.
Orange	6/27/2015	Protect community character, promote conservation through design, encourage well-planned development.
Wallingford	6/13/2016	Promote town center development, transportation connections and protect community character.
West Haven	8/1/2004	Shape the city into a more vibrant, connected and livable community for residents of all ages. Foster an environment that is attractive to businesses and residents alike.
Woodbridge	5/1/2015	Focus developments in town nodes, include affordable housing. Promote corridor improvement, build on previous successful development patterns.

Appendix B: Focus Group Summaries



Housing, Demographics, Institutions Focus Group held June 27, 2017

In attendance: Cheryl Daniw, Merit Properties; Jed Backus, Backus Real Estate; Robert Roscow, Hamden Planning & Zoning; Sandy Leubner, State Dept. on Aging; Anne McKeon, North Haven Housing Authority; Susan Rubino, Hamden Youth Services; Dagmar Ridgway, Branford Senior Center; Amy Casavina Hall; Erik Johnson, New Haven Housing; Carl Amento, SCRCOG; Eugene Livshits, SCRCOG; Rebecca Andreucci; Nick Armata, MMI; Rebecca Augur, MMI

Discussion Summary:

- Use alternative terms to discuss “affordable housing” to reduce social stigmas
- Encourage and explore unconventional, lower-cost housing options, such as micro units and apartments with shared common areas
- Density within the region needed to make development projects financially viable, to attract and maintain businesses, and to serve the new workforce that tends to change employers more frequently
- Acknowledge and embrace location in close proximity to Boston, New York, Philadelphia and Washington D.C. - design transportation networks that support such collaboration
- The South Central Region needs to continue to invest in its excellent school systems – and work on maintaining students in state beyond graduation
- Adapt and adjust to new outreach methods that will allow for greater engagement of Millennials in planning processes
- The SCRCOG area (and State) need to continue to encourage regional cooperation for shared services
- The State’s tax policies are no longer sustainable with towns competing against one another
- SCRCOG could foster greater cooperation among anchor institutions, housing, workforce development, and philanthropic agencies on addressing housing, employment and transportation needs, and advocating for appropriate local, regional and state policies
- Encourage apprenticeship programs in collaboration with local community colleges, local manufacturers and corporations - in accessible locations
- Improvements to walkability / public transit in the region are needed
- Suburban/rural communities lack transportation services for low-income, elderly populations - isolated populations, limited access to amenities, recreation, employment
- Elderly population is living longer – affecting types and levels of need in housing assistance
- The Region needs a diverse housing supply that provides housing suitable to all stages of life
- Affordable housing and densification needs to occur in opportunity areas where housing, employment and transportation amenities can be expanded synergistically
- Local housing authority model is unsustainable – regionalization and diversification of portfolios needed
- Greater assistance needed for households at 61% to 100% of AMI – underserved by current federally funded housing programs

Economic Development, TOD, Smart Growth, Transportation, Arts, Culture and Historical Resources Focus Group held June 29, 2017

In attendance: Annemarie Sliby, Orange EDC; Carol Smullen, Orange Chamber; Daniel Fitzmaurice, Arts Council of Greater New Haven; Mary Bigelow, League of Women Voters East Shore; Tim Ryan, Wallingford ED; Sue Rapini, Greater New Haven Chamber; Miriam Brody, League of Women Voters Hamden/ North Haven; Dee Prior-Nesti; Christopher Soto, East Haven planning; Karla Lindquist, New Haven Planning; Susmitha Attota, New Haven Planning; Barbara Malmber, REX; Juliet Burdelski, Meriden ED; Carey Duques, North Branford Planning; Julie Nash, Milford ED; Carl Amento, SCRCOG; Eugene Livshits, SCRCOG, Rebecca Andreucci, SCRCOG; Rebecca Augur, MMI; Nick Armata, MMI

Discussion Summary:

- Towns are competing to grow their tax bases, but also marketing themselves as part of a greater region
- Opportunities to grow manufacturing, industrial base; however run up against workforce limitations
- Need a workforce development strategy, especially for urban communities – access to good paying jobs limited by lack of public transportation
- Unique strategies are currently being used by workforce development agencies in the region; e.g. Workforce Alliance grant for Uber to assist getting low-income people to job interviews
- Need to align transit and transportation with employment opportunities
- Having a solid future land use strategy critical for economic development – serve the greatest amount of people, connect people to jobs and educational opportunities
- We have large amounts of vacant office space throughout the area and we expect this pattern to only increase in the future – how can these be repurposed?
- Need to improve the quality of life in the area, which includes developing and promoting the area as rich in cultural institutions
 - o When people look at the area and compare it to nearby cities like New York or Boston, there is much more appeal to live in those cities
 - o Recruiting and retaining those in the creative class will help
 - o Involve creative class in planning processes to help educate and connect with the public
- Need to diversify housing stock
- The communities in the region need to collaborate with one another in order to promote the area as the cultural and employment destination that it is
- Senior housing easier to get approved in some communities than dense market-rate or affordable housing
- Public education needed on what exactly affordable housing is and who it serves
 - o We need to educate the public on the capacity of our existing infrastructure and resources, so that they are aware that affordable housing can be seamlessly integrated into the existing community fabric
- When development does occur, we need to make sure that it is incremental and that the new units can be fully absorbed

- Work with universities to develop talent based on the needs of regional employers - 90% of SCSU's graduates stay in the region
- Address the issue of "trailing spouses," who enter the region's workforce due to a relocation of their spouse, and who often take jobs designed for someone with a certificate or degree from a 2 year college, and for which they are often over-qualified
- All communities need to promote walkability in some form – create those destinations
- Encourage creative place making and public art
- Work with coastal communities to mitigate flood issues, as many employment and industry areas are impacted
- Growing industrial/manufacturing companies are leaving the City of New Haven as a result of space and parking constraints, and the costs associated with expanding in an urban environment (brownfields, historic preservation, land acquisition etc.) – need to work to understand the needs of these types of businesses
 - o Opportunity for collaboration on regional space progression planning assistance support to connect growing industries with space and land available
- Opportunity for the region to get ahead of the curve on renewable energy and green technology planning – communities currently reacting to private proposals, rather than a thought-out plan to increase renewable energy resources throughout, especially to serve industry
- Agriculture is an important part of the region's past, present and future – a sector that is also diversifying and increasingly looking for more year-round activity
- Explore economic leakage in the area - understand what and where goods and services are coming from and make connections to possibly source them within the region
- Invest in the port of New Haven - an asset to the region and state
- Region does not capitalize on location on Long Island Sound – more opportunity to develop water-dependent businesses and/or waterfront activity
- Do not think of the area as a region that is isolated from other metropolitan areas - build on the fact that the region is situated between Boston, NYC, Hartford and Providence
- Need to better promote the host of cultural attractions available in the region, and ensure that we have a rich portfolio of cultural/historic resources for all age groups
- Educate the public on the importance of sustainability, land use etc. – good role for the region to play
 - o Opportunity to tie in the creative class
 - o Planning needs to be more citizen focused and easier to understand/follow/engage
- NHHS commuter rail development is a great opportunity to help the region grow into the type of community that can attract residents of all ages - the region can help organize a collaborative effort by affected towns to market themselves and the system – perhaps tie in with Shoreline East commuter rail towns

Agriculture, Natural Resources, Open Space, Recreation, and Hazard Mitigation Focus Group held July 18, 2017

In attendance: David Sulkis, City Of Milford City Planner; Miriam E. Brody, League of Women Voters Hamden/North Haven; Matt Reed, Branford Land Trust; Mary Bigelow, League of Women Voters East Shore; Barbara Malmberg, REX; Cindy Ruggerio, Orange Conservation Commission; David Sargent, North Branford Land Conservation Trust; Kevin Magee, Town of Guilford Natural Resource Department; Kelly Hammill, Town of Woodbridge; Warren Connors, Town of Woodbridge; John Triana, RWA; Hank Petroskey, North Branford Land Conservation Trust; Carl Amento, SCRCOG; Eugene Livshits, SCRCOG; Rebecca Andreucci, SCRCOG; Rebecca Augur, MMI; Nick Armata, MMI

Discussion Summary:

- Remains significant unprotected farmland, funding is the challenge for communities and the State
- Some communities more proactive than others in pursuing open space for any purpose (farm, natural etc...)
- Guilford established fund from cell tower lease income for land conservation, although increasingly diverted for other purposes
- Guilford also proactively monitors land availability adjacent to existing protected land
- Need to better facilitate teamwork between various agencies who purchase and maintain open space (land trusts, towns, water companies, etc.)
- Collaboration between towns for properties that cross borders necessary – role for COG in identifying opportunity sites, mapping, etc.?
- The RWA communicates with all towns and land trusts on the purchase of land, especially around reservoirs that are currently active. However, the RWA does not have the budget to purchase big ticket lands in the region as it once did. Now the Authority must be more strategic in its purchasing.
- The RWA does not purchase land that is threatened with development. Typically when a tract of land is slated for development, the costs for acquisition is too high for the RWA to acquire.
 - o The Authority has a 10 year strategy for land acquisition in which it identifies priority properties within the watershed – purchase is ultimately based on the willingness of the seller, the price and timing.
- Impact assessments are important tools. While the cost of acquiring a piece of land upfront may seem large, the cost to developing land will may cost more over time.
- Farming is a growing segment of the area economy, with agri-tourism becoming particularly important. Lack of funding for tourism initiatives have impeded efforts. Regional marketing and promotion of agri-businesses, farmers' markets, etc. is desired.
- CTFarmlink.org is a great way of connecting farmers to open spaces/ farmland – useful for open space land holders maintaining farmland/ meadows, etc. to connect with farmers who can maintain.
- Cuts in State/Federal funding for shellfish and water testing challenging the shellfish industry in the state.
- Accessing shellfish beds can be a challenge due to private property on coastline.
- Shoreline Greenway challenges in Guilford likely to continue – difficulty finding acceptable off-road route

- Concern over State's fiscal position, and effects on parks and trails – Towns increasingly going to be responsible for maintenance of trails and parks?
- Coastal access in the area is somewhat limited, as a result the areas available to the public are becoming crowded and overused. Example: Silver Sands Beach in Milford. Parking lots fill up quickly forcing visitors to park along the road which upsets property owners in the area.
- Acquiring private land along the coast, as it becomes available could open up new access, and support sea level rise adaptation; however, high cost of land
- Septic tank systems continue to be a challenge for coastal communities though progress has been made to mitigate their effect on the environment.

Public Safety, Emergency Management, Public Utilities and Energy Conservation Focus Group held July 20, 2017

In attendance: Melissa Everett, Clean Water Fund; Patrice Gillespie, Clean Water Fund; David Radha, Conn Water Company; Rebecca French, UConn CIRCA; Kathleen Schomaker, Town of Hamden; Cathy Lezon, Eversource, John Hill, SCCRWA; Martin Madon, Hamden; Carl Amento, SCRCOG; Eugene Livshits, SCRCOG; Rebecca Andreucci, SCRCOG; Rebecca Augur, MMI; Nick Armata, MMI

Discussion Summary:

- Eversource has updated their emergency management plan and response structure to include community liaisons during emergencies.
- Eversource has been proactively:
 - Installing stronger, storm/flood resistant infrastructure including telephone poles and transmission wires
 - Relocating substations in floodprone areas
 - Installing smart devices throughout the grid that will allow the company to diagnose and in some cases repair issues automatically.
- RWA is implementing energy efficient projects in order to reduce costs and carbon emissions from its operations.
- RWA looking at installing solar, including floating solar
 - Floating solar requires smaller solar panels than traditional terrestrial mounted solar panels.
 - Studies are ongoing regarding both the project's cost effectiveness and the environmental impact on aquatic life.

- RWA generally seeks to protect high quality open space within its watershed, so solar farms are not appropriate; however, floating solar is a unique opportunity.
- Communities and the region should better plan for green energy and infrastructure.
- SCRCOG can play a role in assisting members by providing resources and guidance on opportunities (locations, technologies, etc.); interfacing with existing utilities and renewable energy providers and DEEP/ PURA; and navigating the complexities introducing more renewable energy into the regional system.
- Water Utility Coordinating Committee Planning (WUCC)
 - o Designed to coordinate between utilities companies and towns
 - o Frequent breakdown in planning between water companies and municipalities – utilities not always made aware of local POCD updates
 - o Can COG play a role in better coordinating water supply and local land use planning?
- Local energy taskforces have set up a helpful peer to peer network with leadership from Clean Water Fund, targeting:
 - o Energy resilience
 - o Mapping pathways to 100% renewable energy
 - o Integrating energy into local POCDs
- Towns actively looking at energy savings performance contracting (Branford and Hamden)
 - o Challenge is up-front money is at-risk
 - o Typically long-term contracts – length of time to recoup investment through savings
- Public Health & Safety
 - o Concern for extended periods of power disruption. Many community emergency response teams have accounted for 1 or 2 days of power loss but do not consider months of power loss.
 - o Economic development tie-in, lost business time
 - o Cyber-attacks are a growing concern for utilities
 - Eversource is investing heavily on planning for and preventing cyber-attacks.
 - o Utilities are coordinating with DEMHS, DPH, communities and other utility providers to establish and maintain lists of critical facilities to prioritize the restoration of energy during emergencies
 - o The Department of Public Health is dedicated to identifying and updating critical operations, including utilities.
- CIRCA – The mission of the Connecticut Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation Increase the resilience and sustainability of vulnerable communities along Connecticut's coast and inland waterways to the growing impacts of climate change on the natural, built, and human environment.

- Sea Level Rise – Most rising tides reports show sea level rise using the “bath tub” model.
 - Sea level rise will not only create stronger storm surges and other effects to extreme weather but will ultimately change the landscape of coastal communities.
 - POCD’s in the region plan for either disaster mitigation or land use changes, but none look at both
 - No one-size-fits-all solution to adapting to sea level rise – will vary neighborhood by neighborhood due to topography of the Region’s coastline.
 - Multi-benefit solutions are best way to garner implementation funding (economic development, transportation improvements, adaptation, etc.) – Meriden Green great example (riverine flooding)
 - CIRCA will be updating sea level rise projections this fall
- SCRCOG has played a critical role in coastal resilience within the region, and should do the same for coordinating efforts on sea level rise
 - Transportation projects are an angle into sea level rise, as COG has jurisdiction over transportation projects, and critical infrastructure (I-95, Route 1, rail lines) are located in close proximity to coastal waters.
 - NEC rail project planning needs to be cognizant of sea level rise planning
- Inland areas also impacted by sea level rise
 - Tidally influenced rivers
 - Impacts of changed coastal landscape on inland development
 - Meriden Green – great flooding,
- Planning Law - CT is at the forefront of the disaster mitigation planning law policy.
 - Project underway to review state statutes that address sea level rise.
- Citizen science – Should be taken into consideration when conducting research and data collection for the region.
 - Citizen science works to an extent, but is limited in the capacity of volunteers. Success rates of this style of research is dependent on the simplicity of the task.
 - Good Example: Early blooming of trees.
 - Not as Ideal: River depth measurements.
- Anaerobic Digester – Good way to reduce waste, move towards trash diversion goal. There are very few drawbacks. Southington plant up and running. Should be more in CT – potential for more in region? North Haven currently working on a project.
- Communities should look into shared solar - for folks who are not able to buy into their own solar array but still want to support and contribute to the green energy movement.
- NY, CT and MA will be collaborating for an “energy conference” in order to share ideas for green and renewable energy.
- Beauty must be integrated into planning efforts – sustainable planning means planning not just for “doom and gloom,” but also for quality of life.

Municipal Planning Focus Group held July 28, 2017

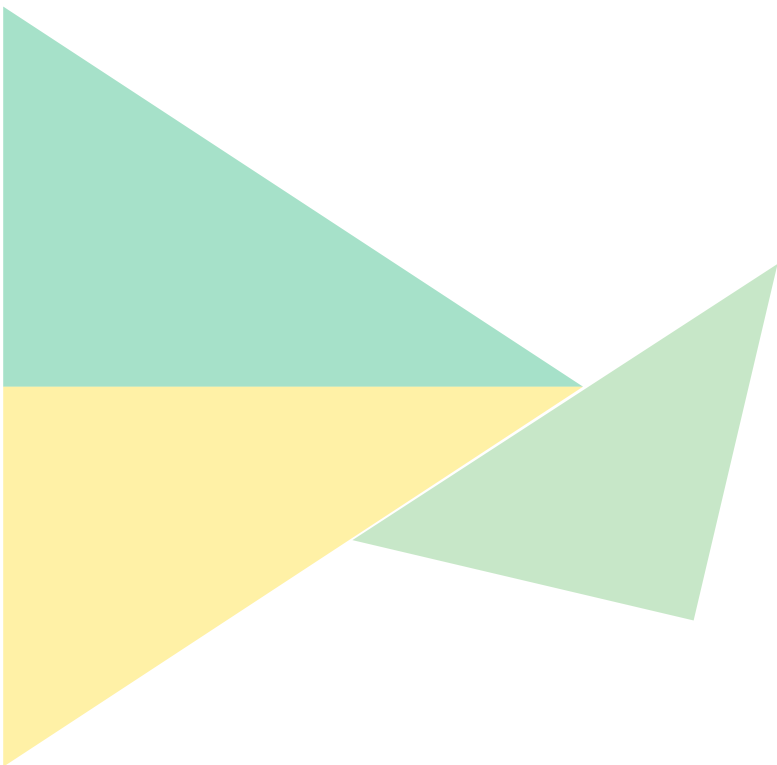
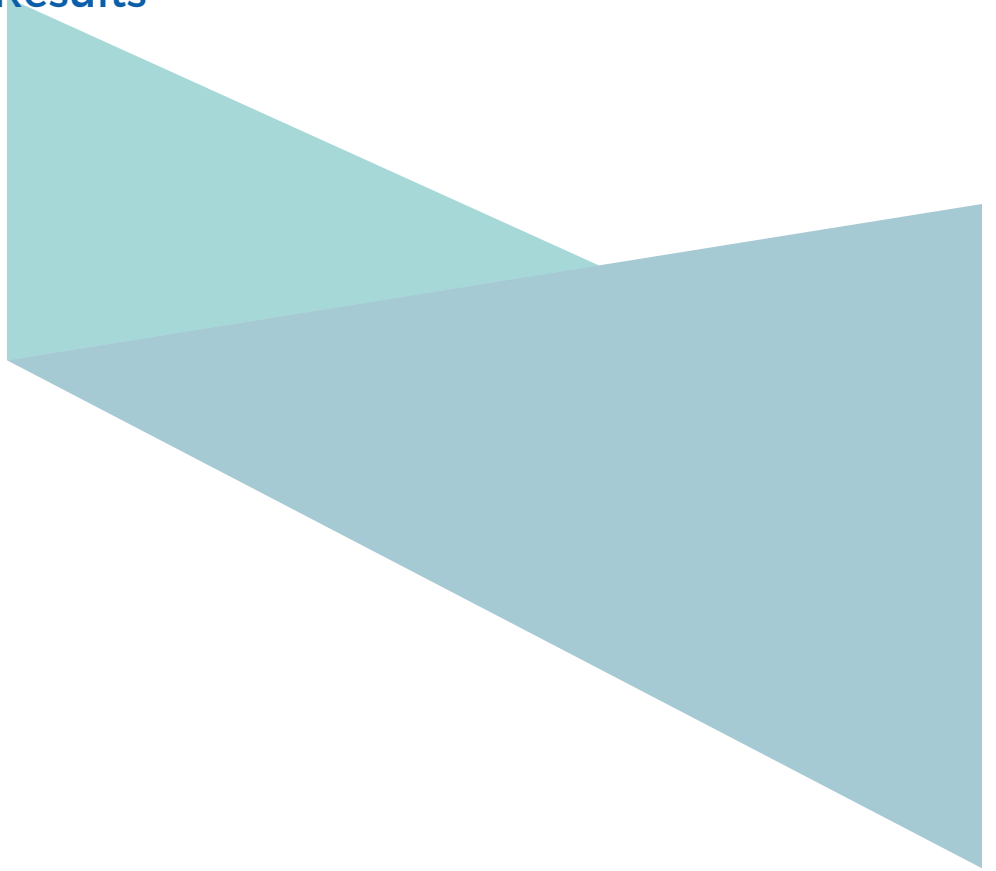
In attendance: Michael Piscitelli, New Haven; Michael Pinto, New Haven; David Sulkis, Milford; David Killeen, West Haven; Kacie Costello, Wallingford; George Kral, Guilford; Eugene Livshits, SCRCOG; Rebecca Andreucci, SCRCOG; Rebecca Augur, MMI

Discussion Summary:

- Economic development in the region hinges on having accessible retail, employment and housing
- The COG might play a stronger role in educating and advocating for diverse, workforce housing in the region – provide technical information, provide models for inclusionary zoning and other mechanisms for housing development, advocate within communities, link housing to expanded workforce and economic development
- The COG might also educate the region's towns about the regional housing market, so that issues of saturation and absorption might be better understood and help towns better plan for and react to housing development.
- Is there an opportunity for the COG to do a multi-jurisdictional affordable housing plan, per Public Act 17-170 and have towns sign on? Gain better understanding of where additional jobs and housing can be located to promote the greater region. Connect workers at various income levels with housing availability and vice versa.
- In more rural communities or communities that lack infrastructure, unrealistic to expect workforce housing development because costs to develop are too high.
- Historic preservation is a tool not only for preserving community character, but also economic development
- There are major projects in the region that need to be planned for and addressed – Orange train station, West Rock Tunnel, deepening New Haven port
- The regional plan should at least consider noting each town's priority areas/ districts (such as the Havens between New Haven and West Haven, a TOD area, etc.)
- Improving walkability and multi-modal options in region's communities still important, and maintaining/ enhancing infrastructure
- Help establish an economic identity for the region which can then help member towns better plan for industry and employment
- Recognize regional anchor institutions as part of the Region's economic identity – better collaborate with them and address any local friction points
- Following up on regional TOD study, help towns understand the scale appropriate for their priority areas based on regional market, what other towns are doing, etc.
- Review gas line expansion plans and projects to ensure areas targeted for conservation are not under new development pressure
- Sea-level rise must be addressed – loss of tidal marshes, and the inability to migrate tidal marshes because of existing development is a concern. How to protect these resources?

- Help identify resources for resiliency planning and implementation
- COG could help provide an inventory of farms and protected lands (SCRCOG is about to start a project to inventory open space in the region)
- COG could facilitate educating significant landholders in the region on estate planning and options for land conservation – more objective third party could provide benefit
- COG could help towns understand agri-business, what's appropriate where and what the implications are
- Need better coordination with and communication from DOT on their plans and projects

Appendix C: Survey Results



Introduction

The South Central Regional Council of Governments (SCRCOG) distributed two surveys, one for the general public and one for municipal officials, to help inform the update of the region's Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). The regional POCD is a policy guidance document that identifies priority areas for growth and conservation. The two surveys asked questions intended to identify issues important to the region, and to develop a vision for its future.

The surveys were open from April to August 7th 2017 with links to the surveys distributed through social media, individual town websites, the SCRCOG website, focus groups, and other avenues.

Municipal Survey Results

The municipal survey collected 91 responses from elected or appointed officials and municipal staff, including 13 respondents who identified as Planning, Zoning, or Planning & Zoning Commissioners, and 8 Councilmen, Selectmen, or Aldermen.

The most-represented communities in the municipal survey were East Haven (11 residents and 9 employees), Wallingford (9 residents and 9 employees) Meriden (11 residents and 6 employees), and New Haven (6 residents and 11 employees). At least one employee or official from every community took the municipal survey.



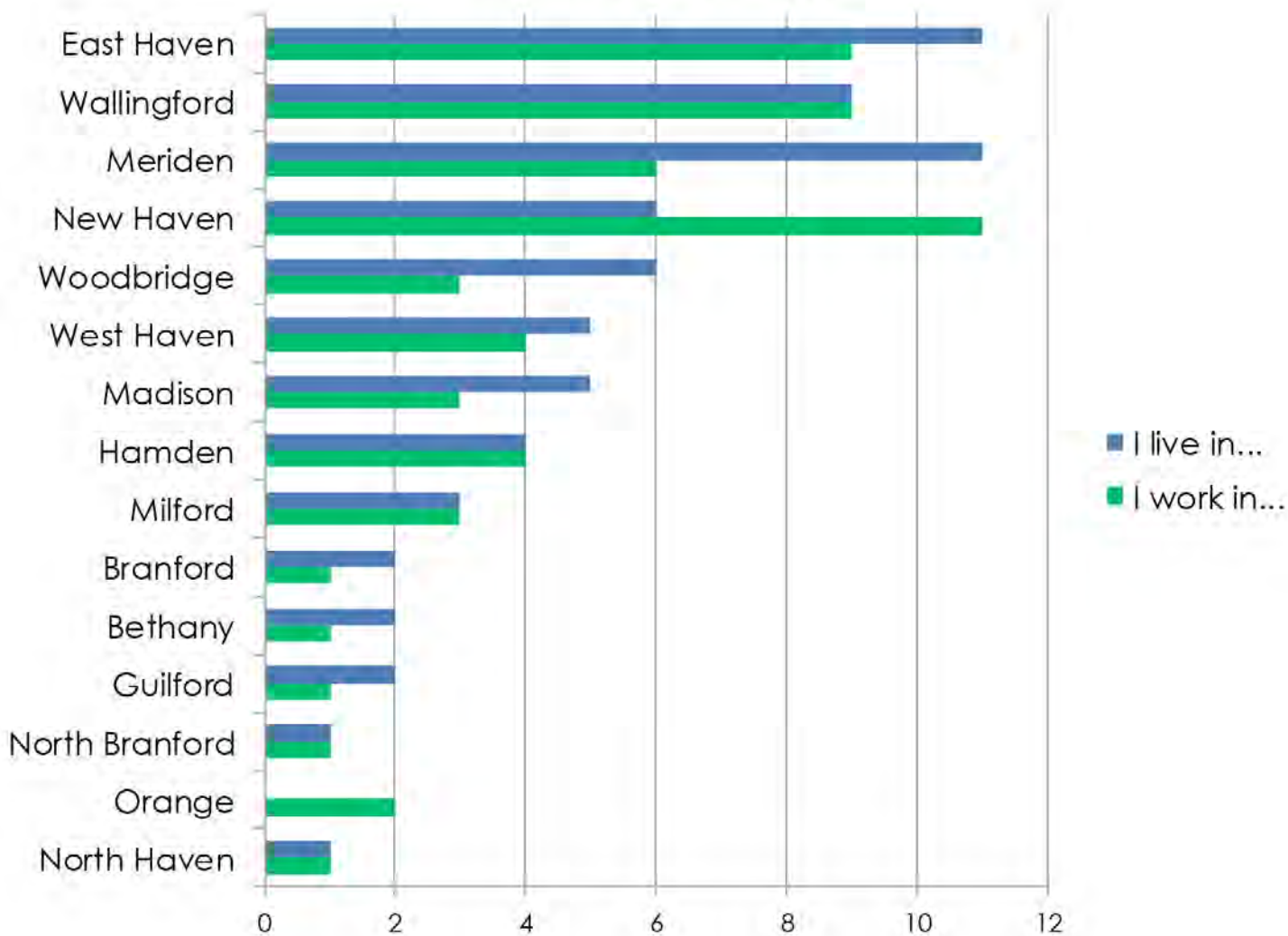
Please indicate your position



Respondents to the municipal survey were asked to characterize each of the communities within the SCRCOG region by whether the community was a job center, retail/shopping destination, cultural/entertainment center, diverse neighborhoods and housing center, outdoor recreation, transit accessible, or rural. Overall:

- As the region’s largest urban center, New Haven was characterized as the dominant Job Center, Cultural/Entertainment Center, having the most Diverse Neighborhoods and Housing Center, and being the most Transit Accessible.
- Respondents identified Hamden, Milford, Orange, North Haven, and New Haven as the region’s Retail/Shopping Destinations.
- Madison, Guilford, Branford, Milford, and New Haven were identified as the region’s best Outdoor Recreation.
- Respondents characterized Woodbridge and Bethany as the most Rural.

Please indicate your relationship to the region... (Municipal Survey)

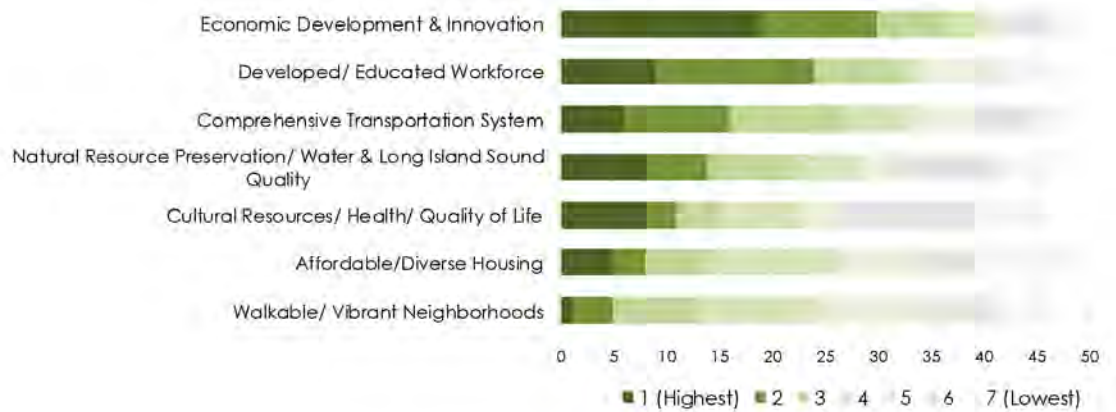


Respondents to the municipal survey were also asked to rank a number of issues in terms of what is the highest priority for the region to address. Economic development and innovation was the top-rated choice, followed by developing an educated workforce.

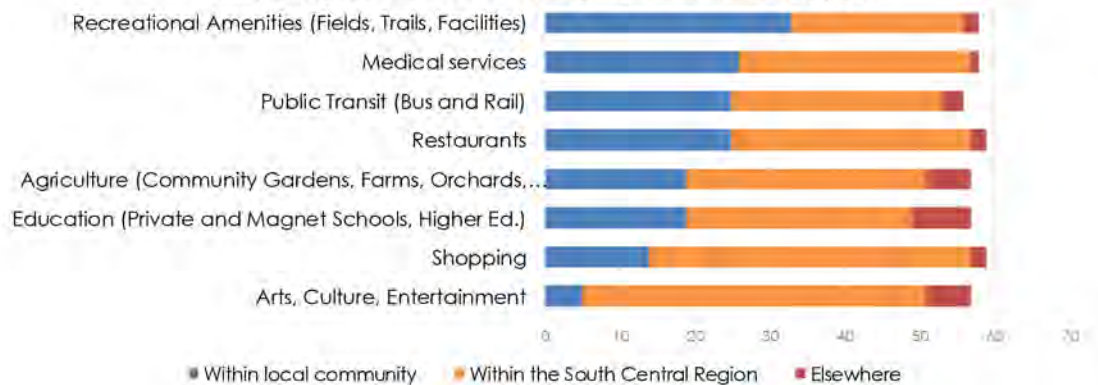
1. Economic Development & Innovation
2. Developed/Educated Workforce
3. Comprehensive Transportation System
4. Natural Resource Preservation/ Water & Long Island Sound Quality
5. Cultural Resources/ Health/ Quality of Life
6. Affordable/Diverse Housing
7. Walkable/ Vibrant Neighborhoods

Respondents largely feel that if residents can't access an amenity within their local community, that amenities are available within the South Central Region. Recreational amenities were the most likely to be found within a local community, and arts, culture, entertainment were most likely to be found elsewhere within the region. Respondents felt that education was the amenity that residents would most likely have to seek elsewhere.

Please rank the following issues in terms of highest priority for the region to address



Where do you think residents in the community you represent most frequently access the following? (Select all that apply)



Concern for economic development and transportation also rose to the top in responses to the question “What one thing would enhance quality of life for most residents of the community you represent, regardless of cost?” At the same time, open spaces, natural resources and Long Island Sound were ranked highly as features of the region that respondents were most concerned about losing or degrading.

What one place, feature, or aspect of the region are you most concerned about losing or being degraded?

What one thing would enhance quality of life for most residents of the community you represent, regardless of cost?

Categories	# of Responses
Economic development	14
Downtown revitalization	11
Improved transportation	11
Affordable housing	6
Lower taxes	2
Increased education funding	2
Entertainment	1
More Businesses	1
Improve natural resources	1
Preserve existing housing	1
Sidewalks	1
Upgrade parks	1
Workforce training	1

Categories	# of Responses
Open spaces	10
Transportation options	6
Education	3
Long Island Sound	3
Natural resources	3
Achitectural character	2
Downtown	2
Historic character	2
Local employment	2
Coastline	1
Economic development	1
Farmland	1
Infrastructure	1
Library	1
Losing residents	1
Residential character	1
Restaurants	1
Rural character	1
Tax base	1

Transportation

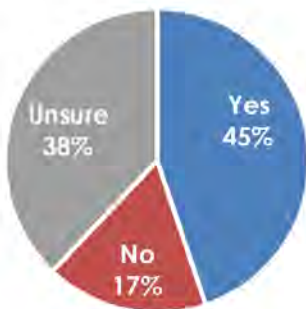
An overwhelming majority of respondents (96%) indicated that most of the residents in their community drive alone to work. Limited availability of public transit was cited most often as the reason residents in their communities did not use public transit more often.

What prevents residents in your community from using public transit now? (Select all that apply)



When asked about Transit Oriented Development (TOD), about 45% of respondents said that their community has identified an opportunity and desire for TOD, while 38% were "Unsure" and 17% said that their community had not identified an opportunity or expressed a desire for TOD.

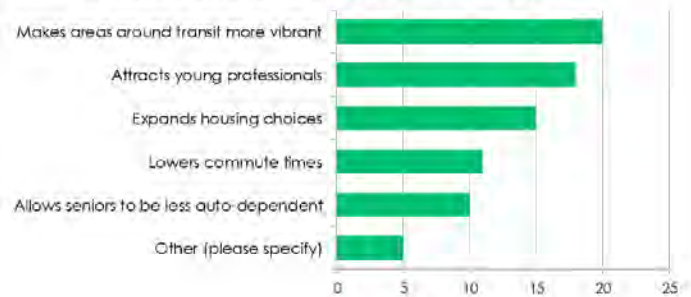
Has your community identified an opportunity and desire for Transit Oriented Development (TOD)?



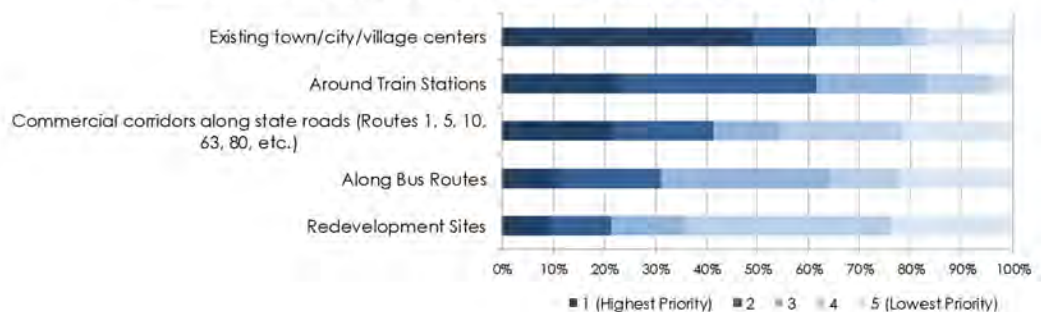
Respondents indicated that their communities supported TOD because they believe that TOD will make areas around transit more vibrant, that such development will attract young professionals, expand housing choices, lower commute times, and allow seniors to be less auto-dependent. The two most-cited reasons that communities do not support TOD include a lack of transit hubs (whether rail or bus), and a lack of adequate infrastructure such as sidewalks.

Municipal survey respondents ranked existing town/city/village centers and train station areas as where the region should prioritize future mixed-use development. Redevelopment sites were considered to be the lowest priority areas for TOD. Almost 35% of respondents felt that infrastructure projects would be the best strategy for supporting TOD or mixed-use projects in their community.

What are some of the reasons your community supports this type of development? (select as many as apply)



Rank where the region should prioritize mixed-use development.



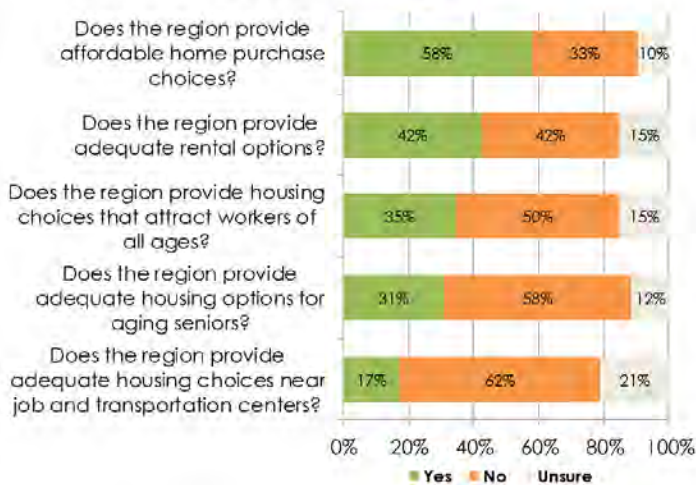
Housing

Municipal officials were also asked about the availability of affordable and/or elderly housing options in their communities. Median single-family home prices vary across the region from a low of \$148,500 to a high of \$400,000. Rental rates also vary significantly. 58% of respondents felt that the region provides affordable home purchase choices. Respondents were split (42% to 42%) on whether or not the region provides adequate rental options. Few respondents (17%) felt that the region provides adequate housing choices near job and transportation centers.

When asked what strategies their communities have used to increase affordable housing supply, the most commonly-cited strategy was to allow mixed-use developments with affordable residential units above commercial, followed by allowing conventional multi-family housing and adopting Incentive Housing Zone regulations.

Similarly, when asked specifically about strategies to allow older residents to age in place, the top three strategies respondents indicated their communities have undertaken were: allowing Planned Development Districts (age-restricted or not), allowing mixed-use developments with affordable and/or accessible units, and increasing the affordable housing supply in general. Six respondents said that their communities had not used any strategies to enable residents to age in place.

Providing additional affordable housing is a state-wide goal.



Parks, Agriculture, and Water Resources

The South Central Region has many large parks, recreation areas, and trails that serve the wider region. Hammonasset State Park and Sleeping Giant were considered to be the most enjoyed by residents. Other popular parks respondents listed included West Rock State Park, Hubbard Park, and Long Wharf Park.

The State and South Central Region has prioritized protecting farmland and prime agricultural soil. Respondents said that their communities have hosted farmer's markets (79% of respondents) provided community gardens (58%), and purchased farmland or development rights (29%) to protect these resources.

Some communities are also using strategies to protect water resources, including supporting open space purchases to protect water supplies and aquifers (46% of respondents), limiting water use during drought warnings (39%), and marking storm drains to show that they drain to local water bodies or Long Island Sound (28%).

Which REGIONAL park, recreation area, or trail do you think is most enjoyed by your community?

Park	# of Responses
Hammonasset State Park	17
Sleeping Giant	15
West Rock State Park	5
Hubbard Park	3
Long Wharf Park	3
East Haven Beach	2
East Rock State Park	2
Farmington Canal Trail	2
None	2
Blue-Blazed Trails	1
Lamentation Mountain State Park	1
Lighthouse Park	1
Mattabessett trail and parks	1
New England Trail	1
Quinnipiac River Waterway	1

What strategies has your community implemented to protect water resources?



The State and Region have prioritized farmland and prime agricultural soil protection. What strategies has your community employed to preserve agricultural lands, businesses, and heritage? (Select all that apply)



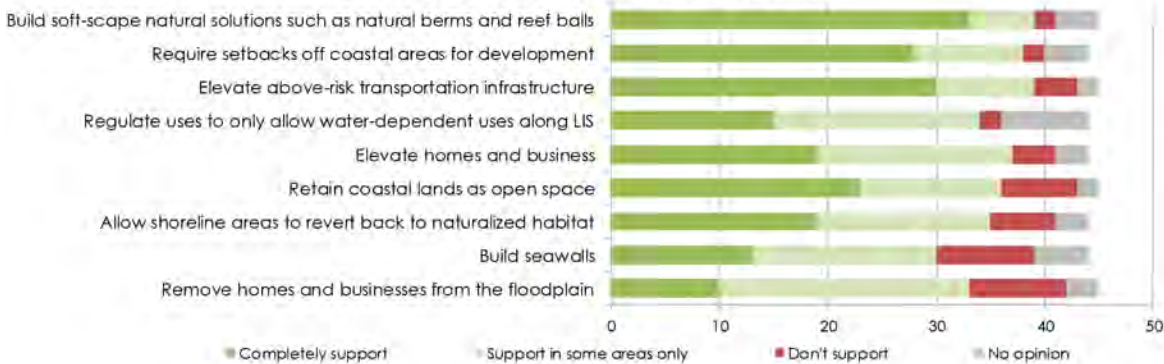
Sea Level Rise

Respondents were asked about their level of support for a number of strategies aimed at adapting to the challenges of sea level rise. There was general wide-spread support (either “completely support” or “support in some areas only”) for building soft-scape natural solutions such as natural berms, requiring setbacks off coastal areas for development, and elevating transportation infrastructure in risk areas. The

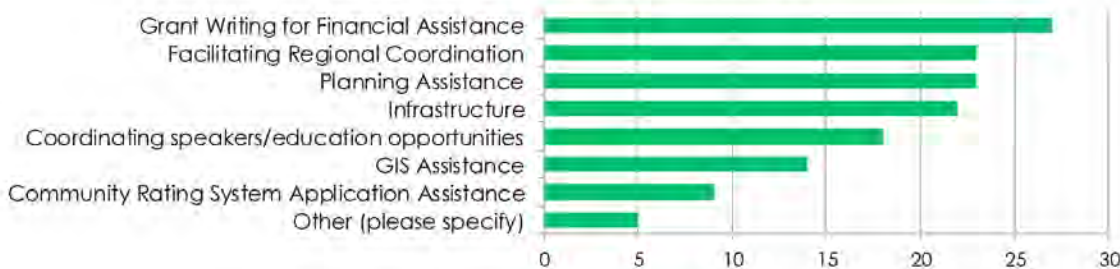
strategy to mitigate flood hazards by removing homes and businesses from the floodplain received the least overall support, although 51% supported the strategy in some areas only.

Respondents understand the value that the SCRCOG team provides to the region. When asked “What are other areas in which SCRCOG can provide further assistance?” over half of respondents said that grant writing for financial assistance would be useful. Respondents also thought that facilitation of regional coordination, planning assistance, and infrastructure assistance would be useful.

The region interested in some of the following regional strategies to adapt to the challenges of sea level rise which includes increased coastal and riverine flooding and erosion. Please indicate your level of support for these policies.



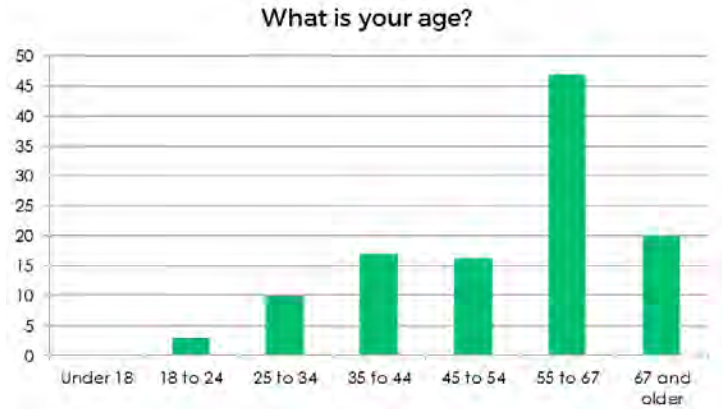
The South Central Region Council of Governments (SCRCOG) has recently led the effort for coastal resilience and multi-hazard mitigation planning for the region. What are other areas in which SCRCOG can provide further assistance?



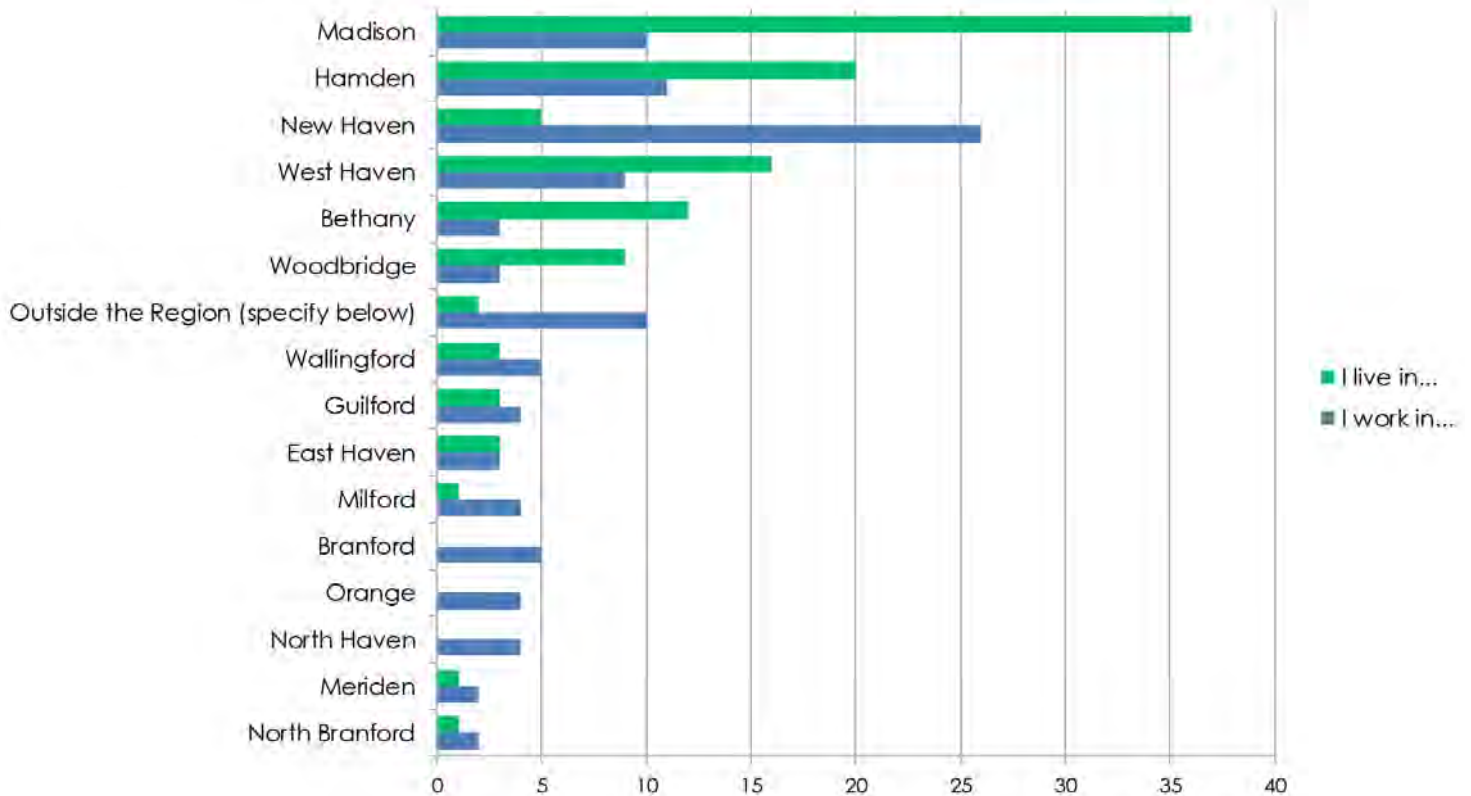
Public Survey Results

The public survey collected 156 responses. While the links to take the public survey were widely distributed, respondents are self-selected and results should not be considered to be a statistically representative reflection of the views of the more than 500,000 residents in the SCRCOG area. For example, the median age for New Haven County is 39.8 (according to 2015 American Community Survey estimates), but only 27% of respondents were under the age of 45, with about 60% over the age of 55. Nevertheless, results provide some valuable input on concerns for the region.

Geographically, the largest group represented was Madison residents, followed by people who work in New Haven, Hamden residents, and West Haven residents. No residents from Orange, North Haven, or Branford took the public survey, although people who work in those communities did take the survey.



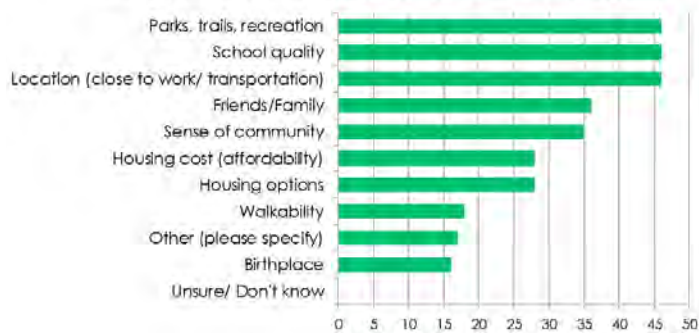
Please indicate where you live and work within in the Region (Public Survey).



Amenities and Resources

The top three reasons that respondents chose their town and the South Central Region to live were: parks, trails, and recreation; school quality; and location (close to work/transportation). Only 14% (16 respondents) said that they lived in the region because they were born there.

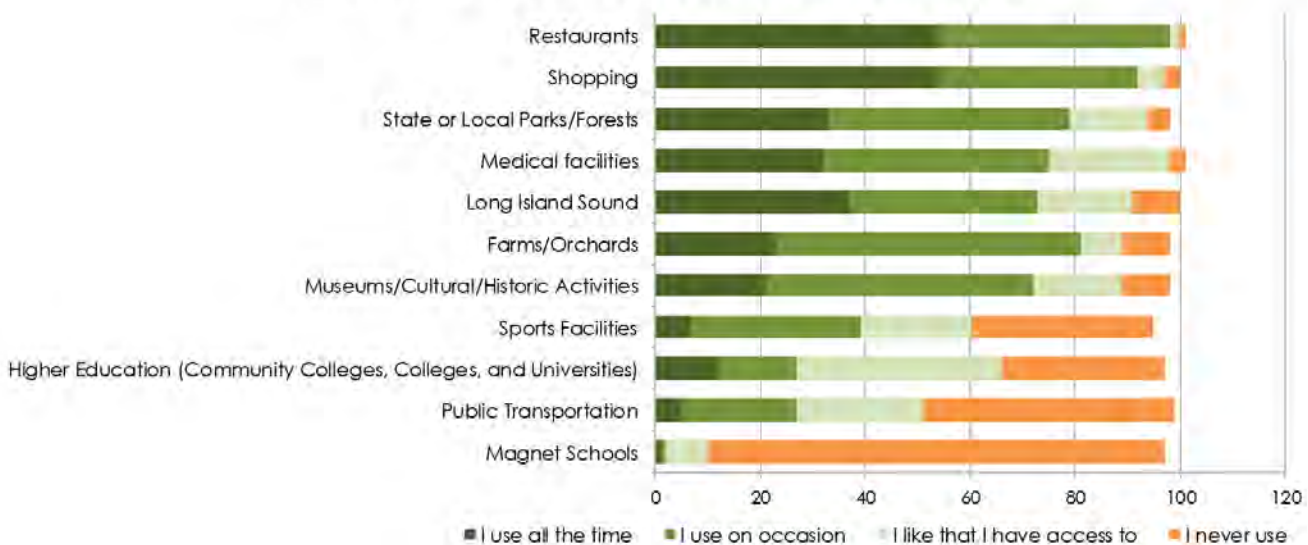
What were your reasons for choosing your town and this region as a place to live? (check all that apply)



Respondents were asked how often they use the resources that the region offers, ranging from “I use all the time” to “I never use”. The resources that were used most often included restaurants, shopping, state or local parks/forests, medical facilities, and Long Island Sound. The resources that respondents used the least were higher education (community colleges, colleges, and universities), public transportation, and magnet schools. The older age of the respondents (mostly over age 55, and possibly without school-aged children still in the home or attending college locally) likely impacts these results.

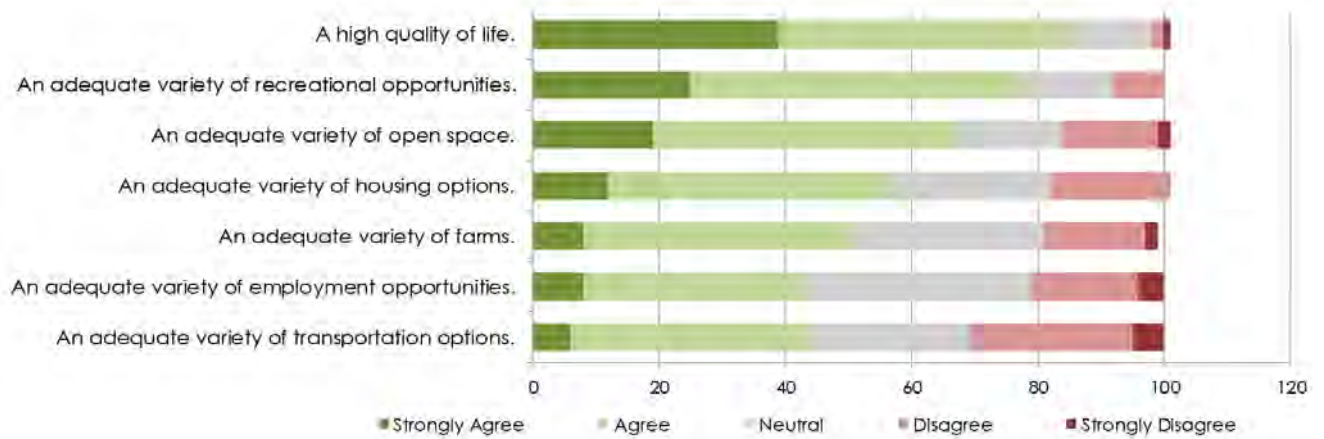
Respondents were also asked to rate how strongly they agree or disagree with statements about the quality of life in the South Central Region. Respondents most strongly agreed that the region offers a high quality of life and offers an adequate variety of recreational opportunities and open space. Respondents had the least agreement about the region having an adequate variety of employment opportunities and transportation options, which corresponds with the results of the municipal survey which indicated these areas as priorities for improvement.

How do you use the variety of resources that the region offers? (Select all that apply for you or members of your family)

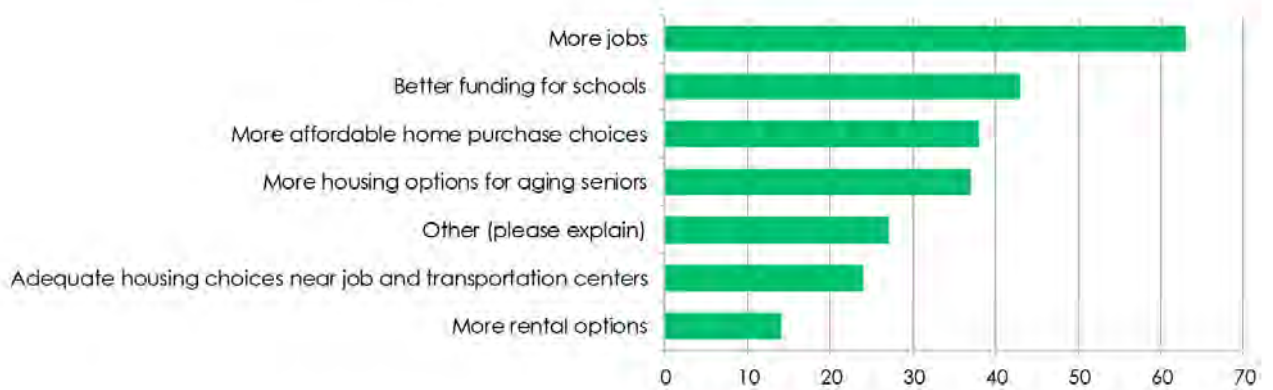


When asked for their top three things they would like to see in the region, most respondents chose “more jobs”, followed by better funding for schools, and more affordable home purchase choices.

**Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.
The region offers...**



What are the top 3 things you would like to see in the region? (Choose 3)



Transportation

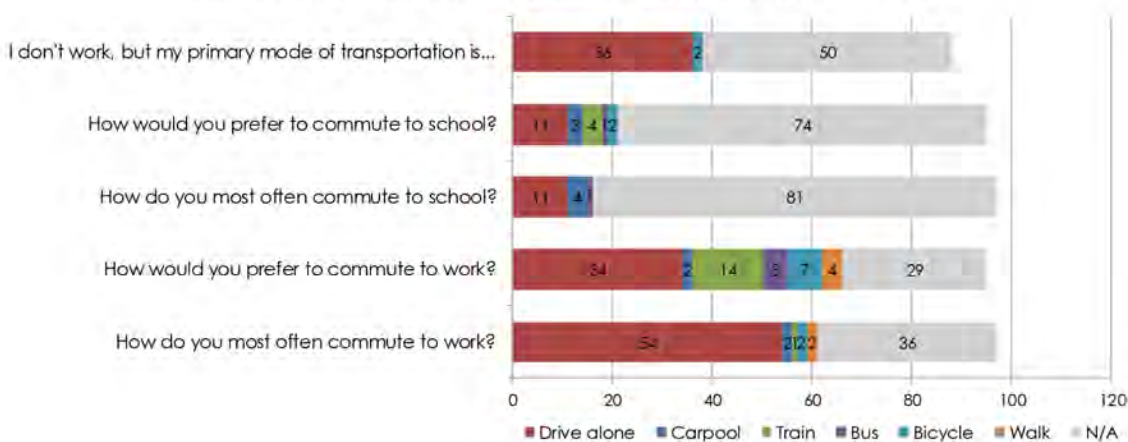
Respondents were asked about their normal modes of transportation compared to their ideal modes of transportation. When asked “How do you most often commute to school?” vs. “How would you prefer to commute to school?” slightly more respondents indicated that they would prefer to take the train or walk than currently do. There was a larger discrepancy among those who commute for work: only 1 respondent currently takes the train, but 14 indicated that they would prefer to take the train. The differences between actual and preferred modes were more modest for bus, bicycle, or walk.

Roughly a third of the respondents (30 out of 92) do not commute at all. A quarter of respondents have short commutes of 0 to 15 minutes, and another 32% of respondents have commutes of 15 to 30 minutes, suggesting that these residents largely work within the region. 10 respondents had commutes between 30 and 60 minutes, and no respondents had commutes over an hour.

The top two strategies that would encourage respondents to use transit (bus or train) more often are “routes that work with where I need to go” and “more regular service”.

Respondents indicated broad support for TOD, and identified TOD as appealing mostly as an area for shopping and entertainment (84%), an area to visit (77%), an area in which to work or go to school (70%), and an area in which to live (63%).

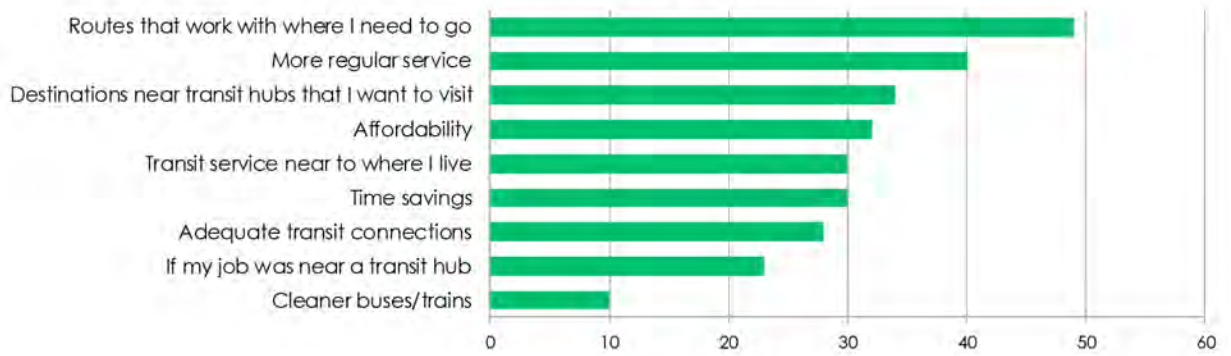
Please answer the following questions about your travel choices.



How long is your commute to work/school?



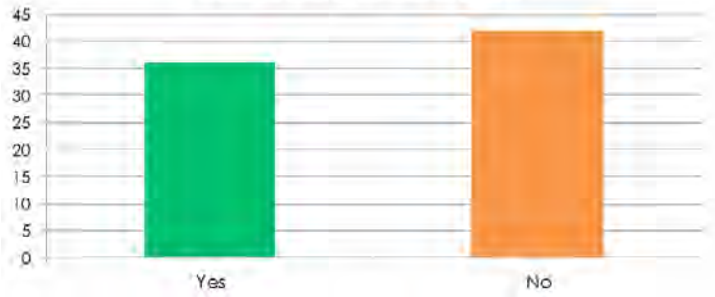
**What would encourage you to use transit (bus or train) more often?
(Select all that apply)**



Open Space

The public survey asked several questions about open space. Respondents would generally like open space preservation to occur along waterways: Long Island Sound/tidal wetlands; and near rivers, streams and inland wetlands. This emphasis on more open spaces near waterways may be due in part to a widespread feeling that there are not enough public access areas (such as docks, launches, beaches, and fishing piers) in the region. Comments for the access question cited a lack of parking and a lack of free public access (as opposed to private beaches or those that require a permit) as barriers to access.

Do you feel that there are enough public Coastal Access areas (docks, launches, beaches, fishing piers) in our region?



The State seeks to preserve 21% of the state's land area as open space. In what areas would you like open space preservation to occur? (Select all that apply)

