
Connecticut Department of Transportation | Stamford Transportation Center Joint Development

Request for Expressions of Interest | August 23, 2024



RFEI Summary

The Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) issues this Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) to seek innovative and implementable approaches and ideas for the joint development of the Stamford Transportation Center (STC) and mixed-use, transit-oriented development (TOD) on certain State-owned parcels at the STC. Stamford is the busiest station in Connecticut, serving 5 million riders in 2023.

This RFEI offers respondents the opportunity to provide feedback on potential approaches and ideas for this joint development that may ultimately inform future stages of the solicitation process. This opportunity includes potential approaches to delivering the joint development including various public-private partnership structures and contractual methods, potential for private operations and maintenance of selected transit facilities, and private financing of public improvements. Interested parties are invited to submit expressions of interest and relevant summary qualifications for the transformation of the STC into a best-in-class, modern transit facility that will serve as a gateway to the State of Connecticut and stitch together Downtown Stamford and the burgeoning South End neighborhood.

Responses to this RFEI are not binding. CTDOT intends to select one or multiple qualified development teams through future solicitations, which may include Requests for Qualifications (RFQ) and/or Requests for Proposals (RFP), which is anticipated to be released later this year (2024). Responses to this RFEI will help CTDOT understand the interest of respondents on the project and inform the timing and development of upcoming RFQs or RFPs, *but respondents to future solicitation documents are not required to respond to this RFEI.*

Table 1 | RFEI Timeline

Milestone	Date and Time
RFEI Release Date	August 23, 2024
Deadline to Submit Questions	September 10, 2024, 4:00 p.m.
Answers to Questions Posted	September 20, 2024,
Deadline to Submit Expressions of Interest	October 4, 2024, 4:00 p.m.
Anticipated RFQ/P Stage	Q4 2024

Project Goals

CTDOT project goals for the joint development of the STC include:

- Create a vibrant and integrated transit gateway** by transforming the STC into a dynamic, mixed-use transportation center that combines modern transit facilities with vibrant community spaces, enhances the sense of place through signature design, and promotes civic urbanism in the City of Stamford (City).
- Enhance the user experience** by providing an exceptional experience for all passengers – daily commuters, regional rail riders, connecting bus and shuttle users, etc. – through improved comfort, accessibility, and safety. Modernize station facilities with upgraded ticketing, in station and station environs wayfinding, digital signage, and information systems, and introduce new amenities such as retail and dining options that can attract transit customers, employees working in proximity to the STC, and nearby residents. Lastly, streamline circulation within the STC to reduce confusion and improve efficiency for all users.
- Drive inclusive economic development** by leveraging a flexible approach to TOD that attracts both residential and commercial investments as market conditions evolve. Ensure equitable access and

treatment for all users by integrating mixed-income and affordable housing options as part of a TOD strategy and create inclusive public spaces at the STC. There is an expectation that any housing proposed will include affordable units. Position the STC as an economic hub that supports local and regional businesses and serves as a key asset for attracting employers to move to or expand in the city.

4. **Enhance accessibility and safety** of the STC and surrounding street network by creating a pedestrian-first system that prioritizes safety and ADA accessibility. Reimagine the street network in collaboration with the City to improve connectivity and reduce vehicular congestion while dedicating road space to pedestrians and cyclists. Improve and expand bicycle and pedestrian accessibility to the STC including amenities such as separated bike lanes, improved wayfinding, and bicycle parking and secure storage.
5. **Support future growth and adaptability** by designing a joint development that allows the STC to be scalable, allowing for future expansions and changes in transportation needs. This includes ensuring that the STC can accommodate increased service levels from changing passenger demand of existing routes, new service brought on by the expansion of Amtrak on the Northeast Corridor (NEC) and completion of Metro-North's Penn Station Access project, changes to bus and shuttle use patterns, and demand for for-hire vehicles and micromobility. Incorporate smart parking solutions that provide sufficient parking options to accommodate rail commuters and the TOD without overparking the STC.
6. **Leverage public-private partnerships** to deliver a complex, high-impact project. Collaborate with joint development partners to ensure the timely and efficient completion of the STC redevelopment and effective partnerships to ensure efficient continued operations of the public transit improvements once completed and during project staging and construction.
7. **Maintain existing station operations** with minimal disruptions that allows for uninterrupted or mitigated ADA accessible pathways to each platform.
8. **Maximize returns to the State and benefits to the public** while considering other project goals listed above.

CTDOT will use the responses and information gathered from the RFEI process to inform the solicitation strategy for the joint development of the STC and private, mixed-use TOD.

Joint Development Opportunity

A reimagined STC is a major opportunity to strengthen the vibrancy of Downtown Stamford and the South End by establishing a world-class transit gateway to Connecticut's Gold Coast. The following section describes the scope of the joint development.

Project Scope

The areas available to joint development include State-owned properties comprising the current STC and parcels across Station Place that include the parking structure built in 1985 that is currently being demolished (1985 Garage Site), the parking structure built in 2004 (2004 Garage Site), Station Place itself, or some combination or all of these. In addition, CTDOT is interested in innovative and implementable approaches and ideas that meet circulation and access goals and is open to working with the City to incorporate changes to the street network within the outlined area in **Figure 1**.

The following components of the STC are considered within the scope of the project, and CTDOT expects that innovative and implementable approaches and ideas for the joint development will address, but may not be limited to:

1. **Stamford Transportation Center**, including station concourses, including the Main Concourse building, connections to the rail platforms, the tunnel and basement level, parking structures, and bus and shuttle areas. CTDOT is seeking ideas for joint development that provide for a modern, vibrant, flexible and safe station area that provides both ADA-accessible, seamless horizontal and vertical connections to the rest of the station. Moreover, CTDOT encourages respondents to think through potential ideas for new or existing connecting infrastructure – connections to platforms, tunnel and basement level, pedestrian bridges, etc. – to provide for a more complementary and holistic approach to the joint development that creates redundant pathways to the station platforms. (It should be noted that the STC is also undergoing an elevator and escalator improvement project, expected to be completed by late 2024.)

Currently the Main Concourse houses customer waiting areas, restrooms, ticketing, rail operator offices, security, and limited retail options including convenience retail and food and beverage options. At this time CTDOT is not prescribing a minimum station program so long as ideas presented as part of responses consider the necessary space to meet project goals.

The bus and shuttle areas are currently located under I-95 and reached from the STC via the tunnel and basement level. Combined both areas comprise approximately 1.3 +/- acres with the larger area (0.8 +/- acres) serving CTtransit and intercity and regional buses with five parallel bus bays and the smaller area (0.5 +/- acres) providing drop off space for private shuttle services. The transfer areas are separated by the extension of the tunnel and basement level that runs to North State Street.

Figure 1 | STC Joint Development Project Area and Site Context



2. **Transit-oriented Development** that includes a mix of uses, including mixed-income multifamily rental or for-sale product, commercial office, ground floor retail, hospitality, or other uses consistent with transit-supportive development. The combined +/- 3.1-acre site includes the 1985 Garage which is currently being demolished (with a planned completion in late 2024) and the 2004 Garage, which contains

approximately 1,135 parking spaces for daily, weekly, and monthly users and has an entrance and exit south of the structure that uses a driveway that connects to Atlantic Street. The 2004 Garage is connected to the STC and platforms via pedestrian bridge to the secondary concourse east of the Main Concourse. Joint development that includes use of the 2004 Garage Site will be expected to include 100% replacement of the existing 2004 garage spaces.

3. **Traffic and Station Area Roads**, including Station Place, South State Street, North State Street, Atlantic Street, and Washington Boulevard, as well as any related bike-ped improvements, drop off or pick up lanes, and entrances to parking structures. Station Place is a two-way street running between Washington Boulevard and Atlantic Street south of the rail lines, and South State Street is a one-way street that runs from Greenwich Avenue – west of the Rippowam River – past the South State Street Garage and the station before crossing Atlantic Street and merging onto I-95 North. CTDOT owns and controls Station Place, South State Street, and Washington Boulevard north of Station Place. The City owns nearby streets such as Atlantic Street, North State Street, Washington Boulevard south of Station Place, and Henry Street. The State is committed to working with the City – who is a willing partner – regarding any proposed changes to these nearby streets.

Key Considerations

In developing innovative and implementable approaches and ideas for the joint development of the STC, respondents should keep several key considerations in mind:

- All ideas and approaches must allow for the continued functionality of the existing STC – i.e., station areas, vertical and horizontal access to concourses, platforms, tunnel and basement level, Atlantic Street (2004 garage), South State Street Garage, etc. – until replacement functionality via joint development is operational.
- Station areas should be flexible and scalable to meet changing demands of a growing passenger base, particularly as Amtrak continues to increase service along the NEC, using Stamford as a stop, and Metro-North Railroad rolls out new service connecting the New Haven (NHL) line to the west side of Manhattan through its Penn Station Access project.
- Respondents are welcome to develop approaches and ideas that consider joint development on the 1985 Garage Site, 2004 Garage Site, or across both sites, as well as Station Place. If respondents consider use of the 2004 Garage site, they should consider how their approaches would meet the following parking requirements:
 - Provision of 600 public parking spaces within a quarter mile of the STC during the period when the 2004 parking structure cannot be used and replacement parking is not yet operational.
 - Provision of 1,135 public parking spaces as part of the new joint development. CTDOT encourages proposals for shared parking between the 1,135 public parking spaces and any additional parking demand generated by the private development.
- The entire site is zoned as Transportation Center Design District (TCDD), which is intended to encourage high-density mixed-use development, provision of amenities for commuters, residents, and employees, connectivity between Downtown and the South End and excellence in sustainable urban design.
- Any concept plan must account for an existing Eversource overhead transmission line that runs along Station Place between Atlantic Street and the Main Concourse and Washington Boulevard. This line must remain clear of any impediments within 12 feet of the line itself. CTDOT is currently exploring the possibility of undergrounding some or all of this line through the project area, and respondents should be clear for any concept plans that require undergrounding, what length of the line would need to be brought underground.

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- CTDOT is open to traffic changes at Station Place, provided the changes provide for existing and future traffic and non-vehicular access to the STC, including the possibility of making the street one-way, closing some or all the street to vehicular traffic, relocating certain drop off activities currently occurring there, removing Station Place as a road of any kind, or other approaches to meet project goals and enhance pedestrian safety. However, the privately owned Metro Center garage and limo pull off are served from Station Place currently and would need to be maintained or their functionality addressed in some other way. In addition, the City is advancing street improvements affecting [Atlantic Street](#) and [North State Street](#).
 - Joint development at the STC may be eligible for a variety of development incentives based on program requirements and funding availability at time of application. Notably, the site is likely eligible for Connecticut's Innovation Clusters Program, which offers up to \$100 million in support for projects that contribute to the ongoing development of Connecticut's key innovative industries.

For additional detail about the site and market context for the STC and surrounding neighborhood, see:

Appendix A | STC: Gateway to Downtown Stamford and the South End.

Stamford Transportation Center Master Plan

CTDOT has developed a master plan for the STC that provides recommended conceptual improvements to the State-owned facilities and surrounding environs, including opportunities for future TOD. CTDOT, in collaboration with the City and supported by the Stamford Transportation Advocacy Team (STAT) – which met regularly during the plan development process and whose members included the Stamford Partnership, People's United Bank, Charter Communications, the University of Connecticut, People Friendly Stamford, Stamford Downtown, Stamford Hospital, and Waterside/NRZ – developed a set of recommended improvements to transform the STC into a best-in-class, multi-modal passenger facility, as well as enhance interior and exterior spaces, including roadways and new civic open spaces based around three objectives.

1. **Station Place.** Create a well-organized roadway and an engaging public plaza that functions as an entrance to the city for those individuals connecting to vehicle pickup. Create a safer and more welcoming pedestrian and bicycle environment through dedicated bike lanes and amenities.
2. **Main Concourse and Waiting and Ticketing Areas.** Enhance circulation and connectivity, improve ticketing and signage, provide new amenities, and enhance the overall customer experience.
3. **Tunnel Level and Bus and Shuttle Area.** Improve the customer experience, maximize access and connectivity, while creating efficiencies for operations and public safety personnel and improve access between the bus bays, waiting facilities, and rail platforms.

The STC Master Plan was completed in February 2024. Details on its development, images associated with conceptual recommendations, and a copy of the report can be found on the project website, www.STCMasterPlan.com.

This RFEI, though informed by some of the analysis performed as part of this study and guided by the robust public engagement process undertaken to develop the master plan, is designed to consider a broader view of potential improvements to the STC as part of a joint development project. Respondents are not limited in their development approach to achieving the projects goals by what is presented in the Master Plan. Any recommendations or conceptual schematics, designs, or renderings contained in the Master Plan are non-binding and have been provided solely for respondents' reference.

Submission of Questions

Any questions concerning this RFEI or requests for any other information should be sent via e-mail only, directed to Elise Greenberg at DOTplanning@ct.gov. Questions shall not be submitted through the CT DAS CTsource Bid

Board. Verbal requests for information will not be considered. Submitted questions should not be assumed to be confidential. All requests must be received via e-mail prior to 4:00 PM EST on the date listed in the RFEI Timeline shown in **Table 1** above. Responses will be in the form of an addendum that will be posted on the CTDAS CTsource Bid Board at <https://portal.ct.gov/das/ctsource/bidboard> and searching for “Stamford Transportation Center Joint Development”. It is the responsibility of each Proposer to retrieve addenda. No verbal communication or phone calls will be responded to regarding questions associated with the RFEI.

Submission Requirements

CTDOT invites respondents with innovative and implementable ideas for advancing the joint development of the STC and meeting CTDOT project goals. Submissions in response to this RFEI must be emailed to Elise Greenberg at DOTplanning@ct.gov no later than the time and date specified in the RFEI Timeline shown in **Table 1** above. Responses shall not be submitted through the CTDAS CTsource Bid Board. Late submissions will not be accepted. Preparation for and delivery of the submission shall be at the Proposer’s expense.

As this RFEI is not binding nor a prerequisite to participation in future solicitation phases, respondents will be able to team with other firms and establish responsibilities as part of future stages of the solicitation. Rather, respondents should clearly and completely address each of the following areas in response to this RFEI:

1. **Cover Letter.** Respondents should prepare a cover letter stating their interest in the opportunity, summarizing any relevant expertise and the materials presented to support the RFEI response. This letter should also identify the primary contact person for the respondent.
2. **Description of the Respondent.** Respondents should include a description of their firm and any partner(s) comprising their team, if applicable. In this section, respondents should include a description of their mission and key firm management. In addition, respondents should provide the names and locations of up to four relevant examples of projects that demonstrate experience with complex joint development or TOD. *As noted above, composition of teams is neither required nor evaluated as part of this RFEI, and any partnerships highlighted will not be binding and may be changed in future solicitation phases.*
3. **Development Approach.** Teams should include a description of their vision for meeting CTDOT goals for the joint development of the STC and any innovative and implementable approaches or ideas. This section should take the form of a narrative that addresses at minimum the following:
 - a. Narrative for the STC, 1985 and 2004 Garage Sites, and surrounding roadways, as applicable, that articulates the vision and preliminary concept, proposed program, integration of the components of the STC and mixed-use TOD with one another, and integration of the entire project into the surrounding urban fabric, solidifying the STC’s role as a gateway to Downtown and the South End;
 - b. Preferred project delivery method or methods for any contracts associated with the private, mixed-use component of the joint development (e.g., design-build, progressive design-build/construction manager at-risk, design-build-operate-maintain, etc.);
 - c. Interest and ability in providing project financing, and if so, preferred role and, if applicable, potential sources used for financing each component of the joint development;
 - d. Proposed development timeline and phasing;
 - e. Preferred approach to the long-term operations of the public components of the joint development;
 - f. Concerns of risks to realizing CTDOT’s vision and achieving the agency’s goals as part of this joint development; and

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- g. Any other aspects of this potential joint development project that respondents would like to share with CTDOT to inform its solicitation process more directly.

The RFEI submission, except for any plans, illustrations, diagrams or visuals, which should be included as appendices, should be limited to 10 pages.

Drawings or plans are not required at this stage of the solicitation; however, any optional conceptual site plans, illustrations, or simple diagrams – if appropriate – to articulate any ideas or approaches included in RFEI responses are welcome and will be considered by CTDOT.

CTDOT will review responses to this RFEI to inform the solicitation process for the joint development of the STC. CTDOT may, at its discretion, conduct informational interviews (up to one hour per respondent) either in person or virtually within the review period.

RFEI Amendment

CTDOT reserves the right to amend this RFEI at its discretion prior to the submission deadline. In the event of an amendment to this RFEI, CTDOT, at its sole discretion, may extend the submission deadline as it deems appropriate. CTDOT will post notifications of amendments to their CTDAS CTsource Bid Board at <https://portal.ct.gov/das/ctsource/bidboard> under the solicitation title “Stamford Transportation Center Joint Development”. Proposers are responsible for monitoring this website for addenda to the RFEI documents.

Disclaimer

This RFEI is issued solely for informational and planning purposes and does not constitute a solicitation. Responding to this RFEI will not enhance any respondent's chances in a future solicitation. Similarly, not responding to this RFEI will not be a detriment to any party in a future solicitation. Any information submitted is to be the sole property of CTDOT and may be used, in full or in part, by CTDOT for its purposes, including, but not limited to any future solicitations, and the respondent waives any rights it has to such information. Any information the respondent deems confidential as a proprietary or trade secret may be marked (on each page) as follows: “Proprietary and Confidential pursuant to CGS § 1-210(b)(5)”

Responses to this process are not an offer and cannot be accepted to form a binding contract. This RFEI should not be considered an opportunity to market to CTDOT, nor to any entity of the State of Connecticut.

Respondents are solely responsible for all expenses associated with responding to this RFEI.

Appendix A | STC: Gateway to Downtown Stamford and the South End

Stamford is one of the largest cities in Connecticut and a major regional employment center located 40 miles northeast of New York City. Commuters and residents have strong public transportation options across Connecticut and into New York via the STC – officially known as the Stewart B. McKinney Transportation Center – via Metro-North Railroad’s NHL and Amtrak’s NEC service. Benefiting from the presence of numerous corporate headquarters including four Fortune 500 companies, Stamford has experienced rapid population growth at more than nine times the Statewide average since 2010. Most of this growth has been concentrated near the STC in Downtown and the South End.

Site Context

Stamford is connected to New York City and other cities in coastal Connecticut via Interstate 95 (I-95) and Amtrak NEC and Metro-North NHL service. Although Stamford extends north to the southwestern Connecticut border, most of the city’s population and recent growth are concentrated in the city’s core – particularly in the Downtown and the South End, which have added nearly 10,000 residents since 2010 or more than half the citywide increase over the same period. Stamford has added nearly 5,000 jobs over the past 10 years (7.5%), and its unemployment rate has more than recovered from the onset of the pandemic, reaching 3.7% for an annual average in 2023.

The STC is centrally located at the nexus of Downtown and the South End, its footprint generally bounded by North State Street to the north, Washington Boulevard to the west, Station Place to the south, and Atlantic Street to the east. (See: **Figure 2.**)

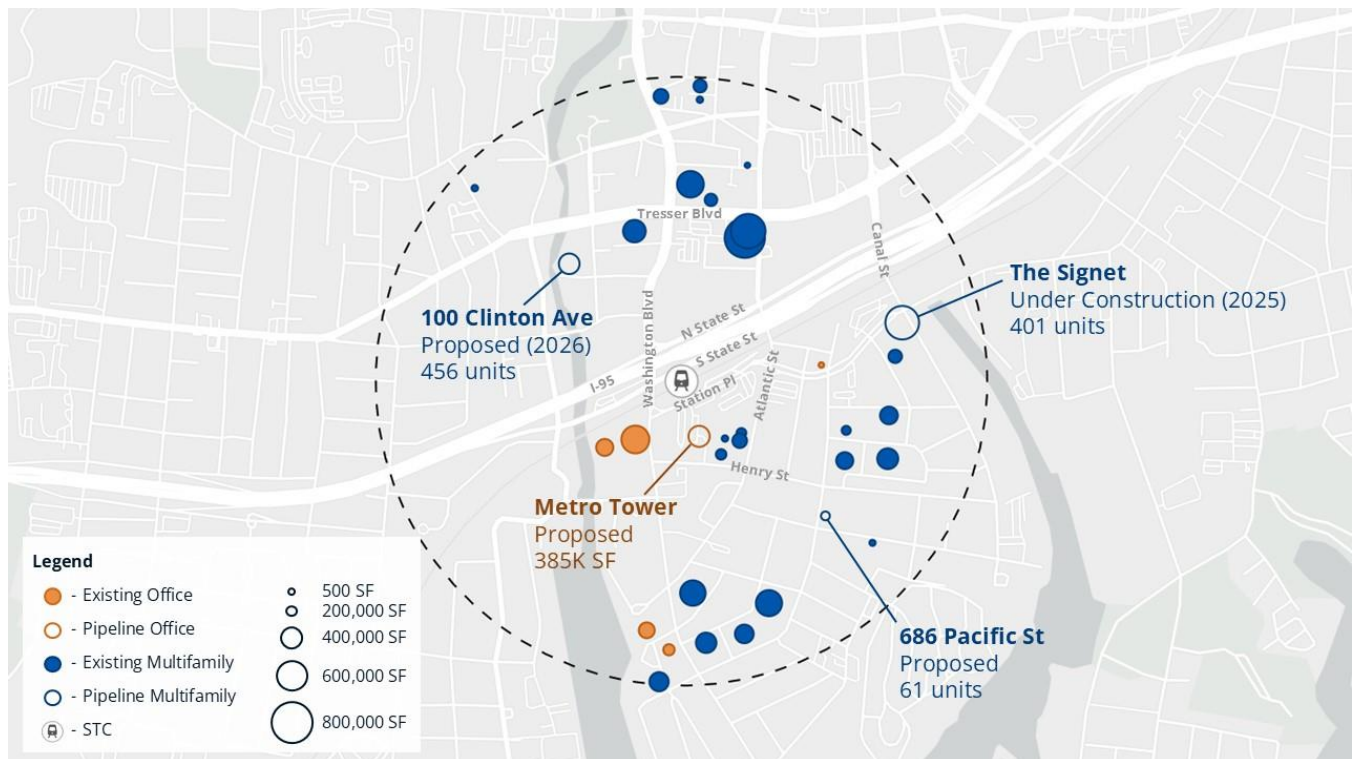
Figure 2 | Stamford and the STC



Real Estate Market Context

Downtown Stamford and the South End are characterized by strong development activity and an active pipeline of projects oriented toward the development of a walkable, mixed-use neighborhood with the STC at its core. The rapidly developing Harbor Point waterfront district in the South End has delivered numerous projects over the past decade within walking distance of STC, including the Charter Spectrum World Headquarters, the multi-phase Metro Green mixed-income residential development, and waterfront towers like the 240-unit Beacon. Downtown projects such as the mixed-use Atlantic Station, 75 Tresser, and in-progress The Smyth tower have added a large volume of residential units and retail space to the station's walkshed as well. This trend can be expected to continue with the approval of projects such as the 385,000 SF Metro Tower office, 677-707 Washington Blvd mixed use tower, and additional residential projects in Harbor Point. (See: **Figure 3**.)

Figure 3 | Proposed Projects and Recent Deliveries



Within a half mile of the STC, there are premium and highly amenitized residential developments such as Atlantic Station at 355 Atlantic Street, which introduced 325 units with ground floor retail in 2018, Hazel at 44 John Street, completed in 2022, and the Signet at 18 Dock Street, currently under construction. Effective monthly rents are as high as \$4.15 per SF. Despite nearly doubling the number of new residential units in the area over the past 10 years, the pipeline remains robust: 918 units are either proposed or under construction within a half mile of the STC, rents continue to grow, and vacancy remains at or below 5%.

Stamford is not immune to broader trends in commercial office development and vacancies; however, despite elevated vacancy rates, Stamford remains desirable to corporate tenants, who are increasingly seeking spaces around the STC. Although there are no new commercial office developments under construction within a half mile of the station, there are two proposed projects that are expected to advance, particularly as the financial industry increasingly returns to in-person work.

Development Incentives

Joint development at the STC may be eligible for a variety of development incentives¹ which although subject to change and funding availability at time of application may include, but are not limited to:

1. **Innovation Cluster.** The Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) Innovation Clusters Program offers up to \$100 million in support for projects that contribute to the ongoing development of Connecticut's key innovative industries.
2. **Railroad Rehabilitation & Improvement Financing (RRIF) and Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA).** RRIF and TIFA both provide low-cost financing with favorable terms (flexible amortization, credit assistance benefits, etc.) for TOD projects and related infrastructure.
3. **Enterprise Zone.** The STC is located within a State-designated Enterprise Zone, which offers tax benefits including abatements of newly constructed facilities and equipment for five years and corporation business tax credits based on allocable improvements for 10 years.
4. **Opportunity Zone.** The federal Opportunity Zones Program provides potential tax incentives for investments made through Qualified Opportunity Funds in Opportunity Zones.
5. **Housing Programs.** Various programs and assistance available to support the creation of affordable housing including the Connecticut Housing Finance Agency's (CHFA) Build for CT program.
6. **Community Investment Fund 2030.** Competitive grant program for municipalities or non-profit organizations for variety of economic and community development capital projects. Private partners may be subrecipients of grant funds.
7. **Urban Reinvestment Tax Credits.** Tax credits of up to \$100 million over 10 years for projects that create significant jobs accompanied by capital expenditures of more than \$50 million.
8. **Sales and Use Tax Exemption.** Tax relief on the purchase of tangible personal property for qualifying job retention and expansion projects, or projects that significantly contribute to a targeted industry cluster.
9. **JobsCT Tax Rebate Program.** Tax rebates of up to 50% of the withholding taxes from new employees for eligible employers adding a minimum of 25 new full-time equivalent workers. Salaries must be 85% of the median household income of the municipality where the jobs are located.
10. **Connecticut Green Bank.** Offers green energy solutions to home, building and multifamily property owners, residential and commercial contractors, towns and cities, and capital providers.
11. **Housing Trust Fund Program.** The Connecticut Department of Housing provides loans and/or grants to eligible sponsors of affordable housing. Funds can be used for various uses such as acquisition, rehabilitation, new construction, demolition, infrastructure improvements.

¹ Federal or State of Connecticut grant, tax credit, and financing programs may trigger additional requirements for the mix of affordable and market rate units, deed restrictions, or job creation and retention, among others.