



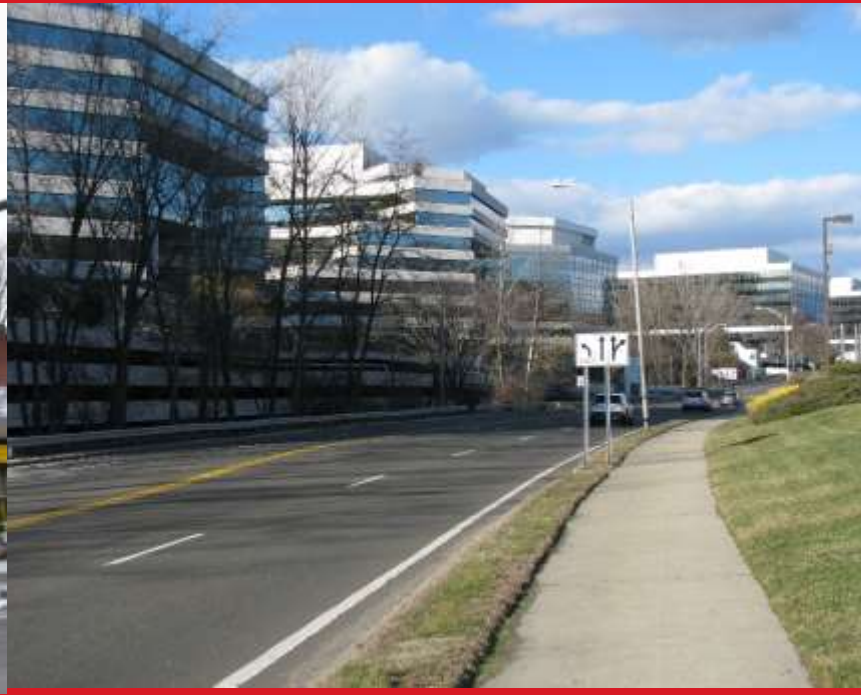
TOPIC WORKSHOPS

MAY 2018

tomorrow.norwalkct.org

PROSPEROUS NORWALK: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Public Workshop | May 30, 2018
tomorrow.norwalkct.org

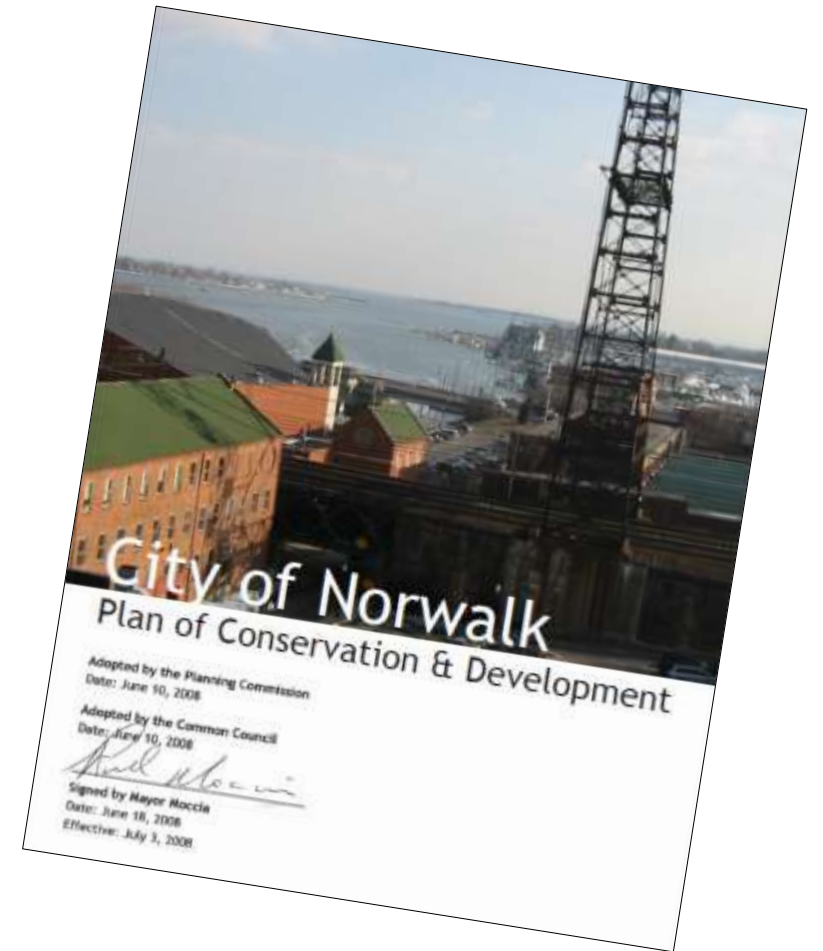


Tonight's Agenda

- The planning process and the context of the plan
- Trends, issues, opportunities
- Potential goals and strategies
- Panel discussion
- Participant questions and discussion

The Citywide Plan is also called the Plan of Conservation & Development.

- The **only** plan that covers **the entire city**
- State-required update every ten years for eligibility for discretionary state funding
- Last plan adopted in 2009



Citywide Visioning Forum

November 18, 2017



Neighborhood Meetings

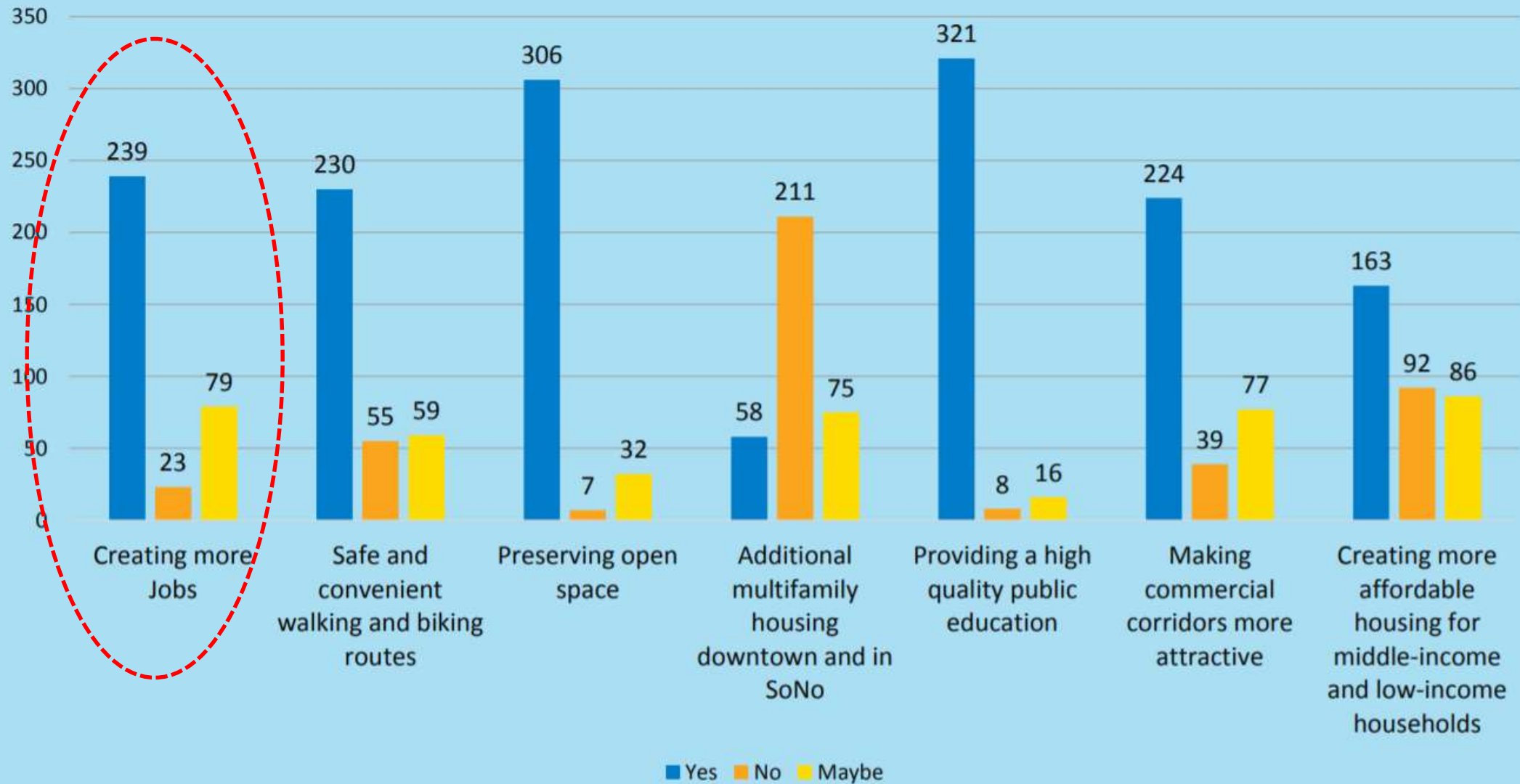
March 2018



What do you like most about Norwalk?

- Diversity
- Culture
- Distinctive neighborhoods
- The look feel of it – like a city
- History
- Beach and public parks
- ★ Location
 - Nightlife
- ★ Local Business
 - Safety
 - Water access
- ★ Train access
 - Kid friendly activities
- ★ Urban feel with suburban comforts
 - The community
- ★ SoNo
 - The schools
 - The improvement of Washington Street
 - Food
 - The people

Norwalk should be focusing on...



Tonight's focus – goals, strategies, actions – in the ten-year context

WHAT?

The ten-year goals: what are we trying to accomplish?

WHY?

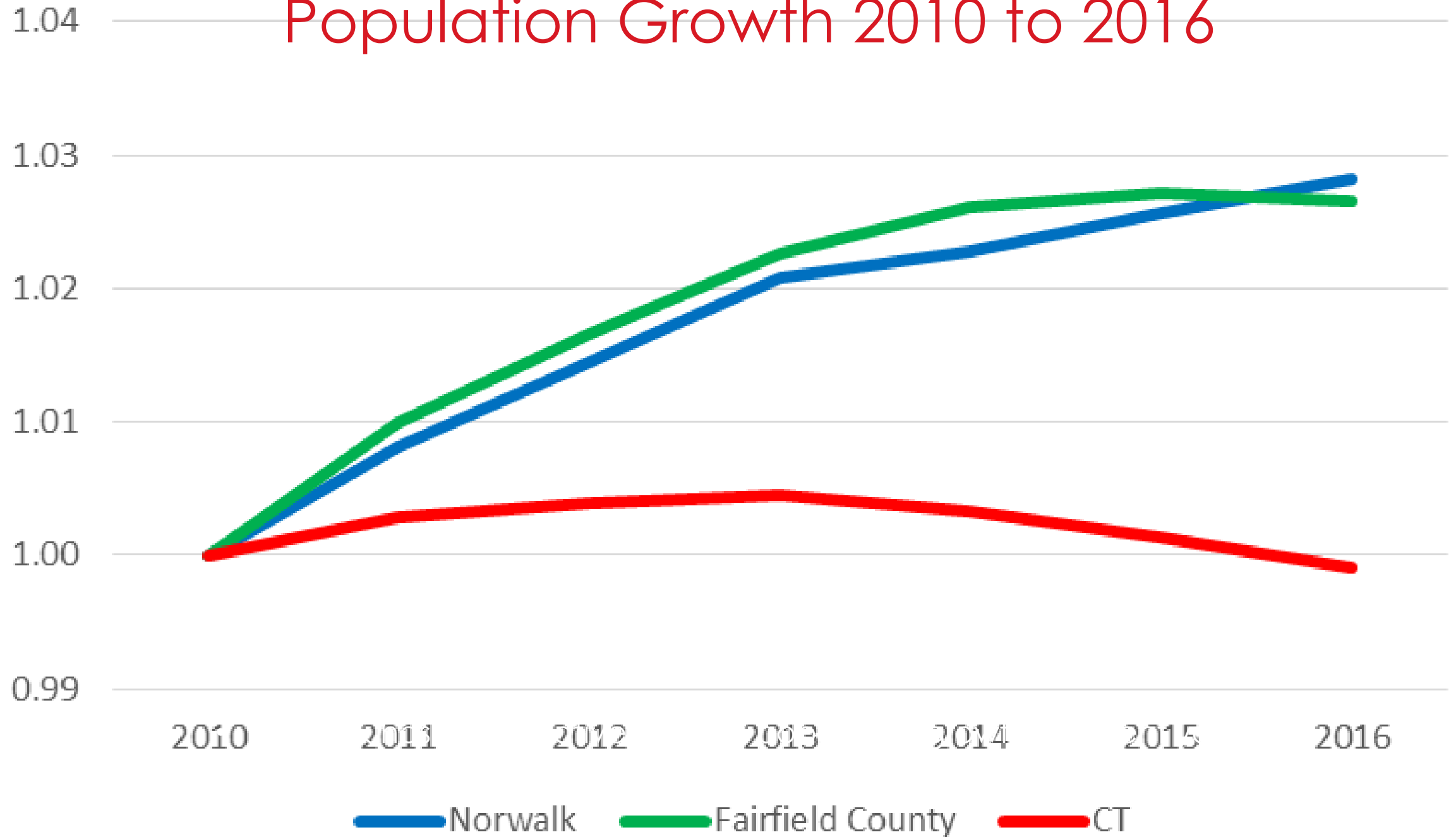
Reasons for the goals

HOW?

Ten-year strategies and example actions to achieve the goal

Economic Development: Trends – Issues - Opportunities

Population Growth 2010 to 2016

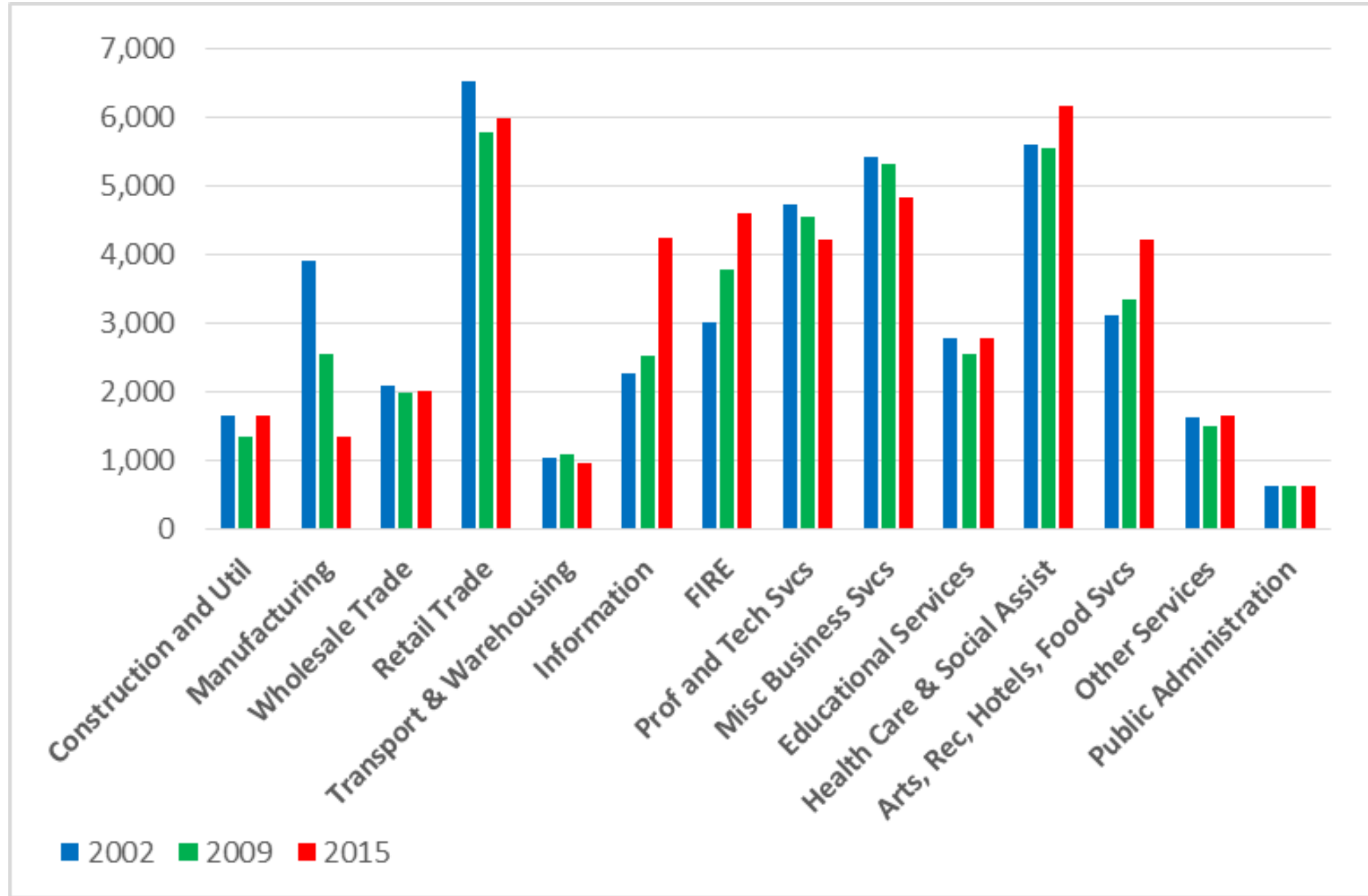


Norwalk and Comparison Cities

Socioeconomic Data

	Population (2016)	Median Household Income (2015)	% Bachelor's Degree or Higher (2015)	Poverty Rate (2015)	Unemployment Rate (Aug 2017)
Norwalk	88,438	\$ 76,987	41.0%	8.4%	3.8%
Danbury, CT	84,992	\$ 66,676	30.2%	12.0%	3.6%
New Haven, CT	129,934	\$ 37,192	34.4%	26.6%	6.2%
Stamford, CT	129,113	\$ 79,359	47.1%	9.4%	3.8%
White Plains, NY	58,241	\$ 80,442	49.0%	12.2%	3.8%
Warwick, RI	81,579	\$ 66,044	31.9%	7.0%	3.6%
Portland, ME	66,937	\$ 46,280	46.2%	19.7%	2.4%
Connecticut	3,576,452	\$ 70,331	37.6%	10.5%	4.6%

Norwalk Employment Growth Trends

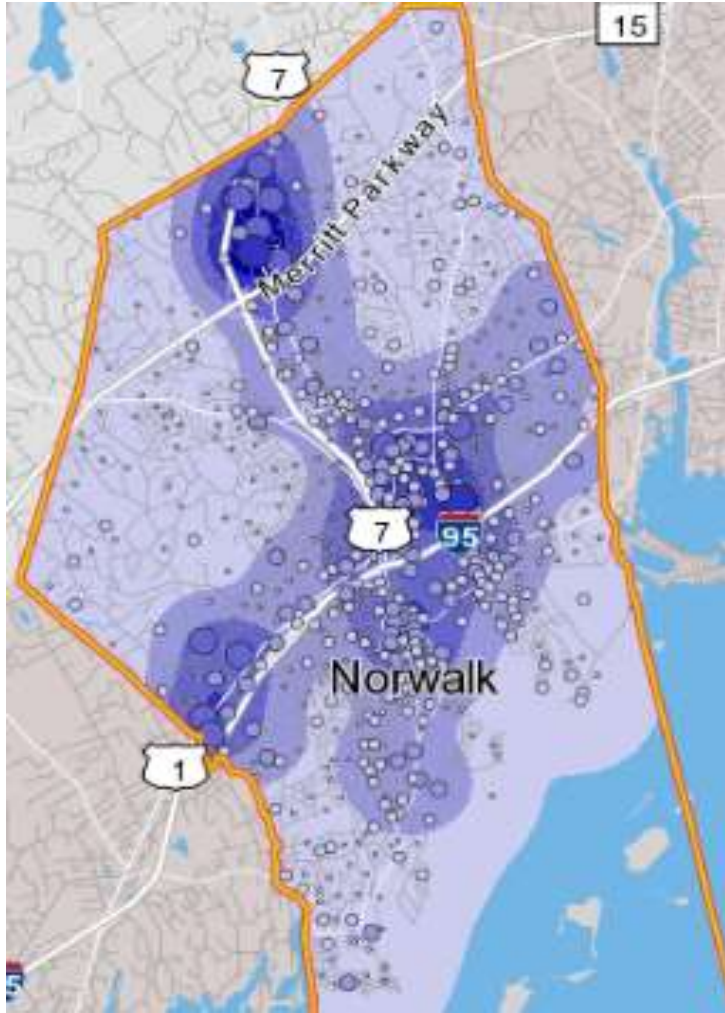


Norwalk and Comparison Cities

Economic and Industry Data

	Employment (2015)	Jobs to Pop Ratio	% Higher Wage Jobs*	% Prof and Tech Services	% Education and Health Care
Norwalk	45,569	0.52	59%	9.3%	19.6%
Danbury, CT	44,920	0.53	53%	4.7%	27.9%
New Haven, CT	84,621	0.65	62%	4.5%	57.0%
Stamford, CT	76,780	0.59	63%	12.0%	16.9%
White Plains, NY	52,862	0.91	56%	9.1%	26.7%
Warwick, RI	48,973	0.60	39%	5.0%	24.4%
Portland, ME	65,203	0.97	46%	9.2%	26.1%
Connecticut	1,651,986	0.46	52%	5.9%	27.5%

Where are the jobs?

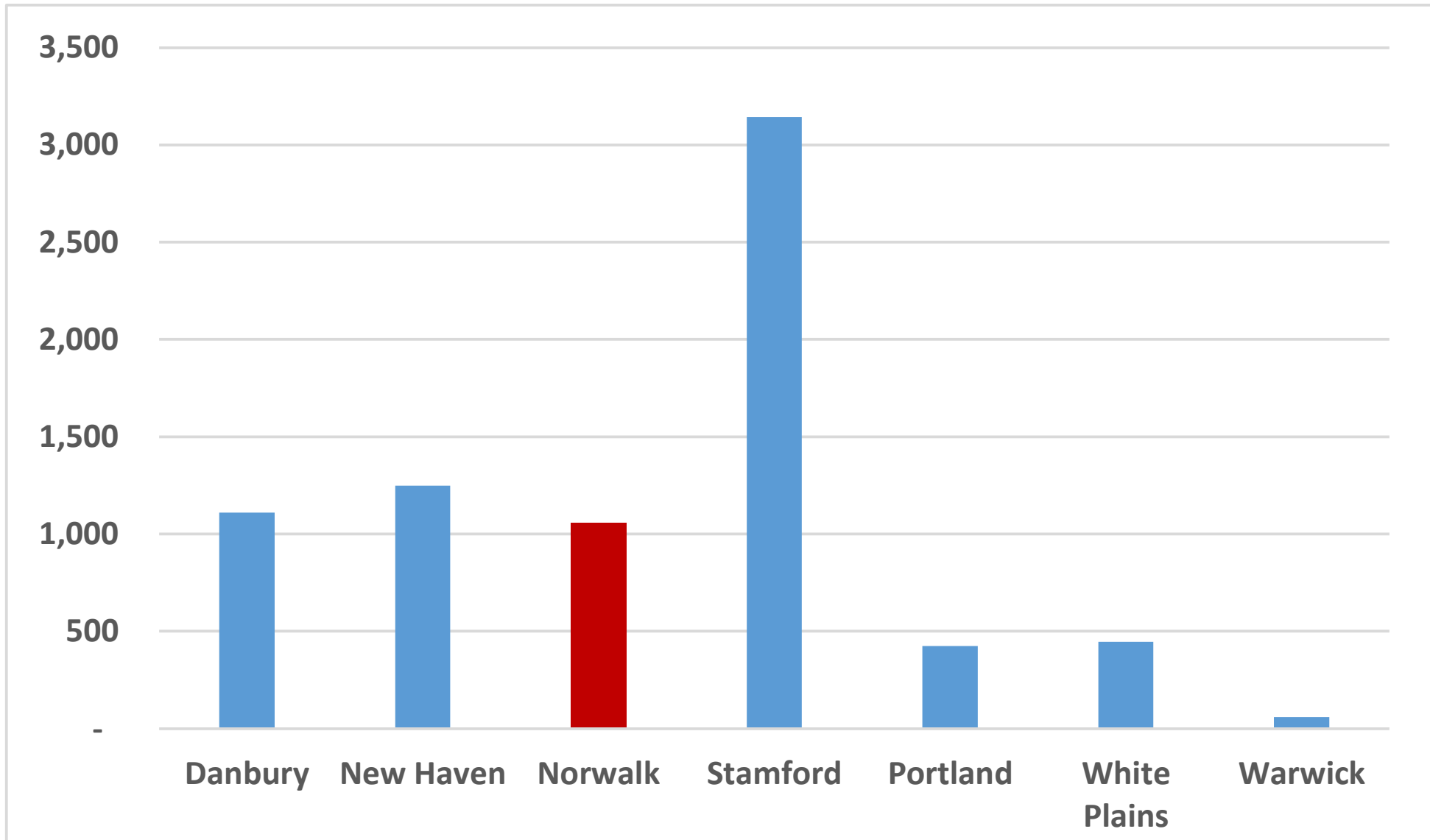


- Employment locations in Norwalk

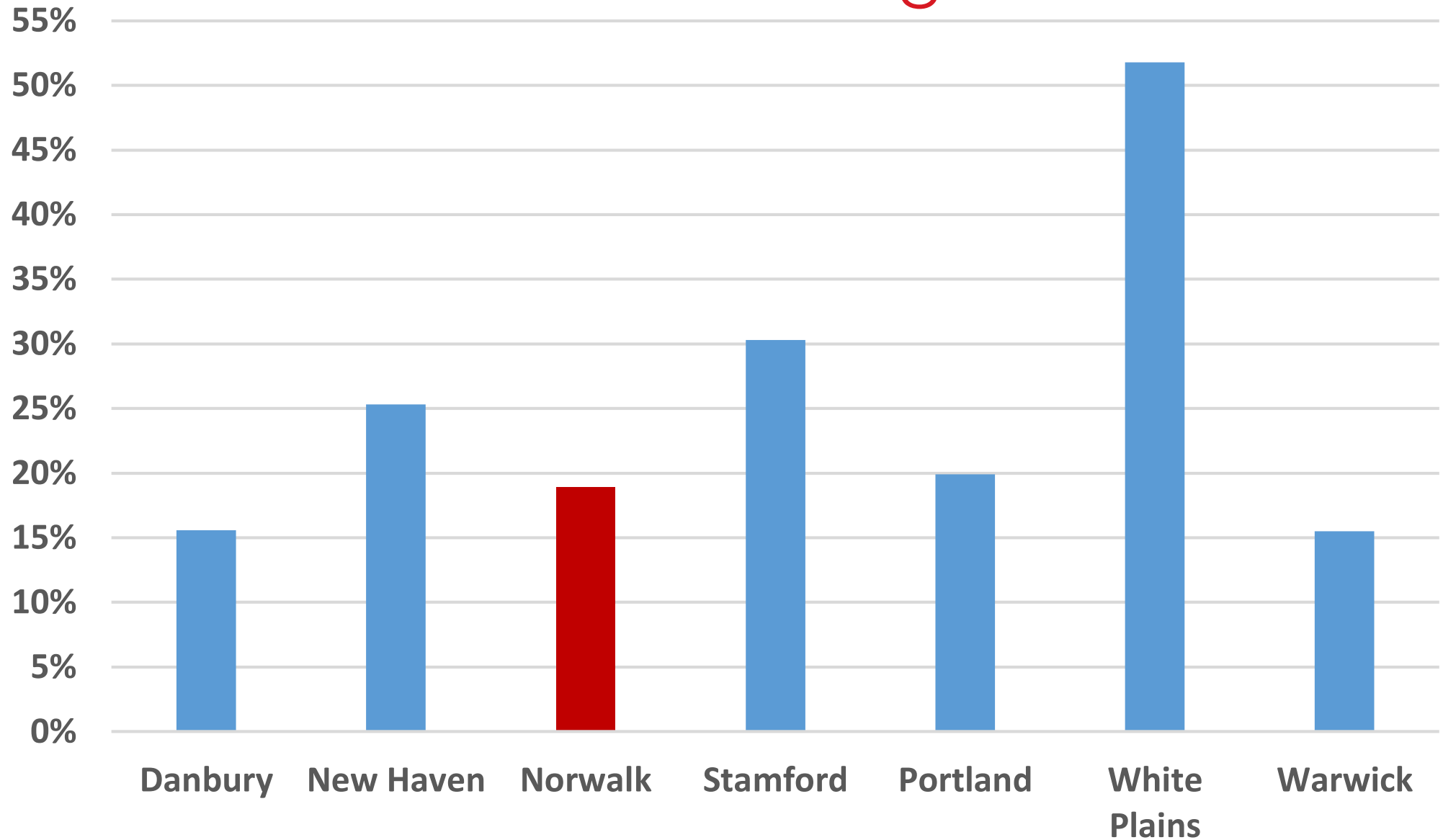


- About the same number of people commute in and commute out.
- Norwalkers work in Stamford, New York City, and other CT and nearby NY cities.

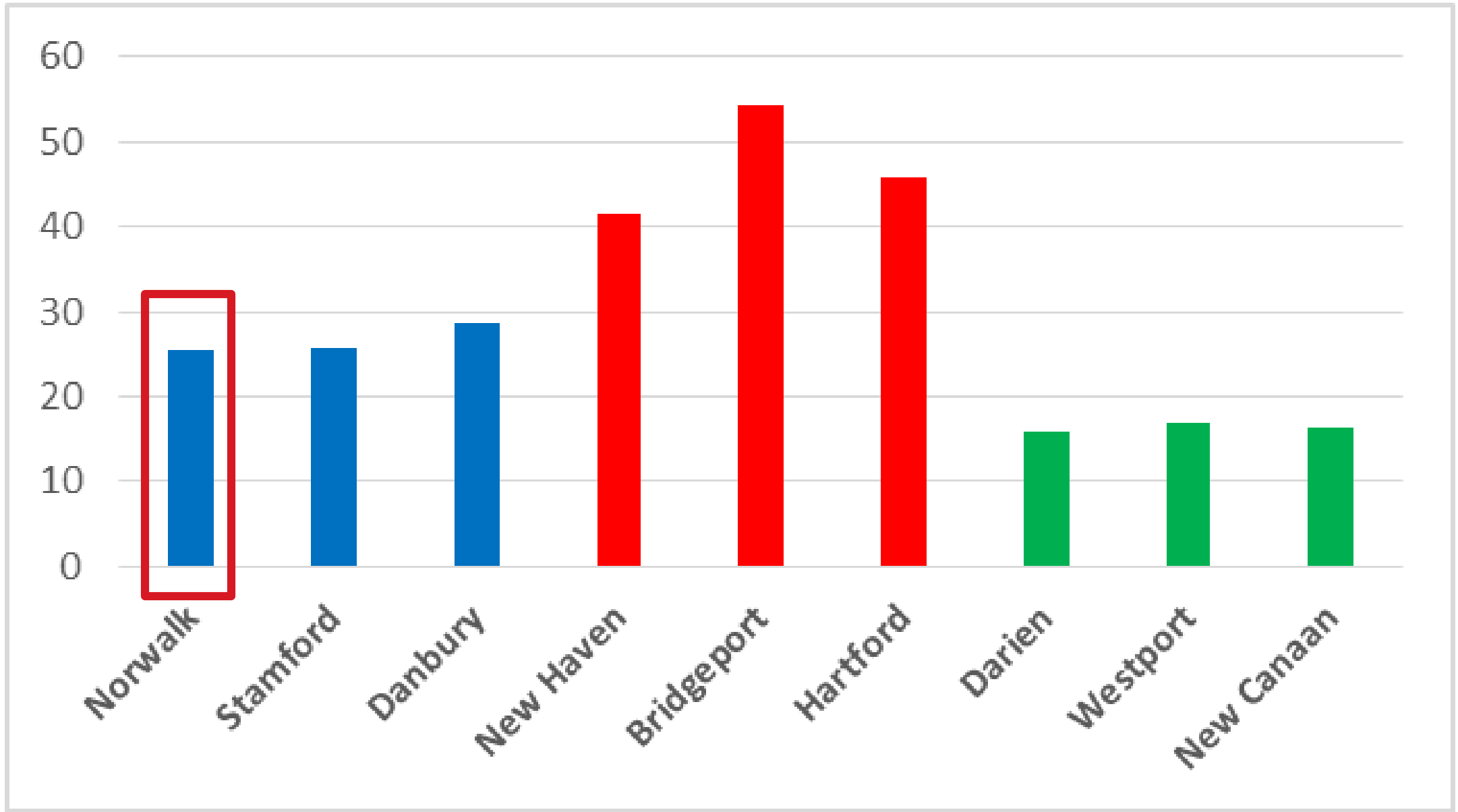
Building Permits: Number of New Housing Units in 5+ Unit Structures: 2010 to 2016



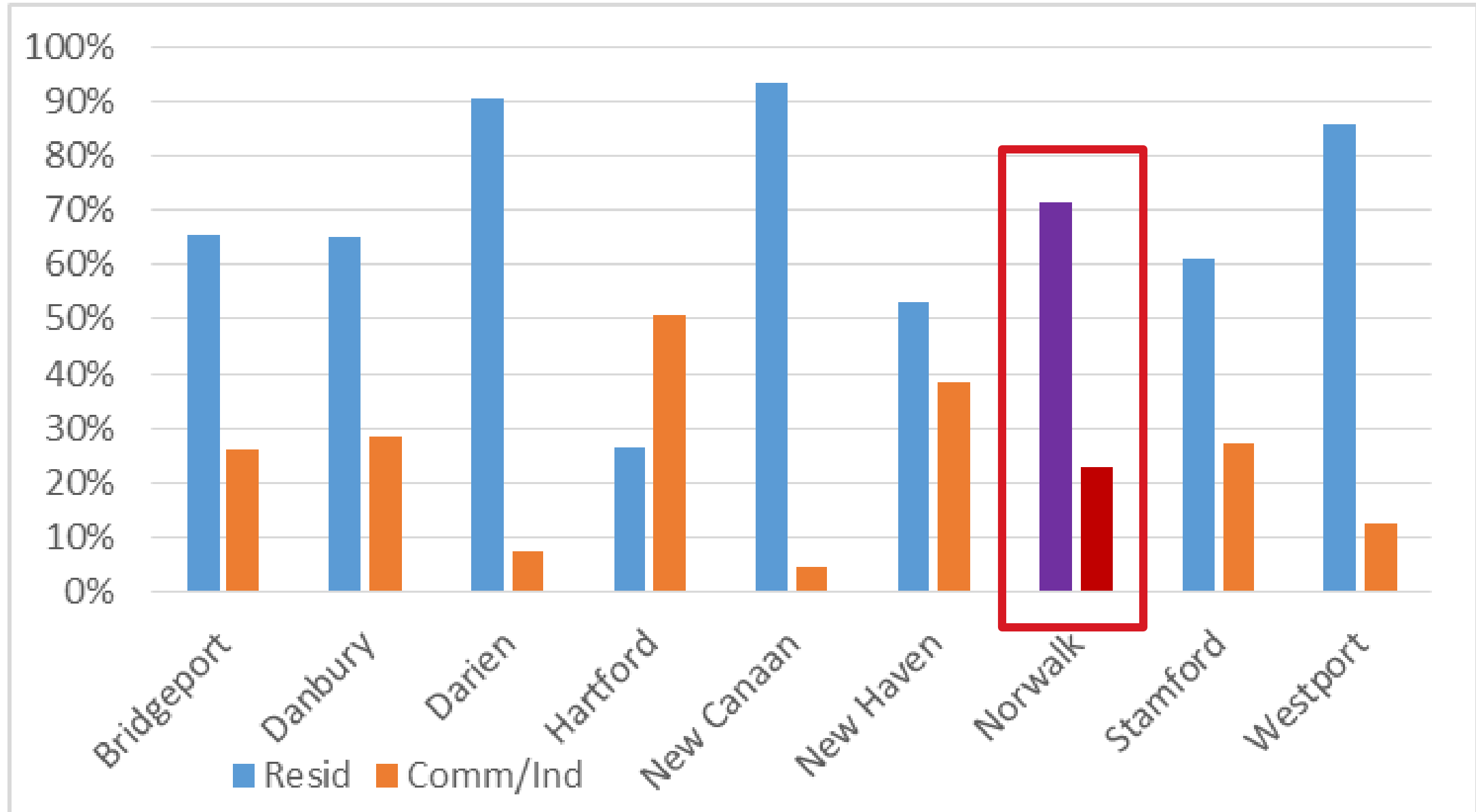
Percent of Housing Units in Structures with 10+ Housing Units



Property Tax Rates for Norwalk and Other CT Cities and Towns



Grand List - Share of Net Real Property Value for Residential and Commercial/Industrial Properties



SWOT:
STRENGTHS – WEAKNESSES
OPPORTUNITIES – THREATS

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- Waterfront / coastal location
- Proximity to NYC and rail
- Diverse industry mix, high-paying sectors
- Educated and higher income
- Mix of urban, suburban areas
- Active private development and recent growth

Weaknesses

- Traffic congestion on major highways and internal
- Relatively high costs (real estate and land)
- Multiple activity centers (“downtowns”) with economic center at Merritt 7
- Lack of vibrancy and empty storefronts in Wall St area
- Lack of research university

SWOT Analysis

Opportunities

- Train stations offer mixed use TOD opportunities
- Leverage of waterfront location for restaurants, recreation, festivals, etc.
- Become urban area for tech and creative economy start-ups
- Workforce housing
- Niche industrial uses
- Regional collaboration and target industries

Threats

- Growing traffic (I-95, Merritt), lack of CT transportation funds
- Office market still below capacity and less SF needed per employee
- Walk Bridge project and impact to local business
- Enhanced downtowns in nearby towns compete with SoNo
- Retaining traditional (“working”) waterfront uses

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Goal: Norwalk has a diversified economy with a larger business tax base and more high-quality, good jobs for residents.

WHY?

- Increase competitiveness to retain, grow and attract wide-range of businesses
- Limit and/or reduce the residential tax burden
- Residents desire local, high-quality jobs with opportunity for growth and advancement (“job ladders”)

HOW?

Update zoning and land use in targeted industrial zones for:

- Light industry
- Warehouse/logistics
- Brewing/distilling
- Artist/artisan uses

Relocate the Fairfield Makers' Guild to Norwalk Center



HOW?

Focus on **regional target industries:**

- Professional/tech services
- Finance
- Tourism, recreation, culture
- Niche industrial uses

Develop a **Small Business and Entrepreneurial Initiative:**

- Co-working space
- Small business incentives and financing
- Local/regional entrepreneurship accelerator program

HOW?

Expand workforce housing availability so more employees can live in Norwalk and avoid costly commutes

Promote **Norwalk Center and SoNo for creative economy small office users** -- technology, software, graphic design, art, etc.

- Requires local economic development / business community leadership

Optimize Norwalk's coastal location and waterfront areas for recreation, tourism, economic, and transportation uses (e.g., Liberty Square for waterfront restaurants with boat parking and water taxis)

- On-the-ground local leadership to identify target locations, business uses, and make things happen

Goal: Continue to strengthen the urban core with a mix of uses to attract residents, visitors, and businesses.

WHY?

- Essential to city economic success
- Critical to attracting businesses and workers
- Strongly valued by millennials—now the majority of the workforce
- Build on Norwalk's waterfront, TOD-friendly, and urban character

“Startups and cities are a natural match. Urban areas provide the diversity, creative energy, cultural richness, vibrant street-life, and openness to new ideas that startup founders are looking for.” *The New Urban Crisis*, Richard Florida (2018)

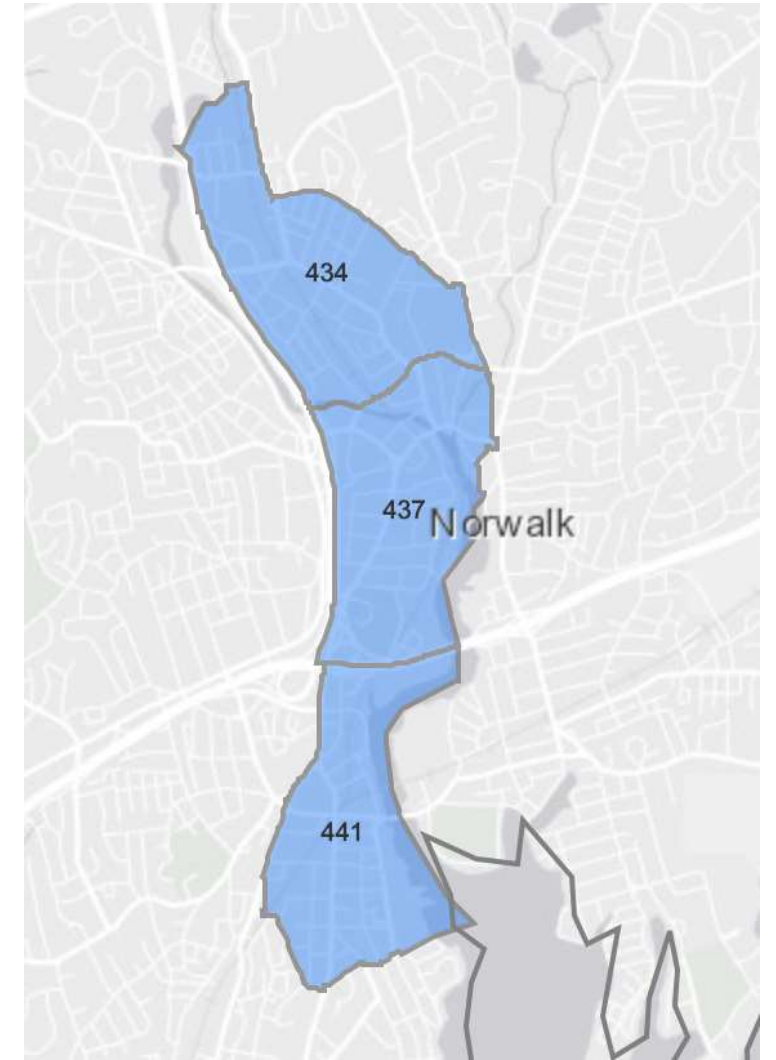
HOW?

Enhance business attraction and expansion tools in urban core areas

- Consistent and transparent tax incentive policies
- Next steps and implementation on Innovation District concept, future of Enterprise Zones (SoNo), and new Opportunity Zones tax credit program

Track and evaluate development and business incentives

- Partner with CT Economic Resource Center (CERC) to score projects based on criteria (jobs created, ROI, green building elements, etc.)



Source: nancyonnorwalk.com

HOW?

Storefront activation program:

- Activated Spaces in Dayton; Dining District in Springfield; Memshop in Memphis

Higher education presence in Norwalk Center

Parking improvements in center: signage/simplification

TOD implementation for live/work/play: SoNo, East Norwalk, pedestrian bridge at Merritt 7



Goal: Norwalk has the right policies, infrastructure, and leadership for business growth and development.

WHY?

Business retention and expansion requires dedicated and proactive economic development leadership

Time to market and efficient/transparent permitting processes are critical to development and business location decisions

Competitive economies need strong infrastructure to thrive (mobility, utilities, telecom, government, civic leadership, amenities, etc.)

HOW?

Strong citywide economic development leadership

- Directly integrated with Planning and Zoning
- Closely coordinated with the Redevelopment Agency, Greater Norwalk Chamber of Commerce, and similar groups

Responsible for...

- **High-quality economic development marketing materials and web site** to promote Norwalk's economic assets and opportunities to external audiences
- **Proactive business retention and expansion program** to anticipate employer needs and opportunities (e.g., meet with the city's mid-to large employers)

HOW?

Define strategic focus areas in Norwalk Center for multi-faceted public investment and programming

- The whole is bigger than the sum of the parts
- Downtown manager?

Action-oriented strategy to enhance non-auto connections between activity centers: SoNo, Norwalk Center, the Merritt 7 areas, Norwalk Hospital, SoNo Collection

Improve and maintain public realm, parks, infrastructure for quality of life

Economic Development Panel: Questions and Discussion

- Brian Griffin, Greater Norwalk Chamber of Commerce
- Thomas Madden, City of Stamford Economic Development
- Melissa Kaplan-Macey, Regional Plan Association
- Carolyn Grossman Meagher, NYC Department of City Planning

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

TABLE EXERCISES AND DISCUSSIONS



PROSPEROUS NORWALK
Topic Workshop | May 30, 2018
tomorrow.norwalkct.org