



# East Norwalk Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Plan

Choices and Priorities Workshop

July 25, 2019

City of Norwalk | Harriman | NV5 | RKG Associates



# Let's Plan East Norwalk Together!

**Curious about what the CITY could be planning for OUR East Norwalk?**



**ENNA needs residents to see what's planned, add YOUR ideas and vision, work with the City to shape the East Norwalk WE want!**



**THURSDAY JULY 25TH  
NORWALK CITY HALL  
Community Room #128  
6:00 - 8:00 pm**

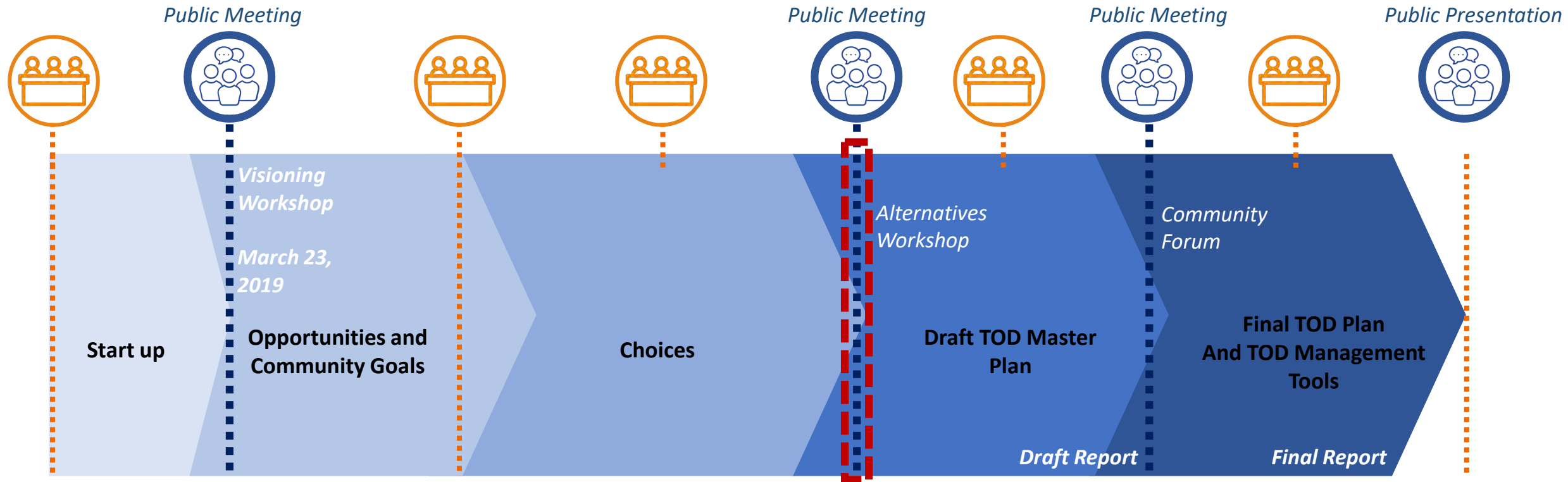


**East Norwalk Neighborhood Association**  
[www.eastnorwalk.org](http://www.eastnorwalk.org)

# Agenda

- **Welcome !!**
- **Project Overview**
- **What We Heard**
  - Feedback from the March 23 Visioning Workshop and Online Survey
- **East Norwalk TOD Plan Framework – *How is the TOD Plan Organized?***
- **Draft Baseline Recommendations**
- **Conceptual TOD Alternatives**
- **Susceptibility to Change Analysis**
- **Breakout Exercises**

# Process



- Kick off meeting
- Previous planning studies
- Communication plan
- Stakeholder interviews
- Assess and identify existing conditions
- Opportunities and constraints
- Market analysis
- TOD scenario alternatives
- Cost benefit analysis
- Confirmation of choices
- Redevelopment and preservation potential
- Documentation
- Final TOD Master Plan
- Implementation tool kit
- Draft zoning changes
- Design guidelines

# What We Heard – Visioning Workshop and Online Survey

- Public Visioning Session – March 23, 2019
- Online Survey – May 4<sup>th</sup> – May 24<sup>th</sup>
- 77 Attendees, 29 Online Survey Responses
- Three Exercises
  - Exercise 1 – Draw a map from memory! - **Perceptions of Identity of East Norwalk**
  - Exercise 2 – Where do you go? How do you get there? - **Daily Accessibility Challenges**
  - Exercise 3 - What's Missing Here? – **Aspirations**

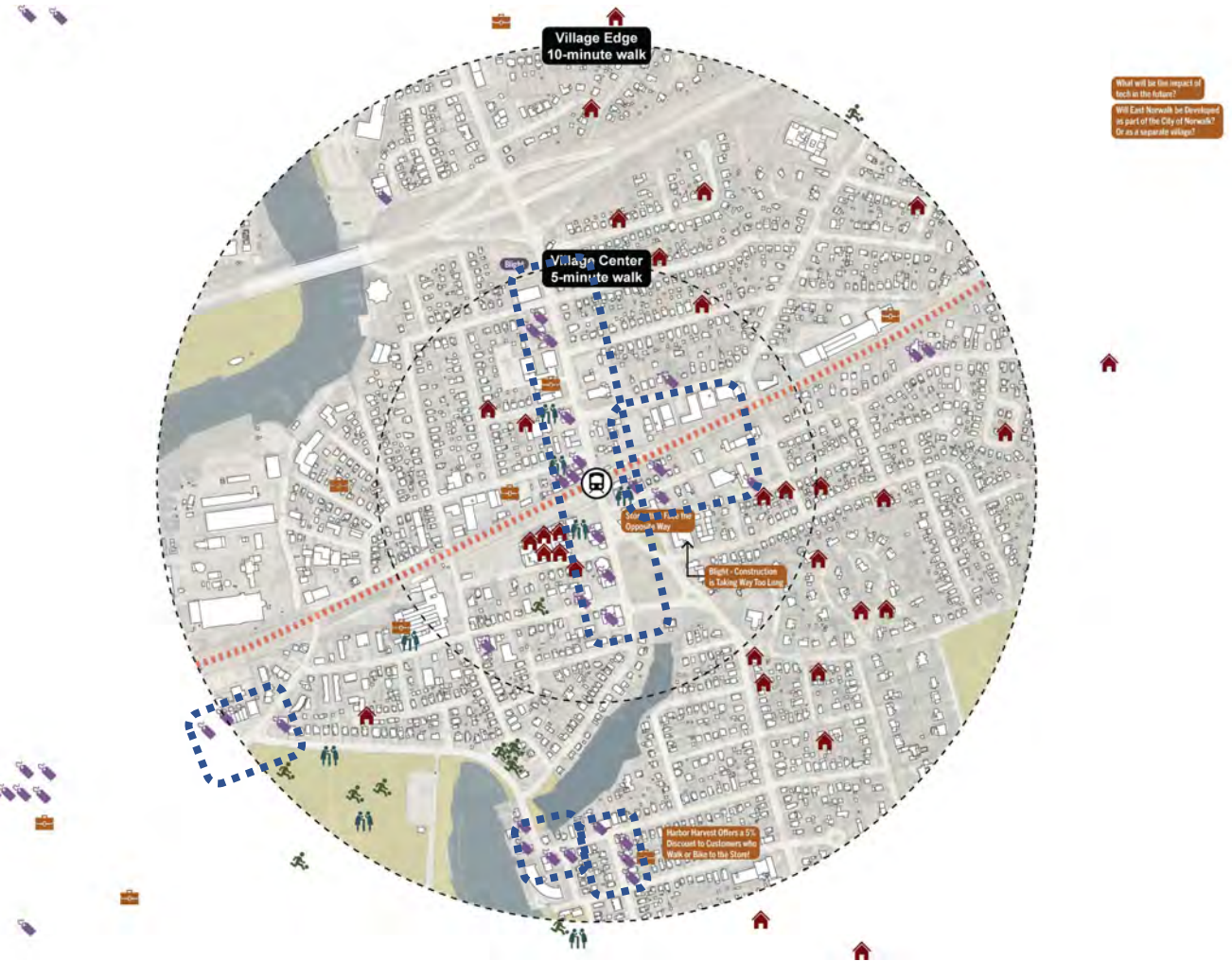




# Where Do You Go? and How Do you Get There?

## Places where people most frequently shop and bump into their neighbors

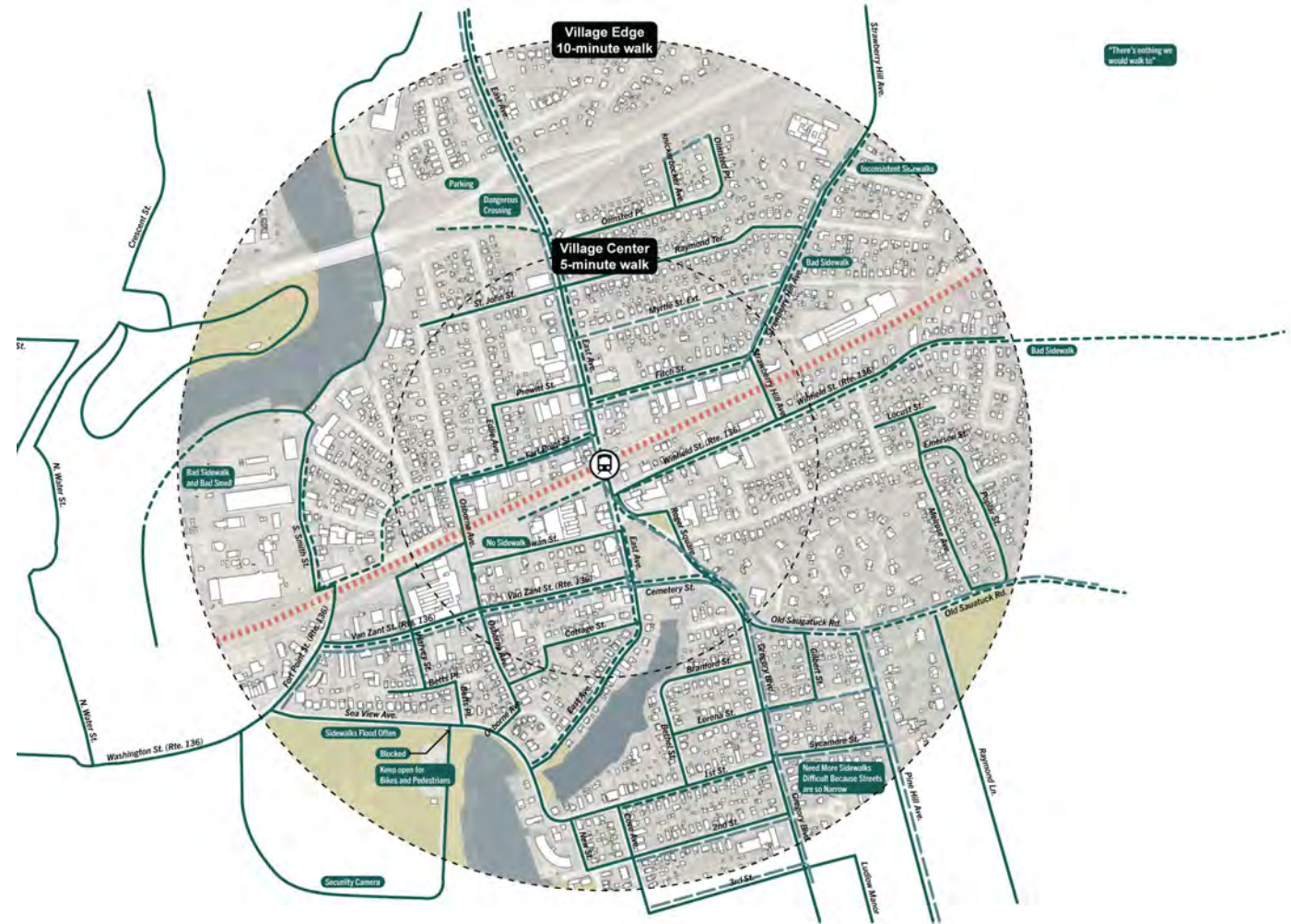
- East Avenue,
- Commercial Areas around Station,
- Liberty Square and
- Mill Pond/Cove Avenue Commercial Area



# Where Do You Go? and How Do you Get There?

## Walking

- Residents use majority of street network for walking despite its conditions
- Desire for walkable streets
  - to beach,
  - to the train station and
  - to the commercial activity areas
- **Streets with heavy vehicular activity** and without proper sidewalks **feel unsafe**
- Streets with **underutilized buildings**, **lack of activity** and **with parking uses** along the streets are **undesirable for walking**
- Streets that have “eyes on the street” are desirable and feel safe

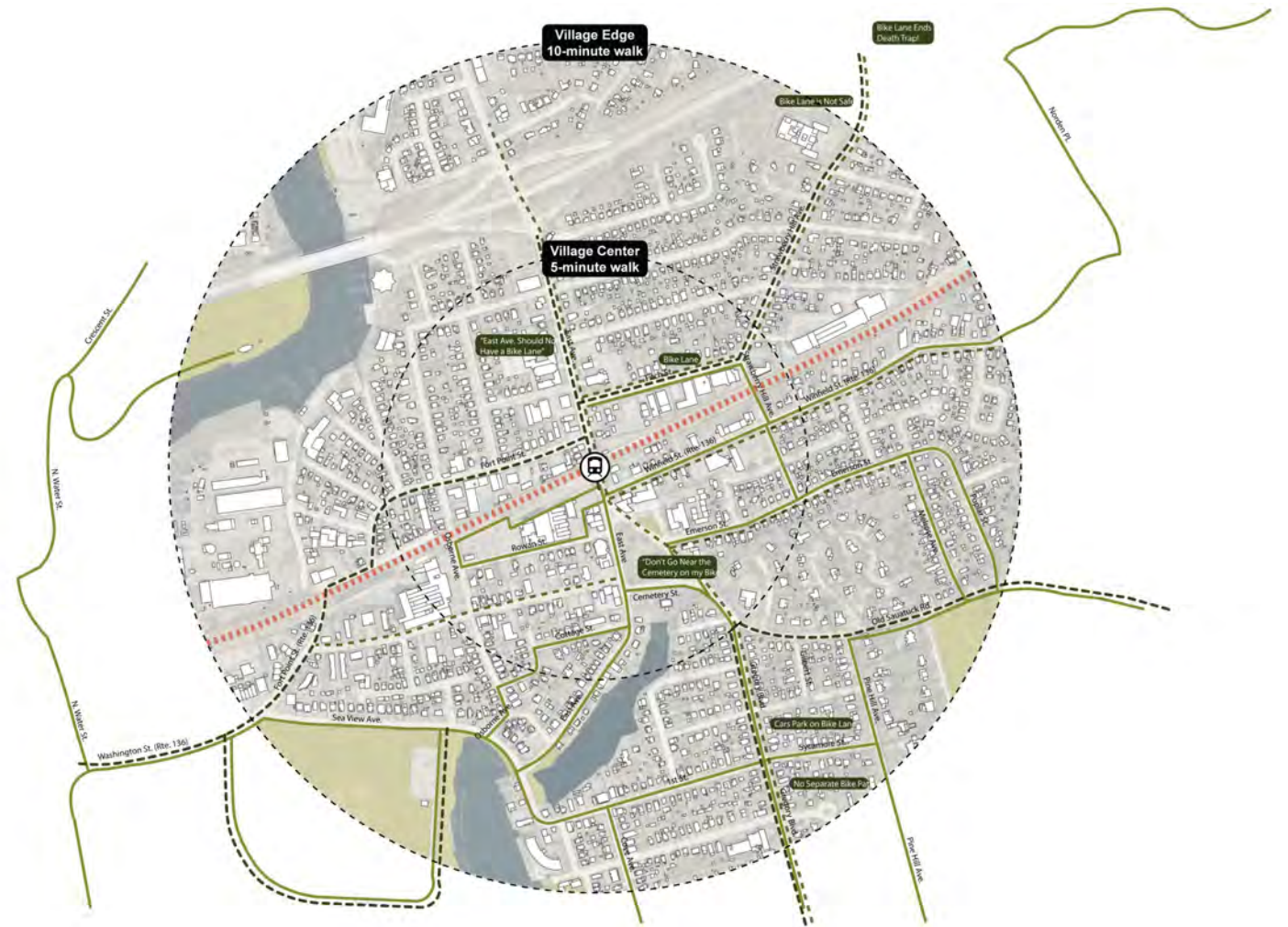




# Where Do You Go? and How Do you Get There?

## Biking

- Street south of the tracks are well utilized for biking
- **Beaches, parks and train station** as biking destinations
- Bicyclists feel **unsafe along the major corridors with traffic due to speeding, narrow bike lanes, traffic configuration**

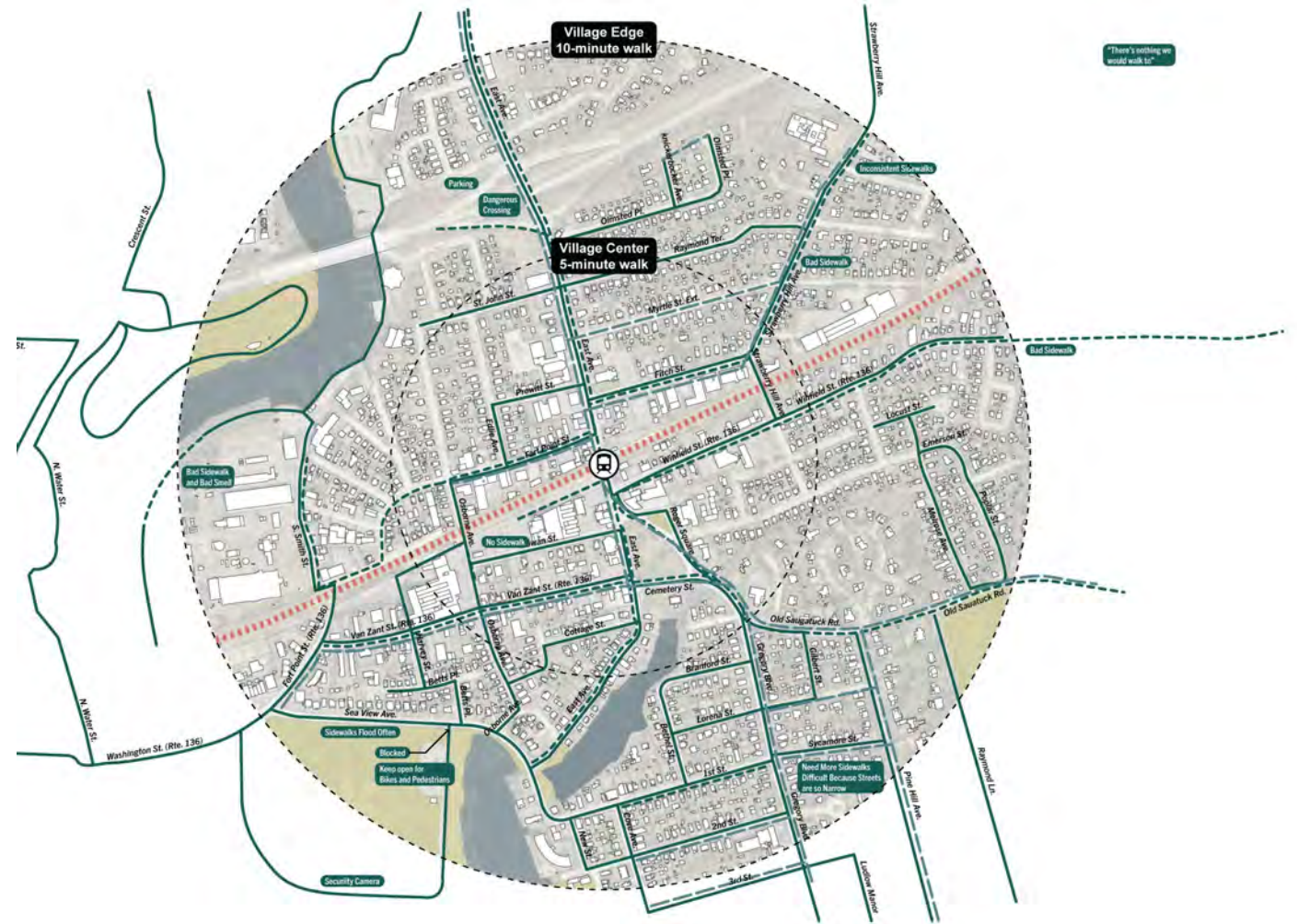




# Where Do You Go? and How Do you Get There?

## Online Survey Responses

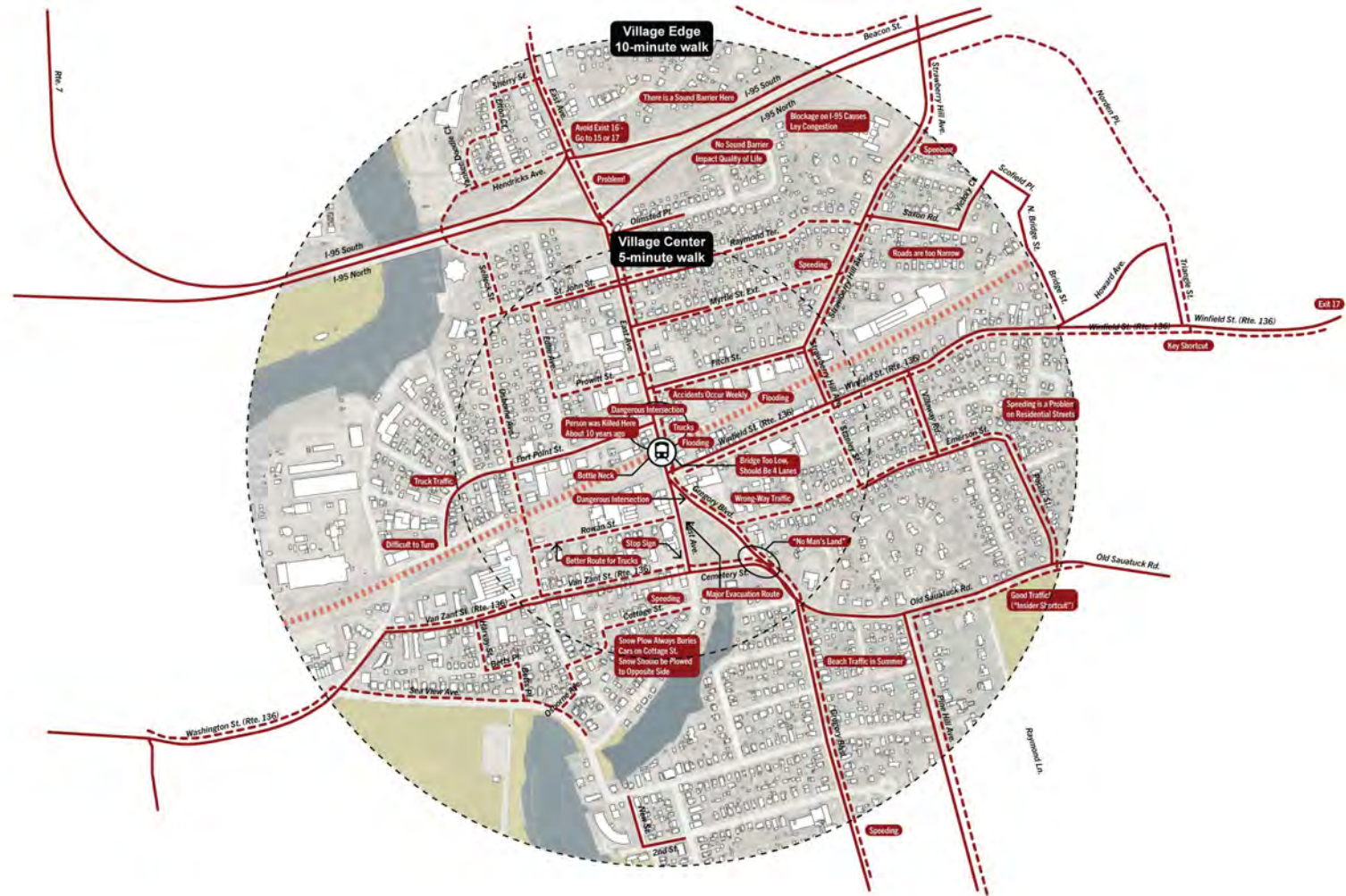
- *Desire for walkable streets in the study area*
- *Well maintained and safe 36' minimum sidewalks in the entire area adjacent to the train station*
- *Winfield Street to Westport town line*
- *Corridor of Strawberry Hill and Winfield Street*
- *Stew Leonard area, and Raymond Terrace*
- *Veterans Park*
- *Under the train pass*
- *Waterfront area/Beach area*
- *Near the cemetery*
- *Access from the street to the train platform*
- *Mr. Frosty's area, Ft. Point, Van Zant, Osborne, Seaview, Fitch, and Myrtle Street*



# Vehicular Access and Traffic

## Vehicular Circulation

- **East Avenue Challenges**
  - Exit 16
  - Multiple challenges on East Avenue from Exit 16 to Mill Pond
- **Speeding** along major corridors and on residential streets
- **Through traffic along major corridors and neighborhood streets** to bypass the gridlock on Exit 16
- Concerns with **truck traffic** through the area
- **Flooding** in the underpasses
- **Seasonal traffic** on Gregory Boulevard
- **Narrow Streets**

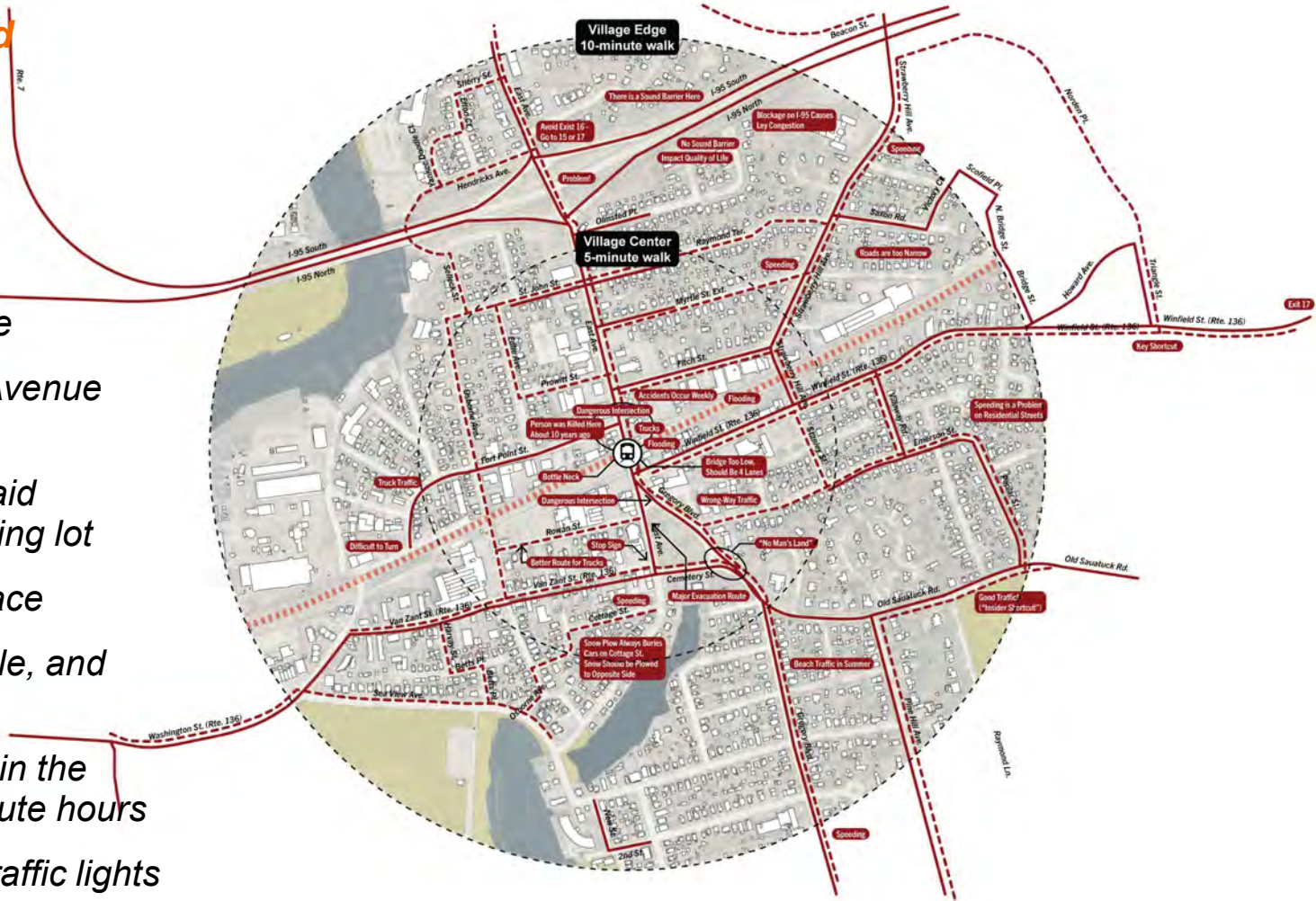




# Vehicular Access and Traffic

## Online Survey Responses

- **Comments reiterate the challenges expressed during Visioning Workshop**
- *Between the cemetery roundabout and Fort Point Street*
- *i-95 overpass/Exit 16*
- *Near the railroad station*
- *Beach*
- *Underpass of the railroad area*
- *Strawberry Hill*
- *Difficulty getting on to i-95/ramps overload*
- *Corner of East Avenue*
- *and Fort Point*
- *Olmstead Place*
- *St. John/East Avenue intersection*
- *Shortcut: Rite-aid pharmacy parking lot*
- *Raymond Terrace*
- *St. Johns, Myrtle, and Fitch Street*
- *Traffic – Worst in the morning commute hours*
- *Bad timing of traffic lights*



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

- Small community / village feel
- Small Businesses
- Restaurants,
- Open Spaces (Veteran's Park, Taylor Farm Dog Park, Beach, marina)
- Sidewalks/Walkability, Bike Paths
- Train Station





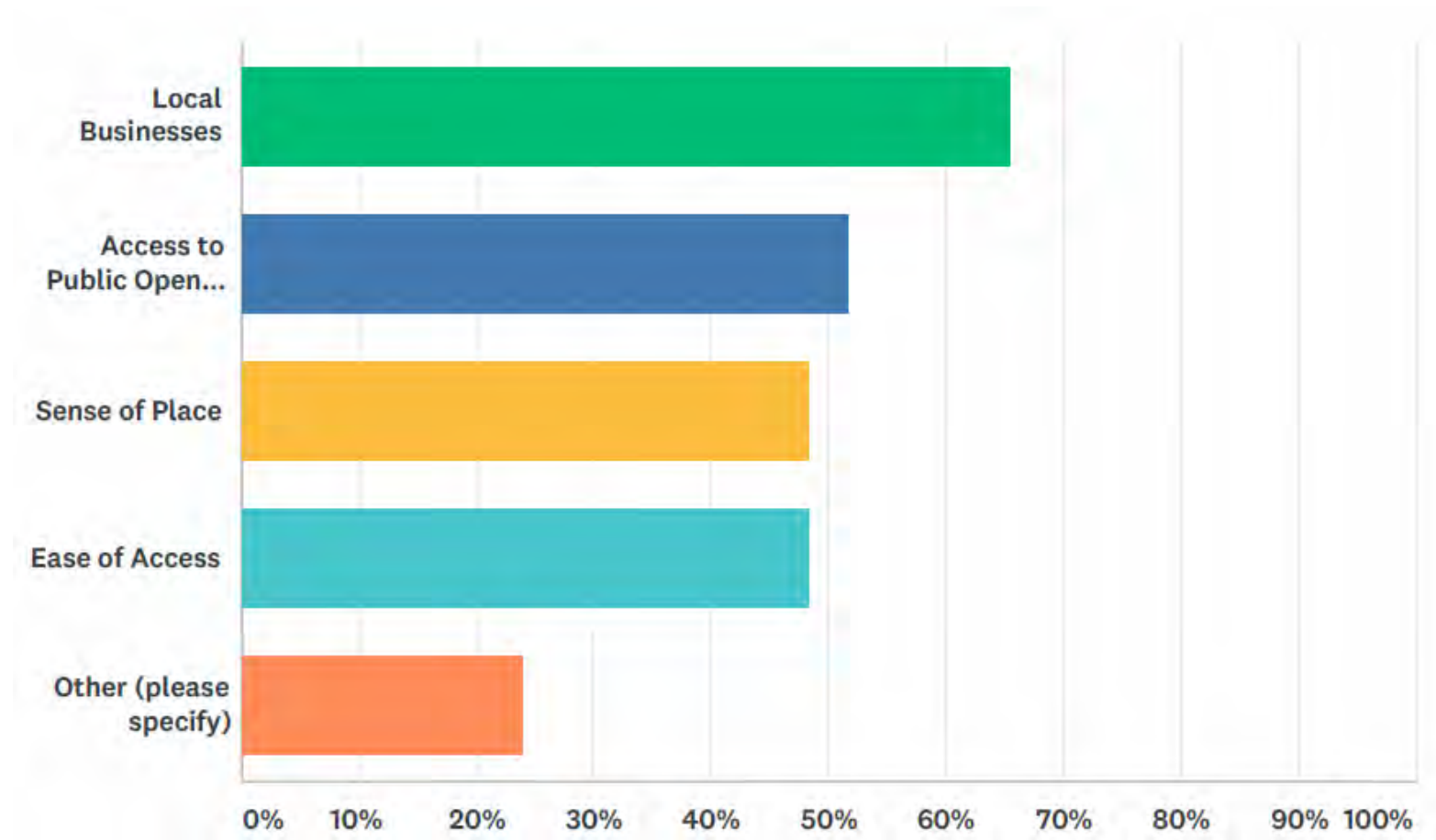
# What does the area have now that you want to keep?

## Online Survey Responses

- **Local businesses**
- **Access to public open space.**

### *Other Comments*

- *Community Character*
- *Train Access*
- *Walkability*
- *Sense of Community with Single Family Homes*
- *Grocery Store*
- *Local Businesses*



## Online Survey Responses

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

- Blight / Undeveloped Properties
- Broken Infrastructure, sidewalks
- Gas Stations (too many)
- Traffic
- Litter
- Trucks





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

## Online Survey Responses

- *Traffic congestion*
- *Cut through traffic including heavy trucks*
- *Narrow and broken sidewalks,*
- *Lack of sidewalks*
- *Blight, vacant, unfinished, underutilized buildings*
- *Liquor stores, gas stations*
- *High-rise apartment buildings*
- *Industrial businesses*
- *Resident parking challenges*
- *High taxes*

*"Buildings that look like they are falling apart, too many gas stations, empty buildings and churches"*

*"Little to no charm (not appealing to the eye), open parking lots that are not utilized, empty/old buildings that are also not utilized and too many gas stations"*

*"cut through access from East Ave to Strawberry Hill. Congestion at the i-95 entrance and exit areas."*

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

- Improved Sidewalks
- Bike Lanes/paths
- Grocery Store
- Traffic Control
- Safe Pedestrian Access to Train Station
- Better Drainage / storm-water management
- Open Spaces / Parks
- Parking

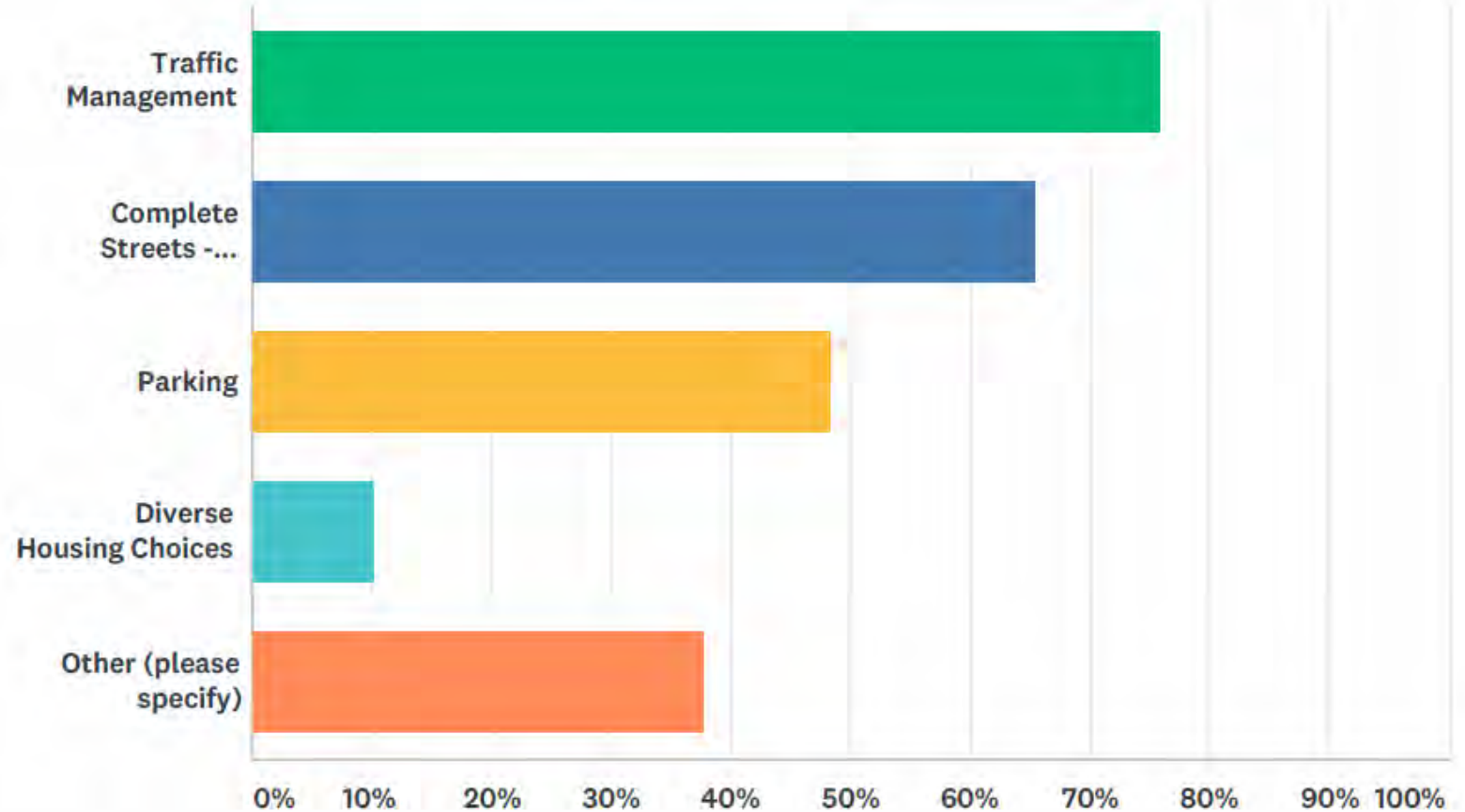




# What would you add to the area that it doesn't have now?

## Online Survey Responses

- **Traffic management**
- **complete streets**
- *Traffic Enforcement and Management*
- *Complete Streets*
- *Open Spaces, Parks, Community Garden*
- *Walkable Sidewalks on Side Streets*
- *Local Businesses – Bakery, Book Store, Community Spaces*



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

- Apartment
- Big Box Stores / Chain Retail
- High-rises/dense housing similar to West Ave
- More Traffic and Congestion



*"I like this neighborhood and hope is not altered to the degree that it loses its unique character. Fix the sidewalks, but don't overdevelop or drive out existing businesses."*



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

## Online Survey Responses

- *Additional traffic*
- *Narrow Streets*
- *Discourage trucks*
- *High-rise apartments, apartments, multi-family, public housing,*
- *Commercial strip malls,*
- *Chain stores,*
- *Promote Adaptive Reuse of the existing infrastructure*

**"large apartment blocks except at station or in rework of warehouse/factory' office buildings"**

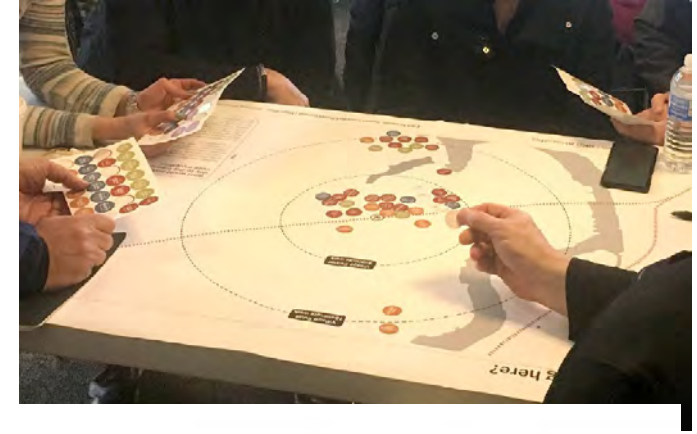
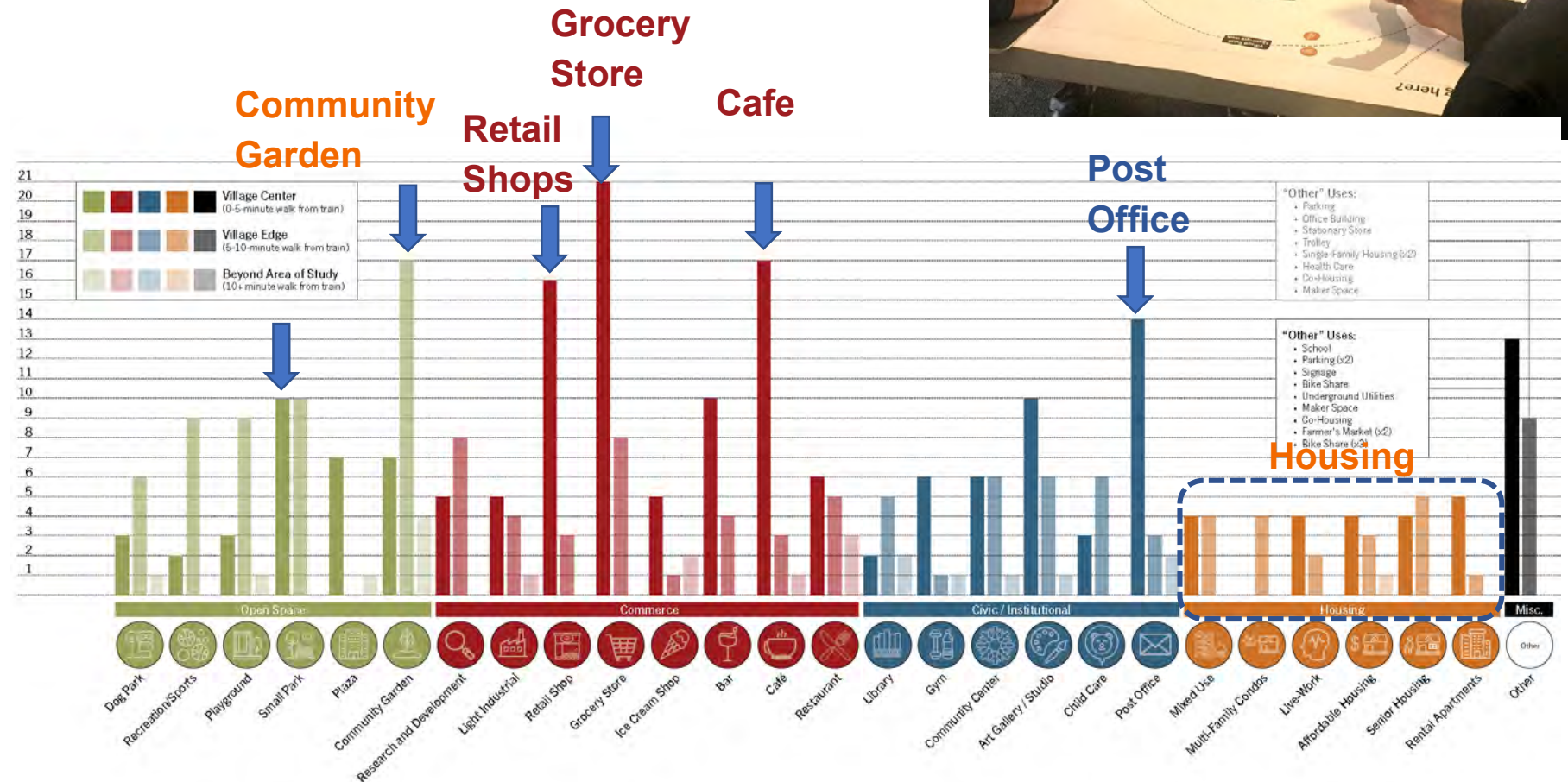
**"High-rise apartment buildings"**

**"No more condominiums. No Trendy buildings built up to the sidewalks. High risers."**

***"I would be apprehensive about adding too many apartments unless new restaurants are also added. A new apartment building without additional growth and revamping of the area would seem out of place"***

# What's missing here?

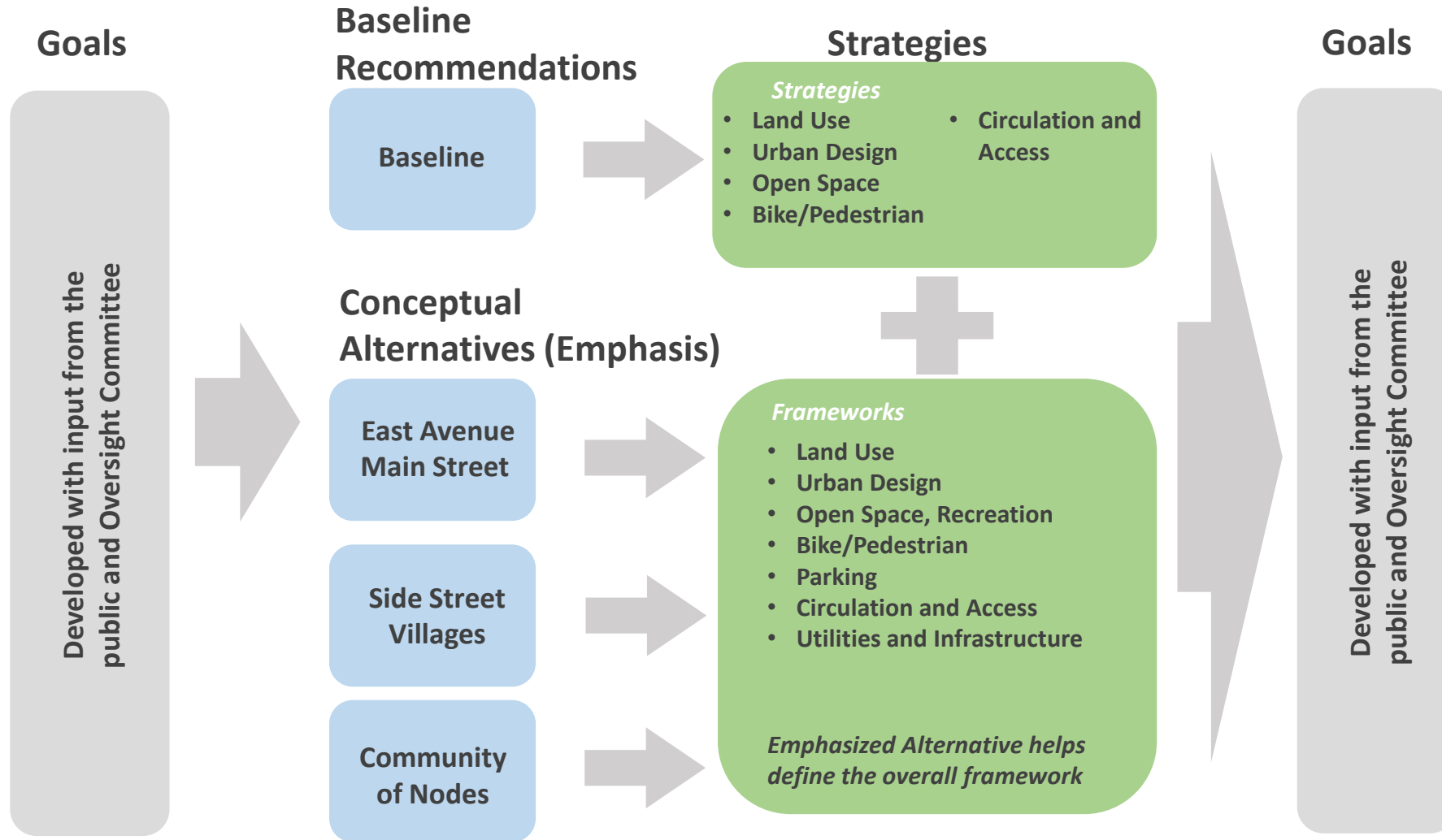
- **Grocery Store, Retail Shops and Café, Post Office** as most desirable uses within the Village Center Area (5 Mins of the Train Station)
- **Community Garden** is the most desirable amenity within the Village Edge (5-10 Mins from Train Station)
- **Housing is less desirable, particularly anything taller than 3-4 stories**





# How is the TOD Plan Organized?

## East Norwalk TOD Plan Framework



# East Norwalk TOD Plan Framework

## **Baseline Recommendations**

Make improvements necessary to set the stage for correcting problems that exist and for meeting the goals for East Norwalk, regardless of the direction that this takes.



# East Norwalk TOD Plan Framework

## Baseline Recommendations

Make improvements necessary to set the stage for correcting problems that exist and for meeting the goals for East Norwalk, regardless of the direction that this takes.

## Conceptual Alternatives

Examine significantly different approaches to strengthening the East Norwalk Station Area that would all meet the overall goals but have different outcomes as a means of clarifying key choices and the most desirable features for the future.

**East Avenue Main Street**

**Side Street Villages**

**Community of Nodes**

# East Norwalk TOD Plan Framework

## Baseline Recommendations

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Examine significantly different approaches to strengthening the East Norwalk Station Area that would all meet the overall goals but have different outcomes as a means of clarifying key choices and the most desirable features for the future.

East Avenue Main Street

Side Street Villages

Community of Nodes

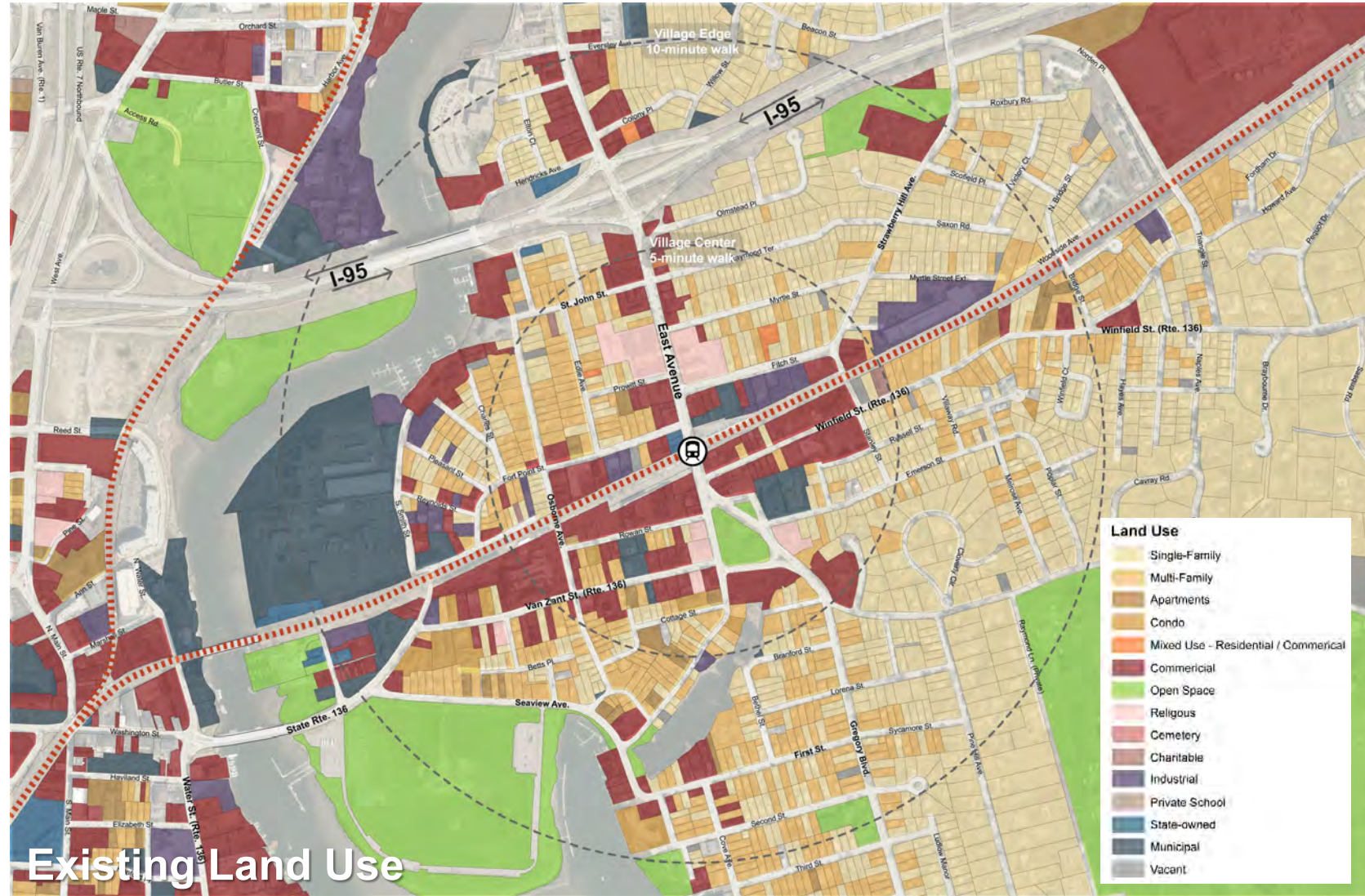
## Evaluate Target Sites

Identify and study several target areas to illustrate the types of changes and improvements that could occur to help achieve the overall goals, and the types of choices that may exist.



# Draft Baseline Recommendations

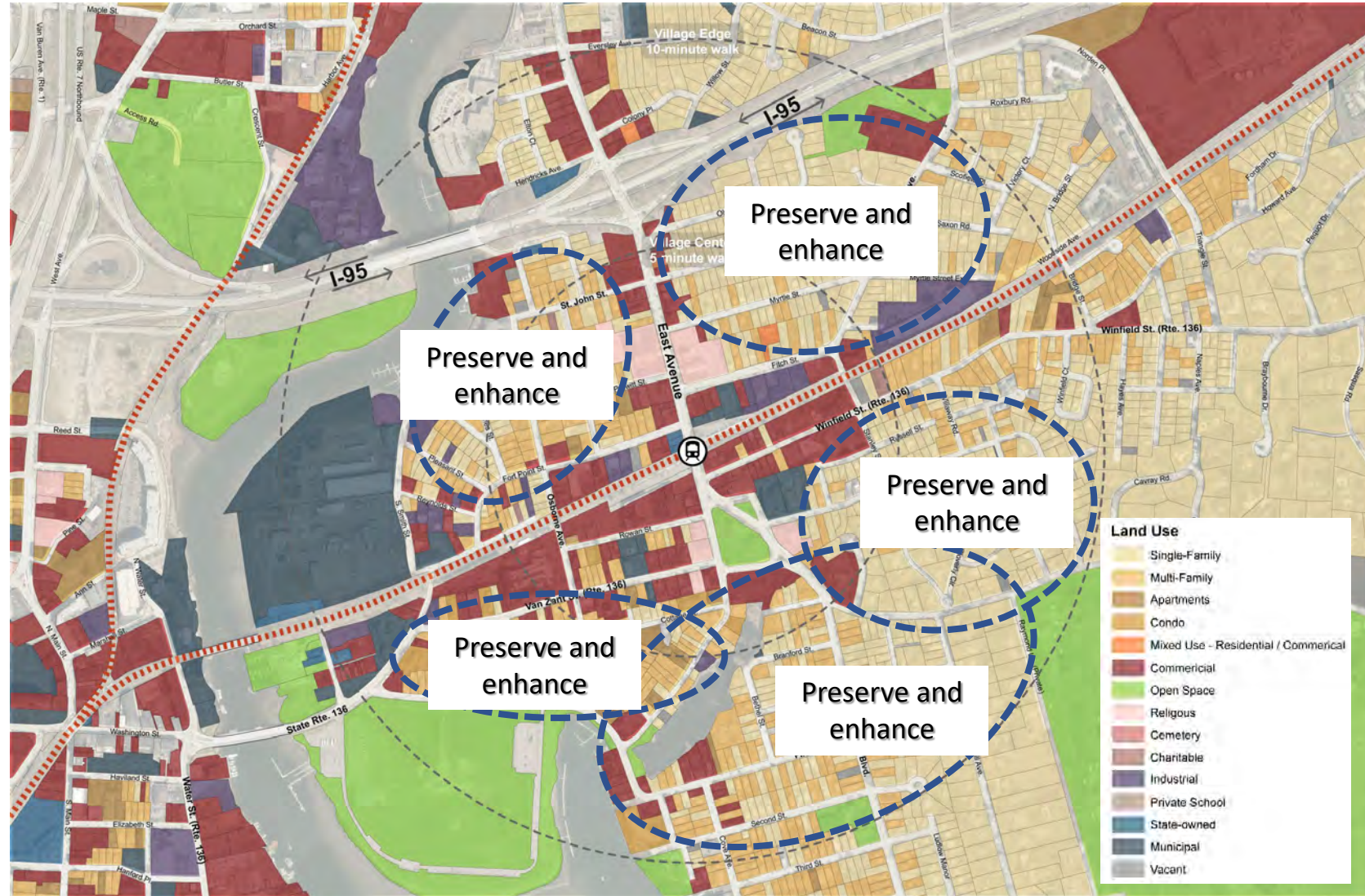
- Open Space
- Pedestrian and Connectivity
- Transportation and Access
- Land Use





# Draft Base Recommendations – Land Use

- Preserve and enhance existing residential neighborhoods
  - Code enforcement of non-compliant properties and land uses
  - Pedestrian and side walk improvements
  - Context appropriate infill developments on vacant lots





# Draft Base Recommendations – Open Space

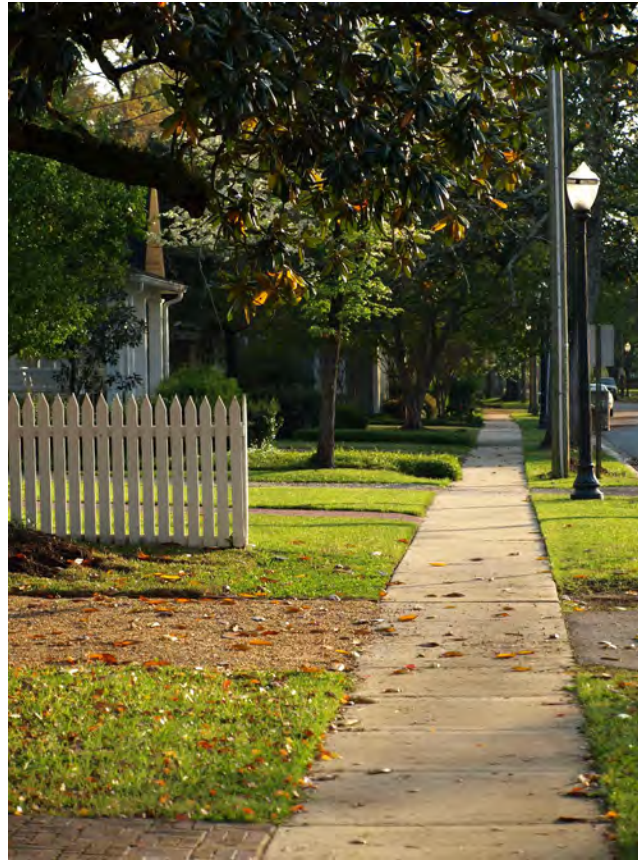
- Enhance neighborhood's access to water
  - Provide signage and wayfinding that guides residents to water
  - Improve sidewalks, pedestrian crossings towards water
  - Complete the Trail System
  - Preserve views towards the water





# Draft Base Recommendations – Open Space

- Enhance neighborhood's access to water
  - Provide signage and wayfinding that guides residents to water
  - Improve sidewalks, pedestrian crossings towards water
  - Complete the Trail System
  - Preserve views towards the water





# Draft Base Recommendations – Open Space

- Seek opportunities to anchor retail nodes with open spaces
  - parklets, plazas, outdoor seating areas that can be activated with outdoor café seating, benches





# Draft Base Recommendations – Open Space

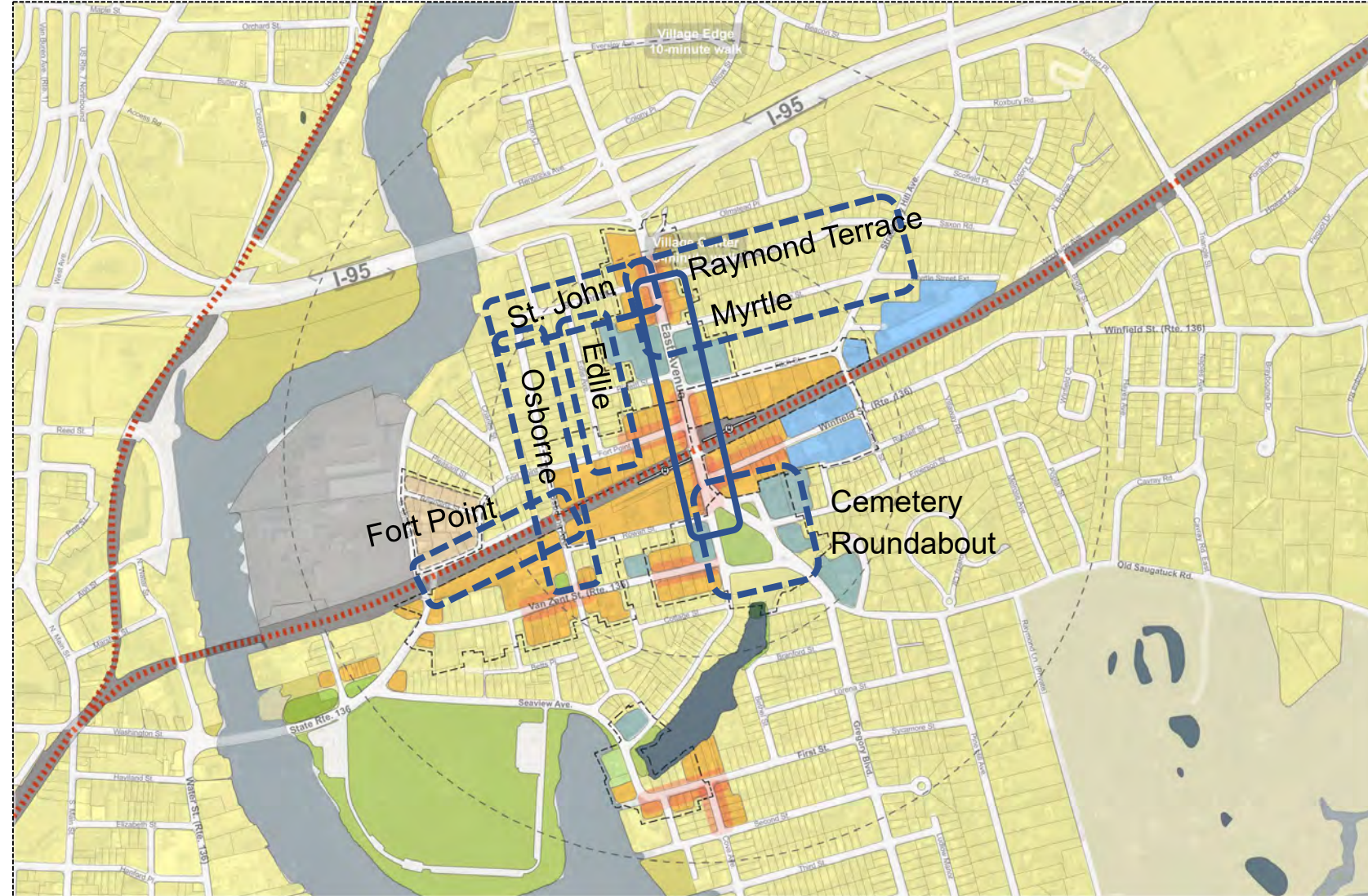


- Celebrate Seaview Avenue as a special pedestrian promenade



# Draft Base Recommendations – Transportation and Connectivity

- Discourage through traffic from the neighborhoods
  - Raised crosswalks, speed humps, local roundabouts, bump outs,





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- Discourage through traffic from the neighborhoods
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# Conceptual TOD Alternatives



**East Avenue Main Street**

## Pros

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

## Cons

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



**Side Street Villages**

## Pros

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

## Cons

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



**Community of Nodes**

## Pros

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

## Cons

- Smaller parcel sizes
- Relaxed parking standards may be required



# East Avenue Main Street





# East Avenue Main Street





# Side Street Villages



Crystal City, VA



Rhinebeck NY





# Community of Nodes

Inman Square, Cambridge MA

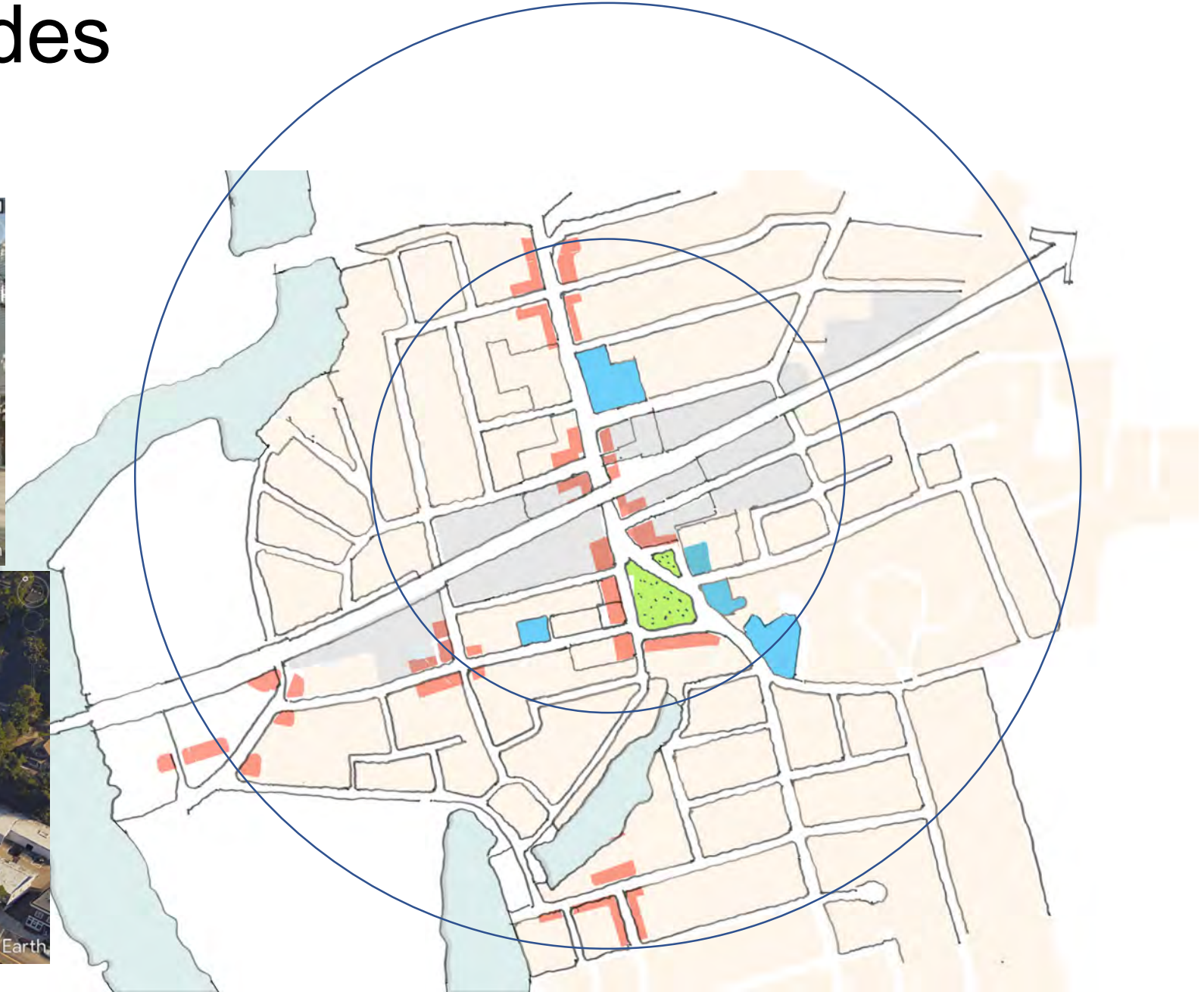


Google Earth





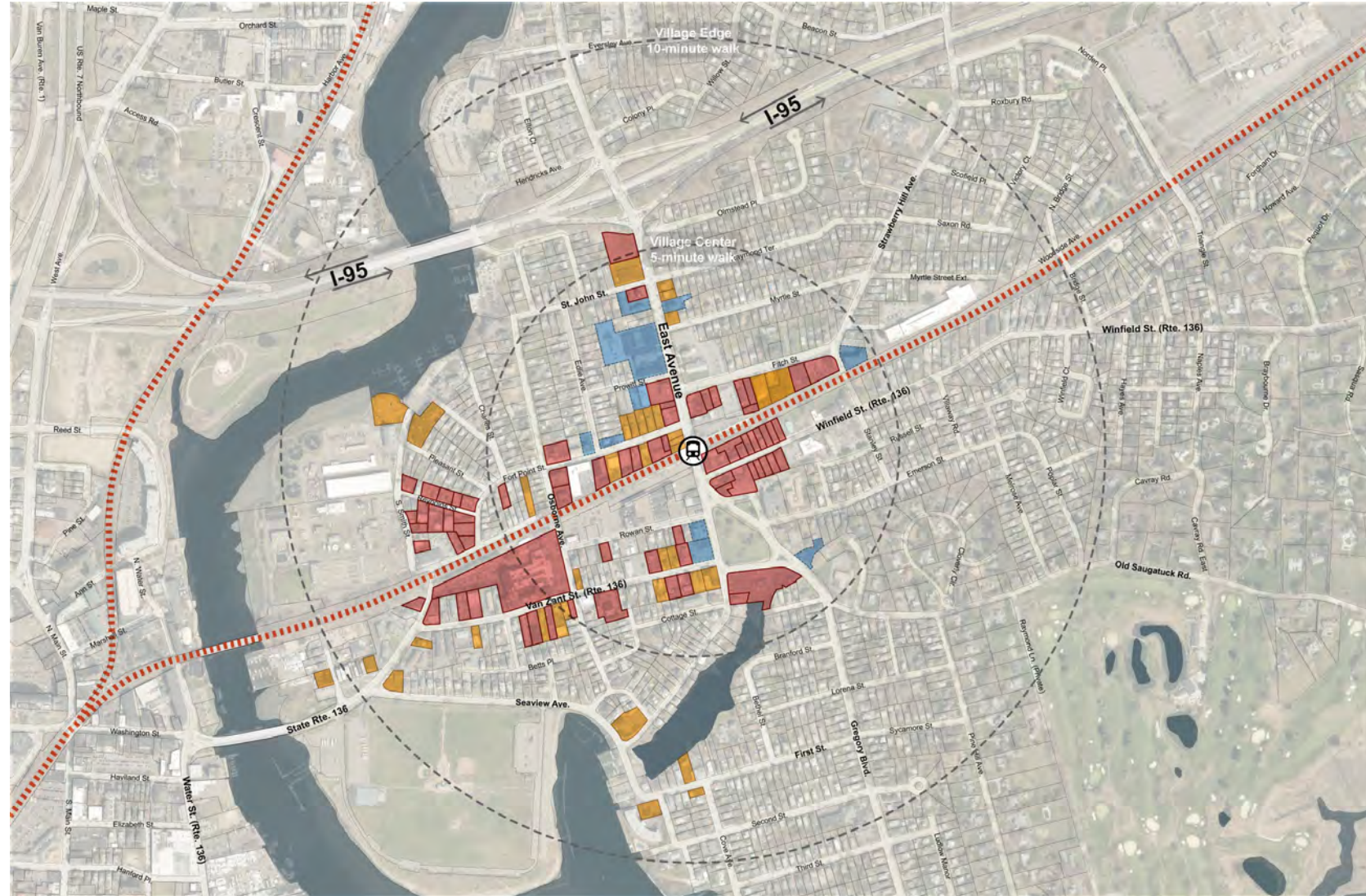
# Community of Nodes





# Susceptibility to Change Analysis

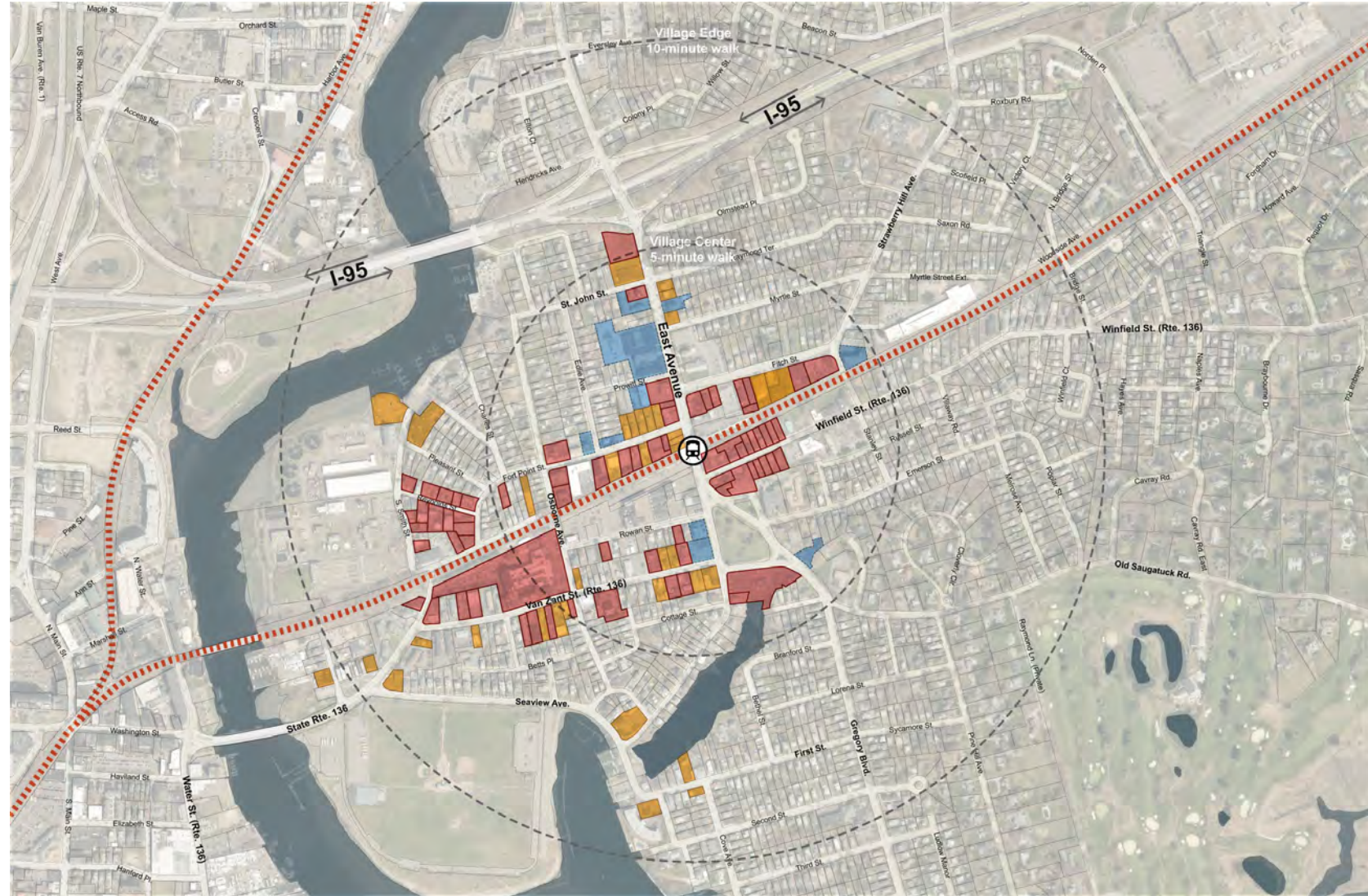
- Identify and study several target areas that might be most vulnerable to change
  - Parcels that are underutilized
  - Other vulnerable private parcels
- Illustrate the types of changes and improvements that could occur to help achieve the overall goals,
- Share the types of scenarios that may exist





# Criteria for Evaluating Sites

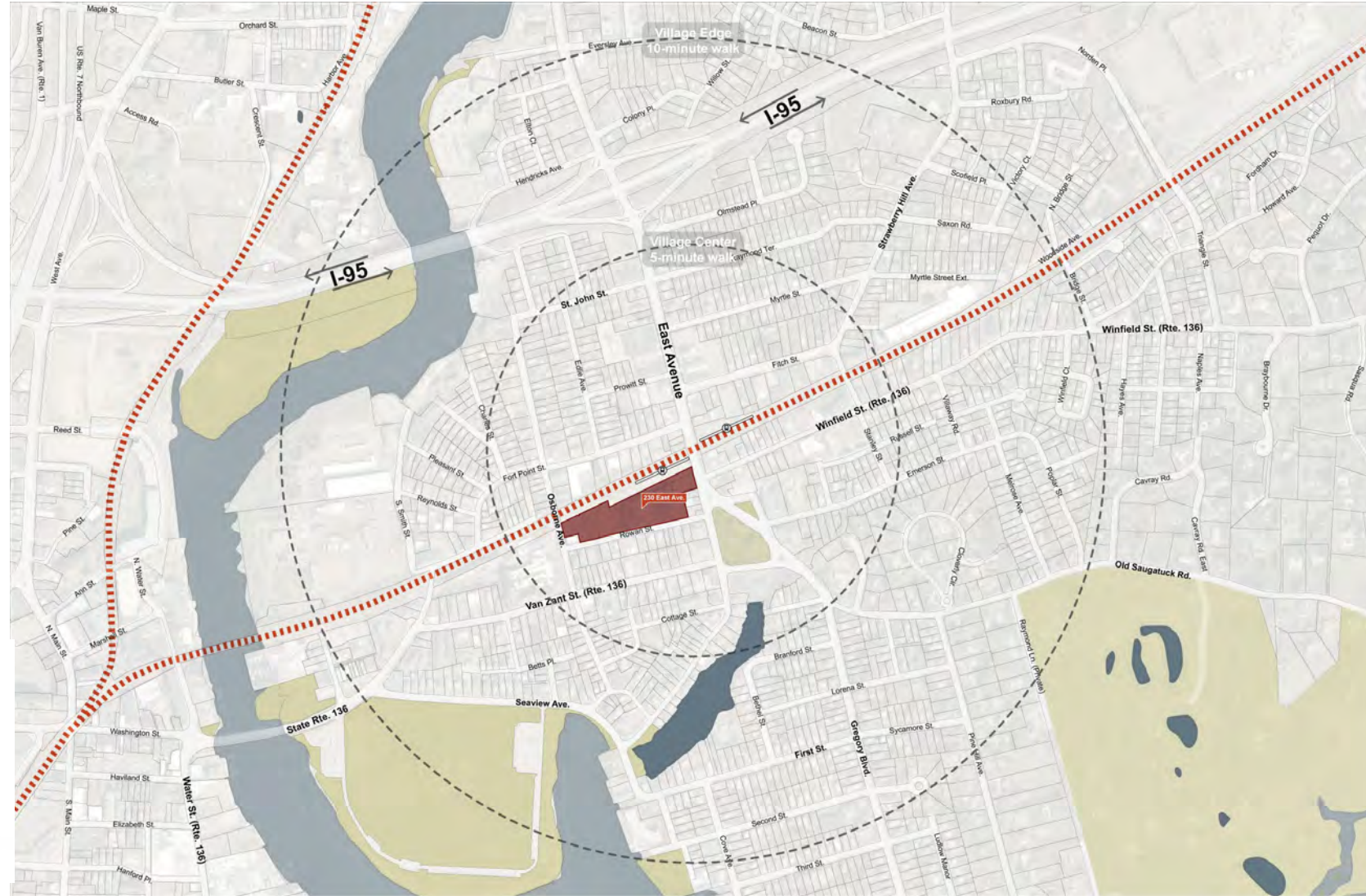
- Current use and vacancy
- Potential for additional density and highest and best use
- Catalytic impact on other properties and center
- Short term feasibility
- Need to assembly
- Match with market potential
- Contribution to the pedestrian environment
- Property and site conditions





# Parcels Susceptible to Change

- 230 East Avenue Project






# Parcels Susceptible to Change

- 230 East Avenue Project
- Highly Likely to Change – Underutilized parcels, potential to add density and highest and best use, property conditions

## Susceptibility to Change

 Highly likely to change





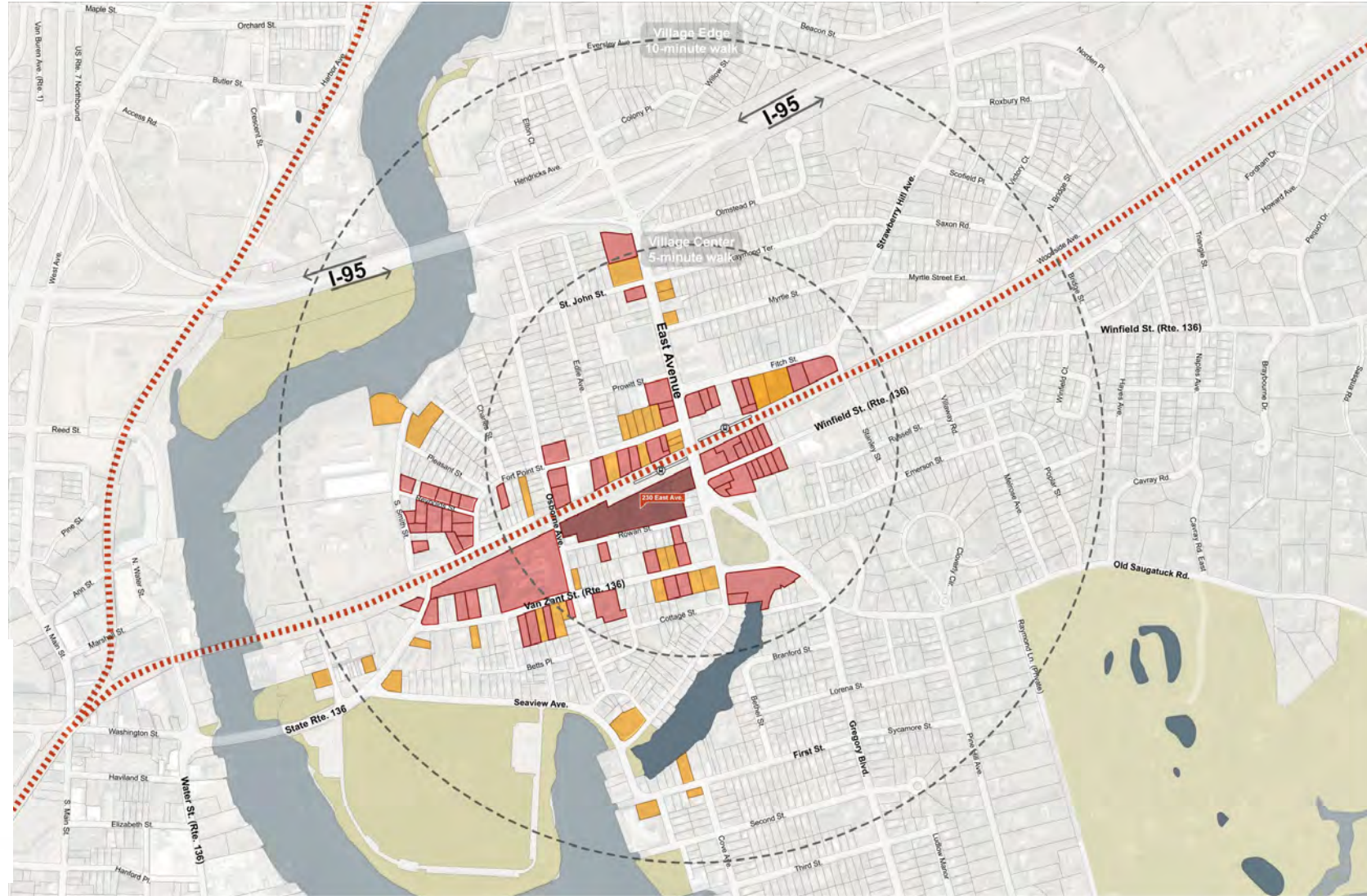


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- Highly Likely to Change – Underutilized parcels, potential to add density and highest and best use, property conditions
- Likely to change – parcels adjacent to susceptible parcels (high probability that developer tries to assemble large parcel with adjacent parcels)

## Susceptibility to Change

-  Highly likely to change
-  Likely to change






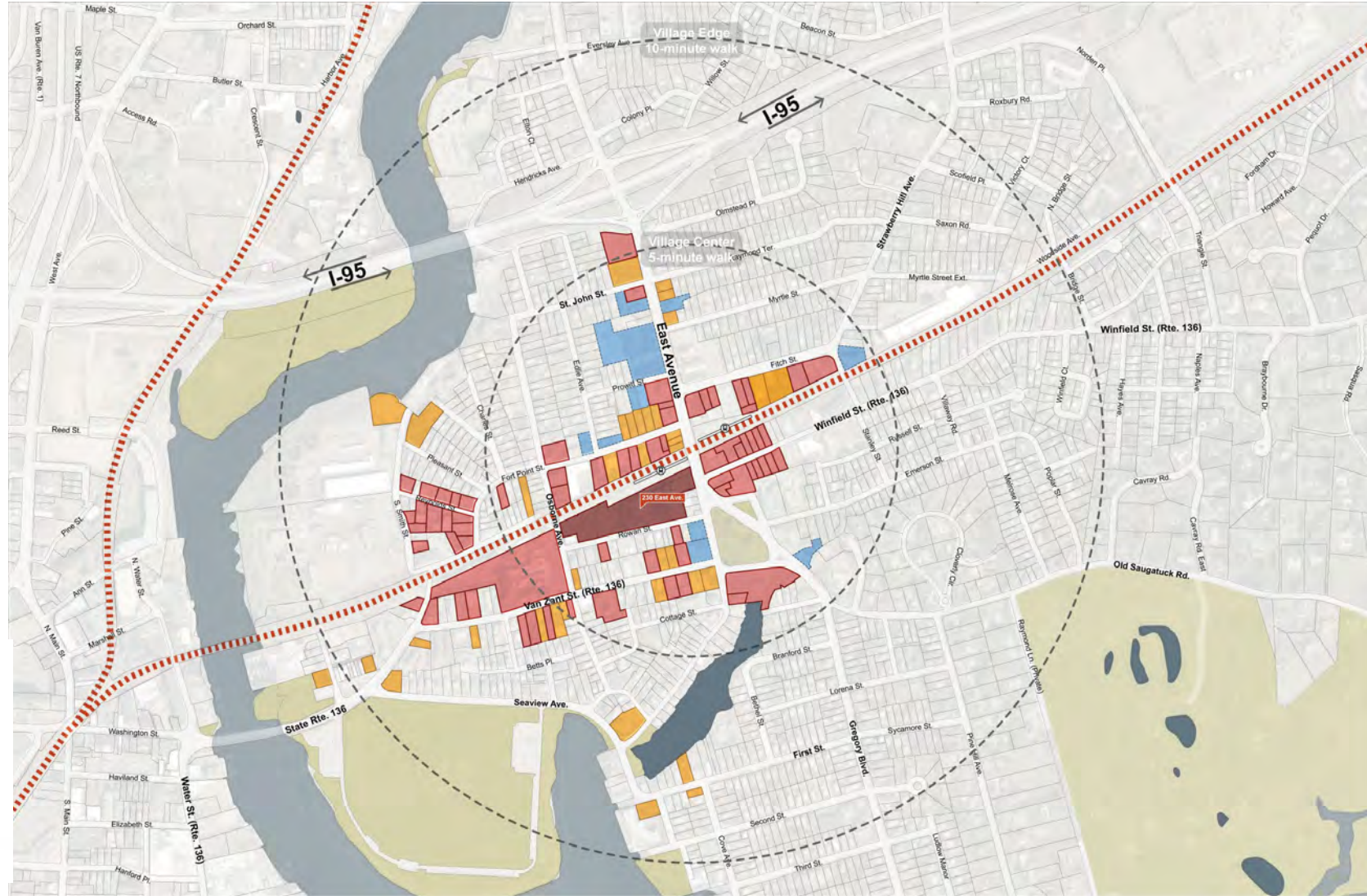


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- Likely to change – parcels adjacent to susceptible parcels (high probability that developer tries to assemble large parcel with adjacent parcels)
- Likely to change as they see transformation around them and the existing use is not the Highest and Best Use of the parcel.

## Susceptibility to Change

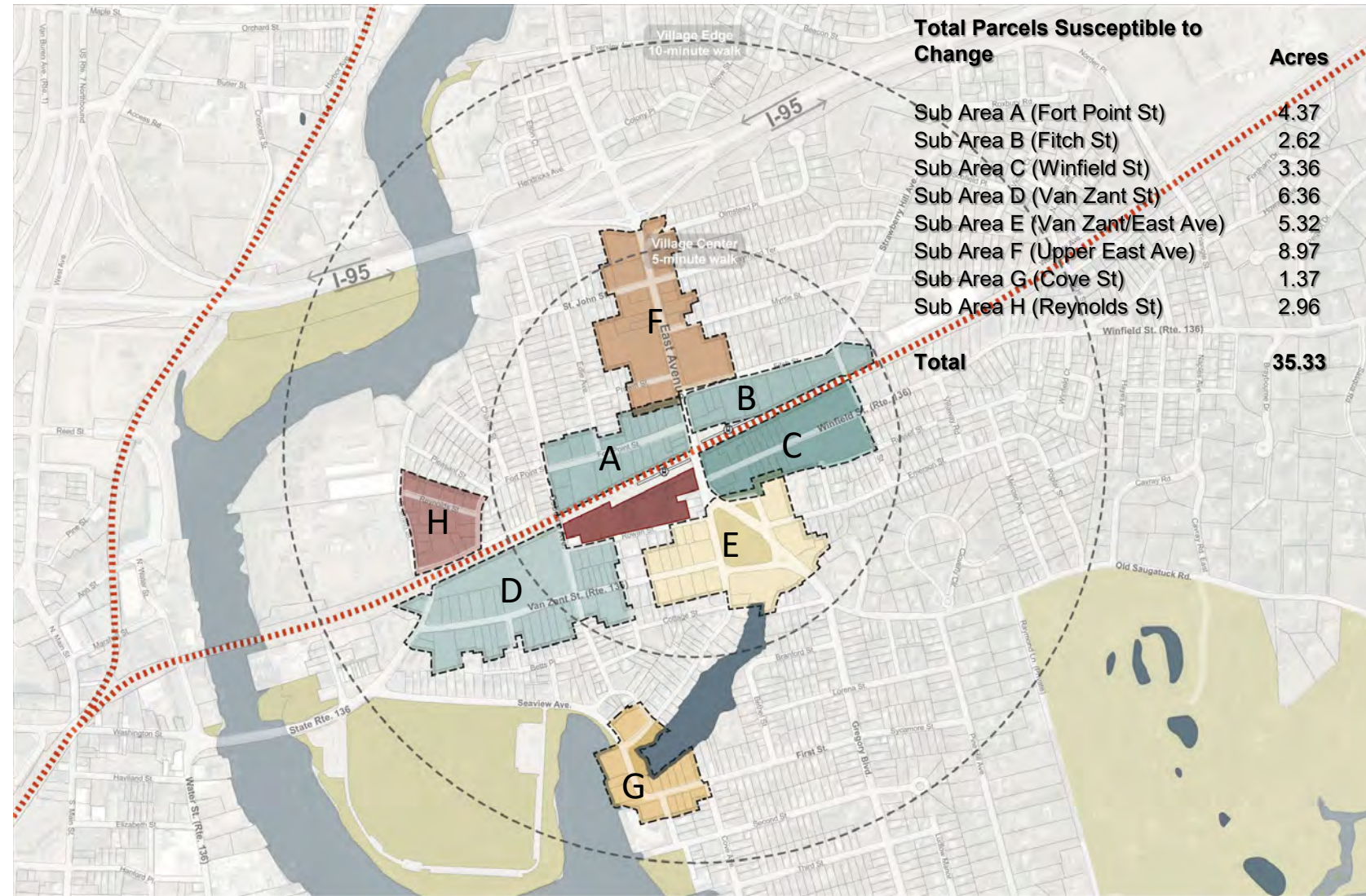
-  Highly likely to change
-  Likely to change
-  Likely to change due to adjacent uses and adjacent potential to change





# Parcels Susceptible to Change

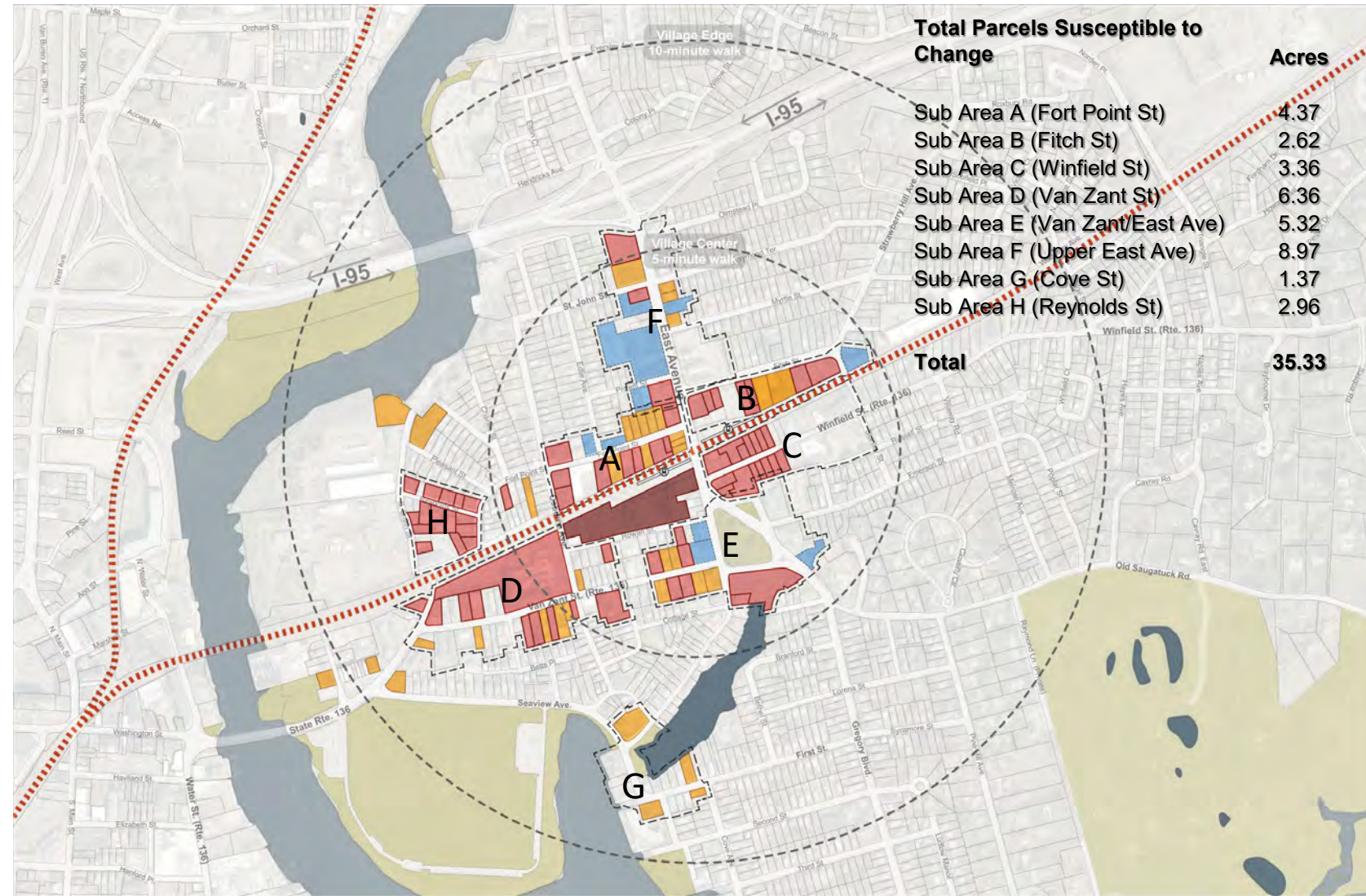
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# Group Exercises

East Norwalk Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Plan

July 25<sup>th</sup> 2019

City of Norwalk | Harriman | NV5 | RKG Associates



# Exercise 1 – Visual Preference Survey – 25 Mins

- Each Attendee will fill out these surveys individually
- Intended to capture general design preferences for
  - **Housing,**
  - **Commercial and mixed-use development,**
  - **Connectivity and access, and**
  - **Public space.**





# Exercise 1 – Visual Preference Survey – 25 Mins

- Images have a brief description on the top to explain what the image is about Eg.
    - Housing – Type of housing with number of Floors
    - Commercial and Mixed Uses – Types of uses or mix of uses
  - Each image has a scale below it ranging from -2 to 2,
  - **-2 being highly undesirable and 2 being highly desirable.**
  - Think about the character and identity of East Norwalk in concert with bringing activity and vitality to the neighborhood,
  - **Is the use/function/scale/type of improvement presented with the image desirable or highly undesirable in East Norwalk TOD Area?**
  - Mark one a scale of
- 2** Highly Undesirable **-1** Undesirable **0** Neutral **1** Desirable **2** Highly Desirable



*"I think this retail with 1 fl office is highly desirable in East Norwalk and can add vitality to the area around the station "*

# Visual Preference Survey

The purpose of this Visual Preference Survey is to capture your design preferences for the future of the area around East Norwalk Station.

This packet contains sets of images pertaining to the following four categories:



A: BUILT ENVIRONMENT - HOUSING



B: BUILT ENVIRONMENT - COMMERCIAL AND MIXED USES



C: CONNECTIVITY AND ACCESS



D: PUBLIC SPACE

For each image, please rank your enthusiasm toward it based on the following scale:

- 2** Highly Desirable
- 1** Desirable
- 0** Neutral
- 1** Undesirable
- 2** Highly Undesirable

Some additional information we would like to know about you:

Please add any additional comments you have here:

## 1. Please circle your gender:

Female   Male   Other   Prefer not to say

## 2. Please circle your age group:

(0-12) (13-17) (18-25) (26-35) (36-45)

(46-55) (56-65) (66-80) (80+)

## 3. Please circle your association/s with the East Norwalk TOD Plan:

Resident of East Norwalk

Business or Property Owner in East Norwalk

Commuter from East Norwalk

Employee in East Norwalk or Patron of East Norwalk Retail and Restaurants

Resident, Business, or Property Owner in Norwalk or Surrounding Region



## Built Environment - Housing



Displayed are images of various commercial and mixed-use buildings. Please rank these on a scale of -2 to 2 based on how suited to East Norwalk you feel that type of building would be.

Consider the height and massing of the building as well your preference toward the uses shown.

- 2 Highly Desirable
- 1 Desirable
- 0 Neutral
- 1 Undesirable
- 2 Highly Undesirable



## Built Environment - Commercial and Mixed Uses



-2 -1 0 1 2



-2 -1 0 1 2



-2 -1 0 1 2



-2 -1 0 1 2



-2 -1 0 1 2



-2 -1 0 1 2



-2 -1 0 1 2



-2 -1 0 1 2



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-2 -1 0 1 2



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- 2 Highly Desirable
- 1 Desirable
- 0 Neutral
- 1 Undesirable
- 2 Highly Undesirable



## ↑ Connectivity and Access



-2 -1 0 1 2



-2 -1 0 1 2



-2 -1 0 1 2



-2 -1 0 1 2



-2 -1 0 1 2



-2 -1 0 1 2



-2 -1 0 1 2



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-2 -1 0 1 2



-2 -1 0 1 2



-2 -1 0 1 2



-2 -1 0 1 2



-2 -1 0 1 2

Displayed are images of various elements pertaining to connectivity and access in the public realm. Please rank these on a scale of -2 to 2 based on how suited to East Norwalk you feel that element would be.

Consider the aesthetic contribution of each element to the streetscape and/or public realm environment, and the suitability of its function.

- 2 Highly Desirable
- 1 Desirable
- 0 Neutral
- 1 Undesirable
- 2 Highly Undesirable



# Public Space



-2 -1 0 1 2



-2 -1 0 1 2



-2 -1 0 1 2



-2 -1 0 1 2



-2 -1 0 1 2



-2 -1 0 1 2



-2 -1 0 1 2



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-2 -1 0 1 2



-2 -1 0 1 2



-2 -1 0 1 2



-2 -1 0 1 2



-2 -1 0 1 2



-2 -1 0 1 2

Displayed are images of various types and elements of public spaces. Please rank these on a scale of -2 to 2 based on how suited to East Norwalk you feel that element would be.

Consider the aesthetic contribution of each element to the public realm environment, and the suitability of its function.




- 2 Highly Desirable
- 1 Desirable
- 0 Neutral
- 1 Undesirable
- 2 Highly Undesirable



# Exercise 2 – Concepts for East Norwalk

- You are presented with three options
- Discuss with your facilitators the opportunities and challenges that each option present based on your knowledge of the East Norwalk as a resident or a business owner or a visitor.
- Think about the potential of different options to achieve the desired vision based on your knowledge of these areas.

### 3 Concepts for East Norwalk




1: East Avenue Main Street	2: Side Street Villages	3: Community of Nodes																																																						
																																																								
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East Norwalk Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Plan Choices Worksheet

# Exercise 2 – Concepts for East Norwalk

- You can use images from the visual preference survey to visualize as a way to describe your vision and elaborate on the options shown.
  - For example, “For option 1, I think image B-1 would be suitable because it is an appropriate scale for the context and offers a pedestrian-friendly streetscape.”*
- Facilitators will take notes on the boards

3 Concepts for East Norwalk					
1: East Avenue Main Street		2: Side Street Villages		3: Community of Nodes	
					
<b>PROS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides a central axis for the town's growth.</li> <li>• Allows for a mix of uses and densities.</li> </ul>	<b>CONS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May lead to a loss of character in surrounding areas.</li> <li>• May result in a less pedestrian-friendly streetscape.</li> </ul>	<b>PROS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides a mix of uses and densities.</li> <li>• Allows for a mix of uses and densities.</li> </ul>	<b>CONS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May lead to a loss of character in surrounding areas.</li> <li>• May result in a less pedestrian-friendly streetscape.</li> </ul>	<b>PROS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides a mix of uses and densities.</li> <li>• Allows for a mix of uses and densities.</li> </ul>	<b>CONS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May lead to a loss of character in surrounding areas.</li> <li>• May result in a less pedestrian-friendly streetscape.</li> </ul>
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East Norwalk Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Plan Choices Worksheet




# Exercise 3 – Comment Cards


- Having discussed the 3 concept options now think about which sub-areas within the plan each concept is most suited to.
- There are 8 identified sub-areas based on parcel susceptibility to change, labeled A-H.
- For each area, think about what came up in the prior discussion, and, working individually, identify which concept (1, 2, or 3) is most suitable for each area A-H.

**Comment Card - Side A**


1: East Avenue Main Street




2: Side Street Villages



3: Community of Nodes






For each sub-area identified in the map above, circle the concept (1: East Avenue Main Street, 2: Side Street Villages, or 3: Community of Nodes) that you think is most suitable for that area.

A (Fort Point Street)	1 2 3	D (Van Zant Street)	1 2 3	G (Cove Street)	1 2 3
B (Fitch Street)	1 2 3	E (Van Zant Street)	1 2 3	H (Reynolds Street)	1 2 3
C (Winfield Street)	1 2 3	F (East Avenue)	1 2 3		

Please complete both sides of this comment card  
and return to the sign-in table before you leave today.

**Thank-you!**




East Norwalk Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Plan - Choices Workshop | July 25, 2019

# Exercise 3 – Comment Cards

- This will help us determine if a hybrid of the three concepts is most appropriate, or if one concept is strongly preferred over the others in all areas.
- The back of the card offers participants an opportunity to submit any questions they still have about the project, and offer any other knowledge or insight that they feel the planning team should be aware of moving forward.

**Comment Card - Side A**

1: East Avenue Main Street      2: Side Street Villages      3: Community of Nodes




For each sub-area identified in the map above, circle the concept (1: East Avenue Main Street, 2: Side Street Villages, or 3: Community of Nodes) that you think is most suitable for that area.

A (Fort Point Street)	1	2	3	D (Van Zant Street)	1	2	3	G (Cove Street)	1	2	3
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C (Winfield Street)	1	2	3	F (East Avenue)	1	2	3				

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**Thank-you!**

 **HARRIMAN**      East Norwalk Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Plan - Choices Workshop | July 25, 2019



# Report Back

- In exercise 2,
  - Was there a consensus among the group about the most appropriate option in East Norwalk TOD Area?
  - Most common challenges and opportunities in each of the options





# East Norwalk Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Plan

Choices and Priorities Workshop

July 25, 2019

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