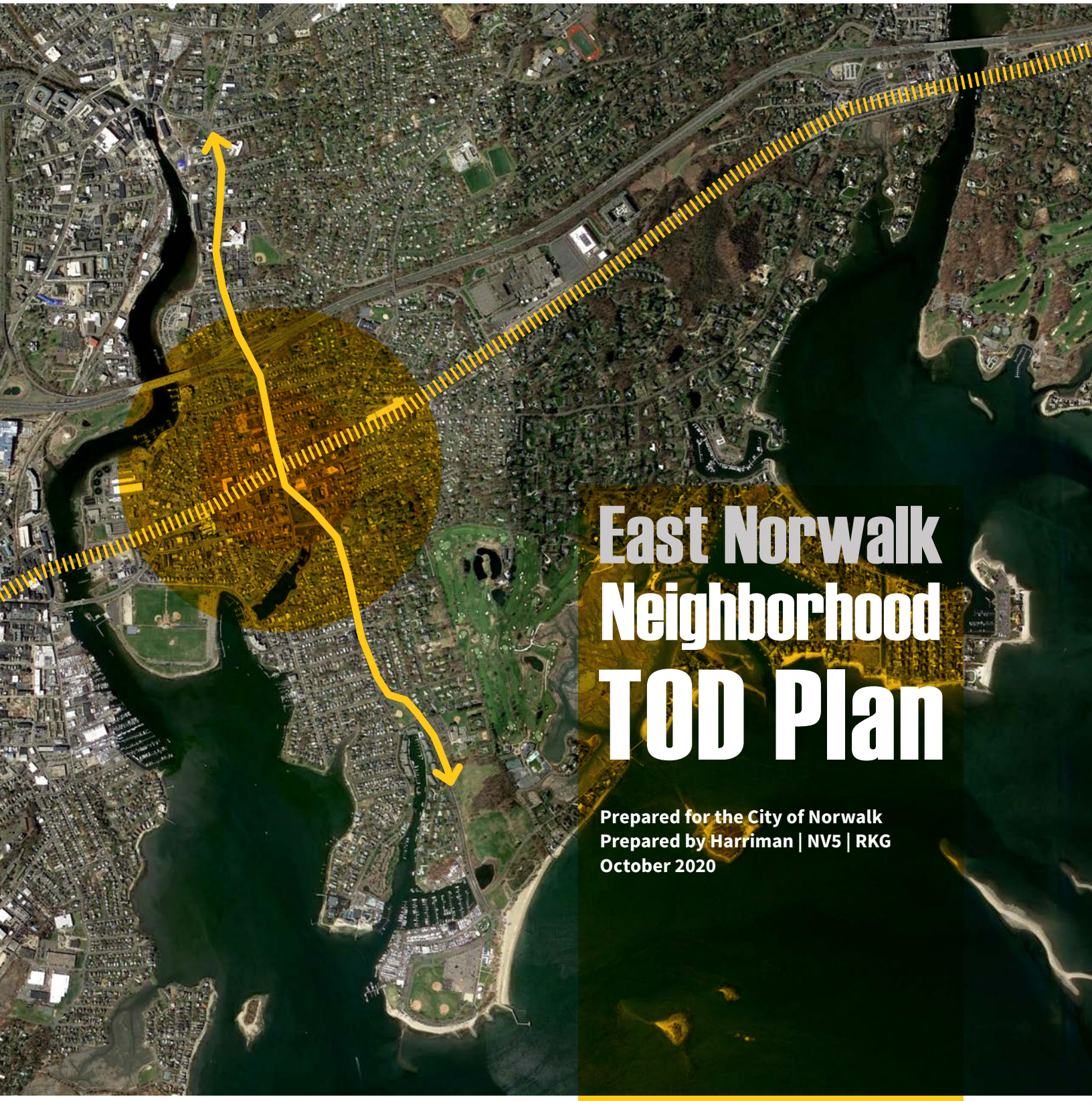

East Norwalk Neighborhood TOD Plan

Prepared for the City of Norwalk
Prepared by Harriman | NV5 | RKG
October 2020

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East Norwalk Neighborhood TOD Plan

Plan Purpose and Process

The purpose of the Plan is to develop a vision and path for the future of the East Norwalk Neighborhood based on its proximity to the commuter train station. The City recognized the opportunities and challenges this neighborhood faced and was aware of community concerns regarding the proliferation of new apartments leading to increased density and traffic challenges. In response, the City initiated this transit oriented development (TOD) planning study in conjunction with Harriman, RKG Associates, and NV5. The plan was developed with input by an appointed Oversight Committee, comprised of City staff and residents who represented government, the business community, and residents at large. Over the course of 16 months the oversight committee held numerous meetings to discuss plan progress and direction. Three public meetings were held to gather ideas and input about the plan from the community. The public meetings and meetings with the oversight committee, as well as the data gathered and analysed by the planning team lead to the creation of this plan. It is the intent of this plan to be incorporated into the Citywide Plan and serve as the overarching planning guide for the area.

Plan Inquiries and Intent

East Norwalk is a complex area due to the existing road constraints, the established and stable neighborhoods surrounding the station, some thriving businesses in the area, disjointed land uses, the area being a gateway to the Sound and the existing traffic concerns. As indicated in the Request for Proposals for this effort, the City sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the vision for this area?
2. What are the infrastructure (roadways, sanitation, energy, etc.) possibilities and limitations in this area?
3. How will planned roadway improvements and the eventual replacement of both the East Avenue Bridge and Walk Bridge affect the area and potential for redevelopment?
4. What are the employment numbers and types of businesses within the Industrial One and other zones and what impacts would regulation changes have on these businesses?

Based upon the data and conclusions reached from the initial phase of this plan, the planning team addressed the following additional questions and issues:

1. What should be the bounds of the TOD area?
2. What are the impediments to realizing the vision from the standpoint of economy, mobility, environment, and implementation?
3. What is the appropriate mix of uses for this area?
4. How can we leverage the existing assets in the area?
5. What is the appropriate density and massing of the TOD area?
6. How can we establish building and streetscape design guidelines for the TOD area?
7. What are the recommended zoning changes?

Executive Summary

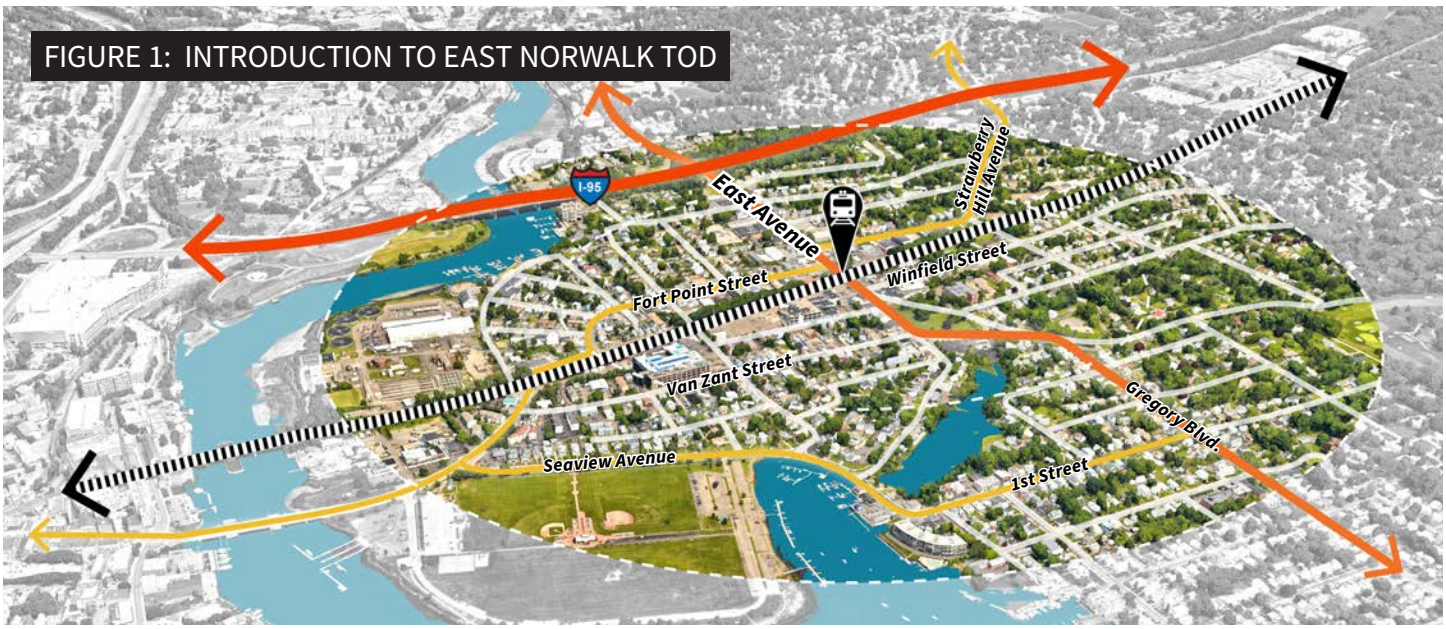


FIGURE 1: INTRODUCTION TO EAST NORWALK TOD

Plan Area

The East Norwalk station provides commuter railroad service to New York and New Haven on the Metro North rail lines, with over 700 boardings occurring each weekday (based on 2017 data), which is low compared to similar stations. As part of the Walk Bridge construction program, the East Avenue rail bridge is scheduled to be rebuilt beginning in 2021. As part of that project, the roadway will be lowered and widened, which should ease some of the current traffic bottlenecks that occur. In addition, a new, elongated, station platform is planned as part of the Walk Bridge Program. This project is intended to increase ridership by allowing six train cars at a time to drop off and pick up passengers in both directions and increase parking and ADA accessibility at the station.

East Avenue, which is the main corridor connecting I-95 to East Norwalk is comprised of disjointed development and non-complimentary uses, and uninspired site design and architecture, resulting in an unfriendly pedestrian experience. The pedestrian realm is further hindered by poorly maintained, obstructed, and in some places non-existent sidewalks and a lack of crosswalks. An industrial district runs west to east in proximity to the train station. The City has seen increased interest in small warehouse and industrial space in this area and should seek to capitalize on this growth. The main corridors currently have disjointed zoning districts and numerous instances of nonconforming uses which prevent the vibrant, walkable area the public desires.

The areas surrounding East Avenue and the other core streets (Fitch, Fort Point, Van Zant and Winfield) boast vibrant, well established neighborhoods with key nodes like the Cove Avenue area. These nodes also provide access to idyllic public spaces such as Veteran's Memorial Park and Calf Pasture Beach. This plan seeks to improve connectivity from the neighborhoods to the commercial and recreational areas so they can be safely accessed by pedestrians and cyclists.

The draft plan provides a roadmap for correcting many of these issues and new incentives to revitalize these areas.

East Norwalk Neighborhood TOD Plan

TOP 10 ACTION ITEMS

1 CREATE A NEW VILLAGE DISTRICT: East Norwalk TOD Village Zone (EVTZ).

- Add 1 story and a moderate increase in residential density with requirements for public amenities.
- Require ground floor activation/commercial use.
- Enforce design guidelines for all development.

2 FACADE IMPROVEMENT: Explore the possibility of enacting a program in the areas of Charles Street & Osborne Avenue, north of Fort Point Street, similar to the program employed in SoNo. This area functions as de-facto affordable housing and should be preserved.

3 RELOCATE THE DPW GARAGE: Study options to move the garage to elsewhere in the city. If possible, master-plan the site for future uses such as marine commercial or open space.

4 CONSIDER A VILLAGE DISTRICT OR HISTORIC DISTRICT FOR LIBERTY SQUARE: A separate in-house planning exercise should be done for this area, once the Walk Bridge project is complete and additional parcels are available for redevelopment. This has been considered in the past and is consistent with the Citywide Plan.

5 REZONE FROM COMMERCIAL TO RESIDENTIAL: Rezone to encourage a more consistent development pattern and concentrate growth near the train station and main corridor.

6 ALLOW RESIDENTIAL UNITS ABOVE GROUND FLOOR: Within the Industrial-1 Zone, allow some residential units above the ground floor commercial uses, provided the commercial uses remain, to enable property owners to monetize their properties.

7 IMPROVE SAFETY FOR ALL MODES OF TRANSIT on Gregory Blvd. by upgrading the street and sidewalk and rezone to new EVTZ.

8 CREATE A PROMENADE ALONG SEAVIEW AVENUE: Connect the Cove Avenue area to SoNo. The area can be used for multi-purpose recreational and entertainment options.

9 CONSIDER A VILLAGE DISTRICT OR HISTORIC DISTRICT FOR COVE AVENUE: A separate in-house planning exercise should be done for this area. This has been considered in the past and is consistent with the Citywide Plan.

10 AREA-WIDE ACTIONS: The following actions are recommended throughout the East Norwalk (*not mapped*):

- Improve connectivity within East Norwalk by completing sidewalk links and connecting bike routes.
- Increased green space and public amenities throughout the area.
- Explore job-generating incentives such as TIFs or BIDs*.
- Respect the development patterns of the residential neighborhoods.

**Tax-Increment Financing (TIF) and Business Improvement District (BID).*

Executive Summary

FIGURE 2: TOP 10 ACTION ITEMS

Introduction

The East Norwalk Neighborhood Transit Oriented Development Plan (The Plan) is the product of many voices: homeowners, home-renters, business owners, commuters, dog-walkers, joggers, bicyclists, and many more who all call East Norwalk home. The public engagement process encouraged these voices to share their experiences and their aspirations for their neighborhood, identifying opportunities for East Norwalk to enhance its social, economic, and environmental assets while addressing many challenges facing the community.

East Norwalk is an area suitable for transit-oriented development because of the central location of the East Norwalk Train Station, its desirability as a place to live, the number of recent projects in the area, both public and private, and the challenges in this area pertaining to traffic and parking.

As part of the adopted 2019 Citywide Plan an extensive SWOT analysis of the entire City was done (see Chapter 2, page 14 https://tomorrow.norwalkct.org/wp-content/uploads/Norwalk-Citywide-Plan.pdf). That findings of that analysis are directly applicable to East Norwalk

Qualities of East Norwalk

East Norwalk offers an enticing quality of life, particularly for families and commuters. With convenient access to Highway I-95 and regional rail service to New York City, East Norwalk provides a wide range of accessibility and transit options. The community's coastal New England charm and robust network of open spaces offers a unique range of amenities. East Norwalk includes many sub-neighborhoods with distinct qualities and characteristics ranging from thriving commercial nodes to strong, healthy residential neighborhoods.

Challenges

With this unique set of amenities; however, comes a unique set of challenges. East Avenue and Gregory Blvd. experience high traffic demand due to their proximity to the interstate. Together they serve as the primary route to and from Calf Pasture Beach. Additionally, the four gas stations surrounding East Norwalk Station attract many trucks which cause further back-ups and delays. Community members have expressed great frustration at the congestion caused by these conditions. Other traffic-related challenges include speeding on Gregory Blvd. and Strawberry Hill Avenue, limited parking and parking enforcement near the train station, and substandard pedestrian amenities which require improvement. Non-traffic related challenges include a desire to guide new development to ensure that it aligns with and/or enhances existing neighborhood character and improves access to existing open spaces.

Recent Projects

Several recent development projects in East Norwalk acted as a catalyst for this planning process. A resurgence of development activity throughout Norwalk has raised fears among East Norwalk community members about what accelerating change might mean for their neighborhoods and way of life. Specific projects within East Norwalk include the Spinnaker Development and the Walk Bridge Program. The Spinnaker Development is an adaptive reuse of the structure at 230 East Avenue. The current proposal for the existing five-story structure includes 189 residential units and retail, restaurant, café, and offices. The building will sit on top of a sub-grade parking garage with 311 spaces and a public courtyard on the roof deck just above grade. The Walk Bridge program consists of several infrastructure projects throughout Norwalk that aim to increase safety, reliability, and ease of travel as part of a larger effort to enhance Norwalk's railroad transportation infrastructure, and

1

The East Norwalk TOD Area is within a 1/2-mile radius of the train station.

improve local roads and sidewalks. One of the Walk Bridge projects involves lowering East Avenue to allow trucks to pass below the railroad bridge that crosses it. There is a neighborhood concern that this may lead to increased truck traffic.

Purpose of the Neighborhood TOD Plan

The purpose of the Plan is to develop a vision and path for the future of the East Norwalk Neighborhood based on its proximity to the commuter train station. This purpose was divided into several smaller goals as follows:

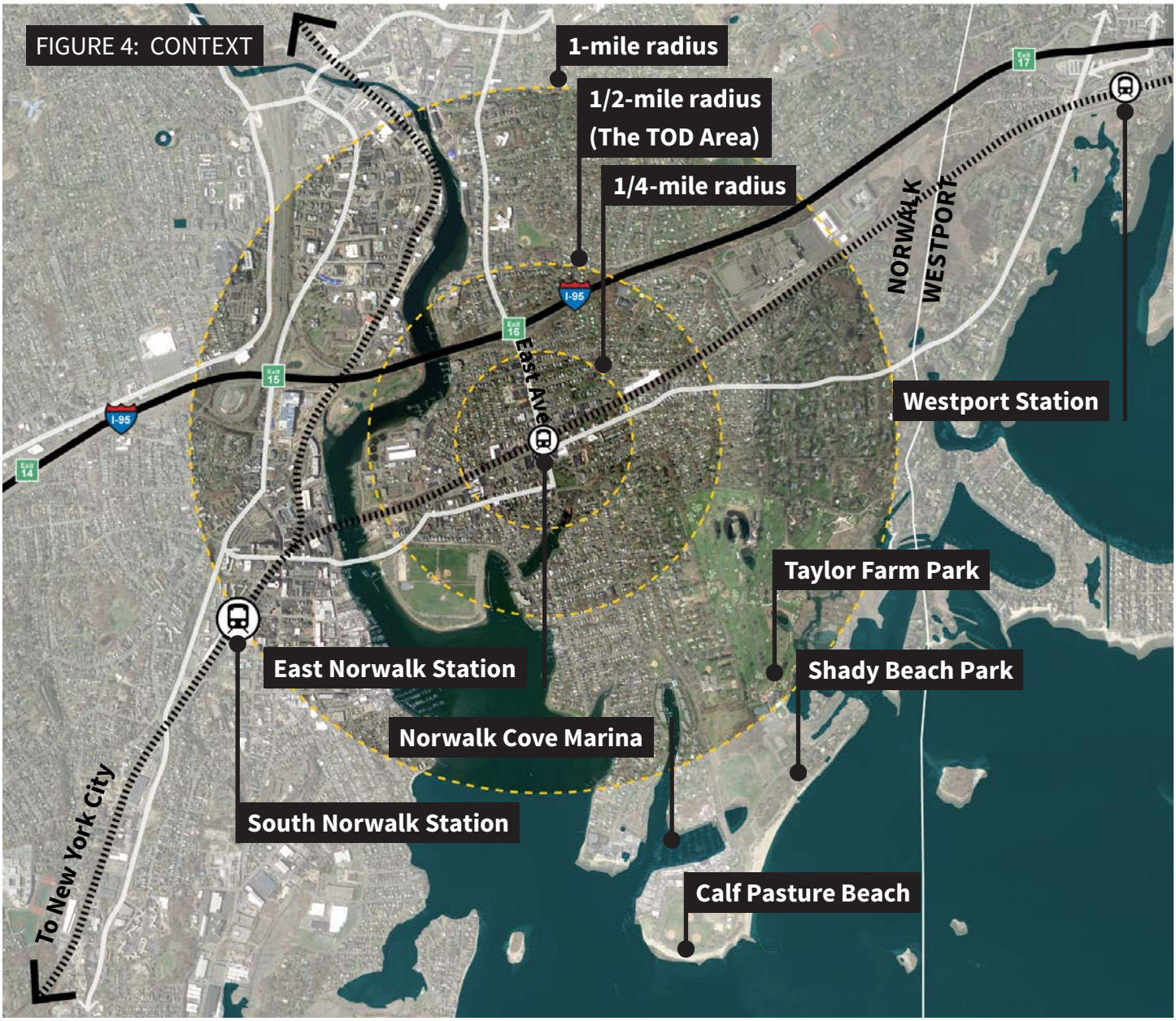
- Understand the existing conditions in East Norwalk and the impacts of those conditions on future options.
- Engage community members, business-owners, and stakeholders to elicit critical insight for the development of a community driven vision for the future of East Norwalk.
- Develop a path to achieve the community vision.
- Provide tools to the City to achieve successful implementation of the recommendations of this Plan.

Planning Process

The City of Norwalk began the planning process for this Plan with an awareness of the neighborhood's susceptibility to change and a desire to understand and address community concerns. The City issued a Request for Proposals and through this selection process chose a planning team led by Harriman. As part of a holistic approach to understanding the opportunities and challenges in East Norwalk, the Harriman team included RKG Associates, to conduct a market analysis, and NV5 to conduct a transportation analysis.

The City assembled an Oversight Committee consisting of critical stakeholders to oversee the planning process. The planning team met with the committee at regular intervals to receive feedback on progress to-date as well as vital input on the next steps in the process.

While the planning team conducted rigorous analysis of the existing conditions in East Norwalk, the most vital data came from the public via participation in the three public workshops facilitated by the planning team and via an online survey. Together, the planning team, the City, the Oversight Committee, and the public worked together to develop this Plan. The TOD Plan provides a community-driven vision for the future of East Norwalk, and a path to implement the actions needed to achieve this vision.



Context map of the East Norwalk TOD Area.

What's in this Plan?

This Plan is organized into the following sections:

1. Introduction
2. Vision and Goals: This section articulates the community's vision for Transit Oriented Development in East Norwalk and describes the goals identified through this planning process. These goals define the broad vision for the neighborhood, given the planning context and the needs of the community.
3. Planning Context: This section will address how this Plan fits in with other concurrent planning and development processes currently underway in Norwalk, providing an overview of these plans and studies and highlighting the elements that intersect with this Plan.
4. Community Engagement: This section will describe the methods of community engagement used to gather feedback and input and offers an analysis of the results. The engagement process included public workshops, online surveys, and stakeholder interviews. The full write-up of the community engagement process and results can be found in Appendix C.
5. Existing Conditions Analysis: This section provides an in-depth analysis of the existing conditions in East Norwalk including land use and current projects, zoning, parcel sizes, property ownership patterns, circulation and access, infrastructure (including sanitation, stormwater, flooding, and utilities), sea level rise, and an overview of the findings from the market analysis.
6. Susceptibility to Change Analysis: This section identifies which parcels are highly likely, likely, or not likely to be redeveloped in the near future based on the analyses of existing conditions and projections of potential options. This section also examines the fit studies used to test zoning for the proposed EVTZ.
7. The East Norwalk Neighborhood TOD Plan: This section provides the analyses and recommendations made for Transit Oriented Development in East Norwalk. It addresses Economic Development, Land Use and Urban Design, Bike and Pedestrian Connectivity, Parking, Open Space and Recreation, Circulation and Access, and Utilities and Infrastructure. The end of this section includes a table outlining the recommendations, timeline for action, and responsible parties.
8. Appendices: This report contains summaries of methods and findings extracted from separate detailed studies. The full in-depth analysis for each of these studies are included in the following appendices:

   A: Market Analysis

   B: Transportation Analysis

   C: Community Engagement

   D: Recommended Zoning

   E: Design Guidelines

FIGURE 5: VETERAN'S MEMORIAL PARK

Photo taken at Veteran's Memorial Park on 3/12/2020.

Vision and Goals

A well-written vision provides a clear understanding of the future as defined by the many voices who participated in the process. The statements below define the community's goals for the enhancements to their neighborhood that could be implemented by the recommendations of this Plan.

The following statement of the vision and supporting goals was developed from public input throughout the planning process with direction and refinement provided by City planning staff and the Oversight Committee. This vision captures the collective aspirations of East Norwalk community members as they look towards the future of this neighborhood.

VISION

East Norwalk is a neighborhood with a high quality of life for all, supporting existing residents and businesses, and attracting new ones. Rehabilitation and new development support public amenities and ground floor uses that enhance the pedestrian environment, connecting housing to goods and services, and multimodal (pedestrian, bicycle, vehicular, and rail) transport. Planning processes and decisions include many community voices and focus on enhancing the overall neighborhood as a maritime community with a series of village clusters.

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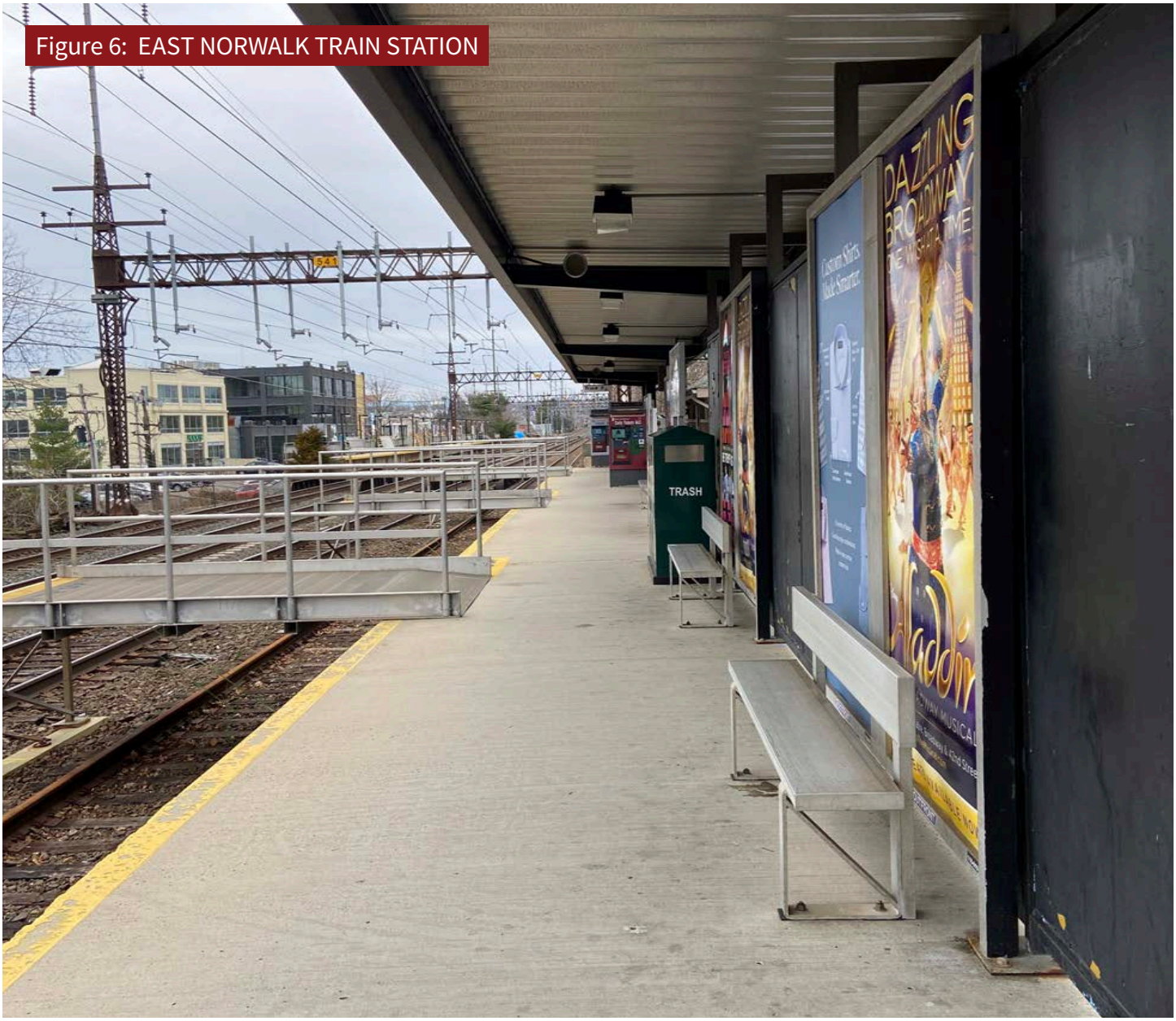


Figure 6: EAST NORWALK TRAIN STATION

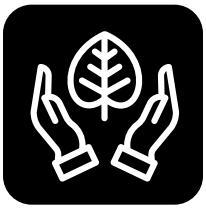
Photo taken at East Norwalk Train Station on 3/12/2020.

GOALS

Enhance Quality of Life

Enhance the quality of life for everyone, including residents, visitors, business owners, and property owners.

East Norwalk should remain an affordable place to live and work with convenient regional and local multi-modal transportation options, a diverse housing stock, access to good jobs, a vibrant public realm, a well-connected network of open space and recreation areas, and thriving commercial nodes.



Foster Community Stewardship

Foster community agency and stewardship in East Norwalk by delivering a plan based on public engagement and input.

Community engagement for this Plan is about more than just the process. The goal is to develop continued involvement and investment from community members to advocate for the changes they want to see and to feel ownership of the vibrant environment they helped to create. Bringing stakeholders together early in the process ensures a result that benefits the entire community and sets the groundwork for continued collaboration and successful implementation.

Balance Growth and Neighborhood Character

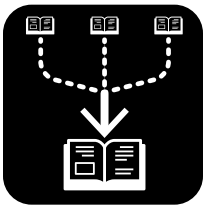
Promote beneficial economic growth that serves to enhance East Norwalk's neighborhood identity and public amenities.

Transit Oriented Development promotes added density and mixed-use development near transit nodes, such as the East Norwalk Train Station. TOD can improve access to jobs via public transit, diversify the housing stock and increase affordable housing, and promote a more walkable and bikeable pedestrian realm. These outcomes could benefit the entire City of Norwalk economically, socially, and environmentally, but must be balanced and aligned with the East Norwalk neighborhood's unique identity as a small coastal village within the city.

Enhance Neighborhood Identity

Preserve and enhance the characteristics that give East Norwalk its unique identity as a small coastal New England community.

East Norwalk is a primarily residential neighborhood prominently located along Long Island Sound. When asked to characterize East Norwalk, many community members use phrases like “coastal village,” “New England charm,” “small-town feel,” or “quiet community.” Transit Oriented Development in East Norwalk should be implemented in a way which reinforces, rather than degrades this identity.



Coordinate with other Plans and Projects

Coordinate efforts with other planning initiatives, studies, and projects to ensure a clear and cohesive vision for the implementation of this plan.

Infrastructure improvements like the Walk-Bridge program, East Avenue upgrade, East Norwalk Station improvements, and planned development projects like 230 East Avenue will likely be catalytic in spurring further changes in East Norwalk. It is important for the City to coordinate and prioritize current and future efforts to deliver a clear path toward implementing a cohesive vision for the city.

Improve Multimodal Accessibility and Connectivity

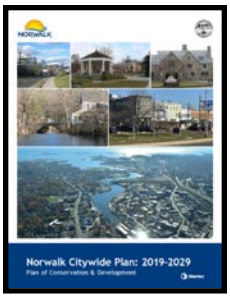
Balance public health and safety needs with convenience and reliability of pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and roadway infrastructure.

The East Norwalk community is bustling with an active population of pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit-users. Accessible transportation options are major contributors to the high desirability and quality of life in East Norwalk. The City must enhance this accessibility and connectivity for all modes of transportation so that East Norwalk community members and visitors alike can easily plan multi-modal trips whether it’s to run daily errands or make a special visit to one of the many amenities East Norwalk has to offer.

Planning Context

The recommendations of this Plan are based on a broad range of information sources and data and will support and enhance previous and concurrent planning efforts, while also informing future efforts. While the planning process included new research, analysis, and community engagement, the planning team also looked closely at the findings from other relevant plans and studies so as not to repeat or contradict what has already been accomplished.

While this plan focused on a small area surrounding the East Norwalk Train Station, many of the findings and recommendations are applicable to the larger context surrounding the . East Norwalk has its own unique identity within the City of Norwalk and is integral to the vibrancy of the city. The community-driven vision of this Plan has the potential to inform and direct future plans and studies for both this neighborhood and city-wide.



Norwalk Citywide Plan/Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD): 2019 – 2029

The Citywide Plan is an update to the 2008 Plan of Conservation and Development. This plan, which was adopted on December 5, 2019, provides a comprehensive vision for all aspects of life in Norwalk over the next 10 years. The East Norwalk Neighborhood TOD Plan addresses many of the same topics within the specific context of East Norwalk and supports the overarching priorities for the whole city. The following goals from the Citywide Plan are especially relevant to East Norwalk and reflected in this plan:

Living and Working in Norwalk

Housing Choice and Healthy Lifestyles

- Maintain the overall character of established single-family neighborhoods.
- Promote diverse housing types in the urban core, at transit-oriented locations, and at mixed-use clusters on major corridors, and in village districts where appropriate.

Environment, Sustainability, and Resilience

Parks, Open Space, Trail, and Recreation Systems

- Give priority to completing the Norwalk River Valley Trail.
- Identify more opportunities to provide public access to water, including streams, the Norwalk River and coastline.
- Identify potential park opportunities in areas of the city underserved by parks so that all residents can walk or bike to a park.

Sustainability and the Norwalk Environment

- Use green infrastructure and low-impact development to improve water quality and mitigate flooding.
- Continue to maintain and increase the shade tree canopy.

City Systems

Transportation and Mobility Networks

- Adopt multi-modal level of service to measure street performance.
- Make land use decisions that support walking, bicycling, and transit use.

3

- Explore innovative ways to improve transit service, such as consolidating shuttle services or flexible route service.
- Implement access management in major corridors. Expand pedestrian and bike networks.
- Right-size parking.

The Future City

Future Land Use, Urban Design, and Zoning

- Re-write and modernize the zoning ordinances with best practices and user-friendliness.

Norwalk Walk Bridge Program (2019 - ongoing)

The Walk Bridge Program is an ongoing project being implemented by the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT). There are 6 projects under the umbrella of this program, 4 of which will have significant positive impacts improving safety and mobility for pedestrians and motorists alike in East Norwalk. During this construction, utilities will be moved underground, improving the aesthetic quality of the built environment.

- Walk Bridge Replacement: The bridge that carries the railroad tracks across the river, known as Walk Bridge, will be replaced with a durable 240' Vertical Lift Bridge. This will help maintain Norwalk River navigation and improve the dependability of rail service for commuters.
- Fort Point Street Bridge Replacement and Roadway Realignment: The railroad bridge that crosses Fort Point Street will also be replaced and in the process Fort Point Street will be realigned with South Smith Street, improving safety and visibility for drivers and pedestrians.
- Osborne Avenue Replacement and Bridge Rehabilitation: This project will replace the railroad bridge that crosses Osborne Avenue as well as repair the substructure.
- East Avenue Bridge Replacement and Roadway Improvement: This project will likely have the most significant impact on improving traffic conditions in East Norwalk. This will be the fourth and final bridge replacement. The new bridge will be taller, allowing trucks to pass underneath rather than forcing them onto narrow residential side streets to get around. At the same time, the road will be widened, which will provide much needed relief from the bottleneck condition that is currently caused by the two-way/single-lane configuration. New sidewalks will also be added to both sides of the road, improving pedestrian connectivity and safety.

Norwalk Pedestrian and Bikeway Transportation Plan (2012)

The Norwalk Pedestrian & Bikeway Transportation Plan recommends improvements for pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure in support of the City's overarching transportation and mobility goals. The document covers tools for improvements, design concepts for prioritized corridors, the Norwalk River Valley Trail Improvements, design guidelines and other recommendations such as educational outreach programs. Strawberry Hill Avenue and Winfield Street within the neighborhood were prioritized as Tier 1 corridors. Tier 2 corridors within the

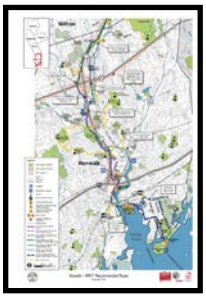
neighborhood are Gregory Blvd., Seaview Avenue, and East Avenue. This plan is well underway to implementation. The following upgrades have recently been made or are about to be made to these corridors. This Plan elaborates on next steps for further improvements to enhance overall connectivity and safety based on community feedback on the success of these measures so far.

Tier 1 Corridors

- Strawberry Hill Avenue: Sharrows were added within the neighborhood. Dedicated bike lanes, sidewalk improvements, crosswalk improvements, and wayfinding signage have been implemented along this corridor north of the East Avenue area.
- Winfield Street: The redesign for Winfield Street includes the following: sharrows in both directions; sidewalk improvements on one side at each end; wayfinding signage and crosswalk improvements at the intersections of East Avenue and Strawberry Hill Avenue; and additional crosswalk improvements at the Gregory Blvd. intersection.

Tier 2 Corridors

- Gregory Blvd., Seaview Avenue, and East Avenue: These corridors are recommended for further study to implement the tools recommended in the Pedestrian and Bikeway Transportation Plan following the completion of Tier 1 corridor projects. These tools include marked crosswalks, crosswalk signage, pedestrian actuated crossing signals, curb ramps, sidewalks and footpaths, curb extensions, pedestrian refuge islands, sharrows, bicycle lanes, bike boxes, bike pockets, multi-use paths, bicycle racks, lane reduction, and wayfinding.

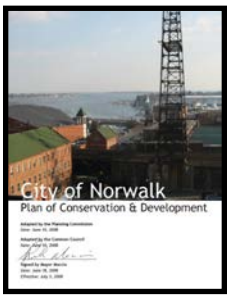


Norwalk River Valley Trail (Began with 1979 Norwalk River Masterplan Study, ongoing)

The Norwalk River Valley Trail is a regional effort dating back to a concept that emerged from the 1979 Norwalk River Masterplan Study for a continuous multi-modal trail. The first segment of the Harbor Loop portion of the trail was built in 1981 at Oysterbend Condominiums and has been continually extended and enhanced ever since. The trail, which will ultimately connect from Calf Pasture Beach in Norwalk, to Rogers Park in Danbury, passing through Wilton, Ridgefield, and Redding, is handicap-accessible and provides recreation opportunities for walkers, hikers, bicyclists, children, and pets. The trail is widely popular and well-supported by the communities. Almost all other plans and studies relating to Norwalk contain some language supporting the trail and its continued implementation, as it offers numerous benefits as social infrastructure and an economic driver.

Norwalk Transportation Management Plan (2012)

The Norwalk Transportation Management Plan provides a broad framework for incorporating multi-modal elements and context-sensitive design practices in the City of Norwalk. The plan identifies specific areas for improvement as well as broader recommendations which address a range of multi-modal transportation needs. The Plan is an extensive document with the aim of moving Norwalk towards a broad, sustainable, multi-modal transportation system. This means creating safe and convenient mobility options for all community members and visitors including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, emergency service operators, automobile drivers, and commercial vehicle operators. In addition to recommending design guidelines, policies, and strategies to address future transportation challenges, the Transportation Management Plan identified locations for "demonstration projects" that the City could prioritize to set an example for best practices and act as catalysts for the implementation of similar upgrades elsewhere. Within the TOD area, East Avenue and Strawberry Hill Avenue were both selected as demonstration locations, but were not extensively redesigned as part of this plan given that other efforts were already underway to make improvements to these corridors as part of the Walk Bridge Program and the Pedestrian and Bikeway Transportation Plan.



City of Norwalk Plan of Conservation and Development (2008)

The City of Norwalk Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) is an update to the previous POCD planning effort (1990) as required per the Connecticut General Statutes. The City of Norwalk Plan of Conservation and Development aims to preserve Norwalk's natural resources and coastal identity while providing opportunities for the city to grow responsibly and prosperously, values which are reflected in the East Norwalk TOD Plan. The POCD was updated again in 2019 as "The Citywide Plan."

East Norwalk Master Plan Recommendations (2004)

The East Norwalk Master Plan Recommendations were the result of an effort led by the East Norwalk Neighborhood Association to guide the discussion of the East Norwalk 2008 Plan of Conservation and Development ("Master Plan"). The document extensively lists recommendations for the Master Plan primarily based on community input. It addresses public policy and approach to planning, people/community and housing, historic assets, infrastructure, public buildings, land use and zoning, environmental hazards and pollution, parks and waterways, urban design and development, and roads and parking. The recommendations emphasize the importance of broad-reaching community engagement throughout the planning process to achieve a bottom-up/community-driven plan. This study provides a comprehensive look at residents' perspectives toward any future planning efforts in East Norwalk.

The Norwalk Harbor Management Plan (Approved 1989; Effective 1990; Amended 1993, 1998, 2009)

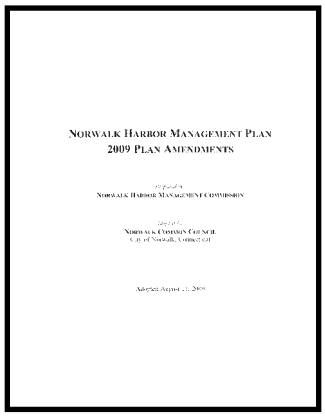
The Norwalk Harbor Management Plan guides regulations and uses around Norwalk's waterfront in respect to ecological, cultural, and economic considerations. The Plan provides 13 goals and objectives for Norwalk's Harbor. Goals 9-11 are particularly relevant to East Norwalk and are picked up and reflected in this TOD report.

- Goal 9: Preservation of Maritime Heritage and City Character
- Goal 10: Public Access to Norwalk Harbor
- Goal 11: Preservation of Quality of Life in Shorefront Neighborhoods.

Figure 7: TIME-LINE OF PLANS AND STUDIES

2004 ENNA Recommendations informed the 2008 POCD, which in turn informed the 2019 Citywide Plan

2012-Present: A focus on multi-modal connectivity



The Norwalk Harbor Management Plan

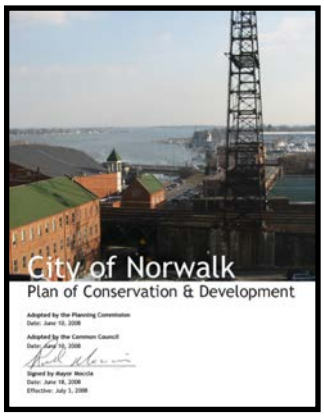
Approved 1989

Effective 1990

Amended 1993; 1998; 2009

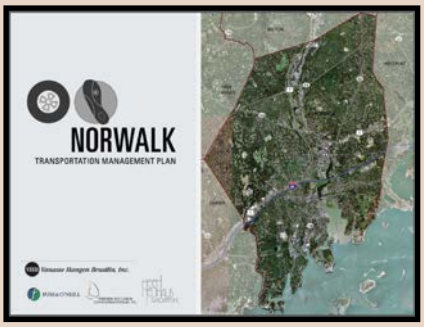
The East Norwalk Neighborhood Association (ENNA) Master Plan Recommendations

2004



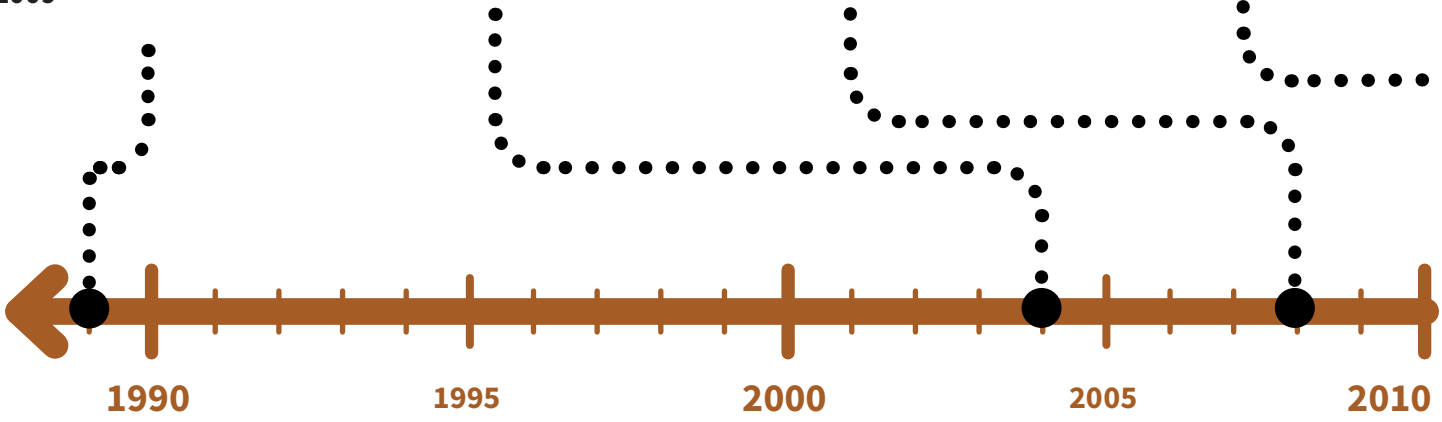
The City of Norwalk Plan of Conservation and Development

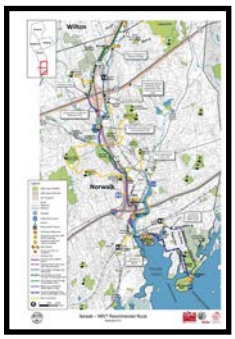
2008



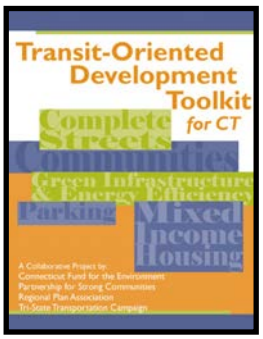
The Norwalk Transportation Management Plan

2012





Norwalk River Valley Trail (NRVT)



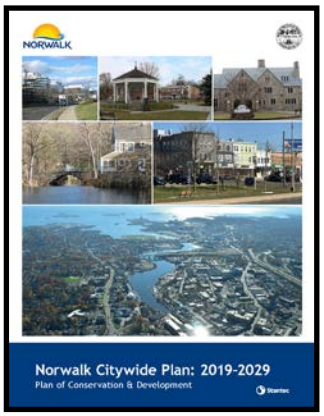
Transit-Oriented Development Toolkit for CT

The Norwalk Pedestrian and Bikeway Transportation Plan

2012

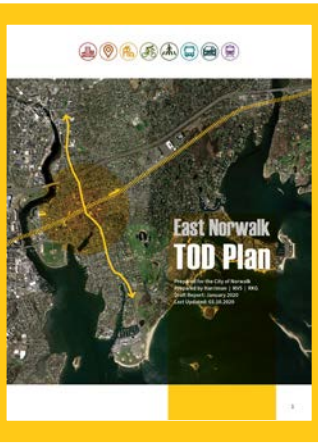
The Norwalk Walk Bridge Program

2019; On-going



The Norwalk Citywide Plan

2019-2029



The East Norwalk Neighborhood TOD Plan

2020

2010 2015 2020 2025 2030

Community Engagement

4.1 March Visioning Workshop

4.2 July Choices Workshop

4.3 November Open House

4.4 Online Surveys

4.5 Stakeholder Interviews

For a full write-up of all community engagement methods and results, see Appendix C.

Community engagement was a key aspect of the planning process for the East Avenue Neighborhood Transit Oriented Development Plan (the Plan). This chapter of the report provides an overview of the methods used and results gathered from public workshops, online surveys, and stakeholder interviews.

An appointed Oversight Committee of critical stakeholders guided the process and provided input. Members of this Oversight Committee included representatives from the Planning Commission, the Zoning Commission, the Third Taxing District, the Finance and Claims Committee, the Planning Committee, the Norwalk Harbor Management Committee, and the Department of Public Works.

Oversight Committee

- Brian Baxendale, Planning Commission
- Deborah Goldstein, Zoning Commission / Third Taxing District until 11/19
- Diane Cece, East Norwalk Neighborhood Association (ENNA)
- Pam Parkington, Third Taxing District as of 11/19.
- Stephanie Thomas, Zoning Commission
- John Kydes, Common Council
- Judith Dominguez, East Norwalk Business Association (ENBA)
- Vanessa Valadares, Department of Public Works

The planning team reviewed feedback from the community process with the City Planning Department and the Oversight Committee. Input from both on the results from community engagement and the analyses conducted by the planning team allowed the team to identify feasible recommendations that are in line with the community's vision for the future of East Norwalk. The Plan is therefore the result of close collaboration among the community, the Oversight Committee, the City, and the planning team.

4

Figure 8: VISIONING WORKSHOP

Participants at the March 2019 Visioning Workshop identify missing land uses around the East Norwalk Train Station.

Process and Participation

The planning process included the following:

- Fourteen meetings with the City Planner and Oversight Committee
- Stakeholder interviews
- Three public workshops
- Two online surveys

Stakeholder interviews early in the process established themes and focus areas for the planning team's research and analysis and for the public workshops.

The time and day of the week of each workshop was varied in an effort to make the workshops more accessible to community members with conflicting schedules, and all workshops were centrally located in City Hall. The March workshop was held on a Saturday morning, the July workshop on a Thursday evening, and the final open house was on a Monday evening. In addition, two online surveys were distributed to extend the reach of the public workshops to those who were unable to attend in person.

The planning team analysed data gathered from the public, who translated that data into findings and graphics which it then presented at the following workshop. This iterative process allowed for each public meeting to build off of the input from the previous one, creating a transparent planning process where participants were continually shown the results of previous engagement and able to provide input on the analysis, conclusions, and implications. The Oversight Committee and public participants provided feedback on progress as well as input on next steps.

The planning process saw a high level of participation from the community:

Figure 9: COMMENT CARD

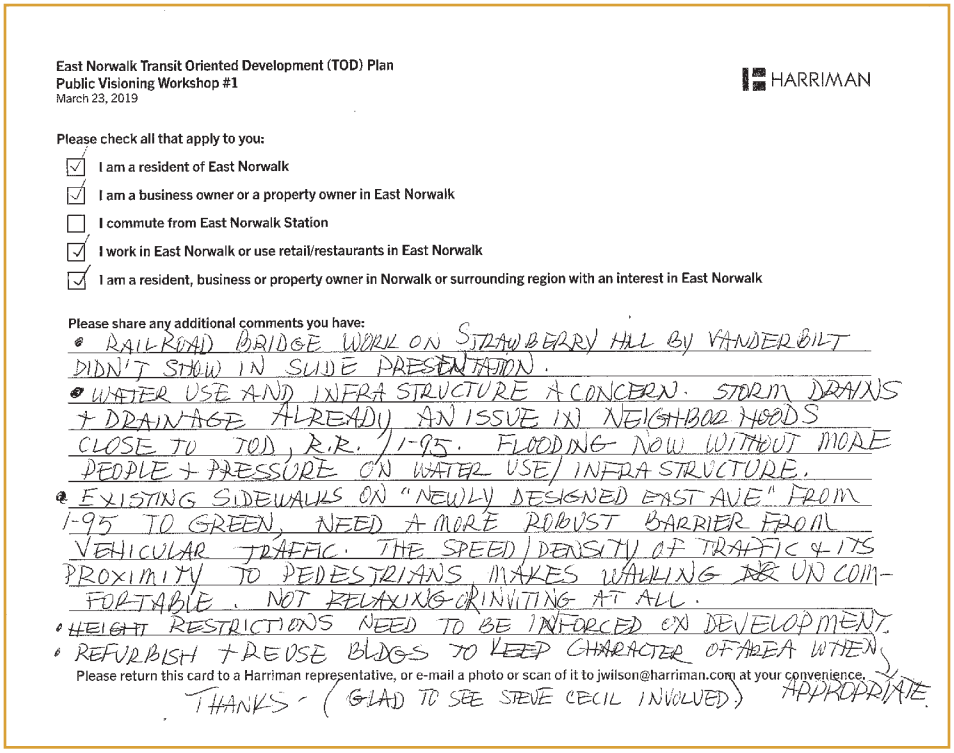
March Visioning Workshop	**3/23/2019**	**77 Attendees***
July Choices Workshop	**7/25/2019**	**73 Attendees***
November Open House	**11/9/2019**	**50 Attendees***
Online Visual Preference Survey	**7/30/2019 - 9/6/2019**	**121 Respondents**
Online Commuter Survey	**7/31/2019 - 10/15/2019**	**61 Respondents**
Stakeholder Interviews	**4/29/2019**	**15 Participants**

**Represents the number of attendees who signed in, the actual attendance numbers were higher.*

Outreach Tools

In order to raise awareness of this process in the community and promote participation, the planning team and the City coordinated the distribution of information in English and Spanish by distributing business cards, flyers, postcards, and displaying digital roadside signage. These efforts were extended to online and social media platforms as well. A Spanish Translator was available at public workshops. The planning team sought to ensure that this planning process was as transparent and accessible to as much of the population as possible.

Figure 10: COMMENT CARD



East Norwalk Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Plan
Public Visioning Workshop #1
March 23, 2019

HARRIMAN

Please check all that apply to you:

- [x] I am a resident of East Norwalk
- [x] I am a business owner or a property owner in East Norwalk
- [ ] I commute from East Norwalk Station
- [x] I work in East Norwalk or use retail/restaurants in East Norwalk
- [x] I am a resident, business or property owner in Norwalk or surrounding region with an interest in East Norwalk

Please share any additional comments you have:

- RAILROAD BRIDGE WORK ON STRAWBERRY HILL BY VANDERBILT DIDN'T SHOW IN SLIDE PRESENTATION.
- WATER USE AND INFRA STRUCTURE A CONCERN. STORM DRAINS + DRAINAGE ALREADY AN ISSUE IN NEIGHBORHOODS CLOSE TO TOD, R.R. / I-95. FLOODING NOW WITHOUT MORE PEOPLE + PRESSURE ON WATER USE / INFRA STRUCTURE.
- EXISTING SIDEWALKS ON "NEWLY DESIGNED EAST AVE." FROM I-95 TO GREEN, NEED A MORE ROBUST BARRIER FROM VEHICULAR TRAFFIC. THE SPEED / DENSITY OF TRAFFIC & ITS PROXIMITY TO PEDESTRIANS MAKES WALKING ~~DE~~ UN COMFORTABLE. NOT RELAXING OR INVITING AT ALL.
- ~~HEIGHT~~ RESTRICTIONS NEED TO BE INFORCED ON DEVELOPMENT.
- REFURBISH + REUSE BLDGS TO KEEP CHARACTER OF AREA WHEN APPROPRIATE.

Please return this card to a Harriman representative, or e-mail a photo or scan of it to jwilson@harriman.com at your convenience.

THANKS - (GLAD TO SEE STEVE CECIL INVOLVED)

A comment card received at the first public workshop in March 2019.

4.1 March Visioning Workshop

The first public visioning workshop was held on the morning of Saturday, March 23, 2019 at City Hall. Harriman, RKG, and NV5 facilitated three exercises with 77 attendees. The exercises asked the audience to think about their perceptions of East Norwalk's identity, the navigational and accessible challenges of their daily lives, and their aspirations for the future of their neighborhood.

The data taken from these exercises revealed patterns of the challenges that East Norwalk residents face on a daily basis, as well as the opportunities to strengthen the identity and resiliency of the community. This chapter summarizes the data gathered and the key sentiments expressed at this workshop.

Comment Cards

At the first public visioning workshop on the morning of Saturday, March 23, 2019, 77 participants signed in and 50 turned in comment cards. Of the participants who filled out comment cards, 40 checked off that they are a resident of East Norwalk, 20 checked off that they are a business or property owner in East Norwalk, 11 said they commute from East Norwalk, 18 work in East Norwalk or patronize East Norwalk retail and restaurants, and 12 checked off that they are a resident, business, or property owner in Norwalk or the surrounding region with an interest in East Norwalk.

The comment cards asked four questions:

1. What does the area have now that you want to keep?
2. What does the area have now that you don't want to keep?
3. What would you add to the area that it doesn't have now?
4. What would you not add to the area that it doesn't have now?

The responses were evaluated through the creation of word clouds. Phrases and text were pulled out and entered into a word cloud generator for each question. Phrases or words that only showed up once or twice in the comments are expressed as small text in the cloud; the more frequently a phrase or word was used, the larger it appears in the cloud.

Mapping and Perceptions

The first facilitated exercise was a quick 10-minute warm-up which asked participants to draw a map of their neighborhood from memory in the space provided on a given worksheet. This activity was inspired by Kevin Lynch's approach to mapping neighborhood character. When drawn from memory, the maps reveal the elements and landmarks that stand out and become icons or way-finding devices, and everything that is not significant is left off the map all together. After completing their maps, participants were asked to draw a happy face and a sad face on the locations that they enjoyed the most and the least. This set the groundwork for the next exercise, which looked more deeply at why those specific locations elicited such strong emotions.

Routes

The second exercise revealed opportunities and challenges related to mobility. In this group mapping exercise, participants were asked to locate the places that they lived, worked, shopped or dined out, played, or ran into neighbors. This began to reveal clusters of destinations. Next, participants were asked to describe how they move between these destinations – identifying the route and the mode of transportation.

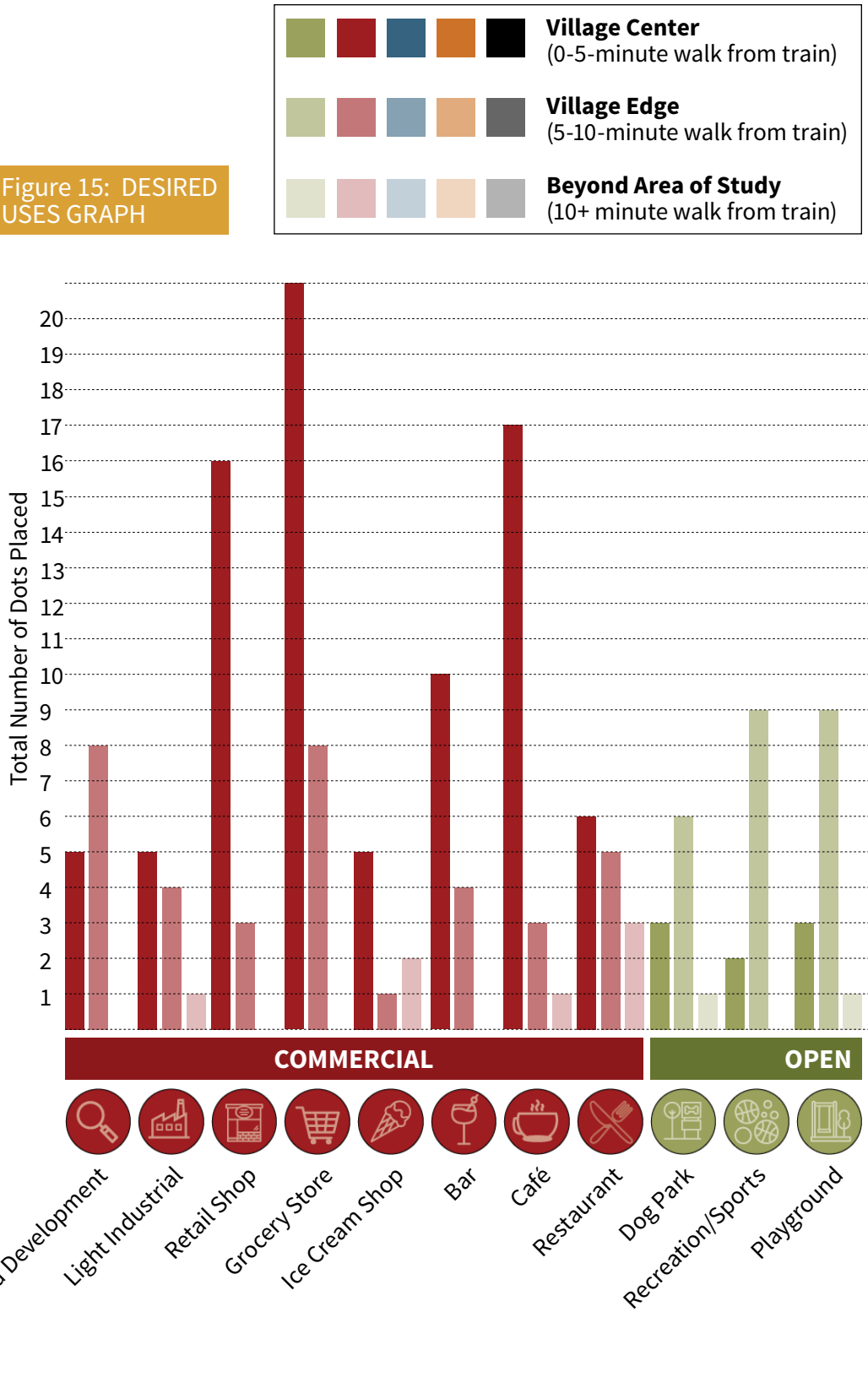
Figure 11: WHAT DOES THE AREA HAVE NOW THAT YOU WANT TO KEEP?

Figure 12: WHAT DOES THE AREA HAVE NOW THAT YOU DON'T WANT TO KEEP?

Figure 13: WHAT WOULD YOU ADD TO THE AREA THAT IT DOESN'T HAVE NOW?

Figure 14: WHAT WOULD YOU NOT ADD TO THE AREA THAT IT DOESN'T HAVE NOW?

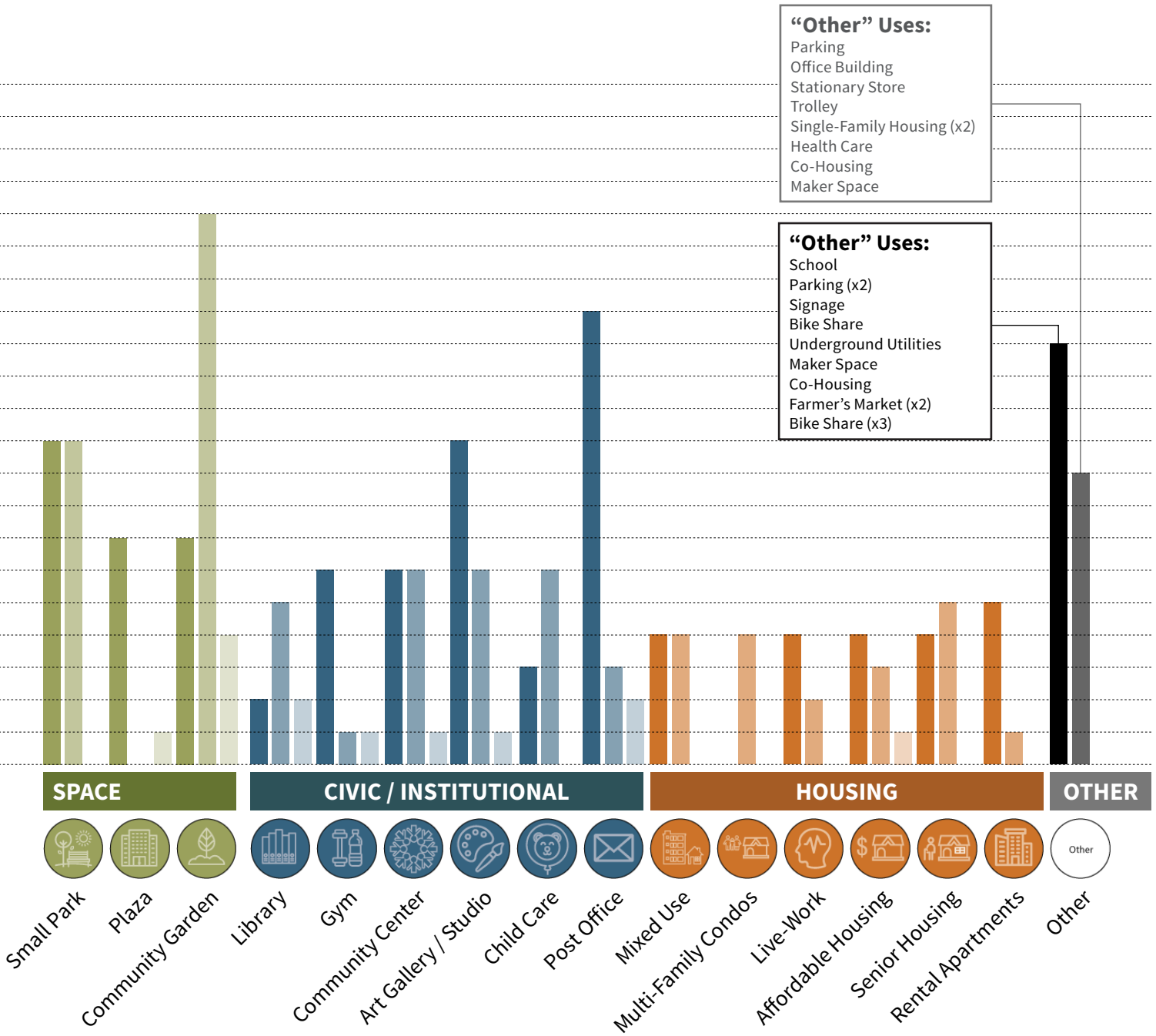
Figure 15: DESIRED USES GRAPH



Aspirations

For the third and final exercise, each participant was given one sheet of stickers corresponding to land uses in the categories of open space, commerce, civic/ institutional, and housing. Facilitators asked which uses they would support adding to the village center (within a 5-minute walk of the train station), the village edge (within a 10-minute walk of the train station), or beyond the area of study (more than a 10-minute walk of the train station) and participants placed their stickers in the appropriate location on the provided boards.

The graph on the following page reveals community aspirations. Open space and commerce come forward as priorities, while housing is less desirable, with many participants expressing a strong aversion to adding more housing, particularly anything taller than 3-4 stories. A grocery store in the village center is the most desired amenity within the village center and a community garden is the most desired amenity within the village edge.


"Other" Uses:
Parking
Office Building
Stationary Store
Trolley
Single-Family Housing (x2)
Health Care
Co-Housing
Maker Space
"Other" Uses:
School
Parking (x2)
Signage
Bike Share
Underground Utilities
Maker Space
Co-Housing
Farmer's Market (x2)
Bike Share (x3)
SPACE
CIVIC / INSTITUTIONAL
HOUSING
OTHER
Other
Small Park
Plaza
Community Garden
Library
Gym
Community Center
Art Gallery / Studio
Child Care
Post Office
Mixed Use
Multi-Family Condos
Live-Work
Affordable Housing
Senior Housing
Rental Apartments
Other

4.2 July Choices Workshop

The purpose of this workshop was to gather feedback through the facilitation of three different exercises. The first was a Visual Preference Survey (VPS)which asked participants to rank their enthusiasm toward 16 images for each of four categories:

- Built Environment – Housing
- Built Environment – Commercial and Mixed Uses
- Connectivity and Access
- Public Space.

The second exercise engaged participants in a discussion of the opportunities and challenges posed by each of three conceptual approaches to the TOD Plan proposed by the planning team:

1. East Avenue as a Main Street
2. Side Street Villages
3. Community of Nodes

The final exercise was a comment card which asked participants to identify which of the sub-areas within the TOD area they felt each planning concept option was most suited to. This provided the planning team with a clear approach to redevelopment that was appropriate to the existing context and would allow the development of a fourth hybrid option containing the desirable elements from each of the other options.

Exercise 1: Visual Preference Survey Results

Attendees at the public meeting on July 25, 2019 at Norwalk City Hall were able to take the VPS in person. The VPS was later posted online so that community members unable to attend the meeting could share their opinion.

For the VPS, attendees were invited to evaluate images within four categories:

- Built Environment: Housing
- Built Environment: Commercial and Mixed Uses
- Connectivity and Access
- Public Space

For housing, participants were asked to consider the height and massing of the building. For commercial and mixed uses, participants were asked to consider the same as well as their preference toward the uses shown. For connectivity and access and public space, participants were asked to evaluate the images based on the aesthetic contribution of the elements shown to the streetscape and/or public realm environment, and the suitability of its function. Participants were asked to rank their enthusiasm toward each image based on its suitability to the context and character of East Norwalk according to the following scale:

2: Highly Desirable

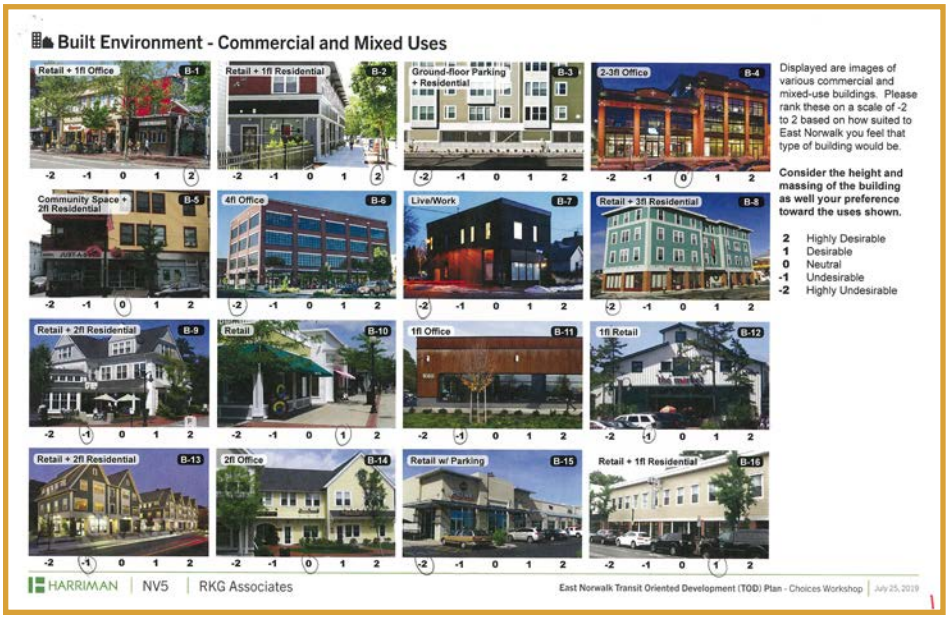
1: Desirable

0: Neutral

-1: Undesirable

-2: Highly Undesirable

Figure 16: VISUAL PREFERENCE SURVEY

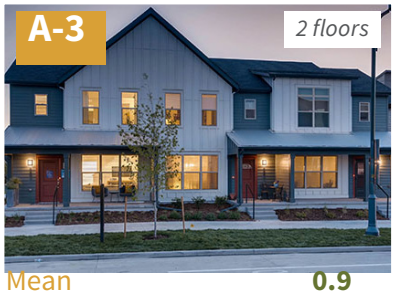
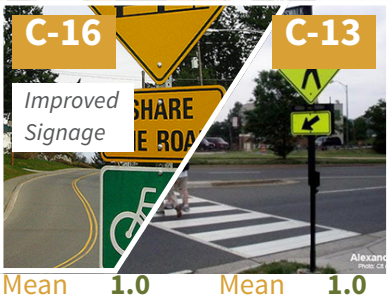


At the public workshop, the community expressed a fairly strong adverse reaction to adding new housing. At both the March and July workshops, participants conveyed that the maximum height of any new development should be 2.5-3 stories. Results from the workshop indicate a preference for retail and restaurant spaces rather than office space. For connectivity and access, results indicate a preference for smaller-scale, more localized interventions rather than any major or sweeping changes. Results indicate community enthusiasm for enhancing and expanding East Norwalk's open space network, especially the opportunity to create more active and lively streetscape environments with added green space and vegetation. Whether discussing housing, commerce, connectivity, or public space, it is clear that there is no one-size-fits-all approach for all of East Norwalk. The TOD Plan should be strategic in locating any interventions and careful not to create new problems by solving existing ones, especially when it comes to traffic and parking. Overall, the community seems to be wary of this planning process and measures should be taken to ensure that future development will be contextually appropriate in enhancing East Norwalk's identity as a coastal New England village.

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

Figure 17: VISUAL PREFERENCE SURVEY RESULTS

MOST PREFERRED IMAGES

CATEGORY	WORKSHOP RESULTS	ONLINE RESULTS	COMBINED RESULTS
HOUSING	Mean 1.0 Standard Deviation 1.2	Mean 0.8 Standard Deviation 0.9	 Mean 0.9 Standard Deviation 1.1
COMMERCIAL AND MIXED-USE	Mean 1.2 Standard Deviation 0.9	Mean 1.2 Standard Deviation 0.8	Mean 1.2 Standard Deviation 0.8
CONNECTIVITY AND ACCESS	 Mean 1.0 Std. Dev. 1.4 Mean 1.0 Std. Dev. 1.2	Mean 0.8 Standard Deviation 1.1	Mean 0.9 Standard Deviation 1.1
PUBLIC SPACE	Mean 1.5 Standard Deviation 0.7	Mean 1.6 Standard Deviation 0.7	Mean 1.5 Std. Dev. 0.7 Mean 1.5 Std. Dev. 0.8

LEAST PREFERRED IMAGES

CATEGORY	WORKSHOP RESULTS	ONLINE RESULTS	COMBINED RESULTS
HOUSING	A-16 — 4 floors Mean -1.9 Standard Deviation 0.4	A-7 — 5 floors Mean -1.4 Standard Deviation 1.0	A-16 — 4 floors Mean -1.6 Standard Deviation 0.8
COMMERCIAL AND MIXED-USE	B-8 — Retail + 3fl Residential Mean -1.5 Standard Deviation 0.9	B-6 — 4fl Office Mean -1.2 Standard Deviation 1.1	B-3 — Ground-floor Parking + Residential / B-6 Mean -1.2 Std. Dev. 1.1 Mean -1.2 Std. Dev. 1.1
CONNECTIVITY AND ACCESS	C-8 — Painted Sharrow Lane in Car Lane Mean -0.7 Standard Deviation 1.4	C-8 — Painted Sharrow Lane in Car Lane Mean -0.8 Standard Deviation 1.2	C-8 — Painted Sharrow Lane in Car Lane Mean -0.8 Standard Deviation 1.3
PUBLIC SPACE	D-9 — Sidewalk - No Planting Mean -0.5 Standard Deviation 1.3	D-9 — Sidewalk - No Planting Mean -0.4 Standard Deviation 1.1	D-9 — Sidewalk - No Planting Mean -0.4 Standard Deviation 1.2

Exercise 3: Comment Cards

After completing the visual preference surveys, participants at the July 25 workshop worked in small focus groups to explore the opportunities and challenges they foresee with each of the three options (1: East Avenue Main Street, 2: Side Street Villages, and 3: Community of Nodes) for development of the East Norwalk TOD area proposed by the planning team. The presentation and workshop facilitators described these concepts to aid participants in gaining a better understanding of what each might mean for the neighborhood. After engaging in these discussions, facilitators asked participants to fill out comment cards. Side A of the cards identified each of the sub-areas within the TOD area and asked participants to identify which of the three proposed options is most suited to each of these sub-areas.

The results were fairly consistent with a general preference toward Option 2, Side Street Villages, with the exception of Option 1, Main Street, being preferred along East Avenue, and the approach of community nodes in the Cove Avenue and Reynolds Street areas. These results, as illustrated by Figure 19, provide a clear direction for moving forward with a hybrid of the three plan options.

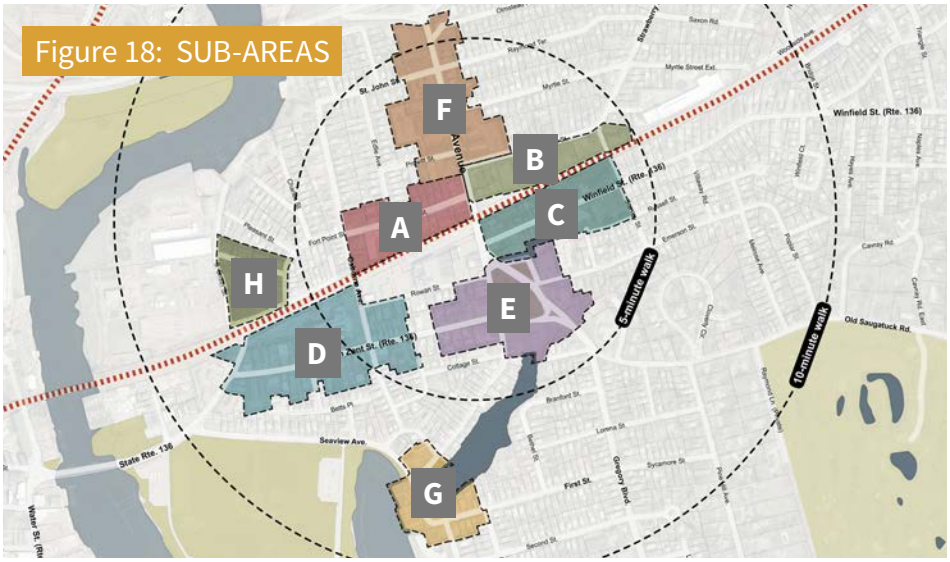
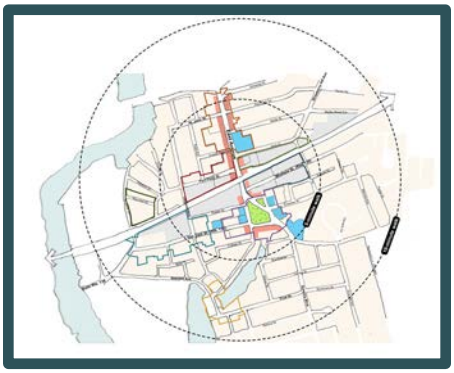
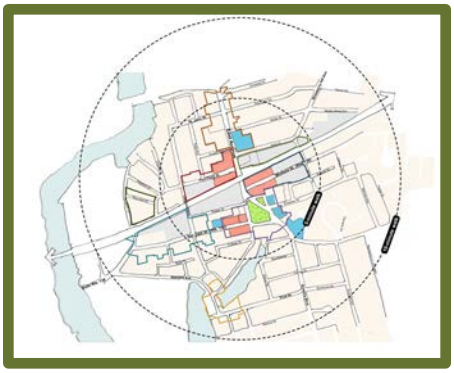


Figure 18: SUB-AREAS

EAST AVENUE MAIN STREET



SIDE STREET VILLAGES



COMMUNITY OF NODES

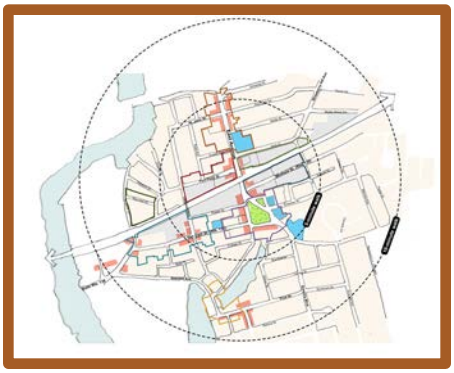
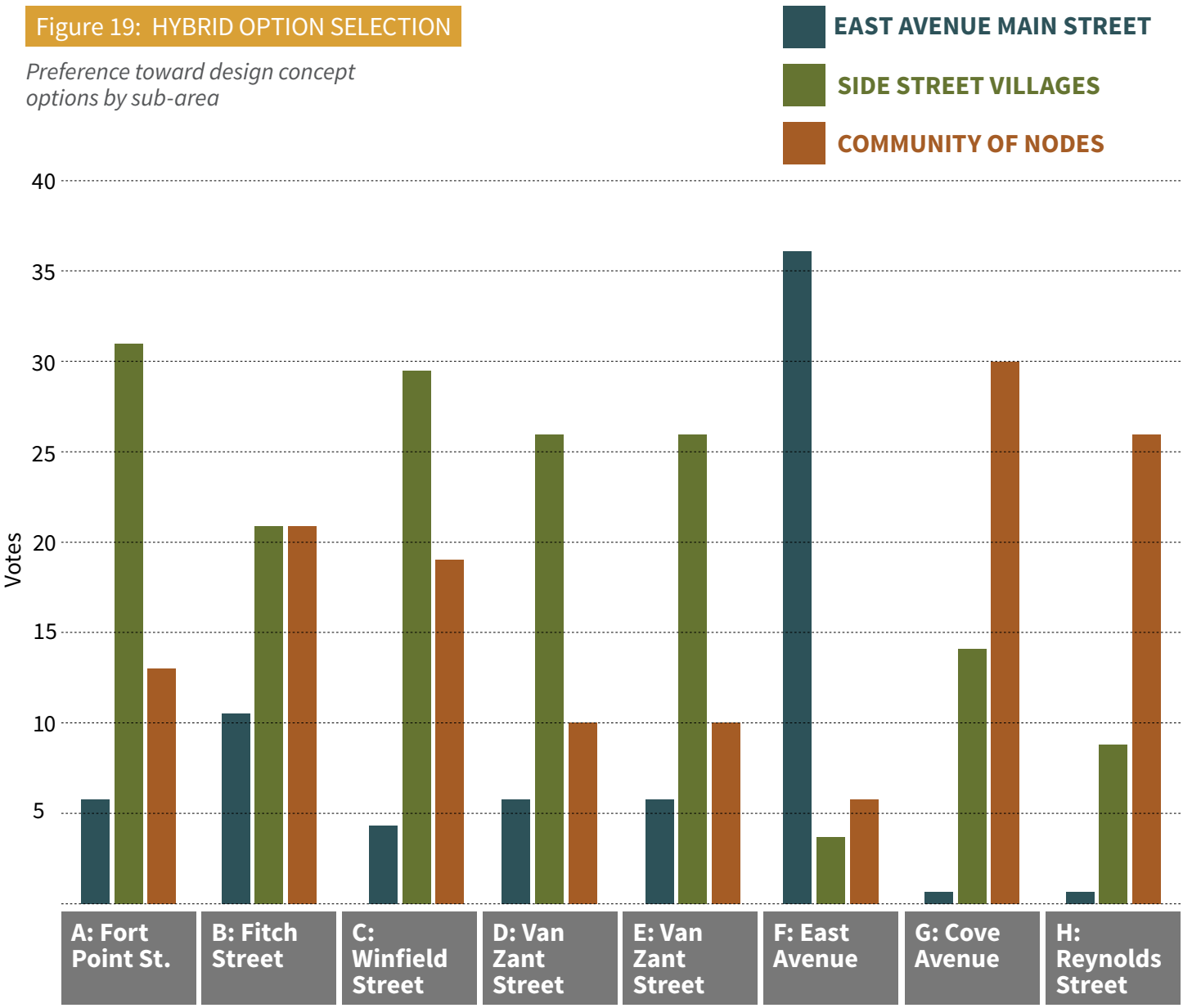


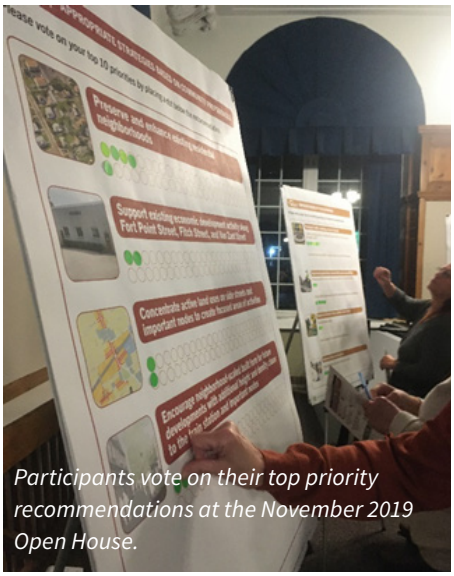
Figure 19: HYBRID OPTION SELECTION

Preference toward design concept options by sub-area



4.3 November Open House

The open house took place on Monday, November 9, 2019 at Norwalk City Hall from 6:30-8:30pm to share progress and gather feedback on the Plan. The meeting began with a presentation led by Harriman and RKG which provided an overview of the project, summarized the community engagement process, identified opportunities and challenges, discussed criteria for planning, described the "keys to success" and recommendations for TOD in East Norwalk, and shared next steps in the process. Fifty attendees signed in at the meeting. The presentation was followed by about 20 minutes of questions from the audience answered by members of the planning team.



Participants vote on their top priority recommendations at the November 2019 Open House.

Following the first round of questions and answers, participants were provided the opportunity to circulate the room to review the boards on display. The boards offered a more detailed overview of the TOD planning process to date and addressed the following topics (1 board per topic):

- What is a Typical Transit Oriented Development Plan?
- What is the East Norwalk TOD Plan?
- Three Concepts for the East Norwalk TOD Area
- March Visioning Workshop – What We Heard
- July Choices Workshop – What We Heard
- Appropriate Strategies Based on Community Preferences
- Summary of Recommendations
- Development Feasibility in East Norwalk
- Norwalk's Market for Development

Four interactive boards provided participants an opportunity to vote on the prioritization of recommendations. Each participant was given a set of 10 sticker dots to vote with.

Highest Priority Recommendations:

- Wider sidewalks, mid-block crossings, pocket parks, plazas, community gardens, and publicly accessible open spaces
- Traffic calming tools and methods to slow traffic and discourage cut-through traffic
- Preserve and enhance existing residential neighborhoods

Lowest Priority Recommendations:

- Examine two-way traffic circulation options around the cemetery
- Road signage to increase driver awareness
- Increase turn-over of prime on-street parking

4.4 Online Surveys

Visioning Workshop - Community Feedback Questionnaire

4/2/2019 - 6/1/2019

The first online survey was a digital version of the comment card that was handed out at the first community visioning workshop. Sixty-one community members responded to the four prompts via SurveyMonkey. Their responses were grouped and analyzed with the responses from the in-person workshop previously discussed in this section.

Choices Workshop - Community Feedback Questionnaire

7/30/2019 - 9/6/2019

A second survey was open from the end of July through early September to expand the scope of participation in the July choices workshop. The same visual preference survey that was provided at the July Workshop was made available online via SurveyMonkey. 121 community members responded. The results of this online survey were added to the results from the in-person workshop and analyzed collectively as discussed previously in this section and in *Appendix C: Community Engagement.*

Commuter Questionnaire

8/1/2019 - 8/22/2019

In late August, NV5 conducted a survey targeted toward commuters which informed their analysis of the transportation conditions in East Norwalk. The full summary of results for this survey is included in *Appendix C: Community Engagement.*

Figure 20: MARCH VISIONING WORKSHOP

Participants at the March 2019 Visioning Workshop collaborated in small focus groups.

4.5 Stakeholder Interviews

Methods

Stakeholder interviews were conducted with small groups and individuals offering critical perspectives and insights on existing conditions and trends in East Norwalk. The interviews were conducted in person, facilitated by members of the planning team, on April 29, 2019. The following questions were used to guide the conversations:

- What are the challenges in this area in your opinion?
- What are the assets or opportunities that you think we should definitely consider while planning?
- What are the plans of the organization you represent?
- What do you see as the challenges for development/ parking/walking/biking/ recreation?
- What do you think can spur reinvestment in this area?
- What do you think are the market conditions?

Interviewees

- Kim Morton, Norwalk Transit District, and Britt Liotta
- Michael DiScala, developer
- Pam Parkington and Kevin Barber, 3rd Taxing District
- Nancy Rosett, Chair of the Norwalk Walk/Bike Commission
- East Norwalk Neighborhood Association (ENNA)
    - Mark Albertson
    - Jan Nelson Broome
    - Diane Cece
    - Roberta DiBisceglie
    - Sarah Hunter
    - Marrianne Johansson
    - Megan McNeill
- East Norwalk Business Association (ENBA)
    - Judith Dominguez, ENBA President
    - Marc Nieto, Nieto Properties
    - Vincent Scicchitano, Fitch Street (Accurate Auto Repair)
    - Winthrop Baum, ENBA President (WEB Realty Company)
    - Jason Minoff, 19 Fort Point Street (Perfect Plantings LLC.)
    - Ray Schaer, 74 Fort Point Street (Hanes Precision Industries)
    - Norma Zukim, 215 Liberty Square (Rowlinson Agency Inc.)
    - Jim Blair, 215 Liberty Square (Rowlinson Agency Inc.)
    - Richard Tavella, Rick's Main Roofing
    - Robert Kunkel, Harbor Harvest

Themes

The themes and related feedback listed in this section emerged from the conversations had with stakeholders at these interviews. These comments have been edited for the purposes of maintaining language consistency, but the intent of each remains intact. These comments reflect individual perceptions and opinions.

Transit

- Service to East Norwalk Train Station is limited, a comprehensive transit operations analysis is in the works and will evaluate opportunities to connect the East Norwalk Station to the South Norwalk Station to provide commuters with more options and better access to frequent rail service.
- The planned development at 230 East Avenue may be an ideal location for a local transit connection.
- People from East Norwalk are more likely to go to Saugatuck Station because there is more parking and more service available.

Connectivity

- It is critical to make East Norwalk more walkable and bikeable. East Avenue is especially challenging.
- Improving the conditions of sidewalks is vital, especially within the five to ten minute walk radii of the station to reduce car-dependence which exacerbates traffic and parking challenges.
- Sidewalk repair is currently the responsibility of property-owners, which has led to a high level of neglect and disrepair.
- Crossing East Avenue is a challenge because of the heavy traffic and lack of adequate pedestrian infrastructure.
- Some businesses offer discounts to customers who walk or bike to their business.
- The Norwalk Bike and Pedestrian Plan aims to connect public amenities such as Calf Pasture Beach and incorporate the East Coast Greenway in connecting to larger Citywide bicycle infrastructure networks as part of the Norwalk River Valley Trail.

Traffic

- Cut through traffic from I-95 causes issues for the community.
- Truck traffic is a major challenge for the East Norwalk community contributing to severe congestion problems.
- Events such as the Boat Show or Taste of Norwalk create immense traffic challenges.
- Streets are too narrow to handle the traffic flow. Widening East Avenue may help, but would require the City to take some private property.
- There are concerns of the SoNo Mall development causing even worse traffic challenges.

Parking

- There is a lack of adequate parking at the station. Conflicts continually arise between commuters, residents, and business owners all competing for limited parking space and access.
- The current parking situation surrounding East Norwalk Station is an assembly of multiple owners and arrangements.
- The two main goals related to parking should be to improve safety and convenience.
- The City should streamline mechanisms for parking permitting and paying for parking.
- Saint Thomas' Church heavily utilizes its parking lots with the exception of Saturday mornings.
- The 7th Day Adventist Church does not have an adequate supply of parking to support its diverse congregation of primarily French and Creole-speaking community members, who carpool to the church services. There is an informal agreement with the neighboring bank to allow church parking to overflow onto their lot.
- There needs to be better parking enforcement.

Figure 21: EAST AVENUE

East Avenue: Saint Thomas Church and Penny's Diner.

Development

- Two parcels on Fort Point Street currently offering around 100 parking spaces will be removed with the implementation of the Walk-Bridge program and the placement of utilities underground.
- There is a trend for older and 2-3-family homes to be converted into multifamily rentals. These rentals do not comply with code and are not adequately invested in by property owners, resulting in overall lower property values.
- Saint Thomas Church may consider selling their property if zoning conditions were modified to create incentives for redevelopment.
- The owner of the DiScala property between the cemetery and Mill Pond is interested in redeveloping, but current zoning limits any building height to 35' and includes a limit of 1 dwelling unit per 1,650 square feet of land. If zoning could accommodate a limit of 1 unit per 800 square feet and a parking requirement of 1.3 spaces per unit, redevelopment would be far more feasible. This particular site has added constraints with drainage easements and flooding issues. The Owner is willing and open to negotiating a public amenity, such as access to the water through their site, in exchange for these added development incentives.

Market Conditions

- There is no market for office space in East Norwalk.
- Condos are taxed the same as single-family dwelling units, making them extremely expensive and difficult to sell. The market only supports rentals as a result, limiting access to home ownership and opportunities for desired mixed-use development in East Norwalk.
- A low population density contributes to low rents.
- The construction of the new SoNo Mall will have a major impact on retail and will likely cause Westport Center to "empty out." Westport Center is offering free parking as an incentive to generate more foot traffic.
- The City should focus on supporting small and local businesses, who are struggling to combat the Amazon effect.
- The City should develop programming to attract, support, and retain younger demographics who currently have limited opportunities to live and or work in East Norwalk.

Urban Design

- East Norwalk should promote "live, work, shop."
- There is a desire for a variety of retail spaces with indoor and outdoor green spaces and common areas.
- The City should prioritize the redevelopment of blighted parcels.

Open Space/Environment

- Flooding is a major issue for East Norwalk during heavy storm events.
- The Third Taxing District can acquire property and park land.
- There are potential industrial brownfield sites north-west of the train station.

Identity/Character

- The City should strive to maintain East Norwalk's "New England character" and "neighborhood feel." This character in itself actually increases property value; how can the City allow for more density while preserving and enhancing the value of East Norwalk's coastal identity?
- East Norwalk is nothing like South Norwalk and a far cry from Wall Street; a more parallel comparison would be with Old Greenwich, Port Chester, NY or Port Jefferson, NY.
- East Norwalk is a residential area in a big City, with many distinct sub-identities within the multiple East Norwalk neighborhoods.
- Destinations such as Marvin Beach, Calf Pasture Beach, and the Parks lend themselves to enhancing East Norwalk's character.

Communications

- Road construction and infrastructure improvements need to be better communicated and coordinated with business and property owners to minimize disruption to business operations and patronage.
- There is lack of coordination or communication between businesses, utility companies, law enforcement and the City. Business owners suffer when there is work in front of their business without them knowing about it. Many times, they cannot run their businesses and are forced to send employees and customers away because there was no communication about the work and police/ utility companies have shut them down for a day. Road closures and diversions need to be coordinated to minimize disruption to businesses and services, and need to be communicated in advance. We strongly recommend coming up with a clear line of communication to convey utility work and construction plans to residents and business owners who will be impacted.
- There needs to be a long-term strategy and coordinated effort among all the many construction projects planned to take place in the next five years. There needs to be a clear implementation plan to minimize disruption to the way of life for East Norwalk residents and businesses. 350-500 businesses could be impacted and may choose to relocate if years of construction is going to make running a profitable business highly challenging.
- No one knows the current status of the East Avenue reconstruction project.

Existing Conditions Analysis

5.1 Land Use and Current Projects

5.2 Existing Zoning

5.3 Parcel Sizes

5.4 Property Ownership

5.5 Circulation and Access

5.6 Sanitation, Stormwater, and Flooding

5.7 Sea Level Rise

5.8 Market Analysis

5.1 Land Use and Current Projects

The study area (the TOD area) used for the analysis in this plan is bounded by the half-mile radius from the East Norwalk Train Station. It is comprised primarily of residential parcels with the exception of commercial corridors along the train tracks and East Avenue, which intersect at the Train Station. Institutional parcels break up the continuity of the commercial uses along East Avenue, generating a cluster of commercial activity near Exit 16 off Interstate-95 and another cluster near the train station.

Smaller, neighborhood-oriented commercial centers include Cove Avenue and Liberty Square. Liberty Square commercial uses include auto-oriented uses; the square serves as a transitional area connecting East Norwalk to South Norwalk via the Washington Street Bridge. Light industrial land uses cluster along the Norwalk Riverfront on the periphery of the neighborhood.

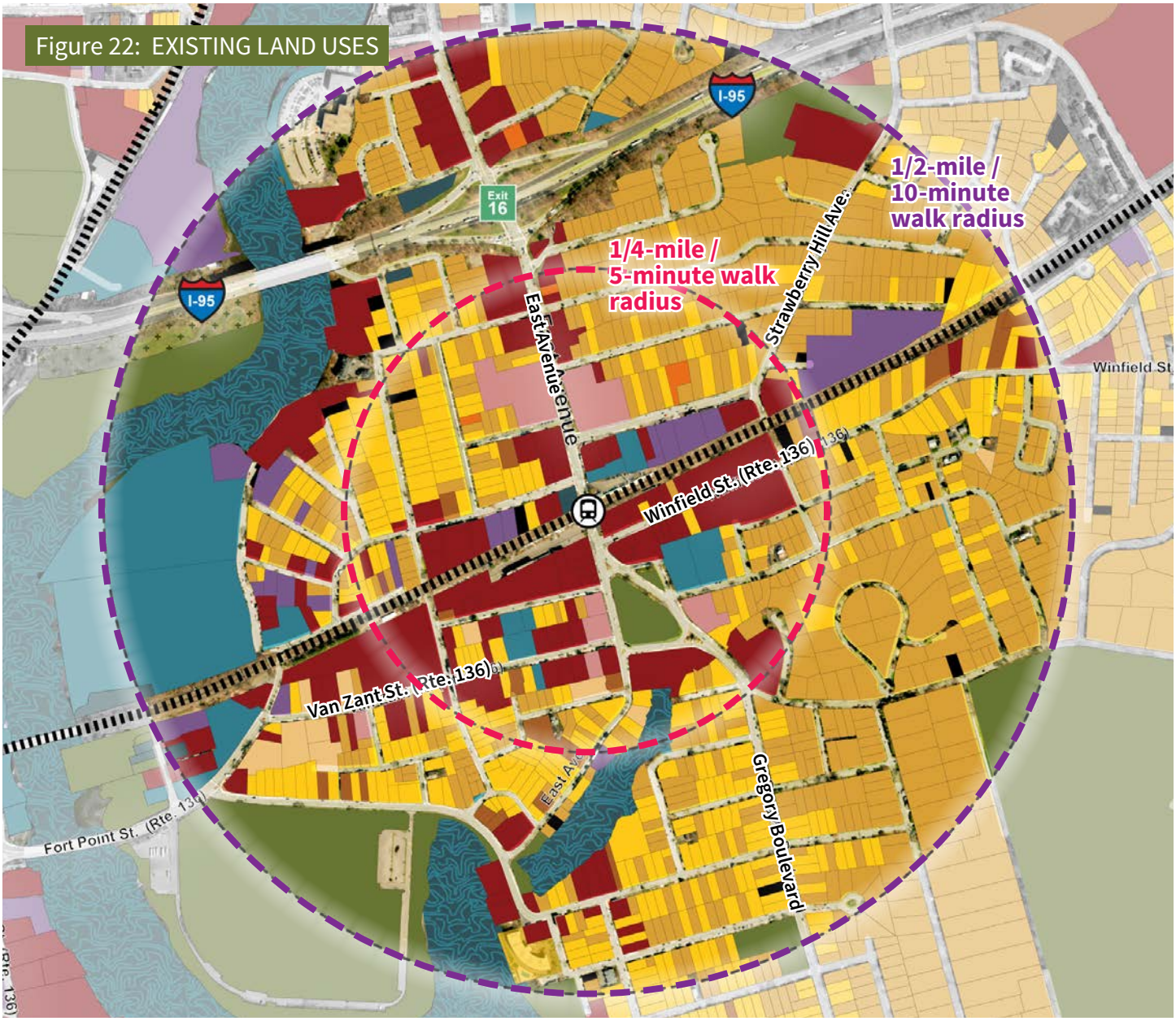
Across the river, South Norwalk has comparatively higher density within its residential areas. To the northeast, Westport has comparatively lower density than East Norwalk. East Norwalk serves as a transitional zone between these higher and lower levels of density, giving it a distinct character and identity from the rest of the city.

Figure 4622 Legend

- Industrial
- Commercial
- Municipal
- Mixed Use
- Religious
- State-Owned
- Charitable Non-profit
- Single-Family
- Apartments
- Multifamily
- Vacant
- Condos
- Open Space

5

Figure 22: EXISTING LAND USES



An industrial zone runs the length of the railroad tracks, intersecting a commercial zone running the length of East Avenue.

5.2 Existing Zoning

The following zones overlap with the TOD area (see Figure 23):

- Neighborhood Business (NB)
- Industrial – 1 (I-1)
- Residence Zone A
- Residence Zone AA
- Residence Zone AAA
- Residence Zone B
- Residence Zone C
- Residence Zone D
- A small corner of the East Avenue Village District (EVD) zone overlaps the TOD area north of Interstate-95. Since this Plan focuses on the conditions south of the highway, this EVD zone was not extensively studied as part of this analysis.

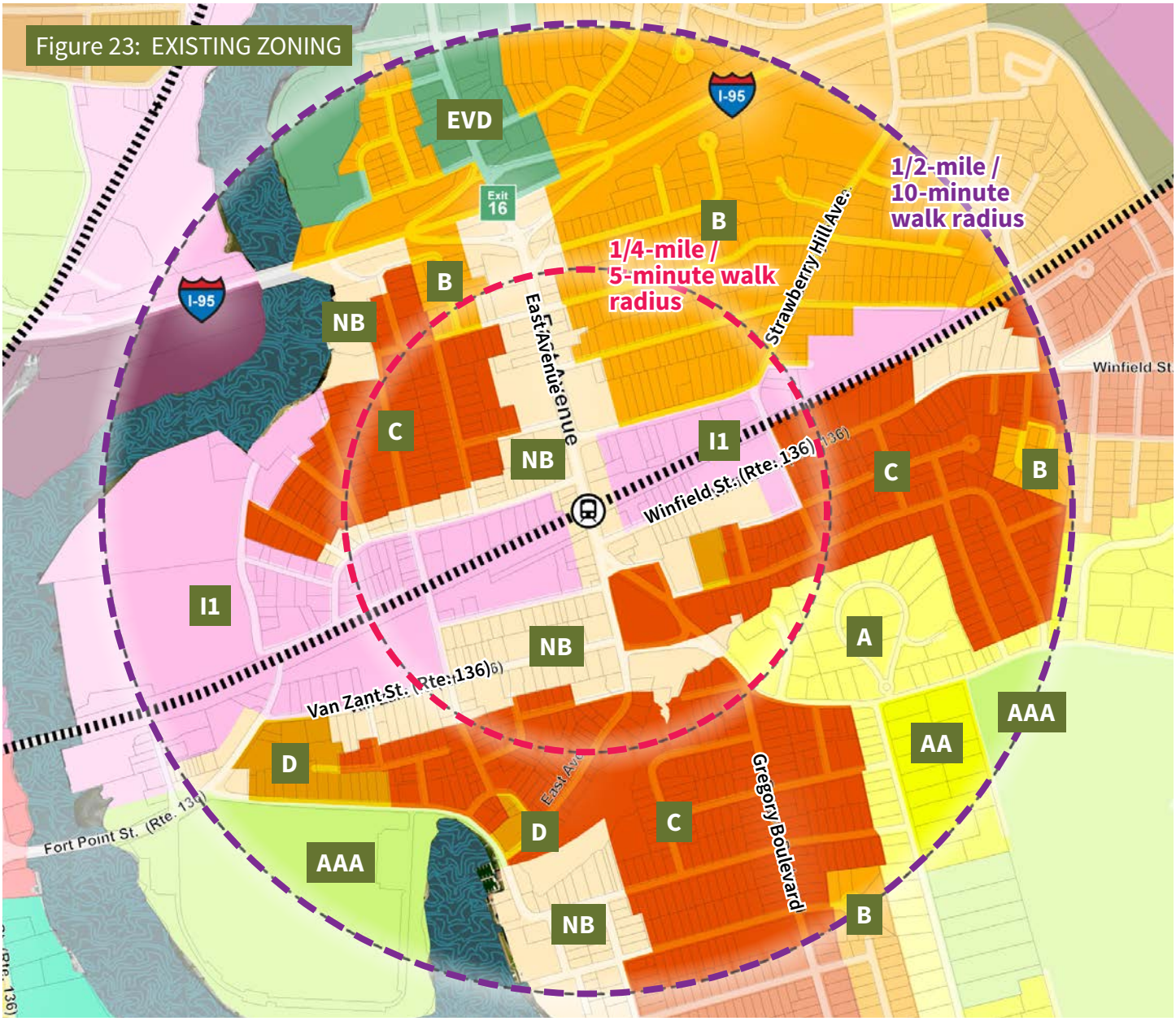
No zoning overlays, special districts, or design guidelines currently apply within the TOD area. Although the overall planning area is not located within a flood zone, there are known flood risks along Seaview Avenue, Mill Pond, and South Smith Street. Just over half of this area is within the Coastal Area Management Boundary (CAM).

Based on this study, there are no zoning changes anticipated for the Residence Zones A, AA, AAA, and B as these are stable residential districts with long-term ownership patterns.

Figure 24 provides an overview of the uses allowed As-of-Right and with Special Permit for the zones affecting the TOD area.

Figure 25 provides an overview of the height and bulk limitations applicable to Neighborhood Business, Industrial #1, and Residence Zones D, C and B.

Figure 23: EXISTING ZONING



An industrial zone runs the length of the railroad tracks, intersecting a commercial zone running the length of East Avenue.

Figure 24: EXISTING ZONING OVERVIEW OF USES

ZONES	USES ALLOWED AS-OF-RIGHT	USES ALLOWED BY SPECIAL PERMIT
NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS (NB)	Allowed: Single and two-family dwellings; multifamily (fewer than 12 units); retail stores and personal businesses (gross area less than 8,000 sq. ft.); offices (gross area less than 8,000 sq. ft.); restaurants (gross area less than 2,500) banks and financial institutions; places of worship; schools, including nursery schools and child day-care; marinas; parks, playgrounds, community centers; museums and libraries, off-street parking facilities; fire stations; and boutique manufacturing (accessory to retail use).	Multifamily dwellings (more than 12 units), including elderly and congregate housing; retail stores and personal businesses (gross area more than 8,000 sq. ft.); offices (gross area more than 8,000 sq. ft.); restaurants (gross area more than 2,500); distilleries/brew pubs; commercial recreation; gas stations and sale and service of vehicles; public utility supply or storage; halfway, boarding and rooming houses; group, convalescent, and nursing, homes.
INDUSTRIAL-1 (I1)	Manufacturing, processing, assembly of goods; warehouse, storage, and wholesale distribution; transportation and bus storage terminals; public utility supply and storage facilities; building materials sale and storage yards (including contractor's storage yard); offices, banks, financial institutions and contractors' offices; all principal uses permitted in the Marine Commercial Zone; retail stores, personal and business services establishments, restaurants and taverns; printing establishments; municipal sewage treatment facilities; research and development facilities; off-street parking facilities; and all uses, including special permit uses, permitted in C Residence Zone; off-street parking facilities; oil or petroleum storage less than 20,000 gallons; propane storage less than 30,000 gallons; indoor contractor parking facility; Brew Pub/Distillery	Municipal utility plant or storage yard; oil and petroleum storage over 20,000 gallons; propane gas storage more than 30,000 gallons; asphalt and concretes plants and recycling operations, rock crushing/processing facilities; motor vehicle storage and junkyards; solid waste transfer stations, recycling and composting centers, and related facilities; commercial recreation; hotels; adult day care centers; helicopter landing sites; animal care centers; multifamily and mixed use developments*.

NOTE: All uses, including special permit uses, may have additional restrictions. Please see *https://www.norwalkct.org/203/Building-Zone-Regulations* for additional information.

ZONES	USES ALLOWED AS-OF-RIGHT	USES ALLOWED BY SPECIAL PERMIT
All Residential Zones	Single-family detached dwelling; parks and playgrounds; farms, truck gardens and nurseries. neighborhood clubhouses.	Public museums; places of worship, churches and church buildings; schools; public utility supply or storage facilities; firehouses; golf clubs; waterfront clubs; and athletic field facilities.
AAA RESIDENCE	All Residential Zones.	All Residential Zones, and conservation development; full-service/all-season restaurant in a public park; nursery schools or child day-care centers.
AA RESIDENCE	All Residential Zones.	All Residential Zones, and public and private colleges and universities; schools or institutions for the mentally retarded, physically handicapped or the emotionally or developmentally disabled; cemeteries; youth day camps; conservation development; convalescent or nursing homes; congregate housing; nursery schools or child day-care centers.
A RESIDENCE	All Residential Zones.	Same as AA Residence, and maternity homes in existing accessory structures; commercial communication antennas.
B RESIDENCE	All Residential Zones.	Same as AA Residence, except conservation development, and planned residential, developments; halfway houses; group homes.
C RESIDENCE	All Residential Zones, and two-family detached dwellings.	Same as B Residence, and community residences; public or nonprofit community center; elderly housing.
D RESIDENCE	C Residence, and multifamily (less than 12 dwelling units).	Same as C Residence, and multifamily (more than 12 dwelling units); boarding or rooming houses; nonprofit technical schools.

Figure 25: EXISTING ZONING HEIGHT AND BULK LIMITATIONS

ZONE	MAXIMUM HEIGHT		MINIMUM SIZE OF PLOT		MAXIMUM BUILDING AREA
			AREA	WIDTH	
NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS (NB)	2 1/2 stories and 35 feet	**MINIMUM HEIGHT** 2 stories and 25 feet	5,000 sq ft	50 ft	35% for buildings, 80% for buildings and parking, 20% open space
INDUSTRIAL-1 (I1)	4 stories and 50 feet; 6 stories and 72 feet on lots 30 acres or larger*		5,000 sq ft minimum Multifamily* 800 sq ft per dwelling unit	50 ft	50% for buildings, 90% for buildings and parking; none for multifamily and mixed use developments*
AAA RESIDENCE	2 ½ stories and 35 feet, maximum of 40 feet to peak, with exceptions in flood zones.		43,560 sq ft	150 ft	25%
AA RESIDENCE	As AAA Residence		21,780 sq ft	100 ft	As AAA Residence
A RESIDENCE	2 ½ stories and 35 feet, maximum of 38 feet to peak, with exceptions in flood zones.		12,500 sq ft	100 ft	As AAA Residence
B RESIDENCE	2 ½ stories and 30 feet, maximum of 38 feet to peak, with exceptions in flood zones.		6,250 sq ft	50 ft	25% - 35%
C RESIDENCE *1-2 Dwelling Units*	As B Residence.		5,000 sq ft 1 dwelling unit 6,000 sq ft 2 dwelling units	50 ft	25% - 35%,

** References to multifamily in Industrial 1 are to § 118-700.B(2)(l) which refer to specific parcels at 230 East Avenue as shown on the Transit oriented development at East Norwalk map at https://www.norwalkct.org/203/Building-Zone-Regulations. This map and the zoning related to it pre-dates this TOD study.*

ZONE	MAXIMUM HEIGHT	MINIMUM SIZE OF PLOT		MAXIMUM BUILDING AREA
		AREA	WIDTH	
D RESIDENCE *1-2 Dwelling Units*	As B Residence.	As C Residence.	50 ft	25% - 35%,
3-6 Dwelling Units	2 1/2 stories and 35 feet	1,650 sq ft per dwelling unit; 7,500 sq ft minimum	80 ft	30%; 60% buildings and parking
Over 6 Dwelling Units	3 ½ stories and 40 feet	1,650 sq ft per dwelling unit; 12,000 sq ft minimum	100 ft	25%; 65% buildings and parking
Over 6 Dwelling Units Elderly Housing	As over 6 dwelling units.	1,250 sq ft per dwelling unit	100 ft	25 % for 1 and 2 story buildings 20% for 3 and 4 story buildings
Over 6 Dwelling Units Congregate Housing	As over 6 dwelling units	1,000 sq ft per dwelling unit; 500 sq ft per dwelling unit in Business # 2 zones	100 ft	25%; 65% buildings and parking

Current Parking Requirements

Parking requirements are by use rather than zoning district. The requirements are as follows:

- Single-family: 2 spaces
- Two-family: 4 spaces
- Multi-family (three or more units): 1.3 spaces per dwelling unit.
- Mixed use developments (with residential) the higher of 1.3 spaces per dwelling unit or the required parking for commercial uses and 1 space per residential unit less any reductions based on the formula in the zoning.
- Planned residential development, congregate housing, elderly housing, and artist live work space each ahve different calculations.

ZONE	FLOOR-AREA RATIO MAXIMUM	RECREATION AREA	CALCULATED COMPARATIVE RESIDENTIAL DENSITY
NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS (NB)	0.7	200 sq ft per dwelling unit	26 units per acre
INDUSTRIAL-1 (I1)	1.0; 2.0 for multifamily and mixed use developments*	150 sq ft per dwelling unit, may include balconies, courtyards, indoor recreational facilities, landscaped roofs and outdoor recreational areas	*C Residence:* 8.7 units per acre - 1 unit 14.5 units per acre - 2 units *Multifamily*:* 54 units per acre
AAA RESIDENCE	–	–	1 unit per acre
AA RESIDENCE	–	–	2 units per acre
A RESIDENCE	–	–	3.5 units per acre
B RESIDENCE	–	–	7 units per acre
C RESIDENCE *1-2 Dwelling Units*	–	–	8.7 units per acre - 1 unit 14.5 units per acre - 2 units

** References to multifamily in Industrial 1 are to § 118-700.B(2)(l) which refer to specific parcels at 230 East Avenue as shown on the Transit oriented development at East Norwalk map at https://www.norwalkct.org/203/Building-Zone-Regulations. This map and the zoning related to it pre-dates this TOD study.*

ZONE	FLOOR-AREA RATIO MAXIMUM	RECREATION AREA	CALCULATED COMPARATIVE RESIDENTIAL DENSITY
D RESIDENCE *1-2 Dwelling Units*	–	–	8.7 units per acre - 1 unit 14.5 units per acre - 2 units
3-6 Dwelling Units	–	200 sq ft per dwelling unit	26 units per acre
Over 6 Dwelling Units	–	200 sq ft per dwelling unit	26 units per acre
Over 6 Dwelling Units Elderly Housing	–	125 sq ft per dwelling unit	34 units per acre
Over 6 Dwelling Units Congregate Housing	–	100 sq ft per dwelling unit	46 units per acre 87 units per acre in Business # 2 Zones.

Current Limits on Residential Density

While building height, placement on the site, and massing are controlled by dimensional standards, residential density is controlled by a ratio of dwelling units to the total area of the lot.

- Neighborhood Business: Minimum lot area per dwelling unit of 1,650 SF for multifamily of under 12 units (as of right) and over 12 units (special permit).
- Industrial-1: allows 1 and 2 family Dwelling Units. Mixed use is currently allowed only parcel at 230 East Avenue. (see notes on page 50 and 52).

Density in residential districts is regulated based on minimum lot sizes with the following standards

- 1 Dwelling Unit – 5,000 SF (Residence C and D)
- 2 Dwelling Unit – 6,000 SF (Residence C and D)
- 3-6 Dwelling Unit - 7,500 SF (Residence D)
- 6-12 Dwelling Units – 12,000 SF (Residence D)
- Residence D also controls density with a minimum square feet of lot area per dwelling unit, similar to Neighborhood Business and Industrial 1, for any building with three to six or more dwelling units. This minimum lot area starts at 1,650 sq. ft. per dwelling unit and varies by the type of multifamily.
- Residence B, C and D allow multi-family with Special Permit via Planned Residential Development

Note that allowable numbers of dwelling units is not the same as achievable units; limitations on height, FAR, setbacks, building coverage, and minimum parking ratios will also have an impact on how many units can be developed in the Residence D and Neighborhood Business districts.

5.3 Parcel Sizes

Overlaying maps of parcel sizes with zoning layers reveals the potential of some of the parcels in the TOD area.

The minimum developable parcel size is 5,000 square feet (Neighborhood Business, Industrial-1, Residence C and D (for single-family).

Residence C and D require a minimum of 6,000 square feet for a two-family.

As noted on page 54, the number of dwelling units in a multifamily building (principally Residence D and Neighborhood Business) are controlled by a ratio of lot area to dwelling units. In Residence D, a multifamily building of three units would require a minimum lot size of 4,950 square feet while one of six units would require

Parcels in the Neighborhood Business district are eligible for a residential density of 1,650 square feet per dwelling unit (SF/DU). Parcels in Industrial #1 are eligible for 1 and 2 family dwelling units based on Residential Zone C. Multifamily and mixed-use development is allowed by special permit if the parcel is within the Industrial-1 zone and a specific East Norwalk TOD are as defined before this study began. (See notes on pages 50, 52, and 53.)

Parcels in Residential Zones are eligible for single-family dwellings by right. Residences C and D allow two-family dwellings. In Residence D, multifamily developments under six units are allowed by right; those over six units require a special permit. Parcels in Residence Zone C require a minimum lot area of 5,000 SF for 1 dwelling unit (DU) and 6,000 SF for 2 dwelling units. Multi-family development is allowed by Special Permit on parcels larger than 6,000 SF in the Residential-C zone in replacement of the 638 units, which are existing or approved as of March 1992. These multi-family units require a minimum floor area of five hundred (500) square feet per dwelling unit.

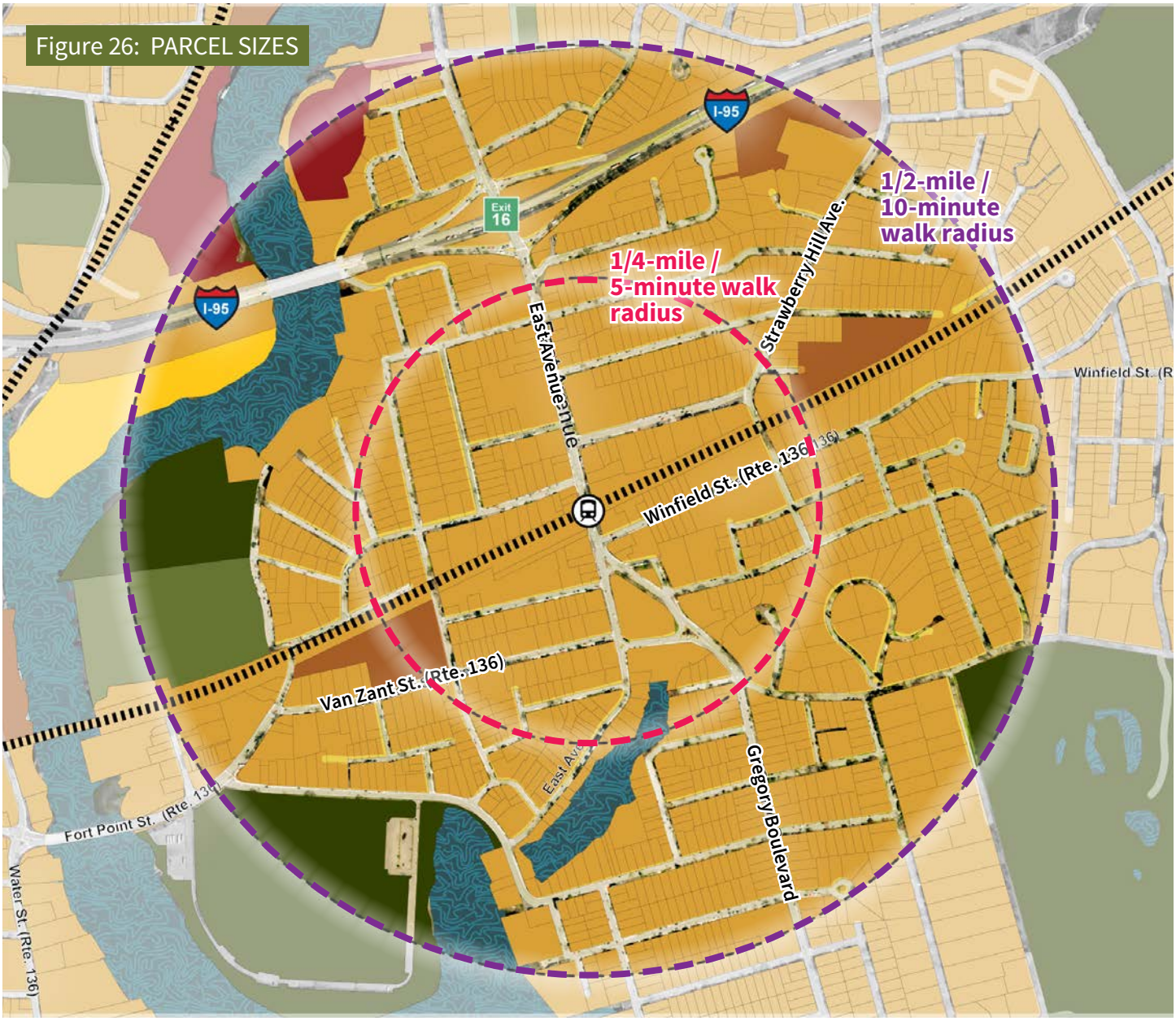
Parcels in Residential Zone D are eligible for a minimum of 1 to 6+ dwelling units based on the parcel sizes. For parcels in Residential Zone D, a building of more than 3 dwelling units requires 1,650 SF of lot area per dwelling unit. Hence, any parcel greater than 7,500 SF in size can accommodate more than 3 dwelling units per lot in Residential Zone D.

Planned Residential Development (PRD) is allowed in Zones B, C, and D; however, the number of multifamily dwellings allowed in Zone Bis capped by a maximum capacity of 1,806 units, which was reached in 1990. Zone C allows a maximum of 638 units, which was reached in 1992. For this reason, PRD's are currently only allowed in Residence Zone D.

Figure 26 Legend

- 0-3 acres
- 3-6 acres
- 6-9 acres
- 9-12 acres
- 12-15 acres
- 15+ acres

Figure 26: PARCEL SIZES



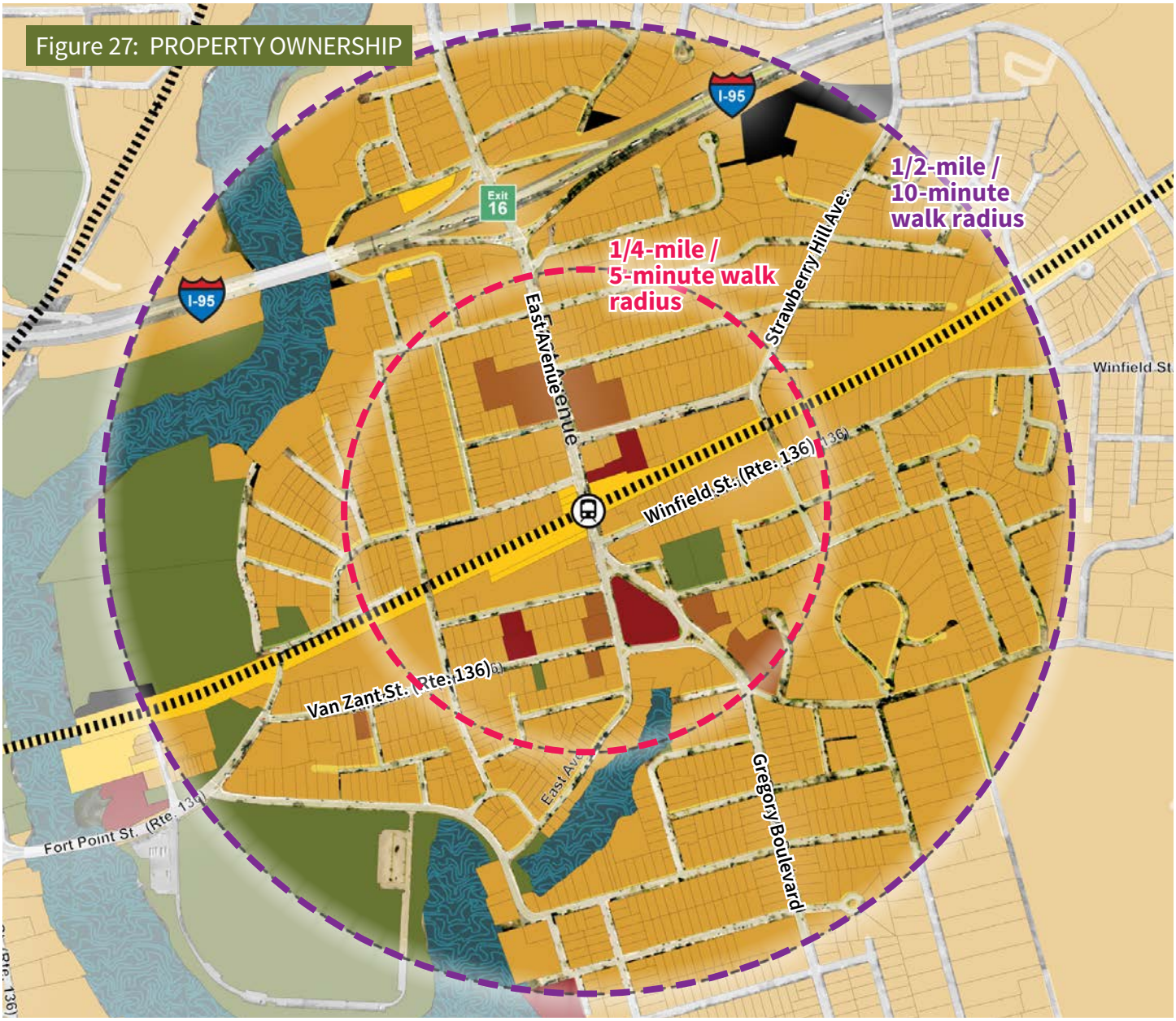
5.4 Property Ownership

Many of the parcels in the TOD area are under private or institutional land ownership. Commuter parking parcels around the train station are either owned by the State or are privately owned with the dedicated arrangement for future commuter parking managed by the City. Multiple parcels along East Avenue are owned by different religious institutions. The Third Taxing District also owns several parcels which currently house utility infrastructure servicing the area as well as the East Norwalk Association Library, which serves as the community's only public library in East Norwalk. Additionally, Ludlow Commons Senior Housing is owned by the City's Norwalk Housing Authority and managed by Human Services Council. Most of the other parcels within East Norwalk are privately owned with additional City and the State-owned parcels along the Norwalk River.

Figure 27 Legend

- Private Ownership
- City of Norwalk
- Vacant
- Institutions
- Third Taxing District
- State of CT

Figure 27: PROPERTY OWNERSHIP



5.5 Circulation and Access

Vehicular Circulation

While readily accessible by car to Interstate 95 (I-95), the TOD area has a local residential neighborhood character in land use and street design. East Avenue, the primary arterial roadway in the TOD area, is one of the busiest streets and is said to experience both local traffic as well as traffic bound for destinations outside of the neighborhood including South Norwalk, Westport and the parts of Norwalk north of I-95. The following discussion of vehicular circulation focuses on the existing conditions of the primary roadways in the TOD area and issues and concerns observed in the field or discussed in prior reports. Figure 29 summarizes the existing condition issues and concerns.

Figure 28: COMMUTER PARKING

Commuter Parking Map by NV5.

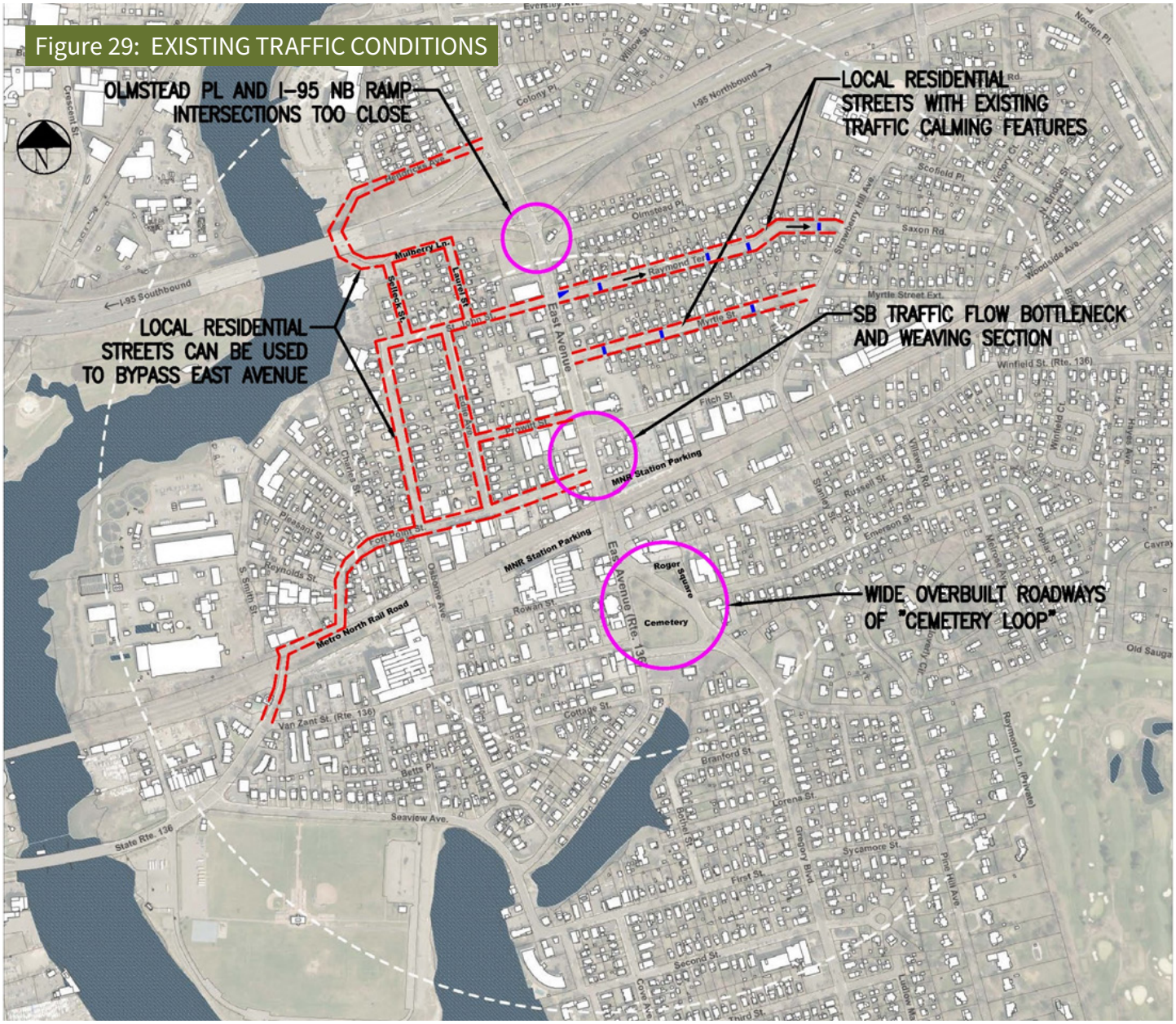
East Avenue

As the primary roadway in the East Norwalk neighborhood, East Avenue provides vehicle access in the north-south directions and connects the Interstate 95 entrance and exit ramps (exit 16, north of the highway) to the Metro-North Rail Road (MNR) East Norwalk Station (south of the highway). According to the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) Functional Roadway Classification Map, East Avenue is considered a principal urban arterial with the exception of the segment between Cemetery Street and Seaview Avenue (which is designated as a local road). Based on CTDOT Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) data, East Avenue experienced an AADT of 15,600 vehicles per day between I-95 and Winfield St. in 2017.

East Avenue supports vehicular travel in both the north and south directions, with one to two lanes in each direction. Parking is not permitted between I-95 and East Avenue Rail Bridge due to the width of the roadway (40 ft. curb to curb) and number of active roadway lanes (3-4 lanes). Sidewalks of varying widths are present on both sides of the street; however, a sidewalk is only present on the west side of East Avenue when the roadway traverses below the East Avenue Rail Bridge.

South of the I-95 interchange, southbound East Avenue has two through lanes until the roadway reaches Fitch Street, in which a

Figure 29: EXISTING TRAFFIC CONDITIONS



East Avenue serves as a primary route connecting highway I-95 to the north to the beaches to the south. Graphic by NV5.

left turn only lane at Fitch Street and right turn only lane at Fort Point Street effectively create a lane drop and weaving section from the right lane to the left lane in the southbound direction. Currently, there is only one lane in each direction below the East Avenue Rail Bridge, thus potentially creating a traffic bottleneck at this location. Based on the traffic analysis included in the 230 East Avenue Transportation Impact Study (TIS), favorable Level of Service (LOS) is shown for the north and south movements along East Avenue during the weekday morning, afternoon and Saturday midday peak hours in the 2017 existing conditions, while minor streets experience less favorable to congested LOS in the same peak hours. This would suggest delays experienced at the minor approaches along East Avenue at signalized intersections (Winfield Street, Fitch Street) are caused by high north-southbound vehicular demand on East Avenue. Similarly, the unsignalized eastbound approach at Fort Point Street experienced unfavorable LOS in all analyzed peak hours as drivers struggle to find gaps to turn onto East Avenue.

At the intersection of East Avenue, Fort Point Street and the east parking lot driveway for the Metro-North East Norwalk Station, the minor street approaches are offset as well as unsignalized (minor streets are stop-controlled). As the crosswalk is used by commuters to cross East Avenue, these factors result in unsafe conditions including ambiguous timing and limited gaps for crossing pedestrians against major and minor street traffic, ambiguous right-of-way for minor street vehicles turning into East Avenue, as well as poor sight lines from minor streets. These issues point to a problematic intersection located adjacent to the East Norwalk Station.

Figure 30: CEMETERY CIRCLE

East Avenue United Methodist Church on the left and East Norwalk Historic Cemetery on the Right. Photo taken on 3/12/2020.

Although traffic volumes along the residential dead-end street of Olmstead Place are likely low, the intersection of Olmstead Place and East Avenue appears to be problematic in its proximity to the I-95 interchange ramps and the lack of restriction of southbound left turns and westbound left turns at this unsignalized intersection. This intersection has potential to cause delays due to westbound left turns blocking the northbound lanes to find a gap in southbound traffic flow during congested peak periods.

Cut-Through Streets

Based on the congestion observed at intersections along East Avenue, public input and the abundance of drivers utilizing GPS navigation, it is likely that local residential streets intended for local traffic are experiencing additional cut-through traffic to avoid delays on East Avenue and I-95. Roadways providing alternative north-south vehicular mobility between the Washington Street Bridge (leading to

South Norwalk) and I-95 other than East Avenue include the following streets: Fort Point Street, Osbourne Avenue, Saint John Street, Selleck Street, and Hendricks Avenue. In addition to increased traffic volumes, it is likely that cut-through traffic could be travelling at higher speeds as they do not have a destination in the neighborhood; these speeds contribute to unsafe conditions on these local roads for residents. These roadways typically exhibit the following characteristics: narrow curb to curb and sidewalk widths, two-way traffic flow, limited pedestrian crossing pavement markings, parking on one or both sides of the street; and serve primarily low-density residential uses. Thus, these local streets were not designed to accommodate alternative commuting routes and influxes of traffic originally intended to be served on the neighborhood's primary arterial, East Avenue.

Raymond Terrace and Myrtle Street have also been flagged as potential alternative east-west routes that experience cut-through traffic. Currently, these streets have some traffic calming and cut-through traffic deterring features already implemented. On Raymond Terrace, the road operates one-way westbound with no through trucks permitted and includes a diverter at the eastbound receiving leg of its intersection with East Avenue. In addition, no southbound left turns are permitted at this intersection, and four speed bumps were installed along the roadway to reduce vehicular speeds. Effectively, these interventions eliminate potential eastbound cut-through traffic flow, while deterring westbound cut-through traffic and thus encouraging that traffic to use other routes. On Myrtle Street, southbound left turns from East Avenue and through trucks are not permitted. Myrtle Street does have three installed speed bumps, similar to Raymond Terrace and supports traffic in both east and west directions. These traffic calming interventions on Myrtle Street would reduce truck traffic and vehicular speeds along the roadway.

Cemetery Circle (East Avenue, Gregory Blvd., Cemetery Street)

South of the East Norwalk Station along East Avenue, the East Norwalk Historical Cemetery is located on a two block long triangular parcel which is bound by East Avenue to the west, Cemetery Street to the south and Gregory Blvd. to the east. These three roadways form a counter-clockwise one-way traffic loop, experiencing an AADT of 9,500, 7,700 and 18,800 vehicles per day (2017) on the segments of East Avenue, Cemetery Street and Gregory Blvd., respectively. South of Winfield Street, East Avenue is approximately 38 feet wide curb to curb. Gregory Blvd. varies in width between Cemetery Street and Winfield Street, but reaches a minimum width of approximately 36 feet curb to curb. Cemetery Street is approximately 38 feet wide curb to curb. These three roadway segments, or the 'Cemetery Circle' appear to be overbuilt in terms of width, as the roadways typically support two vehicular lanes and sometimes with and sometimes without a parking lane. This excessive roadway width contributes to poor pedestrian mobility and safety in this area, as wide roadways contribute to longer crossing times in an area with limited east west pedestrian facilities and connectivity.

Van Zant Street (SR 136)

Van Zant Street (SR 136) is an east-west principal urban arterial with one traffic lane in each direction and parking permitted along the south curb. Although Van Zant Street is just over a 1/3 of a mile long, this roadway provides the primary vehicular connection between the southern end of East Avenue to Fort Point St/Washington Street to the South Norwalk neighborhood. Van Zant Street is a fairly narrow roadway (32 feet curb to curb) with narrow sidewalks on both sides of the street.

Winfield Street (SR 136)

Winfield Street (SR 136) is an east-west minor urban arterial with one traffic lane in each direction with generally no parking permitted on either side of the road. The roadway of Winfield Street is typically 34 feet wide (curbs not always present), and experiences an AADT of 7,200 vehicles per day (2017).

Winfield Street generally serves as the primary local road connection between the Metro-North Saugatuck Station, I-95 entrance and exit ramps at exit 17 and the East Norwalk neighborhood. As such, Winfield Street can become an alternative east-west route to I-95 at times when traffic is diverted from the severe congestion and back-ups experienced on the interstate.

Strawberry Hill Avenue

Strawberry Hill Avenue is a north-south minor urban arterial with one traffic lane and one bicycle lane in each direction, with parking permitted on the west curb. Strawberry Hill Avenue is typically 40 feet curb to curb and experiences an AADT of 9,300 vehicles per day (2017) within East Norwalk. Strawberry Hill Avenue serves the low-density residential uses along it, and connects the East Norwalk neighborhood to greater Norwalk north of I-95 and northeast, toward Norwalk High School. This roadway can also serve as an alternative north-south connection to East Avenue, connecting Post Road (US 1) to East and South Norwalk.

Future Roadway Improvements

The Walk Bridge project, a large-scale bridge replacement project, is planned by CTDOT to replace three Metro-North Bridges that cross above East Avenue, Osbourne Street, and Fort Point Street. The project will also include roadway improvements below and adjacent to those bridge underpasses.

On East Avenue, the plan includes a widening of the roadway below the bridge, providing two travel lanes in each direction and sidewalks on both sides of East Avenue. The roadway construction will also include lowering the roadway to provide additional vertical clearance to support larger vehicles such as trucks. Some residents have expressed concerns about the traffic impacts of lowering the road to allow larger trucks through. Additional improvements will be made north of the Fort Point Street intersection, which include new pavement markings to eliminate the lane drop and weaving of through-traffic between Fitch Street and Fort Point. Both lanes at the southbound approaches will be shared through and turning lanes. Additionally, the East Norwalk Station parking lot driveway will be realigned with Fort Point Street to create a typical four-way approach intersection with updated signalization.

In addition, the rail bridge above Fort Point Street is planned to be shifted so that the roadway aligns with South Smith Street to the west, creating a typical "T" intersection and eliminating the northbound "S" turn required for northbound traffic on Fort Point continuing north on South Smith Street.

While the East Avenue improvements would not be considered a traffic calming project, the project would have benefits by improving traffic flow south of Fitch Street by reducing weaving movements and eliminating the bottleneck caused by the lane drop in the existing condition. By improving the roadway throughput and maintaining two southbound lanes of traffic from I-95 in the north to Van Zant Street to the south, it is possible that in the short term the volume of cut-through traffic on residential streets may experience a reduction. However, it should be noted that induced traffic, or additional traffic attracted to the area due to the improved traffic conditions has the potential to increase in the long term. Levels of traffic congestion could also return to the existing levels on East Avenue and thus return residential cut-through traffic back to existing levels. Lastly, the signalization and realignment planned at East Avenue, Fort Point Street, and the East Norwalk Station parking lot driveway would provide a significant benefit to traffic and pedestrian safety, as well as improve transit accessibility from the street network to the East Norwalk Station and parking lots.

Increasing investments in alternative transportation modes such as bus service, infrastructure for bicycles, and pedestrian infrastructure to encourage drivers to shift away from private automobile modes in the future could reduce the number of automobile trips in the neighborhood and reduce the degree of congestion on busier streets.

The SoNo Collection Retail Development

The SoNo Collection is a newly opened mall including 730,000 gross leasable area of retail that was completed in late 2019. The mall is located along West Avenue in SoNo, just south of I-95, and was expected to generate a total of 1,933 and 2,700 vehicular trips in the weekday PM and Saturday peak hour, respectively, per the Supplemental Traffic Impact Assessment prepared by Langan Engineering (2016). Although the majority of vehicular trips to and from the development site were anticipated to originate from or depart to the I-95 entrance and exit ramps along West Avenue or Reed Street when I-95 is

operating with acceptable levels of service, there is a concern among some residents of East Norwalk that periods of congestion and back-ups on I-95 may result in mall-generated trips diverting to local roads as an alternative means of reaching the mall. As the Washington Street Bridge could serve as an alternative means of getting to the neighborhood of SoNo and the mall, there is a possibility that during these congested periods on I-95, diverted mall-generated trips may pass through the East Norwalk neighborhood. This could potentially exacerbate existing conditions of congestion on East Avenue as well as increasing cut-through traffic on local residential streets.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation

Pedestrian Activity and Conditions

The primary area of pedestrian activity within East Norwalk occurs around East Norwalk Station. The two primary commuter parking areas are located on the northeast and southwest sides of the station, with East Avenue and the railroad tracks separating them. Therefore, commuters must cross under the railroad overpass and cross East Avenue either in the morning or evening.

There is also a Park and Ride facility on Hendricks Avenue, west of East Avenue, approximately 1/2 mile from the station. This parking facility is free at all times, and generates pedestrian traffic along the west side of East Avenue.

Figure 31: PEDESTRIANS ON EAST AVENUE

Pedestrians crossing the street on East Avenue approach a narrow section of sidewalk. Photo taken on 3/12/2020.

The most significant gap in the pedestrian network, at the intersection of East Avenue and Winfield Street (Route 136), will be addressed as part of the East Avenue Bridge Replacement and Roadway Improvements project. On East Avenue from the railroad overpass to the intersection of Route 136, there is a narrow sidewalk that is substandard in condition and width and does not lead to pedestrian ramps or crosswalks at the intersection. There is currently no pedestrian connection to the south side of Route 136, and no sidewalk along the south side of Route 136 until approximately 500 ft. east of the intersection. After the 500 ft. stretch of missing sidewalk along the south side of Route 136, there is a sidewalk present. Once completed, the East Avenue Bridge Replacement and Roadway Improvements project will create a pedestrian connection from north of the railroad overpass to that existing sidewalk on the south side of Route 136.

On the west side of East Avenue, north of the I-95 overpass, there is a missing pedestrian connection at Hendricks Avenue. This intersection includes an entrance ramp to I-95. The highway entrance ramp has crosswalks marked to align with existing sections of sidewalk, but from the northwest corner to the southwest of Hendricks Avenue there is no crosswalk.

While the general condition of the pedestrian network elsewhere is adequate, there are some key locations that require intersection improvements for pedestrians, including the following:

Gregory Blvd. and Roger Square

- Crosswalks and pedestrian ramps are missing.
- Painted geometric changes do not adequately shorten the crossing distance.

Gregory Blvd. and Emerson Street

- This intersection is excessively wide due to the convergence of Emerson Street and Roger Square, creating an expansive, unmarked space for pedestrians to navigate.
- No crosswalks or pedestrian ramps are present.

Gregory Blvd. and Cemetery Street

- The crossing from Gregory Blvd. to access the west side of the cemetery area from the east side of Gregory Blvd is unmarked.
- A landscaped triangle creates an obstructed view of pedestrians for motorists.
- A pedestrian cut-through is present on the southern tip of the landscaped triangle in this location, but no crosswalk is present.

East Avenue and Cemetery Street

- The crossing from Gregory Blvd. to access the east side of the cemetery area from the west side of East Avenue is unmarked.

East Avenue and Hendrix Avenue

- Some existing crosswalks provide a walking route across the highway entrance ramps, but pedestrian ramps as well as crosswalks across Hendricks Avenue are missing.

East Ave and Route 136 (details above)

Route 136 and Strawberry Hill Road (details above)

Figure 34 summarizes the pedestrian existing conditions and concerns detailed above.

Bicycle Activity and Conditions

In terms of bicycle activity, observations made during weekday am and pm peak periods indicated only a few cyclists traveling through East Norwalk, primarily utilizing East Avenue to reach the East Norwalk Station. Of the 15 bicycle parking spaces available (at racks adjacent to the westbound station building), seven were occupied. However, bicycle activity increases on weekends, as observations indicated a significant number of cyclists using Fort Point Street and Gregory Blvd. to reach Veteran's Memorial Park and Calf Pasture Beach.

The existing bicycle network provides some connectivity to the northeast section of the neighborhood but does not provide a continuous network of bicycle routes. The bicycle facilities that are provided include striped bicycle lanes, bicycle logos with directional arrows, and "Bike Lane" signs.

Two-way dedicated bicycle lanes can be found on Fitch Street, as well as Strawberry Hill Avenue from Fitch Street north, extending beyond the TOD area. Shared lane markings are found on the block of Strawberry Hill Avenue between Fitch Street

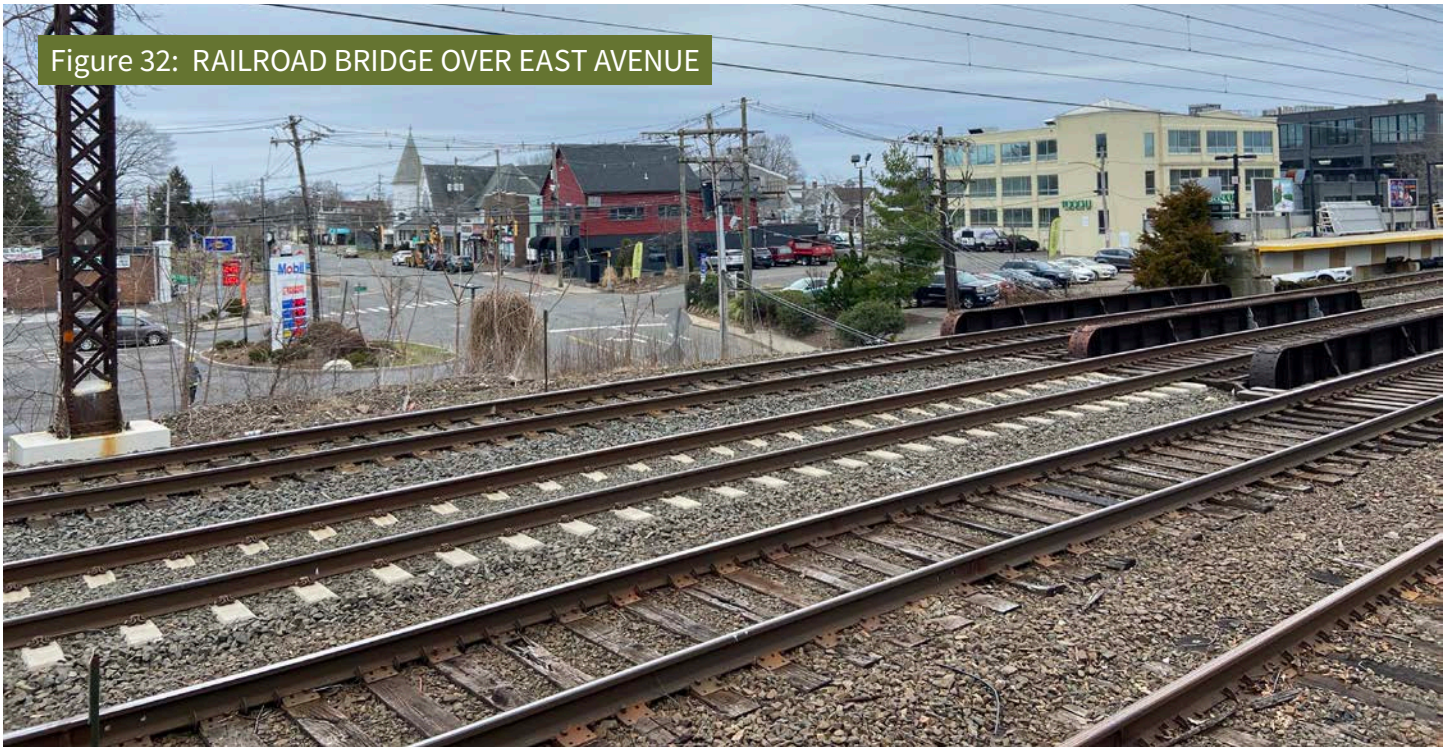
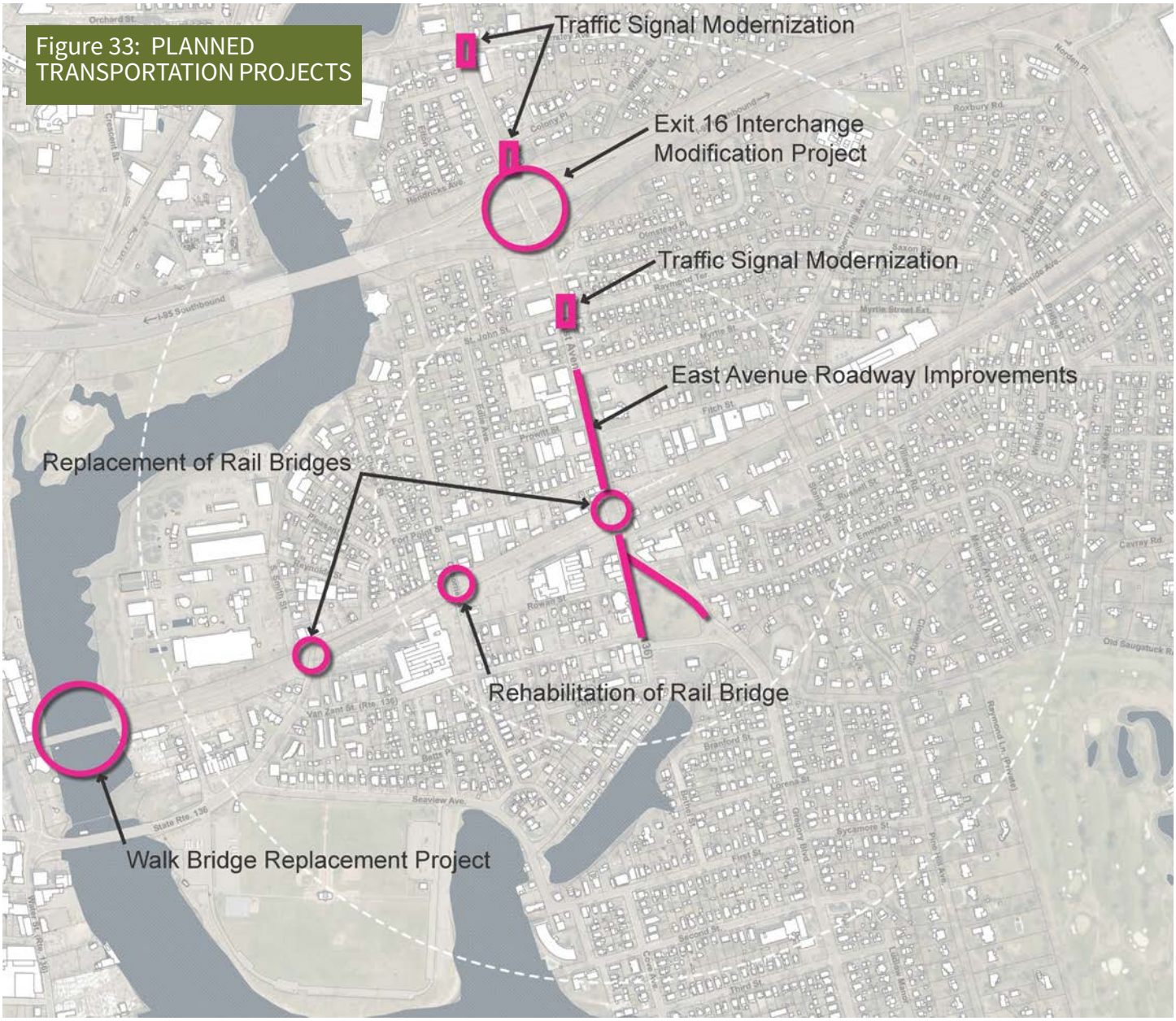


Figure 32: RAILROAD BRIDGE OVER EAST AVENUE

Photo taken on 3/12/2020.

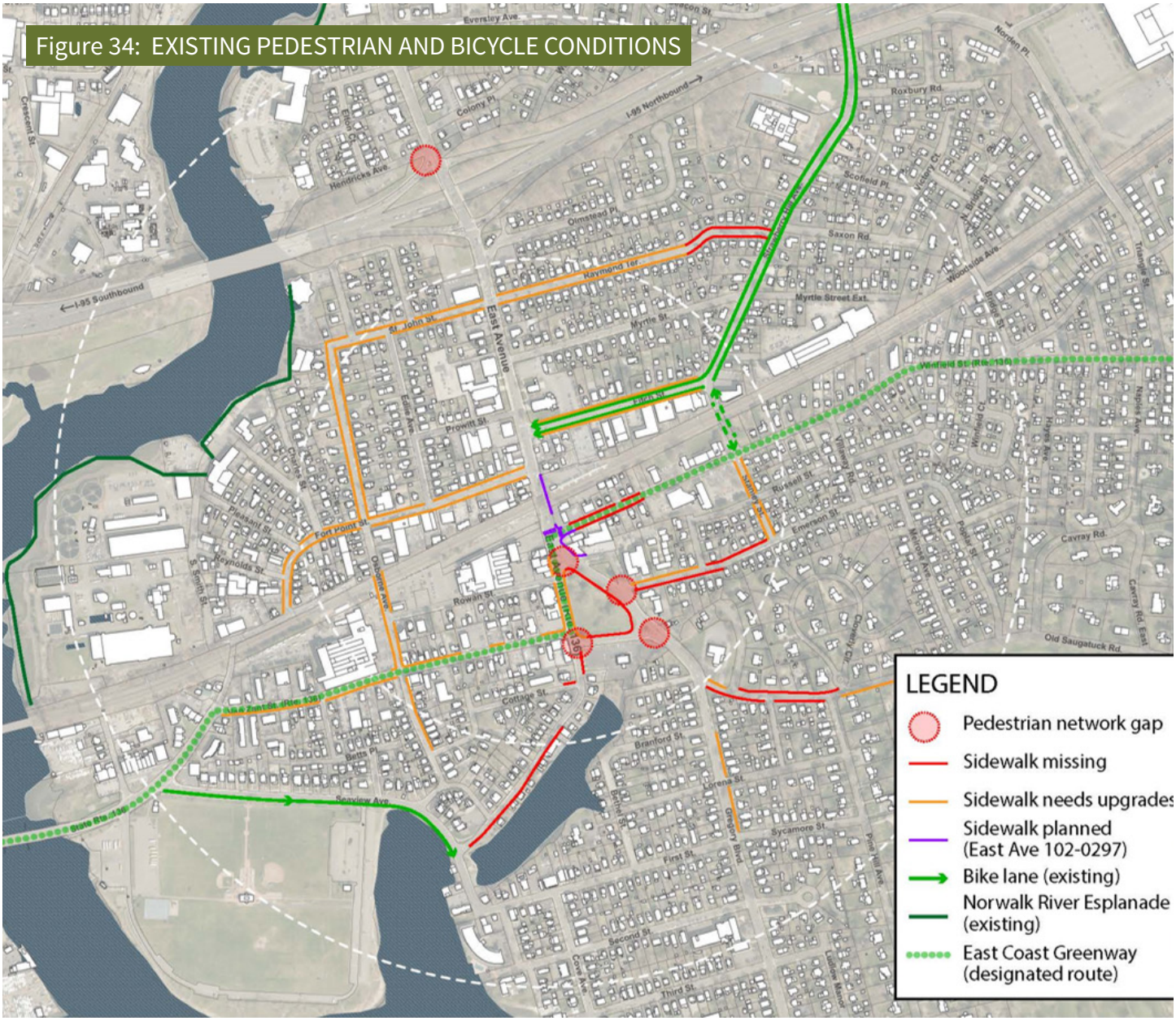
and Stanley Avenue. The City should consider expanding the shoulder on Seaview Avenue into a bike lane (this would be along Veteran's Memorial Park, terminating at East Avenue). The designated route of the East Coast Greenway follows Route 136 (Van Zant Street and Winfield Avenue, with a one-block connection on East Avenue along the west side of the cemetery), but no bicycle route signs or markings are present.

Figure 34 summarizes the existing conditions and concerns detailed above.



Map of all current and planned transportation projects in East Norwalk. Graphic by NV5.

Figure 34: EXISTING PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE CONDITIONS



Map identifying links and gaps in pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure networks. Graphic by NV5.

Transit

Rail

Metro-North's New Haven Line provides commuter rail service via the East Norwalk Station, which is located at 230 East Avenue (see Figure 32). The average travel time to/from Grand Central is 68 minutes though this varies depending on run and time of day. Service is more limited at East Norwalk Station compared to South Norwalk Station. For example, during the am peak, 11 New York bound trains serve East Norwalk compared to 21 trains that serve South Norwalk while in the pm peak, 11 New Haven bound trains serve East Norwalk compared to 19 trains that serve South Norwalk. The average frequency of peak trains at the station is 20 minutes, while the frequency of off-peak trains is generally 60 minutes. Weekend service, which is hourly, is again more limited than South Norwalk. Metro-North has no immediate plans to increase service at East Norwalk Station.

Figure 35 below indicates ridership at East Norwalk Station. Given the more limited service at the station, it is not surprising that the number of weekday rides is significantly lower than South Norwalk, which averages about 6,000 weekday rides. East Norwalk is comparable to other stations along the New Haven Line with limited service such as Southport (800), Rowayton (1,000), Green's Farms (1,400), Riverside (1,500), and Cos Cob (1,600).

Amenities at the station include bike racks, a bus-type shelter, waste receptacles and benches, and a ticket vending machine (TVM). A small building, in the parking lot near the New York Bound platform side of the station, houses a concession and restrooms, which are open during morning peak hours. Both the New York and New Haven bound platforms at the station can accommodate only four cars. As part of the Walk Bridge Program, the station is being upgraded which will include the platforms being increased to accommodate six train cars in both directions, increased commuter parking (including handicap parking on both sides of the tracks), and new ADA elevators.

There are three commuter permit parking lots at the East Norwalk Station which include a 50 space lot on the westbound side adjacent to the station building, a 100 space lot near the intersection of Rowan Street and Osborne Avenue, and a 26 space temporary lot on the corner of Fort Point Road and East Avenue (see Figure 28). Each of the permit lots is open to daily parkers on weekends. In addition, the Norwalk Parking Authority, which manages all parking at the station, entered into an agreement with CTDOT at the end of last year, which provides 117 spaces alongside

Figure 35: RIDERSHIP AT EAST NORWALK STATION

2017 New Haven Line	Inbound	Outbound	Total
Weekday Boardings	550	162	712
Weekday Alightings	162	550	712
Total Weekday Rides	712	712	1,424
Saturday Boardings	209	76	285
Saturday Alightings	76	209	285
Total Saturday Rides	285	285	570
Sunday Boardings	178	46	224
Sunday Alightings	46	178	224
Total Sunday Rides	224	224	448

Data from Metro-North 2017 Weekday Boardings and 2017 Weekend Station Boardings. Alightings based on boarding count.

the southside tracks and adjacent buildings off of East Avenue on a temporary basis for daily parkers only. This parking will be available until the CTDOT needs them for the East Avenue Bridge Replacement and Roadway Improvements project. Permit parking utilization is at 93% during weekdays according to the Western Connecticut 2018 Commuter Parking Survey (prepared for WestCOG by HART).

In addition to the commuter lots, as mentioned earlier, there is a park and ride lot at Hendricks Avenue and I-95 that is utilized by commuters.

The monthly fee for permits is $70 while daily parking costs $8. The Parking Authority issued 202 permits in 2017 for East Norwalk Station and there is a waiting list of approximately 136 people.

A recent survey conducted for the Parking Authority indicated that 55% of the people traveling to the station during the morning commute carpooled, followed by 23% who drove alone, and 22% who walked. Only 3% used public transit to reach the station. In terms of where people parked, 36% parked in the temporary lot, followed by 21% who parked in the monthly southbound lot, as well as 21% who parked in the Rowan lot. The majority of commuters came from two zip codes, 06855 (55%) which includes East Norwalk south of I-95, and 06851 (35%) which includes East Norwalk north of I-95 as well as the neighborhoods north of East Norwalk and east of the Norwalk River (all the way to the border with the Town of Wilton).

Figure 36: EAST AVENUE RAILROAD BRIDGE

A bus passes below the East Avenue Rail Road Bridge next to a narrow sidewalk. Photo taken on 3/12/2020.

Bus

East Norwalk is served by two fixed Norwalk Transit District (NTD) routes; routes 7 and 11 (see Figure 37). Route 7 provides hourly service (from 6:20am to 7:11pm) on weekdays only, running between the Hub, Calf Pasture Beach, and Norden Park. Route 11 provides service every 40 minutes on both weekdays (from 5:40am to 8:35pm) and Saturdays (from 6:17am to 7:35pm), running from the Hub to Norwalk Community College. On Routes 7 and 11, passengers may board anywhere along the route.

The average monthly ridership on Route 7 is 3,825 which accounts for 4% of the total monthly system ridership (88,003), while the average monthly ridership on Route 11 is 9,656 which accounts for 11% of the total monthly system ridership (88,003). In terms of boardings, for Route 7, 5% (199) of the average monthly boardings on the route take place within East Norwalk, while for Route 11, 14% (1,645) of the average monthly boardings on the route take place within East Norwalk.

In addition to the two fixed routes, a large part of the area (see Figure 37) is served by the new on-demand WHEELS2U shuttle service, which is the first microtransit service in Connecticut. The service which is a six month pilot program (started in September 2018 by the Norwalk Transit District) allows for the flexible routing and scheduling of shuttle buses. The objective of the WHEELS2U service is to improve connections between South Norwalk, the Maritime Aquarium, the SoNo Collection, the Wall Street area, and other attractions.

By using an app, riders can request a pick up and drop off location anywhere within the WHEELS2U service area. Shuttle drivers also have an app in each vehicle to provide navigation, live traffic conditions, and real time pick up and drop off information. The service currently operates Thursday, Friday, and Saturday from 5:00pm to 12:00am, and on Sundays from 12:00pm to 9:00pm.

As the pilot program period closes, WHEELS2U is proposing a permanent, expanded service with an affordable $2.00 fare. In this next phase, service hours would increase, adding a Saturday noon to midnight shift. The area of service would also be expanded and a fourth shuttle would be added to the fleet, resulting in reduced wait times. This proposal is currently undergoing a public comment period and is not finalized.

Figure 37: EXISTING TRANSIT SERVICE

Map showing Metro-North Railroad, and the #11 and #7 bus lines offering transit options in East Norwalk. Graphic by NV5.

5.6 Sanitation, Stormwater, Flooding, and Utilities

Utility Infrastructure

The Third Taxing District is the predominate supplier of power for East Norwalk, although the Connecticut Light and Power Company (CL&P) is also present.

In addition to the local suppliers, CT has an open power market. The two major private suppliers are Eversource and United Illuminated (also known as Avangrid). Both of these raised rates by 19-24% starting in January 2020. Other private power suppliers serving Norwalk include Constellation, Clearview Energy, Public Power, Direct Energy, and Verde Energy. Local power supply may be more reliable than private suppliers.

Fiber optic and high speed data connections are slowly working their way into Norwalk's infrastructure. Of the 22 internet service providers that cover Norwalk, 3 provide fiber optic service. Optimum by Altice operates in 4 zip codes in Norwalk covering 26.8% of the City[1], providing fiber optic cable service to residential customers. Crown Castle Fiber and Altice Business both serve businesses with fiber optic internet service.

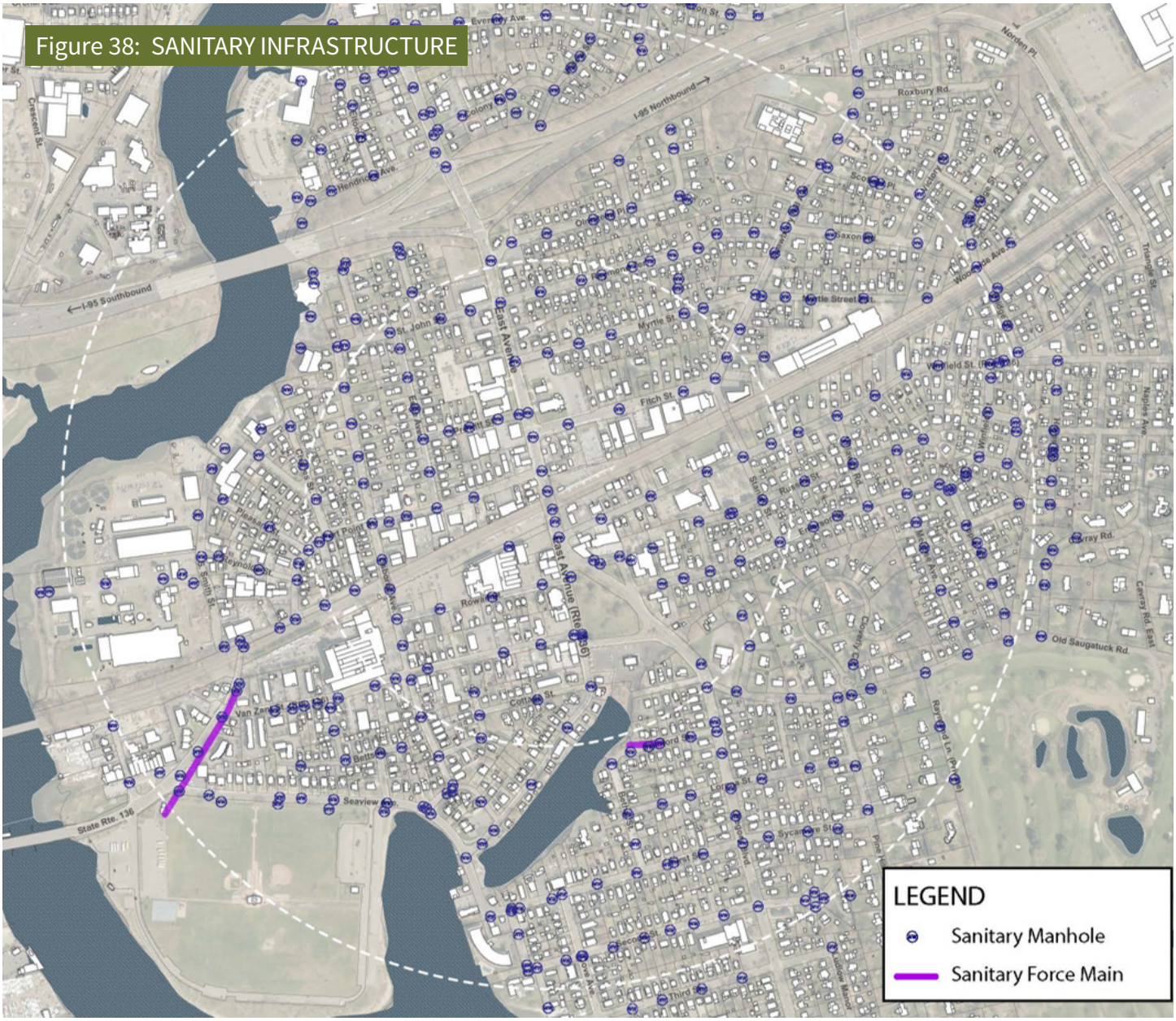
As of January 2020, small cell phone towers broadcasting 5G service are being mounted to street lights and telephone poles.

Sanitary Infrastructure

As shown on Figure 38, the East Norwalk is served by the City of Norwalk's sanitary sewer system, which is an enterprise fund, administered by the Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA). In addition, as indicated in the 2018 City of Norwalk Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD), the Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) currently has an average plant flow of 13 million gallons per day (MGD) and is rated to treat an average daily flow of 18 MGD. It can treat 30 MGD through full treatment and over 95 MGD through preliminary treatment. It recently completed a project to replace/upgrade preliminary and combined sewer treatment equipment and has an ongoing program to rehabilitate the collection system and upgrade pumps when needed. Finally, the POCD indicated that the City has adequate sewer capacity to accommodate new development.

[1] *https://broadbandnow.com/Connecticut/Norwalk*

Figure 38: SANITARY INFRASTRUCTURE



Sanitary Infrastructure map showing locations of manholes and main lines by NV5.

Capacity

The Norwalk Wastewater Treatment Plant has a permit limit of 18 MGD. If the average flow over a 180 day rolling average exceeds 16.2 MGD, the City must develop and submit a plan for future WWTP capacity expansion to the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's Commissioner. As of April 1, 2020, the peak 180 day rolling average flow within the last 12 months is 14.5 MGD providing a current available flow capacity of approximately 1.7 MGD – it is important to note that the rolling average flow is high due to extreme wet weather during 2018 (double the annual rainfall totals).

A look at some recent developments yielded the information displayed in Figure 39 on annual gallons of effluent.

For planning purposes, the 2009 facility plan for the Norwalk Water Pollution Control Facility assumed 2.51 persons per household with a typical per capita wastewater flow of 100 gallons per day per person for residents in the City of Norwalk. This equates to 251 gallons per day per unit.

Newer development projects (i.e. Iron Works, SONO Pearl) have floor plans consisting of studios, and 1 or 2 bedroom units and overall occupancy per unit is less than 2.51 persons/unit (2009 facility plan).

Assuming 2 persons/unit and a wastewater flow of 100 gallons per day per person, a flow of 200 gallons per day per unit (gpd/unit) can be derived. Therefore, for every 500 new units, approximately 100,000 gallons per day of wastewater will be discharged.

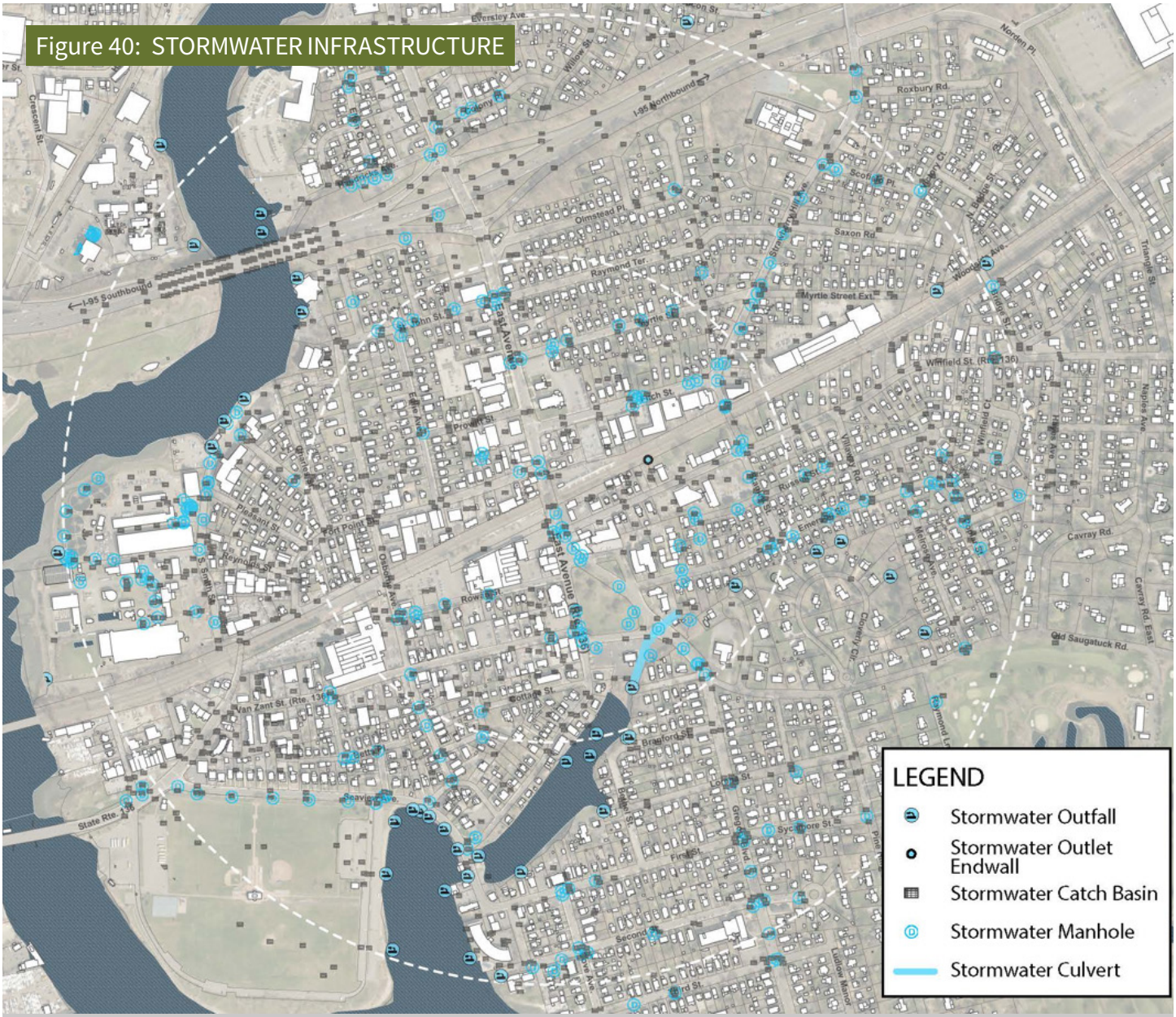
Stormwater Infrastructure

As shown on Figure 40, the area is served by the City of Norwalk's stormwater management system, which is designed to intentionally capture, place, move, and treat stormwater runoff in order to minimize pollution and/or flooding. In addition, as indicated in the 2018 City of Norwalk Plan of Conservation and Development, the City is working towards compliance with the General Permit for the Discharges of Stormwater from Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) from the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP) to protect waters of the state from contaminated urban stormwater runoff. The City also updated its Drainage Manual in 2017 to incorporate green infrastructure and Low Impact Development principles but will need to use more green infrastructure for stormwater management to comply with the MS4 permit and the Drainage Manual.

Figure 39: ANNUAL GALLONS OF EFFLUENT FROM RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Name	Units	Location	2019	2018	2017
Iron Works	108	20 or 1 North Water Street	4,820,240	3,954,400	3,845,490
The SONO Pearl	66	101 Washington Street	1,994,390	1,890,020	1,617,060

Figure 40: STORMWATER INFRASTRUCTURE



Stormwater Infrastructure map showing locations of outfalls, endwalls, catch basins, manholes, and culverts by NV5.

Stormwater Management

Stormwater management practices are implemented in order to reduce stormwater flow into the sewer system and thus reduce peak storm flows into the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

East Norwalk utilizes a combined sewer system (CSO), meaning that both sanitary discharge and stormwater use the same system. For this reason, rain water can affect the waste water treatment capacity.

The 2017 Drainage Manual and Department of Public Works (DPW) do not allow any extra runoff or volume to be discharged into the CSO system, based on the 25-year storm. Therefore, all new redevelopment sites will have to provide detention of the extra stormwater on site and contain any additional water quality features that are required for underground detentions systems (eg. oil-water separators).

Figure 41: INUNDATION AT VETERAN'S MEMORIAL PARK

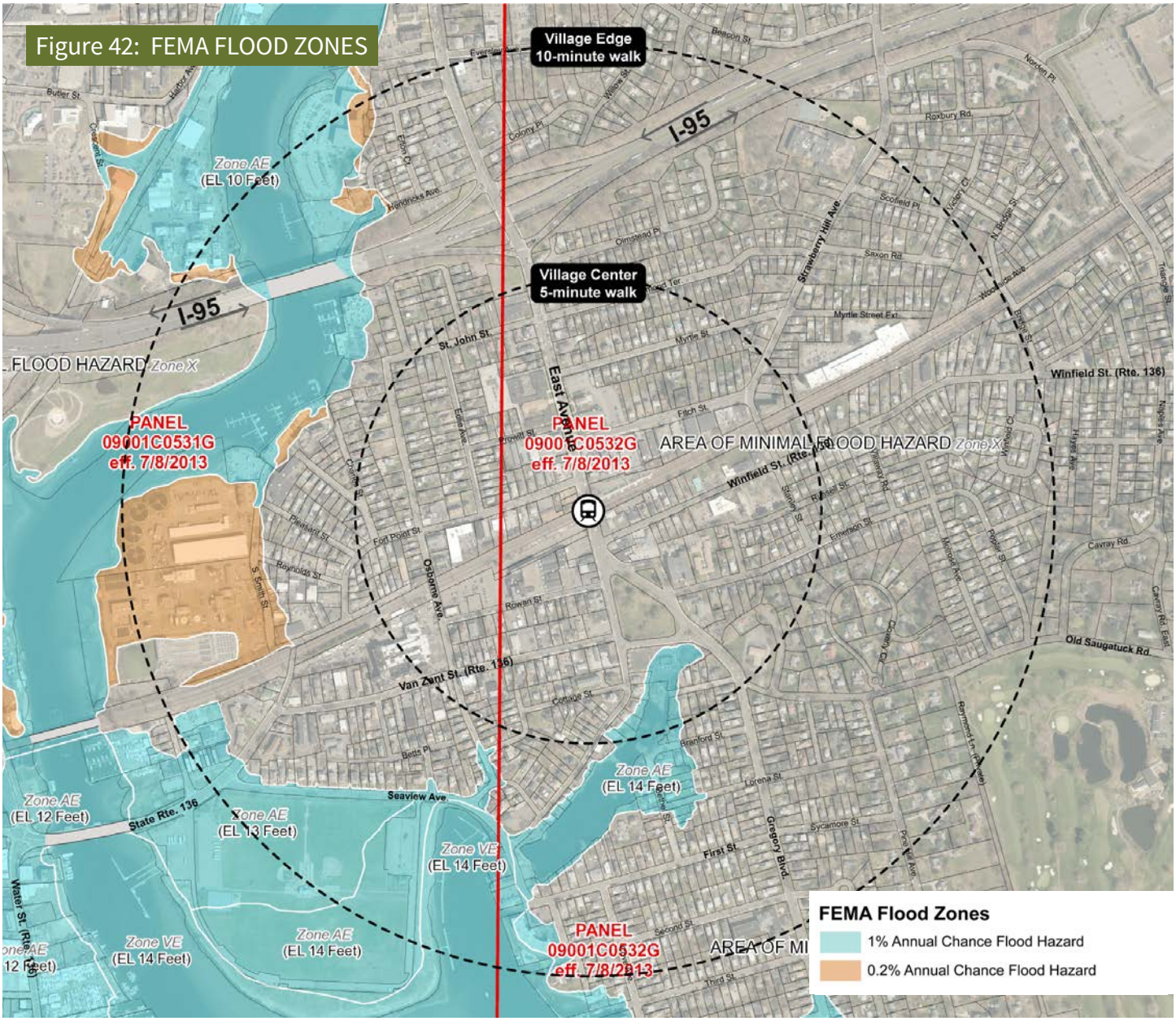
Inundation at the marshy edges of Veteran's Memorial Park. Photo Taken 3/12/2020.

Flood Zones

Based on current data within the TOD area, the properties most prone to flooding are the parcels surrounding Mill Pond and Veteran's Memorial Park as well as Route 136 where it crosses the river. The site of the wastewater treatment plant is also prone to flooding in the case of a storm event. These flood zones are subject to change given the uncertain sea level rise and climate change projections.

Figure 42 indicates that portions of the area are located within the AE Flood zone, which as defined by FEMA are coastal areas with a 1% or greater chance of flooding, and additional hazard associated with storm waves. These areas also have a 26% chance of flooding over the life of a 30-year mortgage. In addition, participants at the first public workshop stated that flooding regularly occurs along Seaview Avenue and South Smith Street, and at Mill Pond and its surrounding properties.

Based on the predictions for increased precipitation events as a results of climate change, flooding in this area is likely to increase. This plan recommends green infrastructure and low-impact development (LID) strategies to help reduce the negative effects of flooding.



FEMA Flood Zones Map.

5.7 Sea Level Rise

Norwalk Harbor is one of East Norwalk's greatest assets, but in the face of climate change and rising sea levels, it is also one of the greatest threats. Like many coastal communities, East Norwalk can expect more frequent and severe storms, increased daily flooding, and the migration or loss of critical marsh and island habitats.

Both the City and the State are well aware of the risks associated with rising seas and are implementing critical measures to mitigate and adapt to current and future challenges. The City of Norwalk has invested in the following projects impacting East Norwalk:

- Upgrade the Wastewater Treatment Plant and pump stations; enhance enforcement of sanitary sewer system connection permits: **$41m**
- Resolve chronic drainage problems and implement stormwater best management practices (such as those recommended in this plan): **$3.5m**
- Improve and repair Calf Pasture Beach and Veteran's Memorial Park: **$3.2m**

At the state level, a new report is being compiled titled, *Municipal Resilience Planning Assistance for Sea Level Rise, Coastal Flooding, Wastewater Treatment Infrastructure, & Policy,* which will likely be a critical resource for any future development in East Norwalk. The State also offers *The Connecticut Climate Change Preparedness Plan: Adaptation Strategies for Agriculture, Infrastructure, Natural Resources and Public Health Climate Change Vulnerabilities.* The 2019-2029 Citywide Plan emphasizes the vulnerability of the Wastewater Treatment Plant, located at Liberty Point in East Norwalk. CT DEEP and The Connecticut Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation (CIRCA) identified the 20" sea level rise by the year 2050 projection as the one that should be used state-wide for planning purposes. This projection shows water inundating the edges of the Wastewater Treatment Plant on a daily basis and flooding the entire facility in the event of a severe storm.

Figure 43 shows the daily inundation if 2ft, 4ft, or 6ft of sea level rise occur and highlights the roadways that would be frequently inundated in as little as 30 years with 20 in of sea level rise.

Figure 43 Legend

Road will flood at least every 30 days*

Road will flood between every 90 days and 10 years*

Road will flood between every 10 and 100 years*

Daily Inundation with 0" Sea Level Rise

Daily Inundation with 24" Sea Level Rise

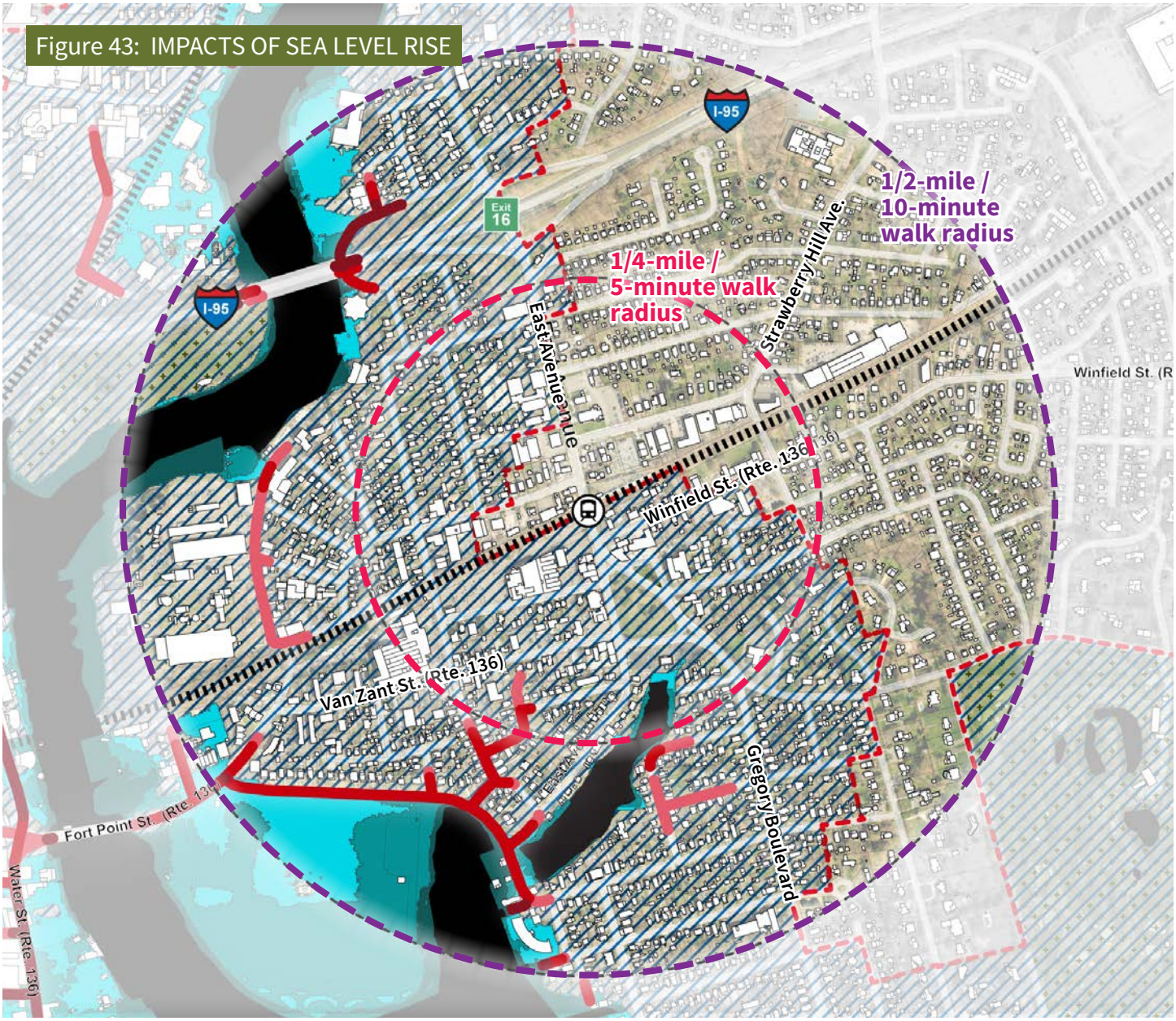
Daily Inundation with 48" Sea Level Rise

Daily Inundation with 72" Sea Level Rise

Coastal Area Management Zone

**Projected flood frequency assuming 20" sea level rise by 2050.*

Figure 43: IMPACTS OF SEA LEVEL RISE



Road flood frequency based on approximately 20" sea level rise by the year 2050. Data source: 2016 Sea Level Affecting Marshes Model (SLAMM) to Connecticut's Shoreline (Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection). Sea Level Rise data source: The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Office of Coastal Management; last modified 3/2/2020.

Application Review by the Norwalk Harbor Management Commission (NHMC)

Pursuant to the CT General Statutes and Norwalk Code, the NHMC reviews, for consistency with the Norwalk Harbor Management Plan, development proposals affecting the real property on, in, or contiguous with the Harbor Management Area received by the Planning and Zoning Commissions and other City agencies, including applications for coastal site plan review and proposals for new or amended City plans, regulations, or ordinances.

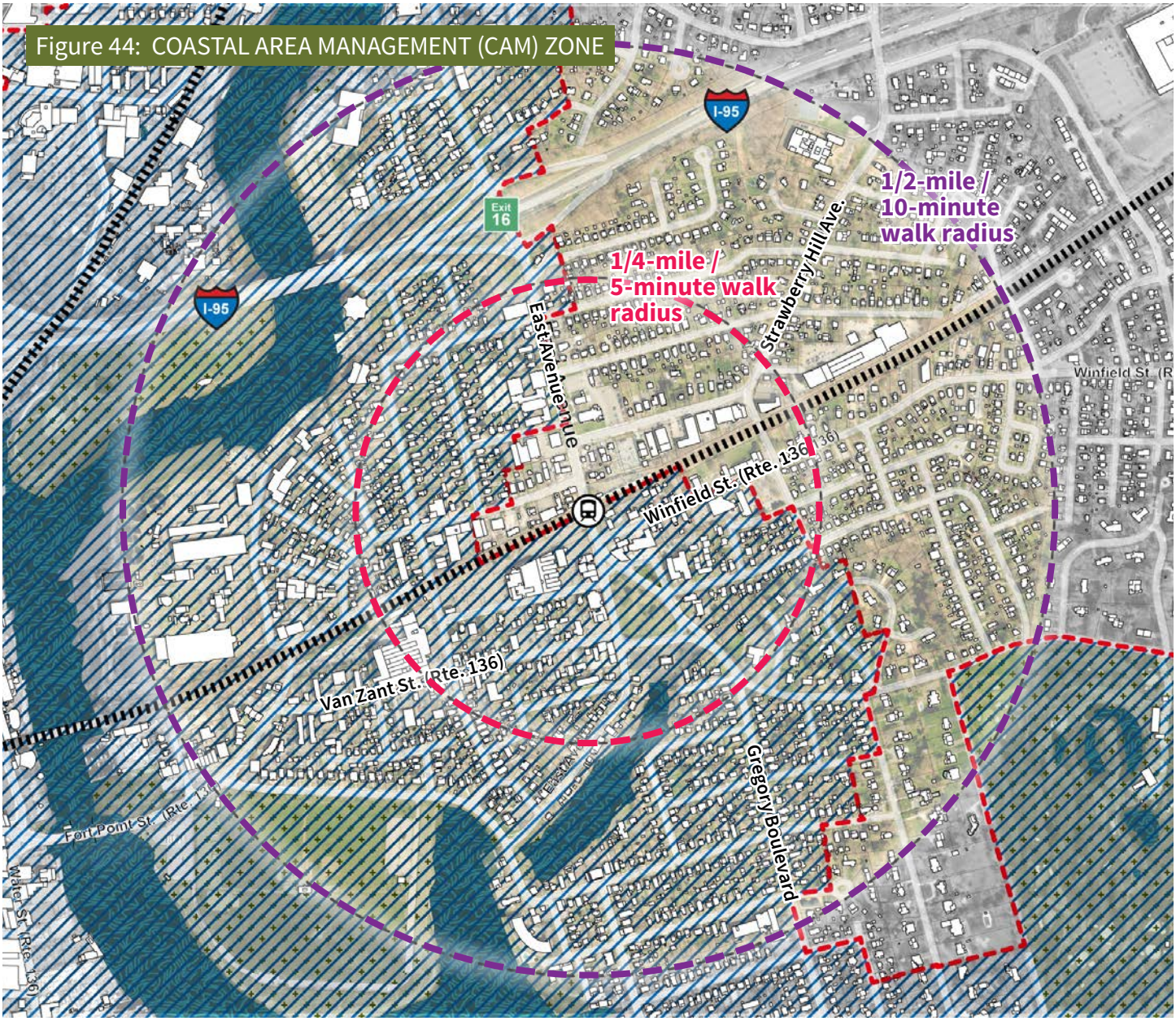
In accordance with Sec. 22a-113p of the General Statutes and Sec. 69-21 of the Norwalk Code, a 2/3 vote of the referring City agency (including the Planning Commission and Zoning Commission), is required to approve a proposal that has not received a favorable recommendation from the NHMC.

In addition, the NHMC reviews applications for projects subject to state and federal coastal regulatory programs, including structures, dredging, and fill proposals requiring approval from DEEP. Pursuant to Sec. 22a-113n of the General Statutes, a recommendation of the NHMC that is consistent with and adequately supported by the Harbor Management Plan with respect to a proposed project shall be binding on any official of the state when making regulatory decisions or undertaking or sponsoring development affecting the Harbor Management Area, unless such official shows cause why a different action should be taken.

Pursuant to Sec. 22a-113p of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Norwalk Harbor Management Commission (NHMC) has reviewed the [add when complete] draft of the *East Norwalk Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Neighborhood Plan* prepared by Harriman with support from RKG Associates, and NV5.

Insofar as the proposed East Norwalk TOD Plan may affect property on, in, or contiguous to Norwalk Harbor, it is subject to review by the NHMC to determine its consistency with the Norwalk Harbor Management Plan prior to any action by the Redevelopment Agency to approve the East Norwalk TOD Plan. The requirements of this review are specified in Sec. 22a-113p of the General Statutes, Chapter 69 of the Code of the City of Norwalk, and the Harbor Management Plan.

Figure 44: COASTAL AREA MANAGEMENT (CAM) ZONE



More than half of the East Norwalk TOD Area falls within the Coastal Area Management Zone.

5.8 Market Analysis

Introduction

This market analysis studied existing demographic and economic conditions for Norwalk and East Norwalk, and the market conditions for a variety of uses in the TOD area (within a half-mile radius of the East Norwalk train station). The report includes an analysis of broad demographic and economic trends, a review of real estate development trends in Norwalk, and summaries of the market potential for residential, commercial, and light industrial uses in this area.

The following lists the key findings that resulted from the market analysis. *To view the full report, see Appendix A.*

Key Findings

- Norwalk and Fairfield County are some of Connecticut's only communities experiencing economic and population growth. Between 2010 and 2017, Norwalk's population grew by 4.6 percent to 88,537. Four of the state's eight counties lost population over that period. Fairfield County is the only Connecticut county projected to experience population growth between now and 2023.
- Shifting demographics have changed Norwalk's market for housing and amenities in the last decade. Norwalk is rapidly becoming more diverse; a declining number of white residents has been offset by growing Black, Asian, and especially Hispanic/Latino populations. While Norwalk's population is growing older, like most suburban areas across the country, the City has fared better than most at attracting 20- to 34-year-olds since 2010. Attracting these residents can help protect the local economy against risks that come with an aging population.
- Local incomes and wages have grown steadily, a trend not seen in most parts of the state. Median income growth of 12 percent and average wage growth of 14 percent since 2010 indicate that Norwalk's residents and workers have benefited from a strong national and New York City metro economy. Norwalk's median household income of nearly $82,000, while not as high as the Fairfield County's median, makes it one of the state's highest-income communities.
- Retail, Healthcare, and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services remained Norwalk's largest employment sectors in 2017. Despite five percent employment growth since 2010, projections show Norwalk's job count stabilizing, instead shifting workers into higher-earning jobs. The City's growing knowledge economy will play an expanded role as the New York City region continues its shift towards technology, information services, and life sciences, and away from legacy manufacturing. While the forthcoming SoNo Collection will provide an immediate boost to retail hiring, longer-term employment in the sector is projected to decline as nationwide consumer preferences continue to shift.
- Norwalk's residential development has taken on different forms since 2008, with an increase in location-focused mixed-use structures that include multi-family housing. The average density, or floor-area-ratio, of residential buildings built since 2008 has been nearly four times that of Norwalk's pre-2008 structures. Hundreds of new residential units in walkable, mixed-use areas like South Norwalk have played a key role in attracting 20- to 34-year-olds and subsequent retail and restaurant amenities.
- The City's overall housing market is reported to be strong,

with housing prices and asking rents on the rise. Despite a diverse housing stock, Norwalk is a high-cost market in a region with other even higher-cost communities like Greenwich. In 2018, the City's median home sale price reached $409,000, 13 percent higher than in 2013 (Fairfield County's median price saw no growth over that period). Median rents grew to around $2,440/month.

- Demand for office space across Fairfield County has slowed, although refurbishment and use conversions of existing spaces have provided new options for prospective firms. The Norwalk area's 2018 average asking rent of $32.19/sf/yr was virtually equal to the county average. Negative absorption across the region in 2018 made any significant new office construction unlikely in the near term.
- Despite a strong overall market, East Norwalk's small lots and historic character mean it has few suitable parcels for transformative development. Concerns over car traffic and parking may play less of a role in curtailing development activity than the layout and existing land uses. The vast majority of East Norwalk parcels are too small to accommodate new construction of a scale that would attract most for-profit developers.
- The market for new retail and restaurant development is limited due to its relatively medium density, segregated land uses, and lower income profile versus surrounding communities. East Norwalk's population is not large enough to support most types of retail businesses on its own, and a rise in lower-income residents means the this area has less purchasing power than some neighboring communities. Opportunities may exist for small footprint, unique retailers to succeed in East Norwalk, but small market demand and the presence of highly competitive retail environments within a 15-minute drive may make attracting new retail to the area a challenge.
- The 25 Van Zant Street office/commercial building refurbishment and the Spinnaker mixed-use project, both near the train station, have the potential to create a catalyst for a new "village center." While community concerns over parking and traffic linger, the two projects can help provide the population and worker density needed to support some additional amenities that the community desires.

Figure 45: STATION HOUSE RESTAURANT

Station House Restaurant on East Avenue. Photo Taken 3/12/2020.

Susceptibility to Change Analysis

The planning team examined the parcels within East Norwalk for the likelihood that the use or density would change in the future. This is known as a Susceptibility to Change analysis. The parcels that were deemed highly likely or likely to change were the ones the planning team used to develop test fit scenarios discussed in this section. The team used these scenarios to understand the impact of the recommendations on the physical character of East Avenue and certain connecting side streets.

The following factors were considered while establishing parcels susceptible to change in the future:

- Current land use and/or vacancy
- Level of under-utilization of the parcels (e.g., a parcel with an auto-oriented use, a single-story structure, and/or a large parking area surrounded by higher density developments and efficient parking)
- Proximity to the train station (within a 5-minute walk of the East Norwalk Train Station)
- Current uses incompatible with the surrounding predominant uses. Current land uses, like automotive, gas stations, storage and contractor's yards, are conforming based on the current zoning, but may be incompatible with their neighboring land uses and desired future uses
- Size, proportion, and enhanced value of the parcel if assembled with two or three adjacent parcels

Based on the above factors, the parcels most susceptible to change based on the factors identified above are illustrated in Figure 46.

However, just because a parcel is susceptible to change, does not mean that it **will** change. The **feasibility** of change is also a factor and requires a balance between the desired development context and market forces. The development market will evaluate the cost to build versus the likely return. If the cost to build is too high, the property owner and/or developer will look for other options. A developer will look to build the largest scale allowable to spread fixed costs (such as parking and building systems) across more units.

The cost of construction is one factor in the total cost; others that contribute to the cost/return balance include the underlying market value of the land and existing buildings; the number of units achievable and the projected sales or rental prices of each unit (commercial or residential); the known demand for the proposed development; the size and configuration of the available lot(s); and the regulatory requirements. These factors will be evaluated within individual neighborhoods and among adjacent communities.

Figure 46 Legend

Highly Likely to Change

Likely to Change

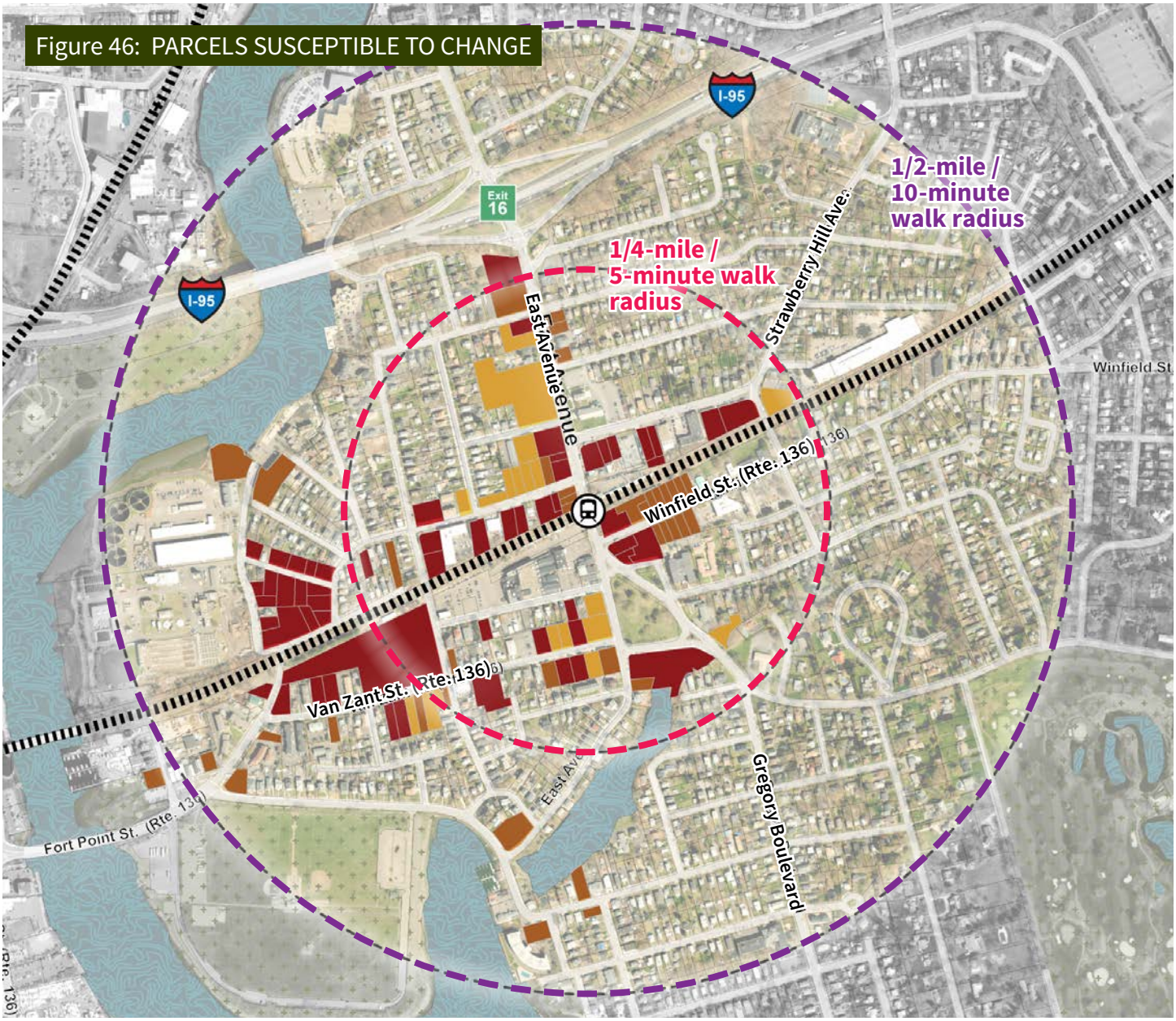
Potential to Change

Regulatory burdens can include a long or inefficient permitting process; requirements for costly infrastructure (for example, the cost of a surface parking space is $10,000 or more; for structured parking, the cost of a space may be $35,000 or more); or requirements for community amenities that do not also provide value to the development.

The next few pages provide fit studies that assist in understanding the impact of zoning regulations on potential development volumes (square foot for commercial/retail and dwelling units for residential). These simple massing studies helped define the proposed East Norwalk Village TOD Zone.

6

Figure 46: PARCELS SUSCEPTIBLE TO CHANGE



This map illustrates the likelihood of a parcel to be redeveloped in the near future based on current conditions and projected trends.

Purpose of Fit Studies

A common question during the public planning process was "how many units will be built here?"

At some point during any planning process that question appears, because it is human nature to attempt to quantify the potential change to a known area. Many people enter a planning process assuming that it is similar to a development process. During a development process, a developer applies for a specific development project on a specific parcel or parcels that will, if approved, be built within a few years of approval. The development program (the number of square feet, the number of dwelling units (if residential), and the proposed land uses) is known. From this specific proposal, judgments about the number of parking spaces required, the likely traffic impact from the mix of land uses, and the potential increase to the tax base can be calculated.

It is more difficult to define the number of dwelling units that would be built during a planning process. To do so, planners use fit studies which test different development volumes on existing properties to explore the impacts. These fit studies can be designed using different assumptions about zoning regulations and market factors.

Fit studies are often used to test changes in zoning regulations, and that is how the fit studies are used in this chapter. The consultant team selected a series of sites based on the Susceptibility to Change analysis described above and used the existing and proposed zoning regulations to test how those regulations controlled development on the site.

Knowing that the current market conditions and regulatory structure do not provide an incentive for parcel assembly, the consultant team tested the impact of the new zoning regulations on parcel assembly. Parcel assembly would allow efficiencies in terms of building design and positioning on the site, including the provision and location of parking and public amenities.

Parcel assembly is very easy to do on page and more difficult to do in practice. The embedded values of the existing buildings has to be considered, and a developer would require a return large enough to cover the cost of removing or rehabilitating the existing buildings.

These fit studies are illustrative three-dimensional diagrams only, **and should not be viewed as potential developments**. They are the best method of understanding what development could happen if the regulatory rules were to change. Any future development would be dependent on the existing regulatory and market conditions at the time of application.

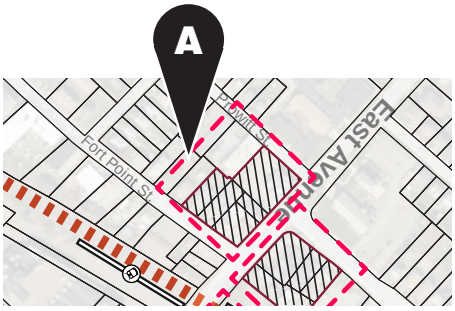
All the fit studies shown are within the existing Neighborhood Business Zone and the proposed East Norwalk Village TOD Zone (EVTZ). They were used to test the recommendations for zoning changes, including required public amenities, and design guidelines. The draft text for these can be found in Appendices D and E, and were current at the time of approval of this plan. These draft documents require a separate approval process under the City's requirements for changes to the zoning ordinance. The text of both is likely to change during that approval process and the Appendices will serve as a historical record of the original text.

There are many ways to calculate the number of dwelling units that may be allowed as a result of a zoning change. Because the City of Norwalk places an upper limit on the number of units allowed on a site based on a ratio between the number of dwelling units and the total number of square feet in a parcel, the simplest calculation is to divide the number of square feet in a given area by the square feet required per dwelling unit. This gives an artificially high number. That is because the City of Norwalk also has requirements

Figure 47: LOCATION OF FIT STUDIES

Area outlined in blue is the proposed East Village TOD Zone.

A1
Fort Point Street
East Avenue
Fitch Street


A
Fort Point St
East Avenue

A2
Fort Point Street
East Avenue
Fitch Street

B
East Avenue
Fitch Street

B
East Avenue

Standard	Current Zoning	Proposed Zoning	Proposed Zoning with Bonus	A1	A2	B
Stories	2 ½ stories/ 35 feet	2 ½ stories 35 feet	3 ½ stories/ 45 feet	2.5 and 3.5	2.5 and 3.5	2 and 2.5
Building Coverage	80% buildings and parking (35% buildings)	80% buildings and parking	80% buildings and parking	±49%	±47%	±36%
FAR	0.7	0.7	1.1 or 1.5	±1.25	±1.55	±0.95
Minimum Lot Size	5,000 SF	5,000 SF	5,000 SF	±23,500 SF	±31,500 SF	±29,000

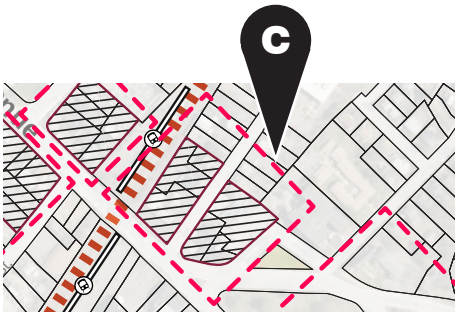
Maximum Dwelling Units allowed per X SF of lot area	Per Current Zoning 1,650 SF	Per Proposed Zoning 1,650 SF	Proposed Zoning with Bonus 1 1,035 SF	Proposed Zoning with Bonus 2 825 SF	Estimated Residential Units	Estimated Commercial SF	Estimated Parking Spaces
Scenario A1	14	14	22	28	±15	±11,500	±32
Scenario A2	19	19	30	38	±28	±14,900	±50
Scenario B	17	17	28	35	±14	±10,500	±31

for building and parking coverage (i.e. how much of the surface of the lot can be covered by impervious surface); building height (in both feet and stories; Floor Area Ratio (of the ratio of the building square footage to the lot square footage); parking requirements; and minimum lot size. These standards work together to limit the amount of development volume on any given site.

Finally, the potential number of units that could be developed also depends on the market demand for units of a certain size (measured in square footage) and mix (typically referring to the number of bedrooms). When reviewing these tables, it is critically important to understand that the square footage ratio is a limit on density based on the ratio of one dwelling unit per X square feet lot area. It is **not** the size of the units themselves.

The fit studies for the five areas identified in Figure 47 show a potential range of the **maximum** number of units allowable for each fit study based on three sets of numbers: the existing zoning (which is also the proposed non-bonus zoning); the first level of bonus for the proposed EVTZ; and the second level of bonus in the proposed EVTZ.

C1
Winfield Street
East Avenue


C

C2
Winfield Street
East Avenue

Standard	Current Zoning	Proposed Zoning	Proposed Zoning with Bonus	C1	C2
Stories	2 1/2 stories 35 feet	2 ½ stories 35 feet	3 ½ stories/ 45 feet	2.5 and 3.5	2.5 and 3.5
Building Coverage	80% buildings and parking (35% buildings)	80% buildings and parking	80% buildings and parking	±38%	±35%
FAR	0.7	0.7	1.1 or 1.5	±0.91	±0.93
Minimum Lot Size	5,000 SF	5,000 SF	5,000 SF	±114,500	±128,156

Maximum Dwelling Units allowed per X SF of lot area	Per Current Zoning 1,650 SF	Per Proposed Zoning 1,650 SF	Proposed Zoning with Bonus 1 1,035 SF	Proposed Zoning with Bonus 2 825 SF	Estimated Residential Units	Estimated Commercial SF	Estimated Parking Spaces
Scenario C1	69	69	110	138	±51	±43,300	±150
Scenario C2	77	77	123	155	±62	±44,800	±62

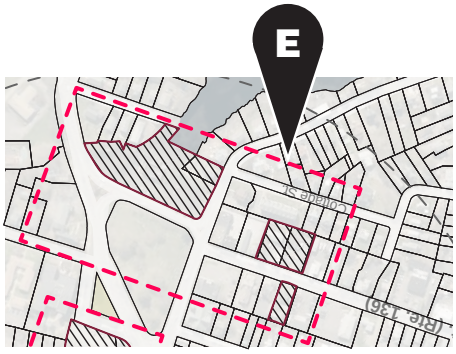
The fit studies also show the achievable number of dwelling units. This is based on the actual stories, building coverage, FAR, and lot size.

Note that parking requirements for the EVTZ are unchanged from the current 1.3 spaces per unit. No assumption about ownership vs. rental units were made as part of these fit studies.

All seven test fits are also based on parcel assembly; in other words, a developer would have to buy and redevelop multiple parcels in order to match these test fits. Parcel assembly allows proposed zoning requirements to be tested on both existing parcels and future combination so that the impact of a zoning change at these different scales can be understood.

The information for these fit studies was presented to the Oversight Committee on September 12, 2019. Additional fit studies were also presented at that meeting; however, the fit studies here were used to develop the table of amenities required for the bonus height, FAR, and residential density in the proposed EVTZ. As noted above, the draft zoning presented in Appendix D and the accompanying design guidelines presented in Appendix E are subject to change through the separate approval process required for their adoption. The fit studies were used to see if it were possible to meet the initial square footage requirements of the various amenities on the site while achieving the original development volume tested.

E


E

F
I-95 Exit 16

F

Standard	Current Zoning	Proposed Zoning	Proposed Zoning with Bonus	E	F
Stories	2 1/2 stories 35 feet	2 ½ stories 35 feet	3 ½ stories/ 45 feet	2.5 and 3.5	2.5 and 3.5
Building Coverage	80% buildings and parking (35% buildings)	80% buildings and parking	80% buildings and parking	±34%	±44%
FAR	0.7	0.7	1.1 or 1.5	±1.07	±1.64
Minimum Lot Size	5,000 SF	5,000 SF	5,000 SF	±125,500	64,000

Maximum Dwelling Units allowed per X SF of lot area	Per Current Zoning 1,650 SF	Per Proposed Zoning 1,650 SF	Proposed Zoning with Bonus 1 1,035 SF	Proposed Zoning with Bonus 2 825 SF	Estimated Residential Units	Estimated Commercial SF	Estimated Parking Spaces
Scenario E	76	76	121	152	±105	8,699	185
Scenario F	38	38	61	77	±74	15,100	84

A final note: during the planning process, some members of the community expressed deep concern that a change in zoning would lead to a large influx of new dwelling units. Of the seven test fits presented in this chapter, Scenarios B, C1, and C2 have fewer dwelling units than the existing Neighborhood Business zone (NB) would allow now. Scenario A1 has one unit more and Scenario A2 has 9 units more. (The two scenarios are mutually exclusive.)

Scenarios E and F have 29 units and 36 units more than the maximum allowable in the existing NB. However, a close reading of the table will show that Scenario F is not allowable under the EVTZ, as the FAR is greater than the maximum allowed.

Were these parcels to be developed at a similar level to the fit studies in this chapter, the total number of anticipated units would range from 309 units (A1, B, C1, E, and F) to 333 units (A2, B, C2, E, and F). However, Scenario F would have to be reduced in size to meet the required FAR.

All these scenarios rely on parcel assembly and an assumption of market demand. **Change along East Avenue as a result of the rezoning to EVTZ is likely to be incremental and over a mid- to long-term horizon, based on actual market demand and the moderate increase in density from the NB to the EVTZ.**

Proposed Zoning Changes

This section details some of the provisions in the proposed zoning provided in Appendix D.

I-1 District

The purpose of this change is to support the retention of existing industrial businesses and uses in East Norwalk by allowing the flexibility of adding a small number of residential uses to financially support the industrial operations.

The proposed change to the I-1 District is would allow residential units as an accessory use to an industrial use. In the draft text of this proposed change (see Appendix D) there are several restrictions:

- The ground floor must have one of the following uses as defined by the City's Zoning Ordinance: Light or Boutique Manufacturing, Maker Space, or Artist Workspace.
- A minimum of 50% of the total FAR is dedicated to the uses above.
- The number of dwelling units is restricted to one unit per 3,000 square feet of lot space.
- The dwelling units must be within the same building as the principal use and are subject to the City's workforce housing requirements .
- A map defines the properties within the I-1 District in East Norwalk that are subject to this change.

East Norwalk Village TOD Zone

The purpose of the proposed EVTZ is to balance increased development levels near the current East Norwalk train station with community desires for a pedestrian-friendly maritime village that supports the existing surrounding neighborhoods.

Unlike the proposed change to the I-1, which sees residential as a supplementary use to support a specific principal land use, for the EVTZ, residential is seen as a companion use to the required active ground floor use. As noted in the fit studies above, the new EVTZ proposes three options for residential density:

- As-of-right: 1,650 square feet of lot area per dwelling unit.
- First bonus level: 1,035 square feet of lot area per dwelling unit.
- Second bonus level: 825 square feet of lot area per dwelling unit.

The bonus levels also determine the applicable FAR:

- As-of-right FAR: 0.7.
- First bonus level FAR: 1.1.
- Second bonus level FAR: 1.5.

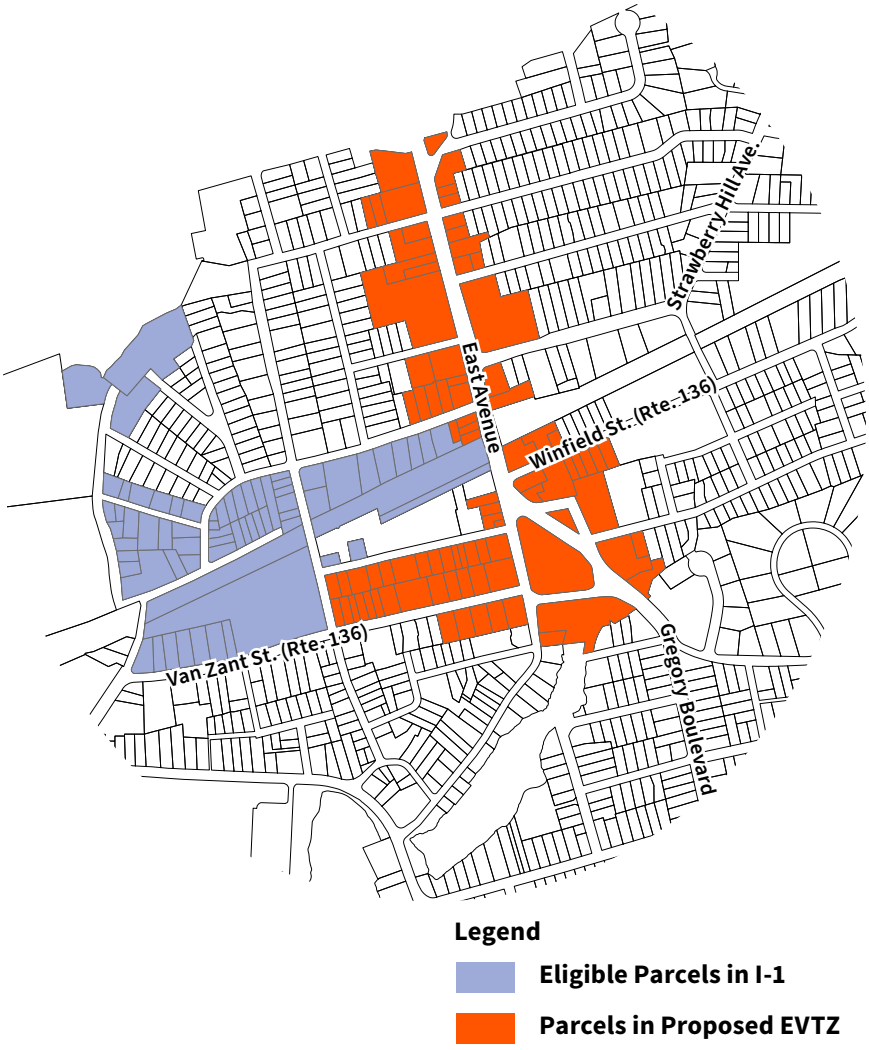
And the allowable height changes as well:

- As-of-right height: 2.5 stories.
- Bonus level (both) height: 3.5 stories.

The point system that determines the bonus levels are described in Appendix D. This system is likely to change during the approval process, but the draft in the appendix provides a framework for tying public benefit to the increases proposed here. In particular, this zoning framework and the accompanying design guidelines (Appendix E), reflect community goals for a pedestrian-friendly environment, a maritime village, and sustainable design for both buildings and sites.

The fit studies tested the potential development volumes under this proposed zoning, in some cases and by assuming some level of parcel assembly within the proposed EVTZ. The zoning was further refined based on comments during the public comment process on this draft plan and is likely to be changed again during the formal approval process. Appendices D and E, therefore, are representative of the discussions held at the time this plan was approved.

Figure 48: I-1 and EVTZ Boundaries



East Norwalk TOD Plan Recommendations

7.1 Economic Development

7.2 Land Use and Urban Design

7.3 Multi-modal Connectivity and Access

7.4 Parking

7.5 Open Space and Recreation

7.6 Utilities and Infrastructure

7.7 Implementation

Background to Recommendations

In order to determine the most appropriate recommendations for transit-oriented development around the East Norwalk Station, the City sponsored an extensive analysis and community engagement process to develop a holistic understanding of life in East Norwalk. The process looked at the neighborhood from both a quantitative/analytical approach as well as a qualitative/experiential approach. Many different sources of data and feedback informed the recommendations made in this plan. The planning team sought to achieve the right balance of community-driven aspirations tested against expert analysis.

These recommendations were developed through a integrated approach which explored the intersections of results from the community engagement process described in Section 4, the analysis of existing conditions including RKG's market analysis and NV5's traffic and circulation study discussed in Section 5, as well as an analysis of parcel susceptibility to change explained in Section 6. Other factors addressed throughout this process include density and development capacity, sustainability, connectivity/mobility/circulation and access, parking, open space, economic development trends, and implementation.

When looked at together, these aspects of the planning process paint a robust picture of the challenges and opportunities facing East Norwalk, which are addressed in the recommendations for transit-oriented development surrounding East Norwalk Station elaborated on in this section.

Base Recommendations

A key aspect of this process was to develop public realm recommendations that are independent of any private activity in the area. Even if no (re-) development occurs, the East Norwalk community deserves access to public infrastructure and a physical environment which enhances their quality of life. These base recommendations should be implemented regardless of other changes to improve the well-being of existing residents and business owners.

Focus on Redevelopment

Redevelopment recommendations were developed around analysis of parcels that are most susceptible to change based on the research undertaken and the criteria developed during the study process. The criteria include the following:

- Parcels lacking a highest and best use (a use which does not maximize the potential of the land based on its location, or a use with a structure that does not maximize the potential of the site allowed by zoning).

7

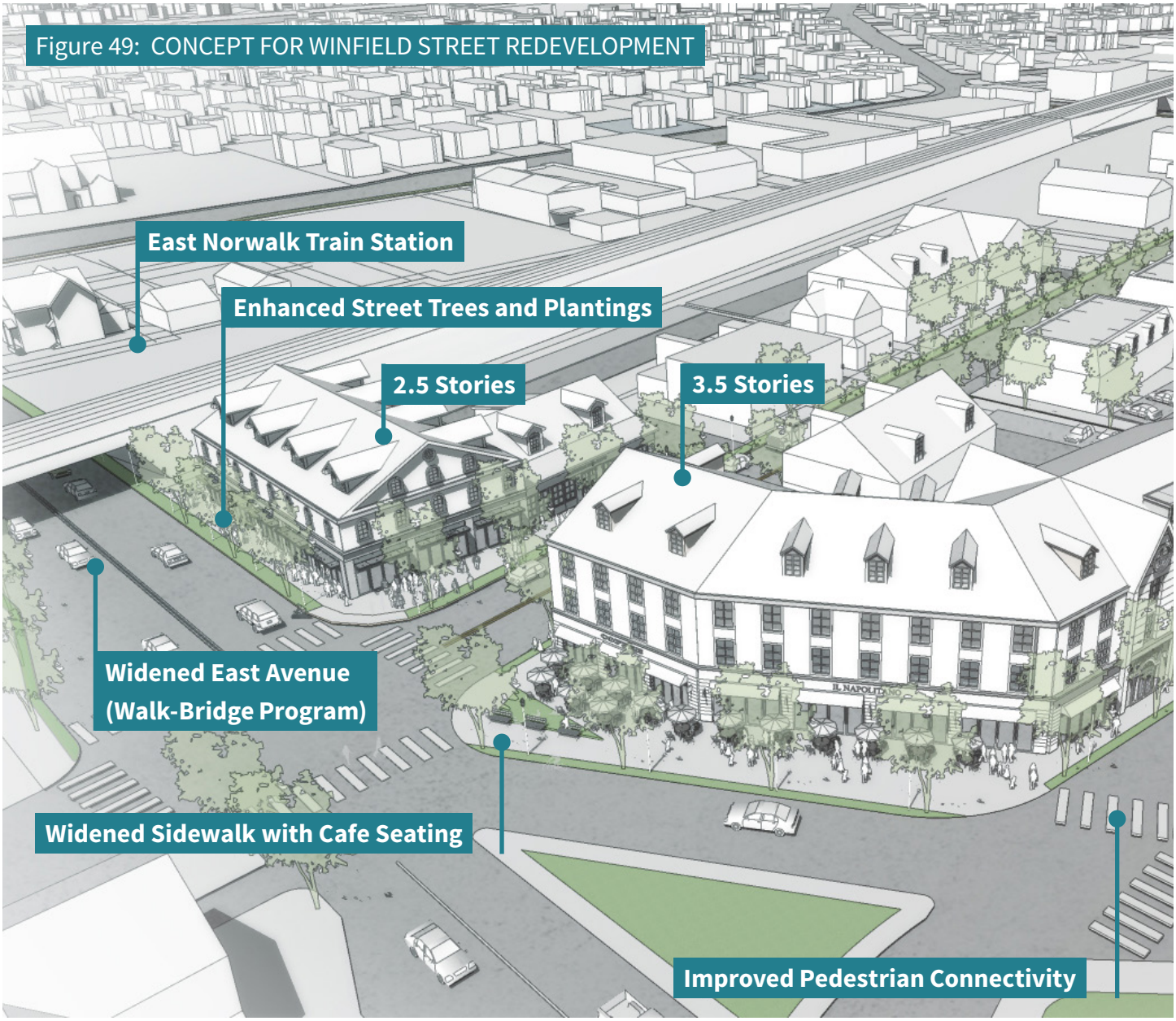


Figure 49: CONCEPT FOR WINFIELD STREET REDEVELOPMENT

*FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY. NOT AN ACTUAL PROPOSAL.

- Parcels that have high potential to impact the neighborhood in a manner consistent with the plan goals.

Developers and private investors target under-used parcels as redevelopment opportunities that maximize potential based on current or future zoning to generate profits for them and their institutional investors.

- New desired amenities are feasible when they are incorporated as a part of the redevelopment.
- New amenities may not be financially feasible according to market analysis.
- A planning change is much more feasible when planned around currently under-used parcels.

A vital component to the successful redevelopment of the neighborhood is an explicit implementation plan. It is critical to set up rules so that the desired results are feasible on the most susceptible parcels. The susceptibility analysis looked at land use, zoning, market conditions, and ownership to determine the likelihood of each parcel to be redeveloped in the near future based on current conditions and projected trends. The planning team studied various scenarios for redevelopment on the parcels most likely to change. These "fit studies" are a 3D analysis which develops building massing to meet zoning and regulations, such as setbacks and height restrictions, while maximizing building and site efficiency. Various configurations of retail, residential, office, and mixed use were tested on several sites. These tests explored the capacity for redevelopment on those sites and the potential impact on the context. The existing market conditions, type of development, parking, and construction feasibility were all closely considered in determining the most feasible options.

These development fit studies were refined based on community feedback to balance community preferences with development feasibility. Illustrative graphics expressed the intended character of the proposed development opportunities for the community to respond to. These studies were developed both in respect to form and architectural identity, as well as numbers and market feasibility. The numbers (residential units, retail/office space, parking spaces, FAR, etc.) were studied against community demographics, market and real estate projections, and infrastructural capacity to understand the potential impacts of the proposed developments on the community.

These redevelopment scenarios were used to develop zoning recommendations and design guidelines that balance community preferences with opportunities for property owners.

Figure 50: CONCEPT FOR WINFIELD STREET REDEVELOPMENT: WINFIELD STREET

Fit Studies C1 and C2, Winfield Street (East Avenue is behind the viewer)

**FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY. NOT AN ACTUAL PROPOSAL.*

Figure 51: VIEW FROM LAWN OF ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE TO CONCEPT FOR EAST AVENUE

Fit Study A, viewer is looking at East Avenue between Fort Point Avenue and Prowitt Street

**FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY. NOT AN ACTUAL PROPOSAL.*

Figure 52: CONCEPT FOR WINFIELD STREET: EAST AVENUE

Fit Studies C1 and C2, viewer is looking at East Avenue between the rail track and Roger Square

**FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY. NOT AN ACTUAL PROPOSAL.*

7.1 Economic Development

There are many existing businesses in East Norwalk which are viewed favorably by members of the community, particularly those along Fort Point Street, Fitch Street, and Van Zant Street. This plan promotes and create incentives for new development and redevelopment, while also protecting existing businesses which are thriving and contributing to the local economy.

This Plan recommends the following strategies to attract new high-quality small businesses while preserving existing fiscally-sound businesses:

1. Support existing economic development activity along Fort Point Street, Fitch Street, and Van Zant Street.

a. Support existing non-polluting businesses that generate high value jobs.

There is nearly 1.5 Million SF of industrial space in the vicinity of the train station. Many businesses have found this to be an affordable opportunity to start up their operations. The mix of business varies from small manufacturers of precision equipment, such as Hanes Precision, to small businesses located in the Old Hat Factory Building. These businesses foster a diverse array of jobs near the train station. The thriving small businesses are generally supportive of the conversion of low rent yielding industrial space into slightly higher rent yielding small business space. The growth of small businesses will mean a higher volume of employees to potentially patronize new amenities near the train station.

- **Develop a regular communication channel with area businesses** – Multiple large-scale construction projects are slated for the future in East Norwalk. These projects may have the potential to disrupt existing businesses. The City should engage these businesses and develop an ongoing communication channel with them to convey City programs and future infrastructure improvements. The City should also work with the future improvement planners to develop a proactive solution to maintain the viability of these businesses during construction.
- **Market East Norwalk** – East Norwalk has vacant industrial spaces. The City should collaborate with owners and brokers to promote the reduction of these vacant spaces, as well as understand the needs of potential tenants. Such assistance could be in the form of expedited building permits for tenant improvements and assistance with any additional requirements that the tenants have under the purview of the City.
- **Promote the formation of an East Norwalk Business Improvement District** – The City should promote the formation of the Business Improvement District to work collaboratively with the City departments, area businesses, and other stakeholders. Currently, the East Norwalk Business Association performs this role by organizing events like Taste of East Norwalk. These relationships could be formalized to develop a Business Improvement District. A Business Improvement District could work with the City to collaborate on cleanliness, safety, community engagement, marketing, placemaking, beautification, outreach, and advocacy.
- **Improve pedestrian connectivity** – Improving

Figure 53: MIXED USES ON VAN ZANT STREET

A 3-story mixed-use node on Van Zant Street. Photo taken 3/12/2020.

sidewalks and pedestrian connectivity is of critical importance. Enhancing the pedestrian realm serves to promote transit use among local employees and ensures that employees, visitors, and residents can safely walk from the station to their destinations. If connectivity is not improved, ridership will continue to drop and it will be increasingly difficult to advocate for increasing rail service to improve accessibility and convenience in East Norwalk.

- **Promote an inventory of available public parking resources within the area and the small lots that are available for short-term and long-term leases** – As East Norwalk redevelops, it will be crucial to maintain a supply of both long and short-term parking to support the growing needs of local businesses. An inventory of the available parking spaces can help businesses navigate their parking requirements and understand where parking is available within a walking distance. A formal system of sharing excess parking on one site for a potential land use on another site within walking distance will allow for the efficient use of parking resources. The proponent will have to show that the proponent is planning to lease the parking space for long-term. If for any reason the parking is lost, the proponent will have to find another parking space or cease the operation of the use.
- **Designated truck routes for small businesses** – Small businesses contribute to the coastal village character of East Norwalk. These small businesses also need to be accessible by trucks for them to conduct their businesses efficiently. The neighborhood has concerns with trucks on the neighborhood streets creating safety challenges. The City and the businesses should work together with the neighborhood to designate specific truck routes to avoid conflicts between residents and businesses. The truck routes

should avoid the neighborhood streets and these routes should be enforced.

- **Use City programs and initiatives such as the Main Streets program, the façade improvement program, small business loans, and other programs to rejuvenate existing building spaces to attract new businesses** – Commercial operations in East Norwalk typically yield rents in the $20-25 per square foot per year range. These rents are not high enough to support reinvestment in properties. To attract new tenants, some reinvestment may be required. The City should use its business support initiatives like the Main Street Program, the Façade Improvement program, and others to assist property owners with improvements to their properties. This reinvestment assistance will allow property owners to attract tenants with attractive rates which will lead to the improvement of properties and the overall enhancement of the physical realm.

b. Assist in enhancing the curb appeal of local businesses to improve the pedestrian environment ("good neighbor" policy).

The City should work with businesses to improve the pedestrian environment around their properties for the benefit of neighbors. Strategies to improve the pedestrian environment are presented in the Design Guidelines (Appendix E).

The transitions where residences face commercial or industrial uses lack proper sidewalks on the commercial property side. Additionally, the head-in parking configuration extends the road asphalt surface from the business property without any clear definition delineating the road, sidewalks or property lines. Many of these businesses don't even provide any vegetated screening to visually enhance this condition. This kind of environment suppresses the quality of life for residents who use the streets on a daily basis.

c. Promote these areas to attract future small businesses through the City's economic development activities.

East Norwalk's existing inventory of commercial and industrial spaces offers an opportunity to create a mixed-use village center around the train station. The commercial and industrial spaces in East Norwalk are most conducive to small to medium-sized businesses. The City can market these spaces to future small businesses who are looking to locate in Norwalk. The commercial spaces available around East Norwalk allow the City an opportunity to offer future businesses a range of options from small commercial space close to the East Norwalk village center to larger office space in other areas of Norwalk such as the Merritt 7 parkway.

To ensure that the spaces are ready to attract future high value small businesses, the City will have to work with landowners and utility companies to ensure that the spaces have fiber connectivity. Improving fiber connectivity in the area for both new and existing buildings and leveraging the Third Taxing District's existing high-quality power resources presents an opportunity to target IT and tech-related businesses.

As part of this effort, the City may also consider implementing a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District around particular areas targeted for redevelopment as a way to divert tax revenues for the sake of public infrastructure improvements.

d. Consider creating incentives for desired uses (i.e. light industrial, maker economy,) by allowing property owners to develop additional FAR, reducing parking requirements, allowing additional ground coverage, adding accessory residential units, etc.

The current industrial and office market conditions do not support any reinvestment in these property types without a zoning change given existing vacancies and low rents. To ensure that the existing industrial and commercial spaces are preserved in East Norwalk from completely transforming to residential uses, it will be critical to create financial incentives for these property owners to maintain and grow their businesses. Allowing upper floor residential,

artist live/work, maker spaces, and restaurants will allow these properties to generate additional revenue to support their existing industrial uses.

e. Maintain existing commercial land uses along Reynolds Street.

The City has expressed a need for land to remain in industrial use to promote jobs and the tax base. The existing industrial land bound by Fort Point Street, Reynolds Street, and South Smith Street is not suitable for future residential uses because of its proximity to the City of Norwalk Waste Water Treatment Plant. In addition, these parcels are not near any other residential areas. Reynolds Street itself is flanked by industrial uses on both sides of the street, limiting the possible visual impact of the industrial properties on adjacent residential parcels. For this reason, this plan recommends maintaining the existing industrial land uses along this stretch of parcels.

Figure 54: 230 EAST AVENUE PROJECT

A train passes behind the transit-oriented mixed use development underway at 230 East Avenue. Photo taken 3/12/2020.

7.2 Land Use and Urban Design

Throughout the public engagement process, East Norwalk residents strongly advocated for the maintenance and enhancement of the small coastal New England village ambiance that makes the community so attractive. The feedback received expressed a strong consensus toward ensuring that any new changes or development should be in keeping with East Norwalk's traditional marine character and village identity. This resulted in recommendations to target development around key nodes within East Norwalk, preserving the intact residential neighborhoods, and improving connectivity between those neighborhoods and the development nodes. Nodes are defined as significant connection points within an area.

1. Preserve and enhance existing residential neighborhoods.

a. Code enforcement of non-compliant properties and land uses.

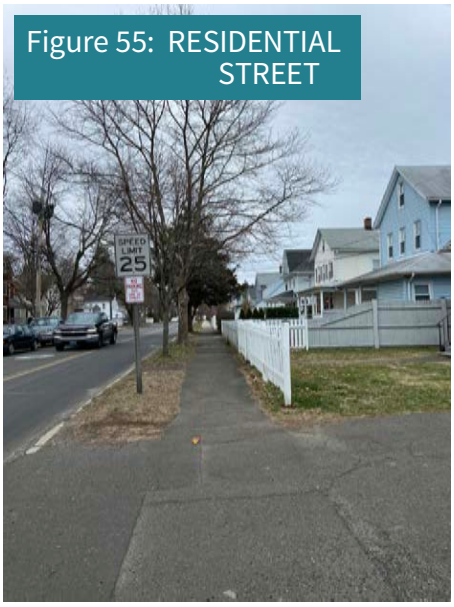
East Norwalk includes several strong existing neighborhoods. These neighborhoods contain well-maintained, primarily owner-occupied homes. The City of Norwalk overall has a homeownership percentage of up to 60%. Through the community engagement process, several constituents expressed concern that many of the properties in the north-west quadrant of East Norwalk are non-compliant, housing more occupants than what is allowed per zoning. In addition, some of these properties are owned by landlords who live out-of-town and have shown a lack of investment and maintenance in their East Norwalk properties. In order to preserve, strengthen, and enhance the existing fabric, it is critical that the City encourages responsible ownership and stewardship within reasonable property standards. The most effective way for the City to achieve this will be through a multi-pronged approach that increases code enforcement capacity, engages absentee landlords in a positive way, and develops effective tools and methods for dealing with non-compliant properties.

Additional Readings:

The Center for Community Progress has provided helpful resources with the Building American Cities Toolkit addressing the issue of non-compliant properties and land uses:

https://www.communityprogress.net/problem-property-owners-pages-201.php

Figure 55: RESIDENTIAL STREET



A typical residential street in East Norwalk. Photo taken 3/12/2020.

b. Infill developments on lots that undergo change that are appropriate to the physical context.

East Norwalk's existing residential areas are defined by a scale of 2 to 2.5 stories, with a maximum height of 35 feet. The density ranges from 1 to 6 dwelling units depending on the existing zoning. To best preserve and enhance these existing neighborhoods, any new

Tax Incentive Funds (TIFs) and **Business Improvement Districts (BIDs)** are great tools for encouraging favorable development. These could be used to create incentives for an innovative use like an incubator space in East Norwalk to support and attract small businesses and contribute to economic growth.

development should either be a rehabilitation of an existing building, preserving the exterior architectural character, or new construction respectful of the density and character of other properties in the surrounding context.

c. Support sidewalk improvements with public subsidies.

Current regulations dictate that individual property owners are responsible for the construction and repair of sidewalks adjacent to their parcels. To help mitigate this burden, The City replaces sidewalks wherever they do major roadway improvements. The upcoming East Avenue roadway project will replace long stretches of deteriorating sidewalk on East Avenue. While this will address the conditions on East Avenue, it does not address the poor condition of sidewalks throughout East Norwalk. Placing the primary responsibility of sidewalk maintenance on individual property owners has resulted in many of the sidewalks falling into various states of disrepair and is a detriment to walkability and accessibility. Walkability has been an important component of community discussions. Connected, continuous, safe, and walkable sidewalks would address the concerns raised during this planning process.

The City should look into programs and funding sources that could better support sidewalk improvements.

d. Consider a façade improvement program for the Charles Street and Osborne Avenue areas north of Fort Point Street.

A similar program was used in South Norwalk. Investments in these homes will help improve and preserve the existing housing stock, which acts as de-facto affordable housing.

2. Concentrate active land uses on side streets and important nodes to generate focused areas of activity; establish side-street villages along Van Zant and Winfield Streets.

a. Encourage a critical mass of amenities and neighborhood services along select side streets and nodes to foster an active pedestrian-oriented and bicycle-friendly environment.

The small sizes of neighborhoods within East Norwalk produce relatively low demand for amenities. Amenities could include various goods and services with a public benefit, parks and open spaces, and pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.

The heavy traffic on East Avenue, which bisects East Norwalk, discourages pedestrian and bicyclist activity. While vehicular accessibility can be an economic driver for businesses, a lack of accessibility for other modes of transportation can be equally detrimental to economic growth.

The analysis and public feedback suggests a preferred approach is to focus and promote new development around critical nodes and along quieter side streets branching off East Avenue to establish a network of concentrated activity which does not disrupt the existing fabric of the well-established residential areas. In this scenario, East Avenue would serve as a central spine connecting the side street villages and nodes of activity.

On East Avenue, bicycle parking near retail establishments and a bike locker at the train station would support the use of bicycles rather than vehicles for local trips. Pedestrian amenities near businesses, such as shaded seating,

would equally encourage walking for local trips.

b. Promote amenities and services on both sides of the street to foster a concentration of activities.

In establishing these selected Side-Street Villages, it is important that development happens along both sides of the street. Studies have shown two-sided pedestrian-oriented retail and mixed-use streets thrive, while streets with businesses on only one side of the street struggle to remain viable. Parking requirements and guidelines will need to be carefully considered so that access to business is convenient for patrons, but not at the cost of the pedestrian realm. These Side Streets should feel distinctly different from East Avenue, with parking at the rear of buildings, and a well-landscaped, vibrant, and safe environment for pedestrians. Given the concentration of these nodes within East Norwalk, it would be feasible to park in one village, and walk to all of them.

c. Promote active and continuous street frontages to encourage walkability and vitality.

In addition to concealing parking behind buildings, developers can improve the pedestrian realm by considering the transparency of their storefronts, signage, shade (awnings and street trees), planting, and street furniture. By stepping buildings back slightly to create sidewalks wider than the City's standard 7' and even small plazas where feasible, businesses can promote a diverse range of activities and attractions in front of their stores. Such guidelines should not homogenize new development, but create cohesion and vibrancy for the neighborhood.

3. For future developments, encourage a neighborhood-scaled built form, while still providing some added height and density closer to the train station and important nodes.

a. Allow a maximum of 3.5 Stories from the average grade of adjacent streets.

One of the architectural characteristics that gives East Norwalk its identity as a small coastal New England village is the low height of the buildings. This feature is cherished by residents who desire to maintain this identity and quaint atmosphere. However, the market analysis indicates that any new development lower than two stories in East Norwalk is highly unlikely to be profitable. The compromise is a maximum height of 3.5 stories – this height is not much taller than the existing buildings, but, based on fit studies, would provide enough building square feet to attract developers and spur economic growth for the community.

b. Promote a moderate increase in height and density within the proposed EVTZ. Maintain existing zoning for established residential areas.

This Plan suggests an approach which is respectful of the context and character of what is there, but allows just enough added density to foster viable economic growth and added public amenities to capture a better quality of life for all who visit, live, or work in East Norwalk. This recommendation does not affect the well-established existing residential neighborhoods, but instead recommends a zoning change for East Avenue and certain connecting streets (the proposed EVTZ District) to encourage redevelopment within that new district that is linked to increased walkability and appropriate economic development.

c. Encourage infill development in residential areas that is appropriate to the existing context.

While the focus on development for this plan is near the train station and other identified nodes, some residential development is likely to occur within the existing neighborhoods. Such development should be in keeping with the scale and character of its context and the City should discourage parcel assembly in these areas to maintain the lower density of the existing neighborhood fabric.

d. Limit building heights and diversify rooflines and features to enhance the traditional New England character.

In addition to limiting the heights of buildings, the architectural character of the buildings themselves should enhance East Norwalk's coastal New England identity. While there should be certain guidelines to set limits and constraints, these should not be so rigid that the built environment becomes monotonous. Part of what gives East Norwalk its classic New England character is the variety and diversity of its architectural vocabulary. Varying the rooflines and adding features such as dormers can help create the desired aesthetic.

e. Encourage developers to provide public amenities by offering incentives such as allowing additional floors or increased FAR.

The public engagement process revealed a menu of amenities which the community would like to see added in East Norwalk such as pocket parks, plazas, and open space. Creating a trade-off where a developer can add floors or units, (and therefore increase profits) by providing such a public amenity, allows the City to foster fruitful public-private relationships that will go a long way in enhancing the physical environment and quality of life for East Norwalk community members.

Amenities may include:

- Atrium
- Fountain/Water Feature
- Green Infrastructure
- Pedestrian Plaza
- Public Art
- Public Parking Facilities

f. Consider a Village District or Historic District for Liberty Square and Cove Avenue.

These districts have different characteristics from other parts of East Norwalk and should be protected by either a local historic district or by separate Village District zoning under the Connecticut State Statutes.

g. Rezone isolated commercial areas to the adjacent neighborhood district for consistency in land uses.

Certain areas in East Norwalk (shown on page 7) are zoned as commercial districts but would be more appropriate in a residential zone based on their existing land uses.

4. Provide flexibility for the future development of the Saint Thomas the Apostle Parish Family Center on the west side of East Avenue.

a. Encourage reinvestment in the Saint Thomas Church properties.

The analysis conducted as part of this study does not suggest that the properties owned by Saint Thomas the Apostle Roman Catholic Church on East Avenue are likely to change in the near future. The City should consider other means to encourage and provide incentives for reinvestment in these properties to ensure their continued vibrancy and contribution to the community until the conditions become more suitable for redevelopment.

b. Create flexible zoning to encourage the redevelopment of the Saint Thomas Family Center property as mixed-use.

Zoning and guidelines should be structured in such a way that would allow for the flexible redevelopment of this property into mixed-use in the future. As one of the larger parcels in East Norwalk, this property holds the greatest potential for viable redevelopment. The parcel is flanked by primarily commercial uses, meaning that redevelopment of these parcels would not disrupt or heavily impact the existing fabric of the established adjacent residential neighborhoods.

7.3 Multi-modal Connectivity and Access

In East Norwalk, Transit Oriented Development means more than simply encouraging development near the train station. Part of this study focused heavily on all aspects of transit, traffic, and parking in East Norwalk. Many community members who participated in public workshops or online surveys stated that all aspects of multi-modal travel present challenges in East Norwalk and expressed concerns that any new development or added density would only amplify these issues. In order to make sound recommendations for successful implementation of transit-oriented development, this study addressed traffic and infrastructure and carefully considered ways to implement improvements for bicyclists and pedestrians to promote healthier and safer neighborhoods for all.

1. Improve pedestrian connectivity to the train station, amenities, and services.

a. Improve the sidewalks and pedestrian environment along priority pedestrian edges to encourage walking to the train station and other nodes of activity.

Figure 56: SIDEWALK ON VAN ZANT STREET

Deteriorating sidewalk conditions on Van Zant Street. Photo taken 3/12/2020.

Because commuter parking is a major challenge around the East Norwalk Train Station, an enhanced pedestrian realm will encourage residents and employees to walk between the station and their destinations and alleviate the competition for parking spaces. This enhancement also adds to the quality of life and well-being for those able to walk or bike – healthy activities with innumerable physical and mental health benefits. Safety issues currently discourage community members from walking or biking in East Norwalk. Repairing sidewalks, reconfiguring traffic patterns, and improving bike lanes and pedestrian crossings, particularly at intersections, would also encourage more people to walk or bike rather than drive. Additional contributions to the public realm include shade-giving street trees, plantings, comfortable street furniture, and better signage – both for safety and wayfinding.

b. Promote mid-block pedestrian crossings to improve connectivity.

To better support existing and future businesses within the proposed Side-Street Villages, mid-block pedestrian crossings should be implemented wherever it is safe and desirable to do so. Future developments and roadway improvements should consider the design of effective mid-block crossings, especially where they will improve the connectivity between areas of activity, to create a convenient and safe experience for those patronizing local businesses on foot. Where possible, parking should be located behind buildings rather than on street and neck-downs/bump-outs should be implemented at crossings to improve pedestrian visibility and safety.

c. Promote wider sidewalks where possible to incorporate street trees and landscaping.

Where feasible, new developments should provide a wider sidewalk (wider than the standard 5') to allow room for the desired increased pedestrian traffic, the implementation of street trees and plantings for shade and stormwater filtration, and areas for street furniture such as outdoor tables and seating in front of cafés and restaurants, or benches where appropriate. The combination of planting and furniture will make the pedestrian realm a vibrant and active experience elevating the attraction of East Norwalk as a destination to live, work, and visit. This will further entice future development and help Norwalk to grow and diversify economically, making it a more financially, socially, and ecologically resilient community.

2. Improve bicycle rider comfort and safety.

a. Improve driver awareness through enhanced signage.

At the second public workshop, the planning team distributed a visual preference survey (which was also made available online) to gather community feedback in the categories of housing, commercial and mixed-use development, connectivity and access, and public space. Within the connectivity and access category, improved signage was one of the most preferred tools out of the sixteen images shown. Adding signs such as "share the road" serve to remind drivers of the laws as they may change road-to-road. Drivers visiting from out-of-town may not otherwise be familiar with share-the-road policies.

b. Extend bicycle lanes along key routes.

As recommended by the 2012 Bike and Pedestrian Plan, the City recently painted new bike lanes on Strawberry Hill Avenue and Gregory Blvd.. The City should continue to use the recommendations in this report to connect the broken links in the bicycle infrastructure network.

c. Provide safe bicycle storage at the train station and other significant locations.

A lack of safe storage options discourages some people from using bicycles to travel from home to work. Bicycle theft is particularly common around train stations. By providing appropriate bicycle storage options, the City can address this concern and encourage more bicycle usage to help relieve traffic and congestion problems. Storage solutions such as public bicycle lockers should be provided at the train station and other areas of activity in East Norwalk, such as Veteran's Memorial Park.

d. Support City efforts to implement a micromobility program in the future.

Since 2018, the City of Norwalk has been planning on piloting a bike share program in the urban core during 2019 and expanding the program to other parts in the City during 2020. The program priority was to focus on first and last mile mobility as well as to offer visitor type of services. The City contracted with a bike share company at no cost to implement these programs. Before the pilot was set to launch, the company decided to go in another direction and focus their business elsewhere. At the same time, the focus on safety and liability for the bike and scooter share industries changed worldwide. It was decided that these type of programs would be on hold until such time as it make sense to implement safely in the City of Norwalk. The priority has shifted to a Vision Zero safety platform focusing on pedestrian safety and expanding bike routes and sharrows Citywide as the preferred alternative mobility options.

3. Improve traffic congestion and road safety conditions.

a. Reduce speeds on local streets to deter cut-through traffic.

One of the greatest challenges for East Norwalk is the amount of traffic that cuts through the neighborhood from I-95 to the north to Calf Pasture Beach to the south. Participants at the first public workshop identified several factors contributing to this problem:

- East Avenue to Gregory Blvd. from Exit 16 is the most direct and accessible route to the beach.
- The presence of four gas stations near the train station attracts excessive truck traffic.
- An over-abundance of traffic lights disrupts traffic flow.
- The configuration of turning lanes is confusing and leads to dangerous situations.
- The reduction of lanes under the railroad bridge creates a bottleneck affect.
- Once traffic opens up again past the cemetery, cars are more prone to speeding along Gregory Blvd..

With the increased use of GPS, more visitors and tourists can find cut-through streets that were previously only known to locals. To avoid the East Avenue traffic, many drivers divert their routes to cut through the quieter residential areas, disrupting the quality of life for community members. In order to deter this cut-through traffic, the City should study the impacts of implementing the following traffic-calming measures on appropriate streets:

- Reconfigure traffic patterns and signals (CTDOT is currently working on designs for reconfiguring East Avenue; see recommendation 3-b.)
- Implement small rotaries at intersections.
- Enforce the 25mph speed limits on Gregory Blvd. and Strawberry Hill Avenue.
- Increase police presence to better enforce traffic laws.
- Improve signage to increase driver awareness of laws and applicable fines.

b. Support planned City and CTDOT projects/ infrastructure improvements.

The City is currently investing $3.6 million in upgrading traffic signals to develop intelligent transportation system tools to mitigate the impacts of traffic diverting off I-95 onto Norwalk Streets.

The State Department of Transportation recently issued 90% design drawings for road improvements along East Avenue intended to improve traffic configurations, signals, utilities, sidewalks, and drainage.

These efforts are in alignment with the analyses conducted as part of this study and should largely address many of the traffic challenges currently hindering the East Norwalk community if paired with other recommendations in this report to reduce car-dependence by improving multi-modal connectivity options.

c. Support pedestrian and traffic improvements for Gregory Blvd.

Potential improvements to increase safety and walkability on Gregory Blvd. include the following:

- Bump-outs
- Crosswalks
- Lane shifting/realignment

d. Define specific evacuation routes for hurricanes and other storm events. Develop a signage strategy to indicate the routes and publicize the routes and the signage strategy.

The City does not have published evacuation routes and, with the likelihood of increased storm and flooding events, such routes are critical to ensure orderly travel away from areas in danger.

Figure 57: EAST NORWALK RAILROAD BRIDGE

The East Norwalk Railroad Bridge will be replaced as part of the CTDOT Walk Bridge Program. East Avenue will be lowered and widened in an effort to relieve traffic congestion. Photo taken 3/12/2020.

7.4 Parking

1. Reduce parking conflicts for residents and businesses.

a. Implement a residential/ business parking permit program.

One way for the City to better enforce parking and fair access is to implement a permit program requiring residents and businesses (owners and employees) to display a permit to park in designated zones. The needs of businesses, residents, and commuters create a high demand for parking spaces in East Norwalk and conflicts consistently arise. Parking regulations are unclear and not always enforced. The City should provide clear guidelines, communicated through well-designed signage, and an easy-to understand process for obtaining a permit and enforcing who has permission to park where.

b. Provide striped and managed on-street parking where feasible to support short-term parking needs of current and future businesses.

The small size of parcels in East Norwalk limits on-site parking. In some areas, on-street parking is the only viable solution. On-street parking is also often the most convenient solution for business patrons with quick errands. For this reason, it is recommended that the City mandate short-term (half-hour, one-hour, or two-hour) parking limits for on-street parking to facilitate frequent turnover, ensuring availability of the most accessible spaces. Larger parking lots behind the buildings could accommodate more long-term parking (three-hours +).

c. Improve enforcement to increase turn-over and/ or reduce spill-over onto residential neighborhood streets.

Commuter parking on residential streets due to a lack of spaces at the station is a challenge for residents of East Norwalk. As noted above, residents have expressed frustration at the lack of clarity and enforcement surrounding parking regulations. Implementing new strategies and policies must be teamed with increased enforcement to ensure appropriate implementation of the new policies. Enforcement also builds trust between the community and the City as the community expects the City to implement and enforce fair policies to meet the needs of all users of parking.

2. Manage parking supply.

a. Promote shared parking among property owners.

Another approach for addressing the high demand and low supply of parking is to establish shared-parking agreements among property owners. Often adjacent uses have different peak hours, which allows for businesses to share a parking lot so long as their peak demand hours do not overlap. For example, a church may have a high demand for parking on the weekend, but the lot sits vacant the remainder of the week. Restaurants are most active in the evenings, while coffee shops are more active in the mornings. Concerns around liability and enforcement may prevent such arrangements. By creating formalized agreements, the City can alleviate these concerns and foster collaborative relationships among property and business owners that benefit businesses owners, employees and customers.

b. Implement wayfinding and signage to manage existing supply efficiently.

Concerns about parking may be related to the actual number of spaces or to a perception that there

is a lack of spaces. Raising the visibility of the existing parking is an appropriate strategy and well-designed wayfinding signage can alter this perception and create a better user experience. Such signage should clearly identify where public parking is available, time limits, and costs. Signage that shows walk and bike distances and times between parking areas and popular destinations can help people plan their trips to reduce the use of cars and thus the accompanying congestion. Better parking arrangements with clear signage encourages users to park once and walk or bike to their various destinations.

c. Implement parking payment technologies that increase convenience for users.

New technology has made a variety of creative parking solutions much easier to implement. Many apps aid drivers in finding and paying for parking ahead of time. These apps can also help implement shared parking agreements. The City should research what technologies are being used in neighboring communities and which are most popular/common; separate apps for adjacent cities can be frustrating for drivers. The City will need an alternative for those without smartphones or who are not comfortable with such technology to ensure access for all.

3. Reduce parking demand.

a. Unbundle parking spaces from future mixed-use developments near the train station.

Separating dwelling units or business spaces from dedicated parking spaces increases flexibility. Developers can require tenants to rent parking spaces separate from their units. This ensures that only tenants who need a parking space get one, increasing the availability. This also encourages residents to think more critically about their transportation options and walk or bike if feasible, helping to lower the overall demand on parking. This is a particularly attractive option near train stations, such as the case in East Norwalk, as public transportation and micro-mobility options become increasingly more convenient and more pleasant than driving.

b. Consider charging for on-street parking near the train station to increase turnover of the most convenient spaces.

The East Norwalk community currently benefits from free parking. While that is an asset in most areas, attracting customers who may otherwise be deterred by parking costs, it can also be detrimental to access around the station and contribute to conflicts related to parking. By charging a small fee for some of the most desirable spaces close to the station, and ensuring enforcement, the City can increase the turnover of these spaces which are typically occupied by commuter vehicles who take the train to work and leave their cars for the entire day.

Figure 58: ENW STATION PARKING SIGN

Permit Parking Only sign at East Norwalk Train Station. Photo taken 3/12/2020

7.5 Open Space and Recreation

1. Encourage active pedestrian spaces in the form of enhanced sidewalks, pocket parks, plazas, and publicly accessible open spaces.

a. Promote building setbacks along street-frontage that encourage a variety of pedestrian activities.

By encouraging developers to set their buildings back to allow for a wider sidewalk, a range of pedestrian-oriented activities can be implemented which add to the vibrancy of the streetscape and enhance the connectivity of parks, open spaces, and other recreational amenities. Depending on the depth of the setback, expanding the sidewalk could provide room for plantings, street trees, street furniture, and more users to share the sidewalk.

b. Promote variation in building forms at the street level to allow for the creation of plazas and publicly accessible open spaces

In addition to setting buildings back to allow for wider sidewalks, developers should be encouraged to vary their setback from their neighbors when possible. Creating a large setback or opening up a corner will create space for public plazas, pocket parks, and open space. While density is encouraged around the train station and along key side streets, this should be balanced with the implementation of new parks and open spaces, even if on a small scale. A well-connected series of small parks, plazas, and open spaces has more impact than one large isolated park/plaza/open space.

c. Create incentives for developers to provide amenities and usable public open spaces such as plazas and pocket parks.

One of the most effective ways to achieve the implementation of new open space is through fostering mutually beneficial public-private relationships. By allowing developers to add more units or increase the FAR of their project in exchange for some form of public amenity, the developer can increase their profits while contributing to the creation of an attractive public realm. This further benefits the value of their building/s and makes any new project more palatable to existing residents and business owners who may otherwise oppose the change. Accessible open space can come in many forms and benefit all who visit, live, or work near it.

d. Reconsider bike lane configurations on Strawberry Hill Avenue and Fitch Avenue.

The City should consider adding an additional southbound bicycle lane or reconfiguring the lanes along Strawberry Hill Avenue and Fitch Avenue so that both bike lanes are adjacent to the curb which would improve bicycle accessibility and safety as well as have a traffic calming affect by narrowing the perceived travel way.

2. Enhance neighborhood access to water.

a. Provide signage and wayfinding that guides residents to water.

One of East Norwalk's greatest assets is its proximity to the Harbor and the 35-acre Veteran's Memorial Park that welcomes the public to the waterfront. Veteran's Memorial Park features basketball courts, a lacrosse field, a soccer field, volleyball courts, a playground, public boat launch ramps, boat

Figure 59: NRVT TRAIL MAP

The Norwalk River Valley Trail System Map. Image source: Norwalk River Valley Trail. (2020, 03 04). Maps and Trails: Norwalk. Retrieved from Norwalk River Valley Trail: http://nrvt-trail.com/maps/norwalk/

rentals, picnic areas, and a pavilion. As one of the few points of public access to the waterfront in East Norwalk, the City should promote and enhance accessibility and use of this park. One way to achieve this goal is to provide signage and wayfinding to guide residents and visitors to the water from some of the active interior nodes recommended in this Plan. Indicating walk and bike distances and guiding people down the best pedestrian-oriented routes to the water will serve to help connect the interior parts of the neighborhood with the water and stand as a continuous reminder of this asset which is so integral to the quality of life in Norwalk.

b. Prioritize the improvement of sidewalks and pedestrian crossings on routes that lead to the water.

In order to encourage a concentration of pedestrian activity along key routes that lead to the waterfront and Veteran's Memorial Park, the City should prioritize these routes for improving sidewalks and crosswalks. As suggested by the Recreation and Parks Master Plan, consider adding a bike route through Veteran's Memorial Park. These routes can establish a cohesive network of active, pedestrian and bicycle-friendly streets that ensure the public always feels connected to the water, even when it is out of sight.

c. Complete the Norwalk River Valley Trail System.

The Norwalk River Valley Trail (NRVT) is a non-profit organization with the goal of connecting 30 miles of trails from Calf Pasture Beach in Norwalk up to Rogers Park in Danbury through Wilton, Ridgefield, and Redding. This will be a 10'-wide handicap-accessible multimodal trail for all users. Parts of the trail have already been completed and funds are currently being raised to complete the project. As part of this effort, some on-road improvements have already been completed through East Norwalk between Oyster Shell Park in the northern portion of East Norwalk, to Taylor Farm Park to the south along Seaview Avenue, Cove Avenue, Fifth Street, part of Gregory Blvd., and the loop through Veteran's Memorial Park. Part of the NRVT system includes the Harbor Loop Trail (HLT) – 3 miles of off-road trail along the water. An isolated segment of this loop has been completed past the Water Treatment Facility and is referred to as the Norwalk River Esplanade. This TOD Plan supports the completion of this effort to connect the Esplanade to other segments of the trail including Veteran's Memorial Park and Edgewater Park. The City should prioritize this project as part of the larger vision for creating a multimodal network of connected open spaces.

d. Preserve views toward the water.

Where possible, the City should make efforts to preserve open space and streetscapes that create views toward the water. The waterfront is a key feature providing East Norwalk's identity as a coastal New England village. In addition to improving accessibility of the waterfront, maintaining as many visual connections to the water as possible will help to reinforce that identity and ensure that the unique character of East Norwalk remains intact.

e. Study the relocation of the Public Works Center (DPW garage) and future uses of the site that could include public open space connected to the Norwalk River Esplanade.

The site of the Public Works Center could provide a mix of uses that would be appropriate for its location on the edge of the East Norwalk neighborhood and adjacent to the Norwalk River Esplanade. Any mix of uses should include additional publicly-accessible open space that is connected to the esplanade. Any future changes to this site should include requirements for on-site stormwater management to prevent runoff into the Norwalk River.

3. Consider creating a special pedestrian promenade along Seaview Avenue as an amenity for the entire City of Norwalk.

a. Integrate a safe, multi-use path for pedestrians and bicyclists along Seaview Avenue into the Norwalk River Valley Trail Network.

In addition to supporting and promoting the completion of the planned NRVT system, the City should consider incorporating Seaview Avenue as a particularly important segment of the trail. The existing configuration of Seaview Avenue acts as a threshold between East Norwalk and the Harbor, as well as connecting East Norwalk to the rest of the City. Veteran's Memorial Park is a popular destination for walkers, joggers, bikers, boaters, and athletes who all come to use the park's many recreational resources. All users would benefit from the enhancement of Seaview Avenue as a welcoming threshold into the park and a vibrant corridor connecting East Norwalk to the retail and amenities on the other side of the river.

There is a wide stretch of under-utilized grassy area between the road and a stonewall with a narrow sidewalk down the middle, leaving ample room for expansion of the sidewalk into a wide multi-modal path with added amenities such as benches and additional planting. Treating Seaview Avenue as a promenade would also open up opportunities to incorporate areas for exercise, pop-up activities, vendor carts, and places to congregate, creating an active and vibrant streetscape.

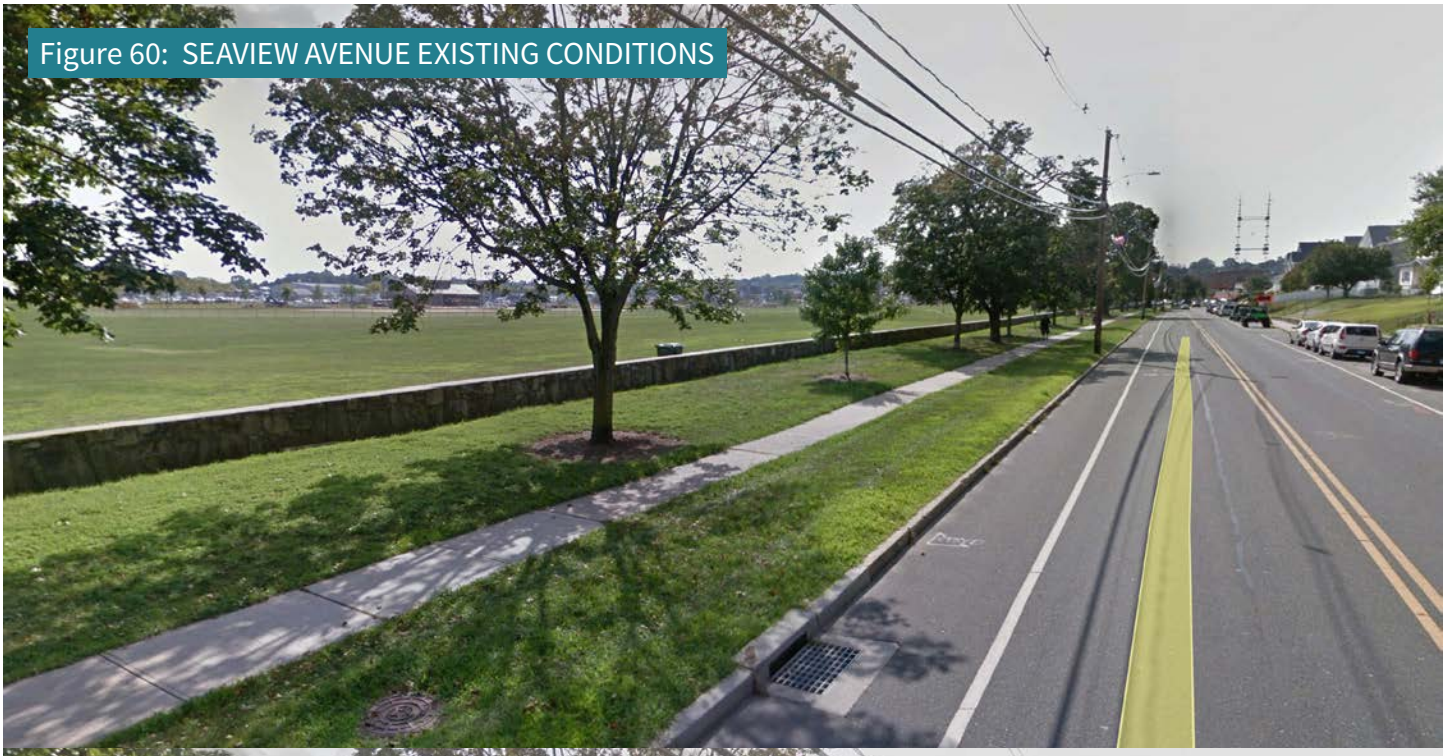
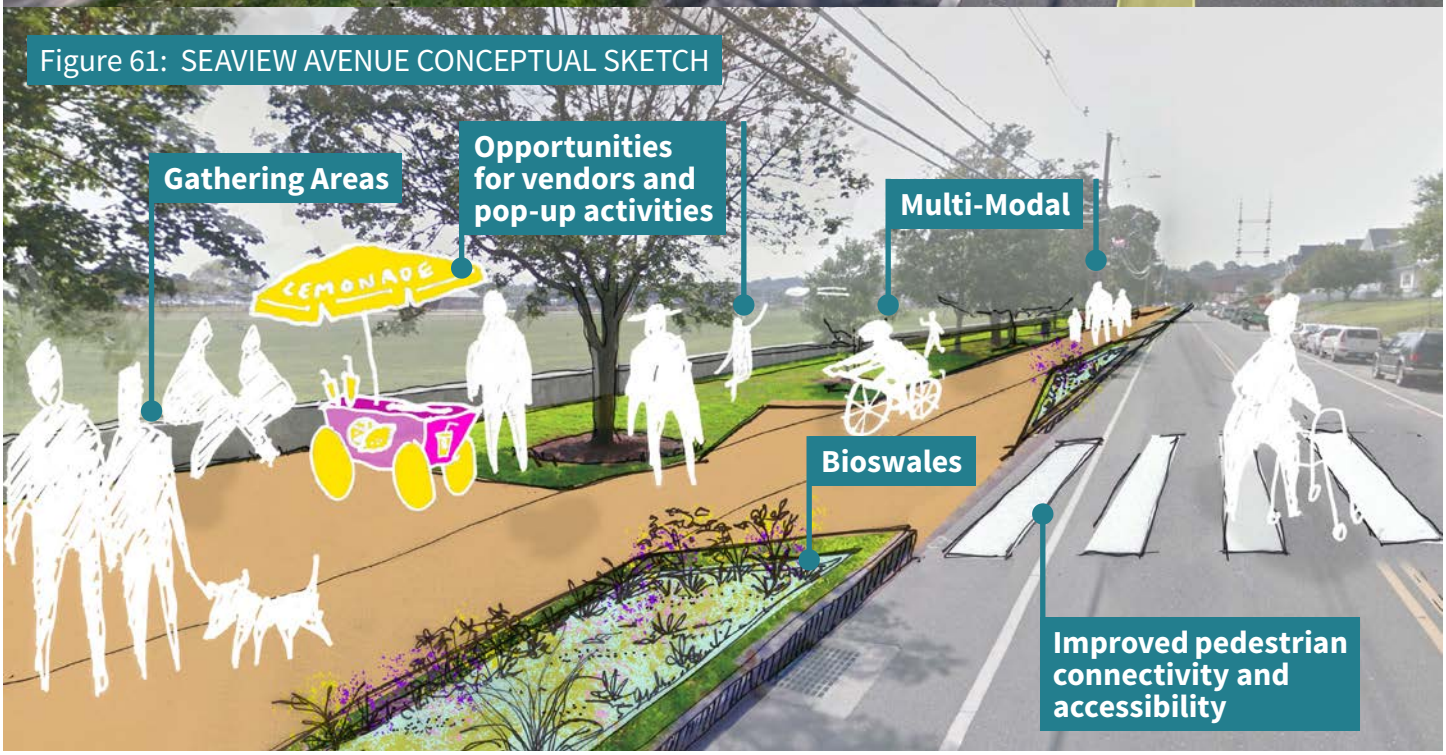


Figure 60: SEAVIEW AVENUE EXISTING CONDITIONS



A conceptual sketch showing Seaview Avenue as a pedestrian-oriented promenade.

b. Incorporate resilient landscaping.

Given the current flooding issues along Seaview Avenue, this would be an ideal location to implement a bioswale or other type of green infrastructure to help manage stormwater in a way that also contributes to the aesthetics of the avenue as a promenade. Bioswales are a series of connected rain gardens which serve to slowly filter stormwater runoff as it enters the groundwater supply. An overabundance of paving causes water to quickly run off impervious surfaces, overcharging the groundwater supply with contaminated water. By selecting appropriate inundation-tolerant plants with the capacity to extract toxins through their roots, contamination and flooding during storm events can be drastically reduced.

4. Promote community gardens.

a. Activate passive and unused open spaces with community gardens.

One of the public amenities that the community expressed a strong desire for through the engagement process was the implementation of community gardens. The City should evaluate existing open spaces and designate those that are either underutilized or unused for community garden space.

b. Provide the community with access to fresh produce.

The public engagement process also revealed a strong desire for a small, affordable grocery store. Unfortunately, the current market analysis indicates that a grocery store is not a viable additional use in East Norwalk given current demand and the proximity of existing grocery stores. Community gardens are one way to creatively address this gap. Another method is farmer's markets which are becoming increasingly popular as a social activity as the slow food movement grows. Providing community gardens could give access to fresh produce and could help stimulate the local economy through a series of farmers markets, or the establishment of a grocery store co-op as an alternative to a bigger box store.

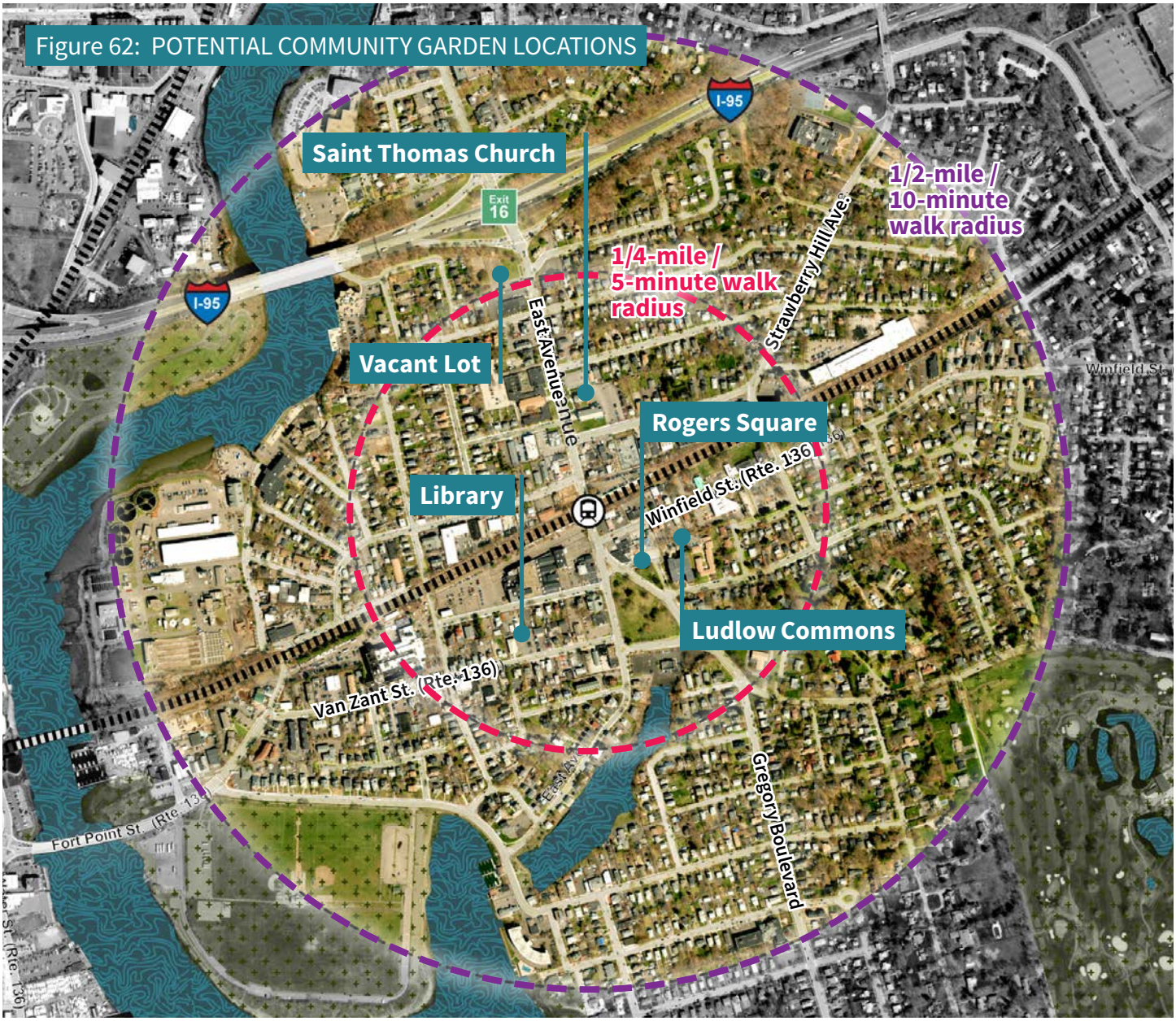
c. Promote community engagement, skill-building, and education for youth populations.

Community Garden programs can come with a broad range of benefits, particularly for youth involvement. Getting children and teens involved in growing their own food teaches important life-skills and instills the significance of reframing agricultural practices around ecologically ethical methods. Community gardens also foster place attachment and a sense of land stewardship. By teaching these values to the younger community members, the City can foster the next generation of community advocates to ensure the continued resilience of East Norwalk as a vibrant place to live, work, and visit.

d. Implement community gardens where feasible.

The following locations, averaging 3,500 sf, should be studied as potential community gardens:

- Roger's Square
- Ludlow Commons Elderly Housing
- The East Norwalk Library
- Saint Thomas Church
- Large private parcels susceptible to redevelopment
- The vacant lot near Exit 16, next to Rite Aid



Map depicting potential locations for community gardens in East Norwalk.

7.6 Utilities and Infrastructure

The infrastructure analysis conducted by NV5 revealed that the City's current sanitary sewer system is adequate to support the level of development suggested by the test fits completed for this plan.

The City updated its Drainage manual in 2017 to incorporate green infrastructure and Low Impact Development principles. Further efforts should be taken to implement green infrastructure for stormwater management to comply with the City manual as well as CT DEEP's General Permit for the Discharges of Stormwater from Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) in order to protect state waters from contaminated urban stormwater runoff.

1. Implement innovative strategies for resilient stormwater management and a healthier environment.

a. Promote low impact development principles.

There are practices that can reduce negative environmental impacts and help human and natural systems to better coexist in harmony with one another. The primary solution is to reduce impervious surfaces (buildings and paving) as much as possible. Section 1.4.2 of the City's Drainage manual (updated 2017) discusses LID site planning and design strategies and goes into detail on the protection of riparian buffers by enforcing setbacks from wetlands and other critical ecosystems. Strategies such as ground floor parking (as opposed to surface parking), building site selection and massing, topographic grading for the desired movement of water across the site, and the implementation of green infrastructure such as green roofs and rain gardens are some of the tools that developers can use to minimize the environmental impact of their building/s.

b. Encourage developers to seek SITES qualifications for projects.

Just as LEED offers a sustainability rating for buildings, SITES does the same for landscapes. It is a comprehensive assessment of a project's impacts on the health of local and regional ecosystems. The SITES assessment addresses the categories of context, pre-design assessment and planning, water, soils and vegetation, materials selection, human health and well-being, construction, operations and maintenance, education and performance monitoring, and innovative or exemplary performance. The City should set a goal to achieve SITES requirements for all new major developments, even if the project does not pursue certification.

For more information about SITES visit www.sustainablesites.org.

c. Enhance green infrastructure networks.

Green infrastructure offers a broad range of "soft engineering" approaches to address conflicts between the built environment and ecological systems. Green infrastructure brings ecology back into human and urban systems, resulting in a wide range of benefits for community members as well as the environment. The City should consider developing programs to implement the following green infrastructure:

- **Rain Gardens** – Rain gardens help to filter toxins out of stormwater runoff from roads, buildings, and other impervious surfaces. The roots draw contaminants out of the water while the layers of soil and gravel serve to slow down the water as it enters the groundwater supply. Rain gardens therefore have two methods to to clean and slow water, as would naturally occur, so as to both not overburden the groundwater supply and prevent severe flooding issues.
- **Bioswales** – Bioswales are essentially a series of rain

gardens and check dams (to further slow water runoff) often implemented along the side of a road. Bioswales are highly effective at capturing and treating a large quantity of water in a storm event.

- **Artful Rainwater Design** – Rain Gardens, Bioswales, and other stormwater management tactics can be designed in a way that contribute to aesthetic and social public amenities.
- **Urban Forest Canopy** – Fostering a connected, diverse urban street canopy promotes clean air, provides critical habitat for many species, and increases the aesthetic appeal and value of the surrounding environment.
- **Permaculture** – Open Space and Recreation Recommendation #4 is to promote community gardens in East Norwalk. The City should do so with the principles of permaculture in mind to foster sustainable agricultural practices that benefit the health and well-being of the community while avoiding any detrimental impacts on the natural environment and local ecosystems.
- **Pollinator Habitat** – In conjunction with permaculture programming around community gardens, the City should consider establishing a program to educate and promote residents to grow pollinator habitat on their properties. Creating networks of habitat will ensure the health and viability of community farming efforts and support local natural ecosystems.
- **Green Roofs** – Roads and parking lots are often seen as the primary source of stormwater runoff, but buildings take a close second, particularly in denser areas such as East Norwalk. By implementing green roofs, developers can increase the appeal of their building while also capturing and filtering stormwater at its source. The City should establish a program to create incentives for the implementation of green roofs, especially those that are publicly accessible.
- **Blue Roofs** – While less common than green roofs, blue roofs are designed with a similar intention to capture, store, and slow down the release of stormwater that comes into contact with building rooftops. Building rooftops are one of the largest groups of impervious surfaces contributing to stormwater management challenges and should be considered with as much weight as parking areas when addressing stormwater management on site.
- **Solar Power** – Solar technology is constantly evolving to offer a variety of state-of-the-art options for capturing energy from the sun. This could be solar fields in vacant lots, solar structures doubling as shade canopies over parking areas, solar panels on rooftops, or even artful solar power-collecting art installations.

2. Provide reliable power and fiber availability.

a. Encourage energy and Internet providers to provide economical, reliable, renewable energy, and provide adequate coverage for neighborhood residents and businesses.

- Service providers should be encouraged to provide reliable, high speed service to neighborhood residents and businesses in an economical fashion. The City should consider providing incentives to providers to improve reliability and access to service that is consistent with the East Norwalk Neighborhood goals, as well as the overall goals for the entire City of Norwalk.

7.7 Implementation

Figure 63: TIMELINE AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION		TIMELINE	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
7.1	**Economic Development**		
1	**Support existing economic development activity along Fort Point Street, Fitch Street, and Van Zant Street**		
a	**Support existing non-polluting businesses that generate high value jobs.**	Ongoing	City + Chamber of Commerce
b	**Assist in enhancing the curb appeal of local businesses to improve the pedestrian environment ("good neighbor" policy).**	Ongoing	Private
c	**Promote these areas to attract future small businesses through the city's economic development activities.**	0-3 years	City + ENNA + ENBA + Chamber of Commerce
d	**Consider creating incentives for desired uses (i.e. light industrial, maker economy) by allowing property owners to develop additional FAR, reducing parking requirements, allowing additional ground coverage, adding accessory residential units, etc.**	0-3 years	Planning Commission + Zoning Commission
e	**Maintain existing commercial land uses along Reynolds Street.**	Ongoing	City
7.2	**Land Use and Urban Design**		
1	**Preserve and enhance existing residential neighborhoods**		
a	**Code enforcement of non-compliant properties and land uses.**	Ongoing	City
b	**Infill developments on lots that undergo change that are appropriate to the physical context.**	3-5 years	City (Regulatory), Private
c	**Support sidewalk improvements with public subsidies.**	0-3 years	City

	RECOMMENDATION	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
d	**Consider a façade improvement program for the Charles Street and Osborne Avenue areas north of Fort Point Street.**		
2	**Concentrate active land uses on side streets and important nodes to generate focused areas of activity; establish side-street villages along Van Zant and Winfield Streets**		
a	**Encourage a critical mass of amenities and neighborhood services along select side streets and nodes to foster an active pedestrian-oriented environment.**	0-3 years	City + Private
b	**Promote amenities and services on both sides of the street to foster a concentration of activities.**	0-3 years	City + Private
c	**Promote active and continuous street frontages to encourage walkability and vitality.**	0-3 years	City + Private
3	**For future developments, encourage a neighborhood-scaled built form, while still providing some added height and density closer to the train station and important nodes.**		
a	**Allow a maximum of 3.5 stories from the average grade of adjacent streets.**	Ongoing	City
b	**Promote a moderate increase in height and density within the proposed EVTZ. Maintain existing zoning for established residential areas.**	Ongoing	City
c	**Encourage infill development in residential areas that is appropriate to the existing context.**	5+ years	City
d	**Limit building heights and diversify rooflines and features to enhance the traditional New England character.**	Ongoing	City + Private
e	**Encourage developers to provide public amenities by offering incentives such as allowing additional floors or increased FAR.**	Ongoing	City
f	**Consider a Village District or Historic District for Liberty Square and Cove Avenue.**	0-3 years	City

	RECOMMENDATION	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
g	Rezone isolated commercial areas to the adjacent neighborhood district for consistency in land uses.	0-3 years	City
4	**Provide flexibility for the future development of Church properties as mixed use.**		
a	Encourage reinvestment in Saint Thomas Church properties.	5+ years	City
b	Create flexible zoning to encourage the redevelopment of the church properties as mixed-use.	3-5 years	City + Zoning Commission
7.3	**Multi-modal Connectivity and Access**		
1	**Improve pedestrian connectivity to the train station, amenities, and services.**		
a	Improve the sidewalks and pedestrian environment along priority pedestrian edges to encourage walking to the train station and other nodes of activity.	0-3 years	City + Private
b	Promote mid-block pedestrian crossings to improve connectivity.	0-3 years	City + Private
c	Promote wider sidewalks where possible to incorporate street trees and landscaping.	0-3 years	City + Private
2	**Improve bicycle rider comfort and safety.**		
a	Improve driver awareness through enhanced signage.	0-3 years	City
b	Extend bicycle lanes along key routes.	0-3 years	City
c	Provide safe bicycle storage at the train station and other significant locations.	0-3 years	City
d	Support City efforts to implement a micromobility program in the future.	0-3 years	City
3	**Improve traffic congestion and road safety conditions.**		
a	Reduce speeds on local streets to deter cut-through traffic.	0-3 years	City

	RECOMMENDATION	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
b	**Support planned City and CTDOT projects/ infrastructure improvements.**	Ongoing	City
c	**Support pedestrian and traffic improvements for Gregory Blvd.**	Ongoing	City
d	**Define specific evacuation routes for hurricanes and other storm events. Develop a signage strategy to indicate the routes and publicize the routes and the signage strategy.**	0-3 years	City
7.4	**Parking**		
1	**Reduce parking conflicts for residents and businesses.**		
a	**Implement a residential/business parking permit program.**	0-3 years	City
b	**Provide striped and managed on-street parking where feasible to support short-term parking needs of current and future businesses.**	Ongoing	City + Private
c	**Improve enforcement to increase turn-over and/ or reduce spill-over onto residential neighborhood streets.**	Ongoing	City + Private
2	**Manage parking supply.**		
a	**Promote shared parking among property owners.**	0-3 years	City + Private
b	**Implement wayfinding and signage to manage existing supply efficiently.**	0-3 years	City + Private
c	**Implement parking payment technologies that increase convenience for users.**	0-3 years	City + Private
3	**Reduce parking demand.**		
a	**Unbundle parking spaces from future mixed-use developments near the train station.**	0-3 years	City
b	**Consider charging for on-street parking near the train station to increase turnover of the most convenient spaces.**	3-5 years	City

	RECOMMENDATION	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
7.5	**Open Space and Recreation**		
1	**Encourage active pedestrian spaces in the form of enhanced sidewalks, pocket parks, plazas, and publicly accessible open spaces.**		
a	**Promote building setbacks along street-frontage that encourage a variety of pedestrian activities.**	Ongoing	Planning Commission + Zoning Commission + Private
b	**Promote variation in building forms at the street level to allow for the creation of plazas and publicly accessible open spaces.**	Ongoing	Planning Commission + Zoning Commission + Private
c	**Create incentives for developers to provide amenities and usable public open spaces such as plazas and pocket parks.**	Ongoing	City + Zoning Commission
d	**Reconsider bike lane configurations on Strawberry Hill Avenue and Fitch Avenue.**	0-3 years	City + NRVT + Bike/ Walk Commission
2	**Enhance neighborhood access to water.**		
a	**Provide signage and wayfinding that guides residents to water.**	3-5 years	City + Private
b	**Prioritize the improvement of sidewalks and pedestrian crossings on routes that lead to the water.**	0-3 years	City + Bike/Walk Commission
c	**Complete the Norwalk River Valley Trail System.**	5+ years	NRVT + City
d	**Preserve views toward the water.**	Ongoing	City + Planning Commission + Private + Zoning Commission
e	**Study the relocation of the Public Works Center (DPW garage) and future uses of the site that could include public open space connected to the Norwalk River Esplanade.**	5+ years	City

	RECOMMENDATION	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
3	**Create a special pedestrian promenade along Seaview Avenue as an amenity for the entire City of Norwalk.**		
a	**Integrate a safe, multi-use path for pedestrians and bicyclists along Seaview Avenue into the Norwalk River Valley Trail Network.**	5+ years	City
b	**Incorporate resilient landscaping.**	5+ years	City
4	**Promote community gardens.**		
a	**Activate passive and unused open spaces with community gardens.**	0-3 years	City + ENNA + Private
b	**Provide the community with access to fresh produce.**	0-3 years	City + ENNA + Private
c	**Promote community engagement, skill-building, and education for youth populations.**	Ongoing	City
d	**Implement community gardens where feasible.**	0-3 years	City + ENNA
7.6	**Utilities and Infrastructure**		
1	**Implement innovative strategies for resilient stormwater management and a healthier environment.**		
a	**Promote low impact development principles.**	Ongoing	City + Private
b	**Encourage developers to seek SITES qualifications for projects.**	Ongoing	City
c	**Enhance green infrastructure networks.**	Ongoing	City + Private
2	**Provide reliable power and fiber availability.**		
a	**Encourage energy and Internet providers to provide economical, reliable, renewable energy, and provide adequate coverage for neighborhood residents and businesses.**	Ongoing	City

Report Card

A helpful tool to follow up and ensure successful implementation of this plan is a "report card" like the example shown in Figure 64. The entities identified in the implementation table would be responsible for developing their own report cards with relevant metrics appropriate to their scope and should self-evaluate progress toward plan goals annually. For example, The City is responsible for prioritizing the improvement of sidewalks and pedestrian crossings on routes that lead to water. In the first year the city might start by identifying these routes and taking an inventory of sidewalk conditions along them. As sidewalks are repaired and replaced, the city should record the linear feet of sidewalk that are fixed and compare that to the total linear feet of sidewalk identified and use this to calculate annual progress as a percentage of work completed.

Figure 64: EXAMPLE IMPLEMENTATION REPORT CARD

TOD IMPLEMENTATION REPORT CARD			
Task ID#	**Overarching Recommendation**		
2B	Prioritize the Improvement of Sidewalks and Pedestrian Crossings on Routes that Lead to the Water		
Sub-task	**Date**	**Metrics**	**Next Steps**
Identify routes leading to water	2020	*i.e. 4 Routes, 6,000 linear feet, lead to water*	Inventory Sidewalk Conditions
Inventory sidewalk conditions on those routes	2020	*i.e. 2,000 linear feet of sidewalk need to be repaired, 500 feet need to be fully replaced*	Begin to repair and replace sidewalks
Begin to repair and replace sidewalks on those routes	2021	*i.e. 25% of degraded sidewalks have been fixed*	Continue repairs
Continue repair and replacement of sidewalks on select routes	2022	*i.e. 50% of degraded sidewalks have been fixed*	Complete repairs
All sidewalks leading to water have been repaired or replaced.	2023	*i.e. 100% of degraded sidewalks have been fixed*	Monitor conditions; maintain a safe and accessible pedestrian environment.

East Norwalk Neighborhood TOD Plan

Prepared for the City of Norwalk
Prepared by Harriman | NV5 | RKG
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