THE CITY OF **MIDDLETOWN**

Middletown 2030

2020-2030 PLAN OF CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT

DRAFT: 12.4.2020

Prepared by: The City of Middletown Planning and Zoning Commission

with assistance from CHA

MIDDLETOWN 2030: THE VISION

We envision a Middletown that is **Thriving.**

A thriving Middletown 2030 will be achieved through a commitment to economic development that increases opportunities for businesses old and new, creates meaningful, well-paid jobs, promotes housing diversity, and enhances the overall quality of life in the City. The riverfront will be made accessible and will showcase a dynamic balance of conservation, recreation, and development. Parking downtown will be available, accessible, and unobtrusive. Daily needs can be fulfilled by neighborhood centers. The housing stock will grow more housing options. Anchor institutions will function as drivers of sustainable economic growth.

We envision a Middletown that is **Vibrant.**

A vibrant Middletown 2030 will be achieved through a commitment to the preservation and integration of place and community throughout the City. Public spaces will give residents and visitors opportunities to enjoy the City and its amenities. Streetscapes will be aesthetically appealing and promote a sense of place. Communication and public engagement will unite the neighborhoods into a single community. The City will provide rich opportunities for personal growth and social and civic interaction.

We envision a Middletown that is **Connected.**

A connected Middletown 2030 will be achieved by providing to all residents transportation and utility infrastructures that facilitate access to employment, commerce, education, recreation, and housing. The transportation network accommodates all modes of moving from one place to another. Road improvements will follow the Complete Streets Master Plan. The redesign of Route 9 will reconnect the City to the riverfront. Parks, trails, and open spaces will be integrated into a unified green corridor system. The Sewer Boundary Area will not expand beyond the City core. Telecommunication infrastructure will serve every home and business and will be hidden from view.

We envision a Middletown that is **Sustainable.**

A sustainable Middletown 2030 will be achieved by pursuing resilience in the face of climate change, efficiency in the use of resources, and self-sufficiency in energy production. The City will embrace responsible development practices. Natural resources and open spaces will be preserved and stewarded. Prime agricultural land will be protected and used to increase the local food supply. The City will be prepared for climate change and natural disasters. Historic buildings will be preserved for adaptive reuse. The City's energy needs will be provided by renewable sources.

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A NOTE FROM THE P&Z COMMISSION CHAIR

The Middletown Community,

The Planning and Zoning Commission once every decade prepares a document that expresses the goals and visions of Middletown and guides land use and other municipal decisions. In this 2030-2030 plan, we recognize that economic development, transportation, housing, and the environment are interconnected, and address each of them in the context of achieving a thriving, vibrant, and connected city.

This plan has been shaped by extensive and thoughtful input from residents, businesses, and city employees, for which we are grateful. One of the dominant themes of this input was that the plan should emphasize the importance of sustainability, not just in the area of the environment, but also in the areas of equity, economic development, housing, food access, public health, and more. Accordingly, this plan concludes with a chapter focusing on the issue of sustainability.

During the writing of this plan, Middletown has been buffeted by outside events, in the areas of public health (COVID-19), the environment (a drought and severe storms), public safety (concern over police treatment of people of color), and civics (a contentious election). These have all emphasized the importance of sustainability and the importance of resilience. They have also made it clear that multiple government and non-governmental entities need to work together to make our city the best it can be.

- The global climate change has increased concerns about the effects of changing weather and water patterns on our city and makes it clear that our city should contribute to a mitigation of the causes of this climate change. The City recently declared a Climate Emergency, with the intention of taking action throughout City government to reduce its impact on the environment.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has led to the loss of lives and livelihoods in our city, and has impacted virtually everyone. Collaboration between City government, the Chamber of Commerce, and health- care providers serves as a model for how different groups of individuals can work together for the good of the community.
- The killing of George Floyd and other black men and women, along with the realization that race has a profound effect on the health and economic impacts of COVID-19 and climate change, has galvanized our community. We realize that our city cannot be sustainable if there is systemic racial and income inequality. In July, the city established a Permanent Task Force on Anti-Racism, with the intention of reducing the corrosive impact that racism has on all residents.

We hope that this plan provides an honest assessment of our city, and offers clear guidance on how to make a great city even better. We thank the many members of our community who helped shape this plan, and who will play a role in implementing its recommendations. We look forward to working with City staff, community groups, and the boards and commissions of the City to achieve its goals.

Sincerely,

Stephen Henri Devoto
Chair, Middletown Planning and Zoning Commission

1. INTRODUCTION

Middletown's Planning and Zoning Commission is pleased to present the City's 2020–2030 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). In January 2019, the City initiated a comprehensive effort to develop this plan. Over the last year, the City, with assistance from its consultant and guidance provided by the Planning and Zoning Commission and POCD Steering Committee, conducted an open planning process to ensure that the document presented today reflects a broad consensus on the City's aspirations and values.

Middletown Planning and Zoning Commission Members

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HISTORY OF MIDDLETOWN

The first English settlers arrived in the place we now know as Middletown around 1650. Initially they anglicized the name used by the indigenous population for a larger area, Massabesec ("at a great river"), calling their settlement Mattabessett or Mattabeseck. A group of the Wangunks—hunters, gatherers, and farmers—had occupied the area since at least 1634, having moved there from Wethersfield after conflict with settlers. The settlers adopted the name Middletown in 1653, perhaps because of the town's location half-way between the port of Saybrook and Windsor. In the early years the settlers cleared land, built stone walls, laid out roads, and constructed houses. By 1752 the Wangunks were forced by local and federal policies to sell much of their land to the settlers, and confined to three reservations by the State of Connecticut. The introduction of smallpox from European settlers decimated the Wangunks, and in 1785 the impoverished Wangunks sold their remaining land to the settlers.

By the early 18th century, the population had grown to the point that dividing the existing land into ever smaller parcels no longer sustained families, and manufacturing and commerce, including shipbuilding, increasingly provided for the community's economic needs. Middletown was an important port in the Triangular Trade between England, Africa, and the Americas, which sent raw materials from the Americas to England, manufactured products from England to Africa, and enslaved people from Africa to the Americas. By 1756 about 5% of the city's residents (215) were enslaved Africans, primarily used for farming and housework. Although Connecticut banned the importation of slaves in 1774, the institution of slavery was not outlawed until 1848. During the Revolutionary War, Middletown contributed lead for ammunition and food for the Continental Army, and a substantial number of its male residents, including slaves, served as soldiers.

In 1785 the core of Middletown was incorporated as a city. Political tensions between Jeffersonians and Federalists and the decline of shipping characterized late 18th- and early 19th- century Middletown, and a considerable number of residents left for parts west. After the War of 1812, some coastal shipping persisted, carrying local brownstone to cities like New York and Boston. In the 19th century the city became known for manufacturing, with marine hardware, swords and pistols, and industrial and elastic belting among the principal products. Several waves of Irish immigrants supplied labor to the factories, whose goods played a significant role in Civil War. The latter years of the

Image: Main Street circa 1940

Image: 1922 Aerial Photo of Downtown

19th century saw increasing numbers of immigrants arriving from several European countries to work in factories, quarries, and commercial greenhouses in the area. Although Middletown missed out on getting the main railway line between Boston and New York to pass through the City, by the end of the 19th century the town had become prosperous and was linked with other towns in the state by a modern electric trolley system. The presence of Wesleyan University, founded in 1831, constituted an increasingly important intellectual resource.

The early 20th century saw many immigrants arriving from Poland, northern Italy, and especially Sicily, adding further to the City's cultural diversity. That century brought two world wars, the Great Depression, catastrophic floods, a changing economy, and, in the 50s and 60s, the deterioration of the Downtown, with urban renewal, undertaken without community input, resulting in the displacement of primarily low-income residents and the demolition of many historic structures. The construction of Route 9's boulevard section in the 1950s created a barrier between the City and its most significant natural feature, the Connecticut River. Urban renewal projects in the 1960s caused the demolition of many buildings and city blocks to make room for large parking lots and sites for large development. These disproportionately displaced low-income and minority communities. By the early 70s, environmental awareness and an appreciation for preservation and adaptive reuse were beginning to take hold in the country and likewise in Middletown, but the burgeoning of shopping malls had drained much of the small-business activity from the core, and several anchor stores had closed. Meanwhile suburbanization was consuming much good farmland and expanding the area to which City services had to be provided. The increase in members of ethnic and racial minorities further diversified the City's culture, but these residents also experienced discrimination. Federal lending policy, the adoption of restrictive single-family zoning codes, and discrimination against African Americans and, more recently Hispanic immigrants led to economic and social inequality.

The last two decades have seen a revival of Main Street, with many restaurants attracting residents and visitors to the Downtown. A new spirit of civic engagement enlivens the public discourse and inspires a commitment to equity and inclusion for all residents. How the City will build on this success and address old and more recent challenges in the coming decade forms the subject of this Plan.

Image: View looking north along Main Street

Image: Old Middletown High School Building on Court Street

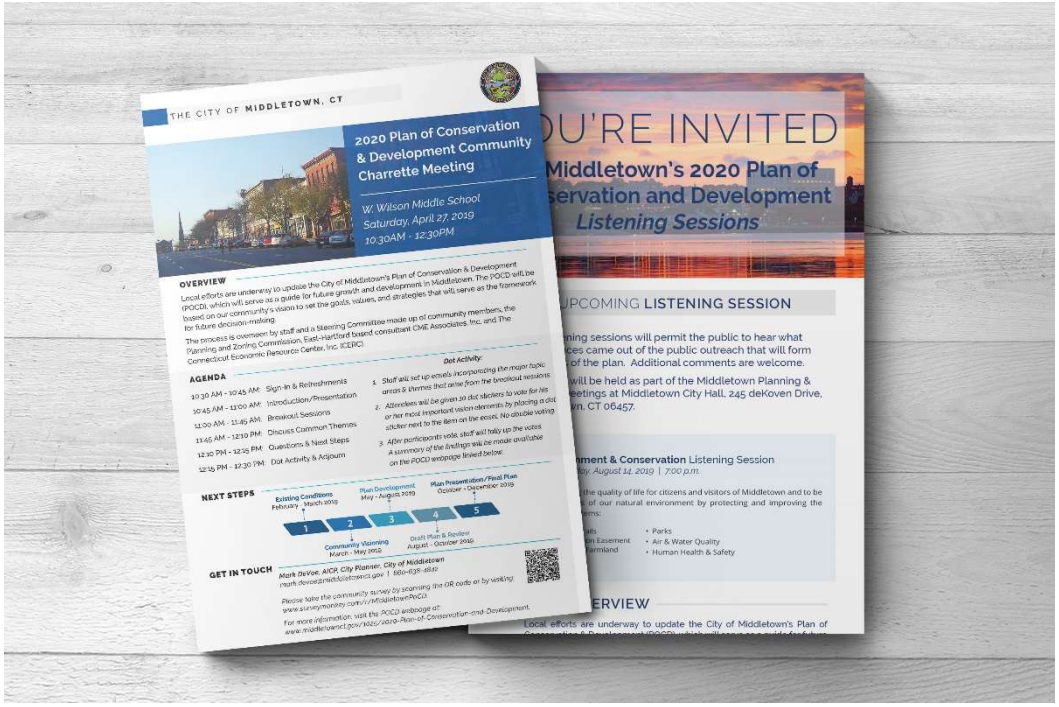
DEVELOPMENT OF THIS PLAN

Connecticut General Statutes Chapter 126, Section 8-23 requires every municipality in Connecticut to formulate a municipal plan of conservation and development. The Planning and Zoning Commission is required to prepare, amend, and adopt this plan as an update to the 2000–2010 Plan of Conservation and Development within the 10-year statutorily required timeframe (Appendix 1). Failure to comply with this timeframe could disqualify the City from obtaining discretionary funding from the State.

The Plan must conform to the *Growth Management Principles of the 2013–2018 Conservation & Development Policies: The Plan for Connecticut*, currently in effect (Appendix 2).

The Plan outlined here has been informed to a considerable extent by the public's vision for Middletown in the next 10 years and beyond. To understand that vision, the Planning and Zoning Commission focused heavily on reaching out to the public and gathering input from a variety of stakeholders. The Planning and Zoning Commission sponsored two community-wide charrettes and three subject-specific listening sessions, invited comments from key members of the community and City government, and held numerous public hearings at its regular meetings. An online survey was offered to the public which generated 611 responses. Lastly, a survey was submitted to City department heads to survey the needs of the City from the perspective of its professional staff.

Complementing this input, many of the concepts and suggestions incorporated into this Plan have been carried over from the 1990 and 2010 Plans, the latter of which updated the previous one and established principles that remain valid today.



2010 POCD GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following are the guiding principles as published in the 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development:

Environment

- Preserve open space, farmland, and critical environmental areas and connect them to one another.
- Acquire open space.
- Protect our natural resources, our green infrastructure.
- Encourage sustainable development.
- Implement low-impact development standards (reduce area of impervious surfaces; rural road standards, etc.)

Economic Development

- Increase the commercial tax base by attracting light industry, retail, office, entertainment.
- Build upon educational institutions and encourage their partnerships with industry.
- Expand and build upon the medical sector as a regional draw.
- Offer incentives for recycling brownfields and rehabbing historic structures.
- Reinforce downtown as our economic and cultural center.

Transportation

- Create walkable neighborhoods.
- Encourage biking, walking, bus use by investing in sidewalks, road connections, bike paths, street trees, etc.
- Increase rail freight by investing in rail infrastructure.
- Locate jobs near housing, transit, and services.
- Connect to our regional neighborhoods.

Development

- Mix uses to ensure neighborhood vitality: civic, commercial, residential, recreational.
- Encourage compact development.
- Recycle existing degraded land before developing greenfields.
- Concentrate development along major transportation corridors.
- Create a range of housing choices.
- Limit development to areas already serviced by sewer and city water.

Urban Design

- Protect the unique character of our neighborhoods and improve the quality of development by adopting form-based design standards.
- Encourage compact building design.

This Plan reaffirms many principles from past POCDs that have laid the groundwork for building a vibrant and sustainable city and respects its natural and historic resources. The latest vision for the City includes a new focus on adapting to climate change while adopting measures to mitigate it, such as transitioning to renewable energy; on undertaking creative placemaking; and on integrating considerations of social justice into the built environment.

The Planning and Zoning Commission appointed a steering committee made up of members of various City commissions, City staff members, and at-large residents. That committee has had the charge of making sure the Plan reflects the needs and desires of the community while protecting the City's fundamental character, which combines a hub of concentrated urban activity with outlying natural, low-development, low-density areas. The committee has worked diligently to realize the goal of bringing public input and City policy into alignment in support of a durable balance.

The public's contributions to this Plan were numerous and constructive. Residents who attended charrettes and/or public hearings provided a wealth of ideas and comments. Organizations, including the Middlesex Chamber of Commerce, the North End Action Team (NEAT), the Environmental Collective Impact Network (ECOIN), the Complete Streets Committee, the Sustainable CT Team, the Westfield Resident Association, as well as the City's Planning & Zoning Commission, the Commission on Conservation and Agriculture, the Clean Energy Task Force, the Urban Forestry Commission, and numerous City staff members have helped shape the vision for Middletown 2030.

Special thanks are offered to Krishna Winston for contributing her time and professional services in editing various drafts of this document. Her work was invaluable. Ms. Winston is Professor emerita of German Studies and Professor emerita in the College of the Environment at Wesleyan University.

Image: Middlesex Chamber of Commerce Building on Main Street

Image: Public Charrette on the POCD

2. MIDDLETOWN 2030: A THRIVING COMMUNITY

We envision a Middletown that is **Thriving.**

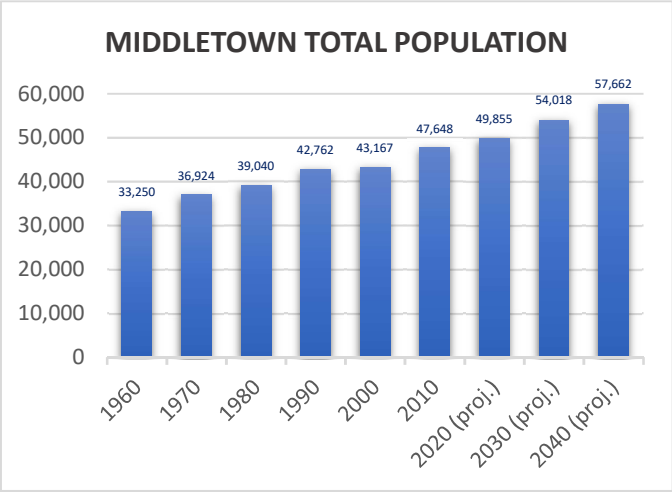
A thriving Middletown 2030 will be achieved through a commitment to economic development that increases opportunities for businesses old and new, creates meaningful, well-paid jobs, promotes housing diversity, and enhances the overall quality of life in the City. The riverfront will be made accessible and will showcase a dynamic balance of conservation, recreation, and development. Parking downtown will be available, accessible, and unobtrusive. Daily needs can be fulfilled by neighborhood centers. The housing stock will grow with more housing options. Anchor institutions will function as drivers of sustainable economic growth.

Total Population

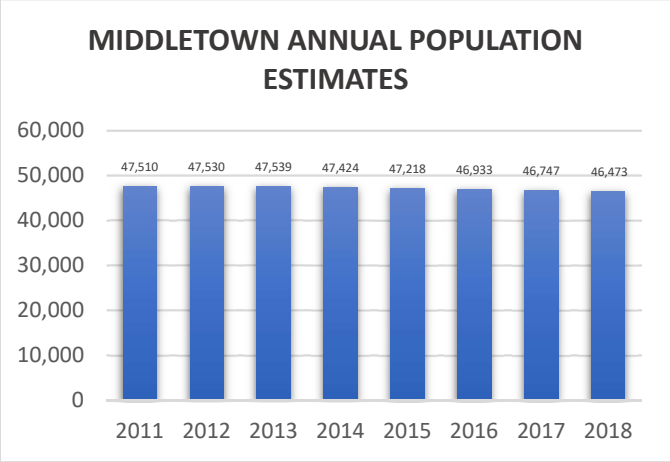
Middletown's population totaled 47,648 in the 2010 decennial census. Figures from the 2020 census, launched in April 2020 and originally scheduled to run through December, are not yet available and may well be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the City's population has remained relatively flat or even declined slightly in the last decade, Connecticut's population projections foresee considerable growth between 2020 and 2040. It is difficult to predict whether Middletown will witness such growth.

The 2018 population estimate for Middletown was 46,473 (ACS 5-Year estimates). Middletown has a larger percentage of young adults (age 15-34) than Middlesex County and the State as a whole but also has a disproportionate percentage of residents over 45 years of age. The median age for Middletown is 36.6 years, contrasted with 45.4 years in Middlesex County and 40.8 years in the State overall.

Middletown's population distribution closely conforms to a concentric model of the City, with the greatest population density occurring in the Downtown (Census Tracts 5411, 5415, 5416, and 5417). These tracts contain the greatest density of mixed-use structures and midrise residential dwellings. The Westfield section (5413) also has a dense population, housed in planned residential developments and a single-family



Source: Connecticut Secretary of State, Population of Connecticut Towns 1900-1960 and Population of Connecticut Towns 1970-2010; Connecticut Data Collaborative, Population Projections by Town.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Five Year Estimates.

development. The areas extending outward from the Downtown are characterized by lower density, with both mixed-use and single-family housing. The periphery of the City has the lowest density, with single-family houses on relatively larger lots served by private wells and septic systems, large tracts of industrial land, large tracts of preserved or undeveloped open space, and active farmland.

Educational Attainment

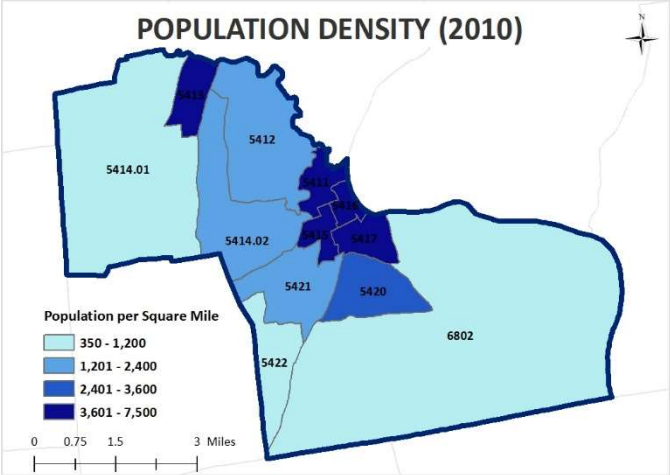
Middletown's population aged 25 or older has a broad range of educational achievement, which provides another measure of the City's diversity. Although the educational attainment is relatively similar to that of adults in Middlesex County or the State, one notable difference from surrounding towns can be seen in the higher proportion of least-educated adults. In Middletown, 5% of adults did not graduate from high school, compared to 6% in Middlesex County. Conversely, Middletown has slightly more adults with a high-school degree or the equivalent (25%) or some college (17%) than adults in Middlesex County or the State. Approximately 11% of city residents have an associate's degree, 22% have a bachelor's degree, and 19% have a graduate or professional degree. In comparison, 23% of county residents have a bachelor's and 19% have a graduate or professional degree, while 22% of State residents have a bachelor's degree, and 17% have a graduate or professional degree.

Income

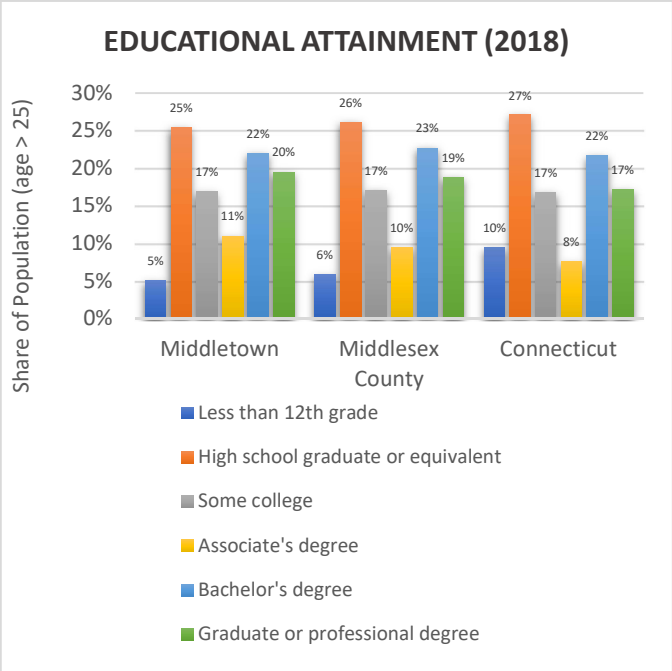
Median household income in Middletown increased from $57,655 in 2010 to almost $68,000 in 2018. However, both median household income and per capita income in the city were lower than these measures for Middlesex County and for the State overall, both in 2010 and 2018. The City's annual household earnings vary widely; 34% of households earn less than $50,000; 28% earn from $50,000 to $99,999; 26% earn from $100,000 to $199,999; and 12% earn $200,000 or more.

Low Income and Poverty

Incomes vary even more widely within these larger categories. In 2018, nearly 12% of individuals in Middletown fell below the federal poverty line. In that year, the lowest estimated median household income was less than $22,000 in the City's Downtown (Tract 5416), compared with household income in Westfield (Tract 5414.01) of $117,500. Two other Census tracts, Tract 5411 (North End) and Tract 5417, also had household incomes below $50,000 ($41,094 and $25,368 respectively). Both Tracts 5411 and 5417 are in downtown Middletown, while Tract 5421 is centered on Wadsworth Street.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Decennial Census.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Five Year Estimates.

Fortunately, the City's estimated poverty rate is on the decline. Unfortunately, the rate is growing in the county and the State. The highest estimated poverty rate in 2018 was in the Downtown (Tract 5416), with nearly 40% of individuals below the federal poverty line.

Downtown

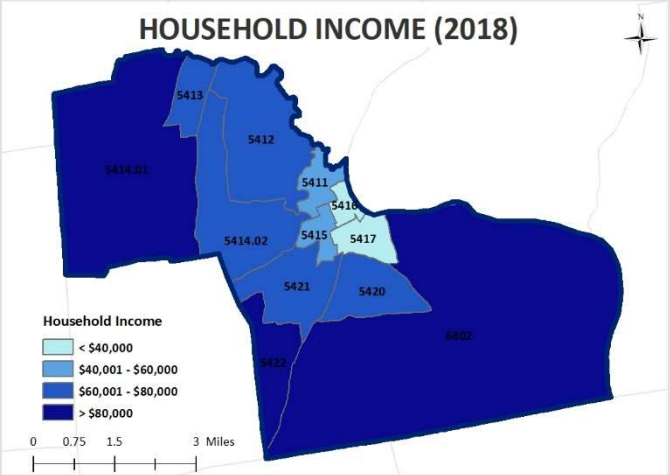
One of Middletown's most defining characteristics is how the City has retained a classic walkable downtown centered on Main Street. Although the northern end of the street forms part of the Route 66 corridor, Main Street offers a lively streetscape, made up of a mix of historic and new buildings, angled street parking, wide sidewalks, crosswalks, street trees, outdoor dining opportunities, and other public and private spaces.

The Downtown experienced many urban renewal projects during the 1960s when multiple blocks of buildings were razed to make way for expansive parking lots. Many properties in downtown Middletown do not provide on-site parking, which forces patrons to seek parking along Main Street or in the municipal lots adjacent to City Hall and the former arcade sites, which exist because of this urban renewal. These lots provide easy walking access to Main Street and the side streets. Main Street was recently improved by the CT Department of Transportation with sidewalk bump-outs and rebuilt crosswalks, shortening the time it takes to cross the street and making it more pedestrian-friendly while reducing vehicles' idling time.

Buildings currently have a range of one to five stories, with mixed uses that include retail, restaurants, and services on the first floor and commercial and residential spaces above. Many establishments serve locally sourced food, offer live music, and outdoor dining. The B-1 zoning provides flexibility in use and design, which lends the area an organic and dynamic character.

Opportunity and Enterprise Zones

The City's North End Tract 5411 and downtown Tract 5416 are designated as Opportunity Zones under the federal Opportunity Zone program, created as part of the 2017 federal Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (P.L. 115-97). Tract 5417, south of the Downtown, was nominated but not designated. The program is designed to spur economic development and job creation in distressed communities by providing special tax benefits to attract private investment. Investors receive capital-gains tax relief to spur development. Qualifying tracts are those where at least 20% of the residents live below the poverty level or earn no more than 80% of the area's median income.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Five Year Estimates.

COMMUNITY INPUT
Downtown Experience

- Provide a municipal broadband network.
- Sidewalk repairs and upgrades are necessary.
- Improve transit connections to other neighborhoods and neighboring communities.
- Downtown needs more connections to Wesleyan University.
- Support small businesses and entrepreneurs.
- Increase entertainment options.
- Provide access to locally grown food with a regional farmers' market.
- Parking needs to be safe, convenient, and accessible. Wayfinding should be provided for public parking.

In 1982 Connecticut established a statewide Enterprise Zone program, allowing businesses to receive tax incentives for developing properties and investing in distressed areas. Today there are ten types of zone designations, with 43 participating communities across the state. Middletown's Enterprise Zone covers parts of Census Tracts 5411 (North End) and 5416 (downtown). It is bounded by Union Street to the south, Broad Street to the west, and continues into the North End around Johnson Street.

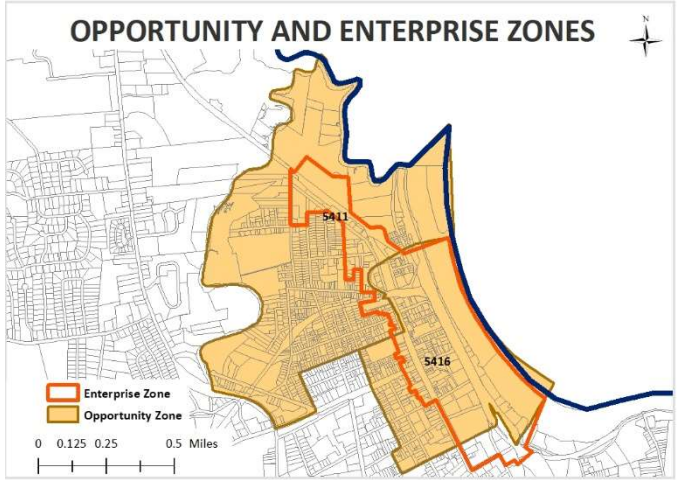
An Enterprise Zone (EZ) consists of a primary or secondary census tract or several contiguous tracts within a community. The census tracts in the EZ, at the time it was established, were required to meet three measures of poverty: a poverty rate of 25%, an unemployment rate of twice the State average, and 25% of the residents on public assistance.

A qualified business that invests in the EZ receives two incentives: a 5-year 80% abatement of qualifying real and personal property taxes. The real and/or personal property must be new to the municipality's tax base. Qualified businesses are manufacturers, research companies associated with manufacturing and distribution warehousing (new construction/expansion only), and certain service companies that develop properties in the EZ.

Commercial and Industrial Corridors

Middletown has multiple commercial and industrial corridors outside of Main Street. Each contributes to the City's vibrancy in its own way by offering space for businesses that do not fit downtown. The corridors are home to big-box stores, national retailers and foodservice chains, offices of all types, manufacturers and their subcontractors, service-providers and local small businesses. Taken together, they constitute a major source of the City's tax base and jobs. Furthermore, the corridors offer housing opportunities that serve as convenient locations where residents can obtain goods and services.

Washington Street (Route 66) is the City's most traveled corridor, with more than 27,000 cars per day and a variety of shopping. It serves as Middletown's western gateway from the I-91 corridor. Zoned for commercial uses, it has attracted national retailers such as Home Depot, Staples, Petco, and Starbucks, two grocery chains, and an array of restaurants, service-providers, and small businesses.



COMMUNITY INPUT
Riverfront

- Projects along the riverfront should range from high-density housing to incubator workspaces to preservation and access to natural resources.
- The riverfront should match the scale of Middletown.
- An amphitheater open to the public would function as a gathering space for music, theatre, or prayer.
- Improve access to the River for all users, including pedestrians, cyclists, drivers, and boaters.
- Facilitate outdoor recreation for a healthier and more active lifestyle.

Newfield Street has a mix of single-family homes, apartment complexes, and commercial and industrial businesses. It brings local traffic to Middletown from the north. Its proximity to I-91 has made it attractive to automobile dealerships and complementary repair shops. Newfield Street also has a mix of small shops and retailers that serve residents in the Westfield section of Middletown. It is one of the last areas of Middletown where new development can take place, with empty lots and underutilized buildings. The City will have to work with CT DOT to address Newfield Street's growth in automotive traffic, as well as use by pedestrians and bicyclists, creating a complete street to make it safer for all users and more attractive.

South Main Street is a well-established commercial, retail, and residential corridor just south of Main Street. It has attracted a mix of businesses, among them locally owned eateries, gyms, and an array of retailers, as well as a few national chains. Its current mix of zones, which includes R-15, MX, and B-2, should be revisited for coherence.

Saybrook Road is the best example of a neighborhood that has grown organically but with little consideration for pedestrians and bicyclists until recently. Two plazas host a mix of small businesses that serve nearby residents. Medical offices in the area continue to grow. The area is adjacent to an education cluster that includes Middlesex Community College and Xavier and Mercy high schools. One major tract of land owned by Eversource Energy served as the utility's Area Work Center, but it has stood empty since 2015.

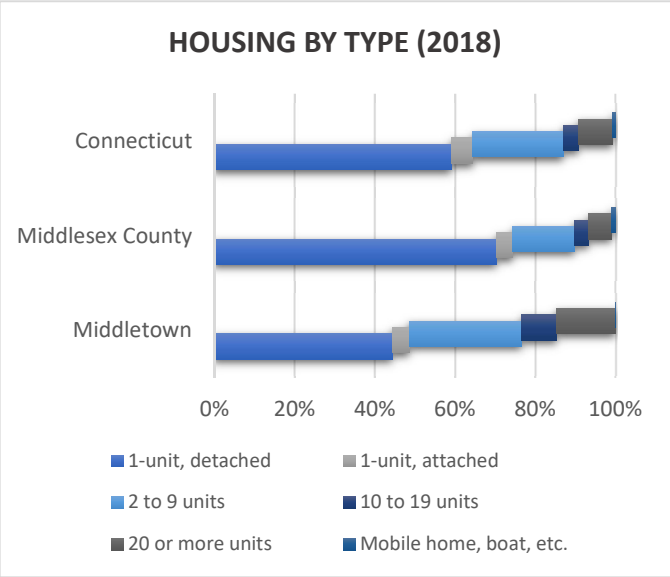
Middletown's main area intended for industrial use, located in the Industrial Park Road–Middle Street district on the City's west side, houses a mix of industrial, manufacturing, and office facilities. FedEx recently built a 535,000-square-foot distribution hub on the last remaining large site. Most of the undeveloped properties could accommodate smaller buildings in the 5,000–10,000 square-foot range. Several companies in the area have expanded in the last couple of years.

Housing

The latest estimate by the American Community Survey shows that Middletown had 21,223 housing units in 2017. Approximately 49% of the housing stock consists of single-family dwellings, which represented a much smaller share of the housing than in Middlesex County (75%) and the State (65%). The remaining housing stock consists of two-family homes (8%), three- and four-family dwellings (7%), and structures with five or more units (36%).

COMMUNITY INPUT
Housing

- Housing needs to be affordable.
- Build more housing downtown to drive demand for services, restaurants, and retail to create a stable downtown economy.
- Make housing attractive to young professionals.
- Create walkable and bikeable communities with access to transit, recreation, and commercial amenities.
- Reuse and redevelop historic buildings for both housing and commercial development.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates.

Fifteen percent (15%) of Middletown's housing stock consists of large multi-family developments with 20 units or more. These developments are concentrated in the Downtown as well as on the land zoned Multi-Family (M), Mixed Use (MX), and Planned Residential Development (PRD).

Affordable Housing

Middletown is a leader in the State for providing affordable housing. The City housing stock includes over 21,000 housing units of which 22.83% qualifies as affordable housing according to the Connecticut Department of Housing 2019 Affordable Housing Appeals List. The State has a goal for each municipality to provide at least 10% of its housing stock as affordable housing. Middletown is the only municipality in the county that meets and exceeds that goal. The Middletown Housing Authority owns and manages eight housing complexes in various parts of the City that provide a total of 487 dwelling units.

Municipality	Housing Units (2010)	Total Assisted Units (Affordable Units)	Percent Affordable
Middletown	21,223	4,632	21.83%
Portland	4,077	346	8.49%
Cromwell	6,001	417	6.95%
Westbrook	3,937	202	5.13%
East Hampton	5,485	186	3.39%
East Haddam	4,508	137	3.04%
Essex	3,261	99	3.04%
Deep River	2,096	61	2.91%
Middlefield	1,863	53	2.84%
Clinton	6,065	171	2.82%
Old Saybrook	5,602	155	2.77%
Durham	2,694	64	2.38%
Chester	1,923	42	2.18%
Haddam	3,054	50	1.43%
Killingworth	2,598	24	0.92%
Total: Middlesex County	**74,387**	**6,639**	**8.89%**

Source: 2019 Affordable Housing Appeals List. CT Department of Housing.

Housing Growth

Since 2010, over 300 authorizations for new housing have been issued in Middletown. Over half of these authorizations were for single-unit housing (195 authorizations, 57%). Another 41% of the authorizations were for housing of five units or more (141 authorizations). Only 2% of the authorizations went to two-, three-, or four-unit housing.

Middletown has a higher share of housing that is renter-occupied (47%) than the State (33%) and, especially, Middlesex County (26%). The value of both owner-occupied and rental housing in Middletown tends to be lower and more affordable than in other communities in Middlesex County or the State as a whole. The median owner-occupied home value in Middletown ($228,500) was also lower than in Middlesex County ($283,700) and the State ($270,100). Furthermore, the median gross rent in Middletown was $1,094 in 2017, lower than in Middlesex County ($1,132) and the State ($1,123).

Approximately 26% of households that own their homes are cost-burdened, meaning they spend more than 30% of their income on housing. Furthermore, approximately 47% of renter households are cost burdened. This figure is slightly lower than the statewide cost-burden levels of 30% and 51% of homeowners and renter households, respectively.

Employment

In 2017, Middletown had an estimated 28,757 jobs, which includes 1,600 more jobs (5.9%) than in 2010. The largest share of jobs in the City was in the Health Care and Social Assistance sector (5,911 jobs), which includes jobs at the hospital and associated medical offices. This industry also saw faster than average growth, with an increase in jobs of almost 15% since 2010. The Government sector included 4,613 jobs, and manufacturing accounted for 4,410 jobs.

Industry	Jobs, 2010	Jobs, 2017	Avg. Earnings (2017)
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	0	0	$0
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	0	0	$0
Utilities	118	138	$228,010
Construction	709	901	$75,710
Manufacturing	3,862	4,410	$123,471
Wholesale Trade	1,149	1,028	$92,157
Retail Trade	1,547	1,629	$41,744
Transportation and Warehousing	435	487	$44,811
Information	199	125	$75,684
Finance and Insurance	1,095	689	$108,203
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	189	192	$60,800
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	961	1,223	$92,271
Management of Companies and Enterprises	336	490	$104,123
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	541	653	$40,678
Educational Services	3,271	3,292	$48,589
Health Care and Social Assistance	5,143	5,911	$68,718
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	207	214	$25,555
Accommodation and Food Services	1,336	1,791	$28,834
Other Services (except Public Administration)	911	963	$37,441
Government	5,145	4,613	$91,546
Unclassified Industry	<10	<10	Insf. Data
Total	**27,154**	**28,757**	**$76,799**

Source: EMSI, 2019.1.

Health Care

Health care is a growing industry in Middletown. According to the Connecticut Department of Labor, employment in Health Care and Social Assistance is expected to increase by 11.3% between 2016 and 2026 statewide. The largest increases are projected to be in Outpatient Care Centers (32.3%); Home Health Care Services (30.4%); and Continuing Care Retirement Communities and Assisted Living Facilities for the Elderly (28%). Middletown is also likely to see the increases predicted in Ambulatory Health Care Services (19.1%), Other Ambulatory Health Care Services (17.8%), Offices of Physicians (12.6%), and General Medical and Surgical Hospitals (3.0%). This growth can in large part be attributed to the graying of America.

Already the middle-aged outnumber children, but the country will reach a new milestone in 2034 (previously 2035). In that year, the U.S. Census Bureau projects, older adults will edge out children in population share: people age 65 and over are expected to number

77.0 million (previously 78.0 million), while children under age 18 will number 76.5 million (previously 76.7 million).

Manufacturing

Aerospace manufacturing has long been an important industry in Middletown. The industry's largest employer, Pratt & Whitney Aircraft, a maker of jet engines and a subsidiary of Raytheon Technologies, is one of Middletown's largest employers. The company is currently working to catch up on a backlog of 8,000 next-generation engines. It continues to add engineers and skilled manufacturing employees.

According to the Connecticut Department of Labor, manufacturing employment is expected to increase by 6.5% statewide between 2016 and 2026. Transportation Equipment Manufacturing is expected to grow by 21.9%, including growth in one of its subindustries, Aerospace Product and Parts Manufacturing, 18.4%, and Machine Shops. Turned Product and Screw, Nut, and Bolt Manufacturing is expected to grow by 12.0%. The other subindustries will see growth less than 10% or a decline in employment.

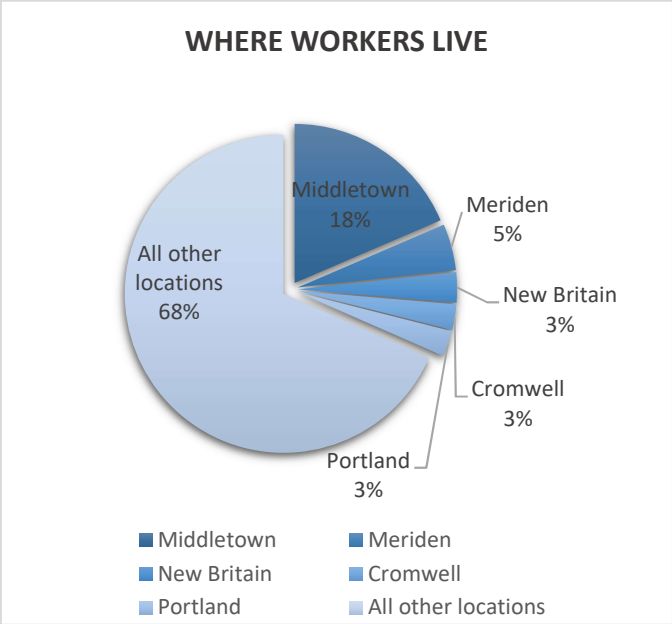
Agriculture

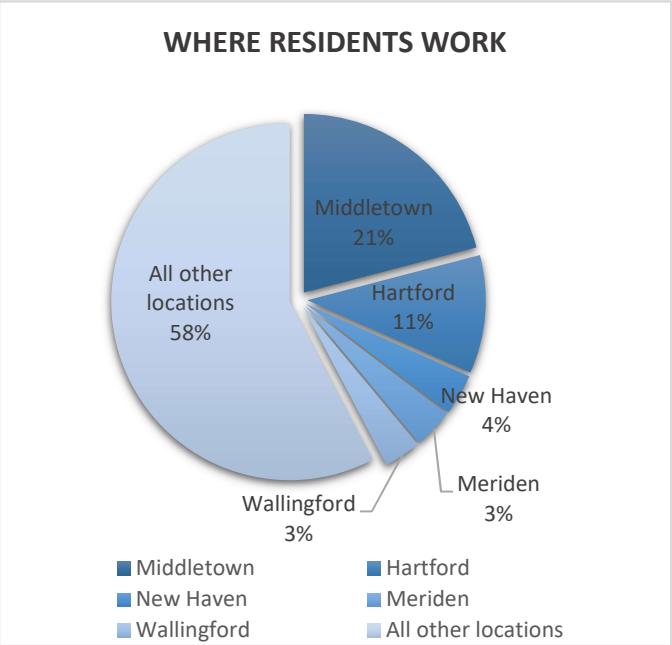
Middletown has a small farming community working to contribute to the local agricultural sector. The scope and scale of Middletown's farms range from small hobby farms with only a handful of animals on the property to large farms producing for regional distribution. In 2016, the City partnered with Forest City Farms to allow farming on City-owned land. The farm markets its produce through a Community-Supported Agriculture program, participates in local farmers' markets, and supplies local restaurants.

Employment and Earnings

The average earnings per job in Middletown were almost $76,800 in 2017, which was above the average for Middlesex County ($67,147) but below the average for the State ($80,273). Seven industries in Middletown had average earnings above the City-wide average, and these seven industries combined employed almost 13,000 people or 44% of all workers in the city.

In 2015 approximately 21% of employed Middletown residents worked in the City. Another 11% worked in Hartford, 4% in New Haven, and 3% each in Meriden and Wallingford. This highlights the importance of I-91 and the other north-south highways in





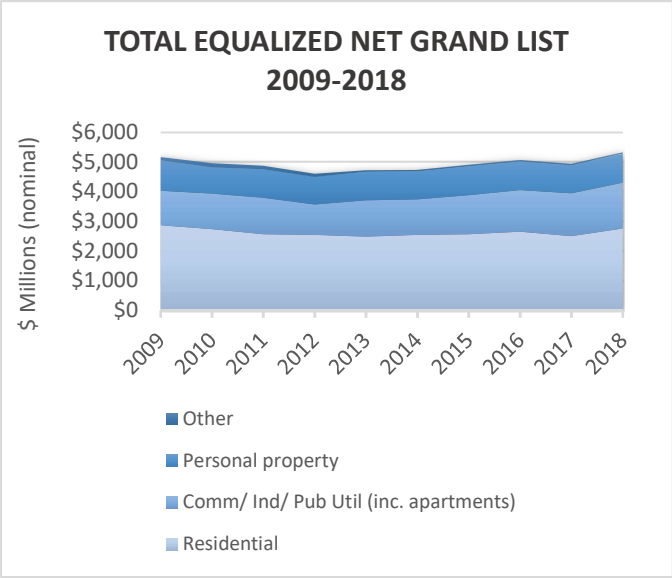
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap.

the central part of the State that enable Middletown residents to reach jobs in other cities.

Approximately 18% of all those employed in Middletown also lived in the City, while 5% lived in Meriden and 3% each in New Britain, Cromwell, and Portland. Under 2% of Middletown's workers live in Hartford, while approximately 1% live in New Haven.

Grand List

Middletown's Equalized Net Grand List ("ENGL"), or the total taxable property in the City adjusted for comparison with other cities and towns, was valued at over $5.17 billion in 2009. It has yet to recover to this value as of 2016 (the most recent data), when the total ENGL was $5.07 billion. This $100 million loss in taxable property in Middletown is even greater once the figures are adjusted for inflation. Two major projects, the FedEx Ground Distribution hub, and the Liberty Bank redevelopment on Long Hill Road, are recent additions to the Grand List that will improve these numbers.



Source: Connecticut Office of Policy and Management, Equalized Net Grand List by Town.

The City's residential market has not fully recovered from the nationwide housing-market collapse that occurred in 2008. The residential property represents just over half of Middletown's ENGL; the total value of taxable residential property in Middletown has declined from $2.87 billion in 2009 to $2.76 billion in 2018.

The total value of taxable personal property in the City has also declined, from just over $1 billion in 2008 to $978 million in 2018, a 4.5% loss. Much of the decline stems from the State's move to exempt personally owned equipment used in manufacturing from property taxes. The value of commercial, industrial, and public-utility property increased by 32% from 2009 ($1.17 billion) to 2018 ($1.54 billion).

Middletown's percentage of tax-exempt properties is larger than the state average. These properties include large non-profits such as Wesleyan University and Middlesex Hospital, as well as state-owned facilities such as Connecticut Valley Hospital, the Solnit Center, the now vacant Connecticut Juvenile Training School, the County Courthouse, and over 40 houses of worship. Although the City is eligible for Payment in Lieu of Taxes ("PILOT") from the State to compensate for these nontaxable properties, the formulas used to calculate these funds have been changing in recent years, increasing the gap between the value of the PILOT and the value of the nontaxable properties. Meanwhile, the City must still provide services to these properties, including fire and rescue, police, and road maintenance and plowing. Twenty-eight percent of Middletown property is tax-exempt, compared to 14% statewide.

Zoning

Middletown established its first zoning code in 1927, where all 45.2 sq. mi. of land within the municipal boundaries is divided into zoning districts that regulate the location, use, and bulk of buildings and structures. The City is divided into 28 zoning districts whose boundaries are fixed in the official zoning map. The Middletown Code also contains four floating zones that offer opportunities to develop land under different standards if certain criteria are met.

The zoning districts can be generally categorized as follows:

Residential Zones: R-1, R-15, R-30, R-45, R-60, RPZ (Residential Prezoning), M (Multi-Family Dwellings), and PRD (Planned Residential Development)

Business Zones: B-1 (Central Business), B-2 (General Business), B-3 (Office/Transitional Business), and NPC (Newfield Street Planned Retail Business Commercial)

Industrial Zones: I-1 (Service Industrial), I-2 (Restricted Industrial), I-3 (Special Industrial), I-4 (Limited Industrial), IRA (Industrial Redevelopment Area), IT (Interstate Trade), and IOP (Interstate office Park)

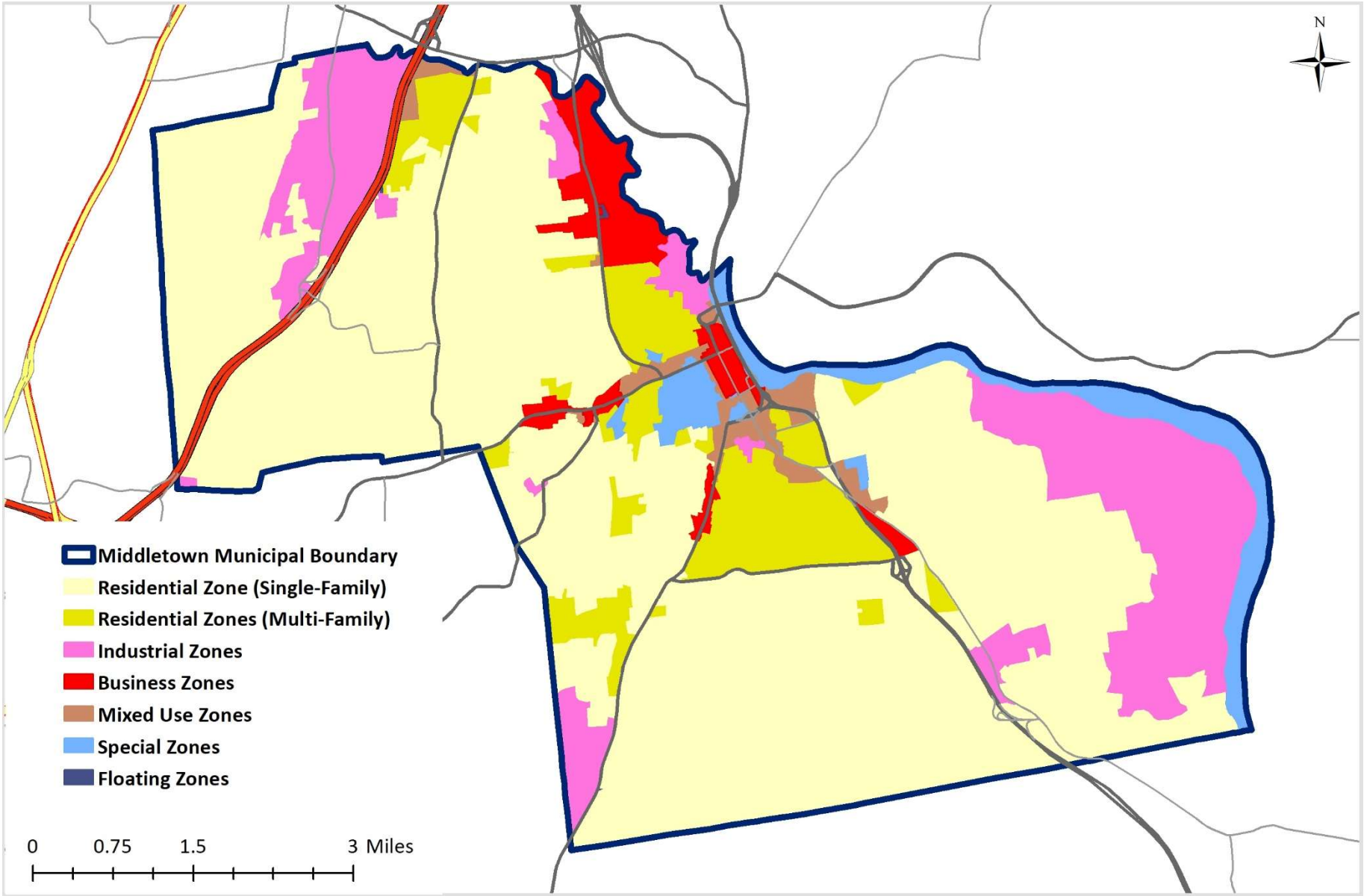
Mixed Use Zones: MX (Mixed Use), TD (Transitional Development), and IM (Interstate Mixed-Use)

Special Zones: ID (Institutional Development), DVD (Downtown Village District), RF (Riverfront Recreation), PL (Park Land) and PSUZ (Public Service Utility)

Floating Zones: NRCD (Neighborhood/Rural Commercial Development), SMH (Substance Abuse/ Mental Health Floating Zone), Special Residential Development (SRD), and RDD (Redevelopment Design District)

Category	Area (Acres)	Percent of City	Zone	Area (Acres)	Percent of City
Residential	21,829	75.39%	**R-60**	5,527	19.09%
			R-45	3,106	10.73%
			R-30	5,304	18.32%
			R-15	4,992	17.24%
			R-1	501	1.73%
			RPZ	1,227	4.24%
			PRD	674	2.33%
			M	499	1.72%
Industrial	4,231	14.61%	**I-1**	202	0.70%
			I-2	110	0.38%
			I-3	2,324	8.03%
			I-4	271	0.93%
			IRA	129	0.44%
			IT	149	0.51%
			IOP	1,047	3.61%
Business	993	3.43%	**B-1**	126	0.44%
			B-2	240	0.83%
			B-3	2	0.01%
			NPC	625	2.16%
Mixed Use	597	2.06%	**TD**	141	0.49%
			MX	359	1.24%
			IM	97	0.34%
Special	1,291	4.46%	**DVD**	74	0.26%
			ID	207	0.72%
			PL	3	0.01%
			RF	1,007	3.48%
Floating	13	0.05%	**NRCD**	7	0.02%
			SRD	7	0.02%
Total	**28,955**	**100.0%**		**28,955**	**100.00%**

MIDDLETOWN ZONING MAP (UNOFFICIAL)



GOALS AND ACTION ITEMS FOR A THRIVING COMMUNITY

A **thriving Middletown 2030** will be achieved through a commitment to economic development that increases opportunities for businesses, adds meaningful, well-paying jobs, fosters housing diversity, and enhances the overall quality of life in the City.

Middletown 2030 will be *thriving* as a result of progress toward the following goals:

An accessible riverfront that includes a dynamic balance of conservation, recreation, and development.

The early history of Middletown was inextricably connected to the Connecticut River. From colonial days through the steam-powered industrial revolution of river travel and commerce, Middletown owed its growth and prosperity to the River, as it is the longest river in New England and connects many communities along the way. As alternative means of transportation and other industries grew, the waterfront lost its importance. Since as far back as the 1940s, the City's Harbor Improvement Agency sought to restore public access to and use of the riverfront, particularly for recreational purposes. The Agency developed plans over the next several decades, and its 1974 Plan for Waterfront Recreational Development stated:

"The revitalization to the Connecticut River waterfront in Middletown would provide an opportunity for the City to re-establish its close relationship with the River, which has been badly neglected in recent years. The time is right since Federal and State environmental legislation [has] resulted in the vast improvement of water quality, and thus the appeal of the River as a recreational resource."

Indispensable elements of plans for riverfront development will include improving pedestrian and vehicular access, signage, sidewalks, landscaping, lighting, and other wayfinding enhancements to encourage use by visitors and residents.

ACTION ITEMS
Riverfront

- Create a Riverfront Master Plan that builds on the PPS Riverfront Placemaking Plan, which identifies mixes of uses, public amenities, recreational activities, and opportunities for conservation and other open spaces to site plan standards.
- Amend zoning codes and design standards to achieve the vision of the Riverfront Master Plan.
- Establish a Tax Increment Finance (TIF) District along the riverfront to focus capital toward redevelopment in this area.
- Increase recreation opportunities with small-scale improvements along the Connecticut River, possibly including kayak launches, floating boat docks, or small piers to engage the river's edge.
- Collaborate with nearby towns that might have local farmers interested in participating in a regional farmers' market.

Development along the riverfront will require a public-private partnership with a shared vision for the riverfront–Route 9–Downtown connectivity plan. City leaders will need to work with the State to make it a reality.

Any solution will need to satisfy a majority of the community's decision-makers but will ultimately also have to be approved (and largely funded) by the State. The City, after careful consideration of its numerous options, should plan and then act boldly to deliver on the dreams of many decades and tie itself closely to its most special natural resource.

As pointed out in the 2014 City-commissioned Project for Public Spaces (PPS) report, *"A Placemaking Plan for the Middletown Riverfront,"* the Middletown riverfront is at an important turning point. The result is the rare and important opportunity to leverage the riverfront as a public-private space that provides conservation land, recreational opportunities, and economic development.

While the most direct access to and along the River itself should be maintained for the general public, development and redevelopment of adjacent areas, including the decommissioned wastewater treatment facility, the Omo Manufacturing and Jackson Corrugated sites, and State-owned land south of Riverfront Park, should have a strong private investment component. Key next steps will be refining the report's final recommendations, including translating some of the public-space recommendations into specific hard engineering plans and establishing the policy and regulatory framework to enable private investment.

Image: Kayakers on the Connecticut River

Image: Crew team training on the Connecticut River

Middletown can serve as a regional hub for many of the lower Connecticut River Valley farmers by providing a regional farmers' market. This market would have a scale capable of strengthening economic vitality, promoting regional agriculture, and greatly improving the availability of fresh local produce for Middletown. Multiple sites may be considered downtown, including development along the riverfront. The site would require easy access to multimodal transportation and sufficient space for parking and vendors. The city could work with Portland, Middlefield, Durham, and Haddam or other area towns to develop connections with local producers.

Through a Master Planning process, the city can create a vision and a unified plan for the use of the riverfront that will allow the City to identify the uses and public amenities it wants located there; these may include:

- A vibrant, mixed-use district that provides cohesive and interactive development that encourages retail, housing, and office space through appropriate urban design.
- An inclusive community with a diverse housing stock that includes market-rate and affordable housing.
- An accessible and healthy active living environment with a network of multi-use trails that connects the riverfront to neighborhoods.
- A diverse transportation network that connects transit systems, waterways, and complete streets.
- Protection of the natural environment, including open spaces, wetlands, the riverbank, and native plant life.
- Identification of opportunities for passive and active recreational uses.

Properties in the City's two Opportunity Zones (OZ) and single Enterprise Zone will be greatly impacted by the redesign of Route 9. Any redesign in these areas must improve their development potential and have benefits for the Downtown. The OZ can be considered low-risk, since the tracts identified as "distressed" have significant intrinsic value for a thriving Main Street, offering access to major highways and proximity to the riverfront. Outside of the OZ tracts, Middletown has features with regional draw, including large employers and high household incomes. The City owns two large parcels of land, the Arcade site (2.5 acres) on Dingwall Drive and the City Hall property (5.0 acres) on deKoven Drive, which offer prime land for private investment, provided the separation from the riverfront by Route 9 is mitigated. The City might assist in establishing an Opportunity Zone Investment Fund but should also play a leading role in guiding developers' decision-making.

The land between River Road and Silver Street lends itself to mixed-use development to be undertaken in cooperation with the State of Connecticut, which owns large swaths of land in the area. Such development can include new housing, commercial businesses, and parks and green corridors to support the neighborhood. The area has the infrastructure to support development, offer easy access to major highways, and views of the Connecticut River Valley. It also has areas with steep slopes and other characteristics more suited to be preserved as open space or dedicated to agriculture.

Image: 2019 Aerial Photo of Downtown and the Riverfront

Parking downtown that will be available, accessible, and unobtrusive.

As activity in the Downtown area increases, there will be heightened demand for shared parking to accommodate the patrons of restaurants, retail shops, and other businesses on Main Street and side streets at all times of the day. Opportunities to expand the parking supply in the Downtown on City-owned property should be explored. Parking decks, as a less costly compromise between full garages and expanded surface lots, would add capacity to existing parking areas.

All parking areas should be attractive, well lit, and secure, as should the pedestrian passages connecting visitors to their destinations.

Wayfinding will direct people to both parking and shopping and will contribute to a sense of place throughout the Downtown. Goodlooking, clear wayfinding signage, and enhanced walking paths will encourage the use of more remote parking areas. The City can offer an online interactive parking map for visitors with information on parking locations, availability of spaces, and fees.

Multiple options exist to connect remote parking areas to desired destinations. A downtown circulator trolley bus will encourage the use of remote parking areas, particularly by full-time employees of downtown businesses, thereby freeing up more central parking areas for patrons of those businesses. This trolley would service Wesleyan, Middlesex Hospital, and the riverfront. The introduction of a bike-share program serving those destinations should be considered. The future of autonomous vehicles (AV) may impact how people travel and use long-term parking areas in the next decade.

ACTION ITEMS
Parking

- Create a wayfinding and parking pathway signage program to improve access to alternative parking areas in the downtown core.
- Engage in coordinated discussions between City, Middletown Area Transit, Chamber of Commerce, key employers, and DOT on remote parking and a Downtown Circulator Trolley and a bike-share program.
- Create online access to parking maps with possible real-time information on the availability of parking.
- Identify appropriate development and redevelopment opportunities within the City's two Opportunity Zones and promote an Opportunity Zone Investment Fund as a financing option.

Image: View looking south along Main Street

Daily needs fulfilled by neighborhood centers.

A neighborhood center is a walkable, bikeable, and transit-friendly business cluster located among residential neighborhoods. People are typically willing to walk ¼ mile or bike 3 miles to a destination. At that distance, walking is not a chore but part of the experience. Neighborhood centers rely on safe and inviting active transportation environments that include sidewalk and bike continuity and connectivity. They offer sustainable development that generates vibrant spaces that have positive effects on quality of life and gives residents a chance to find jobs and buy goods and services within a 5-minute walk.

The City must look back to its traditional development patterns as it looks forward for future sustainable development. In the aftermath of the City adopting a zoning code common to much of the US, subdivisions were the standard increment of housing development, and commercial development typically took the form of shopping strips along arterials.

ACTION ITEMS
Neighborhood Centers

- Amend zoning codes to allow flexibility of uses and residential densities and create new and revitalized existing neighborhood centers.
- Amend zoning codes to ensure a streamlined permitting process for appropriate uses and developments.
- Identify properties for development along the main corridors and coordinate with property owners to develop marketing materials and provide informational assistance to potential developers and siting professionals.

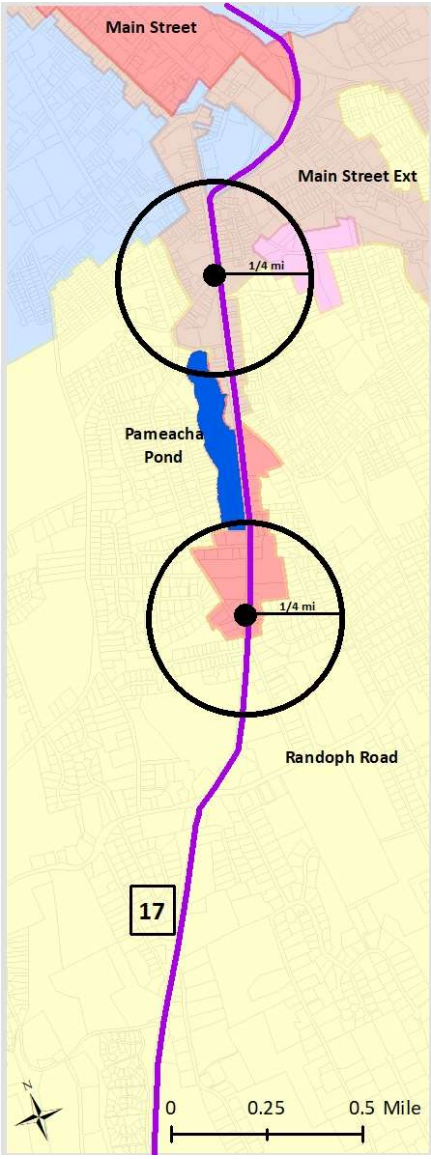
The current Zoning Code is a suburban zoning code that prescribes the opposite of Middletown's rich tradition of diverse, mixed-use neighborhoods. Commercial and residential zones require wider lot frontages, and allowed parking in front of buildings. Over time, this parking pattern became dramatically exaggerated on Washington Street, Newfield Street, South Main Street, and Saybrook Road. As a result, the highly connected fabric of the traditional close-knit neighborhoods became frayed.

Along Newfield Street, Washington Street, South Main Street, and Saybrook Road, individual stores or clusters of stores already exist; they should be expanded to enhance the existing centers and establish new ones. The Zoning Code should be modified to allow the revitalization of existing neighborhood centers, the organic growth of centers around some individual stores, and the creation of entirely new centers where appropriate. The zones should allow a mix of uses, including retail, services, offices, and other features that serve nearby residents. Permitted uses, which can be expanded to adjust for a changing economy, may include common or shared spaces for start-up businesses. Commercial spaces can be created through both new construction and adaptive reuse of existing buildings and infrastructure. These corridors can be improved by zoning-code modifications that reduce curb cuts, increase sidewalk connectivity, and generally improve pedestrian and bicyclist mobility. Depending on the site and the uses it attracts, each neighborhood center will acquire a different character.

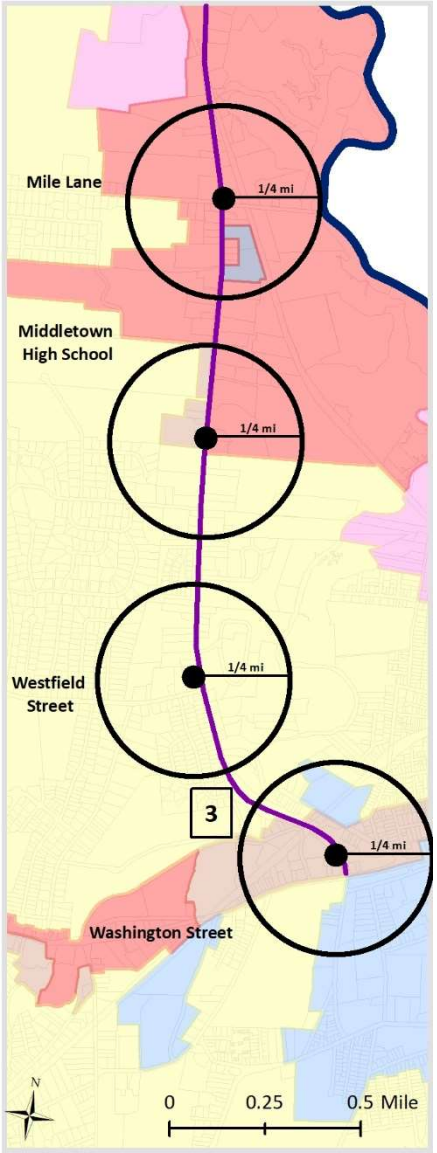
The Downtown is an excellent model for a neighborhood center constituting the largest and most important to Middletown, with a pedestrian-friendly environment that supports commercial uses that satisfy many of the daily needs of nearby residents. The City should continue working to make the Downtown and the surrounding area more bike-friendly. The existing zoning codes on Main Street offer opportunities for a wide range of commercial uses and do not restrict density. As the community becomes less dependent on private automobiles and the City provides safe and accessible parking, the Downtown can be developed further into a neighborhood center that supports a large segment of the city's population.

CORRIDOR PLANS FOR NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS

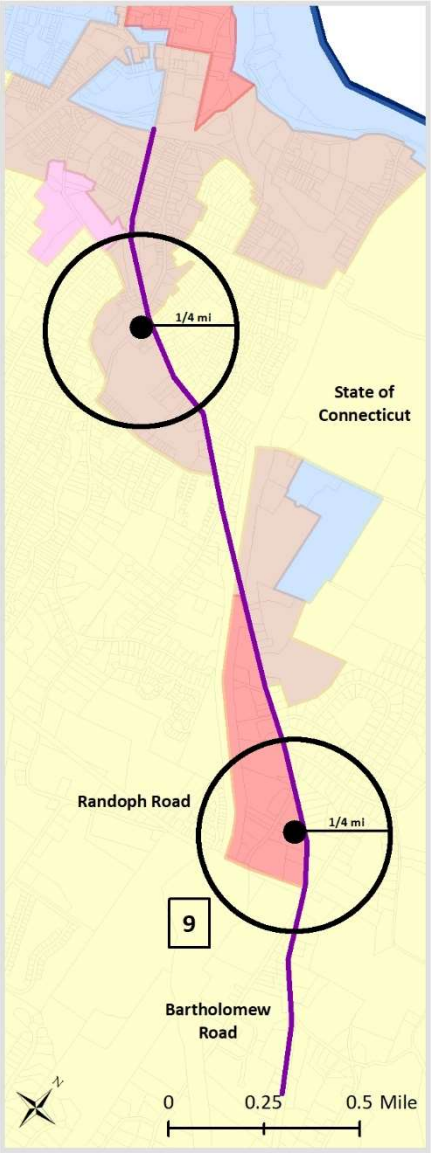
SOUTH MAIN ST CORRIDOR



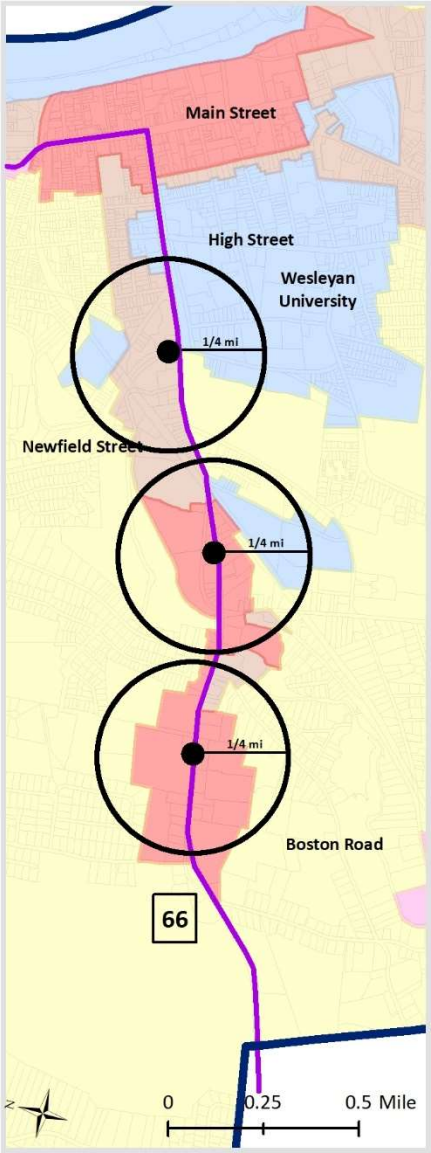
NEWFIELD ST CORRIDOR



SAYBROOK RD CORRIDOR



WASHINGTON ST CORRIDOR



A growing housing stock with more housing options.

People across all age groups, races, income levels, and lifestyle choices value the ability to find housing that is affordable and satisfies their need and desire live in a safe, comfortable, and healthy environment. To meet these requirements the City will have to provide a variety of housing options. Over the next decade, few communities in Connecticut will be better positioned than Middletown to appeal to and welcome potential residents, visitors, and workers.

Mixed-use neighborhoods can expand by making more housing types available, including but not limited to apartment buildings, liner buildings, tiny houses, carriage houses, lofts over commercial uses, studios in industrial buildings, courtyard apartments, bungalow courts, mansion apartments, and dormitories.

ACTION ITEMS
Housing Stock

- Amend zoning codes to allow new opportunities to construct accessory housing units on residential lots in the sewer-service area.
- Amend zoning codes to ensure development density, including housing and mixed use, creating a vibrant level of activity in the Downtown and neighborhood centers.
- Create a housing plan that addresses the long-term availability of affordable housing.

Infill development and redevelopment are highly desirable throughout the City and specifically in the City's Opportunity Zones, provided new construction happens at a scale compatible with existing buildings. Additional housing would increase the customer base and stability for new retail establishments and restaurants, as well as adding vibrancy.

Neighborhoods and compact development require fewer cars and promote walking, biking, and use of motorized wheelchairs. These modalities can be supplemented by public transportation. Neighborhoods with a mix of uses offer more convenient jobs, schools, shopping, and services for those who cannot afford or choose not to have a car, those who cannot drive for medical reasons, and those who are not permitted to drive. For public enjoyment and protection from over-development, some parcels should be left without infill, to be used for open space, public parks, and playgrounds.

Suburban and lower-density areas of Middletown within the Sewer Boundary Area can experience housing growth through building on empty lots along existing streets with sewer and water lines; creating new lots by subdivision or making rear lots accessible from new alleys; constructing additional stories atop existing one-story buildings; converting large single-family dwellings into two- or three-family dwellings; or adding on to existing buildings or building above garages and other accessory structures.

Housing growth should be sustainable and therefore limited outside the Sewer Boundary Area. Growth should be planned in areas with access to public amenities, city parks, and other public resources. The zoning codes will require amendment to focus on these elements. Zoning codes should include standards that permit development density suited to the specific capacity and scale of a given neighborhood. Housing development may be mixed-income and mixed-use where appropriate to encourage re-use of existing buildings. Zoning codes should support the orderly completion of development capacity and ensure that any remaining development fits the character in form and style of the surrounding area.

Anchor institutions serving as economic drivers for sustainable growth.

The permanent presence of anchor institutions willing to enter into close partnerships with the City creates an environment of stability and brings sincere investment in the success of the community. Middletown is fortunate to have a goodly number of highly-committed institutions—Wesleyan University, Middlesex Community College, the Community Health Center, Middlesex Health, Pratt & Whitney, Liberty Bank, and the Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce. By forging collaboration with and among these institutions in a shared mission of investment and improvement, the City government can promote substantial development that will benefit the entire community.

Coordinated investment in the Downtown by these institutions will expand jobs and housing that can drive activity and growth in related sectors such as retail and restaurants. A shared interest in amenities such as recreation facilities, trails, boathouses, riverfront improvements, and cultural centers can result in substantial public-private investments.

The Middletown Entrepreneurial Work Space (MEWS+) initiative demonstrates the strong potential of this kind of partnership in fostering start-ups and encouraging young entrepreneurs. Headquartered at the Chamber of Commerce property, MEWS+ has already successfully incubated businesses.

Building on this approach, the Chamber and the City, backed by the key anchor institutions, should continue to work closely to coordinate economic development efforts, including recruiting new businesses for infill and new development and fostering the growth and expansion of the existing business community.

ACTION ITEMS
Anchor Institutions

- Collaborate with anchor institutions and the Downtown Business District to maintain a unified focus on the promotion of desirable businesses, redevelopment of vacant or underused properties, and enhancement of public amenities and infrastructure.
- Collaborate with key anchor institutions, facilitated through the Chamber of Commerce, to align and coordinate on major goals and investment plans.
- Partner with key stakeholders such as Middlesex Health and Pratt & Whitney to encourage the location of complementary health-care, wellness, engineering, and technology businesses in Middletown, including expanded housing opportunities for employees.

Image: Middlesex Hospital

3. MIDDLETOWN 2030: A VIBRANT COMMUNITY

We envision a Middletown that is **Vibrant.**

A vibrant 2030 Middletown will be achieved through a commitment to the preservation and integration of place and community throughout the City. Public spaces will give residents and visitors opportunities to enjoy the City and its amenities. Streetscapes will be aesthetically appealing and promote a sense of place. Communication and public engagement will unite the neighborhoods into a single community. The City will provide rich opportunities for personal growth and social and civic interaction.

Community Assets

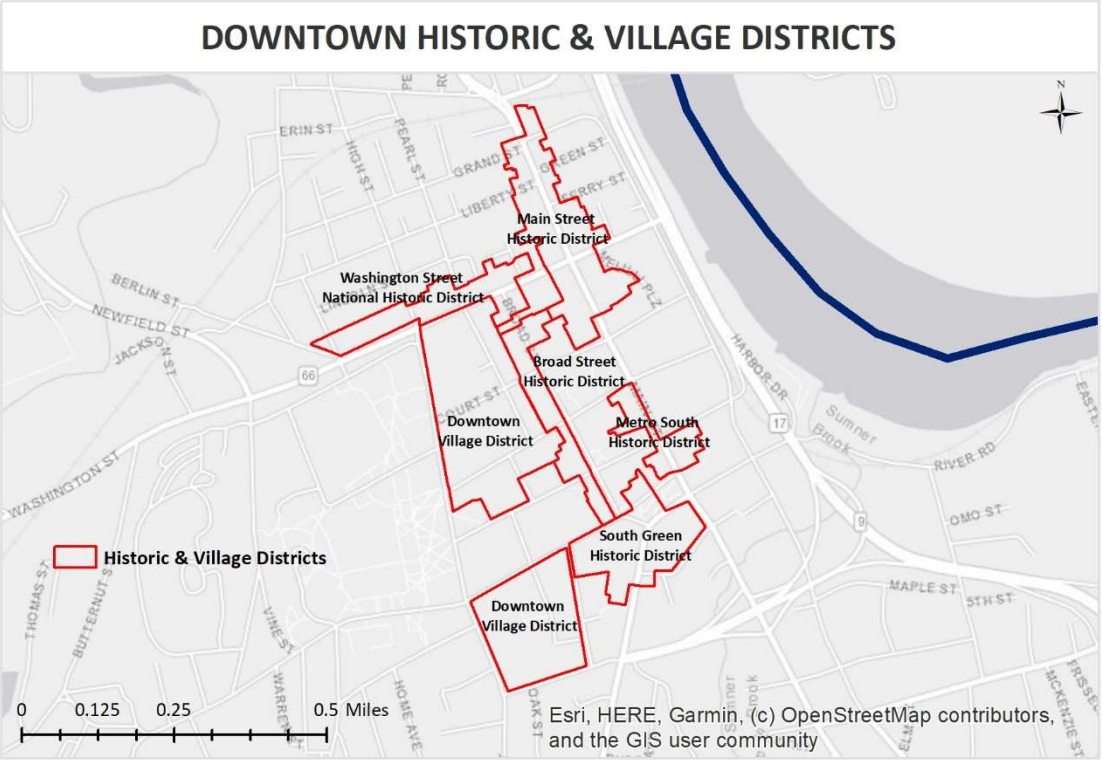
Middletown already offers residents and visitors a wealth of opportunities to enjoy the arts, culture, sports, commerce, and the region's natural features. In the last twenty years Middletown's Downtown has experienced a dramatic transformation, adding restaurants, retail establishments, and other businesses on Main Street and side streets, supported by the Middlesex Chamber of Commerce, which counts over 2,000 member businesses. In Middletown learning and education are valued at all levels. The City's diverse educational system includes two colleges, a public high school, a State vocational high school, and two private high schools. The City has one neighborhood association and many organizations that actively contribute to the community. More than ever residents, visitors from neighboring towns, and tourists who enjoy spending time in a lively, safe, and welcoming environment are turning to the City of Middletown for its facilities, activities, and other resources.

Historic Resources

In 1979 the Greater Middletown Preservation Trust published a survey of Middletown's historical and architectural resources. The inventory lists nearly 1,200 properties of historic and/or architectural significance. Middletown has 33 places listed on the National Register of Historic Places, many of them located downtown. The listing includes 7 historic districts—the Broad Street, Highland, Main Street, Metro South, Middletown South Green, Wadsworth Estate, and Washington Street districts—as well as buildings now in

Image: View along Main Street

use as private housing, university housing, other institutional purposes, schools, and museums.



Public Schools

Middletown's public school system includes eight elementary schools, two middle schools (soon to be consolidated), and one public high school. The system educates 4,800 students annually, from preschool through high school. The system also offers a robust adult-education system.

Higher Education

Middletown's two institutions of higher learning are Wesleyan University, a world-class, private liberal arts college, and Middlesex Community College, which belongs to the Connecticut State Colleges and University system.

The Wesleyan campus covers about 315 acres in the City. The approximately 3,200 undergraduates and graduate students live in residence halls, former private houses, or nearby rental properties. Many of Wesleyan's buildings are listed on the National Register of Historic Places or are identified as historic resources in Middletown. The university sponsors performances, exhibitions, lectures, film-showings, sporting events, and the like, most open to the public.

At Middlesex Community College students can earn the associate's degree or certificates in over 70 programs. The school contributes to sustainability efforts in the region by modeling sustainable practices and educating students and the community about conservation and environmental stewardship.

Crafts Education

Wesleyan Potters, Inc., the oldest craft school in Connecticut, got its start in 1948. In addition to offering classes in a wide range of crafts, the Potters have a gallery shop on site and organize an annual post-Thanksgiving juried exhibition and sale.

Image: Kids City Museum

Middletown Commission on the Arts

The Commission on the Arts and Cultural Activities was established by City ordinance in 1972 in recognition of the essential contributions of the arts and artists to the City's cultural, educational, social, and economic vitality. Now called the Middletown Commission on the Arts, it strives to enrich the lives of all citizens, enhance the image of the City, and meet the needs of its varied constituencies. The Commission's bimonthly newsletter highlights recent and upcoming events, many of which draw spectators and participants from all over the State, and the Commission sponsors the City art collection, on display in the Municipal Building.

Public Parks

Middletown's 39 public parks offer a range of amenities, including but not limited to playing fields, skate parks, basketball and tennis courts, playgrounds, and open space for passive recreation. Many parks contain historic resources and monuments or landmarks. Many parks are ADA-accessible.

Galleries, Libraries, Theaters, and Museums

The City offers many opportunities to experience the arts and culture. The institutions that provide these opportunities, funded through public, private/non-profit, and institutional investments, include the Russell Library, the Middlesex County Historical Society, the Godfrey Memorial Library, the Kidcity Children's Museum, and Wesleyan and Middlesex Community College, with their galleries and performances. Oddfellows Playhouse, an independent children's theater founded in 1975, serves children from all backgrounds. It sponsors an annual summer Children's Circus. ARTFARM, a non-profit organization focused on theater, social justice, and sustainable living, has offered summer "Shakespeare in the Grove" performances at Middlesex Community College.

Civic Organizations

Middletown currently has one neighborhood organization, the North End Action Team (NEAT). The Middlesex United Way also provides assistance throughout the community. The City hosts numerous organizations focused on the environment, human services, sports, the arts, religion, and other areas of interest and endeavor. Among the City's resources are the commissions, task forces, committees, and boards that engage the energy and ideas of many residents as volunteers, who in turn encourage other citizens to inform themselves and get involved in the City's planning and government operations.

COMMUNITY INPUT
Public Arts & Culture

- The City's vibrancy is a source of pride to the community.
- A stronger presence of both large and small art display is desired throughout the City, especially in Downtown and in public parks.
- Murals on buildings, art on bus shelters, and sculptures along Main Street will help engage pedestrians and foster conversation.
- Art and cultural events should be better publicized.
- Commercial centers should be attractive and engaging to the public.

Image: Oddfellows Playhouse Youth Theater

GOALS AND ACTION ITEMS FOR A VIBRANT COMMUNITY

A **vibrant Middletown 2030** will be achieved through a commitment to the preservation and integration of place and community throughout the City.

Middletown 2030 will be *vibrant* as a result of making progress toward the following goals:

Public spaces that provide opportunities to enjoy the City and its amenities.

A commitment to providing access to its open spaces and natural resources will enhance the vibrancy of the City. Both paved and unpaved blazed walking trails will allow residents and visitors to enjoy Middletown's natural environment. A paved path along the riverfront will grant better access and permit utilization of the river's edge, offering new ways to experience the City.

Pocket parks and playgrounds within the urban core can provide essential public space for Middletown residents in the Downtown and the North End. The City should acquire parcels there to create pocket parks, reached by way of sidewalks and crosswalks, where residents in that urban neighborhood can enjoy nature and congregate in a public setting. Every resident in these neighborhoods should live within a 10-minute walk of a park equipped with benches, tables, greenspaces, playgrounds, and landscaping. Parks should be well lit, safe, and conscientiously maintained.

City Hall should be an inviting and safe public place where residents can meet the City's leaders and staff, seek services, find information, conduct business, attend meetings, and contribute to civic life. The building should be functional and easy to navigate. It should continue to display the work of local artists.

The Russell Library should build on its existing programming and services to create an environment where all patrons feel welcome, comfortable, and inspired. The Library should strive to substantially increase its capacity to provide 21st-century services to the community by addressing the challenges posed by its 19th-century building and infrastructure: efficiency/sustainability, maintenance, staffing, wiring/technology. The

ACTION ITEMS
Public Spaces

- Identify eligible properties to acquire for the purpose of installing public parks and greenspaces throughout the Downtown and the North End.
- Create the Path to Freedom trail that includes historical markers and signposts to guide the followers along the historical path from slavery to freedom to equality.
- Identify key locations across the City in both the built and natural environments as areas to showcase local artwork.
- Collaborate with local arts groups to develop key sites throughout the City for community-themed murals and painted crosswalks.
- Amend zoning codes to require amenities for pedestrians in commercial and mixed-use zones, including but not limited to benches, landscaping, street lighting, and wayfinding signage.
- Identify a revenue source to directly fund "Artscape" improvement projects in key commercial corridors.
- Amend zoning codes to attract and retain businesses downtown by modifying minimum parking requirements on private sites, encourage public parking in key locations, and promote active transportation.

last major renovation to the Russell Library occurred 37 years ago (1983) when it connected three buildings not designed to function as a library (an 1834 church, a 1930 wing, and a 1960s bank building). A comprehensive plan should address the convenience and cost of parking. The Library should develop partnerships with the business community, the City, and the education community to further promote residents' career readiness, civic engagement, and lifelong education.

Middletown must continue to preserve its historic resources. Historic buildings should have their façades preserved. The City must continue to identify buildings eligible for recognition and undertake the process of obtaining a listing on the National Registry of Historic Places. Signs should be installed and maintained to identify the boundaries of historic districts. Monuments should be installed to mark places of historical significance.

Sidewalks also constitute a public space that contributes greatly to the vibrancy of the City by inviting life to the street. Sidewalks should be safe and accessible to all, including residents and visitors, adults and children, the able-bodied and the disabled. All roads and streets within a mile of the Downtown should have sidewalks that can be used to reach businesses in the core and neighborhood centers. Sidewalks should also provide safe walking access to schools and parks. Sidewalks must be maintained properly for safety and appearance.

Image: 2019 Middletown Pride Event

Image: 2019 Middletown Pride Event

Streetscapes that are aesthetically attractive and promote a sense of place.

Middletown's land-use policies and public infrastructure improvements should prioritize the improvement of the City's sense of place and enhance the character of the Downtown, neighborhood centers, and commercial corridors. Both the function and aesthetics of public places and private property visible from public spaces should receive emphasis. The built environment should be attractive and engaging and preserve the historic character of the City. The creation of design districts to establish standards and guidelines for certain neighborhoods could preserve and enhance their character. Preservation of familiar landmarks can be an important component in the revitalization of neighborhoods and communities, making them attractive and livable.

The City's arts and cultural resources should be on full display across the City. The City should identify and dedicate funding sources to plan for and install public art so that residents and visitors encounter it as an object of contemplation or discussion. Sculptures in City parks and on Main Street and murals and landscaped pocket parks will enhance the City's physical appearance and leave a positive impression on residents and visitors.

Middletown's main transportation corridors should be enhanced with green spaces, street trees, and a reduction of curb cuts to them more attractive. Natural and green spaces should be available to residents by way of urban parks, landscaped areas, and buffers from roadways. Properly selecting and placing street trees between sidewalks and travel lanes physically protects pedestrians. They also make sidewalks cooler and more comfortable to walk on, thereby bringing more pedestrians with more "eyes on the street," a known deterrent to crime. As they mature, trees create a canopy and give a sense that their area will endure. They are a promise of decades, sometimes even centuries, of the City's commitment to a place.

The Zoning Code should be amended to encourage retrofitting the streets with new developments that bring buildings closer to the road and place any parking behind them. The Planning and Zoning Commission should require buildings to have architectural details and aesthetic designs that add character to the area and contribute to the streetscape. Artworks can be strategically located along the corridors, where they will enhance users' experience and convey a sense of place.

ACTION ITEMS
Streetscapes

- Implement placemaking with signage, decorations, and art along Main Street.
- Amend zoning codes to include design districts to ensure that development and redevelopment is harmonious with the existing neighborhood context and provides a sense of place.
- Create a façade-improvement loan program to ensure the buildings that significantly contribute to Middletown's character are preserved.
- Partner with developers of historic brownfield properties, seeking assistance for cleanup, regulatory relief, and preservation of key architectural features.
- Encourage building owners along Route 9 and other state-road corridors to improve landscaping, improve building façades, and provide areas to showcase local artworks.

Image: Rendering of a city street

Communication and public engagement opportunities that unite the neighborhoods into a single community.

Major conservation and development projects in the next ten years will have long-term impacts on all Middletown residents, regardless of the neighborhood in which they reside. For example, modifications to Route 9 will affect everyone, and the riverfront development will provide recreation and other opportunities to all Middletown residents. Likewise, open-space acquisition, trail-network expansions, and other sustainable development initiatives will provide benefits to residents and visitors alike.

Improved communication will be essential to making all residents aware of what is happening in the City as a whole and not just their neighborhood. The City can play a significant role in connecting the neighborhoods by using its website, virtual meetings, and social media to share information about projects and events of all kinds and solicit residents' involvement. The City, to share economic development news can publish and distribute a monthly newsletter that highlights major projects and update the community on new restaurants and other businesses that come to the Downtown and other commercial areas. The City should consistently seek to find methods to keep the public informed that are calibrated to different audiences' characteristics and preferences. Such calibration can include translation into other languages, posting of legal notices on virtual or actual message boards, "town-crier"-style announcements at gatherings, smartphone notifications, tabling at events, and other methods that may yet be discovered.

In the interest of social justice, equity, and a more positive sense of community, the City of Middletown should strive to expand opportunities for public engagement. That includes supporting its volunteer commissions, committees, task forces, and boards, and actively encouraging citizens, especially from previously underrepresented groups, to participate in formulating and furthering of the goals of the City. The City should welcome the non-profit groups and organizations that contribute to individual aspects of community life. Hosting discussions, at sites around the City, of plans, projects, and goals for the future can bring people from different neighborhoods into the same room and foster new relationships and sharing of perspectives. Such communication and cooperation will enhance the sense that the neighborhoods form one Middletown community.

The City should continue to support public events that promote the arts and culture, sports, and commerce, temporarily closing streets and opening City-owned spaces such as Palmer Field, when appropriate, to provide safe, monitored gathering places.

ACTION ITEMS
Communication

- Create and distribute a monthly economic, arts, and events newsletter for the city, with sufficient funding to maintain it.
- Encourage public comment through public engagement activities for major projects and initiatives.
- Utilize the City's website and other social media to disseminate information.

Image: NEAT Community Forum

Making the City a place that offers opportunities for personal growth and social and civic interaction.

A community becomes vibrant, healthy, and strong when its residents have the opportunity to pursue fulfilling lives. An individual can experience personal growth and development through the arts and culture, education, sports and recreation involvement, and social and civic interaction.

Middletown should provide an environment where an individual can grow and develop meaningful connections. Such an environment can benefit from the collaboration of institutions, local businesses, and organizations to involve residents. Accredited educational institutions, places of worship, and local arts and civic organizations can provide diverse opportunities for residents to grow as individuals and create powerful community ties within the larger whole.

The City should continue to provide generous support to its public and private educational institutions. Building and infrastructure improvements to the public schools will enhance the school environment for decades to come. The City should strengthen partnerships with its institutions of higher learning and continue to develop opportunities to integrate their students into the community, where they can contribute to the vibrancy of the Downtown.

The City should continue to identify new ways for residents to access the arts, culture, sporting events, and commerce. Events should continue to be advertised through the Chamber of Commerce, WESU, the Arts Commission, the City website, and social media. The City should collaborate with local institutions to exchange and publicize information on each activities. The City should support business development that creates jobs, bringing new people, new ideas, and economic activity to the community, and providing employment for residents.

ACTION ITEMS
Interaction

- Collaborate with major employers and businesses located downtown and in neighborhood centers to encourage employees to patronize retail, services, entertainment, and restaurants in the city.
- Collaborate with the business community to foster business, economic development, and job and career readiness for unemployed or underemployed residents.
- Identify key indicators for quality-of-life data, identify methods for data collection, and maintain a database of these indicators for each neighborhood.

Image: Creating art on Main Street

4. MIDDLETOWN 2030: A CONNECTED COMMUNITY

We envision a Middletown that will be **CONNECTED**.

A connected Middletown 2030 will be achieved by providing to all residents transportation and utility infrastructures that facilitate access to employment, commerce, education, recreation, and housing. The transportation network accommodates all modes of moving from one place to another. Road improvements will follow the Complete Streets Master Plan. The redesign of Route 9 will reconnect the City to the riverfront. Parks, trails, and open spaces will be integrated into a unified green corridor system. The Sewer Boundary Area will not expand beyond the City core. Telecommunication infrastructure will serve every home and business and will be hidden from view.

Road Network

Middletown's location puts it at the crossroads of the state's transportation system. Middletown is served by two major highways—Interstate 91, with one interchange at Country Club Road, and Route 9, a major limited-access highway along the Connecticut River with seven exits to Middletown at present. Several major State highways, including Routes 66, 154, 17, 3, and 157, connect Middletown to adjacent and more distant communities.

The volume of vehicle traffic on these State or interstate roads varies widely, with Route 154 averaging fewer than 10,000 trips per day between Middletown and Haddam, to well over 100,000 vehicles per day traveling through Middletown on Interstate 91. Traffic on all the major highways in Middletown has increased over the past decade, while traffic on local roads has decreased, according to Connecticut DOT traffic counts.

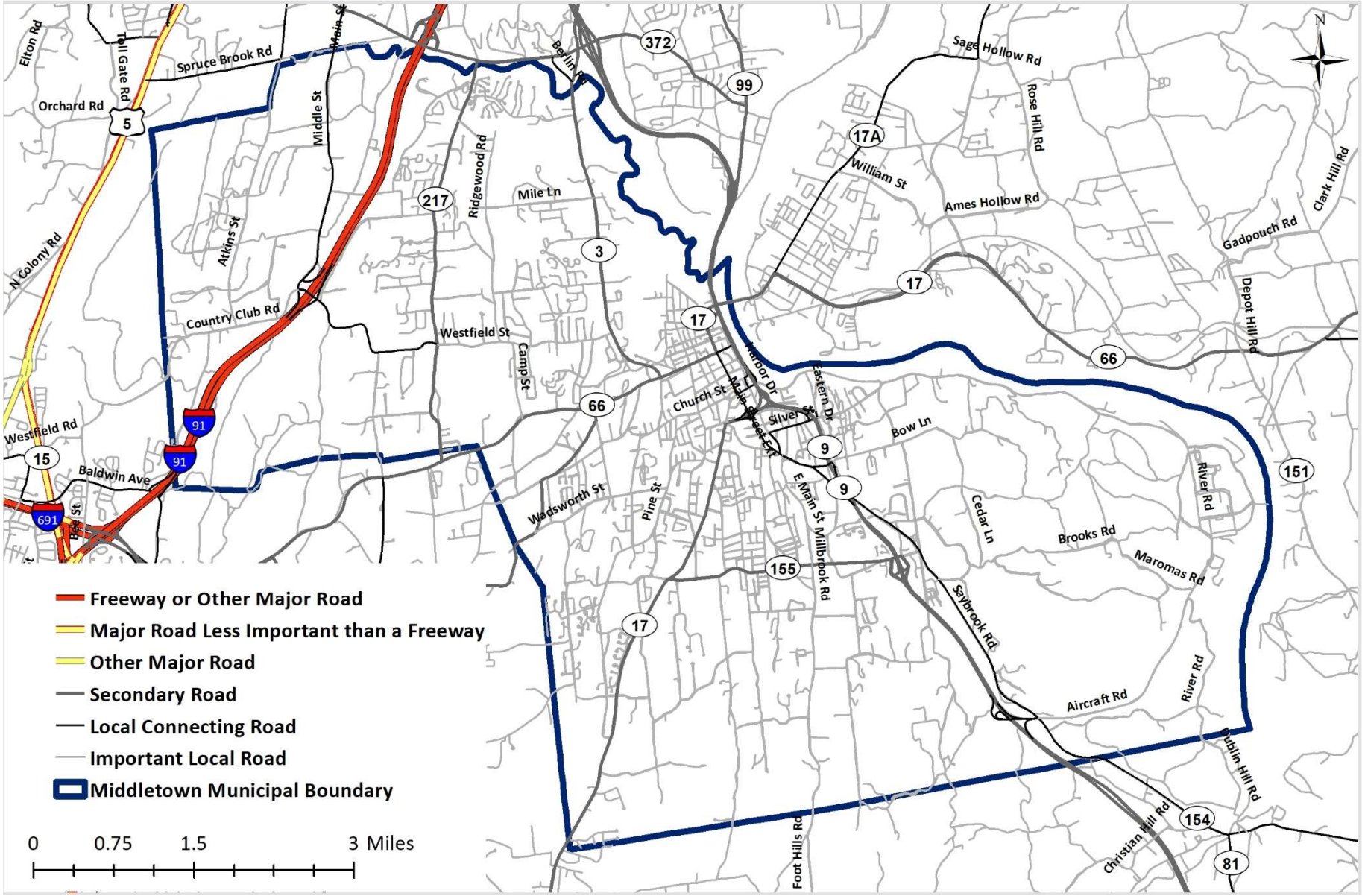
Middletown's network of local roads connects residential and commercial activities. Local streets in the Downtown and North End present the typical urban grid pattern. The roads outside of the core mirror typical suburban development, with collector streets extending from major arterial roads. Many roads, including cul-de-sacs, were created to serve residential subdivisions.

Image: Arrigoni Bridge crossing the Connecticut River

COMMUNITY INPUT
Transportation Network

- Street network must be made safer for both bicyclists and pedestrians.
- Residential neighborhoods should be connected and accessible to schools, commercial centers, civic places, trails, and open spaces by all modes of transportation.
- Not all roads are equally suited for multi-modal upgrades, particularly bicycle travel, and creative solutions will be required.
- Maintenance of the existing network, including traffic control, pedestrian crossings, sidewalks, and trails, is critical in making it functional.
- Any plans to revise Route 9 should include a convenient, pedestrian-focused bridge containing a wide pedestrian plaza connecting the Downtown with the riverfront.
- Existing roadway access points, for example, Union Street, should be strengthened and made more welcoming, particularly for pedestrians.

MIDDLETOWN ROAD NETWORK



Railroad Network

Middletown is connected to the rail network that extends throughout Connecticut. The City has approximately 13 miles of rails. Two rail lines lie within the city limits, both of which pass through the Downtown. One line runs north to Hartford and south along the Connecticut River and extends to Old Saybrook. A second line has a terminus in Portland and extends south to New Haven. These lines currently see limited use for freight transportation. Both would require substantial upgrades for passenger use.

RAILROAD NETWORK

Public Transit

Middletown Area Transit (MAT) is the primary provider of public transit in northern Middlesex County and within the City of Middletown. MAT is a quasi-municipal agency funded by the Federal Transportation Administration, the Connecticut Department of Transportation, and the City of Middletown. MAT provides fixed routes, ADA Dial-A-Ride, and rural transportation serving Middletown, Middlefield, East Hampton, Portland, Durham, and parts of Cromwell and Meriden. MAT provides direct service to AMTRAK and the Meriden Mall in Meriden. Connections are available to Higganum, Chester, Essex, and Old Saybrook via 9-Town Transit. In addition, connections are available to Wethersfield, Rocky Hill, Hartford, and New Haven via CT Transit. The City anticipates the possible merger of the Estuary Transit District with MAT in the coming years.

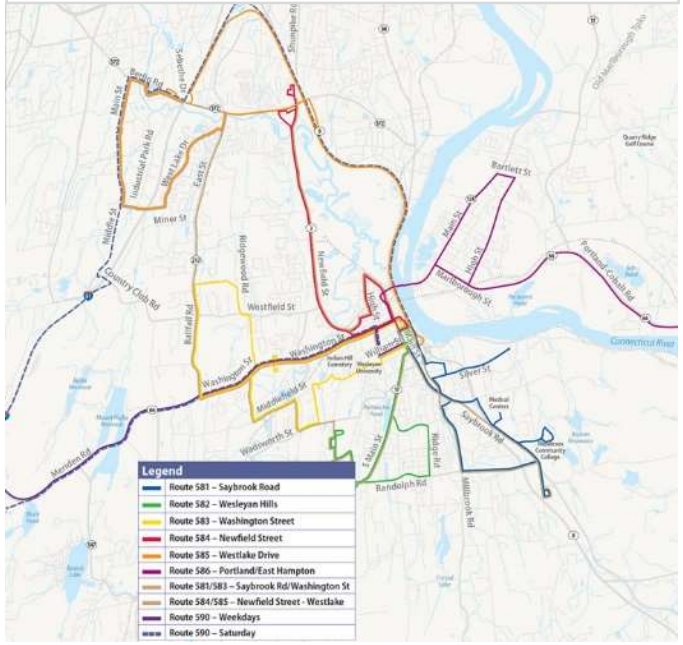
Middletown is connected to the Greater Hartford Express Bus Network through the CTRides commuter service. The Middletown/Old Saybrook Line runs on Route 9 through Middletown. The line has five stops, including one in Middletown located at the Park & Ride Lot on Silver Street.

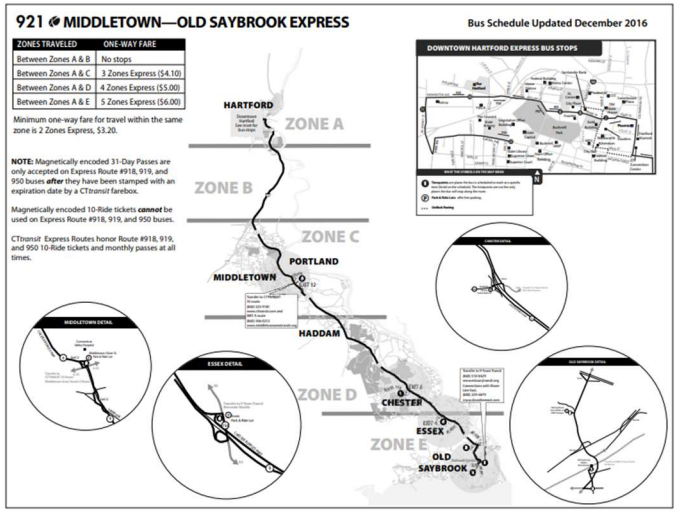
Complete Streets

In 2012, the Mayor and the Common Council appointed a Complete Streets Committee and funded a consultant to assist with the development of a complete streets master plan. This Plan was completed and adopted by the City in April 2013. The Plan focuses on creating walking and biking connections between neighborhoods, schools, commercial districts, parks, public lands, private institutions, and neighboring communities. The Committee's work continues with the purpose of planning for a City that is less dependent on fossil-fuel use by making multi-modal active transportation more attractive, convenient, desirable, and safe for all users.

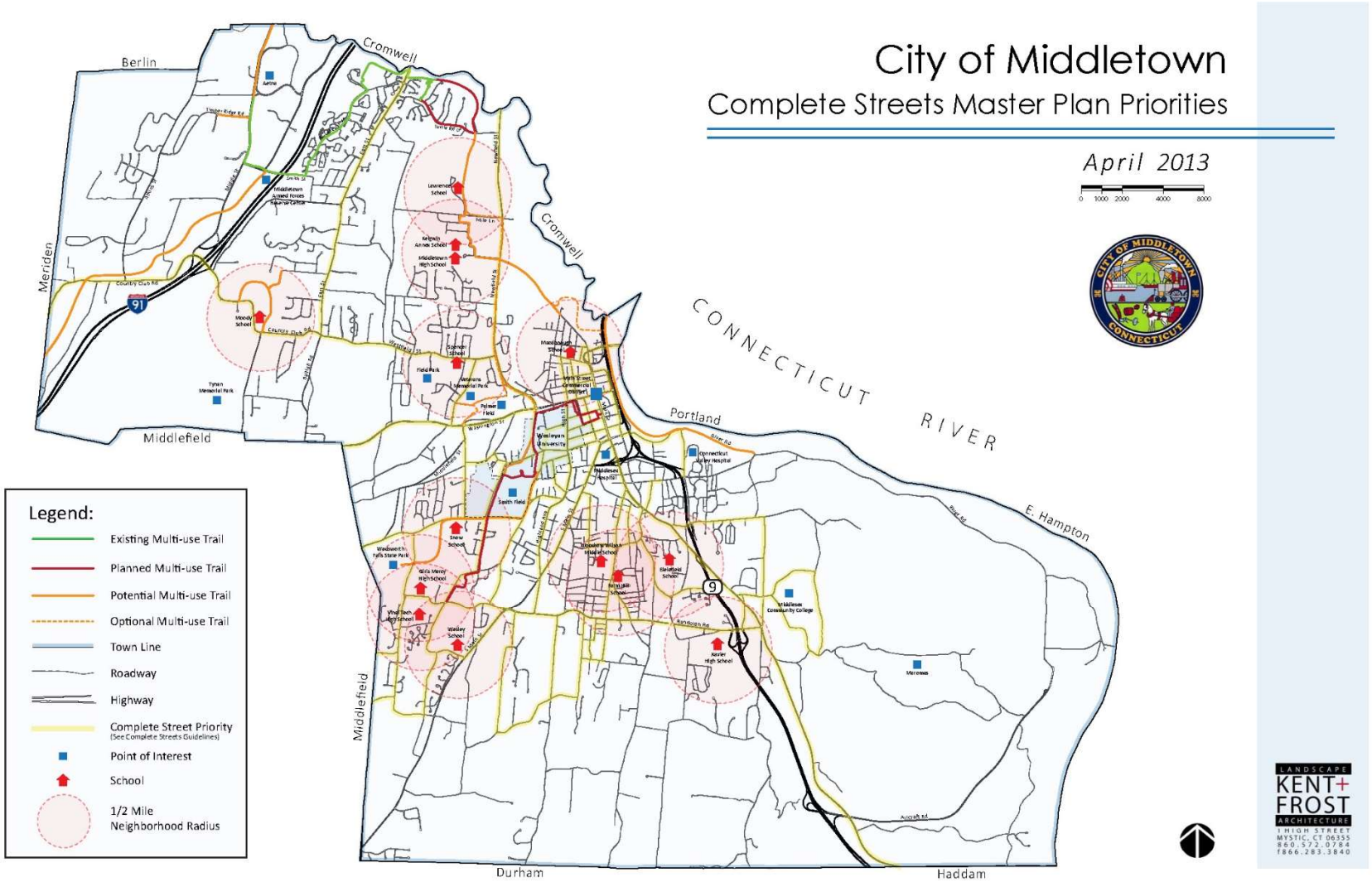
The Plan is designed to be consistent with and assist in achieving the goals and recommendations set forth in the Middletown Plan of Conservation and Development and other policy documents. The committee meets monthly, and quarterly meetings are held with Public Works and other city departments to review road bonds and State, regional, and local transportation projects to make sure active modes of travel are being reviewed, considered, and implemented.

MAT TRANSIT NETWORK





MIDDLETOWN COMPLETE STREETS MASTER PLAN



Sewer and Water Infrastructure

The City's Sewer and Water Department provides clean water and sanitary waste disposal to many residents and businesses. The system has the capacity for growth within its current designated boundaries. As part of the existing overall growth-management policy, the City and the Department have no plans to expand the current limits of the Sewer Boundary Area. Accordingly, growth and development outside this area will be limited to projects with relatively low water use and lower density.

An exception to this policy is Middletown's recent effort to provide clean drinking water to properties affected by the Durham Meadows Superfund site. A total of 50 residents will have clean water piped from Middletown to replace their contaminated wells. Construction work began in 2019 and will be completed by 2021.

In 2019 the City opened a new pump station on deKoven Drive that replaced the existing one on the same site. The pump station sends Middletown's wastewater to the Mattabassett District's Water Pollution Control Facility in Cromwell.

Other Utilities

Electricity, natural gas, cable, and high-speed data lines all serve the City, provided by various private, publicly regulated companies. Many utilities are supplied through overhead wires that are susceptible to damage and cause storm-related outages. Recent residential subdivisions and commercial development have been required to bury new service wires.

Trail Network and Open Spaces

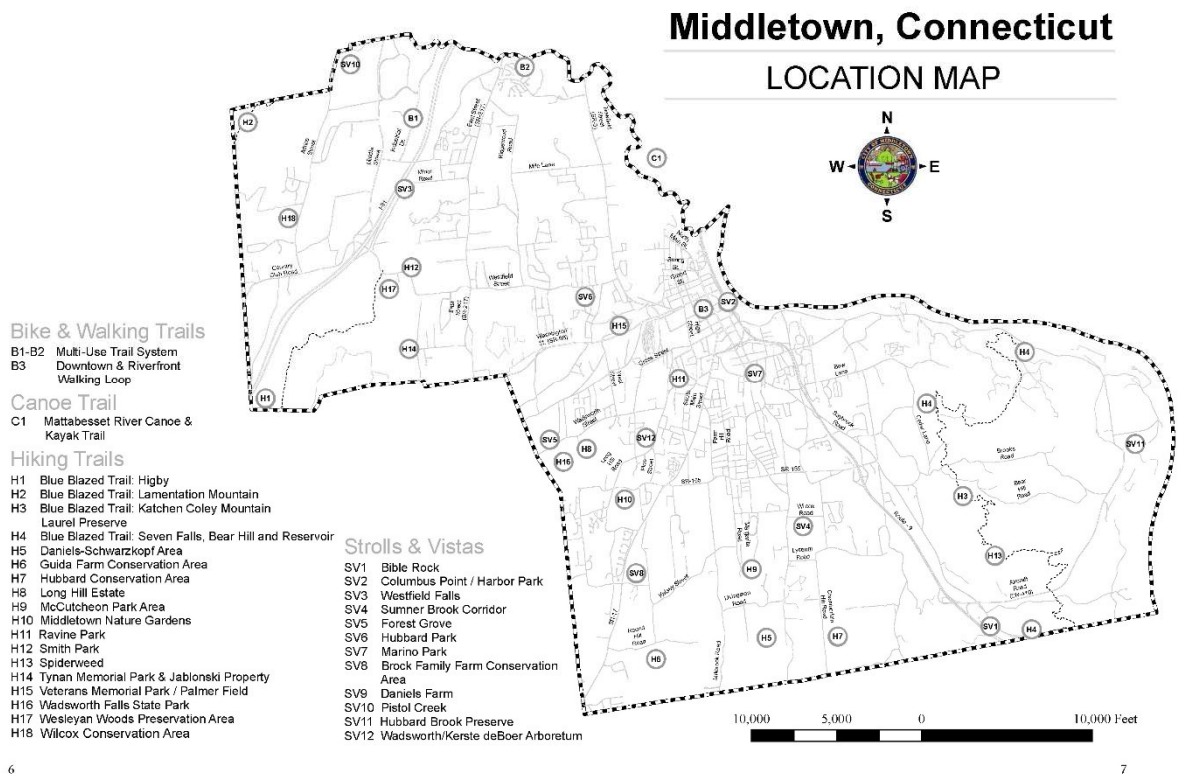
Middletown's official commitment to land preservation began when it adopted its Open Space Plan in 1993, becoming one of the pioneers of such planning in the State of Connecticut. The Open Space Plan and accompanying maps were created in cooperation with the now defunct Midstate Regional Planning Agency. A statewide plan was not adopted until 1998. It is important to keep open space plans up to date and complete because DEEP and other institutions review them to determine eligibility before grants are awarded. Some grant programs require that a parcel be specifically mentioned in a municipal open-space plan as designated for preservation in order to qualify for funding.

COMMUNITY INPUT
Public Transportation

- MAT is a good and responsive service-provider; additional investment should be made to increase the hours of service, add a dedicated downtown circulator trolley with electric vehicles, and upgrade stations, stops, and multi-modal connections.
- The transit system should be flexible and take advantage of new private transportation options that use apps, auto-payments, and door-to-door services.
- Some bus stops only have signage when shelters with seating are warranted.
- Improved connections between other regional and inter-regional transit networks outside of Middletown are desired.

Image: Daniels Farm Conservation Area

Middletown is spread over a large geographic area and has numerous green and natural spaces, with many of the largest located in the northwestern and southeastern areas of the City. As of 2016, the City of Middletown had more than 4,000 acres of permanently preserved land belonging to the City, the State, the Middletown Land Trust, and other private and non-profit entities. More than 30 separate and distinct locations exist where visitors can get outside and explore the unique landscapes, geological features, and vistas that Middletown has to offer, the largest of which is the 267-acre parcel that constitutes the Wadsworth Falls State Park. These lands contribute significantly to the natural environment and the rural character of certain parts of the City. Other areas of open space lack permanent protections; these include land owned by Eversource, the Connecticut Valley Hospital, Middlesex Community College, and Wesleyan University.



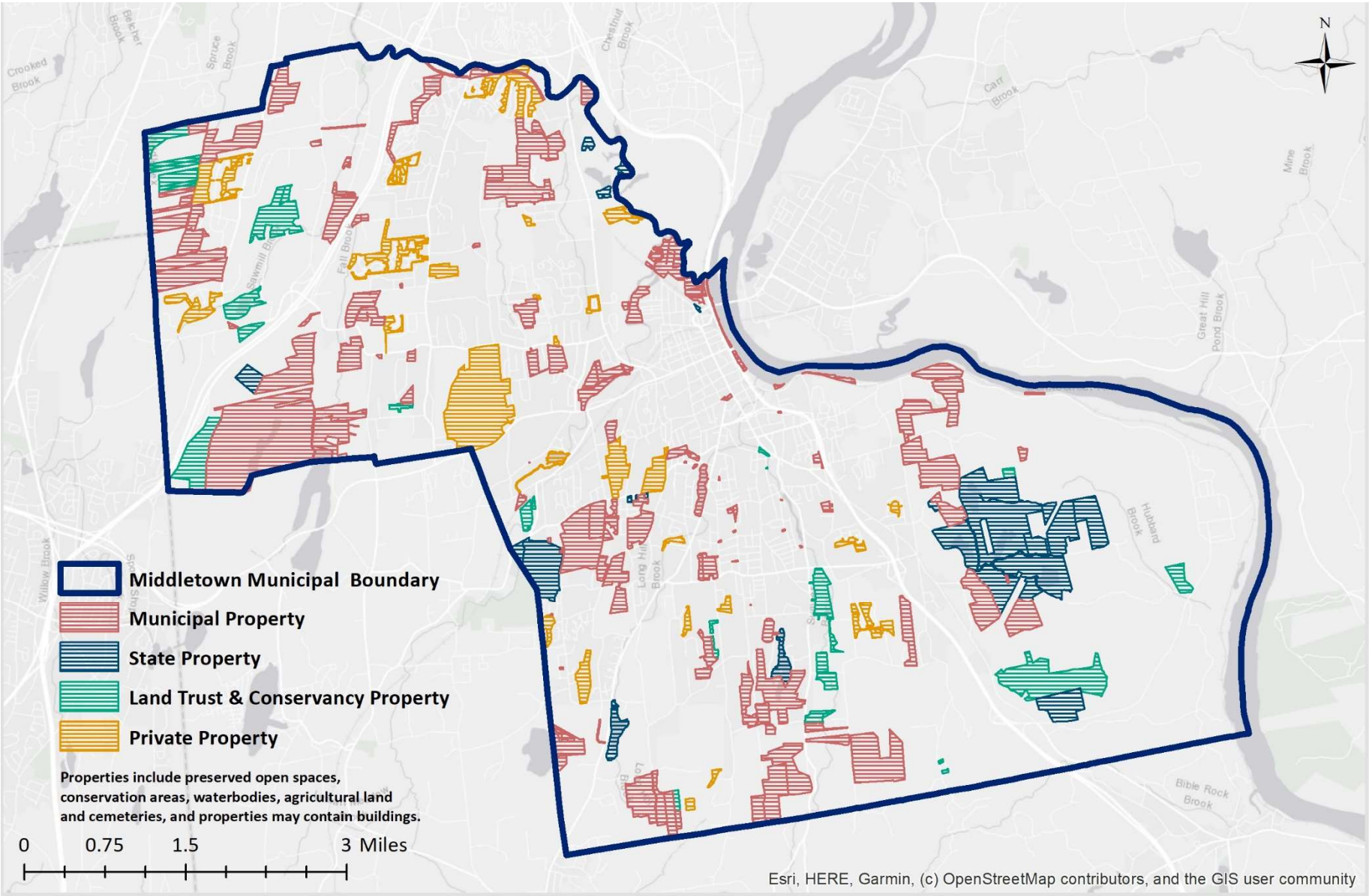
Many of the City, State, Land Trust, institutional, and private areas are open to the public, providing opportunities for active and passive recreation. The Conservation Commission developed its Trails Guide in 2004 and updated it in 2016; it does an excellent job of documenting and describing publicly-accessible lands, from Wadsworth Falls and Seven Falls State Parks to the City-owned Guida and Wilcox Conservation Areas, as well as broad swaths of forested land in the Maromas section of the city.

The New England Scenic Trail, part of the 825-mile Blue-Blazed Hiking Trail System, passes through Middletown. Hikers can experience scenic views from Chauncy Peak and Higby Mountain.

The City is currently planning to create a multi-use trail on top of the former landfill, which will provide an opportunity for outdoor recreational activity close to the densely occupied North End. The top of the landfill offers striking views of the River and the City.

While the 1990 POCD states, “A major goal of the Open Space Plan is to create a corridor system of interconnected open space areas throughout the city,” this goal has yet to be achieved. Some open-space acquisitions have managed to connect parcels, but overall, Middletown's natural environment has limited linkages between parks, open spaces, farms, wildlife corridors, and rivers.

MIDDLETOWN OPEN SPACE MAP



GOALS AND ACTION ITEMS FOR A CONNECTED COMMUNITY

A **connected Middletown 2030** will be achieved by providing transportation and utility infrastructures that provide access to employment, commerce, education, recreation, and housing to all.

Middletown 2030 will be *connected* as a result of progress toward the following goals:

A transportation network that includes all modes of transportation.

The City's connectivity depends to a large degree on the transportation infrastructure. The network of highways, local roads, sidewalks, bicycle routes, trails, and paths ties the City together physically and can facilitate easy, convenient, and safe connections within and beyond Middletown. The City should focus on continual improvement to ensure that this transportation network meets the needs of its residents, businesses, and guests.

The City's public ways should be complete, with the infrastructure to accommodate all modes of transportation. An increase in the presence of bicycles and pedestrians will require drivers to be more aware of and sensitive to others sharing the travel network. Recognizing that not all roadways can accommodate dedicated bicycle lanes, a variety of road treatments and solutions will be needed to provide increased safety, including narrower vehicular lanes to accommodate wider shoulders, reducing the number of curb cuts, installing new sidewalks and pathways, and other strategies that enhance bicycle and pedestrian safety.

The transportation network should developed with multi-model systems to reduce vehicular traffic and thereby decrease traffic injuries and death. Less traffic also provides improved air quality and encourages citizens to become more physically active.

ACTION ITEMS
Transportation Network

- Amend city ordinances to expand on-street parking in residential areas (i.e., alternate-side parking) to improve public safety.
- Develop plans for bicycle infrastructure improvements on River Road/Aircraft Road, Route 154/Saybrook Road, and the Newfield Street connector that goes between the Airline Trail in Portland and the Farmington Rail Trail in Cheshire.
- Implement Safe Routes to School improvements for students who bicycle and walk to school.
- Encourage opportunities to increase utilization of the rail network and the Connecticut River for passenger and freight transport.
- Collaborate with Middletown Area Transit to ensure that public transportation routes are responsive to changing demands.
- Upgrade bus stops and other transit shelters.

Middletown's sidewalk network should expand to connect existing neighborhoods, providing ADA-compliant curbs, crosswalks, and widths. Zoning Codes should be revised to require new developments, including subdivisions, to include pedestrian connections to the established network.

The transportation network should be improved to reduce traffic congestion and vehicle idling. Methods include the redesign of roadways, synchronization of traffic signals, and improvements that facilitate getting around by means other than private automobiles. To improve transportation flow, curb cuts can be reduced by means of agreements between adjacent properties on sharing parking lots and access to them. Improvements to traffic flow through the North End and along Washington Street and Newfield Street will make those areas safer and improve the air quality.

The City, collaborating with regional and State agencies, should actively publicize road-sharing through signage, road treatments that improve visibility and safety for all users, and public-information campaigns aimed at distracted driving and walking.

State highways, multi-use trails, and transit systems should function to serve the goals of efficiency, safety, and equity on an inter-municipal scale. Flexible, responsive transit systems will accommodate residents who lack access to private transportation, as well as improving connections to larger, regional transit networks in Hartford, New Haven, and beyond.

Middletown should utilize its existing rail network. The rail lines offer opportunities for movement of freight and passengers, as well as recreation. Middletown should support the creation of a rail connection to Hartford as an extension of CTRail.

Improved access to the Connecticut River should provide renewed opportunities for the use of the River as a transportation option. An active harbor with the necessary infrastructure improvements could reconnect the City to its history by once again allowing goods and people to move by water.

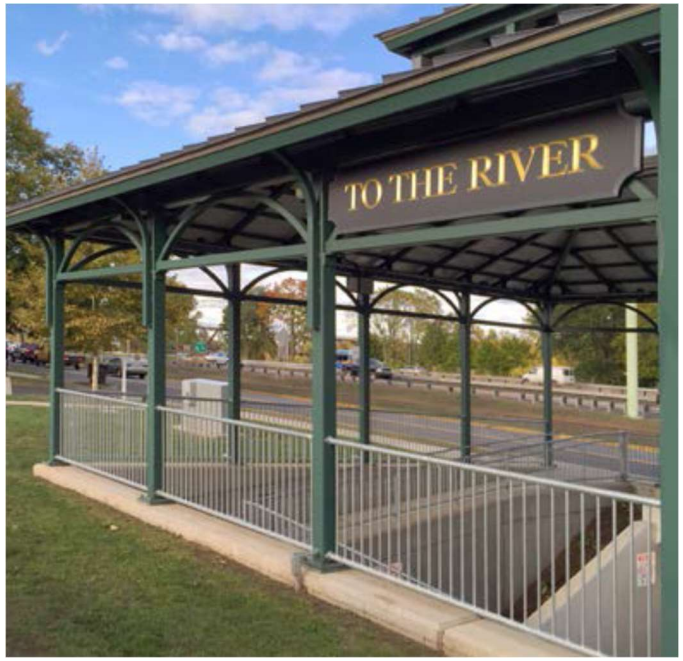


Image: Pedestrian Tunnel to the River

Image: Veteran's Memorial Park

Road improvements consistent with the Complete Streets Master Plan.

Not all residents own a car, some cannot drive, and others simply choose other modes of transportation. As the population ages, the City might find a greater number of residents needing alternatives to driving. Part of that need can be met with greater emphasis on walking and biking. The City should advance the Complete Streets efforts, so that road improvements serve all active transportation users and promote active healthful living, independent mobility, increased safety, and better air quality. The Departments of Public Works and Planning, Conservation, and Development should consult and use the design standards developed by the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) or other tried and tested design standards whenever possible.

The Complete Streets Committee has developed a framework to improve Middletown's infrastructure to accommodate and promote all modes of transportation safely and conveniently. The initial result of this work was the 2013 Complete Streets Master Plan, which is continuously updated and augmented to respond to changing needs and priorities.

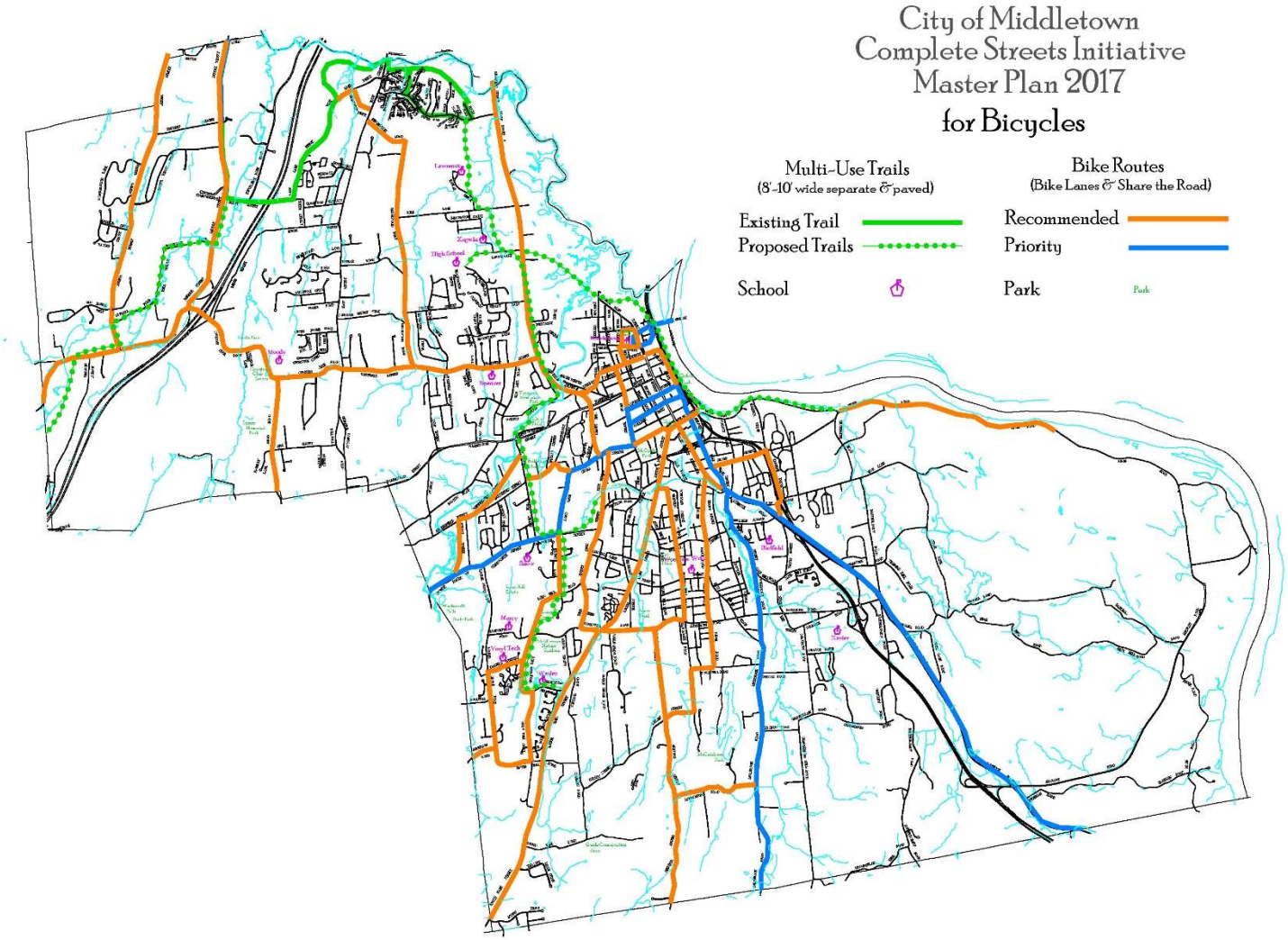
The Complete Streets framework directs the City to:

- Provide safe and comfortable routes for walking, bicycling, and public transportation that enable convenient and active travel as part of daily activities. These measures will also reduce pollution, and help meet the needs of all users of the street, including children, families, older adults, and those with disabilities.
- Ensure that land-use patterns and decisions encourage walking, bicycling, and public transportation use, and make these transportation options a safe and convenient choice.
- Increase children's physical activity to benefit their short- and long-term health and improve their ability to learn.
- Increase the use of parks and open space for physical activity and encourage residents to get to City parks by walking, bicycling, or public transportation.

ACTION ITEMS
Complete Streets

- Complete an accessibility audit and make ADA improvements at all public facilities.
- Develop a Complete Streets design manual and amend zoning codes to require related design standards in development projects.
- Establish a formal relationship and charge the Public Works Department to work with the Complete Streets Committee to regularly prioritize short-term issues and bicycle/pedestrian improvements.
- Partner with the State of Connecticut and Middletown Area Transit on improved connections to area transit networks, with a focus on increasing frequency of access to Meriden, Hartford, and New Britain systems.
- Partner with neighboring towns and RiverCOG to create and promote bicycle and pedestrian connectivity beyond the City limits.
- Amend the Complete Streets Master Plan to incorporate "Bicycle-Friendly Community" goals.

The Complete Streets Committee should play a leading role as the City works toward the 2025 goal of being considered a "Bicycle-Friendly Community" by the League of American Bicyclists. The Committee should monitor progress toward complying with the National Complete Streets guidelines and objectives, as well as the objectives of Sustainable CT. The City should value the Committee as a key stakeholder in identifying and prioritizing improvements on an ongoing basis. Further, when maintaining, repairing, and constructing new roads, Public Works should review plan designs with the Committee to assure that the priorities of the Master Plan are being met.



The City should implement land-use policies that promote connecting new and existing roads, sidewalks, and pathways with new development. New subdivisions should minimize the use of cul-de-sacs and be required to link to existing cul-de-sacs when possible to improve connectivity. Access easements can be created to make possible walking and biking connections when constructing a through-road is not warranted.

Most residents, workers, and guests will likely continue to travel to, though, and around Middletown by car, using the road network for access to businesses and residences. The City should continue to update its pavement management system to identify and track the need for road maintenance, repairs, and upgrades. Sufficient City, State, and federal funding will be critical to maintaining the City's road system.

A redesign of Route 9 that provides access to the riverfront.

Route 9 is the primary, limited-access artery connecting Middletown with the rest of Connecticut. It plays a large role in how the City is perceived by visitors, potential residents, and investors. Route 9 currently has a unique section in Middletown with two sets of lights that impede the flow of through-traffic.

The Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) has devised plans for eliminating the traffic lights and replacing them with several on- and off-ramps. These plans have met with opposition because they would complicate access to Main Street businesses and funnel increased traffic through the North End, visually and physically affecting residents of the area. The part of the plan that included constructing pedestrian bump-outs to reduce the time it takes pedestrians to cross Main Street was completed in 2019.

The section of Route 9 that lies within Middletown sees over 65,000 vehicle trips per day. This volume provides an opportunity for Middletown to use its frontage on Route 9 to improve its presence along the highway. The City should aim for future development that will not only benefit Main Street but also enhance views from the highway.

Multiple concepts for addressing problems caused by the traffic lights have been put forward by residents and the DOT. One concept proposed would retain the lights and convert Route 9 into a pedestrian-friendly boulevard, creating a more welcoming gateway to the City. Another concept replaces the lights with a traditional interchange to achieve efficiency of travel into and through the City. This concept has generated strong opposition from residents because it would increase traffic on parts of Main Street and some side streets, as well as obstructing views of the river in one iteration. Other concepts include lowering the highway or moving the highway to a different location altogether. Each concept has positive and negative implications. The inability to strike the proper balance has sparked impassioned discussions.

Any future plans for Route 9 should include a connection between the Downtown and the Connecticut River, increased efficiency of travel to and through Middletown, improved safety for drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists, and safeguards for residential neighborhoods and City businesses. These principles must define the vision of the City as

ACTION ITEMS
Riverfront Access

- Collaborate with the CT DOT and other stakeholders on designs for revisions to Route 9, to improve access to the Downtown and the riverfront, increase the efficiency of travel through Middletown, and minimize displacement and environmental-justice concerns.
- Amend zoning codes to address areas affected by Route 9 modifications to encourage compatible development or redevelopment.
- Create points of access to the riverfront area that maximize public access to the River and connection with the Downtown.
- Implement bicycle and pedestrian improvements and wayfinding to improve existing access to the Connecticut River.

Image: View looking south along the Connecticut River

it seeks to work with CT DOT on devising a new, beneficial relationship between Route 9 and the City.

The consensus plan should address the City's many concerns. It should continue to bring people to local businesses and neighborhoods while mitigating traffic's effects on the North End. The plan should be sensitive to environmental justice, air quality, and access to the riverfront, serving the greater good of Middletown. The redesign must include input and buy-in from the City's leadership, City staff, and the public.

The City has an opportunity to remedy its problem with access to the riverfront, while the DOT seeks to remedy the delays caused by the traffic lights. The City must ensure that any Route 9 realignment includes a strong pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly connection between the riverfront and the Downtown.

In any scenario, the connection must make it possible for drivers, bicyclists, pedestrians of all ages and abilities to access the riverfront. Populations that are dependent on public transportation, pedestrians, and bicyclists must be able to safely and conveniently cross Route 9. Several options that have been identified and discussed in the POCD process are the following:

- A pedestrian overpass, with a high level of on-bridge activity, including but not limited to green spaces, kiosks, vendors, and public art.
- Expansion of the existing tunnel with enhancements such as signage, landscaping, lighting, artwork, security, and maintenance.
- Conversion of Route 9 into a boulevard with stronger, safer, and friendlier pedestrian crossings at grade.
- Improvement of existing access points at Union Street, Walnut Street, Eastern Drive, and River Road.

This infrastructure investment would represent the most significant opportunity to integrate Middletown's core with the riverfront. Physical connections, whether bridges, pathways, tunnels, or roads, should be aesthetically appealing and safe. A seamless connection with the river would make the City's most attractive natural feature a focal point, creating a new perception of Middletown for residents, businesses, and visitors.

Image: View looking north from Harbor Park

Image: View looking south along Route 9

Parks, trails, and open spaces integrated into a unified green corridor system.

Between 1989 and 2007, the residents of Middletown voted for three open-space bond referenda that resulted in the acquisition of over 1,000 acres of open space, but the period following the recession of 2008 saw an end to such spending. The passage of another bond referendum in 2019 offers renewed opportunities for preserving open space. The City should renew its commitment to the “corridor system” envisioned in the POCD of 30 years earlier, balancing this initiative with the preservation of farms and prime farmland whenever possible.

As the Commission on Conservation and Agriculture evaluates lands for acquisition, one priority should be the linkage of existing parks and open spaces in a "green corridor system." Through outright purchases and permanent protection (via easement) of lands, such connections can be provided. The Planning, Conservation, and Development and Public Works Departments, along with the Parks Division and the Recreation and Community Services Division, should collaborate with the State of Connecticut, the Middlesex Land Trust, CT Forest and Parks, Wesleyan, the Conservation and Agriculture Commission, the Complete Streets Committee, and key property owners to create pathways and construct off-road connections between green spaces. This network would make the green corridors more accessible from residential neighborhoods. The blue-blazed trails of the Connecticut Forest and Park Association, which include easements over privately-owned land, will form a critical component of this network.

ACTION ITEMS
Green Corridor System

- Identify funding sources and implement management plans for the stewardship of open-space properties.
- Partner with the State of Connecticut, Middlesex Land Trust, and other conservancy organizations to identify potential links between and among parks and open lands to create greenway corridors.
- Prioritize the acquisition of key parcels within the City to improve functioning greenway corridors.
- Amend zoning codes to encourage passive and active recreational uses in low-density residential neighborhoods.
- Establish a funding source for implementing management plans for city-owned open spaces.

Image: View from Mount Higby

MIDDLETOWN GREENWAY CORRIDORS

Metacomet Corridor
With the New England Trail and various blue-blazed trails running through it, this prized hiking area is known throughout the state. Positioned along the city's western boundary, with steep slopes and abundant forests, much of this land is contiguous with open space in Meriden. The diversity of flora, wet meadows, swamps, marshes, and ponds makes this a valuable wetland ecosystem.

Highlawn-Mattabesset Corridor
With diverse upland forests and extensive wetlands, this area provides active recreation and hiking trails. Old farmland and other contiguous undeveloped parcels offer possibilities for future trails and other recreational activities. The Matabasset flood plain includes tributaries that cross prime farmland, and it includes the former Camp Estate to the south.

Coginchaug River Corridor
While, for the most part, highly urbanized, the river also passes through three City parks before entering the Mattabesset River at the Cromwell Meadows, a large, ecologically significant freshwater tidal wetland. Some areas along the banks provide opportunities for hiking trails. There is also a hiking trail that extends into Durham. A human-powered boat launch, the Phil Salafia Canoe and Kayak Launch, is near the confluence of the two rivers.

Sumner Brook Corridor
With 80 acres already owned by the Middlesex Land Trust, the Sumner Brook floodplain occupies the center of the South Farms area of Middletown, which, as the area's name suggests, has excellent farmland along the watercourse. Located close to the Daniels-Schwarzkopf Area and the Hubbard Conservation Area, the floodplain has rich soils that suggest the value of preserving it as active farmland whenever possible.

Maromas Corridor
With steep gradients hosting upland forests that contain rare species and extensive wetland systems, this largely undeveloped area has abundant wildlife corridors. Its fine views of the Connecticut River and its forbidding slopes, unsuitable for development, make it a prime candidate for preservation.

Guida Farms Corridor
Extending westward from the Sumner Brook Corridor, this corridor is centered on the historic Guida dairy farm with its classic farmland soils. This area includes the Triassic Eastern Border Fault. The western part has prime farmland.

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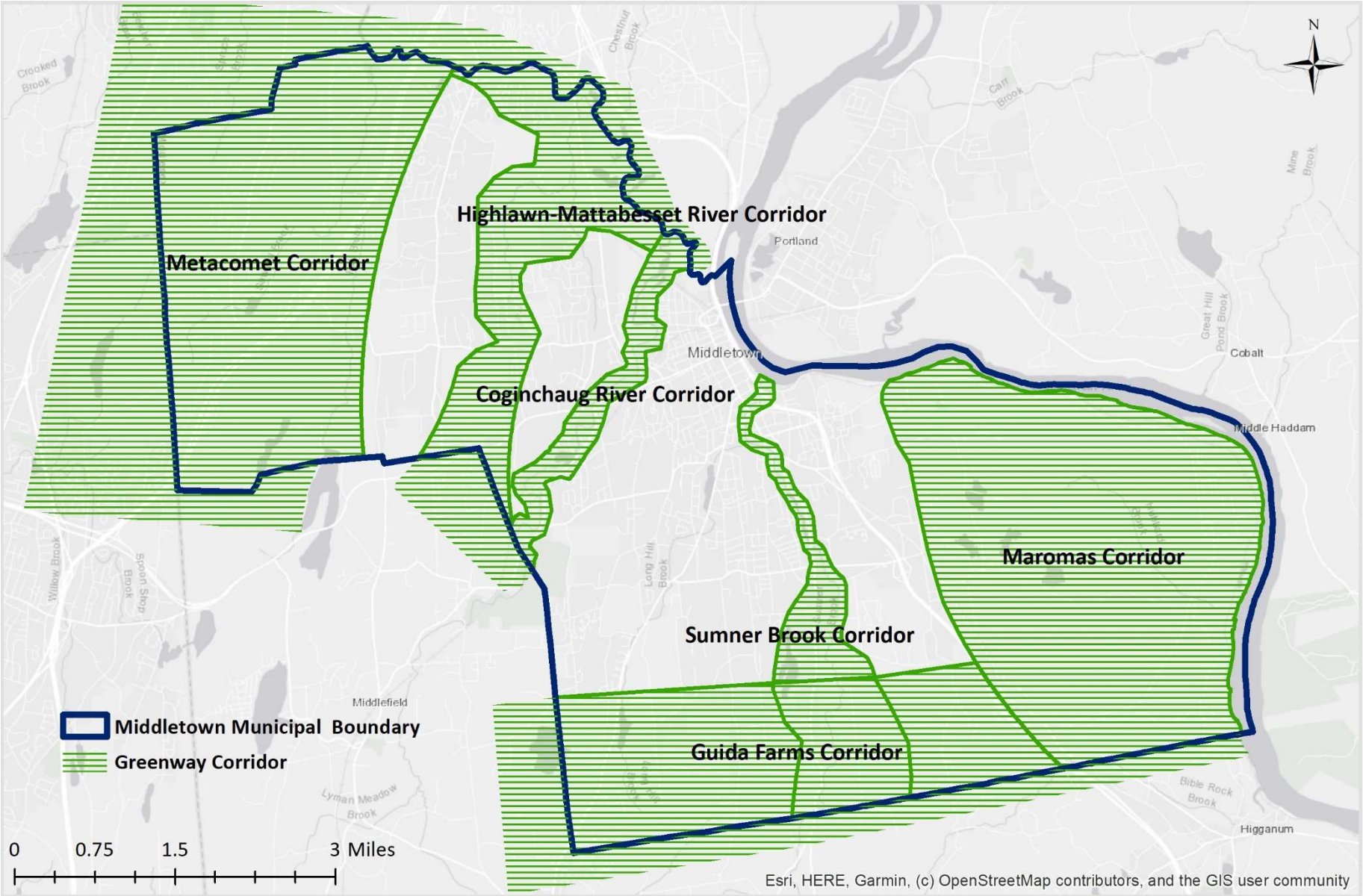
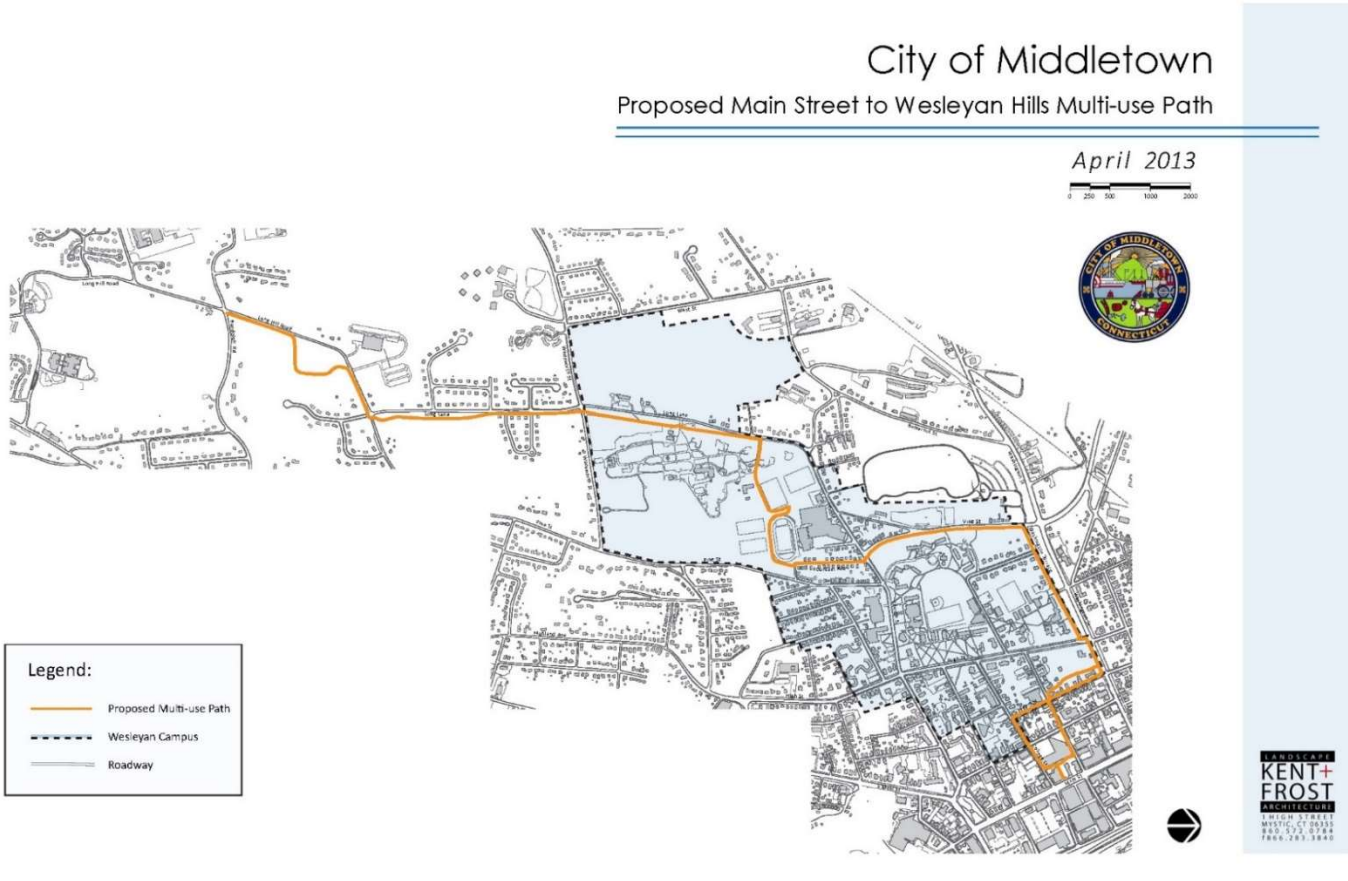
MIDDLETOWN GREENWAY CORRIDOR MAP





Protected contiguous greenways can allow Middletown to construct routes for pedestrians and cyclists that will reduce road traffic and offer safer travel alternatives than busy roads. Such a trail was recently completed from Long Hill Road to Long Lane, and another is planned for the northern part of the city between Tuttle Road and Veterans Park. Trails of this sort are an appropriate use of floodplain land when set back from streams and other watercourses. All of these connections should be made easy to navigate via websites, clear signage, and shared promotion by private and public entities.

Middletown's efforts to acquire open space have been successful, though sporadic, through the years. However, cooperation between the City government and landowners with open space could be improved. Most in need of improvement is stewardship of the lands the City acquires. As agricultural lands are abandoned, or forests experience fierce storms, invasive species proliferate, and debris accumulates. The City should adopt responsible management techniques with a dedicated funding source.

A Sewer Boundary Area limited to the City core.

Overall development in the City should focus on intensifying activity within the existing infrastructure territory. Areas outside the service area should be priorities for low-density development, open-space recreation, and land conservation. To prevent sprawl, the Sewer Boundary Area should not be expanded.

Investments and upgrades should continue to focus on the existing service territory, increasing the capacity to facilitate concentrated growth and more intense activity in the City's core. Any property with frontage on a road with sewer infrastructure should connect to the system, provided the system can accommodate the added usage.

ACTION ITEMS
Sewer Boundary Area

- Maintain the existing public sewer and water network without expansion of the current service territory.

Telecommunication infrastructure available to all and hidden from public view.

The City should work closely with state regulators to ensure that new telecommunications infrastructure is designed and sited to minimize the impact on the existing physical and cultural character of the community. Antennas must be disguised or hidden from public view. Support equipment must be buried or screened to minimize its visual impact.

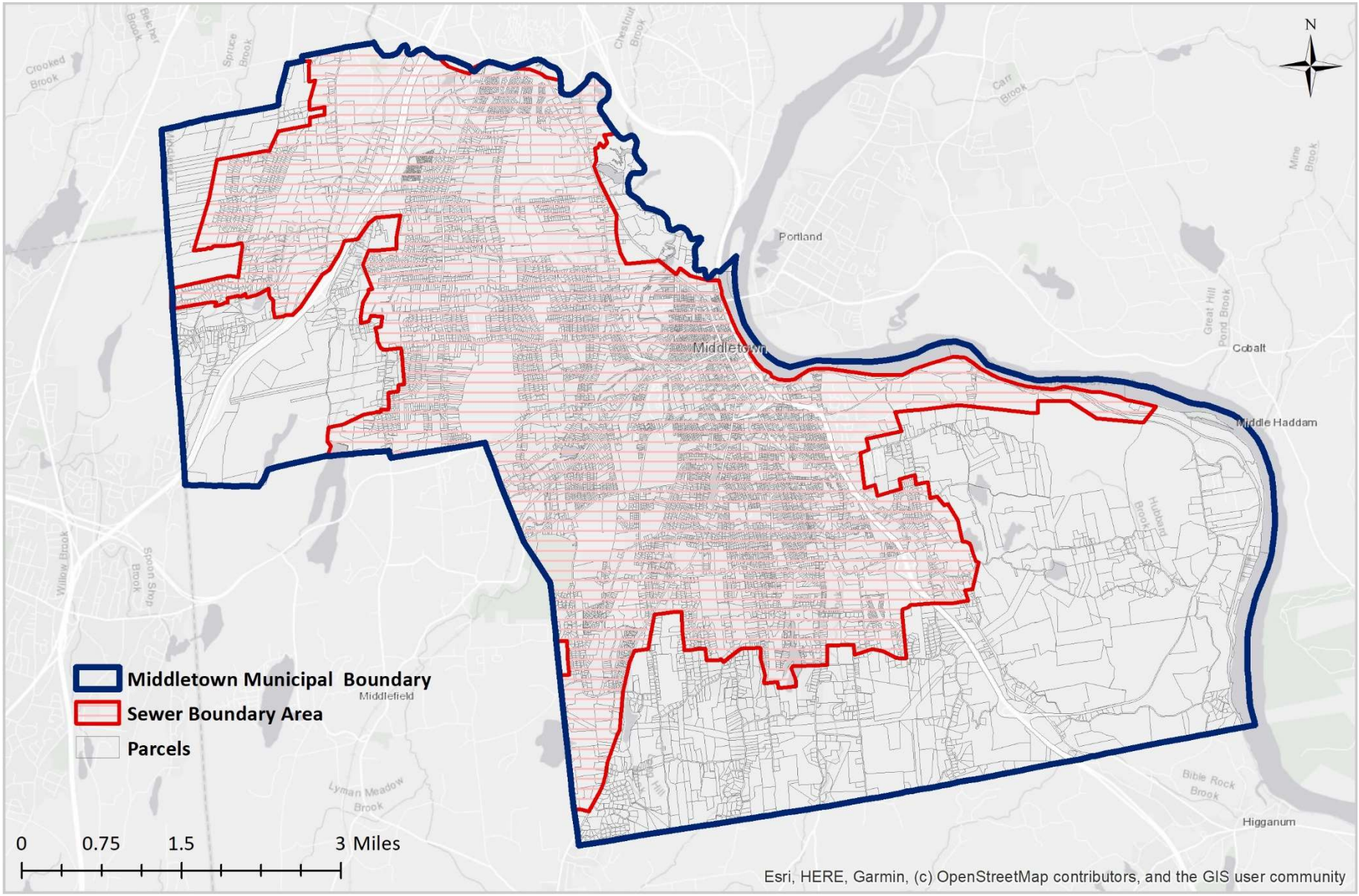
Wi-fi and 5G wireless infrastructure can dramatically increase the public's access to information and communications. While this connectivity will be useful to Middletown, the nature and extent of the required additional physical infrastructure are not yet clear. Furthermore, it remains unclear what improvements these technologies will need in order to ensure that they have no harmful impacts on the physical health of the population and environment.

New developments, including but not limited to subdivisions and infill developments, will continue to have utility and telecommunication lines buried. To improve streetscapes and make the utilities more resilient, every opportunity to bury existing wires and support equipment must be explored when upgrades or repairs are undertaken.

ACTION ITEMS
Telecommunications

- Maintain active awareness of State statutes and PURA regulations regarding 5G infrastructure needs and siting, including ensuring zoning regulations take full advantage of statutory authority to manage the location and impact of these facilities.
- Amend zoning regulations to ensure telecommunication equipment is hidden from public view.
- Encourage the expansion of broadband network so every home and businesses has access to affordable, fast, reliable service.

MIDDLETOWN SEWER BOUNDARY AREA



5. MIDDLETOWN 2030: A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY

We envision a Middletown that is **Sustainable.**

A sustainable Middletown 2030 will be achieved by pursuing resilience in the face of climate change, efficiency in the use of resources, and self-sufficiency in energy production. The City will embrace responsible development practices. Natural resources and open spaces will be preserved and stewarded. Prime agricultural land will be protected and used to increase the local food supply. The City will be prepared for climate change and natural disasters. Historic buildings will be preserved for adaptive reuse. The City's energy needs will be provided by renewable sources.

Existing Sustainability Initiatives

The 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development focused a great deal on energy conservation and reduction in greenhouse-gas emissions to combat climate change, as well as other sustainability principles such as reductions in vehicle-miles traveled. The prologue to that Plan included this policy guidance:

"The Plan of Conservation and Development determines where and to what extent future growth will occur. By developing plans and regulations which contain growth within the area of existing infrastructure, reduce vehicle miles traveled, and preserve the land as open space, the Planning and Zoning Commission can ensure that Middletown is encouraging responsible and sustainable development and doing its part to address global warming." (2010 POCD, p.5)

Sustainable CT

Middletown has been one of the earliest and most enthusiastic communities to embrace the Sustainable CT initiative. In 2016, the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities and the Institute for Sustainable Energy at Eastern Connecticut State University inaugurated a program designed to guide municipalities on a series of coordinated, voluntary actions that would make them more sustainable. With the assistance of numerous subject-matter experts, a framework of actions across a number of categories was defined and

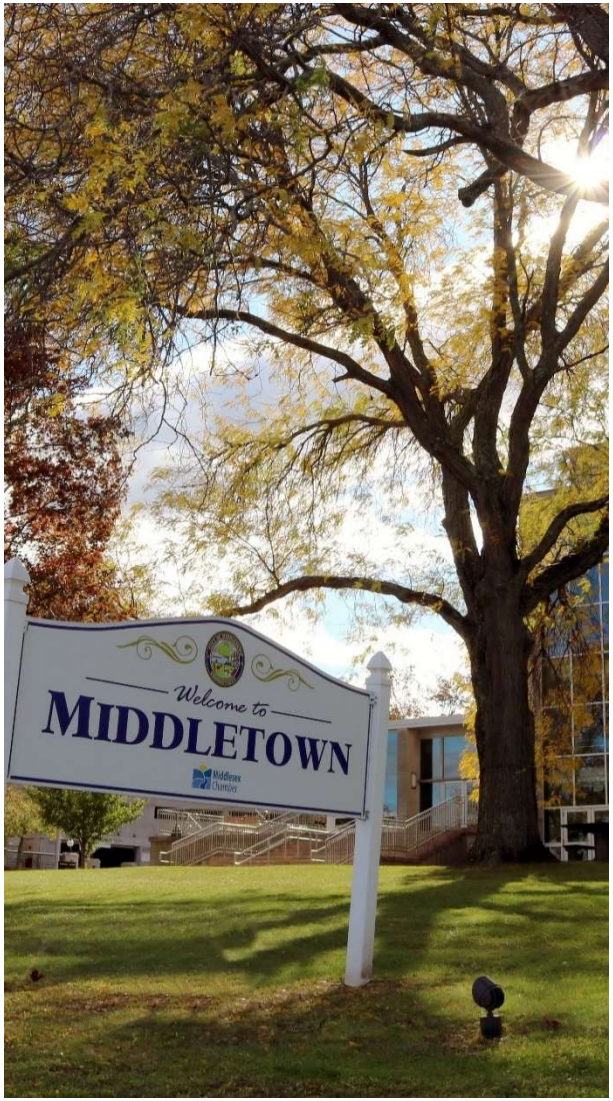


Image: Welcome sign located at City Hall

established. Concepts of sustainability were put into a municipal context, and categories of practical actions defined. A certification program was rolled out in 2017, designed to be led in each participating town by a Sustainable CT committee made up of volunteers and municipal staff. Middletown's efforts were initially led by the City's Clean Energy Task Force, but soon included a broad coalition of volunteers that became the Sustainable CT Team. The City received Bronze certification in 2018 and Silver in 2019 by achieving several new initiatives and documenting existing community initiatives and policies.

The Sustainability Team committed to collaborate with City officials, employees, and volunteers to pursue steady progress toward sustainability. The certifications, while part of a still relatively new program, reflect an evolving concerted effort to identify and remedy unsustainable systems and circumstances.

Energy Plan

In addition to spearheading the City's involvement with the Sustainable CT process, the City Energy Coordinator, in conjunction with the Clean Energy Task Force, developed an Energy Plan for Middletown, adopted in the summer of 2019, that was designed to be incorporated into this update of the Plan of Conservation & Development. The goal of this Energy Plan is to help "guide the city toward greater energy efficiency and sustainability"; the plan aims for multiple benefits, including energy cost savings, improved public health thanks to improved air quality, greater indoor comfort through energy efficiency, and a more resilient power grid.

Beginning with a bold aspiration of transitioning the entire community of Middletown to 100% renewable energy by 2050, the Plan lays out key elements, which include: 1) reducing energy usage by improving the efficiency of our buildings, both public and private; 2) strategically electrifying by transitioning transportation to electric vehicles and heating and cooling to high-efficiency heat pumps; and 3) developing an optimal mix of locally-supplied renewable energy by promoting the responsible development of solar energy, including residential rooftop solar, community-shared solar, commercial solar, and solar carports.

COMMUNITY INPUT
Sustainability

- Middletown should be a leader in sustainability, combating climate change and a committing to energy and water use reductions.
- Tax and financial incentives should be provided to homeowners to use renewable energy or reduce water use.
- New development or significant redevelopment projects should be "green" or more energy efficient.
- More public land should be made available for gardening or production agriculture.
- Restore balance between the natural and built environment.
- Reduce dependence on fossil fuels, extracted underground metals, minerals, chemicals, and synthetic substances.
- Reduce activities that negatively impact nature.
- Meet human needs fairly and efficiently;
- Promote activities that have multiple benefits to the community.

Downtown Development

Downtown Middletown was built with great care and efficiency of land use. Along Main Street, offices and housing were located above street-level shops. Smaller workspaces were situated at the back of lots and along narrow side streets. The building stock offered great variety in size, design, and possible use. Buildings were positioned close to one another along Main Street, varying in width from 12 to 75 feet. They were at least 2½ stories tall, often 3-5 stories, housing many different occupants and activities. Large houses offered more than one living unit for either extended families or a mix of households, very flexible and easy to modify with a locking a door or entering from another hall. The city directories reveal a wide variety of small businesses in addition to the shops, pharmacies, hotels, and factories. Today the street features buildings from the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries, many of which were designed with so much flexibility that some have been continuously occupied for over 200 years.

Within a single residential block there was likely a full cross-section of society: wealthy merchants and pharmacists on the main streets, modest shopkeepers around the corner, and employees in small houses in the back of the block. This meant that people got to know one another simply by walking down the street. They were acquainted with their neighbors. This contrasts greatly with development conventions which concentrate a single type of housing, meant for one type of household and sold for one price. This pattern can sometimes be repeated for miles, resulting in whole towns segregated by income.

Wesleyan University's Sustainability Action Plan

Wesleyan University has committed to complete carbon neutrality by 2050. To reach this goal, the University has developed a five-year Sustainability Action Plan. The University tracks its sustainability efforts using the STARS (Sustainability Tracking, Assessment, and Rating System) approach, developed to guide higher-education institutions. In its resilience initiatives, as part of this larger sustainability effort, Wesleyan has established an energy micro-grid, which provides electricity to the University during the year and can be powered up to supply essential energy when the regional electrical grid is down during a storm. In the summer of 2020, Wesleyan began the first phase of converting from steam to hot water energy, with the eventual plan of heating, cooling, and electrifying its central campus with 100% renewable energy.

Connecticut Valley Hospital

In 2013 the State of Connecticut chose Connecticut Valley Hospital as one of the first institutions to use "Lead By Example" funding for an energy-efficiency upgrade. Thirty million dollars will be spent over a period of 15 years to upgrade lighting, install new windows, replace inefficient heating systems, and address numerous other problematic energy features of the old buildings.

Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) requires each municipality to update its Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan (NHMP) every five years to retain eligibility for certain pre-disaster mitigation funds and higher prioritization for recovery funding. Middletown's NHMP was annexed to the regional Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments (RiverCOG) Plan in June 2014.

The Middletown annex analyzed the most significant likely hazards, including flooding from the Connecticut River and its tributaries, tropical storms, and nor'easters, as well as winter snow and ice storms. It also provided context and risk assessment for other natural hazards such as earthquakes, tornadoes, wildfires, and wind shears. A variety of policy and mitigation recommendations were formulated to prevent high-value losses as well as respond to disasters as they are occurring. Numerous policies had already been put into place, including emergency management communications systems and a ban on new construction in any identified flood-prone areas. The analysis and recommendations are generally still valid, given the absence of significant losses in the past half-decade due to natural disasters. The violent storms in the summer of 2020, which resulted in widespread loss of power, clearly form part of a trend that necessitates consistent attention to increasing the resilience of the power and communications infrastructure.

Sustainable CT 2018 Resilience Workshop

In 2018, under the aegis of the Sustainable CT program, Middletown conducted a resilience workshop that involved several City departments, including Emergency Management, Health, and Public Works. The day-long workshop identified areas of vulnerability, prioritized them, and explored responses to them. A formal report was generated and distributed to the Mayor's office and other City leadership.

The City has not experienced any major natural hazard events in the half-decade since its 2014 adoption of the NHMP. The City will work with the RiverCOG to update its portion of the regional NHMP, including revision of flood maps and sea-level-rise projections, to ensure preparedness and continued eligibility for FEMA programs.

Image: EV Charging Station at City Hall

Middletown Zoning Code

The Middletown Zoning Code already has several criteria for new developments that contribute to the sustainability of the City. Stormwater management plans that meet water-quality measures are required for all major developments. Electric charging stations are required for any new development with 25 or more parking spaces. Sidewalks are required for any development within one mile of a school. The Code restricts development in flood-hazard areas.

Land Lost to Development

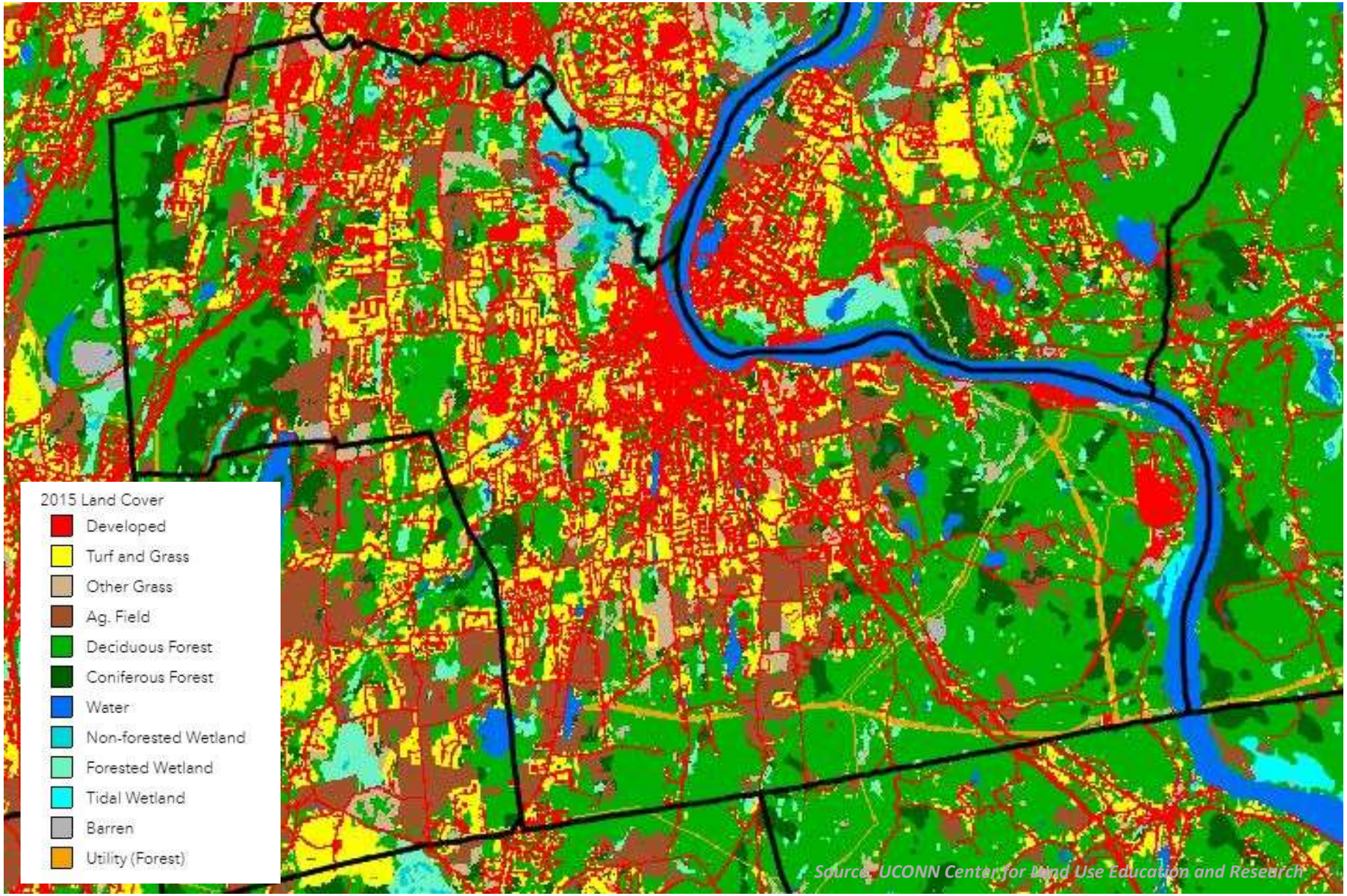
The UConn Center for Land Use Education and Research (CLEAR) studies the changing landscape in Connecticut's communities, and its latest report covers the 30-year period between 1985 and 2015. CLEAR estimated that Middletown converted approximately 2,200 acres (3.4 square miles) from farm and forestland to residential and commercial development, which includes associated development such as new roads.

Despite that change and the substantial portions of Middletown that were already developed before 1985, the City still has extraordinary natural resources. As of 2015, over 12,000 acres in Middletown were classified as "forest" and 2,200 acres as "agricultural fields." But the rate of loss demonstrated—over 70 acres converted per year from farm or forest to development land—is not sustainable. The implications of such land conversion extend from habitat loss for flora and fauna to the stormwater problems created by the increase in impervious surfaces, and from the loss of carbon-sequestering trees to the loss of capacity for local food production.

Land Use	Acres (1985)	Acres (2015)	Acres (Change)	Percent (Change)
Developed	5,722	6,918	1,196	17.3%
Turf & Grass	2,711	3,383	672	19.9%
Other Grass	498	838	340	40.6%
Agriculture	3,379	2,209	-1,170	-53.0%
Forest	13,296	12,273	-1,023	-8.3%
Other	1,566	1,551	-15	-1.0%

Source: UCONN Center for Land Use Education and Research

MIDDLETOWN LAND COVER MAP



GOALS AND ACTIONS FOR A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY

A **sustainable Middletown 2030** will be achieved by pursuing resilience in the face of climate change, efficiency in the use of resources, and self-sufficiency in energy production.

Middletown 2030 will be *sustainable* as a result of progress toward the following goals:

Adherence to responsible development practices.

Many aspects of responsible development are addressed in the other chapters of the POCD in so far as they pertain to the quality of life, transportation, and access to resources. Chapter 2, "Middletown 2030: A Thriving Community," discusses enhancing our neighborhoods with infill development, increased residential density, and new access to commercial activities. Chapter 4, "Middletown 2030: A Connected Community," emphasizes the benefits of and need for complete streets and making our transportation network safe and accessible to all users, with the goal of reducing reliance on motor vehicles and fossil-fuel use. Furthermore, that chapter discusses limiting the Sewer Boundary Area to its existing size in order to ensure that growth occurs in already built-up places, which in turn helps the City protect open spaces, natural resources, and agricultural land.

The City can do more to require responsible development practices. Zoning codes, subdivision regulations, and City policies and ordinances should be amended to create holistic standards for incorporating sustainable practices into new development and renovation projects. New developments should be required to implement responsible building practices, use of renewable energy, resource efficiency, waste reduction, and preservation of at-risk land elements such as steep slopes and erosion-prone soil.

ACTION ITEMS
Development Practices

- Amend zoning codes to support the Sustainable CT program initiatives.
- Amend zoning codes to align with the American National Standards Institute for tree protection and tree planting in all construction and development projects.
- Amend zoning codes to increase requirements for new residential construction to be sited to support photovoltaic solar installations.
- Amend zoning codes to require that all new and substantially redeveloped commercial property apply best practices in stormwater management, as outlined in the 2004 Connecticut Stormwater Quality Manual.

Each site development brings an opportunity to make a positive impact on air quality. One of the more fundamental ways of combating increased levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and the warming it causes is to support the natural carbon-sequestration provided by trees. Middletown's future should reflect a true commitment to the "Tree City USA" designation it holds. Zoning codes should specify minimum landscaping requirements entailing the planting of native trees and shrubs. In addition to converting greenhouse gases into oxygen and reducing the urban heat-island phenomenon through shading, a robust forestry program includes protecting large forest blocks, and increasing the number of street trees that contribute to the urban canopy.

The Urban Forestry Commission has embarked on an ambitious program of increased tree-planting in response to a number of years that brought devastating tree mortality from insects, disease, and storms. In addition to their contribution to air quality and cooling, trees deflect and absorb stormwater, increase bird habitat, anchor soil, and raise property values. Proposed increases in funding from the City, in addition to private donations, will provide the initial trees. In keeping with State statutes and local ordinances, Middletown should retain the services of an accredited City Forester and an accredited Tree Warden. The forester would contribute to the Emergency Management Plan's provisions on tree damage and update the Arborculture Specifications Manual, both of which should be available to the public. The city forester would also oversee the planting and maintenance of City trees in cooperation with the Urban Forestry Commission and the City Tree Warden.

The City should continue to work toward maintaining and improving water quality within its watershed, following best practices in stormwater management. Through filtration, all pollutants carried by stormwater runoff will be removed by either natural or mechanical solutions before the ultimate discharge of water into the City's streams and rivers. Adoption and enforcement of Low Impact Development standards that specifically require water to be filtered in some way before being returned to the ground will ensure that the City maximizes its ability to improve water quality.

Disconnecting residences from the storm-sewer system, maximizing green spaces in development projects, and onsite treatment of runoff also provide opportunities to improve water quality. Through the MS4 general permit, the City will take the steps necessary to ensure that stormwater entering its storm-sewer system is clean before it enters water bodies.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AT DIFFERENT SCALES

The City Scale:

- Development is organized into neighborhoods that are about ¼ mile in diameter.
- Each neighborhood has a clearly identifiable center.
- A hierarchy of streets exists.
- Uses are mixed: commercial, offices, residential.
- People can walk to get food and other daily necessities.
- A variety of building and housing types is available.
- Transit available every day of the week links local to regional places.
- Parks are distributed throughout the City and vary in character and use.

The Block Scale:

- Development occurs in blocks and streets, so connections are made to adjacent parcels.
- New streets connect to existing streets.
- Sidewalks and street trees welcome walking.
- Buildings are designed for use and adaptive reuse over time.
- Compact building design makes the most of available land, enabling many buildings on a site instead of only one; building footprints are small.
- Consolidated parking in interior blocks minimizes paving.
- Front yards and common lawns provide natural open space.
- Continuous tree canopy keeps pedestrians and streets cool.
- Buildings front the street respectfully, with windows providing light to occupied spaces; mechanical spaces, stairs, etc. are located elsewhere. Entrances are frequent, so the entire street is lively and active.
- Parking is located behind buildings or in dedicated lots.
- Outdoor spaces are designed for people to enjoy year-round.
- Alleys allow for another layer of development at the back of lots.
- Allow for an array of complementary uses.

The Building Scale:

- Standards include small footprints, compact design, human scale, and energy efficiency.
- Continuous occupancy remains possible generation after generation due to thoughtful building design, with interiors able to be easily changed.
- Design allows natural light and cooling with operable windows.
- Façades are cladded with natural materials.
- Designs are appropriate for the New England climate.

Preservation and stewardship of natural resources and open spaces.

In 2019, residents voted to approve a $5 million bond for open-space acquisition to increase the protection of open lands and critical resources. The City, led by the Commission on Conservation and Agriculture, the Planning & Zoning Commission, and the Common Council should work together to acquire land. The Acquisition Committee of the Commission on Conservation and Agriculture will assess and rank all proposed purchases, seeking to expand open-space parcels, incorporate wetlands and watercourses, link together existing trail systems, protect large forested blocks, preserve prime agricultural land, and provide recreational opportunities throughout the City.

The City should adopt an Open-Space Acquisition & Stewardship Plan for the City. The plan could identify key areas for future acquisition and detail specific stewardship plans for each open-space property, recognizing that each area requires different management and preservation strategies, depending on its intended use, e.g., for recreation activities or preservation of habitats and natural resources. Stewardship of the City's properties must include ongoing maintenance such as basic forestry management, removal of invasive species, and safe and convenient public access where appropriate. Proper staffing and budgeting for Public Works and the Recreation Division, as well as strong partnerships with land trusts and other conservation organizations such as the Connecticut Forest & Parks Association, will ensure that stewardship remains a priority.

The City should develop standard restrictions for existing open-space parcels and record them in the deeds to guarantee the preservation of parcels as open space and protect them from development in the future. While the City, the State of Connecticut, land trusts, and other conservation interests own thousands of acres and work to ensure their preservation from development, the largest portions of the remaining farm and forest land have no permanent protections in place. This fact includes much of the undeveloped land owned by the Connecticut Valley Hospital (over 100 acres) and by Eversource (about 75 acres). The large forest blocks in the southeastern and northwestern portions of the City play critical roles in habitat protection, carbon sequestration, and water quality, and should be appropriately prioritized. Tax incentives for dedicating land as open space through deed restrictions can provide protection for valuable parcels held by private owners.

ACTION ITEMS
Open Spaces

- Develop a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program to incentivize preservation of open spaces.
- Amend zoning codes to increase requirements for preservation and restoration of street trees and urban forest resources.
- Amend zoning codes so that allowed uses are sensitive to immediately adjacent natural resources.
- Develop an Open Space Acquisition & Stewardship Plan to identify existing natural resources and priority lands for acquisition, and codify stewardship and maintenance requirements for each area.
- Identify funding opportunities through partnership with the State of Connecticut, Middlesex Land Trust, and other conservation organizations for cooperative acquisitions.

Image: Guida Farm Conservation Area

A Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program can accomplish both conservation and development goals within the same market. Such a program, managed by the City, would establish regulatory "sending" and "receiving" areas of the City, and would seek to conserve land by redirecting development to more suitable areas. Property-owners and developers in receiving areas would pay property-owners in sending areas for development credits. These credits could be applied for relief of other requirements for development, including but not limited to density, bulk, or coverage restrictions.

Identifying more opportunities for acquiring high-quality properties beyond what is supported by currently available funding should act as encouragement to seek additional funding, both through future bond referenda and application to the State's Open Space and Watershed Lands Grant program. Private landowners should be further encouraged to work with the Middlesex Land Trust and other conservation organizations on potential preservation projects. The City should examine its use-assessment policies enabled by the PA-490 tax abatement program to ensure that property-owners with large but unprotected land holdings are encouraged to keep them undeveloped.

Image: View from a trail at Chauncey Peak

Image: Invasive Species removal along Coginchaug River

Protection and use of prime agricultural land.

The farmland of the Connecticut River Valley is one of the most underappreciated resources in the City. Formed by centuries of flooding along major rivers and smaller waterways, these ancient loams are amazingly fertile. Since many of these soils lie in floodplains, they are at high risk from increased flooding caused by climate change. Their use as farmland would allow the natural cycle of sediment deposition to continue while keeping other development out of these sensitive areas. Wherever prime farmland or a historic farm exists, the City should explore purchasing development rights from the landowner to enable the farm to persist in perpetuity. Owners of prime farmland can work with the Connecticut Farmland Trust or the Connecticut Department of Agriculture's Farmland Preservation Program, which funds the acquisition of development rights to allow continued production while protecting the soil.

Across the country, we see increasing interest in having more locally grown food. In Middletown, several community gardens have been established, and waiting lists show that more such opportunities are desired. Preserving farmland would make it possible to attract agricultural businesses—small-scale farms, wineries, orchards, and stables—as well as provide community garden plots to more residents, especially those living in the urban core, where private land for vegetable gardening and access to fresh produce are both scarce. As the Commission on Conservation and Agriculture evaluates lands for acquisition, significant priority should be given to the preservation of agricultural land and to undeveloped urban land suitable for growing food.

The City should support a small-plot farming program that promotes farming throughout the City. Areas in the City's existing parks and vacant lots can be transformed into small community or neighborhood gardens. These programs will help foster the participants' sense of community and help them acquire valuable skills while making fresh, local, low-cost produce available. Since many of Middletown's housing units do not include access to an area suitable for a garden, their residents would benefit from having access to this type of resource.

ACTION ITEMS
Agricultural Land

- Identify prime agricultural farmland for acquisition of development rights or for outright purchase.
- Amend zoning codes to allow an array of agricultural businesses.
- Identify City properties or potential acquisitions by the City to make land available for private farm operations and community gardens.
- Create new tax incentives and other programs to sustain and grow agricultural uses.

Image: Daniels Farm Conservation Area

A City prepared for climate change and natural disasters.

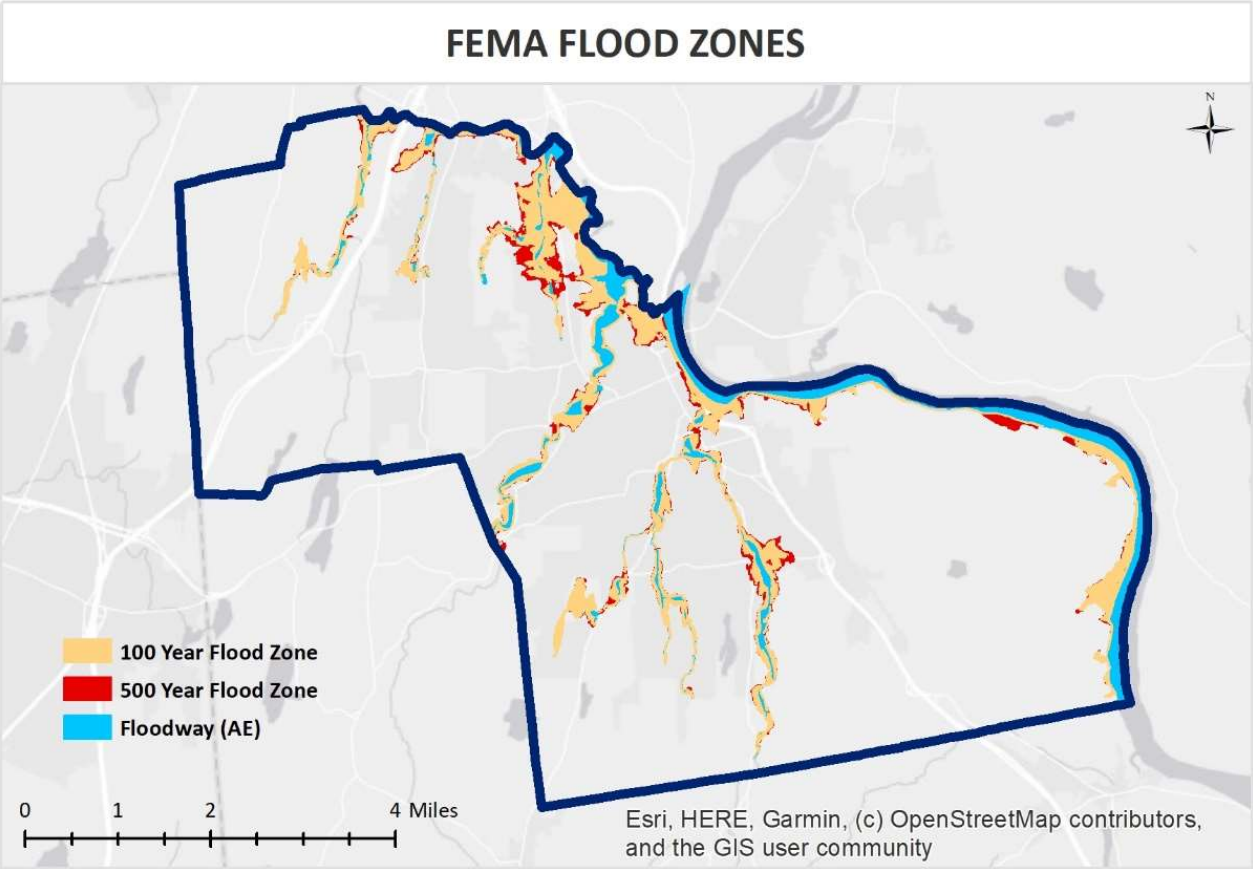
Infrastructure investment should reflect a commitment to resilience and a changing climate. Middletown's centuries-old relationship with the Connecticut River has seen scores of flood events, ranging from short-term inconveniences to the occasional disaster. Longer-term development patterns, the topography of Maromas, and active municipal policies restraining construction in flood-prone areas have been successful in limiting the most severe impacts on the City. Nonetheless, proof continues to accumulate that the changing global climate will create widespread effects. In Connecticut, some of the most obvious impacts over the coming decades are likely to involve sea-level rise along the shoreline and associated storm-surge concerns during major weather events. UConn's Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation (CIRCA) published projections in early 2019 about likely shoreline effects, which include a 2-4' baseline increase in sea level by 2100.

While CIRCA's mapping shows that much of the immediate impact of sea-level rise will be felt primarily by coastal communities, Middletown will also be affected. Because the Connecticut River is tidal all the way to Hartford, increasingly high tides are very likely to create more severe flooding areas along the River. The geological "choke point" of Bodkin's Rock creates a unique bottleneck in the River, which can exacerbate upstream floods and inundate riverfront areas in Middletown. In addition, a higher-energy water cycle created by a warming atmosphere has led to the acceleration of storm frequency and increased severity. Communities across the country have seen numerous 100-year floods over the past decade, and this trend shows no signs of slowing. Middletown's Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan confirmed that the most likely climate-related hazards for the projectable future are related to flooding. It is anticipated that the updated NHMP work, which will be undertaken between 2020 and 2021, will provide new information about key areas at risk, including any critical municipal facilities.

ACTION ITEMS
Preparation

- Update the Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan and increase regulations to prohibit new construction in high-hazard areas.
- Implement improvements to key facilities and public-safety infrastructure to improve resilience and preparedness for projected increases in storm intensity and frequency, in accordance with FEMA-approved emergency plans.
- Amend zoning codes to require green infrastructure, including rain gardens, bio-swales, and tree planting for new development and redevelopment.
- Collaborate with other communities and partners to review and update the Coginchaug River Watershed Based Plan.

Image: View looking south down the Coginchaug River



The City's approach to municipal resilience-planning should include avoiding major investment or placing critical infrastructure in high-risk areas. For the most part, Middletown has already made the appropriate long-term decisions relative to its significant infrastructure. Key facilities (hospitals, shelters, power plants, emergency management) are located outside flood-prone areas, and the City recently completed a relocation of its primary wastewater treatment to a more secure location upstream of the former River Road facility. Zoning codes and ordinances already prevent or significantly limit new development in 100-year flood zones or dictate that all habitable square footage be minimally above this flood elevation. The City should strongly consider a similar requirement above the 500-year flood elevation. The City should explore opportunities for further protections of high flood-hazard areas by identifying resilient land uses and development practices.

Zoning codes should mandate that review of any development include consideration of other at-risk land elements such as steep slopes and soil highly prone to erosion. All of these policies and regulatory approaches should be revised on an ongoing basis to reflect the most current authoritative information on storm projections.

Historic buildings that are preserved for adaptive reuse.

Retaining and reusing older buildings is an effective tool for the responsible, sustainable stewardship of resources. Preservation constitutes the ultimate recycling: it retains the energy embodied in the structure through the extraction, manufacturing, and transportation of the building materials and expended in the construction of the building itself.

The developers of the first three centuries understood how to make the most of building materials, space, and investment. Development was compact, with narrow building footprints. Until recently, no building on Main Street building was wider than 80 feet. Stairs were placed so access was created but rooms were not deprived of sunlight. Tall windows on the ground floor let light deep into shop interiors. Buildings were designed to take full advantage of solar exposure, natural cooling, and light. They were not deeper than 70-100 feet, allowing natural light to reach the middle. Transoms, operable windows, deep eaves and cornices, sloped roofs, and natural materials characterize these buildings, designed for New England's climate of snowy winters and humid summers.

Middletown adopted its first zoning code in 1927, which carefully described the extent of the commercial blocks, building massing and other requirements. Tried-and-true preservation practices that reuse existing buildings can reduce the environmental impact of new construction. The City should offer incentives to encourage reuse and energy upgrades in older buildings. Zoning codes should be revised to allow flexibility and innovation in making existing buildings more energy-efficient.

ACTION ITEMS
Adaptive Reuse

- Encourage adaptive reuse of existing underutilized building stock, including vacant industrial and commercial buildings.
- Amend zoning codes to simplify and allow greater flexibility in adaptive reuse of older buildings.
- Amend zoning codes to encourage improvements that make buildings more energy-efficient.
- Provide tax incentives for adaptive reuse of historic buildings.

Image: 1890 Building on Washington Street

The City's energy needs provided by renewable sources.

Connecticut's Public Act #18-50 requires that by 2030 not less than 40% of the energy output or services be generated from Class I renewable energy sources. Class I includes electric energy produced from solar technologies, photovoltaic technologies, wind energy, fuel cells, geothermal technologies, and small-scale hydropower facilities. The 2018 Connecticut Comprehensive Energy Strategy identifies key strategies to advance the State's goal of creating a cheaper, cleaner, more reliable energy future for Connecticut's residents and businesses.

The City recognizes this fact in the 2019 Middletown Energy Plan and incorporates that goal into this POCD. Furthermore, the Energy Plan seeks to have 100% of the City's energy generated by renewable sources by 2050. This plan includes numerous specific steps to be undertaken by the City and its institutional partners, as well as benchmarking and tracking approaches for the municipal, transportation, and private sectors. The Energy Plan reflects the pertinent energy and greenhouse gas reduction goals set by the State of Connecticut, and guides the City to policies and activities consistent with achieving the state plan. Understandably, these goals change with administrations, and as the climate and energy situations change. Thus, the Energy Plan will reflect the evolution of the guiding state framework through regular revisions.
The Middletown Clean Energy Task Force, as part of its 2019 Energy Plan for the City, recommended focusing on developing "micro-grids," which would increase the resilience and connectedness of the City's power grid. Such systems, which could initially be developed for the downtown area and key municipal assets such as the High School, would bring multiple benefits: increasing power reliability, cost savings, flexibility for local users, and the potential to ramp up the use of renewable energy.

Wesleyan University has already committed to Middletown's energy future. The City should work with Wesleyan as it implements the goals in its plan to find areas of synergy and connection. Not only can the City learn from what Wesleyan has already experienced, but these projects can serve as demonstrations for what might work in other parts of the City.

ACTION ITEMS
Energy

- Identify opportunities and partner with residents and business to develop renewable-energy micro-grids for power production.
- Amend City ordinances to promote and incentivize the use of renewable energy and other "green" technologies in public buildings.
- Increase recycling programs and educate both public and private users to reduce waste and make the waste stream less costly.

The following climate-action framework could inform future City policies, resolutions, and ordinances:

- Adopt a zero-emissions standard for new buildings.
- Build a ubiquitous electric-vehicle-charging infrastructure.
- Mandate the recovery of organic materials.
- Electrify buildings' heating and cooling systems.
- Designate car-free and low-emissions-vehicle zones.
- Empower local producers and buyers of renewable electricity.
- Set a City climate budget to drive decarbonization.

As various municipalities deal with the issue of waste disposal, it is clear that this issue is linked to energy use, both because it is possible to generate electricity through waste incineration and because trucking waste out of the City costs money and requires energy resources. While the City has taken its solid waste to its incineration plant in Lisbon for many years, the costs associated with this transportation are not appealing. Consideration should be given to finding ways to reduce the overall waste stream through large-scale composting, improved recycling, and reduction in packaging. Additional innovative ideas should be sought, both small-scale and large-scale, to advance a long-term sustainable plan for waste disposal.

6. IMPLEMENTATION

The Middletown Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) sets forth goals for the City of Middletown and strategic approaches to achieving those goals to help accomplish the overall strategies of the POCD. The Implementation Table identifies the action items necessary to undertake each POCD objective, the lead entity to undertake the task, and the timeframe envisioned for implementing each goal.

The complete listing of action items presented below is organized by each POCD section (Thriving, Vibrant, Connected, Sustainable) and identifies the lead Commission/Agency and Department, and a general timeframe. The POCD is designed to be in effect for the next ten years. There are countless variables that can influence when action items are implemented.

TYPE

D	Deliverable
C	Continuous

LEAD

CET	Clean Energy Task Force
CCA	Commission on Conservation & Agriculture
CITY	Citywide
CSC	Complete Streets Committee
EDC	Economic Development Commission
M	Mayor's Office
MAT	Middletown Area Transit
MCA	Middletown Commission on the Arts
P	Parking Authority
PCD	Planning, Conservation, and Development Department
PW	Public Works Department
PWC	Public Works & Facilities Commission
PZC	Planning & Zoning Commission
WPC	Water Pollution Control

TIMEFRAME

●○	Within the 1st - 5 years
○●	Within the 2nd - 5 years
●●	Continuous over 10 Years

IMPLEMENTATION TABLE

ACTION ITEM	TYPE	LEAD	TIMEFRAME
THRIVING			
Goal 1: An accessible riverfront that includes a dynamic balance of conservation, recreation, and development.			
Create a Riverfront Master Plan that builds on the PPS Riverfront Placemaking Plan, which identifies mixes of uses, public amenities, recreational activities, and opportunities for conservation and other open spaces to site plan standards.	D	PCD	●○
Amend zoning codes and design standards that achieve the vision of the Riverfront Master Plan.	D	PZC	●○
Establish a Tax Increment Finance (TIF) District along the riverfront to focus capital toward redevelopment in this area.	D	EDC	●○
Increase recreation opportunities with small-scale improvements along the Connecticut River, possibly including kayak launches, floating boat docks, or small piers to engage the river's edge.	C	PWC	●●
Collaborate with nearby towns that might have local farmers interested in participating in a regional farmers' market.	D	EDC	●○
Goal 2: Parking downtown that will be available, accessible, and unobtrusive.			
Create a wayfinding and parking pathway signage program to improve access to alternative parking areas in the downtown core.	C	P	●●
Engage in coordinated discussions between City, Middletown Area Transit, Chamber of Commerce, key employers, and DOT on remote parking and a Downtown Circulator Trolley and a bike-share program.	D	P	●○
Create online access to parking maps with possible real-time information on the availability of parking.	D	P	●○
Identify appropriate development and redevelopment opportunities within the City's two Opportunity Zones and promote an Opportunity Zone Investment Fund as a financing option.	C	PZC	●●
Goal 3: Development that fosters creating and revitalizing neighborhood centers.			
Amend zoning codes to allow flexibility of uses and residential densities and create new and revitalized existing neighborhood centers.	D	PZC	●○
Amend zoning codes to ensure a streamlined permitting process for appropriate uses and developments.	D	PZC	●○
Identify properties for development along the main corridors and coordinate with property owners to develop marketing materials and provide informational assistance to potential developers and siting professionals.	C	PCD	●●
Goal 4: A growing housing stock with more housing options.			
Amend zoning codes to allow new opportunities to construct accessory housing units on residential lots in the sewer-service area.	D	PZC	●○
Amend zoning codes to ensure development density, including housing and mixed use, creating a vibrant level of activity in the Downtown and neighborhood centers.	D	PZC	●○
Create a housing plan that addresses the long-term availability of affordable housing.	D	PZC	○●
Goal 5: Anchor institutions serving as economic drivers for sustainable growth.			
Collaborate with anchor institutions and the Downtown Business District to maintain a unified focus on the promotion of desirable businesses, redevelopment of vacant or underused properties, and enhancement of public amenities and infrastructure.	C	EDC	●●
Collaborate with key anchor institutions, facilitated through the Chamber of Commerce, to align and coordinate on major goals and investment plans.	C	EDC	●●
Partner with key stakeholders such as Middlesex Health and Pratt & Whitney to encourage the location of complementary health-care, wellness, engineering, and technology businesses in Middletown, including expanded housing opportunities for employees.	C	EDC	●●

ACTION ITEM	TYPE	LEAD	TIMEFRAME
VIBRANT			
Goal 1: **Public spaces provide opportunities to enjoy the City and its amenities.**			
Identify eligible properties to acquire for the purpose of installing public parks and greenspaces throughout the Downtown and the North End.	D	PCD	○●
Create the Path to Freedom trail that includes historical markers and signposts to guide the followers along the historical path from slavery to freedom to equality.	D	PCD	●○
Identify key locations across the City in both the built and natural environments as areas to showcase local artwork.	D	MCA	●○
Collaborate with local arts groups to develop key sites throughout the City for community-themed murals and painted crosswalks.	C	MCA	●●
Amend zoning codes to require amenities for pedestrians in commercial and mixed-use zones, including but not limited to benches, landscaping, street lighting, and wayfinding signage.	D	PZC	●○
Identify a revenue source to directly fund "Artscape" improvement projects in key commercial corridors.	D	MCA	●○
Amend zoning codes to attract and retain businesses downtown by modifying minimum parking requirements on private sites, encourage public parking in key locations, and promote active transportation.	D	PZC	●○
Goal 2: **Streetscapes that are aesthetically attractive and promote a sense of place.**			
Implement placemaking with signage, decorations, and art along Main Street.	C	EDC	●●
Amend zoning codes to include design districts to ensure that development and redevelopment is harmonious with the existing neighborhood context and provides a sense of place.	D	PZC	●○
Create a façade-improvement loan program to ensure the buildings that significantly contribute to Middletown's character are preserved.	D	EDC	○●
Partner with developers of historic brownfield properties, seeking assistance for cleanup, regulatory relief, and preservation of key architectural features.	C	EDC	●●
Encourage building owners along Route 9 and other state-road corridors to improve landscaping, improve building façades, and provide areas to showcase local artworks.	C	EDC	●●
Goal 3: **Communication and public engagement opportunities that unite the neighborhoods into a single community while maintaining their unique identities.**			
Create and distribute a monthly economic, arts, and events newsletter for the city, with sufficient funding to maintain it.	C	PCD	●●
Encourage public comment through public engagement activities for major projects and initiatives.	C	CITY	●●
Utilize the City's website and other social media to disseminate information.	C	CITY	●●
Goal 4: **Making the City a place that offers opportunities for personal growth and social and civic interaction.**			
Collaborate with major employers and businesses located downtown and in neighborhood centers to encourage employees to patronize retail, services, entertainment, and restaurants in the city.	C	EDC	●●
Collaborate with the business community to foster business, economic development, and job and career readiness for unemployed or underemployed residents.	C	EDC	●●
Identify key indicators for quality-of-life data, identify methods for data collection, and maintain a database of these indicators for each neighborhood.	C	M	●●

ACTION ITEM	TYPE	LEAD	TIMEFRAME
CONNECTED			
Goal 1: A transportation network that includes all modes of transportation.			
Amend city ordinances to expand on-street parking allowed in residential areas (i.e., alternate-side parking) to improve public safety.	D	PWC	○●
Develop plans for bicycle infrastructure improvements on River Road/Aircraft Road, Route 154/Saybrook Road, and the Newfield Street connector that goes between the Airline Trail in Portland and the Farmington Rail Trail in Cheshire.	D	CSC/PW	●○
Implement Safe Routes to School improvements for students who bicycle and walk to school.	D	CSC	●○
Encourage opportunities to increase utilization of the rail network and the Connecticut River for passenger and freight transport.	D	EDC	●○
Collaborate with Middletown Area Transit to ensure that public transportation routes are responsive to changing demands.	C	EDC	●●
Upgrade bus stops and other transit shelters.	C	MAT	●●
Goal 2: Road improvements consistent with the Complete Streets Master Plan.			
Complete an accessibility audit and make ADA improvements at all public facilities.	D	PW	●○
Develop a Complete Streets design manual and amend zoning codes to require related design standards in development projects.	D	CSC/PZC	●○
Establish a formal relationship and charge the Public Works Department to work with the Complete Streets Committee to regularly prioritize short-term issues and bicycle/pedestrian improvements.	D	CSC	●○
Partner with the State of Connecticut and Middletown Area Transit on improved connections to area transit networks, with a focus on increasing frequency of access to Meriden, Hartford, and New Britain systems.	C	EDC	●●
Partner with neighboring towns and RiverCOG to create and promote bicycle and pedestrian connectivity beyond the City limits.	C	CSC	●●
Amend the Complete Streets Master Plan to incorporate “Bicycle-Friendly Community” goals.	D	CSC	●○
Goal 3: A redesign of Route 9 that provides access to the riverfront.			
Collaborate with the CT DOT and other stakeholders on designs for revisions to Route 9, to improve access to the Downtown and the riverfront, increase the efficiency of travel through Middletown, and minimize displacement and environmental-justice concerns.	C	M	●●
Amend zoning codes to address areas affected by Route 9 modifications to encourage compatible development or redevelopment.	D	PZC	●○
Create points of access to the riverfront area that maximize public access to the River and connection with the Downtown.	D	PWC	●○
Implement bicycle and pedestrian improvements and wayfinding to improve existing access to the Connecticut River.	C	CSC	●●
Goal 4: Parks, trails, and open spaces integrated into a unified green corridor system.			
Identify funding sources and implement management plans for the stewardship of open-space properties.	D	CCA	●○
Partner with the State of Connecticut, Middlesex Land Trust, and other conservancy organizations to identify potential links between and among parks and open lands to create greenway corridors.	C	CCA	●●
Prioritize the acquisition of key parcels within the City to improve a functioning greenway corridors.	C	CCA	●●
Amend zoning codes to encourage passive and active recreational uses in low-density residential neighborhoods.	D	PZC	●○
Establish a funding source for implementing management plans for city-owned open spaces.	D	CCA	●○
Goal 5: A Sewer Boundary Area limited to the City core.			
Maintain the existing public sewer and water network without expansion of the current service territory.	C	WPC/PZC	●●
Goal 6: Telecommunication infrastructure available to all and hidden from public view.			
Maintain active awareness of State statutes and PURA regulations regarding 5G infrastructure needs and siting, including ensuring zoning regulations take full advantage of statutory authority to manage the location and impact of these facilities.	C	PCD	●●
Amend zoning regulations to ensure telecommunication equipment is hidden from public view.	D	PZC	●○
Encourage the expansion of broadband network so every home and businesses has access to affordable, fast, reliable service.	C	PCD	●●

ACTION ITEM	TYPE	LEAD	TIMEFRAME
SUSTAINABLE			
Goal 1: **Adherence to responsible development practices.**			
Amend zoning codes to support the Sustainable CT program initiatives.	D	PZC	●○
Amend zoning codes to align with the American National Standards Institute for tree protection and tree planting in all construction and development projects.	D	PZC	●○
Amend zoning codes to increase requirements for new residential construction to be sited to support photovoltaic solar installations.	D	PZC	●○
Amend zoning codes to require that all new and substantially redeveloped commercial property apply best practices in stormwater management, as outlined in the 2004 Connecticut Stormwater Quality Manual.	D	PZC	●○
Goal 2: **Preservation and stewardship of natural resources and open spaces.**			
Develop a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program to incentivize preservation of open spaces.	D	PCD	○●
Amend zoning codes to increase requirements for preservation and restoration of street trees and urban forest resources.	D	PZC	●○
Amend zoning codes so that allowed uses are sensitive to immediately adjacent natural resources.	D	PZC	●○
Develop an Open Space Acquisition & Stewardship Plan to identify existing natural resources and priority lands for acquisition, and codify stewardship and maintenance requirements for each area.	D	CCA	●○
Identify funding opportunities through partnership with the State of Connecticut, Middlesex Land Trust, and other conservation organizations for cooperative acquisitions.	C	CCA	●●
Goal 3: **Protection and use of prime agricultural land.**			
Identify prime agricultural farmland for acquisition of development rights or for outright purchase.	D	CCA	●○
Amend zoning codes to allow a variety of agricultural businesses.	D	PZC	●○
Identify City properties or potential acquisitions by the City to make land available for private farm operations and community gardens.	C	CCA	●●
Create new tax incentives and other programs to sustain and grow agricultural uses.	D	EDC	●○
Goal 4: **A City prepared for climate change and natural disasters.**			
Update the Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan and increase regulations to prohibit new construction in high-hazard areas.	D	PCD	○●
Implement improvements to key facilities and public-safety infrastructure to improve resilience and preparedness for projected increases in storm intensity and frequency, in accordance with FEMA-approved emergency plans.	C	CITY	●●
Amend zoning codes to require green infrastructure, including rain gardens, bio-swales, and tree planting for new development and redevelopment.	D	PZC	●○
Collaborate with other communities and partners to review and update the Coginchaug River Watershed Based Plan.	D	CCA/PCD	●○
Goal 5: **Historic buildings that are preserved for adaptive reuse.**			
Encourage adaptive reuse of existing underutilized building stock, including vacant industrial and commercial buildings.	C	PCD	●●
Amend zoning codes to simplify and allow greater flexibility in adaptive reuse of older buildings.	D	PZC	●○
Amend zoning codes to encourage improvements that make buildings more energy-efficient.	D	PZC	●○
Provide tax incentives for adaptive reuse of historic buildings.	C	EDC	●●
Goal 6: **The City's energy needs provided by renewable sources.**			
Identify opportunities and partner with residents and business to develop renewable-energy micro-grids for power production.	C	CET	●●
Amend City ordinances to promote and incentivize the use of renewable energy and other "green" technologies in public buildings.	D	CET	●○
Increase recycling programs and educate both public and private users to reduce waste and make the waste stream less costly.	C	PW	●●

7. APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: CONFORMANCE WITH THE STATE PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

This plan conforms to Connecticut General Statutes Chapter 126, Section 8-23, which outlines the requirements to be met by municipal planning commissions in formulating their plans of conservation and development.

The Commission is required to:

- Prepare, amend, and adopt this plan as an update to the 2000–2010 Plan of Conservation and Development within the 10-year statutorily required timeframe.
- Consider the following:
    - The community development action plan (if applicable).
    - The need for affordable housing.
    - The need for protection of existing and potential public surface and ground drinking-water supplies.
    - The use of development patterns consistent to the extent possible with soil types, terrain, and infrastructure capacity within the municipality.
    - The State's Plan of Conservation and Development.
    - The Regional Plan of Conservation and Development.
    - Physical, social, economic, and governmental conditions and trends.
    - The needs of Middletown as they relate to human resources, education, health, housing, recreation, social services, public utilities, public protection, transportation and circulation, and cultural and interpersonal communications.
    - The objectives of energy-efficient patterns of development, the use of solar and other renewable forms of energy, and energy conservation.
    - Protection and preservation of agriculture.
    - The most recent sea-level change scenario updated pursuant to CGS Section 25-68(o)(b).
    - The need for technology infrastructure in the municipality.

Furthermore, the Plan of Conservation and Development is required to:

- Be a statement of policies, goals, and standards for the physical and economic development of the municipality.
- Provide for a system of principal thoroughfares, parkways, bridges, streets, sidewalks, multipurpose trails, and other public ways as appropriate.
- Be designed to promote, with the greatest efficiency and economy, the coordinated development of the municipality and the general welfare and prosperity of its people, and identify areas where it is feasible and prudent to (i) have compact transit and accessible, pedestrian-oriented mixed-use development patterns and land reuse; and (ii) promote such development patterns and land reuse.
- Recommend the most desirable use of land within the municipality for residential, recreational, commercial, industrial, conservation, agricultural, and other purposes, and include a map showing such proposed land uses.
- Recommend the most desirable density of population in the several parts of the municipality;
- Note any inconsistencies with the following growth-management principles:
    - Redevelopment and revitalization of commercial centers and areas of mixed land uses within existing or planned physical infrastructure;
    - Expansion of housing opportunities and design choices to accommodate a variety of household types and needs;
    - Concentration of development around transportation nodes and along major transportation corridors to support the viability of transportation options and land reuse;
    - Conservation and restoration of the natural environment, cultural and historical resources, and existing farmland;
    - Protection of environmental assets critical to public health and safety; and
    - Integration of planning across all levels of government to address issues on a local, regional, and state-wide basis.
- Make provision for the development of housing opportunities, including opportunities for multifamily dwellings, consistent with soil types, terrain, and infrastructure capacity, for all residents of the municipality and the planning region in which the municipality is located, as designated by the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management under Section 16a-4a.
- Promote housing choice and economic diversity in housing, including housing for both low- and moderate-income households, and encourage the development of housing that will meet the housing needs identified in the State's consolidated plan for housing and community development, prepared pursuant to CGS Section 8-37t, and in the housing component and other components of the State Plan of Conservation and Development prepared pursuant to Chapter 297.
- Consider provisions to enable older adults and persons with disabilities to live in their homes and communities whenever possible.

APPENDIX 2: CONFORMANCE WITH THE STATE GROWTH MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

This POCD and the process to create the Plan conform to the six *Growth Management Principles of the 2013–2018 Conservation & Development Policies: The Plan for Connecticut*, currently in effect:

① Redevelop and Revitalize Regional Centers and Areas with Existing or Currently Planned Physical Infrastructure.
This plan outlines strategies the City can use to implement and facilitate increased revitalization in the City's various commercial centers, including the downtown core area and commercial corridors.

② Expand Housing Opportunities and Design Choices to Accommodate a Variety of Household Types and Needs.

This plan includes strategies that will increase housing quality and equity in Middletown by creating a diverse housing stock and increasing density within the City. The plan promotes a mix of market-rate and affordable housing and the development of mixed-use neighborhood centers and multi-family dwellings.

③ Concentrate Development Around Transportation Nodes and Along Major Transportation Corridors to Support the Viability of Transportation Options.
This plan focuses on development within the downtown core and along State Routes 66, 17, and 3, the major transportation corridors. Transportation options include private automobiles, local bus service offered by the Middletown Area Transit District (MAT), and out-of-town bus service provided by CT Transit. The plan calls for building complete streets throughout the city to enhance a pedestrian and biking infrastructure that promotes walking and biking as viable transportation options.

④ Conserve and Restore the Natural Environment, Cultural and Historical Resources, and Traditional Rural Lands.
Sustainability plays a central role in this plan, which offers strategies to conserve and restore the natural environment; these strategies include encouraging growth within the existing Sewer Boundary Area, systematically preserving open space and agricultural land, and developing green infrastructure. This plan also promotes vibrancy and health within the City by valuing and protecting its historic structures, fostering cultural diversity, and supporting the arts.

⑤ Protect and Ensure the Integrity of Environmental Assets Critical to Public Health and Safety.
This plan builds on Middletown's ongoing efforts to identify, protect, and appreciate its environmental assets. These features include but are not limited to open spaces, farmland, ridgelines, wetlands, and bodies of water.

⑥ Promote Integrated Planning Across all Levels of Government to Address Issues on a Statewide, Regional, and Local Basis.
Many goals and objectives outlined in this Plan require a coordinated effort by agents of the City, the Region, and the State. This plan promotes collaborative decision-making by many City commissions, agencies, stakeholders, and leaders. Integrated solutions are required, for example, to address the challenges involved in redesigning Route 9 and reconnecting downtown Middletown to the riverfront.

APPENDIX 3: REFERENCES, DOCUMENTS, AND SOURCES

Information Resources in Preparing Plan Update

Documents

- 2013–2018 Conservation & Development Policies: The Plan for Connecticut (State of Connecticut), 2013
- Middletown Plan of Conservation & Development (City of Middletown), 2010
- Middletown Complete Streets Master Plan (City of Middletown/Kent + Frost), 2013
- City of Middletown Energy Plan (City of Middletown Clean Energy Task Force), 2019
- Middlesex Hospital Community Health Needs Assessment (Middlesex Health), 2016
- A Placemaking on the Middletown Riverfront (Project for Public Spaces), 2014
- City of Middletown Community Resilience Building Report (City of Middletown), 2018
- Plan for Waterfront Recreational Development (City of Middletown), 1974
- Multi-Jurisdictional Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan (Lower CT River Valley Council of Governments), 2014
- Middletown Trail Guide (Middletown Conservation Commission), 2016
- Healthy Connecticut 2020 (CT Department of Public Health), 2014
- Inventory of Historical & Architectural Resources (Greater Middletown Preservation Trust), 1979
- Brief History of Middletown (Society of Middletown First Settlers Descendants), 2007-2015
- Perceptions Photography, Photo credit (Middletown Pride Event, 2019)

Entities

- AdvanceCT (formerly Connecticut Economic Resource Center)
- City of Middletown Planning & Development Office
- City of Middletown Public Schools
- City of Middletown Public Works Department
- City of Middletown Water & Sewer Department
- Connecticut Department of Transportation
- Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection
- Connecticut Department of Economic & Community Development
- Connecticut Forest & Parks Association
- Connecticut State Data Center
- Jonah Center for Earth and Art
- Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments
- Middlesex Commission on the Arts
- Middlesex Community College
- Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce
- Middlesex Health
- Middlesex Land Trust
- Middletown Area Transit
- Russell Library
- Sustainable CT
- U.S. Census Bureau and American Community Survey
- University of Connecticut Center for Land Use Education and Research (CLEAR)
- University of Connecticut Institute for Resilience & Climate Adaptation (CIRCA)
- Wesleyan University