

CITY OF NORWALK, CT

South Norwalk TOD Redevelopment Plan

DRAFT MAY 2016



Prepared for the Norwalk Redevelopment Agency
by THE CECIL GROUP • FXM ASSOCIATES

South Norwalk TOD Redevelopment Plan

Community Meeting

June 16, 2016



Agenda

- Define a Redevelopment Plan
- Review Transit-Oriented Development and the *TOD Strategy*
- Review Draft *South Norwalk TOD Redevelopment Plan*
 - Redevelopment Area
 - Purpose and Goals
 - Implementation
 - Proposed Design Guidelines
 - Proposed Zoning Changes

- Presenters
 - Tim Sheehan, Norwalk Redevelopment Authority
 - Emily Keys Innes LEED AP ND, The Cecil Group



Define a Redevelopment Plan

What a Redevelopment Plan does...

- Conveys to the public the City's specific developmental goals and objectives for a geographic area based on uses, density, and design
- Empowers the Redevelopment Agency to implement plan recommendations in accordance with the state statutory provisions and findings
- Responds to, and is informed by, existing land use policies, ordinances and regulations that govern development within the redevelopment area
- Communicates approved land use policies to the public
- Examines the potential of new development through the lens of existing land use by specific reference
- May recommend increasing the number or density of housing units in a specific plan area as an objective



Define a Redevelopment Plan

What a Redevelopment Plan is not...

- Distinct from existing land use policies, ordinances, and regulations that govern development in the redevelopment area
- A wish list of contemplated or desired land use policies
- A Municipal Housing Plan



Transit-Oriented Development and the *TOD Strategy*



Transit-Oriented Development is...

- Centered on public transit – usually a rail station, subway station, or bus hub
- Requires safe pedestrian connections to public transportation; often includes safe bicycle connections
- Encourages higher density, lower parking ratios, and is often mixed-use



South Norwalk TOD Strategy

South Norwalk TOD Strategy

- *South Norwalk Railroad Station Area Transit Oriented Development Strategy*
 - The Cecil Group began work in 2010
 - Final report October 2011
 - Based on earlier studies and City policy for centering development around South Norwalk Rail Station



SOUTH NORWALK
RAILROAD STATION AREA TRANSIT
ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
FINAL REPORT

Prepared for:
The City of Norwalk

Prepared by:
The Cecil Group, Inc.

October 2011



South Norwalk TOD Strategy

South Norwalk TOD Strategy

- Involved significant public participation
 - 2010 – 2011 Community Outreach:
 - 31 Community Interviews
 - 7 Stakeholder Meetings
 - 4 Planning Coordination Meetings
 - 4 Community workshops in English, Spanish and Creole
- Defined goals for:
 - Neighborhoods
 - Economics and Development
 - Urban Design Character and Qualities
 - Diversity
 - Circulation and Transportation
 - Community Security and Safety



1.3 Statement of Objectives

The extensive public process and technical research that laid the groundwork for the *TOD Strategy* identified a series of goals and objectives for the Redevelopment Area. These goals and objectives are divided into six categories, listed below, with the primary goal for each strategy:

- NEIGHBORHOOD – Develop a continuous, coherent pattern of pedestrian-friendly streets, sidewalks, and paths that line and connect blocks with complete and compatible development and land uses that create a cohesive and attractive environment in which to live, work, shop, visit and enjoy in the neighborhoods around the Rail Station.
- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – Invite and support development as a combination of new buildings and renovations that create a long-term, sustainable mixed-use pattern that contains a balanced quantity of housing, commercial, retail, civic and institutional uses, while protecting existing residents from displacement.
- URBAN DESIGN CHARACTER AND QUALITIES – Shape the fabric of buildings, spaces, streets and places to create distinctive and complete urban neighborhoods that contain diverse but well-connected components.
- DIVERSITY – Encourage and maintain a diverse neighborhood that provides housing, employment, shops, services and restaurants that attract and support a wide range of cultures and incomes.
- CIRCULATION AND TRANSPORTATION – Enhance pedestrian and bicycle connectivity, while channeling and enabling vehicle circulation to be consistent with neighborhood quality and supporting the economic development goals for appropriate locations within the neighborhood.
- COMMUNITY SECURITY AND SAFETY – Create safe and secure environments for residents, commuters, business owners and visitors in the neighborhoods around the Rail Station.

The objectives related to each goal can be found in *Section 4 Implementation Plan*.



South Norwalk TOD Strategy

FOCUS AREA	ACTION	STRATEGY
Redevelopment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on moderate scale, mixed use redevelopment of key sites relatively close to the Rail Station Leverage City ownership Unlock public/private redevelopment at the Rail Station, Webster Street Block, and Day Street. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist in land assembly/reorganization of land in conjunction with viable projects Unlock public/private redevelopment through strategic development, land use or disposition agreements incorporating City-owned land at the Rail Station, Webster Street Block, and Day Street lots.
Housing and Residential Quality of Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand housing opportunities for market rate units. Promote a mixed-income, diverse neighborhood and high quality of life for everyone through amenities, public safety programs, open space. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide zoning to allow non-conforming office or commercial use to housing. Maintain work-force zoning or incentives for large, multi-family developments. Focus programs to support home ownership within walking distance of the Station. Improve parks and extend pedestrian corridors to and along the Waterfront.
Pedestrian Environment and Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide improved pedestrian corridors connecting South Norwalk neighborhoods to the Rail Station with streetscape enhancements. Target initial improvements within the blocks adjacent to the Rail Station. Support bicycle use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve streetscapes, sidewalks, paths, ramps, and stairs including consistent lighting along the principal pathways to and from neighborhoods, in conjunction with traffic calming along neighborhood streets not intended for through traffic. Expand sidewalk and streetscape improvements throughout the neighborhoods. Extend bike routes along streets leading to the Station, provide secure bike parking.
Circulation and Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide additional commuter parking near the Rail Station to the extent that it benefits Norwalk and has limited visual and traffic impacts. Provide modest expansion of public parking at Webster Street. Direct commuter-related vehicle traffic away from neighborhood streets. Provide substantially improved space and circulation at the Rail Station for shuttles, pick-up and drop-off. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish public/private venture to create a parking structure at Henry/Chestnut Street. Seek grants, funds and "gap" financing for a parking deck at Webster Street for that portion of the costs that cannot be covered by revenues. Provide wayfinding signage, street and intersection design to direct primary commuter traffic to and from the Rail Station along Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive. Use grants and other sources to fund improvements to expand and reorganize pickup and drop-off on the east side of the station, between Henry and Monroe Streets.



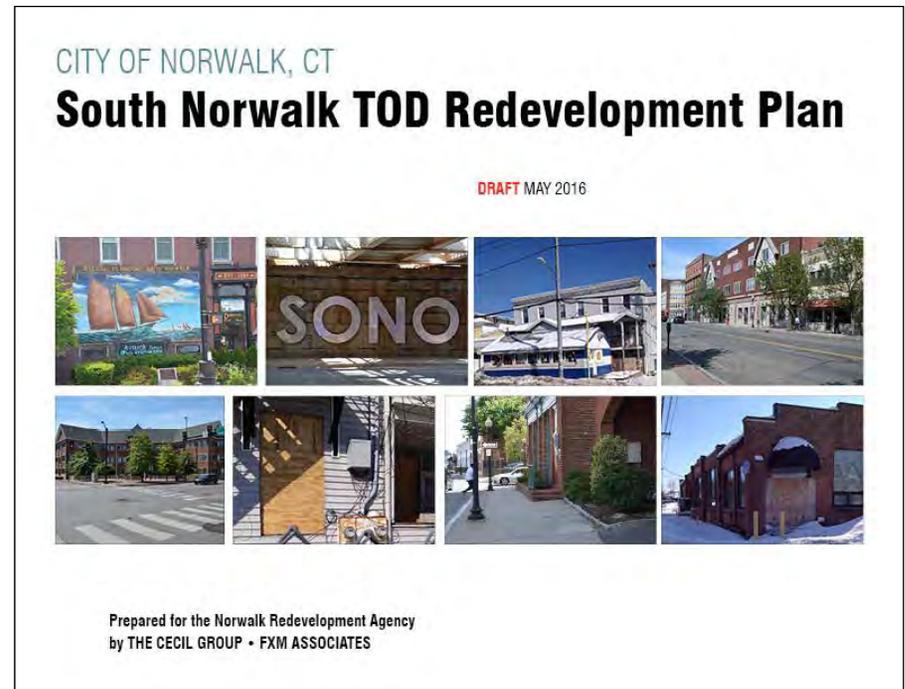
Draft *South Norwalk TOD Redevelopment Plan*



South Norwalk TOD Redevelopment Plan

Draft Redevelopment Plan

- Meets requirements of Enabling legislation: CGS Chapter 130 Section 8-127
- Has been online and available for public comment
- Currently in public process for approval
 - Planning Commission (consistency with POCD)
 - Common Council (approval)



South Norwalk TOD Redevelopment Plan

Plan Findings

- The Redevelopment Area is a blighted area under Chapter 130 of the Connecticut State Statutes
 - Presence of incompatible land uses
 - Presence of existing environmental conditions that cannot be addressed by the private market alone
 - Existing flood conditions that cannot be addressed by the private market alone
- The proposed Redevelopment Plan will materially improve conditions by providing development incentives to address existing conditions of blight over time:
 - Replace incompatible land uses by infill development
 - Replace existing older housing stock by infill development
 - Address flood conditions with appropriate building and site design guidelines for new development
 - Protect existing historic buildings



South Norwalk TOD Redevelopment Plan

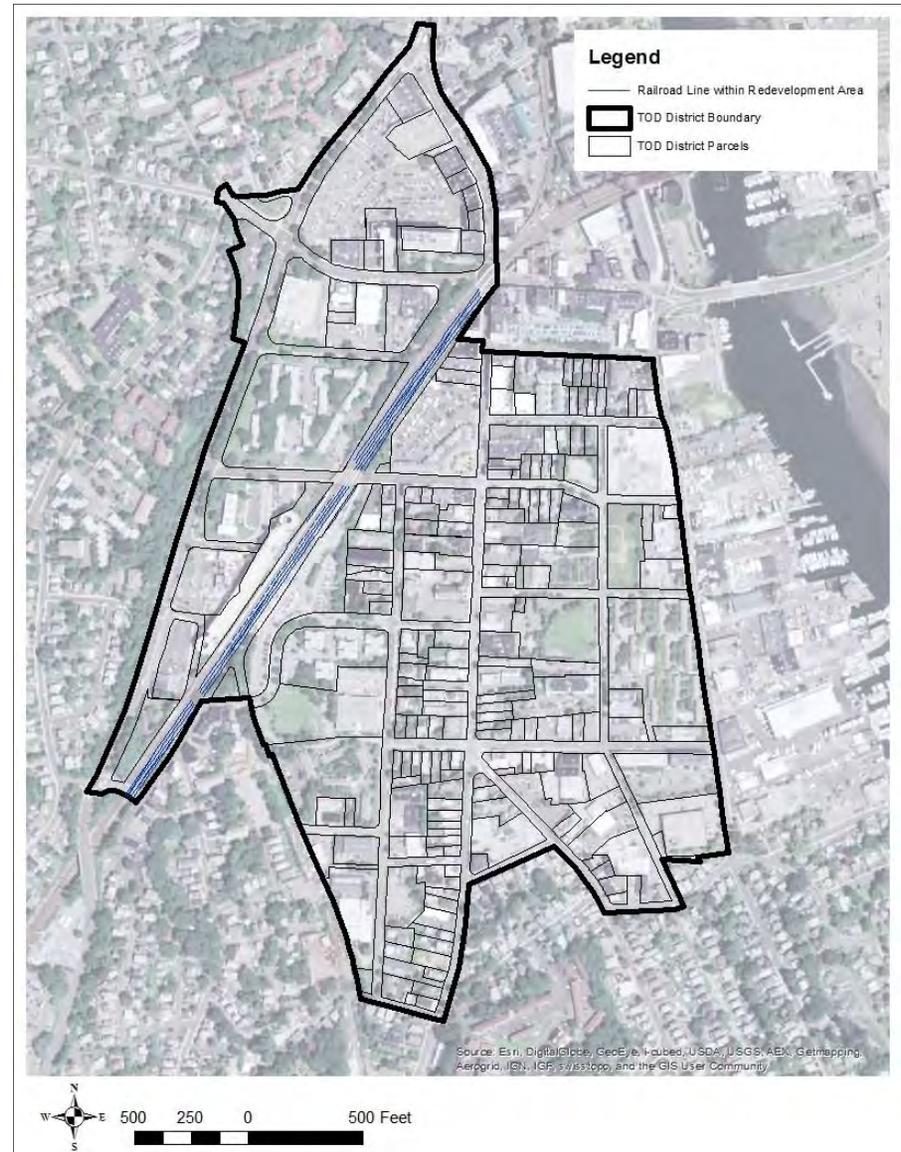
Plan Findings

- Sufficient Housing Exists for Relocation
 - Changes to the area are expected to take place over time – the Redevelopment Plan does not include a specific project that would require relocation
 - The proposed zoning for the TOD District requires the replacement of existing Workforce Housing (118-1050) in new development at 50% of the Median Income as defined by CGS 8-30g-8
 - Additional Workforce Housing units up to the required 10% must be provided at 80% of the Median Income as defined by CGS 8-30g-8
- The proposed Redevelopment Plan is consistent with the City's POCD
 - Supports POCD goals for
 - Economic development
 - Affordable housing
 - Transportation improvements
 - Historic preservation
 - Urban design



South Norwalk TOD Redevelopment Area

Redevelopment Area



Purpose and Goals



South Norwalk TOD Redevelopment Plan

Purposes of this Redevelopment Plan

- Support the transition from the current conditions to a walkable, mixed-use district, centered on the South Norwalk Rail Station, and connected to the surrounding neighborhoods with safe access for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motor vehicles.
- Support a range of housing options in terms of type and affordability that sustain a mix of incomes
- Accommodate existing businesses and residents
- Address current conditions of blight and prevent future blight



South Norwalk TOD Redevelopment Plan

Plan Goals

- A major goal of the TOD Redevelopment Plan is the advancement of equitable development in the plan area.
- Every City seeks a strong fiscal base and healthy markets to sustain itself and allow for all its residents to thrive.
- The redevelopment of urban districts and neighborhoods contributes to that objective.



TOD Redevelopment Goals

Equitable Development

- The redevelopment of urban neighborhoods and districts requires equitable development policies and practices that combine both people-based and place-based strategies that effectively deploy the City's cadre of economic development, land use polices and regulations to:
 - Create stable socially and economically diverse neighborhoods that are sustained by minimizing the neighborhood transition costs impacting existing LMI residents
 - Provide for LMI residents to establish equity in the revitalization by becoming investors in the redevelopment goals and objectives, not disaffected by them
 - Recognize that a thriving City needs thriving commercial districts and inversely a thriving commercial district needs a thriving neighborhood to economically sustain itself



TOD Redevelopment Goals

Equitable Development

- Positively impacts the general conditions of a neighborhood which have significant impact on individual outcomes
- Responds quickly to market pressures
- Maintains existing owner occupied, rental and SRO housing in the area
- Eases price pressures by employing smart growth and sustainable development density principles
- Streamlines the new development approval process by making desirable uses allowable as of right
- Uses business assistance and loan funds to allow neighborhood businesses to effectively respond to neighborhood economic changes



TOD Redevelopment Goals

Equitable Development

- Uses public assets and facilities as tools to leverage needed neighborhood resources and improvements such as affordable housing, community services, and high quality public realm and infrastructure improvements
- Educates residents regarding their rights via the City's Fair Rent and Fair Housing resources
- Increases district educational resources be they public, non-profit, or private
- Ensures that the dialogue regarding the ongoing impact of neighborhood transition is ongoing, open, and transparent



TOD Redevelopment Goals

Equitable Development

- The TOD Redevelopment Plan embraces the neighborhood based strategies, policies, and practices of equitable development. Evidence of this is found but not limited to the following:
 - Plan does not call for the use of eminent domain
 - Plan incorporates preservation of existing LMI units
 - Plan calls for the expansion of affordable units at a threshold lower than the current zoning regulation
 - Plan focuses on public transportation as an development asset
 - Plan elevates historic preservation
 - Plan is focused on infill development, compatible with existing neighborhoods, over superblock development concepts
 - Plan views economic and cultural diversity as an economic asset



Existing Conditions



Beyond TOD...

Three Legs of the Plan

The redevelopment area encloses a series of conditions within its boundary:

- Current Conditions of Blight
- Future Conditions of Blight
- Outdated Zoning
- Expired Urban Renewal Plans

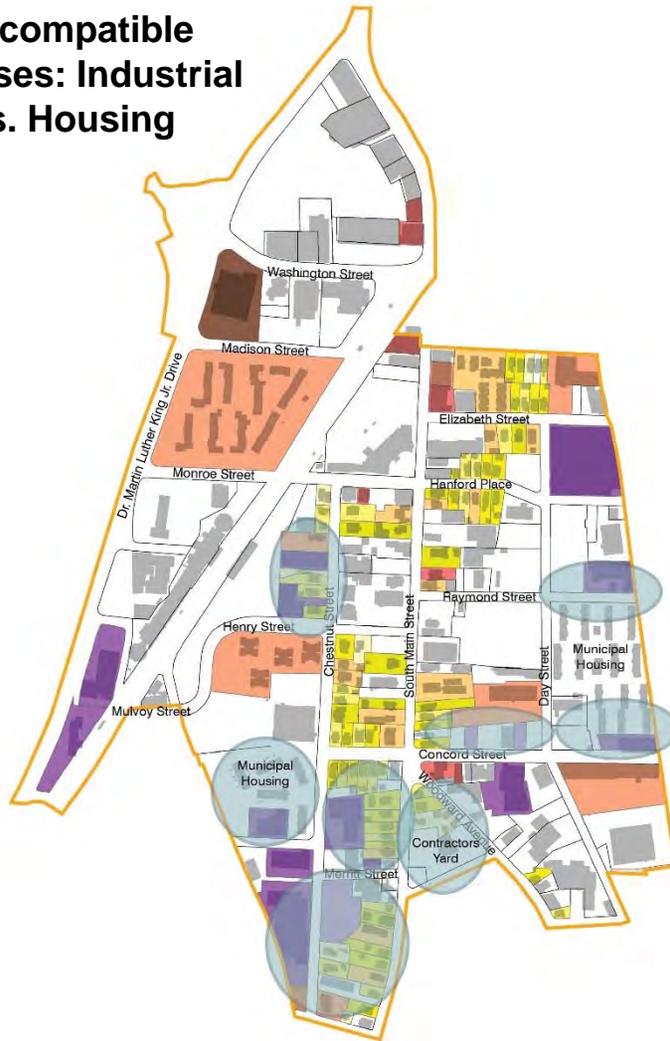
The zoning changes and the design guidelines work together to address those conditions



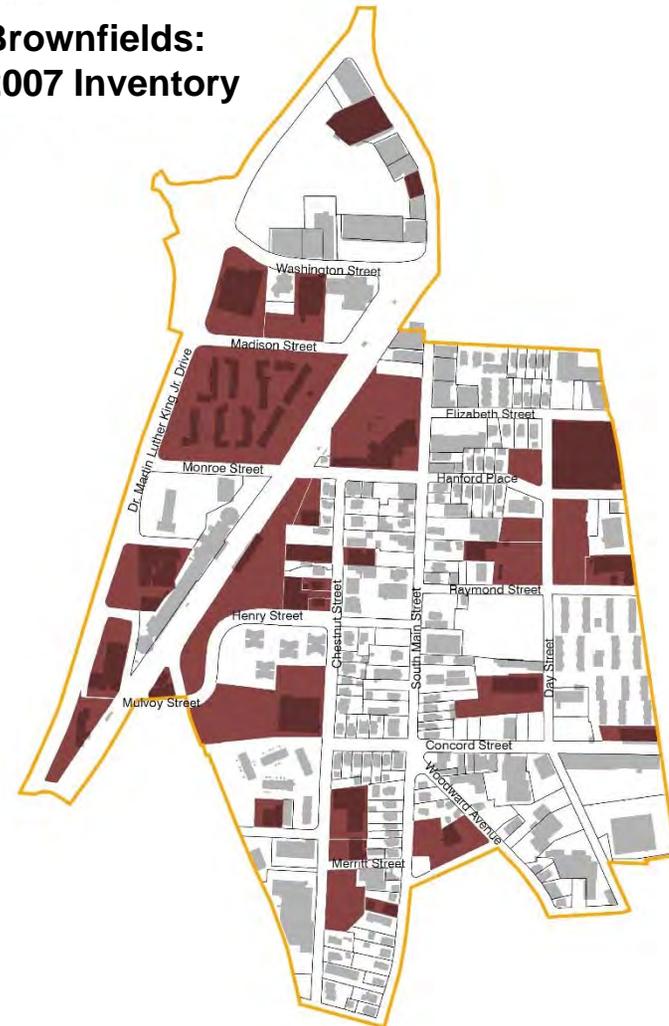
Conditions within the Redevelopment Area

Current Conditions of Blight

**Incompatible
Uses: Industrial
vs. Housing**



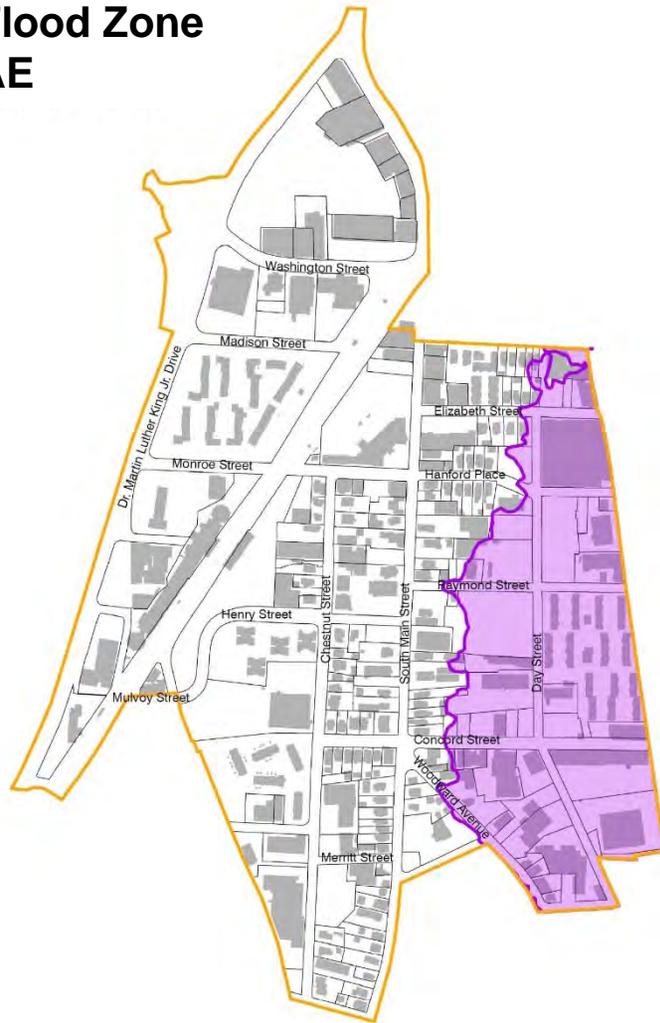
**Brownfields:
2007 Inventory**



Conditions within the Redevelopment Area

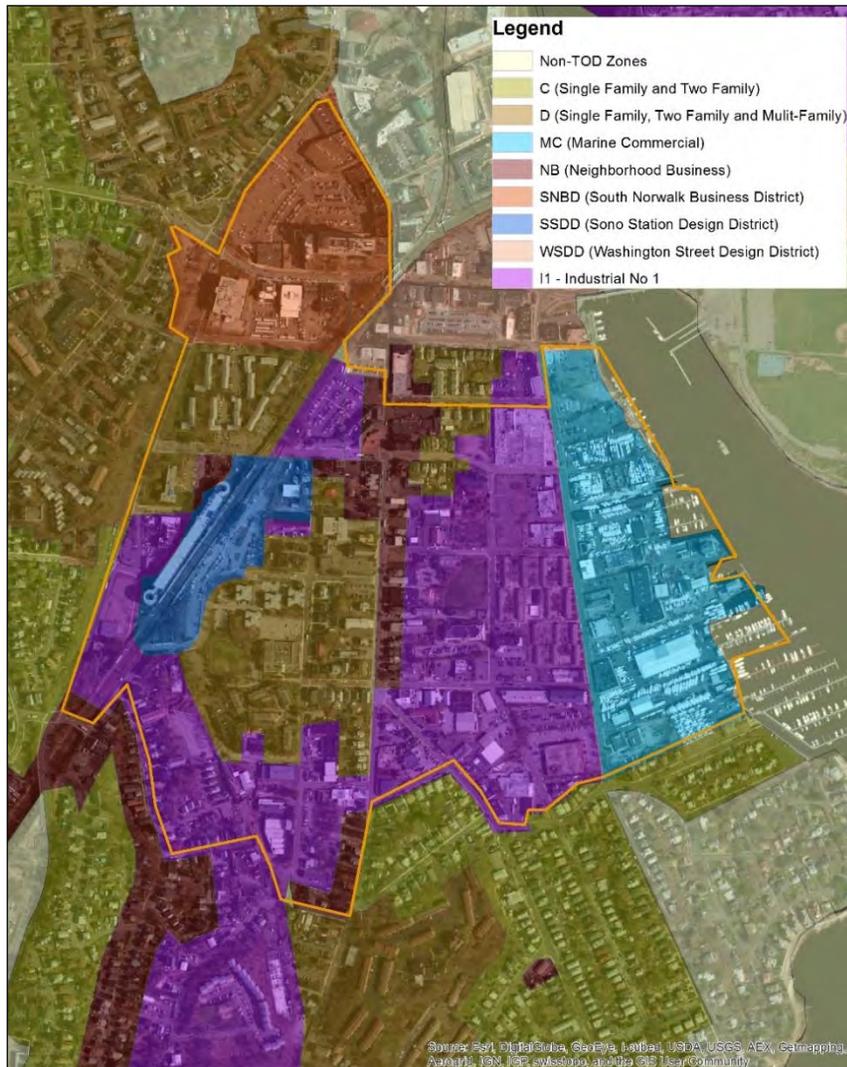
Future Conditions of Blight

**Flood Zone
AE**



Conditions within the Redevelopment Area

Outdated Zoning



- 6 Zones in the original TOD Area; 8 Zones in the Study Area
- Current zoning reflects incremental change rather than planned change
- Current zoning does not provide incentives to address existing conditions

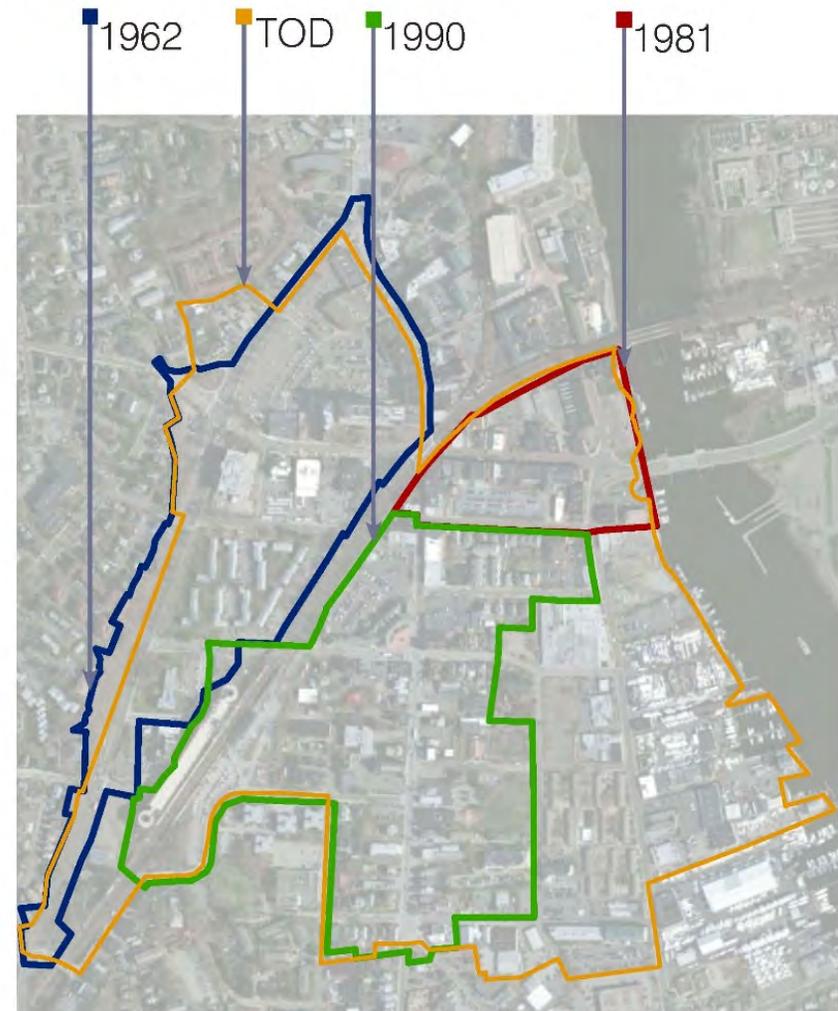


Conditions within the Redevelopment Area

Expired Urban Renewal Plans

- *Urban Renewal Plan for the South Norwalk Project Area No. 1, June 1962 (URP 1962)*
- *Urban Renewal Plan Washington-South Main Street Improvement Area II, January 1981 (URP 1981): Expires 2021*
- *South Main Corridor Urban Renewal Plan, September 1990 (URP 1990)*

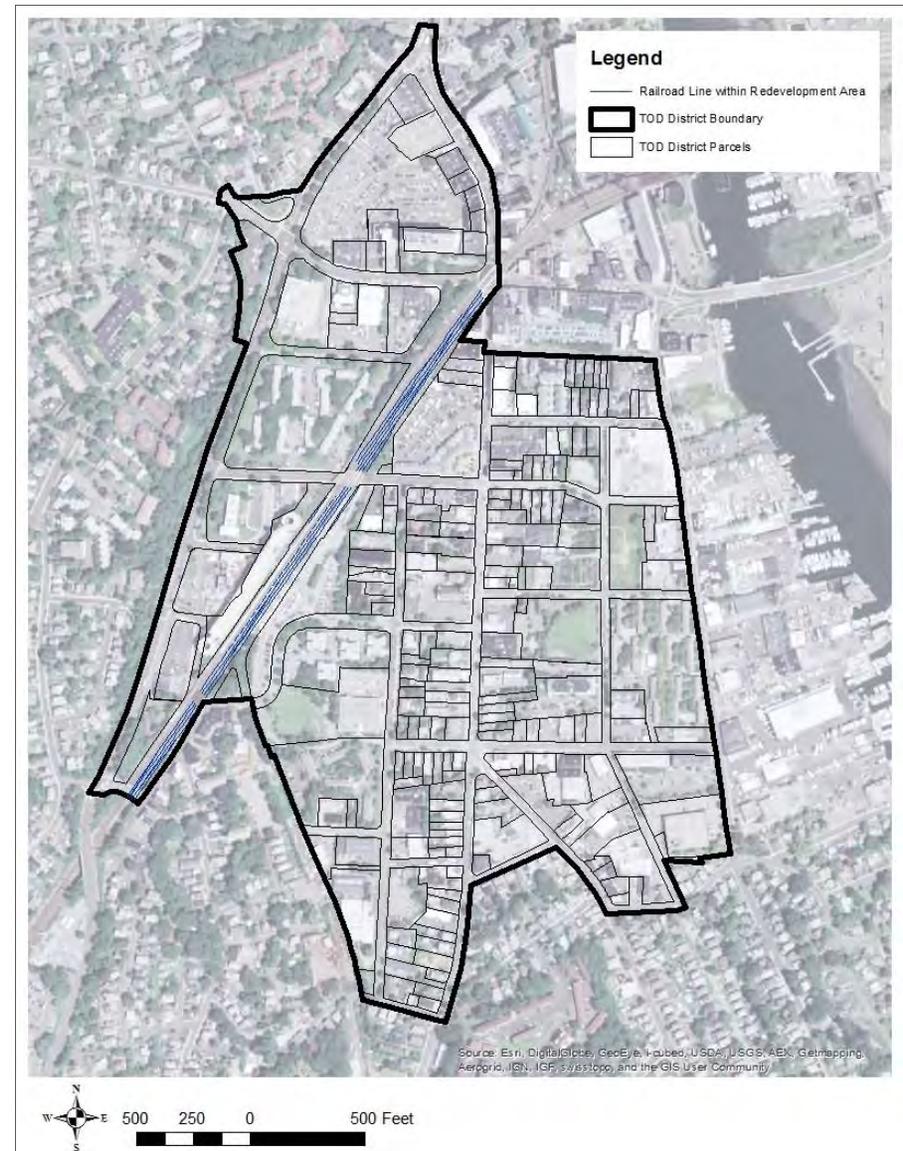
Urban Renewal Plans and the TOD Focus Area



South Norwalk TOD Redevelopment Area

Redevelopment Area

- Consolidates the *Urban Renewal Plan for the South Norwalk Project Area No. 1* (URP 1962) and the *South Main Corridor Urban Renewal Plan* (URP 1990)
- Creates a single zoning district: the proposed TOD District
- Creates a single set of design guidelines within the Redevelopment Plan



Implementation



Implementation

The Redevelopment Plan will...

- Address existing conditions of blight
 - Suspected environmental contaminants (brownfields, lead paint)
 - Incompatible land uses
- Help prevent future conditions of blight
 - Damage from significant flood events
- Create incentives for changes in land use
 - Support mixed-use development and higher density around the train station
 - Allow uses as-of-right and limit discretionary decisions
 - Reduce number of zoning districts and simplify requirements
- Protect existing conditions which are of value to the community
 - Provide incentives to retain historic buildings
 - Preserve existing number of housing units at current affordability levels
 - Create additional Workforce Housing under Section 118-1050
 - Enforce design guidelines that reflect plan goals and community values



Implementation

Implementation Strategy

- Based on goals and related actions from *South Norwalk TOD Strategy*
- Actions include
 - Improvements to public infrastructure to accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers throughout the area
 - Support for a diversity of housing types, including affordable housing
 - Support for mixed use development near the rail station
 - Protection of historic resources
 - Recognition of the diverse residential population and mix of businesses and how that diversity improves the strength of the area
- Includes expanded design guidelines
- Recommends consistent and uniform zoning district-wide
- Infill will be incremental over time and based on market conditions



Proposed Design Guidelines



Design Guidelines

Purpose of Design Guidelines

- The design of new development must support the overall goals of the Redevelopment Plan
 - New or renovated buildings must be sensitive to the existing building context of the TOD District
 - Site improvements must reinforce an active public realm
 - Site improvements on private sites must connect to the public circulation system for pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles
 - Public infrastructure changes must reinforce the pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular links between the train station and the neighborhoods
 - Within the flood plain, new development must respond appropriately to potential flood conditions
 - Signage and lighting must be appropriate for their purpose and the context of the area
 - Renovation of historic buildings must meet the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation*



Proposed Zoning Changes



Zoning Changes

Key Ideas for New TOD District

- TOD-Related Ideas
 - Additional density in exchange for Workforce Housing (118-1050): 118-540.B(1)(r)
 - Activation of ground floors along principal streets: 118-540.C(7)
 - Reduced parking ratios: 118-540.D(3)
 - Use of Parking Management Plan to add flexibility to off-street parking requirements: 118-540.D(5)(b)



Zoning Revisions

What Makes These Recommendations TOD?

TOD Goal	Relationship to TOD Principles
Affordable Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Addresses affordable housing demand in the TOD zoning districts without concentrating affordable housing in any one area of the City
Activate Ground Floors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creates pedestrian-oriented commercial streets to encourage walking from residences to stores, services, and transit
Development Incentives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourages developments that increase density around the rail station
Reduced Parking Ratios	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognizes that fewer people will need cars as they can walk to reach goods and services• Land not needed for parking can be used for commercial and residential development and public and private amenities
Shared Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Along with reduced parking ratios, shared parking arrangements require less land to be used for parking in the TOD zoning districts



Zoning Changes

Key Ideas for New TOD District

■ Other Ideas

- Protection of historic and single-family buildings
 - Existing non-conforming buildings may have residential or retail uses so long as the nonconformance does not increase: 118-540.C(1)(a)
 - Height restrictions south of Henry Street on Chestnut and South Main: 118-540.C(2)
 - Height requirements protect existing single-family homes: 118-540.C(3)
 - Buildings listed on, or eligible for, the Norwalk Historical Resources Inventory are in compliance with the height and bulk requirements of the TOD District: 118-540.C(1)(b)
 - Design guidelines for the South Norwalk TOD Redevelopment Plan will apply to changes to historic buildings: 118-540.C(1)(b)
 - No minimum parking requirement for the redevelopment of historic buildings as mixed-use: 118-540.D(3)(a)
- Adjusting requirements for building in the flood zone
 - Required “activated component” has been removed for parking structures within the AE and VE flood zones: 118-540.D(2)(b) and (c)
 - Height definitions depend on location within flood zone: 118-540.C(2)



Zoning Changes

Key Ideas

- Density in Exchange for Workforce Housing
 - Greater height allowed for multifamily and/or mixed use if requirements under 118-540.B.(1)(r) for Workforce Housing are met
 - A minimum of 10% of units must be Workforce Housing as defined by 118-1050
 - First, any existing workforce housing units must be replaced at 50% of Median Income as defined by CGS 8-30g-8
 - Second, additional required units, up to the 10% minimum, must be replaced at 80% of Median Income as defined by CGS 8-30g-8
 - Development is eligible for height increase if the parcel or assembled parcels are over ½ acre



Key Ideas: Density in Exchange for Workforce Housing

Test Sites

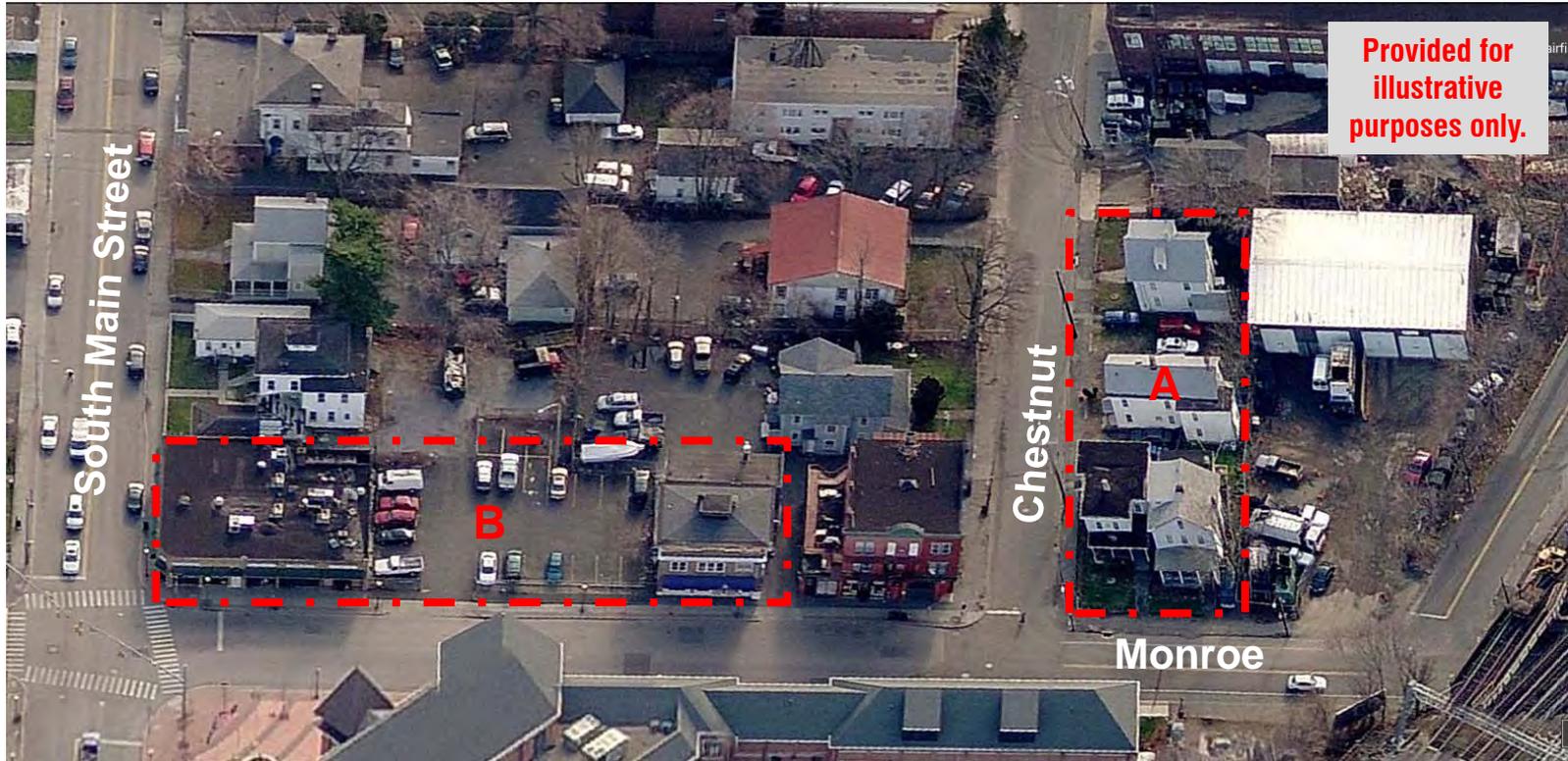


Image Source: Bing.com and The Cecil Group



Key Ideas: Density in Exchange for Workforce Housing

Test Site A



Image Source: Bing.com and The Cecil Group



Key Ideas: Density in Exchange for Workforce Housing

Test Site A

Address	Lot Size (Acres)	Lot Size (Square Feet)	Existing Housing Units
20 Monroe Street	0.12		4
5 Chestnut Street	0.17		4
Total	0.29	12,632	8

Provided for illustrative purposes only.

■ Possible scenario

- 12 units with 16 parking spaces
- 10% Workforce Housing Requirement (118-1050) = 1 unit
- Replace existing 8 units at 50% of Median Income (CGI 8-30g-8)
- No additional Workforce Housing units required
- Developer gets 4 market rate units
 - *Developer might get additional units with off-site parking*



Key Ideas: Density in Exchange for Workforce Housing

Test Site B



Image Source: Bing.com and The Cecil Group



Key Ideas: Density in Exchange for Workforce Housing

Test Site B

Address	Lot Size (Acres)	Lot Size (Square Feet)	Existing Housing Units
8 Monroe Street	0.317		0
10 Monroe Street	0.075		4
Total	0.392	17,099	4

Provided for illustrative purposes only.

■ Possible scenario

- 18 units with 22 parking spaces
- 10% Workforce Housing Requirement (118-1050) = 2 units
- Replace existing 4 units at 50% of Median Income (CGI 8-30g-8)
- No additional Workforce Housing units required
- Developer gets 14 market rate units
 - *Developer may get additional units if off-street parking is provided either using a structure on-site or with provision elsewhere in the TOD District per 118-540.D*



Key Ideas: Density in Exchange for Workforce Housing

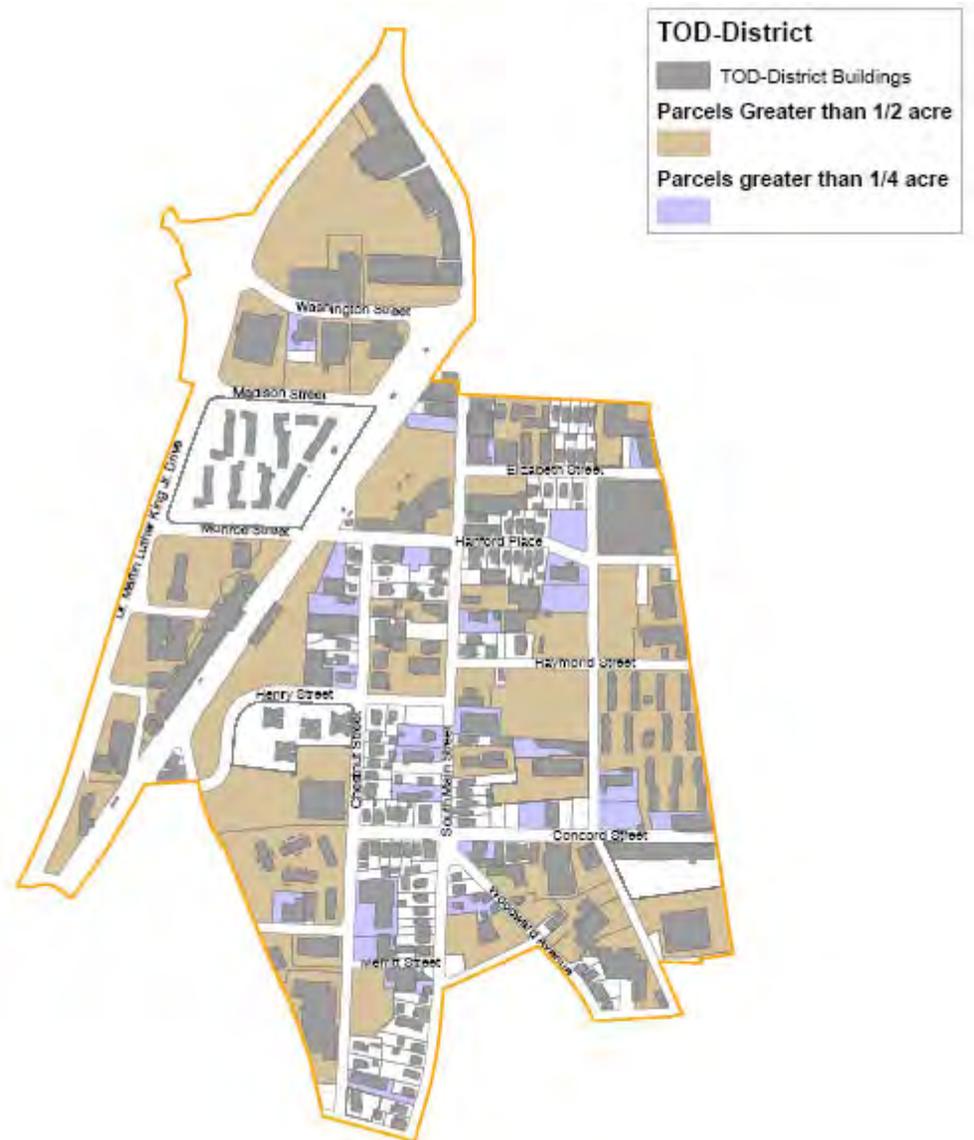
Implications

- In these two scenarios (and two others) the Workforce Housing requirement for 10% of the total units is more than met by the replacement of the existing units
- The requirement to replace existing units at 50% of Median Income reduces the profit to the developer thus reducing the incentive to invest in the area
- Requiring a half acre before allowing additional height creates an incentive to assemble smaller parcels to create larger developments
- **Is the proposed zoning unduly restricting the ability to allow for incremental change in the Redevelopment Area?**
- **Is the proposed zoning creating incentives for substantial changes to the existing context of the Redevelopment Area?**



Key Ideas: Density in Exchange for Workforce Housing

Implications: Parcel Sizes



Proposed Zoning: Key Issues



Zoning Changes

Questions Raised To Date

- Appropriate land uses for the TOD District
- Off-site parking
 - Payment-in-lieu of development
 - Long-term lease vs. short-term lease
 - Use of public parking: how to track; how to allocate
- Existing Workforce Housing
 - How to count
 - How to preserve
 - Level of affordability



Zoning Changes

Proposed Uses: By Right

- Railroad station and commuter facilities.
- Dwellings, when located above any principal or Special Permit use.
- Child day-care centers.
- Mixed-use development, subject to § 118-750.
- Offices, including medical offices.
- Banks and financial institutions, excluding drive-in facilities.
- Retail stores and personal and business service establishments.
- Health clubs.
- Restaurants and taverns, excluding drive-in facilities, having a gross floor area of two thousand five hundred (2,500) square feet or less.



Zoning Changes

Proposed Uses: By Right

- Research and development facilities.
- Places of worship, churches and church buildings.
- Theaters and auditoriums.
- Museums, libraries and meeting halls.
- Parks, playgrounds and open space.
- Hotels.
- Off-street parking facilities.
- Printing establishments
- Multifamily dwellings of not less than 12 units,
- Boutique manufacturing, with an accessory retail use.



Zoning Changes

Proposed Uses: Special Permit

- Public utility supply or storage facilities.
- Bank drive-in facilities.
- Restaurants and taverns having a gross floor area of two thousand five hundred (2,500) square feet or more.
- Gasoline stations and the service of motor vehicles, subject to § 118-1010.
- Electric power generator, as defined herein, subject to Section 118-830(B).



Questions and Answers

