

# A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR DOWNTOWN MERIDEN

## HUD CHOICE NEIGHBORHOODS TRANSFORMATION PLAN

### PEOPLE PLAN

**To connect** the neighborhood to high quality educational and employment opportunities so that all residents can reach their full potential

### HOUSING PLAN

**To build** new mixed-income, mixed-use, green housing units with access to transit, employment and educational centers that promote healthy living

### NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

**To create** a safe, cohesive, richly amenitized, walkable city center that is sustainable and environmentally resilient

### DEVELOPED FOR:

The Residents of Meriden

### DEVELOPED BY:

Meriden Housing Authority, The City of Meriden, residents, and partners with funding from U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development



# **MERIDEN 2020**

BRINGING IT | TOGETHER

## **A Comprehensive Plan for Downtown Meriden**

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**PREPARED BY:**

Wallace, Roberts & Todd,  
2015

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# GLOSSARY

**9% Credits** – The 9% credit is generally reserved for new construction. Each year for 10 years a tax credit equal to roughly 9% of a project's qualified basis (cost of construction) may be claimed. The applicable credit rate is not actually 9%; instead, the specific rate that a project will receive is set so that the present value of the 10-year stream of credits equals 70% of a project's qualified basis.

**4% Credits** – The 4% credit is typically claimed for rehabilitated housing and new construction that is financed with tax-exempt bonds. Like the 9% credit, the 4% credit is claimed annually over a 10-year credit period. The actual credit rate fluctuates around 4%, but is set by the Treasury to deliver a subsidy equal to 30% of a project's qualified basis in present value terms.

**Affordable Housing** – Housing deemed affordable to alleviate families' burden of paying more than 30% of household income on housing related costs.

**AMI** – Area Median Income.

**CDBG** – Community Development Block Grant; a HUD program that provides communities with resources to address a wide range of unique community development needs.

**CHFA** – Connecticut Housing and Finance Agency.

**CHC** – Community Health Center is building a world class primary health care system, is committed to caring for special populations and is focused on improving health outcomes for their patients as well as building healthy communities.

**City** – City of Meriden.

**CN** – Choice Neighborhoods.

**CNI** – Choice Neighborhoods Initiative.

**Daylighting** – The redirection of a stream into an above-ground channel for restoration.

**Extremely Low Income** – Household income under 30% of AMI.

**FEMA 100-Year Floodplain** – Area that has a 1-percent chance of flooding in any given year as delineated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

**FMR** – Fair market rent.

**HOME** – The HOME Investments Partnerships Program which provides grants to states and local governments to fund a wide range of activities

including building, buying and/or rehabilitating housing for rent or homeownership and providing direct rental assistance to low-income families.

**HUB park** – Located at I-77 State Street and 30-50 East Main Street, the HUB is a 14.4-acre City-owned brownfield redevelopment site that has undergone extensive environmental assessment and cleanup. The City is in the process of transforming the HUB site into a park that provides public green space, flood storage and 3.4 acres for redevelopment. The \$16 million project commenced in January 2014 and will be substantially completed in 2015.

**Low Income** - Household income between 30% and 60% of AMI.

**HUD** – US Department of Housing and Urban Development.

**Intermodal** – Involving two or more different modes of transportation.

**LEED** – Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (a green building and neighborhood certification program).

**Leverage** – The opportunity/ability to influence a system or environment effectively.

**LIHTC** – Low Income Housing Tax Credits (Funding for Tax Credit Housing). Privately financed, developed, managed and owned units. Tax credits are awarded on a competitive basis by state housing agency (CHFA), often furthering state's housing policies. Income limits are capped at 60% AMI. Rents are fixed.

**Market Rate Housing** – Housing units unrestricted by income.

**MCF** – Meriden Children First.

**MHA** – Meriden Housing Authority.

**Mills** – Mills Memorial Public Housing Complex.

**MPSD** – Meriden Public School District.

**Non-Replacement Housing** - New housing not tied to Mills.

**Public Housing** – Established to provide decent and safe rental housing for eligible low income families, the elderly and persons with disabilities. Rent is 30% of income. All existing 140 units in Mills are public housing units.

**PBV** – Project Based Voucher units are part of the

Housing Choice Voucher program, also known as Section 8. PBVs are tied to a unit. Tenant Based Vouchers are portable. Tenant pays 30% of income for rent. Voucher makes up the difference up to FMR.

**QAP** – Qualified Allocation Plan. Describes the process for allocation of LIHTC.

**Renewable Energy/Low Impact Design** – Energy which comes from natural resources such as sunlight and geothermal heat which are naturally replenished.

**Replacement Housing** – Public Housing or PBV housing unit replacement for demolished Mills.

**School Readiness** – Refers to a set of expectations, guidelines or developmental milestones that describe what all children need to know before entering kindergarten.

**Socioeconomic** – Refers to the combination of social and economic factors.

**TDC** – Total development costs.

**Transit Oriented Development or TOD** – Transit oriented developments as defined in the June Special Session, Public Act No. 07-7 of the Connecticut General Assembly. Transit Oriented Development means "the development of residential, commercial and employment centers within one-half mile or walking distance of public transportation facilities, including rail and bus rapid transit services, that meet transit supportive standards for land uses, built environment densities and walkable environments, in order to facilitate and encourage the use of those services. This requirement may include any form of public transportation, provided that activities contiguous to the project include appropriate transportation improvements, i.e. bus shelters, bus pull offs, bus schedule coordination, etc." In accordance with the QAP, walking distance is defined as one-quarter mile.

# MERIDEN CHOICE NEWS

## A NEW WAY FORWARD, A PATH TO DOWNTOWN TRANSFORMATION!

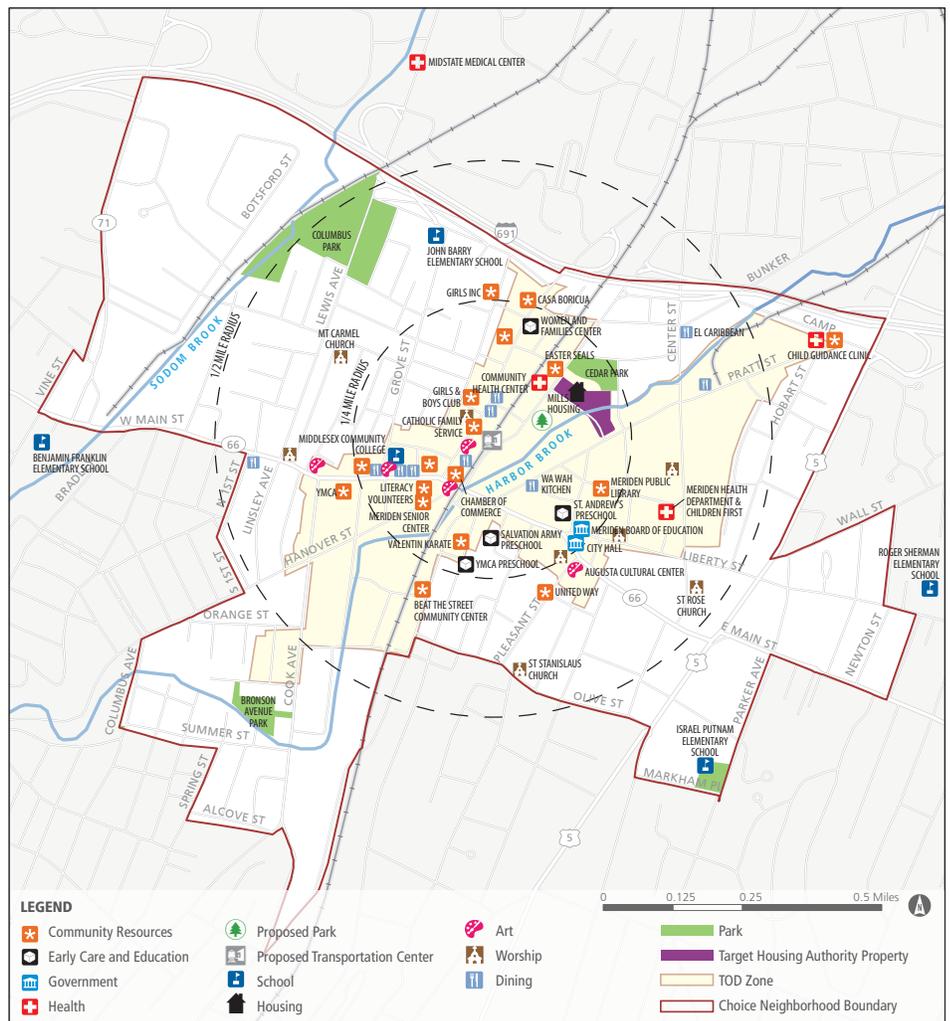
Stakeholders and citizens of Meriden came together over a two-year period and developed an achievable civic vision for their city center that includes a people plan that meets the unique needs of downtown residents, 670 units of new mixed-income, mixed-use housing, and a neighborhood strategy that charts a path to a safe, walkable and richly amenitized downtown.

**"Change is under way in Meriden!"**

**-Brian P. Daniels**

### CHANGE IS HERE!

In the history of the Silver City, there has never been a better time to plan for the future of Downtown Meriden. Over \$125 million in private and public funds have been committed to investments within a half-mile radius of the City center. After years of planning for flood control, construction is nearly complete of a new 14 acre park (11 acres of open space and 3 acres of development). Construction has begun on 24 Colony Street – a \$22 million mixed-use, mixed-income development in the heart of Downtown. Over the last year, projects collectively involving \$100 million dollars of private investment and up to 670 new residential units have been planned on 15 acres of City-owned downtown properties. Over a dozen businesses, including C-Town supermarket, Condado Grill, Nina's Cafe, Shield Driving School, and Valentin Karate, have opened or are in the business planning stage and are eager to be a part of the downtown transformation. Construction has begun on a new Meriden train station with increased rail service to New Haven, Hartford and Springfield. HUD recognized this potential when it awarded the MHA and the City of Meriden a Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant to develop this Neighborhood Transformation Plan. The plan described herein leverages all of Meriden's assets and embodies the vision of the entire community.



Map of Meriden's Choice Neighborhood



Illustrative Concept Map

## OUR GOALS

### PEOPLE GOALS

**EDUCATION:** Cradle to career education goals that (1) aim to ensure that all students enter kindergarten school-ready, (2) provide for programs and services that promote life-long learning for the entire family and (3) bridge the gap towards employment and careers for high school graduates.

**YOUTH:** Establish a Meriden Youth Center.

**EMPLOYMENT:** A multi-faceted approach to ensure that every able-bodied downtown resident looking for employment will find a job, keep the job and choose to leverage that job for higher wages in the future.

**HEALTH:** Restore the physical and mental well-being of downtown residents through healthy diet, exercise, clean air environments, high-quality mental health resources, and ensuring medical homes.

### HOUSING GOALS

**VARIETY:** Create a mix of housing types and attractive styles that serve the identified needs of current and future residents at all income levels.

**LEVERAGE:** Develop housing that best leverages Downtown Meriden's unique assets – train station, HUB park, location, Community Health Center, highway access, and public institutions.

**MILLS:** Ensure minimal disruption to the residents of Mills during demolition and new construction, and assure that every Mills household who is lease-compliant has the right to return.

### NEIGHBORHOOD GOALS

**TOD:** Create a truly multi-modal downtown that is pedestrian/bike friendly and easy to navigate by car, with accessible parking.

**SUSTAINABILITY:** Green buildings, growth of the Downtown Meriden Farmers Market and a recycling facility.

**SAFETY AND SECURITY:** Improve real and perceived safety in the downtown by (1) strengthening relationship between community and police, (2) improving the appearance of downtown neighborhoods lighting and security, (3) marketing downtown as a safe place to live, work and shop, and (4) building pride of place among residents.

## PEOPLE

**EDUCATION:** The Meriden Choice Education Plan provides every child living in the City's downtown resources to excel from cradle to career – from school readiness strategies to college/career pathways. The Education Plan will be led by MCF, a local organization that has been working with downtown students and families for 15 years. The plan builds on the 2012 Department of Education's Promise Neighborhood plan and is informed by findings from the CN needs assessment, multiple focus group meetings and individual interviews. Three key goals supported by 24 detailed strategies build on the strengths of local resources such as Family Resource Centers, Wilcox Vocational High School and a progressive school district. Many strategies are ready to implement immediately with minimal resources.

**EMPLOYMENT:** At the heart of the Meriden Choice Employment Plan is a desired short term outcome of connecting jobs to residents and a long term outcome of closing the unemployment rate gap between downtown residents and the City at large. A consortium of local organizations (Workforce Alliance Regional Workforce Development Board, CT Works

American Job Center, Midstate Chamber of Commerce, Meriden Board of Education Adult Education, and Middlesex Community College) will implement multiple goals and strategies to achieve these outcomes. Strategies include setting Section 3 hiring benchmarks to “give back” to the community during construction, an awareness campaign to market Meriden's rich employment resources and establishing a pipeline to employment for some of Meriden's vocation-oriented youths.

**HEALTH:** The Meriden Choice Health Plan will be led by the Meriden Health and Human Services Department and CHC. Five goals supported by 19 strategies will address the priority needs identified through the CN needs assessment – reduce asthma rates, improve physical health through exercise and good diet, improve mental health among residents (a priority issue among Mills residents), and ensure medical homes.

All of the people goals will be administered using a case management approach.



*December 9, 2014, the community came together to envision the future of Meriden.*

transportation – walk, bike, car, bus, and train. The Meriden Choice TOD and Circulation Plan calls for the conversion of confusing one-way loops into two-way streets, implementation of complete streets with streetscape amenities and signage, a comprehensive effort to increase ridership on the commuter rail upon the construction of the train station and increased service, and a decentralized parking network governed by the Meriden Parking Commission.

**SUSTAINABILITY:** A revitalized Downtown Meriden will also be a green downtown. The Meriden Choice Sustainability Plan requires all new buildings to include green features that are environmentally friendly with utility savings for tenants, recommends the long-term viability of the Meriden Farmers Market and recommends a recycling and consignment facility in the downtown.

**SAFETY:** The Meriden Choice Safety & Stabilization Plan recognizes that future investments in Downtown Meriden are possible only if people believe that Meriden is a safe place to live and work. Residents and City officials have committed to working together to improve real and perceived neighborhood safety through four holistic goals: (1) strengthen the relationship between community and police; (2) improve the appearance of downtown neighborhoods using tools such as rehab funds, loans, art installations, demolition, and pocket parks; (3) coordinate business and City marketing efforts and events; and (4) establish programs so that every downtown resident has an opportunity to be a proud stakeholder.

## BY THE NUMBERS!



**100+**  
participated in  
focus groups

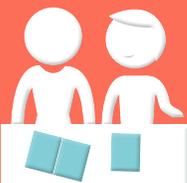
**7 task forces comprised of stakeholders & citizens!**

**500 participants signed in at large community-wide events!**

**20+**  
public meetings /  
charrettes were held!



**385**  
household surveys  
completed



## HOUSING

The Choice Housing Plan lays out the blueprint to radically transform the housing landscape of Downtown Meriden from a low-rent option of last resort to a market-compatible neighborhood of choice.

The housing implementation team is committed to the following priority steps: (1) phased demolition of Mills, (2) a thoughtfully developed relocation plan, (3) 670 units of new green, mixed-income housing units in multiple highly coordinated phases over a span of 10 years, and (4) a well-crafted strategy to maximize impact in downtown's core area of distress while stabilizing its peripheral neighborhoods with both rental and homeownership units.

## NEIGHBORHOOD

**TOD:** The vision of Downtown Meriden as a vibrant place to live, work and shop is possible if residents and visitors can access downtown's new and existing assets easily via all modes of

**M**eriden's Choice Neighborhood is the same as Meriden's Promise Neighborhood (target area for Meriden Family Zone) and covers census tracts in the City that include the most need (census tracts 1701, 1702, 1703, 1709, 1710, and 1714). The neighborhood is bounded by I-691 to the north, Vine Street to the west, Highland and Olive Street to the south, and Route 5 to the east. The neighborhood is served by Amtrak and the future New Haven Hartford Springfield rail line, accessible to major highways and connected east-west by East Main Street. Contained entirely within this neighborhood is Meriden's TOD district – an area that includes the historic downtown center and the City's Central Business District.

The underlying need in Meriden's Choice Neighborhood is profound. Compared to the City as a whole, a family residing downtown is twice as likely to be living in poverty, three times more likely to be unemployed, more likely to be a victim of a violent crime, and more likely to rent instead of own their home. In addition, they are more likely to suffer

from poverty-related issues such as poor mental health, asthma and not connected to nearby available resources. While not the only contributor to Downtown Meriden's deep needs, Mills is emblematic of downtown's biggest issues – distressed and outdated housing conditions, concentration of poverty and a disenfranchised under-represented population.

Despite these challenges, Meriden's Downtown community (majority Hispanic) is resilient and united in advocating for change. A comprehensive community needs assessment confirmed many already identified needs, shed light on new community needs and informed the planning team of one important fact – **over half of the 385 households surveyed volunteered to be more involved in the planning process** as candidates to champion change.

This is a plan FOR the community and BY the community. **385 households were reached** through the comprehensive community needs assessment. Over **100 citizens**

**participated in focus groups**, and their concerns and ideas have been translated into plan initiatives. Interviews were conducted with 12 households and six businesses. Monthly meetings were reinstated at Mills to keep residents informed of the planning process. Over **500 participants attended large community-wide events** such as the 2014 Spring Festival, the December 9, 2014 Community Workshop, and the June 4, 2015 Community Workshop. 1,500 newspaper prints from the December 2014 event were distributed to neighborhood households and businesses. Over 30 residents and stakeholders traveled to Boston together to witness neighborhood transformation past, present and future. Additionally, **the planning team facilitated over 20 public meetings / charrettes** and continues to maintain a project website together with digital and hardcopy monthly newsletters. **Seven task forces** comprised of stakeholders and citizens developed the People and Neighborhood plans and will be responsible for implementing their recommendations.

Simply put, Meriden is bringing it, together!

## CHANGE IS HERE!

Jumpstarting the momentum towards neighborhood transformation, the CN planning team implemented the following early action items to address community needs that arose during the planning process:

- Farmers Market at Mills parking lot.
- Downtown pilot shuttle loop and downtown parking study.
- Small business outreach and development assistance to over 12 start-up businesses.
- \$800,000 brownfields assessment and cleanup grant for portions of the Mills block (Choice Housing Plan Phase 1 & 4)
- \$1.7 million brownfield cleanup grant for the Record Journal site (Choice Housing Plan Phase 3)
- MHA received HUD ConnectHome designation - national initiative to offer lower-cost access to high speed internet for families



*Over 300 neighborhood residents attended the 2014 Spring Festival where the Choice Team and volunteers collected 120 surveys, held dozens of informative conversations, grilled 500 hotdogs and 500 hamburgers, and had a lot of fun!*



Photo Credit: Doug Kerr

# CHAPTER 1 Context

This section sets the scene for the Neighborhood Transformation Plan. The plan's audience includes: neighborhood residents, neighborhood business owners, stakeholders, residents of the City, people who live and work in the New Haven and Hartford regions, state and federal officials, and potential funders and investors.

## HISTORIC AND GEOGRAPHIC CONTEXT

The City of Meriden is a mid-sized, post-industrial urban community located near the center of Connecticut, at the crossroads of three major highways, and midway between two of the state's largest cities, Hartford, the state capital, and New Haven. With a population of 60,674, Meriden is an ethnically diverse city that is emerging from an extended period of economic and social decline linked to the loss of a once-thriving manufacturing base, a historic lack of investment in local infrastructure, and challenges faced by a changing population at a time of significant socioeconomic shifts.

Meriden is known as the "Silver City" due to the large number of cutlery and related products which were manufactured here by companies such as International Silver and Meriden Cutlery. Meriden Britannia Co., an electro-gold and silverplating factory, sat on what is under construction today as HUB park. At the peak of the City's industrial era, West Main Street and Colony Street were once a bustling regional retail center filled with shops and served by a streetcar. More than 20% of Meriden's 24 square-miles is publicly-owned open space. The two thousand acre Hubbard Park is the largest municipally-owned park in New England and was designed by the notable landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted. This park is a cultural and recreational treasure in the City. Castle Craig, located within the park, is the highest point within 25 miles of the coastline between Maine and Georgia and provides panoramic views of Connecticut out to Long Island Sound.



*Meriden is known as the "Silver City" due to a once thriving silver manufacturing industry.*

Meriden once had 80 manufacturing plants and was chosen as the ideal World War II community. The construction of I-691 through the center of the City led to the gradual decline of, and disinvestment in, the historic downtown area.

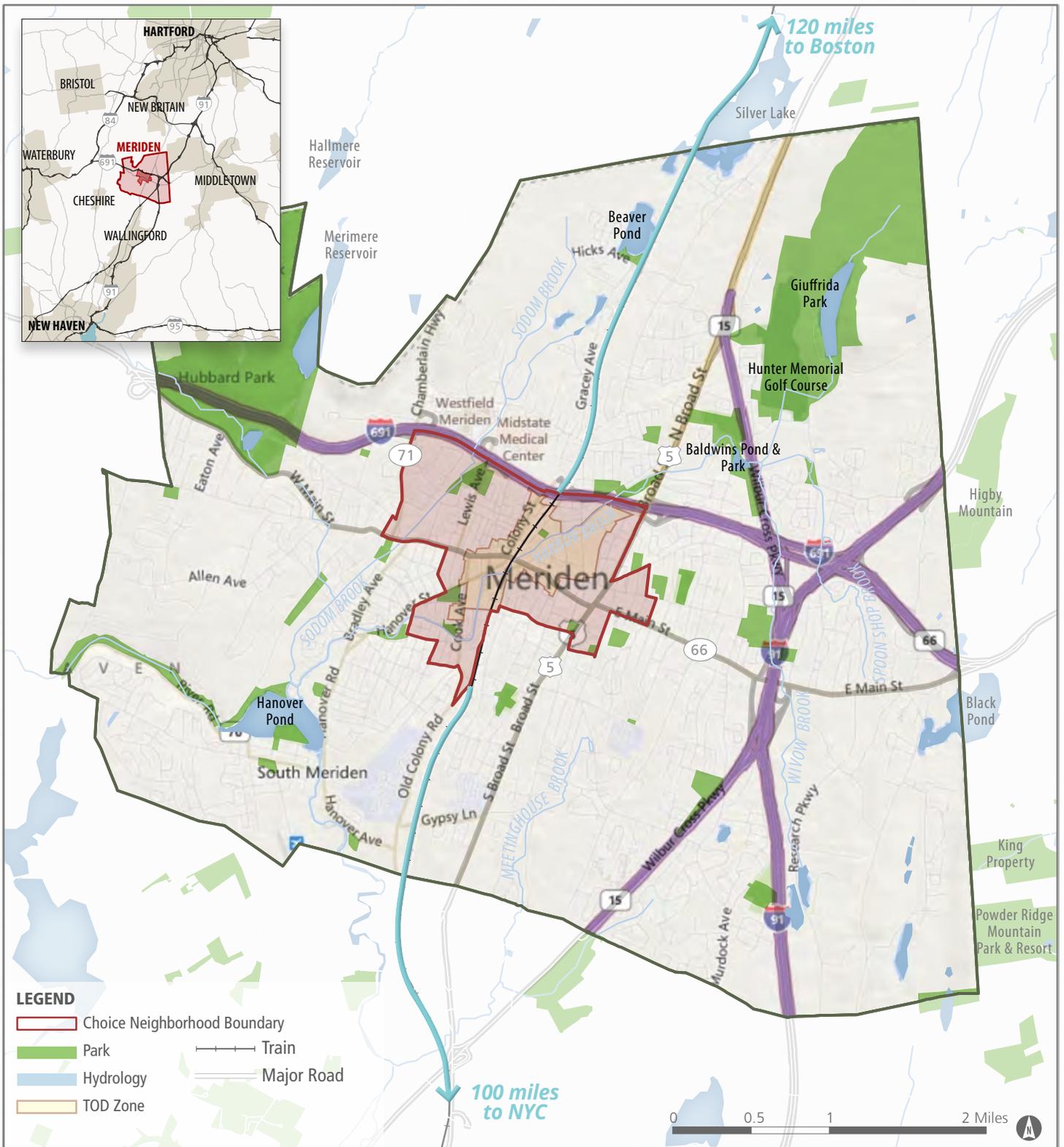
## Geographic Significance

Meriden's regional location is critical to its success. Meriden is well-served by existing highways, rail and a municipal airport. It is a location of choice for families looking to strike a balance between affordability, commuting convenience and access to open space. Meriden is minutes away from Connecticut's largest population and job centers – New Haven, Middletown, New Britain, Hartford, and Waterbury. Meriden also is the mid-point between Boston and New York City. Additionally the City is designated as a major stop on the proposed \$500 million New Haven-Hartford-Springfield commuter rail, connecting it to regional economies spanning from Fairfield County's "Gold Coast" to the Hartford/Springfield "Knowledge Corridor."

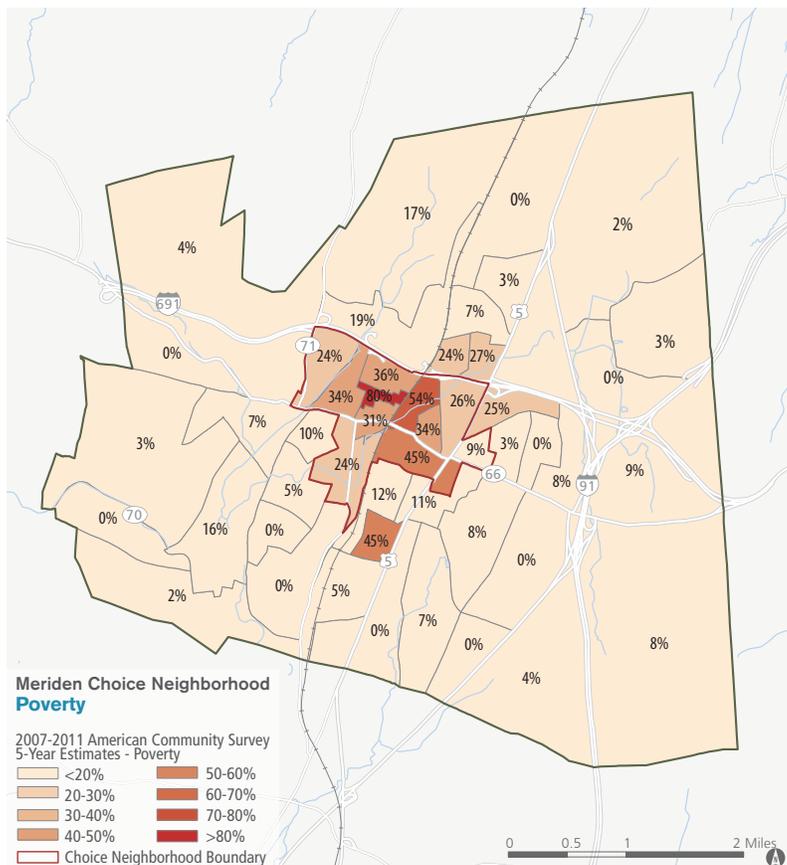
## Meriden Facts & Figures

Key details about Meriden

- Meriden is in the **HUD New Haven County FMR area**
- **Meriden** is in Connecticut's South Central Region Council of Governments along with 14 other municipalities and an **Metropolitan Statistical Area population of 570,000**
- There are **138,620 jobs within a 1 mile radius of train stations** in Meriden's commuting shed
- Meriden's **population today is 60,674**



Context Map



## DOWNTOWN MERIDEN

Meriden's once thriving downtown is the subject of this Transformation Plan. The Meriden Choice Neighborhood, or Downtown Meriden, consists of six contiguous census tracts with approximately 21% of the City's total resident population. The residents in this zone experience nearly two times the level of poverty as the City as a whole, almost three times the unemployment rate and sharply elevated rates of violent and property crime. Just 65% of the resident population has graduated high school, 24% of households in the neighborhood are single parent households and 12% speak English as a second language (based on MPSD information). The MHA's Mills Memorial Apartment Building is at the heart of the neighborhood distress - a 140 public housing unit site. Despite these conditions, the vibrant community has proven to be resilient and progressive in advocating for change. The future of the City is inextricably linked to the future of Downtown Meriden.

## Why Here?

The future of the City of Meriden is linked to the future of Downtown Meriden.

- **21% of Meriden's population lives here** in 6% of the City's total land area
- **Poverty rate in Downtown Meriden is 45%** – twice that of the City-wide rate
- **Incidents of violent crime in Downtown Meriden are higher than that of the City as a whole**
- **Vacancy rate in Downtown Meriden is 14%** – nearly double the rate of the City
- **Over \$25 million is slated to be invested in the Downtown in the next year and approximately \$100 million is anticipated to be invested in the next five years**

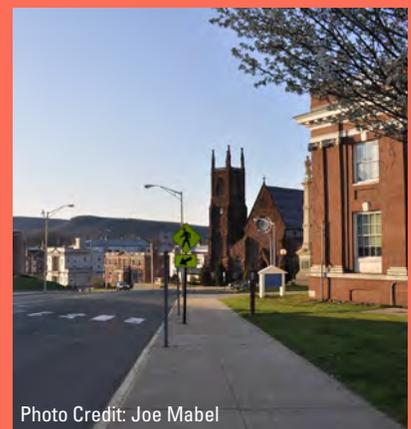


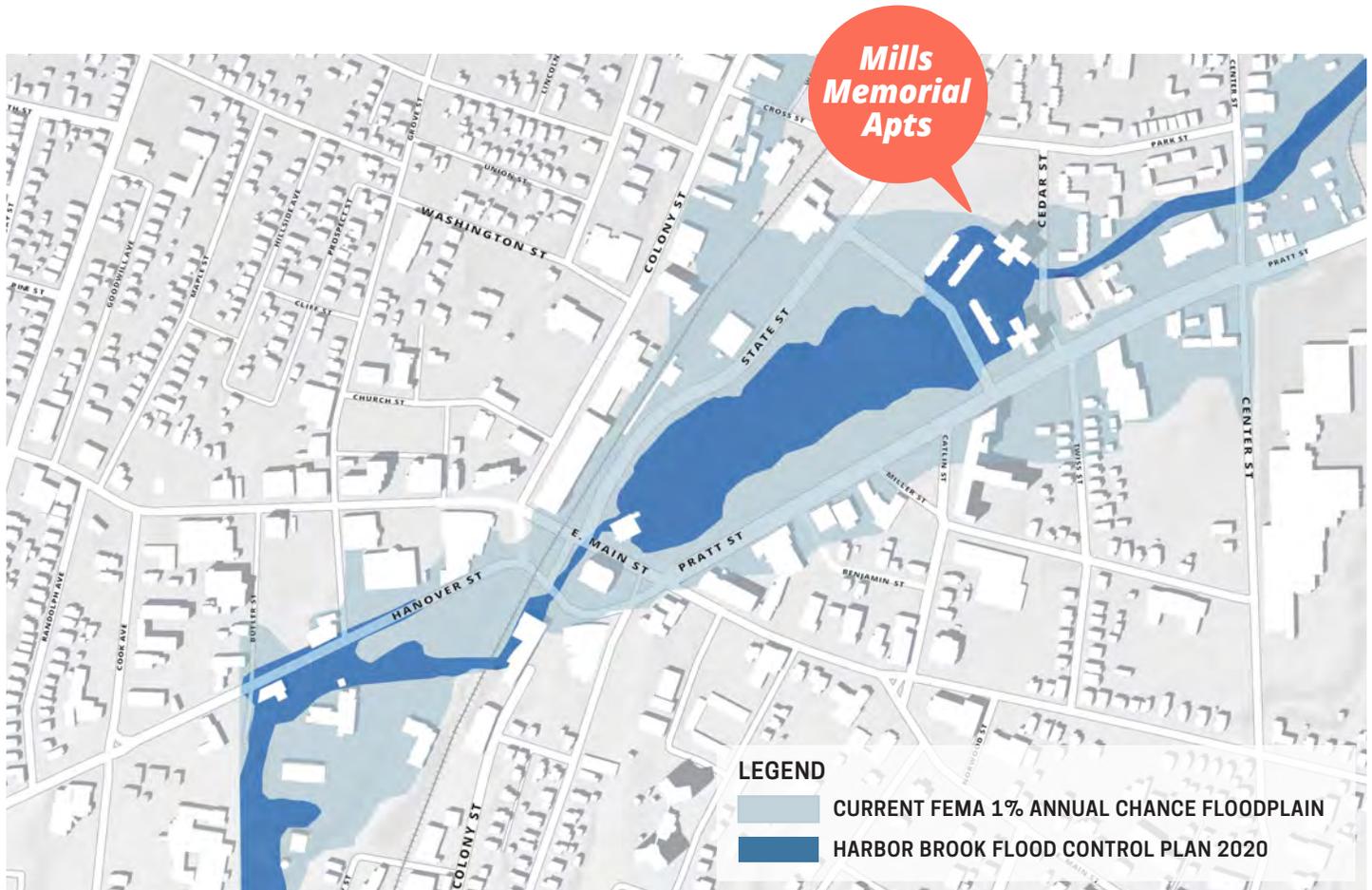
Photo Credit: Joe Mabel



### MILLS MEMORIAL APARTMENTS

The Mills Memorial Apartments is a 140 unit public housing development that is considered obsolete by today's standards. The Mills site has substantially inappropriate building design, site layout and street connectivity when compared to the surrounding neighborhood. The Mills site consists of five buildings (3 low-rise walk-up buildings and two high-rises) which turn at an angle to the surrounding streets and have multiple blind-spots and yard areas that violate defensible space design principles. Mills apartment units are undersized when compared to modern living standards, lacking dining areas and having bedrooms of under 100 sf, often less than 10' x 10'. On-site infrastructure and utilities at Mills are at the end of their useful lifespan. In particular, Harbor Brook, culverted under the site, poses a recurring flood hazard for both Meriden and downstream communities, with 11 "100-year" flood events since 1860. Upon completion of flood control measures at HUB park, the area where Mills buildings currently sit will remain undevelopable due to flooding constraints. The Mills buildings currently lie within the FEMA 100-Year Floodplain (see map on the following page) and will remain as such even with major flood control improvements slated for the next five years. The long term Harbor Brook Flood Control Plan calls for the demolition of the existing Mills buildings and daylighting Harbor Brook at the site.

	NUMBER	PERCENT
<b>BUILDING INFORMATION</b>		
Total Housing	140	100%
1 Bedroom	26	
2 Bedroom	52	
3 Bedroom	44	
4 Bedroom	18	
Total Bedrooms	334	
<b>HOUSEHOLD INFORMATION</b>		
Total Households	135	100%
Families with Children	93	68.9%
<b>TENANT INFORMATION</b>		
Total Tenants	387	100%
Disabled	28	7.2%
Non-disabled	359	92.8%



## PROFILE OF MILLS RESIDENTS

Mills households comprise 3% of all households in the Meriden Choice Neighborhood.

LARGER AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE:



2.5 = average household size for Choice Neighborhood

2.9 = average household size for Mills Residents

YOUNGER & MORE DIVERSE POPULATION:

22

median age of Mills Residents vs. 31 for residents in the Choice Neighborhood



80%

of Mills Residents are Hispanic vs 58% of Neighborhood Residents

35%

speak English as a second language

LOWER MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME:



\$9,144

Mills Residents



\$26,329

Choice Neighborhood

# Right Time, Right Place –

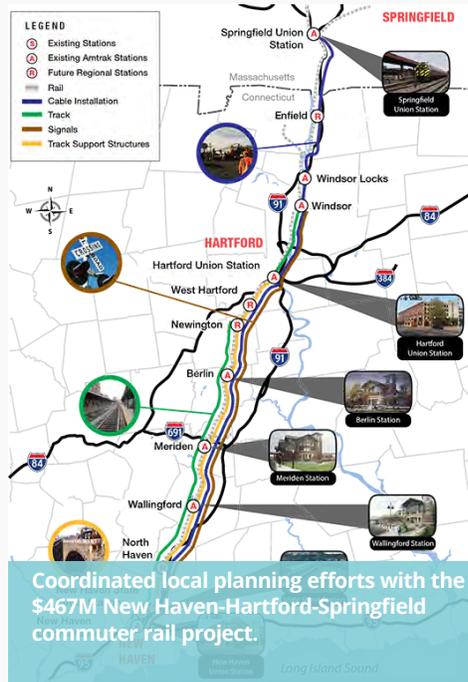
## MERIDEN'S UNIQUE LOCATION AND OPPORTUNE TIMING OF INVESTMENTS

Since its industrial heyday in the 19th Century, there has never been a more exciting time to live and work in Meriden. In the past decade, the City has seen an unprecedented amount of private, local, state, and federal investment in its downtown. From flood control, to a new train station, to new development throughout downtown, the City of Meriden and its partners are actively engaged in numerous efforts designed to transform downtown:

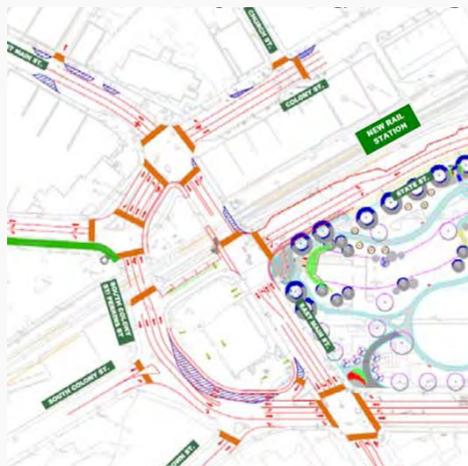
- Secured \$16M to implement the HUB park and flood control project. Completed 90% of construction activities as of November 2015.
- Procured private developers to redevelop four City-owned sites totaling approximately 15 acres within the TOD District (116 Cook Ave., 104 Butler St. and 77 Cooper St., 11 Crown St., and portions of the HUB site).
- Approved 2016 Capital Improvement Plan including flood control projects.
- Adopted TOD District zoning regulations.
- Coordinated local planning efforts with the \$467 million New Haven-Hartford-Springfield commuter rail project.
- Partnered with a private developer recently awarded 9% tax credit financing through CHFA to construct a 63-unit, 11,000 square foot commercial use TOD at 24 Colony and a 273-space parking structure.
- Completed 35% traffic engineering design plans for the TOD District.
- Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) acquired Meriden Intermodal Transit Center.
- CTDOT completed demolition of 88 State Street for commuter parking.
- Reconstructed West Main Street sidewalks from Cook Avenue to South Grove Street.
- Completed TOD master plan, market and financial analysis and updated downtown parking study.



Secured \$16M to implement the HUB park and flood control project. Completed 90% of construction activities as of November 2015.



Coordinated local planning efforts with the \$467M New Haven-Hartford-Springfield commuter rail project.



Completed 35% of traffic engineering for complete streets design plan for the TOD District.



Procured private developers to redevelop four City-owned sites.



Partnered with a private developer recently awarded 9% tax credit financing through CHFA to construct a 63-unit, 11,000 sf commercial use TOD with a parking structure at 24 Colony.



Reconstructed West Main Street sidewalks from Cook Avenue to South Grove Street. Photo Credit: John Phelan



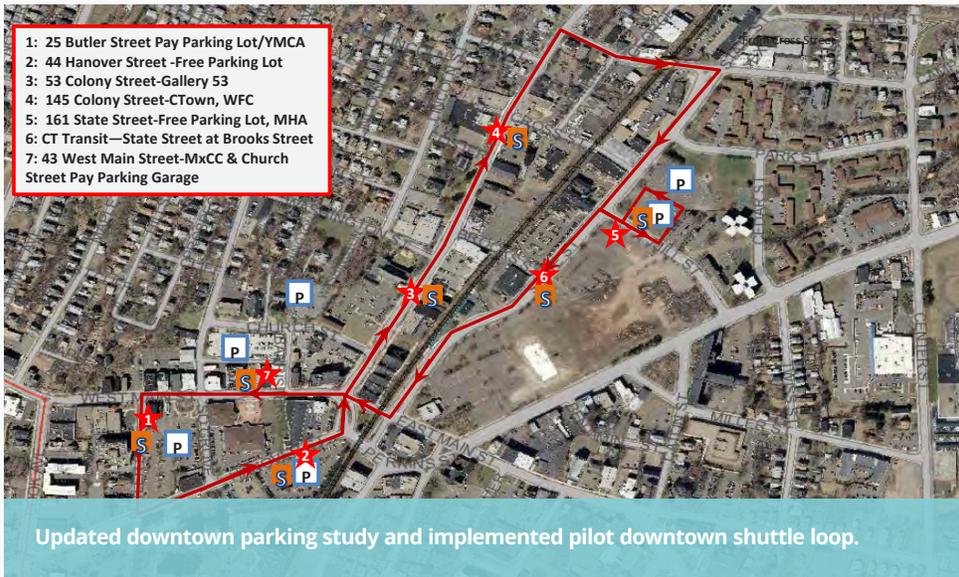
CTDOT completed demolition of 88 State Street for commuter parking.



CTDOT acquired Meriden Intermodal Transit Center.



Approved 2016 Capital Improvement Plan including flood control projects.



- 1: 25 Butler Street Pay Parking Lot/YMCA
- 2: 44 Hanover Street -Free Parking Lot
- 3: 53 Colony Street-Gallery 53
- 4: 145 Colony Street-CTown, WFC
- 5: 161 State Street-Free Parking Lot, MHA
- 6: CT Transit—State Street at Brooks Street
- 7: 43 West Main Street-MxCC & Church Street Pay Parking Garage

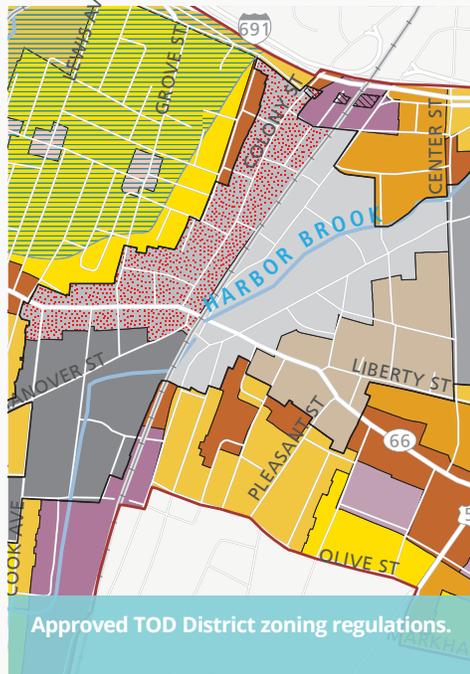
Updated downtown parking study and implemented pilot downtown shuttle loop.



Approved demolition disposition of two Mills low-rise buildings and environmental work on Mills block. This will include site remediation and removal of hazardous building materials where necessary to ensure that new development is free of environmental hazards.



MPSD - Meriden Public School District as a planning and implementation partner.



Approved TOD District zoning regulations.



C-Town Supermarket opened in 2014.



Meriden Children First - Meriden Promise Neighborhood Award.



## PHYSICAL NEIGHBORHOOD CHALLENGES / NEEDS

**D**owntown Meriden today is dominated by several large construction projects, including the 14-acre HUB park and flood control project located at I-77 State Street and 30-50 East Main Street, the demolition and reconstruction of the Meriden Transit Center at 60 State Street, the construction of a mixed use development at 24-38-44 Colony Street, and natural gas line upgrades along West Main, Hanover, Cook and Pratt Streets. The projects have resulted in road lane closures and reduction in parking capacity throughout downtown.

These major project sites are surrounded by clusters of medium to high density rental housing (many in fair or poor condition), small businesses, vacant buildings, and underutilized and vacant lots. Approximately 11% of the land in the CN is vacant, and 26% is tax exempt.



West and East Main Streets are the primary commercial corridor through the downtown, with Colony Street also serving as a commercial thoroughfare. Physical development along these corridors is mixed – generally older buildings converted into small shops or storefronts (most are in modest states of upkeep) and surface parking lots. While the bones of a once thriving downtown still exist, numerous shuttered storefronts indicate a struggling local retail economy.

To further compound this physically challenging environment, vehicular circulation in downtown Meriden is extremely difficult to navigate. Following the rise of the automobile and during the urban renewal era of the 1960's, traffic patterns on key downtown and commercial corridors, such as West Main Street, Hanover Street, and Cook Avenue, were modified from two-way to one-way to move traffic through and out of town as efficiently as possible. The system of one-way streets, intended



CT Transit bus stop State Street

to move cars efficiently towards downtown destinations, obfuscates drivers – many who wind up leaving the downtown out of frustration. The rail line also adds to this complexity. It divides the city (and downtown) into two halves. Most vehicular/ pedestrian connections are at grade, and except for East Main Street, located in areas that do not extend connections farther

into the City. The downtown roadway network has been aptly described as “...a sucking vortex of vehicular doom ... [where motorists] drive in confused circles wondering how you got there and more importantly how, and whether, you can ever get out again.” The City has completed the TOD Multi-Modal Roadway Improvement Plan that addresses the major deficiencies

of the downtown roadway network. Implementation of the proposed TOD Multi-modal Roadway improvement project will help address the deficiencies of the roadway network, resulting in 92,000 hours of travel time savings per year, decreased fuel use by 22,000 gallons per year, a reduction in the number of crashes by 27 percent, and the creation of 217 jobs.

Not only is the system confusing for vehicle modes, it is also confusing and often dangerous for non-vehicle modes including pedestrians, bicyclists and the disabled. The downtown is currently served by Amtrak rail service (the Vermonter Line) and CT Transit fixed route transit bus service (A, B & C Routes). Intercity bus service, which had been in Meriden at the Amtrak Station for over 30 years, ended when Greyhound and Peter Pan bus lines ceased serving Meriden in 2007. Access to the public transit system is hindered due to the fact that sidewalks and crosswalks are in disrepair, bus stops are not sheltered, wayfinding signs are haphazard, and bicycle lanes are non-existent. In a recent survey of downtown residents as part of the CN planning process, over 18% of survey respondents use a public transit bus as their primary means of



“Vortex of vehicular doom” traffic pattern.

transportation and over 18% primarily walk or bike. Only 60% use or share a personal automobile, and 32% percent said that they cannot afford a personal automobile. Over 80% of the survey respondents expressed a willingness to commute to work and/or obtain employment. However, pedestrian safety (such as interaction with speeding vehicles) was a key concern and a barrier to expanded use of the public transit system by downtown residents.

Further compounding the confusing and often dangerous traffic patterns is that previous improvements did not take into account long-term maintenance needs. In 1991, a downtown streetscape project was implemented that included brickwork and sidewalk bump outs. While some of the elements remain in fair condition, bump out configuration on West Main Street and Colony Street has made plowing and street sweeping time consuming and expensive. Brick pavers used in the sidewalks were thin set and have a tendency to pop out. Crosswalk pavers are missing at many locations due to potholes, utility work or the random vehicle strike. Trees have outgrown

the tree wells, cracking the sidewalks and lifting the grates. Bump outs reduce the availability of on-street parking, and vehicles in the act of parking cause all traffic to stop while they attempt to maneuver into the spaces. Vehicle speeds are high due to the lack of opposing traffic or pedestrian activity. There is frequent weaving as vehicles position for lanes and avoidance of the aforementioned parking vehicles. Overall, the existing streetscapes are poorly maintained and the overall appearance decreases quality of life throughout downtown Meriden.

The Mills Memorial Housing Complex sits at the center of downtown Meriden, across the street from both the HUB and Meriden Transit Center sites. The Mills site, as currently configured, is an island onto its own and is not connected to the surrounding neighborhood. The five buildings that comprise the complex are monolithic, towering above the surrounding buildings, and generally do not conform to block "street walls," creating pockets of indefensible space throughout the site. Significant portions of the site are

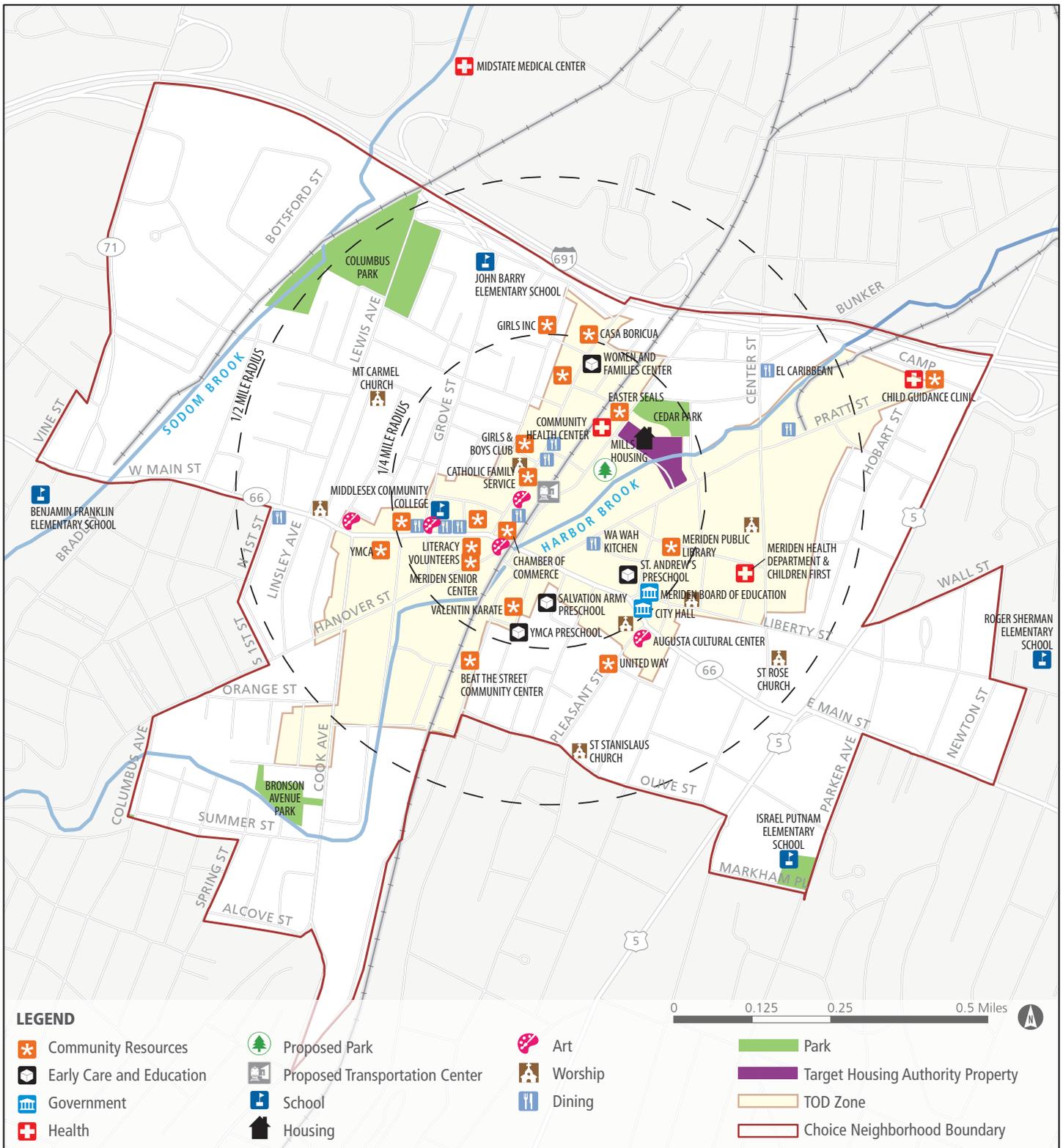
underutilized as surface parking or under-programmed open space. The site is located within the 100-year flood plain and atop Harbor Brook, which will be daylighted as part of the Harbor Brook flood control project. Due to its central location and lack of ownership of common areas, criminal activities (mostly drug crime) from various parts of the City gravitate towards Mills. Some juvenile crime such as vandalism and gang-like activity also has been reported anecdotally.

Residential neighborhoods surrounding the downtown core (along streets such as Twiss, Washington and Grove) have high concentrations of rental housing. Many large formerly single-family homes have been converted into two, three and four family apartments. Some of these buildings, due to density and absent landlords, have fallen into disrepair. The median age of the housing stock in the neighborhood is 74 years old. Many of the structures in the neighborhood show their age, with peeling paint, boarded windows and overgrowth being commonplace.



Photo Credit: Christopher Zajac



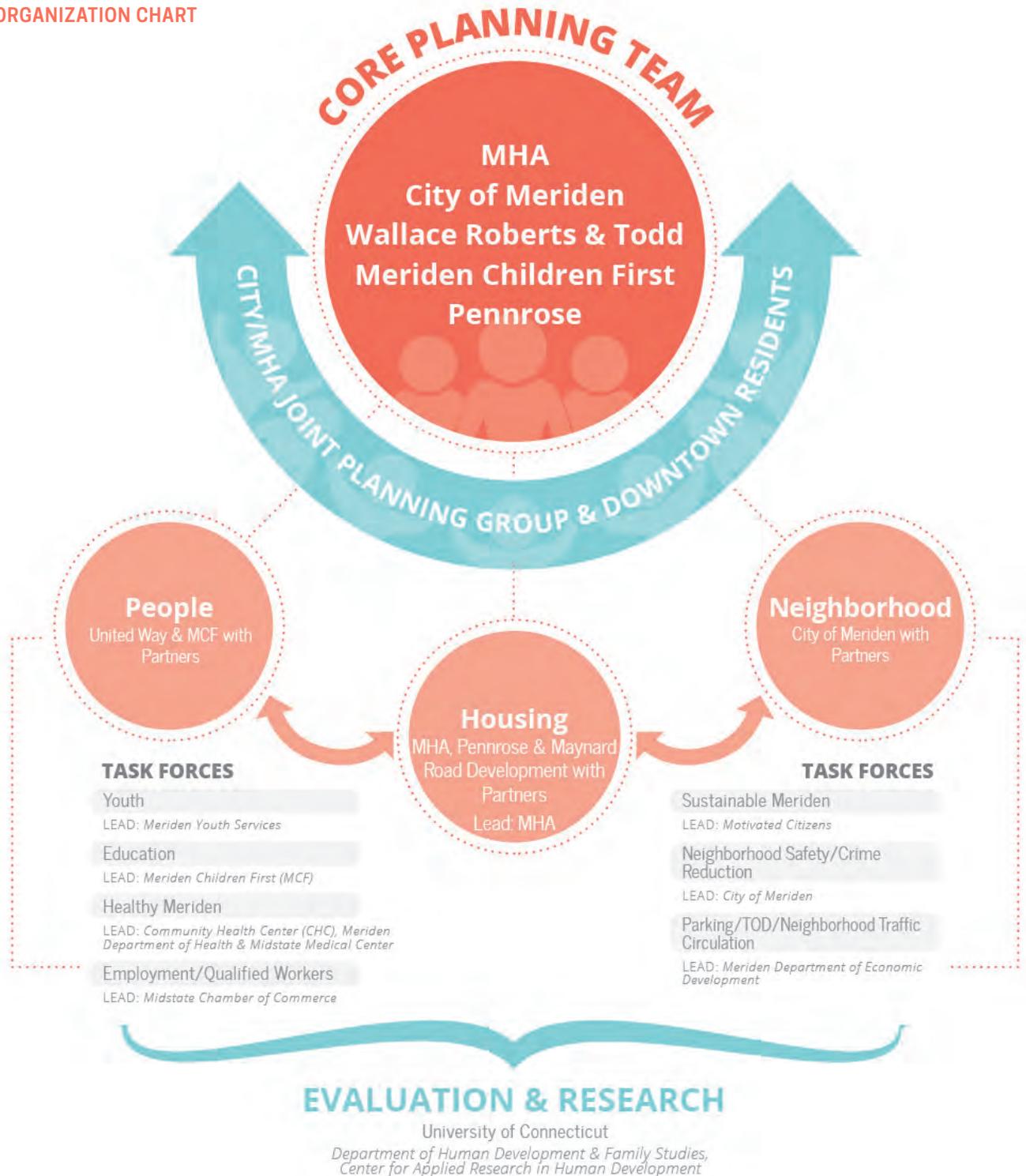


Asset Map

**LEADERSHIP IN PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

This plan is the result of deep-rooted collaboration among 20 different agencies and organizations. The primary leaders of the planning process are the MHA and the City of Meriden. MHA will oversee and be responsible for implementing this plan. The City of Meriden will lead the Neighborhood component of this plan. The City of Meriden, MHA, Pennrose Properties, and Maynard Road Development will lead the Housing component of this plan. United Way of Meriden and Wallingford will lead the People component of the plan, and within this component, Meriden Children First, a Promise Neighborhood designee, will be the principal education partner. Downtown Meriden was awarded a 2012 Department of Education Promise Neighborhood Planning Grant.

**TEAM ORGANIZATION CHART**





# CHAPTER 2 Analysis

Where should resources be located to address the neighborhood's most compelling needs? What is working for neighborhood families, and how can these successes be built upon? What change has occurred since the completion of the 2012 Promise Neighborhood Needs Assessment? How can the community be involved in the Choice Neighborhoods planning process?

The goal of the needs assessment was to address these questions, develop the necessary strategies and identify the actions that create the biggest impact for neighborhood investment. The planning process strived to ensure the voices of under-represented community members were heard and were thoroughly and fairly represented.

## NEEDS ASSESSMENT CATEGORIES:

Demographic Information

People - Family/Children/Education

People - Overall Health

People - Employment

People - Senior/Services

Neighborhood - Transportation/Recreation

Neighborhood - Safety

Neighborhood - Community

Housing

## NEEDS ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

### Methodology

The needs assessment process, conducted from October 2013 to November 2014, included the following key activities:

- Development of Choice Neighborhoods Survey:** Members of the CN team administered 385 surveys as a statistical sample. The survey served as the primary means for the collection of information.
- Data Collection and Entry:** Data was collected by administration of in-person interviews over a period of four months. Data gatherers included members of the CN team.
- Interviews and Focus Groups:** Five focus groups were created based on the topics contained in the CN Survey: *Healthy Meriden, Downtown Living, Education, Employment, and Quality of Life*. The purpose of the focus groups was to collect additional information about attitudes and ideas regarding downtown redevelopment and to inform business owners and residents about the proposed changes to downtown. Several one-on-one interviews were also held with Mills residents and highlighted in a monthly CN newsletter that is distributed to all Mills residents.
- Secondary Data Collection:** The City collected land use and other data using its GIS programming capabilities and also utilized data provided by HUD at two CN gatherings held in 2014. This data has been used to highlight and analyze information collected during the CN survey process.
- Data Analysis:** Each member of the CN team was assigned the role of reviewing and analyzing the data and reporting on the findings around their area of expertise.
- Report Generation:** CN team members provided written analysis of the data and provided sections to staff of MCF and the project consultant to include in the final report.



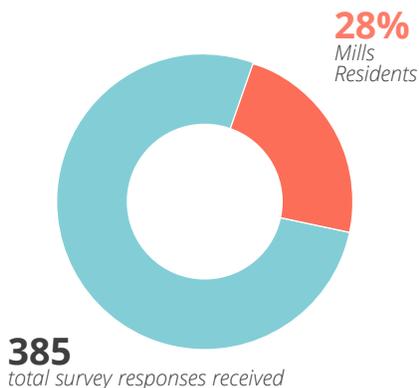
The Choice Neighborhoods 2014 Spring Festival resulted in the completion of nearly 120 surveys.



### Survey Process Summary

The CN team developed the CN survey to assess the topics of education, health, employment, transportation, safety, housing, and community life. A host of volunteers, including members of the CN team, conducted the surveys. To target MHA residents, MHA staff, along with outreach workers from MCF, went door-to-door and asked residents to complete the survey. The surveys were also electronically available through the Survey Monkey Data System. Survey respondents received a \$10 gift card to the new C-Town Grocery Store.

The MHA sponsored a successful Kick-Off Event on May 31, 2014 and collected 122 completed surveys. The event included activities for children, a barbecue and a local DJ. Based on the success of the kick-off event, the team also conducted surveys at the National Night Out and at the local Farmer's Market.



A total of 385 survey responses were received. Respondents live throughout the Meriden Choice Neighborhood and in the immediate vicinity. Of the survey respondents, 68 lived outside the area and 28% were Mills tenants.

## Meriden Choice Comprehensive Community Needs Assessment

- **Multiple avenues of outreach** – festivals, door-to-door, MCF connectors, and needs assessment nodes at library, City Hall, MHA, and meetings
- **385 completed surveys**
- **28% were Mills households;** 108 Mills households – 80% of occupied Mills housing units
- **45% were surveyed** two years ago during the **Promise Neighborhood** planning process
- **18% lived outside the neighborhood boundary,** but considered themselves with vested interest in the downtown

**Survey Respondents Demographics**

The demographic data of survey respondents was collected and analyzed in comparison with the data from the Choice Neighborhood and the City of Meriden.

Survey respondents were mostly single (45%) or divorced (15%) – only 34% indicated they were married (6% unreported). These statistics paralleled the CN statistics (43%, 15%, and 37% respectively). Compared to the City of Meriden as a whole, people within the CN have a lower marriage rate. The survey respondents and the CN have a relatively low median age (30, 31 years old), compared to the City of Meriden as a whole (38 years old). Over one third (39.1%) of survey respondent households include a member 55 or older.

Overall, the Choice Neighborhood is 57% Hispanic, 30% white and 10% African American. (Source, American Community Survey, 2012). Hispanic survey respondents made up 60.5% of all survey respondents; this accurately represents the ethnicity of the Choice Neighborhood whose population is 57% Hispanic (compared to the City of Meriden as a whole at 29%). However, more than half (57%) of the survey respondents were white (52% Choice Neighborhood) and 18% were black (15% Choice Neighborhood) suggesting that these groups were somewhat over represented in the survey.

	MILLS RESIDENTS	SURVEY PARTICIPANTS	CHOICE NEIGH. <sup>1</sup>	CITY OF MERIDEN <sup>1</sup>	NEW HAVEN COUNTY <sup>1</sup>
<b>DEMOGRAPHICS</b>					
Population	387	N/A	12,677	60,674	862,477
% Hispanic	80%	60.5%	58%	29%	15%
Number of Households	135	385	4,956	23,977	334,502
Median Age	22	30	31	38	39
<b>ECONOMY/INCOME</b>					
Poverty Rate	100%	N/A	45% <sup>3</sup>	14% <sup>2</sup>	12% <sup>4</sup>
Median Household Income	\$9,144	\$5K-\$10K	\$26,329	\$51,363	\$59,840
<b>HOUSING</b>					
Owner %	0%	N/A	18%	54%	56%
Renter %	100%	N/A	70%	38%	36%
Vacant %	-	N/A	12%	8%	8%
Households with members over 55 years	3%	39%	18%	27%	27%
Median Home Value	-	N/A	\$166,346	\$175,444	\$233,148

Sources: <sup>1</sup>ESRI Business Analyst  
<sup>2</sup>ACS 2009-2013  
<sup>3</sup>HUD Mapping Tool  
<sup>4</sup>Census 2010



**ROSSY MATEO:** *Rossy and her daughter Kate have lived at the Mills Apartments since 2007. Living at Mills gives her and her daughter access to everything Meriden has to offer. As a committed resident, Rossy is excited about the changes the Choice Neighborhood will bring to Meriden. She is looking forward to a better future in Meriden for her, her daughter*

*and the entire Mills community with less stereotyping, less crime and lots of healthy and entertaining activities to keep young children off the streets!*

# Community Needs Assessment Key Findings

## DOWNTOWN LIVING

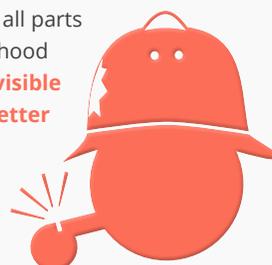
Families in the neighborhood continue to face significant challenges. The most common challenges are **not having enough money for food and/or housing, not being able to find work, and having a**



**lot of stress in their lives.**

The Choice data corresponds to the Promise Neighborhood data, although more pronounced.

Respondents in all parts of the neighborhood feel that **more visible patrol (43%), better street lighting (39%) and better security systems (36%)** are the types of crime prevention methods that would be meaningful and successful.



Neighborhood characteristics such as quality, safety and cost are the most important factors in choosing where to live. Shared on-site amenities ranked the lowest factor. More than one dedicated parking space, availability of stores, restaurants/bars, services, access to highway, quality of public schools, public green/open space nearby, and walk-ability were also amenities that ranked higher than average by prospective residents.



**60%**

**More than 60% of the respondents would consider it a likable place to live and call home** if Downtown Meriden were extensively revitalized.



The top three safety concerns were: **drug use, drug dealing and speeding.**



Although the crime rate decreased in the neighborhood, residents in the Choice Neighborhood only feel **somewhat or very safe (66%) in the neighborhood during the day.** That sense



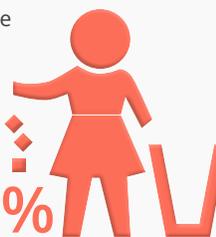
**66%**

of safety drops to only **46% after dark.**

Crime statistics, however, show that crime committed during the day is almost exactly the same as crimes committed at night.



**32%** of respondents said that they were extremely concerned or very concerned about **litter.**



**47%** of respondents said that they were extremely concerned or very concerned about **pests** (rats, mice or roaches).



Residents were asked where would they prefer to live if the Choice Neighborhood was redeveloped in the next five years. Choice Neighborhood residents responded overwhelmingly **(66%) that they would prefer to stay in their current location or**

**60% Owning** **40% Renting**

**somewhere within the Choice Neighborhood area.** Of those, 60% said they would be interested in owning, and 40% said they would be interested in renting.



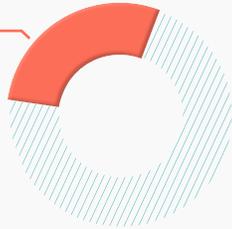
**WANT TO STAY**

**66%**

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Meriden Choice respondents were significantly more likely to be unemployed than Meriden as a whole.

**25.6%** of total Choice residents reported not working but actively looking for work.



Of the respondents who identified themselves as unemployed,

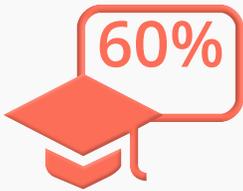
**76%** were without work for more than one year.

As to the **barriers to employment**, 57% of respondents indicated lacking the right skills, needing more education and having transportation issues getting to a job.



**>50%** of Choice Neighborhood survey respondents **have not used employment services or small business training services** (job fairs, small business training, work study programs, small business loans, training and continuing education, business mentoring, and youth employment).

**Many of these services are offered free and appear to be underutilized by the Choice Neighborhood population.**



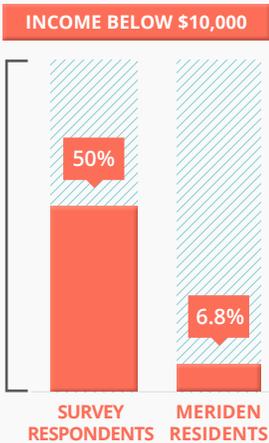
60% of the respondents expressed an interest in **“on the Job” and classroom training, ESL and Career Counseling. All of these programs are in fact offered in the district.** The CN team must

determine why residents are not using them and figure out how to address this as a community.



For respondents who did utilize existing programs, **Job Fairs, Training, CT Works, Meriden Public Library, and Youth Programs** ranked highest on the satisfaction scale, suggesting better awareness of these programs could help address the high unemployment levels.

**Almost 50%** of the Choice Survey respondents said that their **incomes were \$10,000 or less.** This is well below



Meriden as a whole where only 6.8% had incomes below \$10,000.

Over 85% of the survey respondents indicated that their household income was below \$40,000. This is also below the City of Meriden as a whole, where less than 50% of the population reports household income less than \$50,000 per year.

**24%** of respondents indicated that **small business training, loans and workshops would be most beneficial.** This suggests that there is an entrepreneurial and self-employed population that feels that they are underserved.



### TRANSPORTATION



Choice respondents (compared to Promise respondents) **show a more pronounced need for internet access and personal automobile access.** Both of these within

the context of other connectivity needs are greater within the neighborhood than outside.

In the Choice survey, **respondents used public transit to a much greater extent** than respondents in other surveys. Only 60% use or share an automobile.

**32%** of Choice Neighborhood respondents said that **they cannot afford a personal automobile.**



**>60%** of the Choice respondents **know about the new commuter rail**

program coming in 2016. 70% of the respondents said they would consider or it is very likely that they would use the commuter rail service if it could provide access to a "well-paying job."



**Only 1%** of respondents indicated that **they currently use the train.** This

is not surprising considering the current Amtrak service is neither convenient nor affordable.

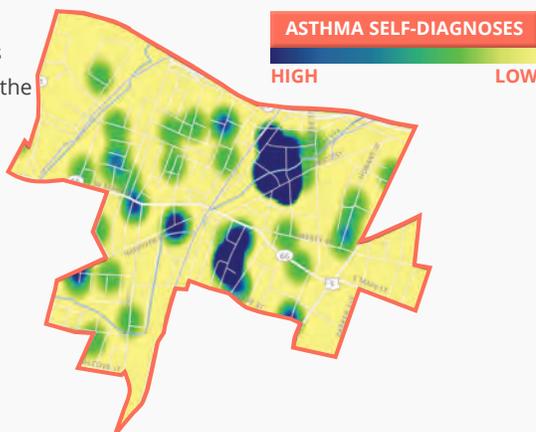
In another survey (**Meriden employee survey**) **45%** of the respondents were **unaware of the new commuter rail service** coming to Meriden.

### HEALTH

The self-reported asthma rate among children in the neighborhood is **alarmingly high (42%)** and trending in the wrong direction.



**42%** of children in the neighborhood reportedly suffer from asthma



A positive sign is that **most families within the neighborhood are insured and meet their health and dental needs appropriately.** In fact, there is an increase in the percentage of families who brought their children to doctors and dentists recently (compared to the Promise Neighborhood survey).

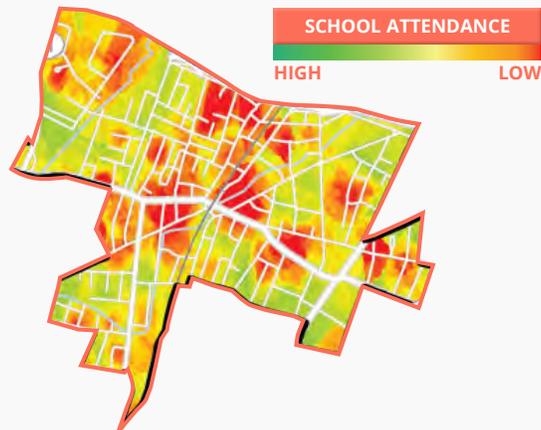


**EDUCATION**

Among the surveyed parents with school-age children,



School attendance is lower in the Choice Neighborhood compared to the surrounding neighborhoods and the City of Meriden.



More parents are taking active roles in their children's education since the Promise Neighborhood Survey in 2012.

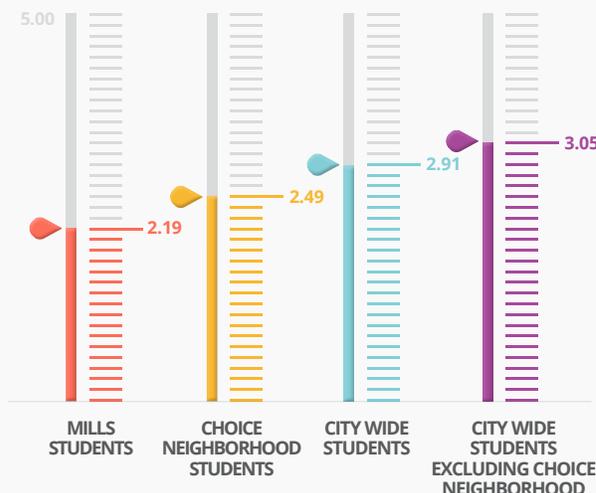


More than 80% of parents feel that their children's school is providing a safe place for them with a quality education.



Despite these positive feelings, children in the neighborhood are not performing as well as those in surrounding neighborhoods.

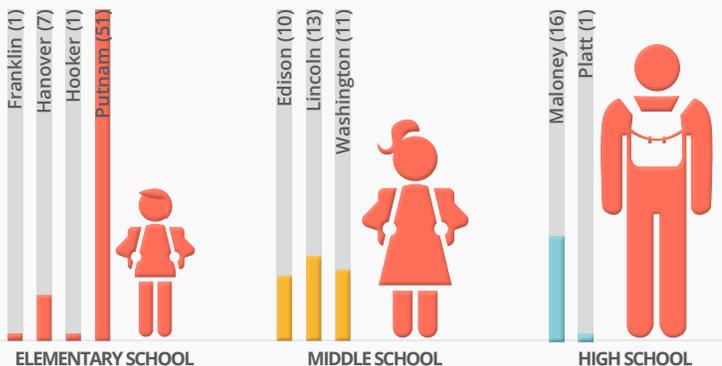
Children in the neighborhood have an average score of 2.49 (basic/below proficient) in the reading portion of the 3rd and 4th grade Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT). That is more than half a point below that of the surrounding neighborhoods – 3.05 (proficient) and Meriden as a whole 2.91.



**73%** of families with young children who are eligible for subsidized or unsubsidized early childhood education **DO NOT participate in programs**, citing cost and “other” as the two biggest challenges.

EDUCATION

Mills students attend the following schools



Within the Meriden Public School District there are two high schools that serve the students, Maloney High School (6 students) and Platt High School (1 student).

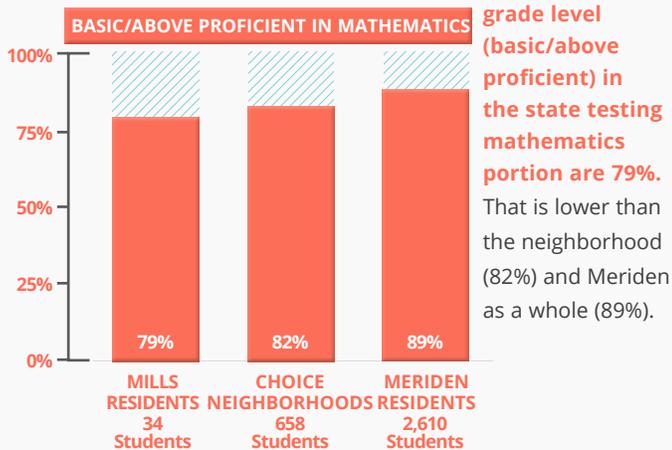
**Maloney High School** has a graduation rate of **73.9%**

**Platt High School** has a graduation rate of **69.3%**

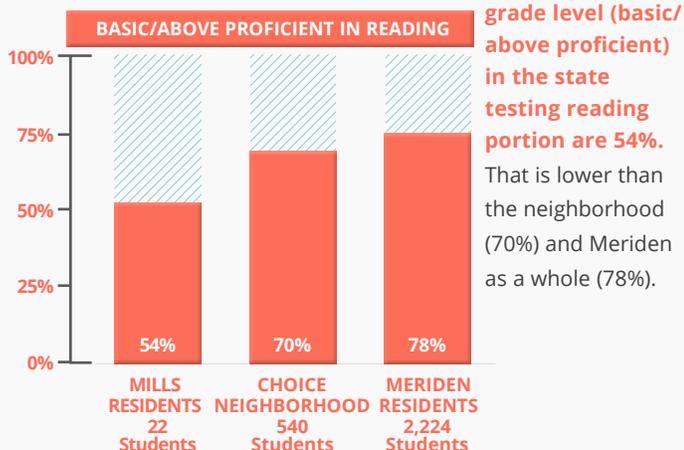


\*Connecticut Open Data (2013)

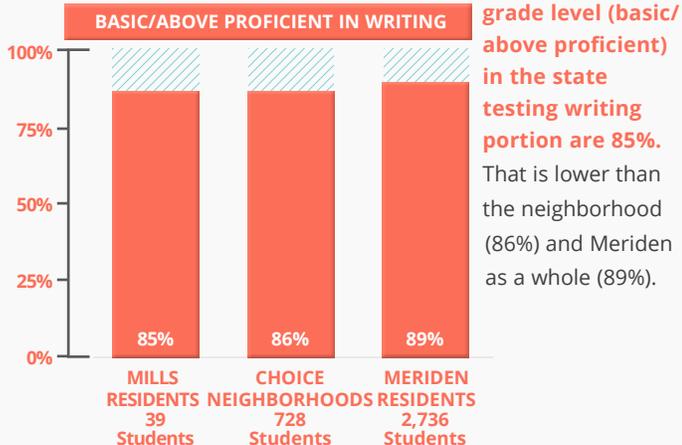
The percentage of Mills students (grades 3-8) at or above



The percentage of Mills students (grades 3-8) at or above



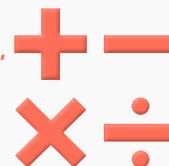
The percentage of Mills students (grades 3-8) at or above



According to the high school state testing math, reading and writing scores, Mills students are not performing as well as the neighborhood students.

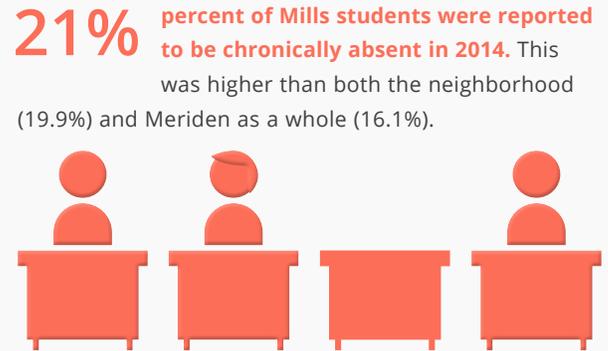
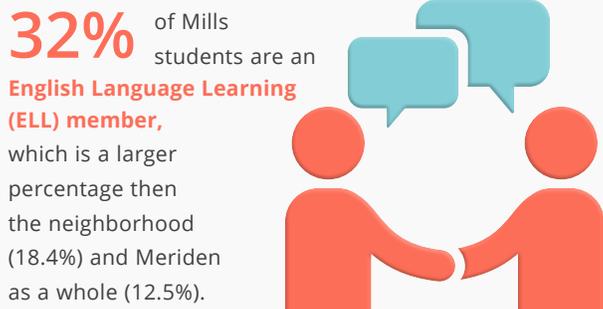
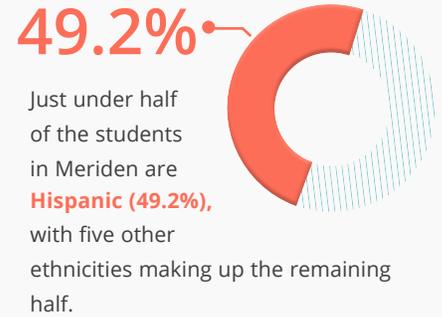
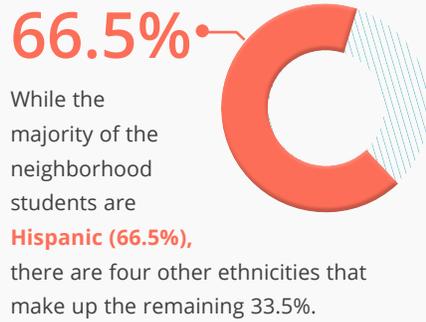
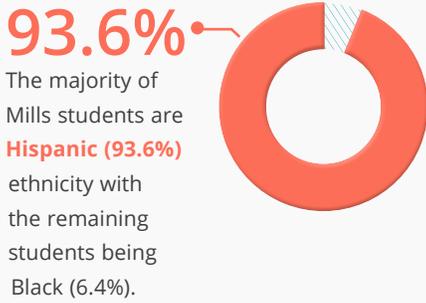


Children in Mills scored an average score of **2.3** in the math portion, **1.6** in the reading portion and **2.3** in the writing portion. These scores are lower than the neighborhoods – **2.5, 2.6 and 2.9**, respectively.

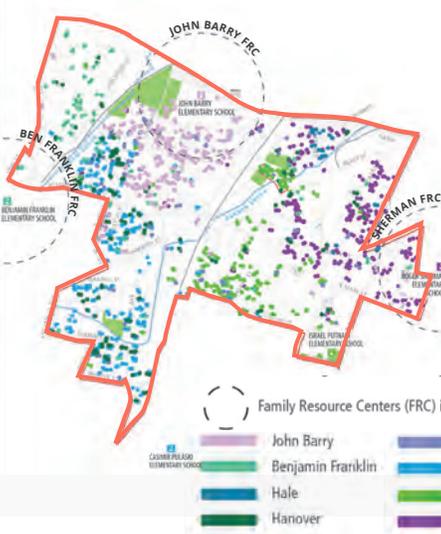


Source: Meriden Public School District (2013)

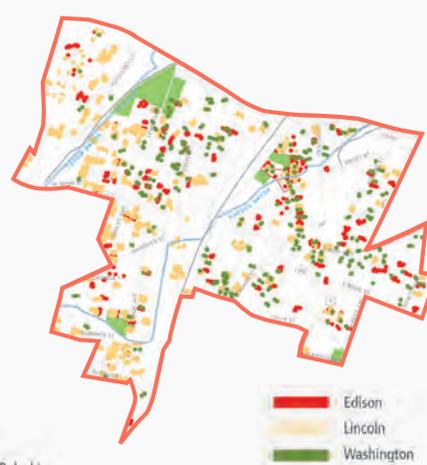
EDUCATION



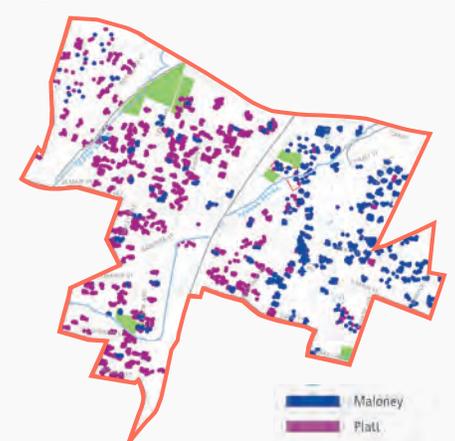
Elementary School student population



Middle School student population



High School student population



Source: Meriden Public School District (2013)

## Community Needs Assessment: Focus on Mills Residents

The following summary compares the needs of Mills residents with residents of the larger Choice Neighborhood. Data for the report was derived from a needs assessment survey given to 385 residents in the Meriden Choice Neighborhood through the Survey Monkey portal.

### SAFETY

- **Negative perception of safety is more pronounced among Mills residents.** Only 46% of Mills residents said they felt safe in the neighborhood at night compared to 61% of neighborhood residents.
- **Safety concerns related to drug use/dealing are more of an issue for Mills residents.** 54% reported drug use and 46% reported drug dealing as an issue at Mills compared to 32% and 29% of non-Mills residents, respectively.
- **Better security systems (47%), more visible police patrol (44%) and a crime watch program (42%)** are the types of crime prevention methods that Mills residents felt would be most successful.

### INCOME & EMPLOYMENT

- **Mills residents reported lower average income.** Mills residents average income was less than \$5,000, while non-Mills residents reported average income between \$10,001 and \$20,000.
- **Mills residents have greater difficulty obtaining employment** compared to the rest of the Choice Neighborhood population.
- **Not having the right skills, education, transportation restrictions, and language issues** were the main barriers to employment for Mills residents.
- **Both Hispanic and Mills residents indicated that having access to English-as-a-second-language (ESL) classes would be beneficial.**

### HEALTH

- **Higher risk of asthma and breathing issues** reported among Mills residents.
- **Greater concern about mold** issues among Mills residents.
- **Mills residents were very concerned about pests/rats/mice/roaches** compared to Choice Neighborhood residents who reported being only somewhat concerned.

### HOUSING

- **Fewer Mills residents indicated that they liked their current location.** However, a larger than expected number of Mills residents responded that they would like to live somewhere within the Choice Neighborhood.
- **Building amenities (community room, gym, etc) outdoor amenities (playground, tot lot, etc), and convenient parking were more important to Mills residents** than to residents of the Choice Neighborhood.

### TRANSPORTATION

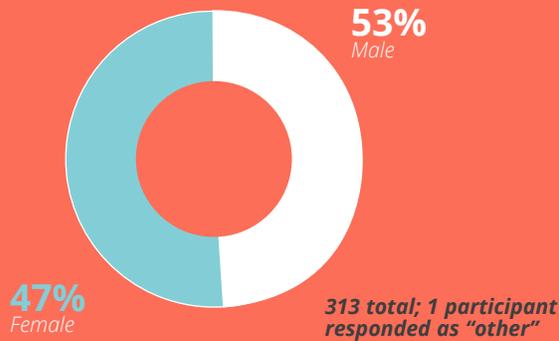
- **Mills residents have more transportation limitations when compared to the larger Choice Neighborhood.** Main concerns included not being able to afford a car, infrequent/unreliable public transportation and difficult parking.

## Community Needs Assessment: Focus on Youth

A committed group of youth in Meriden conducted a survey with 313 teens in the neighborhood this Spring.

- Responses came from youth at three high schools (Wilcox, Platt and Maloney) and other venues in the City.
- 32% of responses came from youth within the Choice Neighborhood.
- A majority of youth said they would go to a Youth Center and 86% felt that the Center is very important.
- A majority of the youth get rides from a friend/family member or walk.
- 50%+ believe the Youth Center will reduce stress in Meriden's youth.
- The most important things/activities youth wanted to see at the Center include:
  1. Job Training/Mentoring
  2. Quiet Study Area
  3. Tutoring
  4. Computers
  5. Workout Area

### Participants by Gender



### Average curfew of participating youth:

WEEKDAYS	WEEKENDS
Age 14-16 8-10 PM	Age 14-16 10 PM-12 AM
Age 17+ 9-11 PM	Age 17+ No Curfew
Age 18+ No Curfew	Age 18+ No Curfew

### Top 5 reasons youth **WOULD GO** to a youth center:

- 1 Free admission/use
- 2 Interesting activities
- 3 Open after school
- 4 Potential for job opportunity
- 5 Open during vacations

### Top 3 reasons youth would **NOT** go to a Youth Center

- 1 Admission fee
- 2 No say in what goes on in the Center
- 3 Lack of transportation



## Market Study Key Findings

The City of Meriden contracted a market financial and economic analysis of transit-oriented development (TOD) adjacent to the Meriden Intermodal Transit Center in Downtown Meriden. This study includes a detailed quantitative and qualitative analysis of market conditions impacting the potential TOD study area (a half-mile radius surrounding the transit center). This serves as a market study for non-replacement Choice units in order to site new mixed-income housing in areas within the TOD study area.

A socioeconomic analysis found that the initial market for the project will not be driven by current residents in the TOD study area, who are primarily of low incomes. Instead, the primary, near-term demand will be driven by two age cohorts currently living in the primary market area (PMA); young workers and graduates (age 25 to 34) and empty nesters (age 55 to 74). Both age cohorts tend to favor smaller rental or homeownership units in an urban setting with access to transit, entertainment, amenities, and jobs. Empty

nesters also have higher disposable incomes, which will foster future residential and retail development. However, the currently low-values and low-incomes in the study area represent a challenge; early development around the transit station will need to offer significant value and quality to attract future residents.

Employees both living and working in the area decreased slightly from 2006 to 2010 and, at about 13%, is low relative to the surrounding region. However, the share of workers commuting into the PMA (nearly 35,000 workers) increased slightly over that time frame. This trend indicates a latent demand for housing in the PMA as a percentage of those currently commuting would be expected to move into the PMA given more attractive housing choices.

Additionally, the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield (NHHS) rail service will offer Meriden as a potential housing choice for persons who want to commute to one of the many employment centers (with nearly 140,000 jobs) along the transit line (e.g., Hartford and New Haven). Given that many metropolitan

area major employers are located within a mile of rail stations along the NHHS line, Meriden's potential as a "point of origin" for prospective commuters will be quite great.

A review of social infrastructure also found that the study area fails to provide adequate open space, childcare services and affordable quality housing options, based on industry standards. A land improvement to land value (ILV) analysis found that 35% of the land area (and 25% of all parcels) in the study area have ILV ratios of less than 2.0 (that is, where the built structure was valued at half the value of the assessed land). These are considered to be underdeveloped, or prospective opportunities for redevelopment. Redeveloping such low-value land parcels close-in to a rail station could prove fiscally beneficial to the local community, based on the likelihood of generating net positive tax revenues.

Current low vacancy rates in Meriden suggest a tight rental market and potential latent demand, favoring residential construction in the area. This trend is supported by strong positive growth in non-family households, suggesting high receptivity for TOD-style multi-family units. An analysis of residential supply

and demand indicates a potential demand for 600 to 1,000 housing units in the TOD study area targeted to young workers and graduates and empty nesters.

The near-term challenge associated with this is financial; due to the current low rents in the market, a cap on pricing in the near-term can be expected, limiting the upside for developers until housing demand increases markedly. For the early-phase projects to get underway, public support in the way of up-front subsidies and incentives will be necessary.

The analysis, however, showed little demand for office space, specifically for large corporate office space users. The low demand for office space is expected to be met largely with existing vacant space, of which there is plenty in the region surrounding Meriden. The potential opportunity in the near-term is small-scale office space to provide medical, financial and personal services to serve the local market. In the five to ten-year window, a potential of 20,000 SF could be readily absorbed. Similar to the residential use, the near-term challenge for this office space development is that public incentives and subsidies would be needed to make private investment financially viable.

Retail demand in the vicinity of the Meriden TOD study area is expected to be largely limited to convenience and community serving retail with a focus on the local market. Projections of retail demand outlined in the prior study (2014 TOD Plan by Parsons Brinckerhoff) far exceed what is indicated by this analysis, estimated to be up to an additional 28,000 SF. To “ground truth” (confirming the absolute truth) the quantitative findings, the CN team conducted interviews with real estate professionals and conducted both an online area employee survey and a telephone survey of area residents.

Key findings of the employee survey are:

- Less than half of respondents are aware of the improvements coming to Meriden.
- Very few people live near transit (less than 10%).
- People generally do not have a good impression of Downtown Meriden.



**C-TOWN SUPERMARKET:** *The opening of C-Town Supermarket was eagerly awaited by City officials, and more importantly by residents of the community, and now the wait is over! The Diaz family are experienced business owners of C-Towns in New York and New Britain, CT. After finding success in New Britain, they saw an opportunity to translate that success into a larger store here in Meriden. The 12,000 square-foot store opened August 8, 2014, and currently employs 25 people. Based on the overwhelmingly positive response from the community and the Diaz family's commitment to Meriden, the store looks to grow rapidly and do what it takes to provide fresh, healthy food to residents. Thank you to the Diaz family for partnering with the City and MHA by offering \$10 gift cards to those who completed surveys for the Choice Neighborhoods Plan.*

The responses reflect a common theme, that in order to attract people to new residential housing in the TOD study area, there will also need to be a change in perception and/or reality regarding Downtown Meriden.

The telephone survey confirmed both the demographic analysis and the employee survey findings, that young workers and graduates would have the most interest in moving to the TOD study area, followed by empty nesters (but less so those empty nesters from higher income brackets). Therefore, the focus should be on providing the amenities of interest to these age groups, primarily basic services (grocery, banking, medical), parks and outdoor space, and restaurants. It also reiterates the point that providing new, high quality housing at low price points will be a challenge.

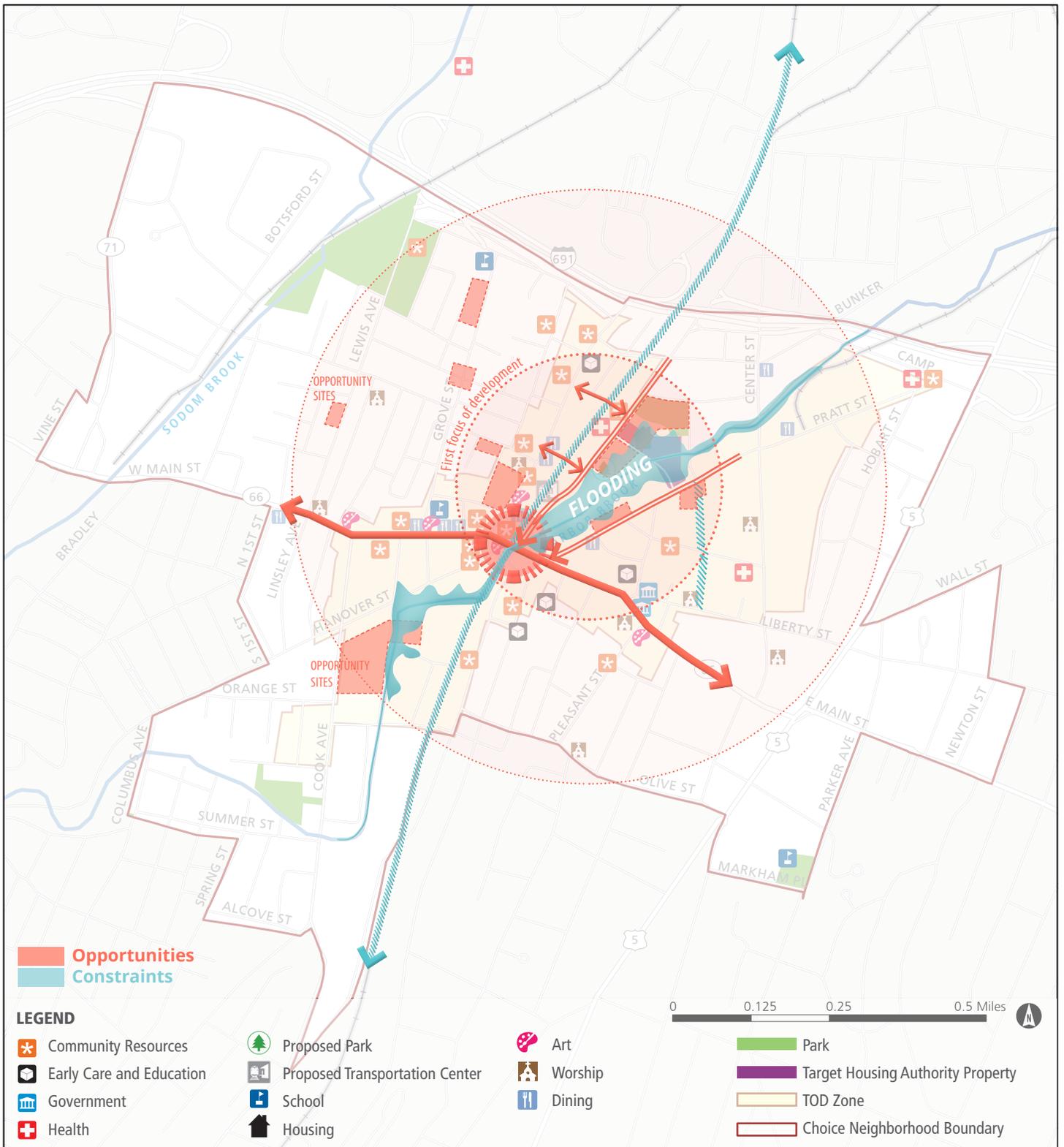
While their outlook was mixed, interviews with developers revealed similar themes. They noted the challenge of attracting people to the TOD study area without significant initial investment in the area's attractiveness, including retail and services. They also confirmed that incentives would be necessary to induce developer interest.

In summary, the recommended development program for TOD-style development around the Meriden Intermodal Transit Center includes:

- **600 –1,000 multi-family residential units attractive to young workers, recent graduates and empty nesters;**
- **20,000 SF of small-scale office space; and**
- **28,000 SF of convenience and community serving retail**

In addition, the study area will need additional open space (such as the HUB park), childcare services and a full-service grocery store near the transit center to provide an adequate level of service. Current low values in the area will be a significant early challenge. Public incentives and subsidies will be necessary to induce private investment and make early development of the TOD study area possible.

*Source: Meriden TOD Market Study and Financial Feasibility Analysis Phase 1 Market Study, 4Ward Planning, June 21, 2013*



Opportunities and Constraints Map

## DOWNTOWN OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

### OPPORTUNITIES



- Meriden is **located centrally to job clusters** related to health care and education.
- Commuter **rail/regional transit system under development** will provide even better access to job clusters in 2016.
- TOD zoning, other **policies are in place to support mixed use**, and high density development in the Choice Neighborhood.
- Several **redevelopment projects are underway** (Meriden Intermodal Transit Center, HUB park, high school renovation, greenway trail, sidewalk reconstruction, 24 Colony Street).
- Some **new entrepreneurial activity can be seen in the downtown**, representing confidence in the master plans for downtown and the economic viability of the City center.
- City has assembled **25 acres of land for redevelopment**. Seven acres of developable land on Mills block is also under City/MHA control.
- **Education** (Middlesex Community College, career and college readiness programs, and technical high school) **and Workforce support programs** (CT Workforce Alliance) are **in place** to link local workforce to training and job opportunities.
- **Construction projects will provide short term job opportunities** for CN population.
- **New development and commercial activity will have little competition** in existing downtown market.

### CONSTRAINTS



- While unemployment in city/region/state is decreasing, statewide and **regional growth/economic expansion is not strong**. Public funds must be used to leverage private investment.
- High **concentration of low income, low education attainment population** not well-suited for job growth opportunities that are available or for entrepreneurial activities.
- **Language/cultural barriers** not fully understood by policy makers.
- **Development costs are high** due to environmental or other factors. Few “clean” redevelopment sites are available. Significant pre-development costs, including assessment and cleanup of sites, will be necessary prior to redevelopment. The city of Meriden is currently working on a number of clean up grants.
- **Flood control project is needed yet costly**. Remainder of project will be constructed over several years as funds are identified.
- **Rents for residential/commercial space in CN is low relative to surrounding market**. New development or substantial rehab cannot be supported without significant public subsidies (state and federal grants or tax abatements).
- **Significant amount of land in CN is vacant or tax exempt**. Low tax base places economic burden on existing taxpayers.
- **Perception of Downtown Meriden as old, unsafe and abandoned is burden**. Changing public perception is critical.
- Good governance structure is in place (City, MHA), but **rapid growth may tap capacity of existing organizations**.



February 10, 2014 Kick-Off

# CHAPTER 3 Community Vision

The Meriden Choice Neighborhood Transformation Plan was developed through a transparent public planning process with input from Mills residents, neighborhood residents, neighborhood civic and religious organizations, City and MHA officials, Board of Education officials, neighborhood business owners, and other downtown stakeholders.

### ENGAGEMENT BY THE NUMBERS:

**385 Households Surveyed, 12 household interviews & 6 business interviews**

**Over 100 citizens participated in focus groups**

**Over 300 participants** at the Meriden Choice May 31, 2014 Spring Festival

**Over 30 residents and stakeholders** participated in capacity building trip to Boston

**Over 200 citizens** participated at the Dec. 9, 2014 Community Workshop and Open House

Jun. 4, 2015 **plan unveiling**

**1,500 "Meriden Choice News" prints** distributed to neighborhood households and businesses & **18 monthly newsletters**

**Over 20 public meetings and charrettes**

**7 task forces** comprised of stakeholders and citizens  
**1 project website**

### PLANNING PROCESS

The Choice Neighborhoods planning process spanned two years and was divided into six tasks.

- 1. Project Initiation** commenced upon award of the HUD grant and pooling of partner resources. The task included kick-off meetings and collection and review of secondary neighborhood data.
- 2. Analysis** included the comprehensive neighborhood-wide household needs assessment. The team's target response count was 400 surveys, and 385 surveys were collected. Data from the surveys were analyzed and augmented with additional education, health and employment data.
- 3. Community Visioning** included a major community workshop in the areas of Housing, People and Neighborhood.
- 4. Framework** set up the structure of the Transformation Plan.
- 5. Draft Transformation Plan** established a strategy to transform Downtown Meriden. The strategy was vetted with the community and stakeholders.
- 6. Implementation Strategy** outlined the necessary steps to implement the plan immediately.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

### CONTEXT

Our Community



### ANALYSIS

What are our assets, issues and needs?



### IMPLEMENTATION

How will we realize our vision?



HOUSING PLAN

NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

PEOPLE PLAN

### COMMUNITY VISION

What do we want for our community?



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TIMELINE

### 2002-2013 CITY CENTER INITIATIVE

Groundwork for neighborhood transformation begins with plan for major flood control project, new rail service, Harbor Brook flood control plan, update of City Plan of Conservation and Development, housing charrettes, HUB reuse plan, TOD master plan, market/financial studies, TOD zoning plan, and strategies to redevelop underutilized/distressed downtown properties.

### FEBRUARY 10, 2014 KICK-OFF

In conjunction with HUD officials site visit to Meriden, a community kick-off meeting was held at the Meriden Board of Education Building. The purpose of the meeting was to engage and introduce the public to the planning process.

### MARCH 23 & APRIL 27, 2014 DOWNTOWN PARKING STUDY PUBLIC MEETINGS

### MARCH 23, 2014 MERIDEN COUNCIL OF NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS ANNUAL MEETING

### MAY 31, 2014 SPRING FESTIVAL

The Meriden Housing Authority sponsored the needs assessment survey kick-off event and collected 122 completed surveys. The event included activities for children, a barbecue and a local DJ.

### JULY 19, 2014 FARMERS' MARKET LAUNCH

The Meriden Farmers' Market included fresh produce from local farmers, merchandise from vendors and live entertainment. The Choice Team hosted a Choice Neighborhoods Booth where residents received a gift card to the new C-Town Supermarket in exchange for completing a survey.

### AUGUST 12, 2014 HEALTHY MERIDEN FOCUS GROUP 1

## Focus Group Highlights

Throughout the summer of 2014, planning team members met with the following focus groups to identify concerns and needs within the community.

### Healthy Meriden Focus Group Highlights (15+ PARTICIPANTS; MULTIPLE MEETINGS)

- Residents of Meriden are **very concerned about the physical environment and its impact on public health** – is the built environment conducive to a healthy lifestyle?
- **Downtown neighborhood today has very few areas to recreate** – inconsistent sidewalks, inaccessible recreational fields, lack of activities for youths, safety concerns, no bike lanes.
- **HUB park should be well programmed** – Concerts, art shows, Zumba, yoga, dance, etc.
- **Not enough attention paid to mental health**, particularly for many Mills residents who live in stressful conditions.
- **Mental health and depression need to be addressed with cultural sensitivity** and need more discussion locally.
- There is a great **lack of knowledge as to what is really healthy food**.
- Need to **leverage local assets such as CHC, YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, and future HUB park**.

### Downtown Living (50+ PARTICIPANTS)

- Focus group participants stated that **safety issues and lack of night life are two primary reasons for not living downtown**. They also stated that attending Middlesex Community College and owning a business are two primary reasons for choosing to live in Downtown Meriden.
- When asked what needs to change before consideration to move downtown, participants stated: downtown life, music, restaurants of all types, cafes and bars, arts scene, more access to parking, activities for kids, children's museums, safety, more police presence, better lighting, after school activities, better housing opportunities, education on culture diversity.
- Downtown location provides easy access to other locations, **many are optimistic about what downtown could become**.
- **City needs to provide businesses with additional information on incentive programs**. It is helpful to have one source of information, programs and events.
- Full time **policing will be instituted at the HUB** per Chief of Police.
- **Create a Friends of the Park** and include community in programming events

for the HUB; strong, robust management needed for HUB.

- **Give community a reason to come to downtown.** Need nightlife and events.
- Partnerships are key: **business and the City should work together** – City should provide framework/guidelines.
- Businesses need **more parking for their customers**; remove bump-outs; restore two way traffic.
- Creation of a **“Downtown Ambassadors” program**, to help keep clean streets, support job creation and provide information and assistance to residents/commuters/visitors.
- **More varied retail stores**, be selective of types of businesses that come to the downtown. No need for any additional bail bonds, pawnshops and dollar stores.

#### Education (15+ PARTICIPANTS)

- **There is neither one strategy nor one organization that can accomplish this on its own.** It is going to take a community-wide effort.
- Interested in knowing **how Choice initiatives can complement what MPSD is already doing or planning on doing.**
- **Lack of awareness of what it means to be “school ready.”**
- Looking to implement extended day at Israel Putnam Elementary School – all four schools serve Mills children and neighborhood families.
- **Many children graduate from high school without a plan or a career path.**
- **Misconception about the cost of preschool programs.**
- Many families do not use existing high quality programs because of cost or transportation.
- Place a new preschool program and Family Resource Center within one of the new Choice Neighborhood buildings.
- Need to **build capacity for parents to assist their children.**
- **Need to overcome the cultural norm that a child needs to be with a family member until he/she enters kindergarten.**

#### SEPTEMBER 9, 2014 DOWNTOWN LIVING FOCUS GROUP

#### SEPTEMBER 17, 2014 HEALTHY MERIDEN FOCUS GROUP 2

#### SEPTEMBER 24, 2014 MERIDEN CHOICE CAPACITY BUILDING BUS TRIP TO BOSTON

On Wednesday, September 24, a group of 32 people consisting of residents, Meriden high school seniors, City and housing authority officials, and stakeholders boarded a bus and headed to Boston. The mission was to experience ongoing and completed revitalization projects and learn how to use tools of neighborhood revitalization back home in Meriden.

#### OCTOBER 15, 2014 QUALITY OF LIFE FOCUS GROUP

#### OCTOBER 22, 2014 EMPLOYMENT FOCUS GROUP

#### NOVEMBER 10, 2014 EDUCATION FOCUS GROUP

#### DECEMBER 9, 2014 COMMUNITY WORKSHOP & OPEN HOUSE

Over 160 citizens attended. The event involved the collaboration of over ten City agencies and three regional and national developers. Community input was gathered at Housing, People and Neighborhood Stations.

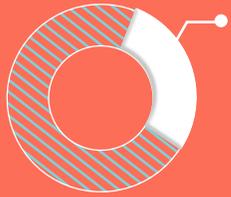
#### FEBRUARY 9, 2015 COMMUNITY WORK SESSION

#### FEBRUARY 23, 2015 HOUSING CHARRETTE

#### JUNE 4, 2015 COMMUNITY MEETING

## COMMUNITY POLLING

We surveyed residents about the Neighborhood Planning process!



**32%**  
participated  
in multiple  
activities

53% were interested in  
volunteer opportunities

59% were  
interested in Choice events

67% were interested in public  
meetings

68% were interested in joining a  
focus/task force group

**70%**

were optimistic or very optimistic  
about genuine transformation in  
Downtown Meriden in December  
of 2014!



### Focus Group Highlights (Continued)

- **Enlist Meriden Children First outreach workers** – discuss the importance of a preschool education in English and Spanish.
- Create a city-wide marketing campaign to publicize the Meriden School Readiness Program and the sliding fee scale available to families.
- Create an electric and hard copy **listing of services available that will support bilingual families.**
- Differentiated programming for students with **autism or other significant exceptionalities.**
- Provide services to promote language development within families homes.
- Need for increase of extended day schools and Parent Academies.
- **Utilize existing transportation systems** – Downtown trolley and church vans.
- Establish an **Adopt-A-School Program**, where local businesses work with one school and provide a **variety of opportunities to the students.**
- Establish a city-wide mentoring program and **assign a mentor to every student living in the Choice Neighborhood**, as well as other students who would benefit from the program.

### Employment (10+ PARTICIPANTS)

- Lack of full time work in the neighborhood.
- Residents complained of holding jobs that they hate.
- **Childcare is a barrier to employment** and is expensive.
- A general **fear, dislike and mistrust of “big business” or “corporations” or “big developers”** was expressed.
- **Self employment or entrepreneurial work** was expressed as a possible alternative to unemployment.

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**Quality of life** (10+ PARTICIPANTS; MULTIPLE MEETINGS)

- **Safety, more Police visibility, better lighting, and improving the “image of downtown”** are top concerns.
  - **More things to do for different age groups** – children, youth, adults, seniors.
  - **More well lit parking and more accessible parking.**
  - **Commercial anchor** such as a movie theater **will transform downtown.**
  - **More restaurant options** – particularly sit-down, family-friendly restaurants.
  - **EXPO event** – Big downtown events to spark the community.
  - **Improve image** – Develop a City-wide ordinance for indecency.
  - **More night life option for adults** – Sports Bar, “Pub”, Martini Bar, etc.
  - **More things to do for kids** – Movies, roller skating, toy store, etc.
- 





Right: The group sets off toward Boston to visit completed revitalization projects. Above: The group poses in Boston before heading back to Meriden to continue fighting for positive change.

**"I feel empowered and appreciative for the experience to learn and be part of Meriden's future. The best part of the trip for me was the opportunity to meet the Boston residents and see how secure they feel about their neighborhood, and I can't wait to feel the same"**

**-Melody Vasquez**



**WE'RE CONNECTED!**

The project website: [www.MeridenChoice.com](http://www.MeridenChoice.com) documented the planning process and served as a resource to keep the community engaged and informed. The website provided background information to the process and resources such as the data book, newsletters, reports, presentations, and meeting minutes.

**Meriden Choice Boston Bus Trip**

On Wednesday, September 24, 2014, a group of 32 people consisting of residents, Meriden high school seniors, City and housing authority officials, and stakeholders boarded a bus and headed to Boston. The mission was to experience ongoing and completed revitalization projects and learn how to use tools of neighborhood revitalization back home in Meriden. The group traveled 250 miles, visited three sites, met dozens of people, asked tons of questions, and spent over four hours together on a bus where, regardless of age, race, or income, all felt like equal champions of positive change in Downtown Meriden.

**The goals for the day were:**

1. Provide residents an experience of a revitalized community through the redevelopment of public housing;
2. Build up residents' capacity to advocate for positive change and be trained in the language of good design for Downtown Meriden; and
3. Form new ideas for the planning team and residents in areas of People, Housing and Neighborhood.



## ***Boston Bus Trip – Case Study***

Boston, MA; September 2014

Maverick Landing (East Boston) provides an example of a successful completed HOPE VI public housing redevelopment effort. This project transformed a 413-unit distressed public housing site into a new mixed income rental community with a variety of energy efficient housing types. The Boston Housing Authority developed a loan-to-purchaser homeownership program and worked with the developer to establish an endowment to fund ongoing supportive services on-site. Construction was completed in 2006, with a total development cost of \$120 million.

The Homes at Old Colony (South Boston) are in the second phase of implementing a Redevelopment Master Plan to transform a distressed and isolated 845-unit public housing site into an innovative and high-efficiency affordable housing development. Phase One of the plan was completed in 2011 and included an on-site program of 116 new affordable rental units in townhouses and a midrise building. Designs for the residential buildings and the new 10,000 square foot community center incorporate a number of green features that helped the project meet Enterprise Green Communities and several LEED certification standards. Future phases are planned to add more diversity of housing types and character and integrate the development with a connected open space system.



Boston Quincy Corridor (South Boston) is the target neighborhood for the City of Boston and Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corporation's \$20.5 million Choice Neighborhood Implementation Grant. The ongoing project centers on the redevelopment of the 129-unit HUD-assisted Woodledge/Morrant Bay housing development. The transformation plan calls for the construction of 49 new homes and the rehabilitation of 80 existing units. The Choice Neighborhoods funds were used to leverage an additional \$17 million for investments in WiFi, a small business center, new parks and playgrounds,



### ***What can WE learn from this?***

High quality housing is key, balance housing density & diversity, and leverage existing partnerships.

and a retail business facade improvement program. The efforts' People Plan partners include the non-profit Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative and the Boston Promise Initiative, whose work in the target neighborhood

will continue to focus on community building through strong schools, families and resident leadership.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY: DECEMBER 9, 2014 EVENT &amp; HOUSING CHARRETTE

"Choice Neighborhoods will create a better community with less stereotyping, less crime and lots of healthy and entertaining activities to keep young children off the streets. I look forward to a better future in Meriden and many positive changes for all Mills residents."

-Rossy Mateo

HOUSING  
PLAN

NEIGHBORHOOD  
PLAN

PEOPLE  
PLAN

"My greatest aspirations are stronger community spirit, better living conditions, safe outdoor areas for children to play, an empowered community, and residents who are proud."

-Emily Morales Verona

### Housing

- **No separation between mixed-income housing** (rental and home-ownership)
- **Desire for both traditional and modern architecture** and low (3 story) and medium (4-5 story elevator) density with a variety of unit sizes.
- **No high-rise buildings** (no more than 7 floors)
- Not in favor of large families (3-bed units) living above small units. Need for units that accommodate families with grandparents taking care of children.
- Minimize common areas and **maximize defensible space**. Desire for ground floor flats with individual entrances.
- Sustainable / energy efficient features.
- **Walkable places** with access to alternative forms of transportation.
- Community gardens.
- **Some are not in favor of a large institutional anchor on the Mills site** (i.e., CHC) due to increased traffic, higher parking needs, and the desire to have something more kid-friendly.

- **Desire for Family Resource Center type space in ground floor with wrap-around services** (i.e., day care, community room, resident-owned and employing business, My City Kitchen Inc, and expanded FSS program) in mixed-use buildings.

### Neighborhood

- **Neighborhood plan should address blight**; Rehabilitate homes and preserve historic buildings when possible.
- **Communicate benefits of increased train service** and new train station to residents.
- **Improve connectivity** – better bus service and hours, create new bike lanes, and manage traffic impacts from increased train service.
- **Interest in a new community center/ business incubator that can be a regional draw**; Potentially located in HUB park run by Police Athletic League.
- **Strong support for HUB park**

- Desire for developers of new housing to **hire local workers and increase tax revenues**.
- **Retain existing anchors** – Castle Craig Players, MxCC, YMCA.
- **Integrate technology** – cell phone charging stations.
- **New development should be walkable and connected** to other amenities downtown.
- **More activities downtown** – ice skating, farmer's market, art shows, jazz festivals, concerts.
- **Diversity of businesses to provide day and night entertainment options** – sit-down restaurants, clubs, billiards.
- Strategy to reward good landlords and penalize bad ones.
- Exciting architecture.
- Integrate supportive services in new housing.
- **Reasons to move to Downtown Meriden: affordability, central location, new green buildings.**



Left: Residents attend the December 9, 2014 Event.

Below: Neighborhood kids enjoy face painting and food at the May 31, 2014 Spring Festival.



### People

- **Improve safety** – strategies to reduce illegal drug activity, provide better lighting, reduce speeding.
- Community police officers.
- **More activities for children, teens and families.**
- Desire for a community center, community gardens, improved sidewalks, farmer's market, and bike lanes.
- **Improve community engagement** – better communication and advertisement for events.

### HOUSING CHARRETTE INPUT

- A first phase on the Mills site – a five story mixed-income, mixed-use building with ground floor flats and an early childhood education /Family Resource Center as potential tenant in addition to multi-purpose community room.
- A subsequent phase on the Mills site in lower density form – 2-3 story townhouse/walk-ups.
- Infill development in existing neighborhoods in addition to large site developments in downtown core to help stabilize through home ownership.
- Façade improvement programs for owner occupied homes.
- A fast tracked housing plan without major disruption to Mills residents.
- Demolish low-rise buildings as soon as possible to set tone for revitalization.

## MERIDEN'S YOUTH



Meriden's youth were critical to the planning process and are committed to change as future leaders of the City.

- Helped residents fill out surveys.
- Volunteered at community meetings (conducting surveys, handing out food, organizing).
- Joined the group on Boston Capacity Building Trip.
- Participated at meetings and workshops.
- Researched teen and community center needs and program by conducting their own survey with youth about the potential for a Meriden Youth Center.

## June 4, 2015 Community Workshop and Open House

On June 4, 2015 over 150 citizens participated in the Plan Unveiling Community Workshop and Open House. 75% of people said they are optimistic of genuine transformation in Downtown Meriden, a 5% improvement from December 9, 2014.

Following the presentation, members from each of the focus groups were available at stations around the hall to answer questions and engage with residents. Representatives at the People stations (Education, Youth, Employment, and Health) received feedback and suggestions about how to expand goals and strategies. Some suggestions included focusing on first/last mile transit options and providing more healthy food options at restaurants downtown.



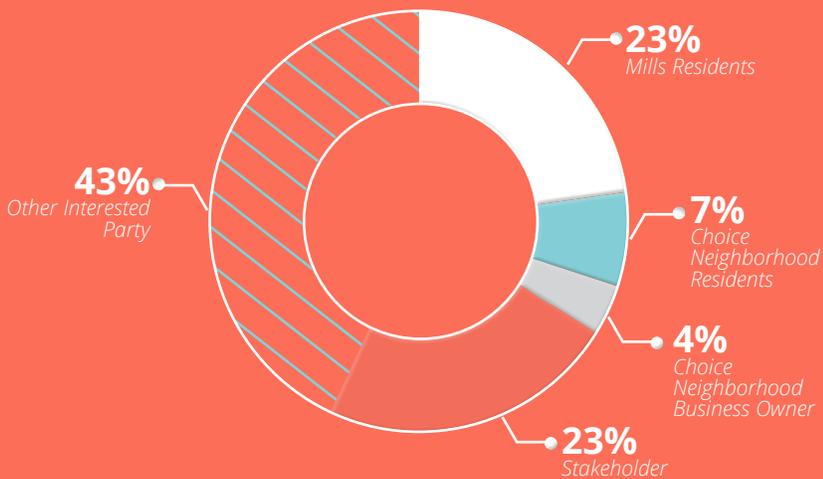
Residents at the Housing station saw the development of mixed-income housing and the de-concentration of poverty as positive goals for the redevelopment of Mills Memorial. Neighborhood stations (TOD, Sustainability and Safety) received positive

feedback from residents about the new commuter train and rail station, the possibility of farmers' market expansion, and greater pedestrian connectivity. Overall, the majority of participants felt that the People, Housing, and Neighborhood Plans accurately reflected the desires of the community.

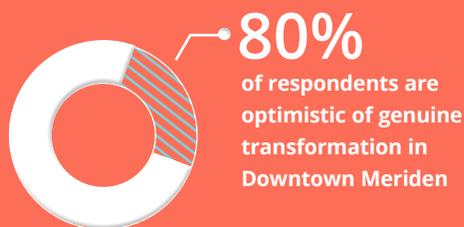


## June 4, 2015 Community Survey Responses

SURVEY QUESTION: TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF



**23%** of respondents that participated in the survey were Mills Memorial residents.



64% thought the Housing Plan reflects the desires of the community

70% thought the Neighborhood Plan reflects the desires of the community

71% thought the People Plan reflects the desires of the community



## HOW TO READ THE PLAN

### SECTION HEADER

There are three sections to a Choice Neighborhoods Plan: People, Housing and Neighborhood. The header tells you which section you are reviewing.

61 PEOPLE PLAN

Meriden Choice



## Employment

### QUALIFIED WORKFORCE

There is consensus among stakeholders and residents that without gainful employment for downtown residents, no lasting change can take place. No amount of investments in housing, neighborhood and education will endure if households cannot secure meaningful, sustainable and dependable income.

The goal of the Meriden Choice Employment Task Force is to implement focused strategies to ensure that every able-bodied downtown resident looking for employment will find a job, keep the job and choose to leverage that job for higher wages in the future.

Many of the resources are already in place and yet are underutilized. The priority of services should be given to successful existing programs that already demonstrate results.

### CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

Within each section there are multiple elements (eg., People section contains education, youth, employment, and health). This part describes the section element's goals.

**GOAL**

Detailed description of goals

**WHAT CAN YOU DO?**

Actionable initiatives in which Meridenites can be involved

Meriden Choice

PEOPLE PLAN | 62

**EMPLOYMENT & QUALIFIED WORKFORCE**

**GOAL 1**

**Train Mills and neighborhood residents for quality jobs and work with local agencies to set hiring goals for skilled workers.** Work with the Workforce Alliance Regional Workforce Development Board, CT Works American Job Center and the Middlesex Community College to set up programs to train Mills and neighborhood residents in construction trade jobs and other sectors that will support the development projects that will be coming to the district. It is anticipated that jobs will be available in the early years of the redevelopment of Meriden's central business district.

**PRIORITY**

**PRIORITY STRATEGY A: Charge the CT Works American Job Center (AJC) One Stop Career Center to oversee, certify and market this pool of qualified workers to contractors and sub-contractors working on downtown developments.**

This strategy necessitates the hire of a full-time "Downtown Jobs Connector" – a position based in the AJC office. The role of the "Downtown Jobs Connector" will be threefold – (1) work with able-bodied current and former Mills residents (if relocated to elsewhere in the city) to enter the workforce pipeline of counseling, training and placement; (2) liaise with downtown developers, local sub-contractors, and employers human resources departments to provide a constant stream of qualified workers; and (3) seek additional philanthropy, state and federal funding for said position and additional programs.

**STRATEGY B: Work with the City of Meriden and the Meriden Housing Authority to set local hiring goals and incentives for the City and MHA-funded development projects that can be escalated over time as private investments and pool of highly skilled workers increases.**

This strategy necessitates the expansion of MHA's Section 3 director position. Regional peer organizations such as the Hartford Housing Authority and the Norwalk Housing Authority have successful models to emulate/aspire to.

**STRATEGY C: Coordinate efforts with Middlesex Community College, H. C. Wilcox (Meriden's Vocational High School), Platt High School and Maloney High School so that students and recent graduates who reside in downtown Meriden are given priority for job opportunities.**

This strategy is an added role for the "Downtown Jobs Connector." It addresses high school graduates, not college-bound and ready to enter the workforce. Currently many of these good young adults languish in the city or move elsewhere for better opportunities. A "Hire Local" campaign targeted at downtown graduates is an actionable item under this strategy. A small pilot program can begin with Mills graduates.

**STRATEGY D: Institute a program to encourage developers working with the City and MHA to utilize local sub-contractors, and thus local people, on their projects.**

Work with the local agencies to enforce Section 3 requirements and set up a list or database of local subcontractors to ensure that local workers are afforded opportunities to work on projects in the neighborhood. This strategy involves the coordination between the "Downtown Jobs Connector" and the MHA Section 3 director.

**What can YOU do?**

- If you're unemployed and looking for work, stop by downtown's CT Works/American Job Center
- If you're a Meriden employer looking to hire, consider the benefits of hiring local. Talk to the Midstate Chamber or CT Works/American Job Center on how to get started

**How will we measure success?**

- **Decrease in Downtown unemployment rate:** current rate Downtown is 25.6% compared to city-wide unemployment rate of 8.6%
- **Section 3:** Number of residents who are employed through Section 3
- **Successful hire of "Downtown Jobs Connector" position**
- **Percent of residents who sign up for job training programs; % retention**
- **Overall employment rate (change)**

**Meriden Downtown Jobs Connector is akin to a Career Development Facilitator**

- **A CDF is competent in:** (1) individual and group counseling; (2) individual/group assessment; (3) information/resource delivery; (4) program management and implementation; (5) consultation; (6) special populations; (7) supervision; (8) ethical/legal issues; (9) career development theory; and (10) research and evaluation

**PRIORITY STRATEGIES**

Strategies identified as most impactful under each goal

**STRATEGIES**

Additional strategies to support the goal

**IMPORTANT FACTS AND DEFINITIONS**

**HOW WE MEASURE SUCCESS?**

Measurable, quantitative outcomes



# CHAPTER 4 People Plan

Desired outcome of the Meriden Choice People Plan: to support every family in the Choice-Promise Neighborhood so that every child reaches their highest potential, every family has access to high quality City and neighborhood services and assets, every adult is given the opportunity to be gainfully employed, and every person is healthy in body and mind.

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## PEOPLE PLAN GOALS:

### Education

1. School readiness.
2. Life-long learning for entire family.
3. School to career opportunities.

### Youth

1. Meriden Youth Center.

### Employment

1. Train residents for quality jobs.
2. Train residents for healthcare jobs.
3. Workforce readiness.
4. Engage youth in programs.
5. Expand support services and reduce barriers to full-time employment.
6. Train residents for manufacturing jobs.

### Health

1. Access to healthy foods.
2. Physical activities and places to be active.
3. Clean air allows all to breathe easier.
4. Mental health services for the most vulnerable and culture and language sensitive mental health care.
5. Medical home.

## INTRODUCTION

We begin the Transformation Plan with the People section first because as one meeting participant stated, "People come first!" The Meriden Choice People Plan is divided into four equally important and deeply intertwined parts – Education (a Promise – Choice collaborative), Youth (designed entirely by Meriden's energetic youth), Employment (100 jobs for 100 residents), and Health (both physical and mental).

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**EMELY MORALES-VARONA:** *Emely Morales-Varona, a tenant of the Mills since 2008, became the Meriden Housing Authority Resident Commissioner in May 2013. She feels that one of the biggest challenges in her community is the stereotyping and labeling that comes with being a resident of the Mills. The lack of good paying jobs nearby, limitations of public transit, and lack of access to the internet, smart phones and information also have been detrimental to the community. For her family, children and her community, Emily's greatest aspirations are a stronger community spirit, better living conditions, and safe outdoor areas for children to play. Her vision for Meriden and its residents is to have a safe community where every member of the community thrives.*



# PEOPLE PLAN GOALS & PRIORITY STRATEGIES

## EDUCATION

### GOAL 1 School readiness

**PRIORITY A:** Through child-finder, pediatric medical partners, or proactive outreach at the Meriden Community Health Center, Meriden Health Department and MidState Medical Center, establish relationships and share resources with parents of infants.

**PRIORITY B:** Re-zone Meriden's public transportation routes around educational sites. Seek private or grant funding for transportation subsidies for families enrolled in early childhood education programs.

**PRIORITY C:** Publicize education thresholds children need to meet before entering kindergarten. Many parents are not aware of the increased academic requirements of kindergarten students. Meet families where they are – if parents choose to have a family member care for their preschool-aged child, services should be provided within the home to promote language development.

### GOAL 2 Life-long learning for entire family

**PRIORITY A:** Increase the number of Extended Learning Day Schools to include Israel Putnam Elementary School, located in the Choice Neighborhood.

**PRIORITY B:** Increase the number of Parent Academies and explore opportunities to host Parent Academies within the new mixed-use development.

**PRIORITY C:** Establish a Teacher-in-Residence Program in the new mixed-income housing developments.

**PRIORITY D:** Engage in partnership with the CT State Department of Education, Meriden Public Schools, Regional Education Service Centers, and a partnering university or accredited school to subsidize teachers for Bilingual Education Certification to meet the needs of Mills residents, of which 36% speak no or only some English.

**PRIORITY E:** Create a series of after school, intramural activities at each school to engage Mills and CN students.

**PRIORITY F:** Replicate Meriden Children First's "Summer at Sherman Program" in the CN. The program provides a meaningful learning and fun experience, addresses summer reading loss and promotes family literacy.

**PRIORITY G:** Provide a free WiFi network in Downtown Meriden with access to a collection of free e-books.

### GOAL 3 School to career opportunities

**PRIORITY A:** Establish an Adopt-A-School Program, where local businesses work with one school and provide a variety of opportunities to the students.

**PRIORITY B:** Support for high school guidance counselors from Human Resource staff at area businesses.

**PRIORITY C:** On-line counseling for incoming 9th grade students as a means to begin thinking about their career choices before entering high school.

**PRIORITY D:** Establish a citywide mentoring program and assign a mentor to every student living in the Choice Neighborhood, as well as other students who would benefit from the program.

**PRIORITY E:** Provide summer employment opportunities for CN Youth.

**PRIORITY F:** Establish Meriden College Scholarship Plan.

## YOUTH

### GOAL 1 Meriden Youth Center

**PRIORITY A:** Investigate potential space and funding sources for the new Meriden Teen Center.



## EMPLOYMENT

### GOAL 1 Train residents for quality jobs

**PRIORITY A:** Charge the CT Works American Job Center (AJC) One Stop Career Center to oversee, certify and market this pool of qualified workers to contractors and sub-contractors working on downtown developments.

### GOAL 2 Train residents for healthcare jobs

**PRIORITY A:** Promote and expand Meriden Adult Education enrichment programs, C.N.A. and Medical Instrument Training.

### GOAL 3 Workforce readiness

**PRIORITY A:** Promote and expand CT Works American Job Center services to employers and out of work individuals.

**PRIORITY B:** Promote Adult Ed/MxCC Non-Credit short-term training programs for recent high school credentialed students.

### GOAL 4 Engage youth in programs

**PRIORITY A:** Utilize High School Career Counselors to identify students and better connect them to programs.

**PRIORITY B:** Expand the nationally recognized Meriden K-12 and American Federation of Teachers "Personal Learning Experience" program and deliver at an as early age as possible.

### GOAL 5 Expand support services and reduce barriers to full-time employment

**PRIORITY A:** Create a School Readiness Early Childhood program that would address the obstacle of lack of quality child care for someone seeking employment.

### GOAL 6 Train residents for manufacturing jobs

**PRIORITY A:** Market graduates to manufacturers in the district.

## HEALTH

### GOAL 1 Access to healthy foods

**PRIORITY A:** Expand the opportunities for community garden programs.

**PRIORITY B:** Promote the Meriden Farmers' Market to Choice Neighborhood residents.

### GOAL 2 Physical activities and places to be active

**PRIORITY A:** Create community-wide campaigns focused on motivating people to increase physical activity.

**PRIORITY B:** Create a "social environment" that promotes physical activity.

**PRIORITY C:** Encourage community design and development that supports physical activity.

### GOAL 3 Clean air allows all to breathe easier

**PRIORITY A:** Implement smoke-free multi-unit housing policy.

**PRIORITY B:** Create smoke-free park ordinances.

### GOAL 4 Mental health services for the most vulnerable and culture and language sensitive mental health care

**PRIORITY A:** Encourage linguistic access to mental health services.

**PRIORITY B:** Increase psychiatric resources for younger populations.

### GOAL 5 Medical home

**PRIORITY A:** Encourage all providers in Meriden to ask about medical homes.



Photo Credit: Meriden Public Schools

# Education

## MERIDEN'S PROMISE TO FAMILIES & CHILDREN

The overall goal of the Education Plan is to promote life-long learning for all Meriden residents.

In order to reach this goal, the underlying assumption must be that there is neither one strategy nor one organization that can accomplish this on its own. Rather, it is going to take a community-wide, concerted effort to support this endeavor. The following goals require the efforts of the entire community.

## EDUCATION

### GOAL 1

**Ensure that all Meriden children living within the Choice Neighborhood enter kindergarten “ready for school” by increasing enrollment in quality early learning programs.** According to data received from the Needs Assessment, approximately 73% of three and four-year-olds enter kindergarten without a preschool experience. Citywide nearly 70% of all three and four-year-olds attend preschool, which makes the Choice Neighborhood statistic very revealing.

Currently, there are 68 full-day school readiness spaces, 12 part-day school readiness spaces and 20 full-day Child Day Care spaces at the YMCA in the Choice Neighborhood. There are also 15 full-day school readiness spaces at Maloney High School and Platt High School (located outside of the CN). The capacity exists to serve three and four year old children living in the Choice Neighborhood, but in order to do this effectively, the reason why these children are not enrolled in a preschool program must be addressed.

There are a variety of reasons why these children are not enrolled in a preschool program. These reasons include: lack of awareness regarding what it means to be “school ready” and what a preschool experience entails; lack of knowledge regarding the existence of preschool programs in the City; lack of transportation to preschool; the misconception regarding the cost and availability of a preschool experience; and the cultural norm that a child needs to be with a family member until he/she enters kindergarten.

**STRATEGY A: Increase awareness of what it means for children to be “school ready” in an effort to promote and increase participation in preschool and other learning programs.**

#### PRIORITY

- **Through child-finder, pediatric medical partners or proactive outreach at the Meriden Community Health Center, Meriden Health Department and MidState Medical Center, establish relationships and share resources with parents of infants.**
- Create a citywide marketing campaign that explains what children are expected to understand when they enter kindergarten. Marketing may include:
  - a. Elementary school principal meetings with Head Start families
  - b. Increase communication and collaboration with MidState Medical Center, the Community Health Center and local pediatricians to access families as early as possible

- Place a new preschool program within one of the new mixed-use developments.
- Ensure MCF outreach workers target families with young children (two years and younger) and discuss in English/Spanish the importance of the preschool experience.
- Include materials regarding the importance of a preschool experience on “Peachjar” and bulletin boards, both hard copies and electronic, throughout the City with rent statements sent through the Meriden Housing Authority and other large renters within the City. Include these materials at non-traditional places like beauty salons and barber shops.
- Connect and coordinate school readiness efforts with the Meriden Public Library to publicize the importance of a preschool education.
- Include bilingual and culturally appropriate informational material with packets that are distributed through the various established home visiting programs throughout the City.

## SCHOOL READINESS



A quality preschool experience is a critical piece in bridging the Achievement Gap. A Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching study indicates that 35% of children entering kindergarten are unprepared to learn and that the achievement gap is much higher for low-income and other high need children. Also, according to Barnett WS (2008) Preschool education and its lasting effects: Research and policy implications, “Well-designed preschool education programs produce long-term improvements in school success, including higher achievement test scores, lower rates of grade repetition and special education, and higher educational attainment. Some preschool programs are also associated with reduced delinquency and crime in childhood and adulthood. The strongest evidence suggests that economically disadvantaged children reap long-term benefits from preschool.”

## QUALITY PRESCHOOL

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) is a professional membership organization that works to promote high-quality early learning for all young children, birth through age eight, by connecting early childhood practice, policy and research. NAEYC advances a diverse, dynamic early childhood profession and support all who care for, educate and work on behalf of young children. The association comprises nearly 70,000 individual members of the early childhood community and more than 300 regional Affiliate chapters, all committed to delivering on the promise of high-quality early learning. NAEYC’s vision: that all young children thrive and learn in a society dedicated to ensuring they reach their full potential.

## GOAL 1 (CONTINUED)

### STRATEGY B: Provide transportation to preschool.

#### PRIORITY

• **Re-zone Meriden’s public transportation routes around educational sites. Seek private or grant funding for transportation subsidies for families enrolled in early childhood education programs.**

- Utilize existing transportation systems and the future downtown trolley to provide transportation to and from preschools.
- Establish a carpooling service connecting families whose children attend the same preschool program.

### STRATEGY C: Overcome the cultural norm that a child needs to be with a family member until he/she enters kindergarten.

#### PRIORITY

• **Publicize education thresholds children need to meet before entering kindergarten. Many parents are not aware of the increased academic requirements of kindergarten students.**

• **Meet families where they are – if parents choose to have a family member care for their preschool-aged child, services should be provided within the home to promote language development.**

- Locate a Family Resource Center within one of the new mixed-use developments to provide an accessible place to receive education and support services.
- Provide a Two-Generational benefit at preschool programs, such as adult ESL classes, financial literacy, Raising a Reader, Resume and Interview workshops, etc. (Based on a program run through the New Britain YWCA).

### STRATEGY D: Address the misconception regarding the cost of preschool programs.

- Create a city-wide marketing campaign that publicizes the Meriden School Readiness Program and the sliding fee scale available to families. Include materials for Spanish speaking households.
- Create a central location for preschool registration so that every family receives consistent information.
- Create a bilingual one-page flyer that explains preschool options and payment methods.

PERCENT OF CHILDREN WITH PRESCHOOL EXPERIENCES PRIOR TO KINDERGARTEN						
LOCATION	2001	2004	2006	2008	2010	2013
Bridgeport	66.8%	63.7%	65.5%	66.9%	61.7%	65.9%
Hartford	52.3%	55.2%	67.5%	35.0%	72.2%	79.2%
Meriden	69.9%	83.3%	81.6%	75.2%	78.2%	67.7%
New Britain	39.7%	43.7%	63.8%	77.0%	76.7%	63.7%
New Haven	62.4%	64.0%	65.2%	71.5%	72.4%	66.6%
Stamford	79.5%	80.3%	81.6%	87.8%	73.8%	78.3%
Waterbury	48.0%	56.9%	60.4%	65.4%	59.7%	61.9%
State of CT	75.1%	77.0%	79.3%	79.7%	80.2%	79.2%

Research demonstrates that preschool attendance relates to parental employment, maternal education and family income; nationally, preschool children from immigrant families have less access to out-of-home preschool programs and are more likely to spend their days in relative or parent care and

### What can YOU do?

- **If your child is of pre-school age and not currently enrolled in a school readiness program, sign up now!**
- **Help distribute information to friends, family, and neighbors**

### How will we measure success?

- **Increase in number/percent of 0-5 year olds enrolled in accredited early learning programs**
- **Percent/number of kindergartners demonstrating age-appropriate skills**

experience unstable child care arrangements than children with native-born parents. Yet, Latino children who attend preschool experience the same advantage as their peers with respect to kindergarten readiness and success.

## GOAL 2

**Create a series of programs and services that promote life-long learning for the entire family.** We know that in order to increase the educational outcomes for children we need to build capacity for parents to assist their children. We also know children benefit when their parents are engaged in their child's education, there are many reasons why this does not take place, and it is not due to parental indifference. We know that the issues faced by Choice Neighborhood families present a unique challenge. By this we mean that there is no one strategy that will address the many and varied needs specifically of the families living in the Mills Apartments.

Many parents living in the Choice Neighborhood did not have a successful experience when they attended school and are intimidated about going into a school. The Meriden Public Schools have addressed this issue through a number of strategies, including the Parent Academy, using data gathered from the Parent Survey to plan for school improvement, providing Open Houses, supporting three Expanded Day Schools for students to have additional support and enrichment, and creating the Family School Liaison team whose work is to build bridges with families. The Parent Academy, and the subsequent school-based parent sessions on the new educational standards, have been an especially effective strategy of addressing parent concerns regarding the Common Core Standards. At these meetings, the Common Core is discussed and presented to families in a way that they can understand and be more helpful to their children with homework.

There are a number of high quality before- and after-school programs that promote learning and provide enrichment experiences. Many families do not utilize these services because of the cost of these programs, lack of transportation or both. Currently, a few Meriden Public Schools have an extended day program, which provide an additional 100 minutes of learning per day in three of the Meriden's schools – John Barry Elementary (in the CN), Roger Sherman Elementary and Casimir Pulaski Elementary. Students are given an enrichment period that allows them to engage in activities to which they may not otherwise be exposed, such as broadcasting, woodworking, dance, additional fitness and health programming, as well as other technology-based software in computer mega-labs. This enrichment period also allows students to receive additional support to close whatever academic gaps may exist.

## EXTENDED DAY SCHOOL



Photo Credit: Meriden Public Schools

The Expanded Learning Time (ELT) School program at John Barry Elementary has resulted in a number of positive results over the past three years! Some of these include:

- Highest Kindergarten Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) scores in District (2014). Highest 1st Semester DRA growth over the last three years for 1st and 2nd graders.
- High average Meriden District Assessment (MDA) scores for reading and math for 3rd, 4th and 5th graders.
- Whole school attendance above district average in April 2014.
- Students' (grades 3-5) perception of a "positive school climate" was at 94.9%. Students' perception of "teachers care and motivation," where students "strongly agree," is at 90.8%. Highest scores in the last three years.

## GOAL 2 (CONTINUED)

### PRIORITY

**PRIORITY STRATEGY A:** Increase the number of Extended Learning Day Schools to include Putnam Elementary School, located in the Choice Neighborhood.

Expanded Learning Time (ELT) Schools provide 100 minutes of additional instruction. This equals about 40 extra days of school. Enrichment and additional academic support are focused on closing achievement gaps between subgroups of students. Currently, Meriden has three of seven ELT schools in the state (John Barry Elementary, Roger Sherman Elementary, and Casimir Pulaski Elementary). Only John Barry Elementary is located in the CN. However, since a majority (88.5%) of Mills students attend Putnam Elementary, it should be targeted for ELT.

**PRIORITY STRATEGY B:** Increase the number of Parent Academies and explore opportunities to host Parent Academies within the new mixed-use development.

Many parents living in the Choice Neighborhood did not have a successful experience when they attended school, and many are intimidated about going into a school. The Parent Academy, and the subsequent school-based parent sessions on the new educational standards, have been an especially effective strategy of addressing parent concerns regarding the Common Core Standards. At these meetings, the Common Core is discussed and presented to families in a way that they can understand and be more helpful to their children with homework.

### PRIORITY

**PRIORITY STRATEGY C:** Establish a Teacher-in-Residence Program in the new mixed-income housing developments.

This program provides subsidized or free housing to Meriden teachers in exchange for open office hours for tutoring, homework help, parent conferences and education, and educational enrichment programming at one or more of the new housing sites. It not only is a means to connect with the families living in the neighborhood, but also is a means to attract other professionals to reside in this neighborhood.

**PRIORITY STRATEGY D:** Engage in partnership with the CT State Department of Education, Meriden Public Schools, Regional Education Service Centers, and a partnering university or accredited school to subsidize teachers for Bilingual Education Certification to meet the needs of Mills residents, of which 36% speak no or only some English.

**PRIORITY STRATEGY E:** Create a series of after school, intramural activities at each school to engage Mills and CN students.

Parks are natural places for children to congregate. Having a well-supervised after-school program located in City parks would minimize the opportunities for young people to be idle and get into trouble.

## Mills Students

What schools do Mills residents attend in and around the neighborhood?

### Elementary School:

Franklin (1)	2%
Hanover (4)	7.5%
Hooker (1)	2%
Putnam (46)	88.5%

### Middle School:

Edison (12)	44%
Lincoln (8)	30%
Washington (7)	26%

### High School:

Maloney (15)	83%
Platt (3)	17%

## GOAL 2 (CONTINUED)

## PRIORITY

**PRIORITY STRATEGY F:** Replicate Meriden Children First’s “Summer Discovery Program” in the CN. The program provides a meaningful learning and fun experience, addresses summer reading loss and promotes family literacy.

The Summer Discovery Program, located at Sherman Elementary School just outside of the CN, provides learning opportunities for students for three weeks during the summer. Students benefit from enrichment activities focused in reading, math, and science while exploring new ideas and taking exciting field trips. The program is currently located at two elementary schools: Sherman and John Barry, and currently serves over 100 children during the summer. Increased funding could provide an additional site to serve more children from the CN.

## PRIORITY

**PRIORITY STRATEGY G:** Provide a free WiFi network in Downtown Meriden with access to a collection of free e-books.

Free access to a collection of e-books through public libraries can improve educational development for children in the CN. This is a priority and an identified need in the Choice Neighborhood, specifically of Mills Apartment residents. Currently, there are very few families living in the Choice Neighborhood who have Internet access.

## THE SUMMER DISCOVERY PROGRAM



Photo Credit: MyRecordJournal.com

The Summer Discovery Program, a Meriden Children First Initiative program, provides support and education opportunities to families and children at the Roger Sherman School over three weeks during the summer. Children in the program are exposed to new topics, vocabulary and experiences. The program allows children to participate in science, math and reading enrichment activities while also playing fun games and going on field trips. The program is held at the school three days a week and at the YMCA Outdoor Center for one day. Each week the students travel on a field trip to places like the CT Science Center.

In 2015, the program will be doubling its efforts by adding a summer program at John Barry School. In all, they will serve 100 students.

## GOAL 2 (CONTINUED)

**STRATEGY H: Create an electronic and hard copy listing of services available at the new mixed-use development that will support bilingual families.**

**STRATEGY I: Locate a Family Resource Center within one of the new buildings currently being planned so that families can receive a variety of family support and educational programs within the Choice Neighborhood.**

The philosophical foundation of Family Resource Centers is designed to provide the best possible start for children and families of all racial, ethnic and socio-economic groups living in the communities in which FRCs are located. Services provided include child development and social/emotional screening with referrals to the CT Birth-3 system or the public school's support system as needed, pre-K classes, parenting programs, families in training and home visitation services, school-age clubs, positive youth development, adult education, training for home daycare providers, and collaboration with local and state agencies. Family Resource Centers address the needs of the whole family with true two-generational support and services. Family Resource Centers are also very effective means to acknowledge the strengths that families have. Being a "strength-based" model, Family Resource Centers provide an avenue for families to share their skills, whether they are more effective parenting strategies or cooking and sewing. Families are more engaged because they are able to share their strengths with other families and learn from the Family Resource Centers staff and the other families attending the Family Resource Centers. There are currently three Family Resource Centers in Meriden.

**STRATEGY J: Connect community partners such as CT Works, local banks or others to parents through events planned at the school building.**

Despite not having a successful time in school, most parents in the neighborhood see the school as a safe place for their families to grow. Events at school buildings will attract more parents.

**STRATEGY K: Create a rigorous program for educator and administrator evaluation and development planning that uses student achievement data as a factor for overall educator rating.**

## CT FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER



Photo Credit: Meriden Family Resource Centers

A family resource center will be opened within the Choice Neighborhood to meet the needs of residents.

Family resource centers are based on the School of the 21st Century concept as developed by Dr. Edward Zigler, Director of the Bush Center for Child Development and Social Policy at Yale. Family Resource Centers provide comprehensive, integrated, community-based systems of family support and child development services linked to public schools or located in public school buildings. There are 74 sites in Connecticut elementary schools. The school is an institution that is known to, recognized by, and accessible to all families. For parents whose schooling experiences were positive, FRCs are an acknowledgement and endorsement of those parents' trust in schools. For those parents who have not been successful in school, FRCs represent a unique opportunity to "win those parents back" and therefore, increase the educational outcomes for their children.

## GOAL 2 (CONTINUED)

### **STRATEGY L: Differentiated programming for students with autism or other significant exceptionalities.**

Tailored programming for students with autism or other special needs can ensure that all students have access to a high-quality education. Success Academy, currently in the planning phase, would serve as a high school alternative for students who are unsuccessful at the traditional high school. The program would support Glasser's Choice Theory Model and allow students to actively engage in the planning of their education.

### **STRATEGY M: Continue transforming high school instruction through Student Centered Learning efforts.**

Student Centered Learning efforts are transforming instruction at the high school through the use of blended learning, personalized learning experiences, an increase in student voice, and a transition to standards-based grading. The Nellie Mae Foundation is supporting this work.

### **STRATEGY N: Instruct new teachers at "New Teacher Seminars" to reach out to all parents in the first week of school and send home a positive message about every student to forge relationships and engage with Mills and CN parents.**

## *What can YOU do?*

- **Enroll your child for this summer's "Summer of Sherman" program**
- **Attend Parent Academy**
- **Visit your local Family Resource Center**

## *How will we measure success?*

- **Number/percent of 3rd graders who read at or above grade level**
- **Number/percent of 6th-8th graders who score at or above grade level**
- **Number/percent of Mills/CN residents participating in out-of-school time programs**
- **Number/percent of Mills/CN parents who attend the Parent Academy**

## GOAL 3

Some Meriden children graduate high school without a plan, or career path to follow. They enter the work force with few marketable skills and are destined for low paying jobs. We need to insure that every Meriden high school graduate leaves school with a plan. We are convinced that schools cannot accomplish this task on their own. This goal needs to be shared by the entire community as a means of creating a smoother transition from school to career for each Meriden child.

We believe that businesses can play an active role in this venture but need a means in which to coordinate their efforts. The following strategies address this goal and include the entire community as part of this effort. **To address this gap, we need to create a series of programs and services that promote School to Career Opportunities.** There would need to be a position of Adopt-A-School Coordinator established, but we feel that these strategies would pay dividends in terms of the connections made between businesses and the Meriden Public Schools and would be a highly-effective means to bridge the gap between Meriden residents living outside the Choice Neighborhood with Choice Neighborhood residents.

### PRIORITY

**PRIORITY STRATEGY A:** Establish an Adopt-A-School Program, where local businesses work with one school and provide a variety of opportunities to the students.

These include:

- Mentors from the business connected with students
- Job shadowing opportunities for the students at the business
- Guest speakers from the business to discuss the relevance of mathematics and other subjects with their particular job
- Donations of items, i.e., computers and other devices that are slightly outdated but would benefit the students

**PRIORITY STRATEGY B:** Support for high school guidance counselors from Human Resource staff at area businesses.

This would include creating opportunities for business representatives to talk with small groups of students about their career.

### PRIORITY

**PRIORITY STRATEGY C:** On-line counseling for incoming 9th grade students as a means to begin thinking about their career choices before entering high school.

**PRIORITY STRATEGY D:** Establish a citywide mentoring program and assign a mentor to every student living in the Choice Neighborhood, as well as other students who would benefit from the program.

**PRIORITY STRATEGY E:** Provide summer employment opportunities for CN Youth.

**PRIORITY STRATEGY F:** Establish Meriden College Scholarship Plan.

The program would open a savings account for students upon entering kindergarten with a small deposit. As students progress through school, the savings account grows and is used as a financial education tool. The Kindergarten to College program in San Francisco would serve as the model.

## What can YOU do?

- If you are a business owner, partner with MPSD to create opportunities that help students and prime the next generation of employees
- Be a mentor to a Choice Neighborhood student
- Be a guest speaker
- Contribute to scholarship fund

## How will we measure success?

- Number/percent of high school students who graduate
- Number/percent of Mills high school students who graduate and move onto higher education/apprenticeship/internship/job



# Youth

## MERIDEN'S PROMISE TO FAMILIES & CHILDREN

The overall goal of the Youth Plan is to engage Meriden's future generation in positive activities by establishing a new Meriden Youth Center and providing this new generation of leaders with opportunities to grow, learn and create.

## MERIDEN'S PROMISE TO FAMILIES & CHILDREN – YOUTH

### GOAL 1

**Establish a Meriden Youth Center that will create job opportunities and reduce youth stress by encouraging youth engagement and retention at the youth center.** The future Meriden Youth Center would provide myriad services to one of Meriden's greatest resources – teens and children.

#### PRIORITY

**PRIORITY STRATEGY A: Investigate potential space and funding sources for the new Meriden Teen Center.**

- Designate a committee comprised of local community leaders, city officials and youth to identify a space for the Meriden Teen Center. This space can either be new construction, built into buildings as part of the Choice Neighborhoods downtown revitalization project, or part of retro-fitting existing city-owned buildings such as the public library.
- Design an engaging layout that best fits the activities and services that will be provided for teens.
- Locate potential funding sources for construction, design and sustainability of the Meriden Teen Center.

**Strategy B: Encourage youth to participate and remain engaged at the new Meriden Youth Center.**

- Advertise on the internet, at the schools during advisory meetings or at lunch/ morning announcements. Reach out to youth leadership to spread the word.
- Create programs that interest youth. Provide opportunities for youth to provide ideas and vote on new activities at the center.
- Maximize youth participation – hold monthly community/worker/participant meetings to discuss what is going well at the center and what could be improved.
- Check in with youth who have been missing programming for a week via phone call.
- Organize youth-to-youth mentor program.

**STRATEGY C: Provide transportation to improve attendance at the new Meriden Youth Center.**

- Provide transportation through a hired driver (e.g., minivan shuttle, etc.).
- Ask parents to participate in carpools.
- Provide transportation from the high school to the center.

**STRATEGY D: Create job opportunities and increase career readiness skills for Meriden youth.**

- Offer help in creating resumes and filling out applications.
- Converse with funders/stakeholders/ sponsors to create opportunities for youth to be trained and work at the center.
- Create job opportunities at the center to give youth the needed experience and skills to find employment in other establishments.
- Create a point system for youth who lead workshops to provide other resume building opportunities.

### What can YOU do?

- Volunteer or become a mentor at the youth center
- Encourage youth in your neighborhood to participate in events and programs at the youth center
- Donate or volunteer your time to fundraise for the center

### How will we measure success?

- Get 2,000 new enrollees to come to the free youth center over a year
- Number of youth in attendance for each program
- Percent of youth who travel to the center via shuttle, carpool or public transportation
- Track participation by assigning youth a membership number/card
- Conduct focus group sessions with youth who have left the center to understand why youth stop coming
- 3% reduction in reported teen substance abuse.



Photo Credit: Dan O'Neil

### What can WE learn from this?

YOUmedia is a great example of a public-private partnership that provides a creative solution to community needs!



## WHERE HAS IT WORKED?

### YOUMEDIA - CHICAGO, IL

Research focused on engaging youth maintains that “learning must be socially connected, interest-drive, and oriented toward educational, economic, or political opportunity.” YOUmedia Chicago provides a flexible, open and creative laboratory for youth to innovate, play and learn.

The Chicago YOUmedia center is primarily a learning lab, or “maker space” for teenagers. It pairs a physical space with a digital social network to provide both traditional and digital media access. As the ways in which teenagers use and access media change, digital access provides an invaluable opportunity for learning. Digital media can foster participation and self-expression, increase the accessibility of information and educational experiences, widen interest-based socialization, and build diversity and community capacity. The philosophy is simple – youth are best engaged when following their passions, collaborating with their peers and being makers and doers. The center is a transformative place that helps teens gain the skills they

need to be successful in college or in a work environment. The theoretical underpinnings of the Chicago YOUmedia center are based upon Mizuko Ito’s Connected Learning Model, which tries to connect interests, peer culture and academic content in order to optimize learning. The Connected Learning Model focuses on linking participants’ subject-specific expertise with a wider set of competencies via an interdisciplinary framework. Those connections are fostered through peer, adult and institutional learning supports which create opportunities for deeper learning via mentoring, help and feedback.

Positive youth development models assume that, for youth to benefit, they need to develop a sustained relationship with at least one adult who demonstrates commitment, serves as a role model and enables not only engagement but also specific skill-building opportunities. In other words, programs that positively and substantially engage youth (e.g., they choose to participate) can promote

positive growth. The Chicago YOUmedia had clear goals when it was founded, and it has a primary objective of boosting learning and educational experiences for teenagers via interaction with digital media. The continued use of the Chicago YOUmedia center is related to the gains, educational and otherwise, that the teenagers have perceived through participation.

Programs focused on developing self-efficacy, problem-solving opportunities and active participation had increased improvement in youth outcomes.



# Employment & QUALIFIED WORKFORCE

There is consensus among stakeholders and residents that without gainful employment for downtown residents, no lasting change can take place. No amount of investments in housing, neighborhood and education will endure if households cannot secure meaningful, sustainable and dependable income.

The goal of the Meriden Choice Employment Task Force is to implement focused strategies to ensure that every able-bodied downtown resident looking for employment will find a job, keep the job and choose to leverage that job for higher wages in the future.

Many of the resources are already in place and yet are underutilized. The priority of services should be given to successful existing programs that already demonstrate results.

## EMPLOYMENT & QUALIFIED WORKFORCE

### GOAL 1

**Train Mills and neighborhood residents for quality jobs and work with local agencies to set hiring goals for skilled workers.** Work with the Workforce Alliance Regional Workforce Development Board, CT Works American Job Center and the Middlesex Community College to set up programs to train Mills and neighborhood residents in construction trade jobs and other sectors that will support the development projects that will be coming to the district. It is anticipated that jobs will be available in the early years of the redevelopment of Meriden's central business district.

#### PRIORITY

**PRIORITY STRATEGY A: Charge the CT Works American Job Center (AJC) One Stop Career Center to oversee, certify and market this pool of qualified workers to contractors and sub-contractors working on downtown developments.**

**This strategy necessitates the hire of a full-time "Downtown Jobs Connector" – a position based in the AJC office. The role of the "Downtown Jobs Connector" will be threefold – (1) work with able-bodied current and former Mills residents (if relocated to elsewhere in the city) to enter the workforce pipeline of counseling, training and placement; (2) liaise with downtown developers, local sub-contractors and employers human resources departments to provide a constant stream of qualified workers; and (3) seek additional philanthropy, state and federal funding for said position and additional programs.**

**STRATEGY B: Work with the City of Meriden and the Meriden Housing Authority to set local hiring goals and incentives for the City and MHA-funded development projects that can be escalated over time as private investments and pool of highly skilled workers increases.**

This strategy necessitates the expansion of MHA's Section 3 director position. Regional peer organizations such as the Hartford Housing Authority and the Norwalk Housing Authority have successful models to emulate/aspire to.

**STRATEGY C: Coordinate efforts with Middlesex Community College, H. C. Wilcox (Meriden's vocational high school), Platt High School and Maloney High School so that students and recent graduates who reside in downtown Meriden are given priority for job opportunities.**

This strategy is an added role for the "Downtown Jobs Connector." It addresses high school graduates, not college-bound and ready to enter the workforce. Currently many of these good young adults languish in the city or move elsewhere for better opportunities. A "Hire Local" campaign targeted at downtown graduates is an actionable item under this strategy. A small pilot program can begin with Mills graduates.

**STRATEGY D: Institute a program to encourage developers working with the City and MHA to utilize local sub-contractors, and thus local people, on their projects.**

Work with the local agencies to enforce Section 3 requirements and set up a list or database of local subcontractors to ensure that local workers are afforded opportunities to work on projects in the neighborhood. This strategy involves the coordination between the "Downtown Jobs Connector" and the MHA Section 3 director.

#### What can YOU do?

- **If you're unemployed and looking for work, stop by downtown's CT Works/American Job Center**
- **If you're a Meriden employer looking to hire, consider the benefits of hiring local. Talk to the Midstate Chamber or CT Works/American Job Center on how to get started**

#### How will we measure success?

- **Decrease in Downtown unemployment rate:** current rate Downtown is 25.6% compared to city-wide unemployment rate of 8.6%
- **Section 3:** Number of residents who are employed through Section 3
- **Successful hire of "Downtown Jobs Connector" position**
- **Percent of residents who sign up for job training programs; % retention**
- **Overall employment rate (change)**

### Meriden Downtown Jobs Connector is akin to a Career Development Facilitator

- **A CDF is competent in:** (1) individual and group counseling; (2) individual/group assessment; (3) information/resource delivery; (4) program management and implementation; (5) consultation; (6) special populations; (7) supervision; (8) ethical/legal issues; (9) career development theory; and (10) research and evaluation

## GOAL 2

Health care related jobs are expected to grow in the coming years. Work with all of the region's healthcare providers and Meriden's two institutional anchors, MidState Medical Center and Community Health Center (CHC), to **train local residents for projected new jobs tied to expansion or growth of facilities in the healthcare related fields.**

### PRIORITY

**PRIORITY STRATEGY A: Promote and expand Meriden Adult Education enrichment programs, C.N.A. and medical instrument training.**

All indicators are that jobs in the health care sector will continue to become available and grow. This creates initial opportunities for Certified Nursing Assistant (C.N.A.) and medical billing and coding positions. These jobs are excellent gateways to an Associate of Science (A.S.) or Registered Nurse (R.N) degrees, or other degree or training programs for the jobs that pay well.

**STRATEGY B: Promote and expand Allied Health Pre-Professional Certificate and Associates Degree programs offered at Middlesex and Gateway Community Colleges.**

The Allied Health Pre-Professional Certificate Program was created for students who are considering a career in nursing, radiography, dental hygiene, medical laboratory technology, and other medical fields. Once they complete the program, they can apply to one of the selective health technology programs at MxCC or transfer to a program at a four year college or university after completing their associate's degree.

Additional certificate programs at Gateway Community College include Community Healthcare Worker, Help Desk and Customer Service Certifications. For employers, bilingual students would likely be excellent candidates for employment with these certifications. Transportation vouchers would be provided by the AJC for the Hartford Line commuter rail between Meriden and Hew Haven scheduled to begin in late 2016.

**STRATEGY C: Outreach to employers' Human Resources departments through the Chamber's Health and Wellness Council and its Human Resources Roundtable and the CT Works American Job Center Business Services Reps to identify local healthcare employment trends and opportunities.**

This strategy will be addressed by the "Downtown Jobs Connector."

**STRATEGY D: Reach out to local businesses headquartered in Meriden to enroll residents in apprenticeship programs.**

Set up a small fund at AJC or Midstate Chamber to pay participating businesses for apprenticing downtown residents, particularly Mills residents.

**STRATEGY E: Locate Meriden Adult Education programming within new housing developments so that residents can participate in Adult Education services without needing outside transportation to do so.**

## SECTION 3



The Section 3 Program helps support local communities and workers by requiring that recipients of certain funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provide job training, employment and contract opportunities for low- or very-low income residents in connection with projects within the target neighborhood.

The program promotes self-sufficiency by providing low- and very-low income residents with marketable job skills and local job opportunities.

## STEPPING STONE

CNA work might provide a good initial step for previously unemployed or underemployed individuals, it may serve as an occupational "stepping stone."

### How will we measure success?

- **Number of CNAs and medical billers and coders that attain further education/training and achieve other employment**
- **Number of enrolled students in the programs (CNA, adult education, etc.)**

## GOAL 3

### Prepare Choice Neighborhood residents to enter the workforce.

Develop an employment-focused awareness campaign to connect skill seekers to local training programs, job seekers to jobs, employers to qualified talent pool, and employers and employees along the New Haven Hartford rail line to job seekers and jobs in downtown.

Preparing Mills residents for employment is a very broad goal which recognizes that each individual will require his or her individualized solutions to address specific needs. There is never a “one size fits all” solution. Multiple strategies often will be utilized by one individual to address skill deficiencies, employment history gaps, barriers to employment and other challenges. Goal 3 recognizes that unemployed adults, under employed, long term unemployed, and unemployed youth are four distinct populations requiring services.

### PRIORITY

**PRIORITY STRATEGY A: Promote and expand CT Works American Job Center services to employers and out of work individuals.**

1. Direct a targeted Job Developer to work in the district.
2. Design community rooms into new housing developments so that residents can participate in training programs without needing outside transportation to do so.
3. Since Mills residents who use programs are very satisfied, we can engage these individuals as Resident Ambassadors to direct and encourage fellow residents to participate.

**PRIORITY STRATEGY B: Promote Adult Ed/MxCC non-credit short-term training programs for recent high school credentialed students.**

Provide programs that focus on:

1. Include communication skills to help employees after they joined the workforce as well as communication skills that help attain employment.
2. Offer both ESL and developmental writing classes to Meriden residents with varying fluency in English attain better employment and wages.

### PRIORITY

3. Technology programs should focus on: the use of computer for creating charts and graphs, e-mail communication, data analysis, group/cooperative use of computers, using a computer tutorial to learn material for a course or remedial program, and using the Internet to gather information for a class project or paper.
4. College and Career Readiness courses should consider ease of access, scheduling, and utilize alumni tracking to evaluate effectiveness. Teaching key cognitive strategies, key content knowledge, key learning skills and techniques, and key transition knowledge and skills may be a good foundation for the curriculum.
5. In the quick, customized training program, use the following practices to promote acquisition, retention and transfer of skill:
  - For acquisition, incorporate appropriate scheduling of feedback, balance struggling/success ratios so that trainees are being pushed to learn and have rest intervals between tasks for skill practice.
  - For retention, use item chunking (grouping separate items together

## NEEDS ASSESSMENT

In the Needs Assessment, it was noted that many Mills residents are completely unaware of the existence of or the programs offered through CT Works American Job Centers and Middlesex Community College. Many of the offerings are funded through the Workforce Alliance, Meriden's regional workforce development board. American Jobs Center Job Developers and Case Managers are literally co-housed with the CT Department of Labor and within 2 City blocks of the college on West Main Street.

In the Needs Assessment, residents disclosed a variety of barriers to employment. In some cases, part time employment is actually a barrier to training that could lead to higher wage full time employment. The individualized solution for each resident will be a combination of some or all the above.

## WIFI ACCESS

The Boston Choice Neighborhoods implemented a program that expanded free WiFi to the Grove Hall area to provide full coverage within the CN. In addition to providing free WiFi access, the program connected families in the neighborhood with the Technology Goes Home (TGH) program, which equips families with the tools needed to bridge the digital divide. Through partnerships with schools, families are able to attend skills workshops, participate in job fairs and employment trainings and receive a new netbook or mobile device for a minimal fee.

## GOAL 3 (CONTINUED)

to create less items to remember), information retrieval practice and information generation practice.

- For transfer of skill, vary the environment for skill practice when possible, create a knowledge base that can be referenced in new situations and teach systematic relationships to create guidelines that can be generalized outside of a specific environment.

It is important to create multiple programs for improving language skills and to identify which programs are most appropriate for individual residents.

**STRATEGY C:** Work with Midstate Chamber of Commerce and CT Works American Job Center to co-create an annual downtown Meriden Job Fair to match employers and employees.

The Meriden Job Fair can be held at the finished HUB park or at the groundbreaking ceremony of the first phase Mills development.

**STRATEGY D:** Direct residents to programs like the Women and Families Open DOHR program ([www.womenfamilies.org](http://www.womenfamilies.org)) which takes a comprehensive approach that focuses on the development of the whole person.

The Women and Families Center is a multi-faceted human service agency that is committed to promoting equity and improving the lives of women and families throughout the greater New Haven area. They provide services that foster empowerment and independence including before and after school programs, employment and training programs and mentoring programs for youth.

**STRATEGY E:** Direct Workforce Alliance to fund the training of local residents to become Employment Coaches to serve as peer mentors to other Mills residents. Employment Coaches would serve as liaisons to the Job Developers at the CT Works American Job Center.

One of many programs that be run out of AJC which is relatively low cost and high impact.

**STRATEGY F:** Create “Choice Neighborhood Priority of Service” designation with the CT Works American Job Center for all district residents and employers. Dedicate an American Job Center Business Services staff person to work with employers in the district, the City and the region to better connect employers with residents of the district.

**STRATEGY G:** Provide neighborhood-wide free or reduced rate WiFi service to bridge the digital divide.

The AJC staff can assist Mills residents and custom tailor a suite of on-line services that can be accessed by residents in their own homes. METRIX Learning @ site licenses and other on-line courses provide the greatest flexibility as courses can be taken at any time of the day or night.

## TOD WORKFORCE STUDY

As a part of the overall TOD efforts in Meriden’s Central Business District, the South Central Regional Council of Governments will conduct a “first mile / last mile” transit study that will be started in the fall of 2015 and conclude by July 2016. This will identify population densities and destinations for workers.

## How will we measure success?

- Number of students enrolled in programs
- Self-reported data from technology program regarding gains from technology (grades, wages, ease of communication, etc.)
- For CCR, there are several possible measures (Camara, 2013):
  - Persistence and successive completion of courses resulting in a certificate or degree
  - Graduation or completion of a degree or certification program
  - Placement into college credit courses and exemption from remediation courses
  - Student GPA
- Number of students passing the programs

## NEW WORKFORCE ACT

With the new Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act, 70% of workforce funds must be directed to out-of-school youth (previously 40% under Workforce Investment Act) which is a population that has been identified as a very difficult population to serve. In addition, the definition of “out of school youth” has been extended to age 24. These changes will become effective in July 2015, and Meriden area partners and collaborators are being made aware of this through the new RFP process.

## GOAL 4

Identify disengaged youth without a long term work plan and connect them to existing and new in-school and out-of-school programs.

### PRIORITY

**PRIORITY STRATEGY A: Utilize High School Career Counselors to identify students and better connect them to programs.**

Additionally, high school career counselors should receive training in addressing long term work plans, particularly for Mills and Choice Neighborhood students.

- School counselors should create groups or programs for at-risk populations, such as those with low grades, males, students who are bored or aggressive, or students with a high disciplinary frequency.
- The programs should address personal insight, expansion of career options and future orientation.

**PRIORITY STRATEGY B: Expand the nationally recognized Meriden K-12 and American Federation of Teachers “Personal Learning Experience” program and deliver at an as early age as possible.**

The “Personal Learning Experience” program is a revamp of internship programs at Meriden high schools and is run like independent study. Students can explore a topic not taught or take a regularly taught course that they wouldn’t have time to fit in their schedule. The process is organized to make learning more structured and credit-driven.

Students work with a teacher, a guidance counselor and the PLE coordinator to create a study plan that outlines expectations, assessments and goals. Currently at Platt, students are studying subjects that include special education instruction and code-writing for computers.

**STRATEGY C: Utilize Adult Education / College and Career Readiness Center staff to further identify populations in their pipeline and programs to support the population.**

This strategy necessitates slightly expanded scope for staff members at said organizations to take a closer look at their clientele in light of this comprehensive Meriden Choice Employment Plan.

**STRATEGY D: Support local collaborating agencies submitting grant applications to the Workforce Alliance and other funders (including the Meriden based foundations Napier, Cuno and the Meriden foundation) for youth programs where out-of-school/disengaged youth are to participate in a workforce program that remediates basic skills while preparing them for careers.**

Organized originally as a response to the Meriden Family Zone Promise Neighborhood Planning Initiative, United Way of Meriden and Wallingford’s Youth Committee is now considering its role in CHOICE initiatives. The committee members include representatives of the Meriden Public Schools (the two Career Counselors and Adult Education representation), six United Way-funded agencies that offer after school and academic support programming, the Midstate Chamber of Commerce leadership and its Education Committee rep and representatives of Project REACH (a homeless teen outreach program), Children First Initiative, the CT One Stop Job Center, and other interested parties who attend as projects attract them. As with the Promise Neighborhood planning, the Youth Committee will use the CHOICE plan and focus on the goals and recommendations made that cover youth in various areas. As with the Promise Neighborhood initiative, United Way-funded programs can receive extra consideration if they offer initiatives and strategies to meet these goals such as Goal 4.

### How will we measure success?

- Number of students participating in programs
- Number of students identifying that they have a long-term work plan
- Number of students obtaining employment or beginning additional education or training after high school graduation

## MANUFACTURING



Photo Credit: Senator Danté Bartolomeo

Manufacturers are dealing with an aging workforce that will be retiring and need to be replaced in the next few years. This problem has already started to show as there are many more unfilled jobs in the manufacturing sector than virtually any other sector. In addition, manufacturing jobs pay significantly higher wages (plus the opportunity for overtime) than many of the retail and service jobs are anticipated to be created in the district.

MxCC has a Precision Manufacturing Institute in Meriden that offers a comprehensive training experience for those who want to learn the technical skills needed to enter or advance in the field of manufacturing. The program will be coordinating its course offerings with H. C. Wilcox Technical HS to provide greater opportunities to Choice Neighborhood and Meriden students.

## GOAL 5

Expand support services and reduce other barriers to full-time employment including childcare, transportation, lack of skills, and financial hardship.

### PRIORITY

**PRIORITY STRATEGY A: Create a School Readiness Early Childhood program that would address the obstacle of lack of quality child care for someone seeking employment.**

- Advertise and inform Mills residents about the School Readiness Early Childhood program via respected persons and sources in their community
- Provide information in written form in Spanish and English

This strategy overlaps with the downtown shuttle strategy in the Meriden Choice Education Plan.

**STRATEGY B: Work to increase transportation options (CT Transit fixed route and commuter bus services, NNHS rail services, Uber, ridesharing, walking, biking, etc.) to enable residents to get to and from education, work and family obligations.**

This strategy overlaps with multiple school readiness early childhood strategies in the Meriden Choice Education Plan.

**STRATEGY C: Expand enrollment in MxCC College and Career Readiness course.**

This strategy necessitates additional marketing dollars for MxCC to increase enrollment particularly among Mills and Choice Neighborhood residents.

**STRATEGY D: Utilize employers and CT Works American Job Center Job Developers to identify part time workers who have the skills and time required for full-time employment.**

Target this strategy towards part time workers at the Mills looking for full-time employment. An employment assessment survey is required and can be facilitated by AJC.

**STRATEGY E: Utilize Midstate Chamber of Commerce and Business Services Reps to work with employers to encourage full time employment.**

This strategy necessitates additional marketing dollars for Midstate Chamber to reach out to its chamber members to encourage full time employment, with an added focus on Mills and Choice Neighborhood residents.

**STRATEGY F: Engage CT Works American Job Center to develop co-work/education programs to stop the loss of many students who quit education and training early for sub-standard part-time employment opportunities. Promote the models and best practices through the Midstate Chamber of Commerce and City Economic Department office so employers can participate.**

**STRATEGY G: Utilize the CT Works American Job Center to work one on one with residents to assess specific needs of specific residents and find solutions, especially for the long term unemployed.**

The long term unemployed are an especially challenging population to work with but AJC has a suite of programs to assist these residents. Paid work experience programs

### How will we measure success?

- Number of enrolled children in the program
- Survey results from Mills residents regarding reason for enrollment
- Number of full-time employed Mills residents

will help to establish work history and improve credentials for a resume. Occupational assistance programs are bridge programs to re-socialize workers to life in the workplace. Often this can be done by combining a part time work with a part time certificate program. This strategy is best implemented through case management, starting with 140 Mills households.

## GOAL 6

Expand support for the Workforce Alliance / MxCC Certificate of Advanced Manufacturing program to the district to feed the future needs of the manufacturing sector in the district and in the region.

### PRIORITY

**PRIORITY STRATEGY A: Market graduates to manufacturers in the district.**

Midstate Chamber will convene a “meet and greet” mixer among soon-to-be graduates and regional manufacturers annually to address this strategy.

- Have students take a seminar on what conscientiousness, agreeableness, emotional stability, and extraversion look like. Have the students develop their own array of related qualities and coach the students to exhibit them during the mixer.
- Have students take a seminar on interviewing skills and go through mock-interviews to prepare them for the mixer.
- Survey the regional manufacturers to see what qualities they are looking for in hiring new employees.

**STRATEGY B: Engage residents in the district to enroll in programs.**

Provide extra consideration for Mills residents who through the CN needs assessment revealed high unemployment yet a strong desire for well-paying manufacturing jobs.

**STRATEGY C: Identify candidates for training programs and utilize Ready to Work or on the job training contracts or apprentice programs to improve skills of and employ local residents.**

Begin identification of candidates among current and former Mills residents (if relocated), then radiate out into the Choice Neighborhood for candidates.

**STRATEGY D: Work with employers to drive specific course offerings at MxCC based on employers needs.**

This strategy allows employers to build up qualified and local employee bases to fuel their businesses.

**STRATEGY E: Engage in reuse planning of former manufacturing and brownfields sites, including the former Meriden Wallingford hospital site, as a potential jobs, training or education center that serves residents.**

This is a long term strategy as the hospital requires significant remediation and phased redevelopment.

### How will we measure success?

- Number of soon-to-be graduates hired
- Number of soon-to-be graduates at the same position for a year or more



Photo Credit: CHC Meriden

# Health

## HEALTHY MERIDEN PLAN

The overall goal of the Meriden Choice Health Plan is to promote the health and well-being of Choice Neighborhood residents. Goals and strategies build on existing neighborhood assets including the Community Health Center of Meriden, a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) located within the CN, adjacent to the Mills site.

## HEALTHY MERIDEN PLAN

### GOAL 1

**Promote increased consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables in the Choice Neighborhood and ensure everyone has equal access to healthy foods.** Chronic diseases, such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes and some cancers, are the leading causes of death and disability in Connecticut, Meriden included. Social and environmental conditions—such as neighborhood safety, community isolation, poverty, lack of access to employment and education, and inability to find affordable healthy foods—are often the common thread to much of the disease burden.

#### PRIORITY

**PRIORITY STRATEGY A: Expand the opportunities for community garden programs.**

Community gardens are collaborative projects created by members of a community in which participants share both the maintenance and products of the garden, including fruits and vegetables. This strategy can be implemented by:

1. Designating areas in the CN (potentially the new community park), such as a park or a community lot for gardens, where the land can be divided into individual plots, shared among all members;
2. Creating a resident-run workgroup to organize and oversee the garden, so as to create ownership for the project. Because individuals who participate in community or home gardens are exposed to fresh fruits and vegetables, they may be more likely to eat them. Community gardens can yield high-quality produce at low cost, benefiting community members from both an economic and a health perspective; and
3. Develop community garden programs that include additional programming opportunities such as gardening classes and cooking demonstrations.

#### PRIORITY

**PRIORITY STRATEGY B: Promote the Meriden Farmers' Market to Choice Neighborhood residents.**

An important benefit of farmers' markets is that they support regional fruit and vegetable production, while providing consumers with access to fresh produce at an affordable cost.

Residents of low-income neighborhoods, where supermarkets are scarce and the small grocery and convenience stores that do exist sell limited fresh produce, may benefit most from the access to fruits and vegetables provided through farmers' markets. Strategies to increase attendance at and expand access to farmers' markets include:

1. Promote the acceptance of food and nutrition assistance programs, such as SNAP, WIC, WIC SFMNP, and the WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) at local farmers' markets;
2. Educate market-goers on the differences and health benefits of organic versus commercially grown produce;
3. Provide cooking demonstrations at the market to show residents how to cook seasonal offerings;
4. Market the farmers' market and fruits and vegetables through a recognizable "brand," such as Produce for Better Health Foundation's Fruits & Veggies—More Matters;
5. Encourage existing stores to carry fresh fruits and vegetables if not already doing so; and
6. Increase the supply of and shelf space dedicated to high-quality, affordable fruits and vegetables at existing stores.

### COMMUNITY GARDEN



Photo Credit: Beat the Street Community Center

Community gardens help foster community identity and spirit and inspire ownership and pride. These gardens bring people from a variety of backgrounds together to work toward a common goal and provide much needed exposure to green space that may reduce stress and increase wellness and a sense of belonging.

Beat the Street Community Center's community garden, located in the Choice Neighborhood, celebrates another year! The program includes education about the nutritional value of fruits and vegetables and classes on how to cook healthy food. Members develop planning skills that support teamwork, cooperation, responsibility, and good work habits.

## GOAL 1 (CONTINUED)

### STRATEGY C: Promote food policy councils to improve the food environment in the Choice Neighborhood.

Create a Food Policy Council to support and advise the neighborhood in developing policies and programs to improve the local food system, with the goal of increasing consumer access to and the availability of affordable, healthy foods such as fruits and vegetables. This Council can include stakeholders from public, private and non-profit sectors and should represent a wide array of interests, including nutrition, health, agriculture, education, policy, community design, and commerce. This Council would develop strategies, based on current data, to provide high quality and affordable healthy food, including fruits and vegetables, to all members of the community through policy and environmental changes.

### STRATEGY D: Identify heart healthy options at local restaurants in the Choice Neighborhood.

Many restaurant menu items contain excessive calories, sodium, saturated fat, cholesterol, and other things that can contribute to poor health outcomes. Consumption of food prepared away from home plays an increasingly large role in the American diet. In 1970, 25.9 percent of all food spending was on food away from home; by 2012, that share rose to its highest level of 43.1 percent. A number of factors contributed to the trend of increased dining out since the 1970s, including a larger share of women employed outside the home, more two-earner households, higher incomes, more affordable and convenient fast food outlets, increased advertising and promotion by large foodservice chains, and the smaller size of U.S. households. The more we eat meals away from home the more likely we are consuming food with more calories and poor nutritional content; this can contribute to overweight and obesity and related health consequences such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes.

This strategy can be implemented in several ways:

1. Encouraging restaurants to mark select menu items as "heart healthy", using guidelines and criteria provided by the Meriden Department of Health and Human Services. Heart healthy service may include, but is not limited to, informing customers that accommodations can be made to meet their dietary needs or offering to serve dressings and condiments on the side. Heart healthy menu items may include, but are not limited to, low-fat or non-fat salad dressing, mayonnaise, sour cream, ice creams, and desserts; and
2. Creating a list of "heart healthy" restaurants and posting it on partner websites and social media.

### *What can YOU do?*

- Request fresh fruits and vegetables at your grocer/store
- Join a community garden workgroup
- Shop at the Downtown Meriden Farmers' Market
- Volunteer to work at the urban farm
- Train others in modern gardening/farming techniques

### *How will we measure success?*

- Number/percent of residents who report good physical health
- Number/percent of adults at a healthy weight
- Number/percent of adults with lower cholesterol
- Percentage of Meriden residents who report eating fruits and vegetables daily (current rate in the state of CT is 31.9%)
- Percentage of residents who have a healthy weight

## GOAL 2

**Increase the number of residents who participate in daily physical activity. Ensure safe places to be active and eliminate barriers to physical activity.** Everyone should have access to safe places to play and be physically active. Risks to safety can run the gamut from reckless drivers and “stranger danger” to bullies in the playground. Research shows that if people believe their neighborhoods are unsafe, children are less likely to play outside, and adults are more wary about walking or taking part in other physical activities.

### PRIORITY

**PRIORITY STRATEGY A: Create community-wide campaigns focused on motivating people to increase physical activity.**

Traditional prevention efforts focus on educating and motivating people to help them increase their physical activity. Community-wide campaigns address multiple levels of influence, including individual, interpersonal, institutional, and community levels. These types of socioecological, multi-pronged efforts that are designed to identify and eliminate barriers have been found to be more effective than each single component. The Choice Health Workgroup should work with residents in designing a culturally and linguistically appropriate community campaign to encourage the use of the new park, including establishing opportunities for ownership of the space and participatory action research with community members to aid in the creation of a social environment that supports daily physical activity.

### PRIORITY

**PRIORITY STRATEGY B: Create a “social environment” that promotes physical activity.**

The existence of safe, convenient and accessible facilities for walking and biking are likely to increase physical activity and make parents feel more secure about their children’s safety. However, they do not by themselves ensure more active lifestyles for residents of such communities. The “social environment” includes how community members feel about their neighborhood, how secure they feel and how interested they are in participating in community-based physical activity. Evidence suggests that the combined effect of the built and social environment has an impact on rates of childhood obesity and overweight. City leadership and community health organization partners should engage residents whenever possible, using a participatory action research approach to developing and implementing physical activity programming.

### *What can YOU do?*

- Put away electronic devices when not working or doing homework
- Limit television time for kids
- Start a walking or exercise group in your neighborhood and encourage your friends and family to join!
- Challenge friends and neighbors to participate in weight loss/physical activity programs
- Join group exercise activities at the HUB park

### *How will we measure success?*

- Number/percent of residents who report good physical health
- Number/percent of adults with reduced hypertension
- Number/percent of adults at a healthy weight
- Percent of adults who report exercising for an hour or more at least three times a week

## GOAL 2 (CONTINUED)

## PRIORITY

**PRIORITY STRATEGY C: Encourage community design and development that supports physical activity.**

**How communities are designed and function can promote—or inhibit—physical activity for children and adults. The built environment consists of all man-made structures, including transportation infrastructure, schools, office buildings, housing, and parks. Resident's ability to be physically active in their community depends on whether the community is safe and walkable, with good sidewalks and reasonable distances between destinations. The Choice Neighborhood should be developed with activity in mind; sidewalks should link together, protected bike lanes created, street design that slows traffic, and open, grassy spaces for other activities such as yoga, tai chi, and aerobics classes.**

**STRATEGY D: Provide no-cost group exercise opportunities to the community.**

During Choice Health Workforce meetings it was expressed that often the cost of joining a traditional gym or purchasing a membership to a non-profit organization prohibited families from joining. In addition, the price of the equipment necessary to participate in many organized sports and/or activities was also a barrier. It is suggested that:

1. Group programming is made available in the Choice Neighborhood at no-cost;
2. The green, open space in the new park be utilized for community events that encourage physical activity;
3. A walking map with exercise prompts be created for the new park for residents to use; and
4. Encourage residents to set up a "buddy" system, make "contracts" with others to complete specified levels of physical activity or set up walking or other groups to provide companionship, friendship and support while being physically active.

## ACTIVE COMMUNITY



Photo Credit: Sangudo

The existence of safe, convenient and accessible facilities for walking and biking are likely to increase physical activity and make parents feel more secure about their children's safety. However, they do not by themselves ensure more active lifestyles for residents of such communities. The "social environment" includes how community members feel about their neighborhood, how secure they feel and how interested they are in participating in community-based physical activity. Evidence suggests that the combined effect of the built and social environment has an impact on rates of childhood obesity and overweight.

## GOAL 3

**Reduce asthma-inducing triggers and create a smoke-free social norms environment.** Asthma is a chronic disease of the respiratory system that is characterized by reversible obstruction of the airways and airway hyper-responsiveness to a variety of stimuli. The reported asthma rate for children in the CN is alarmingly high – 42% and trending in the wrong direction.

### PRIORITY

**PRIORITY STRATEGY A: Implement smoke-free multi-unit housing policy.**

Children exposed to secondhand smoke are at increased risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), respiratory infections, asthma, and ear infections. While the proportion of households with voluntary no-smoking rules has increased since the early 1990s, nonsmoking residents in multi-unit housing are not adequately protected from the infiltration of secondhand smoke into their units. This is due to potential seepage through walls and shared ventilation systems. New housing units built in the Choice Neighborhood should be smoke-free, or at a minimum have more smoke-free units than not. HUD encourages the adoption of smoke-free policies and has action plans and toolkits for owners/management agents and residents to follow. Additionally implement smoke-free policies at the city or county-level.

**PRIORITY STRATEGY B: Create smoke-free park ordinances.**

Parks are established to promote healthy activities, and tobacco-free policies fit with this idea. Tobacco-free public parks are becoming the norm in more and more places across the state, and many other Connecticut towns and cities have successfully implemented ordinances and/or policies to reduce exposure to second-hand smoke in public parks. Strategies to create a smoke-free park ordinance include

1. Surveying park users for thoughts and inputs;
2. Develop an ordinance, including an enforcement policy;
3. Develop a plan to notify and educate the public; and
4. Expand smoke-free policies to other public spaces

**STRATEGY C: Establish enforceable pet policies in multi-unit housing.**

Proteins in dog and cat skin flakes, urine, feces, saliva, and hair can trigger asthma. Establishing enforceable pet policies in multi-unit housing can reduce potential triggers. Policies can include banning pets from the housing complex or limiting the size/weight/number of animals allowed in the home. If a family with a child with asthma chooses to have a pet, education should be given on isolation measures. Isolation measures can include keeping pets out of the sleeping areas, keeping pets away from upholstered furniture, carpets, and stuffed toys, keeping the pet outdoors as much as possible, and isolating sensitive individuals from the pet as much as possible.

**STRATEGY D: Use Integrated Pest Management (IPM).**

IPM takes a holistic approach to pest control that includes ongoing monitoring for pests, sealing cracks that allow pests to move between apartments, providing pest control education to residents, and, when needed, the targeted and safe use of pesticides. Housing management in the Choice Neighborhood should be educated on and encouraged to use IPM to reduce possible exposure to pests and their excretions in order to reduce asthma triggers.

### What can YOU do?

- Help make smoke-free a social norm
- If there are children in your home, endeavor to stop smoking
- Sign up for Meriden Health & Human Services Putting on AIRS Program if you or someone in your household suffers from asthma

### How will we measure success?

- Number/percent of residents who are diagnosed with asthma
- Percent of residents who are aware of smoke-free policies
- Percent of hospital admissions/ discharges due to asthma

## GOAL 3 (CONTINUED)

### STRATEGY E: Encourage the use of the Putting on AIRS program.

This program is provided through the Meriden Health & Human Services Department and provides a free in-home environmental assessment and one-on-one asthma education to asthma patients and their families. An Environmental Specialist conducts the environmental assessment of the home with the family to identify asthma triggers and give recommendations on how to reduce triggers in the home. An Asthma Education Specialist conducts the asthma education. This specialist will review prescribed medications, their usage and how to properly administer them, as well as provide education on asthma signs and symptoms. Follow-up phone calls are conducted with the client/family/caregiver at two-weeks and at three and six month intervals.

### STRATEGY F: Diminish construction-related triggers in the Mills neighborhood.

Air quality issues have plagued Mills residents, especially children, acting as triggers to asthmatic conditions. Residents have noted that the blowing dust and dirt from the adjacent ongoing Hub construction project has exacerbated these conditions. Goal: To the extent possible, mitigate the affects of the construction project "fugitive" dust by continually monitoring the dust levels as prescribed in the construction contracts with the City of Meriden and as overseen by the city engineering department. If dust levels are at unacceptable levels, the City must take enforcement action to correct the situation.

## EVIDENCE BASED INTERVENTIONS

Research examining the impact of smoke-free laws, in general, shows positive outcomes in asthma rates.

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Engage important stakeholders such as civic leaders, the recreation department and community members. Engagement should be focused on:

- Positives and negatives of smoke-free policies
- Identifying outdoor and indoor spaces that require smoke-free policies
- Sharing responsibilities
- Identifying potential challenges to enforcement

Explore possible policy implementation avenues and identify what method works best for the City of Meriden. The possible legal avenues listed below were explored by the Philadelphia Department of Public Health when exploring smoke-free policies, and these avenues may be appropriate in Meriden but additional avenues may be better:

- Legislation by city council
- Regulation from city agency

Offer education sessions to directors or leaders of locations enforcing newly implemented smoke-free policies

Possible suggestions for enforcement of policies include:

- Pointing to smoke-free signs
- Providing community members with wallet cards describing the policy and include smoking cessation resources
- Asking residents/patrons to stop smoking

## GOAL 4

**Ensure culturally and linguistically competent mental health services for unserved, underserved and inappropriately served populations.** In addition to increasing access to services, services being provided should be culturally and linguistically competent and have staff that reflects the community being served. **Increase access to mental health services for unserved, underserved and inappropriately served populations.** The first step in reducing disparities in mental health is making the services more available to those in need. Meriden can make it easier for residents to access services by expanding options and locations of services, providing assistance to make it easier to get to services, bringing services to the community, and making sure that those seeking services know where to find them.

### PRIORITY

#### **PRIORITY STRATEGY A: Encourage linguistic access to mental health services.**

The Choice Health Workgroup encourages a comprehensive approach to improve linguistic access for all clients in need of mental health services in Meriden. Approaches can include the use of National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services in Health and Health Care (the National CLAS Standards). CLAS standards pertaining to communication and language assistance include the following:

1. Offer language assistance to individuals who have limited English proficiency and/or other communication needs, at no cost to them, to facilitate timely access to all health care and services.
2. Inform all individuals of the availability of language assistance services clearly and in their preferred language, verbally and in writing.
3. Ensure the competence of individuals providing language assistance, recognizing that the use of untrained individuals and/or minors as interpreters should be avoided.
4. Provide easy-to-understand print and multimedia materials and signage in the languages commonly used by the populations in the service area. Materials should also consider the cultural context and literacy level of the targeted community.
5. Train interpreters in mental health, specifically how to properly translate mental health terms and concepts in a culturally and linguistically acceptable and understandable manner to the clients – often, the literal translation of “mental health” can have negative connotations (e.g., “crazy”). Interpreters should also know and be comfortable using terms regarding sexual orientation and gender identity.
6. Interpreters should also be trained in maintaining a code of ethics, which requires them to respect the culture of their clients and consider the confidentiality, accuracy and impartiality of the service they provide. Interpreters are often seen as community leaders, serving as a link between the community and health providers.

## NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Children of respondents from the Choice Neighborhoods Needs Assessment have been diagnosed with a number of chronic ailments. These included Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD or ADHD) – 16% and emotional disturbance or mental illness – 10%. These percentages are all higher than the Promise Neighborhood Survey respondents. It is essential that parents have access to and understand what resources are available within the community.

## IMPLEMENTATION SUGGESTIONS

- Provide incentives for staff and providers to attend training specific to the cultural and linguistic needs of their target population
- Use cultural brokers (individuals tasked with mediating between people of different cultural backgrounds in order to reduce conflict) to help bridge cultural divides between clients and providers
- Use qualified and trained interpreters
- Utilize a multi-faceted approach to providing linguistic access (i.e., interpreters, language line, etc.)

## GOAL 4 (CONTINUED)

### PRIORITY

**PRIORITY STRATEGY B: Increase psychiatric resources for younger populations.**

Mental health is a key component in a child's healthy development; children need to be healthy in order to learn, grow and lead productive lives. The Choice Health Workgroup has identified a need for increased resources for medication management and mental health evaluation for adolescents and young adults in Meriden. Additional psychiatric health providers, including services and supports, need to be accessible and followed up on in order to help our young residents thrive and live successfully. City leadership and mental health providers will have to work with regional and/or statewide providers to increase the amount of services local to Meriden.

- Ensure that medical home / primary pediatric care providers include screening for toxic stress within well child visits.
- When there are signs of toxic stress and/or its effects, formal screening should occur, with referral to behavioral health services occurring promptly and within a defined time window.
- Formal screening should be conducted by individuals who are trained, using reliable and valid screening tools for both parents and children.
- In early childhood settings, screening for toxic stress should be conducted for any child who demonstrates difficulty adjusting or show signs of externalizing (e.g., dysregulated, angry, aggressive behaviors) or internalizing (withdrawal, sadness, sleep disruption) problems. Screening should be conducted in a sensitive, non-blaming manner that engages family members.

**STRATEGY C: Elevate schools as centers for wellness in the community.**

Meriden's public and private schools can be valuable assets when developing ways to improve mental health in children and adolescents by adequately screening, detecting and diagnosing potential mental health issues. Schools are a safe setting where children go almost every day and can be used to educate youth and their families about mental health and to provide interventions to decrease the risk of incarceration, drug use and mental illness. Schools also can be used as portals to help adolescents access prevention and early intervention programs in their communities. Recommended efforts to improve mental health treatment through schools should include:

- A plan to create and integrate mental health into school curricula dealing with health to help increase awareness of mental health issues and treatment.
- Programs to ensure early detection of mental disorders and a strategy to change the course of these disorders and avoid misdiagnoses that may result in mistreatment and school dropouts.
- Workforce training and technical assistance for all public school staff and administrators to improve culturally and linguistically competent treatment of all students.
- Effective, evidence-based anti-bullying and anti-harassment programs should be developed for public schools at all levels and should include language addressing race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, perceived sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, and gender expression.

### What can YOU do?

- Encourage providers to provide services that reflect the population being served
- Ask for educational materials in your own language

### How will we measure success?

- Percentage of workers who report being familiar with the National CLAS Standards
- Number of providers using linguistic services, such as the Language Line, will increase
- Number of Community Health Center personnel trained in medical home and screening for trauma
- Number of providers trained in EBIs for trauma
- Number of children/families screened for toxic/chronic/traumatic stress
- Mean number of days between presentation of concerns about trauma and referral for behavioral health

## CT TRAUMA GRANT CONCEPT

Connecticut's trauma grant, CONCEPT, implements trauma screening and evidence-based trauma treatment services for children ages six and older statewide. CONCEPT also provides for trauma screening to children ages five and younger and providing TF-CBT statewide, and can serve as a valuable resource for embedding trauma screening into Meriden's health practices. Sample Screening instrument can be found in the appendix.

## GOAL 5

Work to ensure that all individuals and families who reside in the Choice Neighborhood area have a medical home for their primary medical, behavioral health and dental care.

### PRIORITY

**PRIORITY STRATEGY A: Encourage all providers in Meriden to ask about medical homes.**

Care under the medical home model must be accessible, family-centered, continuous, comprehensive, coordinated, compassionate, and culturally effective.

MHA can partner with other non-profit agencies in the area to do outreach to special populations in need of healthcare and connect people with a medical home.

- Educate staff and providers on the principles of the patient-centered medical home
- Utilize strategies such as “teamlet” huddles and improvement meetings to evaluate the implementation of the patient-centered medical home
- Ensure timeliness of data receipt to providers
- Provide clear expectations for staff and providers in implementing the patient-centered medical home.

**STRATEGY B: Support primary care practices in engaging patients and families at three levels:**

1. Involvement in their own care,
2. Quality improvement in the primary care practice, and
3. Policy and research development implementation.

### *How will we measure success?*

- Percent of providers who report understanding the principles of the patient-centered medical home model
- Utilization of patient-centered medical home practices like “teamlet” meetings or education sessions
- Percent of emergency department visits for chronic conditions
- Percent of hospitalizations for chronic conditions



# CHAPTER 5 Housing Plan

We are committed to developing a vibrant and diverse mixed-income community that fulfills the needs of current Mills residents, provides an attractive mix of housing options that are responsive to market demand and fosters future commercial development. Who will live in Downtown Meriden?

## HOUSING PLAN GOALS:

- 1. Create a mix of housing types and attractive styles that serve the identified needs of current and future residents at all income levels.**
- 2. Develop housing that best leverages Downtown Meriden's unique assets – train station, HUB park, location, Community Health Center, and employment opportunities.**
- 3. Ensure minimal disruption to the residents of Mills Memorial and assure that every Mills household who is lease-compliant has the right to return.**

## HOUSING VISION

New housing is critical to creating a vibrant Downtown Meriden. In 2020, new mixed-income, diverse, green housing units will serve a new multigenerational and diverse downtown population. To achieve this vision, the community developed the following overarching housing goals.

## INTRODUCTION

The Housing Plan is developed with three goals that aim to create a mix of housing types that cater to all income levels while leveraging Downtown Meriden's unique assets – train station, HUB park, Community Health Center. Ensuring that Mill residents experience minimal disruption is another driver of the Plan; therefore, the Plan is divided into six phases – Mills (State Street), HUB (State Street), Record Journal Building, Infill Development, Mills (Cedar Street), and HUB (Pratt Street). The Plan also includes four early action and other construction and rehab projects – 24 Colony Street, 116 Cook Avenue, 143 W. Main Street, and Yale Acres.

# HOUSING TRANSFORMATION PLAN

## GOAL 1

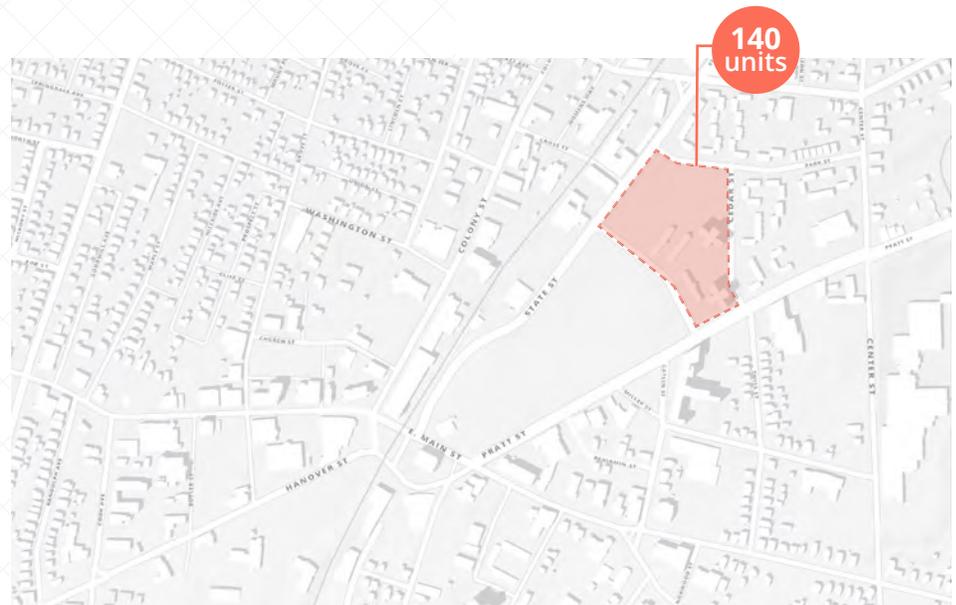
**Create a mix of housing types and attractive styles that serve the identified needs of current and future residents at all income levels.** As potential for market-rate housing units increases in Downtown Meriden, our community must provide housing opportunities for everyone. Additionally, it is the intent of the Meriden Housing Authority and its development partners to ensure that every Mills unit that is demolished is replaced with a new unit near the downtown area.

### STRATEGY A: Ensure one for one replacement of Mills units.

All 140 units of public housing at the Mills will be demolished and replaced with 140 units of public housing / project based voucher units within the City of Meriden with ample choice for returning residents in terms of housing type, bedroom size, location, and amenities.

### STRATEGY B: Develop higher-income units.

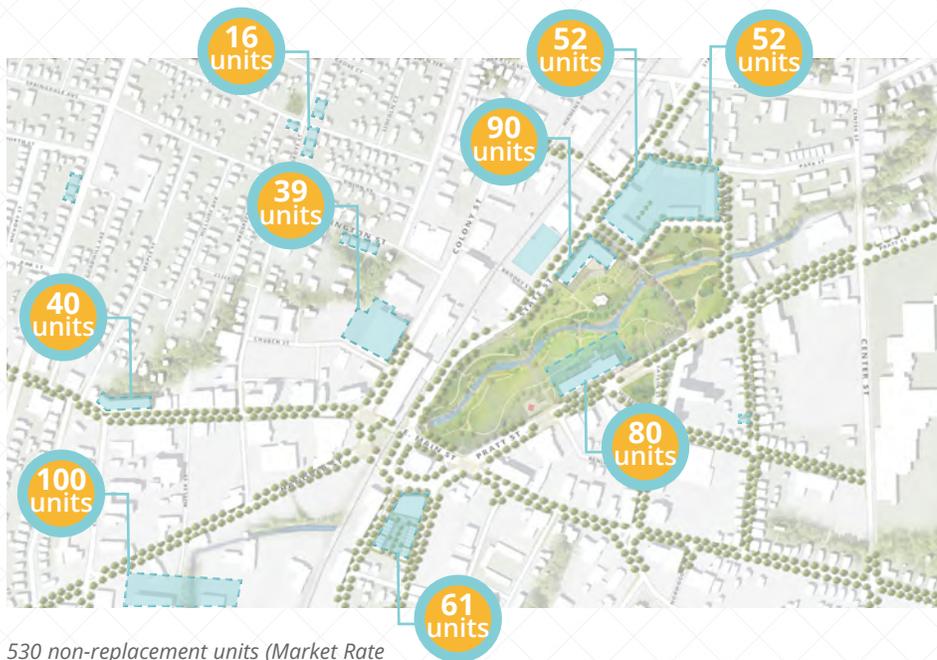
In addition to the Mills redevelopment, MHA and its development partners will develop additional affordable and market rate units to serve a broader mix of income. These non-replacement units will be tax credit units or units targeted to higher income and market rate renters. These units will be fully integrated into every phase of development and distributed throughout the downtown.



Existing Map of Mills Site with 140 units.



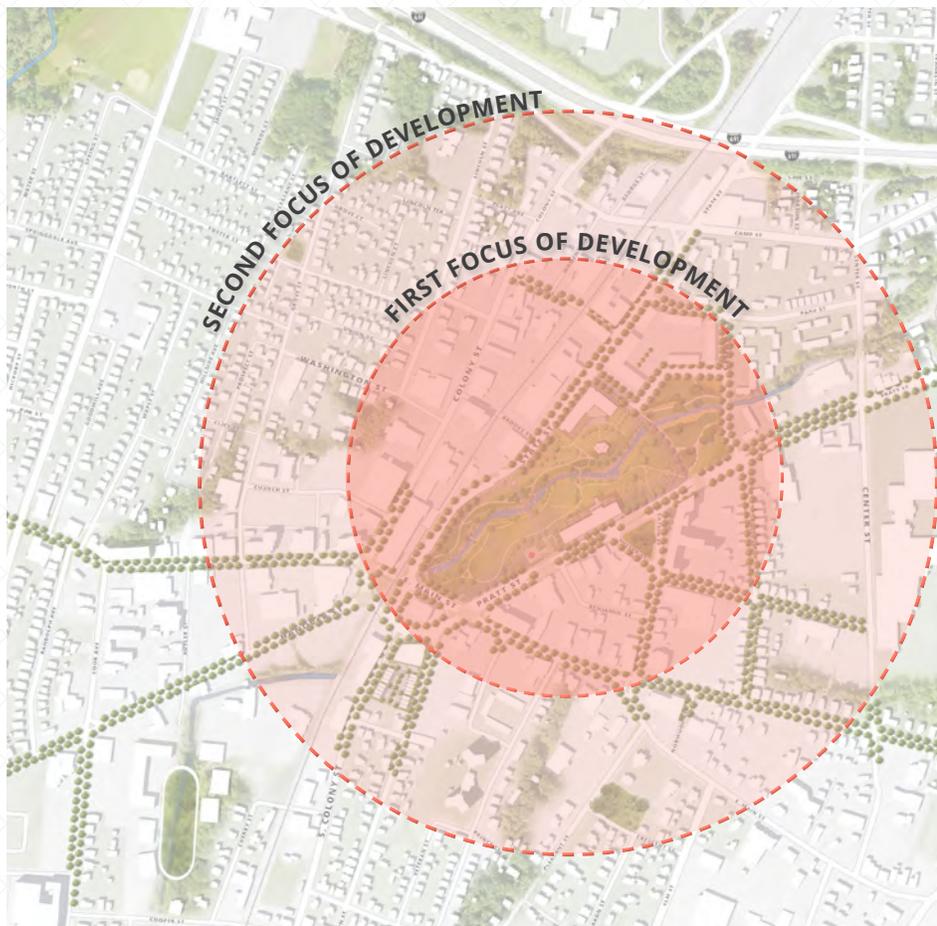
140 replacement units



530 non-replacement units (Market Rate & Affordable)

### Housing by the Numbers

- **140 Mills units will be demolished** and replaced in 5 years
- **39 Mills** replacement units will be **relocated at Yale Acres**
- **101 Mills replacement units** (65%) will be relocated **back in the neighborhood**
- Additional **240 affordable units** will be developed in **Downtown Meriden**
- **290 market rate units** will be developed in **Downtown Meriden** in 10 years
- **The 5 year program is 21% replacement, 36% affordable / non-replacement, and 43% market rate**



Development Phasing Strategy

## GOAL 2

### Develop housing that best leverages Downtown Meriden’s unique assets – train station, HUB park, Community Health Center.

The Housing Plan recommends early development take place in the area closest to the train station and park. Subsequent phases can ripple out, riding the momentum of transformation.

#### STRATEGY A: Secure funding to demolish the Mills.

To address first the obsolescent and distressed nature of the Mills, the Housing Implementation Team is committed to abating and demolishing Mills Memorial Apartments. The high-rise and low-rise buildings have exhausted their useful lives and will remain in the flood plain even after flood control measures are fully implemented. The development community cites the Mills as one of the biggest hurdles in the way of new market-rate units in the downtown.

#### STRATEGY B: Incorporate mixed-use program in ground floors of multi-family buildings and site community-oriented open space adjacent to new development. Design new housing that complements non-residential investments in the downtown.

- Family Resource Center with wrap-around service and community room in new Mills elevator building.
- Mills community garden.
- Wellness center in HUB building.
- Potential expansion of CHC.
- Amphitheater at HUB park.
- Community gardens at 116 Cook Ave. redevelopment.

## How our community shaped the plan

- **The community wanted a mixed-income program** for new downtown housing – the final program is a mix of replacement, non-replacement affordable and market rate units
- **Community envisioned mixed-use TOD developments** – all buildings will incorporate non-residential uses
- **Community asked for a variety of housing types and tenures** – the housing plan has five housing types and both rental and homeownership units
- **Residents did not like designs that showed homeownership units that look different from rental units** within the same building – the plan avoids this by siting homeownership units away from rental developments
- **2/3 of current downtown residents wish to stay in the downtown.** The plan provides units inside and outside the neighborhood and opportunities for homeownership

24 COLONY  
MILLS PHASE 1  
RECORD JOURNAL  
MILLS PHASE 5  
143 W. MAIN  
YALE ACRES

#### BEDROOM REPLACEMENT INFORMATION

Total Replacement Units	140	24	23	20	23	11	39
1 Unit	26	12	6	2	6	-	-
2 Units	52	12	11	9	11	9	-
3 Units	61	-	6	9	6	2	38
4 Units	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
<b>Total Bedrooms</b>	<b>317</b>	36	46	47	46	24	118

## How will we measure success?

- **Mills residents occupying new housing**
- **Market rents**
- **Energy costs per unit**
- **Residential vacancy rate**
- **City-wide median sale price of single family home**

HUB PARK ONLINE

PEOPLE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

NEW MERIDEN TRAIN STATION ONLINE

50% Affordable  
50% Market Rate

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	MILLS	AFF/NON-MILLS	MARKET-RATE	TOTAL	COMM. SPACE	
<b>EARLY ACTION ITEMS</b>												
24 Colony	WESTMONT \$22m LIHTC DOH/CHFA		Construction	Lease Up			24	32	7	63	11,000 ft <sup>2</sup>	
<b>PHASES - HOUSING PLAN</b>												
Demolition of 2 Mills Low-Rises											-	
Phase 1 Mills	PENNROSE 9% LIHTC Application		Approval	Construction	Lease Up		23	37	15	75	5,000 ft <sup>2</sup>	
Demolition of remainder of Mills											-	
Phase 2 HUB	PENNROSE		Approval	Construction	Lease Up			18	72	90	12,000 ft <sup>2</sup>	
Phase 3 Record Journal (11 Crown)	MICHAELS 9% LIHTC Application		Approval	Construction	Lease Up		20	39	22	81	10,000 ft <sup>2</sup>	
Phase 4 Infill	HOMEBUILDER TBD RFP Developers		Construction	Lease Up					<b>HOMEOWNERSHIP</b> 16		16	-
Phase 5 Mills	PENNROSE 9% LIHTC Application		Approval	Construction	Lease Up		23	37	15	75	-	
Phase 6 HUB				PENNROSE Approval	Construction	Lease Up		17	63	80	8,500 ft <sup>2</sup>	
<b>OTHER NEW CONSTRUCTION OR REHAB UNITS</b>												
116 Cook Phase A	POKO Remediation		Approval	Construction	Lease Up			13	51	64	-	
116 Cook Phase B				POKO Approval	Construction	Lease Up		7	29	36	-	
143 W. Main	MHA 9% LIHTC Application		Approval	Construction	Lease Up		11	40		51	50,000 ft <sup>2</sup>	
Yale Acres	MHA Funding / Approval		Construction	Lease Up			39			39	25,000 ft <sup>2</sup>	
<b>TOTAL</b>							<b>140</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>670</b>	<b>121,500 ft<sup>2</sup></b>	

## GOAL 3

### Ensure minimal disruption to the residents of Mills and assure that every Mills household who is lease-compliant has the right to return.

Create opportunities for Mills residents that wish to return. Lease-compliant Mills tenants will be individually assessed and relocated based on preference and family size.

#### STRATEGY A: MHA relocation plan will aim to achieve the following:

- Ensure that every Mills household is tracked upon move-out so that services can be coordinated.
- Ensure that every returning Mills household is right-sized.
- Ensure that every returning Mills household is offered new housing within their top preferences.

#### MILLS MEMORIAL RELOCATION PLAN SUMMARY

There are strict federal and state laws that govern relocation of public housing residents. These laws are in place to protect tenants as they transition from one place of residence to another. Redevelopment of Mills Memorial Apartments will require the eventual relocation of 140 households. The Mills Relocation Plan meets the specific needs of its tenant base by (a) communicating in Spanish in addition to English, (b) offering new housing in areas of comparable access to frequented services, and (c) ensuring no disruption in school tenure for at least the first year of relocation.

The full MHA Mills Relocation Plan and Right to Return Policy can be found in the appendix. Here are the highlights:

- All Mills households in “good standing” will be provided relocation assistance and payments. Households not currently in good standing due to arrears will be offered opportunities to enter into repayment agreements with MHA. It is the goal of MHA to protect its current tenant base, avoid eviction and ensure that a maximum number of current households can benefit from this plan and its subsequent benefits.
- MHA’s Section 8 department will not only administer the Tenant Protection Voucher, but also keep a file for each relocating household so as to track their transitions with the aim of providing continued services.
- Any Housing Authority tenant who resides at Mills Memorial will be provided relocation assistance and payments sufficient to cover reasonable relocation expenses and in an amount that will exceed requirements.
- Every Mills household will be screened to determine housing and supportive service needs and counseled in the selection of housing so that those needs can be met. It is anticipated that a variety of needs will dictate the demand to provide certain housing resources, such as accessibility or proximity to medical, daycare and schools, transportation, and jobs. These factors will be taken into account in the relocation effort.

## How our community shaped the plan

- **City Center I and II Planning Forums**
- **Update of Meriden Plan of Conservation and Development** – 15 steering committee meetings with public comment
- Parsons Brinckerhoff **TOD Master Plan Community Forum**
- **116 Cook/Factory H Placemaking Charrette**
- **Quarterly Blight & Brownfields Committee meetings with community groups, city staff, and environmental professionals**
- **HUB Reuse Meetings and Forum**
- **City/MHA Joint Planning Meetings**
- **Downtown living focus groups**
- **Review of other successful public housing redevelopment projects** – Boston and Norwalk, CT
- **Resident organization** and outreach to community through web and social media

## How will we measure success?

- **Median Rent**
- **Residential Vacancy Rate**
- **Median Home Sales Price**



### YALE ACRES – RELOCATION SITE

Yale Acres is an unsubsidized 162 unit moderate income development located one mile from the Mills development and one quarter mile from the northern Broad Street border of the Choice Neighborhoods zone. This distance is similar to the proximity of other proposed Mills replacement housing in the plan. This walkable distance is served by local bus, and the bike trail that is planned to connect the entire City from north to south is proposed to run near the area. This close proximity will enable residents to take full advantage of the improvements in the TOD area while residing in garden style apartments in a quiet, suburban setting.

Commissioned in 1953, the entire complex is undergoing a comprehensive rehabilitation. Units are being stripped to the studs and rebuilt with expanded floor plans, modern kitchens and bathrooms, and new Energy Star appliances. The new units capitalize on green technologies to conserve energy and ensure that the development will remain affordable for

generations to come. All units feature geothermal heating, solar voltaic electric and domestic hot water systems. The units will be of the same quality as the newly constructed apartments proposed in the transformation plan. Yale Acres is an attractive site to Mills residents who need a large apartment. 31% of the Mills consists of three bedroom units and 13% of apartments are of the four bedroom variety. This size dwelling is hard to come by in the CN zone, but Yale Acres has units to accommodate large families, and the renovation process will allow new units to custom fit the diverse needs of Mills tenants.

Planned amenities will address many of the needs of the target area depicted in the plan. A proposed 25,000 SF community center will provide on-site day care, after school programming, space for adult training and activities, sports facilities, and resident and staff office space. The center will function as a Disaster Refuge area for Yale Acres and CN zone residents because the utilization of the same green heating

and cooling technologies as the rehabbed units will allow it to operate independent of electrical and utility services.

Mills residents living in Yale Acres will enjoy the same increased access to the school system because the educational elements of the transformation plan are proposed to be adopted district-wide. Supportive services will be able to be rendered in the new community space by the same agencies and entities that will offer programming downtown.



## WHERE HAS IT WORKED?

### MAVERICK LANDING, BOSTON, MA

Maverick Landing is a new mixed-income rental community in East Boston that is the result of a \$35 million HOPE VI public housing redevelopment effort that started in 2001. The project centered on the transformation of a 413-unit distressed public housing site to a new mixed-income rental community with a variety of housing types, including townhomes, duplexes and mid-rise apartment buildings.

The Boston Housing Authority (BHA) initiated the effort in partnership with the development team of Trinity Financial and the East Boston Community Development Corporation. Together, the team successfully transformed the former “Maverick Gardens” into a new energy efficient mixed-income community with sustainable on-site community supportive services and opportunities for current renters to become future home owners. The project was completed in 2006 at a total development cost of \$120 million.

As part of the HOPE VI grant, BHA developed a loan-to-purchaser homeownership program for first time homebuyers who

were interested in purchasing a home in Maverick Landing. The funding through the program is provided as soft second mortgages to qualified low-income households for the purchase of homes as part of the redevelopment.

In addition to the HOPE VI funding, The Maverick Gardens project received a Green Building Design and Construction Grant in the amount of \$477,675 from the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative through its Renewable Energy Trust Fund Program. The purpose of the grant was to implement measures in a mid-rise building that produced energy savings and new sources for renewable energy. Using funds from this grant, the development team facilitated a design process which resulted in the integration of a series of green, energy efficient, healthy, safe, and durable initiatives to enhance the living experience for the residents. As part of the Energy Star Home initiative, the project also has adopted standards for insulation, windows, air leakage, HVAC equipment, appliances (refrigerators, dishwasher), and light bulbs.

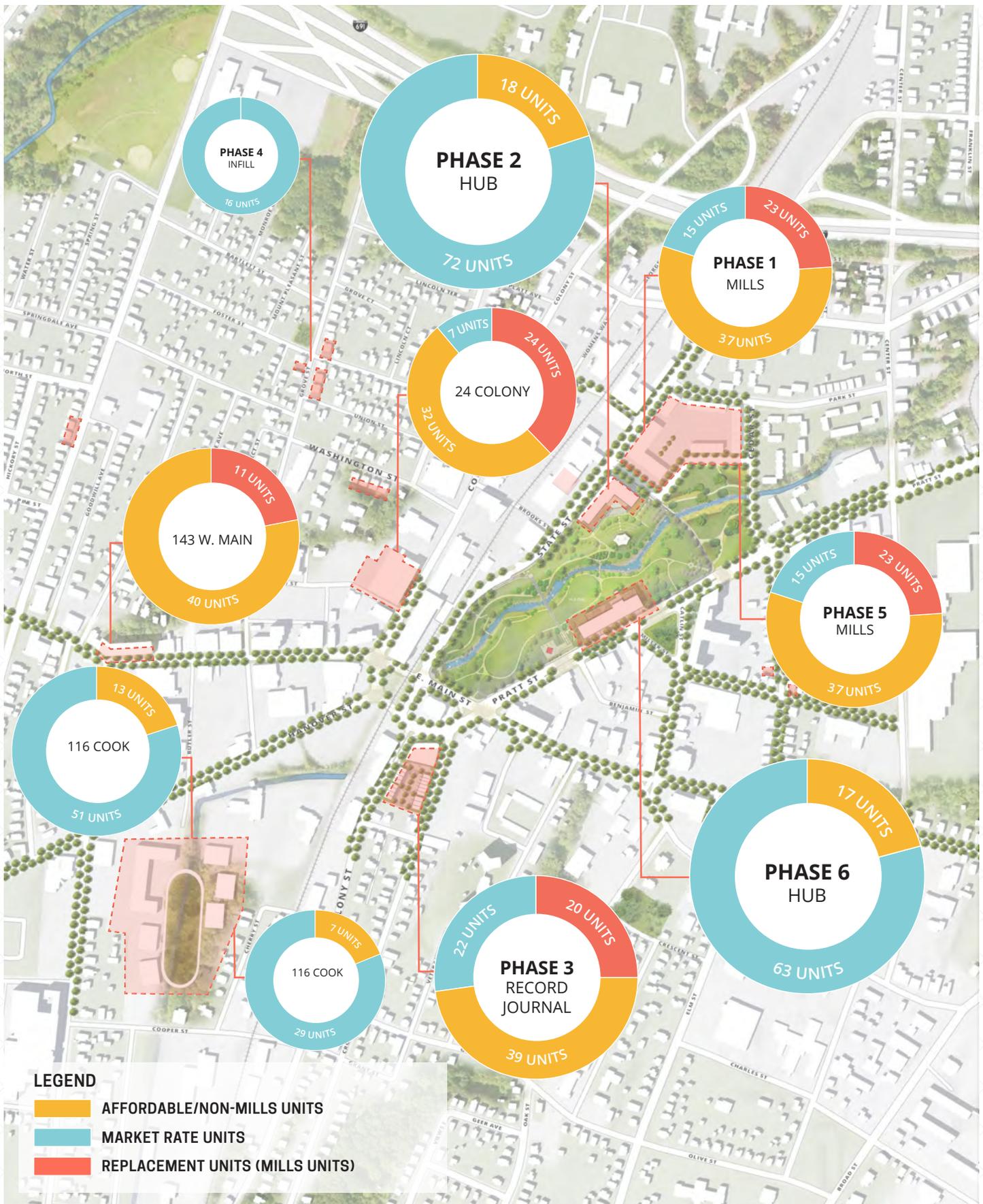
BHA and Trinity Financial, Inc. agreed to contribute construction cost savings to an endowment fund that would secure ongoing

### What can WE learn from this?

Energy efficiency savings were passed on to residents & construction cost savings were used for CSS Endowment

supportive services at the Maverick Landing site. This agreement generated almost \$2 million in savings that are now being used to fund supportive services for residents. With these funds, BHA and Trinity created an endowment, which HUD approved, and deposited the remaining HOPE VI funds for a total of over \$3.1 million.

The Maverick Landing Community Services, Inc. was created as a 501(c) (3) corporation as a result of the endowment. The organization now exists for the charitable purpose of improving and enhancing the Maverick Landing community and the surrounding East Boston neighborhood for residents of all ages through the provision and coordination of social services. These services include job training and placement assistance, computer education, after school and summer programs, educational programs, and sponsorship of civic activities that foster improved personal and community life.



## PHASE 1 – Mills (State Street)

The first phase of development arising from the Choice Planning process will be on the Mills megablock. A five-story L-shaped 75 unit building will include ground floor units along the wing facing Mill Street, non-residential community space in the ground floor of the wing facing State Street, and 5,000 SF of commercial space. Parking and service are



*Rendering of Mills*

behind the building.

## PHASE 2 – HUB (State Street)

The first phase on the HUB site (Second Phase overall) consists of the construction of a five-story L-shaped, mixed-use, mixed-income building on the parcel located at the southeast corner of State and Mill Streets, adjacent to the planned park amphitheater. This first HUB building consists of a total of 90 dwelling units on the second through the fifth floors. The ground floor is reserved for sales and personal services-oriented retail uses (12,000 SF) in support of the goals of the TOD zoning overlay. Sixty-two covered parking spaces are constructed on the ground floor behind the retail spaces fronting State and Mill Streets, with an additional twenty-five in an open lot along Mill Street, for a total of 87 parking spaces. Eighteen of these spaces are reserved for retail customers, with the balance reserved for the mixed-income residential units. In addition to the residential units, the second floor includes a recreation room amenity space for the exclusive use of the tenants. This recreation room connects directly to a terrace overlooking the HUB park and amphitheater. The balance of the roof over the covered parking is planted as a green roof to provide stormwater storage capacity as well as a green buffer between the second floor apartments and the



*Rendering of the HUB (State Street)*



Record Journal

### PHASE 3 – Record Journal Building

The Record Journal building is projected to be demolished and replaced with a 63 unit apartment building and 18 townhouses sited on the uphill portion of the site. The design concept includes 15,000 SF of common area and amenity space, 10,00 SF of commercial space and 66 parking spaces. Preliminary plans submitted by the developer indicate that the project can accommodate 20 Mills replacement units with the remaining units to be a mix of affordable and market rate units. An award of project based vouchers is subject to a determination of unit size and an issuance of a request for proposals by the Meriden Housing Authority.

### PHASE 4 – Infill Development

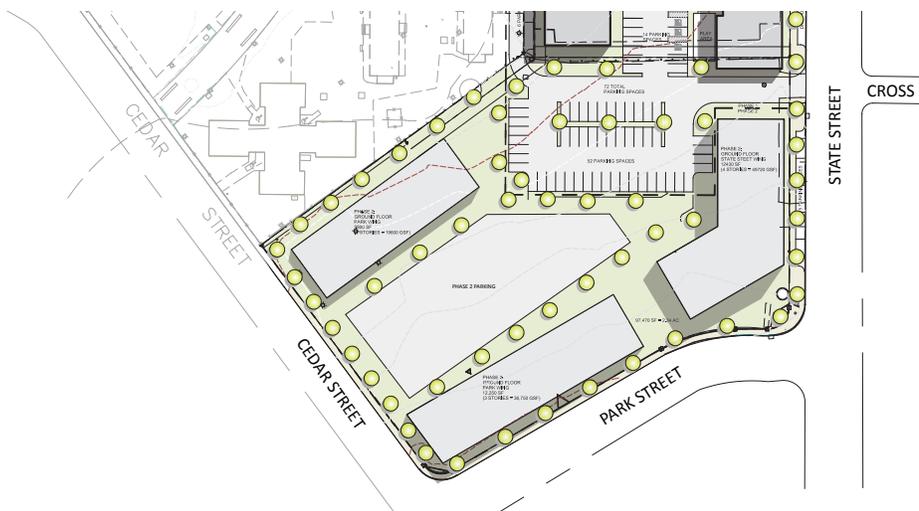
16 units on city owned building lots are proposed on Grove Street, Lewis Avenue, Washington Street and Twiss Street – streets that residents and City officials have identified as priority areas for stabilization.



Example of infill housing along Twiss Street.

### PHASE 5 – Mills (Cedar Street)

75 units of mixed-income housing are proposed in three story stacked townhouse and walk-up flat configuration, surrounding a new community park.



Rendering of Mills 2

park amphitheater.

## PHASE 6 – HUB (Pratt Street)

The second phase consists of the construction of two buildings along Pratt Street: a five-story mixed-use, mixed-income bar building on the larger of the two parcels, and a two-story café “pavilion” and outdoor patio on the smaller of the two parcels, overlooking the park bridge and Harbor Brook. The mixed-use residential bar building consists of 80 dwelling units on the second through the fourth floors. The ground floor is reserved for sales and personal services-oriented retail uses (8,500 SF) in support of the goals of the TOD zoning overlay (similar to the State Street Building). Fifty-five covered parking spaces are constructed on the ground floor behind the retail space, and an additional 20 spaces to the east of the building in a surface parking lot screened from the street and the park. Fifteen of these spaces are reserved for retail customers (including the “pavilion”), with sixty reserved for the mixed-income residential units. As in the State Street HUB building, the second floor includes a recreation room amenity space, with a terrace and green roof overlooking the HUB park. The pavilion building provides space for a restaurant/café with outdoor seating and is envisioned as a sculptural building to serve as a signature visual element for the park. A portion of the ground floor space of this building is reserved for use by the City as a HUB park maintenance and management office.



*HUB (Pratt Street)*



24 Colony Street

### EARLY ACTION AND OTHER CONSTRUCTION/REHAB

## 24 Colony Street

The 63-unit 24 Colony Street development includes 24 Mills replacement units, 32 affordable/non-Mills units and seven market-rate units with 11,000 SF of commercial space.



116 Cook Avenue

## 116 Cook Avenue

116 Cook Avenue will be constructed in two phases with a total of 100 units. This will include 20 units of affordable/non-Mills housing and 80 market-rate units.



143 W. Main Street

## 143 W. Main Street

The 51 unit development at 142 W. Main Street will include 11 Mills replacement units and 40 affordable/non-Mills housing. In addition to residential units, 143 W. Main Street will incorporate 50,000 SF of retail/commercial space.



Yale Acres

## Yale Acres

Yale Acres is an existing 162-unit moderate income development. The entire complex is undergoing a comprehensive rehabilitation and will accommodate 39 Mills replacement units.



## WHAT IS GREEN HOUSING?

Green housing is the practice of creating housing using environmentally responsible and resource-efficient building methods throughout a building's life-cycle from drawing board and construction to maintenance and operation. Features may include:

- Sustainable materials that benefit the environment
- Energy-efficient appliances (Energy Star)
- Alternative energy sources (geothermal, solar, wind)
- Water conservation features and stormwater management practices (green or blue roofs, swales, rain gardens, cisterns)
- Passive solar heating and cooling
- Housing that is sited near public transportation

## Commitment to Green Housing

All new development will adhere to green design standards as required by:

- LEED ND certifiable (Mills block)
- Enterprise Green Communities (all new buildings)

To this end, the Mills block master plan must ensure that LEED ND prerequisites are met.

### Smart Location and Linkage

- *Prereq 1 Smart Location* – project qualifies as an infill site.
- *Prereq 2 Imperiled Species and Ecological Communities* – Phase 1 environmental impact assessment to determine that no imperiled species or ecological communities have been found or have a high likelihood of occurring.

- *Prereq 3 Wetland and Water Body Conservation* – the subdivided site includes no wetlands, no water bodies, no land within 50 feet of wetlands, and no land within 100 feet of water bodies.
- *Prereq 4 Agricultural Land Conservation* – the project is on a site that is not within a state or locally designated agricultural preservation district, and it is an infill site.
- *Prereq 5 Floodplain Avoidance* – since the Mills site is a previously developed site with floodplains, development will occur ONLY on portions of the site that are not in the floodplain.

### Neighborhood Pattern and Design

- *Prereq 1 Walkable Streets* – design meets all requirements of LEED ND Walkable Streets criteria.
- *Prereq 2 Compact Development* – residential component is designed over seven dwelling units per acre of buildable land.

- *Prereq 3 Connected and Open Community* – design meets all connectivity requirements.

### Green Infrastructure and Buildings

- *Prereq 1 Certified Green Building* – community space within building on-site to be designed and certified LEED Interiors.
- *Prereq 2 Minimum Building Energy Efficiency* – 90% of all building floor area demonstrates an average 10% improvement over ANSI/ASHRAE/IESNA Standard.
- *Prereq 3 Minimum Building Water Efficiency* – 90% of buildings use a combination of fixtures that would earn 3 points under LEED for Homes 2008 WE Credit 3, Indoor Water Use.
- *Prereq 4 Construction Activity Pollution Prevention* – development team will create and implement an erosion and sedimentation control plan.

Photo Credit: WRT

## Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing

The City just updated its Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice this year which included a complete evaluation and analysis of administrative policies and zoning codes. The more dominant factors contributing to affordable housing barriers within the City include:

- Low household incomes;
- Older substandard housing stock in the inner-city neighborhoods;
- Limited economic development potential in inner-city neighborhoods;
- Not preserving existing affordable units due to lack of maintenance or necessary rehabilitation; and
- Lack of/or inadequate land that can be utilized to develop affordable housing.

To reduce barriers to affordable housing, the City implements various programs targeting low- and moderate-income households. These programs assist in

eliminating barriers to affordable housing by providing economic opportunities and minimizing overall household expenses. The City brings homes up to code through rehabilitation efforts and code enforcement and reduces lead-paint hazards. The City is also involved in several redevelopment efforts supported with other funding sources which, when completed, will provide economic opportunity, eliminate blight and increase housing opportunity as part of these mixed-use developments.

Additionally, the MHA continues to reduce barriers to affordable housing by providing Section 8 vouchers and first time homeowner loan assistance aimed at transitioning residents from public housing into the private housing market and applying for additional vouchers and resources when available.

The recommendations in the Meriden Choice Neighborhood Transformation Plan are aligned with City goals of increasing the supply of decent and affordable housing (Housing Plan), creating suitable living environments and providing economic opportunity (People and Neighborhood Plans).



Photo Credit: Doug Kerr

# CHAPTER 6 Neighborhood Plan

Desired outcome of the Meriden Choice Neighborhood Plan: to transform Downtown Meriden into a vibrant neighborhood where people desire to live, work, shop, and play, and which also is economically and environmentally sustainable and socially equitable.

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## NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN GOALS:

### TOD

1. Increase mobility and accessibility
2. Increase ridership on train
3. Implement a parking network and a maintenance system
4. Pedestrian safety

### Sustainability

1. Meriden Farmers' Market
2. Green buildings
3. Develop and implement a Clean Streets Program

### Safety

1. Strengthen community – police relations
2. Neighborhood stabilization
3. Market Downtown Meriden honestly – as a safe place to invest
4. Pride of place

## INTRODUCTION

The Meriden Choice Neighborhood Plan is divided into 3 sections – TOD and Neighborhood Circulation Plan, Sustainable Meriden Plan and Neighborhood Safety and Stabilization Plan. Together these plans lay the groundwork for critical community improvements needed to revitalize Downtown Meriden beyond the scope of new housing – improvements such as parks, street improvements, rehabilitation of existing homes, and demolition of blighted properties.

# NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN GOALS & PRIORITY STRATEGIES

## TOD

### GOAL 1 Increase mobility and accessibility

**PRIORITY A:** Implement the TOD Multi-modal Roadway Improvement Plan for the TOD District (TOD Roadway Plan)

**PRIORITY B:** Implement “complete streets” design principles included in the TOD Roadway Plan.

**PRIORITY C:** Implement streetscape amenities.

### GOAL 2 Increase ridership on train

**PRIORITY A:** Implement measures included in the TOD Roadway Plan to allow safe access to the new Meriden Intermodal Transit Center.

### GOAL 3 Implement a parking network and a maintenance system

**PRIORITY A:** Open new lot at 24 Colony Street to the public, host Parent Academies within the new mixed-use development.

### GOAL 4 Pedestrian safety

**PRIORITY A:** Implement roadway, pedestrian and bikeway improvements included in the TOD Roadway Plan.

## SUSTAINABILITY

### GOAL 1 Meriden Farmers' Market

**PRIORITY A:** Conduct a user survey to optimize the community's use of the Farmers' Market.

### GOAL 2 Green buildings

**PRIORITY A:** Newly constructed buildings will meet qualifications for Enterprise Green Communities.

### GOAL 3 Develop and implement a Clean Streets program

**PRIORITY A:** Increase street sweeping frequency.



## SAFETY

### GOAL 1 Strengthen community - police relations

**PRIORITY A:** Organize a team of highly respected neighborhood ambassadors to engage the police more meaningfully facilitated by an outside consultant.

### GOAL 2 Neighborhood stabilization

**PRIORITY A:** Strategic use of City's NPP funds to rehabilitate existing homes.

### GOAL 3 Market Downtown Meriden honestly - as a safe place to invest

**PRIORITY A:** Add safety as key component of Meriden 2020 campaign.

### GOAL 4 Pride of place

**PRIORITY A:** Increase training for Neighborhood Watch leaders.



Photo Credit: John Phelan



# Circulation

## TOD AND NEIGHBORHOOD CIRCULATION PLAN

The TOD and Neighborhood Circulation Plan focuses on the return of two way traffic, improved transit bus and commuter rail service, and increased mobility and connectivity for non-vehicle transportation modes (including pedestrians and bicyclists) as a key component for the future success of Meriden and its viability as a transit oriented community.

## TOD AND NEIGHBORHOOD CIRCULATION PLAN

### GOAL 1

**Address the major deficiencies of the current roadway system, improve traffic flow and reinstitute two-way traffic in order to increase mobility and accessibility in the TOD District.** The State, the City and key stakeholders have been engaged in several transportation initiatives, including the implementation of regional commuter rail service along the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield line, development of a TOD Multi-modal Roadway Improvement Plan for the TOD District (TOD Roadway Plan), updating downtown parking policies, and improving local transit service. The City of Meriden, downtown businesses and local stakeholders are committed to ensuring that the roadway network in the Choice Neighborhood target area provides safe and efficient access for motorists, public transit riders, pedestrians, and bicyclists. This will be achieved by the following strategies:

#### PRIORITY

**PRIORITY STRATEGY A: Implement the TOD Multi-modal Roadway Improvement Plan for the TOD District (TOD Roadway Plan).**

This plan includes the reconstruction of nine roadway sections in Downtown Meriden to include improved traffic flow and “bump out” removal.

**PRIORITY STRATEGY B: Implement “complete streets” design principles included in the TOD Roadway Plan.**

These principles will allow for safe use of the roadway by motor vehicles, pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users.

#### PRIORITY

**PRIORITY STRATEGY C: Implement streetscape amenities.**

Amenities will include pedestrian crosswalks, lighting and wayfinding signage included in the TOD Roadway Plan that unify the TOD District and provide better accessibility and safety for pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users. Complete Streets principles will be incorporated into the entire project to ensure that all users of the public right of way are considered. Multi-use trails, bicycle network, narrow roadways, and textured pavements are all features that will be incorporated into the project. Sections will be implemented as funding is available, or if TIGER grant funds are awarded, the project can be implemented in 18-24 months.

### *What can YOU do?*

- **Support the implementation of the TOD Multi-modal Roadway Improvement Plan**
- **Consider walking or biking for short trips**
- **Make your voice heard** – attend public meetings regarding bike and pedestrian infrastructure

### *How will we measure success?*

- **Miles of complete streets**
- **Decrease in pedestrian and vehicle accidents in the TOD District**
- **Improved pedestrian connectivity on routes connecting housing to transit, including:**
  - **Mill and Cedar Street to the Meriden Transit Center via State Street**
  - **Pedestrian crosswalks on Colony St. to the MTC**
  - **Traffic calming and vehicle speed reduction on Perkins Square to enable pedestrian connectivity from Crown Street to the MTC and the park area.**
  - **Completion of the Quinnipiac River Linear Trail from Platt High School to the Hub Site via the Harbor Brook along 116 Cook Ave. and Factory H.**
  - **Complete Boulevard entrance to the TOD district via Pratt Street.**

## GOAL 1 (CONTINUED)

### TOD MULTI MODAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Phase 1	West Main Street from Route 71 (Cook Ave) to Colony Street
Phase 2	Colony Street from East/West Main Street to Brooks Street
Phase 3	Cook Avenue
Phase 4	Hanover Street
Phase 5	Pratt Street from Broad Street to Center Street
Phase 6	Pratt Street from Center Street to East Main Street
Phase 7	East Main Street from St Casimer Street to Colony Street
Phase 8	Perkins Square
Phase 9	State Street
<b>Total Funding Needed</b>	<b>\$15,264,000</b>



Existing street network (1-way traffic): The current City Center circulation network with a series of one-way streets that confuse drivers.



*Realigned street network (2-way traffic): Existing one-way traffic flow will be converted to two-way traffic flow in the City center on West Main Street/East Main Street, Cook Avenue (not pictured) and Perkins Square. Pratt Street is converted into a boulevard with medians to facilitate safer pedestrian crossings.*

## SHUTTLE BUS PROGRAM



Photo Credit: MyRecordJournal.com

In 2015, the City of Meriden partnered with the MHA and the YMCA to implement a downtown shuttle bus trial. The purpose of the program was to determine if there was interest in having a shuttle bus program serving downtown businesses, housing and the new transit center over the long term while alleviating the loss of parking associated with the closure of the Colony Street municipal parking lot.

Middlesex Community College students were asked, as a part of a class assignment, to ride and write about the shuttle bus trial. Several students recommended promoting the shuttle bus further, adding buses to the route to reduce wait times, extending the route beyond the downtown, and running the shuttle additional hours.

In 2016, the South Central Council of Governments will conduct a "First Mile/Last Mile" study of the Meriden Intermodal Transit Center to investigate what infrastructure or other improvements are needed to maximize use of the new commuter rail service and Transit Center.

## GOAL 2

Increase transit ridership in concert with new commuter train service in order to reduce travel time between key destinations, create access to job opportunities and provide energy and environmental benefits to the community.

### PRIORITY

**PRIORITY STRATEGY A:** Implement measures included in the TOD Roadway Plan to allow safe access to the new Meriden Intermodal Transit Center.

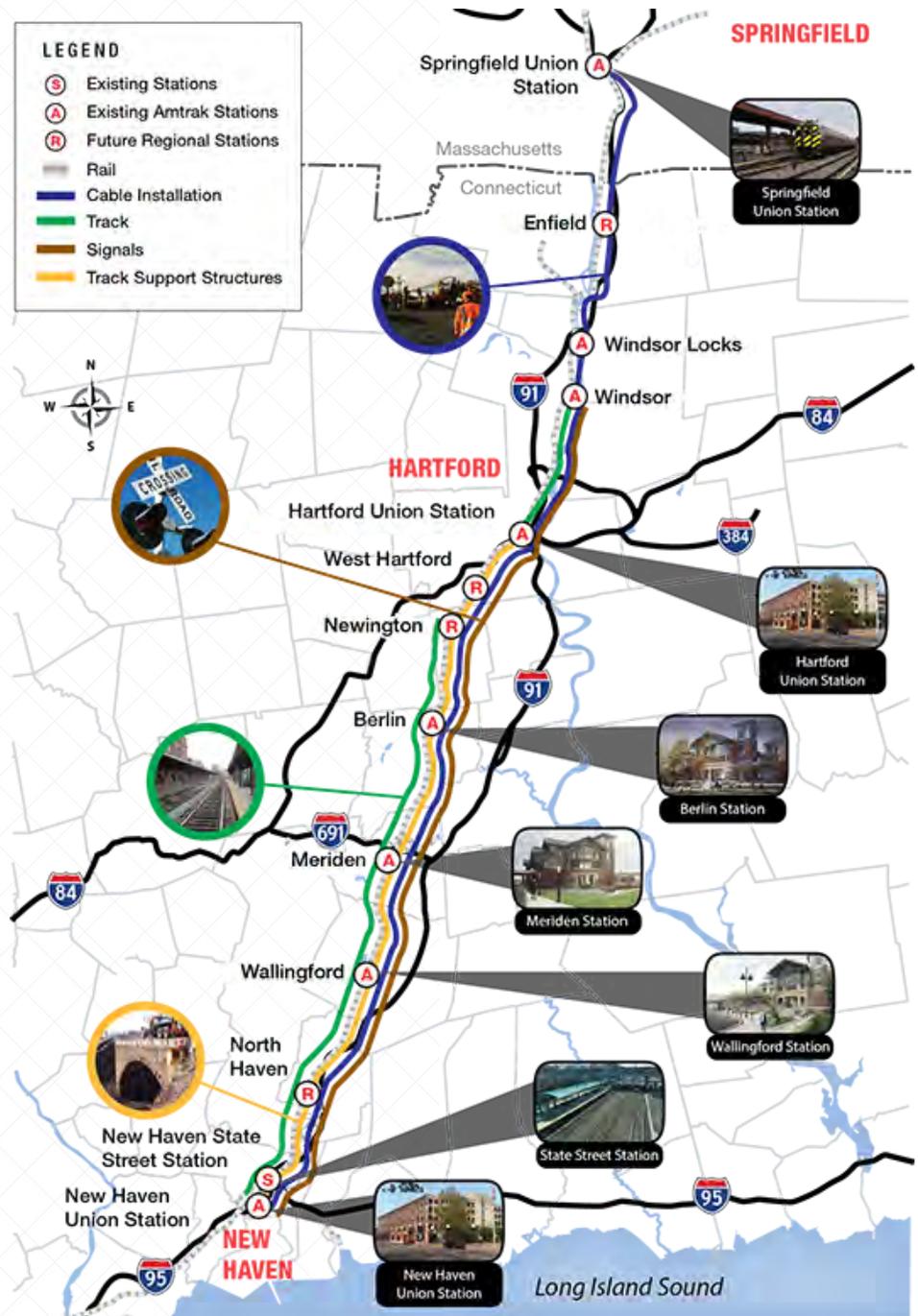
These measures will ensure safe and efficient access to the new Meriden Intermodal Transit Center and commuter rail service.

**STRATEGY B:** Advertise the new commuter rail system service and existing transit bus service.

Work with CT DOT to ensure that Meriden residents, business owners, visitors, and Meriden-based workers are aware of commuter rail service beginning in 2016 and existing transit bus service.

**STRATEGY C:** Ensure that infrastructure improvements are included in the new train station design.

Work with CT DOT to ensure that infrastructure, including transit bus shelters, pedestrian walkways and bike parking areas, are incorporated into the train station design and local transit system.



NHHS Service Area Map showing connections from New Haven to Springfield.

## GOAL 2 (CONTINUED)

### STRATEGY D: Provide Meriden residents and job seekers better connections to regional educational and job opportunities through access to public transit service.

Major job centers in Hartford and Springfield to the north and New Haven and Fairfield County to the south will be accessible from Meriden via commuter rail service beginning in 2017. The City will work with its development and transportation partners to ensure that Meriden residents are aware of the new transit service and that transit fares and parking rates are affordable for all users of the transit system.

### STRATEGY E: Identify and fill gaps in existing public transit system.

Work with transportation planning agencies, including South Central Regional Council of Governments, to identify gaps in public transit service, and fill those gaps with low cost transit service, such as a downtown shuttle or commuter feeder bus program. Yale Acres is served by CT Transit B Route, which connects Yale Acres to downtown where connections are available. However, the service currently runs only on weekdays

6:30 AM-4:40 PM. Weekend service is not available. The City, MHA and stakeholders would need to work with CT Transit to identify resident needs and implement those changes in coordination with other CT Transit bus routes and the NHHS rail service. In 2015/2016, the City of Meriden and the SCRCOG will initiate a “first mile/last mile” study to look at gaps in transit service and determine how to maximize NHHS ridership through the addition of increased transit service. Yale Acres will be included in the study. Other gaps that we know of include, for example, lack of transit bus service on Sundays, lack of early morning and after 6 pm transit bus service, MxCC shuttle between Middletown and Meriden, spotty intercity service, and lack of real time information on parking and transit bus service.

### STRATEGY F: Identify ways the new commuter rail and existing transit system can benefit residents, visitors and commuters.

The first mile last mile study referenced above will include a local employer survey to determine how the City and State can assist employees of large Meriden employers that can benefit from increased utilization of the new commuter rail service and feeder routes including the Westfield Meriden Mall, Middlesex Community College, the Midstate Medical Center, and several large employers in the Research Parkway area.



Proposed Train Station Rendering

## REGIONAL TOD



Photo Credit: AmtrakDowneaster.com

Building off of regional rail. The Downeaster Service (between Brunswick, ME and Boston, MA) started with minimal headways and has expanded to 7 daily round trips. The increase in service has resulted in greater economic activity throughout the region which includes new hotels, a \$20 million mixed use complex, the renovation of multiple train stations, and a \$30 million mixed use brownfield redevelopment project. The new service is estimated to bring over \$100 million to the economy and create more than 1,500 jobs by the end of 2015 and potentially catalyze \$255 million in investment by 2030 (*nhhsrail.com*).

### What can YOU do?

- **Change your commute** – use the new commuter rail service beginning in 2016

### How will we measure success?

- **Change in transit ridership**
- **Change in transit service**
- **Pollution reduction**
- **Energy savings**

## GOAL 3

Ensure adequate parking is available throughout the TOD District.

### PRIORITY

**PRIORITY STRATEGY A: Open new lot at 24 Colony Street to the public.**

**Work with CT DOT to allow public (not just commuters) to use the new lot to be constructed.**

**STRATEGY B: Align the downtown parking validation program with parking in City-owned lots and garages, on-street parking and State DOT parking facilities to be constructed.**

**STRATEGY C: Establish a dedicated capital expenditure account for downtown parking facilities.**

The new account will be funded with a percentage of parking revenue from garage tickets, leases and parking violation tickets. Funds collected will be used to update signage, lighting, re-lining of lots, repairs to existing garages, replacement of ticket booths, repairing/replacement of ticket machines, and possibly build a new garage.

**STRATEGY D: Use parking enforcement staff to enforce existing fines for on-street parking.**

Having dedicated staff to enforce current and any future parking codes downtown will increase parking revenue and provide the downtown area with “eyes on the street”. This staff also would be able to assist visitors with information and be able to report anything to the proper authorities.

**STRATEGY E: Allow on-line fee collection.**

Add a parking ticket payment option to City online bill collection system to aid in the automated collection of parking tickets.

**STRATEGY F: Raise month-to-month surface and garage parking lease fees in City-owned lots as indicated.**

Increase fees for surface parking and for covered parking to begin to get pricing in line with other Connecticut communities. This slight increase to the parking fee structure will provide additional revenue to both the City and the Parking Authority while allowing downtown residents and business owners to set up long term parking arrangements if needed.

**STRATEGY G: Explore ways to effectively enforce onstreet parking regulations and implement those changes using police department and/or parking division staff.**

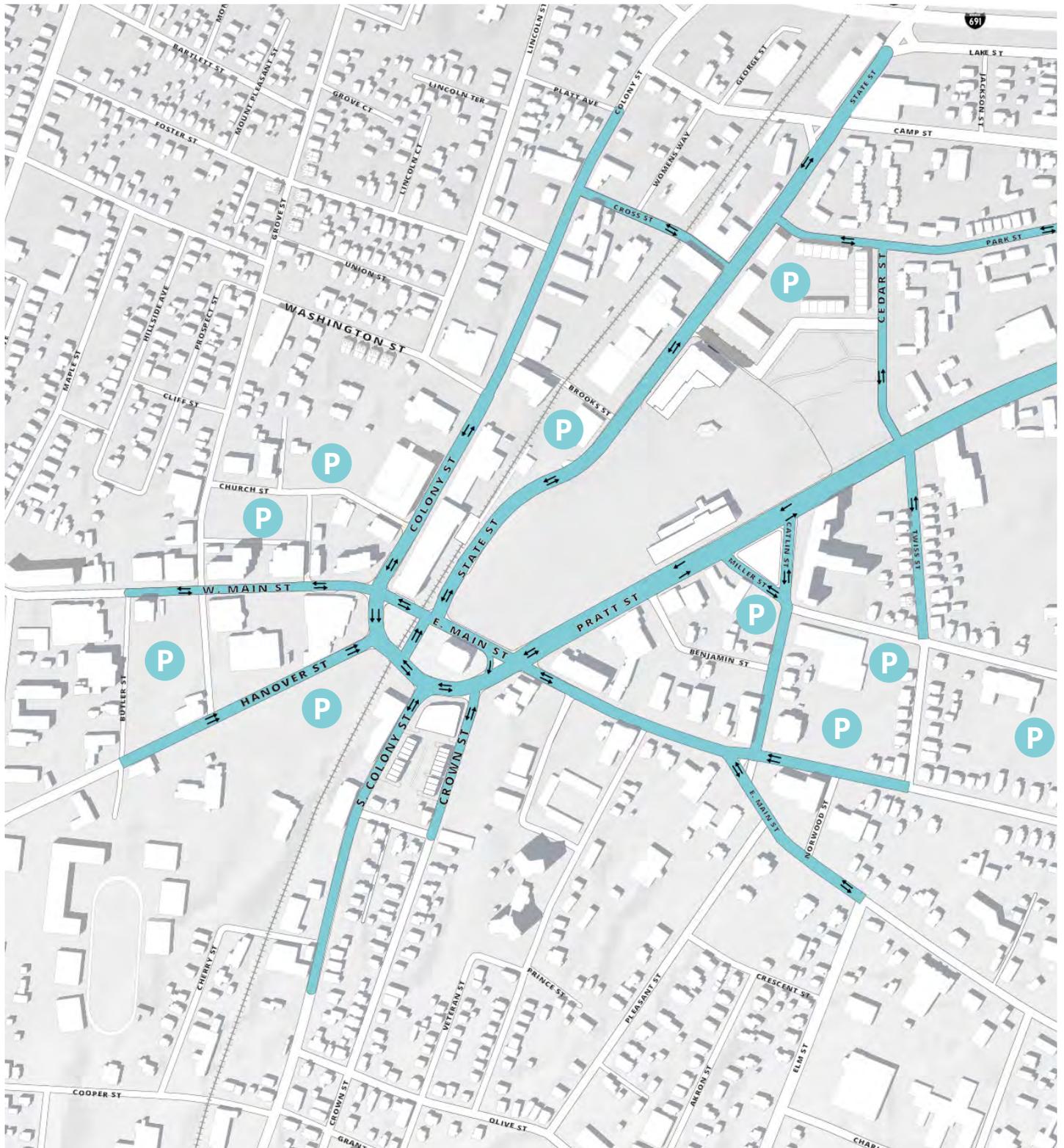
**STRATEGY H: Allow for shared parking and monthly parking leases in City-owned garages and parking lots for downtown residents and businesses; ensure that the fee structure is fair and does not discourage use of downtown parking facilities.**

### What can YOU do?

- Support downtown businesses by parking once and walking
- Pay for downtown parking
- Try transit instead of driving
- Ask your employer about covering the cost of a monthly transit pass

### How will we measure success?

- Total number of parking spaces available
- Parking revenue collected and reinvested into parking infrastructure



The proposed parking strategy from Meriden's Downtown Parking Vision Report (2015) highlights potential locations for new parking lots to accommodate new parking demand that will result from the City of Meriden's continued efforts to promote economic growth in the downtown area.

## GOAL 4

Improve downtown pedestrian safety by improving downtown wayfinding signage and lighting, adding shelters at downtown transit bus stops and providing better accessibility generally for pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users.

### PRIORITY

**PRIORITY STRATEGY A: Implement roadway, pedestrian and bikeway improvements included in the TOD Roadway Plan.**

Improvements include installation of dedicated bus stops, improved crosswalks and streetscapes. Pedestrian safety is improved at key intersections by repaving crosswalks and providing legible signage and traffic signals.

**STRATEGY B: Implement the Meriden Linear Trail Master Plan adopted in 2012.**

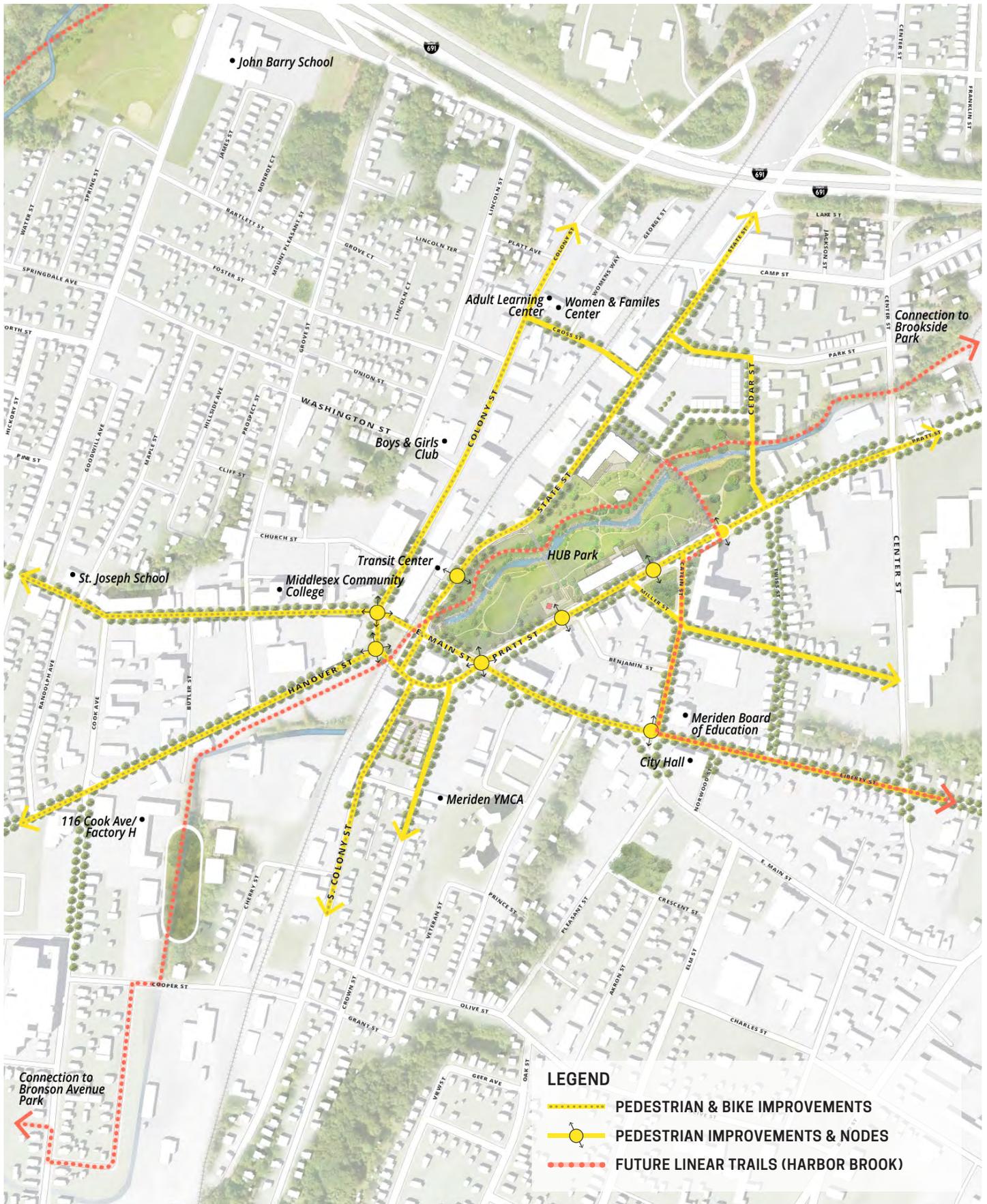
The centerpiece of this Linear Trail Master Plan is the five mile Harbor Brook Linear Trail running southwest to northeast through the new park at the HUB. 2.5 miles of trail have been constructed in the southwest corner of the City, with plans underway for connecting the existing greenway to Downtown Meriden.

### *What can YOU do?*

- **Take transit to school or work.** Get a monthly transit pass to save.
- **Walk for short trips** to the grocery store or a neighborhood event instead of driving.
- **Ride a bike** for active recreation or for transportation.
- **Get to know the local roadway and greenway trail system.** Vary your modes of travel and pick the shortest/safest route.
- **Carpool**

### *How will we measure success?*

- Sections of roadway improved
- Change in transit ridership
- Change in transit service
- Pollution reduction
- Energy savings
- Changes in vehicle miles traveled
- Number of companies participating in transit awareness programs
- Increase in parking revenue



Connectivity Diagram



Photo Credit: Lisa Jacobs

# Sustainable

**SUSTAINABLE MERIDEN PLAN**

**The Sustainable Meriden Plan focuses on ensuring the health of Meriden's natural environment, controlling flooding and improving air quality.**

# SUSTAINABLE MERIDEN PLAN

## GOAL 1

Ensure the long-term sustainability of the Meriden Farmers' Market.

### PRIORITY

**PRIORITY STRATEGY A: Conduct a user survey to optimize the community's use of the Farmers' Market.**

The survey should gather information about what is currently working and what should be improved. Ask residents for suggestions about what retailers or events they would like to see featured at the market.

**STRATEGY B: Provide transportation for seniors to shop at the market and ensure accessibility by developing a reliable SNAP/EBT program.**

Transportation to and from the market on weekends for seniors and a program that allows vendors to accept SNAP/EBT payments will increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables and support the longevity of the market.

**STRATEGY C: Begin an annual campaign to recruit volunteers and fundraise.**

Gather interested residents and members of the market to host events that help support the operating cost of the market.

**STRATEGY D: Increase farm participation by providing a variety of foods and events at the market.**

Offer a variety of foods that will draw a larger portion of the neighborhood to the market. Attract a more diverse customer base by hosting more special events (e.g., live music, art festivals, cooking demonstrations, etc.)

Meriden Farmer's Market Community Interest Survey

Please take a few moments to answer the following questions regarding the current level of farmer's market interest in Meriden. Your thoughts and perspectives will help us to know what enhancements can or should be made to help our current farmer's market grow.

1. How often have you attended the Meriden Farmer's Market?

- Weekly
- 2-3 times a month
- Once a month
- Rarely
- Never

2. If you have attended the market, why? Please check all that apply.

- Convenient Location
- Selection of fresh produce
- Convenient day and time
- Fun, family-friendly event
- To support local agriculture/business

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

3. If you have not attended the Meriden Farmer's Market, why not? Please check all that apply.

- Not interested in local farmer's market
- Not aware of the market
- Inconvenient location
- Inconvenient day
- Inconvenient time
- Products offered
- Inconvenience of making one more stop

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

4. Where would you prefer the Farmers Market would be in town?

- East Main Street Area
- South Meriden Area
- West Main Street Area

Farmers' Market Survey

## What can YOU do?

- Buy Local! Shop at the Farmers' Market
- Volunteer at the Farmers' Market

## How will we measure success?

- Meriden Farmer's Market participation

## GOAL 2

Develop green buildings with renewable energy systems that rely on green infrastructure and passive energy solutions.

### PRIORITY

**PRIORITY STRATEGY A:** Newly constructed buildings will meet qualifications for Enterprise Green Communities.

**STRATEGY B:** New construction will incorporate green infrastructure and passive energy solutions.

Green infrastructure will be incorporated in new buildings through the use of green roofs, blue roofs, and other rain water collection techniques. Additional energy capture solutions may include geothermal and solar.

**STRATEGY C:** Private development will include stormwater management best practices.

New development should manage all of the stormwater that collects on any given site. Best management practices could include rain gardens, pervious pavement, cisterns, swales, and stormwater tree trenches.



Solar panels provide a renewable source of energy at Yale Acres.

### What can YOU do?

- Find ways to conserve water at home. There are many simple steps you can take, such as shorter showers, turning off the water after you wet your toothbrush and installing water saving devices
- Install rain barrels and rain gardens at home to collect and reuse rainwater

### How will we measure success?

- Number of new certified green buildings
- Number of new buildings that manage on-site stormwater



*Stormwater Management and Infill Housing - Twiss Street Example*

## GOAL 3

Develop and implement a Clean Streets program.

### PRIORITY

**PRIORITY STRATEGY A: Increase street sweeping frequency.**

Regular street sweeping benefits the environment, improves stormwater runoff management, and leads to a more positive perception of the neighborhood.

**STRATEGY B: Sponsor periodic free bulk waste days.**

Sponsoring free bulk waste days allows for the safe removal of large waste and reduces the frequency of illegal dumping which poses an environmental and safety hazard.

**STRATEGY C: Install solar trash compaction units.**

Solar trash compaction units keep neighborhood spaces (parks, streets, etc.) clean. The contents of the bin are compressed using solar power, freeing up additional space, which can reduce trash collections by up to 80%.



Photo Credit: MattDLucas

BigBelly® Solar-Powered Trash Compactor

### What can YOU do?

- Participate in Spring/Fall Cleanups
- Use appropriate recycling/trash receptacles

### How will we measure success?

- Number/percent of residents and visitors who do not cite litter/clean up as an issue on surveys



# Safety

## NEIGHBORHOOD SAFETY PLAN

The Neighborhood Safety Plan aims to address crime and perception of crime, to improve the appearance of downtown, and to make Meriden a safer place to live, work, play, and shop.

## NEIGHBORHOOD SAFETY PLAN

### GOAL 1

**Strengthen relationship between community and police.** Within the state of Connecticut there are a variety of initiatives in place with respect to relations between communities/youth and police. The CT Office of Policy and Management was recently awarded a grant to improve school-community-police interactions and has sought funding for another initiative. Many of the most successful programs involve placing officers in schools and in other locations where they work directly with youth.

#### PRIORITY

**PRIORITY STRATEGY A: Organize a team of highly respected neighborhood ambassadors to engage the police more meaningfully, facilitated by an outside consultant.**

According to Meriden Police Department crime statistics, 49 percent of all Aggravated Assaults, 57 percent of all Robberies, and 47 percent of all Sex Offenses occurred in the Choice Neighborhood. 52 percent of all burglaries and 45 percent of all car thefts also happen in the neighborhood. Crime statistics also show that although the Choice Neighborhood has only 21 percent of the City's total population, based on Part 1 violent crime data it had nearly 1.34 times the violent crime per 1,000 residents overall. Building better relationships with the police will serve to increase residents' confidence in the police and encourage working together to continue to drive down the level of crime. Task force meetings and focus groups raised one salient strategy - address the culture of distrust through a partnership between police and neighborhood leaders.

A team of highly respected neighborhood ambassadors (representing Mills,

faith-based organizations, schools and neighborhood organizations) will engage the police more meaningfully and help overcome the "no snitching" trend and culture of distrust. As a start, the following organizations can each appoint an ambassador to partner with the Meriden Police Department:

- Recently formed Mills Tenant Council
- Downtown neighborhood associations
- Meriden youth
- Consortium of faith-based organizations.

Additionally "Community Conversations" or open forums will provide non-confrontational venues for community and police to communicate.

An outside consultant will serve as a neutral facilitator to hold "Community Conversations" - a structured yet open forum for community and police to communicate constructively around salient issues in Downtown Meriden such as race, poverty and policing methods. Conduct an annual downtown community survey to track qualitative data on safety and police relations. Additionally, as supported by research, this strategy will include a periodic police community newsletter.

#### What can YOU do?

- **Nominate an ambassador whom you trust and respect**
- **Participate in "Community Conversations"**
- **Volunteer and donate to local non-profits** that support positive community - police relations
- **Lobby your council person to increase police funding** to benefit Downtown Meriden

#### How will we measure success?

- **Community Safety Climate Survey - trending in the right direction**
  - Trust in police officers
  - Perceived collective efficacy
  - Perceived crime rates
  - Degree of community-policy communication
- **Decrease number/percent of Part I Crimes**
- **Meriden Public Schools - School Climate Survey (score changes over time)**
- **School Discipline Data (infractions)**
- **Law enforcement data on arrests among youth**
- **As available, data on pre- and post-training for the ESSI and EPIY projects (change in knowledge and attitudes)**
- **Number of community conversations and findings/summaries of each, coded by theme and input into the repeat community surveys**
- **Community agency data on the number of contacts among these organizations and members of the CN**

## GOAL 1 (CONTINUED)

### STRATEGY B: Leverage existing programs that support positive community-police relations.

Potential program partners may include: Meriden Council of Neighborhoods, Meriden Health Coalition, youth programs, New Opportunities, Boys & Girls Club, Beat the Street, and Police Explorers Program.

Additionally these existing programs stand to benefit from state/federal programs such as Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) that are intended to reduce school arrests and improve relations among police, youth and school personnel.

Currently the CDBG program funds Youth Services - JAD, New Opportunities, Boys & Girls Club, and Beat the Street

### STRATEGY C: Organize a campaign for community and political support for increase in police funding.

Based on discussions which took place in focus groups, there are several drivers of crime in the Choice Neighborhood. Unemployment is high leaving those without resources and lots of idle time to be involved in illegal activity. It also became clear from discussions that people from outside Meriden come here to engage in drug and associated criminal activities. Meriden is an easily accessible location in Connecticut due to the fact that several highways converge here. There is not a great deal of organized gang activity in Meriden; it is more the lack of recreational opportunities nearby and transportation to what recreation is available that leads to youth involvement in what could loosely be termed “gang” activity. Additional funding will specifically target increased police patrol hours in Downtown Meriden and to combat these “outsider” drug transactions.

## CRIME PREVENTION

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED, or “sep-ted”) is an approach to deterring criminal behavior through the effective design and use of the built environment. The objective of such approach is to encourage a reduction in the fear of crime, a reduction in the actual number of crimes, an improvement in community safety, an improvement in the perception of safety, and an improvement in the overall quality of life in a community. CPTED strategies are proven to influence offender decisions that precede criminal acts, thereby deterring criminal activity.

## POSITIVE ATTITUDES

Positive interactions between police and youth in a non-enforcement environment can provide an opportunity for youth to build positive attitudes toward police.

## DEFINITION

### Collective efficacy

It is hypothesized that **collective efficacy**, defined as social cohesion among neighbors combined with their willingness to intervene on behalf of the common good, is linked to reduced violence.

## NEIGHBORHOOD SAFETY PLAN

### GOAL 1 (CONTINUED)

#### STRATEGY D: Extend C4R (Cops, Clergy, and Community) Program in the Choice Neighborhood.

This program provides programming (e.g., basketball, video games, mentoring sessions, etc.) for at-risk youth conducted with police officers in a non-confrontational environment.

#### STRATEGY E: Increase funding for the City’s Youth Services Bureau’s Juvenile Assistance & Diversion Board (JAD)

To specifically address the preventative side of crime, expansion of the JAD program (a preventative program that intervenes to keep youth out of the justice system through education, job training and increased employment opportunities) can be a critical strategy in the Safety Plan.



Liberty Street neighborhood association

### GOAL 2

**Neighborhood Stabilization – improve the appearance of downtown neighborhoods.** The Mills public housing is itself defined as distressed and outdated. The housing stock in the surrounding neighborhood is old and in many cases also distressed. The neighborhood residents are also low income and subject to many of the same challenges as those who reside in the Mills. Many of the properties are investor owned and are in disrepair. A history of flooding in the neighborhood also has led to disinvestment both from a residential and business perspective. These are the physical signs that lead residents from outside the Choice Neighborhood and visitors to feel, whether factual or not, that this is not a safe or enticing environment to live or work.

#### PRIORITY

#### PRIORITY STRATEGY A: Strategic use of City’s NPP funds to rehabilitate existing homes.

Seek other unrestricted funding sources to fund small to medium sized “tipping point” home investment projects. Meriden’s Neighborhood Preservation Program (NPP) provides interest free loans to qualified homeowners to be repaid when properties exchange hands.

Funding for this program is currently limited and is constrained in application. Additional unrestricted funding for NPP will provide the City flexibility to loan dollars in strategic areas. As a start, the City will focus on Pratt Street, West Main Street, Liberty Street and Twiss Street for beautification. Pratt Street, in particular, is envisioned as the new entryway into the Choice Neighborhood and Downtown Meriden.



Photo Credit: CTPost Online

## WHERE HAS IT WORKED?

### CREATE HERE NOW, CONNECTICUT

“Turning Vacant into Vibrant” – CreateHereNow, an initiative funded by an ArtPlace grant, focuses on creative placemaking in cities and towns across Connecticut. They work with creative people in communities to transform and re-purpose under-utilized storefronts, historic buildings and vacant lots.

They work to populate these spaces with entrepreneurs who start businesses and create spaces that become focal points within each community and spur economic growth. CreateHereNow chapters across the state have completed a number of successful revitalization projects including the Arcade Storefronts and the launch of the Reactivated Historic McLevy Hall in Bridgeport, the Morrisons’s Artists Collective in Torrington, and Waterbury’s launch of the statewide artisan’s marketplace – State of Makers.

The Arcade Storefronts in Bridgeport transformed one of the nation’s first enclosed shopping malls dating back

to the early 1840s. Nine permanent businesses, including restaurants and retail stores, and six art storefronts currently call the Arcade Storefronts home. In addition to providing year-round local shopping, Arcade Storefronts hosts a number of community events including a Halloween Party, a Holiday Celebration of Lights, rummage sales, and creative workshops.

State of Makers, CreateHereNow’s newest venture, raises awareness of artists and artisans in Connecticut. State of Makers celebrates Connecticut’s talent through an innovative marketing campaign and mobile market that will tour the state emphasizing the need to support local makers.



### What can WE learn from this?

CreateHereNow utilizes creative talent in communities to affect lasting economic and social change!

## NEIGHBORHOOD SAFETY PLAN

### GOAL 2 (CONTINUED)

#### STRATEGY B: Demolish blighted properties deemed unredeemable and encourage new development.

Proactively invite residents to join City's Code Walks both as a team building and capacity building exercise.

City of Meriden's code enforcement department invites all residents to join its officials in its monthly Code Walks. During these walks, officials will point out building code infractions and suggest methods to mitigation.

#### STRATEGY C: Organize a semi-annual volunteer Spring/Fall Cleaning of public spaces in Downtown Meriden.

Improve the appearance of Downtown Meriden by gathering stakeholders, businesses and residents to clean-up litter. The broken windows theory states that maintaining and monitoring urban environments by addressing small issues, such as broken windows and litter, help create an atmosphere of order and lawfulness, thereby preventing more serious crimes from happening. While Downtown Meriden is not heavily rubbish strewn, periodic volunteer clean-up events will not only improve appearance, but also build community spirit.

### What can YOU do?

- Sign up and join monthly Code Walks
- Volunteer to lead Spring/Fall Cleaning on your street

### REHABILITATION IN MERIDEN

Rehabilitated housing on Fourth Street by Code Enforcement



BEFORE



AFTER

### How will we measure success?

- Decrease number/percent of residential code infractions
- Number of participants from within CN and the Mills
- Community Safety Climate Survey - trending in the right direction
  - Perception of physical neighborhood disorder
  - Perceived collective efficacy
  - Fear of crime

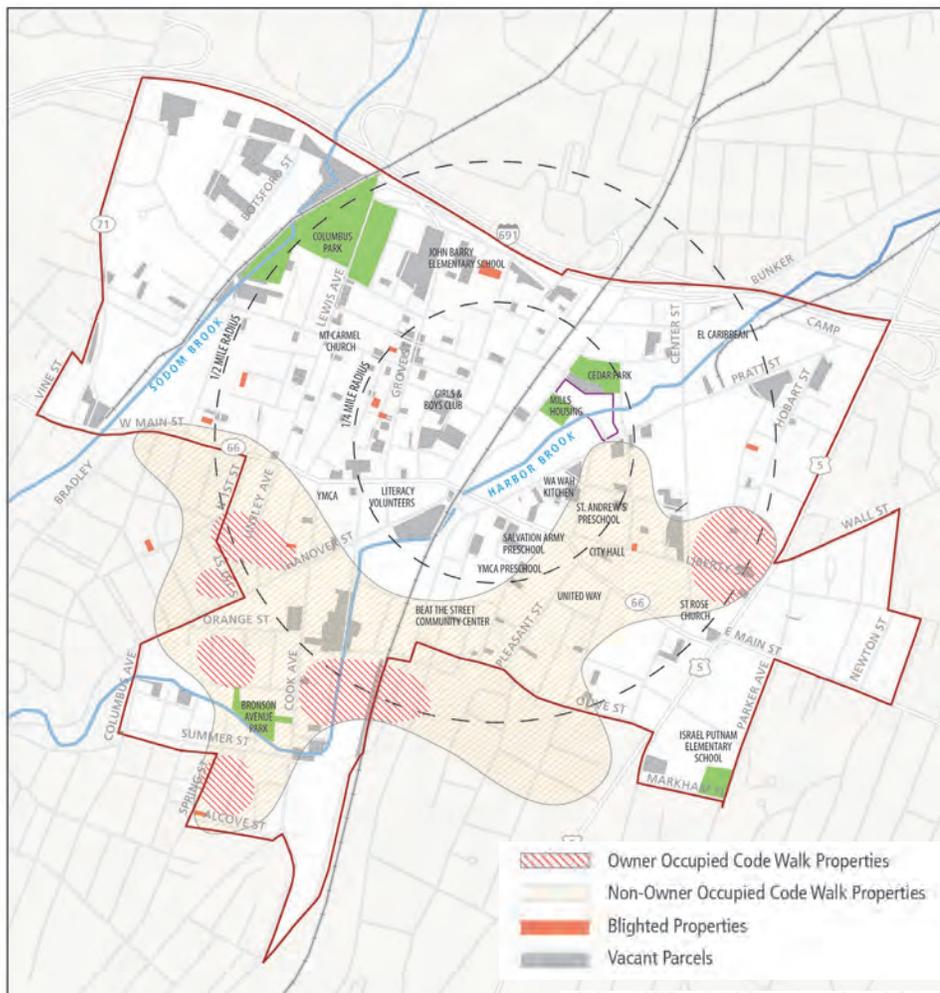
## GOAL 2 (CONTINUED)

**STRATEGY D: Clean up and beautify the backs of buildings along train corridor and incorporate art into public spaces.**

Work with private property owners and state and federal programs such as Artplace, Art Works and Create Here Now to sponsor and foster art/cultural events, murals and art installations. When the NHHS Rail is in full effect, thousands of train passengers will experience Meriden from the perspective of the rail corridor. Currently this corridor is lined by backs of buildings that are trash-strewn and poorly maintained. Beautifying this corridor with new paint, artwork, and landscaping will enhance this “gateway” experience.

**STRATEGY E: Create a downtown business/building facade loan program.**

Flexibility in additional Neighborhood Preservation Program (NPP) funding will allow the City to loan small amounts of money to business property owners to improve their facades. The City will focus on the same corridors - Pratt Street, West Main Street, Liberty Street, and Twiss Street.



Owner Occupied Home Improvements Map

## Implementation Timeline

	TIPPING POINT REHAB (DWELLING UNITS)	BLIGHT REMOVAL (STRUCTURES)	PARKS/COMM. GARDENS (PARCELS)
YR 1	3	2	-
YR 2	3	2	1
YR 3	3	2	-
YR 4	3	2	-
YR 5	3	2	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>

## GOAL 3

**Portray Downtown Meriden honestly – a safe and increasingly safer place to live, work, play, and shop.**

### PRIORITY

**PRIORITY STRATEGY A: Add safety as key component of Meriden 2020 campaign.**

In 2014, Downtown Meriden's Part I violent crime rate was 1.34 times that of the City as a whole – the Part II crime rate was 1.68 times that of the City as whole. This is an improvement from previous years – in 2009, the Part I violent crime rate downtown was 2.36 times, in 2010 it was 2.38 times, and in 2011 it was 2.27 times. Downtown is

safe and increasingly safer, yet print and television media tend to cover the negative events downtown, causing a skewed perception that downtown is riddled with criminals. The team is committed to working on a multi-prong strategy to combat this perception via positive stories in traditional media, neighborhood newsletters and blogs. Adding safety as a component to the Meriden 2020 campaign also will contribute to this strategy.

### *What can YOU do?*

- Adopt a Block/Lot/Curb
- Be more active in your Neighborhood Watch organization
- Tell your friends and colleagues about Downtown Meriden's safety track record

## GOAL 4

**Pride of Place – every resident of Downtown Meriden is a stakeholder.**

### PRIORITY

**PRIORITY STRATEGY A: Increase training for Neighborhood Watch leaders.**

Additional funding for Meriden Police Department can be used to train existing and new Neighborhood Watch leaders. Currently Neighborhood Watch is implemented by the Council of Neighborhoods. Although they work closely with the Meriden Police Department, volunteers have never received formal training. An officially trained group of citizens (with priority for existing and new Mills leaders) will be more effective in deterring unwanted criminal behavior.

**STRATEGY B: Implement an Adopt-a-Block/Lot/Curb program.**

Work with Mills tenant council and neighborhood associations to identify key areas of downtown to "adopt." Adopting residents are encouraged to maintain and patrol these areas. Adoption of public spaces provides downtown residents, who are predominantly renters, a stronger sense of ownership.

### *How will we measure success?*

- Decrease number/percent of Part I property crime
- Community Safety Climate Survey – trending in the right direction
- Survey residents' perceptions of neighborhood safety
- Survey residents' knowledge about crime in Meriden
- Measure extent to which safety is visible as theme in campaign
- Determine ratio of positive to negative media reports

## CRITICAL COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENTS PLAN

In addition to investments in housing, the Meriden Choice Neighborhood Plan recommends investments in physical, community and economic development projects that enhance and accelerate neighborhood transformation and lives of existing and new residents. These Critical Community Improvement projects include the expansion of the Community Health Center in Meriden, a new park amenity adjacent to the revitalized Mills site, infill and rehab of existing homes in the neighborhood, streetscape improvements/green infrastructure investments, and a low-cost or free neighborhood-wide WiFi network.

### Expansion of CHC Meriden

CHC Meriden is a Federally Qualified Healthcare Center (FQHC) that serves the needs of CN residents. They provide a number of comprehensive health and wellness services including primary care, behavioral health services, dentistry, podiatry, nutrition counseling, and prenatal care. CHC's current facility is located just across the street from the Mills on State Street. In an effort to leverage this essential asset and ensure that CHC can continue to provide high-quality care to an increasing number patients at the Mills and in the CN, their current facility will need to be expanded and upgraded. Expansion would involve modernizing and enlarging the existing building and a parking strategy. The parking strategy will leverage existing and planned assets with potential shared parking arrangements. Funds for the building expansion are fully committed.

*Referenced Strategies: Housing–Goal 2, Strategy B and People–Employment–Goal 2, Strategy A.*

### Community Park

A community park, located adjacent to the proposed HUB park, is a smaller planned open space that will serve community residents. Park amenities may include a community garden, green infrastructure elements (swale, rain garden, etc.), a playground, and/or a tot lot.

*Referenced Strategies: People–Healthy Meriden–Goal 2, Strategy B.*

### Neighborhood Stabilization

The overall plan for the neighborhood focuses on providing new amenities and improving its appearance and stability. Included in this stabilization plan is the demolition of blighted properties deemed unredeemable, the reuse of vacant land and the rehabilitation of existing properties. Potential uses for vacant properties include infill housing, green infrastructure and open spaces.

*Referenced Strategies: Neighborhood–Safety–Goal 2, Strategy A, B.*

### Streetscape Improvements/Green Infrastructure

Streetscape improvements and green infrastructure investments tie together investments that will be made in Downtown Meriden over the next ten years. Improvements will allow greater pedestrian and bicycle access to existing trails, the new transportation center and key destinations. The streetscape improvements/green infrastructure plan includes the addition of street trees along key pedestrian corridors, the use of stormwater trenches and green gutters to manage stormwater, new bus shelters, and improved pedestrian crosswalks.

*Referenced Strategies: Neighborhood–Circulation–Goal 4, Strategy A, B and Neighborhood–Sustainability–Goal 2, Strategy B, C.*

### Downtown WiFi

A low-cost or free WiFi network covering Downtown Meriden will help further education and employment goals as we work towards closing the digital divide. Strategies include providing free WiFi access through subsidized or reduced cost mobile devices and providing free e-book through public library systems. This was one of many things learned during the capacity-building trip to Boston.

*Referenced Strategies: People–Employment–Goal 3, Strategy G and People–Education–Goal 2, Strategy G.*



# CHAPTER 7 Implementation Plan

How the goals and strategies will be implemented to achieve Meriden's vision.

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## IMPLEMENTATION PLAN SECTIONS:

Implementation Matrix  
Master Project Schedule  
Master Project Budget  
Committed Partners (MOUs pending)  
Committed Leverage (pending)

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## INTRODUCTION

So how do we implement these great ideas? We can start with priority strategies that are low cost and slated for short term results – low hanging fruit to start the momentum of neighborhood revitalization. From there we will leverage bricks and mortar development (i.e., 24 Colony, Mills Phase 1, etc.) to piggy back plan initiatives such as a well-programmed community room and smoke-free policies. All the while we will keep our sights on high impact funding sources such as a Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant, grants from large philanthropic organizations and state funding.

This plan is already rippling out in the community in positive ways. Organizations such as The United Way of Meriden and Wallingford, Meriden Public School District, Midstate Medical Center, and the Meriden Funders (consortium of local philanthropy) are considering aligning their goals to further the recommendations of this plan.

This section will focus on the leaders involved in, the funding required for and the timing of putting plans into action.

# IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

PEOPLE - EDUCATION					
	GOAL	STRATEGIES	TIMEFRAME	METRICS	LEAD(S)
1	Ensure that all Meriden children living within the Choice Neighborhood enter kindergarten "ready for school" by increasing enrollment in quality early learning programs.	<b>Strategy A:</b> Increase awareness of what it means for children to be "school ready" in an effort to promote and increase participation in pre-school and other learning programs.	Short Term	Increase in number/percent of 0-5 year olds enrolled in accredited early learning programs	MCF MPSD
		<b>Strategy B:</b> Provide transportation to preschool.	Mid Term		
		<b>Strategy C:</b> Overcome the cultural norm that a child needs to be with a family member until he/she enters kindergarten	Short Term	Percent/number of kindergartners demonstrating age-appropriate skills	
		<b>Strategy D:</b> Address the misconception regarding the cost of preschool programs.	Short Term		
2	Create a series of programs and services that promote life-long learning for the entire family.	<b>Priority Strategy A:</b> Increase the number of Extended Learning Day Schools to include Putnam Elementary School, located in the Choice Neighborhood.	Long Term	Number/percent of 3rd graders who read at or above grade level  Number/percent of Mills/CN parents who attend the Parent Academy  Number/percent of Mills/CN residents participating in out-of-school time programs  Number/percent of 6th-8th graders who score at or above grade level	MCF MPSD MHA Pennrose
		<b>Priority Strategy B:</b> Increase the number of Parent Academies and explore opportunities to host Parent Academies within the new mixed-use development.	Short Term		
		<b>Priority Strategy C:</b> Establish a Teacher-in-Residence Program in the new mixed-income housing developments.	Long Term		
		<b>Priority Strategy D:</b> Engage in partnership with the CT State Department of Education, Meriden Public Schools, Regional Education Service Centers, and a partnering university or accredited school to subsidize teachers for Bilingual Education Certification to meet the needs of Mills residents, of which 36% speak no or only some English.	Mid Term		
		<b>Priority Strategy E:</b> Create a series of after school, intramural activities at each school to engage Mills and CN students.	Short Term		
		<b>Priority Strategy F:</b> Replicate Meriden Children First's "Summer at Sherman Program" in the CN. The program provides a meaningful learning and fun experience, addresses summer reading loss and promotes family literacy.	Short Term		
		<b>Priority Strategy G:</b> Provide a free WiFi network in Downtown Meriden with access to a collection of free e-books.	Mid Term		
		<b>Strategy H:</b> Create an electronic and hard copy listing of services available at the new mixed-use development that will support bilingual families.	Short Term		
		<b>Strategy I:</b> Locate a Family Resource Center within one of the new buildings currently being planned so that families can receive a variety of family support and educational programs within the Choice Neighborhood.	Mid Term		
		<b>Strategy J:</b> Connect community partners such as CT Works, local banks, or others to parents through events planned at the school building.	Short Term		
		<b>Strategy K:</b> Create a rigorous program for educator and administrator evaluation and development planning that uses student achievement data as a factor for overall educator rating.	Mid Term		
		<b>Strategy L:</b> Differentiated programming for students with autism or other significant exceptionalities.	Mid Term		
		<b>Strategy M:</b> Continue transforming high school instruction through Student Centered Learning efforts.	Mid Term		
		<b>Strategy N:</b> Instruct new teachers at "New Teacher Seminars" to reach out to all parents in the first week of school and send home a positive message about every student to forge relationships and engage with Mills and CN parents.	Short Term		
3	Create a series of programs and services that promote School to Career Opportunities.  Priority Strategy	<b>Priority Strategy A:</b> Establish an Adopt-A-School Program, where local businesses work with one school and provide a variety of opportunities to the students.	Short Term	Number/percent of high school students who graduate	MPSD Midstate Chamber of Commerce
		<b>Priority Strategy B:</b> Support for high school guidance counselors from Human Resource staff at area businesses.	Short Term		
		<b>Priority Strategy C:</b> On-line counseling for incoming 9th grade students as a means to begin thinking about their career choices before entering high school.	Mid Term	Number/percent of high school student who graduate and move onto higher education/apprenticeship /internship/job	
		<b>Priority Strategy D:</b> Establish a citywide mentoring program and assign a mentor to every student living in the Choice Neighborhood, as well as other students who would benefit from the program.	Short Term		
		<b>Priority Strategy E:</b> Provide summer employment opportunities for CN Youth.	Mid Term		
		<b>Priority Strategy F:</b> Establish Meriden College Scholarship Plan.	Short Term		

Priority Strategy

PEOPLE - YOUTH					
	GOAL	STRATEGIES	TIMEFRAME	METRICS	LEAD(S)
1	<b>Establish a Meriden Youth Center that will create job opportunities and reduce youth stress by encouraging youth engagement and retention at the youth center.</b>	<b>Priority Strategy A:</b> Investigate potential space and funding sources for the new Meriden Teen Center.	Short Term	Get 2,000 new enrollees to come to the free youth center over a year	Meriden Youth Services Meriden Health Department
		<b>Strategy B:</b> Encourage youth to participate and remain engaged at the New Meriden Youth Center.	Long Term	Number of youth in attendance for each program	
		<b>Strategy C:</b> Provide transportation to improve attendance at the New Meriden Youth Center.	Long Term	Percent of youth who travel to the center via shuttle, carpool, or public transportation	
		<b>Strategy D:</b> Create job opportunities and increase career readiness skills for Meriden youth.	Long Term	Track participation by assigning youth a membership number/card  Conduct focus group sessions with youth who have left the center to understand why youth stop coming  3% reduction in reported teen substance abuse.	

PEOPLE - EMPLOYMENT & QUALIFIED WORKFORCE					
	GOAL	STRATEGIES	TIMEFRAME	METRICS	LEAD(S)
1	<b>Train Mills and neighborhood residents for quality jobs and work with local agencies to set hiring goals for skilled workers.</b>	<b>Priority Strategy A:</b> Charge the CT Works American Job Center (AJC) One Stop Career Center to oversee, certify and market this pool of qualified workers to contractors and sub-contractors working on downtown developments.	Mid Term	Decrease in downtown unemployment rate: current rate downtown is 25.6% compared to city-wide unemployment rate of 8.3%	Meriden Workforce Investment Board, CT Works American Job Center and Midstate Chamber of Commerce, Meriden Board of Education Adult Ed
		<b>Strategy B:</b> Work with the City of Meriden and the Meriden Housing Authority to set local hiring goals and incentives that can be escalated over time as private investments and pool of highly skilled workers increases.	Mid Term		
		<b>Strategy C:</b> Coordinate efforts with H. C. Wilcox (Meriden's Vocational High School), Platt High School and Maloney High School so that students and recent graduates who reside in Downtown Meriden are given priority for new job opportunities.	Mid Term		
		<b>Strategy D:</b> Institute a program to encourage large developers to utilize our local sub-contractors, and thus local people, on their projects.	Mid Term		
2	<b>Train local residents for projected new jobs at Meriden's two institutional anchors.</b>	<b>Priority Strategy A:</b> Promote and expand Meriden Adult Education enrichment programs, C.N.A. and Medical Instrument Training.	Mid Term	5 year outcome: 100 new jobs for 100 Meriden residents	Meriden Workforce Investment Board, CT Works American Job Center and Midstate Chamber of Commerce, Meriden Board of Education Adult Ed
		<b>Strategy B:</b> Promote and expand Allied Health Pre-Professional Certificate and Associates Degree programs offered at Middlesex Community College.	Mid Term	10 year outcome: Every able-bodied, working-age Mills resident (still residing in Downtown Meriden) to be gainfully employed	
		<b>Strategy C:</b> Outreach to Employers Human Resources departments through the Chamber's Health and Wellness Council and its Human Resources Roundtable and the CT Works American Job Center Business Services Reps to identify local healthcare employment trends and opportunities.	Mid Term		
		<b>Strategy D:</b> Reach out to local businesses headquartered in Meriden to enroll residents in apprenticeship programs.	Mid Term		
		<b>Strategy E:</b> Locate Meriden Adult Education programming within new housing developments so that residents can participate in Adult Education services without needing outside transportation to do so.	Mid Term		

## IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX CONTINUED

3	Prepare Choice Neighborhood residents to enter the workforce.	<b>Priority Strategy A:</b> Promote and expand CT Works American Job Center services to employers and out of work individuals.	Mid Term		Meriden Workforce Investment Board, CT Works American Job Center and Midstate Chamber of Commerce, Meriden Board of Education Adult Ed
		<b>Priority Strategy B:</b> Promote Adult Ed/MxCC Non-Credit short-term training programs for recent high school credentialed students.	Mid Term		
		<b>Strategy C:</b> Charge Chamber and CT Works American Job Center to co-create an Annual Downtown Meriden Job Fair to match employers and employees.	Long Term		
		<b>Strategy D:</b> Direct residents to programs like the Women and Families Open DOHR program (www.womenfamilies.org) which takes a comprehensive approach that focuses on the development of the whole person.	Mid Term		
		<b>Strategy E:</b> Direct Workforce Alliance to fund the training of local residents to become Employment Coaches to serve as peer mentors to other Mills residents. Employment Coaches would serve as liaisons to the Job Developers at the CT Works American Job Center.	Long Term		
		<b>Strategy F:</b> Create "Choice Neighborhood Priority of Service" designation with the CT Works American Job Center for all district residents and employers. Dedicate an American Job Center Business Services staff person to work with employers in the district, the City and the region to better connect employers with residents of the district.	Mid Term		
		<b>Strategy G:</b> Provide neighborhood-wide free Wi-Fi service to bridge the digital divide.	Mid Term		
4	Identify disengaged youth without a long term work plan and connect them to existing and new in-school and out-of-school programs.	<b>Priority Strategy A:</b> Utilize High School Career Counselors to identify students and better connect them to programs.	Short Term	Decrease in downtown unemployment rate: current rate downtown is 25.6% compared to city-wide unemployment rate of 8.3%  Section 3: Number of residents who are employed through Section 3	Meriden Workforce Investment Board, CT Works American Job Center and Midstate Chamber of Commerce, Meriden Board of Education Adult Ed
		<b>Priority Strategy B:</b> Expand the nationally recognized Meriden K-12 and American Federation of Teachers "Personal Learning Experience" program and deliver at an as early age as possible.	Short Term		
		<b>Strategy C:</b> Utilize Adult Education / College and Career Readiness Center staff to further identify populations in their pipeline and programs to support the population.	Short Term		
		<b>Strategy D:</b> Support local collaborating agencies submitting grant applications to the Workforce Alliance and other funders for youth programs where out-of school/disengaged youth are to participate in a workforce program that remediates basic skills while preparing them for careers.	Short Term		
5	Expand support services and reduce other barriers to full-time employment including childcare, transportation, lack of skills, and financial hardship.	<b>Priority Strategy A:</b> Create a School Readiness Early Childhood program that would address the obstacle of lack of quality child care for someone seeking employment.	Mid Term	5 year outcome: 100 new jobs for 100 Meriden residents  10 year outcome: Every able-bodied, working-age Mills resident (still residing in Downtown Meriden) to be gainfully employed	Meriden Workforce Investment Board, CT Works American Job Center and Midstate Chamber of Commerce, Meriden Board of Education Adult Ed
		<b>Strategy B:</b> Work to increase transportation options (expanded bus hours, Uber, promote ridesharing, etc.) to enable residents to get to and from education, work, and family obligations.	Long Term		
		<b>Strategy C:</b> Expand enrollment in MxCC College and Career Readiness course.	Mid Term		
		<b>Strategy D:</b> Utilize employers and CT Works American Job Center Job Developers to identify part time workers who have the skills and time required for full-time employment.	Short Term		
		<b>Strategy E:</b> Utilize Midstate Chamber of Commerce and Business Services Reps to work with employers to encourage full time employment.	Short Term		
		<b>Strategy F:</b> Engage CT Works American Job Center to develop co-work/education programs to stop the loss of many students who quit education and training early for sub-standard part-time employment opportunities. Promote the models and best practices through the Midstate Chamber of Commerce and City Economic Department office so employers can participate.	Short Term		
		<b>Strategy G:</b> Utilize the CT Works American Job Center to work one on one with residents to assess specific needs of specific residents and find solutions.	Short Term		
6	Expand support for the Workforce Alliance / MxCC Certificate of Advanced Manufacturing program to the district to feed the future needs of the manufacturing sector in the district and in the region.	<b>Priority Strategy A:</b> Market graduates to manufacturers in the district.	Short Term		
		<b>Strategy B:</b> Engage residents in the district to enroll in programs.	Short Term		
		<b>Strategy C:</b> Identify candidates for training programs and utilize Ready to Work or on the job training contracts or apprentice programs to improve skills of and employ local residents.	Mid Term		
		<b>Strategy D:</b> Work with employers to drive specific course offerings at MxCC based on employers needs.	Mid Term		
		<b>Strategy E:</b> Engage in reuse planning of the former hospital site as a potential jobs, training, or education center that serves residents.	Long Term		

Priority Strategy

**PEOPLE - HEALTHY MERIDEN PLAN**

GOAL	STRATEGIES	TIMEFRAME	METRICS	LEAD(S)
1 Promote increased consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables in the Choice Neighborhood and ensure everyone has equal access to healthy foods.	<b>Priority Strategy A:</b> Expand the opportunities for community garden programs.	Short Term	Number/percent of adults with lower cholesterol	CHC Meriden Health Department
	<b>Priority Strategy B:</b> Expand the Meriden Farmers' Market in the Choice Neighborhood.	Short Term		
	<b>Strategy C:</b> Promote food policy councils to improve the food environment in the Choice Neighborhood.	Long Term	Number/percent of adults at a healthy weight	
	<b>Strategy D:</b> Identify heart healthy options at local restaurants in the Choice neighborhood.	Long Term		
2 Increase the number of residents who participate in daily physical activity. Ensure safe places to be active and eliminate barriers to physical activity.	<b>Priority Strategy A:</b> Create community-wide campaigns focused on motivating people to increase physical activity.	Short Term	Number/percent of residents who report good physical health	CHC Meriden Health Department
	<b>Priority Strategy B:</b> Create a "social environment" that promotes physical activity.	Mid Term	Number/percent of adults with reduced hypertension	
	<b>Priority Strategy C:</b> Encourage community design and development that supports physical activity.	Mid Term	Number/percent of residents who report good physical health	
	<b>Strategy D:</b> Provide no-cost group exercise opportunities to the community.	Short Term	Number/percent of adults at a healthy weight Percent of adults who report exercising for an hour or more at least three times a week	
3 Reduce asthma-inducing triggers and create a Smoke-Free Social Norms Environment.	<b>Priority Strategy A:</b> Implement smoke-free multi-unit housing policy.	Short Term	Number/percent of residents who are diagnosed with asthma	MHA Pennrose City of Meriden
	<b>Priority Strategy B:</b> Create smoke-free park ordinances.	Mid Term		
	<b>Strategy C:</b> Establish enforceable pet policies in multi-unit housing.	Mid Term		
	<b>Strategy D:</b> Use Integrated Pest Management (IPM).	Mid Term		
	<b>Strategy E:</b> Encourage the use of the Putting on AIRS program.	Short Term		
	<b>Strategy F:</b> Diminish construction-related triggers in the Mills neighborhood.	Short Term		
4 Ensure culturally and linguistically competent mental health services for unserved, underserved and inappropriately served populations. Increase access to mental health services for unserved, underserved, and inappropriately served populations.	<b>Priority Strategy A:</b> Encourage Linguistic Access to Mental Health Services.	Long Term	Number of providers using linguistic services, such as the Language Line, will increase	CHC Meriden Health Department
	<b>Priority Strategy B:</b> Increase psychiatric resources for younger populations.	Mid Term	Development and implementation of a community-level campaign	
	<b>Strategy C:</b> Elevate Schools as Centers for Wellness in the Community.	Short Term	Increase in public transportation to service locations	
5 Work to ensure that all individuals and families who reside in the Choice Neighborhood area have a medical home for their primary medical, behavioral health and dental care.	<b>Priority Strategy A:</b> Encourage all providers in Meriden to ask about medical homes.	Short Term		CHC Meriden Health Department
	<b>Strategy B:</b> Strategy B: Support primary care practices in engaging patients and families.	Long Term		

**HOUSING**

GOAL	STRATEGIES	TIMEFRAME	METRICS	LEAD(S)
1 Create a mix of housing types and attractive styles that serve the identified needs of current and future residents at all income levels.	<b>Strategy A:</b> Ensure one for one replacement of Mills units.	Long Term	Replacement units	MHA Pennrose
	<b>Strategy B:</b> Develop higher-income units.	Long Term	Market rate units	
2 Develop housing that best leverages Downtown Meriden's unique assets - train station, HUB park, Community Health Center.	<b>Strategy A:</b> Secure funding to demolish the Mills.	Mid Term	Market rents	MHA Pennrose
	<b>Strategy B:</b> Incorporate mixed-use program in ground floors of multifamily buildings and site community-oriented open space adjacent to new development. Design new housing that complements non-residential investments in the downtown.	Mid Term	City-wide median sale price of single family home Energy costs per unit	
3 Ensure minimal disruption to the residents of Mills and assure that every Mills household who is lease-compliant has the right to return.	<b>Strategy A:</b> MHA relocation plan will aim to achieve the following: • Ensure that every Mills household is tracked upon move-out so that services can be coordinated. • Ensure that every returning Mills household is right-sized. • Ensure that every returning Mills household is offered new housing within their top preferences.	Mid Term	Median Rents	MHA Pennrose
			Residential Vacancy Rate City-wide median sale price of single family home	

Priority Strategy

# IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX CONTINUED

NEIGHBORHOOD - TOD NEIGHBORHOOD CIRCULATION PLAN					
GOAL	STRATEGIES	TIMEFRAME	METRICS	LEAD(S)	
1 Address the major deficiencies of the current roadway system, improve traffic flow and reinstitute two-way traffic in order to increase mobility and accessibility in the TOD District.	<b>Priority Strategy A:</b> Implement the TOD Multi-modal Roadway Improvement Plan for the TOD District (TOD Roadway Plan)	Long Term	Miles of complete streets Decrease in pedestrian and vehicle accidents in the TOD District Improved pedestrian connectivity on routes connecting housing to transit, including: Mill and Cedar Street to the Meriden Transit Center via State Street Pedestrian crosswalks on Colony St. to the MTC Traffic calming and vehicle speed reduction on Perkins Square to enable pedestrian connectivity from Crown Street to the MTC and the park area. Completion of the Quinnipiac River Linear Trail from Platt High School to the Hub Site via the Harbor Brook along 116 Cook Ave. and Factory H. Complete Boulevard entrance to the TOD district via Pratt Street.	City of Meriden	
	<b>Priority Strategy B:</b> Implement "complete streets" design principles included in the TOD Roadway Plan.	Long Term			
	<b>Priority Strategy C:</b> Implement streetscape amenities.	Long Term			
2 Increase transit ridership in concert with new commuter train service in order to reduce travel time between key destinations, create access to job opportunities and provide energy and environmental benefits to the community.	<b>Priority Strategy A:</b> Implement measures included in the TOD Roadway Plan to allow safe access to the new Meriden Transit Center.	Long Term	Change in transit ridership Change in transit service Pollution reduction Energy savings	City of Meriden	
	<b>Strategy B:</b> Advertise the new commuter rail system service and existing transit bus service.	Short Term			
	<b>Strategy C:</b> Ensure that infrastructure improvements are included in the new train station design.	Mid Term			
	<b>Strategy D:</b> Provide Meriden residents and job seekers better connections to regional educational and job opportunities through access to public transit service.	Mid Term			
	<b>Strategy E:</b> Identify and fill gaps in existing public transit system.	Mid Term			
	<b>Strategy F:</b> Identify ways the new commuter rail and existing transit system can benefit residents, visitors and commuters.	Long Term			
3 Ensure adequate parking is available throughout the TOD District.	<b>Priority Strategy A:</b> Open new lot at 24 Colony Street to the public.	Mid Term	Total number of parking spaces available Parking revenue collected and reinvested into parking infrastructure	City of Meriden	
	<b>Strategy B:</b> Align the downtown parking validation program with parking in City-owned lots and garages and on-street and State DOT parking facilities to be constructed.	Mid Term			
	<b>Strategy C:</b> Establish a dedicated capital expenditure account for downtown parking facilities.	Mid Term			
	<b>Strategy D:</b> Use Parking enforcement staff to enforce existing fines for on-street parking.	Mid Term			
	<b>Strategy E:</b> Allow on-line fee collection.	Long Term			
	<b>Strategy F:</b> Raise month-to-month surface and garage parking lease fees in City-owned lots as indicated.	Long Term			
	<b>Strategy G:</b> Explore ways to effectively enforce onstreet parking regulations and implement those changes using police department and/or parking division staff.	Short Term			
	<b>Strategy H:</b> Allow for shared parking and monthly parking leases in city-owned garages and parking lots for downtown residents and businesses; ensure that fee structure is fair and does not discourage use of downtown parking facilities.	Short Term			
4 Improve downtown pedestrian safety by improving downtown wayfinding signage and lighting, and adding shelters at downtown transit bus stops and providing better accessibility generally for pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users.	<b>Priority Strategy A:</b> Implement roadway, pedestrian and bikeway improvements included in the TOD Roadway Plan.	Mid Term	Sections of roadway improved Change in transit ridership Change in transit service Pollution reduction Energy savings Changes in vehicle miles traveled Number of companies participating in transit awareness programs Increase in parking revenue	City of Meriden	
	<b>Strategy B:</b> Implement the Meriden Linear Trail Master Plan adopted in 2012.	Long Term			

Priority Strategy

NEIGHBORHOOD - SUSTAINABLE MERIDEN					
GOAL	STRATEGIES	TIMEFRAME	METRICS	LEAD(S)	
1 Ensure the long-term sustainability of the Meriden Farmers' Market.	<b>Priority Strategy A:</b> Conduct a user survey to optimize the community's use of the Farmers' Market.	Short Term	Participation at Meriden Farmer Market	Meriden Farmers Market	
	<b>Strategy B:</b> Provide transportation for seniors to shop at the market and ensure accessibility by developing a reliable SNAP/EBT program.	Mid Term			
	<b>Strategy C:</b> Begin an annual campaign to recruit volunteers and fundraise.	Short Term			
	<b>Strategy D:</b> Increase farm participation by providing a variety of foods and events at the market.	Mid Term			
2 Develop green buildings with renewable energy systems that rely on green infrastructure and passive energy solutions.	<b>Priority Strategy A:</b> Newly constructed buildings will meet qualifications for Enterprise Green Communities.	Mid Term	Number of Certified Green Buildings Number of new buildings that manage on-site stormwater	MHA Pennrose	
	<b>Strategy B:</b> New construction will incorporate green infrastructure and passive energy solutions.	Mid Term			
	<b>Strategy C:</b> Private development will include stormwater management best practices.	Mid Term			
3 Develop and implement a Clean Streets program.	<b>Priority Strategy A:</b> Increase street sweeping frequency.	Long Term	Number/percent of residents and visitors who do not cite litter/clean up as an issue on surveys	City of Meriden	
	<b>Strategy B:</b> Sponsor periodic free bulk waste days.	Long Term			
	<b>Strategy C:</b> Install solar trash compaction units.	Long Term			
NEIGHBORHOOD - NEIGHBORHOOD SAFETY					
GOAL	STRATEGIES	TIMEFRAME	METRICS	LEAD(S)	
1 Strengthen relationship between community and police.	<b>Priority Strategy A:</b> Organize a team of highly respected neighborhood ambassadors to engage the police more meaningfully facilitated by an outside consultant.	Mid Term	Community Safety Climate Survey – trending in the right direction	City of Meriden	
			Meriden Public Schools – School Climate Survey		
			Number of community conversations and findings/summaries of each, coded by theme and input into the repeat community surveys		
			Decrease number/percent of Part I Crimes		
			Community agency data on the number of contacts among these organizations and members of the CN		
<b>Strategy B:</b> Leverage existing programs that support positive community-police relations.	Mid Term	School Discipline Data (infractions)			
<b>Strategy C:</b> Organize a campaign for community and political support for increase in police funding.	Mid Term	Law enforcement data on arrests among youth			
<b>Strategy D:</b> Extend C4R (Cops, Clergy, and Community) Program to the Choice Neighborhood.	Short Term	As available, data on pre- and post-training for the ESSi and EPIY projects (change in knowledge and attitudes)			
<b>Strategy E:</b> Increase funding for the City's Youth Services Bureau's Juvenile Assistance & Diversion Board (JAD)	Mid Term				
2 Neighborhood Stabilization – improve the appearance of downtown neighborhoods.	<b>Priority Strategy A:</b> Strategic use of City's NPP funds to rehabilitate existing homes.	Mid Term	Decrease number/percent of residential code infractions Number of participants from within CN and The Mills	City of Meriden	
	<b>Strategy B:</b> Demolish blighted properties deemed unredeemable and encourage new development.	Long Term			
	<b>Strategy C:</b> Organize a semi-annual volunteer Spring/Fall Cleaning of public spaces in Downtown Meriden.	Short Term			
	<b>Strategy D:</b> Clean up and beautify the backs of buildings along train corridor.	Mid Term			
	<b>Strategy E:</b> Create a downtown business/building facade loan program.	Long Term			
3 Portray Downtown Meriden honestly – a safe and increasingly safer place to live, work, play, and shop.	<b>Priority Strategy A:</b> Add safety as key component of Meriden 2020 public relations campaign.	Short Term	Measure extent to which safety is visible as theme in campaign	City of Meriden Council of Neighborhood MPD	
4 Pride of Place – every resident of Downtown Meriden is a stakeholder.	<b>Priority Strategy A:</b> Increase training for Neighborhood Watch leaders.	Short Term	Community Safety Climate Survey – trending in the right direction		
	<b>Strategy B:</b> Implement an Adopt-a-Block/Lot/Curb program.	Mid Term	Decrease number/percent of Part I property crime		

Priority Strategy

## PLAN SCHEDULE (PRIORITY STRATEGIES) SHORT & MID TERM

	SHORT TERM (YEAR 1)	MID TERM (YEAR 2-3)
<b>PEOPLE PLAN</b>		
	<b>Education 1 Priority Strategy A:</b> Through child-finder, pediatric medical partners or proactive outreach at the Meriden Community Health Center, Meriden Health Department and MidState Medical Center, establish relationships and share resources with parents of infants.	<b>Education 1 Priority Strategy B:</b> Re-zone Meriden’s public transportation routes around educational sites. Seek private or grant funding for transportation subsidies for families enrolled in early childhood education programs.
	<b>Education 1 Priority Strategy C:</b> Publicize education thresholds children need to meet before entering kindergarten. Many parents are not aware of the increased academic requirements of kindergarten students. Meet families where they are – if parents choose to have a family member care for their preschool-aged child, services should be provided within the home to promote language development.	<b>Education 2 Priority Strategy D:</b> Engage in partnership with the CT State Department of Education, Meriden Public Schools, Regional Education Service Centers, and a partnering university or accredited school to subsidize teachers for Bilingual Education Certification to meet the needs of Mills residents, of which 36% speak no English or some English.
	<b>Education 2 Priority Strategy B:</b> Increase the number of Parent Academies and explore opportunities to host Parent Academies within the new mixed-use development.	<b>Education 2 Priority Strategy G:</b> Provide a free WiFi network in Downtown Meriden with access to a collection of free e-books.
	<b>Education 2 Priority Strategy E:</b> Create a series of after school, intramural activities at each school to engage Mills and CN students.	<b>Education 3 Priority Strategy C:</b> On-line counseling for incoming 9th grade students as a means to begin thinking about their career choices before entering high school.
	<b>Education 2 Priority Strategy F:</b> Replicate Meriden Children First’s “Summer at Sherman Program” in the CN. The program provides a meaningful learning and fun experience, addresses summer reading loss and promotes family literacy.	<b>Education 3 Priority Strategy E:</b> Provide summer employment opportunities for CN Youth.
	<b>Education 3 Priority Strategy A:</b> Establish an Adopt-A-School Program, where local businesses work with one school and provide a variety of opportunities to the students.	<b>Employment 1 Priority Strategy A:</b> Charge the CT Works American Job Center (AJC) One Stop Career Center to oversee, certify and market this pool of qualified workers to contractors and sub-contractors working on downtown developments.
	<b>Education 3 Priority Strategy B:</b> Support for high school guidance counselors from Human Resource staff at area businesses.	<b>Employment 2 Priority Strategy A:</b> Promote and expand Meriden Adult Education enrichment programs, C.N.A. and Medical Instrument Training.
	<b>Education 3 Priority Strategy D:</b> Establish a citywide mentoring program and assign a mentor to every student living in the Choice Neighborhood, as well as other students who would benefit from the program.	<b>Employment 3 Priority Strategy A:</b> Promote and expand CT Works American Job Center services to employers and out of work individuals.
	<b>Education 3 Priority Strategy F:</b> Establish Meriden College Scholarship Plan.	<b>Employment 3 Priority Strategy B:</b> Promote Adult Ed/MxCC Non-Credit short-term training programs for recent high school credentialed students.
	<b>Youth 1 Priority Strategy A:</b> Investigate potential space and funding sources for the new Meriden Teen Center.	<b>Employment 5 Priority Strategy A:</b> Create a School Readiness Early Childhood program that would address the obstacle of lack of quality child care for someone seeking employment.
	<b>Employment 4 Priority Strategy A:</b> Utilize High School Career Counselors to identify students and better connect them to programs.	<b>Health 2 Priority Strategy B:</b> Create a “social environment” that promotes physical activity.
	<b>Employment 4 Priority Strategy B:</b> Expand the nationally recognized Meriden K-12 and American Federation of Teachers “Personal Learning Experience” program and deliver at an as early age as possible.	<b>Health 2 Priority Strategy C:</b> Encourage community design and development that supports physical activity.
	<b>Employment 6 Priority Strategy A:</b> Market graduates to manufacturers in the district.	<b>Health 3 Priority Strategy B:</b> Create smoke-free park ordinances.
	<b>Health 1 Priority Strategy A:</b> Expand the opportunities for community garden programs.	<b>Health 4 Priority Strategy B:</b> Increase Psychiatric Resources for Younger Populations.
	<b>Health 1 Priority Strategy B:</b> Expand the Meriden Farmers’ Market in the Choice Neighborhood.	
	<b>Health 2 Priority Strategy A:</b> Create community-wide campaigns focused on motivating people to increase physical activity.	
	<b>Health 3 Priority Strategy A:</b> Implement smoke-free multi-unit housing policy.	
	<b>Health 5 Priority Strategy A:</b> Encouraging all providers in Meriden to ask about medical homes.	
<b>NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN</b>		
	<b>Sustainability 1 Priority Strategy A:</b> Conduct a user survey to optimize the community’s use of the Farmers’ Market.	<b>TOD 3 Priority Strategy A:</b> Open new lot at 24 Colony Street to the public.
	<b>Safety 3 Priority Strategy A:</b> Add safety as key component of Meriden 2020 public relations campaign.	<b>TOD 4 Priority Strategy A:</b> Implement roadway, pedestrian and bikeway improvements included in the TOD Roadway Plan.
	<b>Safety 4 Priority Strategy A:</b> Increase training for Neighborhood Watch leaders.	<b>Sustainability 2 Priority Strategy A:</b> Newly constructed buildings will meet qualifications for Enterprise Green Communities.
		<b>Safety 1 Priority Strategy A:</b> Organize a team of highly respected neighborhood ambassadors to engage the police more meaningfully facilitated by an outside consultant.
		<b>Safety 2 Priority Strategy A:</b> Strategic use of City’s NPP funds to rehabilitate existing homes.
<b>HOUSING PLAN</b>		
	<b>Phase 1:</b> Mills	<b>Phase 2:</b> HUB
		<b>Phase 3:</b> Record Journal
		<b>Phase 4:</b> Infill

## PLAN SCHEDULE (PRIORITY STRATEGIES) LONG TERM

LONG TERM (YEAR 4-5)
<p><b>Education 2 Priority Strategy A:</b> Increase the number of Extended Learning Day Schools to include Putnam Elementary School, located in the Choice Neighborhood.</p>
<p><b>Education 2 Priority Strategy C:</b> Establish a Teacher-in-Residence Program in the new mixed-income housing developments.</p>
<p><b>Health 4 Priority Strategy A:</b> Encourage Linguistic Access to Mental Health Services.</p>

<p><b>TOD 1 Priority Strategy A:</b> Implement the TOD Multi-modal Roadway Improvement Plan for the TOD District (TOD Roadway Plan)</p>
<p><b>TOD 1 Priority Strategy B:</b> Implement “complete streets” design principles included in the TOD Roadway Plan.</p>
<p><b>TOD 1 Priority Strategy C:</b> Implement streetscape amenities.</p>
<p><b>TOD 2 Priority Strategy A:</b> Implement measures included in the TOD Roadway Plan to allow safe access to the new Meriden Transit Center.</p>
<p><b>Sustainability 3 Priority Strategy A:</b> Increase street sweeping frequency.</p>
<p><b>Phase 4:</b> Mills</p>
<p><b>Phase 5:</b> HUB</p>

## ESTIMATED COST OF IMPLEMENTATION

Goal/Strategy	Timeframe	Annual Cost	Position/Program	Notes
<b>Education</b>				
1-A	Short Term	\$ 20,000	Family/school resource coordinator	1/2 time employee, just salary
1-B	Mid Term	\$ 45,000	Downtown Shuttle	based on pilot shuttle; shared with other strategies
1-C	Short Term	shared	Family/school resource coordinator	shared
1-D	Short Term	\$ 25,000	Family/school resource coordinator; MCF Connectors	shared; additional \$2,000 value hours per month
2-A	Long Term	\$ 775,000	CT DOE; Philanthropy	Putnam as ELT
2-B	Short Term	\$ 5,000	Parent Academy	cost of hosting 1 PA regularly for 1 year; free rent
2-C	Long Term	\$ 5,000	Teacher in Residence; Incentive funded by MPSD	assume teacher will pay market or LIHTC rent, \$5,000 to offset rent
2-D	Mid Term	\$ 20,000	Subsidy pooled from partnership	assume 2 subsidies of \$10,000 each
2-E	Short Term	\$ 20,000	MPSD - Afterschool Activities	overtime salary for MPSD teachers and coaches
2-F	Short Term	\$ 10,000	MCF Choice Summer at Sherman	based on precedent
2-G	Mid Term	shared	Technology Goes Home	shared; based on Boston Choice example - this is cost of installation of system; operating costs ranges from \$10-20,000
2-H	Short Term	\$ 12,000	Marketing Budget at New Developments	\$1,000 per month of online and hardcopy marketing
2-I	Mid Term	\$ 100,000	FRC at Mills, funded by State	operating cost; construction cost (est. \$1 million) not factored
2-J	Short Term	shared	MCF Connectors - Additional Hours	shared
2-K	Mid Term	\$ 20,000	MPSD - Educator Evaluation	cost should be borne by MPSD
2-L	Mid Term	\$ 1,000	MPSD - Special Needs	cost should be borne by MPSD
2-M	Mid Term	\$ 10,000	MPSD- Student Centered Learning	cost should be borne by MPSD
2-N	Short Term	\$ 5,000	MPSD - New Teacher Seminar	add to existing new teacher orientation
3-A	Short Term	\$ 10,000	Local businesses	Putnam as adoptee, \$1,000 in-kind per business, 10 businesses
3-B	Short Term	\$ 10,000	Local businesses	\$1,000 in-kind per business, 10 businesses
3-C	Mid Term	\$ 20,000	MPSD - Career Counselors	additional funding for MPSD counselors
3-D	Short Term	\$ 10,000	Choice Mentorship Coordinator Volunteer; In-kind Contribution	in-kind value of volunteer coordinator only
3-E	Mid Term	\$ 20,000	Choice Youth Coordinator	1/2 time employee, just salary
3-F	Short Term	\$ 100,000	Meriden College Scholarship Plan	estimate from Meriden funders
<b>ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST- EDUCATION</b>				
	<b>YEAR 1</b>	<b>YEAR 2 and 3</b>	<b>YEAR 4 and 5</b>	
	\$ 227,000	\$ 463,000	\$ 1,243,000	
<b>Youth</b>				
1-A	Short Term	\$ 100,000	Meriden Youth Center	operating cost; construction cost (est. \$1.5 million) not factored
1-B	Long Term	shared	Meriden Youth Center	operating cost; construction cost (est. \$1.5 million) not factored
1-C	Long Term	shared	Downtown Shuttle	shared
1-D	Long Term	shared	Choice Youth Coordinator	shared
<b>ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST- YOUTH</b>				
	<b>YEAR 1</b>	<b>YEAR 2 and 3</b>	<b>YEAR 4 and 5</b>	
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 100,000	

Employment					
1-A	Mid Term	\$ 40,000	Downtown Jobs Connector	full time employee, just salary	
1-B	Mid Term	\$ 25,000	MHA Section 3 Director	1/2 time employee, just salary	
1-C	Mid Term	shared	Downtown Jobs Connector	shared	
1-D	Mid Term	shared	Downtown Jobs Connector	shared	
2-A	Mid Term	\$ 100,000	Expansion of Existing Programs at MxCC	10 additional slots at \$10,000 each; shared	
2-B	Mid Term	shared	Expansion of Existing Programs at MxCC	shared	
2-C	Mid Term	shared	Downtown Jobs Connector	shared	
2-D	Mid Term	\$ 10,000	Local businesses	\$1,000 in-kind per business, 10 businesses	
2-E	Mid Term	shared	MHA Section 3 Director	shared	
3-A	Mid Term	shared	Downtown Jobs Connector	shared	
3-B	Mid Term	shared	Downtown Jobs Connector	shared	
3-C	Long Term	\$ 5,000	Annual Downtown Meriden Jobs Fair	time and materials in preparation of jobs fair	
3-D	Mid Term	shared	MHA Section 3 Director	shared	
3-E	Long Term	\$ 10,000	Employment Coach Training	quarterly coaching sessions at \$2,500 each	
3-F	Mid Term	shared	Downtown Jobs Connector	shared	
3-G	Mid Term	shared	Technology Goes Home model	shared; based on Boston Choice example	
4-A	Short Term	\$ 1,000	High School Guidance Counselor - Added Scope	added scope to existing program	
4-B	Short Term	\$ 25,000	Expansion of Personalized Learning Experience Program	estimated cost of expansion	
4-C	Short Term	\$ 1,000	Adult Ed / College and Career Readiness Center	added scope to existing program	
4-D	Short Term	\$ 5,000	Additional Marketing Funds	print and online marketing	
5-A	Mid Term	shared	Family Resource Center at Mills	shared	
5-B	Long Term	shared	City Funds - Downtown Shuttle	shared	
5-C	Mid Term	\$ 10,000	Expansion of Existing Programs at MxCC	5 additional slots at \$2,000 each	
5-D	Short Term	shared	Downtown Jobs Connector	shared	
5-E	Short Term	\$ 10,000	Midstate Business Service Reps	\$1,000 in-kind per business, 10 businesses	
5-F	Short Term	\$ 25,000	Co-Work / Education Programs	estimated cost of 1 program	
5-G	Short Term	\$ 40,000	Case Manager	full time employee, just salary; shared	
6-A	Short Term	\$ 5,000	Additional Marketing	increased scope of existing MPSD counselor	
6-B	Short Term	shared	Case Manager	shared	
6-C	Mid Term	shared	Downtown Jobs Connector	shared	
6-D	Mid Term	\$ 100,000	Expansion of Existing Programs at MxCC	10 additional slots at \$10,000 each; shared	
6-E	Long Term	unknown	Reuse of Former Hospital Site	long term strategy	
<b>ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST-EMPLOYMENT</b>		<b>YEAR 1</b>	<b>YEAR 2 and 3</b>	<b>YEAR 4 and 5</b>	
		<b>\$ 112,000</b>	<b>\$ 397,000</b>	<b>\$ 412,000</b>	

## ESTIMATED COST OF IMPLEMENTATION CONT.

Health					
1-A	Short Term	\$ 5,000	Beat the Street	annual cost of maintenance (not factoring site acquisition and development costs) - 1 acre	
1-B	Short Term	\$ 10,000	Expansion of Meriden Farmers Market	estimated cost of expansion	
1-C	Long Term	\$ 1,000	Food Policy Council	largely volunteer organization	
1-D	Long Term	\$ 50,000	City	annual cost of maintenance (not factoring site acquisition and development costs) - 5 acres	
2-A	Short Term	\$ 5,000	Family Health Fitness and Fun Day	expansion of existing event	
2-B	Mid Term	shared	Downtown Activity Coordinator	shared	
2-C	Mid Term	shared	Downtown Activity Coordinator	shared	
2-D	Short Term	shared	Downtown Activity Coordinator	shared	
3-A	Short Term	none	Pennrose Policy	Pennrose policy	
3-B	Mid Term	\$ 50,000	Smoke Free Park ordinances	cost of signs and enforcement	
3-C	Mid Term	none	Pennrose Policy	Pennrose policy	
3-D	Mid Term	\$ 5,000	Integrated Pest Management	estimated cost of program at 1 building	
3-E	Short Term	\$ 5,000	Putting on AIRS	estimated expansion of existing program	
3-F	Short Term	\$ 10,000	Diminish construction-related triggers	construction dust mitigation plan	
4-A	Long Term	\$ 50,000	Translators / Translation Services	estimate of annual cost of on-call translation services	
4-B	Mid Term	\$ 100,000	Pediatirc Psychiatric Resource	estimate	
4-C	Short Term	\$ 20,000	Schools as Centers for Wellness	estimate - pilot program at Putnam	
5-A	Short Term	\$ 5,000	Encourage providers to ask about medical homes	small scale marketing campaign	
5-B	Long Term	\$ 30,000	Support primary care practices	estimate of annual cost to support practices	
<b>ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST- HEALTH</b>		<b>YEAR 1</b>	<b>YEAR 2 and 3</b>	<b>YEAR 4 and 5</b>	
		\$ 60,000	\$ 215,000	\$ 346,000	

PEOPLE PLAN COST- ANNUAL					
		<b>YEAR 1</b>	<b>YEAR 2 and 3</b>	<b>YEAR 4 and 5</b>	
		\$ 399,000	\$ 1,474,000	\$ 3,575,000	

TOD					
1-A	Long Term	\$ 1,680,000	TOD Multi-Modal Roadway Improvement Plan	shared - 10% admin cost of \$16.8 million	
1-B	Long Term	\$ 75,000	1 Mile of Complete Street	estimated cost per mile of complete street retrofit - \$750,000; 10%	
1-C	Long Term	\$ 25,000	1 Mile of Streetscape Amenities	estimated cost per mile of streetscape amenities - \$250,000; 10%	
2-A	Long Term	shared	Safe Access to Meriden Transit Center	shared	
2-B	Short Term	\$ 10,000	Additional Marketing	additional marketing of transit - billboards and online	
2-C	Mid Term	shared	Infrastructure Improvements in New Train Station	shared	
2-D	Mid Term	shared	Downtown Jobs Connector	shared	
2-E	Mid Term	shared	Downtown Shuttle	shared	
2-F	Long Term	\$ 50,000	Post-Occ Commuter Rail Impact Study	estimated cost of consultant	
3-A	Mid Term	\$ 100,000	Public Parking at 24 Colony	estimate of operating cost of 24 Colony parking spaces	
3-B	Mid Term	\$ 25,000	Downtown Parking Validation Program	cost of validation program	
3-C	Mid Term	\$ 5,000	Downtown Parking Capital Expenditure Account	administration of account	
3-D	Mid Term	\$ 40,000	Parking Enforcement	one full time parking enforcement official	
3-E	Long Term	\$ 5,000	Online Fee Collection	cost of online municipal account	
3-F	Long Term	\$ 20,000	Lease Fee Escalation	future parking authority cost	
3-G	Short Term	shared	On-street parking enforcement	shared	
3-H	Short Term	\$ 10,000	Shared parking and monthly parking leases	estimate cost of shared parking administration	
4-A	Mid Term	shared	TOD Multi-Modal Roadway Improvement Plan	shared	
4-B	Long Term	unknown	Meriden Linear Trail	long term strategy	
<b>ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST- TOD</b>		<b>YEAR 1</b>	<b>YEAR 2 and 3</b>	<b>YEAR 4 and 5</b>	
		\$ 20,000	\$ 190,000	\$ 2,045,000	

Sustainability					
1-A	Short Term	\$ 5,000	Farmers Market Survey	print and online surveys	
1-B	Mid Term	shared	Downtown Shuttle	shared	
1-C	Short Term	\$ 5,000	Increased Capacity of Market Master	Increase of 1/8 time at \$40,000 per year; shared	
1-D	Mid Term	shared	Increased Capacity of Market Master	shared	
2-A	Mid Term	construction	Green Buildings	cost borne by development team	
2-B	Mid Term	construction	Green Infrastructure and Passive Energy Solutions	cost borne by development team	
2-C	Mid Term	construction	Green Stormwater Management	cost borne by development team	
3-A	Long Term	\$ 10,000	Increased Frequency of Street Sweeping	estimate of increased street sweeping in DT	
3-B	Long Term	\$ 10,000	Free Bulk Waste Days	Estimate of bulk waste clean up day; donation funded	
3-C	Long Term	\$ 20,000	Smart Trash Receptacles	\$4,000 each; install 5 per year	
<b>ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST- SUSTAINABILITY</b>		<b>YEAR 1</b>	<b>YEAR 2 and 3</b>	<b>YEAR 4 and 5</b>	
		\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 50,000	

## ESTIMATED COST OF IMPLEMENTATION CONT.

Safety					
1-A	Mid Term	\$ 20,000	Increase in Police-Community Relations Budget	estimated increase in police-community relations budget	
1-B	Mid Term	\$ 10,000	Expansion of Existing Programs that Support Positive Community-Police Relations	increased funding from CDBG	
1-C	Mid Term	\$ 10,000	Campaign for Community and Political Support for Increased Police Funding	Campaign costs	
1-D	Short Term	\$ 5,000	Extension of C4R in Choice Neighborhood	increased funding from CDBG	
1-E	Mid Term	\$ 10,000	Increase funding for the City's Youth Services Bureau's JAD	estimate	
2-A	Mid Term	\$ 200,000	Expansion of NPP Program	Current NPP budget at \$65,000; increase in \$135,000	
2-B	Long Term	\$ 50,000	Demolition of Blight	Demolish 2 SFD homes	
2-C	Short Term	shared	Downtown Activity Coordinator	shared	
2-D	Mid Term	\$ 50,000	CT Create Here Now / ArtPlace Project	Bridgeport model	
2-E	Long Term	\$ 20,000	Downtown Business / Building Façade Loan Program	estimated loans to 2 businesses	
3-A	Short Term	\$ 5,000	Additional Marketing	add on to Meriden 2020 PR	
4-A	Short Term	\$ 10,000	Increase training for Neighborhood Watch leaders	4 training sessions by MPD per year	
4-B	Mid Term	shared	Downtown Activity Coordinator	shared	
<b>ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST- SAFETY</b>		<b>YEAR 1</b>	<b>YEAR 2 and 3</b>	<b>YEAR 4 and 5</b>	
		\$ 20,000	\$ 320,000	\$ 390,000	
<b>NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN COST- ANNUAL</b>					
		<b>YEAR 1</b>	<b>YEAR 2 and 3</b>	<b>YEAR 4 and 5</b>	
		\$ 50,000	\$ 570,000	\$ 3,055,000	

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	MILLS	AFF/NON-MILLS	MARKET-RATE	TOTAL	COMM. SPACE	COST ESTIMATES
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <span>PEOPLE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION</span> <span>HUB PARK ONLINE</span> <span>NEW MERIDEN TRAIN STATION ONLINE</span> <span>50% Affordable 50% Market Rate</span> </div>												
<b>EARLY ACTION ITEMS</b>												
24 Colony		WESTMONT \$22m LIHTC DOH/CHFA Construction Lease Up					24	32	7	63	11,000 ft <sup>2</sup>	\$22 million
<b>PHASES - HOUSING PLAN</b>												
Demolition of 2 Mills Low-Rises			↕								-	\$946,000
Phase 1 Mills		PENNROSE 9% LIHTC Application Approval Construction Lease Up					23	37	15	75	5,000 ft <sup>2</sup>	\$14.5 million
Demolition of remainder of Mills			↕								-	\$3 million
Phase 2 HUB		PENNROSE Approval Construction Lease Up						18	72	90	12,000 ft <sup>2</sup>	\$18.7 million
Phase 3 Record Journal		MICHAELS 9% LIHTC Application Approval Construction Lease Up					20	39	22	81	10,000 ft <sup>2</sup>	\$17.4 million
Phase 4 Infill		HOMEBUILDER TBD RFP Developers Construction Lease Up							16	16	-	\$4 million (\$250k per unit)
Phase 5 Mills		PENNROSE 9% LIHTC Application Approval Construction Lease Up					23	37	15	75	-	\$15 million
Phase 6 HUB		PENNROSE Approval Construction Lease Up						17	63	80	8,500 ft <sup>2</sup>	\$16.8 million
<b>OTHER NEW CONSTRUCTION OR REHAB UNITS</b>												
116 Cook Phase A		POKO Remediation Approval Construction Lease Up						13	51	64	-	\$24.7 million
116 Cook Phase B		POKO Approval Construction Lease Up						7	29	36	-	\$29.2 million
143 W. Main		MHA 9% LIHTC Application Approval Construction Lease Up					11	40		51	50,000 ft <sup>2</sup>	\$33.7 million
Yale Acres		MHA Funding / Approval Construction Lease Up					39			39	25,000 ft <sup>2</sup>	\$9 million
<b>TOTAL</b>							<b>140</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>670</b>	<b>121,500 ft<sup>2</sup></b>	

# RESOURCE INDEX

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