

MERIDEN TRANSIT CENTER - "FIRST MILE, LAST MILE" STUDY

FINAL STUDY REPORT

PREPARED BY: MILONE & MACBROOM, INC

PREPARED FOR: CITY OF MERIDEN

SOUTH CENTRAL REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS



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Executive Summary

The City of Meriden (the City) in collaboration with the South Central Regional Council of Governments (SCRCOG) initiated a bus transit study, the goal of which was to identify existing connectivity gaps and provide both infrastructure and service recommendations to facilitate access and maximize usage of the new \$20 million Meriden Transit Center that is scheduled to be completed in 2018 as part of the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield (NHHS) Rail project. Milone & MacBroom, Inc. (MMI) was retained by the SCRCOG to serve as the prime consultant on the study. A study steering committee comprising representatives from the City and the SCRCOG helped provide input and guidance to ensure successful execution of the study. The study findings and recommendations were presented at a special joint meeting of the Town Council held on June 20, 2016.

Existing Land Use

It is well established that land use and development practices have a profound effect on shaping transportation choices in communities. The City has a total area of approximately 15,360 acres (24 square miles) with roughly 41% residential, 28% open land (including parks, agriculture, and undeveloped land), 21% institutional and infrastructure (including rights-of-way), and 10% commercial and industrial by land use. Meriden experienced roughly 75% growth in industrial lands from 1981 to 2007, with commercial and residential lands increasing roughly 55% and 29%, respectively, during that same period. Going forward, Meriden's

future development will most likely be a combination of infill development, redevelopment, and revitalization projects. In anticipation of the NHHS Rail project, the City has taken a number of steps to leverage rail transit including the incorporation of transit-oriented development (TOD) into its regulatory structure via a Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map. Furthermore, the City recognizes the need to partner with employers and the business community to promote transit not just locally but regionally as well. Some of the major employers in the City include the MidState Medical Center, CANBERRA, 3M, Radio Frequency Systems (RFS), and the Westfield Meriden Mall.

Existing Transit Service

Local bus transit within the City is provided via the following routes:

- Meriden Route A1 – Westfield Shoppingtown
- Meriden Route B3 – Yale Acres
- Meriden Route B4 – South Meriden
- Meriden Route C5 – West Main Street
- Meriden Route C6 – East Main Street

Regionally, the CT Transit New Haven Route C provides connections to New Haven via Wallingford and North Haven while the Middletown Area Transit (MAT) M-Link route provides connections to Middletown. The local buses for the most part run weekdays from 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and from 9:40 a.m. to 5:20 p.m. on Saturdays. None of the local buses operate on Sundays. Presently, bus stop infrastructure and amenities are very limited. There are a handful of identifiable bus stops within the City as most

of the routes currently do not have bus stop signage while bus shelters are very limited. Currently, there are only six bus shelters within the City.

Passenger and Employer Surveys

As part of this study, passenger surveys were conducted to help the project team fully understand the user experience and identify needs and deficiencies with respect to gaps in the existing bus transit service, frequency of service, reliability, bus stop amenities, and passenger safety. During the course of the study, the passenger survey was expanded to include the business community and employers within the region. The purpose of the employer survey was to better understand the current state of affairs relative to employee transit use as well as explore potential employer-driven initiatives or programs to improve transportation choices, in particular bus transit both locally and regionally. The passenger and employer surveys are discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.0.

Recommendations

Study recommendations were developed through extensive analyses of the existing bus service and feedback from the passenger and employer surveys and focus group meeting.

Study recommendations were grouped into three main categories including regulations and policy, operational improvements, and infrastructure improvements. Study recommendations are summarized below and are discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.0.

Regulations and Policy

- City Planning & Zoning (P&Z) Policies – Implement strong policies, regulations, and programs that support transit and TOD.
- Federal Programs – Encourage participation in the "Commuter Tax Benefits" program as described in Section 132(f) of the Internal Revenue Code, which establishes a deductible of up to \$255 per month benefit for transit and commuter highway vehicles.
- Transportation Management Association (TMA) – Institute a TMA that will be responsible for implementing and monitoring Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies throughout the City.
- Employer Programs – Encourage employers to run TDM programs that make multimodal commuting convenient and accessible to their employees.

Operational Improvements

- Schedule Changes – Implement schedule changes such as the following:
 - Extend service hours to 8:00 p.m. or after in order to accommodate users who work later hours.
 - Reduce bus headways to 15 minutes during peak weekday hours and 30 minutes on weekends.
 - Implement service on Sundays.
 - Collaborate with large employers along routes to discuss specific timing needs based on employee shifts.

- New Bus Routes – Provide new bus routes to Research Parkway as well as to Target via Chamberlain Highway. Additionally, extend the West Main Street route (Route C) through Coe Avenue and Centennial Avenue.
- Shuttle – Explore the use of a City or employer-run shuttle to provide frequent and reliable service to employment sites.
- Technology – Utilize real-time technological applications to help passengers plan their trips and also assist supervisors and dispatchers with the needed information to run the system more efficiently.
- Lighting – While there appears to be adequate lighting in the downtown core, there are definitely opportunities to improve lighting, particularly along bus routes outside the downtown area.
- Additional Amenities – Provide additional amenities such as bus shelters, benches, and trash receptacles at bus stops.

Infrastructure Improvements

- Bus Stops – Coordinate with CT Transit to establish designated bus stop locations along routes. These stops should be reflected on the bus schedules.
- Bus Stop Signs – Coordinate with CT Transit to install bus stop signage at designated bus stops.
- Wayfinding Signs – Install vehicular wayfinding signs at cardinal points approaching the City including at off ramps from I-691 and I-91 as well as on main routes such as Routes 5, 15, and 71 and East and West Main Streets. Also, provide pedestrian-scaled wayfinding signage in the downtown core to guide walkers and bicyclists to the transit center.
- Sidewalks and Crosswalks – Install new sidewalks and crosswalks at locations where new bus routes are proposed.

1.0 Introduction

The City, in collaboration with the SCRCOG, initiated a bus transit study, the goal of which was to identify existing connectivity gaps

To identify existing connectivity gaps and provide both infrastructure and service recommendations to facilitate access and maximize usage of the new Meriden Transit Center

and provide both infrastructure and service recommendations to facilitate access and maximize usage of the new Meriden Transit Center.

Construction of the \$20 million Meriden Transit Center is scheduled to be completed in 2018 as part of the NHHS Rail project. It is envisioned that the NHHS Rail program, once completed, will revitalize many communities and serve as a local economic driver through job creation and TOD.

The City is well positioned to harness these anticipated benefits, having already established a number of local planning initiatives including the 2012 Transit-Oriented Development Master Plan as well as projects such as the HUB site redevelopment, Pennrose/MHA Mills, and 11 Crown Street mixed-use developments. With the expected increase in rail ridership at the new transit center, a key question to be addressed is how to provide easy, frequent, and reliable connections between the new transit center and major city employment and recreational

destinations including Research Parkway, Westfield Meriden Mall, MidState Medical Center, and Hubbard Park.

This "First Mile, Last Mile" study will evaluate various strategies to enhance local and regional multimodal connections to the transit center with a primary focus on bus transit as many of the City's current employment centers and major destinations are located over a mile away from the transit center.



*Meriden Transit Center Rendering
Source: CTDOT*

1.1 Study Team

MMI was retained by the SCRCOG to serve as the primary consultant on the study. MMI subcontracted with Interpreters & Translators, Inc. (ITI) to assist in public outreach and also to provide Spanish translation services.

A study steering committee comprising officials from the City (Economic Development, Department of Public Works, and Planning), the SCRCOG, and the MidState Chamber of Commerce was formed to provide guidance to the MMI project team and ensure that the study was successfully executed.

Extensive stakeholder outreach and coordination with CT Transit, MAT, the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT), and the business community formed a key component of the study.

The study involved a number of tasks including data collection and analysis, bus passenger and employer surveys, evaluation of existing and future transit and land use conditions, development of near-term and long-term transportation improvement recommendations, and the development of a Project Implementation Plan.

These tasks are discussed in greater detail in subsequent chapters of this report.

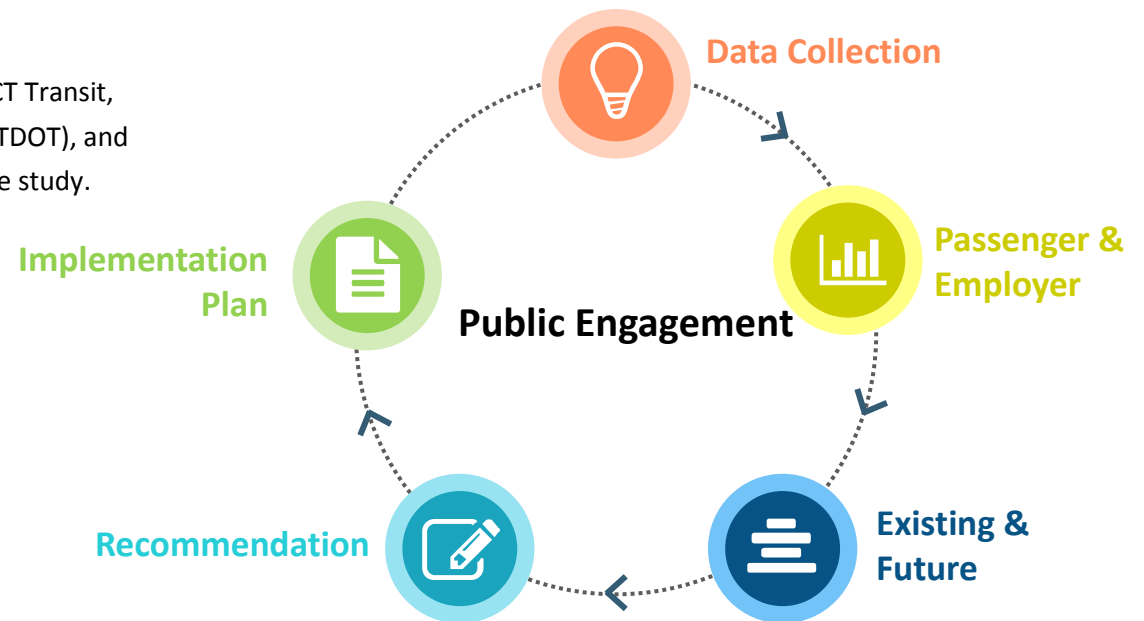


Figure 1-1: Study Approach

2.0 Land Use

2.1 Existing Land Use

It is well documented that land use and development practices have a profound impact on shaping transportation choices in communities. The City has a total area of approximately 15,360 acres (24 square miles) with roughly 41% residential, 28% open land (including parks, agriculture, and undeveloped land), 21% institutional and infrastructure (including rights-of-way), and 10% commercial and industrial by land use. Meriden experienced roughly 75% growth in industrial lands from 1981 to 2007, with commercial and residential lands increasing roughly 55% and 29%, respectively, during that same period.

To accommodate this growth in development, undeveloped land decreased 48%. The City's 2009 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) found that 7.8% of land in the City was classified as private vacant land, and an additional 2.6% was classified as agricultural. Much of this vacant and agricultural land was located in low-density residential zones, indicating that much of Meriden's future development activity will be a combination of infill development, redevelopment, and revitalization projects.

While land has been developed, population has remained stable. Compared to surrounding communities, Meriden registered the smallest percentage increase in population between 1990 and 2005, at only 0.3% growth compared to 5.3% growth in New Haven

County and 14.0% growth in Middlesex County. The 2009 POCD projected that Meriden would continue to experience slow population growth until 2030.

Zoning

With the NHHS Rail project slated to be completed in 2018, the City has taken a number of steps to leverage rail transit including the incorporation of TOD into its regulatory structure via a Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map. The TOD District was created based on the recommendations of the 2009 POCD and the 2012 Meriden TOD Master Plan.

The TOD District implements Smart Growth principles to support and encourage a viable mixture of uses including the following:

- Residential
 - Elderly living or care facilities
 - TOD mixed-income dwellings
- Commercial
 - Healthcare services/medical offices
 - Indoor arts, recreation, and entertainment
 - Retail sales and services
- Industrial
 - Artisan industrial
 - Light industrial/manufacturing
- Institutional
 - College/university
 - Community services
 - Religious institutions

- Other
 - Intermodal transportation center
 - Laboratories and research facilities
 - Mixed-use development
 - Parking structures or surface parking
 - Other accessory uses

A large part of the downtown area is within the TOD District, which is divided into the five subzones: TOD Historic – Commercial, TOD Park, TOD Hanover, TOD Civic, and the TOD Gateway. The Zoning Ordinance provides for numerous incentives for dense, high-quality developments within the TOD zone and encourages adaptive reuse and infill development that is in keeping with the existing neighborhood context. **Figure 2-1** illustrates the existing land use and major employers within the City.

Major Employers

The 2015 TOD Market Study found that 46% of all primary jobs within a 10-minute drive of Meriden are in the top three industries of Health Care, Manufacturing, and Retail. In Meriden, the second largest employer is MidState Medical Center with roughly 1,000 employees. The Health Care industry is projected to grow roughly 2.5% per year through 2018. Other top employers in Meriden include the following:

- CANBERRA Corporate Headquarters. CANBERRA is a leading provider of nuclear measurement devices.
- Carabetta Management, a leader in building and managing affordable housing and commercial real estate

- Hunter's Ambulance Service, a provider of patient care and transportation services
- 3M, which conducts research on filtration production
- Meriden Board of Education, which oversees Meriden Public Schools
- Westfield Meriden Mall, a shopping center with over 140 shops and nearly 900,000 square feet of retail area
- Accel International, a technology consulting firm
- Radio Frequency Systems (RFS) Cable, a global designer and manufacturer of cable and antenna systems
- Target retail store
- Bob's Stores, a family apparel and footwear store

Eight of these top employers are located within 1 mile of the new transit center.

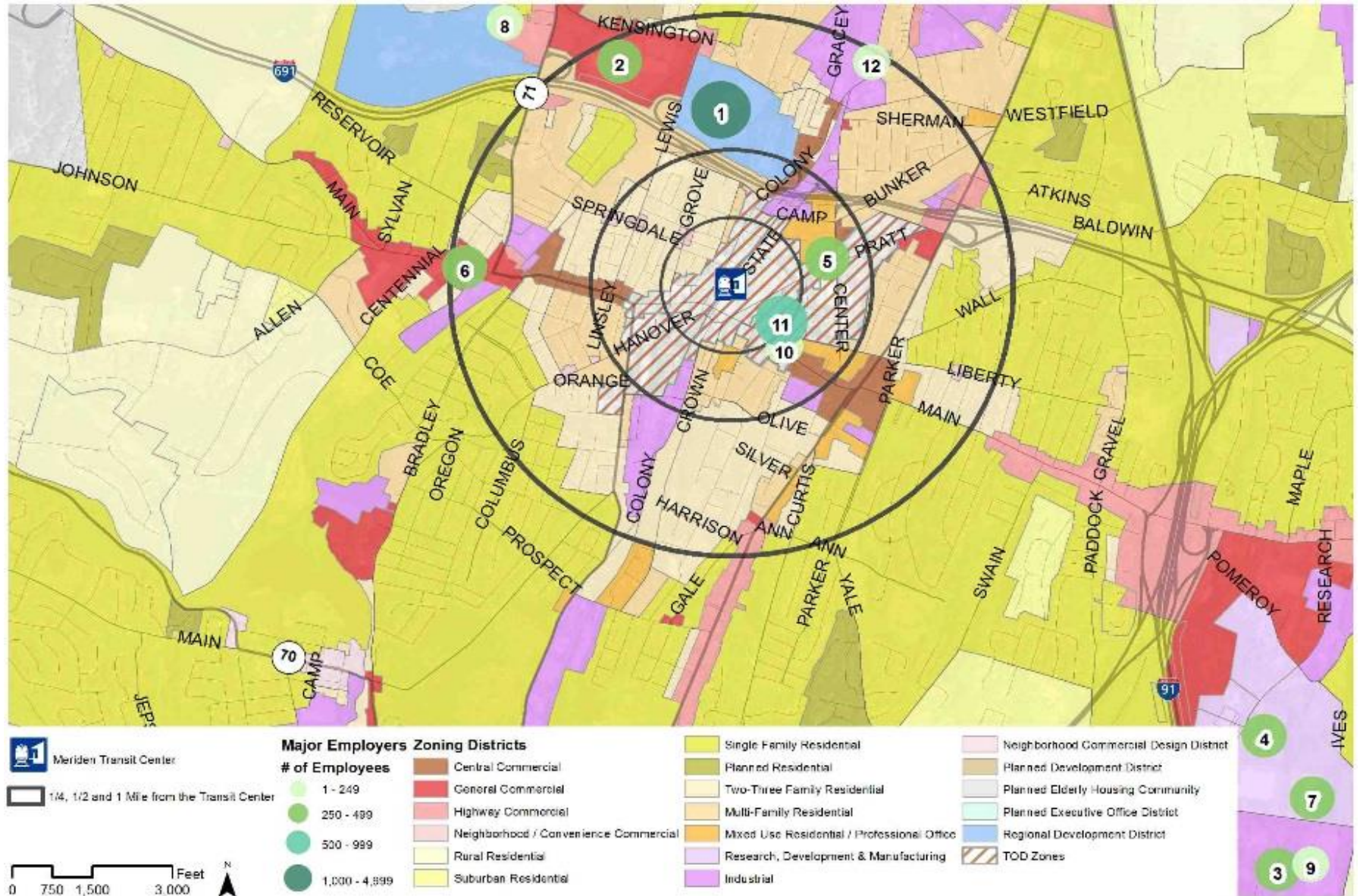


Figure 2-1: Existing Land Use and Major Employers

2.2 Future Land Use

Core areas of the City are the most likely to lack vacant developable land. New residential and commercial development is more likely to be conversion of old and abandoned land uses and brownfields into new projects. The POCD points to evidence of this trend at the HUB site, the Undercliff property, Factory H, the VMMC (former hospital) site, and land assemblage and infill of the areas around the Chamberlain Highway-Kensington Avenue corridor.

As the success of small cities often hinges on the strength of the community's downtown area, the POCD suggests that downtown development should continue to be the cornerstone of economic development in Meriden over the coming years. In particular, the unique opportunity to pursue TOD and the "transit village" concept with the redevelopment of the HUB site, the initiation of the NHHS rail service, and the implementation of the City Center Initiative program were pointed out as positive steps in Meriden.

Furthermore, the 2015 TOD market study identified currently low-value parcels (such as vacant lots, surface parking, or buildings that have a low assessed value relative to the value of the land) that are in close proximity to the rail station that could be candidates for redevelopment. Redevelopment of these low-value land parcels will likely generate net positive tax revenues. Concentrations of these parcels include the following:

- Commercial and industrial sites on the west side of South Colony Street near Cherry and Cooper Streets

- Commercial and industrial sites along Colony Street near Cross Street
- Commercial and industrial sites along East Main Street near Elm Street and High Street

The market study finds that commuter rail service will position Meriden as a housing choice for people who want to commute to the various employment centers along the transit line between Hartford and New Haven. However, future developments around the transit station will need to offer significant value and quality to attract residents.

Based on real estate and TOD viability analyses, the study recommends a development program to include the following:

- 600 to 1,000 multifamily residential units to attract young workers, graduates, and empty nesters
- Up to 20,000 square feet of small-scale office space
- Up to 28,000 square feet of convenience and community-serving retail

Stakeholders and citizens of Meriden also completed a 2-year planning process, *A Comprehensive Plan for Downtown Meriden: HUD Choice Neighborhoods Transformation Plan (2015)*. The plan was funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to develop a vision for its city center to meet the needs of downtown residents. As part of the 5-year Housing Plan (2015-2020), a total of 670 units of housing are currently planned. One hundred forty units are to be a direct replacement of the Mills Memorial Apartments, which are being demolished; 240 units will be additional affordable housing, and 290

units will be market rate. These housing projects are planned as mixed-use developments with over 120,000 square feet of nonresidential uses. The immediate area around the HUB park is identified as the first focus of development, with later phases of development rippling out from this location.

In addition, the City has created an incentive program designed to encourage Information Technology (IT) companies to relocate to downtown Meriden. The IT Zone (ITZ) covers much of the downtown, roughly following the north/south Route 71 corridor. IT companies that locate into new or rehabilitated buildings within a designated ITZ may qualify for real estate and property tax incentives.

Meriden is poised to complete several major redevelopment projects in the downtown area and accelerate growth in the downtown area, anchored by the HUB project. Six-hundred-seventy units of multifamily housing are in the pipeline to redevelop formerly blighted or other low-value properties within close proximity to the downtown transit center. The City has realigned regulatory processes to incentivize and encourage downtown residential and mixed-use developments in order to attract higher-income professionals who work within Meriden or are easily able to commute to other major employment centers.

While the City is strategically positioning itself from a land use and development standpoint, it is equally important to have in place a reliable, convenient, and well-connected transit system to support

these development initiatives in order to fully harness the benefits of TOD.

3.0 Existing Transit Use

3.1 Data Collection

Relevant data from several sources was collected prior to the assessment of the existing bus transit system. These include bus route maps and schedules, available station and roadway plans for the Meriden Transit Center, previous transportation and TOD studies, and existing bike routes and sidewalks as well as parking data.

Field visits were also conducted to document and validate existing bus transit operations and infrastructure, frequency and reliability of service, parking areas, transfer points, and bus stop amenities as well as bicycle and pedestrian accommodations.

3.2 Existing Bus Service Existing Schedule

Local bus transit within the City is provided via five routes including the following:

- Meriden Route A1 – Westfield Shoppingtown
- Meriden Route B3 – Yale Acres
- Meriden Route B4 – South Meriden
- Meriden Route C5 – West Main Street
- Meriden Route C6 – East Main Street

Regionally, the CT Transit New Haven Route C provides connections to New Haven via Wallingford and North Haven while the MAT M-Link route provides connections to Middletown.

The local buses run Monday to Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and from 9:40 a.m. to 5:20 p.m. on Saturdays with the exception of Route B, which does not run on Saturdays. None of the local buses operate on Sundays.

The Meriden Route A bus generally runs every 30 minutes on weekdays and every 40 or 50 minutes on Saturdays. Meriden Route B (B3 and B4) generally runs every hour during weekdays but does not operate on weekends while the Meriden Route C (C5 and C6) runs hourly and every 1.5 hours on Saturdays.

The New Haven Route C runs hourly on weekdays and every 80 to 90 minutes on Saturdays. Additionally, the MAT M-Link operates hourly on weekdays from 6:15 a.m. to 6:05 p.m. and every 2.5 hours from 8:00 a.m. to 4:40 p.m. on Saturdays.



Existing Bus Stops

Currently, there are very few identifiable bus stops within the City. Signs indicating stop locations are only present along the CT Transit New Haven C route through southern Meriden. Otherwise, CT Transit Meriden Routes A, B, and C and the MAT M-Link, all operate on a hailing system that require riders to wave the bus down along the designated routes. Bus stop locations along the Meriden routes shown in **Figure 3-1** were obtained from GTFS data made available by CT Transit for this study, but it was later confirmed by the system's operator, Northeast Transit, that these stops are not physically in place.

Existing Bus Shelters

There are currently only six permanent bus shelters within the City. These are located at the following areas:

- Intersection of Hanover Street at South Grove Street
- Main Street, South Meriden
- 508 North Colony Road
- Intersection of Research Parkway at Murdock Street
- Intersection of West Main Street at Sylvan Street
- Intersection of East Main Street at Maple Avenue



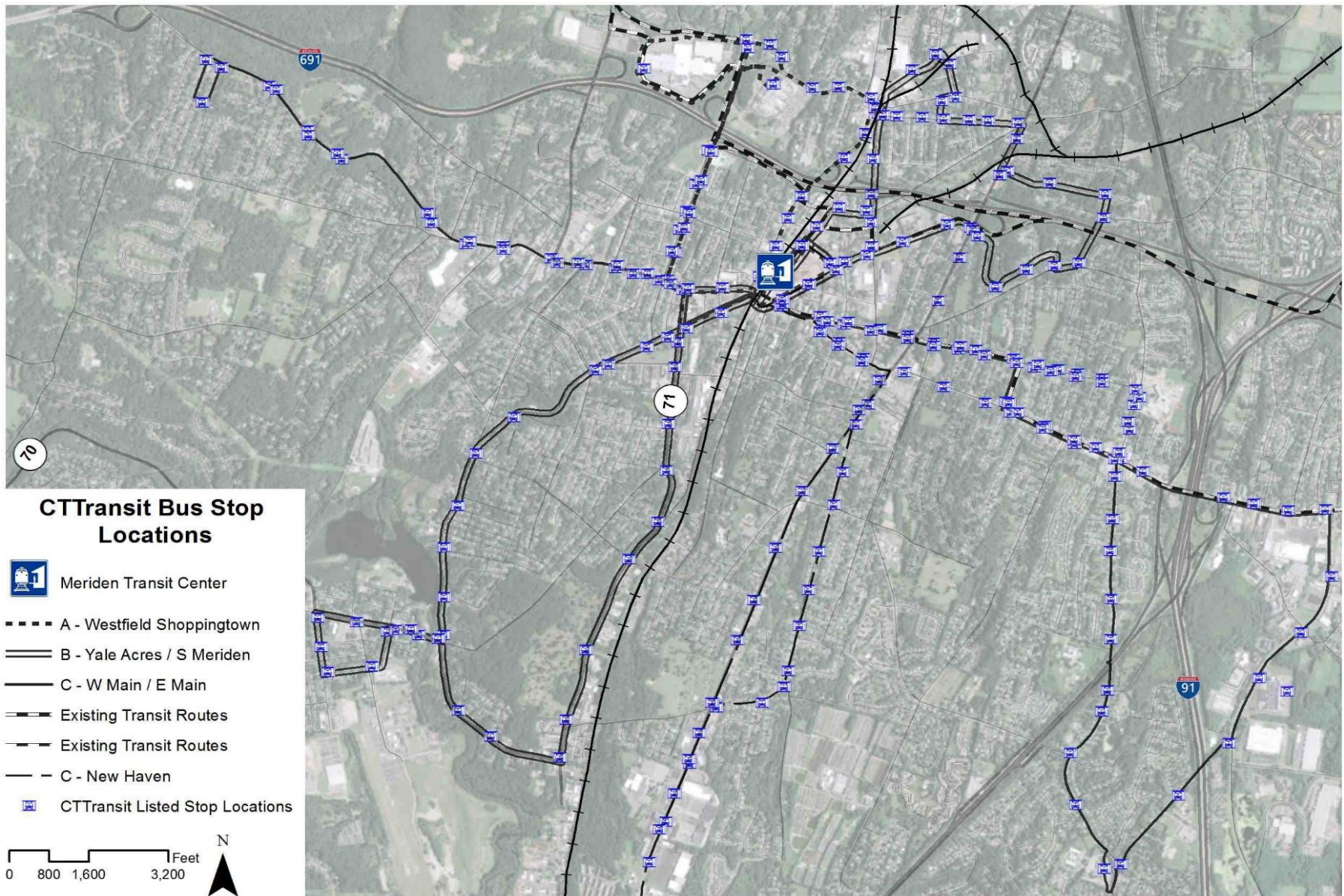


Figure 3-1: CT Transit Bus Stops

Passenger Surveys

As part of the "First Mile, Last Mile" study, MMI developed a passenger survey (**Figure 3-2**) in collaboration with the steering committee to better understand the existing system and user experience. The survey included a total of 14 questions intended to identify needs and deficiencies relating to gaps in the existing bus transit service, frequency of service, reliability, bus stop amenities, and passenger safety. The questions were mostly multiple choice and collected information regarding rider demographics, the types of trips, purpose of trips, and suggestions on how to improve bus transit service. The survey was designed to take less than 3 minutes to complete and was made available in English and Spanish.

The survey was administered by English and Spanish speaking surveyors onboard three circulatory (CT Transit Meriden Routes A, B, and C) and two regional (CT Transit New Haven Route C and Middletown Area Transit M-Link) bus routes during the peak commute hours of 6:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, February 3, and Thursday, February 4, 2016.









 	 
Who are you?	¿Quien eres?
1. Gender: <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female	1. Sexo: <input type="checkbox"/> Masculino <input type="checkbox"/> Femenino
2. Age: <input type="checkbox"/> Under 18 <input type="checkbox"/> 18-25 <input type="checkbox"/> 26-40 <input type="checkbox"/> 41-65 <input type="checkbox"/> over 65	2. Edad: <input type="checkbox"/> Menos de 18 <input type="checkbox"/> 18-25 <input type="checkbox"/> 26-40 <input type="checkbox"/> 41-65 <input type="checkbox"/> Más de 65
3. Are you a resident of Meriden? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	3. ¿Es usted residente de Meriden? <input type="checkbox"/> Sí <input type="checkbox"/> No
4. Do you own a car? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	4. ¿Tiene usted un automóvil? <input type="checkbox"/> Sí <input type="checkbox"/> No
Tell us about your trip...	Hablamos de tu viaje...
5. How many days per week do you utilize bus service in Meriden? <input type="checkbox"/> 1-2 day <input type="checkbox"/> 3-4 days <input type="checkbox"/> 5 days <input type="checkbox"/> 6-7 days	5. ¿Cuántos días por semana usted utiliza el servicio de autobuses de Meriden? <input type="checkbox"/> 1-2 días <input type="checkbox"/> 3-4 días <input type="checkbox"/> 5 días <input type="checkbox"/> 6-7 días
6. Please specify town of: Origin: _____ Destination: _____	6. Por favor especifique la ciudad de: Origen: _____ Destino: _____
7. How did you get to this bus? <input type="checkbox"/> Walked <input type="checkbox"/> Dropped off by someone <input type="checkbox"/> Rode my bicycle <input type="checkbox"/> Drove and parked my own car <input type="checkbox"/> Rode a different bus <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Carpooled with someone else <input type="checkbox"/> Rode the train	7. ¿Cómo llegó usted a este autobús? <input type="checkbox"/> Caminé <input type="checkbox"/> Alguien me trajo <input type="checkbox"/> Llegué en mi bicicleta <input type="checkbox"/> Conduje mi propio automóvil <input type="checkbox"/> Llegué en otro autobús <input type="checkbox"/> Otro: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Compartí vehículo con otra persona <input type="checkbox"/> Llegué en tren
8. Where did you come from before you got on this bus? <input type="checkbox"/> Work/Work Related <input type="checkbox"/> Home <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Shopping <input type="checkbox"/> College/Other School <input type="checkbox"/> Social, Religious Worship, Personal <input type="checkbox"/> Medical Services	8. ¿De dónde venía antes de subir a este autobús? <input type="checkbox"/> Trabajo <input type="checkbox"/> Domicilio <input type="checkbox"/> Otro: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Compras <input type="checkbox"/> Universidad / Educación <input type="checkbox"/> Social, de culto religioso, personal <input type="checkbox"/> Servicios médicos
9. Where are you going now? <input type="checkbox"/> Work/Work Related <input type="checkbox"/> Home <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Shopping <input type="checkbox"/> College/Other School <input type="checkbox"/> Social, Religious Worship, Personal <input type="checkbox"/> Medical Services	9. ¿Hacia dónde se dirige ahora? <input type="checkbox"/> Trabajo/Relacionado con mi trabajo <input type="checkbox"/> Domicilio <input type="checkbox"/> Otro: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Compras <input type="checkbox"/> Entorno universitario/académico <input type="checkbox"/> Entorno social, de culto religioso, personal <input type="checkbox"/> Servicios médicos
10. If you answered "Work/Work Related" for questions 8 and/or 9, do you work at or near any of the following? <input type="checkbox"/> Westfield Meriden Mall & vicinity <input type="checkbox"/> MidState Medical Center <input type="checkbox"/> Businesses on Research Parkway <input type="checkbox"/> Middlesex Community College <input type="checkbox"/> N/A, not Work/Work Related <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	10. Si respondió "Trabajo/Entorno relacionado con el trabajo" en las preguntas 8 y/u 9, ¿trabaja en uno de los siguientes lugares o cerca de alguno de ellos? <input type="checkbox"/> Westfield Meriden Mall y las cercanías <input type="checkbox"/> MidState Medical Center <input type="checkbox"/> Negocios en Research Parkway <input type="checkbox"/> Middlesex Community College <input type="checkbox"/> N/A – Mi viaje no es hacia el Trabajo <input type="checkbox"/> Otro: _____
11. How long is your total trip [from origin to destination]? <input type="checkbox"/> <30 min. <input type="checkbox"/> 30–60 min. <input type="checkbox"/> 60+ min.	11. ¿Cuánto tiempo es su viaje en total (de origen a destino)? <input type="checkbox"/> Menos de 30 min <input type="checkbox"/> 30–60 min <input type="checkbox"/> Más de 60 min
How can we make it better?	¿Cómo podemos hacerlo mejor?
12. How satisfied are you with the bus service to and from the train station located on State Street, which will become the new Meriden Transit Center? <input type="checkbox"/> Extremely Satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Dissatisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Extremely Dissatisfied	12. ¿Qué tan satisfecho está usted con el servicio de autobús desde y hacia la estación de tren ubicada en State Street, que se convertirá en el nuevo centro de tránsito de Meriden? <input type="checkbox"/> Muy satisfecho <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfecho <input type="checkbox"/> Ni satisfecho ni insatisfecho <input type="checkbox"/> Insatisfecho <input type="checkbox"/> Muy insatisfecho
13. What aspects of bus service in Meriden, in order of importance, should be improved (pick up to three): _____ Cost _____ Security/Safety _____ Reliability/Punctuality _____ Onboard Comfort/Amenities _____ Bus Stop/Station Facilities _____ Park-n-ride facilities _____ Availability/Access to information _____ Frequency _____ Convenience Other: _____	13. ¿Qué aspectos del servicio de autobuses de Meriden, en orden de importancia, deben mejorarse? (elijá un máximo de tres): _____ Costo _____ Seguridad _____ Instalaciones de la parada/estación de autobuses _____ Confort/Servicios a bordo _____ Disponibilidad/ Acceso a la Información _____ Instalaciones de aparcamiento disuasorio (Park-n-ride) _____ Confabilidad/Puntualidad _____ Conveniencia _____ Frecuencia _____ Otro: _____
14. Please indicate the places you would like to see new connections to/from the Meriden Transit Center (free response): Results from this survey will be made available on www.Meriden2020.com For more information contact the City of Meriden Office of Economic Development at 203-630-4151.	14. Indique los lugares en que le gustaría ver conexiones individuales hacia/desde el Centro de Tránsito de Meriden (respuesta libre): Los Resultados de esta encuesta estarán disponibles en www.Meriden2020.com Para más información, póngase en contacto con la Ciudad de Meriden en la oficinas de desarrollo económico al 203-630-4151.
Español →	English →
	

Figure 3-2: Passenger Survey

Passenger Demographics

A total of 222 surveys were completed by passengers onboard the three transit buses. One hundred forty-six surveys were collected in the morning peak commute hour while 76 surveys were collected in the evening peak commute hour. The lower evening number can be attributed to the fact that some of the evening passengers had already taken the survey in the morning and, therefore, did not need to take the survey again.

Although equal time was spent on each bus route included in the study, the number of completed surveys collected varied by route due to the route's ridership numbers as well as the willingness of passengers to participate in the survey. Fifty-eight completed surveys were collected on CT Transit New Haven Route C, 49 surveys on the CT Transit A, 49 surveys on CT Transit C, 34 surveys on MAT M-Link, and 32 surveys on CT Transit B (**Figure 3-3**).

Approximately 52% of respondents were male while 48% were female (**Figure 3-4**). The most common age group was 41 to 65 years old, accounting for approximately 38% of respondents, followed by 26 to 40 year olds and 18 to 25 year olds who made up 26% and 24% of the survey takers, respectively (**Figure 3-5**).

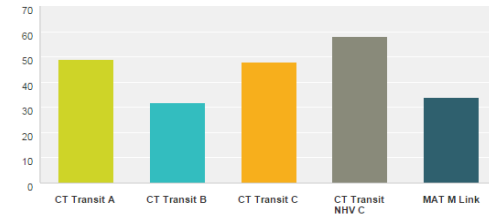


Figure 3-3: "Which Route are you riding now?"

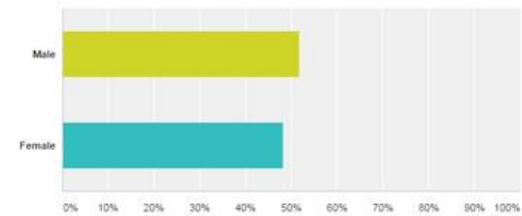


Figure 3-4: "Gender"

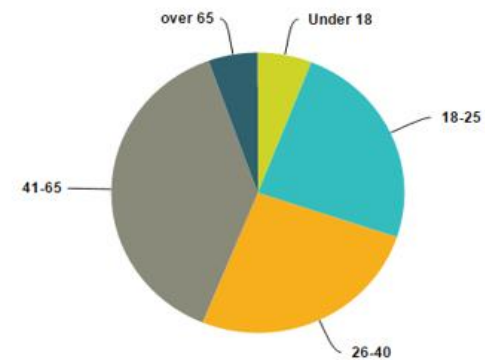


Figure 3-5: "Age"

The majority (78%) of respondents identified themselves as residents of Meriden, with 22% residing in other towns (Figure 3-6). Of those transit riders who chose to participate in this survey, only 8% of Meriden residents owned a car as compared to a car ownership rate of 17% for those who resided outside the City.

Trip Purpose

Nearly 70% of those surveyed utilized public transportation five or more days a week (Figure 3-7).

Home-based trips accounted for about 48% of trips while an equally significant number (29%) of passenger trips were "Work or Work Related." Other origins or destinations were "College or other School" (7% of trips), "Medical Services" (5% of trips), "Shopping" (4% of trips), and "Social, Religious Worship, Personal" (2% of trips).

Of the passengers utilizing the bus to get either to or from work, 12.5% worked at or near Research Parkway, 12.5% worked at or near the Westfield Meriden Mall, 5% worked at MidState Medical Center, and 6.7% worked at Middlesex Community College. Nearly 63.3% of respondents to this question chose the "Other" option (Figure 3-8). The most common workplace locations listed under "Other" were various locations in Meriden, accounting for a total of 14% of total respondents, and locations in Wallingford, accounting for 13% of total respondents.

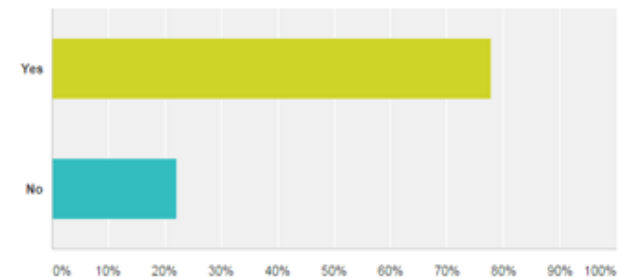


Figure 3-6: "Are you a resident of Meriden?"

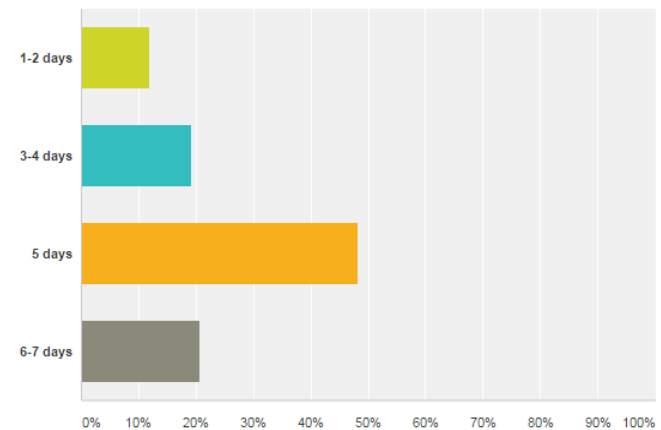


Figure 3-7: "How many days per week do you utilize public transportation?"

The vast majority of those surveyed reached the bus by walking, accounting for just over 79%. Approximately 16% of respondents took a different bus in order to board the one they were surveyed on (Figure 3-9). Very few people surveyed utilized a vehicle, whether carpool, drop-off, or in conjunction with a Park-N-Ride facility, to get to the bus. Only one person surveyed had taken the train prior to boarding the bus. Not surprisingly, the number of individuals utilizing a connecting bus increased significantly for residents outside of Meriden, with approximately 44% taking a connecting bus prior to the one they were surveyed on. Approximately 47% of those surveyed had a trip that was 30 minutes or less from origin to destination. Nearly 30% had trips that lasted 30 to 60 minutes, and the remaining 23% had trips that were over 60 minutes (Figure 3-10).

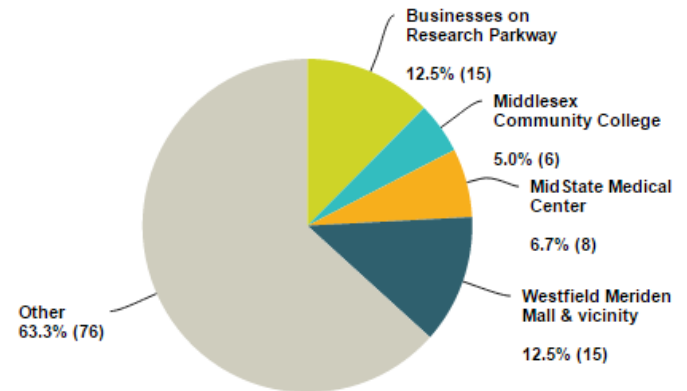


Figure 3-8: "If you answered "Work/Work Related" for questions 8 and/or 9, do you work at or near any of the following?"

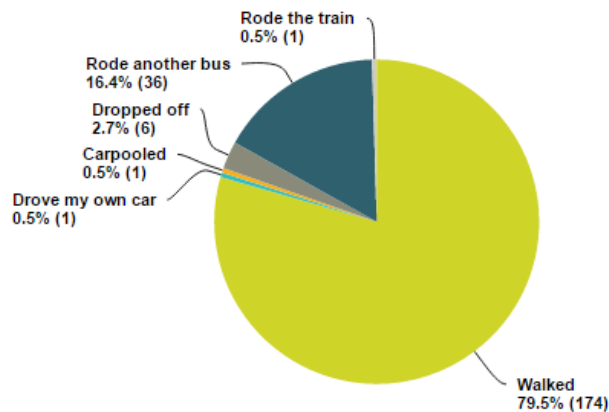


Figure 3-9: "How did you get to this bus?"

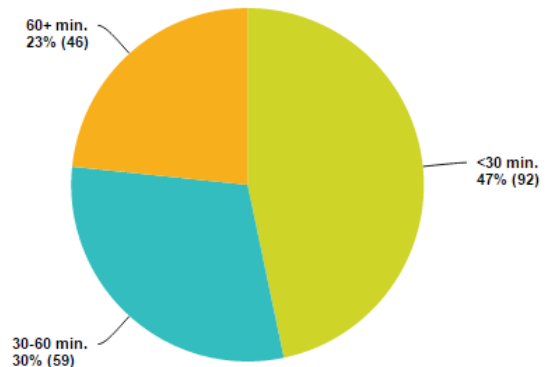


Figure 3-10: "How long is your total trip (from origin to destination)?"

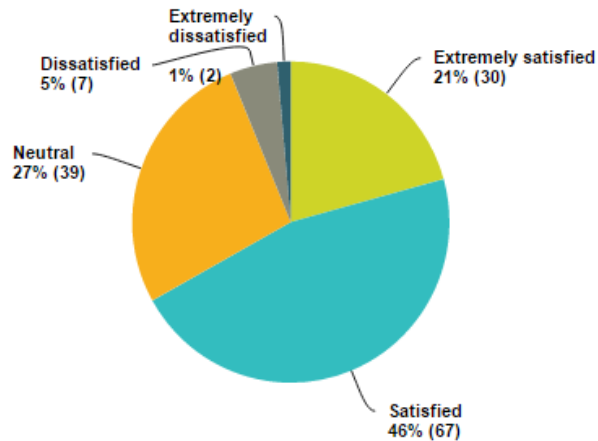


Figure 3-11: "<30 or 30-60 Minutes Travel Time: How satisfied are you with the bus service to and from the train station located on State Street, which will become the new Meriden Transit Center?"

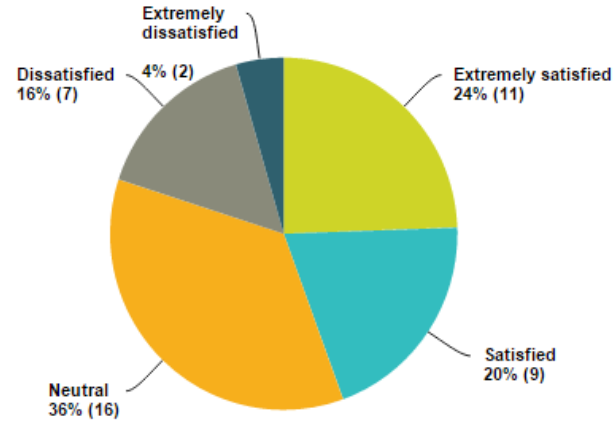


Figure 3-12: "60+ Minutes Travel Time: How satisfied are you with the bus service to and from the train station located on State Street, which will become the new Meriden Transit Center?"

Passenger Opinions

When asked how satisfied they were with bus service to and from the Meriden Train Station, 63% of total passengers surveyed answered "Extremely Satisfied" or "Satisfied." Twenty-seven percent of passengers answered "Neutral," and 10% of passengers answered they were either "Dissatisfied" or "Extremely Dissatisfied."

The shorter a passenger's total trip time, the more likely the passenger had positive perceptions about bus service to and from the Meriden Train Station. Approximately 67% of those whose trip was less than 30 minutes or 30 to 60 minutes answered they were "Satisfied" or "Extremely Satisfied," and 27% of these same groups answered they were "Neutral," with only 6% being "Dissatisfied" or "Extremely Dissatisfied" (**Figure 3-11**). This is in contrast with the answers from those whose trip was over 60 minutes, where only 44% reported being "Satisfied" or "Extremely Satisfied," 36% reported being "Neutral," and 20% reported being "Dissatisfied" or "Extremely Dissatisfied" (**Figure 3-12**).

During the survey, passengers were asked to select the top three aspects of bus service in Meriden that they would like to see improved. The most common response was "Bus Stop Amenities," selected by 78 respondents. Next was "Frequency," which was selected to be important by 75 passengers. "Reliability/Punctuality" was the third most important concern according to this survey as it was chosen by 56 passengers (**Figure 3-13**).

For this question, participants were able to answer "Other" and list their top concerns that were not included in the nine choices. Twenty percent of respondents selected the "Other" option and included a recommendation of their own. Forty-six percent of the recommendations in this category surrounded the need for extended bus service on the weekends and in the evenings. Respondents wrote answers such as "Bus service should run later than 5:30pm as I don't get out of work until 6pm," "The bus needs to run later! People who work late are forced to walk in the dark!," and "Extended Saturday Service, and Sunday Service for church." Eleven percent of those who chose to add a response to the "Other" category stated that buses run by stops too quickly and often leave passengers behind. The rest of the responses were focused mainly on facilities with requests for more seating, cleaner buses, bus shelters at stops, and the availability of change onboard for ticket purchases.

When comparing the responses of passengers surveyed during a morning bus ride and passengers surveyed during an evening bus ride, there are a few differences in their top concerns.

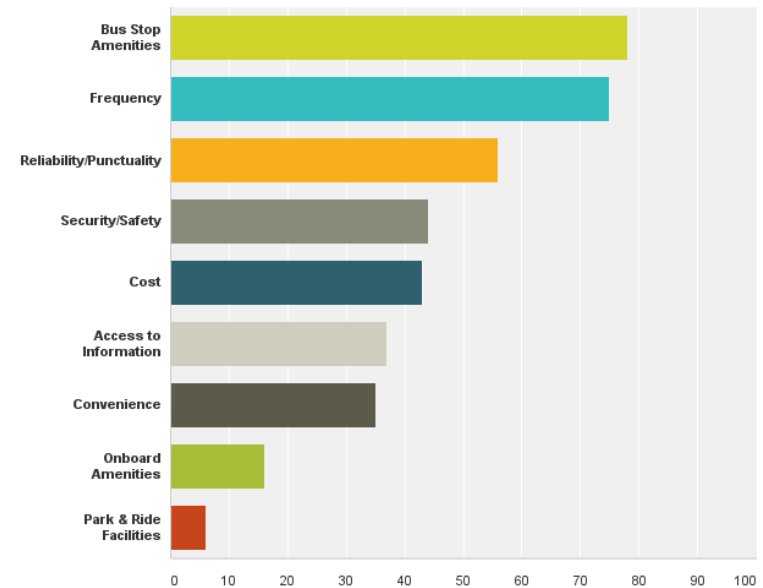


Figure 3-13: Top three aspects of Bus Service that should be improved

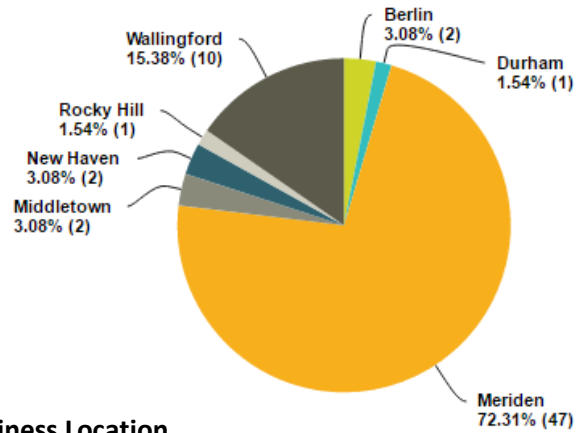
Forty-seven percent of passengers surveyed in the evening listed "Frequency" as a top concern compared to 37% of passengers surveyed in the morning. Morning passengers were overall more concerned with "Reliability/Punctuality," with 33% choosing this as a top concern compared to 26% of their evening counterparts.

The last question on the survey for current passengers was "Please indicate the places you would like to see new connections to/from the Meriden Transit Center." Only 38% of respondents chose to answer this question. The most common request for a new or better served destination was Berlin, followed by New Haven, where respondents would like to see increased frequency in service. Passengers also listed that they would like to see service to Hartford, New Britain, Wallingford, Waterbury, Bristol, Hamden, and Cromwell.

3.3 Employer Surveys

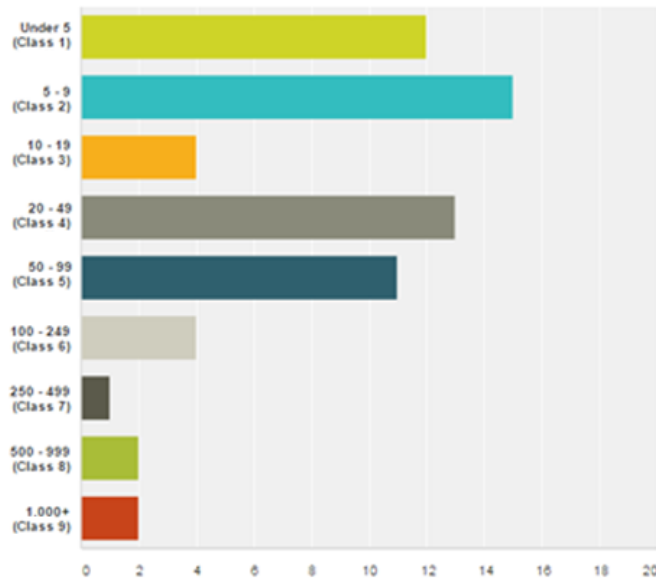
The City in the course of the study felt the need to expand the passenger surveys to include major businesses and employers within the region. The purpose of the employer survey was to understand the current state of affairs with respect to employee transit usage as well as explore opportunities through employer-driven initiatives and programs to improve transit use and connections to transit centers within the region. The survey illustrated in **Figure 3-14** was developed and administered online via the SurveyMonkey tool from Tuesday, February 23, 2016, to Tuesday, March 15, 2016. The MidState Chamber of Commerce distributed the survey to approximately 600 of its members including some of the top employers in Meriden such as MidState Medical Center, CANBERRA, Carabetta Management, Hunter's Ambulance Service, 3M, Bob's Stores Corp., Target Corporation, RFS Cable, City of Meriden, Board of Education, Accel International, and Westfield Meriden Mall.

Figure 3-14: Employer Survey



Business Location

Figure 3-15



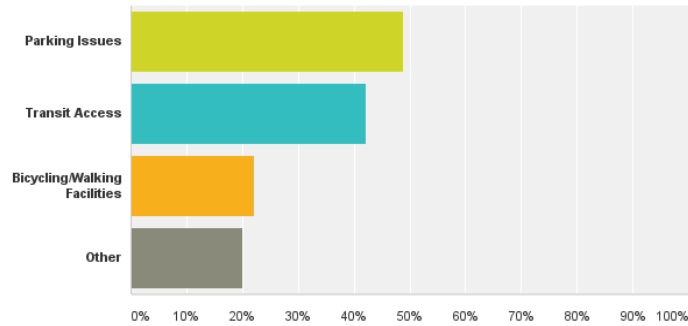
Employer Size by Bureau of Labor Statistics Size Class

Figure 3-16 (Question 7)

Employer Demographics

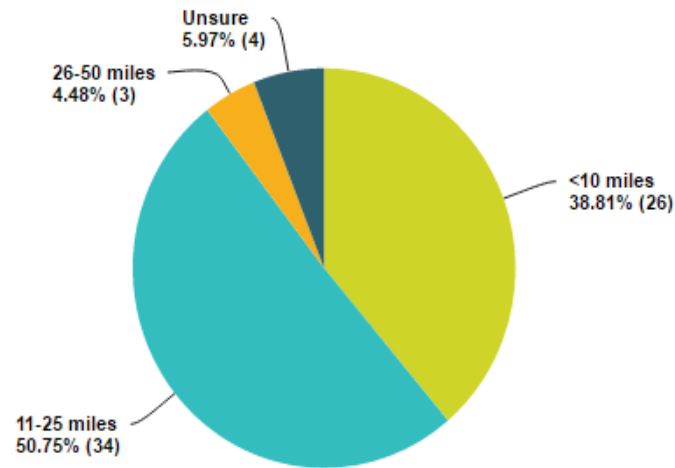
Overall, representatives from 67 employers participated in the survey. The representatives had varying roles but were generally managers, directors, presidents, and human resources representatives. Of those who took the survey, 47 represented businesses in Meriden; 10 represented businesses in Wallingford; two each were from businesses in Berlin, New Haven, and Middletown; and one from a business in both Rocky Hill and Durham (**Figure 3-15**). Two businesses surveyed declined to provide their location.

As shown in **Figure 3-16**, the employers surveyed tended to be small businesses, with nearly 42% of them having less than 10 employees. Businesses were sorted into the Bureau of Labor Statistics Classes based on the number of people they employed. Twelve employers fell into Class 1 (under five employees). Fifteen employers, the largest number in a single class, were in Class 2 (five to nine employees). The other two most popular classes were Class 4 (20 to 49 employees), which 13 employers fit into, and Class 5 (50 to 99 employees), which contained 11 employers. The largest employer surveyed was the City of Meriden with 1,552 employees, followed by the MidState Medical Center with 1,045 employees.



Concerns Expressed by Employees

Figure 3-17 (Question 9)



Average Employee Commute Length

Figure 3-18 (Question 10)

The employers who responded to the survey represented a variety of industries. The Health Care sector represented the largest number of employers surveyed representing over 13%. Manufacturing and Retail each accounted for over 7%. Another nearly 6% classified themselves as "General Office" and almost 3% as Government. "Other" was by far the most common response for this question, showing the diversity of the area's economy. Of the 42 businesses who chose "Other" for this question, the most common industries were education, banking, law, architecture, energy, hospitality, real estate, and insurance.

Employee Travel Behavior and Attitudes

During the part of the survey used to assess employee travel behaviors and attitudes, employers were first asked about concerns expressed by their employees and were allowed to identify more than one (Figure 3-17). As part of the survey, employers were asked about employee concerns with parking, transit access, and bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure to support travel to and from work. Forty-five of the employers surveyed chose to answer this question. The most common concerns fell into the category of parking issues (49%) followed by transit access (42%) and then bicycling and walking facilities (22%). Approximately nine of the employers who answered this question chose "Other" and elaborated upon this choice. Five employers stated their employees expressed no concerns related to transportation; another three employers said their employees expressed concerns regarding

traffic, and the last employer said its employees expressed concerns related to gasoline prices.

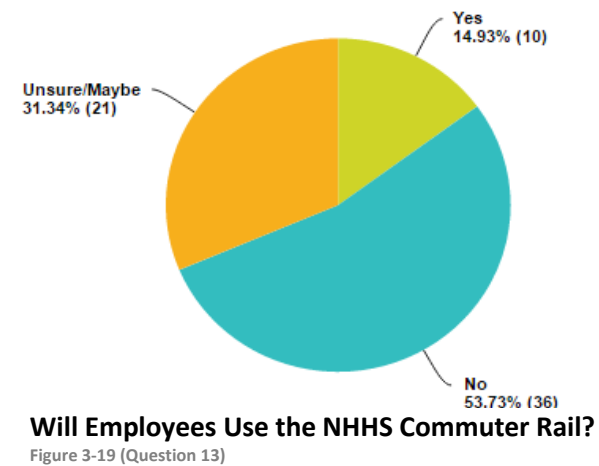
Approximately 40% of the concerns expressed in this survey were centered on either parking, vehicular traffic congestion, or gasoline prices, all of which have to do with vehicular commutes. This is not surprising since approximately 55% of the employers surveyed indicated the average commute distance for their employees was over 10 miles (**Figure 3-18**). For many, driving is by far the easiest commute option. However, by increasing transit access throughout the Meriden region, as well as bicycling and pedestrian facilities from transit stop locations to work places, vehicular dependence could be reduced.

The implementation of the NHHS Rail service also has great potential to reduce the car dependence of employees with longer commutes. While approximately 82% of employers surveyed stated they were aware of the NHHS Rail service, which is slated to begin service in 2018 and will have stops in Meriden, Berlin, and Wallingford, 54% did not believe their employees would utilize the service (**Figure 3-19**).

Current Employer Commuting Programs and Involvement

Forty of the 57 employers surveyed indicated they either did not believe their employees would utilize the NHHS Rail or were unsure and then elaborated on what changes could be made to increase the use of new commuter rail. The most common response was one that concerned the public transportation connection from the

employees' homes to the train station or from the train station to their place of work (35%). Respondents with this type of answer generally felt the first mile/last mile connection was lacking, and this would prohibit employees from taking the train. Another frequent response was tied to the fact that most employees already live locally (13%). Many of those who stated something along these lines included a statement about how better bus connections throughout Meriden would be more important to their employees than a commuter rail service. Several employers also stated their employees need their cars during the work day, so even if transit were the most convenient option, their employees would still need to drive (8%).



Other recommendations for changes that would encourage employees to use the NHHS Rail were less common. One employer recommended free parking on site at the train stations and increased frequency in service during commuting hours. Early service hours were considered to be a crucial component for another employer. Another couple of employers stated that increased education and availability of information surrounding the transit options available in their area could help increase potential use. Twelve employers (30%) who answered this question said something to the effect that train use was not feasible, and with little other explanation, they did not expect their employees to use it.

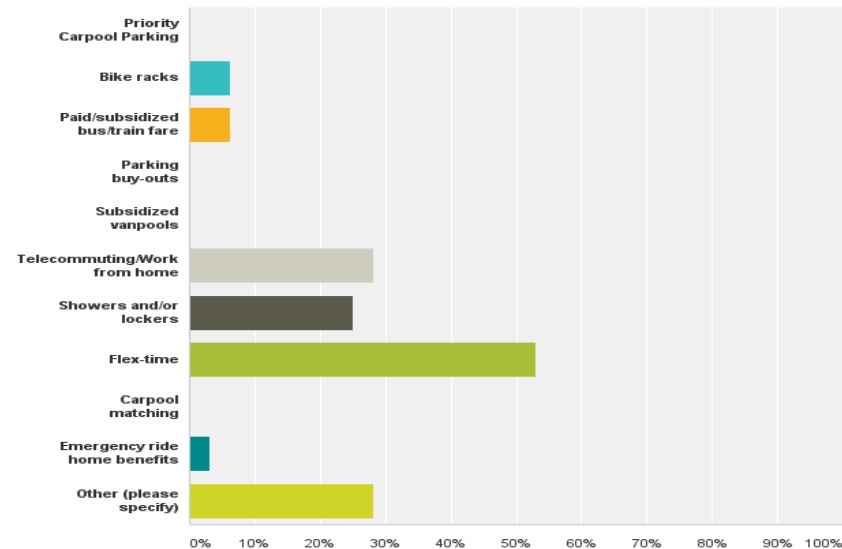
Although many employers expressed ideas concerning how to better employee transportation, only 25 of them claimed to be involved in local transportation issues or groups. Of these, nine chose to list the nature of their involvement:

- Five were involved in the Chamber of Commerce
- Three were involved in transportation-related issues due to the nature of their jobs
- One was involved with the Choice Neighborhood Team

When asked whether they currently offer commute benefits or what would make them offer these types of benefits in the future, employers were allowed to select more than one response. Therefore, the percentages shown indicate the number of employers who chose each individual response out of the overall number of employers who chose to answer the question.

Thirty-two of the employers surveyed (48%) claimed to offer some form of commuting benefit to their employees. As illustrated in **Figure 3-20**, the three most common benefits were flex-time (53%), options of telecommuting (28%), and showers and/or locker rooms for those with an active commute (25%). Only two employers offered paid or subsidized bus/train fare, and emergency ride home benefits were only offered by one employer.

For the nine employers who selected the "Other" category and elaborated, free parking was the most commonly listed benefit. However, this benefit does nothing to reduce dependence upon the single-occupancy vehicle or increase the use of transit.



Commuting Benefits Currently Offered by Employers

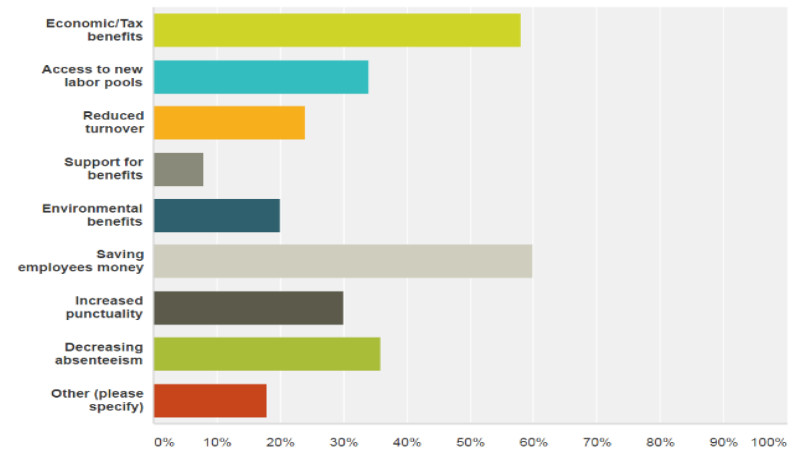
Figure 3-20 (Question 16)

Other answers listed included "providing loans for car purchases," "employees carpool," and "pick up and drop off workers."

Monetary motivations by far outranked all other reasons for employers to offer commute benefits (Figure 3-21). Thirty employers (60%) stated that they would offer commute benefits if it saved their employees money, and 29 employers (58%) stated that they would offer benefits if it saved their business money through either direct economic benefits or tax incentives. It is important to note that this survey was given at a time when gasoline prices were historically very low. With the obvious importance of economic benefits to employers, fluctuations and increases in gasoline prices may have a large impact on an employer's willingness to provide commute benefits that incentivize transportation options beyond the automobile.

Increasing employee punctuality (30%) as well as decreasing employee absenteeism (36%) and reduced turnover (24%) were also important motivators for employers when considering whether or not to offer commute benefits to their employees. This is not surprising as employers had indicated a lack of reliability and variety in bus service affecting their employees' ability to get to work on time in responses to other survey questions. Thirty-four percent of employers were also interested in possibly offering commute benefits in order to increase their access to new labor pools. One employer even said in reference to the NHHS Rail that "rail service might allow us to look at associates outside of our usual 10 mile radius."

The potential reduction of negative environmental impacts due to the use of transit, bicycling, and/or walking and the recognition and branding that the company could receive for offsetting those impacts was something 10 employers (20%) felt would influence them to offer commute benefits to their employees.



What Items Would Influence Employers to offer Commute Benefits?
Figure 3-21 (Question 17)

Four employers (8%) indicated that they would be interested in receiving support implementing commute benefits, and nine selected "other" in response to the question. Of those who selected "other" (18%), four businesses stated that nothing would influence them to offer commute benefits. The other five responses were as follows:

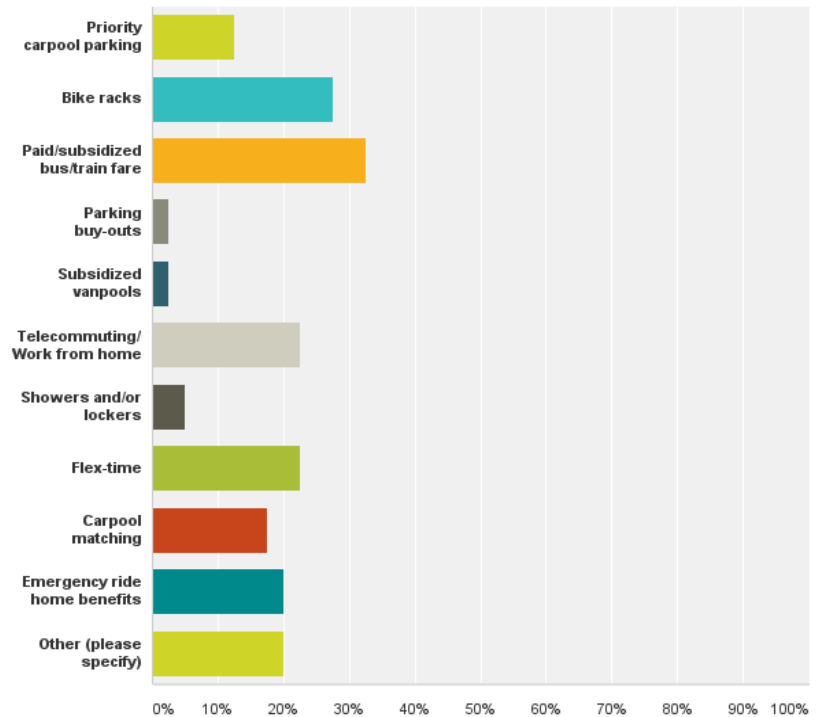
- Benefits offered would have to be compensated by nonprofit grant funders.
- The use of the train would be for commuting to New York City.
- Public transit is not an option for people with multiple jobs.
- Employees already live close to the office.
- They would only offer commute benefits if requested by employees.

Potential Future Employer Commuting Programs and Incentives

Of the 40 employers who answered the question on future employer commuting programs and incentives, all but five of them indicated that they would be willing to offer commute benefits in the future. As illustrated in **Figure 3-22**, 13 employers (33%) indicated that they would offer paid or subsidized transit fare for buses and/or trains.

Many employers were willing to offer some form of benefits for carpooling, including priority carpool parking (five employers), carpool matching (seven employers), and subsidized vanpools (one employer). Flex-time and telecommuting/work from home benefits were selected as possibilities by nine employers each. Although these type of benefits will not likely change employees' overall travel behaviors and dependence on the single-occupancy vehicle, they do have potential to reduce peak-hour traffic by altering the times and frequency of employees' commutes.

Eleven employers stated they would offer bike racks, and two employers stated they would offer showers and/or locker rooms.



Commuting Benefits Employers Would Offer if Items Identified in Question 17 (Figure 7) Were Realized

Figure 3-22 (Question 18)

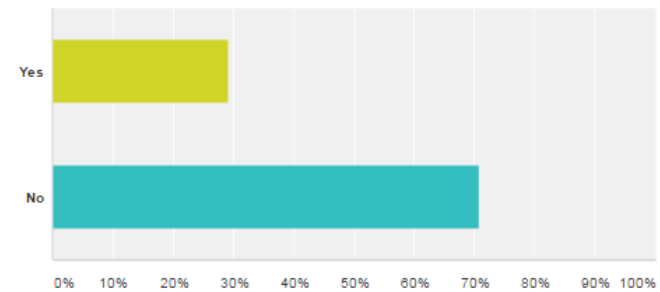
Both of these are benefits specific to active transportation commuters, benefiting those who may walk or bike to work. Eight employers would offer emergency ride home services, and one would offer parking buyouts, both of which are benefits that would

be useful for transit riders, carpoolers, and active transportation commuters alike.

Although priority carpool parking, parking buyouts, subsidized vanpools, and carpool matching were not selected as being currently offered by any of the employers surveyed, all of them were selected by at least one employer as services they would offer in the future if they had the right incentives and/or help.

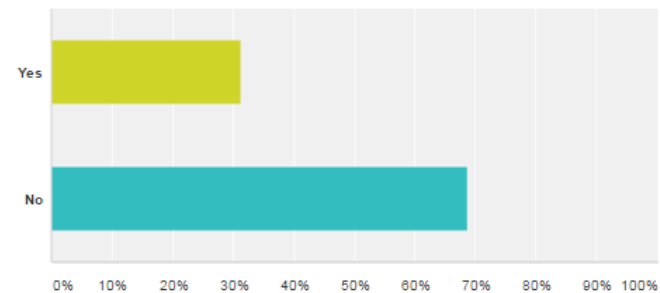
The last three questions of the survey were developed in order to help the study team to determine next steps. Question 19 (Figure 3-23) asked employers whether or not they would like some help in finding transportation solutions and developing commute benefits for their employees. Nineteen employers (~30%) answered "yes" to this question, 46 (~70%) answered "no," and two declined to answer.

Question 20 asked employers whether or not they would like to be involved in the development and/or implementation of regional solutions to their employees' transportation concerns. Twenty employers (~31%) answered "yes" to this question, 44 (~69%) answered "no," and three declined to answer (Figure 3-24). It is important to note that employers who are involved in local transportation issues or groups were far more likely to both want help finding commute benefits for their employees, with 50% of this group answering "yes," and to be involved in the development and/or implementation of regional solutions, with 64% of this group answering "yes."



Employers Who Would Like Help Finding Commute Benefits

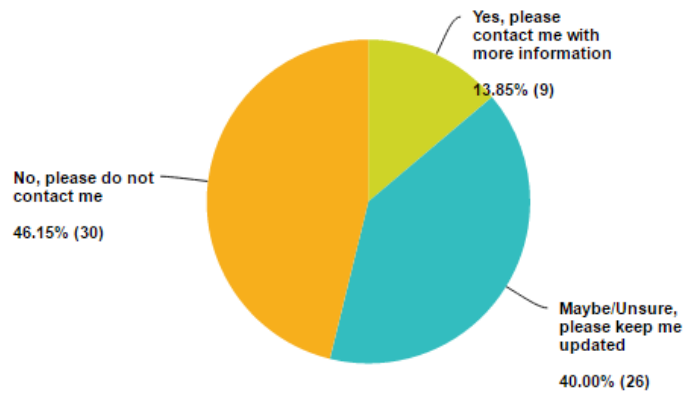
Figure 3-23 (Question 19)



Employers Who Would Like to be involved in Regional Solutions to Employee Transportation Concerns

Figure 3-24 (Question 20)

Knowing that the next step following the employer survey would be the organization and implementation of employer focus groups, the last question of the survey was designed to identify key employers who were willing to be involved. Overall, nine employers stated that they definitely wanted to be involved in the focus group while 26 said that future involvement was a possibility (**Figure 3-25**).



Employers Who Would Like to be involved in Future Focus Groups

Figure 3-25 (Question 21)

3.4 Employer Focus Group

Following the employer survey, representatives from some major employers and businesses were invited to a focus group meeting on April 14, 2016 at the Hunter's Ambulance Service facility in Meriden. The goal of the focus group meeting was to review the results of the employer surveys and explore opportunities for the business community to partner with the City to improve transit use both locally and regionally.



Attendees included Radio Frequency Systems, Valentine Karate, Workforce Alliance, City of Meriden, Hunter's Ambulance, and officials from the Town of Berlin and Town of Wallingford.

The deliberations centered on four questions that were posed during the meeting, the outcomes of which are summarized below.

What can be done to make transit a better option?

- Provide affordable pricing.
- Improve lighting at bus stops.
- Improve pedestrian connections to bus stops.
- Extend bus service hours.
- Improve timing/headways to coincide with shift changes.
- Provide routes/stops closer to actual destinations including Research Parkway.
- Provide better connections to childcare and educational institutions.
- Provide connections to low income and areas with underrepresented demographics in the workforce as many of these people cannot find jobs because of lack of transportation.
- Provide bike racks.
- Implement Bike Share programs that could be run by an outside contractor or by employers.
- Take advantage of newer technology/services such as on-call transportation services (Uber, Lyft) and onboard Automatic Vehicle Locator (AVL) technology.
- Implement zoning or land use regulations that lessen vehicular parking and encourage transit access.

What can employers do to make transit a better option?

- Offer healthcare-linked incentives such as Wellness programs that encourage walking and biking.
- Explore employer-run shuttles from the train station.
- Enroll in federal commuter programs that provide tax benefits to both employers and employees.

- Implement employer policies that promote transit use such as passes for work-related trips similar to mileage reimbursement programs.
- Advertise improved service to employees.
- Provide on-call or emergency ride home services.

What are the benefits?

- Healthier workforce
- Increased employee productivity due to better use of commute time
- Financial benefits to employers and employees through federal subsidies
- Cleaner environment

Who pays for it?

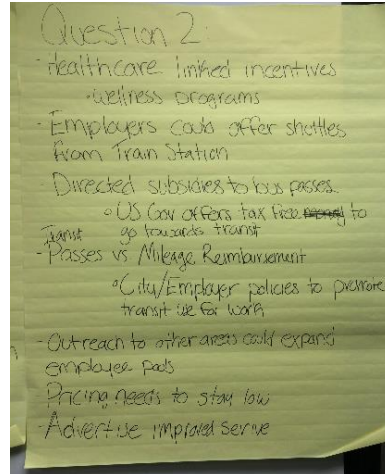
The focus group agreed that payment for the identified policy, infrastructure, and service improvements would have to be a shared responsibility between the federal government, State of Connecticut, City of Meriden, CT Transit and Connecticut Department of Transportation, and local developers.

4.0 Recommendations

The recommendations in this section have been developed through extensive analyses of the existing bus service and feedback from current transit users and the business community as a whole.

The intent of the outlined recommendations is to increase multimodal transportation use in the City to facilitate access and maximize usage of the new Meriden Transit Center. Therefore, the recommendations seek to achieve the following:

- Reduce the need for Single Occupancy Vehicle (SOV) travel through the influence of policy and regulations.
- Increase transportation options through new systems and infrastructure.
- Increase the convenience and efficiency of current systems through operational changes.
- Grow support for transit through unique branding and marketing.



4.1 Regulations and Policy

City Planning & Zoning Policies, Regulations, and Programs

The implementation of strong policies, regulations, and programs designed to support transit and TOD are vital to the City's success in creating a transit-friendly city. As the City continues to develop and change, these policies, regulations, and programs will help shape and maintain quality TOD. All policies, regulations, and programs employed by the City should meet its transportation, mobility, economic development, and environmental goals as well as support increased multimodal access to jobs and services.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

A key consideration in developing a comprehensive and effective transit system is to establish Transportation Demand Management (TDM) policies that support multimodal transportation and TOD. TDM is a general term that is used to describe strategies implemented in order to increase the efficiency of the overall transportation system, meet environmental and air quality goals, and increase public health by encouraging a shift in travel behavior from SOV trips to non-SOV modes such as walking, biking, transit, and even carpooling. When successfully implemented, TDM strategies can have a significant impact in changing travel behavior. TDM programs are usually implemented by public agencies, employers, or through well-organized public-private partnerships.

Such strong policies will help community leaders create and maintain a built environment that meets the community's goals in

the areas of mobility, land use, and economic development. The language used in relevant policies should convey strength and require obedience in order to achieve the desired outcome. For these policies to be effective, they will have to be supported by appropriate development regulations and funding. Some of the policies and regulations that can be adopted by the City include the following:

- Require the creation of a TDM plan as part of the local site plan review process for larger developments.
 - Adopt a citywide Complete Streets policy.
 - Prioritize multimodal improvement projects over car-centric projects and include in the City's Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP).
 - Adopt levels of service (LOS) standards that are supportive of multimodal transportation, and establish LOS minimums for transit whenever possible.
 - Promote universally accessible design that meets the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
 - Encourage coordination between transit agency policies and local jurisdiction policies.
 - Policies should encourage diverse and affordable housing choices near transit as low-income earners who might not own cars generally tend to use transit. This can be achieved through incentives for developers, inclusionary zoning, targeted financing tools, and public-private partnerships.
- Prioritize transit access to resources that support public health, economic development, mobility, education, and public safety in order to increase equitable access to resources.
 - Strategically manage parking in pedestrian and transit-oriented areas through the following:
 - Reducing minimum parking requirements in areas served by transit
 - Limiting free parking and utilizing pricing strategies for public and on-street parking to manage areawide parking supply
 - Unbundling the cost of parking from housing costs
 - Implementing access management strategies, which allow shared parking among neighboring land uses
 - Creating policies that encourage employers to limit free parking and provide incentives to discourage driving alone such as priority parking for carpooling

Federal Programs

Federal Commuter Tax Benefits

All employers and employees in Connecticut who participate in commuter programs such as transit, carpooling, van pools, and commuter-related parking are eligible to receive Qualified Transportation Fringe Benefits, more commonly known as "Commuter Tax Benefits," as described in Section 132(f) of the Internal Revenue Code. These benefits are literally money in the bank for employers who can save on payroll-related taxes and for employees who can save on federal income taxes. This tax benefit previously established a deductible of up to \$255 per month parking benefit and \$130 per month benefit for commuter highway vehicle use and transit.

More recently, the Consolidated Appropriations Act (H.R. 2029), which was signed into law by President Obama in 2015, increased the Fringe Benefits to \$225 per month for transit and commuter highway vehicles as well. Therefore, commuters are eligible to receive this amount for both transit and commuter highway vehicles, as well as parking benefits, totaling up to \$510 per month. Employers can also allow employees to use pretax dollars to pay for transit passes, vanpool fares, and parking.

For employees who choose to commute to work by bicycle, \$20 per eligible bicycle commuting month is available to them via Qualified Transportation Fringe Benefits.

Federal Recognition



National recognition on the National Center for Transit Research's list of "Best Workplaces for Commuters" is given to employers that subsidize at least \$30 per month for qualified transportation fringe benefits.

Transportation Management Association

The City, in conjunction with interested business owners, developers, and other key stakeholders, could form an organization called a Transportation Management Association (TMA). The TMA would be responsible for implementing and monitoring TDM strategies throughout the City. Other organizations with an interest and investment in the City's transportation network such as CT Transit, CT Rides, City of Meriden law enforcement, bicycle and pedestrian advocacy groups, or other relevant regional transportation agencies should be invited to participate in the TMA's meetings as needed. During its formation, Meriden's TMA should focus on the following:

- Establishing legal and organizational structure including a core membership and steering committee
- Formalizing the initial funding mechanisms
- Establishing legal and organizational structure
- Initiating marketing and membership development

- Selecting the most effective strategies and eliminating the least effective
- Generating awareness and interest among targeted markets
- Fostering public-private relationships

There are several options for the organizational structure of a TMA that have been successfully implemented across the county. As it begins, the TMA will function with an interim core group or a steering committee.

The City should assist the TMA in reviewing its options for an organizational structures. It may be best for the TMA to function as a privately led committee, but if the interim steering committee believes that a more formal organizational structure with a Board of Directors is needed to guide the ever-increasing complexity of the TMA, then formal incorporation as a 501c3 Non-Profit Organization may be in the TMA's best interest. Articles of incorporation and bylaws must be drawn up, and a Board of Directors must be established for which a statement of duties should be devised. In general, the formation of an official, incorporated TMA will take between 12 and 18 months and will build upon the work conducted by an interim TMA core group or steering committee.

Employer Programs


Strategies

Employer-run TDM programs can be used to help make multimodal commutes convenient and accessible to their employees with measures such as transit benefits, carpool matching, TOD office location or relocation, flex-time, and telecommuting. Although the effectiveness of any TDM strategy is highly dependent upon the characteristics of the area and target markets, some of the leading practices in the industry include the following:

- Financial incentives and alternative commute subsidies
- Financial disincentives such as the elimination of free parking
- Health and wellness programs that incentivize active commute, such as bicycling or walking, and are tied to financial incentives and employee healthcare
- Parking management including designating priority parking for carpool participants, reducing the supply of available parking, and charging market rate fees
- Flexible work schedules that allow commuters to travel at off-peak hours
- Work from home/teleworking programs
- Carpool matching programs

- Alternative commute campaigns/Clean Commute challenges
- Emergency ride home services

Employer Collaboration with CTrides

 Employers in Meriden wishing to implement employee commute programs and TDM strategies are also able to work with CTrides, which is CTDOT's commuter services program designed to help commuters in Connecticut find alternative commutes to work. CTrides offers many different resources to commuters and employers, some of which are not currently available to commuters in Meriden, but could become available in the future through partnership CTrides. Some of the services currently being offered include the following:

- Carpools and vanpools
- Information regarding transit options
- Customized trip planning, teleworking solutions
- Commuter reward programs
- Guaranteed ride home services

For employers, CTrides offers worksite assessments to help employees with commuter challenges, customized traffic demand

management plan, parking management, carpool and vanpool formation events, and lunch & learns.

4.2 Operational Improvements

The existing transit service in Meriden is such that the majority of current passengers are captive riders, meaning that they are unable to drive, and are therefore forced to utilize transit to access their daily needs regardless of the quality of service that is provided. If these people were to be given the opportunity to travel in another way, they would. In order for the transit system in Meriden to attract choice riders, referring to those who have access to other transportation options, the service quality must drastically improve. It must operate in such a way that is equally or more attractive to make certain trips by transit than it would be to travel by SOV. Improving the quality of transit service has many benefits, including the following:

- Increasing loyalty of existing transit passengers who may choose to stop using the transit service if given the opportunity
- Attracting new transit passengers who have access to other transportation options and would only use transit if service is improved
- Benefitting society by reducing traffic problems (congestion, roadway and parking costs, consumer costs, accidents, energy consumption, and pollution emissions)

- Providing scale economies (increased ridership can create a positive feedback cycle of improved service, increased public support, more transit-oriented land use, and further ridership increases)
- Providing increased revenue to transit agencies and other partners from growth in ridership numbers

Service Improvements

As previously discussed in Chapter 3.0, the transit service in Meriden only runs full service 5 days per week, with limited service on Saturdays and no service on Sundays. Even on weekdays when the bus runs full service, all routes stop by 5:30 p.m. Extending service and improving route timing would help to meet the transportation needs of those who have jobs with nontraditional hours as well as helping those who need to utilize the transportation system to access retail, run errands, or attend social or religious events. Specific recommendations include the following:

- Extend service hours to 8:00 p.m. or after in order to accommodate users who work later hours.
- Implement service on Sundays (full or limited as funding allows).
- Collaborate with large employers along routes to discuss specific timing needs based on employee shifts.

- Reduce headway on buses for busy routes to 15 minutes during peak weekday hours and 30 minutes on weekends.

New Bus Transit Connections

It is recommended that the City implement several new transit connections by extending existing bus routes or creating new routes. The need for these connections was found through the analysis of existing data. Areas of the City that would most benefit from access to transit, including commercial, industrial, manufacturing, and medium- to high-density residential zones, were mapped along with a buffer of a quarter mile around the existing transit routes as this is generally accepted to be the farthest a passenger would be willing to walk in order to access a low-speed transit service such as the bus system in Meriden (see **Figures 4-1** through **4-4**). These mapping visualizations demonstrated the need for transit in certain areas of the city, helping to easily inform recommendations for new connections. The following new connections are proposed:

- New connection to the Target and the Westfield Meriden Mall via Chamberlain Highway (**Figure 4-2**)
- Extension of the West Main Street route (Route C) through Coe Avenue and Centennial Avenue (**Figure 4-2**). This extension will provide access to the Orville Platt High School.

- Extension of the Yale Acres/South Meriden route (Route B) through North Colony Road, Amity Street, and North Broad Street to serve residential areas and the middle schools in this part of the City (**Figure 4-3**)
- New connection to Research Parkway. It is recommended that the existing West Main–East Main Street route (Route C) be split into two routes, one for East Main Street and the other for West Main Street to support the new connection to Research Parkway without creating a headway that is too long to support convenient service for riders (**Figure 4-4**).

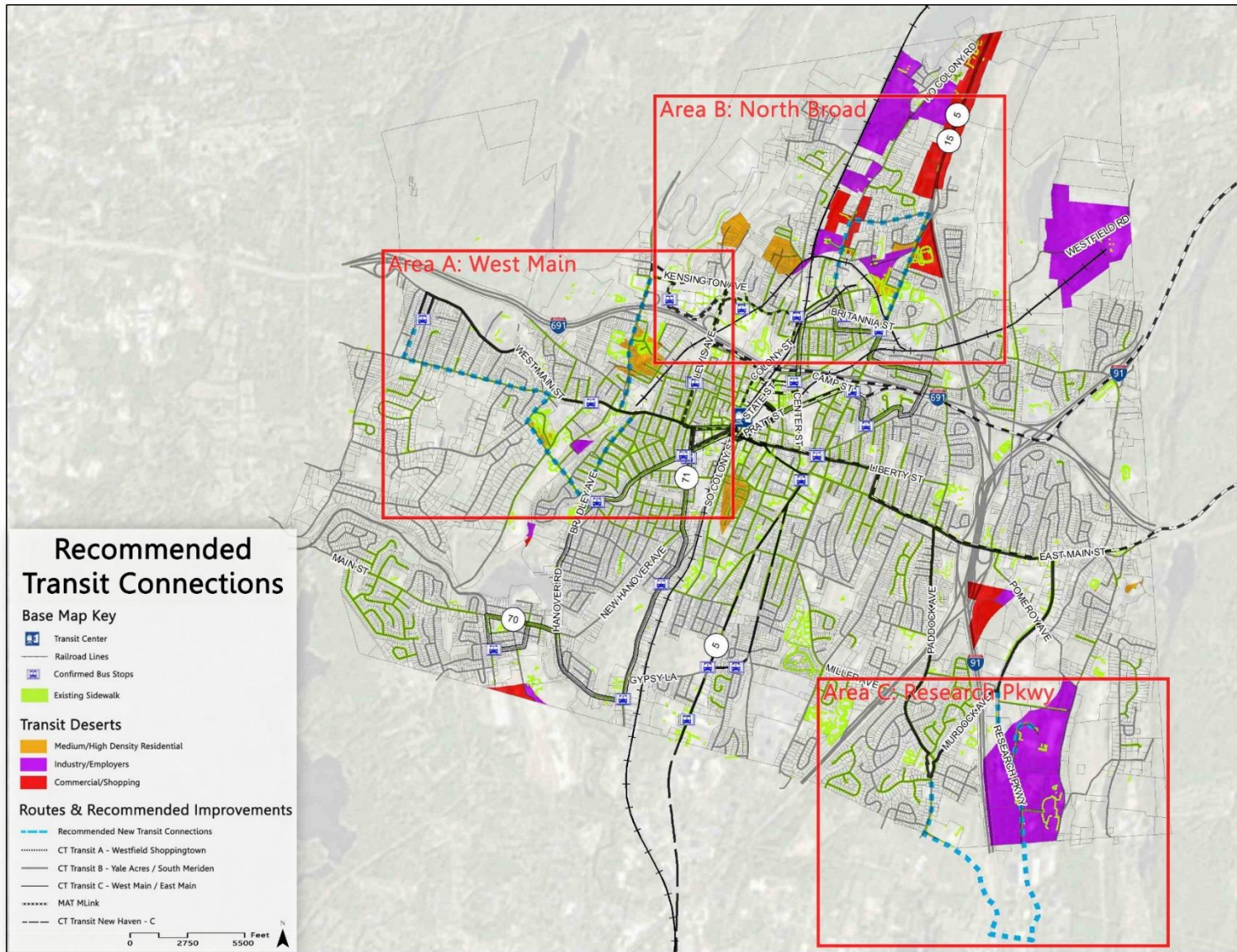


Figure 4-1: Recommended Transit Connections

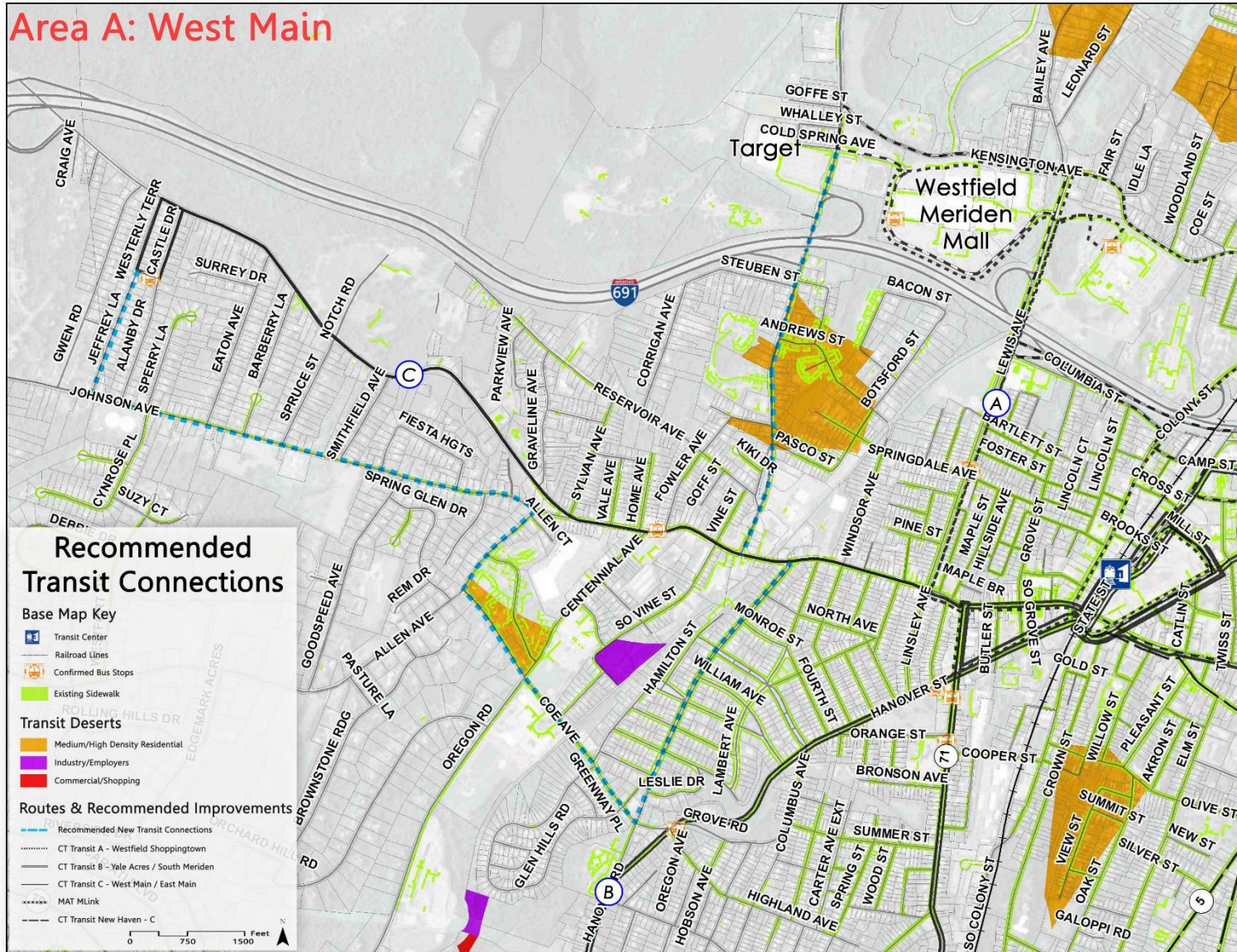


Figure 4-2: Recommended Transit Connections - West Main Street

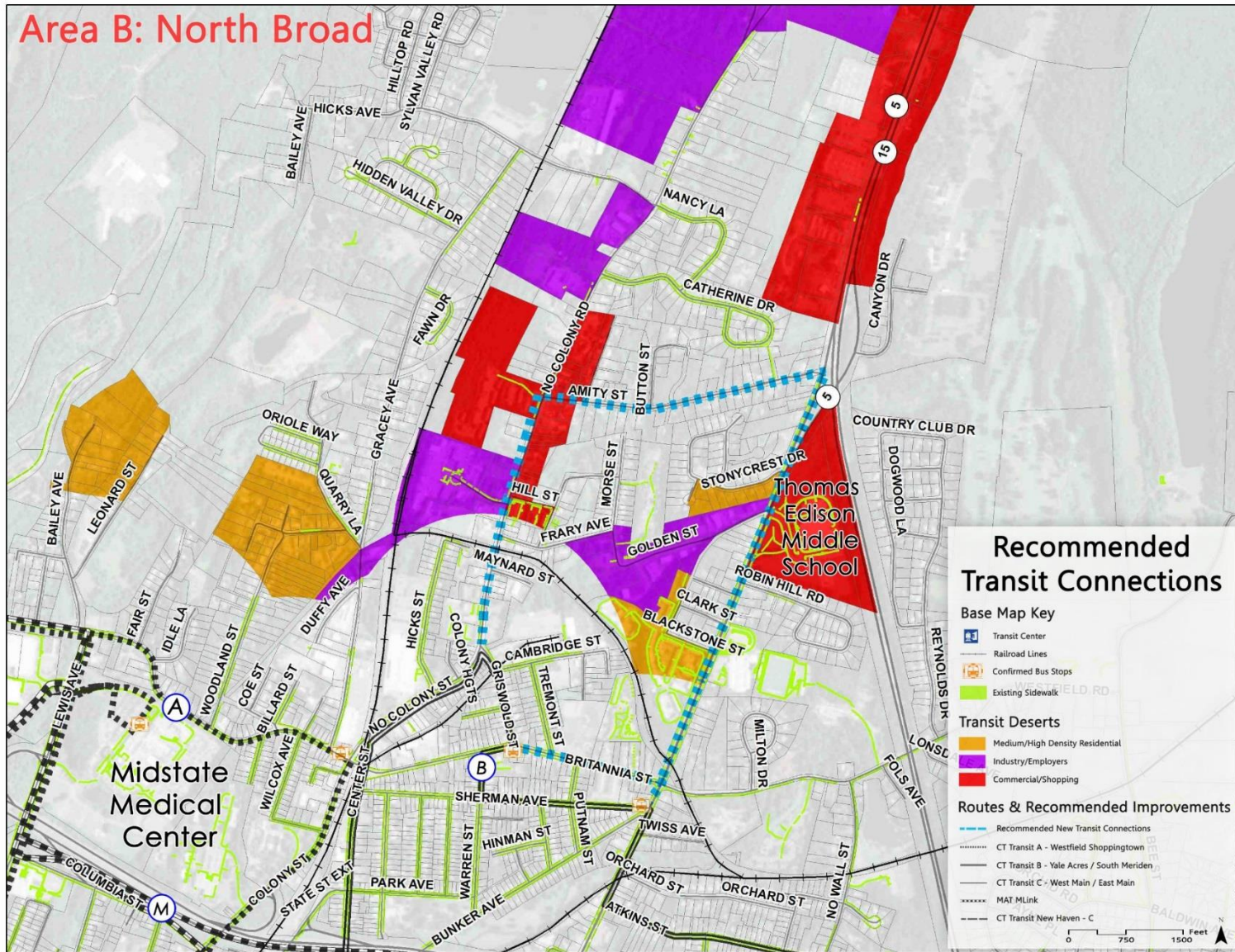


Figure 4-3: Recommended Transit Connections - North Broad Street

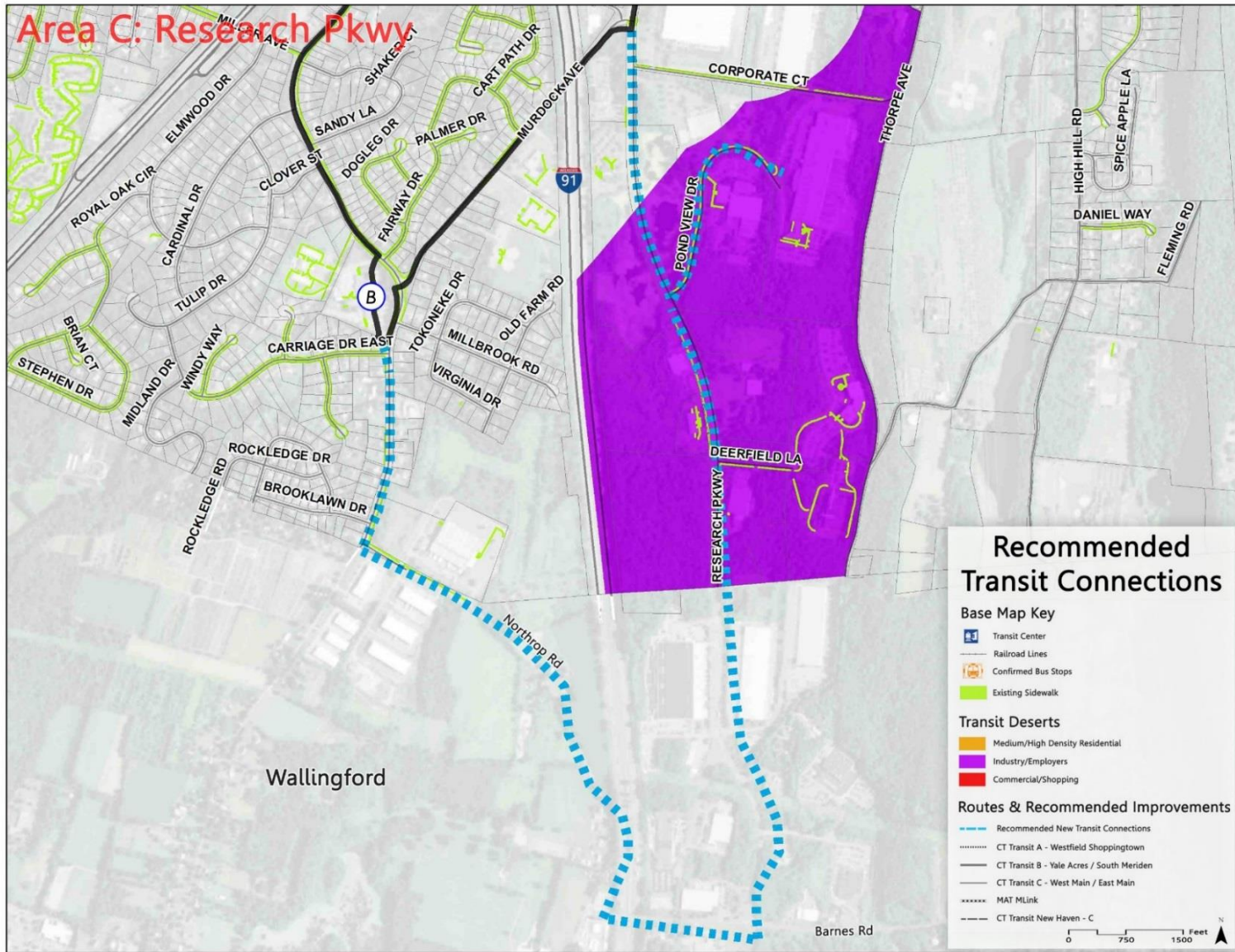


Figure 4-4: Recommended Transit Connections - Research Parkway

Shuttles



The implementation of a City or privately run shuttle is another option. This shuttle can be used to provide employees who work in Meriden with frequent and reliable service from

the transit center to employment sites. The implementation of the shuttle could be a collaboration between the private and public sector. Cost sharing between these entities could help reduce some of the financial burden of operating such a service, which would ideally be free to riders in order to make it successful. Other recommendations for the successful implementation of the shuttle include the following:

- Coordinate shuttle timing with employer needs, making sure to consider factors such as shift changes.
- Coordinate shuttle timing with the NHHS Rail schedule in order to reduce wait time and allow for an easy and convenient transfer for commuters arriving and departing Meriden by rail.
- Install Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) systems in the shuttle.

- Integrate shuttle stop locations and times with the existing transit system for easy transfers.
- Install bike racks on the front of shuttles.
- Consider major commercial destinations and dense residential areas in route planning.

Technology

Automatic Vehicle Location

An AVL system should be implemented on all buses and shuttles within the City. This system provides passengers, supervisors, and dispatchers with the exact locations of transit vehicles as they traverse the route. This real-time application not only helps passengers plan their trips but it also provides supervisors and dispatchers with the needed information to run the system more efficiently by addressing bus bunching and increasing knowledge of and responses to delays and incidents. The successful installation and deployment of an AVL system can produce schedule adherence improvements in the range of 9% to 23% according to the USDOT Research and Innovative Technology Administration (RITA) publication, *Intelligent Transportation Systems Benefits, Costs, Deployment, and Lessons Learned* (2008 Update).

Real-Time Schedule Displays

At the more popular stop locations, it is recommended that an electronic real-time schedule showing the forecasted arrival of all buses that service the location be installed. These types of displays work in conjunction with AVL systems.

4.3 Infrastructure Improvements

Bus Stops

When choosing whether or not to try a transit system, the quality of the bus stop location often serves as a person's first impression of the quality of the system's services. As previously described, there are very few identifiable bus stops within the City. Most of the routes operate on a hailing system that requires riders to wave buses down along the designated routes.

In order to transform the local bus system into one that retains both captive and choice riders, permanent signed bus stops that link reliably to designated schedules are crucial. It is important that all bus stops built in Meriden are easily identifiable, safe, accessible, and comfortable for passengers waiting to embark on a bus. Although it is recognized that some of the less used bus stops in Meriden will always be underdeveloped out of necessity, the following recommendations should help to provide a framework for implementing, maintaining, and developing bus stops.

Bus Stop Placement and Locations

Recommendations for bus stop placement should be pursued in concert with CT Transit. When considering bus stop locations for current and future routes, a number of factors should be considered including the following:

- **Spacing** – Bus stops should be spaced along the route in a way that maximizes route efficiency without requiring riders to walk more than a quarter mile from key destinations.
- **Proximity to Key Destinations** – Whenever feasible, a bus stop should be located in close proximity to key destinations on the transit route in order to minimize walking distances.
- **Transfer Locations** – Bus stops where transfer activity between routes is heavy and stops should be located to minimize street crossings of passengers transferring to other routes.
- **Waiting Space** – Bus stops that are expected to have a large amount of passengers embarking and disembarking, an additional passenger waiting/standing area should be constructed off the main sidewalk so that waiting passengers do not block passage of other pedestrians.
- **On-Street Parking** – When locating a bus stop along a stretch of road with existing curbside parking, there are two options: either limit parking to permit the bus to pull off, service the stop, and reenter the travel lane or install a

sidewalk extension or curb bulb to provide passengers, including those who require ADA facilities, access to the bus.

Bus Stop Signs

Currently, buses in Meriden operate a relatively loose schedule with stops that, although technically placed in designated locations, do not have signage available to make them identifiable, safe, accessible, or comfortable for passengers. An easily identified sign should be present at every stop designating it as a "Bus Stop" and include information on the bus routes that service the particular location.

Wayfinding

Wayfinding signs to the Meriden Transit Center would form an important aspect of the transit system. Vehicular-scaled signs should be placed at cardinal points approaching the City including off ramps from I-691 and I-91 as well as on main routes into the City such as Routes 5, 15, and 71 and East and West Main Streets. Pedestrian-scaled wayfinding signage guiding walkers to the transit center should also be implemented in the downtown core and along key heavily trafficked pedestrian corridors. Recommendations for wayfinding signage are illustrated in **Figure 4-5**.

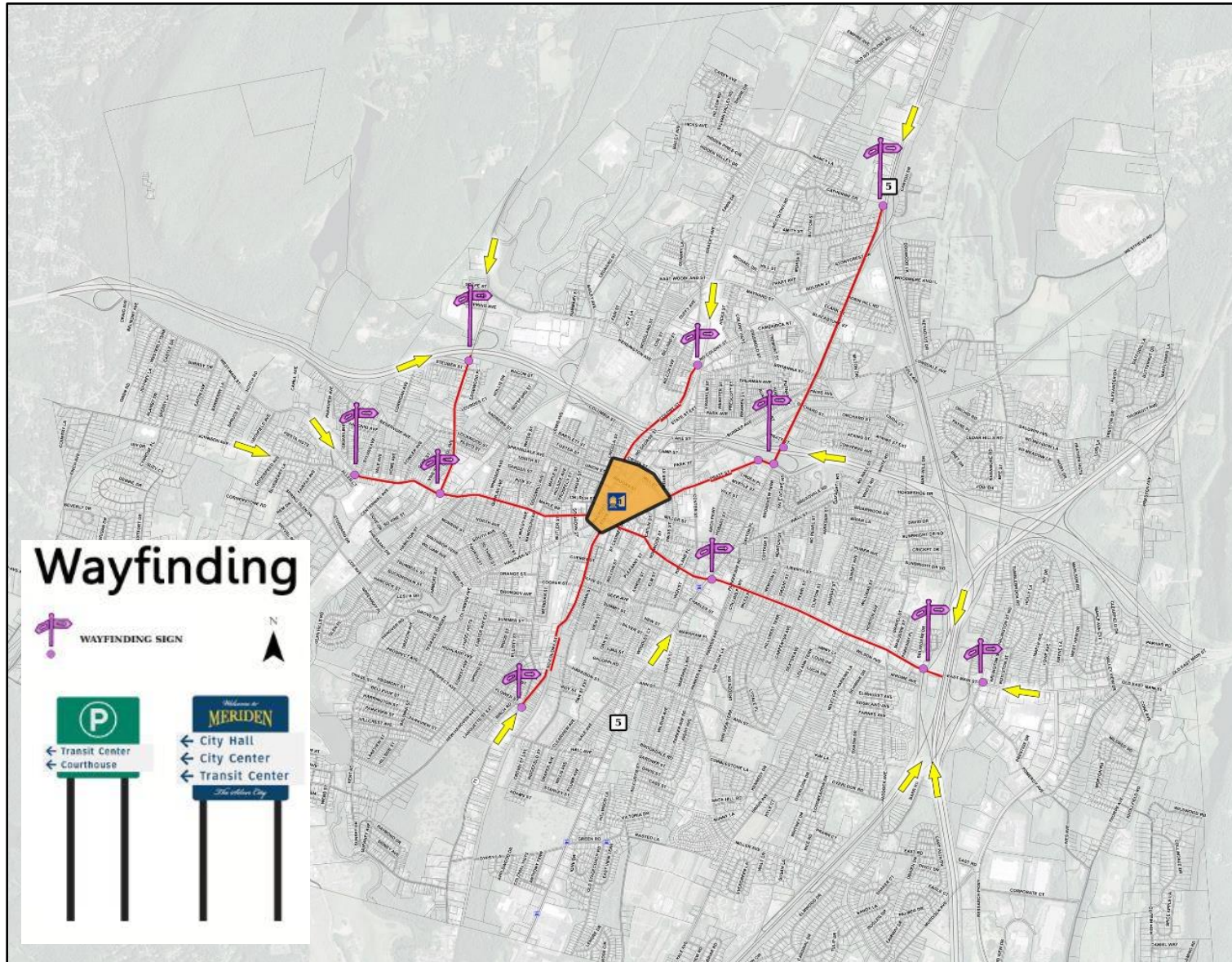


Figure 4-5: Wayfinding Signage

Sidewalk Network

Currently, the area within a half-mile radius of the transit center is well served with sidewalks, most of which are in fairly good condition. Beyond the half-mile radius, sidewalks, though still well connected, begin to deteriorate. The City is currently undertaking a citywide sidewalk replacement project, which presents tremendous opportunities to prioritize sidewalk projects that connect to transit routes, particularly newly proposed routes within the study area.

Pedestrian Crosswalks

In most circumstances, bus stop locations should be accompanied by a safe crossing facility. The easiest way to do this is to locate stops in close proximity to existing intersections where crosswalks are already in place. The implementation of mid-block crossings may also be required in order to encourage safe pedestrian crossings.

Lighting

Lighting for pedestrians is very important and an integral part of cultivating a high-quality pedestrian atmosphere in the City. While there appears to be adequate lighting in the downtown core, there are definitely opportunities to improve lighting particularly along bus

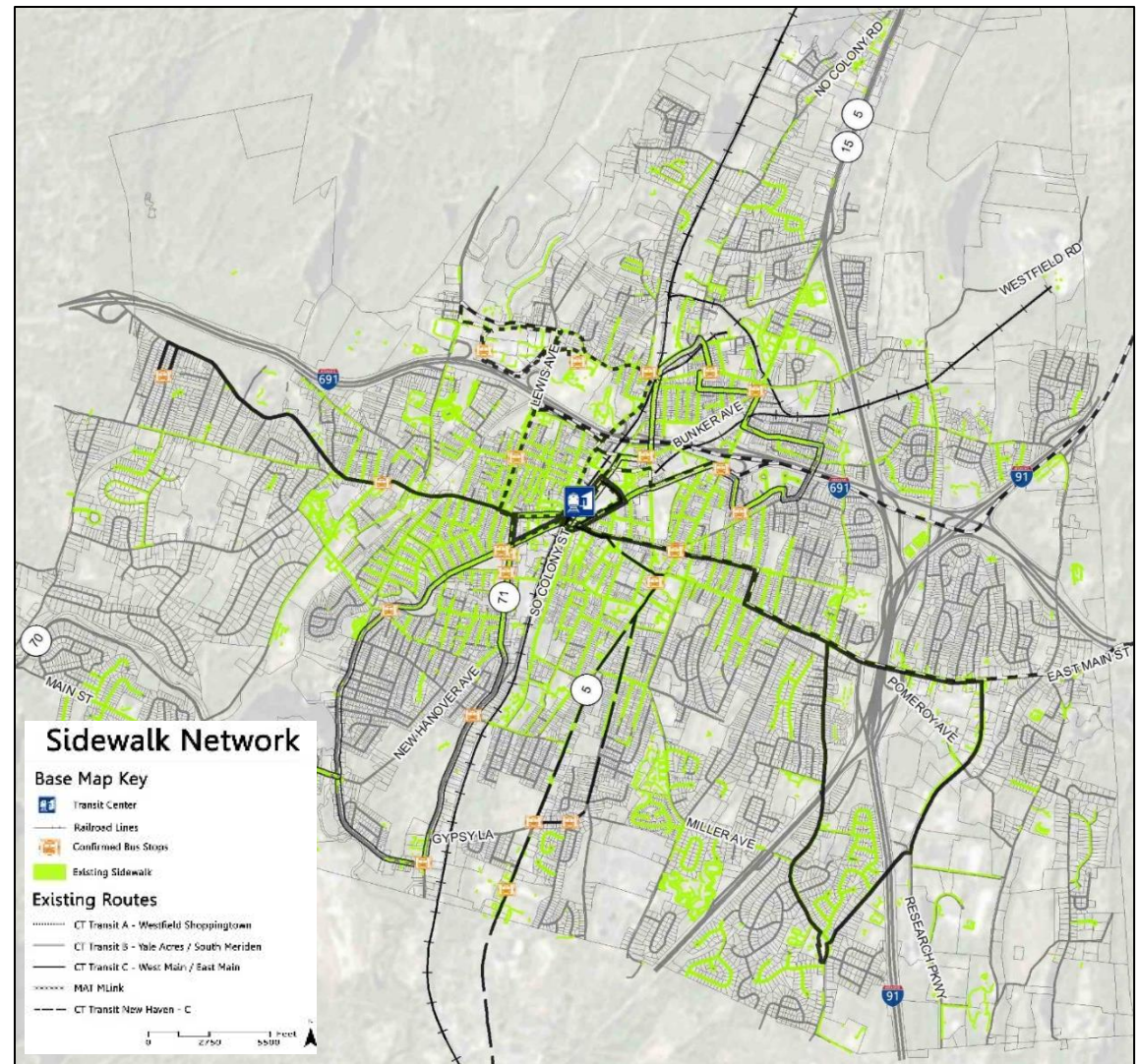


Figure 4-6: Sidewalk Network

routes outside the downtown area. The installation of pedestrian lighting has multiple purposes including the following:

- Helping pedestrians to safely navigate the City's sidewalks and pathways
- Providing pedestrians with high levels of visibility and security at all hours
- Extending the hours that business, shopping and commercial districts stay vibrant and active
- Encouraging walking
- Improving pedestrian access to transit and other services

Additional Amenities

In addition to the recommendations previously listed, the following amenities are recommended for bus stops that service the largest percentage of riders:

- **Benches** – Benches should be present to increase rider comfort while waiting for the bus.
- **Shelters** – Shelters should be present to increase rider comfort while waiting for the bus.
- **Trash Receptacles** – Receptacles for trash should be present at high-priority bus stops in order to help them naturally maintain a clean and inviting environment.



EXAMPLE SHELTER OPTIONS



SITE AMENITIES

4.4 Branding

Like any other product or service, transit in Meriden would greatly benefit from the use of a branding campaign. This type of marketing work will help to cultivate an identifiable and marketable transit service that passengers will soon associate with efficiency, reliability, and comfort. Branding is vital to the successful implementation of the new and improved Meriden transit system for several reasons, including the following:

- Conveying to passengers that this transit system is new and improved
- Creating a premium, higher-quality feel for the service, distinguishing it past service
- Enhancing outreach efforts
- Increasing customer loyalty
- Improving employee satisfaction and retention
- Attracting TOD activity, potentially

In order to create a successful brand for the transit system in the City, the following should be done:

- Identify the target audience and cater to them.
- Determine what aspects of the service are most important and convey them.
- Develop a unique brand logo.

- Choose vibrant brand colors.
- Market the brand at public events by running a unique promotional period and through media and/or outreach at targeted large employers.

5.0 Implementation Plan

Ultimately, the goal of this study is to develop a set of actionable strategies that could be implemented with the availability of funding. The formulation of a Project Implementation Plan (PIP) is a great decision-making tool and a critical step in ensuring that study recommendations are advanced to the next phase of implementation. Generally, the components of the PIP would include a summary of recommendations, implementation time lines, cost of improvement, and the main stakeholder responsible for ensuring the implementation of the particular improvement. A PIP was developed for the study recommendations outlined in Chapter 4.0 and is presented in **Figure 5-1**. Study recommendations were summarized as near, mid, and long term. The near-term recommendations are those improvements that could be implemented within a 1- to 2-year time frame such as changes in bus schedules and installation of bus stop signage while mid-term recommendations could be implemented within 2 to 5 years. The long-term recommendations on the other hand are those improvements that could be implemented beyond a 5-year time frame. Examples of such long-term recommendations include the implementation of a City or privately run shuttle service to connect employment centers to the Transit Center.

2733-15-au1616-rpt

Strategy Implementation			
Strategy	Capital Cost	Timeline	Main Stakeholders
Regulations & Policy			
City P&Z Policies, Regulations	N/A	N	City of Meriden
Federal Programs	N/A	N	City of Meriden Employers
Employer Programs	N/A	M	Midstate Chamber of Commerce Employers CT Rides
Operational Improvements			
Schedule Improvements	N/A	N	CT Transit City of Meriden
New Bus Transit Connections	N/A	M	CT Transit
Shuttles	N/A	L	Employers City of Meriden
Technology	N/A	L	CT Transit
Infrastructure Improvements			
Bus Stop Signs	\$250 - \$500 Each	N	CT Transit City of Meriden
Bus Shelters	\$30,000 - \$40,000 Each	M	CT Transit City of Meriden
Benches	\$1,000 - \$5,000 Each	M	CT Transit City of Meriden
Wayfinding Signs	\$500 - \$2,000 Each	M	City of Meriden CTDOT
Lighting	\$7,000 - \$10,000 Each	N	City of Meriden CTDOT
Pedestrian Crosswalks	\$2.5 - \$5 per Sq. foot	N	City of Meriden CTDOT
Sidewalks	\$10 - \$15 per Sq. foot	N	City of Meriden CTDOT

- N - Near-Term Solutions
- M - Mid-Term Solutions
- L - Long-Term Solutions

Figure 5-1: Strategy Implementation

TECHNICAL APPENDIX

APPENDIX A: PASSENGER SURVEY



Who are you?

1. Gender: Male Female

2. Age: Under 18 18-25 26-40 41-65 over 65

3. Are you a resident of Meriden? Yes No

4. Do you own a car? Yes No

Tell us about your trip...

5. How many days per week do you utilize bus service in Meriden?

1-2 day 3-4 days 5 days 6-7 days

6. Please specify town of: *Origin:* _____ *Destination:* _____

7. How did you get to this bus?

Walked Dropped off by someone Rode my bicycle
 Drove and parked my own car Rode a different bus Other: _____
 Carpooled with someone else Rode the train

8. Where did you come from before you got on this bus?

Work/Work Related Home Other: _____
 Shopping College/Other School
 Social, Religious Worship, Personal Medical Services

9. Where are you going now?

Work/Work Related Home Other: _____
 Shopping College/Other School
 Social, Religious Worship, Personal Medical Services

10. If you answered "Work/Work Related" for questions 8 and/or 9, do you work at or near any of the following?

Westfield Meriden Mall & vicinity MidState Medical Center Businesses on Research Parkway
 Middlesex Community College N/A, not Work/Work Related
 Other: _____

11. How long is your total trip (from origin to destination)? <30 min. 30-60 min. 60+ min.

How can we make it better?

12. How satisfied are you with the bus service to and from the train station located on State Street, which will become the new Meriden Transit Center?

Extremely Satisfied Satisfied Neutral Dissatisfied Extremely Dissatisfied

13. What aspects of bus service in Meriden, in order of importance, should be improved (pick up to three):

_____ Cost _____ Security/Safety _____ Reliability/Punctuality
_____ Onboard Comfort/Amenities _____ Bus Stop/Station Facilities _____ Park-n-ride facilities
_____ Availability/Access to Information _____ Frequency _____ Convenience

Other: _____

14. Please indicate the places you would like to see new connections to/from the Meriden Transit Center (free response):

¿Quién eres?

1. **Sexo:** Masculino Femenino

2. **Edad:** Menos de 18 18-25 26-40 41-65 Más de 65

3. **¿Es usted residente de Meriden?** Sí No

4. **¿Tiene usted un automóvil?** Sí No

Hablanos de tu viaje...

5. **¿Cuántos días por semana usted utiliza el servicio de autobuses de Meriden?**

1-2 días 3-4 días 5 días 6-7 días

6. **Por favor especifique la ciudad de:** *Origen:* _____ *Destino:* _____

7. **¿Cómo llegó usted a este autobús?**

Caminé Alguien me trajo Llegué en mi bicicleta
 Conduje mi propio automóvil Llegué en otro autobús Otro: _____
 Compartí vehículo con otra persona Llegué en tren

8. **¿De dónde venía antes de subir a este autobús?**

Trabajo Domicilio Otro: _____
 Compras Universidad / Educación
 Social, de culto religioso, personal Servicios médicos

9. **¿Hacia dónde se dirige ahora?**

Trabajo/Relacionado con mi trabajo Domicilio Otro: _____
 Compras Entorno universitario/académico
 Entorno social, de culto religioso, personal Servicios médicos

10. **Si respondió "Trabajo/Entorno relacionado con el trabajo" en las preguntas 8 y/u 9, ¿trabaja en uno de los siguientes lugares o cerca de alguno de ellos?**

Westfield Meriden Mall y las cercanías MidState Medical Center Negocios en Research Parkway
 Middlesex Community College N/A – Mi viaje no es hacia el Trabajo
 Otro: _____

11. **¿Cuánto tiempo es su viaje en total (de origen a destino)?**

Menos de 30 min 30-60 min Más de 60 min

¿Cómo podemos hacerlo mejor?

12. **¿Qué tan satisfecho está usted con el servicio de autobús desde y hacia la estación de tren ubicada en State Street, que se convertirá en el nuevo centro de tránsito de Meriden?**

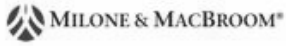
Muy satisfecho Satisfecho Ni satisfecho ni insatisfecho Insatisfecho Muy insatisfecho

13. **¿Qué aspectos del servicio de autobuses de Meriden, en orden de importancia, deben mejorarse? (elija un máximo de tres):**

_____ Costo Seguridad
_____ Confort/Servicios a bordo Instalaciones de la parada/estación de autobuses
_____ Instalaciones de aparcamiento disuasorio (Park-n-ride) Disponibilidad/Acceso a la Información
_____ Conveniencia Confiabilidad/Puntualidad
_____ Frecuencia Otro: _____

14. **Indique los lugares en que le gustaría ver conexiones individuales hacia/desde el Centro de Tránsito de Meriden (respuesta libre):**

APPENDIX B: EMPLOYER SURVEY



Meriden "First Mile, Last Mile" Regional Employer Survey

The City of Meriden, in collaboration with the Midstate Chamber of Commerce, is conducting this regional employer survey as part of the Meriden "First Mile, Last Mile" Study. The intent of this survey is to identify how best to provide improved multi-modal transportation service from transportation centers in Meriden, Berlin and Wallingford to major employment areas within the region. Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

1. Contact Name:

2. Contact Title:

3. E-Mail Address:

4. Phone Number:

5. Company Name:

6. Company Address:

7. How many employees, including yourself, work for your company at your worksite?

8. What industry is your company most closely associated with?

- Government
- Health Care
- Manufacturing
- Retail
- Research & Development
- General Office
- Other

9. Do any of your employees express concerns about any of the following? (check all that apply)

- Parking Issues
- Transit Access
- Infrastructure to support bicycling/walking to work
- Other (please specify)

10. What is the average commute distance for your employees?

- <10 miles
- 11-25 miles
- 26-50 miles
- 50 miles or more
- Unsure

11. Are you aware of a carpool/vanpool program in your area?

- Yes
- No

12. Are you aware of the new New Haven-Hartford-Springfield (NHHS) Rail service which will have stops in Meriden, Berlin and Wallingford beginning in 2018?

Yes

No

13. Do you think that the NHHS Rail Service will be used by your employees?

Yes

No

Unsure/Maybe

14. If no, what would need to change to encourage your employees to use the commuter rail?

15. To what degree are you aware of or involved in local transportation issues or groups?

Very involved (regularly attend meetings and/or play a leadership role)

Somewhat involved (occasionally attend meetings)

Involved in a limited way (only get involved on issues of specific importance)

Not involved

If you answered "very involved", "somewhat involved", or "involved in a limited way", please elaborate here:

16. Do you offer any of the following commuting benefits to employees? (check all that apply)

- Priority carpool parking spaces
- Bike racks
- Paid or subsidized bus/train fare
- Parking buy-outs
- Subsidized vanpools
- Telecommuting/Work from home
- Showers and/or lockers
- Flex-time
- Carpool matching services
- Emergency ride home benefits
- Other (please specify)

17. What would make you more likely to offer commute benefits? (check all that apply)

- Economic benefits to the company (including tax incentives)
- Access to new labor pools
- Reduced turnover
- Support implementing commute benefits
- Environmental benefits as company branding/recognition
- Saving employees money
- Increasing employees timeliness
- Decreasing employees absenteeism
- Other (please specify)

18. Which of the following would you offer if the items you identified in Question 17 could be realized?
(check all that apply)

- Priority carpool parking spaces
- Bike racks
- Paid or subsidized bus/train fare
- Parking buy-outs
- Subsidized vanpools
- Telecommuting/Work from home
- Showers and/or lockers
- Flex-time
- Carpool matching services
- Emergency ride home benefits
- Other (please specify)

19. Would you like help finding transportation solutions for your employees?

- Yes
- No

20. Would you like to be involved in regional solutions to employee transportation concerns?

- Yes
- No

21. Focus groups will be conducted following this survey in order to better understand the needs of major employers in the region, would you like to be involved?

- Yes, please contact me with more information
- Maybe/Unsure, please contact me with more information and I will decide then
- No, please do not contact me

APPENDIX C: REPORT OF MEETINGS



DATE OF MEETING: January 21, 2016
MMI #: 2733-15
PROJECT: City of Meriden Transit Center –
"First Mile, Last Mile" Study
SUBJECT: Kickoff Meeting
LOCATION: City of Meriden Planning Department,
Meriden, Connecticut

ATTENDEES:
Sean Moore – Midstate Chamber of Commerce
Howard Weissberg – Engineering, City of Meriden
Stephen Dudley – South Central Regional Council of
Governments (SCRCOG)
Juliet Burdelski – Economic Development, City of
Meriden
Paola Mantilla – Economic Development, City of
Meriden
Robert J. Bass – Public Works, City of Meriden
Bob Seale – Planning, City of Meriden
Dave Sullivan – Milone & MacBroom, Inc. (MMI)
Kwesi Brown – MMI
Rebecca Augur – MMI
Anna Stokes – MMI

1. Introductions and Study Overview

To start the meeting, everyone in attendance introduced themselves. Dave Sullivan welcomed everyone and gave a short introduction to the study. Kwesi Brown led the meeting and discussed data collection, survey development and goals, analysis approach, deliverables, schedule, and meetings.

2. Discussion Items

Key Stakeholders

Kwesi Brown asked if CT Transit should be part of the Study Advisory Committee or rather meet separately with them as needed.

- Juliet Burdelski indicated that while CT Transit needed to be involved its invitation should be given at a strategic time.
- Bob Bass suggested they be kept in the loop in side conversations.

Data Collection

- Transit Ridership data needs to be collected by MMI. CT Transit should have this for its service in Meriden, which includes four bus routes and two DASH (Downtown Area Shuttle) shuttles. MAT (Middletown Area Transit) may have data for the Middletown to Meriden route; Howard Weissberg will provide contacts of transit agencies to MMI.
- Kwesi Brown asked Howard Weissberg about the source of the Crash Data map he provided to MMI. Mr. Weissberg replied that he obtained it from the UConn Crash Depository. Mr. Weissberg stated that Meriden Police can provide more crash information if necessary.

- Kwesi Brown asked for confirmation that Peter Pan no longer has a stop in Meriden. Howard Weissberg confirmed this.
- It was agreed that regional routing including ride sharing should be considered as part of the study.
- Regarding Geographic Information System (GIS) data, Anna Stokes indicated that MMI has basic GIS data for Meriden but will likely need more in order to complete this project. Howard Weissberg indicated that additional GIS data can be requested from Patrick Ladd (pladd@meridenct.gov).

Ridership and Business Surveys

Kwesi Brown moved the topic of discussion to ridership and employer surveys, stating that MMI would like to move forward with these action items quickly. He inquired whether employer surveys would be included in the scope of work as previously indicated by the city.

- Juliet Burdelski stated that they would definitely like to include employer surveys under a separate contract with MMI. The Meriden Economic Development Department has a budget of \$10,000 for this additional task. It was agreed that Kwesi Brown and Juliet Burdelski will discuss the financial details after the meeting.
- It was agreed that the employer survey could be a good way to capture those who do not currently ride the bus and could be administered online through the tool *Survey Monkey*.
- Key employers to be considered are as follows: Westfield Meriden Mall, Middlesex Community College, 3M, Protein Science, Bob Stores, and RFS.
- Juliet Burdelski suggested that Sean Moore research employer surveys conducted by other Connecticut towns/cities. Maybe one of these could be a great template.
- Dave Sullivan introduced the first draft of the Ridership Survey created by MMI. He stated that this survey would be available in English and Spanish and would be administered to passengers on circulatory bus routes in Meriden.
 - It was suggested survey question 8 that asked "Does your trip involve a connection to a train?" be removed.
 - A question about total travel time was requested to be added.
 - A question about specific employers is to be added for participants who say that their trip is "Work/Work Related."
 - City of Meriden and SCRCOG logos are to be added.

Existing Land Use and Development

- Rebecca Augur requested information on any new development plans in the City of Meriden. Juliet Burdelski said she would provide this information via the Google drive.
- Howard Weissberg provided all the information from the City of Meriden's last Tiger Grant in the Google drive. He suggested that MMI utilize this as they begin the Land Use and Development tasks for this project.
- Juliet Burdelski mentioned the Yale Acres development, stating that bus connections are not great in this area.
- Howard Weissberg will provide MMI with the latest roadway improvement plan (Concept 4) for the area around the train station.

Future Transit

- It was agreed that it is vital to incorporate CT Transit's plans for future transit in the study.
- Future plans for the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield Rail should be incorporated as well.
- The Middlesex Community College (MXCC) is another key location that should be considered. Juliet Burdelski will reach out to Tammy Christopher of MXCC and ask about its plans/needs concerning transit and connection to the future railway.
- Nearby towns (Cheshire, etc.) may also need to be considered as they may want to create new bus service to Meriden to provide connections to the new rail line.

Choice Neighborhood Survey

- Juliet Burdelski said that the recently conducted Choice Neighborhood Survey could be useful to MMI. It had several questions regarding transportation choices for residents in Meriden's most central neighborhoods. She will put it in the Google drive.

Key Contacts

Howard Weissberg gave MMI the following contacts:

- Allan Church – Achurch@meridentct.gov (City Liaison to CT Transit)
- Eric Bergeron – Eric.Bergeron@ct.gov (CT DOT)
- Joe Spina – jsnet@aol.com (CT Transit)
- Rob Marchetti (Meriden Transit District)

Deliverables

- The Ridership Survey will be drafted in English and Spanish by the end of the week (January 22) and sent to Meriden team members to be reviewed. The survey will be conducted prior to the project's next meeting.

Schedule/Meetings

- It was agreed that the next meeting will be held on February 23, 2016 at 10:00 a.m. at the Meriden Planning Department.
- The final project meeting will be held on June 22, 2016. Sean Moore requested that this meeting be videotaped so that the information is easily disseminated.
- Steve Dudley indicated that he would like the study to be completed by June 30, 2016. Dave Sullivan stated that MMI will meet this deadline.

These notes reflect the writer's understanding of items discussed. Please notify Anna Stokes in writing of any inaccuracies in the reporting.

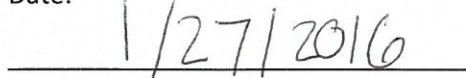
Submitted by:



Anna Stokes

Milone & MacBroom, Inc.

Date:





DATE OF MEETING: February 23, 2016
MMI #: 2733-15
PROJECT: City of Meriden Transit Center –
"First Mile, Last Mile" Study

SUBJECT: Existing Conditions Meeting

LOCATION: City of Meriden Planning Department
Meriden, Connecticut

ATTENDEES:
Sean Moore – Midstate Chamber of Commerce
Howard Weissberg, Engineering – City of Meriden
Stephen Dudley – South Central Regional Council of
Governments (SCRCOG)
Juliet Burdelski, Economic Development – City of Meriden
Paola Mantilla, Economic Development – City of Meriden
Bob Seale, Planning – City of Meriden
Dave Sullivan – Milone & MacBroom, Inc. (MMI)
Kwesi Brown – MMI
Anna Stokes – MMI

1. **Introduction**

To start the meeting, Kwesi Brown welcomed everyone back and gave a brief overview of the meeting's agenda.

2. **Discussion Items**

Ridership Survey Administration

Kwesi Brown gave an overview of the Ridership Survey administration process.

- MMI administered the survey onboard CT Transit's Meriden Circulatory Routes A, B, and C on February 3 and then onboard the commuter routes of CT Transit New Haven C and Middletown Area Transit (MAT) MLink on February 4.
- Surveys were administered during the morning peak commute period of 6:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. and during the afternoon peak commute period of 3:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. on both days.
- All surveys were administered by bilingual English and Spanish speaking professionals from Interpreters and Translators Inc. (ITI), subconsultants for the study.

Survey Results

Kwesi Brown led a discussion on the results of the Ridership Survey. He explained that 222 completed surveys were collected.

- Howard Weissberg asked if the Hartford Commuter bus should have been included. Juliet Burdelski responded that this bus was not included as it did not fit the scope of the "First Mile, Last Mile" study.
- For survey Questions 8 and 9, which asked for passengers to specify their trip origin and destination, it was agreed that the analysis in the report be broken out into a.m. versus p.m. survey participants.

- For Question 10 "If you answered "Work/Work Related" for Questions 8 and/or 9 "Do you work at or near any of the following?," it was suggested that the survey report include a list of the free answer responses provided in the "Other" category. Juliet Burdelski pointed out that she would be especially interested to know how many people were traveling to/from businesses on Broad and South Broad Streets as well as Townline Plaza.
- Regarding Question 11 "How long is your total trip (from origin to destination)?," Paola Mantilla remarked on how many respondents (23%) indicated that their trips were greater than 60 minutes. Anna Stokes indicated that a lot of these people were commuters on the New Haven route. Sean Moore remarked that a lot of New Haven residents travel to Meriden for work.
- Bob Seale requested that a map of bus routes be included in the report. Anna Stokes indicated that MMI would include the map.
- Question 13 "Please rank in order of importance, the top three aspects of bus service that should be improved" was discussed in depth.
 - Kwesi Brown pointed out that only 36 respondents were concerned with price. Juliet Burdelski inquired about the bus fare, and Stephen Dudley indicated that it was \$1.50 per trip no matter the distance.
 - Howard Weissberg asked what amenities and facilities were referred to for the "Onboard comforts/amenities" and "Bus Stop/Station Facilities" responses. Anna Stokes said that most passengers requested better signage, more seating, benches, and bus shelters. She remarked that the CT Transit bus from New Haven to Meriden was especially overcrowded. Steven Dudley said that CT Transit does own some articulated buses that are occasionally used on this route, but CT Transit is trying to balance the demand for these buses with their small supply, so often, normal buses run even on overcrowded routes.
 - The number of bus shelters in the city was also discussed. Howard Weissberg stated that the city currently has three or four of them.
 - Juliet Burdelski expressed a concern for the cost of bus shelters, stating that the city has had issues implementing them in the past.
 - Howard Weissberg also expressed concerns regarding bus shelters, stating that they are often misused and vandalized. Steven Dudley indicated that shelters could be provided without benches.
 - Howard Weissberg asked if MMI could create a system ranking bus stop/station amenities by cost and level of reward/service that they provide.
 - Bob Seale remarked that timing and extended service was very important to many people. Anna Stokes agreed and pointed out that the most common request was evening and Sunday service. Sean Moore remarked that many people who depend on the buses cannot use them in the evening to do their shopping.
 - Howard Weissberg brought up Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) systems for bus tracking, remarking that they seem to be a necessary thing in order to get more people who own cars and have more choices surrounding transportation to take the bus.
 - Howard Weissberg asked about the level of smart phone ownership of riders and whether or not they would be able to track the buses online with a ride systems app of AVL system. Steven Dudley indicated that

- around 50% of riders have smart phones. This estimate was based on his own observations while riding the bus.
- Steven Dudley remarked that CT Transit has put AVL systems in buses in the Hartford district, but because of money and unknown operating costs, they have not been implemented locally.
- Kwesi Brown asked about the possibility of a board displaying real-time bus arrival time at the new Transit Center. Steven Dudley remarked that a new person was recently hired to run the transit district, so many things might change soon.
- Howard Weissberg suggested that the final plan should include many recommendations that point toward increased technology.
- Kwesi Brown pointed out that the public transit system in Storrs at UConn has an AVL system and suggested that this be studied and included as an example in the report. There was a lot of support from all surrounding this idea.
- Juliet Burdelski brought up the Meriden Shuttle, which was run temporarily. She said that it did not work generally because people would often walk as opposed to waiting for the bus. It was agreed that shorter bus headways were very important to encourage bus usage.

Employer Surveys

Kwesi Brown moved the topic of discussion to Employer Surveys and indicated that MMI would like to move forward with this quickly.

- Kwesi Brown asked when the City of Meriden would be able to distribute the survey. Sean Moore said that he could get it out that day, February 23, or the following day, February 24.
- Juliet Burdelski asked when MMI would like to see the survey closed. Dave Sullivan stated that MMI would need it as soon as possible in order to move forward with the focus groups and complete the existing conditions portion of the study. Juliet Burdelski said that they could distribute the survey that day, follow up the next week, and tentatively close the survey by March 5, 2016 but warned that people are often slow to respond to requests like this.
- Juliet Burdelski asked how many representatives from employers could be in the focus group. Kwesi Brown and David Sullivan indicated that the goal would be to encourage as many people as possible but ideally a group of 10 to 15 people.
- Dave Sullivan suggested that it would be useful to find out what other cities are doing with respect to downtown shuttles. He indicated that the City of Stamford for instance has a very robust and effective shuttle service. It was agreed that MMI would look into the Stamford downtown shuttle service.

Project Base Map

Kwesi Brown directed attendees' attention to the project base map created by MMI.

- Kwesi Brown pointed out that they are still missing the MAT MLink bus route data. They are working on obtaining it and will soon add it to the map.
- Kwesi Brown reviewed the significant information on that map, which included transit-oriented development (TOD) zoning, locations of Meriden's top 10 employers and the

number of employees, all bus routes included in the survey, bus stop locations, and sidewalk locations.


Next Steps

- Sean Moore is to send out the employer survey.
- MMI will complete the Existing Conditions report by the middle of March and send it to the City of Meriden for review. The city will have 1 week to review it.
- A conference call will be held following the completion of the Employer Survey. An exact date was not decided upon for this event.
- It was agreed that the next meeting will be held on Thursday, March 29, at 10:00 a.m. at the Meriden Planning Department. This date has subsequently been changed to March 30.

These notes reflect the writer's understanding of items discussed. Please notify Anna Stokes in writing of any inaccuracies in the reporting.

Submitted by:

Date:



Anna Stokes
Milone & MacBroom, Inc.



2733-15-f2916-rpt



Report of Meeting

DATE OF MEETING: March 30, 2016

MMI #: 2733-15

PROJECT: City of Meriden Transit Center – "First Mile, Last Mile" Study

SUBJECT: Employer Survey Review and Focus Group Meeting

LOCATION: City of Meriden Planning Department, Meriden, Connecticut

ATTENDEES:

Sean Moore – Midstate Chamber of Commerce
Howard Weissberg – Engineering, City of Meriden
Stephen Dudley – South Central Regional Council of Governments (SCRCOG)
Juliet Burdelski – Economic Development, City of Meriden
Paola Mantilla – Economic Development, City of Meriden
Bob Seale – Planning, City of Meriden
Bob J. Bass – Public Works, City of Meriden
Dave Sullivan – Milone & MacBroom, Inc. (MMI)
Kwesi Brown – MMI
Anna Stokes – MMI

1. Introduction

Kwesi Brown gave a brief overview of the meeting's agenda to begin the meeting.

2. Discussion Items

Employer Surveys

Kwesi Brown began by reviewing the employer surveys. He explained that MMI worked with the Midstate Chamber of Commerce and City of Meriden Economic Development to develop and distribute the survey via SurveyMonkey. Overall, the survey got 67 responses from employers in the region.

- Kwesi Brown stated that survey participants represented businesses of which 72% were located in Meriden, and 42% have fewer than 10 employees.
- The employers represented a wide variety of sectors of which health care was the most common making up 13% of those surveyed. 63% of survey takers choose "Other." Kwesi Brown pointed out that many of these businesses could have been classified as "General Office," representing businesses in the fields of architecture, law, banking, real estate, and more.
- Employers indicated that the most common concern expressed by their employees had to do with "Parking issues," chosen by nearly 50% of survey takers. Kwesi Brown pointed out that 20% chose "Other." Concerns listed in this category included traffic and gasoline prices. Anna Stokes noted that the survey was conducted at a time when gasoline prices were very low and that responses to a lot of the questions could have been different if the survey was offered when prices were higher.
- Nearly 80% of employers were not aware of carpool services in the area. Stephen Dudley pointed out that CT Rides does very little outreach in the region. Juliet Burdelski

suggested that the contact list collected during this survey be given to CT Rides so that they can reach out to employers in the future. Juliet also noted future recommendations for the study should include both new services and outreach/education solutions to help existing services be better utilized. She remarked that even if we only get one employer to utilize the existing CT Rides services that are offered it would be a win.

- Kwesi Brown stated that although 82% of employers were aware of the new New Haven-Hartford-Springfield (NHHS) Rail Service only 15% stated that their employees would use the new rail service. Sean Moore pointed out that some of the negative responses may be due to a lack of information. He indicated that employers may not know that the new rail line will offer much better service than the existing Amtrak train, which runs quite infrequently. Bob Bass pointed out that this may also be because so many employees are already local and will not be coming from other towns to work in Meriden. Howard Weissberg stated if all of the 15% of responders who answered "Yes" actually took the NHHS Rail that would be great. Dave Sullivan pointed out that the 15% represents employers who think a portion of their employees might use it and does not necessarily mean that there will be a 15% shift from other travel modes to rail. Juliet Burdelski asked if the committee could see a breakdown of which employers answered "Yes" to this question and said that they should all be invited to the focus group. Anna Stokes indicated that MMI would provide this to the group in the future.
- As a general comment on the summary, Dave Sullivan suggested that bullets be used to break up text-heavy sections.
- Kwesi Brown moved on to Question 15, which asked to what degree employers were involved in local transportation issues. He pointed out that 62% said they were "Not Involved." Juliet Burdelski asked the committee how people could be motivated to be more involved. She remarked that with the implementation of the new NHHS Rail there needs to be good marketing similar to that of CTFastrak.
- The next few questions Kwesi Brown reviewed covered commuting benefits. Kwesi Brown mentioned that many people who selected "Other" when asked about what commute benefits they offer listed "Free parking," which seemed counterintuitive. Juliet Burdelski mentioned that the City of Meriden could perhaps begin an incentives program to offer more commute benefits. She also mentioned that the state could do this for their employees as well as hundreds of Connecticut state employees work in and around downtown Meriden. Kwesi Brown said that MMI will research these types of programs and include them in the recommendations and alternatives analysis.

Focus Group Meetings

Kwesi Brown directed the discussion to the Employer Focus Group meetings.

- He began the discussion by talking about who would need to be invited and indicated that nine employers said "Yes" and 26 said "Maybe" when asked if they would like to be involved in a focus group. He also indicated that only three of the City of Meriden's top 12 employers took the survey.
 - Kwesi Brown asked if CT Transit should be invited to the focus group meeting. Sean Moore said that it would be better not to include them but to plan on

- following up with them at a later time. Dave Sullivan mentioned that the recommendations MMI will develop for the plan will definitely include some that require changes by CT Transit; however, due to the complexity of making changes within that organization, the recommendations that are most likely implementable will not include alterations to CT Transit.
- Juliet Burdelski asked about the involvement of local, private transportation providers in the focus group. The committee listed Meriden Taxi, Hunter's Limousine, and Liberty Limousine. It was decided that all three of these business should be invited to the focus group meeting.
 - There was eventual consensus that the invitees would be all employers who either said "Yes" or "Maybe" when asked if they would like to participate as well as the three local transportation companies and the top 12 Meriden employers regardless of whether or not they took the survey.
 - Kwesi Brown then began to review the draft presentation created by MMI for the focus group. The first few slides presented a background of the project as well as a summary of both the ridership and employer surveys. However, the bulk of the discussion centered on the focus group questions.
 - Question 1: Bob Seale stated that the question needs to be phrased in a way that helps the team figure out how to best get employees to use the transit system. Sean Moore suggested that the wording be more positive, and that it should be rephrased to say "improve" as opposed to "inhibit."
 - Questions 2 and 3: It was agreed that these questions could be consolidated into one question.
 - Question 4: Stephen Dudley stated that this question is too long, and others agreed. Kwesi Brown said that MMI would rephrase it. It was suggested that this question be moved to the end and become a "round table discussion."
 - Question 5: Everyone agreed this question is very important.
 - Juliet Burdelski asked if there should be more pointed financing questions. Bob Bass and Stephen Dudley liked the wording of simply "Who pays? Who benefits?" Juliet Burdelski thought something more along the lines of "would employers be willing to subsidize these tools..." would be more appropriate.


Next Steps/Action Items

- MMI will take into consideration all changes and suggestions for the Employer Survey Summary and make needed edits.
- The Existing Conditions Report will be sent to the committee next week.
- The focus group will be held on Thursday, April 14, from 7:45 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. The schedule will be as follows:
 - 7:45 a.m. – Check In
 - 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. – Focus Group Discussions
- Juliet Burdelski will reach out to Hunter's Ambulance to see if they are willing to host the focus group in their facility.
- Sean Moore and Juliet Burdelski will invite employers to attend the focus group meeting.
- Paola Mantilla will send MMI the contact information for "Meriden Taxi."

- Stephen Dudley is to assist MMI in obtaining contact information for a representative for CT Rides.
- The next steering committee meeting will be May 10 at 10:00 a.m. to discuss preliminary alternatives.

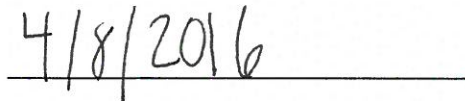
These notes reflect the writer's understanding of items discussed. Please notify Anna Stokes in writing of any inaccuracies in the reporting.

Submitted by:



Anna Stokes
Milone & MacBroom, Inc.

Date:



2733-15-a516-rpt



DATE OF MEETING: May 23, 2016
MMI #: 2733-15
PROJECT: City of Meriden Transit Center –
"First Mile, Last Mile" Study

SUBJECT: Recommendations Review

LOCATION: City of Meriden Planning Department
Meriden, Connecticut

ATTENDEES:
Sean Moore – Midstate Chamber of Commerce
Howard Weissberg, Engineering – City of Meriden (the
City)
Stephen Dudley – South Central Regional Council of
Governments (SCRCOG)
Juliet Burdelski, Economic Development – the City
Paola Mantilla, Economic Development – the City
Bob Seale, Planning – the City
Dave Sullivan – Milone & MacBroom, Inc. (MMI)
Kwesi Brown – MMI
Anna Stokes – MMI

1. Introduction

Kwesi Brown began the meeting with an overview of the work Milone & MacBroom, Inc. (MMI) had completed for the draft Recommendations section of the report. He explained that MMI had created a strong draft of the plan and is planning to fine tune it based on the Steering Committee's feedback.

2. Discussion Items

Kwesi Brown directed meeting attendees to the summary and draft of the Recommendations section.

Regulations and Policy Recommendation

- Kwesi Brown explained that this section reviews City regulations and policies that can help to encourage and enforce transit use within the City. These policies can take many forms including mandatory regulations or incentives.
- Bob Seale stated that this already exists on an informal level as the City currently encourages new developments to build bike racks. A more formal process and enforcement would be good.
- Dave Sullivan added the parking regulations are a huge part of this, stating that parking minimums and maximums can be placed.
- Howard Weissberg mentioned that the City does not currently have a Complete Streets Policy. Complete Streets design might be better incorporated into the TOD.
- Kwesi Brown mentioned that MMI met with CTRides and has detailed its program offering in the recommendations. Howard Weissberg asked if CTRides could maybe present to the Chamber, and Kwesi Brown said that they could. Anna Stokes mentioned that CTRides offers a guaranteed ride home program but only for users with certain bus passes. It may be possible for Meriden users to get access to this if the City were to work with CTRides to arrange for the CT Transit routes in Meriden to be covered by this service. Howard Weissberg suggested tying CTRides into the City's meeting with the Department of Transportation (DOT) about the new parking garage.

- Kwesi Brown mentioned adopting Level of Service (LOS) standards that support multimodal transportation. Howard Weissberg stated that the City does have some pedestrian-friendly design standards including minimum sidewalk widths. Juliet Burdelski stated that the adoption of a Pedestrian Plan would help.
- Juliet Burdelski recommended that all policy recommendations in the plan come with implementation examples and/or best practices.
- Kwesi Brown suggested starting a Transportation Management Association (TMA) as a recommendation in the plan. Juliet Burdelski mentioned that an organized Transit District could really help with this, but she was unsure what role the City should play in the creation of a TMA.
- Kwesi Brown mentioned Wellness Programs that encourage and incentivize active transportation as something the City and employers could provide.

Operational Improvements/Maps

Anna Stokes introduced attendees to the maps that were distributed. She stated that these maps show priority zoning for transit, including medium- to high-density housing, commercial, and shopping, as well as industrial, manufacturing, and employers. The maps were created using a buffer of 0.25 miles, a maximum walking distance for a user of a bus system to show which areas of the City are currently unserved.

- Howard Weissberg stated that the maps also show which areas are served but maybe do not need to be.
- Howard Weissberg noted that there were quite a number of dense residential areas not served. He indicated that there needs to be bus access to all of these areas.
- The following connections were mentioned by the Steering Committee as a high priority:
 - Britannia Street and Kensington Avenue
 - North Colony Street
 - Michael Drive
 - North Empire Avenue
 - Old Colony Road
 - Research Parkway
- Howard Weissberg mentioned that moving routes through more central areas of dense residential zones as opposed to on the outer edge would also reduce how far people need to walk and would be a low- to no-cost improvement.
- Stephen Dudley mentioned that it is vital to match up the bus schedules with work shift changes. Kwesi Brown said this is mentioned in the detailed recommendations.

Infrastructure Improvements

Kwesi Brown moved on to the Infrastructure Improvements section.

- Kwesi Brown mentioned that although CT Transit has stops identified, the operator in Meriden, Northeast Transit, indicated several of these stops are physically not in place.
- Stephen Dudley said this points to a great need for interagency collaboration. There needs to be a recommendation to facilitate a conversation between all players. He stated that the

City should initiate this. This conversation can be used to discuss improvements with DOT and the operators to make sure there is buy-in and funding.

- Howard Weissberg asked about the bus shelters. Anna Stokes mentioned that she received the list from him and will add them into the existing conditions.
- Howard Weissberg mentioned that the TOD plan will distance new stop locations for the downtown area.
- Juliet Burdelski stated that Meriden should have a signed stop network for the entirety of each route.
- Juliet Burdelski stated that she would like to see the plan boiled down to short-term recommendations and long-term recommendations.

Branding

- Stephen Dudley stated that there needs to be standardized wayfinding signage. Howard Weissberg stated that Meriden had worked with CDM Smith to develop a template for this.
- Stephen Dudley stated that branding is not entirely a long-term goal. What the City wants the brand to be should be decided now so that the brand is authentic and reflects the true service.

Other Notes

- Howard Weissberg asked how the City can work with DOT to make sure that the low-cost changes are implemented. The DOT needs to be on board, especially as this project supports the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield Rail and TOD.
- Howard Weissberg mentioned that there is a potential plan in the works for a recreational trail along Research Drive, which could tie in nicely with these transit improvements.

Next Steps/Action Items

- MMI will take into consideration all changes and suggestions for the Recommendations section of the report and make needed edits.
- Howard Weissberg will send MMI the signage template developed by CDM Smith.
- The Steering Committee may meet again if needed but will play this by ear.
- MMI will provide the Steering Committee with a final draft of the report during the first week of June.

These notes reflect the writer's understanding of items discussed. Please notify Anna Stokes in writing of any inaccuracies in the reporting.

Submitted by:



Anna Stokes
Milone & MacBroom, Inc.

Date:

8/15/2016

2733-15-au216-rpt