



*The catalyst that ignites Connecticut's Main Streets as the
Cornerstones of Thriving Communities*



Overview

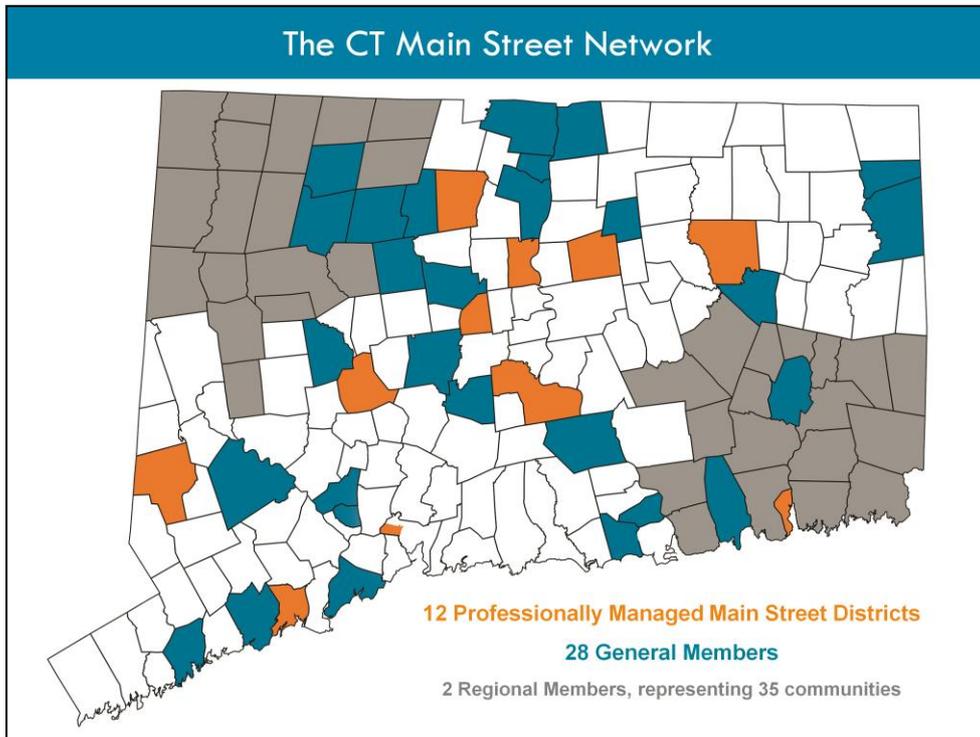
- About CT Main Street Center
- History: *Forces & Trends that Changed Downtown*
- The Main Street Program: *Why it was Developed, How it is Organized*
- *Components of a Vibrant Main Street, & a word about Millennials*

This Overview Presentation



CT Main Street Center’s Mission is ...to be the catalyst that ignites Connecticut’s Main Streets as the cornerstones of thriving communities.”

We function as a “professional association” for downtowns and municipalities. We provide education, resources, and advocacy. We act as the champion for Connecticut’s downtowns.



The Connecticut Main Street Network extends throughout our State, and this network includes professionally managed downtowns & neighborhood districts; municipal planning & economic development departments; and two regional organizations representing the interests of many towns.

And in 2016 we started a Professional Affiliate Membership program for industry professionals in marketing, economic development, urban planning, preservation, transportation, responsible growth policies and more.



The CT Main Street Network

- **Education & Training**
- **Networking Events**

- **Publicity**
- **Success Stories**
- **Communications**

- **Advocacy & Public Policy**

ctmainstreet.org



We offer:

Educational offerings & networking events:

- ½ day workshops (we post all presentation material on our website)
- Late-day networking events in partnership with CT Economic Development Assoc.
- Quarterly members-only info-sharing events: The BRIDGE Series
- Main Street Open House events, hosted by professional affiliate members

Website (ctmainstreet.org) & social media

- Members-Only page: “*CMSCmember*”, “*downtowns*”
- Our Education & Resources page provides links to hundreds of sites, organized by category
- Regular posts of Main Street activity on FB, Twitter

Monthly e-newsletter (15th of each month)

We will be introducing our new Member Communications Kit this fall. In it you will find guidance and examples of writing press releases, using online programs for newsletters and infographics, etc.

OUR HISTORIC MAIN STREETS

Centers of Community Life

Vibrant neighborhoods with
a mix of uses:

- Retail & dining
- Residential & office
- Government & institutions
- Multi modal transportation

However, there were forces
and trends that changed the
course of Main Street...



Historically, Main Street was the center of community life.

Vibrant downtown with a mix of uses:

- Retail & dining – *on ground floor*
- Residential & office – *upper floors*
- Government & institutions – *City Hall, Post Office, Libraries, Houses of Worship, etc.*
- Multi modal transportation (*Notice the various transit options in this photo: streetcar, trolley, auto, bike, on foot – 1920's, Lower Chapel Street, New Haven*)

However, there were forces and trends that changed the course of Main Streets...



2) Auto / Accessibility

National Highway Act of 1956 provided people with ability to move to the suburbs. But many highways cut a swath through our downtowns.

- In CT, we see this in Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport, New Britain, and more.



3) Urban Renewal:

As people moved to new suburban development, *retail followed people*. In misguided efforts to make downtown more appealing to mall shoppers, decisions were made to demolish and compromise the historic fabric – often to create surface parking lots; many times because it is part of the American culture that “newer is better”.



In the late 1970s the National Trust for Historic Preservation developed a pilot program designed to address the neglect and demolition of historic downtowns. They discovered that *downtowns had lost their value in these four distinct areas.*

This Main Street Approach was developed to address the **restoration of these values simultaneously.** Both comprehensive and incremental, this is intended to be a framework guiding revitalization efforts.

The Main Street Approach

1

Organization

Restoring Civic Value

- Communications / Public Relations
- Cultivate the public/private partnership
- Maintain organizational networks
- Volunteer orientation & development

“Restoring Civic Value” - *Engaging the community and public & private sector partners; convening and working toward consensus.*

Communications & Public Relations:

- *Active outreach and engagement to attract people to become involved*
- *Platforms, such as newsletters, website, social media, etc. that convey information about the work in downtown*

Developing public/private partnerships & engaging our local institutions and leaders

- *Business community, civic and governmental partners, community anchors (colleges, hospitals, etc.)*



Restoring Civic Value is all about Community Engagement.

- Do you have a university or community college close by?
- Another anchor institution (hospital) or major employer?
- The faith-based community and social services

These are all sources of expertise, energy, knowledge – and possible residents, customers and partners & volunteers.

The Main Street Approach

Design

Restoring Physical Value

- Preserve and enhance the district
- Walkability & Wayfinding
- Improve visual quality of area and businesses
- Long range planning

The slide features a blue header with the title 'The Main Street Approach'. On the left side, there is a large orange number '2' set against a light orange background. To the right of the '2', the word 'Design' is written in bold black text, followed by 'Restoring Physical Value' in a smaller black font. Below this, there is a bulleted list of four items. At the bottom right of the slide, there is a small graphic consisting of several overlapping triangles in blue, yellow, and green colors.

“Restoring Physical Value” – *getting the district in top physical shape: ensuring downtown is well-planned, welcoming, and attractive.*

- Preservation surveys & protection, design guidelines and standards, façade programs, etc.
- Pedestrian-orientation, parking, way-finding & signage, information systems (ease of use for the community)
- Visual training, beautification projects, etc.
- Placemaking & programming public spaces
- Streetscape plans, traffic plans, master planning, etc.



The Design Function is about:

- Planning, Preservation, Adaptive Reuse
- Clean, well-lit sidewalks and street trees
- Attractive and welcoming storefronts that fit within the context of your unique downtown
- Streets for all users (not just cars, but pedestrians, bikers, strollers, wheelchairs, people of all ages and abilities)

The Main Street Approach

3

Promotion

Social Value

- Promotion of Downtown's image & brand
- Promotion of Downtown as a destination
- Promotions to boost commerce

“Restoring Social Value” – *promoting the district’s unique characteristics and assets.*

Begins with -

- Understanding the market (your demographics & psychographics) and developing your brand.
- Special events, festivals, parades and parties; Art Walks, Historic tours, etc. that create a unique sense of place and bring people downtown.
- Destination Marketing, retail events and promotions; joint advertising, brochures, etc. that promote the district as a whole, and help businesses understand how they can attract customers.



Restoring Social Value begins with understanding your audience, then creating programming that positions downtown as a destination.

- Special events in downtown should be strategic, with your target audiences in mind.
- Businesses benefit from special events because people who enjoy a big parade or special event will return to stroll, shop and explore.

The Main Street Approach

4

Economic Vitality

Restoring Economic Value

- Training to help businesses stay strong
- Assistance to businesses wanting to expand
- Attracting new business

“Restoring Economic Value” – *diversifying the district’s economic base. Begins with working relationships with downtown property & business owners*

- Workshops and one-on-one counseling, technical assistance, maintaining valuable business information, etc.
- Technical assistance, fee waivers, loan assistance
- Market niche studies, cluster studies, consumer & resident surveys – for businesses to understand the market
- Incentives, ease of regulatory process for business & property owners
- Redevelopment & Adaptive Reuse for mixed-use (residential & retail)



Again, improving the economic vitality of downtown begins with understanding your market. Know your numbers!

- Who lives in town, what do they purchase, and where?
 - Do businesses capture zip codes from customers?
 - Do you capture information from event attendees (how far did they travel to attend? What would they like to do on their return visit?)
- Do you have an up-to-date inventory of downtown buildings and businesses?
- Are you missing out on a vibrant downtown economy because the upper floors of downtown buildings are vacant?
 - Retail always follows people: if people aren't living downtown, your small businesses will suffer

Business Health on Main Street: *What are retailers/restaurants looking for?*

- How many potential customers can be captured?
- How much do they spend on average?
- Do they match my customer profile?
- What is the price, quality, and character of the surrounding retail competition?



First, we must understand the conditions on the ground. It helps to understand that we're looking for both qualitative and quantitative input.

1. Community Outreach: get their vision of what Main Street/downtown can be.
2. Gather the Hard Data: Who is our market? What are their buying habits, and what will they support?



Main Street utilizes a preservation & place-based economic development strategy.



Basic Principle

Revitalization of your downtown built around its unique natural and built environment.

- This approach provides you with an organizing structure, that keeps you focused, around which *your own unique plan of action* is developed.
- Most communities have plenty of plans and studies, but lack the capacity and organizational infrastructure to implement the recommendations.



Town of Marlborough – Recent Plans & Surveys

- Marlborough Open Space & Cultural Resource Plan – 2004
- Community Dev. Adv. Cmsn., Public Forums & Town Wide Survey – 2004 & 2005
- Village Land Use & Economic Enhancement Plan – 2007
- Marlborough Business Park Plan – 2008
- Plan of Conservation & Development Update – 2009



Town of Marlborough

Speaking of Plans...



OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Mixed Use Zoning
- 2) Pedestrian Orientation
- 3) New England Village Design
- 4) Civic Campus
- 5) Traditional Town Green

“The Village Center should be the economic hub of the Town, containing a mix of retail, office, and residential land uses, primarily serving the current and projected needs of Marlborough.”

Marlborough has made great efforts to ensure that you have a Plan for the Town Center – this is to be commended.

- Without a plan you don't get anywhere – and you certainly won't get funding for what you want to accomplish.

BUT, a plan must also invite the community to the table: to develop it, to refine it, and certainly to comment on and approve it.

- You need the market data
- You need the community to help articulate your vision for a Town Center

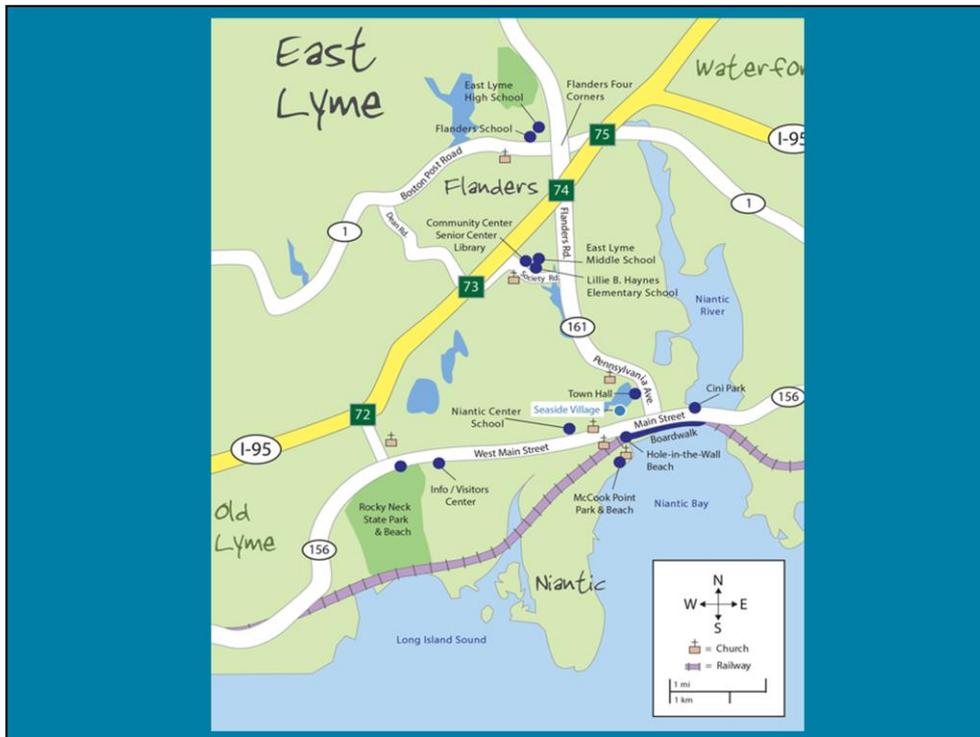
Darien, Rockwell, Inc.
“Walkability” Map: Downtown Darien
Prepared by the Connecticut Main Street Center
 Downtown Darien Business Team
 May, 2008

Building an Action Plan for Downtown

1. Research your Market, Develop the Vision
2. SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, Threats)
3. Transformation Strategies / Goal Setting
4. Project Identification
5. Work planning: Projects, resources & partners, timeline, budget
6. Implementation and communication

The structure of the Main Street Four Point Approach addresses ***Restoring the Value of Downtown***. Begins with basic Strategic Planning for Downtown.

- **Vision:** Declares your intentions for downtown / what does success look like? Should lead the way to any necessary planning & regulatory changes.
- **Market:** Start with basic data: know your numbers (age, income, families? Single-family residential? Where do they work?, etc.) CERC Profile a good start, but dig as deep as you can.
- **Goals:** developed out of SWOT analysis (unique to your downtown – begin with Clean, Safe, Attractive & Fun!). Most will start with *Catalyst Strategy*.
- **Projects** will advance your goals, and speak to your markets and opportunities.



Niantic Village is a coastal urban village in the Town of East Lyme, on Long Island Sound in Southeastern CT.

- Seasonal vs. permanent population
- Seasonal businesses & culture
- Boardwalk that was in planning stages at the time
- A family-owned multi-screen movie theater in the center of downtown
- Recent new residents that had moved from other places, that had vibrant downtowns – who saw potential and were prepared to get involved.



Niantic Main Street

Vision Statement

Downtown Niantic is an *inviting seaside village* easily accessible by car, foot, boat and train. It is a wonderful place to live, work and play where residents and visitors gather for specialty shopping, creative entertainment and arts, gourmet dining and water activities within a village that has recaptured its historic past.

Goals

1. Become the coordinating agency for the revitalization of downtown Niantic.
2. Improve the image of downtown Niantic.
3. Improve the competitiveness, selection, variety and quality of downtown Niantic businesses.

Sample: 1st year Main Street program

Vision is evocative and specific to a unique place (catalyst strategy), and it “Declares your intentions for downtown” (residential, commercial, transit, arts, tourism,).

- Zoning changes were necessary to allow increased residential/mixed-use, outdoor dining, a shared parking agreement with multiple property owners in the Village Center.

Goals: 1) establish downtown management, 2) enhance the image and brand downtown, and 3) address the seasonal and under-performing business culture to make it a year ‘round downtown.



...an inviting seaside village...



Sample Workplan				
Goals	Organization	Design	Economic	Promotion
1) <i>Become the coordinating agency for the revitalization of Niantic Village</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop membership program for individuals & businesses Establish Speakers Bureau 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Photo inventory/audit Organize Spring Clean-Up Day Develop private fundraising campaign for Streetscape project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bldng/Prpty inventory Neighborhood Survey Initiate zoning revision to expand residential options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop/launch website & social media Events calendar Establish retail advisory cmtee
2) <i>Improve the image of Niantic Village</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce newsletter, featuring businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design Guidelines Master Streetscape-Phase 1 Support/promote Boardwalk project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate shared-parking dialogue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch branding program Create new "maritime" event
3) <i>Improve the competitiveness, selection, variety and quality of Niantic businesses</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish monthly "Merchant Mixers" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft & shepherd outdoor dining ordinance Façade Improvement for 267-277 Main Street 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business Survey Business networking & training program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build downtown customer DB Create retail tie-in event w/ movie theater

*Your workplan should have a balance of projects that are easy, inexpensive and highly visible – with those that are more complex, more expensive and require additional capacity. **It starts with Clean, Safe, Attractive & Fun!***

Projects in **bold**: get a handle on data, and conditions on the ground in Year 1.

Projects **(in red)** require coordination with municipal departments (guidelines, streetscape, façade program, zoning issues).

This summary sheet helps draw in partners & volunteers. The workplan discipline keeps you organized and helps measure the return on investment in a Main Street Program.

A healthy Main Street starts with *Clean, Safe, Attractive & Fun*

- **Clean Team:** Sidewalks, streets, plantings, etc.
- **Code Enforcement:** Blight, public safety
- **Downtown Ambassador Program:** “Welcome!”, maps & guides, etc.
- **Signage & Wayfinding:** Gateways, parking, districts, attractions, places to sit, etc.
- **Attractive Storefronts:** Window displays, clean entrances, appropriate lighting
- **Healthy Businesses:** respond to the market-customer service, inventory control, cross-promoting, etc.

We begin with *Quality of Life* issues:

- Redefine public safety issues (inappropriate social behavior and blighted building conditions) as economic development issues. Investment won't happen if the district is not welcoming.
- Convening Code Enforcement Teams, made up of police, building inspection, fire marshal, etc. to cite unsafe and blighted conditions.
- Visual elements and amenities that make people feel welcome in downtown.
- Healthy business environment, addressing the unique markets of the community.



Much like a shopping mall has a management company which ensures its success, **downtown needs comprehensive management.**

Some CT Main Street members are professionally managed downtowns, but most members will begin with a partnership of municipal staff, a chamber, a business association, and major employers, anchor institutions, arts organizations, and more.

The Main Street program builds coalitions around bringing downtown back to life.

Benefits of a Managed Main Street District...

- Community Pride
- Local Leadership
- Culture of Collaboration
- Creates Jobs
- Increased Property Values

Qualitative Benefits

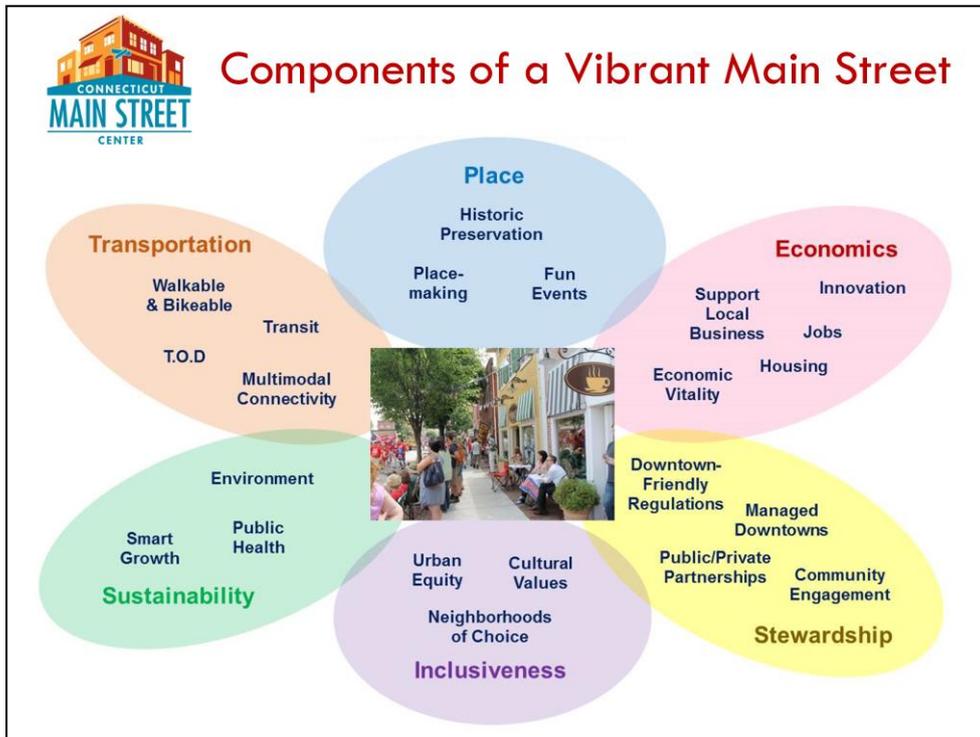
As we say in our mission statement, *“Main Streets are the cornerstones of thriving communities”*. A managed downtown:

- Enhances surrounding industrial and commercial development
- Protects and nurtures historic assets in downtown
- Increases the tax base by developing vacant and underutilized buildings
- Supports one of the community’s largest employers and taxpayers: Downtown

Main Street is a *proven* approach
that builds on *your* strengths.

The Main Street Approach ensures that local organizations:

- Achieve incremental and sustainable progress
- Follow a plan
- Public/Private Partnerships are key
- Use the unique historic and natural assets that already exist



COMPONENTS OF A VIBRANT MAIN STREET

- Vibrant, sustainable Main Streets – and healthy communities – depend on having a full range of outstanding components including housing, retail, transportation, businesses, arts, culture, events, historic places, outdoor space, pedestrian and bike-friendly streets, and connection and access to other places.
- For our communities – and Connecticut as a whole – to compete in the 21st century and beyond, *we must attract, retain and nurture the talent* that will fuel the information age economy.
- What this population craves to nurture their innovative spirit is to live in *authentic, walkable, dynamic, connected places*.
- Connecticut offers a wonderful collection of these kinds of places, from our larger urban downtowns and neighborhoods, to our small town and village centers.

Key Characteristics of Millennials



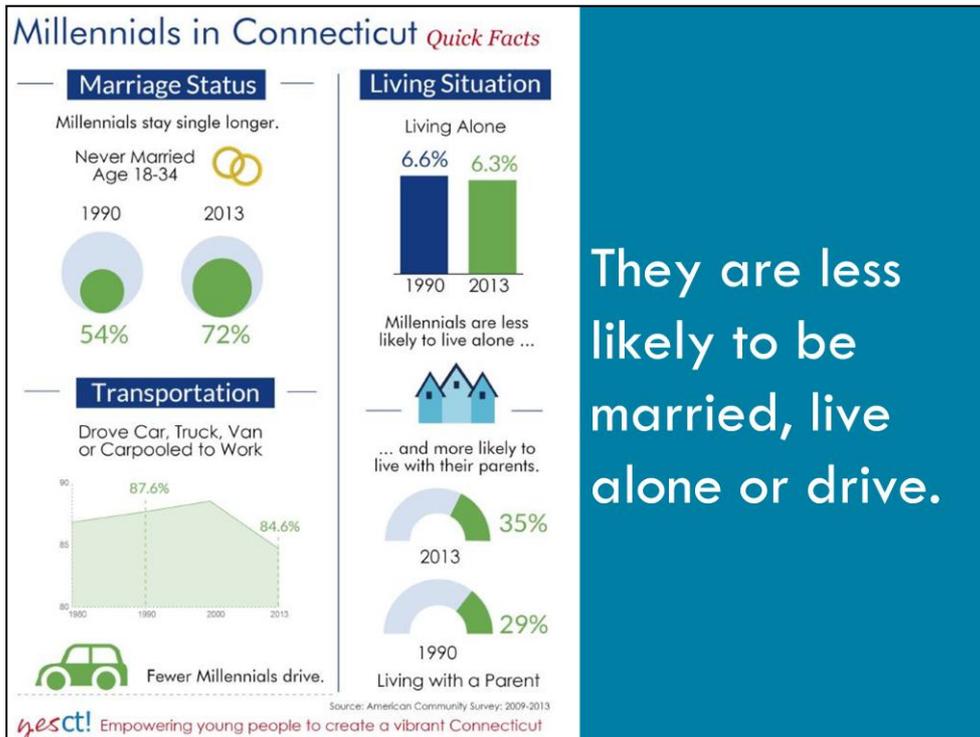
- 77 million nationally
- Civic minded, tech savvy, and wary after the Great Recession
- Want transit options and walkable communities

- According to an 2014 APA Study of Millennials and Baby Boomers, *56% of Millennials would prefer to live someday in a walkable community*, whether that's in an urban, suburban or rural location.
- Only 8% of Millennials prefer living in a suburb (if they can afford it) that requires driving to most places. 59% said there are not enough transportation alternatives where they live, and *80% cite living expenses as important in choosing where to live; 65% said affordable housing is a priority.*



Millennials in CT - Comparing young people in the 1990's vs now:

- fewer young people
- more educated but earning less
- less likely to drive, live alone or be married
- average \$30K of student debt



They are less likely to be married, live alone or drive.

The Perfect Storm – they’re already starting in the hole with student debt, while earning less than their predecessors, leaving less money for housing and transportation in a state that already has high housing costs and lots of suburbia.

Housing in CT is expensive

- I. 6th highest median monthly housing cost
- II. 8th highest rental cost

Cost of transit is also a factor

- I. Transportation is 19% of the average household budget.
- II. Living .5mi from transit reduces cost to 9%

What do Millennials want?

- Smaller
- Denser
- More affordable
- Walkable neighborhoods
- Preferably close to transit
- Interesting amenities



Walkable, transit-bountiful, mixed-use and diverse communities solve many issues at once:

- Desired by both Millennials and Baby Boomers
- They have also been shown to weather economic downturns far better than single-use communities
- A win-win-win for young people, boomers, and local economies

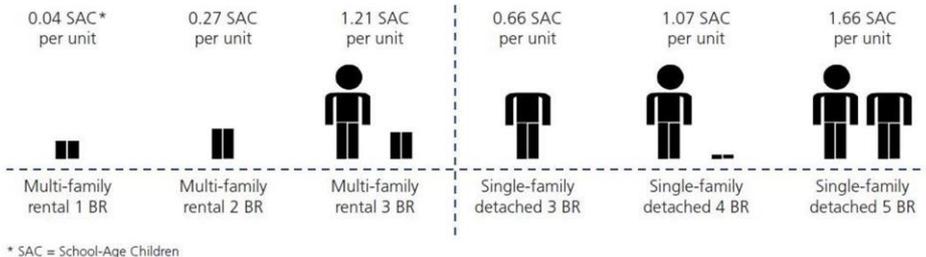
Marlborough's Plan of Conservation & Development articulates the need for market rate housing stock that is attainable for millennials & empty-nesters.

Mythbusters

FACT: Denser + Millennials ≠ Children and higher school budgets.

Only larger homes bring many school-age children

Rutgers University's Center for Urban Policy Research analysis (June 2006) of Connecticut's number of school age children living in various housing types indicate the following averages:

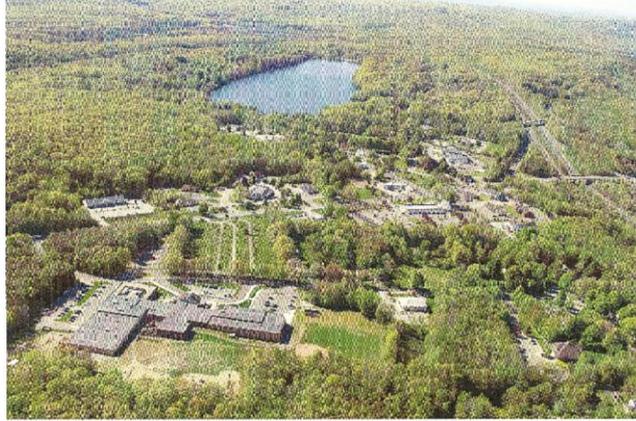


There is a common, pervasive fear that building for young adults will mean an influx of children, resulting in higher taxes and school budgets. **THIS IS NOT TRUE!**

From their peak in 2004-2005, school enrollments are expected to drop 17% by 2020. Between 2015-2025 school-age population is projected to fall in all but 16 CT school districts between. *Source: UConn CT State Data Center (via Partnership for Strong Communities and HomeCT)*

In fact the opposite is true. You get what you build for. If communities only build single family houses on large lots, all they are going to get is families.

WHAT'S NEXT?

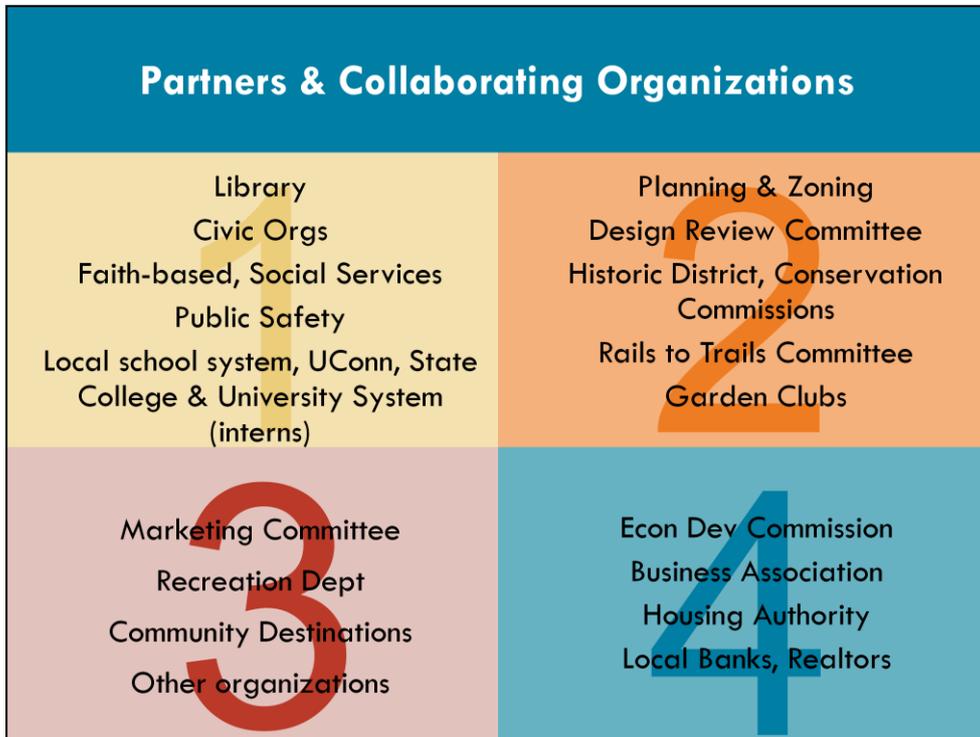




You can begin to utilize this organizing structure to address the development and needs of the Town Center.

I recommend reaching out to Mansfield Downtown Partnership, which is the organization that – for 12 years – worked to engage the community and build the partnerships necessary in order to develop Storrs Center.

- *Obviously, Marlborough's town center will be quite different – but the community consensus-building, and the approach to managing what you will have is the same.*



Collaborating Organizations

Organized under the Four Point grid, identify those organizations and institutions in town and in the region that have the capacity to bring people together to address the needs of the town center.

What's Next?

FUNDAMENTALS OF MUNICIPAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

A Transformational Approach



Review the material shared by Connecticut Economic Resource Center's Municipal Economic Development Training, held in October 2014.

Curriculum:

1. Municipal economic development indicators in state & regional context (this is where the data and market information was introduced)
2. Definitions of economic development: transactions and transformations
3. Roles & responsibilities of the town's economic development team
4. Economic development capacity assessment tool, and next steps

Courtney Hendricson, VP of Municipal Services at CERC

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still revolutionary

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CT Main Street Center Growth Sponsors:



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CT Main Street Center partners with a number of state and public agencies.

www.ctmainstreet.org



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