



# Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Roles, Visioning, Viability, and Tools Analysis

## Roles & Responsibilities

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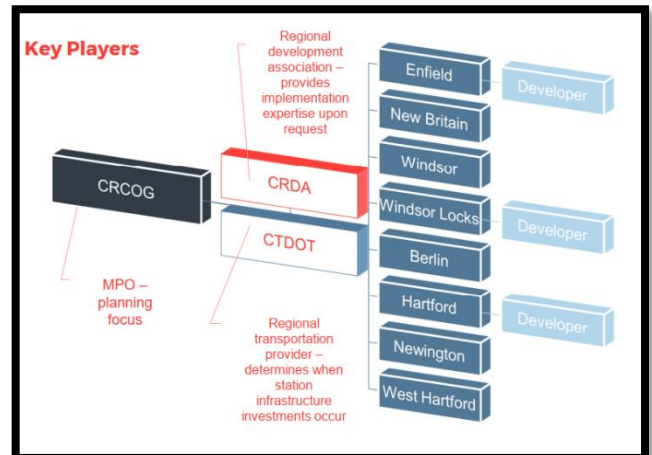
## Executive Summary

This report focuses on the entities that drive implementation of transit-oriented development (TOD) projects in the Capitol Region, with the aim to provide a holistic perspective on how the alignment of those roles and responsibilities may be modified or clarified to bolster the region’s TOD effort.



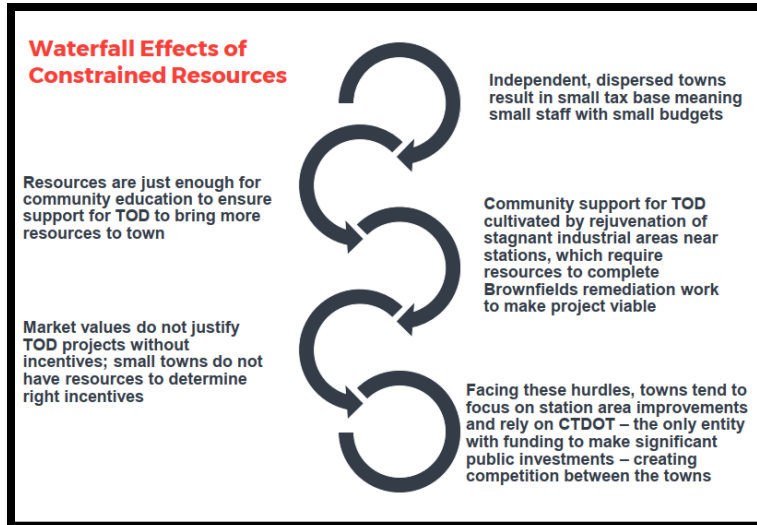
Multiple “players” drive TOD efforts in the Capitol Region: local towns who regulate land use and provide financial incentives to pursue economic development, regional organizations that support those efforts for purposes of planning, funding and regional services, and developers who deliver the projects. Each player has a distinct role tailored to its specific mission and goals,

operates within its own organizational constraints, and is influenced by historical government structures and relationships.



## Current State

This study revealed significant waterfall effects of limited resources that may be preventing the region



from moving forward to complete more robust TOD implementation efforts. Limited resources are the primary constraint. Medium and small towns have budgets constraining access to specialized expertise on TOD project delivery and finance, as well as access to resources needed to prepare a site for market (such as environmental remediation) or to fill financial gaps in deal structures with incentives. Rather than project delivery, towns have focused on outreach to garner political support for financial

incentives and increased density needed to support TOD projects, but they also need resources devoted to project delivery.

All towns viewed a regional strategy to support TOD as mutually beneficial and identified potential synergies. The reasons that a regional approach has not been successful in the past are not definitively clear. There are two likely causes: organizational structure and inherent competition. Already limited resources are dispersed, and economies of scale are hard to realize. Decision making is pushed to the micro level, adding complexity and inconsistency.

The towns are fueled by the race to garner CTDOT support for new or updated transportation infrastructure – a race to get a station. A regional approach requires collaboration, but in this circumstance, towns are not incentivized to devote limited resources to collaborate if the outcome may mean a town's station comes significantly later in the delivery pipeline of stations. Therefore, any efforts to foster collaboration must be able to define the mutual benefit for all towns.

## Recommendations

This report proposes a new regional strategy to realign roles and to make the most of limited resources to catalyze TOD for the benefit of the region as a whole.

Funds and staff time spent independently trying to progress projects could be better spent through collaboration. The recommendations aim to find practical ways to coordinate resources both for the towns and the state, as well as to move away from the singular focus on obtaining a rail station. Each town has its own character and benefits to the region as a whole; the development focus will go beyond the station development towards attracting projects that are appropriate for the community as a part of a larger region.

**In order to implement TOD projects regionally, collective gain must supplant competition**

- **Regional synergy.**
- **Data-driven project focus.**
- **Predictability of public infrastructure investments.**
- **Project delivery and finance expertise.**



TOD investment decisions that are data driven at all levels of government could solve many of the challenges, making better use of limited resources, providing targeted financial incentives, and building community understanding in the economic benefits of TOD. A more formal and strategically focused structure for sharing that information would result in better outcomes.

There is a disconnect between the decision-making process that results in transportation investments and the TOD economic development benefiting from those investments. In planning for TOD projects currently, towns and developers cannot predict whether an investment in a transit station will be made – or when. The criteria for selection of those investments is perceived by towns as not transparent, causing a lack of trust. This dynamic has caused a lack of predictability, adversely impacting the towns' interfaces with developers who rely on quick and efficient processes, thereby increasing the risks and therefore the costs of development projects. A more formal and transparent process could result in more consistency that will attract earlier developer interest and allow towns to focus on investments that make sites more marketable. Such formality and collaboration may require more resources.


TOD projects are highly complex and tend to evolve over time. Even after a transit facility investment decision has been made and a station project is ongoing, towns struggle to fully benefit from that investment because of a lack of project delivery expertise. An ombudsman or owner's representative can act as a conduit between developer and town to speed up the entitlements process and resolve unanticipated challenges with the transaction at a project level, supporting the town. In that approach, towns get the benefit of project delivery expertise while retaining their traditional land use authority.

The recommendations are aimed at fostering a new regional strategy focused on leveraging the potential and resources of the region as a whole. Only from collective action can the region truly overcome the historical hurdles that have held back a more successful TOD implementation strategy.

1. Build a Knowledge-Sharing Toolkit for Towns.




Limited resources can be supplemented by knowledge sharing. Each town has a unique story to tell – how some overcame community TOD education and zoning challenges and how others achieved major developer partnership triumphs – that will benefit the other towns. Town planners, economic development professionals, developers and other project delivery experts can participate and benefit not just from the information shared but from the network of TOD professionals that will develop.

**Recommendations: 3 Regional Actions**




- ✓ Build a Knowledge-Sharing Toolkit for Towns
- ✓ Adopt a Regional Brand
- ✓ Reimagine the Roles of Regional Actors

**Build a Knowledge-Sharing Toolkit for Towns**

 What	 Why	 How
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Town-led interactive sessions</li> <li>➢ Project-delivery expert presentations, Q&amp;A</li> <li>➢ Formal, regular events for peer-to-peer learning</li> <li>➢ Website on project delivery</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Towns benefit from successes of other towns</li> <li>➢ Establish a cohort of regional experts in project implementation</li> <li>➢ Provide plug-and-play templates and resources</li> <li>➢ Low cost to towns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Start with a strategy workshop</li> <li>➢ Build on existing CRCOG website</li> <li>➢ Delegate leadership responsibility for event planning</li> <li>➢ Formality adds credibility and increases engagement</li> </ul>




There is a need to develop a formal structure for information sharing. A formal structure should include regular sessions (such as monthly or quarterly) with presentations, interactive workshops, networking events, along with a website to promote the sessions, host shared materials, and celebrate achievements in TOD. The formality ensures credibility and engagement so that participants can develop relationships, forming a cohort that drives content and collaboration. It will need to be assessed whether CRCOG or another entity should lead this effort.

2. Adopt a Regional Brand.

A regional brand defines the unique characteristics of the corridor, such as employment and institutional centers, historical architecture, and community characteristics to define the value of development projects in the region. Towns benefit from a regional brand by identifying their individual niche that supports the broader brand. By defining a regional brand, each town will be better able to find the right scale of development in its town core.



### Adopt a Regional Brand

 <b>What</b>	 <b>Why</b>	 <b>How</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Consistent message about what the region has to offer that is unique</li> <li>&gt; Marketing strategies about the types of residents and employers are the best fit to shape development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Brand coalesces region's vision for economic development</li> <li>&gt; Complementary development between towns</li> <li>&gt; Creates an incentive to continue to provide data and share information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Establish vision for region at regional planning workshop</li> <li>&gt; Adopt brand messaging and other brand-reinforcing marketing</li> </ul>

A regional brand also reinforces – and creates an incentive to continue to support – knowledge sharing to include collection, review and decision making based on data that benefits the entire region. Travel data will be key to supporting a regional brand.

A regional brand also supports requests for funding and clarifies policy priorities thereby fostering a predictable framework for how resources are prioritized, how developers interact with the region, how the region conducts outreach efforts with communities, and in determining what investments to fund gaps to facilitate transactions. As a result, a regional brand will provide consistency and stability to withstand changes in political leadership, funding streams, and other unforeseen challenges outside of the public actors' control.




3. Reimagine the Regional Organizations.

Reimagining the roles that the regional entities will provide the towns with the resources they need to be more successful at implementing TOD projects, attracting more funding to the region for TOD, and increasing the profile of the regional brand.

CRCOG has the unique opportunity to promote TOD implementation by regularly bringing together

stakeholders in productive conversations and acting as an incubator of information and ideas.

### Reimagine the Roles of Regional Actors

 <b>CRCOG</b>	 <b>CTDOT</b>	 <b>CRDA</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Provides metrics and data supporting brand</li> <li>&gt; Acts as clearinghouse for templates and resources</li> <li>&gt; Promotes funding for TOD at state level</li> <li>&gt; Facilitates strategies on project delivery</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Sets process/standards for transportation investments</li> <li>&gt; Provides ridership data, schedules</li> <li>&gt; Sets standard station design requirements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Provides project-specific development expertise to towns through partnership agreement</li> <li>&gt; Facilitates coordination of multi-jurisdictional projects</li> </ul>

In addition, project delivery expertise already exists in the region through CRDA. Through a project agreement, towns can engage CRDA to provide project-specific support without expanding its legal authority. In the long term, a regional development authority could be an option, particularly in resolving challenges with multi-jurisdictional projects. Over time attitudes may change and as the region starts to build trust among the towns and regional actors, the partners may find the right balance of powers.

As the region's primary transportation provider, CTDOT should be an active participant in the regional conversation by providing data to inform regional decision making. A more formal information sharing structure with a regional partnership is a platform to establish processes with CTDOT that transparently collect and distribute data, schedules, and design requirements that allow for predictable decision making and approvals.

## Regional Strategy Planning Workshop

A regional strategy planning workshop would be an ideal kick-off point first to reaffirm and solidify a regional partnership, and to develop a game plan to collaboratively develop an implementation plan for the three recommendations.

### Regional Workshop

- ❖ In-depth review and discussion of developer recommendations.
- ❖ Interactive workshop to develop vision of a regional brand.
- ❖ Interactive development of a town-driven plan of action to build a knowledge-sharing toolkit.



## Introduction

This report is the deliverable for Task 3 of the CRCOG-sponsored TOD Roles, Visioning, Viability, and Tools Analysis (TOD Study). The purpose of the task was to research and describe the roles and responsibilities of the entities within the Capitol Region involved in TOD implementation and make recommendations on how those roles and responsibilities could be refined to better support TOD as a region. Part 1 describes the current state, and Part 2 describes the recommendations. There is a comprehensive set of appendices that go into detail on the feedback received and while they were too voluminous for the report, the appendices are worthy of more detailed review.

## Part 1—Current State

### Previous Studies and Recommendations

The Capitol Region has invested heavily in TOD-focused planning studies, some of which have touched upon themes and recommendations of the authority (and the limits of the authority) that the region’s players can exercise to catalyze TOD. This is the first report focused wholly on roles and responsibilities. Many of the same themes and needs are identified again in this report.

Table 1 - Prior Studies

Study Title	Date	Key Findings
<b>Making It Happen: Opportunities &amp; Strategies for TOD in the Knowledge Corridor</b>	2013	Recommended active leadership from state governments by leveraging state resources and partnering with anchor institutions; also recommended providing technical assistance to towns.
<b>TOD Analysis &amp; Implementation Strategies Report – CT Fastrack Capacity Study</b>	2016	Identified TOD implementation strategies for each town focused on (1) TOD proposition – specific recommendations for a particular project; (2) public realm improvements; and (3) planning and policy measures. Based on our research, the towns have pursued these strategies.
<b>Hartford Line TOD Action Report Part 1</b>	2017	Focused on desire and readiness criteria: physical suitability; public sector readiness; developer interest and leadership in place – all themes that play a part in this report.
<b>Hartford Line TOD Action Plan Part 2</b>	2019	Discussed hurdles that are again identified in this report: disconnect between property owners and potential developers; misalignment between existing zoning and development goals; lack of a cohesive town center / limited sense of place; lack of unified station area vision; regulatory differences between two municipalities; accessibility to stations and connectivity; dispersed residential and employment centers; limited physical and institutional structures to support TOD; need to better understand financial levers to catalyze TOD.

## Methodology of Report

Three forms of information were analyzed: (1) review of documentation and written questions; (2) interviews with representatives from each of the major players; and (3) a desk review of regional TOD strategies across the nation. A detailed summary of the methodology is provided in **Appendix A – Methodology**.

## Organizational Players Summary

There are a number of key organizations, both public and private, that influence TOD projects in the Capitol Region. This section identifies the strategies that each organization has followed to implement TOD, starting first with the eight towns, then the four regional organizations, and finally, the development community.

## Towns

The study includes eight towns along the Hartford Line rail corridor and/or the CTfastrak bus rapid transit (BRT) guideway. Some of those towns already have a rail and/or CTfastrak station and hope to update that station, whereas other towns are trying to attract a new station. With the exception of Hartford and New Britain, the towns are small or medium sized and have a limited budget for the planning department to implement their TOD policy. No town has staff with specific expertise in TOD implementation. A detailed town-by-town comparison is available in **Appendix B – Town by Town Comparison**. The complete town-by-town feedback is included in **Appendix C – Town Feedback**.

Table 2: Town Organizational Strategy

	Authority	Organizational Structure	Financial Investment	Strategy Focus
Enfield	Traditional CT town: land use, planning and zoning codes and approvals; financial incentives.	TOD policy driven by small planning staff.	Of the smaller towns, devotes the most money to planning and development, surpassing \$900,000 this year. While Hartford spends similar amounts, Enfield’s overall town budget is much less - \$151 million.	Grant funding; Outreach focused on developing community support.
Windsor	Traditional CT town: land use, planning and zoning codes and approvals; financial incentives.	TOD policy driven by planning staff.	Spends around \$500,000 for planning per year. Windsor’s town budget is over \$125 million.	Built collaborative development review process; Update TOD-supportive policies and regulations.

	Authority	Organizational Structure	Financial Investment	Strategy Focus
<b>Windsor Locks</b>	Traditional CT town <sup>1</sup> : land use, planning and zoning codes and approvals; financial incentives.	TOD policy driven by planning staff.	Small town budget of less than \$100 million, resulting in a planning budget of only \$11,014.	Update policies and regulations to promote downtown redevelopment.
<b>West Hartford</b>	Traditional CT town: land use, planning and zoning codes and approvals; financial incentives.	TOD policy driven by medium to small planning staff.	Spends around \$500,000 for planning per year with a town budget of over \$300 million.	Community education on TOD; updating zoning regulations; and leveraging CTfastrak location for mixed-use development.
<b>Hartford</b>	City charter gives zoning power to the zoning commission; large focus on driving TOD through zoning.	TOD policy driven by large planning staff and regional development organization.	Annual city budget of nearly \$600 million provides more resources to work with developers. The city allocates over \$900,000 to planning.	Focus on zoning overlays; recently improved website that allows for entry point into City review process.
<b>Newington</b>	Traditional CT town: land use, planning and zoning codes and approvals; financial incentives.	TOD policy driven by small planning staff.	Spends around \$500,000 for planning per year per year with a town budget of over \$130 million.	Garner public support through historical preservation; foster community understanding of TOD benefits.
<b>New Britain</b>	City: land use, planning and zoning codes and approvals; financial incentives.	TOD policy driven by small planning staff.	Spends around \$500,000 for planning per year with a town budget of over \$250 million.	Streamlined planning structure and business and development toolkit to deliver an easier to navigate planning process

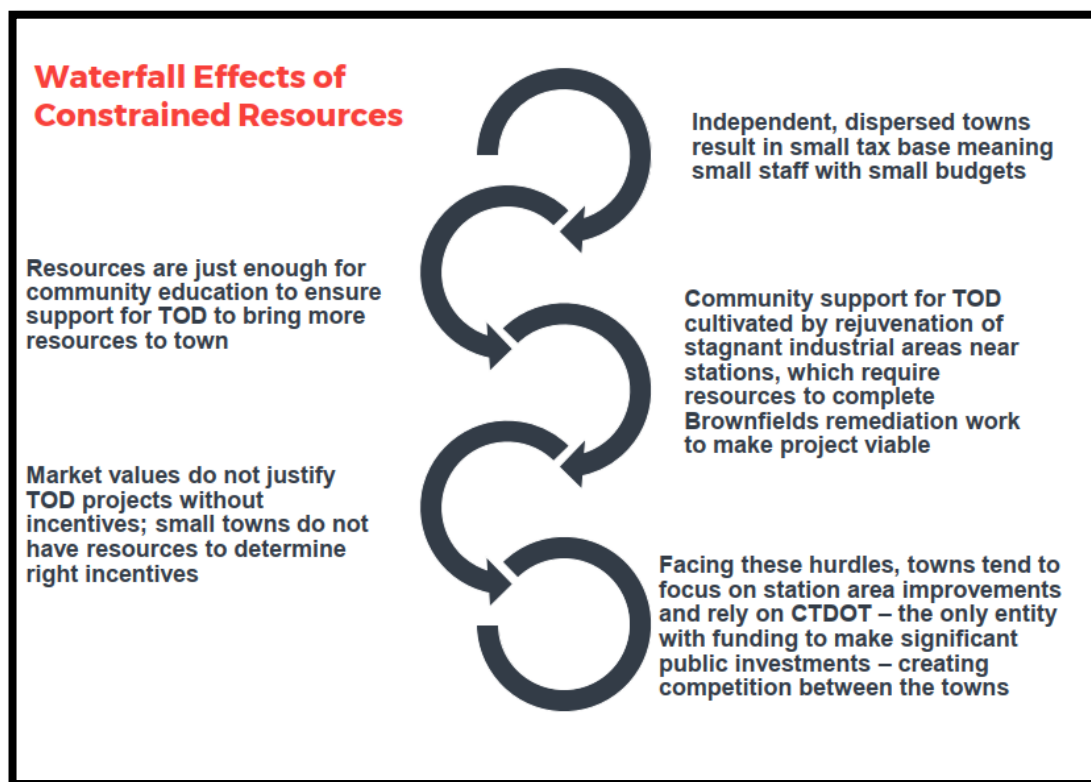
<sup>1</sup> A traditional Connecticut town is a small relatively homogenous town usually under 50,000 inhabitants, typically built around a town green and church that boomed at one point during industrialization benefiting from the hydro power provided by the region's rivers.

	Authority	Organizational Structure	Financial Investment	Strategy Focus
				for economic development.
<b>Berlin</b>	Traditional CT town: land use, planning and zoning codes and approvals; financial incentives.	TOD policy driven by small planning staff.	Small town budget of less than \$100 million resulting in a planning budget of only \$21,000.	Collaborative partnering and efficient risk sharing.

### Key Themes Among Towns

While each town has its discrete areas of focus, a common theme among all towns was the waterfall effects of limited resources. Figure 1 depicts those effects. This dynamic may be preventing the region from moving forward to complete more robust TOD implementation.

Figure 1 Key Town Themes



### Limited Resources

The primary challenge for nearly every town is constrained resources; most towns are small organizations with limited budgets that stretch to cover a myriad of local planning issues beyond TOD. As a result, each town’s policies favoring TOD do not have the resources necessary to retain the expertise needed to implement a complex TOD project. Towns have limited planning staff (sometimes

only one or two planners) who are not specialists in economic development or TOD delivery. Complex TOD projects require areas of special expertise including legal, financial, real estate, environmental, urban design, and engineering – just to get a project ready for market, then to negotiate a development agreement and then to support the project through completion.

In addition to a lack of TOD specialized expertise, resource constraints also limit the financial incentives towns can offer. With a significant financial gap to make a complex TOD project work, the local incentives are critical to getting a project completed. This challenge is compounded by the fact that town residents will not support TOD financial incentives without substantial public outreach to educate them on the community benefits of a TOD project. Therefore, towns choose to first invest in outreach, which diverts resources from being used to implement a TOD project. (Outreach is discussed further below.)

Accordingly, each small town appears to be faced with a difficult choice on where to devote limited resources among competing needs, and how to fill the unmet needs for resources with creative alternatives. The other issues identified in Figure 1 inflate the demand for those limited resources, thus feeding a self-reinforcing, stagnant state.

#### Brownfields Remediation, Financial Incentives & Historical Lack of Community Support

Most of the eight towns follow the New England tradition of development around a mill or factory and experienced fast, dense growth up to the early-20<sup>th</sup> century and then a decline after the Great Depression. As a result, nearly all TOD sites are redevelopment projects of manufacturing or industrial facilities (as opposed to Greenfields) and require substantial investment in environmental remediation either prior to going to market or as part of the financial incentive package for the developer.

Brownfields remediation can be costly and increases the complexity of any TOD project by extending the financial gap between the costs to redevelop and the anticipated revenue that normally most towns try to fill with incentives. However, that is only part of the story. Brownfields remediation requires significant up-front work to evaluate the need – and cost/benefit – for environmental clean-up and elevates the level of risk for both the town and developer. Both parties need expertise in negotiating and implementing risk sharing mechanisms and comfort in relying upon a flexible partnership. For example, one town described a TOD project in which the costs of environmental remediation were greater than originally anticipated, requiring the town to be flexible in restructuring its agreement with the developer to ensure the project moved forward. The town used experts to reevaluate the transaction, and town staff led the town council through the process to understand that even with the modifications, it was still the right choice for the community.

These tough decisions can be politically challenging when there is historical lack of support for TOD, including increased density required for a TOD project, but also lack of support for use of limited town resources for financial incentives to developers. This dynamic puts significant pressure on town staff and elected officials to clearly articulate the benefits that TOD projects can bring to the community. Without substantial resources to devote to outreach activities, this challenge gets even tougher.

In our interviews with the towns, a universal theme among town staff was the need to continually educate their communities on TOD and its benefits. The culture of the communities in the region is infused with a fear that TOD will change the character of their towns. Some towns noted continual changes in elected officials and staff because of skeptical community dynamics. Without that continuity,



it is difficult to implement TOD projects, which tend to take many years before the project even begins construction. Some towns have found ways to effectively communicate the benefits of TOD and have garnered community support to be able to create policies that make TOD projects viable and move them forward. Their experiences and lessons learned could prove valuable for the region as a whole.

#### Reliance on Coordination with CTDOT

With such constrained resources, it makes sense that the towns have focused their efforts to compete for state investment in rail infrastructure with the belief that a rail station can catalyze more TOD development activity. To that end, the towns see their ability to coordinate with the region's rail operator as critical to the success of their TOD efforts.

Implementation of TOD inherently relies upon transit and along the rail corridor, new or expanded stations are in various stages of planning. From the towns' perspectives, they have no other choice but to compete against each other – in a friendly manner of speaking – for priority implementation of the projects in their town. Competition centers around funding, but first, the town must be identified as a priority for adding a station to the state's overall capital plan. Once the station is identified as a priority, then funding must be secured, and last, the towns compete for attention from the state to progress through design and construction. Towns also compete for limited resources from the state to resolve access, right of way and design issues that involve developer plans for adjacent properties.

The towns' reliance on CTDOT was central in their desire to improve collaboration with the state. There are two main stop points: first, to make design and construction of new or updated train stations a priority and second, to act as a liaison between the towns and Amtrak to resolve access and parking issues raised by developers in TOD projects.

CTDOT's decisions on funding priorities were perceived to need more transparency – the towns wanted clearer guidance from the state on the investments they needed to be made to increase the likelihood of getting a rail station sooner. The towns also noted challenges in interfacing with the state. They described hurdles to resolve design and engineering issues with engineering teams who seemed not to coordinate with CTDOT's TOD-focused planners and appeared unwilling to modify station designs to support TOD, such as reducing or relocating parking or designing stations to be street-facing with parking in the back.

The towns' perceptions of CTDOT do not necessarily align with how CTDOT defines its role (discussed below). By contrast to the small-town organizations, CTDOT is a large, state-wide organization with multiple responsibilities beyond this single corridor. Importantly, there is a disconnect. The players in the region do not have a common understanding of the roles and responsibilities between the different organizations. Furthermore, this disconnect between the towns and CTDOT may be exacerbated by the towns' limited resources and lack of expertise as to how to most efficiently approach and utilize CTDOT.

#### A Regional Approach for the Towns

All towns viewed a regional strategy to support TOD as mutually beneficial and identified potential synergies. The reasons that a regional approach has not been successful in the past are not definitively clear. There are two likely causes: organizational structure and inherent competition.

Unlike other states, Connecticut does not have counties; rather, all land has been annexed by towns. Policies are determined at the municipal level and driven by local politics. Already limited resources are



dispersed, and economies of scale are hard to realize. Decision making is pushed to the micro level, adding complexity and inconsistency.

Historically, many Connecticut towns were founded as a reaction against how things were run in an existing town thereby fostering a culture that values independence over collective action. This dynamic is fueled by the race to garner CTDOT support for new or updated transportation infrastructure – a race to get a station. A regional approach requires collaboration, but in this circumstance, towns are not incentivized to devote limited resources to collaborative efforts if the outcome may mean that another town gets a station before them. Therefore, any efforts to foster collaboration must be able to define the mutual benefit for all towns.

This dynamic makes the roles of the regional players quite important. The next section discusses them.

### Regional Players

Four key regional players with the ability to heavily influence TOD implementation in the Capitol Region were identified in this study: Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG); Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT); Capital Region Development Agency (CRDA); and the private development community whose individual interests are not always aligned but for purposes of this report are represented as a single entity. There are other regional entities that provide funding but for purposes of putting a finger on the scale of whether a TOD project will happen or not, the primary players are CRCOG, CTDOT, CRDA and developers.

More information on the regional players is available in **Appendix E – Regional Players**. Table 3 below summarizes the organizational strategy of each.

*Table 3 - Regional Player Organizational Strategy*

Organization	Authority	Organizational Structure	Strategy Focus
CRCOG	Municipal Planning Organization (MPO): Planning and regional coordination.	Small planning staff divided between transportation planning and economic development.  Hosts corridor advisory council.	Regional planning strategies and regional coordination.
CT DOT	Provide state-wide transportation services and infrastructure.	TOD policy driven by a small staff housed within the planning department.  Transportation operations and capital projects engineering are located in different departments.	Investments in station projects that drive ridership.
CRDA	Provides development assistance to municipalities.	Small staff of development professionals available at the request of towns.	Focus on providing technical implementation assistance at the request of towns.

Organization	Authority	Organizational Structure	Strategy Focus
Private Developers	Profit-driven development of real property in increase value.	Developers active in the region are both local and national organizations.	Looking for towns to provide a consistent, predictable process for entitlements and financial incentives, to be helpful partners while avoiding “getting in the way”.

### Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG)

CRCOG is the region’s municipal planning organization (MPO) comprised of a voluntary council of 38 municipal governments in the Capitol Region of Connecticut. The aim of CRCOG is to enable municipalities to communicate more effectively, to save money through shared initiatives and infrastructure, to promote efficient public transportation systems, and to assist municipal governments in advocating for the needs of the region. The chief executive of each participating municipality serves on the CRCOG Policy Board. CRCOG has created a Corridor Advisory Committee that oversees CRCOG TOD studies and projects. CRCOG has a professional staff including a planning team that oversees the TOD studies. CRCOG sponsors planning studies overseen by a Transportation Committee or Policy Board and also participates in an advisory capacity for town or state-sponsored projects. Implementation of TOD projects is left to the individual towns who hold the land use authority like most local governments in the United States.

Unlike similar-sized metro regions in the United States, the dispersed nature of local governments, especially the lack of county governments, in Connecticut have made it difficult for the Capitol Region to be as proactive in establishing a region-wide TOD strategy. CRCOG noted that one major challenge was that there is not a regional transit provider beyond the state rail and CTfastrak system. CRCOG does not have the authority or resources to develop – on its own – a regional transit system. CRCOG also does not have any zoning or land use authority.

#### *Feedback from MPO Peer Studies*

In order to understand CRCOG’s role, we looked at other TOD-related studies by MPOs in regions facing similar issues. A comprehensive summary of that research is included as **Appendix F – Peer Studies**.

These peer studies illustrate the power of a regional approach led by an MPO. Active leadership at the regional level can establish density in land use; consistent design and zoning standards; provide more funding for TOD-supporting planning efforts; and clarify roles and responsibilities among stakeholders.

### Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT)

CTDOT is a department of the state government, and its mission is to provide a state-wide multimodal transportation system, which includes transit, highways, bridges, bicycle, and pedestrian infrastructure. CTDOT offers transit services through local buses, CTfastrak (bus rapid transit) buses, CTrail, Amtrak, and ferries. Expansion of public transit systems in Connecticut requires approval and oversight from CTDOT. All eight towns are connected to local or CTfastrak bus routes. Windsor, Windsor Locks, Hartford, and Berlin host CTrail lines with connections to the Hartford Line in all four municipalities, as well as a connection to Amtrak in Hartford. CTDOT regularly collaborates with all eight cities and towns in the TOD study to maintain existing infrastructure and expand public transit infrastructure.

CTDOT does not have dedicated funding for TOD projects; rather, its role is to fund investments in transit infrastructure that create value for the station area, thereby catalyzing TOD projects.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly, CTDOT does not take on the role of funding gaps in TOD projects or providing financial incentives. Yet, there is tremendous opportunity to support TOD through state funding for transportation projects, given that the state is investing heavily in transportation infrastructure with programs such as Let's Go CT, the biggest state investment outside the Federal funding programs.

CTDOT's primary focus in making those investments in transit infrastructure is to increase ridership to support CTDOT's core mission. CTDOT prioritizes investments to maintain existing infrastructure and then to invest where transit is being used. Therefore, when CTDOT determines which projects to prioritize, it evaluates existing demand for transit service or demonstrated potential to increase ridership. CTDOT collects some data on ridership. For example, CTDOT is collecting data on how many riders board at a station, but without any collaboration with towns about what TOD-supportive data is needed, CTDOT does not provide rider destination, frequency or purpose of riding. Some of the towns pointed out that if they were able to understand whether their station was serving primarily workers, non-business related visitors, or residents or a combination, they could structure their development efforts accordingly. In a post-Covid world where travel patterns have been upended, data on the flow of commuters and the regional needs for transportation related to institutional centers, employment centers, and housing is important to inform infrastructure investment. If CTDOT is making investment decisions based on the ability of a station to build ridership, but the towns do not have adequate ridership data, there appears to be an opportunity to develop a more robust data set that reinforces collaboration rather than competition. CTDOT invited more specific requests for data and suggested on-board surveys to better understand ridership patterns. CTDOT suggested that CRCOG's travel demand model might be useful as well.

#### Capitol Region Development Authority (CRDA)

CRDA is a quasi-state agency created by the Connecticut General Assembly to navigate between the public and private sector to plan and implement projects that are useful to the Capitol region. Most of CRDA's projects are located in Hartford; however, there may be some opportunities to utilize CRDA's skillset to buttress project delivery expertise within the entire region, even outside of CRDA's jurisdiction.

CRDA operates primarily in Hartford but also assists with projects in the seven municipalities that directly surround Hartford. That said, CRDA's implementing legislation enables the organization to assist in projects outside of its designated boundaries when invited by other municipal governments. Towns outside of Hartford and its contiguous municipalities may request CRDA services and funds by submitting project proposals to the executive Regional and Economic Development Committee. CRDA emphasized that it is most valuable when communities come forward with a project that needs project development expertise and support. CRDA has provided fee-based project development services to some towns in the past. This fee-based approach is a great opportunity for the towns in this study to obtain project development expertise at-cost.

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<sup>2</sup> The state Office of Policy and Management (a separate entity than CTDOT) has received state bond funds set aside for TOD projects.

The primary hurdle to overcome in using expertise provided by CRDA is that in the past, towns have voiced some distrust over a regional development authority. Importantly, however, if the towns were to engage CRDA for its fee-based project development expertise, towns would not cede their authority to make land use decisions. CRDA emphasized that it is not a planning office and has no interest in setting land use policy. CRDA does not have the authority to engage in redevelopment work with all of the towns in this study; expanding its jurisdiction for redevelopment projects would require an amendment to its state implementing legislation. Crucially, however, no change to its implementing legislation is required to provide fee-based project development expertise outside of its redevelopment jurisdiction.

Lastly, CRDA has multiple, state-based mandates; its expertise is not solely focused on TOD, and the region will have to coordinate closely with CRDA to ensure it has the resources and capacity to provide that fee-based project development expertise and does not become another source of competition for limited resources across towns.

## Developers

Eleven developers who are active or have shown interest in the eight towns were interviewed. A comprehensive summary of the feedback from developers is included in **Appendix D – Developer Feedback**.

The developers were enthusiastic to partner with those towns that were responsive to their needs and understood the developer's risk profile. Developers saw pushback from towns as a big risk that deterred project implementation.

Rather than the traditional town role of "approver", developers sought out towns that were a proactive partner who is comfortable seeking feedback and ideas from developers. In the theme of partnership, developers valued a town's ability to be flexible to a developer's constraints, such as helping to limit site acquisition costs and remaining agile to adjust incentives tailored to the needs of the project. Further, developers desired towns to provide transparency and assistance in expediting the entitlement process and accessing the local, state and federal public funding.

Because of the size of the towns and their limited expertise in project development, there was not consistent alignment in understanding of the roles and responsibilities between towns and developers. Some developers perceived a centralized redevelopment authority as one solution to this gap in expertise; however, towns were not open to ceding their land use authority to a state or regional entity. In fact, past efforts to create a redevelopment authority had failed.

## Part 2—Recommendations

The second part of this report describes the four key issues with the current state findings that inform the recommendations and then lays out three recommendations, which together, represent an overall proposed regional strategy to realign regional roles and to make the most of limited resources to catalyze TOD for the benefit of the region as a whole.

### Key Issues Informing Recommendations

1. Differences cannot overshadow a regional synergy.

Funds and staff time spent independently trying to progress projects could be better spent through collaboration. Competition for rail stations has constrained a regional synergy. To be successful, a regional approach will need to make readily apparent how collaboration will result in mutually beneficial results. The recommendations in this report aim to find practical ways to coordinate resources both for the towns and the state, as well as to move away from the singular focus on obtaining a rail station. Each town has its own character and benefits to the region as a whole; the development focus will go beyond the station development towards attracting projects that are appropriate for the community as a part of a larger region.

2. Formalized sharing of data will result in data-driven development investments.

TOD investment decisions that are data driven will solve many of the challenges, making better use of limited resources, providing targeted financial incentives, and building community understanding in the economic benefits of TOD. There is a plethora of information that could be shared, for example: ridership data; financial incentive packages; grants availability; project development expertise; brownfields and environmental remediation strategies; developer solicitation tools; and creative public outreach strategies. A more formal and strategically focused structure for sharing that information would result in better outcomes.

3. Collaboration in prioritizing transportation investments and in implementing transit projects will attract more developer interest.

Transportation investment decision making is centralized in Connecticut and driven more by existing ridership than catalyzing economic development through TOD. As a result, towns do not have direct influence over those investments. Therefore, there is a disconnect between the decision-making process that results in transportation investments and the TOD economic development benefiting from those investments.

In planning for TOD projects currently, towns and developers cannot predict whether an investment in a transit station will be made – or when. The criteria for selection of those investments is perceived by towns as not transparent, causing a lack of trust. This dynamic has caused a lack of predictability, adversely impacting the towns' interfaces with developers who rely on quick and efficient processes, thereby increasing the risks and therefore the costs of development projects.

Although DOT planning staff have expressed a willingness to coordinate efforts, there are minimal formal processes and accountability for efficient approval and decision-making processes between levels of government. A more formal and transparent process could result in more consistency that will attract

earlier developer interest and allow towns to focus on investments that make sites more marketable. Such formality and collaboration – plus transparency – may require more resources. The state is already struggling from the burden to deliver multiple major capital projects, while the towns have limited planning and engineering staff. The region’s efforts to attract more funding will support an effort to make the decision-making process more transparent.

A more formal process for collaboration on service delivery would also be helpful. Towns also report that they cannot rely on local transit systems who are too small and do not have consistent funding to provide meaningful, supportive transit options, including first and last mile solutions. Because of the geographic alignment of the corridor, towns often must overcome multi-jurisdictional challenges to provide these services. First and last mile supportive transportation services would reduce the need for parking and lead to increased ridership that would benefit CTDOT. More formal, collaborative coordination with the state may provide more funding and strategic solutions that make best use of limited resources.

#### 4. The region can invest in TOD project delivery and finance expertise.

TOD projects are highly complex and tend to evolve over time. Even after a transit facility investment decision has been made and a station project is ongoing, towns struggle to fully benefit from that investment because of a lack of project delivery expertise.

A good example involves the location and design of parking facilities at transit stations. The state benefits from designing and constructing a surface parking lot for commuters to easily access transit stations; however, towns understand that for town centers, surface parking is not the highest and best land use. Prior TOD studies in the region have identified TOD-supportive design standards and recommended form-based zoning codes that support TOD near station areas. Many towns in this study have implemented – or are in the process of implementing such zoning codes. As a result, towns have pursued a TOD-friendly design that incorporates parking into the built environment so that commercial space is street-facing along with pedestrian-friendly access to transit facilities. However, despite this progress, towns have struggled to bridge the gap between the transit facility design process and the implementation of adjacent development project by ensuring TOD-friendly station designs. More project development expertise could help towns successfully advocate for their design preferences.

An ombudsman or owner’s representative can act as a conduit between developer and town to speed up the entitlements process and resolve unanticipated challenges with the transaction. While the towns are beginning to develop this expertise as they pursue TOD projects, their resources are limited. The region could benefit from additional expertise. This is difficult for towns to provide independently but is more realistic to attain that expertise as a region via CRCOG or CRDA. One reason that a regional development authority is not currently available is that the towns are not willing to cede land use decisions. However, towns can benefit from regional project delivery expertise without having to give up their land use authority, as discussed in the recommendations below.

### Recommendations for a New Regional Strategy

A recommended new regional strategy incorporates three actions:

- Build a knowledge-sharing toolkit for towns.
- Adopt a regional brand.

- Empower the regional actors.

Collectively, these three recommendations are aimed at fostering a new strategy leveraging the potential and resources of the entire region. Only from collective action can the region truly overcome the historical hurdles that have held back a more successful TOD implementation strategy.

#### Build a Knowledge-Sharing Toolkit for Towns

As described above, there is plenty of information that could be shared. What is missing is a formal structure by which to share it. To that end, a knowledge-sharing toolkit for towns could provide that structure.

Because the towns are the project sponsors and land use decision makers, as well as the primary direct representatives of their communities, it makes sense that the toolkit should be town-driven. Each town

***A knowledge sharing toolkit means sharing information across the towns in a formal and collaborative manner.***

has a unique story to tell – how it overcame challenges and how it achieved successful development partnerships and projects – but despite their differences, each town also has something to learn from the other towns on TOD-forward policies and organizational strategies.

Sharing information between the towns – particularly if town-driven – could be unifying and serve as the foundation for future regional partnerships and collaboration. Given the constrained resources across all towns, reinventing the wheel should be avoided in favor of recycling and adapting other town’s lessons learned and tangible resources to each of the town’s needs.

Based on the successes and challenges shared by each town, Table 4 identifies some suggested topics for formal knowledge sharing sessions.

Table 4 - Knowledge-Sharing Session Topics

Topic	Examples
<b>Community support for TOD</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Windsor developed a unique approach; it created a non-profit organization, First Town Downtown, that could present on its mission and community outreach campaign.</li> <li>✓ Enfield gained community support in just about three months to submit a TOD study application.</li> <li>✓ Newington successfully pivoted and altered the conversation on TOD to focus on historical preservation to increase community support.</li> <li>✓ With limited internal resources, West Hartford successfully engaged a consultant to educate their community on TOD.</li> </ul>
<b>Increased density</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Both <b>Berlin</b> and <b>Windsor Locks</b> have restructured or removed their maximum density regulations to remove barriers to market entry. Both towns could collaborate and</li> </ul>



Topic	Examples
	create a more robust presentation that captures multiple solutions to a challenge.
<b>Timing and costs of environmental remediation</b>	✓ <b>Berlin</b> completed multiple amendments to a development agreement to address unexpected additional remediation work. Berlin and their project’s developer could share insights on how their flexibility and problem-solving attitude helped them find a solution.
<b>Developer-friendly process</b>	✓ <b>New Britain</b> finalized a new Plan of Conservation and Development and a Business and Developer Toolkit that affords tools to those seeking more information on TOD and business. ✓ <b>Berlin</b> has had a successful RFQ and RFP process to deliver a TOD project.
<b>Financial incentives</b>	✓ <b>Windsor Locks</b> has structured a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District.

In addition, the following interactive workshops will build expertise in TOD project development.

- Workshops on development of ridership data to facilitate a long-range regional plan to identify commuter patterns.
- Peer-to-peer, one-on-one learning sessions between towns sharing similar TOD functions. This could include a strategy discussion on defining the typology of each station for each town as a work center or a workforce housing and how TOD typologies can serve those stations.
- Learning forums from expert speakers to increase awareness of opportunities for funding and financing.

The formality of these knowledge-sharing sessions is critical to ensure credibility and regular attendance. The content must be engaging and beneficial to the attendees. Through these sessions, the regular attendees will develop better relationships, forming a cohort of sorts, that drives content and methods of knowledge sharing that is meaningful to them and in a manner that is convenient and timely. The format should provide some variety: regular sessions in which speakers can provide presentations; interactive workshops (such as evaluating lessons learned on recent projects); or mentoring networking events where information is shared on a one-to-one basis.

A website could serve as an online resource center for towns to access shared documents and resources. A regional TOD website that acts as a “one-stop-shop” portal for everything TOD in the region will serve as a location to advertise these knowledge-sharing opportunities. The website also can house a comprehensive toolbox that includes each town’s development tools and even other tools used in Connecticut and across the country. Internal content amongst the towns could provide key contact information, processes and procedures, past documents and presentations shared at prior partnership events, advertise for future partnership events, and provide information on upcoming funding and financing opportunities. Most importantly, the internal website can promote a sense of community and cohesion.



The website can also host content targeted for the development communities on what opportunities are available in the region (such as an interactive map of the region), how to pursue those opportunities with links to town websites that identify the development approval process and key points of contact, and regional information that can explain the demographics, ridership information, funding and financing tools, community outreach, and other key information that may be helpful for developers. Importantly, the external website should tout the regional brand (discussed below) and track project successes and the progress of projects to develop interest and excitement.

### *Leadership*

While the content would be town-driven, the formal structure for a toolkit needs a leader. The towns are resource constrained and it is not reasonable for them to organize, promote and host these events. A long-term partnership requires some leadership and vision, as well as practical support to make ideas happen.

CRCOG already hosts monthly meetings with the public works directors from each town and that same group would serve as the core attendees for the knowledge sharing sessions, developing into a cohort of experts. It may be reasonable to expand monthly meetings for planners and economic development professionals as well. CRCOG could facilitate these events, depending on its capacity and resources. .

CRCOG also already hosts a website on TOD. This website might be an existing resource that can be retrooled as a toolkit both for external purposes and for the knowledge sharing toolkit for towns.

### *Adopt a Regional Brand*

There are synergies to be gained from a regional brand. A regional brand has the potential to set a unified, clear vision for the type of region-supported TOD, giving developers consistency and stability to withstand changes in political leadership, funding streams, and other unforeseen challenges. By defining a regional brand, each town will be better able to find the right scale of development in its town core.

***A regional brand means defining the unique characteristics of the corridor, such as employment and institutional centers, historical architecture, or community characteristics to define the value of development projects in the region.***

A regional brand reinforces – and creates an incentive to continue to support – the first recommendation, a knowledge sharing toolkit for towns. A regional brand means that the towns now have an incentive to share data, for example, to identify each town’s niche as a residential center or workforce center, for example. There is an incentive to share transportation

ridership data to determine the best locations for affordable housing or to identify the right connectivity for local transit services.

*What is a “brand” in this circumstance?* The Capitol region historically has been known as the insurance capital. Based on developer interviews, it appears that the development community has begun to develop a potential brand, envisioning a “big little city” or sophisticated smaller city. The region boasts an educated workforce. The area has a concentration of technology and aerospace companies as well as a legacy of manufacturing companies. Post-Covid pandemic, a potential “hub” could attract workers

interested in living along the corridor in towns offering a “small town” vibe with comparatively lower cost housing, but with convenient transportation (including a one-seat ride) to commercial and educational centers tailored to a sophisticated and educated constituency.

The vision for a regional brand must be driven by the region itself. It is recommended that CRCOG host a workshop to include representatives from the towns, the Hartford Chamber of Commerce, and other institutions (such as universities, hospitals, airports). CRCOG may wish to engage a branding expert to facilitate the workshop.

A regional brand does not mean that every TOD transit station project looks the same. Towns benefit from a regional brand by identifying their individual niche that supports the broader brand. For example, some towns are better suited to focus on residential development because that town is where the workers live. Other towns may be better suited to focus on commercial development because that town is where the workers come to work.

Once a brand is developed, it should be incorporated into how the region’s actors make decisions about funding and policy priorities. A regional brand will reflect a predictable process for how resources are made available, how developers can interact with the region, and how the region conducts outreach efforts with communities, and in determining what investments to fund gaps to facilitate transactions. Using the “big little city” brand as an example, the region could develop a concept vision for work centers attracting employers in the technology and aerospace sectors augmenting the state’s broader efforts. The region could offer tailored incentives to projects that provide amenities or housing to technology and aerospace company workers at different towns along the corridor. This approach demonstrates a clear economic benefit to town residents for TOD, assisting with outreach efforts.

### *Leadership*

As with the toolkit recommendation, there is an important leadership role. The regional leadership for a brand would involve facilitating the development of a brand, providing resources to further is promotion, and reinforcing the brand by providing unifying messaging.

### Reimagine the Role of the Regional Actors

Reimagining the roles that the regional entities provide will exponentially provide the towns with the resources they need to be more successful at implementing TOD projects, attract more funding to the region for TOD, and increase the profile of the regional brand.



***The regional actors can provide resources, attract funding, increase the profile of TOD for the region and play a leadership role.***

### *Leadership*

The Capital region is set to benefit from an entity that takes on a more formal leadership role.

### Potential for CRCOG in Leadership Role

While CRCOG’s areas of focus in TOD thus far have primarily focused from the planning lens, as an MPO, CRCOG has the unique opportunity to promote TOD implementation.

Some of the actions that CRCOG could take on are as follows –

- Collect data to develop a regional approach to planning TOD-related investments;
- Lead regional planning such as setting visions for TOD site typology determinations in mutually reinforcing ways through urban design conversations and model zoning codes;
- Serve as a liaison between towns to ensure that one station complements development at other stations;
- Establish regional metrics to measure and evaluate progress;
- Publish and promote progress so that the entire region benefits
- Promote TOD at the state level, refining the region’s brand to seek out state and federal funding;
- Hire a lobbyist and pursues legislative action to ensure consistent state funding for regional or local transportation, in addition to state transportation options;
- Advocate for regional funding for brownfields, historical renovation, or connectivity projects;
- Lead development of a strategy for prioritizing and phasing investments across the corridor, or lead conversations about the benefits of such a strategy by convening state and local leaders; and
- Serve as a clearinghouse for TOD funding, coordinating with the state to promote the region.

#### *Other Leadership Options*

If CRCOG were not able to serve as a regional leader, the towns could form an independent entity for the sole purpose of implementing regional TOD. While the form of the organization may depend on state and local laws, other regions have formed a nonprofit public benefit corporation (or the like). Some towns in the region have nonprofits that serve a similar function in the downtown area. Their experiences, governance structure and implementing documents may be a good place to start. Implementing such an organization may take several years and is more likely a long-term solution.

#### *CRDA as Regional Development Advisor*

The region already has an entity that can provide project development expertise: CRDA. With CRDA already serving as project advisor on projects, CRDA has the ability to fill this role for these eight towns, but it is possible that CRDA could serve as an advisor on a regional basis in addition to a project-by-project basis. This appears to be a more cost effective solution than each town retaining its own experts.


A formal agreement would identify how and under what terms CRDA can offer expertise to the towns. CRDA already has a template agreement that can be used as a framework that can be incorporated into a partnership agreement, if warranted. CRDA would not need to expand its legal authority in any way since CRDA already has the authority to provide project development expertise without making land use decisions and can support projects outside of its immediate area if requested by the jurisdiction.

The region could choose to explore creating its own regional development authority under state law, but that would require state action. There appears to be no interest in a regional redevelopment authority now because the towns do not intend to cede their home rule powers to govern land use and there is not the political will to give a regional entity the power to condemn property. Currently, the need is limited to project development expertise. However, there are advantages to having a regional authority, particularly for resolving challenges in multi-jurisdictional projects. Over time, attitudes may

change and as the region starts to build trust among the towns and regional actors, the partners may find the right balance of powers.

*CTDOT as Regional  
Transportation Coordinator*

Because transportation funding and operations are consolidated within the state government, CTDOT plays a primary role in driving transportation throughout the region. As a result, CTDOT has the information and data to inform regional decision making. CTDOT should be an active participant in the regional conversation, and the regional partnership should establish processes with CTDOT that transparently collect and distribute data, schedules, and design requirements and allow for predictable decision making and approvals.



*To start, a regional strategy planning workshop would reaffirm and solidify a partnership between the towns and regional players, emphasizing the intent to foster collaboration for the collective benefit of the region. The workshop could dive deeper into the feedback described in the appendices of this report.*

## Conclusion – Regional Workshop

A regional strategy planning workshop would be an ideal kick-off point first to reaffirm and solidify a regional partnership, and to develop a game plan to collaboratively develop an implementation plan for the three recommendations. The first workshop could be an in-depth review and discussion of the developer recommendations or other feedback identified in the appendices to this report. A follow-up workshop might include development of a vision for a regional brand, perhaps led by a facilitator. Another session could focus on development of a plan to build the knowledge-sharing toolkit for towns, focusing on roles and responsibilities – including leadership – to make the recommendations in this report a success. In any event, a workshop is an opportunity to bring together the key individuals in the region to define a future partnership focused on collective gain and regional synergy.

## Appendix A: Methodology

This task used a three-step methodology.

Step one was a due diligence request to all eight towns included in the study. The purpose of this request was to identify any additional preliminary documents that had not already been provided. The scope of the request covers any efforts to progress (development) within the rail corridor with the goal of understanding the inter-related roles and responsibilities within the region. These documents informed the second form of information intake for analysis, the interviews.

Step two was a 30-minute interview with one to two representatives from each town. Ahead of the interview, an interview guide was sent to each of the interviewees for them to preview the types of questions they would be asked during the interview to assist in preparation. No written response was required of the interviewees. Aside from the towns, representatives from CRCOG, CTDOT and CRDA were interviewed. In addition, developers who are active or who have shown interest in the region's development and specifically the region's TOD were also included for an interview.

Step three was a desk review of other established transit corridors focusing on TOD roles and responsibilities, strategy, guidelines, and best practices was conducted. Those transit corridors with comparable characteristics or comparable challenges with solutions identified were included in this report as potential recommendations to CRCOG and the eight participating towns.

## Appendix B: Town-By-Town Comparison

Each of the towns has a fairly similar organizational structure with a few key differentiators.

The 2022-2023 FY town budgets and planning budgets vary significantly by municipality. The City of Hartford has the largest municipal budget by a wide margin with an annual budget of nearly \$600 million. Only Windsor Locks and Berlin have budgets less than \$100 million. The remaining municipalities each have budgets between \$125 million and \$317 million, as can be seen in the figure.

Figure 2 Town Budget by Municipality

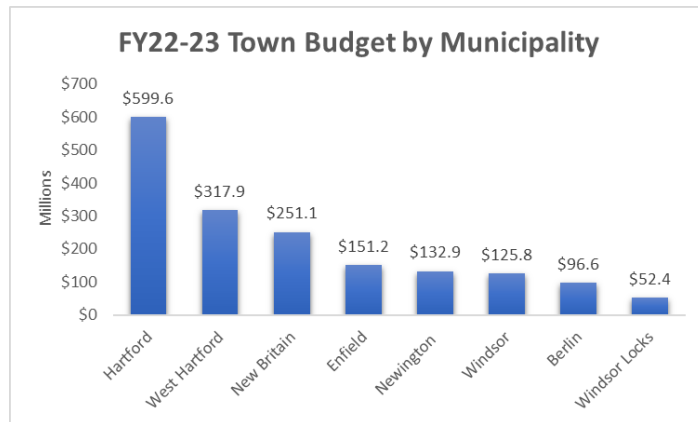
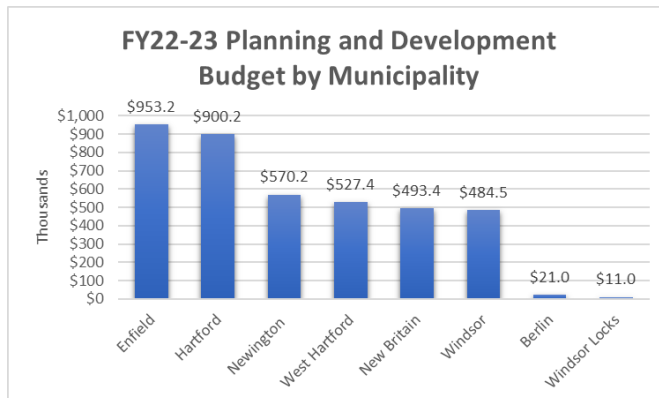


Figure 3 Planning and Development Budget by Municipality



Overall, each municipality dedicates less than one percent of their entire budget to planning and development. Enfield and Hartford devote the most money to planning and development in their FY 2022-2023 budgets, each surpassing \$900,000. The other municipalities devote approximately \$500,000 to planning and development in this fiscal year, except for Windsor Locks and Berlin who devote only \$11,014 and \$21,000 to planning and development, respectively.

### Enfield

#### Organizational Structure

The Town of Enfield is governed by a Town Council, of which the members are elected for a two-year term. A Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) consisting of three regular members and three alternate members, each appointed by the Town Council, handles planning and zoning initiatives within Enfield. Additionally, the Zoning Board of Appeals, Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Agency, and Historic District Commission aid the PZC in their efforts while also attending to problems regarding zoning appeals,

wetlands, and historical conservation, respectively. Enfield's PZC retains most of the decision-making power regarding planning and zoning.

As of May 2022, Enfield's PZC is in the process of developing its updated Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). The draft (updated May 5, 2022) cites Connecticut General Statutes §8-23, noting the municipality's responsibility to develop multi-modal transit options. Furthermore, the draft suggests that Enfield will be cooperative and consistent with the goals laid out in the CROG 2020-2030 POCD. Enfield's new passenger train station is expected to open in late 2023. In the current Enfield POCD draft, there is no mention of transit-oriented development, nor are there any existing agreements specifically regarding transit-oriented development between the town and any other organization.

#### *Prior Successes and Next Steps*

Overall, Enfield has been successful in obtaining support from key stakeholders, namely CTDOT, to provide funding to prioritize completion of a new rail station. The town believes that its ability to raise funding in the form of grants and financing in the form of State bonds has signaled to CTDOT the town's commitment to realizing a train station and is one of the main reasons a rail station was approved and prioritized for Enfield. Enfield was also able to obtain early support from the community, receiving community approval to apply for a TOD grant in just three months.

Enfield successfully applied for a grant to address brownfield remediation and demolish current structures to reduce costs for a developer and make a site more viable and attractive to potential developers.

Enfield realizes its greatest upcoming effort will be to implement the town's vision of a vibrant, successful transportation hub. Currently, Enfield has local buses and a couple of Fastrack stations, but there isn't any real hub. Having a train station will create a natural transportation center and the ability to promote TOD and development in general. However, Enfield appreciates the importance of this opportunity for the town's future and wants to be thoughtful and forward-thinking on the design of the station to promote a thriving transportation hub and TOD. This will require significant collaboration between the town, CTDOT, the community, and developers.

## Windsor

### *Organizational Structure*

The Town of Windsor operates as a council-manager form of government. The town manager is the chief executive officer of the municipality and is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the town, ensuring that town services are performed in accordance with town council's policies and within the capability of the town's resources. The town manager is appointed by the town council to whom the town manager reports the town's financial condition and the future needs of the town. The town council is a council of nine members elected biennially for two-year terms and is responsible for setting the policy direction of the town. In addition to the town manager, the town council elects a mayor from its membership for the two-year term.

While Windsor does not have any agreements in place directed toward TOD, the Windsor Economic Development Department was created for the promotion and development of the business and industrial resources of Windsor. In addition, there is the Town Planning & Zoning Commission (TPZC)

which is charged with the long-range planning, conservation, and development of Windsor. Through its Plan of Conservation and Development, the TPZC sets future policy for the conservation and orderly development of the Town over the next decade and beyond. TPZC implements the Plan of Conservation and Development by regulating the residential and commercial development of the Town of Windsor. The TPZC is supported by the Planning Department and the Staff Development Team, a multi-disciplinary team of Town officials charged with comprehensively reviewing all development proposals and applications pending before the Town's land use commissions.

Windsor employs a comprehensive approach to the development review process, utilizing an interdisciplinary team of Windsor town officials who meet to review plans with the goal of transparent, equal dissemination of information and collaborative problem solving. All stakeholders are in the room at the same time, receiving the same information with the result of an efficient, holistic, predictable approach that allows projects to move forward faster. In addition, when a project application is submitted, it is also given to the Economic Development Commission, which functions in an advisory role only that provides feedback that helps shape proposals and needs ahead of submitting to town council and planning and zoning.

#### *Prior Successes and Next Steps*

Windsor has implemented a successful local development review process. First, the plan goes to the Economic Development Commission which serves in an advisory role to give initial feedback to shape proposals ahead of going to the town council. After that, every Tuesday, all departments across all disciplines of land use and various departments (planning, building, fire, health, etc.) meet to review plans. By having everyone in the same room, hearing the same thing at the same time, projects move forward faster. It's an efficient, holistic, predictable approach that has received good feedback from all departments.

Windsor also has a non-profit, First Town Downtown whose mission is first, to understand what the community wants in terms of development, and second, to build understanding in the community on TOD. First Town Downtown is valuable because it can operate and communicate in ways that town staff cannot. FTD galvanizes stakeholders particularly in the town center where TOD is most focused serving as both formal and informal advocates of development projects.

Windsor is currently working on two main efforts. The first effort is developing more financial incentives to make projects more attractive to developers and ultimately more viable. Windsor is specifically focused on updating the TIF policy.

The second effort consists of assuaging town residents' fears that TOD may change the character of downtown. Along with the efforts of First Town Downtown, Windsor is also working to produce a report on a series of TOD recommendations and focus groups. The benefits of this TOD study are twofold. First, it helps educate the community and create TOD buy-in. Second, the community has given its feedback and recommendations in the report, and the town of Windsor is following those recommendations in the project it's moving forward. So, as they are moving these projects forward, they have a report to point to the community to let them know the town is implementing their vision.



## Windsor Locks

### *Organizational Structure*

The Town of Windsor Locks lacks a central governmental office or council, such as the Office of the Mayor or Town Council that exists in other municipalities in the region. Instead, the Town of Windsor Locks is governed by several boards, commissions, and councils, the members of which are either publicly elected or appointed by an elected official. The two agencies that deal primarily with planning and zoning in the Town are the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) and the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA). There is also a Conservation Commission and an Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission which occasionally collaborate with the PZC and ZBA on plans or developments that could impact wetlands or other nature preserves within the municipality.

The Town ZBA consists of five members who are elected by the public for a term of five years. The Board is a bipartisan commission, and the Windsor Locks Town Charter prohibits more than three members from a single political party from sitting on the board simultaneously. An alternate member of the ZBA is elected every six years. At any given time, the alternate board is made up of three members, no more than two of which belong to the same political party. The ZBA reviews applications to change aspects of the zoning code and is also authorized to grant special permits for developments that do not adhere to the existing zoning code. The Board also hears cases in which a resident wishes to appeal a ruling made by the Zoning Enforcement Officer.

The PZC consists of five regular members who are appointed by the First Selectman, three alternates, and a Town Planner and Town Engineer, who are full-time employees of the Town. The PZC has the authority to develop plans and zoning regulations in the Town of Windsor Locks.

Windsor Locks has a considerable history in researching and promoting transit-oriented development. In 2007, the town completed its own TOD study, which ultimately led to the construction of TOD projects beginning in 2018 and 2019. In their POCD adopted in 2020, the PZC laid out a plan for transit-oriented development as part of a larger redevelopment effort in the Business Downtown Redevelopment District. The PZC has developed a Main Street Overlay in which most of the planned TOD will take place. TOD in this area will likely be supported by the PZC and local government, however TOD elsewhere in the community would likely require special approval.

### *Prior Successes and Next Steps*

From a TOD perspective, Windsor Locks benefits from its location and proximity to Bradley International Airport as well as the already existing Amtrak station. The town's structures and policies are currently set up to encourage TOD and mixed-use development. The town's TIF district brings in funding that allows for a certain portion rebated back to the developer as well as small business loans. Windsor Locks was also able to remove its maximum density requirement by educating the town and the community through conceptual plans, visuals, vision, background work, a TOD study, and community outreach. The community outreach showed the end product of a TOD development in terms of safety, code, sanitary code, etc. to gain community buy-in. The town also managed a four-year process to update its POCD. Finally, while still growing and ramping up, Windsor Lock's Downtown Development Authority works to support Windsor Lock's development by assembling property, site control and release of RFPs.

One of Windsor Locks' primary efforts is in encouraging mixed use development and attracting developers. Developers are interested but the local market creates some risk that increases costs.

Zoning is set up to encourage mixed use and higher density development, but it's not currently happening. Windsor Locks' challenge is that it lacks site control. In addition, frequently the commercial property owners often live elsewhere making communication and negotiations difficult.

## West Hartford

### *Organizational Structure*

The Town of West Hartford is governed by the Town Mayor and operates under a Council-Manager form of government. The Town Council, a group of nine members, is elected by the public, and the Town Council elects the Town Manager. The Town Council serves as the elected policy board and the Town Manager serves as the chief executive officer responsible for carrying out the policies of the Town Council. The TPZC consists of three members appointed by the Town Council, and each serves a five-year term. Additionally, a Town Planner regularly meets with and advises the three primary members of the TPZC. Should a TPZC member become incapable of fulfilling their duties, an alternate is chosen from the Town Council Members. Members of the TPZC also act as the Inland Wetlands Agency. Despite the existence of the TPZC, the Town Council retains significant power pertaining to planning and zoning regulations. All proposed zoning maps must be approved by the Town Council. Additionally, special district rezoning applications and development projects that require alterations to the zoning code must be passed by a majority vote of the Town Council members.

The TPZC has developed a "Transit Oriented Development Planning and Zoning Initiative". Aligning with the goals laid out in their 2020-2030 POCD, the West Hartford Planning and Zoning Commission has begun to develop a TOD zoning plan for a 0.25-mile area between the Elmwood and Flatbush Ave stations. The Town Planning and Zoning Commission has developed a community survey to record attitudes toward this type of development in West Hartford. In accordance with the initiative, the PZC hosted a number of community workshops and public forums in an attempt to educate the public about transit-oriented development. Many of the residents of West Hartford have a history of working against the development of multi-family housing within their municipality which could potentially cause problems with TOD planning efforts in the community. However, the current Planning and Zoning Commission seems committed to following through with the promises of diversifying housing stock and developing TODs as laid out in their most recent POCD. As most of West Hartford is currently zoned for single-family residential housing, most TOD would require a special zoning application that would need to be endorsed by the Planning and Zoning Commission as well as passed by a majority vote of the Town Council.

### *Prior Successes and Next Steps*

West Hartford has been successful in changing the community's view of public transportation and TOD in the town. The Planning and Economic Development team, with some consultant support, conducted targeted outreach to educate the community on TOD. West Hartford also participated in some studies to allow more education on TOD and held parallel Town Council meetings. Initially, before the CTfastrak stations, there was general apathy and even displeasure at having stations in West Hartford. However, the station developments continued and after they were finished, the community looked at the stations as an investment and wanted to see that investment leveraged in a beneficial way. West Hartford then successfully applied for and received a Complete Streets grant and that, along with residents moving back into the area created mixed-use developments and mixed incomes near the Fastrack stations creating full-fledged TOD zones. These efforts and results were well received by the community.

West Hartford has the market for TOD. Its next focus will be on creating interest in projects by developers. West Hartford does not have a history of political direct support for financing nor does the town have an incentive-based development approach. TOD in West Hartford has traditionally been a function of zoning which hasn't been truly transit supportive historically. There is also a mixed assortment of permitted uses. All of these items have been viewed as a challenge by developers and have led to a lack of interest by them. However, last year West Hartford started a formal process to change the zoning to allow for more TOD which should help increase interest in projects by the development community.

## Hartford

### *Organizational Structure*

The City of Hartford is governed by the Mayor of Hartford and the City Council. City Council members are elected to four-year terms. Council members sit on boards and subcommittees under the jurisdiction of the Council. The City of Hartford Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) supersedes all City Council subcommittees that deal with planning and zoning. The Planning and Zoning Commission consists of seven regular members and three alternates, all of whom are professionals in fields relating to law, planning, architecture, landscape architecture, or real estate law. The PZC hosts bi-monthly meetings in conjunction with the Inland Wetlands Commission. Most PZC meetings are open to the public with stakeholders present. Meetings that are generally not public include Section 8-24 reviews regarding municipal properties in which the government is the primary stakeholder.

All requests regarding planning, zoning, and alterations to the city structure must be approved by the PZC. The PZC is responsible for producing a POCD for the city every ten years. The PZC noted the importance of TOD in their 2020-2035 POCD, citing Hartford's large stock of vacant or abandoned mixed-use land as a potential to infill with transit-oriented developments. In their POCD, the PZC lays out a plan to incorporate TOD in the "Parkville Arts & Innovation District" plan, which is located in the area surrounding Parkville CTfastrak Station. Transit-oriented developments could be constructed in areas of the city that are currently zoned as mixed-use development, many of which are within a 0.4-mile radius of a multi-modal transit hub. Any special use applications outside of the marked mixed-use zones would require zoning changes and would need to be approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission.

### *Prior Successes and Next Steps*

Hartford has had a number of successful TOD projects, notably those in Parkville and Dunkin Donuts Park, which is within a half-mile of Hartford Union Station and served by eight bus lines. The city has recently updated its Plan of Conservation and Development. Now, when a developer is interested in submitting a project to the city, they must prove it's in line with the Plan. This makes the project selection process more transparent for developers and gives clearer guidelines and benchmarks to the Department of Development Services (DDS). The city has also updated its website significantly during covid that works to be interactive and transparent for developers looking to start projects. Developers can set up a pre-application meeting on this website which is a good starting point for development in Hartford. Hartford also benefits from community participation through its Neighborhood Revitalization Zones (NRZs). Connecticut mandated Hartford to implement NRZs to improve communication between residents and people working in Hartford and the municipality. These can be very effective in obtaining community buy-in for projects.

Hartford's DDS is in transition after many staff changes and working to increase staff to meet the needs of the DDS. Hartford is also working on continual additions and updates to its planning and development website, including a new citizen portal which will allow developers to upload information on a potential project ahead of the pre-application meeting. In addition, there is still a lack of understanding of the benefits of TOD for the community. Having accessible, weekly bulletins of what is happening from the communications team would be helpful for the community. These bulletins could include updates on what is coming next in terms of projects and time and location of relevant town meetings.

## Newington

### *Organizational Structure*

Voters in the Town of Newington elect a mayor and eight town councilmembers for two-year terms. Seven regulars and three alternate members are appointed to the PZC by the Town Council. PZC members serve for staggered four-year terms. A Town Planner with professional planning qualifications serves as the administrative officer for the PZC. The Town Planner is a non-elected, unappointed professional who is hired by the Town Manager. Newington's Zoning Board of Appeals consists of five regular members and three alternates, all of whom are appointed by the Town Council and serve for staggered terms of five years. Newington also has an economic development team which is comprised of public employees from a multitude of disciplines. The team works with developers to foster business and residential redevelopment, reuse and relocation as needed. The economic development team disseminates its knowledge and expertise with developers to streamline local permitting processes as required.

The 2020-2030 Newington POCD developed by the PZC, and Town Planner lays out plans for a new train station as well as opportunities around the two existing CTfastrak stations. The POCD suggests implementing municipal policy to promote the construction of TODs in the community. In the past there was hesitancy about multi-family housing in Newington including a moratorium on the construction of multi-family residences in the town. This moratorium, however, expired in 2016 and but it continues to impact town culture such that community support for TOD development depends on the level of interest by current PZC members.

### *Prior Successes and Next Steps*

Newington has made and will continue to leverage its existing town assets and location to increase TOD. The community has not been very accepting of TOD, public transportation, nor low-income housing. So, the town has found when a project is presented to the community in that manner it has not been well received. The town instead has found other ways to progress TOD and transit projects. First, the site for a TOD project that is being considered has some beautiful historic homes. Newington applied for and received a grant to perform a planning study and promotion of the area as a historical trail loop. The community liked the idea of preservation rather than development and having a station that promoted tourism for their town. In addition, behind the site, there is an industrial area with underutilized properties. The town of Newington contacted those businesses and asked if they would be amenable to an overlay district that allowed a better market and return on their dollar. The commercial owners there said yes. By finding innovative ways to promote a train station and TOD in the town, the town planners have made the projects more acceptable to the town and more likely to succeed.

Newington will continue to make a concerted effort to educate the community on the benefits of TOD and how to best implement it. They will also continue to leverage the town's assets and location. The town believes this area offers a great opportunity for mixed use due to its proximity to West Hartford and Central Connecticut State University (CCSU). Newington did apply for but wasn't successful in receiving a multi-purpose trail grant to support a trail from New Britain to Newington and another that would from Newington to West Hartford which would connect to the busway. The ultimate goal is to link the two trails. Newington plans to apply for an award again for this competitive grant this year.

## New Britain

### *Organizational Structure*

New Britain's municipal government is led by a mayor and a common council of fifteen members. Both the mayor and council members serve terms of two years and are elected by the public. New Britain's planning and zoning structure has recently been overhauled and streamlined to have the City Planning, Economic Development and Community Development Departments all under the new Department of Planning and Development (DPD). Most positions in the DPD are appointed by the Common Council. The new structure allows developers and community members to approach this one-stop-shop and be directed to the correct department more efficiently. The goal of this realignment was to coordinate planning and zoning decisions with an eye to promoting economic development by meeting the needs of the private sector and providing an easily navigable DPD. With the current structure, planning and zoning decisions are made from an economic development perspective.

The current review process includes a review by the mayor who then conducts a Mayor's Round Table (outlined in the POCD) where all the people who would need to have a say in the approval of the project are gathered along with the development team. Any feedback is then given, but ultimately the final authority for zone approval is the Common Council. The Common Council meets for three consecutive days to review the zoning and make any necessary adoptions to it for a project to move forward.

In 2010 New Britain adopted a ten-year TOD Plan to facilitate the construction of TODs in the town and to support investment in public transit infrastructure. The TOD Plan has not been updated for the 2020-2030 decade. However, the 2020-2030 POCD specifically mentions plans for future TODs in the area. Both the past TOD plan and the current POCD suggest that the Common Council and Department of Planning and Development will be cooperative with future TOD efforts.

### *Prior Successes and Next Steps*

New Britain has had a clear, overall focus on streamlining the planning process to make it easier for the needs of the private sector to be met. Along with the successful reorganization described above, New Britain has also focused on the accessibility of transparent information in the development process. The town has recently completed a Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). Active public engagement was critical to its completion. The POCD includes a matrix of responsibilities with an overall feel towards implementation and therefore continues to inform decision making. In fact, New Britain's DPD has been tasked with implementing the POCD. New Britain has also created a Business and Developer Toolkit. The Toolkit is a source of resources, including an explanation of the Mayor's Round Table, tables on the variance process, requirements for liquor licenses, process for a home loan/grant, and direction on grant resources to name a few.

New Britain is continuing to update other outdated documents to make the development process more transparent, accessible and efficient for developers. The town is also working towards further coordinating planning and zoning decisions, focuses on promoting economic development to further capitalize on the downtown boom and meeting the current market demand for affordable housing, small businesses, and retail space for personal services.

## Berlin

### *Organizational Structure*

The government of Berlin is run by the Town Council consisting of six members elected every two years. The Town Council also elects a mayor for a two-year term. The mayor presides over council meetings and acts as a seventh member of the council. A PZC and a Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) are established through the Town Charter. The PZC consists of seven regular members and three alternate members who each serve five-year terms. Members of the PZC are elected by the town and are politically affiliated. No more than four members of the PZC may be members of the same political party. The ZBA consists of five members who are elected by the town and are politically affiliated. No more than three members of the ZBA may be members of the same political party.

All potential planning and infrastructure projects are brought to and reviewed by the town manager, mayor and town council. While Berlin does not have an agreement in place for outlining roles and responsibilities for carrying out TOD, they use a team approach with any TOD project to include town staff, state agencies, and the developer. All TOD projects would involve the town manager, town planner, public works director, economic development director, economic development coordinator, mayor and town council. An administrative plan is created for all grant applications.

### *Prior Successes and Next Steps*

Berlin has been working successfully towards the completion of the Steele Center TOD project. Berlin received a sample RFP from Windsor which they used to draft their own RFP to fit the site's needs. Berlin conducted a successful procurement process where Newport Realty Group was selected. When complete, the project will include 76 market rate apartments, and 19,000 square feet of retail, restaurant, and medical office space, about 20 percent commercial. Berlin notes the significant and critical collaboration between the town and the private developer. A key reason for selection was Newport Realty Group's commitment to designing something that fits Berlin. However, they needed 76 units to make the lending and financing work and the town updated the zoning to permit that number of units. This collaboration continued through the brownfield remediation for which Berlin was able to receive funding from the Department of Economic Community Development (DECD). The parties met biweekly along with the environmental consultant. There was an efficient allocation of risk and work between the public and private partners that worked well to successfully remediate the site.

Berlin is working now with CTDOT and Amtrak to secure more access between the train station and parking. Berlin is also looking to use the lessons learned from the Steele Center TOD project to develop other projects that would also generate employment.

## Appendix C: Town Feedback

The eight towns interviewed for this report provided the below feedback across these key themes: limited resources, brownfields challenges, coordination with the State, historical lack of community understanding, obtaining project viability, and regionalism.

### Limited Resources

Below is the feedback from towns on limited resources.

- A good amount of turnover lately, mostly from retirement, losing institutional knowledge of already stretched staff resources.
- Staffing shortages or small staff force staff to balance and choose among competing priorities.
- Benefit from streamlining departments all under one department to function more efficiently and maximize staff resources.
- A regional approach would allow a way to obtain collective value for region as a whole and realize synergies: create branding, provide shared resources, align goals and policies, etc.
- Overall funding and financing gap.
- Funding and financing all comes from grants, not much diversity in funding and financing options. It would be helpful for CRDA authority to be expanded to support smaller projects and other towns than those just bordering Hartford. In addition, funding the Municipal Redevelopment Authority would also provide additional support to the towns.
- Limited land available for development, and land that is available is privately held with too high of a price.
- Limited resources for costly brownfield remediation.
- Developers would benefit from a checklist that lays out exactly what is needed for a project to go from concept through the entitlement process.
- Anything that is a tool or education document that shows financial benefits of TOD, tax generation or yield on square foot basis or parcel basis would be beneficial to garner community support.
- Need for a developer toolkit with resources, an explanation of what a mayor's round table looks like, including various tables (what variance process looks like, requirements for liquor license, what it takes to get a home loan/grant, etc.). This would be a great first resource for a developer that is looking for information reducing need for one-on-ones with strained staff and would also allow for a symmetry of information disbursement.

### Brownfield Challenges

Below is the feedback from towns on brownfield challenges.

- Sites with potential for TOD are mostly brownfields and have environmental contamination. The cost of clean-up is outweighing the value of projects which causes issues with attracting developers to the project.
- Some towns noted funding support for brownfield remediation from State agencies and the Department of Economic Community Development (DECD) in Hartford.
- Efficient risk allocation and flexibility between the developer and the town are key when it comes to handling brownfield challenges. Towns must accept some tasks as they are the ones



best suited to perform the task, and therefore must be willing to accept some of the risk of remediation.

- On a project that requires brownfield remediation, frequent calls and check-ins with the town, developer and environmental consultant are critical to address issues and set priorities.
- Brownfield remediation requires a lot of trust on both sides between the town and developer.
- For example, if an assemblage of several different lots needing brownfield remediation and sidewalk additions are needed for a development, then a higher density (say, four to five floors) may be required to make the project financially viable. The financial results must make sense for the developer.

## Coordination with the State

Below is the feedback from towns on coordination with the State.

### Parking

- A couple of towns noted concerns around CTDOT's planning and design for parking. Towns have expressed concern that with parking planned for the front of the station, it seems all CTDOT station designs have park and ride in mind reducing prime land to parking instead of developing buildings and use of that front space with TOD in mind.
- Towns have suggested partnering and discussion around designs of the stations, with a focus on a parking engineering solution.

### Engineering

- Towns have remarked upon the impact on small town budgets of town engineers addressing CTDOT multiple revisions on plans and designs.
- Towns have proposed TOD training sessions for engineers that could better align planning and design between CTDOT and towns and reduce the number of iterations.

### Communications and Partnering

- Overall, towns want to be kept apprised of the station timeline and design updates and be at the table to benefit the project by providing their local area knowledge to the planning and design of the projects.
- Towns have suggested creating a dedicated liaison at CTDOT to provide answers quickly to towns. They also noted previous committees that included the towns early on with TOD that would be beneficial to resurrect.
- Towns are very concerned about any action precluding future opportunities, especially those with temporary stations that would like to start developing the area but don't want any short-term development decision to impede or stop a long-term opportunity.
- Towns have also observed the time-consuming process of bringing CTDOT on board for securing use of key CTDOT- and Amtrak-controlled parcels critical for future TOD.
- Towns are seeking a streamlined and clarified CTDOT plan on work that impacts the CTfastrak or other properties that CTDOT owns or operates.
- Towns are also looking for a clear, transparent permitting process from the State for work occurring on State properties.
- Towns also would like to elevate the operational issues surrounding control of surplus land for redevelopment and control of streetscapes to CTDOT.
- Towns have remarked that while some groups/offices within CTDOT are great, overall, the Department is very compartmentalized which slows down progress of projects.



- Towns have recommended more in-person activities and site visits between the towns and CTDOT to better partnering, communications and project progress.

#### Train Station Prioritization

- Towns are requesting clear, transparent, and objective guidelines on how decisions are made in terms of financial investments by the state in implementing new stations and expanding existing stations along the corridor. Defined requirements for advancing station development to present to the town development team would help in current and future planning and, in some cases, progress town action items faster.

#### TOD and Train Station Planning

- Overall, to support current and future town planning, most towns observed the need for macro-level regional and subregional ridership data and marketplace information.
- Specifically, towns would like to know more on ridership, and how a parcel will impact ridership – is it providing riders, or is it a draw, direction inflow-outflow of Hartford, demographic data around it, growth projections, etc. This would influence the type of development in the parcel.
- In addition, most towns observed a feeling of similarity across station planning and design that may not be warranted. Not all stations should have the same goal or draw. Towns have recommended sitting down together and discussing strategy for each station in the corridor.
- Towns would like to see CTDOT being more TOD focused and the towns being able to rely upon that CTDOT focus to more aggressively pursue TOD in their areas.
- Towns believe a more concrete long-range regional plan is needed for the stations and TOD. One town suggestion is for CTDOT to use the CTfastrak line to grow TOD and secure the ROW throughout corridor with the ultimate goal of a light rail line.
- Towns have observed good outcomes when CTDOT has brought towns into their studies to give their feedback and recommendations.

#### Amtrak

- Towns have expressed appreciation at and importance of the support CTDOT has given in serving as liaison and negotiating with Amtrak on critical Amtrak-owned parcels.
- Towns have observed the competing interests between TOD and rail departments within DOT that can become even more convoluted and difficult to navigate for Towns with the addition of Amtrak in conversations. For example, Amtrak is perceived as having onerous insurance requirements and surplus ROW parcel disposition processes.
- Towns have also noted that there may be more funding for rail than for TOD, hampering TOD progress.

#### Historical Lack of Community Understanding

Below is the feedback from towns on the historical lack of community understanding of TOD.

- There is a significant disconnect between town goals of revitalization and community interpretations of town efforts as towns attempt to serve as property owners and developers.
- Towns have observed an overall lack of community understanding of TOD, the benefits of TOD, how and where to best implement it and strategies like land banking.
- Communities in this region largely support single-family homes and oppose higher density, multi-family housing, affordable housing.
- There are vast generational differences and concerns from big hurdles in convincing residents the character of downtown will not be changed.

- In some areas where there is less real estate for TOD, the existing business community presents a challenge in that they see a change in zoning as a commercial gentrification and are worried about being priced out.
- Even if the project is far along, has already received a lot of approvals, if there is a public outcry, ultimately a commission will err on the side of the public.
- Some towns have seen changes in leadership due to development strategy and decisions made by a town administration. This frequent flipping of leadership and strategy makes it hard for planners to move any projects forward and makes developers nervous to enter a market.
- Some communities do not have a history of direct political support for financing with no incentive-based development approach which is seen as a challenge by developers.
- One town changed the conversation from development to preservation to garner community support.
- Hartford has used neighborhood revitalization zones (NRZs) to help improve communication between the city and residents and those that work there. However, there is still some disconnect as when an application or project comes through the NRZ, and the neighborhoods tend to have differing opinions.
- Towns have noted that a weekly bulletin updating the community on various projects and town meetings would be helpful.
- Some towns have benefited from non-profits whose mission it is to build understanding in the community and are empowered to communicate throughout the entire community and in different ways than what town workers are permitted to say, thereby galvanizing support as formal and informal advocates.
- Some towns have described the significant resistance communities had to CTfastrak, but once CTfastrak had been delivered, the community accepted and wanted to best leverage the investment.
- Some towns are using TOD studies to educate the community.
- Some towns are leveraging CTDOT grants for TOD studies that request and report on significant local feedback. This way, when towns are seeking local approvals for actual TOD projects, the towns can demonstrate how this project will implement that vision from the local feedback already given.

### Obtaining Project Viability

Below is the feedback from towns on obtaining project viability.

- Most towns note the biggest barrier for project viability was to change the regulations on density and the parking requirements.
- Towns observe that zoning hasn't been truly transit supportive historically. That, coupled with a mix of permitting uses, has led to a lack of interest in the developer community.
- Many towns have or are in the process of changing and updating their zoning to allow for more TOD with an eye to allowing flexibility for types of use.
- Land costs are high in this region and private properties that are for sale may be priced at a level that makes redevelopment challenging.
- Some towns have remarked on a historical lack of political direct support for financing.
- Implemented the TIF district small business microloan program – through TIF district.
- Towns have observed developers like to keep the mill rate low.
- Towns want to reduce the risk for developers to take on projects by affording incentives from site assemblage, TIF districts, Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program (LOTICIP) grants, Complete Street grants, small business loans, etc. However, town financial incentives

that would make projects viable need to be set-up or updated which will be challenging as they need to go through the political process.

- Overall towns remark on the need for more developers and local developers. Even when zoning is set up to encourage mixed use, the projects aren't happening potentially due to some local market risk that increases costs.
- While towns will try to be a financial partner in a project, the preferred approach for some towns is for the private sector to fund the project with public incentives, if appropriate.
- There is no single incentive-based development approach for one town; this is seen as a challenge by developers.
- Towns are looking for more options in identifying the best gap financing for projects, especially for smaller gaps that CRDA cannot support.
- Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) is helpful in the acquisition of land and predevelopment costs assistance (primarily for affordable housing), but some towns have heard from developers the terms of that are not as flexible to ultimately help with a project.
- Towns with successful TOD projects have observed the need for a collaborative process and trust between town and developer, and the amount of behind the scenes work that was put in on both sides to make planning and zoning easily approved.

## Regionalism

Below is the feedback from towns on regionalism.

- Towns have noted regular, substantively focused corridor meetings would be helpful.
- Some towns have highlighted what other towns are doing well and would like to learn from similar procurements or TIF Districts.
- A couple of towns have recognized synergies, a regional approach can afford, like creating a corridor brand, providing shared resources, building a LISTSERV and resource pool between developers, aligning goals and policies to attract developers.
- Towns have observed CTDOT has been treating each municipality as a separate project which creates competition rather than regionalism
- While CRCOG and OPM have housing guidelines, there are no counties, and each town has their own policies and does their own plan of conservation and development.
- Overall towns have not observed any regionalism, partnering, or working together.
- Even for projects that could cross town borders, disparate mill rates and completely different zoning make collaboration difficult.
- Towns have flagged interest in targeting a regional approach to activity and public amenities.
- CTRail had monthly meetings that allowed for more discussion, but then that stopped.
- Towns have remarked that the CRCOG advisory committee has been helpful in sharing information. Towns would like to have these meetings on a regular basis, using some of the time to discuss substantive information about hurdles and challenges each town is facing and the different programs that could help overcome those challenges.
- Some towns have worked well together to do connectivity studies and share study funding.
- Multiple towns have expressed interest in discussing how transit can support the region, and potential for different uses of transit across towns. Not all towns need to be mixed-use and a collaborative planning and strategy session with CRCOG CTDOT and local officials could be beneficial for the long-term success of TOD in this region.

## Appendix D: Developer Feedback

Developers provided feedback that fell into the following key themes: perspective on TOD in the region, State support, site assemblage, entitlement and zoning, taxes, public entity support, and community barriers or challenges.

### Perspective on TOD in the region

- There needs to be thought and consideration about each station and what each station's location can bring in terms of growth and plans for growth. Each plan should be different.
- Some towns have a lot of land and have great potential for growth but if towns are not open to development, developers consider investment risky.
- TOD is not a driving factor for development in the region. There's still a lot of highway access, so sufficient numbers don't rely on CTfastrak. The goal or hope is that people use it, and once they do, it will become a big amenity for developers to offer. Ultimately, CT loves its cars, and it is likely still early for mass transit.
- There's not a lot of land left for development and, especially for high density development. The high cost of land and construction makes development a challenge. The best part of TOD is that the zoning component allows more density which helps to spread the cost in terms of overall cost and types of cost (residential, commercial, etc.).
- One developer said connecting the Connecticut rail to Springfield is a critical first step to reaching Vermont. Once that happens, big development opportunities for these towns will come. This developer was building in metro Boston in the early 90s, and when the train came out further, development tripled. This developer thinks this is going to happen in CT as well. Bring the train and people are going to come.
- It's critical for there to be a TOD component in these towns, but the towns need studies on projected transit use. Post-covid world considerations are important to include.

### State Support

- The State can leverage investment in TOD via true subsidies, grants, or incentives for some distressed towns to aid developers. Developers believe it would be the highest return on investment in the State.
- Whatever the state and DECD can do to remediate and expedite a brownfield site would be helpful.
- This country has a huge issue of housing capacity, but the perception is that there are no incentives for developers to build housing. People complain about the lack of low-income housing, but the money must come from the State or Washington.
- For these projects to work, there must be municipal buy-in from the entire governing body. There must be a champion within the municipal group that will have the ability to bring everyone along in the governing body in order to achieve municipal consensus, community consensus and then zoning support. It would be helpful if the state had a department within its organization that would champion and promote TOD value and projects, maybe DECD, that could advise towns on the administrative part of these deals which can overwhelm towns.
- Developers would welcome any proposed method to expedite approvals through state agencies, specifically encroachment permits where the developer can wait up to six months. Developers need a conduit to push things forward as they do not have control over approval timing.

- CTfastrak is not being used to its potential as a premium service; CTDOT reported that rider surveys reflected safety concerns (perceived increase in criminal activity around stations) as a reason rider have not fully utilized the service, although this may be related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The region and CTDOT may be able implement strategies to improve safety and rider perceptions of the service.
- It would be beneficial for requirements like hiring and DBE to be regulated and decided upon by one entity instead of having different requirements across towns and agencies.

### Site Assemblage

- Given the hurdles of site assemblage, environmental remediation, market, entitlement and financing risk, developers would like to minimize land acquisition costs.
- Site assemblage is a big issue whether the land is privately or publicly owned. Towns should do all they can to support the process by identifying land, helping with assemblage, and knowing the tax base. After the site is assembled, the developer and the town need to be flexible and listen to each other's objectives to develop a project that will be sustainable for everyone.
- Developers can be put in a no-go position when a private landowner stalls as long as they want and asks for whatever they want, unless there's a way a town can work with eminent domain.
- Site assemblage needs to be predictable and profitable. A developer will only take risk on acquiring land if there's already a commercial asset on the site upon which a developer can realize a return while assembling the rest of the site.
- Some developers like to buy land with a building already on it that can be repurposed to get all the value out of what was acquired. Developers should consider the cost comparison of renovation and demolition, rebuilding or a hybrid. One could take a strip center with two buildings, demolish the building behind and keep the one on the avenue thereby guarding the value that was there for the avenue view and increasing value for what had no value in the back. This is a win-win proposition.
- Most developers are willing to spend whatever cost on pre-due diligence costs as long as the initial numbers show the investment will have a good return.

### Entitlement and Zoning

- Entitlement risk can still be a huge problem for deal pursuit. Affordable housing can be difficult to zone in some towns. Allowing multi-level zoning or increased density would be helpful.
- Entitlement process can be risky and not predictable. Even though a developer puts a package together according to the laws, the zoning board could still not approve the project. Anything that can be done by the town to increase transparency and reduce risk would be better.
- Most of these towns need to change zoning density to make projects work. Making just a few tweaks (like parking) often make projects extremely more viable.
- Developers take a big risk in costs before they know if a project has been given zone approval.
- Developers don't prefer to bid to do the land zoning and then the development project.
- A developer should never sit at a zoning committee with fingers crossed. Towns and cities should do all they can to support a project from a zoning perspective including transparency, expediency, and garnering town support ahead of meetings.
- Flexible zoning would reduce developer risk when purchasing a site, so that if the initial plan needs to change the developer has flexibility.

- Towns should work on reducing the costs and timing of permits, acting like a concierge for important projects, doing everything to make the process easier. To increase consistency in the permitting process, having long-term employees would be helpful.
- Towns are still in suburban mindset when it comes to parking. They want density and parking.
- Apartment buildings targeting TOD should have one parking spot for one-bedrooms. One structured parking spot costs between \$50,000 and \$100,000 and equals six apartment units, a huge revenue loss for a developer and the town.
- Developers receive many calls from investors on projects in opportunity zones. The OZ is a tax deferral/avoidance federal program run by the treasury department (IRS). All of the zones have been selected and the ability to add properties expires in 2026, though the tax benefit remains in place for 10 years after a property is accepted into the program.

### Taxes

- Taxes make up the biggest operating number and have been escalating in more urban centers. They're not transparent, tough to predict and make development cost estimates difficult.
- Mezzanine financing and tax abatements are important, and they are what municipalities really control.
- With building costs today, having a full tax rate can make a project not viable. A tax break is what allows a modest return for developers in terms of building affordable housing.
- The minimum tax abatement required is ten years, but developers could potentially need 20-30 years on a larger or more expensive project.
- Towns need to collaborate with developers from project to project to deliver what would make a project viable. For large towns, a density deal isn't sufficient; projects need a tax break as well.
- TIF districts and low interest rates are also very helpful.
- Towns need to realize multi-family housing is the best bang for their buck in terms of town revenues. Single family homes only bring in roughly \$8,000 an acre in tax revenues a year. An example multi-family home with a ten-year, 50% tax abatement brings in \$50,000 for ten years and then \$100,000 after that which is significantly more revenue for the town. Developers are building apartments for the demographic towns are losing who are the people that will shore up a town's taxes and funding.

### Public Entity Support

- Building departments should be able to give developers good guidance on codes. Meetings should be held with everyone (health, zoning, developer, P&D, etc.) in one room to get everything done in one meeting. Making the project viable and working through issues quickly is important.
- Brownfield related support and DECD grants are helpful.
- Smart towns deliver competitive land prices, real estate tax abatements, and discount or waive town or permit fees.
- It is very helpful and results in time savings when a town runs interference and serves as a conduit between the developer, the community and the State.
- Developers want a checklist for large developments that states all the things a developer needs to move a project forward. In the beginning, all risk is on the developer, so it is very important to have a clear path forward where no time or money is wasted.

- Towns that have good political leadership and in planning and zoning, experience a lot of development success. These towns go through extensive studies that take a long time but define a vision for an area or project. That's very helpful in giving more transparency and responsiveness to the developer.
- Environmental condition is always a big issue. Developers want to discuss what can or cannot be done with a site before buying the asset.
- Cities that have gone digital for plan review and approval process have removed a lot of unnecessary headaches for developers.
- Entitlement process is ok for developers in the towns where they have experience. The challenge is, for those new town markets developers may want to enter, how do they learn about these towns' processes and feel comfortable about the risk of working with a new town?
- Towns need to invest in school systems, job creation, police, restaurants, coffee shops, retail businesses, and attraction or nighttime activities. This way, when people are paying top dollar to live downtown, they have all their needs met from work to entertainment. West Hartford has accomplished this; it's time for other towns to do the same.
- All the infrastructure, (water, sewer, electric, etc.), should be shovel-ready for developers to make a project more viable.
- Developers have noted, in most markets, 100 apartments is likely necessary to be able to support amenities and on-site property management. In addition, the amount of initial retail tenants needs to be considered as retail tenants often need to be supported by the developer/property manager until the area is fully developed and business is sufficient to make retail financially viable.
- Towns need to understand their master plan and understand what combination of subsidy-tax-density package they can offer upfront. Not all towns need to offer the same thing.
- Conservation commissions need to be realistic and work with developers.
- For large projects, towns that have set schedules for consistent inspections have been helpful.
- Planning and zoning and economic development departments need to have a good understanding of the economics and realistic expectations of what the private sector can do, otherwise some developer will sell them an unrealistic project.
- A developer doesn't want to under-build a site, wants to be forward looking, and not just "get something done" via the usual "shortsighted stick frame with parking".

#### Community barriers or challenges

- There is often a public misunderstanding of the benefits of TOD.
- There is a concern about the market for building market rate housing in distressed areas.
- Developers often hear that communities are afraid of development because it will burden the school systems with more school kids, and the stigmas about the types of people attracted and safety concerns perceived for multi-family and affordable housing. Towns should show communities that schoolteachers or medical assistants need affordable housing and should be welcomed into the community.
- There is a bit of disconnect between what is desired and what is feasible. Developers have a delicate balance to attract the right retail tenants to support day/nighttime vitality and activity but also have to support this retail until the vitality is actually there.



## Appendix E: Regional Player Feedback

### CRCOG

Below is the feedback from former CRCOG ED on TOD in the Capitol Region.

- Overall, a regional power, a muscular entity with money at the center pushing TOD forward is lacking in Connecticut. CRCOG and the region are not resourced to do that. Many other MPOs have billions in capacity. CRCOG does not.
- TOD progresses faster when there is a transit authority separate from a department that runs the TOD. Phoenix is an example of a municipality with separate departments. CTDOT has not allocated a significant amount of funding necessary to stand up the group or department needed to progress TOD.
- Across the country, it seems regions and non-profits are often more successful at TOD and it's just not in a State DOT wheelhouse to deliver TOD. For example, CTDOT delivered the New Haven-Stamford line, and all the stations have parking garages which are not encouraging of TOD.
- Starting in 2004, the Little Communities Act included \$500 million in local incentive grants for TOD planning. Unfortunately, its early years were spent keeping CTfastrak alive. Because there were so many against CTfastrak, no one was certain the stations would be constructed until they were actually built which was unfortunate because TOD wasn't given much thought until the stations were built.
- An understanding of the market around every station and the type of TOD suits that area's market is needed. A corridor level analysis would be helpful to determine commonalities and unique identifiers per station.
- Due to the Capitol region's industrial history, there is a lot of land remediation needed and not a lot of large, undeveloped land. In addition, most of the land is owned in bits and pieces. Across the country, the developer view of the TOD model in general right now is focused on Greenfields. There are the real mathematics of making TOD viable in a high cost, low growth region, especially when land and labor costs are brutal. CTDOT and the towns may need to consider examples like Cleveland which was able to buy, consolidate and clean up land to make TOD more viable.
- There are some good champions in elected officials who are really pushing TOD, enthusiastic and experienced developers, and agencies like CRDA, but there need to be more champions.
- Developers need to see the funding is there to back intent. Once the money is on the table, the developers will go build.
- Once there is some success, towns will continue to develop more TOD. For example, West Hartford was initially hesitant about CTfastrak. However, after it was built, it was a success and now the town is pursuing more. In addition, towns will share their success with other towns which will then develop TOD projects.
- Overall, some of the resistance for the projects need to be reduced to make it easier for the developers. It doesn't always have to mean funding. The reduction of resistance for a project could come from communications or planning and zoning requirements and approvals.
- Also, entities like CRDA that have development and multilayer financing experience could deliver the bridge/gap financing needed to make a project viable. Often, an extra \$1.5 million can make a \$50 million deal work.



## CTDOT

Below is the feedback from CTDOT Planning on TOD in the Capitol region.

- In order to receive CTDOT prioritization on projects, towns need to focus on how they can demonstrate to CTDOT that they are supportive and investments in infrastructure will result in increased ridership. Developers can help with this.
- Everyone likes trains but buses can accommodate the same trips at less cost. In CT, buses are not seen as a desirable transit service. CTDOT will support the town that can have a culture change that accepts bus usage by commuters. In those towns where there is or has been community opposition to CTfastrak or stations, there will not be plans to invest additional funds into a prospective station.
- CTDOT has requests to add stations, and as a result, CTDOT does a lot of feasibility studies. Sometime there are non-starters that make it infeasible to add a station.
- CTDOT often looks at existing population densities or the other modes of transportation that connect to the stations, such as nonmotorized connections. The Community Connectivity Grant Program gives some funding to add sidewalks and bike lanes which is great way for communities to generate ridership. CTDOT sees efforts to improve connectivity and utilization of these grants as an indicator that towns will see an increase in ridership as a result (or that Towns are worthy of investment in transit).
- CTDOT believes it is providing data and accommodating design requests of developers. CTDOT notes that with all the moving pieces, requests need to be specific, identifiable data.
- CTDOT states it does not do planning and design which are distinct processes that towns can accommodate. CTDOT will collaborate with the town and have hearings for the different stages of the designs.
- A \$900,000 grant has been issued for CTDOT to do planning along the corridor.
- CTDOT will look at any (TOD) proposals as long as parking minimums are met. CTDOT also says though that it is willing to consider any proposal to accommodate commuter parking. CTDOT even suggests structured parking as a means to bring private dollars and funding to a project.
- Sometimes politics plays a role in priorities of investments. Also, if towns can give CTDOT an easy win by securing their own funding for a project or by having the development agreement signed, a project can move up in priority. Finally, cost will drive decisions with CTDOT looking to distribute funding for the greatest benefit. If one project becomes too costly, CTDOT will cancel it if by canceling it, additional projects can advance.
- Towns and CRCOG need to focus on state transportation funding overall – not just funding for TOD.
- For towns that cannot generate funding to offset the cost, CTDOT suggests looking to Joint Development Agreements (JDA) that can share costs in a way that maximizes physical and financial resources. In a JDA, each party has something to offer that benefits all the other parties that can advance greater efficiency of the project. The Meriden TOD project is a good example of a JDA.
- CTDOT hears a lot of talk about a development, but only a small portion of that talk materializes to the point of a development agreement. Therefore, CTDOT will only commit dollars to projects that have a signed JDA. Towns need to properly vet and manage proposals. CRDA can help with project implementation expertise. CTDOT recommends not going after too many projects; focusing the best on the town's best bet.
- Towns need to do a better job marketing site, remediating sites, and be able to respond when developers request changes for zoning.

- While CTDOT knows it's difficult to stay current, towns need to find the capacity to follow and know state resources.

## CRDA

Below is the feedback from CRDA ED on TOD in the Capitol region.

- CRDA does not have access to CTDOT's capital, but CRDA can ask CTDOT to do something.
- Most CT towns had a development authority or agency at one point, but then let them die off as the towns didn't have enough projects to sustain or justify staff. Most towns have become either anti-development or will only tolerate one to two projects a year instead of a pipeline of projects.
- MRDA was supposed to be managed by the CRDA. It was set up to focus on development around transit centers, but the State never funded it when administrations changed.
- A regional approach would be difficult in getting all the towns to agree on anything. There may be consensus around train lines, to do something across the larger region, as long as it doesn't impact any individual town.
- An alternative to a regional approach could be a delivery mechanism that consists of a regional authority with capacity. The regional authority would be able to support a broader region but for specific uses only. There would be a menu of those specific uses and a town could come and pick out the items from the menu a project of theirs needs help with that this regional authority could provide. This regional authority would have some funding from DECD or CTDOT that would help bring these projects along.
- Achilles' heel: A town must defer totally to private developers which have their own interests as the local entities don't have sufficient resources to carry the project out and negotiate land and development agreements.
- All deals have been different in the Hartford region as not all projects need the same help (land values and densities are different, timing of projects, funding capacity, etc.). CRDA's goal is to insert the right funds at the right place and time to get a project over the finish line.

## Appendix F: Peer Case Studies

This appendix describes four peer case studies: Philadelphia; Port of Allegheny County; Atlanta; and Minneapolis. Criteria for comparison are largely developed areas with some disinvestment that require redevelopment and brownfields investments. It also describes four other MPOs that took on TOD strategy as a region. The purpose of the studies is to identify best practices or good ideas based on desktop research.

### Southern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA)

The Southern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) published the SEPTA Transit-Oriented Development Policy Research report<sup>3</sup> to identify opportunities to promote TOD in the Greater Philadelphia area outside of just building the stations. The report describes three different strategies and identified a role within each strategy that SEPTA can play in the TOD development process. The strategies and roles are shown in the figure below.

Strategy	SEPTA Role	Tasks to Realize Strategy
<b>Plan and advocate for TOD at the regional level.</b>	Advocate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update SEPTA’s strategic planning and promotional resources to include transit-supportive land development items</li> <li>• Create a TOD working group</li> <li>• Approve a TOD policy</li> <li>• Establish TOD guidelines</li> </ul>
<b>Coordinate and facilitate TOD on non-agency owned land near stations</b>	Stakeholder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage TOD in station area planning studies, workshops, and meetings</li> <li>• Establish development review services</li> <li>• Develop a website outlining SEPTA’s TOD resources and support services</li> <li>• Monitor development proposals near important stations</li> <li>• Align capital improvements with upcoming development activity</li> </ul>
<b>Partner on and sponsor TOD project on agency-owned land</b>	Sponsor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve database of SEPTA-owned land</li> <li>• Analyze SEPTA-owned land for TOD potential</li> <li>• Request a joint development partnership for prime sites</li> </ul>

*SEPTA TOD Policy Research, January 2020*

The report also outlines the regulations and policies that impacts SEPTA’s capacity to support TOD at and close to its stations. This helps SEPTA be able to review its ability to impact and support the decisions around land use and advance SEPTA’s collaboration with key stakeholders in TOD.

### Port Authority of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania (PAAC)

PAAC believes TOD will successfully support its mission to generate ridership from new uses and revenue from real estate. PAAC released its TOD Guidelines. The Guidelines<sup>4</sup> goal is to provide all TOD stakeholders in Allegheny County with the best practice standards for TOD that PAAC and more

<sup>3</sup> SEPTA Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Policy Research, Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, January 2020.

<sup>4</sup> Transit-Oriented Development Guidelines, Port Authority of Allegheny County, April 2016.

specifically how to determine if a site is fit for TOD, what type of TOD it should be, and given the type, what types of activities should be pursued at that site. The Guidelines help stakeholders:

1. **Understand the station TOD type:** Each station is classified by one of six typologies that are based on density and use mix. Each typology is defined by a type of community, density, use mix, parking strategy, etc. that is meant to help inform stakeholders when considering a new TOD project.
2. **Explore opportunities to expand multimodal connectivity:** These guidelines encourage the connection between transit and other types of transportation and help define opportunities for pedestrian or bicycle connections and the right role for parking. It also prioritized the transportation modes via station or site design.
3. **Orient project around increasing station walkability:** These guidelines provide principles for designing TOD for the pedestrian including considerations around connections and safety for pedestrians.
4. **Design development that integrates and expands transit use:** The Development guidelines help stakeholders identify the suitable scale, density and parking strategy for the type of TOD project being proposed.

#### Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA)

MARTA released its TOD Guidelines<sup>5</sup> with the below following standards outlined.

1. **Density and Mixed Uses:** This focuses on why density and mixed uses are so important for TOD and delineates a station typology. Each typology has a unique kind of density, location, land use and transit functions and is critical to understanding how these stations can develop into a more TOD-supportive location. There is also a clear understanding that not every station should have the same use or be developed the same. Various density bonuses and incentives are suggested here.
2. **Public Realm:** The public realm is the public space used by transit riders, visitors, shoppers, residents and the workforce. The guidelines summarize the design and site planning standards that create a good public realm for Metro Atlanta. The design standards defined in these guidelines can become part of a zoning overlay.
3. **Parking Approach:** These parking guidelines focus on reducing the supply of parking, sharing parking, and designing parking depending on the station typology so that it doesn't visually dominate a TOD space. It analyzes various TOD parking challenges and provides recommended standards on the amount of parking and the design and location of parking.
4. **Model TOD Zoning Overlay:** This final section takes the standards outlined above and creates an example TOD Zoning Overlay.

#### Minneapolis Metro Transit

Minneapolis Metro Transit has a dedicated, one-stop-shop Metro Transit TOD Office which is a branch of the Metropolitan Council and was founded in coordination with the region's TOD policy. The TOD Office has completed a development site prioritization process on all properties owned by the Metropolitan Council located within a half-mile of transitways. Their [TOD website](#) is built-out with information on TOD, TOD funding, developer tools, events, studies and projects, a library as well as

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<sup>5</sup> Transit-Oriented Development Guidelines, Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority, November 2010.

multiple points of contact for any questions. The website has an interactive map that shows publicly owned land along transit lines in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area. The TOD Office published A Developer Guide to TOD in 2016 that answers frequently asked questions on TOD to Metro Transit like what sites are prime for TOD, what makes a good TOD and how TOD projects can be funded. It also provides a checklist for a successful TOD.

#### Municipal Planning Organizations (MPOs)

MPOs like CRCOG in other areas of the country are taking action to spur regional TOD growth. Below are some examples.<sup>6</sup>

- **Denver Regional Council of Governments** developed a TOD Information Exchange Program to efficiently disseminate information to help key stakeholders formulate knowledgeable decisions on TOD.
- **Southern California Association of Government's** program funds the planning efforts required to achieve growth around transit stations and corridors.
- **San Francisco Bay Area's MPO** conditions capital funding for transit corridors on whether jurisdictions have planned for transit-supportive levels of housing density and provides funding to local jurisdictions and transit agencies for station area planning.
- **The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission's** "Transportation and Community Development Initiative" (TCDI) program awards grants to local governments in the Philadelphia region to conduct community planning. After plan completion, they become eligible for a marketing program to potential buyers.

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<sup>6</sup> "Planning for TOD at the Regional Scale", by Sam Zimbabwe and Alia Anderson from the Center for Transit-Oriented Development, 2011.