

# 2. A Vision for Sustainable Development in the New York-Connecticut Region

## a. Goals of the New York-Connecticut Sustainable Communities Consortium

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**T**he New York-Connecticut portion of the larger New York City metropolitan region includes New York City, suburban Long Island, the lower Hudson Valley, and the coastal region of southwestern Connecticut stretching from Greenwich to New Haven. The collaborative planning effort launched by the New York-Connecticut Sustainable Communities Consortium (the Consortium) in 2011 was based on a shared understanding of the region's strengths and challenges, an understanding based on years of sustainability planning conducted at both local and regional levels. The planning program attempted to build on the region's core strengths: its dense settlement pattern, extensive transit network, and diverse, highly-skilled workforce that have helped make it one of the most economically productive and energy efficient metropolitan areas in the United States. It also attempted to address the challenges that are interwoven with these assets—some of the widest disparities in income and highest levels of congestion in the nation, and the costs of maintaining its aging infrastructure.

Undertaken in the wake of the global financial crisis, the Sustainable Communities planning program took on a goal of helping to reposition the region in an increasingly competitive international economy, making use of its innovative and creative talent in a range of activities beyond the financial services that have been its primary engine for decades. The program adopted the aspiration of making the region as equitable as it is efficient by addressing the income disparities and high costs that make it a particularly difficult place for low-income households and small businesses. The initiative also aspired to address the enormous challenge of building resilience to the effects of climate change, a particular concern for this

largely coastal region.

The formation of the Consortium, a bi-state collaboration of cities, counties and regional planning organizations and councils, was an important step in working towards these goals. Nine cities, including New York City, four cities in Connecticut—New Haven, Bridgeport, Norwalk and Stamford—and four in the Hudson Valley—Yonkers, New Rochelle, White Plains and Mt. Vernon—represent the largest urban areas in the region. Suburban Long Island is represented by the counties of Nassau and Suffolk and the Long Island Regional Planning Council. Four metropolitan planning organizations—the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council, the South Western Region Metropolitan Planning Organization, the Greater Bridgeport/Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization and the South Central Regional Council of Governments—have joined together to provide an overall planning context. And the Regional Plan Association, a non-profit planning organization covering the entire tri-state region, both managed the federal grant which funded the program and helped to coordinate activities among Consortium members. Additionally, an advisory board of state agencies and nongovernmental organizations helped to guide the planning program and facilitate broader participation in its activities.

The planning program was built from a shared vision of the Consortium members – derived from their own planning efforts individually -- for sustainable development in the New York-Connecticut planning area. Sustainable development, in this context, incorporates the six Livability Principles defined by the federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities to 1) provide more transportation choices, 2) promote equitable, affordable housing, 3) enhance economic competitiveness, 4) support existing communities, 5) coordinate policies and leverage investment, and 6) value communities and neighborhoods. This shared vision for sustainable development rests on the following key characteristics of the Consortium's planning area:

- A globally competitive regional economy that will require strategic investment in infrastructure, business centers and neighborhoods to maintain and expand prosperity and improve quality of life.
- A low per capita energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions, largely a result of safe and reliable public transit service providing for more compact and efficient land-use patterns. These services not only dramatically reduce a traveler's carbon footprint, but also facilitate a larger shift away from automobile use.
- Transit systems with rich legacies and great scalability that have received and will require sustained investment.
- A network of downtowns and neighborhoods supported by the transit network with underutilized potential to provide needed housing and jobs.

Given these key characteristics, pursuit of the shared vision through the Consortium's planning program has involved the Consortium members working together to foster livable and sustainable communities and growth centers around existing and planned transit services in the New York-Connecticut planning area in order to enhance affordable housing and continue to reduce traffic congestion, improve the environment and expand economic opportunities.

The Consortium members sought to bring their individual regional and local planning efforts into greater alignment while also enhancing that planning to create a more robust approach to regional sustainability. At the same time, the shared regional vision was reflected locally through place-based projects funded through the Consortium planning program.

Following an initial round of regional town hall meetings, the consortium adopted the following goals:

- **Goal 1:** Align the existing regional plans of the consortium members with each other and with the federal, state and local policies that are essential to their implementation.
- **Goal 2:** Create a network of engaged government officials, civic and community leaders, business

leaders, entrepreneurs, planners and private citizens that cuts across geographic, racial, ethnic, income and programmatic boundaries.

- **Goal 3:** Provide analysis that will help connect fair housing policy to place-based, transit-oriented development planning.
- **Goal 4:** Develop strategies and tools to improve resilience with regard to severe storms and coastal flooding in areas most vulnerable to the effects of projected climate change and sea level rise.
- **Goal 5:** Through "place-based" and corridor-level planning projects, develop new centers of mixed income housing and jobs in transit-accessible and energy-efficient locations consistent with existing regional plans and ultimately reflected in the execution plan for regional sustainable development.

Over the last three years, the Consortium, with its advisors and partners, has made important strides toward implementing these objectives. Recommended improvements to the planning process have been identified to advance regional sustainability by better integrating transportation, housing and development planning across jurisdictional boundaries and better aligning these plans with the livability principles. Plans and recommendations for sustainable development or related infrastructure improvements were produced for 19 communities or corridors, the majority in low-income communities or underperforming downtown centers served by MTA Metro-North Railroad or MTA Long Island Rail Road, or by planned transit improvements in key corridors. Program participants have learned from each other and from the larger universe of Sustainable Communities grantees and providers, improving public engagement practices and establishing a network of relationships that will facilitate future collaboration on a range of planning, policy and development issues.

The initial vision and planning program also evolved in response to both external events and the learning process inherent in undertaking an ambitious, complex planning effort. In particular, the following events and activities significantly affected the outcomes of the endeavor and the collective understanding of the challenges ahead:

- Hurricane Sandy, which impacted the planning

area on October 29, 2012 with a record breaking storm surge and wind field, was a major milestone in the course of the planning program. On the most fundamental level, the storm reinforced both the vulnerability of the region to extreme weather events and the importance of the resiliency element of the Consortium's planning program. Sandy's devastating human and physical impact diverted much of the Consortium member's energy to the immediate tasks of recovery, and required a reassessment of its mission and program. The storm realigned priorities and made the Consortium's work on neighborhood resilience to climate change both prescient and of immediate value. While the timetable of the work program had to be adjusted, the imperatives of rebuilding reinforced the value of regional collaboration and the importance of forward-looking, community-based regional planning.

- The federally-required development of a Fair Housing and Equity Assessment (FHEA) as part of the planning program provided a richer understanding of how racial and ethnic disparities impact housing, economic opportunity, livability, and sustainability. With the assistance of an advisory committee of housing and community development advocates and practitioners, the FHEA expanded the scope and recommendations of the planning program. It also added a new dimension to the program by defining distinct areas of racially- and ethnically-concentrated poverty and places with high opportunity but little affordable housing.
- The process of undertaking a collaborative planning process across a large, bi-state planning area produced a number of valuable lessons for future regional sustainability planning. Many of the place-based projects undertaken through the planning program with community partners offered models for enhancing public engagement on topics related to sustainability. Additionally, the need to engage stakeholders and the interested public in a regional sustainability discussion across the bi-state planning area -- while challenging -- yielded an understanding of the types of partnerships and level of resources needed to make future efforts successful.

Although the planning process has clearly demonstrated the value of voluntary and incented planning collaboration across a broad

area, importantly, it also illuminated the limits of proceeding without a more permanent institution or institutional process to continue coordination and implementation and monitor progress.

## b. Place-Based Projects

**A** primary goal of the planning initiative was the development of sustainable, equitable communities by creating a network of mixed-use, mixed-income centers linked by the region's extensive commuter rail network. Doing so will build upon the key strengths of the planning area, thus enhancing efficiency in the face of future growth, as well as mitigating environmental pollution, conserving land and strengthening economic vitality.

The most tangible legacy of the initiative is the set of project plans for specific locations that can provide a new dimension of growth for the region's economy and models for other locations. Several of these projects developed community plans for places as diverse as the South Bronx and central Nassau County. Some assessed the feasibility and potential impacts of major infrastructure improvements. Others addressed key sustainability and development issues that affect several communities in a jurisdiction. The outcomes of these projects are summarized below and described more fully in the final deliverables that were produced for each project.

### I. BRIDGEPORT BARNUM STATION FEASIBILITY STUDY

**T**he Bridgeport Barnum Station study, commissioned by the Greater Bridgeport Regional Council, considered the feasibility of a commuter rail station in East Bridgeport. A station in the East Side neighborhood of Bridgeport will offer increased opportunity for development along the rail corridor and provide increased access to public transportation for residents who live near the transit center. Envisioned as an anchor for mixed-use development, the Barnum Station is a key element of the City of Bridgeport's BGreen 2020 sustainability plan.

The proposed station will be located on the site of the former Remington Arms factory on Barnum Avenue, with Hallett St. bordering the west and Seaview Ave. on the east. The site is 16.7 acres in size with over 340,000 square feet of vacant industrial floor space. There is an elevated railroad right-of-way for the New Haven Main Line running parallel with Barnum Avenue that leads into the existing downtown Bridgeport Station one mile away.

An integral part of the feasibility study was the review of existing site conditions to identify key issues and opportunities. The area has strong anchors such as Bridgeport Hospital and Barnum Elementary school along with a significant amount of open space along Yellow Mill Channel with water and recreational opportunity. There are a number of floodplains and coastal issues that could affect redevelopment. The study area is a brownfield, given its current zoning and previous industrial use. Local buses serve the study area well, and it is closely located to the downtown. It also has a market potential for new residential, retail, and flex/office spaces.

Public participation was important to the decision-making process. Outreach included the creation of a bilingual project website in English and Spanish and the formation of advisory committees that provided feedback on the process and progress.



Figure i. Barnum Station Site

The study's outcome confirmed the feasibility of constructing a second commuter rail station to serve as a catalyst for economic development and revitalization in the East End and East Side neighborhoods of Bridgeport. The feasibility study is the first step in establishing widespread local support of a rail-anchored economic development corridor in Bridgeport and support at the state and federal level, showing that a rail station in the area is physically feasible from a design standpoint, is unlikely to impede existing rail operations, and can facilitate sustainable economic and housing growth in the region.

The final Barnum Station feasibility deliverable will be incorporated into the Greater Bridgeport

Regional Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Pilot Project. The pilot project will be a planning assessment of alternative public transportation modes and development strategies for properties in close proximity to transit centers. The study will also develop a model Transit-Oriented Development ordinance for the Greater Bridgeport area that can be replicated elsewhere around rail stations in the region.

Significant resources are necessary to move forward with the rail infrastructure investments. Next steps include running a full rail operations simulation and a rail ridership model to estimate the increase in ridership after development. More detailed designs must be produced on the build-out of the station as well as environmental impact analysis. Funding for these next steps may come from state or federal sources.

## II. I-287 CROSS COUNTY: REPURPOSING OFFICE PARKS

Post-suburban trends have led many office park properties along the I-287 corridor to lose their vitality. Office parks that were designed to complement trends of sprawling suburbanization and increased automobile usage now face major challenges. With decreased car ridership and the preference of millennials to live and work in urban centers closer to transit and, properties along I-278 are left with an inefficient spatial arrangement of commercial space that is difficult to access via transit even through bus service is present along the corridor.

Despite these challenges, the office parks have great potential for redevelopment, with zoning in place to accommodate higher densities and extensive parking areas that could be used as land for other development uses. The corridor is also served by the County's Bee-Line bus system with several shuttle loops servicing the office parks at peak hours.

A 2008 Westchester County study determined that there was a potential to build affordable housing within underutilized office parks without negative impacts to traffic, utilities, or parking. A subsequent study by the Westchester County Association in 2010 explored design solutions for mixed-use development that would turn declining single-use office parks into vibrant mixed-use environments.



Figure ii. I-287 Cross County Planning Charrette

Source: NYMTC, December 5, 2012

New York-Connecticut Sustainable Communities Consortium and the Urban Land Institute engaged a diverse set of stakeholders to identify how mixed-use infill might be implemented along the corridor and what related conditions must be addressed in order for sustainable development to prosper, and to explore strategies for improving those conditions beyond housing development to include sustainable living and integrated transportation.

The Interactive planning program summary was prepared by the Westchester County Department of Planning, summarizing issues and potential strategies discussed at the meeting. For example, better transit access is hindered by the lack of connective street grids between the office parks, the main road, and local neighborhoods. One-way streets and access roads make it difficult to improve ridership along existing local bus services and physically complicate the provision of connecting shuttle service. Addressing this condition would require reconstruction of interchanges and even portions of I-287 to improve pedestrian access.

The final product is a body of work that can be used to build momentum towards action on repurposing the office parks along the I-287 corridor. The final deliverable proposes that a Westchester public agency should be responsible for leading the initiative.

### III. NASSAU COUNTY INFILL REDEVELOPMENT STUDY

The Nassau County Infill Redevelopment Feasibility Study (NCIRFS) seeks to foster opportunities across Long Island to plan for and implement strategies that create livable and sustainable communities. After a review process of 21 commuter rail stations, three were chosen to receive a pilot study that will act as examples for how transit supported development and strategic infrastructure improvements can result in benefits to the combined economic, social and environmental sustainability of communities across Long Island.

Station areas in the Village of Lynbrook, Valley Stream and the Hamlet of Baldwin were the three areas chosen to participate in a transit-supportive development (TSD) pilot study after an exhaustive selection process that consisted of an assessment of infrastructure availability, municipal willingness and community desire, economic feasibility and the potential for replication in other areas of the County.

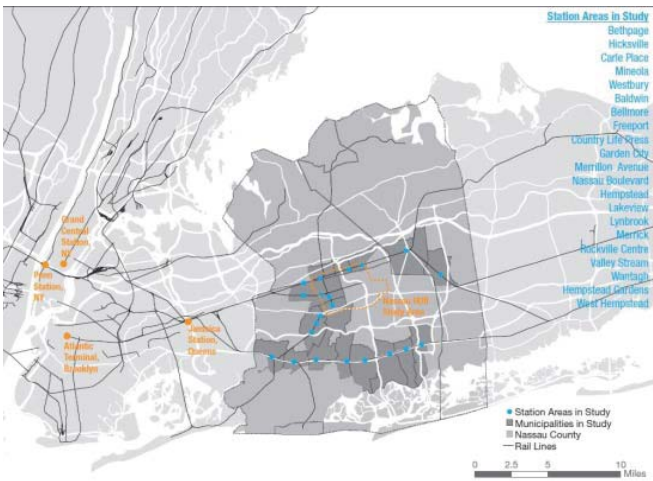


Figure iii. Twenty-One Station Areas of the study

Stakeholder engagement was a critical component of the station evaluation and selection process. Key stakeholders included a Municipal Advisory Group and a Civic Focus Group which provided the primary evaluation for phase one of the project.

The first of three phases involved the analysis of 21 LIRR stations in order to measure the local desire and readiness to implement transit-supported development strategies. In the second phase, seven station areas were short-listed for further evaluation of the impact and influence as a county-wide and prototypical project. The station areas chosen in the

final phase represent the greatest opportunity for the County to partner with the local community to implement sustainable development and livability enhancements. The pilot studies for each of the three station areas contain elements and best practices that other places in Nassau County can replicate.

The pilot studies were conducted with the purpose of creating fully developed and fundable strategies for implementing transit-supported development at varying scales. For each station area, the pilot study outlined next steps that the community and the public sector can take to implement the ideas and concepts that were identified as part of the planning process.

The Village of Valley Stream is supportive of converting municipal surface parking lots adjacent to the LIRR Valley Stream Station to mixed-use that would accommodate new housing, restaurants and structured parking for residents and commuters. The pilot project culminated with several redevelopment concepts that could serve as the framework for the disposition of Village property.

The study recommends that the Village of Lynbrook pivot off of two key downtown redevelopment projects in the pipeline to expand the core of walkable downtown further south along Atlantic Avenue. The Village could utilize strategies to promote downtown district identity and encourage new appropriately-scaled multifamily residential development through the enactment of design guidelines and zoning overlay districts.

Baldwin Station is located at the intersection of Grand Avenue and Sunrise Highway in Baldwin, New York. The overwhelming community sentiment is that downtown redevelopment hinges on improvements to pedestrian safety and walkability at and around Sunrise Highway and the mixed-use redevelopment of several key parcels that would fit the traditional “main street” character. The pilot project focused on a preliminary concept for complete streets improvements along Grand Avenue along with a qualitative analysis of the potential economic benefits of complete streets to local businesses. Several case studies of successful complete streets programs from around the Country are provided to illustrate the potential economic benefits to the local community.

## IV. NEW HAVEN UNION STATION TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Union Station Transportation Center Transit-Oriented Development Study advances planning for mixed-use development inside and around Union Station. The purpose for the study is to further the station's role as an economic catalyst for New Haven and the State of Connecticut and to respond to the desire for increased development within proximity to transit.

The New Haven Union Station Transportation Center occupies over seven acres of land located in the Long Wharf neighborhood along Union Avenue. It is Connecticut's busiest rail center with services from Amtrak, Shoreline East and MTA Metro-North Railroad's New Haven Line. Union Station, at the transportation center, is within walking distance of the Hill neighborhood, downtown, and the City's Medical District. The multimodal Transportation Center accommodates commuter and bicycle parking, local and intercity buses, rental cars, taxis, limousines, and local shuttle services.

The Transportation Center consists of Union Station, commuter parking lots, intercity bus and limousine docks, and the rail platforms. Much of the land is occupied by surface parking and/or service space that potentially could be redeveloped. The station itself comprises 107,400 square feet with 39,500 square feet of leased office space and approximately 2,770 square feet of leased storefront space. With the exception of the office and retail space in Union Station itself, there is no transit-oriented development at the Transportation Center. The absence of active building frontage along Union Avenue has compromised not only the pedestrian environment, but the redevelopment potential of surrounding parcels.

The State of Connecticut has expressed its support for creating transit-oriented development in the Union Station Transportation Center and commissioned studies to assess the feasibility for transit-oriented development in the area both prior to and after the recession. With an award of \$390,000 from the State and funding from Sustainable Communities, New Haven developed the scope of work in collaboration with the Department of Transportation.

The study developed a re-merchandising strategy, an implementation strategy for a new parking garage

north of the station's existing parking garage, and an overall transportation management strategy for the TOD plan.



Figure iv. Rendering of Union Station, New Haven, CT

The plan's implementation is contingent on a new Union Station Development Authority to replace the Lease and Funding Agreement that currently governs the transportation center. This new authority will possess powers to plan, finance, operate, and manage the newly redeveloped Union Station. Prior to drafting legislation for the authority's creation, a Memorandum of Understanding will be executed between the State of Connecticut, the City of New Haven, and the New Haven Parking Authority that will detail each entity's responsibility leading to the creation of the Development Authority.

Once the lease and funding agreement expire, a request for proposal will be drafted that solicits requests from private development/management companies that have the capacity to implement the TOD plan that includes the design and development of the new garage, re-merchandising strategy implementation, and overall transportation center management. The garage component of the project will be a turnkey development funded by the Development Authority through a revenue bond secured by the Union Station Transportation Center's existing cash flow.

## V. NEW ROCHELLE SMART GROWTH STUDY

The New Rochelle's Transit Oriented Development Smart Growth Study looks at how New Rochelle can revive its downtown area and create active, mixed-use districts with convenient, safe and pleasant access to the City's Transportation Center downtown.

Based on this objective, the study creates three goals: to identify areas where significant development opportunities exist and where new development can enhance the Downtown and existing neighborhoods; to identify streets and pathways to serve as primary corridors to the Transportation Center; and to improve the environment in and around the Transportation Center and create the opportunity for streetscape and open space that enhances the patron experience in New Rochelle’s Downtown.

The project area was initially defined as an area where Transit Oriented Development would likely occur, ½ mile radius of the Intermodal Hub. Within that radius, a number of parcels were identified as potential redevelopment opportunity sites. The sites were categorized by ownership, size, and short versus long term potential for development. From the groupings, six redevelopment sub districts were created based on similar characteristics in which the redevelopment analysis was applied. They were North Avenue Gateway, I-95 Gateway, East Gateway, Crossroads, West Gateway and Central Corridor.



**Figure v. Concept for Development Around New Rochelle Train Station**

Public outreach was conducted for the Smart Growth Study in conjunction with the City’s Comprehensive Plan update. Two Comprehensive Plan Advisory groups worked closely with staff and the consultants to better understand the opportunities and challenges within half a mile to one (1) mile of the City’s transit center. Four public meetings were scheduled at various locations around the city to seek input from all City residents as well as two open houses that were held at City Hall.

Recommendations made in the final plan suggested that the City of New Rochelle be proactive with rezoning, infrastructure improvements and parcel consolidation. Specifically, the Smart Growth Study identifies five next steps that the City should explore:

- 1) the City should initiate a Master Plan Development Process of the highlighted sub-districts with zoning changes and transportation / transit analysis, 2) the Central Corridor sub-district should be given the highest priority, 3) the City should adopt new zoning regulations to support the desired development, 4) the City should work with property owners to consolidate parcels and 5) the City should explore with Metro-North and Amtrak the potential for an expanded Transportation Center. The City is beginning to seek proposals for the identified sites through a request for proposal process.

## VI. STAMFORD EAST MAIN STREET

The Stamford East Main Street Feasibility Study examines the possibility of a new transit node at East Main Street that will serve as a catalyst for growth and foster HUD’s livability principles within an evolving east end neighborhood. The study proposes alternative, but viable development scenarios and recommends ways to generate enough community and political support needed to implement and construct the appropriate level of development that will lead to a new transit node.

The proposed transit node is located in the East Side, a neighborhood in the southern part of the City of Stamford. This neighborhood benefits from close proximity to Stamford’s core. East Main Street is the neighborhood’s central spine, carrying significant traffic to and from downtown Stamford. Zoning classifications within the neighborhood mostly consist of mid-density, single and multi-family residential with commercial lining East Main Street. Physically, the neighborhood is divided by the presence of a rail overpass for the Northeast Corridor and Interstate 95 viaduct that parallels East Main Street.

The community is changing. The community is highly supportive of growth. New and recent large scale residential developments on its main street west of the rail bridge indicate the evolving market for development in the neighborhood. Additionally recent capital investments to improve the street infrastructure and surrounding neighborhood have set the stage for the needed change. For instance, the Stamford Transportation center, previously isolated by a convoluted street system, is being improved with the construction of the Stamford Urban Transitway. This multimodal roadway will ultimately provide a direct path between the East Side neighborhood and



the transportation center.

Three distinct groups were targeted for input as part of the participatory process: A committee comprising of governmental officials, a stakeholder committee of community leaders, property owners and public agencies and the general public. In public meetings held throughout the city, the project team was able to discern an overall shared vision for the community which ultimately meant, the desire for a train station at East Main Street, the desire for compact development that promote commercial and residential vitality and spur economic development, and the desire for better connectivity to the Stamford Transit Center and throughout the neighborhood.



Figure vi. Preferred Branch Line Station

The feasibility study recommended that the East Side community pursue the construction of a branch line rail station at the intersection of south of East Main Street below the I-95 viaduct. The constraints to this proposed option is that the \$3 million dollars will be needed to reconstruct the crash walls and support columns under the I-95 and multiple sites would need to be acquired and consolidated to support parking needs.

To achieve the preferred branch line station proposal, the study suggests adopting an incremental, phased approach to development that will lead to a full build out branch line. Each phase of the development will inch closer to achieving the overall goal of a compact mixed-use development that is livable and sustainable. The first phase calls for the construction of the Stamford Urban Transitway, which is underway and federally funded. Stamford Urban Transitway is halfway complete with the second and final phase scheduled to be complete by the end of 2015. The second phase will call for the installation of an interim bus terminal. In the interim, the bus terminal serves as the initial impetus for establishing vehicular access and bus drop-offs, which are each necessary for a rail

station. The bus terminal will be accompanied with the development of a transit supportive main street. The East Main Street Rail Bridge must be widened to accommodate the construction of the branch station line. Funding for the redesign of this bridge will come from the Connecticut Department of Transportation's capital improvement plan. With a strong foundation of transit supportive infrastructure, a branch line will be constructed.



Figure vii. Full Build-out with Branch Line Station

## VII. SOUTHERN WESTCHESTER EAST WEST CORRIDOR ISSUES SCAN

The three cities of Yonkers, Mount Vernon and New Rochelle were originally planned as some of the region's first suburbs and continue to serve multiple purposes as bedroom communities for people working in New York City and vital local centers of retail, business and recreational activity. Each municipality has its urban core built around a Metro-North Railroad station, which provides vast opportunities for strengthening transit-oriented development. However, they have also undergone much change, particularly since manufacturing declined in the latter part of the twentieth century.

A working group was formed to develop an issues scan that would discuss existing conditions in the Southern Westchester East-West Corridor stretching from New Rochelle to Yonkers. The issues scan served as a framework for developing solutions to address some of the opportunities and challenges related to sustainability planning in the corridor.

As part of the Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant, a public meeting was held in Mount

Vernon for participants to share their opinions on what they feel are the opportunities and challenges in the corridor and to provide input to the planning process. The concerns ranged widely of issues including the need for economic development, improvements to the downtown streetscapes, development that is appropriate to the existing scale of each municipality, the potential for community branding, rehabilitating historic buildings and better access to fresh food.

The Cross County Parkway, MTA Metro-North Railroad and Westchester County Bee-line System were examined to assess how they can contribute to creating and supporting more transit-oriented development. Bicycle and pedestrian facilities were reviewed for opportunities to build a “Complete Streets” infrastructure in the corridor.

The land use analysis revealed that the three major urban centers anchoring the corridor contain higher density commercial and residential land uses. The analysis also showed that there has been a progressive decline in the amount of land zoned for industrial use. Many older industrial sites along the waterfront have also been redeveloped for residential and recreational development. While industrial uses have been declining, the industrial sector remains more active in the corridor than elsewhere in the county. A number of smaller industrial enclaves remain viable in areas such as Fifth Avenue in New Rochelle, Fullerton Avenue in Yonkers, and Marbledale Road in Tuckahoe.

The issues scan represents the first step in identifying the strengths and challenges in the corridor. The three municipalities should take steps to develop a framework that can assess the desire and readiness to take current and new TOD related practices to the next level. The municipalities should also evaluate regulatory frameworks and incentives that could be effective in attracting developer interest. Examples include consolidating application processes for developers and improving coordination among public and private financing sources. The adoption of form-based zoning codes should allow for greater

flexibility in use types, and establish standards for building form and public space. Exploring alternatives to minimum parking requirements such as unbundled or shared parking can also enhance opportunities for mixed-use development and strengthen TOD.

The Southern Westchester East- West Corridor has been identified in the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council’s *Plan 2040* as a priority area for major future study, a designation that should direct future NYMTC resources for further work in the corridor.

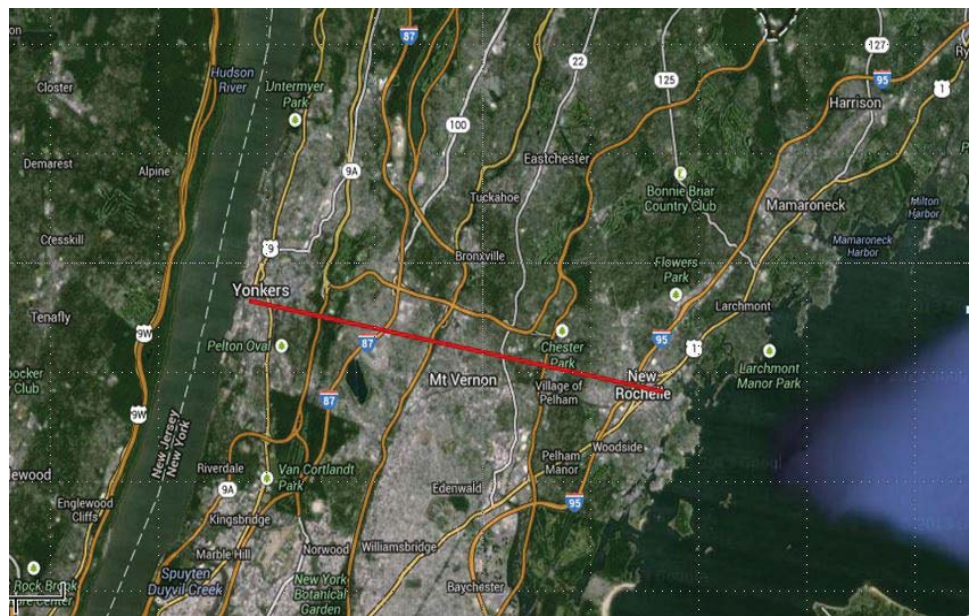
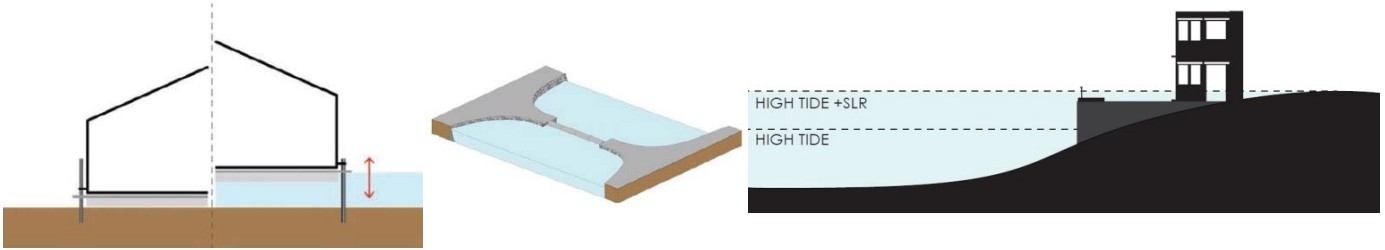


Figure viii. Study area of the Southern Westchester E-W Corridor

## VIII. NEW YORK CITY CLIMATE RESILIENCE

The New York City Department of City Planning produced two studies to help New York City and other urban waterfront communities improve their resilience to coastal flood risks and promote livable, sustainable neighborhoods. *Designing for Flood Risk* and *Urban Waterfront Adaptive Strategies* provides a systematic assessment of coastal hazards and recommends a framework for choosing and evaluating coastal protection alternatives.

The *Designing for Flood Risk* study identifies urban design principles to guide new construction that adheres to flood protection standards, as well recommendations for how zoning can incorporate these principles. The report provides background



**Figure ix.** The images above depict a set of strategies that a community’s coast line would adopt. Moving left to right, for high tide flooding due to sea level rise, a community can build amphibious new construction allowing it to float. The coast line would be protected by a surge barrier to reduce the risk of major flooding.

on the regulatory context for flood-resilient design under the National Flood Insurance Program and then describes the urban design impacts of resiliency standards using building typology and expected flood elevation to develop design solutions for new construction. Based on this analysis, the report then identifies certain zoning rules that may create challenges for building and retrofitting of flood-resistant buildings in vulnerable areas and proposes changes to the New York City’s zoning resolutions that could make the construction of flood-resistant buildings not only more practical, but also supportive of neighborhood character.

*Urban Waterfront Adaptive Strategies* is intended as a resource and reference guide that provides useful information for many different types of projects that seek to enhance coastal climate resilience at various scales from a site specific to regional level study. The body of work provides an overview of coastal hazards as they relate to waterfront planning and design and then describes different coastal area typologies and the exposure of each to different types of coastal hazards. It then goes on to outline a catalog of adaptive strategies that can be applied at various physical scales, and provides information on which strategies are most appropriate. Finally it provides the means to means to evaluate the adaptive approach.

Both climate resilience studies informed “A Stronger, More Resilient New York,” the report of Mayor Bloomberg’s Special Initiative for Rebuilding and Resiliency (SIRR). In October 2013, the New York City Council voted for legislation to advance New York City’s readiness for major storms in the future. The bill implements several recommendations put forth in the SIRR report. Among several laws passed, The City Council approved a bill to undertake a pilot study on the use of permeable materials to reduce flooding

on streets and sidewalks. To keep homes safe from sewage backups, the Council voted to require new or substantially improved buildings in flood-prone areas to install backflow devices. Additionally, they voted to ensure that automatic faucets and toilets can operate in the event of power loss. The Council also voted to give the Office of Long-term Planning and Sustainability the responsibility to develop plans that make New York City more resilient to natural disasters, and the Department of Buildings to create a manual explaining the City’s flood construction and protection requirements.

## IX. NORWALK TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT STUDY

The South Norwalk Railroad Station Area Transit-Oriented Development Strategy Master Plan, completed in 2011 identified poor pedestrian connections as one of the major impediments to sustainable development around the rail station. Regional Planning grant funds supported the re-design of two pedestrian staircases linking South Norwalk neighborhoods to the South Norwalk train station, with the goal of completing the design and engineering of the two staircases and then funding their construction to demonstrate an early action item implementing the 2011 master plan. The reconstruction of the two staircases is expected to improve walkability, improving access to transit from existing mixed-income housing and decreasing reliance on private vehicles and vehicle trips. While all of the pedestrian components of the streetscape are important pieces of the TOD plan network, the staircases are particularly significant as important first achievements in that they are highly visible, critical neighborhood links, undisputed neighborhood assets, and achievable projects in the short term that can help maintain local neighborhood enthusiasm for

engaging in related ongoing planning work.

The City of Norwalk is pooling funding from a variety of other sources to support related work implementing the master plan. The funding received from Department of Transportation TOD Pilot Program is being used for the procurement of a firm to undertake the planning, design and development of bid documents for the Complete Streets network around the railroad station. The Norwalk Redevelopment Agency is funding design, engineering and bid documents for a bus system network that will connect with the Complete Streets network and new pedestrian access ways. The City of Norwalk also received Transportation Alternative Investment funding to increase pedestrian amenities in in the neighborhood. These projects combined will support the application in place for a HUD's Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant program for transforming a nearby housing projects, Washington Village and a TIGER Discretionary grant application to fund the implementation of the each planning and design project.

## X. SUFFOLK TRANSFER OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS

Suffolk County is preparing a Regional Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) study that examines existing local, county and regional TDR programs and proposes recommendations that encourage better participation between programs, coordinates development right absorption within receiving TDR areas while discouraging development in sending areas, and coordinate local use decisions and regional transportation policies. The initial study uncovered that there are 17 TDR programs in Suffolk County, and they all target similar sending areas (natural and historical sites) and target similar receiving areas (TOD areas and central business districts).

Suffolk County looks to analyze each TDR program for specific identifiable problems to determine ways to inter-coordinate each TDR program. A Request for Proposal will be issued to local law firms that can assist the County with drafting proposed legislation, State Environmental Quality Review Act review elements and fiscal analysis.

Anticipated outcomes of the study recommendations include the containment of suburban sprawl through the preservation of remaining open spaces and the promotion of development patterns that direct growth to where it is warranted-in close proximity to transportation hubs, downtown, designated growth zones and infrastructure. The recommendations of this initiative should have applications throughout the New York-Connecticut region; particularly in developing areas where transit oriented development goals must specifically address the need to protect water quality and environmentally sensitive land.

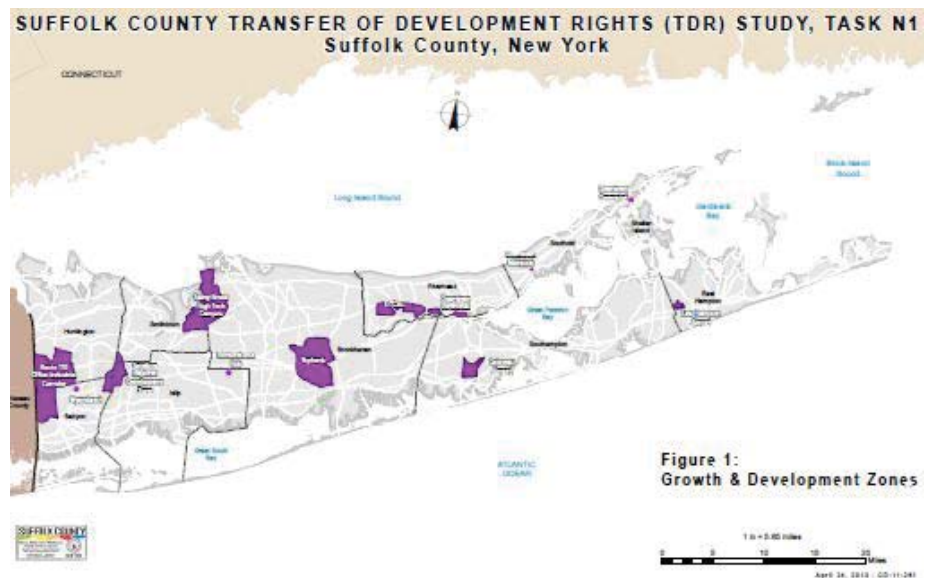


Figure x. Receiving areas of the 17 TDR programs in Suffolk County

## XI. LONG ISLAND REGIONAL HOUSING STUDY

The Long Island Regional Planning Council (LIRPC), working with the counties of Nassau and Suffolk, engaged a local consultant to perform a comprehensive inventory and analysis on affordable housing programs by assessing their impact in the region. LIRPC recognizes the need to expand the stock of affordable, mixed-income housing options throughout Long Island in transit supported locations.

The recommendations from the project call for a report card to measure opportunity areas ripe to receive affordable housing development. The report also acknowledges that affordability must be defined so that housing developers are able construct a

financially feasible development plan that includes some households at or below 50% and 30% of the AMI. Universities and colleges in the region can pull a large share of responsibility to house young residents. The report notes that schools are working on a feasibility study that will assess possible ways to encourage affordable housing for young adults and recent graduates on the campuses of universities and colleges on Long Island.

As the Sustainable Communities grant nears the end, the Long Island Housing report will be reviewed and submitted for approval by the Long Island Regional Planning Council, in which some of the recommendations from the report will be adopted. Beyond the council, the report will continue to keep the fair housing dialogue ongoing and inform the work of Long Island housing coalitions as they continue to develop strategies that further the fair housing agenda.

## XII. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES IN THE BRONX

The New York City Department of City Planning studied transit-oriented development (TOD) around six existing MTA Railroad stations and two stations that are proposed as part of the MTA Metro-North Railroad's Penn Station Access Study. The corridors that surround MTA stations provide an opportunity for sustainable growth that could support retail and affordable housing demand in the Bronx.

The MTA Metro-North Railroad provides service and access to job centers in Manhattan, Upstate New York, and Connecticut at thirteen existing stations and four additional proposed stations as part of proposed new service in eastern Bronx.. Strengthening service in corridors will help meet current transit access needs, both to jobs and other opportunities in the Manhattan Core and to employment centers north of the city, and play a critical role in bolstering and sustaining the economic health of the Bronx.

Ridership at Bronx stations has increased 150% since 1990 but varies greatly at individual Bronx stations, despite being in some of the densest neighborhoods served by Metro-North. Station usage is a product of many factors: price, service and frequency, difficult intermodal and pedestrian connections, lack of surrounding amenities, and incompatible land uses. There is therefore a potential for greater

usage by Bronx residents should these challenges be overcome.

City Planning's Bronx Metro-North Corridor Study identified opportunities, issues and constraints based around land use and zoning; walkability; transportation and intermodal connectivity; and community amenities through a rigorous outreach effort tailored to each individual community. Each of these station areas is within a distinct neighborhood that has their own unique set of stakeholders, issues, and politics and on the ground conditions. As a result, a multi-faceted approach to outreach that maximized our effort was required. Individual outreach methods had different levels of effectiveness in each area. However, DCP was able to find common threads and successful techniques in working with existing grassroots organizations, partnering with agencies that have similar interests and building a consensus around priority issues. This has provided a framework for implementation that will continue on after this report.

The recommendations identify land use opportunities; pedestrian pathways between amenities; and connections to intermodal transit options. DCP will continue to move these priorities forward through agency initiatives and continued coordination with community and interagency stakeholders.



Figure xi. Eight station area in the study

## XIII. SUSTAINABLE EAST NEW YORK

The Sustainable Communities East New York study

area is a transit-rich, predominantly low-income community containing substantial amounts of vacant and underutilized land. The neighborhood is defined by three major mixed-use transit corridors with residential blocks in between. The study area also includes a major regional and local transit hub at Broadway Junction, and an industrial and business area. The area's access to local and regional transit and the availability of underutilized land provide opportunities for the development of much-needed affordable housing as well as opportunities for economic development and increased access to retail and services.

This study recommends changes to transform East New York's key transit corridors into vibrant, safe streets offering new housing and retail, and develop a regional center at Broadway Junction providing jobs and opportunities for economic development. The project builds on ongoing public investment in safety, schools, affordable housing and economic development and is being conducted in cooperation with local community partners. In addition to recommendations for land use and zoning, this study seeks to identify opportunities for improvements to transportation access and intermodal connections, and for the promotion of sustainability practices, serving as a model for sustainable community development for New York City and the region.

Based on input generated through intensive community visioning sessions held with residents and other local stakeholders, the report calls for promoting mixed-income housing and mixed-use development along transit corridors while promoting contextual infill development on residential blocks. Residents and stakeholders who contributed to the report also wanted to see the local economy boosted to support job growth and creation of a major regional destination at Broadway Junction which could include civic institutions, shopping and entertainment. Residents would also like to see pedestrian safety improvements, particularly along Atlantic Avenue, which currently functions as a barrier between north and south portions of the neighborhood.

To achieve the recommendations developed from the visioning process will require the support of government agencies, elected officials, local residents, businesses, and community-based organizations. A rezoning plan that allows higher densities and a mix of uses along transit corridors, as identified in the report, must be developed and introduced for public review. Underutilized sites would be redeveloped through coordinated public and private investment. Lastly, pedestrian safety and walkability would be enhanced with connectivity and streetscape improvements.

Some of the recommendations from the study are already in the process of being implemented. Funding from the City Council will allow for streetscape improvements along Atlantic Avenue, which will make pedestrian crossing safer. The Department of Transportation has plans to continue to redesign the sidewalks and crosswalks around the Broadway Junction, a transit hub, for better pedestrian access. The NYS Department of State has awarded a Brownfield Opportunity Area implementation grant to the Department of City Planning and a partnering local nonprofit to fund the development of an area-wide rezoning that will implement the study's recommendations for mixed-use growth.

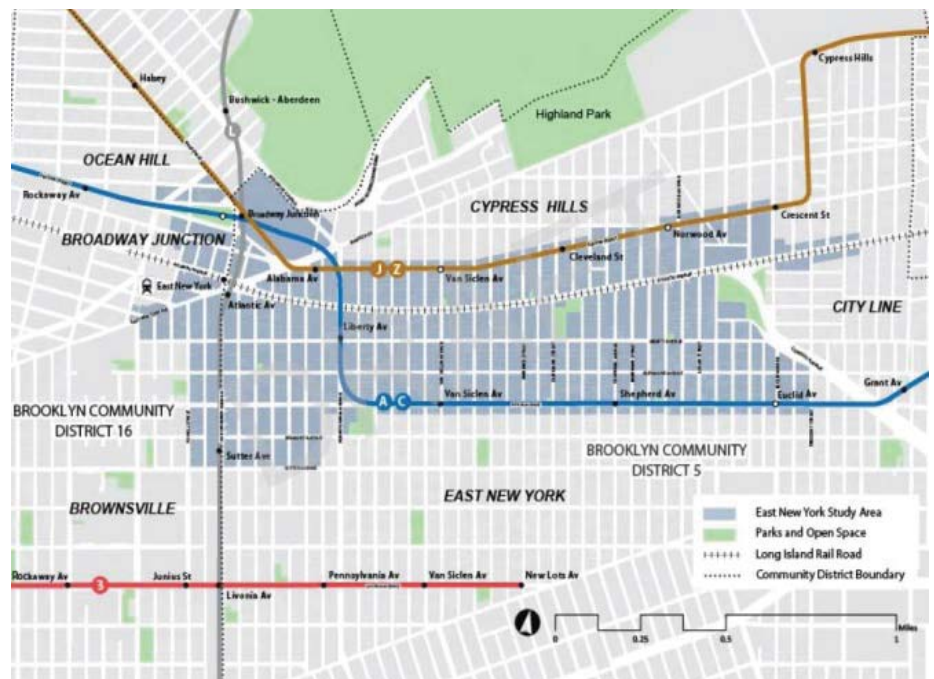


Figure xii. Sustainable East New York study area