City of Stamford, Connecticut
Transit-Oriented Development Technical Assistance

Report Findings and Recommendations

November 14, 2016

I. Executive Summary

Pursuant to the scope of work with the City of Stamford, this memorandum constitutes Smart Growth America's (SGA) final report summarizing an overview of key findings and recommendations from interviews, the June 2016 site visit, and the review of existing plans and studies for the STC area by the TOD TA team over the past several months.

Sarah Kline of SK Solutions; Erika Ruiz of Enterprise Community Partners (ECP); and Christopher Zimmerman of Smart Growth America, representing the SGA TOD TA team, met with municipal leaders and stakeholders on June 28, 2016 to provide assistance supported by the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) National Public Transportation/Transit-Oriented Development Technical Assistance Initiative.

II. Technical Assistance Description

1. **Project Name**: Stamford Transportation Center (STC)
   Applicant: City of Stamford, CT
   Transit Agency Partner: Connecticut Department of Transportation, CT Transit
   Location: Stamford, Connecticut
   Primary Federal Funding Source for Project: New Starts
   Award Amount: $59,000,000

2. **TOD Technical Assistance Description**: Stamford seeks assistance defining an appropriate use mix around the STC, and using the development as a seam to enhance connectivity between the downtown to the north of the station and the South End.

3. **Transit Agency Profile:** CT Transit is a Connecticut Department of Transportation-owned bus service that provides service via contract for eight metropolitan areas, accounting for 80 percent of annual bus ridership in the state.

III. Introduction

The City of Stamford was selected through a national competition to receive assistance under the National Public Transportation/Transit-Oriented Development, Technical Assistance Ladders of Opportunity Initiative, a project of the Federal Transit Administration in partnership with Smart Growth America. The TOD TA Initiative is designed to provide technical assistance to improve access to public transportation, build new economic opportunities and pathways to employment, and support transit-oriented development. The initiative focuses on supporting economically distressed communities across the country. The technical assistance is intended to help elected leaders, developers, and community members work together to build more TOD projects, and to ensure that those projects are both economically successful and socially equitable. Done properly, TOD promotes economic development, provides communities with transit access to jobs and services, and transforms areas near transit into compact, mixed-use developments with quality pedestrian environments. Successful equitable TOD is development that provides access to housing, jobs, and transportation for all members of the community.

Stamford requested assistance regarding TOD around the Stamford Transportation Center ("STC") and in the South End. Stamford seeks assistance defining an appropriate use mix around the STC, and using the development as a seam to enhance connectivity between the downtown to the north of the station and the South End.

The STC sees more than 24,000 rail passengers and 3,500 bus and shuttle riders daily, with commuter rail service provided by Metro North as well as Amtrak and Shore Line East (operated by the state of Connecticut). [1] Stamford is the busiest Metro North station outside of New York City. [2] Stamford is no longer simply a bedroom community for New York; in fact, **more people now arrive in Stamford each morning on the train than depart**. [3] With such a high level of daily use, the STC could serve as an inviting gateway to Stamford's Downtown—which has become a regional employment, retail, and culture center—and as an anchor for transit-oriented development in the adjacent neighborhoods. Today, however, the station area is difficult to navigate, surrounded by parking garages, bus and shuttle stops, and a major interstate

Figure 1. Stamford Transportation Center (Source: Stamford Transportation Center Comprehensive Master Plan).

highway just to the north. Nearly half of the people using the station drive there; in fact, the percentage of people arriving at the station by single-occupancy vehicle increased from 39 percent in 2004 to 48 percent in 2009, due in large part to the opening of the new garage at the STC in 2004. [4]

On the north side the station is bordered primarily by office buildings, many with suburban-style campuses that are set back from the street. At the same time the South End, the neighborhood

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[1] "Stamford Transportation Center Comprehensive Master Plan," Stantec, September 2010, p.11. According to data provided by the City of Stamford, in 2014, Metro North riders comprised the majority of rail passengers, with 14,727 weekday boardings on average, including passengers transferring to or from connecting routes.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid., p. 14.
[4] Ibid., p. 21.

immediately south of the STC, is experiencing a redevelopment boom. Historically an industrial area with a small residential population and neighborhood businesses, the South End became economically challenged when the major industrial employers in the area, such as Pitney Bowes, closed their factories, leading residents and businesses to leave the South End. In recent years, however, new development has occurred, primarily high-rise multi-family apartments targeted toward younger, upper-income workers desiring to live close to transit and urban amenities. Virtually any location in the South End is within walking distance of the STC, making the South End a prime transit-oriented development location.

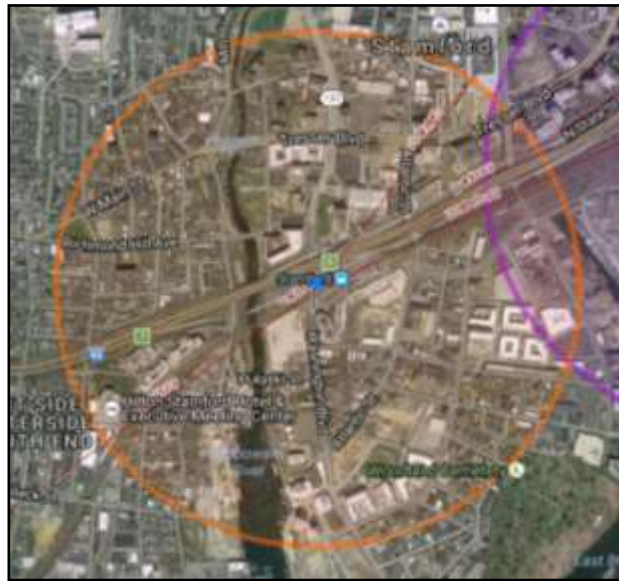**¼ mile radius around the STC**   **½ mile radius around the STC**

Figure 2. Left: ¼ mile radius around the STC. Right: ½ mile radius around the STC. (Source: National TOD Database).

The city requested assistance through the TOD Initiative with two key issues: (1) defining the appropriate scale and mix of uses, including housing, commercial, and other uses, to create an equitable TOD area around the STC, particularly within ¼ mile of the station, and (2) identifying a set of improvements to provide a more seamless connection between the neighborhoods surrounding the STC, namely, downtown and the South End. This report provides findings and recommendations on those two issues.

Overview of Transit-Oriented Development

Transit-oriented development (TOD) is generally defined as a walkable community with a mix of land uses that is close to frequent, reliable transit service. TOD can generate significant economic and quality of life benefits, not just for those who live or work in the TOD area but also for an entire city. Businesses are increasingly looking to locate in walkable, mixed-use areas with good transit access. Recent research by Smart Growth America identified more than 500 companies that have either moved to or expanded in walkable downtowns over the past five years. Companies cited the desire to attract and retain a talented workforce, to encourage creative collaboration, and to be closer to customers and business partners

Figure 3. In 2010 biotech company Biogen moved to a suburb 25 minutes outside Cambridge, MA. In 2014, the company moved back to the heart of Cambridge. (Source: Core Values, Smart Growth America, 2016.

among the key reasons for their location decisions. [5] Individuals and families, many of them older Americans and young professionals, are also seeking access to TOD areas. By 2030, the demand for housing near transit is expected to grow to over 15 million households nationwide, more than double what it was in 2000. [6]

Cities that successfully develop affordable, walkable neighborhoods with convenient access to transit, jobs, shops, and services, will attract the talented workforce they will need to compete in the global economy. Places that have already invested in TOD have seen increased economic activity, higher property values, and greater local tax revenues. Since opening its first light rail line in 1996, Dallas has seen $5.3 billion in new development, and millions more invested in renewal of existing properties, near light rail stations. [7] Additionally, office properties located within 1/4 mile of a station command an average 13.9 percent higher lease rate. [8] In the Washington, DC area, property within ½ mile of Metrorail stations is worth 7-9 percent more than property farther away, and gets more valuable the closer it is to Metrorail stations. [9] Property within ½ mile of Metrorail generates 28 percent of the region's property taxes even though it is only 4 percent of the land. [10] In Minneapolis-St. Paul, property located in areas near the region's rail system performed 48 percent better than the region as a whole during the recent recession, retaining significantly more of its value. [11] TOD areas provide resources and revenues whose benefits are felt far beyond the boundaries of the TOD.

Methodology

In preparing this report, the technical assistance team reviewed existing plans and studies for the STC area, including:
- "Stamford Master Plan, 2015-2025," Adopted December 16, 2014;
- "Stamford Transportation Center Comprehensive Master Plan," Stantec, September 2010; and
- "Walkable Stamford," Project for Public Spaces, August 2008.

The team interviewed representatives of the city, Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT), the Board of Representatives, the Zoning Board, the Planning Board, the Finance Board, the Downtown Special Services District, Building and Land Technology (BLT), Jonathan Rose Companies, Commuter Council, Business Council of Fairfield County, South End Neighborhood Revitalization Zone, Stamford Chamber of Commerce, Stamford Partnership, and Empire State Realty Trust. The team conducted a site visit to the STC, downtown, and the

[5] "Core Values: Why American Companies Are Moving Downtown," Smart Growth America, 2016, http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/documents/core-values.pdf.
[6] "Mixed Income Housing Near Transit: Increasing Affordability with Location Efficiency," Center for Transit-Oriented Development, 2009, p. 7, http://www.reconnectingamerica.org/assets/Uploads/091030ra201mixedhousefinal.pdf.
[7] "Developmental Impacts of the Dallas Area Rapid Transit Light Rail System," Center for Economic Development and Research, University of North Texas, January 2014, https://www.dart.org/about/economicdevelopment/developmentalimpactjanuary2014.asp.
[8] Ibid.
[9] "Making the Case for Transit: WMATA Regional Benefits of Transit," Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, November 2011, https://www.wmata.com/pdfs/planning/WMATA%20Making%20the%20Case%20for%20Transit%20Final%20Report%20Jan-2012.pdf.
[10] Ibid.
[11] "The New Real Estate Mantra: Location Near Public Transportation," American Public Transportation Association and National Association of Realtors, March 2013, http://www.apta.com/resources/statistics/Documents/NewRealEstateMantra.pdf.

South End on June 28, 2016. The full list of individuals who participated in interviews is provided in Appendix B.

IV. Findings

Stamford's intermodal station has the potential to be the hub of an economically vibrant city center that helps to support Stamford as a whole. Already, the area around the STC generates a far greater share of property tax revenue compared to its size than other parts of the city. Properties within ½ mile of the STC represent 3 percent of the city's land area, and generate 18.5 percent of the city's total property tax revenue. [12] These figures represent only a portion of the potential revenues that TOD around the STC could provide for the city. Focusing future growth and development in that area and in the South End will maximize the value of the STC and allow the city of Stamford to become an attractive destination for residents and businesses alike.
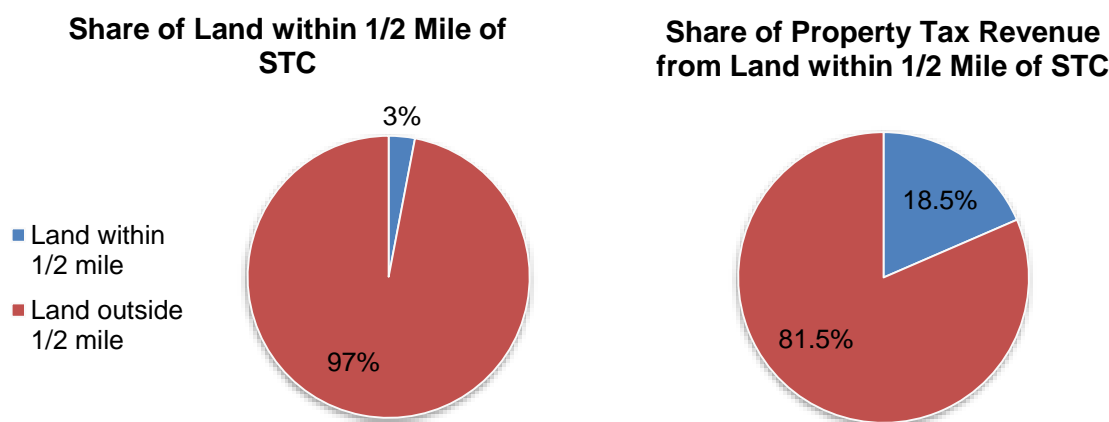

Figure 4. The area around the STC generates a far greater share of property tax revenue compared to its size than other parts of the city.

While there is development around the STC today, it is not transit-oriented, and therefore does not support the kind of dense, walkable neighborhood that generates the benefits described above. The presence of an active transportation hub is not enough by itself to create the kind of city center Stamford desires. There are numerous challenges preventing the STC from serving as the hub of a seamless, connected, transit-oriented area. Those challenges include:

Figure 5. Stamford Transportation Center (Source: Stamford Transportation Center Comprehensive Master Plan).

- Much of the available land directly adjacent to the STC is owned by the state, and is dedicated to subsidized parking. The prevalence of underpriced parking incentivizes driving, as drivers do not have to pay for the full cost of the infrastructure they are using, and discourages

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[12] Data provided by the City of Stamford.

other means of accessing the station. Moreover, parking garages contribute little to the city's property tax rolls; devoting the land closest to the station to cars fails to maximize the value that could be derived from this desirable location.

- Development is occurring in the South End, but is not coordinated to ensure a balance of uses appropriate to the area. Thus far, most new development has been multi-family rental units with some ground-floor retail. Since demand is high for these new homes, affordability has become an issue. Long-time residents are concerned about the future of their community, as historic homes are being lost to new development.
- Walkability around the STC is limited. Pedestrians and bicyclists must cross dangerous intersections to access the station. While block sizes are relatively small in downtown and the South End, buildings are set far back from the street and there is no active street life. While some improvements are being made (e.g., the Atlantic Street bridge project), the physical barriers between downtown and the South End make a seamless connection difficult.
- Local transit is competing with privately operated shuttles for limited space at the station. Shuttle routes are not coordinated either with each other or with existing bus routes, leading to inefficiencies, duplication, and higher operating costs.
- There is no plan in place to combat the potential for displacement of current South End residents and to ensure that the new residential units are affordable to households with a range of incomes.

While these challenges are significant, they are not insurmountable. The following list of findings outlines the key elements that must be addressed to achieve the city's goal of creating a vibrant, mixed-use TOD area around the STC.

1. A balanced mix and greater intensity of uses is needed around the transportation center and throughout the South End.

While the area within ¼ mile of the station should be a primary focus, much of the South End is within ½ mile of the station, which is a generally-accepted benchmark for the maximum distance people will walk from their homes to access a transit stop. [13] The entire South End as well as much of downtown is well within 2-3 miles of the station, the distance people will bike to access transit. [14] This broader area, then, should all be considered part of the TOD development effort, although the initial focus should be the ¼ mile radius around the station.

Increased density in the South End and around the STC—both to the north and the south—is the key variable that will allow the neighborhood to convert from an auto-oriented, single-use area into an economically vibrant destination where people can live, work, shop, and play. [15] Successful TOD requires a "'critical mass' of residents, business activity, and multi-modal

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[13] See, e.g., Dittmar, H., and G. Ohland, eds. The New Transit Town: Best Practices in Transit Oriented Development. 2004. Island Press. Washington, DC p. 120; and "Envisioning Neighborhoods with Transit-Oriented Development Potential," Mineta Transportation Institute, May 2002, http://transweb.sjsu.edu/MTIportal/research/publications/documents/01-15.pdf The Federal Transit Administration uses a ½ mile walking distance and a 3-mile biking distance as the standard for federal transit law. See "Final Policy Statement on the Eligibility of Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements under Federal Transit Law," Federal Transit Administration, Federal Register Vol. 76, August 19, 2011.
[14] Ibid.
[15] "Performance-Based Transit-Oriented Development Typology Guidebook," Center for Transit-Oriented Development, December 2010, p. 5, http://reconnectingamerica.org/assets/Uploads/2010_performancebasedtodtypologyguidebook.pdf.

infrastructure to induce developers and property owners to switch from an automobile-oriented approach to one that facilitates greater multi-modal activity." [16]

The Center for Real Estate and Urban Analysis at the George Washington University School of Business has conducted extensive research on the characteristics of walkable urban places ("WalkUPs"). According to their research, walkable urban development includes:
- Substantially higher densities (1.0 to 40 FAR, though mostly in the 1.0 to 4.0 range).
- Mixed-use real-estate products, or the adjacent spatial mix of products.
- Emerging product types, such as rental apartments over a ground-floor grocery store.
- Multiple transportation options, such as bus, rail, bicycle, and pedestrian-friendly sidewalks, as well as motor vehicles, that connect to the greater metro area. Within the boundaries of the WalkUP itself, most destinations are within walking distance. [17]

Form / Function Matrix:
Metropolitan Land Use Options in the U.S.

	REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT	LOCAL SERVING
WALKABLE URBAN	**WALKUP** (Walkable Urban Place) • Office Space ≥ 1.4M sq ft -OR- Retail Space ≥ 340,000 sq ft • WalkScore ≥ 70.5 • Avg intersection density ≥ 100 per sq mile	**WALKABLE NEIGHBORHOOD** • WalkScore ≥ 65 • Avg intersection density ≥ 100 per sq mile
DRIVABLE SUB-URBAN	**DRIVABLE EDGE CITY** • Office Space ≥ 1.4M sq ft -OR- Retail Space ≥ 340,000 sq ft	**DRIVABLE SUB-DIVISION** • All land not allocated to other categories

Figure 6. (Source: "Foot Traffic Ahead: Ranking Walkable Urbanism in America's Largest Metros," Center for Real Estate and Urban Analysis, George Washington University School of Business, 2016, p. 7.)

The area within ¼ mile of the STC today is dominated by parking garages, office buildings, and older industrial parcels, as shown in the pictures below. Only one of those uses generates foot traffic that could potentially support street-level retail, one of the key components of a walkable community. While parking for commuters who drive remains important, traditional single-use parking structures do not contribute either to a walkable environment or to economic activity.

[16] "Promoting Opportunity through Equitable Transit-Oriented Development (eTOD): Barriers to Success and Best Practices for Implementation," Enterprise Community Partners, October 2015, p. 57, http://www.enterprisecommunity.org/servlet/servlet.FileDownload?file=00P1400000ihaDWEAY.

[17] "Foot Traffic Ahead: Ranking Walkable Urbanism in America's Largest Metros," Center for Real Estate and Urban Analysis, George Washington University School of Business, 2016, p. 6, http://business.gwu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/CREUA_Foot-Traffic-Ahead_2016.06.14.pdf.

Washington Boulevard, one block north (top) and one block south (bottom) of the train station

Figure 7. (Source: Google Streetview).

Successful TOD depends on a mix of uses that balance residential, commercial, and industrial needs. A more densely developed, mixed-use zone around the STC would stimulate economic activity not just a peak commute times, but throughout the day, in the evenings, and on weekends.

There is no simple rule for optimal use mix. A few things should be kept in mind. Successful TOD is fundamentally an exercise in placemaking. A typical goal is to create an "18-hour place"; meaning, an area that has desirable street activity all day and into the evening—a place that has life in the middle of the workday as well as on weekends and weekday nights. This goal has certain implications for the built environment and the mix of uses. Enlivening a city center area may require more destinations, which in part likely means more retail. Following the adage that "retail follows rooftops," adding more walkable retail implies the need for additional residential units within walking distance. This raises the question, how much is necessary?

Part of a strategy for achieving "18-hour" activity is balancing the commercial and residential components of the area in question. In terms of density, if the goal were a 50-50 split, that is, equal daytime (employment) and nighttime (resident) population, a higher share would need to be allocated to residential development. This is because a given amount of commercial density supports more occupants than residential development does. (An apartment for one person might be 600 to 1200 square feet; that same person's office is likely not more than 150 square feet.) For this reason, some local plans may specify a residential share (on a square-foot basis) as not less than 60 percent.

Another way to approach the question is to first determine the amount of additional retail desired in the ½ mile area around the STC, and then to ask what minimum level of residents are necessary to support that additional retail. The first calculation requires determining the amount of retail gross floor area (GFA) necessary to line relevant streets (those to be activated). This will be driven by the linear feet along the relevant paths. Depth is less important, in that activation can be achieved with very shallow retail facilities that engage the street. However, in designing a retail district mix and type of variety is important, and that will impact the total GFA needed. (For example, a given street might be lined with purveyors of "carry-away" food—coffee, crepes, ice cream, juice bars—that can be fit into spaces 20-feet deep or less. For the district to provide for its residents, however, it will need other retail

types that require a larger footprint, such as a grocery store. [18]) For purposes of this discussion, suppose that it is determined (based on design considerations, given the number of linear feet of street to be lined, etc.) that an additional 50,000 to 100,000 square feet of retail space should be provided.

Achieving this result – and sustaining it - will require a minimum number of people to support the shops and restaurants needed to enliven the area. The question of what constitutes sufficient density to support walkable retail is complex. At the risk of oversimplifying, we can start by noting that some studies indicate that densities of around 20-22 units per acre are necessary to generate significant walk-to-shop activity. [19] Looked at another way, an average household will support about 15 square feet of retail development. [20] For 50,000 to 100,000 square feet of retail space, this would imply the need for about 3,300 to 6,700 households within 1/4 to 1/2 mile. Currently, there are approximately 850 housing units within 1/4 mile of the STC, and about 3,700 within 1/2 mile. [21]

Of course, not all demand to support retail need come from the immediate neighborhood; customers will be provided both by households that come from outside the walking zone (most of whom may drive there, though some may arrive by transit or bicycle), and nearby office workers. However, the resident population serves as a key "base" for retail, both to attract retail investment, and to maintain it over time. Furthermore, to minimize the need for parking and support frequent transit service, somewhere between 30 and 75 percent of the required households should be located within a quarter mile of the retail. [22] (Note: While a share of the demand necessary for the retail will come from households that do not live in the immediate vicinity, accommodating them is complicated by the need to provide parking. To the extent that the share of those who will not need to drive to the destinations—because they live nearby—is increased, parking requirements will be reduced. This has the double benefit of reducing the burden of the cost on the development, and generating more ridership for local-serving transit, which may then provide alternative access to households beyond walking distance.)

While this discussion has focused on retail establishments as destinations, it should be acknowledged that destinations that generate and support a walkable environment are not limited to retail. Many are publicly-provided activities, such as libraries and community centers, or quasi-private establishments such as museums, theaters, and other performance venues.

Finally, note the substantial interdependency all of this implies. Creating a lively center means generating more pedestrian activity, which requires more destinations, which requires nearby residents (at least as a base) to support them, who require sufficient retail destinations to support their residency. Success results from the synergies among all of these elements.

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[18] For a comparison of the range and types of neighborhood-serving retail, see "*Dollars and Cents of Shopping Centers / The SCORE 2008*," Urban Land Institute & International Council of Shopping Centers (2008), Washington, DC: Urban Land Institute.
[19] See "Business Performance in Walkable Shopping Areas," Gary Hack, (November 2013).
[20] See "Creating Walkable Neighborhood Business Districts: An exploration of the demographic and physical characteristics needed to support local retail services," Gregory Easton and John Owen (June 2009).
[21] Estimates based on 2010-2014 American Community Survey, US Census Bureau, using Esri Business Analyst Online.
[22] Easton and Owen.

Case Study: Washington, DC's "NoMa" District

Twenty years ago, the area north of Washington, DC's Union Station was in distress. Much of the area was vacant or industrial land, including the railroad tracks leading north from DC along the Northeast Corridor. The only destination of note was the city's Greyhound station, strangely isolated from the busy Amtrak station a few blocks away.

Today, the renamed "NoMa" district (for "North of Massachusetts [Ave.]") is a vibrant, walkable community of 237 acres. When development underway is completed in the next two years, NoMa will be home to nearly 8,000 residential units, 14 million square feet of office space, and 1 million square feet of retail. Eighty-two percent of residents get to work by walking, biking, or public transit. Land values have increased significantly, driven by the desire among young professionals to live close to work, and by the employers who have located in the area to capture that workforce.

ESTIMATED TOTAL MUNICIPAL REVENUES
NoMa Station Impact Study Area
(2006-2014)

Year	Revenue
2006	$11.3M
2007	$16.8M
2008	$23.1M
2009	$28.8M
2010	$33.0M
2011	$39.9M
2012	$51.7M
2013	$55.8M
2014	$68.8M

(Source: "10 Years and Growing: Success Built on Transit," RKG Associates, November 2014, p.6, http://www.nomabid.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/MetroAnniversaryReport_RKG.pdf.)

The development boom began when several large employers moved into the area, anchoring the new development, including the headquarters of XM satellite radio and the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms. The Department of Justice and the General Services Administration also have offices in the area. At the same time, the property owners worked with the District of Columbia government as well as Congress to fund the construction of a new Metrorail station north of Union Station, to serve the newly developing area. The new station opened in 2004. In addition, Harris Teeter (a grocery store) and a CVS opened in the neighborhood, making the area much more attractive for residents.

In 2007, the City Council created the NoMa Business Improvement District to develop and promote a cohesive plan for making NoMa an attractive place to live, work, and play. The neighborhood is now flush with new office and residential buildings, supported by an array of ground-floor retail and restaurants. Brick sidewalks give the neighborhood a unique character, sporting benches, gardens, and free outdoor Wi-Fi that encourage pedestrians to linger and experience what the neighborhood has to offer.

Several factors have contributed to NoMa's success. First, it is in a prime location, adjacent to the Capitol Hill neighborhood where thousands of people live and work. Second, the area benefits from flexible zoning, allowing FARs of 10 and building heights up to 130 feet with limited plan review. Third, the federal government has a policy favoring locating government offices near transit. However, while federal offices made up a high percentage of early

tenants, the trend today is toward private businesses, many of which also have a policy of locating near transit.

NoMa's redevelopment has not been without challenges, including concerns over displacement of existing residents and a lack of homeownership opportunities. Nonetheless, an area that was formerly blighted and dangerous is now crowded with people walking and biking both within NoMa and to other parts of the city. As mentioned, office development led the way, supported by the rail stations. Residential development

Programming of public spaces such as "Summer Screen 2016" helps to create a vibrant neighborhood. (Source: NoMa BID).

has followed, as the multi-family rental market in DC, particularly near Metro stations, has remained strong. Retail followed more slowly, but is now picking up as high-rise buildings provide more space for ground-floor retail uses. All of those elements—the transit access, the mix of retail, office, and residential, and the attention to amenities like parks and public programming—have combined to create a district with 18-hour appeal.

2. Walkability in the area around the transportation center needs to be improved.

One of the key elements of TOD is walkability. Walkable neighborhoods allow residents and visitors to move throughout the area in a variety of ways, using transit, bikes, and their own feet, as well as in a car. This ability to use multiple transportation options has numerous benefits, including reduced household costs (the average cost of owning and maintaining a car is $8,698 per year [23]) and increases in public safety and health, as well as reduced emissions.
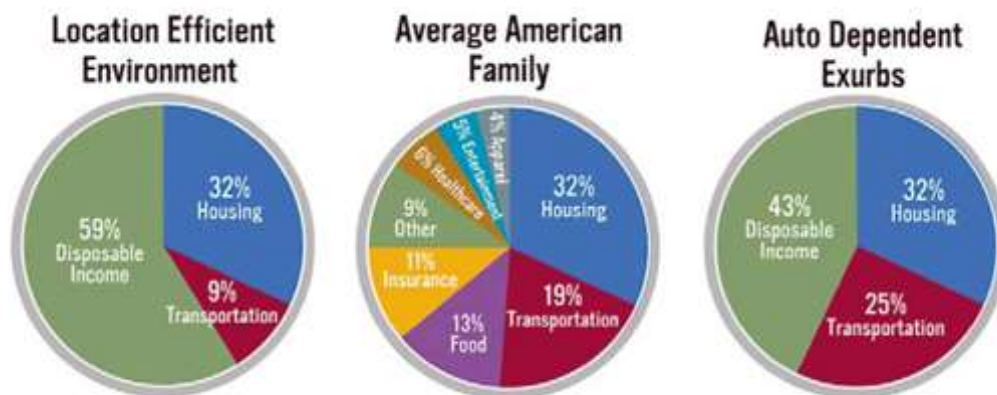

Figure 8. A neighborhood with good access to transit, shops, jobs, and services can reduce household expenditures on transportation. (Source: Center for Neighborhood Technology, cited in "Transportation and Housing Costs," Federal Highway Administration, http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/livability/fact_sheets/transandhousing.cfm).

[23] "Your Driving Costs," AAA, 2015, http://newsroom.aaa.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Your-Driving-Costs-2015-Facebook.png.

Walkable conditions depend on several physical factors, including small block sizes, intersections that balance the needs of pedestrians and drivers, sidewalks unobstructed by utility poles, driveways, or other interruptions, well-lit pathways, and active land uses at the street-level, such as restaurants and shops. These conditions combine to encourage walking from destination to destination, and as the numbers of pedestrians increase, safety also increases, as more "eyes on the street" reduces the likelihood of crime. Walkability also benefits retail sales in pedestrian-oriented shops. For example, a study of two Barnes and Noble locations in Maryland found that the store in a walkable mixed-use area earned 15percent more than the store located in a strip mall. [24]

Walkability in Stamford was the subject of a 2008 report by Project for Public Spaces ("PPS"), and a study of walkability/bikeability is currently being conducted with a report to the Western Connecticut Council of Governments expected next year. The PPS report identified several existing barriers to walkability in downtown and around the STC, including:
- Streets oriented toward high-speed traffic rather than pedestrians;
- Lack of wayfinding signage;
- Failure to use the STC as an anchor for walkable development;
- Lack of amenities such as seating, lighting, and landscaping;
- Failure to activate the plaza in front of the UBS building; and
- Buildings without active ground-floor uses. [25]

Auto-oriented streets near the STC

Figure 9. (Photos: Robin Stein, City of Stamford).

The PPS report recommended numerous improvements, both near-term and long-term. Some of the key areas of focus were activation of the UBS plaza, increasing the crossing time for pedestrians at major intersections, attracting street-level commercial uses to the area around the STC, and improving the pedestrian and bicyclist experience along Washington Boulevard as they cross into the station.

On the other side of the STC, Atlantic Street has the potential to become a key linkage between downtown destinations and the growing population in the South End. With major regional destinations such as the Stanford Town Center just north of the STC between Atlantic and Canal Streets, residents of the South End could be within an easy walk, bike, or bus trip along Atlantic Street. However, for a significant stretch between downtown and the South End, Atlantic Street is bordered by parking garages, empty lots, and office buildings. These uses offer little to interest passing pedestrians or bicyclists and can even make the

[24] "The Jobs and Transit Connection," memo to the Central Corridor Funders Collaborative, Reconnecting America, 2012, http://www.funderscollaborative.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/The-Jobs-and-Transit-Connection.pdf.
[25] "Walkable Stamford: Recommendations for Creating a Pedestrian-Friendly Downtown," Project for Public Spaces, August 2008, pp. 10-11.

trip feel unsafe. Lining Atlantic Street with neighborhood shops, parks, and restaurants would activate the entire corridor and create a seamless connection between people living in the South End and the attractions of downtown.

For this reason, the Atlantic Street Bridge replacement, has the potential to make a tremendous difference for pedestrians, if done right. The state is replacing the old railroad bridge that leads east out of the STC, and reconstructing the portion of Atlantic Street that runs underneath. This project represents a prime opportunity to put into place the type of multimodal improvements that will help to create a seamless connection between the two neighborhoods.

The existing underpass at Atlantic Street provides 8-foot sidewalks, separated from traffic by the bridge support structure. The effect is a dark and forbidding journey between Downtown and Station Place, a key access point for the station and the site of proposed mixed-use development. The project calls for improvements to the pedestrian pathway through the underpass, but it is not clear whether the project will, in fact, result in a safer, more inviting journey by foot. A rendering of the finished project shows a sidewalk immediately adjacent to the right-hand traffic lane, with no barrier or buffer between pedestrians and cars.

Existing Path under Atlantic Street Bridge

Which path is more inviting? Which provides better protection for pedestrians from passing vehicles? How can both goals be realized?

Proposed Path under Atlantic Street Bridge

*Figure 10. (Sources: SK Solutions (top) and Connecticut Department of Transportation,
http://atlanticstreetbridge.com/2016/06/presentation-materials-available-from-public-information-meeting/
(bottom)).*

The Urban Street Design Guide published by the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) recommends that in situations in which a sidewalk directly abuts a high-volume street, as it does here, a buffer zone should be created using on-street parking, a cycle track, street furniture, or other features. [26] In the picture above, the grassy area to the right of the sidewalk could instead be located between the automobile traffic and the sidewalk, with additional landscaping features, to provide a greater sense of distance from the traffic for those using the sidewalk. Such changes would help to unite downtown and the South End through a physically inviting and safe pedestrian walkway.

Case study: Normal, IL

The Town of Normal, Illinois faced a physical challenge to redeveloping its train station as a gateway to a reviving downtown (known as "Uptown"): a complicated intersection right in front of the station, dominated by cars and unwelcoming to pedestrians. Similar to the separation created in Stamford by the challenges of crossing between downtown and the South End, Normal's train station was separated from the rest of its downtown by the intersection, inhibiting the attractiveness of the station area as a site for economic development. The Town overcame this challenge by converting the auto-dominated intersection into a public plaza that balanced the needs of all street users by creating a safe and inviting space for people to walk or bike as well as drive. With an inviting public space as its anchor, the Town also redeveloped its historic station and attracted new private development to its downtown, including a hotel and a children's museum.

Previous Intersection   **Uptown Station Today**

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[26] "Urban Street Design Guide," National Association of City Transportation Officials,
http://nacto.org/publication/urban-street-design-guide/street-design-elements/sidewalks/.

(Source: Landscape Architecture Foundation, http://landscapeperformance.org/case-study-briefs/uptown-normal-circle-and-streetscape#/overview (left) and Transportation for America, http://t4america.org/maps-tools/local-successes/normal/ (right)).

The project to convert the intersection into a pedestrian-friendly area received a TIGER grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation in 2009, which covered $22 million of the $49.5 million cost. The remainder of the funds came from other federal programs and state and local contributions.

3. Transportation options should be coordinated at the STC to encourage more people to access the station by means other than driving alone.

Already today, about half of the people accessing the station use other means than driving alone*,* such as walking, biking, carpooling, private shuttles, and public transit. Yet the traffic patterns around the station are almost entirely focused toward the convenience of only one of these groups: those who drive and park.

Much of downtown and the South End are within a 20-minute walk of the STC, but non-motorized trips to the station represent less than 10 percent of all trips. In 2004, 39 percent of rail transit passengers drove to STC. By 2009, this had increased to 48 percent, due in part to

the opening of a new garage at the STC in 2004. [27] These trends are not sustainable. A more balanced approach to connecting the station with other destinations is necessary in order to address growing traffic congestion and prevent parking from consuming all available land. Encouraging more walking, biking, and transit use has other benefits as well, including reduced household costs and reduced emissions.

In part, this re-balancing of access to the STC can be accomplished by addressing the first two findings discussed above. As the mix of uses surrounding the transportation center becomes more diverse and the area becomes more walkable, more station users will be able to walk or bike a short distance to and from their destinations. Two additional factors would also assist in re-balancing the mode of station access: better coordination of shuttles and local transit, and market-based parking demand management.

There is a study currently underway to determine how the numerous privately operated shuttles can be better coordinated and access the STC in a safer, more efficient way. Currently, there is no designated shuttle drop-off area, and shuttles often block traffic as they pick up or drop off passengers. Moreover, shuttles tend to be operated on behalf of a single employer, with no sharing of services among employers, leading to more shuttles than necessary.

The study mentioned above will also examine local transit, which could be improved to better serve the station and adjacent neighborhoods. Bus routes should provide convenient access to the station for neighborhood residents who live outside the walking radius so that they will have an option for accessing the station other than driving. If bus routes are designed to also meet the needs of office workers in the downtown area, the number of shuttles needing to access the station could be reduced. Coordinating shuttles among employers in the same general location, providing better local transit service, and managing demand would help to reduce the conflicts between shuttles and other vehicles and pedestrians attempting to access the station. Charging a fee for shuttles to enter the station area would both help to manage demand (by encouraging employers to join together to operate a single shuttle service) and could provide a source of revenue to create a dedicated shuttle drop-off location or locations.

Stamford's transportation study should also include parking analysis and the potential to implement market-based parking demand management, a tool used to balance the need for parking near the station with the desire to put the land to more productive uses. For example, when the market is there to support it, shared parking facilities can be an effective way to maximize the value of parking structures. Commuter lots tend to be in highest demand during the day, but underutilized in the evenings and on weekends. Allowing parking facilities to be used by residents, shoppers, and diners during those "off-peak" periods can reduce the cost of nearby commercial and residential development as fewer parking spaces would need to be provided in those properties. Reducing development costs is one of the most effective ways of attracting mixed-use development to a TOD area.

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[27] Stamford Transportation Center Comprehensive Master Plan," Stantec, September 2010, p. 21.

Secondly, market-based parking demand management makes use of variable pricing to match the fees charged to drivers' willingness to pay. Better matching the pricing to the demand would not only encourage drivers to try different ways of accessing the station, but would also provide additional revenues to maintain and operate the garages and related infrastructure. There are several ways to implement market-based pricing. New technologies can automatically adjust fees depending on the level of demand

Incorporating Parking into a Walkable TOD

Figure 11. Parking structure at 15th & Pearl in Boulder, CO is wrapped by retail, creating a more vibrant pedestrian area. (Source: Google Streetview).

at any particular time. Prices can also be set higher at closer lots and lower at lots that are further away. Premium services, such as valet parking, could be offered, which would add convenience for users while raising additional revenues to support station-related needs.

Case study: Chicago, IL Regional Transportation Authority

The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) in Chicago is the oversight, funding, and planning body for the three transit services in the Chicago region: CTA (bus and subway), Pace (suburban bus), and Metra (commuter rail). RTA has published a guide for localities looking to balance station access and parking in TOD locations. RTA first recommends establishing a hierarchy of desired access modes; for RTA, the hierarchy is focused on "providing priority access to modes that are low-cost, have the fewest negative impacts on the environment and surrounding neighborhood and support the tenets of transit-oriented development and sustainable communities…. At the top of the hierarchy is access for pedestrians and people with disabilities, followed by bicycle access, connecting transit service access, kiss and ride access and park and ride access." [28]

Among the recommendations in the RTA guide for creating the right amount of parking in a TOD area are:
- Setting maximum parking requirements for developments in the TOD area;
- Pricing parking appropriately, based on market demand;

Pedestrians
- Pedestrians
- People with Disabilities

Bicycles
- Bicyclists

Transit
- Feeder Bus
- Bus Rapid Transit
- Connecting Rail
- Other Bus Service

Kiss & Ride
- Pick-up/Drop-off Lane
- Paratransit and Shuttle Bus
- Taxi Queue

Park & Ride
- Accessible Parking
- Reserve Parking for Car Sharing, Vanpools and Carpools
- Motorcycle Parking

(Source: "Access and Parking Strategies for Transit Oriented Development," Regional Transportation Authority, p. 4.)

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[28] "Access and Parking Strategies for Transit-Oriented Development," Regional Transportation Authority, November 2011, p. 6, https://todresources.org/app/uploads/sites/2/2016/06/tod_parking_and_access.pdf.

- Unbundling parking from rental prices in residential developments;
- Utilizing structured parking;
- Implementing shared parking; and
- Maximizing on-street parking.

Parking Standard Comparison (Typical vs. TOD Area)

The following table compares typical parking requirements with reduced requirements for TOD areas, with numbers for minimum and maximum requirements. Please note that these requirements vary by municipality and can be adjusted depending on the proposed development and location.

Land Use		Typical Neighborhood		TOD Area	
Type	Per	Min	Max	Min	Max
Residential	Dwelling	1	2.5	.5	1.5
Office, Professional	1000 sq.ft	4	5	2.25	3.33
Restaurant	1000 sq.ft	16	17	4	8
Retail	1000 sq.ft	3	5	2.5	4

Source: Metropolitan Transportation Commission, June 2007

(Source: "Access and Parking Strategies for Transit Oriented Development," Regional Transportation Authority, p. 6).

An example of a shared parking facility is found at the Palatine Metra Station. The Gateway Center is a four-story mixed-use parking structure with retail on the ground floor and office space above, adjacent to the Metra platform. The parking deck behind the retail space provides approximately 1,000 spaces for commuters as well as an additional 300 spaces for the office building and customers of adjacent commercial establishments.
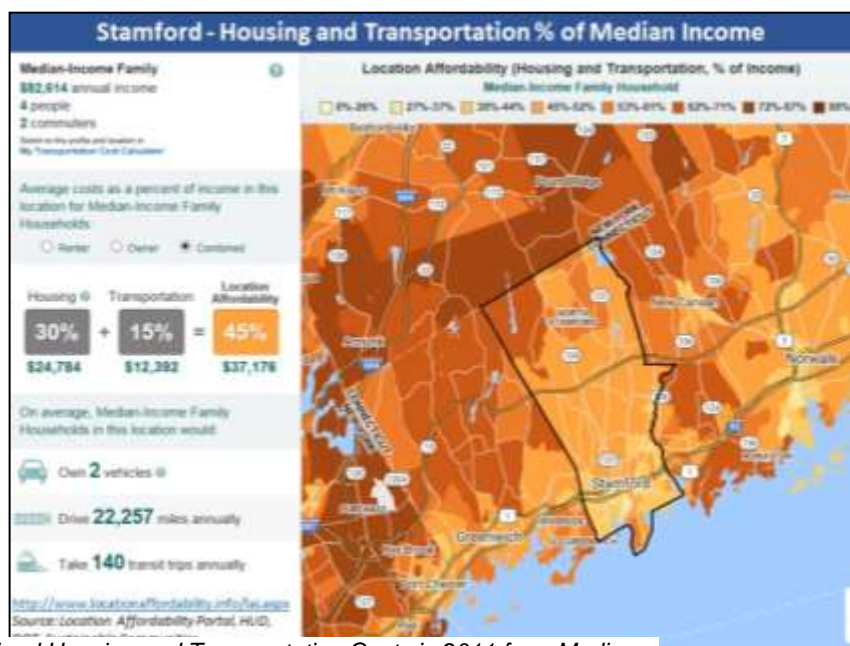
Gateway Center at the Palatine Metra Station

(Source: "Access and Parking Strategies for Transit Oriented Development," Regional Transportation Authority, p. 8 and Google Streetview.)

4. Expansion and preservation of housing affordability around the STC and in the South End are needed to allow everyone to share in the benefits of TOD.

Transit oriented development can impact both land and real estate prices, often increasing their value. [29] While this can be positive overall for an area, it can have a negative impact on the affordability of housing. As such, strategies need to be employed to address affordability prior to and concurrent with TOD efforts in order to address equity and the needs of residents. Undertaking transit-oriented development and addressing the accompanying market pressures poses new challenges for community leaders, community development corporations (CDCs) and affordable housing developers. By taking action to create or preserve a variety of housing options near transit, including affordable housing, community leaders, CDCs and developers can ensure that people of all income levels can enjoy the benefits from transit investments.

According to the Census Bureau's 2009-2011 American Community Survey, between 2000 and 2011, the median value of owner-occupied housing (adjusted for inflation) in Stamford increased by 35 percent, from $400,632 to $540,700. [30] Nearly half of all of Stamford's residents (46.2%) spend more than 30 percent of their household income on housing costs. [31] The federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) deems housing unaffordable if it is equal to or exceeds 30 percent of area household median income. [32] With 46.2 percent of Stamford households paying more than 30 percent of their income on housing, it appears housing affordability is already an issue for many residents.

Figure 12. Combined Housing and Transportation Costs in 2011 for a Median-Income family of four. (Source: Location Affordability Portal, HUD)

Combined Housing and Transportation Costs in 2011 for a Median-Income family of four in Stamford's South End was between 27% and 52% of Median Income. [33]

According to data cited in the Stamford Master Plan, renter households earning less than $50,000 annually are more likely to face affordability challenges than homeowners who earn the same amount (see Figures 13 and 14). [34] Stamford mirrors a national trend, where the percentage gap between home owners and renter households who pay more than 30 percent of their income on

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[29] "Preserving Affordable Housing Near Transit, Case Studies from Atlanta, Denver, Seattle and Washington, DC," Enterprise Community Partners, 2010.
[30] *Stamford Master Plan 2015-2025,* City of Stamford CT, Adopted December 2014.
[31] Ibid.
[32] *Location Affordability Portal*, HUD, DOT, Sustainable Communities, http://www.locationaffordability.info/lai.aspx
[33] Ibid.
[34] *Stamford Master Plan 2015-2025,* City of Stamford CT, Adopted December 2014, p. 129.

housing was 18 percent in 1999 compared to 25 percent in 2012. [35] In 2012 more than half of all renters in the United States—52 percent—were cost burdened due to housing. [36] This is twice as many renters compared to homeowners, who experienced a 27 percent cost burden related to housing. [37] This trend suggests that households who rent are much more likely to experience issues related to the affordability of housing compared to households who own.
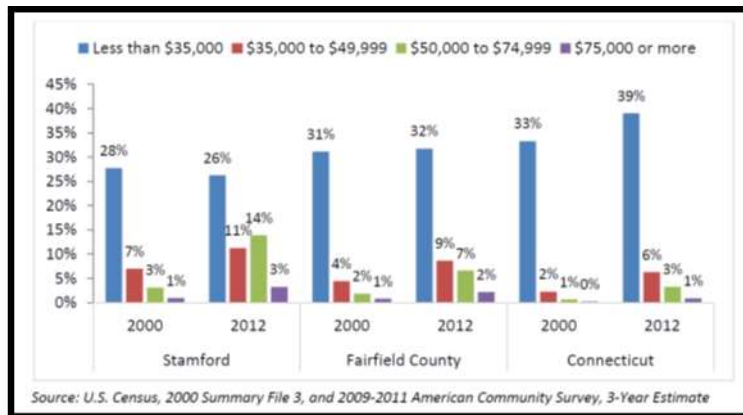

Figure 13. Share of _Renter Households_ Spending More Than 30% of Income on Housing by Annual Household Income, 2000 – 2012. (Source: US Census).

Figure 14. Share of Homeowners Spending More Than 30% of Income on Housing by Annual Household Income, 2000 & 2012. (Source: US Census).

The majority of rental units in Stamford in 2012 were in zip code 06902, which includes the South End, where 12,321 out of 19,726 rental units exist. [38] Additionally, 31 percent of renters living in these units pay less than the citywide median gross rent. [39] This suggests that many of the more affordable areas for renter households in Stamford are in the South End. As TOD around the STC is likely to affect affordability, this area is a particularly important target for strategies to preserve affordable housing.

[35] _The Growing Owner/Renter Gap in Affordable Housing in the U.S.,_ Mark Mather and Beth Jarosz October 2014.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid.
[38] _Stamford Master Plan 2015-2025,_ City of Stamford CT, Adopted December 2014.
[39] _Stamford Master Plan 2015-2025,_ City of Stamford CT, Adopted December 2014.

As the STC area develops further as a TOD site, it may face challenges such as gradual displacement of existing small businesses and lower-income residents, and changes in the demographics and character of the surrounding neighborhoods. Developing a variety of housing options and preserving the affordability of housing stock near transit is critical for successful TOD to occur in a way that will benefit the entire city and people of all income levels. To preserve affordable housing in the STC area will require the city to put in place strategies and incentives, and to take deliberate actions to anticipate and address affordability issues.

Metro Green, a mixed-income, mixed-use development within ¼ mile of the STC

Figure 15. (Source: Robin Stein, City of Stamford)

Case studies: Atlanta, GA; Denver, CO; Seattle, WA; and Washington, DC

To address some of the affordability issues that come with transit-oriented development, the cities of Atlanta, Denver, Seattle, and Washington, DC, may provide helpful examples for the city. Actions taken in these cities include the creation of new sources of funding and local zoning incentives, offering more flexible financing for transit-oriented projects, and joining larger regional efforts targeted at the development and preservation of affordable housing. In Denver, the city focused its federal Neighborhood Stabilization Program 2 (NSP-2) funds towards current and future transit corridors, while in Seattle, the city created the Home Wise Weatherization Program, utilizing local housing levies, to fund for energy efficiency improvements. [40]

Denver Early-Warning System

Denver's housing preservation ordinance requires owners of HUD-assisted properties to notify the city at least one year before opting out of their contracts.

With MacArthur Foundation support, the city is developing an early-warning system that includes mandated opt-out notices and inventories of subsidized housing and unassisted housing with transit access.
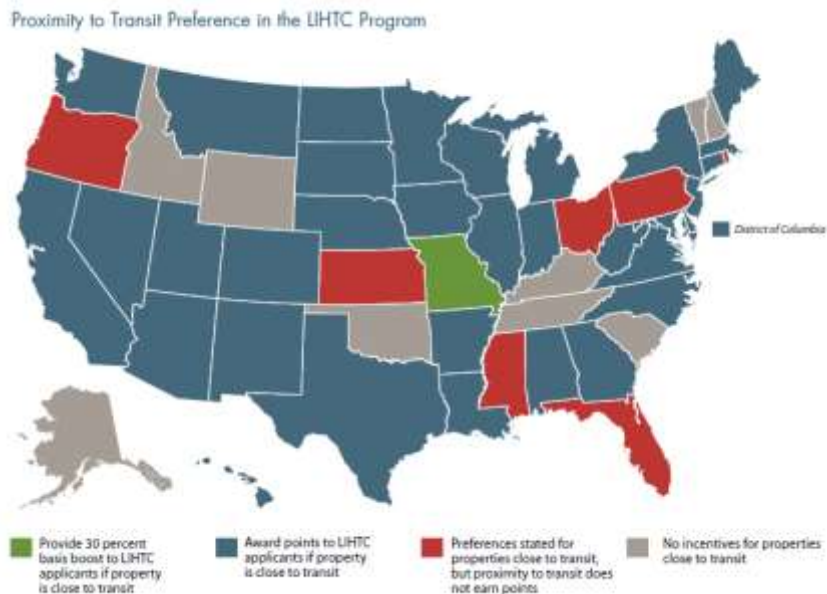
Other key activities include providing assistance to Community Development Corporations (CDCs) and tenant organizations to use pooled financing in order to assist with their development and preservation goals. Transit expansion can increase the value of transferable development rights held by existing owners. As such, utilizing pooled financing can enable small tenant cooperatives to access tax-exempt bond financing cost-effectively. In Seattle, an innovative incentive zoning program was created allowing the sale of unused zoning authority under the city's Transferable Development Rights program. In Washington, DC, the city, in order to save money, utilized a combined financing strategy pooling properties together using tax-exempt bonds and 4 percent tax credits. This structure reduces transaction costs and leverages more equity per property.

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40 "Preserving Affordable Housing Near Transit: Case Studies from Atlanta, Denver, Seattle and Washington, DC," Enterprise, The National Housing Trust, Reconnecting America.

Thirty-two states (including Connecticut) and Washington DC award additional points to prospective projects near transit when scoring Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) applications and approximately twenty-one states include set-asides for the preservation of affordability when allocating their allotment of federal housing credits. [41] LIHTC prioritization and set-asides for housing affordability near transit create the ability for flexible financing. This allows property acquisition to occur when prices are lower and repayment terms that enable the holding of "at-risk" properties until refinancing or redevelopment is more feasible. These strategies are especially necessary in high-cost markets, such as transit-rich neighborhoods, where owners can opt out of federal assistance programs or convert non-subsidized affordable properties to higher-priced housing to capitalize on the higher demand and market value of transit access.

"Approximately 21 states include set-asides for preservation in allocating their allotment of federal housing tax credits. In addition, 32 states and Washington, DC, award points to projects near transit when scoring LIHTC applications." [42]

(Source: Preserving Affordable Housing Near Transit: Case Studies from Atlanta, Denver, Seattle and Washington, D.C., Enterprise, The National Housing Trust, Reconnecting America.)

TOD investments in general take longer to complete. The creation of longer loan terms for financing acquisition and development costs of affordable housing near transit until permanent financing is secured enables project viability. Patient capital with repayment terms matched to transit-related project timelines is key. Terms of five to 10 years enable projects to wait for favorable market conditions following transit expansion and assemble financing. In Denver, the Transit-Oriented Development Fund provides below-market interest rate loans for terms up to five years. [43]

Cities, CDCs, non-profit housing developers, and community organizations are also beginning to join larger conversations around coordinated regional planning and collaboration with housing, transit and planning agencies. Strategic coordination has an impact on the ability to preserve affordability. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Sustainable Communities Initiative is an example of supporting the preservation of affordable housing near transit by catalyzing improved coordinated planning. In the San Francisco Bay Area, the Great Communities Collaborative, a group of local and regional advocacy

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41 Ibid.
42 Ibid.
43 Ibid.

organizations working with community foundations, aligned with Congregations Organizing for Renewal (COR) to influence the transit-oriented development planning process in the inner-ring suburb of San Leandro. In Washington State, the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance (WLIHA), Futurewise, and Transportation Choices Coalition joined forces in 2009. One of the coalition's goals was to ensure that low-income families were not displaced from their communities as development took place around Seattle's new transit stations. [44]

5. Redevelopment of the state garage at Station Place is a prime opportunity to begin transforming the station area, and the state should ensure that its forthcoming project supports TOD goals.

The most successful TOD is accomplished when consensus is achieved among all interested parties on key goals and action items. (Note: This does not mean unanimity or complete agreement on all points, but rather a shared desired to move forward.) Even in the simplest project, there are often multiple stakeholders involved: the land use authority, the transit agency, affected neighborhood residents, and businesses. In Stamford's case, there are many stakeholders in the development of downtown and the South End. The state is a key actor, as they own the STC and some of the surrounding land. Current residents and businesses, private developers, prospective employers, and daily commuters are also important constituencies whose views should be taken into account.

Figure 16. (Source: Reconnecting America).
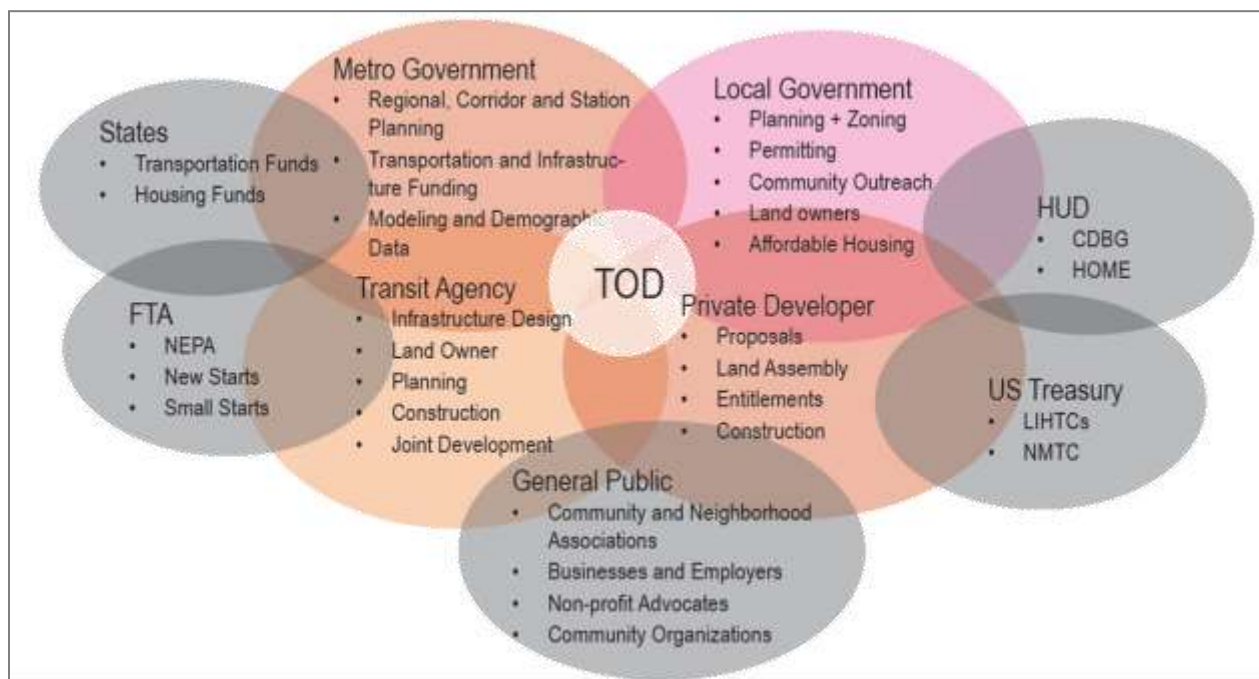
Several projects have been built or are underway within ¼ mile of the transportation center. However, one project in particular has garnered a disproportionate amount of attention: the state's TOD at Station Place. The state issued an RFP in June 2012 for replacement of the old commuter garage with a new parking facility or facilities and a mixed-use TOD. The state

[44] Ibid.

selected a preferred developer in July 2013, and was in negotiation with that developer until October 2016.

The unusually long negotiations, coupled with the lack of detailed information available to the public, created a great deal of uncertainty and mistrust with regard to TOD planning around the STC. The state, having now terminated negotiations with the potential developer, recently announced plans to replace the existing garage with a new parking structure, containing at least 1,000 spaces, and to revisit the question of TOD at a later date.

As discussed above, the STC is a prime location for TOD. The state's garage at Station Place is arguably in the best position to make a transformative difference for the area. This is true not only because the site is the first thing people see when they exit the train station to the south, but also because of the potential of Station Place itself, the east-west access road for the south side of the STC. Today, Station Place is frequently clogged as commuters try to access the garage and taxis and other drivers block traffic as they discharge their passengers. Redevelopment of this area should include not just a new building, but a redesign of Station Place itself to provide safe and attractive space for all users—pedestrians, bicyclists, kiss & ride, and drivers.

Figure 17. The current garage at Station Place creates an uninviting barrier for pedestrians leaving the STC. (Source: SK Solutions)

Recognizing that it represents a prime opportunity to reshape the area around the STC, the state would miss a critical opportunity to transform the area around the STC if it simply proceeds with a new garage. Instead, the state should develop a project that incorporates the following key features of successful TOD:

1. A mixed-use development with ground-floor retail offers the best opportunity to both stimulate economic activity, including from pedestrians who have just come from or are heading to the station.
2. Parking structures should include retail at the ground level to ensure that the garage helps to enhance, not detract from, the pedestrian-oriented spaces around the station.
3. To support walkability, Station Place requires a redesign that prioritizes pedestrian mobility while also improving traffic flow.
4. The amount and location of parking around the station should be developed so as to encourage people to access the station by other means than driving.
5. Any new structures and land uses should be consistent with the city's vision and goals for development around the STC.
6. Public input should be taken and addressed throughout the development of the project, with open communication from project developers.
7. Value capture opportunities should be maximized to help pay for needed infrastructure improvements connected with the station, not just used for parking.

In particular, the state should carefully analyze future parking demand in light of the area's TOD potential. Currently, demand for parking slightly outstrips available supply at state-

owned garages: the state maintains a waiting list for its garages with less than 200 names. [45] According to Connecticut DOT's press release on the project, the state is proposing to demolish the old garage, which has 727 spaces, and build a new facility with a minimum of 1,000 spaces, a gain of at least 273 spaces. [46] However, this total does not include the 500 spaces available for commuters at the new Gateway garage (these spaces had been substituting for closed portions of the old state garage, but will be freed up once the new facility opens), or the 150 commuter spaces that could be made available at Manhattan Street. In other words, it appears that if the state project is completed as proposed, there will be at least 900 new parking spaces at the station, despite the fact that current demand is far below that level. As discussed above, land dedicated to parking is unavailable for more productive use. The land within ¼ mile of the STC is particularly valuable, and could generate significant economic activity and tax revenues if developed into mixed-use buildings, which could include parking facilities, rather than single-use parking garages.

Redevelopment of the state garage at Station Place is a chance to transform an important area to recognize that the STC is no longer just a commuter station for workers traveling to and from New York. With supportive development around it, the STC can become the hub of a vibrant city center. With the cancelation of the state's previous TOD project, the city of Stamford, the state, and local stakeholders should make the most of the opportunity to plan and develop a TOD project in a collaborative manner.

Case Study: Long Beach, CA Courthouse

The state of California is responsible for constructing and maintaining court facilities for the state's judicial system. Ten years ago, the courthouse in the city of Long Beach was among the worst in the state. To address the deficiencies, the state realized it would have to construct an entirely new facility. The state decided to pursue a public-private partnership (P3), in which a private consortium would design, build, finance, operate, and maintain the new building. Before the P3 contract was negotiated and signed, the state worked with the city to determine where the new courthouse could be located to meet both the state's need for a modern, secure facility, and the city's desire for redevelopment in the downtown area. As a result, an innovative land

Long Beach Courthouse (Source: California Courts, http://www.courts.ca.gov/facilities-la-longbeach.htm#ad-image-0).

transfer was arranged, where the state exchanged the site of the existing courthouse for a more desirable site a block away. The city now owns the land where the existing courthouse stood and is redeveloping it to better suit their current vision for the downtown area. [47]

As the private partner was designing the new courthouse, city staff was at the table for key decisions under the city's jurisdiction, including sidewalks and utilities. The city's needs were kept in mind along with the needs of the state. The private partner also worked closely with an elementary school located behind the new site, redesigning its original plan to minimize

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[45] Current as of September 15, 2016, according to the Connecticut Department of Transportation.
[46] "Stamford Parking Garage: Frequently Asked Questions," Connecticut Department of Transportation, http://www.ct.gov/dot/cwp/view.asp?A=2288&Q=506914.
[47] "Governor George Deukmejian Courthouse (Long Beach Court Building)," Whole Building Design Guide, National Institute of Building Sciences, http://www.wbdg.org/references/cs_longbeach.php.

disruption to the school. As a result, the city now has a spacious, modern courthouse downtown, which includes a public gathering area where civic events can be held.

6. In the near-term, basic functionality of the STC should be improved, while in the long-term, the station should become a destination in its own right.

In the near term, changes at the station to provide better access for all users would improve the station's functionality. As discussed on pp. 15-16, designing local bus routes to connect the station with surrounding neighborhoods, using demand management strategies to address congestion from shuttles and drivers, and improving walkability would lead to a better customer experience for those living in, working in, and visiting Stamford.

In addition to improving connections between the station and surrounding neighborhoods, the internal functionality of the STC should also be improved. The current station design and use was the subject of a 2010 study by Stantec, which made numerous specific recommendations to improve circulation, signage, and safety at the station. The following are some of the near-term recommendations in the Stantec report, some of which are in the process of being implemented:

- Connecting the eastbound platform to Atlantic Street;
- Adding shelters to the ends of the island platforms;
- Replacing stairs with a ramp near the North State Street entrance;
- Adding a connection between the bus depot and the rotunda area;
- Adding a ticket machine on the lower level;
- Adding lighting and bird deterrents to the bus passenger waiting area;
- Widening the sidewalk on South State Street to improve pedestrian access; and
- Adding speed tables to North and South State Streets and Station Place. [48]

Over the longer term, Stamford and the state of Connecticut should **recognize that the STC is a valuable asset not just for transportation purposes, but for economic development** as well. Many communities have utilized station buildings or air rights to create retail, restaurants, entertainment spaces, and other attractions at their train stations. The Stamford station today is a relatively small building in a prime location, with a few retail options. **Working with a private developer to redevelop the station into a multi-story building with a mix of uses could capture some of the economic value of the station that is current being lost.** Revenue from the development could also provide funding to make needed infrastructure improvements.

Case studies: Denver, CO and Meridian, MS

A number of cities have redeveloped or are redeveloping their train stations to convert them into attractive destinations in their own right, offering a mix of services in addition to transportation. Denver, CO and Meridian, MS have successfully converted their historic, underutilized stations into centers of activity that have revitalized whole neighborhoods.

Thirty years ago, Denver's lower downtown was dominated by rail yards, warehouses, and an aging train station. During the 1990s, the freight railroads whose tracks bisected the area agreed to move their yards outside of downtown and consolidate five sets of tracks into just two, freeing up a large swath of land for redevelopment. The city began

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[48] Stamford Transportation Center Comprehensive Master Plan," Stantec, September 2010, p.9.

constructing parks and making infrastructure improvements in the area. In 2001, the Regional Transit District (RTD) purchased the old train station, with funding provided by RTD, the City and County of Denver, the Colorado Department of Transportation, and the Denver Regional Council of Governments. [49]

Denver Union Station today. (Source: AASHTO BATIC Institute Webinar, March 30, 2016)

Redevelopment of the train station into a multimodal hub became part of the Denver region's FasTracks program, a voter-approved package of infrastructure projects funded by a regional sales tax. However, just as the city was preparing to issue bonds for the reconstruction project, the recession hit, creating a gap in the proposed financing package. The city turned to the federal TIFIA and RRIF credit assistance programs for low-interest loans to cover the gap – the first time those two programs had been used together on a single project. [50]

The Union Station project turned a previously un-walkable area into a multimodal transit district. Commuter rail and Amtrak services come into platforms on the east side of the station, and light rail serves the west side. The two ends are connected above ground by a pedestrian bridge over the railroad tracks, and below ground by a concourse that also serves as a modern, comfortable bus transfer facility (which replaced the previous, aging facility that was located a few blocks away).

Pedestrians cross tracks via a bridge (left) or concourse (right). (Source: SK Solutions)

While the transportation infrastructure was being reconstructed, Union Station itself was being restored into a mixed-use facility that houses shops, restaurants, a hotel, and a public gathering space. The project was financed in part by future property and sales tax revenues from the new economic activity, through use of a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district. [51]

The project also served as the anchor for significant private investment in the surrounding area. Union Station is now surrounded by new multifamily residential units, modern office buildings, and street-level retail and public plazas. The area has been rebranded as LoDo

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49 "Facts: Current, Historical, and Fun," Regional Transit District, http://www.rtd-fastracks.com/dus_14.
50 "Project Profiles: Denver Union Station," Federal Highway Administration, Center for Innovative Finance Support, http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/ipd/project_profiles/co_union_station.aspx.
51 "Financing of the Denver Union Station," Presentation by Ballard Spahr, LLP, http://www.law.du.edu/documents/rmlui/conference/powerpoints/2013/KhokhryakovaADUSCaseStudyFinancing-of-The-Denver-Union-Station-DMWEST-9630502-1.pdf.

(for "Lower Downtown") and is one of the hottest real estate markets in the city. The success of the neighborhood is in large part due to the public and private investments that converted the train station into a place people wanted to be, and the supportive infrastructure that allowed people to cross safely and comfortably over or under the tracks.

Small cities have also been able to capitalize on their railroad stations to support redevelopment goals. Meridian, Mississippi, population 40,000, envisioned its historic train station becoming the hub of a revitalized downtown. The city worked with the state, the federal government, Amtrak, community organizations, and nonprofit developers to undertake redevelopment of Union Station.

Hotel rooms overlook interior space at Denver Union Station. (Source: AASHTO BATIC Institute Webinar, March 30, 2016)

The $6.6 million project led to an additional $135 million in private investment in shops, restaurants, and residences in the surrounding area, including both market rate and affordable housing. [52] In some cases, the investment involved new construction; in others, façade improvements gave new life to historic buildings. Other civic projects supporting the revitalization of downtown included a new fire station, a restored city hall, and a state-of-the-art performance and conference center.

Meridian Union Station, before redevelopment (left) and after (right). (Source: John Robert Smith)

Union Station itself now hosts 250 events annually, and the momentum created by its redevelopment gave renewed life to the entire downtown. After years of people moving out of the center city, new residents are now coming in, taking advantage of the walkable neighborhoods and cultural amenities in the vicinity of the station.

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52 "Intercity Rail and Transit-Oriented Development: Making Connections, Building Communities," Center for Transit-Oriented Development, 2013.

Downtown Meridian today. (Source: John Robert Smith)

Summary of Findings

1. A balanced mix and greater intensity of uses is needed around the transportation center and throughout the South End.
2. Walkability in the area around the transportation center needs to be improved.
3. Transportation options should be coordinated at the STC to encourage more people to access the station by means other than driving alone.
4. Expansion and preservation of housing affordability around the STC and in the South End are needed to allow everyone to share in the benefits of TOD.
5. Redevelopment of the state garage at Station Place is a prime opportunity to begin transforming the station area, and the state should ensure that its forthcoming project supports TOD goals..
6. In the near-term, basic functionality of the STC should be improved, while in the long-term, the station should become a destination in its own right.

V. Recommended Action Plan

The technical assistance team has developed a recommended action plan for the city to undertake in order to successfully implement TOD around the transportation center and in the South End. The plan is divided into three sections: near-term actions, intermediate actions, and longer-term actions. The recommended actions in the intermediate and long-term section build upon the activities that came before. To the extent possible, recommended actions in each section should be conducted concurrently, and in a coordinated and transparent manner.

The city should conduct regular public meetings and solicit public input through other means as well, including social media and a dedicated website. To assist in public outreach and to coordinate efforts between multiple departments and agencies, the city should conduct this work under a single heading, such as "Vision Stamford" or something similar. Having a common "brand" for all of these efforts—including the on-going studies of shuttles/transit and walkability/bikeability"—will help to demonstrate to all stakeholders that this is not a piecemeal effort, but rather a comprehensive approach to transform the STC area into a vibrant city center.

Short-term Actions (3-6 months)

1. Complete an asset inventory for the ½ mile radius around the STC.

In order to make informed decisions about development in the target areas, the city needs a clearer understanding of two factors: (1) what are the key assets in those areas, and what is missing, and (2) what parcels are currently vacant or underutilized that could be matched to those needs?

To develop the city center into an economically productive hub, the city needs to identify those destinations that will bring people to the area or add to the quality of life of those already there. In other words, people need a reason to be downtown or in the South End, and to stay once they are there. Existing attractions include the Ferguson public library downtown and the South End Branch library, the restaurants and shops along Bedford Street, the waterfront, the University of Connecticut's Downtown campus, and the antique stores along Canal Street. These places are the anchors that will help to convert Stamford into a vibrant destination for residents and tourists, and future development and transportation needs should be designed to take these existing locations into account.

At the same time, the inventory should consider what is missing from the area that could enhance Stamford's ability to serve the needs of its growing population, as well as to attract businesses and tourists. For example, the South End could benefit from a job training center to help residents prepare for and connect with career opportunities. The South End could also support additional shops and local businesses, besides the grocery store, pharmacy, and restaurants that are moving in. A preschool, elementary school, and child care facilities may be needed to encourage younger families to remain in the area. Stamford does not have a well-developed arts district, which other communities have used to attract economic activity. Museums and other cultural attractions could help to bring people to Downtown Stamford outside the working day. There has also been some talk of building a convention center near the train station to attract additional business visitors.

The inventory should also identify opportunities for redevelopment, including vacant and underutilized parcels and parking lots so that development of the missing elements can be targeted to those areas with proactive zoning and other incentives. At the same time, the city should **identify existing affordable housing by income strata, both owner-occupied and rental**, so that that a preservation plan can be developed as the South End develops further.

With both the needs and the potential opportunity sites mapped out, the city should work with stakeholders including the business community, residents, community organizations, and others to develop a clear and consensus-based vision for the STC area. Lack of information about development plans can lead to a culture of mistrust. On the other hand, public discussion and input into plans allows affected parties to air their concerns and either have them addressed or receive a full explanation of why they cannot be addressed.

2. Develop design standards for the South End.

The city should convene a working group, under the leadership of the Mayor's office, with city staff, planning/zoning staff, and community representatives to adopt design standards for future development around the STC and throughout the South End. If development continues at its current pace without such standards, the city risks finding, after a few years, that the South End has not developed into the transit-oriented, walkable neighborhood the city desires. By setting standards for the interaction of the private realm (buildings) with the public realm (the street and sidewalk), the city can guide development of an urban form throughout the South End that supports its transformation into a TOD area.

Design standards should ensure an urban form for the South End that builds on the neighborhood's strengths, such as its historic character or waterfront location, and supports its development as a pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use area. Categories to be covered in the standards include, among other elements:
- Building orientation and setbacks;
- Location and amount of parking;
- Locations of curb cuts and loading docks;
- Building access for pedestrians/bicyclists; and
- Facades, fenestration, and transparency.

3. Create a place management entity for the city center, including the South End.

It is important to have a long-term steward for the neighborhoods in the heart of Stamford, including both the historic downtown to the north of the STC, and the emerging waterfront area to the south known as the South End. Much like a house that needs regular upkeep, a city center needs continual investment, maintenance, and on-going management to keep it vibrant. That means giving people reasons to come to the area again and again. It means creating a culture of hospitality for companies, and continuously pursuing and promoting redevelopment. It means hosting events in public spaces, and inviting new people and businesses to come to the city center who have never been before.

A comprehensive range of organizational types are found in communities around the US, from small downtown revitalization organizations run as non-profits (typically with some kind of joint sponsorship by government and the business community), to business improvement districts (BIDs) that have access to dedicated revenue sources (which may be derived from local taxes, such as a property tax add-on, approved by property owners within the district). Such groups help to bring focus to a downtown or main street district, ensure that its needs receive consistent attention, and help to provide a sense of identity for the target area. This can be a way to ensure that there is someone who has full time responsibility for being concerned about safety and cleanliness, marketing, generating excitement, and placemaking. [53]

To do this successfully, it is usually necessary to bring together government leaders, business owners, neighborhood representatives, landowners, and real estate developers to create a formal, long-term stewardship organization. Stamford does have an existing BID, the Downtown Special Services District (DSSD), which extends from the STC north to Latham Park, bounded on the west by Mill River Park and on the east by Grove Street. The

[53] For more information and examples of place management entities, see "Re-Building Downtown: A Guidebook for Revitalization," Smart Growth America, 2015.

DSSD actively programs and maintains the public spaces within its district and markets the area to potential residents and businesses. While effective for the downtown district, the DSSD's boundaries do not extend to the area south of the STC.

The DSSD's boundaries could be modified to allow it to take on this work south of the station as well. Otherwise, the city should consider creating another entity and assign it responsibility for ongoing activities around the STC and in the South End, such as:

- *Managing the day-to-day needs of the neighborhood,* from trash pickup and street cleaning to graffiti removal and changing streetlights.
- *Marketing the area to potential investors,* both from within the region and from outside of it, and creating a culture of hospitality for companies.
- *Programming public spaces* to bring residents to the neighborhood throughout the day, week, month, and year.
- *Pursuing and promoting redevelopment opportunities,* by working with business owners, developers, and interested companies to help the STC and South End areas continue to grow.
- *Regularly convening key stakeholders.* The entity should bring together landowners, business owners, and developers at regular intervals to discuss needs, address problems, and strategize for future growth. It should consider inviting business development staff from other towns, the region, or the state, and aim to think expansively about how the city center can become even better—now and in the future.
- *Assessing performance.* Keep track of how the neighborhood does over time. Are there vacancies and business closings, or new tenants and new construction? The steward should compile data that measures the outcomes, progress, and goals for the city center over a short-term, mid-term, and long-term basis, and work continuously to improve that performance.

4. **Begin a collaborative process with the city, the state, and other stakeholders to develop a new project at Station Place that meets TOD goals.**

Now that the state has terminated negotiations with its original bidder, it should begin a collaborative process with the city to develop a new vision for the state-owned garage at Station Place and other nearby parcels. To maximize the value of the station and its improvements, both as a transportation center and as the anchor of a prosperous city center, it is of the utmost importance that the city and the state work together to achieve a viable plan and jointly undertake its implementation. The goals of both Stamford and the state of Connecticut will best be achieved through successful transit-oriented development and improved station functionality. This achievement will only be possible if the city and state establish an effective partnership. Should the state proceed with its stated goal of simply building a larger garage on the same site, a tremendous opportunity for transformative change will be lost.

5. **Define affordable housing goals and collect needed data.**

As a first step toward addressing the affordable housing needs in the STC area, the city should conduct an affordable housing analysis to inform the development of an affordable housing strategy. The analysis should review the existing affordable housing stock (whether market-rate or legally-committed), identify current resources and programs, and assess need at varying income strata to identify existing gaps. For example, Stamford does have an

inclusionary zoning program, which has produced over five hundred below market-rate units; however, most of those units are targeted for households at 50 percent of area median income. Based on the analysis, recommendations can be derived on how to preserve existing units and potentially attract affordable housing developers to the market. This will also help to determine if there are any gaps between Stamford's inclusionary zoning affordability band and the market rate. If the affordability band is too narrow, it is easy for residents to "income out" quickly and if the jump to market rate is substantial some households may be precluded from living in the STC area and the South End.

Specifically, the steps the city should follow include the following:

- Take an inventory of affordable housing stock in the South End and in the STC area;
- Conduct an affordable housing analysis by income strata and housing type and stock to understand the extent to which an affordability issue is present;
- Identify the financial resources and policy incentives the city currently has to support and preserve affordable housing;
- Assess the ability to reposition resources, including opportunities to rehabilitate, reposition and/or redevelop older, distressed properties;
- Map and align regional strategies for development and preservation of affordable housing; and
- Identify existing transit-oriented development opportunities and challenges in the South End related to the existence of and the expiration of affordable units.

According to the Stamford Community Development Office, in fiscal year 2012-2013, the city provided $508,700 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding and $589,700 in HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) funding, all of which subsidized renovations for affordable rental and homeowner properties throughout Stamford. [54] As progress toward transit-oriented development around the STC continues, the city should continue its use of local capital funds, Affordable Housing Trust Fund, and allocation of federal funds (CDBG, HOME, etc.) for the acquisition of property and assistance and subsidy to affordable housing projects in the South End. [55]

An essential element of this strategy for Stamford and for the South End is to define "affordable housing" and "affordable housing near transit." It is important to adopt official definitions by the city in order to direct policy and implementation strategies. The city may want to consider creating its own definition based on the needs of residents as determined in the affordable housing analysis or use the following HUD definitions of affordable housing and affordable housing near transit:

- *"Affordable housing"* is privately owned, HUD-subsidized developments, Low-Income Housing Tax Credit properties and unsubsidized multifamily housing where rents are below 30 percent of income for a family earning the median income. [56]

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[54] "Stamford Master Plan 2015-2025," City of Stamford CT, adopted December 2014.
[55] Ibid.
[56] "Preserving Affordable Housing Near Transit Case Studies from Atlanta, Denver, Seattle and Washington, DC," Enterprise, The National Housing Trust, Reconnecting America, Edited by Leo Quigley

- *"Affordable housing near transit"* refers to existing or new housing developments within one-half mile of existing or proposed fixed guideway rail stations or within one-quarter mile of at least one major bus route. [57]

Mid-term Actions (6-12 months)

6. Activate street level areas both in downtown and South End.

The Project for Public Spaces report recommended a number of specific actions to activate streets in the STC area, including adding amenities such as lighting, benches, and wayfinding signage, programming public events, and adding more street-level retail. The city should immediately begin implementation of these recommendations.

Activating the UBS plaza should be a priority for the city given its scale and its proximity to the STC. Today, the plaza is simply a gap that pedestrians must cross as they make their way between downtown and the station. As the building is currently vacant, it is even more important that the city work with the property owner to prevent this space from falling into disrepair. The city could add benches or tables for outdoor eating or games and a water fountain or other inviting structure to encourage people to enjoy the space. Prospective future tenants, particularly ground-floor retailers if the building is redeveloped for that use, will likely be more attracted to a vibrant, active space than to an empty lot.

At the same time, building owners should be encouraged to provide ground-floor space that generates active uses. Encouraging people to walk to the train station encompasses more than just good connections at the station itself (though that is essential), but also a pleasant, interesting, and safe walk to their destination, whether in downtown or the South End.

The goal is to create a continuous streetwall along every walking route, so that there are no significant gaps, like those created by vacant lots, surface parking, and excessive curb cuts.

Ways to Activate a Ground-Floor Space:
- Provide views from the street into the first floor of a building.
- Incorporate movable seating in a sidewalk area.
- Place art in a ground-level window, or install it on the side of a building.
- Provide direct access from the sidewalk to restaurants, cafes, and shops in the first floor of a mixed-use building.
- Program street performances.
- Convert a parking space into a temporary or permanent parklet.

Source: "Transit-Oriented Development Policy Draft," Kansas City, MO, 2016, p.50.

7. Adopt policy and zoning changes to incentivize desired density and mix of development around the STC and in the South End.

To achieve the desired amount of new residential and retail options in the area around the STC, the city should adopt zoning changes and consider other incentives such as tax subsidies or set-asides for small businesses. Incentives can also be used to encourage property owners to think more flexibly about office space; as some larger tenants have moved out, Stamford could broaden its attractiveness to small and medium-sized businesses and make use of currently vacant space. (Note: What incentives are appropriate

[57] Ibid.

is a complicated question, especially tax subsidies, which may have different answers in different communities. We do not here address the merits of development incentives; rather, our focus is on how any such incentives are deployed. The key point is to align ALL use of ANY subsidies to support the development goals. That means never providing them for projects that are not consistent with those goals.)

Some of the tools Stamford should consider for achieving its development goals include:

- Creating a TOD overlay in the zoning code based on form-based code principles. TOD overlays allow for a mix of uses, including ground-floor retail, reduced parking requirements, and medium to high-density development around a transit station, and restricts auto-oriented uses. Affordable housing requirements or set-aside requirements for small businesses can be incorporated to assist in ensuring that new development remains accessible to people of all incomes. Using a process that requires site-specific granting of exceptions to existing codes can be cumbersome and discourage applications from developers. One option increasingly used in communities around the country is the substitution, or overlay, of a form-based code. This lets citizens, landowners and developers know what is expected, and it simplifies the approval process for everyone.
- Expediting permitting for projects in the TOD zone. This can include establishing set time periods for decisions, creating "one-stop" multi-agency review committees, or other actions designed to accelerate decision-making for TOD projects. Note that this tool does not require approvals of all permits, nor does it suggest that public involvement should be limited. It simply recognizes that time is money, and decisions need to be made quickly to retain development momentum.
- Development incentives, such as reduced set back requirements, increased FAR allowances, or increased heights can be offered to achieve a mix of uses that meets community goals for affordable housing and small business space.
- Creating a land bank to acquire vacant or underutilized parcels and assemble or otherwise prepare them for development. They can then be transferred to private developers with conditions that will guide the development of the property.
- Property tax abatement for existing homeowners in the South End to make renovations financially feasible for them.
- Targeting city economic development incentives such as tax abatements to the station area.

8. **Develop and implement a targeted strategy for the expansion and preservation of housing affordability for the South End.**

Developing housing and preserving affordability, including affordable and mixed rate housing, is a key ingredient for successful TOD. It is also a main component of the type of mixed-use development outlined in the Stamford Transportation Center (STC) Master Plan. [58] The targeted strategy should be built around the goals outlined in the Stamford Master Plan 2015-2025, Stamford Transportation Center Master Plan, and other key city documents, as well as best practices in other cities. In addition to the strategies listed in the Stamford Master Plan for developing and preserving affordable housing, the city should identify additional strategies to preserve affordable housing in the South End. The following

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[58] "Stamford Transportation Center Master Plan", Stantec, 2010, pg. 13.

list should be examined for alignment with the goals identified in the Master Plan and feasibility of implementation:

- Create incentives to preserve income-affordable rents at unsubsidized properties that are at risk of losing affordability as market rents rise;
- Preserve the affordability of government-assisted properties that are at risk of losing affordability due to expiring subsidies;
- Utilize inclusionary zoning incentives to subsidize operations, finance repairs or develop additional affordable housing stock.
- Prevent conversions of committed affordable units to market rate, particularly in TOD areas;
- Support organizations that advocate for and protect renter and tenant's rights and put in place ordinances for rent stabilization; and
- Prevent the loss of affordable stock due to physical distress. [59]

9. Compile and implement a comprehensive transportation and development plan for the STC.

The city should work with the state, local employers, commuters, and other users of the station to compile a comprehensive transportation and development plan for the STC. The plan should incorporate the many studies that have been and are currently being completed about transportation around the STC, as well as parking demand, traffic, and other considerations related to redevelopment of the state-owned garage and other sites, and of the station itself. The city should then begin implementation of improvements called for in the plan, such as coordination of shuttle services at the station and parking demand management strategies. The state should raise parking fees to better reflect demand and should also charge a fee for private shuttles entering the station area. These revenues should be reinvested into needed infrastructure improvements at the station.

The city may also want to start a transportation management association (TMA) to coordinate access to and around the train station, unless the study currently underway recommends a different solution to the shuttle access issues. A TMA is a nonprofit organization (typically a partnership among area employers and local governments) that provides services designed to encourage alternatives to driving alone, such as transit incentives, shuttles, guaranteed ride home programs, ride-share matching, and marketing and communications. [60]

Many studies already exist that can be incorporated into a comprehensive plan for the station and its adjacent areas. It is important to move quickly from the planning stage into implementation, to capture the momentum that is growing in downtown and the South End for improved connectivity and economic activity. Though some improvements will have a cost associated with them (such as infrastructure improvements at the station itself, discussed in recommendation #10), many will not, or will be part of projects that are already underway. The city should act expeditiously to implement the recommendations of the comprehensive STC plan.

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[59] "Preserving Affordable Housing Near Transit Case Studies from Atlanta, Denver, Seattle and Washington, DC," Enterprise, The National Housing Trust, Reconnecting America, Edited by Leo Quigley.
[60] "Transportation Management Associations," Online TDM Encyclopedia, Victoria Transport Policy Institute, Dec. 21, 2015, http://www.vtpi.org/tdm/tdm44.htm.

Long-term Actions (12-36 months)

10. Make infrastructure improvements in and around the STC to improve its functioning and the pedestrian experience.

To create a truly seamless connection between the STC and its surrounding neighborhoods, the streets, sidewalks, bike paths, and underpasses around the station need to be reconstructed to support safe and convenient access by pedestrians, bicyclists, transit buses, and shared rides. One such project is already underway, the Atlantic Street Bridge Replacement, which includes the pedestrian underpass that connects downtown with the STC. This is an important opportunity to establish a new standard for pedestrian facilities around the STC, which will be essential to making Downtown Stamford a walkable environment. Station Place presents another opportunity, as it is the first roadway people headed south from the station must cross. Access from Washington Boulevard and from the Urban Transitway to the east are also challenging for pedestrians and bicyclists today.

11. Apply for federal or state funds for redevelopment efforts and seek out private partners as well.

Converting the existing station area into a walkable TOD will require significant investment in infrastructure improvements and other costs (such as development incentives, public programming, and communications efforts). While some will be major projects, many of the needed improvements are small in scale. Somewhat counter-intuitively, these smaller scale projects can be among the most difficult to fund, as the bulk of federal infrastructure dollars go to major construction projects. Still, there are some federal programs that can support these investments, such as the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program, the TIGER program, and the Transportation Alternatives Program. Credit assistance for transportation and TOD-related infrastructure projects is available from the federal Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) and the Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing (RRIF) program. See Appendix B for a list of selected federal programs that can support various elements of TOD.

In addition, joint development with private partners has the potential to both redevelop underutilized property and address infrastructure needs. Finally, the South End has tremendous potential for property value increases, some of which should be captured through a TIF mechanism to pay for needed infrastructure. This approach has already been used on a limited basis in the South End and could be expanded.

Summary of Recommendations	3-6 months	6-12 months	12-36 months
1. Complete an asset inventory for the ½ mile radius around the STC.	✓		
2. Develop design standards for the South End.	✓		
3. Create a place management entity for the South End.	✓		

4. Begin a collaborative process with the city, the state, and other stakeholders to develop a new project at Station Place that meets TOD goals.	✓		
5. Define affordable housing and collect needed data.	✓		
6. Activate street level areas both in downtown and South End.		✓	
7. Adopt policy and zoning changes to incentivize desired density and mix of development around the STC and in the South End.		✓	
8. Develop and implement a targeted strategy for the expansion and preservation of housing affordability for the South End.		✓	
9. Compile and implement a comprehensive transportation and development plan for the STC.		✓	
10. Make infrastructure improvements in and around the STC to improve its functioning and the pedestrian experience.			✓
11. Apply for federal or state funds for redevelopment efforts and seek out private partners as well.			✓

VI. Conclusion

Over the long term, following these recommendations will lead to a vibrant district around the Stamford Transportation Center. The station will function better as a transportation hub. Stamford will be better positioned to attract new businesses and the talented workforce the city will need to remain economically competitive. People of all income levels will proudly call Stamford home.

Appendix A: Affordable Housing Preservation
Appendix B: Selected Federal Funding and Financing Programs
Appendix C: Individuals Interviewed

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U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration

Appendix A—Affordable Housing Preservation

	Resources and Tools for Aligning Housing Preservation and TOD	
Resources	**Purpose**	**Examples**
Tenant Right of First Refusal	Provide tenants with notice of sale and opportunity to arrange preservation purchase	**Washington, DC**: The Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act requires that an owner provide the tenants with an opportunity to purchase the property at the same price as a third-party buyer.
Land Banking Authority	Create local government capacity to acquire and hold land and buildings for future development	**Atlanta**: The Fulton County/City of Atlanta Land Banking Authority can hold and manage land and buildings for nonprofits and government agencies for 3-5 years, clear delinquent taxes and hold properties tax-free
Early Warning Systems	Enable strategic preservation activity by organizing and sharing property information	**Denver**: The city is creating an early-warning tracking system that combines mandated notices of owner intent to "opt out" of subsidy contracts, inventories of subsidized housing developments and unsubsidized multifamily properties with transit access.
Inclusionary Zoning (Density Bonus, Parking Relief)	Create incentives for production or preservation of affordable units by allowing developers to increase the square footage or number of units allowed on a piece of property, in exchange for providing on- and off-site units affordable to low- or moderate-income families	**Seattle:** The Transferable Development Rights program allows commercial real estate developers to purchase unused density from affordable housing owners in exchange for the right to construct buildings that exceed the allowable density under neighborhood zoning rules. **Washington, DC**: The city's inclusionary zoning law requires that affordable units be included in new projects of 10 or more units and rehabilitation projects that are expanding an existing building by 50 percent and adding 10 or more units.
Joint Agency Planning	Encourage joint land use and transit planning, at a regional level, to enhance transit ridership and guide equitable development	**Atlanta**: MARTA guidelines call for creating mixed income, elderly and workforce housing around metro stations. The Beltline project combines transit, economic development and a housing trust fund to create affordable units along the new line. **Denver**: The city's Regional Transit District is adopting a policy requiring consideration of land for affordable housing use before selling or engaging in a joint development agreement (in process). **Washington, DC**: The Council of Governments' "Greater Washington 2050" calls for affordable housing efforts in dense areas of transit-connected economic activity, known as Regional Activity Centers.
(Source: Preserving Affordable Housing Near Transit, Case Studies from Atlanta, Denver, Seattle and Washington, DC, Enterprise, The National Housing Trust, Reconnecting America, Edited by Leo Quigley, 2010.)		

Resources and Tools for Aligning Housing Preservation and TOD		
Resources	**Purpose**	**Examples**
Acquisition Funds	Provide financing to purchase land and buildings for preservation redevelopment or affordable housing construction	▪ **Denver**: The city, Enterprise and the Urban Land Conservancy established the Denver TOD Fund, a $15 million revolving fund to acquire sites in anticipation of new transit stations. It is expected to create or preserve 1,000 affordable housing units, leverage $100 million in local economic development and create construction and permanent jobs. ▪ **Washington, DC**: The Site Acquisition Funding Initiative (SAFI) and other bridge lending resources from Enterprise, the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) and the Open Door Housing Fund provide resources for affordable housing production, preservation and rehabilitation.
Housing Trust Funds	Collect and allocate one-time and ongoing dedicated revenue streams for affordable housing	▪ **Seattle:** A housing levy passed by voter referendum will replenish the Housing Trust Fund with $145 million. ▪ **Washington, DC**: The Housing Production Trust Fund receives 15 percent of deed recordation and transfer tax revenues. It is now suffering sharp reductions due to slowing transaction volume.
Tax Increment Financing	Dedicate a share of increased tax revenues from defined improvement areas to repay upfront costs of investments in infrastructure, transit and development	▪ **Atlanta**: The Beltline Affordable Housing Trust Fund provides grants for the preservation and development of affordable housing. It receives 15 percent of revenues from the Beltline Tax Allocation Districts, using tax increment financing.
Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP)	Use HUD funding to support efforts to acquire and redevelop foreclosed and abandoned properties	▪ **Denver**: The city received $19 million in NSP-2 funding dedicated to multifamily housing preservation in transit corridors.
Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC)	Favor transit-accessible projects in allocating resources Scoring preferences or set-asides in allocating Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, and similar state-level tax credits "Basis boost" flexibility under the Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008 (HERA)	▪ **46 states** provide incentives for preservation in their competitive LIHTC programs and **21 states** set aside allocations for preservation properties. An additional 25 states award points in their scoring criteria for preservation. ▪ **32 states** award points for projects near transportation and services.
(Source: Preserving Affordable Housing Near Transit, Case Studies from Atlanta, Denver, Seattle and Washington, DC, Enterprise, The National Housing Trust, Reconnecting America, Edited by Leo Quigley, 2010.)		

Appendix B—Selected Federal Funding and Financing Programs

PROGRAM	WHO CAN APPLY?	DESCRIPTION	USES
US DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION (EDA)			
Planning and Local Technical Assistance Programs	States, Counties, Cities, townships, institutions of higher education, Native American tribal governments. Nonprofits	These programs will help communities develop the planning and technical expertise to support communities and regions in their comprehensive, entrepreneurial, and innovation-based economic development efforts. Under the Planning Program, EDA provides assistance to eligible recipients to create regional economic development plans in order to stimulate and guide the economic development efforts of a community or region.	Planning/ Development Financing
US DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (DOT)			
Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality (CMAQ) Program	N/A - Funding distributed to States via a statutory formula	Support for transportation projects or programs that improve air quality and relieve congestion in areas that do not meet National Ambient Air Quality Standards. Includes capital transportation investments and pedestrian/bicycle facilities and programs.	Capital Investments
Bus and Bus Facilities	Partially formula, partially discretionary for public transportation agencies, States or Indian Tribes.	Funding to rehabilitate bus and bus facilities, including intermodal facilities.	Capital Investments
Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Program	State/MPO allocated	Conduct research and develop guidelines, tools and safety countermeasures to reduce pedestrian and bicycle fatalities.	Planning/ research
Section 5303-Metropolitan Planning; Section 5304-Statewide Planning	State DOTs and MPOs	Support planning for transportation investment decisions in metropolitan areas and statewide	Planning
Surface Transportation Program - Transportation Alternatives	State/MPO allocated	Helps expand transportation choices and enhance transportation through 12 eligible surface transportation activities, including pedestrian & bicycle infrastructure and safety programs, landscaping beautification, historic preservation, and environmental mitigation.	Capital Investments
Transportation for Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities	States are direct recipients. Eligible subrecipients are private non-profits and governmental authorities.	Funding to assist in meeting the transportation needs of the elderly and persons with disabilities when the transportation service provided is unavailable, insufficient, or inappropriate to meeting these needs.	Transit Operating Assistance

PROGRAM	WHO CAN APPLY?	DESCRIPTION	USES
Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA)	States, local governments; transit agencies; and others.	Provides federal credit assistance in the form of direct loans, loan guarantees, and standby lines of credit to finance surface transportation projects, including public infrastructure for TOD.	Capital Investments
Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing (RRIF)	Railroads, state and local governments, joint ventures, and others	Construction of or improvements to railroad infrastructure or facilities	Capital investments
Transportation Investments Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER)	State, local, and tribal governments, transit agencies, port authorities, metropolitan planning organizations, and multijurisdictional groups.	Competitive grant program funding infrastructure projects that promote economic competitiveness, improve energy efficiency, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve safety, quality-of-life and working environments in communities.	Capital Investments
Transit Oriented Development Planning Pilot	State and local government agencies	Provides funding to advance planning efforts that support transit-oriented development associated with new fixed-guideway and core capacity improvement projects.	Planning/ research
Urbanized Area Formula Program	Formula funding to states and transit agencies.	Provide transit capital and operating assistance in urbanized areas and for transportation related planning.	Capital Investments /Operating Assistance
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA)			
Brownfields Assessment Grant Program	States and local governments, land clearance authorities, regional councils, Indian tribes	Funding for planning/assessing brownfield redevelopment, conducting planning and community involvement, and site cleanup.	Environment-al cleanup, Planning
Brownfield Economic Development Initiative	Any public entity eligible to apply for Section 108 loan guarantee assistance	Competitive funding program to spur redevelopment of brownfield sites to productive economic use. Must be used in conjunction with a Section 108 loan.	Environment-al cleanup, Affordable Housing
Brownfields and Lands Revitalization	States, local and tribal governments, land clearance authorities, regional councils.	Funding for planning/assessing brownfield redevelopment and site cleanup. Restoration of brownfield sites to productive use and revitalization of affected neighborhoods	Environment-al cleanup, Planning
Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities	States, Indian Tribes, public and private universities and colleges, hospitals, laboratories, and other nonprofits.	Technical assistance to selected communities to implement development approaches that protect the environment, improve public health, create jobs, expand economic opportunity, and improve overall quality of life.	Technical Assistance

PROGRAM	WHO CAN APPLY?	DESCRIPTION	USES
Smart Growth Technical Assistance grants	Local governments	Funds to incorporate smart growth techniques into future development.	Technical Assistance
Smart Growth Implement-ation Assistance program	Tribes, states, regions, local governments, as well as nonprofits that have a partnership with a government entity.	The SGIA program focuses on complex or cutting-edge issues, such as stormwater management, code revision, transit-oriented development, affordable housing, infill development, corridor planning, green building, and climate change.	Technical Assistance
US DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HUD)			
Capital Fund Education and Training Community Facility Grant	Public housing authorities	Capital funding for public housing authorities to construct, rehabilitate, or purchase facilities for early childhood education, adult education, and/or job training for public housing residents.	Development Financing
Choice Neighbor-hoods Implement-ation Program	Public housing authorities, local and tribal governments, nonprofits, and for-profit developers that apply jointly with a public entity.	Funding to revitalize severely distressed public and/or HUD-assisted multifamily housing in distressed neighborhoods into viable, mixed-income communities with access to well-functioning services, high quality educational programs, public transportation, and jobs.	Development Financing
Choice Neighbor-hoods Initiative Planning Grant	Public housing authorities, local governments, nonprofits, and for-profit developers that apply jointly with a public entity.	Funding to help communities develop comprehensive grassroots plans (Transformation Plans) that link affordable housing with quality education, public transportation, good jobs and safe streets.	Planning
Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)	State allocated	Formula grants for local governments to carry out community and economic development activities.	Planning/ Development Financing/ Affordable Housing
HOME Program	Local & State governments	Formula funding to create affordable housing for low-income households, in the form of direct assistance or loan guarantees.	Development Financing/ Affordable Housing
Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP)	States, territories and local governments	NSP is intended to stabilize communities that have suffered from foreclosures and abandonment by providing funds to purchase and redevelop distressed residential properties.	Planning/ Development Financing/ Affordable Housing

PROGRAM	WHO CAN APPLY?	DESCRIPTION	USES
Section 108 Loan Guarantees	Cities and urban counties, among others	Provides CDBG-eligible communities with a source of financing for economic development, public facilities, and other eligible large-scale physical development projects.	Development Financing
Section 221- Mortgage Insurance for Moderate Income	Public, profit-motivated sponsors, limited distribution, nonprofit cooperative, builder-seller, investor-sponsor, and general mortgagors.	Insures mortgage loans to facilitate the new construction or substantial rehabilitation of multifamily rental or cooperative housing for moderate-income families, elderly, and the handicapped.	Mortgage financing
Section 542- Risk-Sharing	Eligible mortgagors, who include investors, builders, developers, public entities, and private nonprofits.	Provides credit enhancement for mortgages of multifamily housing projects whose loans are underwritten, processed, serviced, and disposed of by housing finance authorities.	Mortgage financing
SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION			
Small Business Innovation Research Program	Small businesses that are American owned and independently operated, for-profit, principle researcher employed by business and company size limited to 500 employees	SBIR funds the critical startup and development stages of Small Business. It targets the entrepreneurial sector where most innovation and innovators thrive. It also encourages the commercialization of the technology, product, or service, which, in turn, stimulates the U.S. economy.	Start-up grants
DEPARTMENT OF TREASURY			
Low Income Housing Tax Credit	Determined by state housing finance agency	Generate equity capital for the construction and rehabilitation of affordable rental housing.	Development Financing
New Market Tax Credit Program	Community Development Entities (CDEs)	Issuance of tax credits to investors in low-income communities.	Development Financing

(Source: Reconnecting America, Federal Grant Opportunities, http://reconnectingamerica.org/resource-center/federal-grant-opportunities/.)

Appendix C—Individuals Interviewed

David Martin, Mayor
Michael Pollard, Chief of Staff
Robin Stein, Former Land Use Bureau Chief
Norman Cole, Current Land Use Bureau Chief
David Woods, Planner
Josh Benson, Transportation and Traffic Bureau Chief
Erik Larson, Grants Director, City of Stamford
Ellen Bromely, Social Services Director
Randy Skiegan, Chairman, Board of Representatives
Harry Day, Land Use Committee Chair, Board of Representatives
Elaine Mitchell, Board of Representatives
Mary Fidele, Board of Representatives
Roseann McManus, Zoning Board
Teri Dell, Chair, Planning Board
David Kooris, Finance Board
Anna Berry, Connecticut Department of Transportation
Sandy Goldstein, Downtown Special Services District
John Ruotolo, Downtown Special Services District
John Hartwell, Vice Chair, Commuter Council
Joe McGee, Business Council of Fairfield County
Jackie Lightfield, Stamford Partnership
Jack Condlin, Stamford Chamber of Commerce
Sheila Barney, South End Neighborhood Revitalization Zone
Julie Rodriguez, Manager, Jonathan Rose Companies
Ted Ferone, Chief Financial Officer, Building and Land Technology
John Freeman, Corporation Counsel, Building and Land Technology
Jeff Newman, Empire State Reality Trust