

Town of East Hartford

Plan of Conservation & Development



Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting
January 10, 2023



BFJ Planning

Agenda

- 1 Project Status**
 - **Founders Plaza**
 - **POCD Chapters**
- 2 Public Workshop Recap**
- 3 Draft POCD Vision Statement and Goals**

Project Status: Work Since Last Meeting

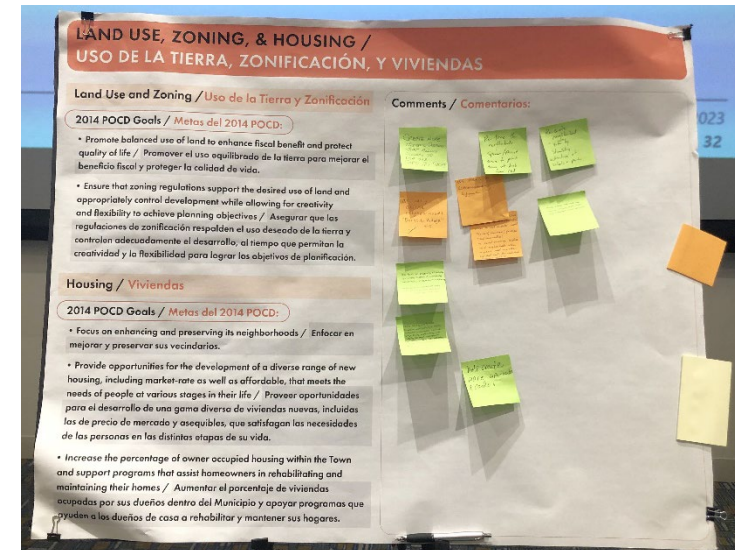
- Stakeholder meetings complete
- Additional meeting held with Port Eastside developer on Founders Plaza
- Ideas Wall launched; November 28 public workshop held

Project Status: Current Work

- Finalizing Founders Plaza existing conditions and market analysis, to schedule targeted stakeholder meetings on Founders Plaza (local real estate professionals, neighboring property owners)
- Work on draft POCD chapters:
 - Introduction and Regional Context
 - Socioeconomic Conditions and Trends
 - Land Use and Zoning
 - Historic and Cultural Resources
 - Parks and Open Space

Public Workshop Recap

- Held at Senior Center November 28, approximately 30 attendees, including: residents, business owners, P&Z and Town Council members.
- BFJ presented project overview, feedback from stakeholder meetings, and key demographic trends. Open House portion sought open-ended public feedback on 2014 vision and goals.
- Participants supported the overall goals from the prior POCD and largely echoed feedback from stakeholder meetings.



Emergent Themes for POCD Vision and Goals

- Desire for more *self-sufficient neighborhoods* where people can access their basic needs. This may indicate a need to allow different formats and scale of housing beyond just single-family, while maintaining the overall neighborhood scale, as well as a focus on nearby corridors/transit nodes within walking distance, and how to focus mixed-use investment to these areas.
- Focus on *non-auto mobility* – safe and effective pedestrian and bike linkages, particularly along key corridors, employment nodes, and near parks and schools. This includes need for traffic calming and bus improvements (service and amenities).
- Town seen as offering little in *goods and services*; people must travel elsewhere. Town Center, especially, needs activity and a reason to visit. Strategies include more housing, traffic calming/complete streets, and public realm improvements, as well as downtown management (e.g. a BID).
- Need to balance community needs for *social services and public facilities* with fiscal prudence, focusing on effective maintenance of the existing system vs. significant expansion.
- Lack of *cultural resources and organizations* in East Hartford, but an opportunity to build on its diversity and entrepreneurship to cultivate a creative class and increase visibility of the arts.
- Need to incorporate *sustainability and resiliency* across the board, given climate change impacts.

Draft POCD Vision Statement

2014: *To promote a development strategy that balances targeted redevelopment for economic revitalization, enhancement of the tax base and job creation, with preservation and stabilization of residential neighborhoods to protect quality of life.*

Proposed: *East Hartford's tapestry of neighborhoods, business and employment nodes, and natural and municipal resources create a unique and diverse community that combines suburban living and an urban vibe. Our vision is that all residents can enjoy the highest quality of life balanced with economic prosperity: with thriving neighborhoods, an effective and accessible transportation network, a range of goods and services in attractive settings, and excellent community facilities and services.*

Draft POCD Goals: Land Use

Existing (2014) goals:

- Promote balanced use of land to enhance fiscal benefit and protect quality of life.
- Ensure that zoning regulations support the desired use of land and appropriately control development while allowing for creativity and flexibility to achieve planning objectives.

Proposed goals:

- Promote a diverse mix of uses that meet the needs of the community and support a strong tax base.
- Use targeted zoning strategies and best practices to implement desired land use patterns, bolster existing neighborhoods, and facilitate economic revitalization of opportunity areas and corridors.

Draft POCD Goals: Housing

Existing (2014) goals:

- Focus on enhancing and preserving East Hartford's neighborhoods.
- Provide opportunities for the development of a diverse range of new housing, including market-rate as well as affordable, that meets the needs of people at various stages in their life.
- Increase the percentage of owner-occupied housing within the Town and support programs that assist homeowners in rehabilitating and maintaining their homes.

Proposed goals:

- Focus on enhancing and preserving East Hartford's neighborhoods.
- Provide opportunities for the development of a diverse range of new housing types, at various price points, that meets the needs of people at various stages in their life.
- Support programs that assist in the rehabilitation and maintenance of the Town's existing housing stock.

Draft POCD Goals: Transportation

Existing (2014) goals:

- East Hartford should maintain an efficient transportation system which meets the needs of community residents, while respecting existing patterns of land use development in the community. East Hartford should maximize the use of the existing road network to support employment centers and work to improve the aesthetics of its highways and commercial streets.
- Provide general roadway improvements and implement transportation strategies as development and reinvestment of existing properties occurs. Such improvements should serve to mitigate and calm traffic flow; improve traffic circulation, parking, vehicular, and pedestrian safety; and encourage multi-modal transportation.
- Provide financially viable improvements that encourage economic and physical revitalization, especially those projects with clear funding sources.

Proposed goals:

- Ensure safe, functional, and accessible mobility for all users: drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders.
- Leverage opportunities to better connect public and community facilities such as parks, schools, business districts, and natural resources.
- Promote efficient traffic circulation and adequate parking to ensure that East Hartford's commercial areas and employment nodes can continue to thrive.

Draft POCD Goals: Environmental Resources

Existing (2014) goal:

- Promote the conservation and preservation of natural resources as part of future development activity.

Proposed goals:

- Promote the conservation and preservation of natural resources to enhance the Town's ability to mitigate and adapt to climate change, including its capacity to recover from emergencies and natural disasters.
- Support environmental sustainability initiatives that improve waste and energy systems, enhance the tree canopy, protect natural resources, and strengthen connections to open space and recreational amenities.

Draft POCD Goals: Economic Development

Existing (2014) goals:

- Promote economic development activity to attract new business and employment opportunities as a way to benefit population, housing, and economic trends in East Hartford.
- Build on the existing industrial and manufacturing base to promote new diversified business investment in the town.
- Recreate Main Street as a showcase of the town, establishing the central business district and the southern end (Goodwin College area) as vital and active nodes for living, eating, working, and entertainment.
- Take advantage of the location, views, and amenities associated with the riverfront as leverage for economic development and tax base for the Town.
- Plan for and develop viable and attractive commercial areas outside of the central business district to meet the needs for goods and services of residents and visitors to East Hartford.

Proposed goals:

- Promote economic development activities that support existing businesses, attract new business and employment, and foster entrepreneurship and creativity, including programming, strategic zoning, and revitalization of deteriorated commercial sites.
- Invest in Main Street to facilitate mixed-use nodes of activity in the central business district, in the Goodwin University area, and at the southern end.
- Support revitalization of the riverfront area as an attractive gateway into East Hartford and a focus of economic activity.
- Upgrade commercial corridors to support diverse uses, improve aesthetics, and support a multimodal environment.

Draft POCD Goals: Parks, Open Space, and Recreation

Existing (2014) goals:

- Provide a system of linked public and private open space that offers both passive and active recreation opportunities and that protects environmentally sensitive areas.
- Maximize access to and utilization of parks and recreation facilities for all residents.
- Promote the conservation and preservation of open space and natural resources as part of future development activity.
- Improve and protect the quality of life in the Town by encouraging the improved use, maintenance, and rehabilitation of the park and open space system to ensure they are adequate in extent, strategic in location, and equitable in distribution, in order to meet the unique active and passive needs of the Town's population.

Proposed goals:

- Provide a system of linked public and private open space that offers both passive and active recreation opportunities, protects environmentally sensitive areas, and leverage opportunities for sustainability and resiliency initiatives.
- Improve and protect residential quality of life by maintaining and enhancing the park and open space system to provide active and passive recreational amenities that are adequate in extent, strategic in location, and equitable in distribution.
- Pursue strategic investments in the open space system that ensure achievable and consistent long-term management and maintenance of facilities.

Draft POCD Goals: Community Facilities

Existing (2014) goals:

- East Hartford should provide community facilities and services which respond to residents' needs in a timely, efficient, and cost-effective manner.
- Effectively manage and control stormwater drainage to minimize hazards to property and the public and protect East Hartford's built and natural environment.

Proposed goals:

- Facilitate necessary infrastructure and municipal facility upgrades to maximize public safety, meet the capacity needs of residents and businesses, protect against natural hazards, advance sustainability and resiliency initiatives, and ensure cost-effectiveness.
- Exercise strong capital and programmatic planning to ensure adequate provision of community and social services, efficiency in the use of buildings and land, and predictability in Town expenditures.
- Improve communication and coordination across municipal departments, agencies, and boards and committees.

Draft POCD Goals: Historic and Cultural Resources

Existing (2014) goal:

- Preserve the Town's historic resources to enhance quality of life and promote economic development.

Proposed goals:

- Preserve the Town's historic resources to enhance quality of life and promote economic development, including updating data and resources to reflect current best practices and provide the necessary tools for effective preservation.
- Within designated historic districts, upgrade the public realm (sidewalks, signage, and streetlights) to present a cohesive district identity and enhance conditions for pedestrians.
- Enhance the visibility of historic districts and sites through repair/replacement of historical markers and publicizing such resources on the Town's website and other publications.

Thank You!

