

CITY OF NORWALK, CT

South Norwalk TOD Redevelopment Plan

DRAFT MAY 2016



Prepared for the Norwalk Redevelopment Agency
by THE CECIL GROUP • FXM ASSOCIATES

South Norwalk TOD Redevelopment Plan

Community Meeting

June 29, 2016



Agenda

- Define a Redevelopment Plan
- Review Transit-Oriented Development and the *TOD Strategy*
- Review Draft *South Norwalk TOD Redevelopment Plan*
 - Redevelopment Area
 - Purpose and Goals
 - Implementation
 - Proposed Design Guidelines

- Presenters
 - Tim Sheehan, Norwalk Redevelopment Authority
 - Emily Keys Innes AICP LEED AP ND, The Cecil Group



Define a Redevelopment Plan

What a Redevelopment Plan does...

- Conveys to the public the City's specific developmental goals and objectives for a geographic area based on uses, density, and design
- Empowers the Redevelopment Agency to implement plan recommendations in accordance with the state statutory provisions and findings
- Responds to, and is informed by, existing land use policies, ordinances and regulations that govern development within the redevelopment area
- Communicates approved land use policies to the public
- Examines the potential of new development through the lens of existing land use by specific reference
- May recommend increasing the number or density of housing units in a specific plan area as an objective



Define a Redevelopment Plan

What a Redevelopment Plan is not...

- Distinct from existing land use policies, ordinances, and regulations that govern development in the redevelopment area
- A wish list of contemplated or desired land use policies
- A Municipal Housing Plan



Transit-Oriented Development and the *TOD Strategy*



Transit-Oriented Development is...

- Centered on public transit – usually a rail station, subway station, or bus hub
- Requires safe pedestrian connections to public transportation; often includes safe bicycle connections
- Encourages higher density, lower parking ratios, and is often mixed-use



South Norwalk TOD Strategy

South Norwalk TOD Strategy

- *South Norwalk Railroad Station Area Transit Oriented Development Strategy*
 - The Cecil Group began work in 2010
 - Final report October 2011
 - Based on earlier studies and City policy for centering development around South Norwalk Rail Station



SOUTH NORWALK
RAILROAD STATION AREA TRANSIT
ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
FINAL REPORT

Prepared for:
The City of Norwalk

Prepared by:
The Cecil Group, Inc.

October 2011



South Norwalk TOD Strategy

South Norwalk TOD Strategy

- Involved significant public participation
 - 2010 – 2011 Community Outreach:
 - 31 Community Interviews
 - 7 Stakeholder Meetings
 - 4 Planning Coordination Meetings
 - 4 Community workshops in English, Spanish and Creole
- Defined goals for:
 - Neighborhoods
 - Economics and Development
 - Urban Design Character and Qualities
 - Diversity
 - Circulation and Transportation
 - Community Security and Safety



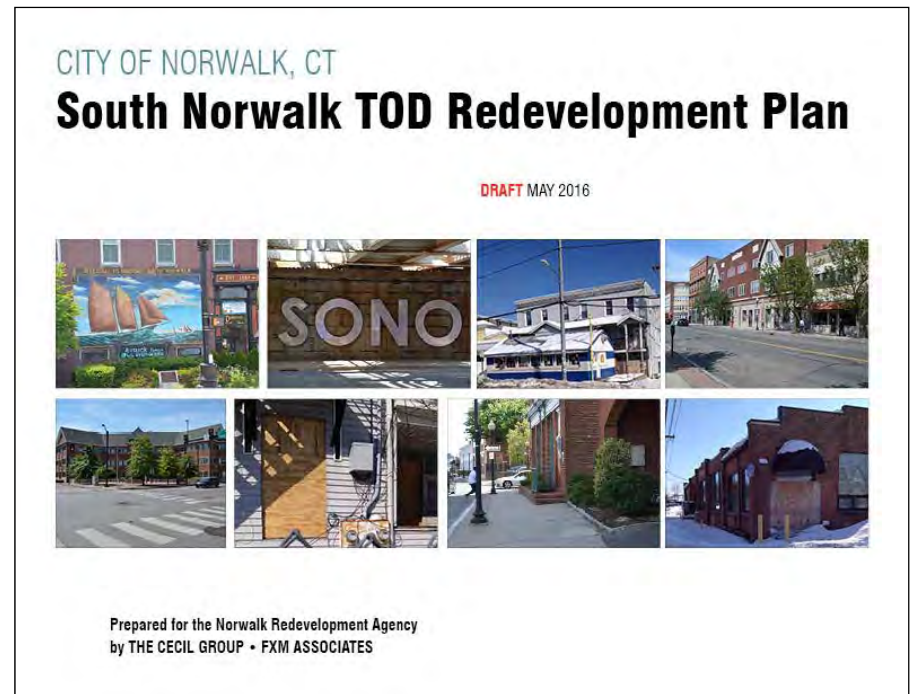
Draft *South Norwalk TOD Redevelopment Plan*



South Norwalk TOD Redevelopment Plan

Draft Redevelopment Plan

- Meets requirements of Enabling legislation: CGS Chapter 130 Section 8-127
- Has been online and available for public comment
- Currently in public process for approval
 - Planning Commission (consistency with POCD)
 - Common Council (approval)



South Norwalk TOD Redevelopment Plan

Plan Findings

- The Redevelopment Area is a blighted area under Chapter 130 of the Connecticut State Statutes
 - Presence of incompatible land uses
 - Presence of existing environmental conditions that cannot be addressed by the private market alone
 - Existing flood conditions that cannot be addressed by the private market alone
- The proposed Redevelopment Plan will materially improve conditions by providing development incentives to address existing conditions of blight over time:
 - Replace incompatible land uses by infill development
 - Rehabilitate existing older housing stock by infill development
 - Address flood conditions with appropriate building and site design guidelines for new development
 - Protect existing historic buildings



South Norwalk TOD Redevelopment Plan

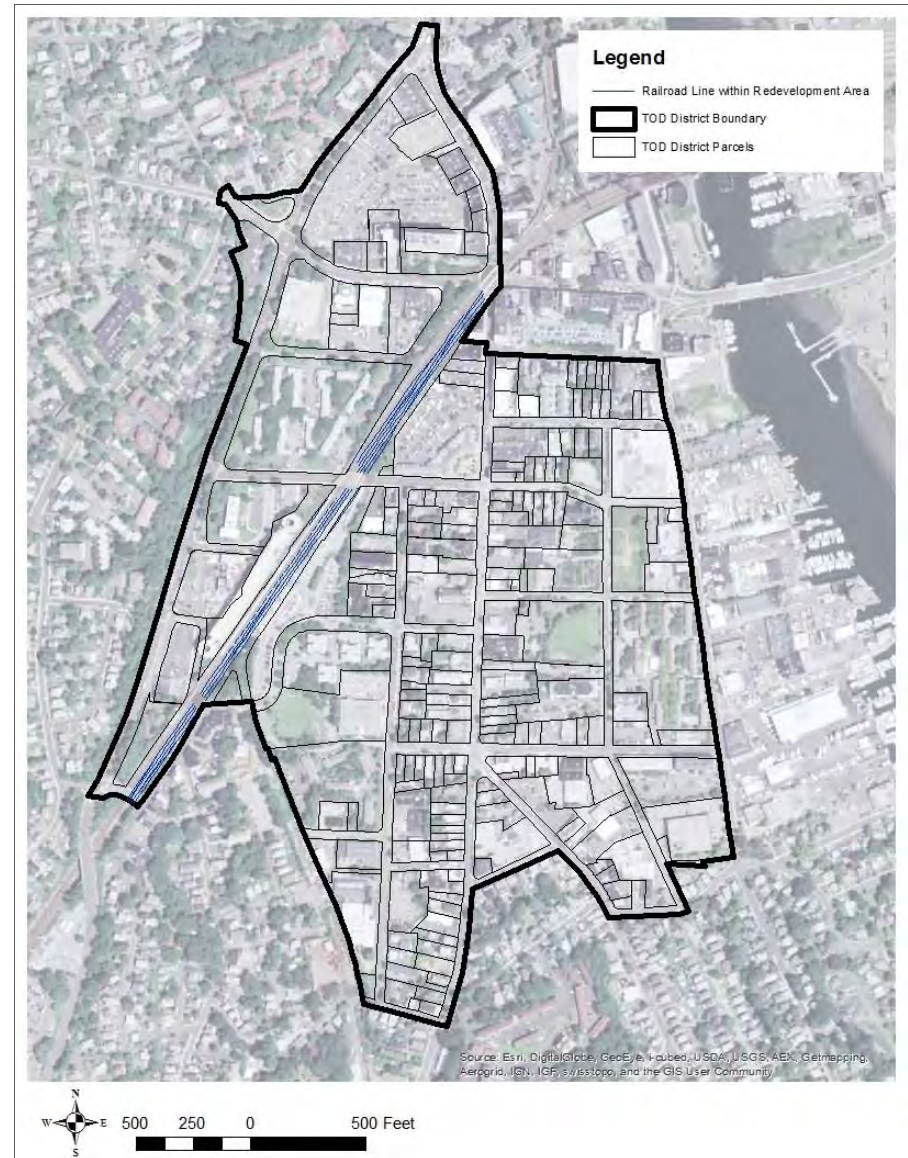
Plan Findings

- Sufficient Housing Exists for Relocation
 - Changes to the area are expected to take place over time – the Redevelopment Plan does not include a specific project that would require relocation
 - The proposed zoning for the TOD District requires the replacement of existing Workforce Housing (118-1050) in new development at 50% of the Median Income as defined by CGS 8-30g-8
 - Additional Workforce Housing units up to the required 10% must be provided at 80% of the Median Income as defined by CGS 8-30g-8
- The proposed Redevelopment Plan is consistent with the City's POCD
 - Supports POCD goals for
 - Economic development
 - Affordable housing
 - Transportation improvements
 - Historic preservation
 - Urban design



South Norwalk TOD Redevelopment Area

Redevelopment Area



Purpose and Goals



South Norwalk TOD Redevelopment Plan

Purposes of this Redevelopment Plan

- Support the transition from the current conditions to a walkable, mixed-use district, centered on the South Norwalk Rail Station, and connected to the surrounding neighborhoods with safe access for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motor vehicles.
- Support a range of housing options in terms of type and affordability that sustain a mix of incomes
- Accommodate existing businesses and residents
- Address current conditions of blight and prevent future blight



South Norwalk TOD Redevelopment Plan

Plan Goals

- A major goal of the TOD Redevelopment Plan is the advancement of equitable development in the plan area.
- Every City seeks a strong fiscal base and healthy markets to sustain itself and allow for all its residents to thrive.
- The redevelopment of urban districts and neighborhoods contributes to that objective.



TOD Redevelopment Goals

Equitable Development

- The redevelopment of urban neighborhoods and districts requires equitable development policies and practices that combine both people-based and place-based strategies that effectively deploy the City's cadre of economic development, land use polices and regulations to:
 - Create stable socially and economically diverse neighborhoods that are sustained by minimizing the neighborhood transition costs impacting existing LMI residents
 - Provide for LMI residents to establish equity in the revitalization by becoming investors in the redevelopment goals and objectives, not disaffected by them
 - Recognize that a thriving City needs thriving commercial districts and inversely a thriving commercial district needs a thriving neighborhood to economically sustain itself



TOD Redevelopment Goals

Equitable Development

- Positively impacts the general conditions of a neighborhood which have significant impact on individual outcomes
- Responds quickly to market pressures
- Maintains existing owner occupied, rental and SRO housing in the area
- Eases price pressures by employing smart growth and sustainable development density principles
- Streamlines the new development approval process by making desirable uses allowable as of right
- Uses business assistance and loan funds to allow neighborhood businesses to effectively respond to neighborhood economic changes



TOD Redevelopment Goals

Equitable Development

- Uses public assets and facilities as tools to leverage needed neighborhood resources and improvements such as affordable housing, community services, and high quality public realm and infrastructure improvements
- Educates residents regarding their rights via the City's Fair Rent and Fair Housing resources
- Increases district educational resources be they public, non-profit, or private
- Ensures that the dialogue regarding the ongoing impact of neighborhood transition is ongoing, open, and transparent



TOD Redevelopment Goals

Equitable Development

- The TOD Redevelopment Plan embraces the neighborhood based strategies, policies, and practices of equitable development. Evidence of this is found but not limited to the following:
 - Plan does not call for the use of eminent domain
 - Plan incorporates preservation of existing LMI units
 - Plan calls for the expansion of affordable units at a threshold lower than the current zoning regulation
 - Plan focuses on public transportation as an development asset
 - Plan elevates historic preservation
 - Plan is focused on infill development, compatible with existing neighborhoods, over superblock development concepts
 - Plan views economic and cultural diversity as an economic asset



Existing Conditions



Beyond TOD...

Three Legs of the Plan

The redevelopment area encloses a series of conditions within its boundary:

- Current Conditions of Blight
- Future Conditions of Blight
- Outdated Zoning
- Expired Urban Renewal Plans

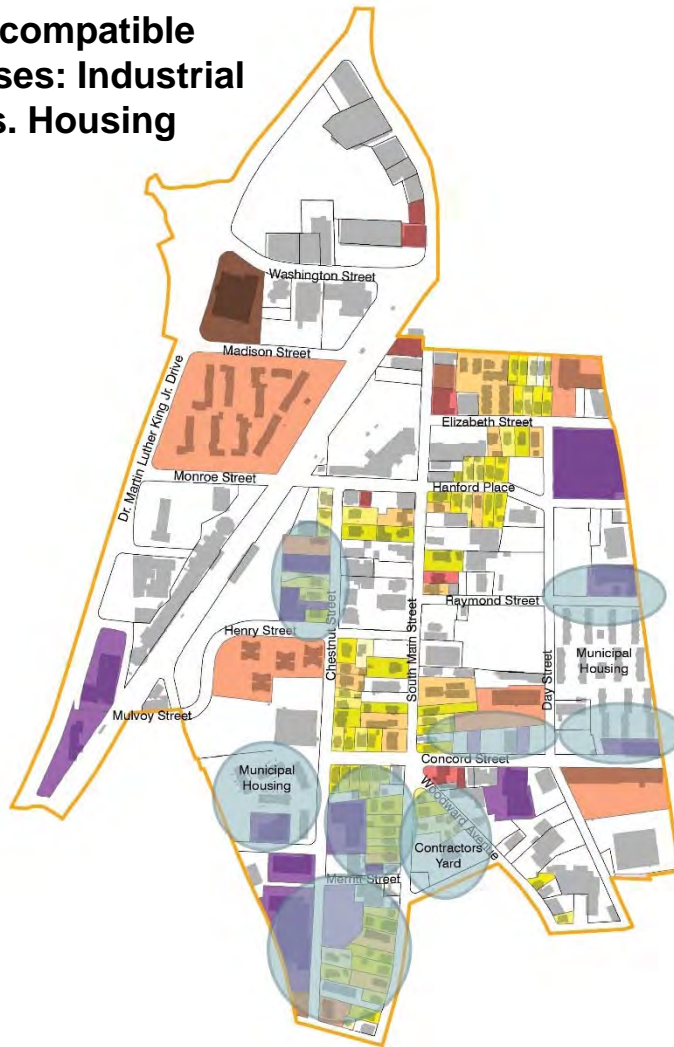
The zoning changes and the design guidelines work together to address those conditions



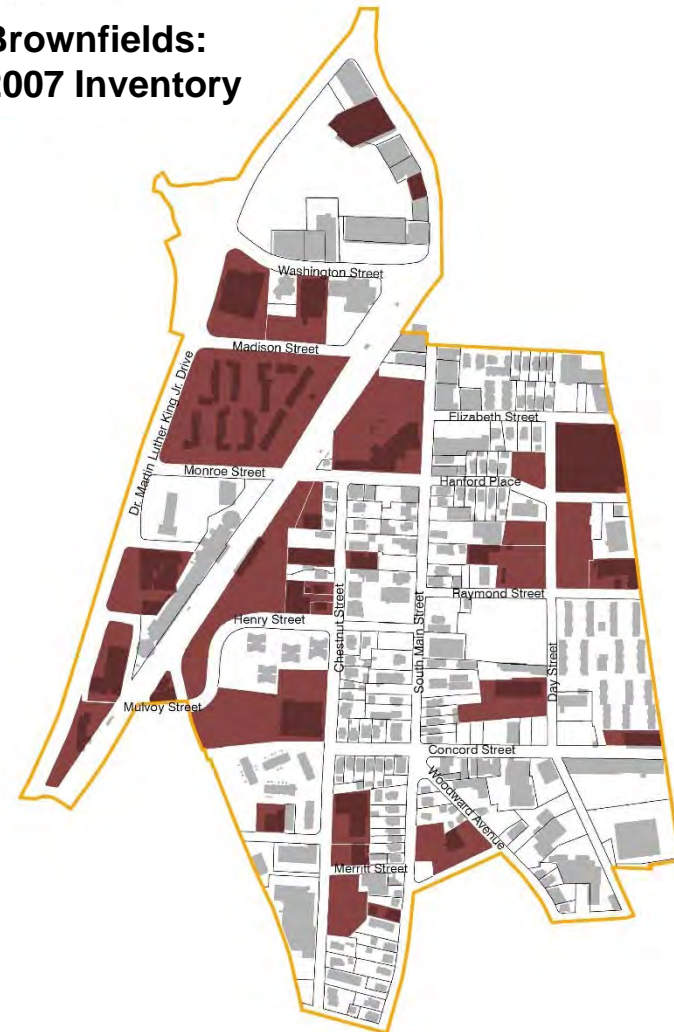
Conditions within the Redevelopment Area

Current Conditions of Blight

**Incompatible
Uses: Industrial
vs. Housing**



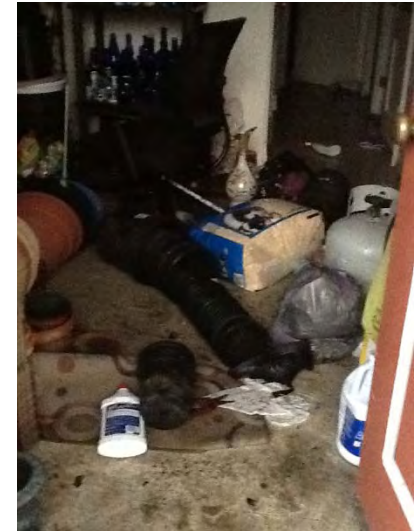
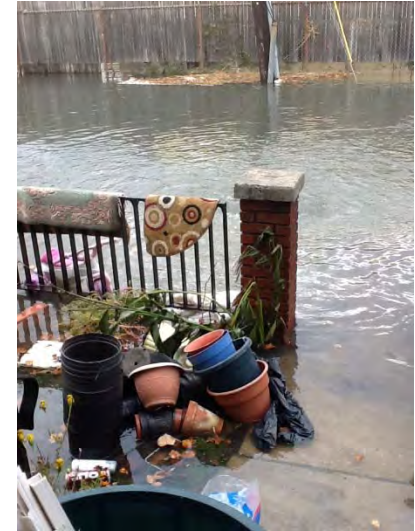
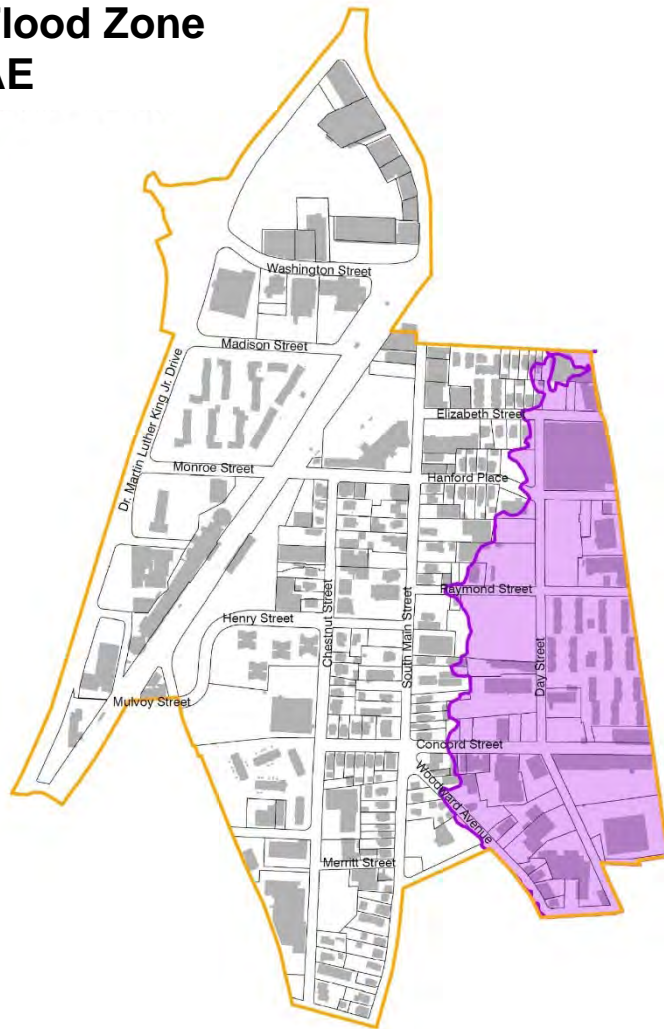
**Brownfields:
2007 Inventory**



Conditions within the Redevelopment Area

Future Conditions of Blight

**Flood Zone
AE**

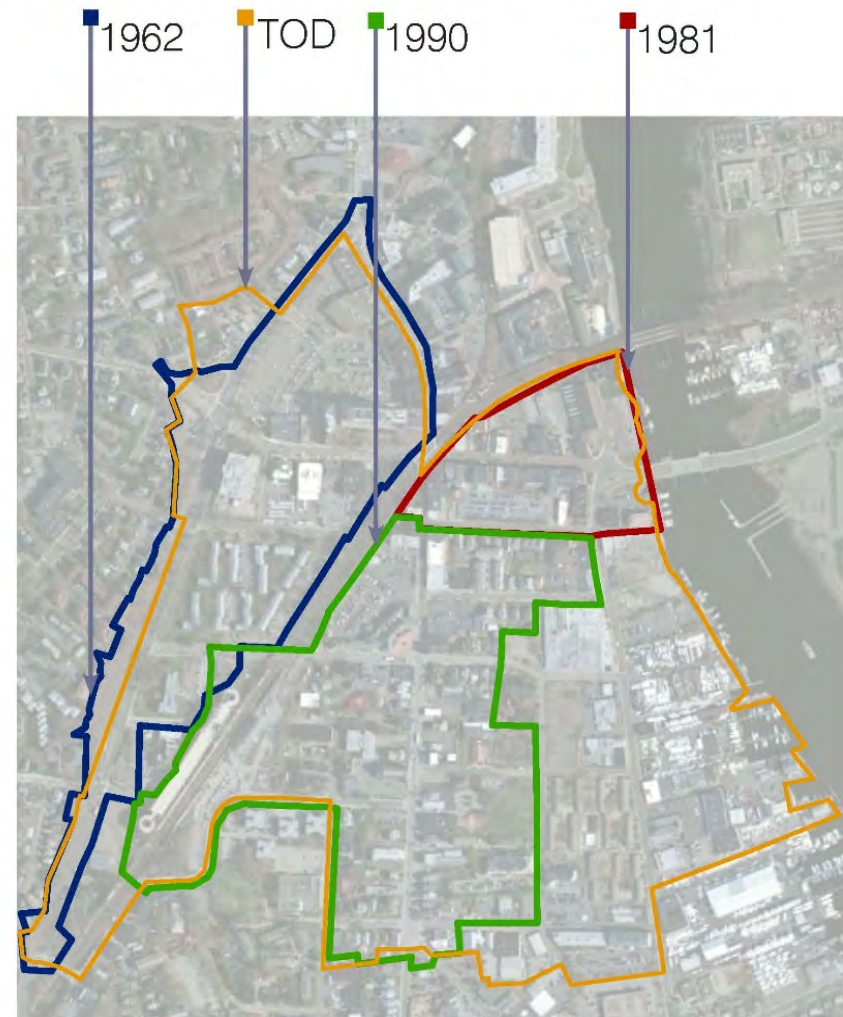


Conditions within the Redevelopment Area

Expired Urban Renewal Plans

- *Urban Renewal Plan for the South Norwalk Project Area No. 1, June 1962 (URP 1962)*
- *Urban Renewal Plan Washington-South Main Street Improvement Area II, January 1981 (URP 1981): Expires 2021*
- *South Main Corridor Urban Renewal Plan, September 1990 (URP 1990)*

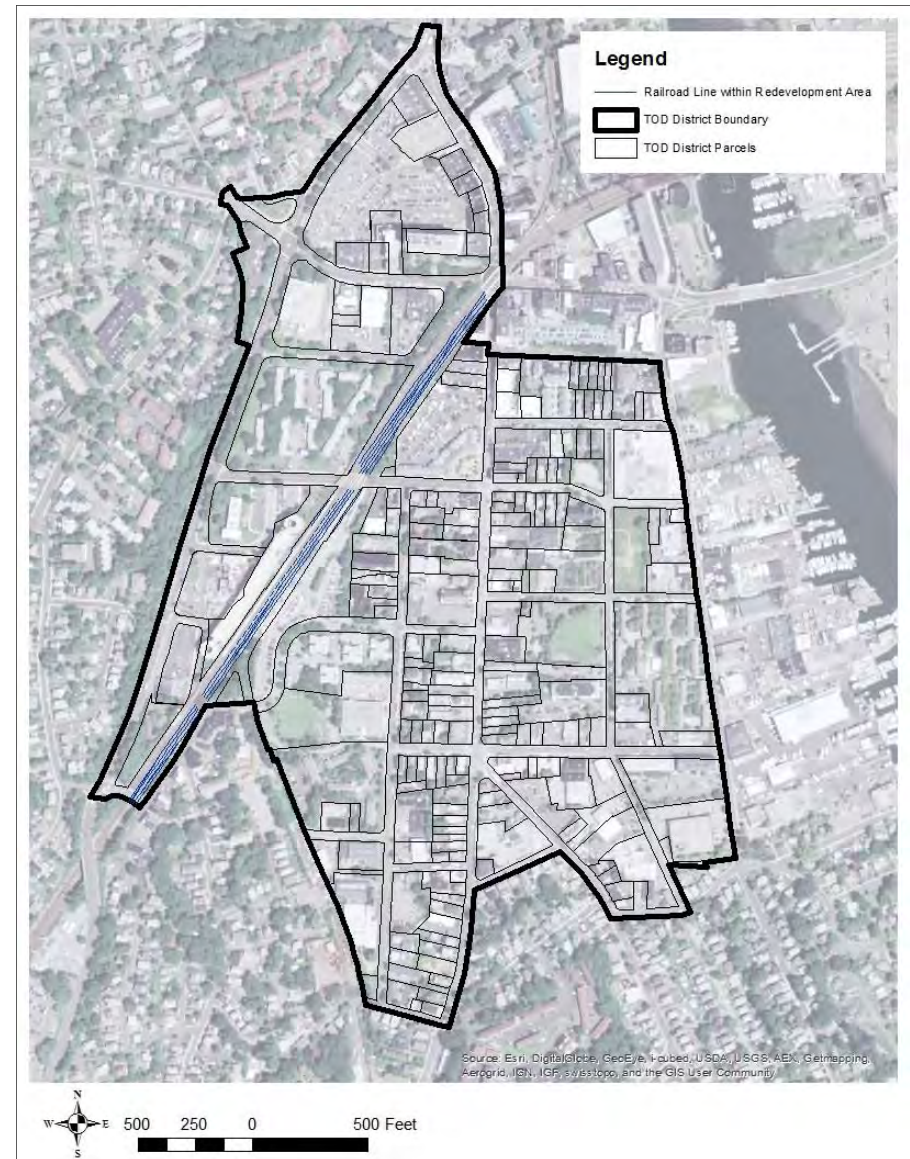
Urban Renewal Plans and the TOD Focus Area



South Norwalk TOD Redevelopment Area

Redevelopment Area

- Consolidates the *Urban Renewal Plan for the South Norwalk Project Area No. 1* (URP 1962) and the *South Main Corridor Urban Renewal Plan* (URP 1990)
- Creates a single zoning district: the proposed TOD District
- Creates a single set of design guidelines within the Redevelopment Plan



Implementation



Implementation

The Redevelopment Plan will...

- Address existing conditions of blight
 - Suspected environmental contaminants (brownfields, lead paint)
 - Incompatible land uses
- Help prevent future conditions of blight
 - Damage from significant flood events
- Create incentives for changes in land use
 - Support mixed-use development and higher density around the train station
 - Allow uses as-of-right and limit discretionary decisions
- Protect existing conditions which are of value to the community
 - Provide incentives to retain historic buildings
 - Preserve existing number of housing units at current affordability levels
 - Create additional Workforce Housing under Section 118-1050
 - Enforce design guidelines that reflect plan goals and community values



Implementation

Implementation Strategy

- Based on goals and related actions from *South Norwalk TOD Strategy*
- Actions include
 - Improvements to public infrastructure to accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers throughout the area
 - Support for a diversity of housing types, including affordable housing
 - Support for mixed use development near the rail station
 - Protection of historic resources
 - Recognition of the diverse residential population and mix of businesses and how that diversity improves the strength of the area
- Includes expanded design guidelines
- Recommends consistent and uniform zoning district-wide
- Infill will be incremental over time and based on market conditions



Proposed Design Guidelines



Design Guidelines

Purpose of Design Guidelines

- The design of new development must support the overall goals of the Redevelopment Plan
 - New or renovated buildings must be sensitive to the existing building context of the TOD District
 - Site improvements must reinforce an active public realm
 - Site improvements on private sites must connect to the public circulation system for pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles
 - Public infrastructure changes must reinforce the pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular links between the train station and the neighborhoods
 - Within the flood plain, new development must respond appropriately to potential flood conditions
 - Signage and lighting must be appropriate for their purpose and the context of the area
 - Renovation of historic buildings must meet the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation*



Questions and Answers

