



Meriden
Just Better For Business

City of Meriden, Connecticut
Economic Development Office

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Economic Development Housing and Zoning Committee
Interested Parties

FROM: Juliet Burdelski, Director of Economic Development

RE: Update of Economic Development Activities Jan. 21, 2015 through April 30, 2015

DATE: April 30, 2015

CC: Lawrence J. Kendzior, City Manager

Attached please find a report of activities conducted by the City of Meriden Office of Economic Development for the period January 21, 2015 through April 30, 2015.

**Update of Economic Development Activities for the period
January 21, 2015 through April 30, 2015**

The mission of the Office of Economic Development is to sustain and grow the tax base, provide jobs, and create economic activity across numerous sectors within our community. Towards this end, we will focus on the following objectives:

- Collaborate with private, public and non-profit organizations that create jobs and economic activity in Meriden.
- Support and champion community leaders who work to make Meriden an attractive and economically viable place to live, work and recreate.
- Increase investment in Meriden's inner city, attract businesses to Meriden across numerous economic sectors, and retain existing businesses that have invested in our community.
- Pursue funding for and help implement critical infrastructure improvements that are necessary to support and sustain economic growth.
- Engage in long-term planning while at the same time recognizing the short-term needs of Meriden business owners, residents and workers.

I. General

The Office of Economic Development is staffed by Director Juliet Burdelski, and Economic Development Associate Paola Mantilla.

II. Marketing & Outreach Activities

A. Website & Social Media

1. Using Google Analytics, we show that over 1900 users visited meriden2020.com from January-April 2015.
2. Added new content to Meriden2020 including things to do, events and community calendar, and news.
3. Updated business incentive information on meridenbiz.com
4. Posted Economic Development news and info to @JulietBurdelski on Twitter and on City Facebook and Twitter pages
5. Distributed news and info using Constant Contact account

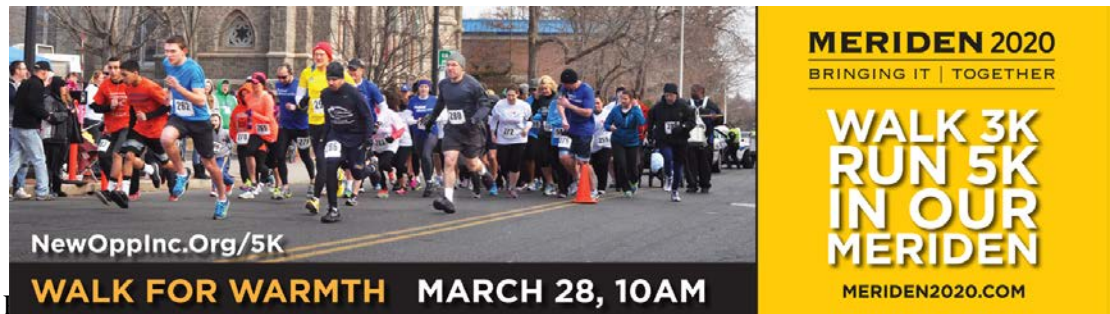
B. Research/Education/Training

1. South Mountain Road Study: Continued study of City-owned South Mountain Road Parcel. SCRCOG has retained Milone and MacBroom on the City's behalf to study the development potential and associated transportation/utility access to the South Mountain Road site. Draft report on Existing and Future Land Use and Transportation Conditions submitted to City staff in Dec. Meeting held with consultants on March 17 and April 28 to discuss potential land use strategy that could include up to 1.2 million sf of development. Joint meeting of EDHZ Committee and Planning Commission to review consultant findings to be scheduled.
2. Coordinated Municipal Economic Development Training held on 2/26/2015.

3. Coordinated Small Business Workshop Series in partnership with SBA, SCORE (Seasoned Corps of Retired Executives) and Midstate Chamber. Training was held Feb 10, 17, 24 and March 10, 17 and 24 at Middlesex Community College Meriden. Over 25 businesses attended. The City, Chamber, SBA and CEDF have partnered to start a second series to focus on QuickBooks accounting software. Workshops to start May 5, 12, 17, and 26.

C. Meriden 2020 Campaign

1. Continued to work with CERC/Liz Panke Designs on Meriden2020 marketing campaign.



D. Press Outreach

1. Fielded regular calls from *Record Journal* reporters regarding economic development issues. Highlights include:
 - *Meriden hotel owners improve space to house a restaurant, April 24, 2015*
 - *Work on Meriden, Wallingford stations continues, DOT official discusses future schedule, April 14, 2015*
 - *Plans to build CVS on Broad Street, April 8, 2015*
 - *Study recommends parking meters, new garage in downtown Meriden, March 24, 2015*
 - *Many Meriden city councilors remain optimistic about old hospital buildings. Feb. 15, 2015*
 - *New-dealership-coming-to-former-Colony- Ford-on-East-Main. Feb. 2, 2015*
 - *Meriden-Wallingford-receive-money-for-rail- area-studies. Jan. 29, 2015*
 - *City-of-Meriden-adds-parking-sets-up- downtown-shuttle. Jan. 22, 2015*
2. Other press outreach:
 - Set up interview with *Business in Focus* magazine for feature article on Meriden's downtown redevelopment and other business success storied. Article will run in June/July 2015.
 - Set up interview with *Record Journal* reporter for feature article on Meriden's Economic Development programs. Feature article will run on May 8, 2015 in the RJ's special business section.
3. Attended signing ceremony at Jonal Laboratories, 456 Center Street, Feb 19, 2015

- E. Co-star commercial real estate reports: Continued to utilize CoStar commercial real estate subscription to identify available commercial properties in Meriden. Downloaded info for several businesses interested in moving to Meriden. Information allows City to access latest information on commercial real estate listings.
- F. CT Main Street Center “Come Home to Downtown” Program: The Connecticut Main Street Center (CMSC) has selected Meriden to participate in the CMSC’s “Come Home to Downtown” Program in 2015. CT Main Street Center will complete a feasibility study of 21 Colony Street and make recommendations regarding the conversion of the property to mixed use that includes at least 12 housing units. Participating in the study is building owner John La Rosa. Draft to be presented May/June 2015.
- G. Outreach to State Delegation: Met with state legislative delegation to review status of Economic Development activities and review funding needs (see attached).
- H. Outreach to US Congresswoman Esty: Met with Congresswoman Esty to discuss priority projects for federal and local collaboration, and prepared follow up memo outlining key priorities, including continued support of flood control projects, bridge reconstruction, and TOD traffic improvements (see attached).
- I. Middlesex Community College: Met with Chamber, MEDCO and MxCC President to review status of MxCC in Meriden. Discussions are ongoing.
- J. East Main Street Incentive: Worked with Council to develop and implement East Main Street incentive, which provides a property tax incentive for real property improvements along East Main Street from Bee St. to the Middlefield town line. Reached out to several property owners/potential buyers. Additional outreach to current property owners will be conducted in next several months.

III. Downtown Redevelopment & Infrastructure Improvement

- A. HUB Redevelopment—attended work progress meetings held onsite. Project will be substantially completed end of 2015. Tentatively planning grand opening for public in spring 2016.
- B. Worked with downtown stakeholders and Parking Commission on several projects related to parking and accessibility downtown. Highlights include:
 - 1. Updated 2005 Parking Study. Retained Fuss & Oneill to update parking study recommendations given current changes to downtown parking, including closure of Colony Street lot and plans for new state parking structure. Parking Commission presented five short-term recommendations at its April 27 meeting. Parking study is available for download at <http://www.meriden2020.com/Downtown-Redevelopment/Downtown-Parking-Study/>
 - 2. Implemented downtown shuttle bus trial. In response to downtown stakeholder request to provide alternative parking arrangements to offset closure of 24 Colony Street lot in February, city staff instituted a shuttle bus trial. The shuttle bus trial commenced in late February and was suspended in early April. A full report on the shuttle bus trial and Choice Neighborhoods parking task force report will be available in May 2015.
- C. 24 Colony Street Mixed Use Development. Assisted MHA and Westmount Development complete Environmental Assessment required by HUD. Coordinated closure of parking lot and disconnection of utilities to the site. Met with church leaders (62 Colony St.) to discuss parking lot closure and development schedule. Property transfer (38-44 Colony St.) pending.

IV. Business Retention and Development

- A. 81 West Main Street Eben-Ezer Restaurant – Provided technical assistance to restaurant owner and assisted the owner secure a small business loan from Community Economic Development Fund (CEDF). Loan will be used to upgrade restaurant equipment and for marketing. Application will be also submitted to DECD Small Business Express loan program.
- B. Logan Steel – Provided information to business owners related to potential acquisition of 119 Empire Ave. (former Atlas Container) and relocation of their Meriden and Wallingford operations to the new facility. Provided information on state and federal incentives available and made introduction to Small Business Development Corp. (SBDC), which provides technical assistance regarding applicability of state incentive programs. Staff is working to assist business owners secure a relocation incentive from the City. Owners have registered with CT Works for employee hiring incentive program.
- C. 1388 East Main/Former Jacoby’s. Provided additional information to broker regarding City policy on flood control improvements. Met with potential buyers to discuss site constraints.
- D. 72 Cook Avenue – United Laundry. Assisting owner apply for Enterprise Zone tax abatement. Provided assistance regarding working with PUC to reduce fees related to sewer hook up. Planned opening May 2015.
- E. C-Town – Assisting owners submit Small Business Express grant/loan package. Per DECD they have been referred to work with SBDC to help complete package for submission.
- F. Condado Grill Restaurant 105 Colony Street. Owner has renovated dining area and is operating a full service bar/restaurant. Provided referral to SBDC to assist in accessing SBA loan.
- G. 226 West Main – Crystal Grocery Store. Working with owner to obtain variance for liquor permit.
- H. Shield Driving School – 39 West Main St. Assisted the owner secure a small business loan from Community Economic Development Fund (CEDF). Funding will be used for start up business costs and for marketing. Grand opening scheduled May 2, 2015.
- I. Karen Jaime – working with Mrs. Jaime to explore locations and financing for Arts Grill Restaurant in the TOD area.
- J. 29 W. Main – Mangu Restaurant. Working with new business owners to obtain additional financing for start up costs.
- K. The Money Source-500 Broad St. Provided information regarding City IT zone incentive and referred management to SBDC for hiring incentive programs.
- L. Moran Appliances – W. Main Street. Met with owner to discuss foreclosure status, potential financing options for property acquisition.
- M. Beecher & Bennett-48 Colony St. Met with owners to discuss City’s downtown redevelopment plans and timelines.
- N. Comfort Inn-900 East Main Street. Met with owners to discuss recent renovations to property. Current owners purchased property 2014 and completed significant renovations. Looking for owner/operator to run bar/restaurant on site. 4000 sf leasable space on ground floor also available. Discussions ongoing.
- O. Meriden Motor Company 1378 East Main (former Colony Ford)-dba JD Byrider--Coordinated approval of \$15,000 relocation incentive under Meriden MAP program. Incentive will be used to offset environmental assessment costs. Grant opening of auto dealership May 2015.
- P. Accel-408 North Colony Street-Ongoing discussions with Accel to discuss state incentive programs. Discussions ongoing.
- Q. US Food Truck Fest-Food truck festival held April 18-19. Assisting with June food truck fest and other special events and needed.

V. Grant Funded Projects

- A. TOD Pilot Project (2012)- Grant funded work is substantially completed. Final tasks completed include update of the parking study, and completion of the developer selection process for City owned sites in the TOD District. The development teams will present their qualifications and concept plans to the City Council in June 2015. Developers selected include the following:
 - 1. POKO-Multi phase plan to convert 116 Cook Ave. to housing development and develop new housing units around the site and on the former Factory H site.
 - 2. Pennrose Properties-Two-phase mixed use development at the HUB site.
 - 3. The Michaels Organization-Mixed use development at 11 Crown Street.
- B. TOD Pilot Project (2015)-\$150,000 awarded. \$125,000 will be used to finalize traffic design plans for W. Main Street and Colony Street (including bump out removal, crosswalk and sidewalk improvements) and \$25,000 will be used for Project Management through 2016.
- C. Brownfields Assessment and Cleanup
 - 1. 116 Cook Ave. Cleanup Grant (USEPA \$240,000): Cleanup of underground storage tank completed November 14, 2014. Balance of grant funds will be used for removal of hazardous materials from inside the structure. Work is ongoing.
 - 2. HUB/50 East Main Street Cleanup Grant (USEPA \$240,000): Cleanup of contaminated soils in the SE corner of the HUB site. Work is ongoing.
 - 3. CT DECD Municipal Brownfields Assessment at the Mills (State \$200,000): Assessment of environmental hazards 62 Cedar St, 161 State St and 144 Mills Memorial. Consultant selection in process.
 - 4. CT DECD Municipal Brownfields Cleanup 177 State Street (\$597,000): Environmental consultant agreement finalized. Waiting for state contract to proceed.
 - 5. CT DECD Municipal Brownfields Assessment at 1 King Place (\$180,000): Seeking additional \$221,000 to conduct interim cleanup activities prior to further assessment
 - 6. Other applications submitted: Cleanup 11 Crown Street, Community wide assessment
- D. Choice Neighborhoods
 - 1. Participated in regular project meetings with WRT, MHA, HUD, and other organizations
 - 2. Continue to support Choice group with monthly Mills newsletter, including interviewing Mills residents and introducing them to local businesses
 - 3. Choice Transformation Plan Public Meeting scheduled June 4, 2015
 - 4. Promize Zone Application submitted January 2015.

VII. Committees/Boards

- A. Blight & Brownfields: Meeting held January 29 2015. Next Meeting May 21, 2015.
- B. Economic Development Task Force. Meeting held 1/2/2015, 4/30/2015. Advanced disposition of city owned properties in accordance with City codes.
- C. Greater Meriden Chamber Board Meetings (3/11/2015), and Govt/Business Committee
- D. MEDCO (3/11/2015)
- E. CT Ec Development Association (attended April 2015 board meeting and workshop at MxCC)

Report prepared by:
Juliet Burdelski
& Paola Mantilla
April 30, 2015



City of Meriden, Connecticut

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

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LAWRENCE J. KENDZIOR
CITY MANAGER

March 25, 2015

The Honorable Elizabeth Esty
US House of Representatives
5th Congressional District
405 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congresswoman Esty:

Thank you for recent visit to Meriden to discuss our goals and priorities for next year. We appreciate your past assistance but need your help with some key projects that can only move forward if we are able to address additional infrastructure needs. Your support of these projects will help further efforts and ensure that we can accomplish our goal to build a better, stronger Meriden.

2015/2016 Priorities:

- Harbor Brook Flood Control Plan: Our first priority would be to secure Army Corps participation in the channel work from Cooper Street to Hanover Pond. This work is key to development of the ten acre 116 Cook Avenue/Factory H site, for which we have procured a developer who has proposed the construction of 184 mixed income housing units with an investment value of \$54 million. This project is expected to create over 300 temporary and permanent jobs. Other specific projects include \$5.5 million for bridge reconstruction at Cooper Street and Cedar Street and drainage improvements at State and Mill Street and \$1.5 million to construct Phase III of the Linear Trail.
- Transportation: \$15 million to implement the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Roadway Improvement Plan throughout City Center as part of an overall plan to develop 580 housing units and 30,000 square feet of associated commercial space.
- Promise Zone: The Promise Zone designation will help us compete for federal funds for many different aspects of the City Center plan and transform the quality of life for over 12,000 residents in the Promise Zone and Choice Neighborhood area with consequent benefits to the City of Meriden as a whole.
- Choice Neighborhoods: In 2015 and 2016, we will complete the Choice Neighborhoods Transformation Plan and work towards a Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant that would leverage up to \$30 million in federal investments for needed education and employment, housing, and neighborhood programs.

Additional information on each priority listed above is attached. We look forward to working with you and your staff on these projects.

Sincerely,

Lawrence J. Kendzior
City Manager

cc: Mayor Manuel A. Santos
Meriden City Council Members
Senator Blumenthal
Senator Murphy

Summary of 2015/2016 City/Federal Priorities

Harbor Brook Flood Control Plan

The Harbor Brook Flood Control Plan is a comprehensive design of various flood control measures along Harbor Brook. The Harbor Brook watershed covers 12.3 square miles, or approximately 50% of Meriden's total land area. The implementation of the Harbor Brook Flood Control plan addresses historic flooding problems through the construction of critical bridge and channel improvements along the length of Harbor Brook. The result will be the removal of 227 properties wholly or partially within the 100-year floodplain including several key redevelopment sites in the City Center. The City's Capital Improvement Program calls for the completion of \$21 million in flood control projects over the next three years (2015-2018) and up to \$53 million over five years. State and federal funds, where available, are needed to offset these costs.

Anticipated Needs/Request (\$15.6 million):

- Army Corps of Engineers participation to construct Harbor Brook Channel Improvements estimated at \$8.6 million. Completing channel improvements from Cooper Street to the south is critical to alleviating downtown flooding, allowing for up to \$54 million in private development at the 116 Cook Ave. and Factory H sites, and creating over 300 temporary and permanent jobs.
- \$1.75 million to reconstruct the Cooper Street bridge. Design is funded by local sources. This bridge reconstruction also is critically important to the redevelopment of 116 Cook Ave. and Factory H.
- \$2.5 million to design and replace the Cedar Street bridge and \$1.25 million to improve State Street and Mill Street drainage. These projects will enhance the redevelopment of the Mills Memorial Housing Complex, an integral component of the City's *Choice Neighborhoods Transformation Plan* (see below).
- \$1.5 million to finalize design and construct Linear Trail Phase III. Design is partially funded and ongoing.

Transportation

The City of Meriden has worked over the past several years with planning and engineering firms Parsons Brinkerhoff and CDM Smith as well as community stakeholders to develop strategies to address transportation infrastructure and accessibility deficiencies in the City Center. A product of this effort is the *Transit Oriented Development, Multi-Modal Roadway Improvement Plan*, which was completed in 2014. The plan recommends strategies to improve access to the new Meriden Transit Center and regional commuter rail service via vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle networks while accommodating for future growth and development in the City Center. The estimated cost to implement the TOD Roadway Improvement Plan is \$15 million. A cost benefit analysis shows the project has the potential to create over \$23 million in direct benefits resulting from improved safety, reduced travel time, emissions and energy benefits, and improved livability and accessibility. The project also has the potential to create 245 jobs. The proposed roadway improvements will be completed in conjunction with several major economic development initiatives now underway including \$20 million in state and federal funding for rail, parking and platform infrastructure that is part of the \$467 million New Haven-Hartford-

Springfield (NHHS) rail program, construction of a \$14 million City park and flood storage area at the HUB site (underway), and construction of a \$22 million, 63-unit mixed use housing development and an \$8 million, 273-space parking structure at 24 Colony Street. The City also recently selected three private developers to redevelop four City owned sites (116 Cook Avenue, 11 Crown Street, the HUB, and the former Factory H site). Over the next five years, the City projects that over 500 new housing units will be constructed on these sites and throughout the City Center.

Anticipated Funding Needs (\$15 million)

- The City will implement final design and construct phased improvements as funds are available
- Up to \$15 million to implement all nine (9) phases of TOD Roadway Improvement Plan throughout City Center is needed. The project includes reconstruction of nine roadway sections to include improved traffic flow, reinstating two-way traffic, and implementing streetscape amenities that unify the TOD district and provide better accessibility and safety for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users. The goal of the project is to ensure that the local roadway network can provide safe and efficient access to the new transit center, economic development projects now underway, and future development projects.
- The City is approving local funds for this project for design and cost share. Funding will be sought through various sources, including TIGER, LOTSIP and CMAQ. We will apprise you of our applications as they are filed.

Promise Zone Designation

The City applied for Promise Zone Designation this past November to enhance our ability to create jobs, increase economic activity, improve educational opportunities and create a community of choice through mixed income housing for Promise Zone residents. As you know, designation as a Promise Zone does not bring grant funding. Instead, Promise Zone communities receive technical assistance, a designated federal liaison and preferential access to certain competitive federal funding streams. In addition, businesses investing in Promise Zones or hiring residents of Promise Zones will be eligible for tax incentives subject to enactment by Congress. Meriden's designation as a Promise Zone will significantly advance and complement the work currently underway in our Choice Neighborhood Planning Grant.

Next Steps:

- Continue to work toward the goals identified in Promise Zone application and prepare for award of PZ Designation.

Anticipated Funding Needs

- Funding to implement specific Promise Zone related programs as funding becomes available.

Choice Neighborhoods

The execution of the Choice Neighborhood Planning grant has been a major undertaking requiring the commitment of the City, the Meriden Housing Authority, stakeholders and most importantly, the residents of the neighborhood to engage with each other. The results of that collaboration will be reflected in the final requirement which is the creation of a Transformation Plan for Meriden's Choice Neighborhood that truly addresses what the residents need and want in their neighborhood. The Transformation Plan is divided into three separate sections: People, Housing, and Neighborhood and will provide a roadmap for the city and the residents in order to move forward and improve the lives of area residents.

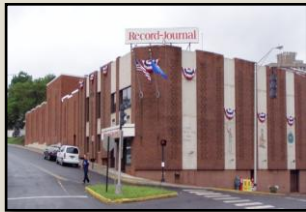
Next Steps:

- Complete all tasks required for Choice Neighborhood Planning Grant by November 2015
- Advance development of proposed TOD Mixed Use Housing
- Put into action goals of Choice Transformation Plan as resources allow
- Continue to prepare to apply for future Choice Neighborhood Implementation Grant funding

Anticipated Funding Needs

- Funding to implement Choice Neighborhood Transformation Plan recommendations as funding becomes available

Meriden 2020: Bringing it Together



State Delegation
Update on Economic
Development Activities
and Funding Needs

January 5, 2015



Hub Park & Flood Control Project



Goal: Transform the former Hub site into a premier economic development and community gathering spot

Next Steps:

- Complete construction of 11 acre park and 3+ acre development (ongoing).
- Complete developer selection; Pennrose and Michaels Corp. competing for dev. rights.
- Complete event programming plan/operations plan for HUB park

Anticipated Needs/Request:

\$17-\$20 million in DOH, CHFA funding for development on the HUB site in partnership with selected developer.

170-280 units, with emphasis on Market Rate.

60,000-70,000 sf Commercial/Retail space.

165-200 parking spaces



Flood Control & Linear Trail Project



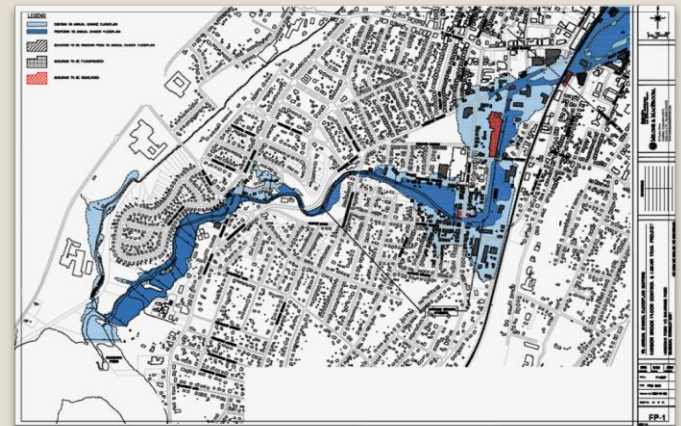
Goal: Significantly reduce risk of flooding and provide linear recreational trail across Meriden

Next Steps:

- Amtrak Bridge Bypass Culvert (\$2.3m FEMA). Final Design underway, 2015 construction.
- Initiated work on Columbus Ave. Bypass Culvert. Complete construction 2015.
- Complete design of Center Street bridge.
- Complete design and construction of Cooper Street bridge .
- Linear Trail Phase II completed, Phase III in design.
- Select Developer/116 Cook Ave. & Factory H.

Anticipated Needs/Request:

- \$20m channel improvement- funding to complete construction at 116 Cook Ave./Factory H given floodplain status, special act waiving floodplain requirements for funding.
- \$3m Center Street bridge construction.
- \$3m Mill Street bridge construction.
- \$2m construction of Phase III Linear Trail.



Rail/Transportation Program



Goal: Transform transit center area into centerpiece of TOD District

Next Steps:

- Complete construction of MTC, parking areas, 24 Colony Street development

Anticipated Needs/Request:

- \$15m to implement downtown roadway improvements & reinstitute two way traffic
- \$200,000 to implement downtown shuttle bus program (2 years)
- \$1 million for public restroom
 - Could be incorporated into development area (potential Visitor Center at Pratt St. Entrance)



Mills Redevelopment Planning



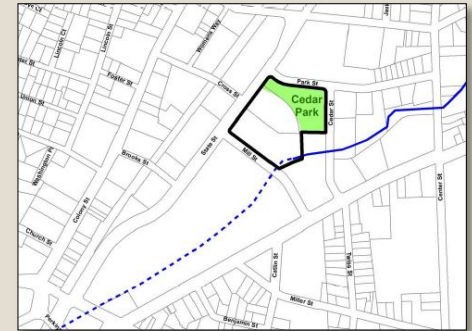
Goal: Replace Mills complex with mixed use, mixed income scattered site development that provides better housing choices and improved quality of life for downtown residents

Next Steps:

- Complete “Choice Neighborhood” Plan
- Complete “Transformation Plan” including plan for redevelopment of the Mills site

Anticipated Needs/Request:

- \$6-8 million to demolish/remediate Mills
- City/MHA/Pennrose to redevelop Mills site
- 9% LIHTC application in 2015 for Mills replacement units



Transit Oriented Development

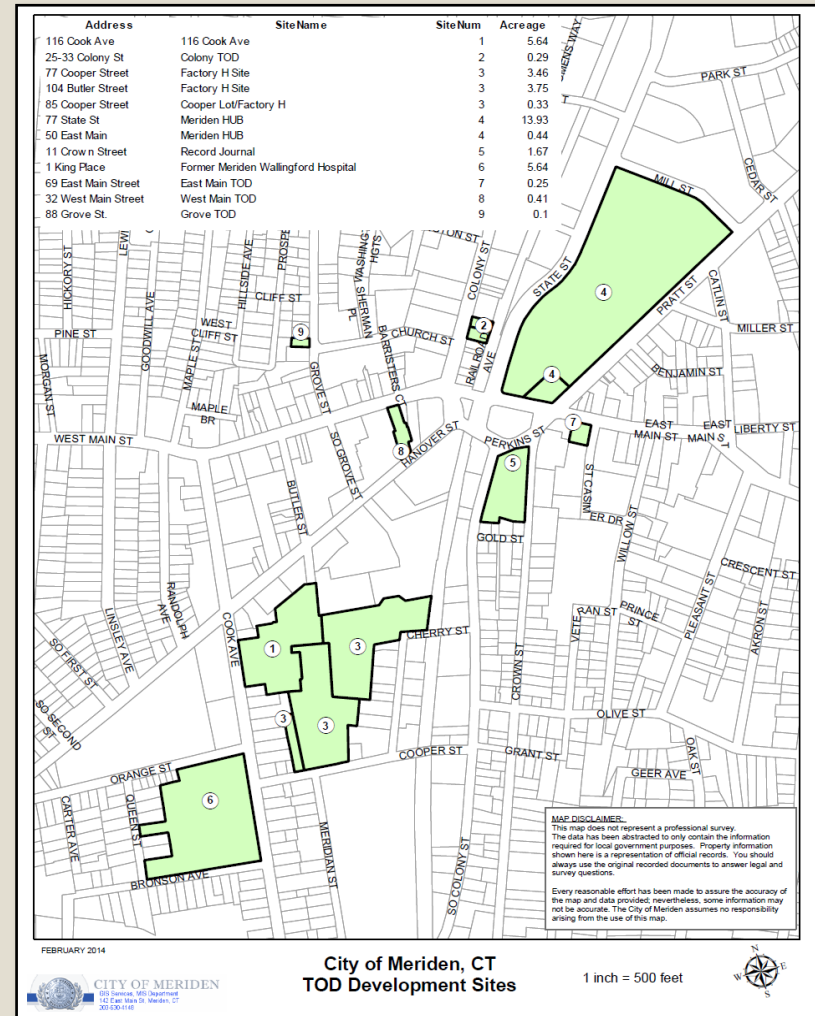
Goal: Foster Private Development in and around the TOD District

Next Steps:

- Finalize developer selection.
- Complete environmental assessments and cleanup using existing funds (177 State, 1 King Place, Mills).

Anticipated Needs/Request:

- \$10-20m gap funding and tax credits for private development of city owned TOD Sites (11 Crown, 116 Cook Ave./Factory H).
- Funds for environment cleanup as needed.
- \$1 million Façade Improvement or Adaptive Reuse funds to help existing business/property owners.
- Small Business Express grants/loans for existing business owners and startups.



Summary



- **\$15 Million** to implement Downtown Roadway Improvements & two way traffic and downtown shuttle bus program.
- **\$6-8 million** to demolish Mills structures (including remediation costs).
- **\$26 million** to complete **Harbor Brook Flood Control Plan and bridge work.**
- **\$2 million** to complete **Phase 3 of the Meriden Linear Trail System.**
- **\$20-30 million in DOH, CHFA funding** for development of TOD sites in partnership with selected developers. Goal of 600-1000 housing units, with emphasis on Market Rate housing development and First Floor Commercial/Retail space.
- Continued support of **brownfields assessment and cleanup efforts** through existing state and federal programs (OBRD, DEEP).
- Continued support **small businesses, non profits, educational and health institutions** in the transformation of downtown (Small Business Express, technical assistance, DSS funding, DOE funding, business incubator program).
- \$1,000,000 to institute a façade improvement program to support **private development along main commercial corridors.**
- Continued **employment growth statewide, and continued support of Meriden's key private sector employers in key growth sectors** (Midstate Medical Center, Protein Sciences, Accel).

Thank you!



For more information, please contact:

Lawrence J. Kendzior, City Manager
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Juliet Burdelski, Director of Economic Development
jburdelski@meridenct.gov

Online Resources:
meriden2020.com | meridenbiz.com | meridenct.gov