

City of Meriden
Plan of Conservation and Development

Date: May 16, 2019

Project Name: Meriden Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD)
Subject: POCD Steering Committee Meeting #2

Meeting Location: Meriden City Council Chambers
Meeting Date: May 9, 2019

Participants:

Planning Commission
Enrico Buccilli, Chair
Lenny Rich
Ross Gulino
Steven Iovanna
Kevin Curry
David Cariati

EDHZ Committee
David Lowell
Bruce Fontanella

City Staff
Renata Bertotti – Director, City Planning
Tim Coon, City Manager
Paul Dickson, City Planning

Consultant Team
Frank Fish, Principal, BFJ Planning
Noah Levine, Senior Associate, BFJ Planning
Ariana Branchini, Planner, BFJ Planning

The purpose of this meeting was to discuss with the POCD Steering Committee updates on the planning process, initial housing and land use data findings, as well as public outreach updates. The committee discussed feedback from the first public workshop and initial focus group meetings and reviewed a draft public survey. Slides from the presentation are attached to these meeting notes.

Introduction - Frank Fish, BFJ Planning

- Review of the schedule and work to date. BFJ aims to have a second public workshop in the fall. Currently undertaking a series of meetings with the committee and stakeholders. Over the summer, BFJ will work on completing draft chapters.
- Today BFJ met with public utilities staff, and representative from the City and State regarding transportation issues.
- BFJ plans to meet with SCRCOG in anticipation of the 65 day review period to forecast the work, issues, and recommendations that are going into the plan.
- The P&Z could be ready to adopt the plan in January if things remain on schedule.

Public Workshop #1 Recap – Frank Fish, BFJ Planning

- The first public workshop was a town hall meeting, with an informal poll and dot point exercise to engage members of the public with interactive elements.
- BFJ received a number of comments and questions with regard to the existing conditions, vision and goals for the Plan,
- General review of issues brought up at the public workshop
 - Desire for a shift to market rate housing.
 - Filling commercial vacancies and attracting businesses should be a priority.
 - Opportunity to expand the Historic District to take advantage of CT tax credit eligibility.
 - Perception that there is a need to remove barriers to market rate housing in the zoning code.
 - Flooding is an issue

Preliminary Housing Data – Ariana Branchini, BFJ Planning

- The vacancy rate presented seems high, as does the number of units, particularly single family homes that were constructed between 2010 and 2017. The Committee has the sense that there is unmet demand for rental units.
 - BFJ Planning will look into the data further.
- The committee asked that BFJH look at percentage of commercial uses to determine who is contributing to city taxes.
- Mill rate/housing tax is high. This is an important factor for households living on a fixed income. Additional analysis to come.

Overview of Land Use – Noah Levine, BFJ Planning

- Land use data came from Meriden’s assessor. BFJ analyzed the GIS information, which was designed for tax purposes and included incomplete land use information. Members of the committee should look at the map and identify any inconsistencies they notice.
- Land in Meriden is mostly single family residential and there is a large percentage of open space.
- Tax-exempt properties in Meriden make up 25% of the City’s land use.
 - The majority of this is open space (nearly 70%).
 - Meriden Commons – There were concerns about the tax exempt status for 17 years
 - 24 Colony Street – There were concerns about the tax exempt status
- Commercial – 7.3% - how does that compare with cities around us?
 - BFJ will look into this and compare to comparable communities.
- Access/centrally located
 - What can we do about this to make this a real asset?

Overview of Zoning Districts– Noah Levine, BFJ Planning

- BFJ looked at land uses in commercial and residential zones.
- Only 45% of land zoned commercial is used for commercial land use.
- 22% of properties in commercial areas are listed as vacant. The committee expressed that Meriden needs to find a way to market these areas.

City of Meriden
Plan of Conservation and Development

- A big part of this could be made up of one large property. (South Mountain Road)
- The committee discussed concerns that brokers say that Meriden demographics don't support their commercial use.
- How does Meriden market to regional companies marketing to a 10 mile demographic circle rather than a 1 mile demographic circle?
- BFJ can do a vacant/underutilized site map. Plan will provide an overview of likely locations for future development. Some sites are not viable or are difficult for development (i.e., they may need infrastructure improvements).
- Zoning code/building code process – there could be ways to make the approvals process easier.
- Economic development – look at Main Street, Broad Street – consider a need for an overlay zone.

Discussion of the Public Survey

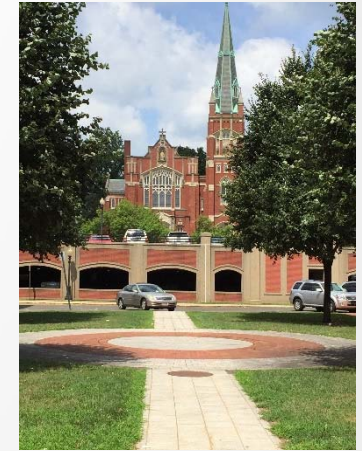
- BFJ prepared draft survey questions for review. Members of the committee should read through and provide comments to Ms. Bertotti.
- Members of the committee were requested to submit questions that they believe would obtain the types of information needed in the plan.
- Due date for public survey Comments: 5/20.
- Survey anticipated to be launched in early June.

Next Steps

- Scheduling meetings with additional stakeholders and focus groups.
- Meetings will occur in May and June.
- Next committee meeting – June 11 at 6:00pm
- Comments to Renata on the survey by next week.

Additional Questions/Comments

- FEMA maps – appeals will be made to FEMA for certification following Harbor Brook plan. This is ongoing.
- History of South Mountain Rd – was supposed to be research parkway west. Determined to be difficult to build on it by a feasibility study. Could the City get a group of developers to look at S Mountain Rd and give their impressions? If there is a viable use for that piece, the market will determine.
- The City's development process has gotten easier over time.
- The Plan should include economic development strategies for the mall.



City of Meriden Plan of Conservation and Development

POCD Steering Committee Meeting

May 9, 2019

City of Meriden

Steering Committee

Planning Commission:

Enrico Buccilli
Leonard Rich
Rosario Gulino
Laura Uhrig
Kevin Curry
David Cooley
Steven Iovanna
Donald F. Cariati, Jr

Economic Development Housing and Zoning Committee (EDHZ):

David Lowell
Daniel Brunet
Michael Cardona
Bruce Fontanella
Sonya Jelks

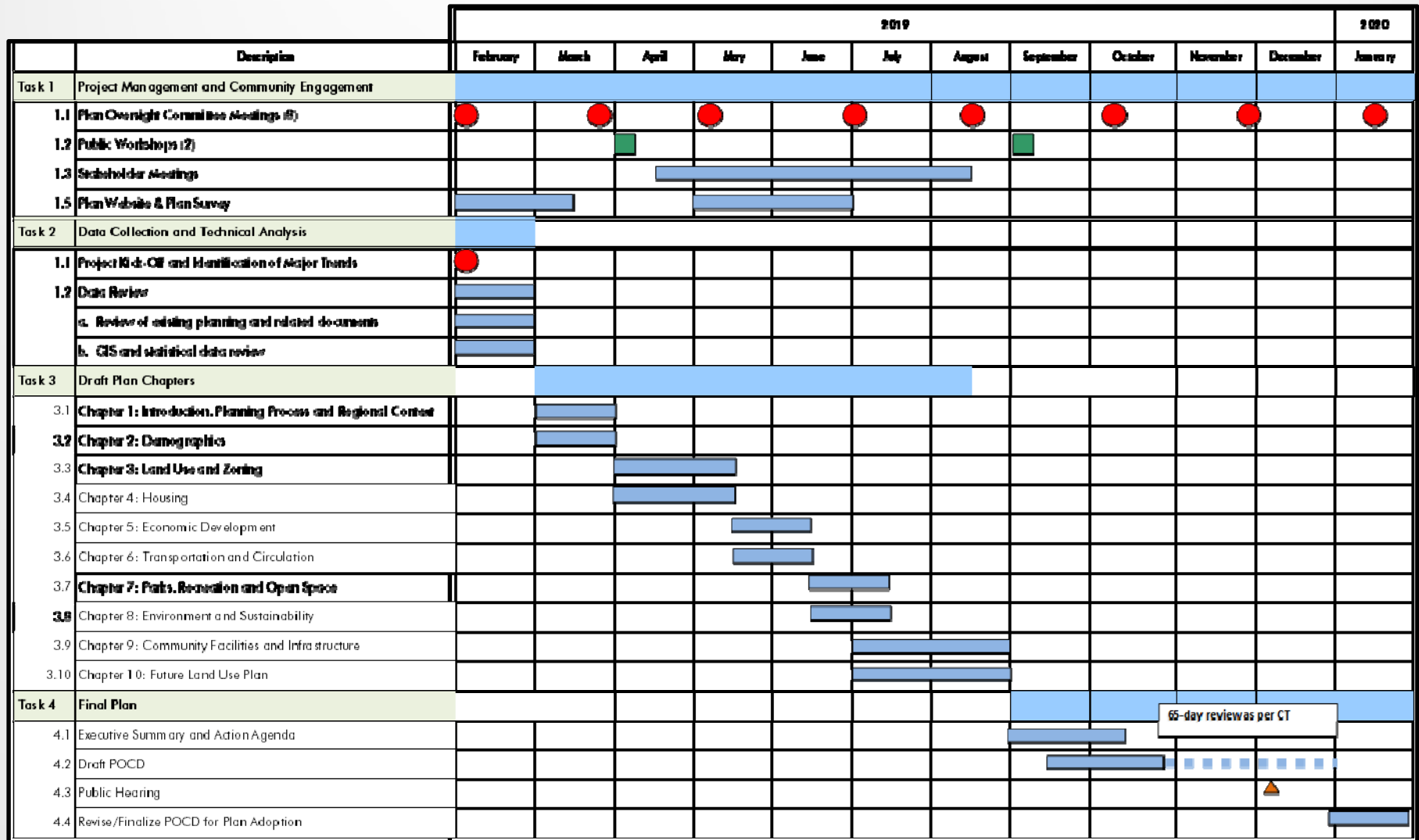
City Staff

Renata Bertotti, Planning Director
Paul Dickson, Assistant Planning Director

BFJ Planning

Frank Fish, FAICP
Noah Levine, AICP
Ariana Branchini, AICP

SCHEDULE

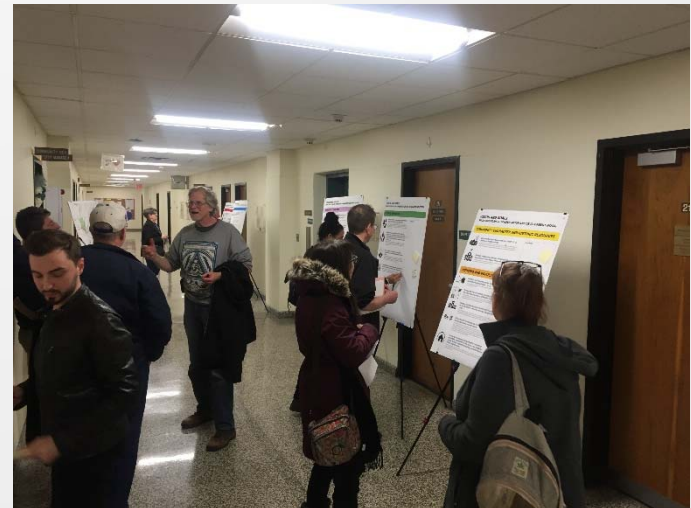


OBJECTIVES OF TONIGHT'S MEETING

1. Report back on Public Workshop #1
2. Preliminary Existing Condition Analysis
 - Housing
 - Land Use and Zoning
3. Public Survey – Draft Questions
4. Action Agenda Update
5. Discussion of Stakeholder Outreach

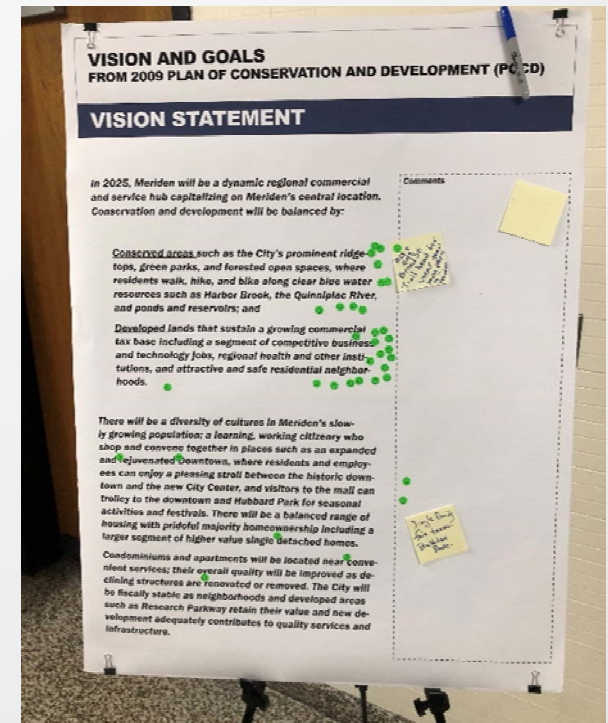
PUBLIC WORKSHOP #1

- Approximately 30 members of the public
 - Presentation
 - Town Hall Meeting
 - Informal Poll
 - “Dot Point Exercise”
- Comments and questions focused on:
 - Vision/goals and process
 - Housing development and zoning
 - Economic development and commercial uses
 - Natural resources and historic preservation



COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

- The 2009 vision should be revised to be more realistic and action-oriented.
- There is sufficient affordable housing in Meriden. Emphasis should shift to increasing market rate housing.
- Commercial vacancy is an issue. Economic development department should coordinate with realtors to bring prospective businesses to view properties.
- Opportunity to expand the Historic District to take advantage of CT tax credit eligibility.



COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

- Remove barriers in the zoning code to developing market rate housing. For example, there is market for high end housing on the north side of town, but there are barriers to this type of development.
- Flood control downtown needs to be addressed. FEMA maps have not been changed since additional flood measures were put in place. As a result, flood insurance is costly for downtown buildings.
- The plan should look at water infrastructure.
- Protection of Harbor Brook from commercial development.

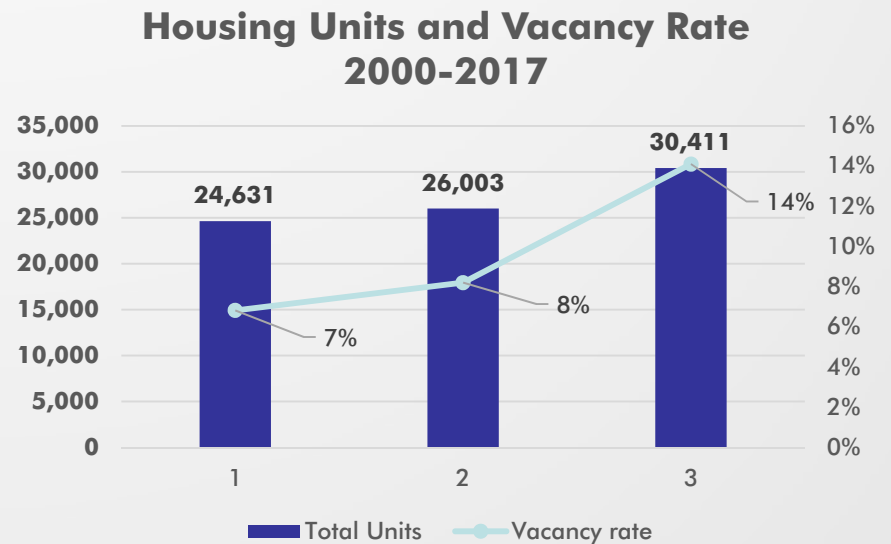
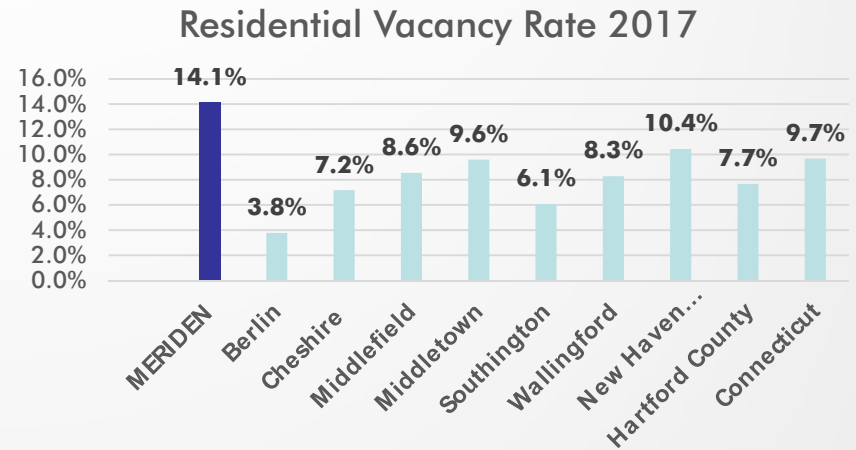




PRELIMINARY HOUSING DATA

HOUSING

- Housing units: 30,411
Occupied units: 26,109 (86%)
- Meriden's vacancy rate is 14.1%.
- This is a higher rate compared to surrounding communities.
- The vacancy rate increased from 8.2% in 2010.
- There were 4,408 more units in 2017, but only 2,248 more occupied units.



Sources: American Fact Finder Census 2010 and American Community Survey 2017.

HOUSING TENURE 2017

Housing Tenure:

- Owner-occupied units = 59.7%
- Renter-occupied units = 40.3%
- Meriden had a slightly lower owner-occupied rate than New Haven County (62.3%)

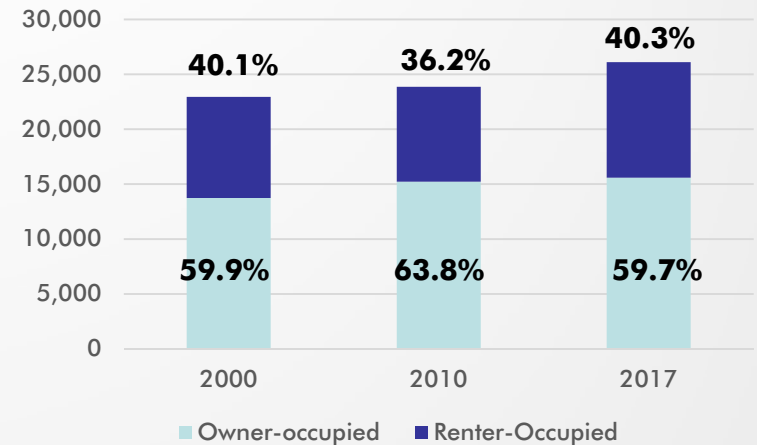
Vacancy by Tenure:

- Owner-occupied vacancy rate: 2.4%
- Renter-occupied vacancy rate: 11.4%
- Vacancy rates were lower at the County level (1.8% owner-occupied; 7.8% renter-occupied)

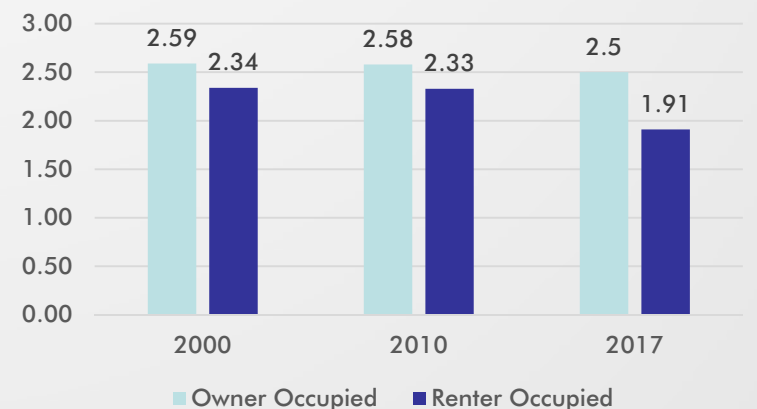
Household Size by Tenure:

- Owner-occupied household size: 2.5
- Renter-occupied household size: 1.9
- Average household size was larger in New Haven County (2.71 owner-occupied; 2.28 renter-occupied)

Occupied Housing Units by Tenure
2000-2017

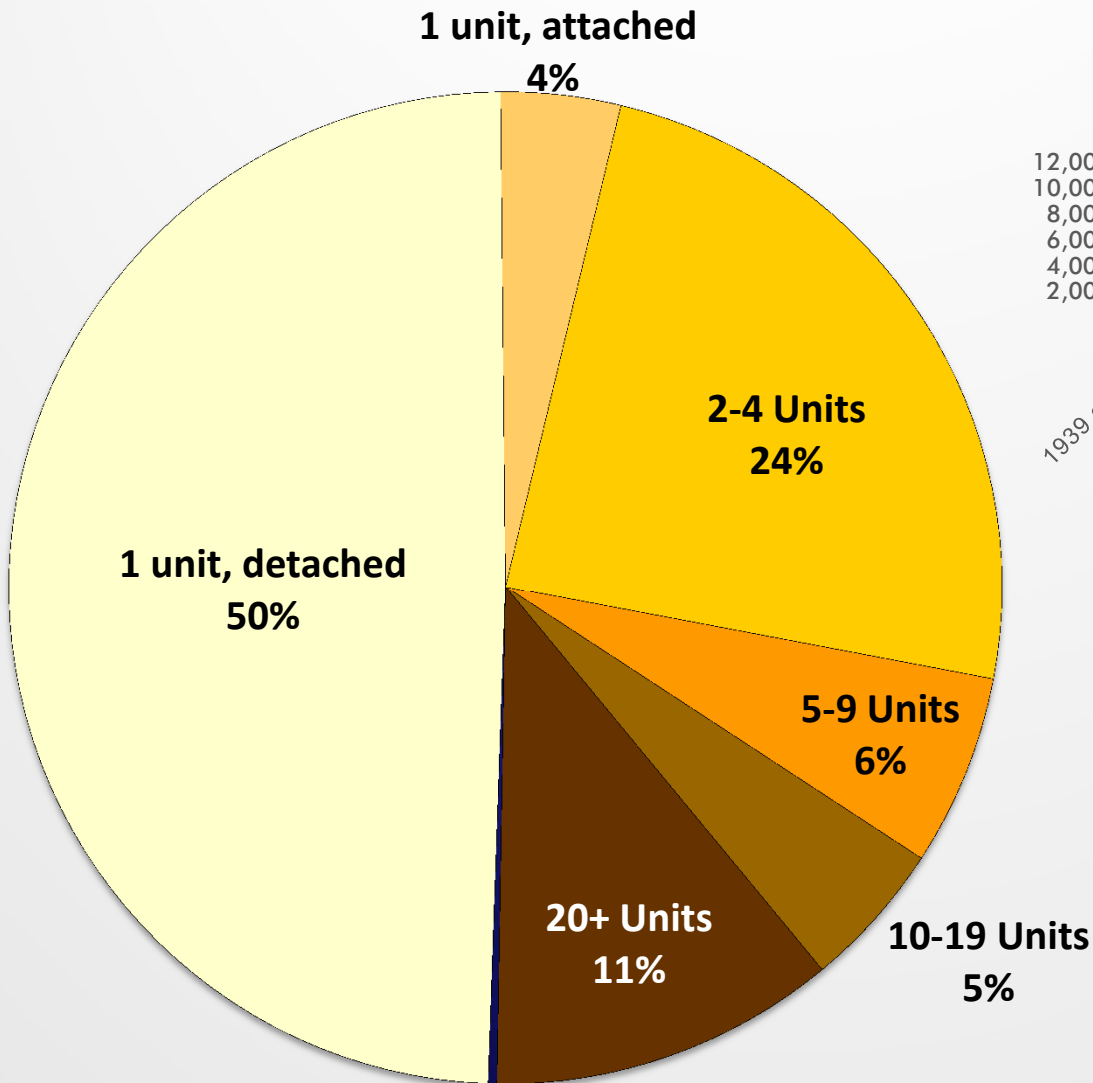


Average Household Size by Tenure
2000-2017

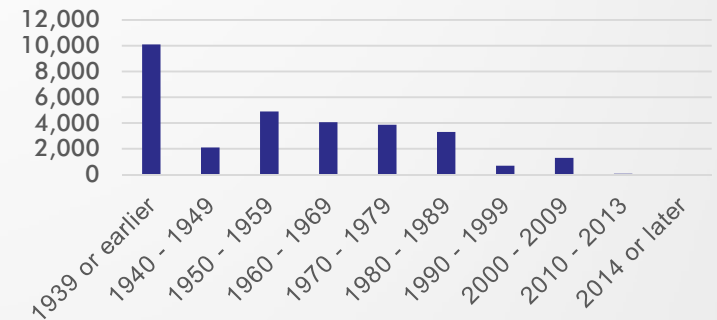


HOUSING UNIT TYPE 2017

Total Housing Units by Structure Type - 2017



Age of Structure - Meriden 2017



56% of units built before 1950.

HOUSING UNIT TYPE – CHANGE 2010-2017

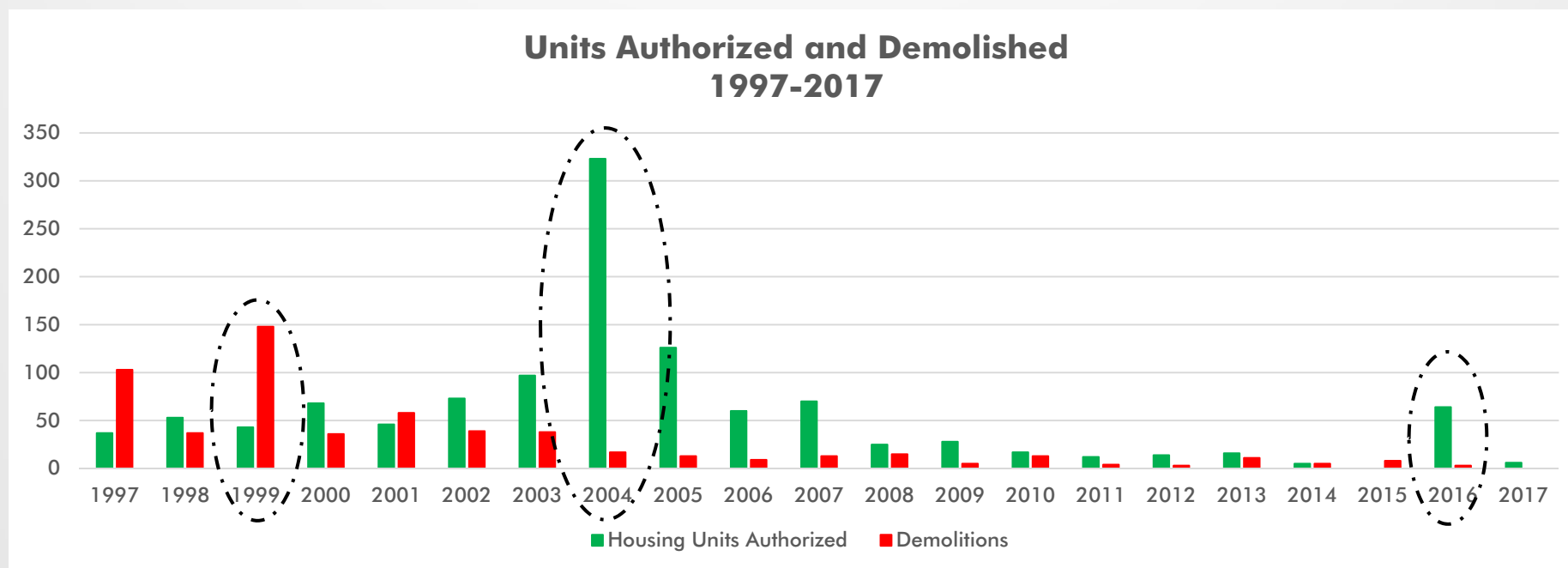
- Increase in single family homes (16%).
- Increase in percentage of multi-family housing (20%).
 - 2010: 18% housing in 5 + units
 - 2017: 22% housing in 5+ units
 - Units in structures with 20+ units went up from 2,726 to 3,430.

TYPE OF STRUCTURE	2010	2017	% Change
Single Family	14,005	16,173	15.5%
Multifamily (2+ units)	11,799	14,152	19.9%
2-4 units	6,910	7,372	6.7%
5 to 9 units	1,375	1,892	37.6%
10 to 19 units	788	1,458	85.0%
20 or more units	2,726	3,430	25.8%
Mobile home	199	86	-56.8%
TOTALS	26,003	30,411	17.0%

HOUSING UNITS – NET GAIN 1997-2017

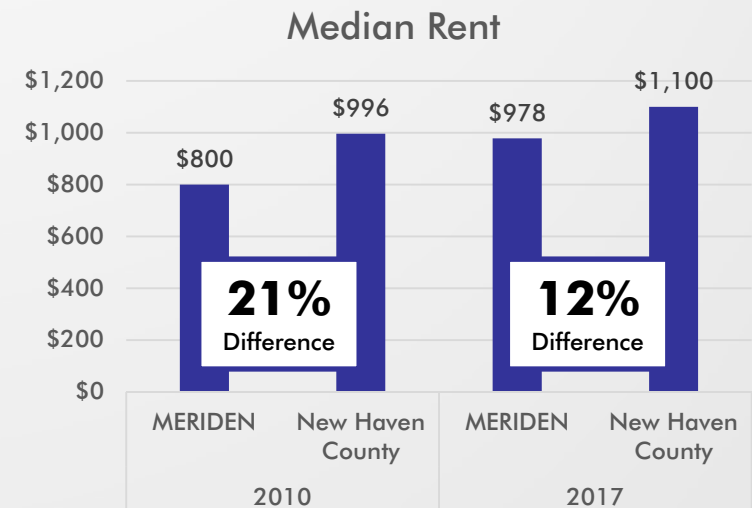
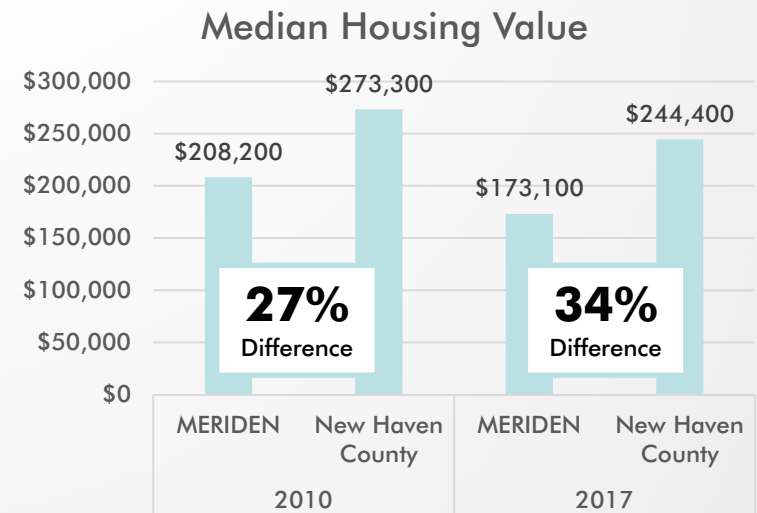
- New units peaked in 2004: 323 authorized
 - Meriden ranked 2nd in the state for net gain in units.
 - 190 units were in structures with 5 or more units, 133 units were single family homes.

Overall trend: decrease in authorized units following the 2008 recession.
Development beginning to pick back up.



HOUSING COST (2017)

- Median home value was \$173,000 in Meriden, less than the County's median value at \$244,400.
- Home value decreased both in Meriden and the County from 2010 – 2017.
- Comparison with New Haven County shows stronger market for multi-family than single family
- Median rent in Meriden (\$978) was less than the County median (\$1,100).
- Median rent went up in both the City and the County 2010-2017.
- Further analysis on tax burden to come



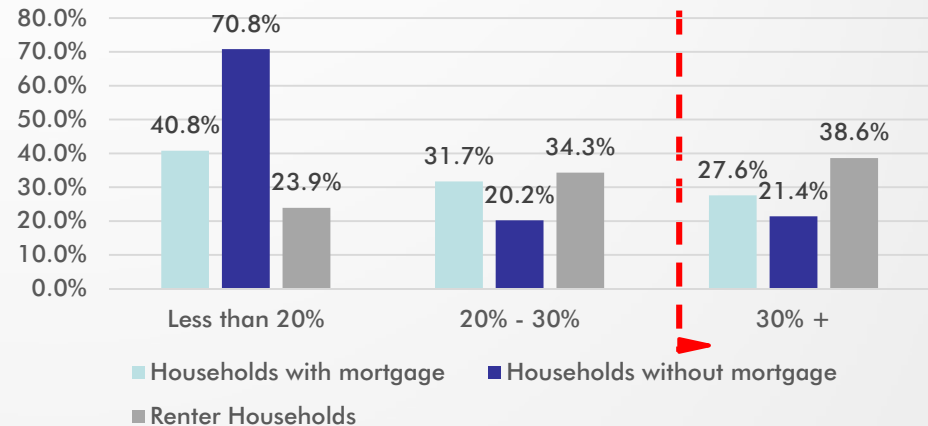
AFFORDABILITY - 2017

- > 42% of renters were rent-burdened (paying 30%+ on housing cost)
 - This is lower than the County level (54%).

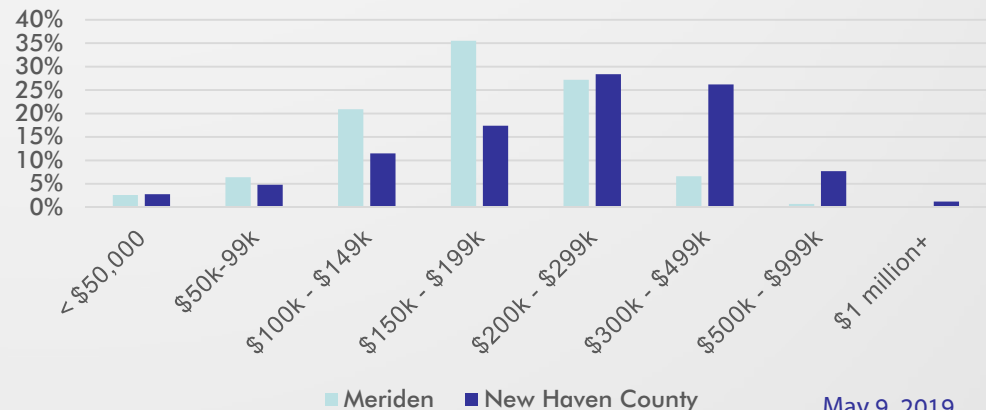
- Most of housing stock is valued between \$100k and \$300k.
 - \$100k-\$149k: 20.9%
 - \$150k-\$199k: 35.5%
 - \$200k-\$299k: 27.2%

- Home value is more evenly distributed at the County level.

Housing Cost Burden by Household Type 2017



Distribution of Home Value - Meriden and New Haven County 2017



HOUSING- PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

Further analysis to come:

- Percentage subsidized vs. market rate housing.

Key Takeaways:

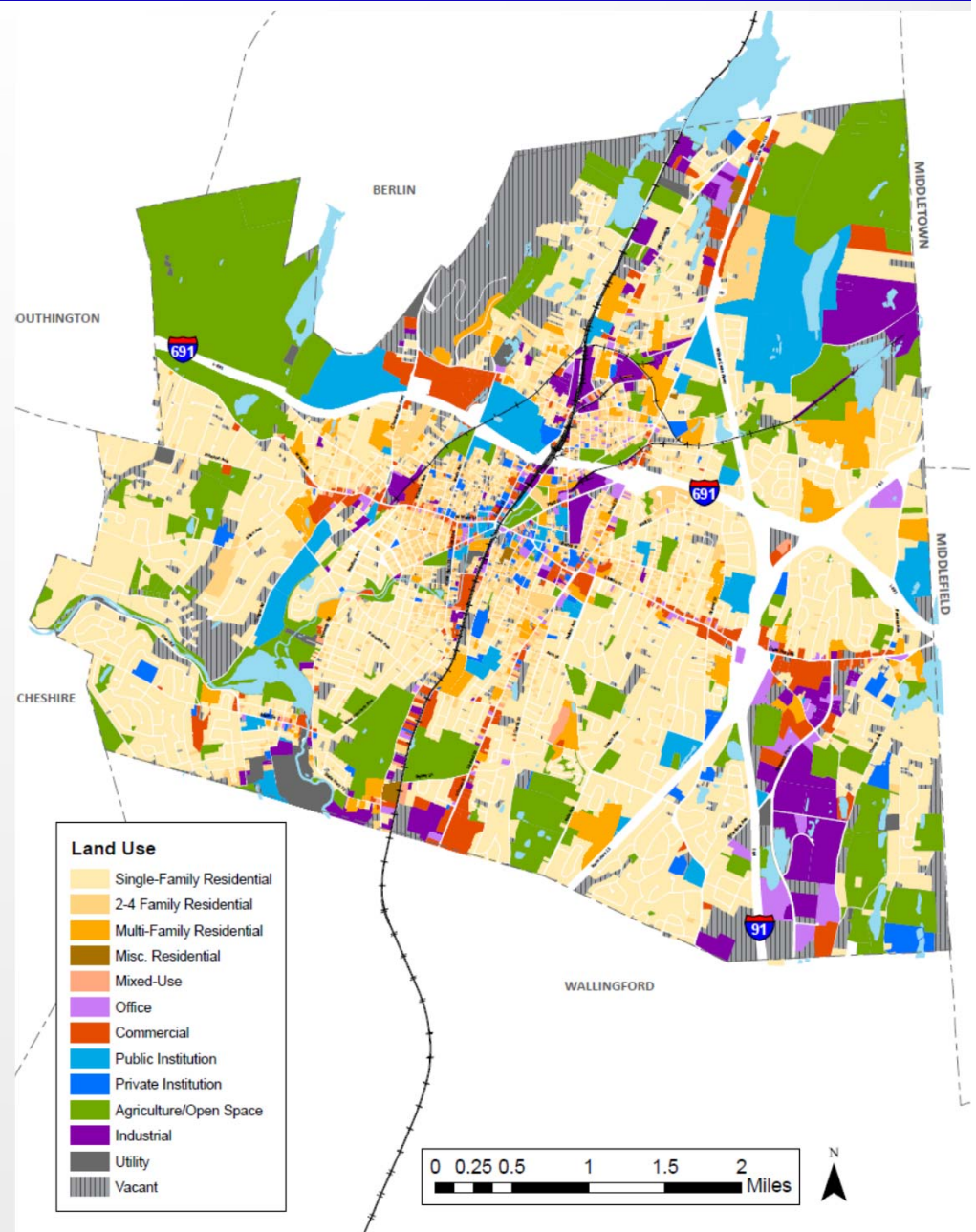
- The vacancy rate has increased from 2000-2010 and 2010-2017.
- The majority of homes are single-family detached (50%), Meriden also has a large supply of multi-family housing (22%).
- Housing costs are relatively low in Meriden, but many residents (42%) are spending more than 30% of income on housing.
- In Meriden and the County, Median home value has fallen while median rent went up.



PRELIMINARY LAND USE

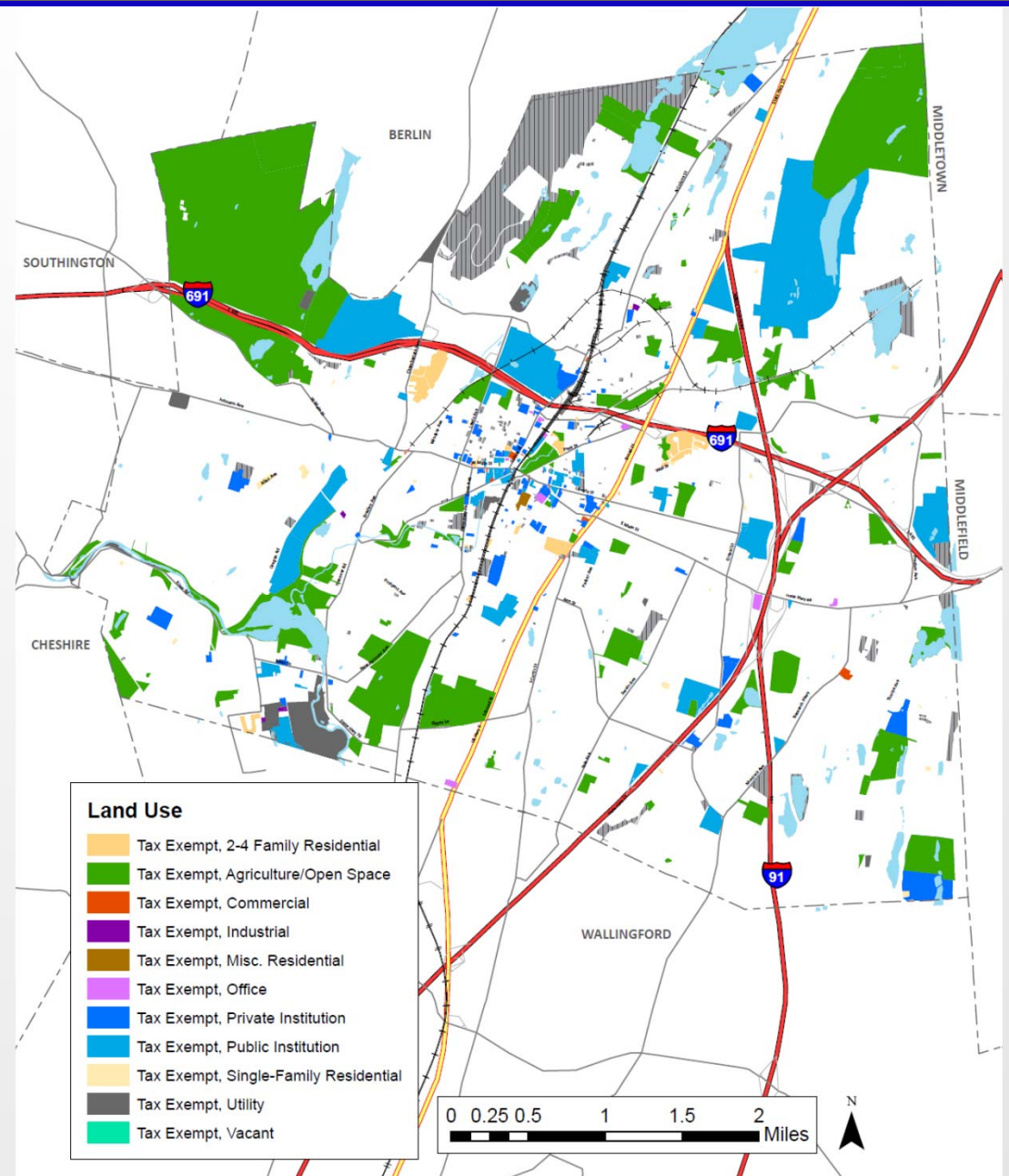
LAND USE

Single-Family Residential	38.6%
2-4 Family Residential	6.0%
Multi-Family Residential	6.8%
Misc. Residential	0.2%
Commercial	7.3%
Mixed-Use	0.6%
Office	1.7%
Industrial	5.1%
Private Institution	1.2%
Public Institution	2.7%
Agriculture/Open Space	20.3%
Utility	1.0%
Vacant	8.5%



LAND USE

- 25% of land area is tax-exempt.
 - Open space - 68%
 - Vacant - 10%
 - Public Institutional - 12%
 - Private Institutional – 4%
- Downtown area contains a core of public and private institutional uses



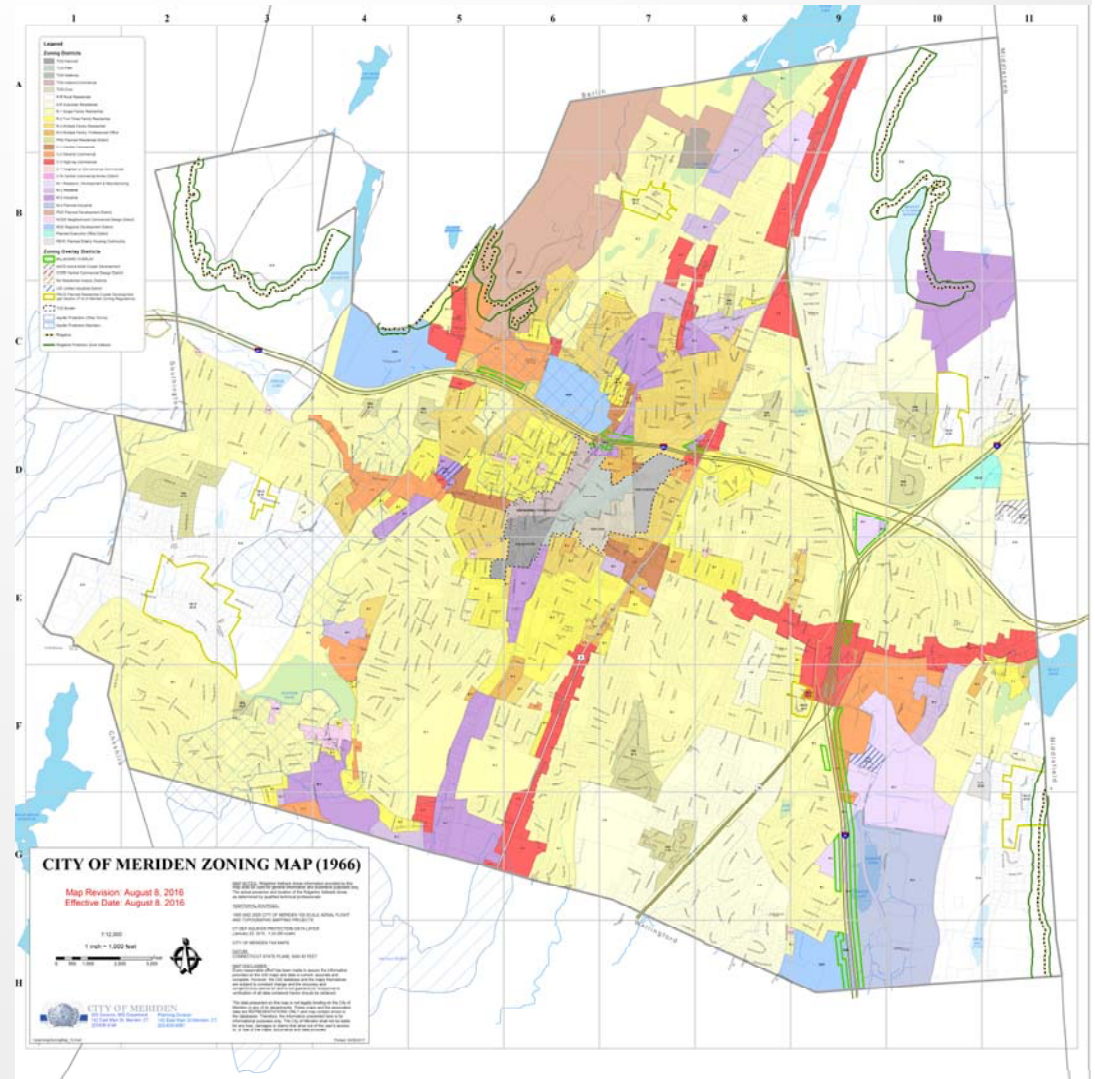
ZONING

Existing districts:

- 6 Residential Districts
- 5 Commercial Districts*
- 4 Manufacturing/Industrial Districts
- 5 TOD Districts

Other Districts:

- Unified Industrial District
- Regional Development District
- Planned Development District
- Planned Executive Office Development District
- Planned Residential Development District
- Active Adult Cluster Developments
- Planned Elderly Housing Community
- Assisted and Independent Living Facilities Overlay District
- Residential Historic District
- Ridgeline Protection Zone
- Billboard Overlay Zone



LAND USE

Land uses in commercial/industrial zones

Single-Family Residential	4.3%
2-4 Family Residential	1.6%
Multi-Family Residential	3.6%
Misc. Residential	0.8%
Commercial	16.2%
Mixed-Use	1.1%
Office	5.7%
Industrial	21.7%
Private Institution	0.7%
Public Institution	9.6%
Agriculture/Open Space	9.1%
Utility	3.0%
Vacant	22.6%

10%
Residential

45%
Commercial

Land uses in residential zones

Single-Family Residential	58.2%
2-4 Family Residential	7.5%
Multi-Family Residential	5.1%
Misc. Residential	0.1%
Commercial	0.8%
Mixed-Use	0.3%
Office	0.2%
Industrial	0.3%
Private Institution	2.0%
Public Institution	2.8%
Agriculture/Open Space	15.7%
Utility	0.7%
Vacant	6.4%

71%
Residential

<2%
Commercial

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- Much of Meriden's vacant land is located in low-density residential zones.
- Meriden lacks raw vacant land in commercial and industrial zones. Future development activity will be a combination of infill development, redevelopment and revitalization projects.
- Significant amount of commercially zoned areas used for other purposes (i.e. residential)

Areas for further analysis and discussion:

- Zoning regulations for Broad Street that consider narrow lot sizes/depths
- Consider strategies to bring vacant and tax-exempt parcels back on the grand list.
- Develop housing goals to stress importance of market rate housing.
- Look at specific focus areas where there is zoning mismatch between commercial/industrial zoned land and existing land use.

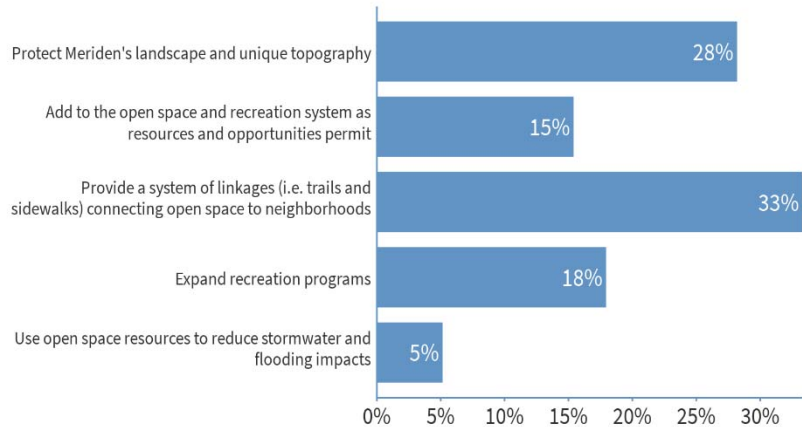
PUBLIC SURVEY

Public Online Survey

- Draft questions emailed to Committee
- Responses Due by May 20.
- Proposed Launch Date – June 1

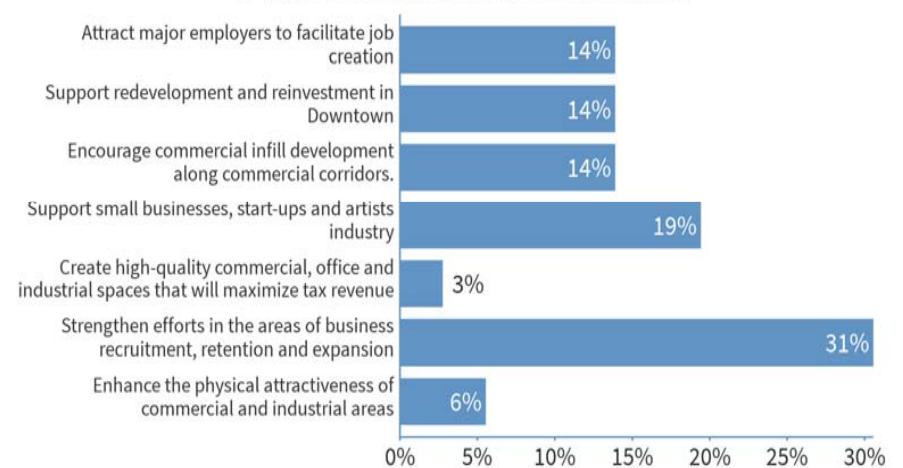
What are your biggest priorities for NATURAL RESOURCES?

When poll is active, respond at [PollEv.com/meridenpocd](https://www.poll-ev.com/meridenpocd)



What are your biggest priorities for ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT?

When poll is active, respond at [PollEv.com/meridenpocd](https://www.poll-ev.com/meridenpocd)



STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH

- Focus Group List:
 - Traffic and Safety (*complete*)
 - Utilities and Public Works/Engineering (*complete*)
 - Land Use and Zoning
 - Parks & Open Space
 - Neighborhood & Cultural Resources
 - Good Governance
 - Economic Development
 - Health and Human Services

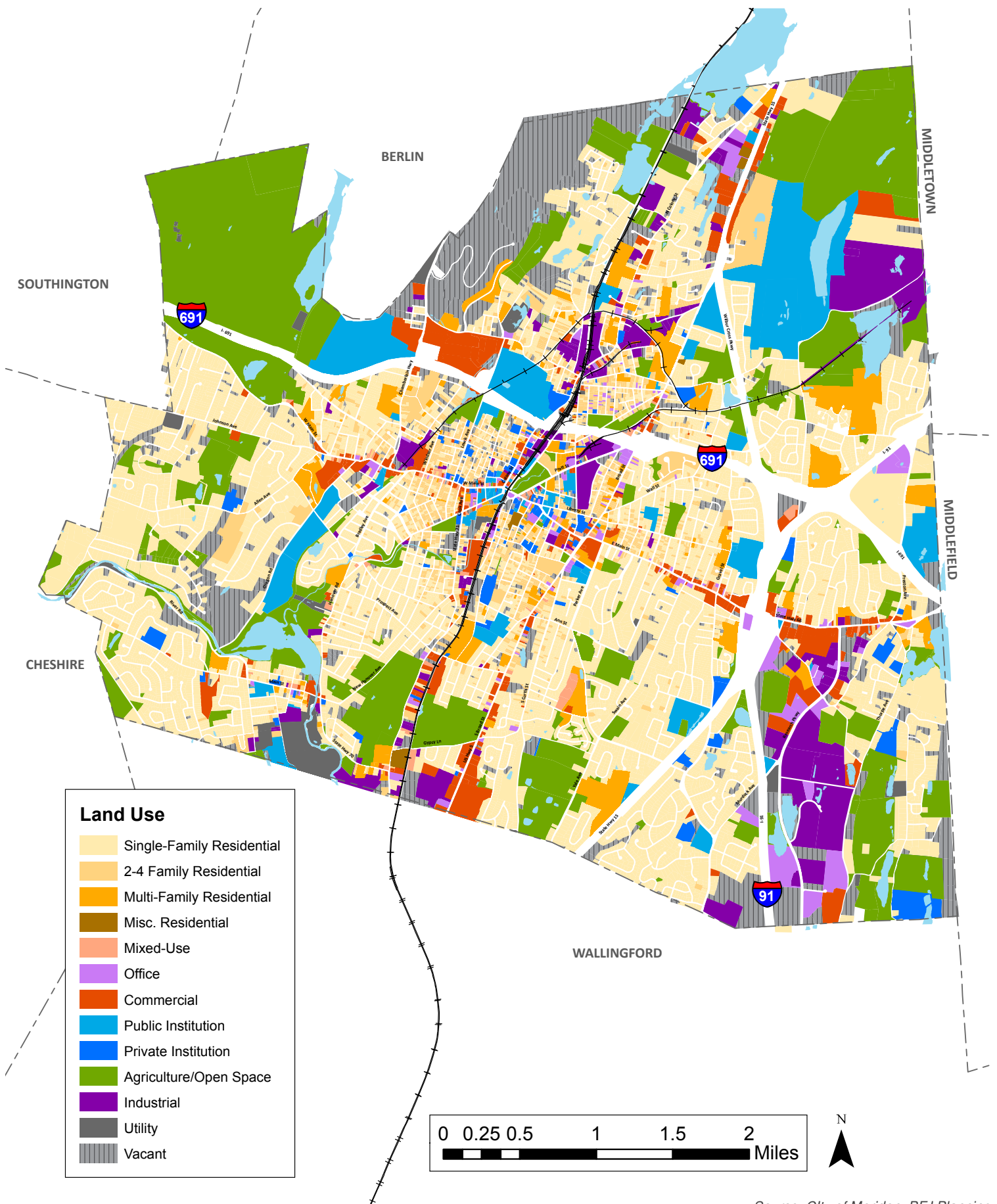
- Meetings to be scheduled in May-June

NEXT STEPS

- Homework:
 - Review Action Plan – online spreadsheet (link sent by Planning Dept)
 - Review public survey questions

- Discussion topic for next meeting:
 - Economic Development
 - Transportation and Circulation
 - Community Facilities
 - Parks, Open Space, Natural Resources
 - Cultural and Historic Resources

- Set date for next POCD Steering Committee meeting
 - Tuesday, June 11 (proposed)



Existing Land Use