

Municipal Planners

Focus Group held July 28, 2017

In attendance: Michael Piscitelli, New Haven; Michael Pinto, New Haven; David Sulkis, Milford; David Killeen, West Haven; Kacie Costello, Wallingford; George Kral, Guilford; Eugene Livshits, SCRCOG; Rebecca Andreucci, SCRCOG; Rebecca Augur, MMI

Discussion Summary:

- Economic development in the region hinges on having accessible retail, employment and housing
- The COG might play a stronger role in educating and advocating for diverse, workforce housing in the region – provide technical information, provide models for inclusionary zoning and other mechanisms for housing development, advocate within communities, link housing to expanded workforce and economic development
- The COG might also educate the region’s towns about the regional housing market, so that issues of saturation and absorption might be better understood and help towns better plan for and react to housing development.
- Is there an opportunity for the COG to do a multi-jurisdictional affordable housing plan, per Public Act 17-170 and have towns sign on? Gain better understanding of where additional jobs and housing can be located to promote the greater region. Connect workers at various income levels with housing availability and vice versa.
- In more rural communities or communities that lack infrastructure, unrealistic to expect workforce housing development because costs to develop are too high.
- Historic preservation is a tool not only for preserving community character, but also economic development
- There are major projects in the region that need to be planned for and addressed – Orange train station, West Rock Tunnel, deepening New Haven port
- The regional plan should at least consider noting each town’s priority areas/ districts (such as the Havens between New Haven and West Haven, a TOD area, etc.)
- Improving walkability and multi-modal options in region’s communities still important, and maintaining/ enhancing infrastructure
- Help establish an economic identity for the region which can then help member towns better plan for industry and employment
- Recognize regional anchor institutions as part of the Region’s economic identity – better collaborate with them and address any local friction points
- Following up on regional TOD study, help towns understand the scale appropriate for their priority areas based on regional market, what other towns are doing, etc.

- Review gas line expansion plans and projects to ensure areas targeted for conservation are not under new development pressure
- Sea-level rise must be addressed – loss of tidal marshes, and the inability to migrate tidal marshes because of existing development is a concern. How to protect these resources?
- Help identify resources for resiliency planning and implementation
- COG could help provide an inventory of farms and protected lands (SCRCOG is about to start a project to inventory open space in the region)
- COG could facilitate educating significant landholders in the region on estate planning and options for land conservation – more objective third party could provide benefit
- COG could help towns understand agri-business, what’s appropriate where and what the implications are
- Need better coordination with and communication from DOT on their plans and projects