

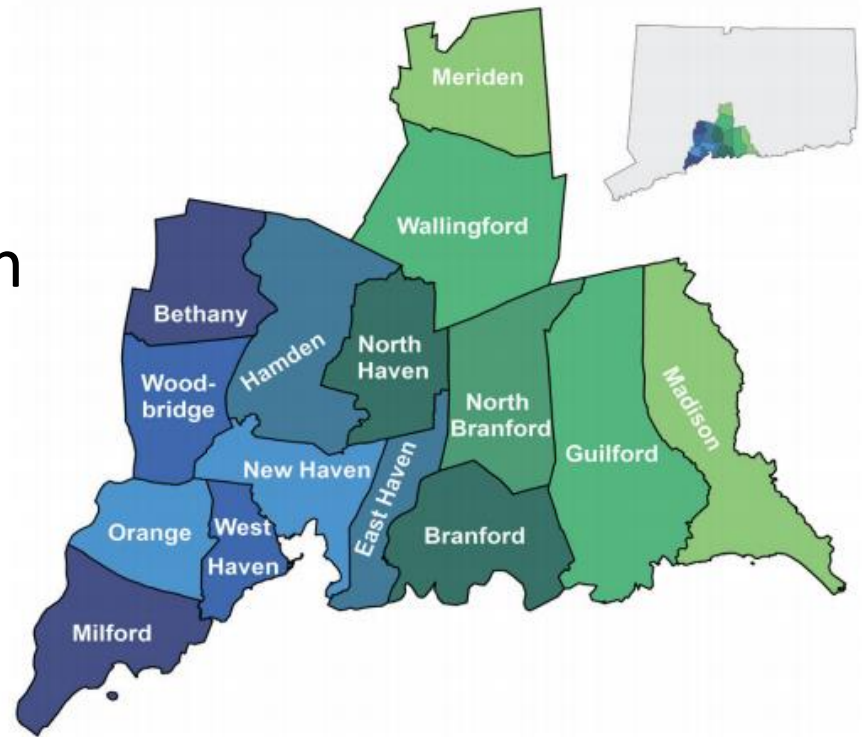
South Central Connecticut Region Plan of Conservation & Development 2018 Update

Regional Planning Commission Visioning and Strategies

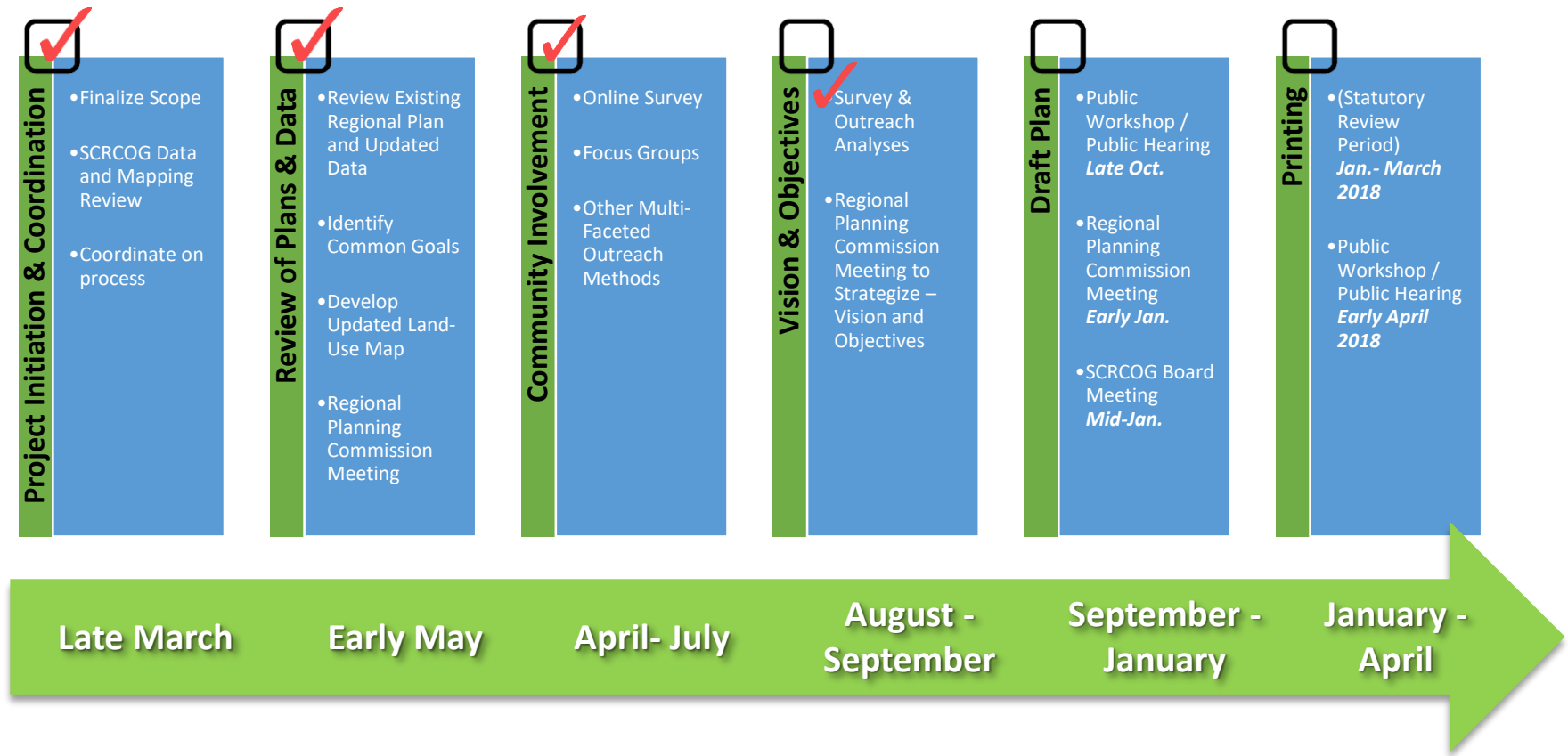
October 12, 2017

Agenda

- Survey results
- Focus group themes
- Vision and goals discussion
- Next steps



Process Update



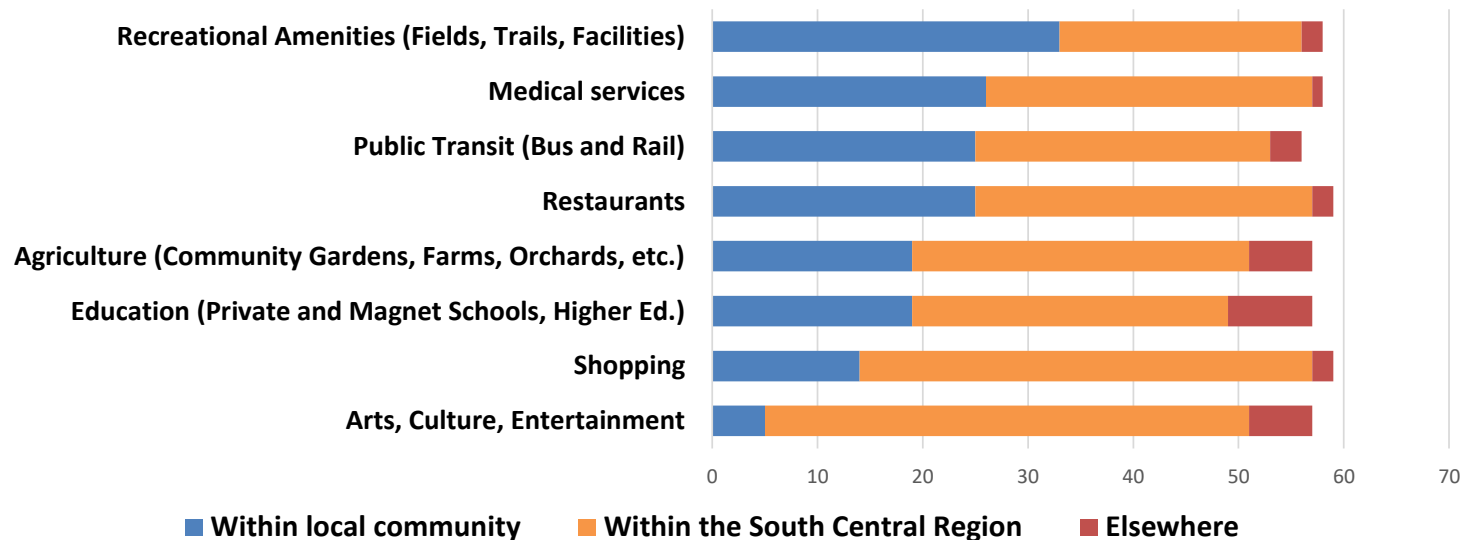
Surveys

- Fielded two surveys – one for the general public and one for municipal officials (elected, appointed, staff) during the summer
- Promoted through municipal websites, boards and commission e-mail lists, organizations from within the region, and at focus group sessions
- Provided some anecdotal information to support data updates and trends, and helped point to issues for focus group discussion
- Executive summary of results available from SCRCOG

Municipal Survey Results

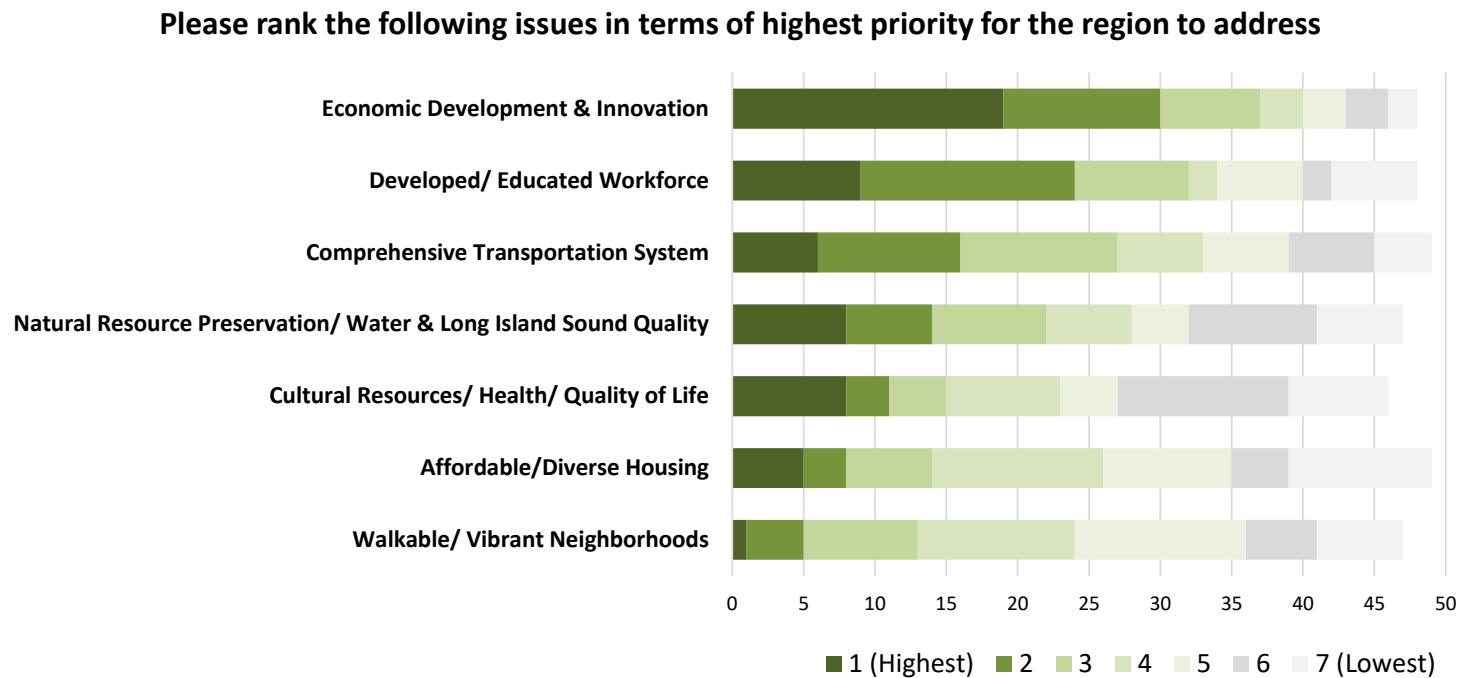
- 91 responses
 - at least one from each community
 - Many land use commissioners, council/ aldermen/ selectmen
- Some services/ amenities are clearly more regionally oriented than others, e.g. arts, culture and entertainment

Where do you think residents in the community you represent most frequently access the following? (Select all that apply)



Municipal Survey Results

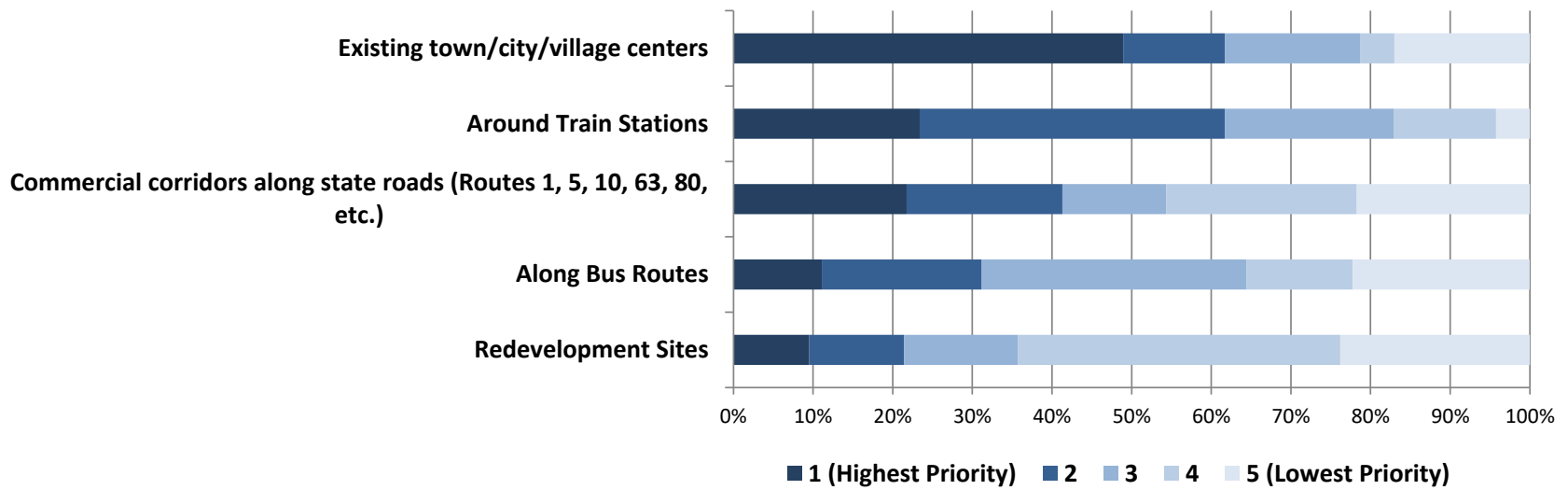
- Economic development issues (both development and workforce) emerged as top concerns
- Transportation issues also higher priority concern



Municipal Survey Results

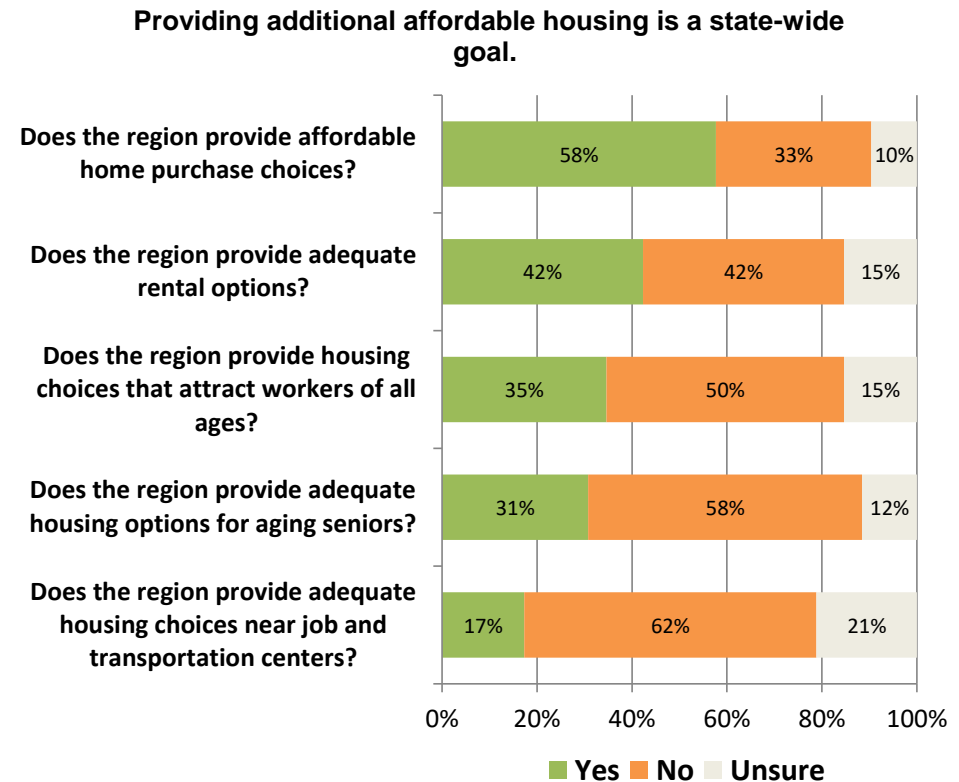
- Redevelopment/ infill of existing centers and TOD areas ranked as priority areas for mixed-use development
- Infrastructure projects identified as best strategy for supporting TOD and/ or mixed-use

Rank where the region should prioritize mixed-use development.



Municipal Survey Results

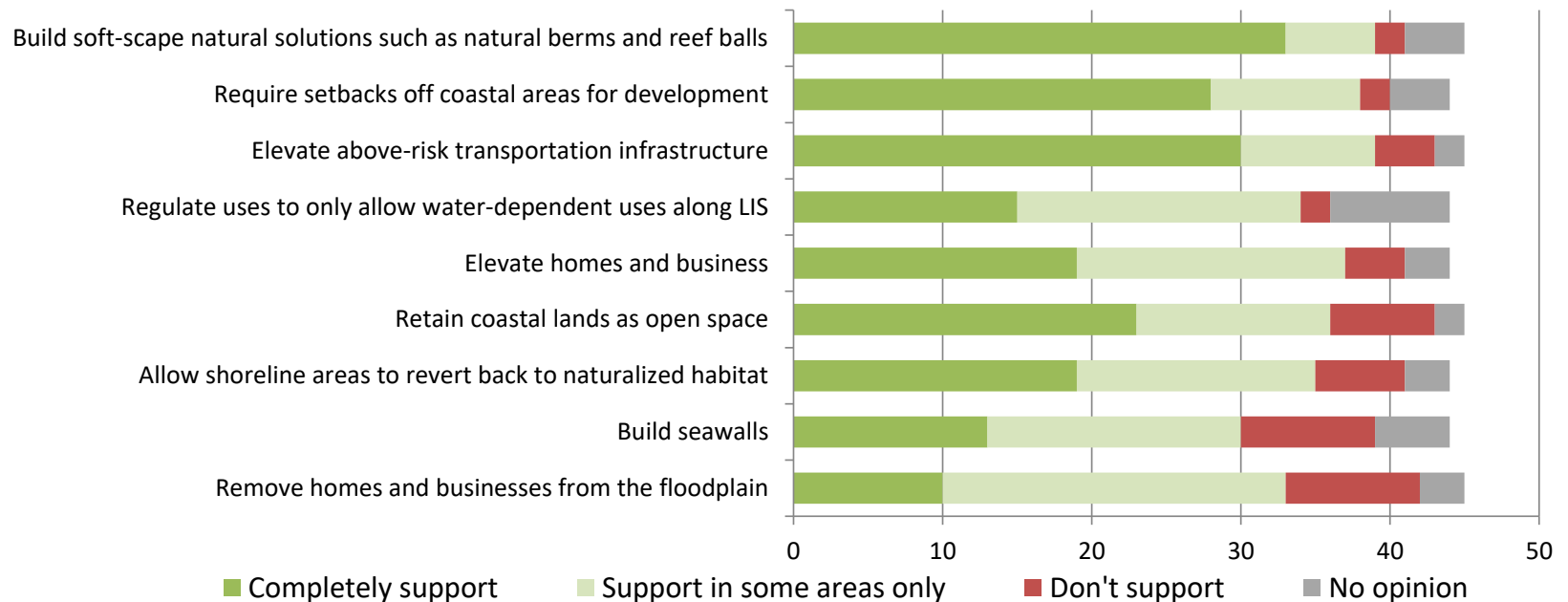
- Respondents indicated the region lacks housing diversity and adequate housing choice near jobs and/or transportation assets
- Strategies identified for increasing affordable housing supply included allowing affordable units in mixed-use developments, allowing multi-family, and adopting incentive housing zones



Municipal Survey Results

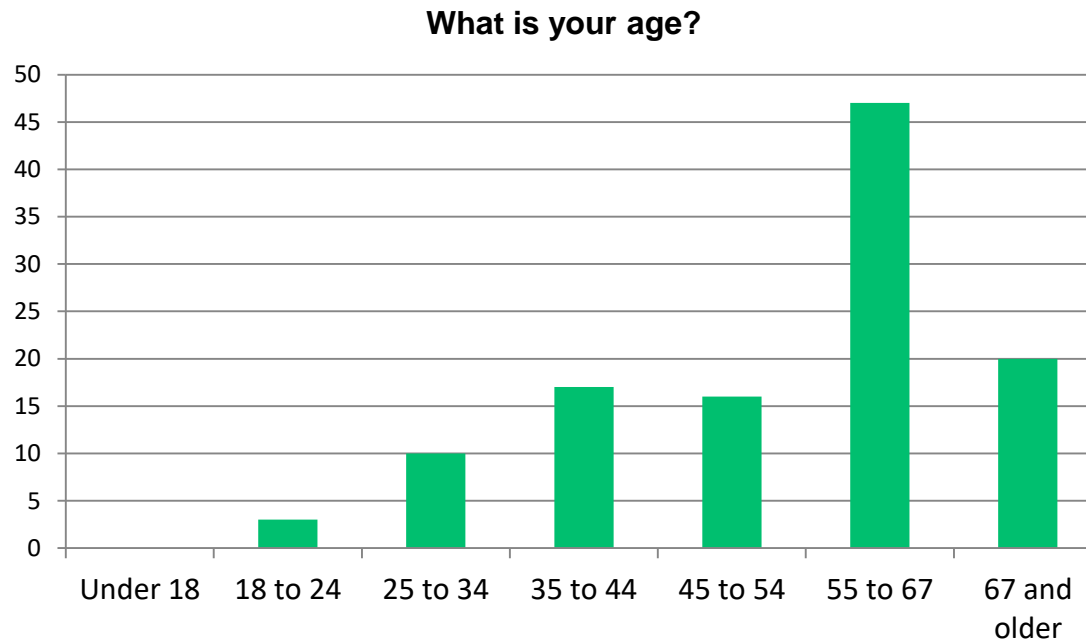
- Results indicate a nuanced approach to addressing sea-level rise is supported – some solutions more appropriate on a regional level, while others only appropriate in specific areas
- Respondents indicated grant assistance, regional coordination and planning assistance from SCRCOG would be helpful in responding to sea level rise

The region interested in some of the following regional strategies to adapt to the challenges of sea level rise which includes increased coastal and riverine flooding and erosion. Please indicate your level of support for these policies.



Public Survey Results

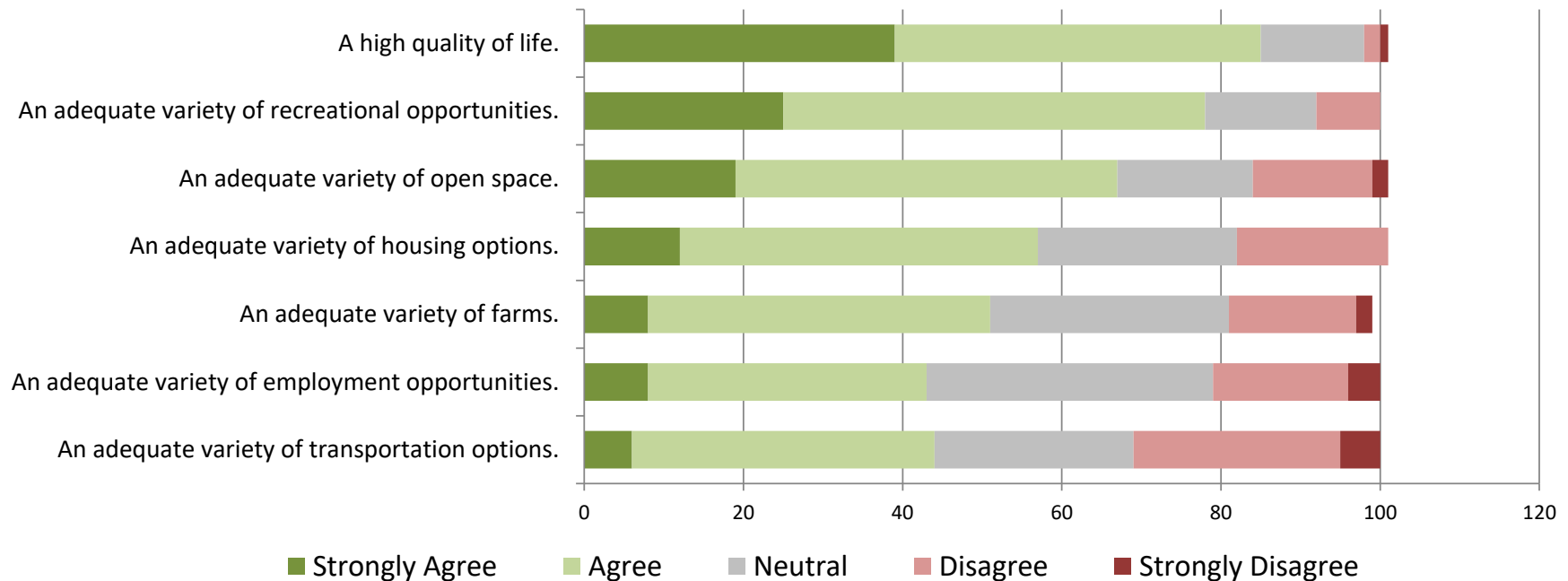
- 156 responses
 - At least one answer from someone who works in each community, but not one from a resident of each community
 - Skewed towards older respondents



Public Survey Results

- Agreement that the region provides a high quality of life, and recreation and open space amenities
- Least agreement that there are transportation and employment opportunities

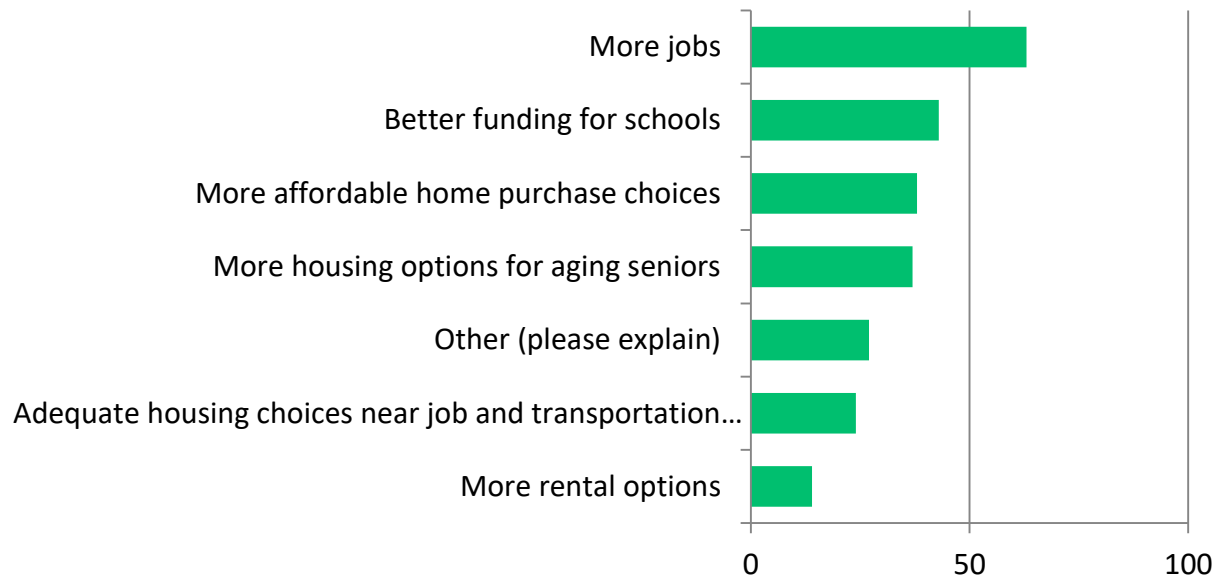
Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements. The region offers...



Public Survey Results

- Economic development highlighted in strong response for more jobs
- Housing diversity and affordability also highlighted as desired
- “Other” answers included lower taxes, focus on sustainability and conservation/ open space

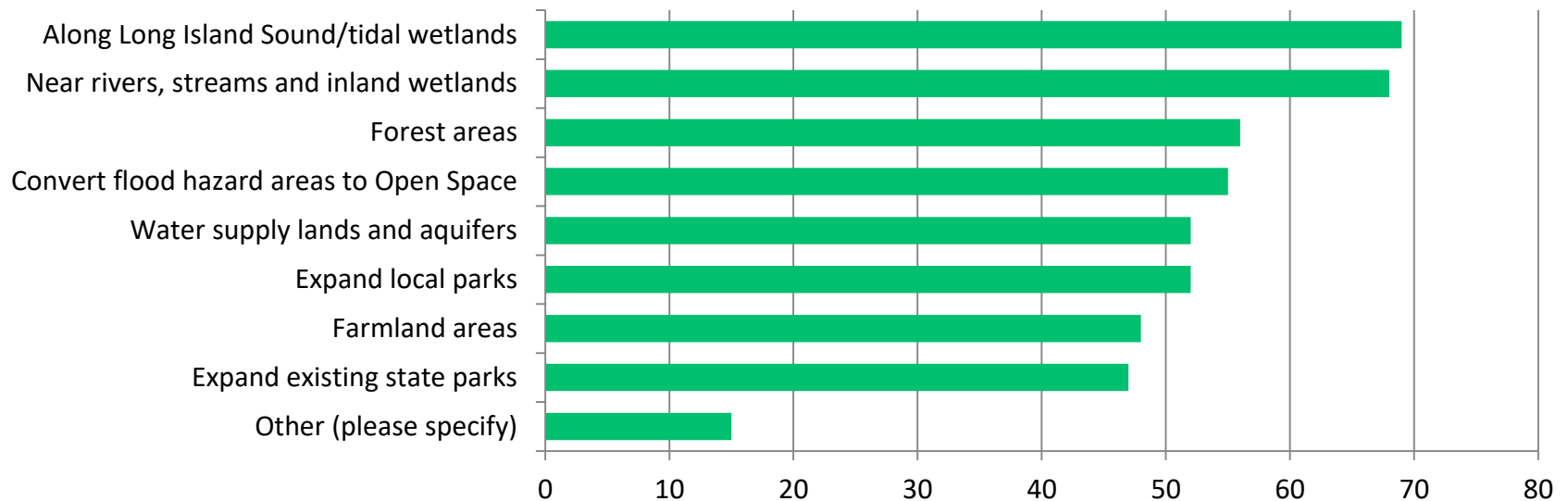
What are the top 3 things you would like to see in the region? (Choose 3)



Public Survey Results

- High level of support for land conservation
- Concerns expressed over maintenance and accessibility (especially of parks) in lean budgets

The State seeks to preserve 21% of the state's land area as open space. In what areas would you like open space preservation to occur? (Select all that apply)



Themes from Surveys

- Economic development
- Housing diversity
- Housing/ transportation connections
- Land conservation/ protection
- Quality of life

Focus Groups

- Five topical focus group sessions held over the summer with invited participants:
 - Housing, demographics, institutions
 - Economic development, TOD, smart growth, transportation, arts, culture and historical resources
 - Agriculture, natural resources, open space, recreation and hazard mitigation
 - Public safety, emergency management, public utilities and energy conservation
 - Municipal planners
- Engaged variety of stakeholders: Land use commissions and staff, EDCs and staff, housing authorities, energy task forces, senior centers, State Dept. on Aging, UCONN, electric and water utilities, LWV, United Way, REX, realtors, Arts Alliance, Clean Water Fund
- Meeting notes available on SCRCOG website

Focus Group Themes

- Diversification of housing stock (price and style/ type), and better alignment of housing employment, training and educational opportunities needed
- Workforce limits opportunities to grow manufacturing and industrial base – need a regional workforce development strategy, especially for urban communities, that ties into housing, transportation and land use
- Densification in appropriate locations needed to support economic development and housing objectives
- Long Island Sound is not capitalized on for economic development, recreation and quality of life opportunities
- Sea level rise and coastal resilience important issues to address for the region; however, require localized, multi-prong solutions

Focus Group Themes

- Opportunities for SCRCOG to facilitate greater collaboration:
 - Among municipalities on service sharing and promotion/ marketing the region
 - Among anchor institutions, housing, workforce development, and philanthropic agencies on addressing housing, employment and transportation needs
 - Among agencies that purchase and maintain open space (utilities, land trusts, etc.)
- Opportunities for SCRCOG to educate residents, and offer more support and guidance to local land use commissions on:
 - The regional housing market, workforce housing/ diversity in housing and its link to economic development, and appropriate locations for density
 - Renewable energy and green technology projects, interfacing with utilities on projects, navigating complexities of permitting processes
 - Farm/ forest land preservation opportunities, trends in agri-businesses and land use implications

Data Analysis



1 IN 6 (16%)
of CT residents
in region



0.1% (+814)
average annual population
growth rate (since 2006)



1 IN 6
are seniors
aged 65 and over



1 IN 8
are millennials with ages
between 20 and 29 years



1 IN 7
Hispanic
of the region



1 IN 8
African American
of the region



\$65,662
Median income
of the region



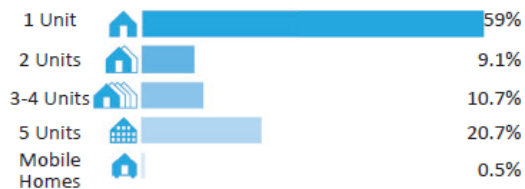
36.8 39.0 39.7
2000 2010 2015
Median age of the region



23%
open space of the region,
at least 500 more acres
added since 2008 to date



240,575
dwellings



55.6%
owner occupied

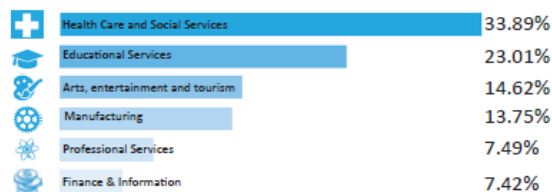


30,638
affordable housing units

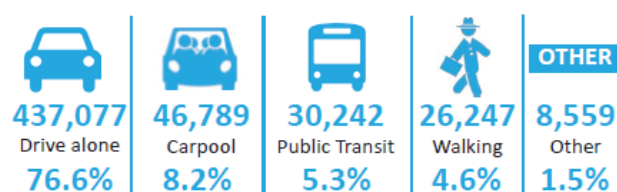


359,106
jobs

Top Six Industries

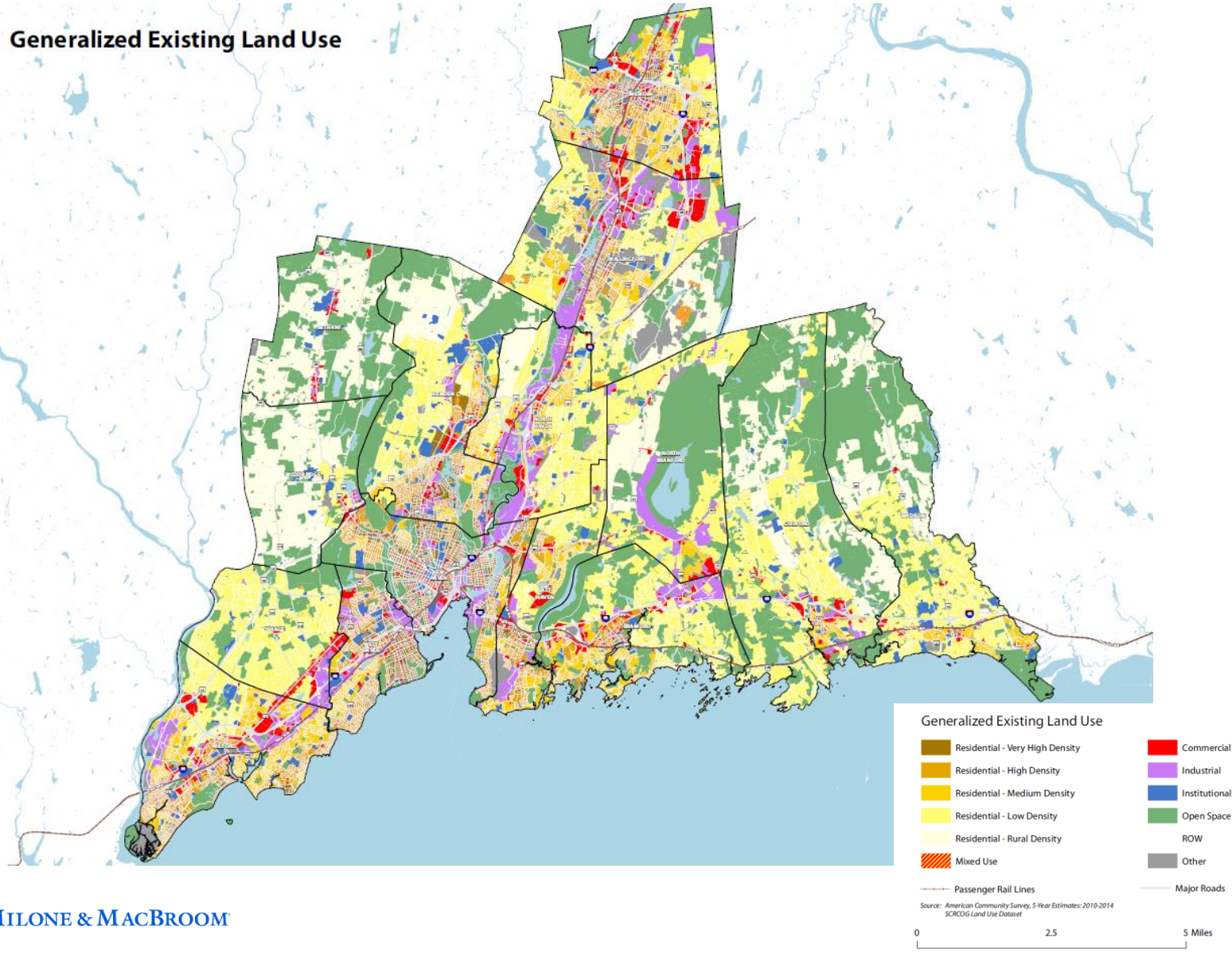


Commuting to Work



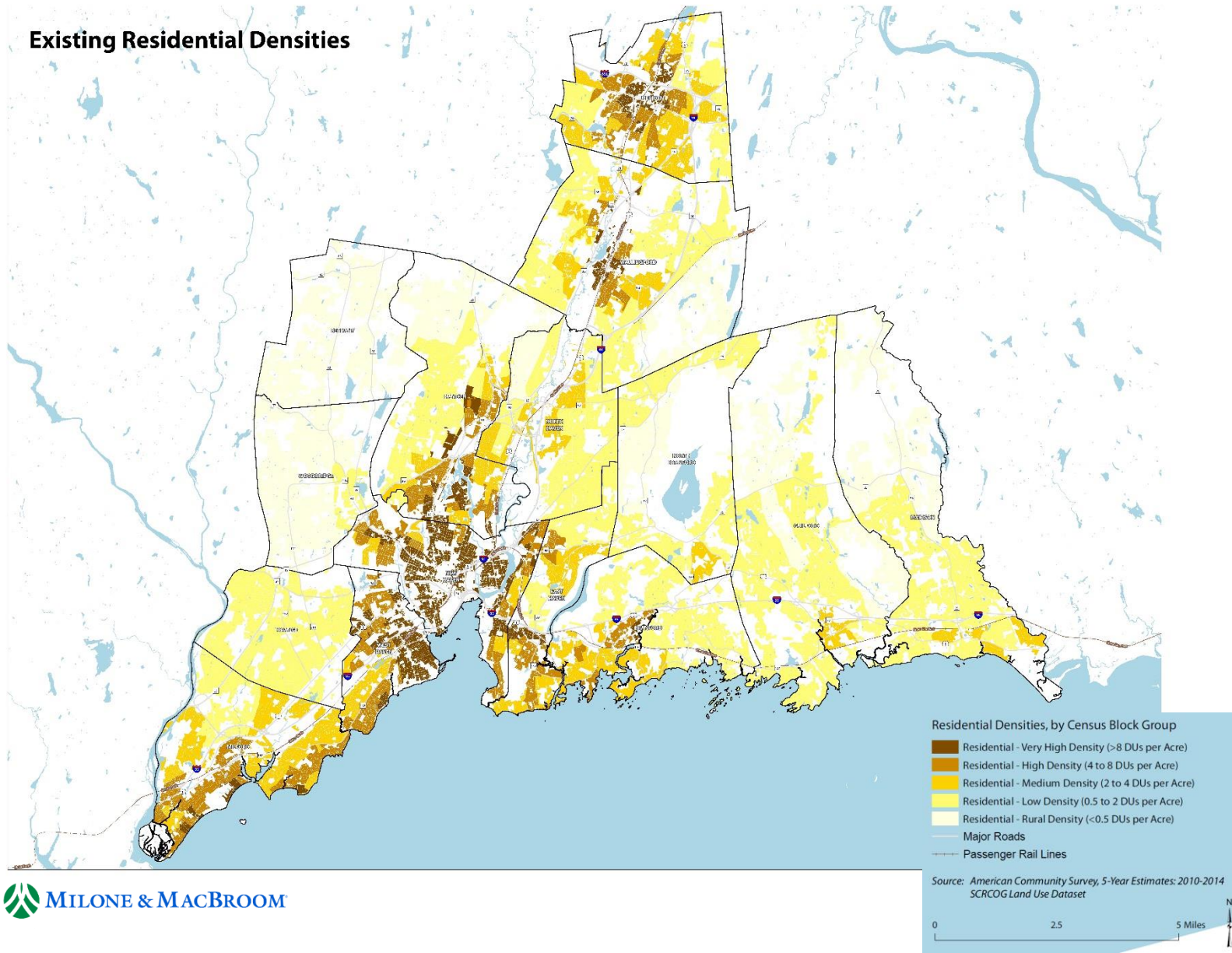
Data Analysis

Generalized Existing Land Use



Data Analysis

Existing Residential Densities



Vision for the Region

SCRCOG and its members envision South Central Connecticut is a region:

- *... that continues to preserve the character of its unique centers, villages, neighborhoods, and places.*
- *... with a strong vital core and thriving suburban/rural communities.*
- *... with several vibrant and livable “centers.”*
- *... with diverse housing choices.*
- *... with high quality infrastructure.*
- *... with a balanced and globally competitive economy.*
- *... that fosters a sense of pride and belonging.*
- *... that is sustainable and healthy.*
- *... that is safe and resilient.*

Structure for POCD

- Human environment – Demographic, housing goals
- Natural environment – Land, water, air, agriculture, environmental sustainability goals
- Built environment – Economic development, transportation, arts, culture, historic resources goals

Human Environment Goals

- The region seeks to be a vibrant, inclusive and livable region that is attractive to an increasingly diverse population.
- The Region contains a diverse and suitable housing supply that provides housing choice for all incomes and age groups.

Natural Environment Goals

- The Region's natural resource systems, water resources, and natural habitats are preserved, protected, and appreciated for their contributions to the environment, economy, and quality of life of current and future generations.
- Drinking and surface water quality is enhanced and maintained by the preservation and protection of wetlands, floodplains, critical watershed lands, and other resources.
- South Central CT's thriving agri-businesses not only provide residents with access to locally grown foods and recreational opportunities, but also contribute to the regional economy.
- The Region is continuously evolving to establish long-term resilience to sea level rise and the impacts of flooding and storm damage.
- The Region minimizes energy consumption through conservation and environmentally sensitive development practices, and facilitates the use of renewable and reliable energy sources.

Built Environment Goals

- Development in the region is focused in existing town/village centers and developed corridors that have transportation, employment and utility infrastructure while land areas that are integral for maintaining the region's agricultural heritage, drinking water supply, unique natural resources, and coastal resilience are conserved.
- The Region's transportation network supports regional land use objectives, enhances the economic competitiveness of the region, and maximizes transportation choice for the region's residents.
- South Central CT's rich portfolio of cultural, historical and archaeological resources attract and retain residents and businesses, and contribute to the overall vibrancy of the region.
- South Central CT capitalizes on its locational, transportation, natural, economic and human assets to position itself as a vibrant and attractive region.

Next Steps

