



How Connecticut can enliven its Downtowns by redeveloping under-used buildings into a blend of housing and retail, entertainment or office space.



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Torrington

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COME HOME TO DOWNTOWN

HOW CONNECTICUT CAN ENLIVEN ITS DOWNTOWNS BY REDEVELOPING UNDER-USED BUILDINGS INTO A BLEND OF HOUSING AND RETAIL, ENTERTAINMENT OR OFFICE SPACE.

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COME HOME TO DOWNTOWN

A MIXED-USE REAL ESTATE PLANNING PILOT PROGRAM

Introduction

OVERVIEW

Connecticut's downtowns have paid a price for the single-use zoning and high-volume sprawl that served as Connecticut's default development option for the last several decades. Instead of bustling neighborhoods extending from Main Street hubs, irreplaceable historic buildings were demolished in favor of big box development resulting in an exodus of jobs, neighbors relocated to vast suburban lots, small businesses shuttered, and critical tax revenue lost.

Juxtaposed with this grim landscape is today's challenging fiscal climate. Municipalities need to grow, but to grow sustainably. This means finding ways to both increase the tax base and reduce costs while ensuring our quality of life and preserving the environment for generations to come. Fortunately, most of Connecticut has potential solutions readily available to it downtown. That's because focusing growth in our downtowns and town centers where the infrastructure is already in place and where development can enhance a walkable, mixed-use setting with housing choices for workers and families is generally more sustainable than low density development, generates revenue and saves money. In fact, according to a report by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the infrastructure costs to service compact, dense development – like the mixed-use development found in most downtowns – is 32% to 47% less than for lower density suburban development (Ford 2009).

The return on investment for a municipality that directs its growth in its downtown is impressive. The City of Raleigh, NC, commissioned a study to compare compact, mixed-use development with big box development. The results demonstrated that on a per acre basis, mixed-use development provided a significantly better return to the municipality (Smart Growth America 2013):

Return on Investment Comparison		
Compact, Mixed-Use Development vs. Big Box Raleigh, North Carolina		
	<u>Big Box</u>	<u>Compact, Mixed-Use</u>
Property taxes/acre	\$2,837	\$110,461

A study commissioned by the downtown business improvement district in Asheville, NC (Minicozzi 2012) had similar results:

Return on Investment Comparison Downtown Development vs. Big Box Asheville, North Carolina		
	<u>Big Box</u>	<u>Downtown</u>
Property taxes/acre	\$6,500	\$365,000
Retail sales tax/acre	\$47,500	\$83,600
Jobs/acre	5.9	73.7
Residents/acre	0	90

Better still, demand for these types of multi-use neighborhoods – fueled mostly by Baby Boomers and their children – is strong and growing. More and more, people want to live in robust, vibrant settings with a range of housing choices where they can walk to shops, services and jobs. Moreover, for many living in a downtown is often more financially feasible than in a suburb because it is more densely developed and offers a variety of residential options and price points.

Luckily, many of Connecticut's town centers still have good "bones," providing us with exceptional foundations for mixed-use development. While some may be struggling with high vacancies, most of Connecticut's downtowns are well-designed – compact, walkable, and often centered around town greens and/or waterfronts that provide development opportunity. A revitalization effort that takes advantage of these features is called "place-based development" and it creates authentic places of human scale in the historic hearts of our communities.

It is typical to find three- and four-story buildings that are family owned downtown, where the family business may be thriving on the ground floor but the upper floors remain vacant. These underutilized spaces can be converted to apartment homes to satisfy the demand for downtown housing that's close to jobs, services and entertainment. Moreover, the redeveloped space can also provide the property owners with additional income while injecting increased spending into the local economy as residents take advantage of nearby shops and services.

More Downtown Housing = Increased Spending Downtown

A study recently completed for Main Street Iowa by economist Donovan Rypkema calculated that **every new unit of downtown housing spent \$20,000-\$39,000 in the downtown annually.**

Vacant First Floor Space = Negative Downtown Revenue

Conversely, ***vacant first floor commercial space has a tremendous negative impact*** on the community. Mr. Rypkema calculated a vacant storefront with a modest \$250,000 in lost annual sales costs the community over \$222,000 annually in terms of lost rents, property and sales tax, and utilities, supplies, services and salaries not paid (Rypkema 2012). (Emphasis added.)

BACKGROUND

It was out of this context that the **Come Home to Downtown** pilot program was born in the spring of 2012. The culmination of a successful collaboration between Connecticut Main Street Center (CMSC) and the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA), Come Home to Downtown directly addresses a need plaguing many of Connecticut's underutilized Main Street districts.

As the statewide agency charged with alleviating the shortage of affordable housing for low- and moderate-income families and individuals throughout Connecticut, CHFA knows that our downtowns and Main Street districts hold a wealth of opportunity for new mixed-use development – in other words, providing a blend of housing, retail and office space in one centrally located building.

At CMSC, our mission is to be the champion and leading resource for vibrant and sustainable downtowns as the foundation for healthy communities. We advocate for a return to the Main Street way of life, one with walkable neighborhoods, where housing, shops and restaurants share the same spaces, providing people with a range of housing and transportation choices. Working closely with our statewide network of over sixty member communities, we've seen firsthand the significant impact even a modest investment in our downtowns can make. That's because development in our downtowns, where the necessary infrastructure already exists, is cheaper, more environmentally friendly and sustainable. It also generates a greater positive economic investment, as additional monies from renters, visitors and downtown employees are poured back into the neighborhood economy. Our own Connecticut experience is evidence of this: during the height of the recession, when the rest of the state and nation were shedding jobs, our designated communities were *creating* jobs. In fact, from 2007 through 2012, CMSC's designated Main Street program communities saw a 29.6% net increase in jobs, a 22.8% net increase in new businesses and a 77% increase in private investment.

CHFA, knowing of our expertise in downtown revitalization and management, sought us out in a collaborative effort to bring more housing options to our downtowns. Although CHFA has been extremely successful in helping to alleviate the shortage of affordable housing, they understand there is a need for additional tools and resources to support smaller deals (typically less than 20 units of housing) than those it currently finances.

Created with the intention of facilitating viable, interesting housing opportunities while revitalizing downtown neighborhoods, this initiative was seeded by CHFA with an investment from Community Investment Act Funds. CMSC used this money to hire additional staff to implement the program, as well as engage consultants with expertise in the program components. Three pilot communities were then chosen from a pool of carefully vetted applicants.

COME HOME TO DOWNTOWN GOALS AND OUTCOMES

As a result of over sixty years of single-use, car oriented sprawl, mixed-use development has become a lost art form. Despite the many potential benefits that come from focusing growth in a downtown, several pervasive impediments remain as barriers to a more sustainable mix of housing and uses, including:

- An unsupportive regulatory environment;
- Limited financing options; and
- The misguided perception that density leads to blight, congestion and loss of value.

This less-than-ideal environment is further complicated by the fact that although many downtown property owners may be experienced business people, they often lack redevelopment experience and/or may be wary of becoming landlords.

Furthermore, the varied nature of the downtown itself can also be obstacle. This is because multiple property owners and building uses all need to be coordinated and integrated. Just like a shopping mall (albeit with one property owner instead of several), town centers also need a management program to convene all interested parties, forge a consensus and create a vision for the downtown.

Come Home to Downtown was designed to address these impediments by providing community leaders with strategic tools to reverse the course of sprawl and focus growth in downtowns where the infrastructure already exists, thereby ensuring the successful continuation of a sustainable, managed downtown with expanded housing choices. Moreover, we chose buildings of a design typical to downtowns throughout Connecticut so that the redevelopment process can be easily replicated in other communities. Along the way, we also made sure to note the obstacles emblematic of downtown, mixed-use development. Our recommendations for easing this process, whether through policy, additional or enhanced financing mechanisms, regulatory changes, or education and technical assistance are detailed later in this report.

In order to achieve the successful completion of Year One of the Come Home to Downtown program, CMSC set forth the following goals:

- Recommend specific solutions for accommodating mixed-use development such as changes to zoning, streamlined permitting and other financial incentives.
- Grow the relationship between communities and property owners by educating them about the benefits of redeveloping vacant and underutilized space.
- Perform a Model Building Analysis and provide technical assistance to guide property owners (many of whom have little or no redevelopment experience) in the redevelopment of their properties.

- Provide the community with an increased understanding of the downtown's value and potential.
- Create or enhance the downtown management's function.
- Analyze lessons learned, and use them to inspire other property owners and municipalities.
- Have the respective pilot communities embrace mixed-use development in their downtowns and the municipalities support these types of property owners while understanding the inherent risk in this kind of redevelopment.

Program Overview

SELECTION PROCESS

In an effort to select pilot communities with the highest likelihood of success, CMSC created an extensive inventory of towns throughout Connecticut, looking especially at those with strong organizational capacity and a good working relationship between the municipality and the downtown. Communities with a history of active community engagement were also highly regarded.

Those towns that rose to the top were invited to an introductory meeting in late September 2012 in Middletown. Mayor Daniel Drew welcomed forty attendees who represented nineteen communities of varying size from across the state. Audience members included First Selectmen, economic development officials, town planners and town managers. CMSC presented them with an overview of Come Home to Downtown, some background on the partnership between CMSC and CHFA, and comparable success stories.

Communities interested in participating were then asked to submit letters of interest to CMSC; twelve communities responded. CMSC then evaluated the communities based on the following criteria:

- Likelihood of success
- Ability to leverage other resources
- Availability of market opportunity & local real estate development capacity
- Diversity of scale and location
- An appropriate building and a willing property owner(s).

Using a matrix of the criteria to rate and rank each community, CMSC narrowed the list of candidates to five. CMSC and the consultant team then visited each of the communities, taking a walking tour of the downtown, meeting with local officials and the downtown management

function and finally, seeing a few prospective model buildings and meeting with some of the owners.

PILOT COMMUNITIES

After this extensive selection process, three pilot communities were chosen: Middletown, Torrington and Waterbury. Each represents a dynamic community with many positive aspects such as walkability, a range of services and amenities nearby and a rich culture of recreation and entertainment. All of them form the epicenter of their respective region, with each of their regions varying in size. While each faces individual challenges and successes, collectively they represent a fair sampling of the many types of Main Street districts, housing stock and downtown infrastructure typically found throughout Connecticut.

PROPERTY OWNERS & MODEL BUILDINGS

Just as important as the downtowns themselves are the individual property owners and their buildings. CMSC wanted owners who were engaged in Come Home to Downtown and its success, and who demonstrated a commitment to the neighborhoods where they are located. Those chosen for the program exemplify a strong desire to be a part of the local fabric and include property owners who also operate thriving businesses within the downtown's borders.

With regard to the buildings, CMSC felt it was critical to choose a variety of styles indicative of those commonly found throughout the State. This was of paramount importance because ideally we viewed this program as a learning process, and one from which we could take the lessons learned in order to more easily replicate and encourage mixed-use development in other Connecticut downtowns.

PROGRAM SERVICES

Come Home to Downtown is designed to provide selected communities with new tools and strategies to revitalize their downtowns through increased mixed-use development that includes a variety of housing choices for workers and families. The Come Home to Downtown pilot program is comprised of five individual components:

Downtown Development Audit – Addresses impediments and incentives to promoting redevelopment in a downtown.

Model Building Analysis – Focuses on redevelopment plans designed to bring housing back to the upper floors of the model building.

Project Financing & Assistance to Property Owners – Property owners received a financial pro forma identifying the shortfall between the rehabilitation costs and what traditional lenders will typically finance. This section includes potential funding sources to address those shortfalls, or

“gaps”. Recommendations are also provided to the property owners, as needed, to assist with the building redevelopment and management.

Downtown Management Assistance – Strengthens the organizational capacity of the downtown management function to address the area’s constantly evolving housing and economic needs.

Urban Design Audit – Uses a *Walkability, Accessibility, Livability Quotient* (WALQ) audit to identify needs and make recommendations for how the downtown could function better with regard to walkability and connectivity.

PROJECT TEAM

In order to address each of the above concerns, CMSC assembled an expert team of consultants through a Request for Proposals (RFP) process.

- William W. Crosskey II, AIA, LEED AP, Principal, Crosskey Architects LLC – Performed the model building analysis and provided development assistance.
- Lou Trajcevski, Principal, Newcastle Housing Ventures, LLC – Drafted pro forma reviews of the development in conjunction with the model building analysis.
- David Sousa, ASLA, AICP, Landscape Architect/Urban Planner, CDM Smith – Performed the Urban Design Audit, designing a program to measure the downtown area’s walkability and connectivity.

CMSC oversaw the work of the consultants while developing and coordinating the program. In addition, we also provided community engagement and downtown management advice, as well as an overall communications strategy for the program.

Findings & Recommendations

TORRINGTON FINDINGS

Overview

Downtown Torrington has many attributes that people find appealing, including attractive residential neighborhoods and a diversity of housing stock. It also has an active and engaged municipal government that recently launched a new promotional campaign and benefits from local entertainment activities, including a well-known performing arts center. However, there is much that Torrington can do to improve its downtown functionality and encourage development that includes mixed use buildings.

Owner: Torrington Downtown Partners

Location: 11-21 Main Street

This building is owned by the Torrington Downtown Partners, who have already made significant investment in downtown redevelopment and are looking for assistance moving forward. Steven Roth, President of Elevator Service Co., Inc.; Stephen Timken, T&M Builders; and David Bender, Bender Plumbing, are the individuals behind the Torrington Downtown Partners group.



11-21 Main Street, Torrington

The Romanesque Revival building at 11-21 Main Street was built around 1896-1897 and is approximately 14,646 square feet and three stories high. Standing at the entrance to Torrington's downtown shopping district, it faces the Naugatuck River and bridge to the south. The owners are interested in doubling the number of units, as well as building smaller units to meet the needs of today's market.

The Torrington community is also vested in the project. In a unique participating venture, Torrington Downtown Partners have offered townspeople the opportunity to invest in the Partners through \$100 memberships. This membership entitles them to provide input on future choices about the development of properties the Partners own, such as certain aesthetic renovations. (Torrington Downtown Partners currently own nine downtown buildings, of which 11-21 Main Street is one.) The \$100 membership also entitles members to discounts at some of the properties' retail tenants. To date, there are nearly 200 memberships.

Findings

Come Home to Downtown identified issues and recommendations specific to each of the pilot communities. Torrington is already on the right path to revitalization of its downtown however there is still much work to do. The recommendations below summarize how Torrington can further ensure its success addressing the interests of downtown stakeholders, the larger community and the region. These findings are discussed in more detail later in the report.

Downtown Development Audit – Torrington's zoning regulations support upper story redevelopment of existing buildings for residential use. The approval process for upper story redevelopment is administrative which decreases the amount of time and effort necessary to complete the approval process and is an excellent strategy for promoting downtown revitalization. There are, however, certain requirements of the regulations that create impediments to downtown development. The regulations for new development require a special exception approval and require development that would not match the historic fabric and existing conditions found on most of Main Street. Recommendations have been made to require that new development better reflects the downtown, as opposed to a single-family residential zone.

Although no parking is required with upper story redevelopment of existing buildings for residential use, the parking requirement for new multi-family development is another impediment to downtown redevelopment. We recommend the City reconsider the parking requirement for new development. We also recommend that the City work with developers to identify parking alternatives and solutions that address the tenant's needs in existing buildings.

Model Building Analysis – This analysis makes specific recommendations for improving the conditions of the structure, including removal of the rear wood porches. A recommended floor plan designed to meet the needs of today's residents and to bring market rate housing downtown was also developed. Under this design, the number of units is doubled to 16 one-bedroom apartments ranging in size.

Urban Design Audit - Although Torrington scored well in some aspects of this analysis, much work is needed in other areas. Recommendations to improve walkability and functionality downtown include:

- Improve pedestrian and bicycle linkages within downtown and to adjoining neighborhoods. Increase safety at intersections using traffic calming techniques.
- Increase the amount of on street parking while minimizing the appearance of surface parking lots.
- Install outdoor art to encourage street activity and make downtown more attractive.
- Encourage and incentivize downtown housing, businesses and other redevelopment that complements the existing character of downtown.
- Improve and coordinate way-finding signage.

OVERALL PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

Our work with the pilot communities led us to several conclusions we believe are relevant to most Connecticut downtowns. Chief among them is a lack of readily available financing for this type of mixed-use redevelopment. Unfortunately, there is also not much in the way of education or outreach to property owners, leaving them unprepared for the complex process of redeveloping their building or the potential benefit in doing so. Below are our aggregate findings after examining the three representative communities, their downtown management functions and the model buildings.

Project Financing & Assistance to Property Owners

One of the goals of Come Home to Downtown is to quantify and highlight the lack of traditional financial incentives available for mixed-use deals in order to then begin advocating for more resources for these important properties. Taken in aggregate, Connecticut's downtown vacant and underutilized properties represent an enormous potential for accommodating growth where infrastructure already exists, thereby reducing the pressure to develop in open spaces and farmlands while creating healthier neighborhoods where people drive less and walk more.

The Come Home to Downtown properties represent a diverse mix and scale of the type of buildings that can be found in downtowns throughout Connecticut. Our work with Middletown, Torrington and Waterbury over the last year led us to several conclusions we believe are emblematic of most of the State's downtowns, namely that these types of projects are perhaps the hardest real estate deals to accomplish. This is because they are:

- Mixed-use.
- In older buildings in need of a gut rehabilitation (the most costly type).
- In a complex downtown setting.
- Owned by people with little to no mixed-use development experience, who may also be unprepared for the amount of debt needed to redevelop the buildings.
- In need of complex financing from multiple sources to close the gap between what traditional lenders will provide and the total construction costs.

Because these deals are so intricate and multi-faceted, financing for the total redevelopment cost does not exist from traditional sources. Also, there are very few municipal officials and experienced developers interested in small properties who know how to navigate the various funding streams, leaving the property owner – who most likely has no experience with any kind of real estate development – with scarce resources to bring a vacant building back to life.

A number of state and federal programs that incentivize housing development are only for affordable housing and only municipalities or non-profit entities are eligible, leaving projects like this one with private ownership out in the cold. CMSC wants to work with the municipality,

property owners and other partners to advocate for more resources to be aggregated for mixed-use development. In the vast majority of our downtowns, virtually all mixed-use development projects are high risk, even if privately owned, and deserve support as much as projects primarily targeted for affordable housing. Also, it is not unusual for market and affordable rental rates to be the same in downtowns, making market rate apartment financing just as difficult to pencil out. Still, this issue should be resolved as successful mixed-use development projects provide a greater return on investment to the state, municipality and local neighborhood, as indicated in the beginning of this report, and can provide the kind of housing in demand at various market rate price points to help rebalance downtowns that currently have either no housing or mostly subsidized housing.

It is clear that more educational resources are also needed to help property owners, municipalities, investors, lenders and State agencies understand how they can work together to facilitate this kind of mixed-use development. CMSC will be working with stakeholders from the pilot communities and appropriate State agencies to determine how more education and information can be developed and disseminated to the appropriate audiences. Municipalities should also encourage local lending institutions (i.e. community banks and foundations) to support more people living in downtown with increased or new lending for mixed-use development.

Doomed to Fail?

In his book, *The Option of Urbanism*, Chris Leinberger states there are 19 standard real estate product types with associated financing mechanisms. If even the most accomplished developer tries to stray from one of these, they will most likely fail because they will not find financing. (Leinberger 2008)

Mixed-use development with residential housing over first floor commercial space is nowhere on this list. Are our downtowns, ripe with historic infrastructure and available housing stock, doomed to fail simply because there's no streamlined financing mechanism in place?

Mixed-use development requires three distinct sets of expertise, which most property owners have no prior experience with:

- Project Financing
- Design and Construction
- Ongoing Property Management.

CMSC will work with the property owners, municipality and downtown stakeholders to put together a team with real estate development, historic architectural and engineering and construction management expertise to demonstrate how the redevelopment of these properties can happen in a financially viable manner. This will require not only aggregating all existing

potential financing resources but also advocating for new resources that can be applied to these kinds of projects.

Regulatory

Flexible zoning regulations and a streamlined approval process can go a long way toward encouraging downtown revitalization. Communities with regulations that are perceived as high-risk because there are no clear ‘rules of the game’ are not going to be viewed favorably, nor sought out by developers. Mixed-use development, including housing, should be allowed as of right; however, regulations should encourage development that fits with the historic character of downtown.

No matter how large or small a building or its location, parking is almost always an issue. City planners should consider waiving parking requirements for developers of mixed-use buildings, especially if there is other adequate parking located nearby. A municipality can further incentivize downtown redevelopment by offering free or reduced fees for parking in municipal lots or structures. This requires municipalities to consider a new paradigm – that people who want to live downtown are not necessarily looking for a parking space on site of their residence.

Downtown Management Capacity

Management is critical to the success of any downtown. The form of a community’s management function will vary from informal to more structured. Any community interested in promoting revitalization should consider enhancing its management function by becoming a resource center for downtown mixed-use development. Additional roles for a downtown management function to employ are:

- Convener of key stakeholders to build consensus and implement initiatives
- Education and public relations
- Data collector and information center
- Coordinator of development incentives.

Over time, as the downtown management function grows in experience and capacity related to mixed-use development, it may become more involved in the real estate development process by:

- Assembling land to draw in developers
- Finding local investors and/or institutions to provide gap financing
- Taking on projects, possibly with a private developer partner, in the early stages to prove there is a market and to serve as case study of how it can be accomplished.

CONCLUSION

Connecticut's downtowns can once again become thriving centers where people come home to streets brimming with pleasant chatter as families stroll along the sidewalks, bikers zip from shop to shop, and neighbors catch up on the bus as they commute from work. The infrastructure is already in place, providing a ready, sustainable stock of buildings capable of supporting first floor commercial space with upper level housing. Not only has this type of mixed-use development been shown to both save and generate monies when situated in compact downtowns, it also promotes a healthier lifestyle.

However, our experience with the Come Home to Downtown pilot program has demonstrated that if Connecticut is to encourage and promote mix-used development, we must develop a manageable, if multi-layered, financing mechanism available to the owners of small downtown properties. Education and technical assistance programs specifically designed for the owners of these small properties will help ensure they are prepared for both the financial and landlord responsibilities they face. Although it will admittedly be difficult at the outset, it is imperative that these efforts begin now if we are to have fully integrated, vibrant downtowns that sustain us today and into the future.

Community Engagement

TOWN-WIDE CONSENSUS

Community Engagement is a critical element of any planning process. CMSC understood that a consensus building process reaching out to downtown stakeholders would be essential. CMSC worked with the pilot communities to engage residents and others to form a broad-based consensus and achieve buy-in around a vision for downtown Torrington.

In Torrington, residents have come to expect this type of community engagement since the City has invited the public to participate in planning the future of their downtown in conjunction with several prior planning efforts. The most recent occurred in the fall of 2012, when Torrington participated in *Fit Together*, a project designed to create healthy communities. Residents participated in a walk audit that looked at various issues related to promoting healthier living throughout the community and downtown (Fenton 2012). Prior to that, the community was engaged in updating the City's Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). It's worth noting that Come Home to Downtown aligns perfectly with the POCD which suggests that, "The success of Downtown will be based on creating a density of people and diversity of uses. Torrington needs to develop a rich diversity of destinations that will attract a critical mass of people to live, work and shop" (City of Torrington 2010).

The goals of the Municipal Development Plan, which also had a community engagement process, align well with this program. They include:

- Promote Economic Development
- Strengthen the existing mixed uses of downtown
- Promote local and regional arts, cultural interests and tourism
- Preserve Torrington's heritage and historic character
- Improve pedestrian facilities, traffic circulation, parking and streetscape (Torrington Development Corporation 2009).

Come Home to Downtown sought to build on this strong relationship between local officials and residents, reaching out to the community in multiple ways. In Torrington, a Project Liaison and Advisory Team were convened. Rose Ponte, Economic Development Director and Martin Connor, City Planner, were designated as Project Liaisons. The Liaisons served as community point people for the Come Home to Downtown program, the press and community stakeholders.

The Advisory Team, on the other hand, consisted of a broad base of stakeholders, including town staff and elected officials, business and property owners, institutional leaders and other interested citizens. The Advisory Team's job was to guide the project by providing local input and direction, and to serve as ambassadors of the project to the larger community.

Community Commitment

Torrington already had a commitment to revitalizing its downtown through various efforts and understood the need and value of bringing a broader mix of residential units back to the upper floors. Torrington convened an enthusiastic and committed group of downtown stakeholders.

Project Liaisons

- Rose Ponte, Economic Development Director, City of Torrington
- Martin Connor, City Planner, City of Torrington

Advisory Team

- Ryan Bingham, Mayor, City of Torrington
- Tim Waldron, Administrative Assistant to Mayor Bingham
- JoAnn Ryan, President and CEO, Northwest CT Chamber of Commerce
- Stephen Roth, Torrington Downtown Partners
- Sharon Waagner, Torrington Arts and Culture Commission
- Fiona de Merell, Director's Office & Community Engagement, UCONN Torrington
- Aurora Daly, Board Chair, Torrington Development Corporation
- Marie Soliani, Councilwoman, City of Torrington
- Gina Scherbner, Vice President & Business Development Officer, Union Savings Bank

Public Outreach

Extensive outreach was undertaken by CMSC and the Project Liaisons to educate the public on this program and elicit their feedback. In addition to traditional media (see below) CMSC also promoted the program through its newsletter, *Downtown Update*, which is issued to approximately 3,000 contacts monthly. CMSC also engaged Facebook and Twitter to celebrate program successes, update industry colleagues and others, as well as invite the public to the community meeting.

Public Outreach

CMSC issued several press releases, utilized social media, devoted space on our homepage and created individual webpages for the program and pilot communities, and started a blog cataloguing our progress.

The Come Home to Downtown program was featured in the following media:

- *Hartford Courant*
- *Middletown Press*
- *Middletown Eye*
- *Republican American*
- *Register Citizen*
- *Face CT*, WTIC 1080
- NBC News Channel 30

Community Meetings

Beyond reaching out to the media CMSC also engaged the public by holding Community Meetings in each of the pilot communities. City Hall hosted Torrington's meeting on June 19th. This event was designed to share preliminary project results and get feedback from the community. The public was encouraged to participate, provide feedback and to inform the team of any questions or issues they had about downtown and the Come Home to Downtown team's work. Approximately thirty people representing a broad base of constituents attended this meeting. Representatives from the local art community and downtown business owners were in attendance, as were representatives from the Planning and Zoning Commission, Board of Finance and the City Council, UCONN, Torrington Development Corp. and Torrington Downtown Partners.

Most of the questions the audience asked revolved around the specifics of the redevelopment proposal related to this project. The audience wanted to know: Who will live there?; What options will the apartments include?; and What will the rents be? The consultants answered many questions but it was also agreed that more research was needed on certain topics including potential rents.

Recommendations

Community engagement is a continuous and continually evolving process. Although Torrington has reached out to its citizenry over the last few years, and although Come Home to Downtown provides another opportunity for Torrington to engage the community, the City would do well to continue seeking resident input in order to engage the public around an overarching vision for the future of downtown Torrington. Doing so will help inform the community about the importance of mixed-use development and the role residential development plays in a robust downtown.

Recommendations

Torrington does a good job reaching out to its residents, but could increase that engagement through new activities including the following:

- Increase use of social media.
- Couple outreach efforts with current and upcoming community events.
- Create a town-wide poll on downtown development with questionnaire boxes located at Main Street crosswalk light posts. Have a number where people can text their suggestions.
- Engage the local schools, especially UCONN Torrington and even local high schools, in downtown recruitment efforts - both in terms of volunteers and as future young professional residents.
- Reach out to targeted demographics like young professionals and active seniors through a mix of traditional and innovative marketing techniques.

Downtown Development Audit

The purpose of the Downtown Development Audit is to identify the assets, challenges, opportunities, and impediments to redevelopment in Torrington in order to pursue strategies to attract development that adds economic value consistent with the community's values. The audit is intended to provide guidance to enhance a municipality's ability to organize and to seek out growth potential, especially regarding mixed-use development.

During the audit process, we examined Torrington's regulations for land use and its development tools and incentives. The following is a discussion of our findings.

REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT & LAND USE CONTROLS

Zoning Regulations

Main Street and other primary streets in the downtown area are located in the Downtown District Zone. Residential Use is a permitted use on second and third floors in this district (Zoning, Section 3.1, Use 1.31) (Torrington Planning & Zoning Commission 2011). Projects like the one proposed

under Come Home to Downtown, involving building out the upper floors of an existing building for residential use, will only require staff approval as part of the building permit application process. Even if this were a change of use in the Downtown District, the City Planner approves applications “where no outside alterations are proposed for permitted uses” (Zoning, Section 8.4.1.D). Since this decreases the amount of time and effort necessary to complete the approval process, it is an excellent strategy for promoting downtown revitalization. Parking, an impediment in many communities, is also not required with redevelopment for residential use in upper floors of existing buildings in the Downtown District.

Zoning requirements for the construction of *new* multi-family units in the Downtown District are a concern, however. The regulations require new development that would not match the historic fabric and existing conditions found on most of Main Street. A new residential building housing one or more dwelling units would require Special Exception approval and would need to meet the same area and building setback requirements for residential buildings in the R-6 Zone (Section 4.11.2). The density, minimum gross area, lot width, building height, buffers, landscaping (Section 6.8) and parking requirements are not appropriate for new development inside the Downtown District Zone. These sections should be re-written to better reflect the differences in building new multi-family units in a downtown as opposed to a single-family residential zone (R-6). The current regulations for the Downtown District Zone provide for residential redevelopment of existing buildings on 2nd and 3rd floors but do not encourage new multi-family development in that zone.

The Torrington Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) also recently approved four Incentive Housing Zone Overlay Districts (IHZ) within the Downtown District that have been approved by CT Office of Policy and Management (as required). These sites allow developers to create mixed-use affordable housing at a higher density than the underlying district and offer incentives to both the Developer and City. IHZ’s are another useful tool for promoting mixed-use development downtown.

Recommendations

The following recommendations will make the zoning regulations better for the City and more predictable and less risky for developers:

- Change the zoning requirements for *new* multi-family units to better reflect the existing conditions of the Downtown District, including density, minimum gross area, lot width, building height, buffers, landscaping requirements and parking.
- Since the zoning regulations do not require parking for residential use in upper floors of existing buildings in the Downtown District, it becomes a developer’s responsibility to make sure there is enough parking – whether onsite or nearby – to make the units marketable. We recommend that the City work with the developer to identify parking alternatives and solutions that address the tenant’s needs.

Building & Fire Code

As in most states, buildings built or renovated in Connecticut are regulated by the International Building Code or the International Existing Building Code, respectively, as modified by the State of Connecticut, and become the State of Connecticut Building Code. The governing fire code is the Connecticut Fire Safety Code. Local officials are tasked with enforcing the codes and cannot modify them. Modifications to the code or interpretations of the code can only be provided by the State of Connecticut Building Official's Office and/or the State of Connecticut Fire Marshal's Office.

Based on the schematic design for this building, we have reviewed the building code requirements to determine compliance. The building needs to comply with the International Existing Building Code (International Code Council 2012) as a Level 3 Alteration (i.e. a project with a work area that exceeds 50% of the aggregate area of the building). As with many older structures, this building does not meet the requirements of today's building and fire safety codes. Compliance with all codes should be strived for during renovation, but due to the construction and the configuration of the existing building we may not be able to comply with some requirements. The code allows, through Article 12 Compliance Alternatives, some existing non-compliant items to remain non-compliant by providing additional safety features. If the mandatory safety scores can be met, it is not necessary to comply with all the code requirements.

We have evaluated the proposed renovated building's safety using Article 12's compliance chart, Figure 2 shown below, from the International Building Code. In order to meet the minimum safety scores, the building will need a new central alarm system that includes voice/alarm with fire command station, an automatic sprinkler system, smoke detectors, and emergency lighting.

Chapter 12 - International Existing Building Code

Table 1201.7
SUMMARY SHEET - BUILDING SCORE

Proposed occupancy: <u>B, M, R-2</u>	Existing occupancy: <u>B & M</u>		
Year building was constructed: <u>c. 1890</u>	No. of Stories: <u>3</u> Height: <u>44'-0" +/-</u>		
Type of construction: <u>3B</u>	Area per floor: <u>5270 SF</u>		
Percent of frontage increase: <u>0%</u>	Percent of height reduction: <u>0%</u>		
Completely suppressed: Yes: <u>X</u>	No: _____ Corridor wall rating: <u>1 Hr</u>		
Compartmentation: Yes: _____ No: <u>X</u>	Required door closers: Yes: <u>X</u> No: _____		
Fire-resistance rating of vertical opening	opening enclosures: <u>1-Hr</u>		
Type of HVAC system: <u>Central Boiler</u>	serving number of floors: <u>3</u>		
Automatic fire detection: Yes: <u>X</u> No: _____	type and location: <u>Heat & smoke</u>		
Fire alarm system: Yes: <u>X</u> No: _____	type: <u>Fully addressable</u>		
Smoke control: Yes: _____ No: <u>X</u>	type: <u>N/A</u>		
Adequate exit routes: Yes: <u>X</u> No: _____	Dead ends: Yes: _____ No: <u>X</u>		
Max. exit access travel distance: <u>88'</u>	Elevator controls: Yes: _____ No: <u>X</u>		
Means-of-egress emergency lights: Yes: <u>X</u> No: _____	Mixed occupancies: Yes: <u>X</u> No: _____		
Provided with battery backup			
Safety parameters	Fire Safety (FS)	Means of Egress (ME)	General Safety (GS)
1201.6.1 Building height	88	88	88
1201.6.2 Building area	6	6	6
1201.6.3 Compartmentation	0	0	0
1201.6.4 Tenant & Dwelling Unit Separations	0	0	0
1201.6.5 Corridor walls	0	0	0
1201.6.6 Vertical openings	3.5	3.5	3.5
1201.6.7 HVAC systems	5	5	5
1201.6.8 Automatic Fire detection	6	6	6
1201.6.9 Fire alarm system	5	5	5
1201.6.10 Smoke control	****	0	0
1201.6.11 Means-of-egress capacity	****	0	0
1201.6.12 Dead ends	****	2	2
1201.6.13 Max Exit Access Travel Distance	****	12.96	12.96
1201.6.14 Elevator control	0	0	0
1201.6.15 Means-of-Egress Emergency Lighting	****	4	4
1201.6.16 Mixed Occupancies	0	****	0
1201.6.17 Automatic Sprinklers	2	2	2
1201.6.18 Standpipes	0	0	0
1201.6.19 Incidental Use Area Protection	0	0	0
Building score- total value	28.38	47.34	47.34
**** = No applicable value to be inserted.			

MANDATORY SAFETY SCORES

Use Group	Fire Safety (FS)	Means of Egress (ME)	General Safety (GS)
M (Most Restrictive)	23	40	40

EVALUATION FORMULAS

Formula	Score	Pass	Fail
FS-MFS ≥ 0 <u>28.38</u> (FS) - <u>23</u> (MFS) =	5.38	X	
ME-MME ≥ 0 <u>47.34</u> (ME) - <u>40</u> (MME) =	7.34	X	
GS-MGS ≥ 0 <u>47.34</u> (GS) - <u>40</u> (MGS) =	7.34	X	

FS = Fire Safety
ME = Means of Egress
GS = General Safety

MFS = Mandatory Fire Safety
MME = Mandatory Means of Egress
MGS = Mandatory General Safety

Figure 1

ADA Compliance

The Connecticut Building Code does not require apartments on the upper floors of buildings to be accessible unless the building has an elevator, which is not being proposed for these buildings. There is no requirement for a multifamily building to have an elevator, but if it does, then all units must be Type A or B accessible (Type A units are completely accessible, Type B units are adaptable for handicap use).

Often in apartment buildings with four stories or more, or with large floor areas, an elevator is deemed necessary in order to market the apartment units. However, this building is only three stories, therefore an elevator is not required.

Fair Housing Act

Handicap accessibility requirements are not applicable for buildings built prior to 1991.

Other Development Tools & Incentives

We have reviewed all of Torrington's tools and incentives to determine which restrict or facilitate development. They include design guidelines, incentive housing zones and tax incentives. In general, these tools and incentives are useful and have a positive impact on the proposed project. They support multi-family residential use in the Downtown District, which include the renovation/conversion of the upper floors of downtown buildings into multi-family housing.

Model Building Analysis

OVERVIEW

The model building in downtown Torrington, 11-21 Main Street has redevelopment potential and represents a good example of a building typically found in Connecticut's downtowns.

The Model Building Analysis conceptually demonstrates how the model building can be redeveloped to accommodate housing on the upper floors and commercial uses on the ground floors. Our approach identifies the most practical and least expensive options to meet all code requirements. The report is intended to be useful to property owners in any town with a similar building type. Every effort has been made to keep the costs of renovation down. Criteria for selection of the model building into the Come Home to Downtown program are as follows:

- Must be mixed use
- Location - Main Street/pedestrian oriented area with ground floor commercial uses

- Upper floors currently underutilized
- Strong likelihood of being redeveloped
- Motivated and committed building owner
- Obstacles/challenges that make it difficult for current owners to develop the upper floors
- Represents a good example of a typical building found in Connecticut's downtowns

11-21 Main Street is located on the west side of Main Street, just south of Water Street. It is one of five large commercial blocks constructed for businessman George Lilley. It was completed in 1897 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Downtown Torrington Historic District. The three-story Renaissance/Romanesque Revival yellow brick building is mixed-use, with commercial tenant spaces on the first floor, and residential apartments on the second and third floors. Inside, the building has two unusual straight run front-to-back center stairs, with access to floors from the landings between runs.

The three commercial tenant spaces on the first floor are currently occupied by a Subway restaurant, a tobacco shop, and a hair salon. The four second-floor apartments are currently vacant. On the third floor, two apartments are occupied and two are vacant.

Since this building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Downtown Torrington's Historic District, it is eligible for historic tax credits (See the Project Financing section).

For a detailed Model Building Conditions Assessment see the Appendix.

BUILDING PLANS

Existing

The following plans show the existing footprints of the buildings.

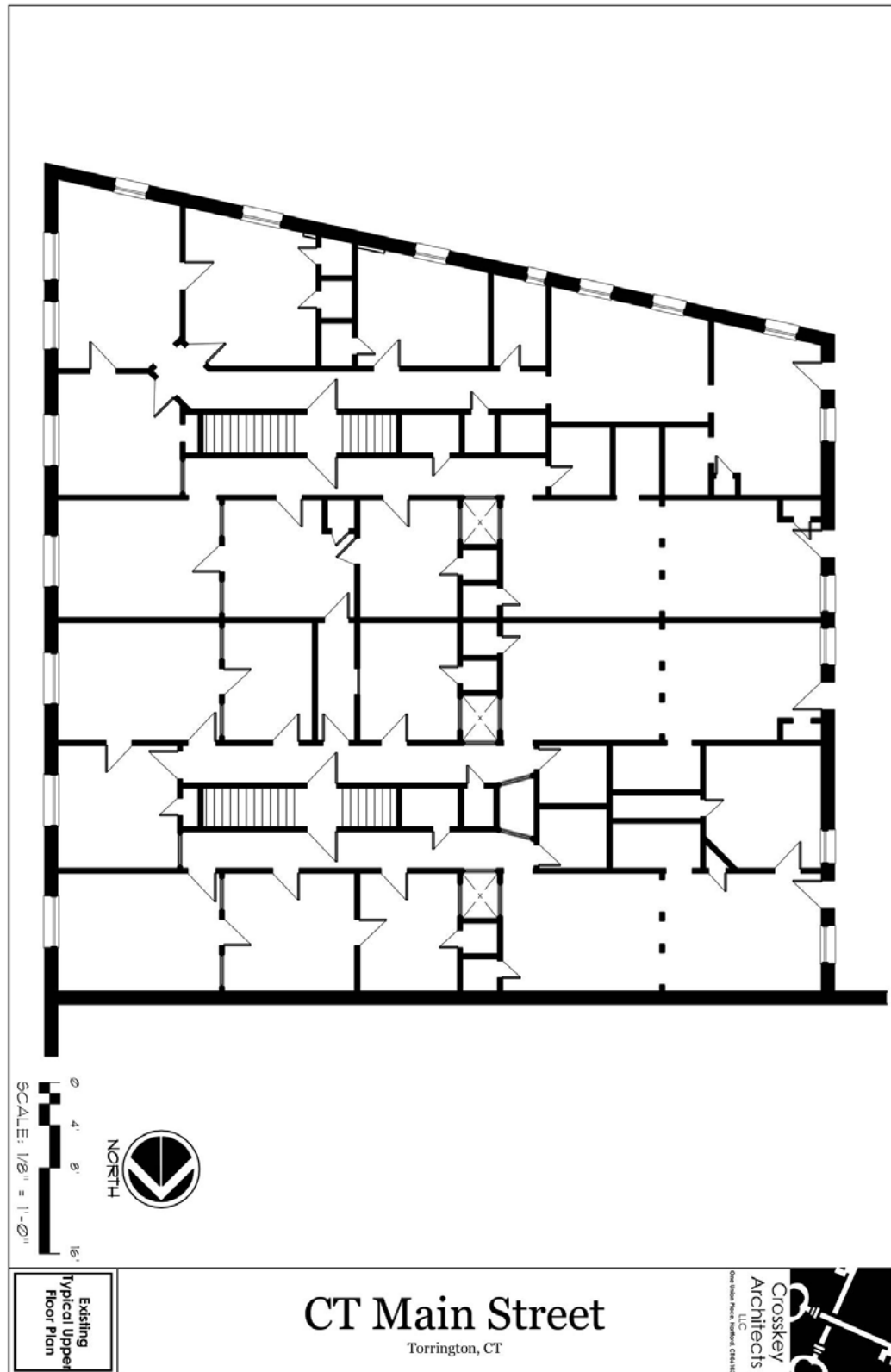


Figure 2

Schematic Design Plans

Based on existing building configuration and the owner's desire to have sixteen apartments, we have redesigned the upper two floors of the building into eight apartments per floor. Units are all one-bedroom apartments ranging in size.

Access to the second and third floor remains through the existing front staircases entered from the street level between the storefronts. Both stairs provide remote access to either ends of the common hallway. Removal of the rear wood porch allows more light for the windows on the west side of the building, increases building security by eliminating the potential for break-ins through second and third floor windows, and reduces building maintenance costs. By adding a new single flight stair from the rear of the building, we have provided a convenience access to a parking lot which may be used by tenants. This stair provides access to the central hallway and front stairs as well as common laundry rooms on both floors.

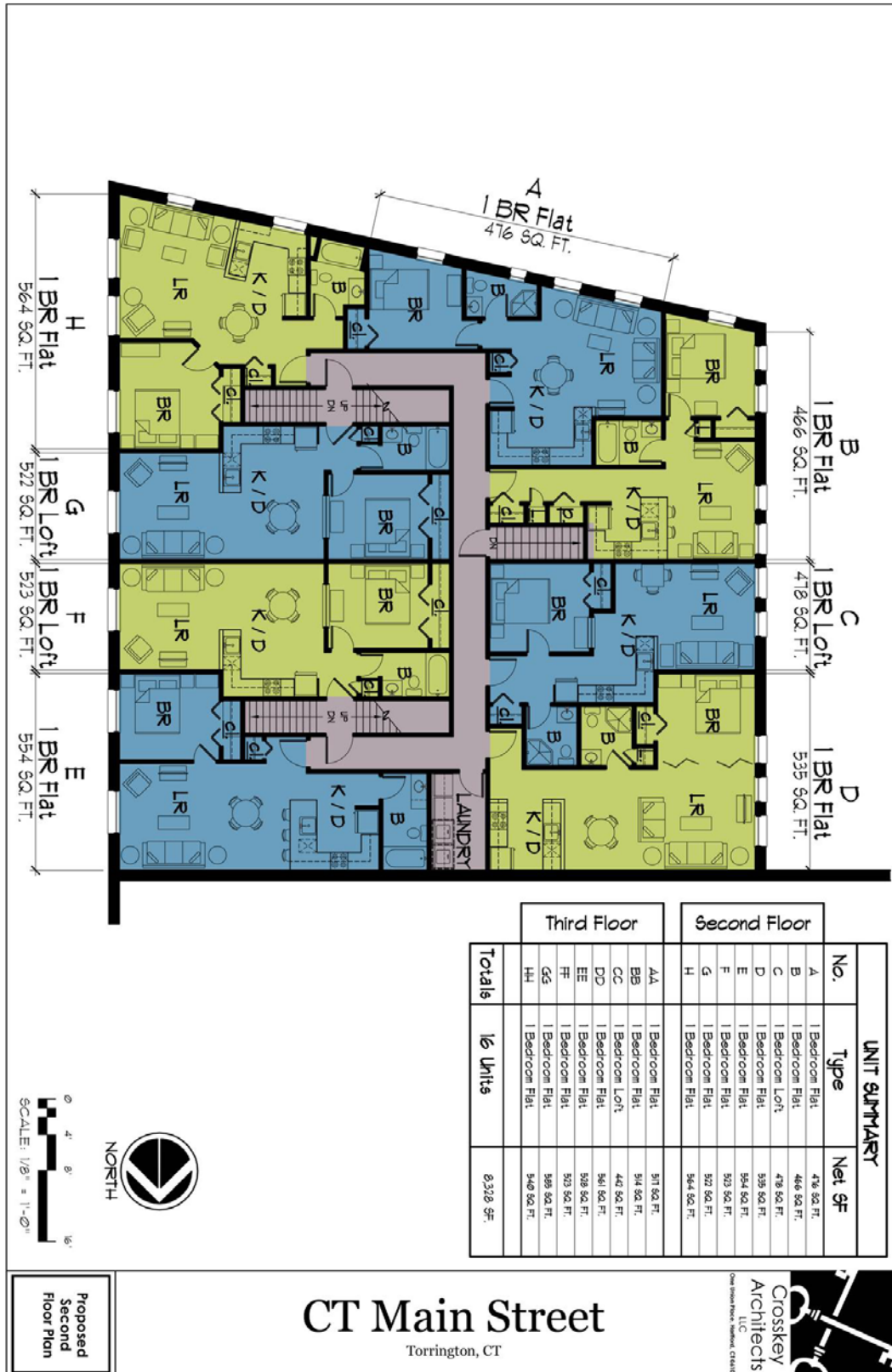


Figure 3

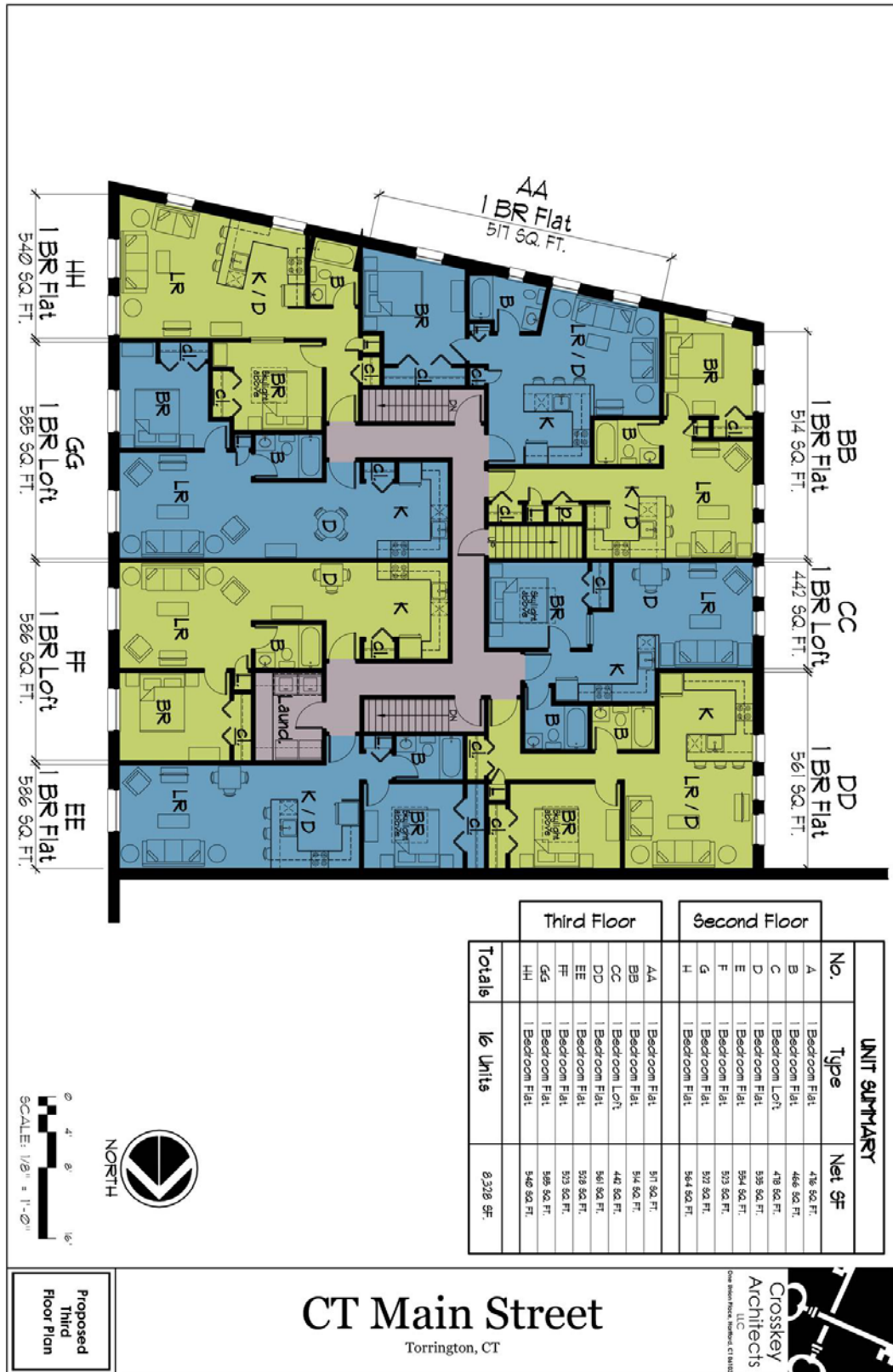


Figure 4

ARCHITECTURAL PROCESS

There are five steps involved in the building rehabilitation process, as outlined below. This study completes the first phase, Schematic Design, for 11-21 Main Street. The next step for these buildings is to assemble the project consultant team and continue with phases 2-5.

1. Schematic Design

During this phase, the architect will evaluate the owner's program, schedule, and budget. The building's existing conditions will be documented with floor plans and exterior elevations. These drawings will form the basis for the new schematic site plans, building plans, and elevations. The architect will develop a preliminary code analysis of building and a statement of probable construction cost.

2. Design Development

The next design phase, Design Development, is a more in-depth study of the schematic design with respect to materials, construction, and detailing. The schematic design is refined and brought into focus in preparation for the Contract Document phase. During Design Development, the site plan, building plans, apartment unit plans, and exterior elevations are finalized, along with structural, mechanical & electrical concepts. The code evaluation and statement of probable cost are updated. We recommend contacting two contractors to verify the costs at the conclusion of Design Development. Local builders may be willing to provide this service pro bono.

3. Contract Documents

Once Design Development is complete, documentation of the project's design will be completed in the form of drawings and specifications: the Contract Documents. These documents, produced by the architect and engineers, are used to obtain competitive bids from contractors and necessary permits. The architect will assist the owner and contractor with submission of documents for approval to the Building Department, Fire Marshal, and Utility Companies.

4. Bidding

During the bidding phase, general contractors are invited to submit pricing for the project. The architect will prepare the invitation to bid, issue addenda and clarifications as required, and review bids with the owner. If necessary, the architect will meet with the bidder to discuss value-engineering items and prepare addenda modifying the scope of the contract documents. The architect will assist the owner with awarding of contract and will also assist the owner and the contractor with submission of documents for approval.

5. Construction

During construction, the architect will make visits to the site and meet with the contractor to review progress of the work on the owner's behalf. The architect's construction services generally include periodic site visits and job meetings, job meetings minutes, processing of shop drawings, submittals, change orders, application for payment, and preparation of the final punch list (list of tasks/items necessary for the completion of the project).

Project Financing & Assistance to Property Owners

Redeveloping older mixed-use buildings in a downtown is one of the hardest real estate deals to finance and accomplish. This is even truer for the building in this report which would represent a pioneering effort for both the property owners and Torrington if successfully redeveloped.

This kind of development requires three distinct sets of expertise: project financing; design and construction; and ongoing property management. The Torrington Downtown Partners should begin the process by developing a team that includes:

- A real estate development consultant experienced with mixed-use development and financing, including historic tax credits and other financing from state agencies.
- A preservation architect experienced with historic buildings, who may also be able to assemble other professionals including structural and mechanical engineers.
- A general contractor, if the owners do not feel capable of overseeing the ongoing construction.
- A property management professional to help determine how to best manage the property once it is complete.
- A real estate professional to help market the apartments.

CMSC can provide advice on where to find the type of team members listed above.

PROJECT FINANCING

As referred to previously, the cost of rehabilitating the building will exceed what a traditional lender will be willing to provide in a mortgage. This is typically referred to as the "gap" that needs to be closed with additional equity and/or debt as well as potential reductions in construction or operating costs. Since financing is obviously a critical component, it is important to invest time at the outset to develop a realistic budget.

In this case, the property owner was provided with a detailed analysis of where the sources of funds could come from to finance the total project costs, along with the total development costs.

The Potential Sources of Funds & Projected Development Costs (Figure 6 below) indicates that the property is eligible for the State Historic Tax Credits which means that 25% of eligible rehabilitation costs can be taken as a tax credit. This could provide \$332,400 of equity for this project. Connecticut Light & Power (CL&P) has indicated that when the credits are issued, they will buy them at 100 cents on the dollar from the owners. CL&P is also willing to meet with the owners to see if they can take advantage of any of the company's energy efficiency programs.

Potential Sources of Funds & Projected Development Costs

Sources of Funds

Equity

State Historic Tax Credits	\$332,400
----------------------------	-----------

Financing (Debt)

First Mortgage Loan	\$1,100,000
---------------------	-------------

Additional Funds Needed	<u>\$104,700</u>
-------------------------	------------------

Total Sources	\$1,537,100
----------------------	--------------------

Development Costs

Construction Hard Costs	\$1,329,800
-------------------------	-------------

Architectural/Engineering	\$82,000
---------------------------	----------

Finance & Interim Costs	\$58,800
-------------------------	----------

Fees & Expenses	<u>\$66,500</u>
-----------------	-----------------

Total Costs	\$1,537,100
--------------------	--------------------

Figure 5

This financial summary indicates that an additional \$104,700 of debt, equity and/or reduced expenses is needed to have a financially viable project. The size of the first mortgage loan (\$1,100,000) was estimated based on the projected net operating income that this building will produce once occupied for a stabilized full year less assumptions for vacancies. The detailed analysis includes rent structure assumptions, operating costs and long-term cash flow projections. The goal within the long-term cash flow projections is to produce long-term positive cash flow and

sufficient debt service coverage (the ratio of net operating income over annual mortgage payment) to satisfy potential lender requirements.

The financing for this project needs to be planned for the construction period and for the long-term, starting when construction is complete and the units are fully rented. The cash flow projections and financing requirements for the construction period will need to take into account any funding sources that are not paid up front. This is the case with both federal and state historic tax credits - while the credit is confirmed prior to the start of construction, the actual vouchers and resulting cash are not provided until the construction is complete, deemed in compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and a certificate of occupancy has been issued for the properties.

CMSC will help the property owners prepare to meet with lenders to discuss the terms for potential mortgages. CMSC will also work with the property owners and the town to assess all potential resources to make this project viable. The property owners, City of Torrington and the Downtown Action Team (see the Downtown Management section below) should work collectively to implement this project. Potential resources may include:

- Federal historic tax credits – typically a project that is less than \$2 million in costs (such as this one) is too small-scale to utilize the federal historic tax credits. However, there are examples of local investors throughout the country, who have benefited from these tax credits because they have a sufficient amount of taxable passive income, and who may be willing to consider a smaller project because of the benefits provided to downtown. CMSC can introduce property owners and interested community leaders to people who can provide more information on how this might work. The federal credits could be worth as much as \$297,700 toward closing the project gap for this project.
- Subordinated loan provided by the municipality - Lynchburg, Virginia provided loans to support a mixed-use development project (although the project is not current with its loan payment). The City receives \$1.5 million in real estate, occupancy and sales tax revenues that it would otherwise not be collected if the building remained vacant (Dono 2013). This is often called “patient” capital – funding sources that are looking for a reasonable rate of return on their investment over a longer time horizon. Examples not only include union pension funds but also community foundations and even groups of local investors.
- Tax Increment Financing (TIF) - would allow the municipality to provide a loan or grant for the project to be paid by the incremental amount of taxes collected as the property is redeveloped. TIF are currently not utilized for these kinds of projects in Connecticut. The City and other stakeholders can work with CMSC and the Main Street network to determine how this may become a useful tool for mixed-use development projects. A project would not use both TIF and tax abatements (discussed below) because with a tax

abatement, the incremental taxes would not be paid to pay back the TIF. Most developers would prefer the TIF as the money would be upfront in a lump sum.

- State and federal financing programs - a word of caution regarding most of these programs, whether it is for historic tax credits or for projects that include affordable housing, they come with specific requirements that can often increase the cost and complexity of the project.

Note: A number of the above ideas came from the National Main Street Center's journal, *MAINSTREETNOW*, January/February 2013 and are posted on CMSC's website at www.ctmainst.org

A number of state and federal programs that incentivize housing development are only for affordable housing and only municipalities or non-profit entities are eligible, meaning projects like this one with private ownership cannot participate. CMSC wants to work with the municipality, property owners and other partners to advocate for more resources to be aggregated for mixed-use development. Although virtually all mixed-use develop projects are high risk, even if privately owned, they deserve support as much as projects primarily targeted for affordable housing. Also, it is not unusual for market and affordable rental rates to be the same in downtowns, making market rate apartment financing just as difficult to pencil out. As indicated in the beginning of this report, successful mixed-use development projects provide a greater return on investment to the state, municipality and local neighborhood and can provide the kind of housing in demand at various market rate price points to help rebalance downtowns that currently have either no housing or mostly subsidized housing.

Other possible options that can help this project become more viable by helping to reduce costs and/or market the project include:

- Commercial and Industrial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE) – is a program administered by the Connecticut Clean Energy Finance and Investment Authority allowing building owners to finance energy efficiency and clean energy projects by placing a voluntary assessment on their property tax bill. This program can provide 100% upfront financing for qualified energy upgrades. The financing is structured to be cash-flow positive, which means the monthly energy costs are reduced by more than the cost of financing the improvements. See also <http://www.c-pace.com/>
- The City of Torrington has a tax abatement program for downtown properties. This allows tax abatements for up to 5 years for older properties in the downtown area. Torrington should consider expanding this program, especially for difficult vacant properties, to up to 25 years as other towns are doing (for example the Town of Vernon).

- Rental rebates for downtown employees. Major employers in downtown Detroit have done this and have reversed that city's dramatic population loss leading to a 96% occupancy rate. This same concept can be instituted in Torrington.
- Municipalities in many states including Maryland, Massachusetts and New Jersey are providing incentives to city workers to live in the downtowns where they are employed. These incentives for living downtown can be one-time help with down payments to purchase a home or annual incentives to reduce rental costs. In a number of states, this program is called *Live Where You Work*.

DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION

Every effort has been made to keep the development cost estimate down while providing the most practical alternative with a level of quality that will be attractive to renters and long-lasting. The development team (suggested above) should be fully involved in this process, including the five steps of the Architectural Process (outlined above).

The detailed construction costs have been provided to the owners and every attempt has been made to provide realistic estimates including contingencies and set asides for replacement reserves. We recommend that the owners calculate these numbers based on their own experience working with properties in downtown Torrington to further refine the costs and then more accurately determine the amount of debt and equity that will be required for this project.

ONGOING PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

For property owners seeking assistance with marketing and managing the property, there are networks of property owners in Connecticut that can be of help. Some offer workshops on how to be a good landlord, screen tenants and manage property. There are also a number of property management firms that can manage the property if the owners do not intend to do so themselves. CMSC can provide contact information for these property owner networks and resources.

The property owners need to be part of a committed team of public and private partners all working together to bring these properties back to life. Although developing and financing a mixed-use building is currently riskier than a single use building, it's a risk with great rewards for the entire community and therefore worth the community's investment of time and resources.

Downtown Management

BUILDING DOWNTOWN MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

Downtown management is critical to the success of any downtown. CMSC works with communities to improve their downtown management function with a goal of creating vibrant and sustainable downtowns and Main Streets. The City of Torrington is a member of the Connecticut Main Street Center. In 2007, CMSC conducted an onsite visit and developed a summary report complete with a series of recommendations for improved downtown management. Ultimately, the report suggested that, “In order for the district to be vibrant and sustainable, Torrington needs to strive for dedicated downtown management with professional staff.” However, recognizing that would be a large undertaking, a series of interim steps were recommended, some of which are underway (Connecticut Main Street Center 2007).

CMSC’s report included a series of recommendations addressing *Organization: Public Education, Outreach and Partnership Building*. Torrington made progress addressing these issues through Come Home to Downtown. The project’s Advisory Team is a broad-based group of stakeholders who provided input about downtown concerns. Come Home to Downtown, the City’s Plan of Conservation and Development update in 2010 and the 2009 Downtown Municipal Development Plan all included a public outreach component. As noted in the Community Engagement section above, the City must continue to build on these efforts and consider other creative strategies to reach out to the larger community.

The CMSC report also recommended that Torrington develop a media relations campaign, which is currently underway with the new “It’s Happening Here!” campaign launched in May 2013. This campaign is the result of an Arts Catalyze Placemaking grant from the state and a significant financial commitment from the city. The consultant hired to for this effort has engaged the media and created a new website

(<http://itshappeninghere.com/>) designed to bring attention to the many events already taking place in Torrington. “The grant will further enable the City to create a micro-grant program for emerging artists and programs; establish a downtown Torrington arts district; undertake various vacancy treatments for empty storefronts; and create and leverage ways to actively fill those storefronts with viable merchants and businesses” (Torrington Office of Economic Development 2013). The



Main Street Marketplace

grant is an important first step towards another series of CMSC recommendations under *Promotion: Image/Branding, Retail Promotional & Events*.

The City has also partnered with others to host a series of great events designed to bring people downtown. These include:

- Main Street Marketplace
- Torrington Farmers Market
- Art Gallery Openings

Although Torrington has made significant progress since CMSC first issued its 2007 recommendations, many of them are still pertinent. Downtown Torrington still has its challenges with vacancies and underutilized properties. The City of Torrington has taken on increasing responsibility in recent years around economic development downtown. It is critical that the City and its downtown stakeholders identify leaders who can bring downtown Torrington to the next level of successful revitalization. In many ways the Torrington Downtown Partners are acting like a community development organization. The City should work with the Partners and representatives from the Come Home to Downtown Advisory Team to develop a strong, formalized “Downtown Action Team” to take the next steps and provide downtown management that will ensure implementation of many of the activities outlined above.

Recommendations

Torrington has yet to fully integrate housing into its Main Street. Torrington would do well to take the necessary steps aimed specifically at upper story redevelopment. More people living downtown will increase activity on the streets leading to additional patronage of local businesses. Additionally, the City and other downtown stakeholders must continue to work together to creatively promote a wide variety of residential living options for a mix of families and individuals.

In Dan Carmody’s *Organizational Development Strategy* report developed for Middletown CT, he recommends a series of steps specifically focused on bringing more residential development back to downtown. Many of these strategies are appropriate for any community interested in promoting downtown living, including Torrington.

Organizational Development Strategy Report – Recommendations

Prepared by Dan Carmody

- **Inventory downtown's housing supply** including unit sizes, rents, condition, and vacancy rates.
- **Convene a Downtown Housing Summit** that includes a:
 - *Downtown Housing Workshop*, an educational program designed to provide small property owners with information about the downtown market potential and financing.
 - *Upper Floor Housing Design Competition* in conjunction with the American Institute of Architects.
- **Create an Upper Floor Task Force** to continue to promote downtown living.
- **Establish a Community Based Development Entity** to partner with for-profit or non-profit partners to access to grants and loans that expand options to finance downtown housing projects.
- **Develop an Upper Floor Incentive Program** to move small property owners into action. (Carmody 2012)

DOWNTOWN ACTION TEAM

CMSC has also identified other ways that the City, members of the Come Home to Downtown Advisory Team and other downtown partners and institutions can help set the stage to attract more mixed-use development in downtown.

Once established as an effective downtown management program, the Downtown Action Team should become a resource center for mixed-use development. The Downtown Action Team can assume the roles of:

- Convener of key stakeholders to build consensus and implement priorities.
- Education and public relations.
- Data collector and information center.
- Coordinator of development incentives.

Convener of Key Stakeholders

Downtown stakeholders, agencies and commissions must work together to encourage and incentivize mixed-use development in Torrington. Many building owners do not have redevelopment experience and are in need assistance. For most lay people the permitting process to get the necessary approvals for a mixed-use project can be hard to understand, intimidating and costly.

The Downtown Action Team should act as a conduit between property and business owners and City officials, facilitating the growth of buildings with a mix of uses by relaying what is required for permitting approval. By doing so, property owners, residents and business leaders have a direct point of contact for their questions and concerns, and the City is able to focus on reviewing more complete and accurate permit requests.

The downtown development audit section of this report also provides a number of recommendations on how to make the redevelopment process more supportive of mixed-use development. The Downtown Action Team can also play a lead role in convening all the entities needed to implement these recommendations as well.

NCDC Strategy for Success

The Norwich Community Development Corporation (NCDC) is a great example of a downtown management function that acts as a conduit between property owners and the City, solving problems by translating regulations into lay language for residents while ensuring the City is provided with appropriate documentation. Jason Vincent, NCDC Vice President, reported these real-life instances of the NCDC creating win-win situations for both residents and the City.

- **Helping “unstuck” permits that have not been issued.** Sometimes all that’s needed is a call or email from NCDC staff to jumpstart the permit process or to help property owners implement guidance from city officials.
- **Aligning property owners with professionals to help them navigate the process efficiently.** Over time, NCDC staff developed a pool of experts and can direct property owners to the right professionals to quickly resolve issues.
- **Attend meetings with city staff and property owners to ask questions and provide post-meeting direction.** At times, NCDC is able to provide insight that inspires a local official to solve a problem less expensively.
- **Anxiety reduction.** Many people unfamiliar with the process are intimidated with presenting at a public meeting. Having a thorough understanding of the process enables NCDC staff to talk to the property owners about potential risks in the process. Just being coached on how to make the appropriate and succinct presentation can build confidence.
- **“You worry about the cheesesteaks and let us worry about the variance,”** NCDC staff told a local business man who needed a variance in order to expand his business. Both were able to do their respective jobs and now the business owner is making more of what the NCDC staff swear are the “state’s best cheesesteaks” in a larger facility (Vincent 2013).

Education and Public Relations

Property owners and developers are not going to risk investment in downtown unless they see an entire community working together to make this kind of development possible. Just like the old adage “it takes a village to raise a child”, it takes a town to re-purpose an older vacant building that is just beginning to turn the cycle of *dis*-investment into a cycle of *re*-investment. Investors want to see community planning, market potential and public leadership. The Downtown Action Team can help galvanize local leaders to meet with potential investors and property owners to build the trust and lines of communication that must come first.

Property owners, especially those whose upper floors have been vacant for a long time, may need help understanding there is a market for people wanting to live downtown. This may also be true for municipal leaders and potential lenders. To bolster confidence and educate the owners and city officials about the market’s true demand, the Downtown Action Team should hold workshops that present examples of successful mixed-use projects in similar communities. A range of speakers providing expertise from attorneys, lenders, developers and state and local officials can answer questions and dispel doubts about whether these types of initiatives can be successful and generate revenue. Tours of buildings with the potential to be successfully remodeled, or that have already been redesigned, provide concrete examples of what is possible.

Furthermore, the Downtown Action Team should begin to package downtown Torrington as a place where people interested in living downtown want to go. According to Chris Lee, president and CEO of the real estate consulting firm CEL & Associates, Inc., people who are considering living downtown are looking for more urban, walkable communities with multiple adjacent assets (e.g. hospitals, entertainment centers, retail and grocery stores, proximity to employment centers, dining facilities, transit centers, educational institutions and recreation areas) (Lee 2012). Downtown Torrington already has several of these attributes today, and certainly far more than any other downtown in the region. Even more encouraging Torrington has what is probably the number one attraction for downtown living – walkability. Implementing the recommendations listed in the Urban Design Audit section of this report will further enhance Torrington’s walkability and desirability as an urban living environment, an initiative the Downtown Action Team can spearhead.

Creating a list of potential developers interested in smaller downtown properties is another priority the Downtown Action Team should pursue. As a property owner looks to either sell or redevelop their property, the Downtown Action Team can then reach out and market the opportunity among the developer list. In the case of a property owner looking to redevelop their property but not sell, the Team can assist the property owner in drafting a Request for Proposals to send out to potential developers.

Workshops that Work
Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance – Harrisonburg, VA

In just ten years (2003-2013), Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance (HDR) went from zero to five hundred units of market rate housing in their downtown. One of the keys to their success was creating a sense of optimism and inspiring local property owners through a series of workshops that described how mixed-use development was achieved in other communities. The HDR then brought in experts to explain how to complete these projects – attorneys, architects, bankers and city and state officials talked about what resources are available, how to use historic tax credits, apply for financing and address construction issues. They also hosted a downtown loft tour which got people excited about the unique spaces with high ceilings, exposed brick walls and other amenities of urban living already in place (Dono 2013).

Torrington, through a newly created Downtown Action Team, can host similar events, inviting the media and devoting online resources to promoting these activities. In the meantime, the City should market the downtown which is already underway the “It’s Happening Here” campaign, as a place people want to move to, emphasizing its many attributes – namely walkability and proximity to entertainment and dining.

Data Collector and Information Center

While the demand for downtown living has grown significantly, it still needs to be quantified. Who wants to live in downtown Torrington? What are they looking for? And what are they willing to pay? This can be done by a highly qualified market analysis consultant and/or it can be done through local networks. Especially at the beginning of the redevelopment process, when the focus is on a relatively small number of housing units and there may not be the need for a full blown market analysis. Rather, what is most essential is an understanding of who are the most likely to be the first ones to move downtown.

The Downtown Action Team can help define the market and its potential in a number of ways:

- Work with local colleges, universities or survey professionals to develop a well-crafted survey for downtown employees and young professional associations.
- Utilize these same groups to mine available data. For example, Nielsen Prizm data from Claritas.com can segment groups of people by demographics and behavioral traits and characteristics. The group labeled the “Bohemian Mix” are early adopters likely to be the first pioneers moving into a downtown such as Torrington’s. From information like this a sense of potential market demand and price points can be built (Dono 2013).

- Engage local property owners and commercial realtors to build a data base of current rents in downtown and in adjacent neighborhoods and towns.
- Build a data base of case studies from comparable downtowns to provide guidance and inspiration on what can happen in downtown Torrington.
- Inventory the upper floor space and determine the maximum potential for residential units in downtown if completely built out. This would provide a sense of what the ultimate goal could be for residents in the downtown core.

Coordinator of Development Incentives

In city and town centers throughout the country case study after case study demonstrates that financing this kind of mixed-use development is complicated and generally requires many layers of debt and equity. The Downtown Action Team can provide potential projects with information regarding resources that are currently or potentially available. Some of these incentives may require the municipality to adopt new ordinances and/or regulations - so a certain amount of advocacy may also be required. See also the Project Financing section above.

There is a complex array of incentives that can be applied to making these projects feasible. These options will likely increase as more mixed-use development is built. The Downtown Action Team can serve not only as the repository of this information, but also help property owners learn what options are best for their projects and how to use these resources.

Urban Design Audit

PURPOSE AND NEED

The Come Home to Downtown pilot program aims to restore vitality and economic health of downtowns through the redevelopment and adaptive reuse of vacant and underutilized buildings with a mix of uses that include residences on upper floors. While it is important to understand how buildings can be designed, constructed or renovated to allow for multiple and diverse uses, it is equally important that the street, blocks and district within which the redeveloped property is situated possesses the characteristics and qualities that will support the new development and provide confidence to building owners, shopkeepers, investors and developers that their reinvestment in downtown will be successful.

The urban design audit was conducted in recognition of the need to understand and improve downtown streets, block, and districts to provide a supportive environment for reinvestment and to encourage people to once again shop, work, live and play downtown.

A key question prior to conducting an urban audit is *“What are the characteristics and qualities that will support the new development, attract people and provide investor confidence?”* We believe that the simple answer to that question is *“Walkability”*. Downtowns that are walkable are the places people prefer to shop in, to visit, to invest in and to live, work and play in. Conversely, places that are not walkable have empty streets at most hours of the day and experience disinvestment.

Walkability, therefore, is a crucial virtue of downtowns, but, as simple and intuitive as walkability may seem to the casual observer, paradoxically, it is not a simple concept to define and is quite elusive to attain. Complementary uses in the same building and throughout a downtown serve to create places of value and enhance economic activity because they help to make downtown more walkable; however, there are many other factors that contribute to walkability.

We broadly define walkability as a series of interrelated qualities and characteristics that make cities more livable. These include attractive and safe streets and sidewalks and compact development that not only promote pedestrianism, but also entice people to walk, stroll and wander.

A central business district (CBD) is truly walkable when its buildings, street trees, and other amenities offer beauty, provide comfort, and create enclosure; where pedestrians of all ages and abilities feel safe from traffic. The sidewalks are alive with people, colorful flowers and banners, artistic signs, impromptu art exhibits, alluring shop windows, sidewalk cafes, and pedestrian-level lighting. All of this richness and comfort combine to create urban environments that attract people and make them want to linger and enjoy their surroundings while they conduct everyday business, window-shop, or simply enjoy walking in a nice environment for health and recreation.

APPROACH and METHODOLOGY

The limits of study for this urban design audit encompass an area that is generally defined as downtown Torrington or the CBD. The study area is bounded on the north by Pearl Street, on the east by Wall Street and Willow Street, on the south by the Naugatuck River and on the west by John Street and Barber Street.

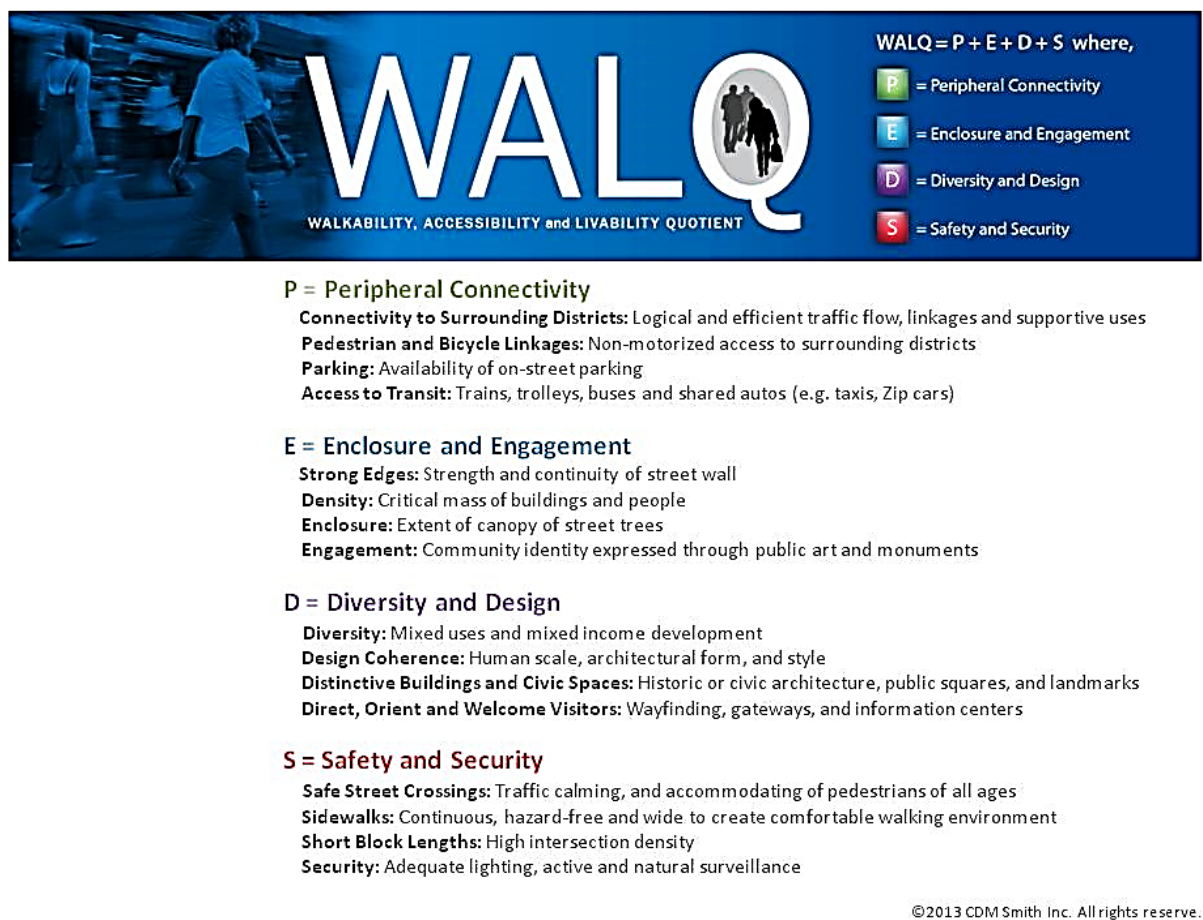


Figure 6: The Four Categories and 16 Indicators of WALQ

To conduct the urban design audit for downtown Torrington, CDM Smith first identified the essential qualities common to successful downtowns that contribute to walkability. We categorized four qualities, or indicators, within each of four distinct categories (Refer to Figure 7):

- Peripheral connectivity,
- Enclosure and engagement,
- Diversity and design, and
- Safety and security.

To better define these 16 qualities or PEDS indicators (i.e. qualities essential to walkability, accessibility and livability), we prepared a photo board for each indicator. Each board is comprised of photographs of other downtowns that provide examples or models of excellent place-making practices – techniques or strategies that all downtowns should strive for to make cities more walkable and more economically viable.

CDM Smith then developed a methodology to assess or quantify walkability. The process establishes a set of criteria for gauging each of the 16 indicators in a downtown and specific metrics by which to measure the degree to which a downtown, commercial block or “main street” meets the criteria. We term this methodology the *Walkability, Accessibility and Livability Quotient* (WALQ) (©2013 CDM Smith Inc. All rights reserved). The criteria define the desirable qualities and the metrics allow these indicators to be measured or scored on a street-by-street and block-by-block basis.

Each of the 16 PEDS indicators is assessed and scored on a three-point scale by codifying either empirical data or qualitative criteria. In effect, the process provides a framework for the evaluation of urban walkability by converting qualitative judgments into quantitative data. The resulting composite score provides a uniform method not only for comparing downtown Torrington with another, similar downtown, but also for tracking progress within downtown Torrington over time.

The scoring of downtown Torrington for each of the 16 indicators - further defined in the following section - was conducted using the metrics and locational parameters. The score sheet utilizes an Excel spreadsheet that was devised to tally scores for each street segment and for each indicator, convert or level composite scores to a three point scale and tabulate a total score for the entire downtown (also represented on a scale of 1 to 3).

Further, scores are color-coded on a chromatic scale where greenish hues indicate scores above the mean and reddish hues indicate scores below the mean. The color-coding allows a quick visual understanding of the scores which, when applied to corresponding street segments on a map of downtown (refer to Map 1: Walkability in the Appendix), also reveals patterns of walkability across blocks and throughout the downtown.

This assessment and scoring process, which we playfully call WALQ = PEDS, is intended to be accessible yet informative. We want to attract and involve townspeople in a methodical but

engaging assessment of their city so that they can better relate to their city's structure, understand its components, discover its deficiencies and then monitor it over time after the baseline condition has been established.

To enable townspeople to better understand how the WALQ scores for their downtown were derived, residents of downtown will be invited to walk the study area to apply the WALQ methodology themselves. This exercise will be conducted by an urban planner trained in the methodology and will not only allow townspeople to actively participate in the assessment and scoring process, but also to learn firsthand where and why downtown streets may be deficient or performing above the norm. They will also be encouraged to reassess their downtown streets using the WALQ scorecard every few years to determine where the streets have improved; or, possibly, where conditions may have slipped. By revisiting the criteria and scoring metrics of WALQ, townspeople will be able to identify the specific reasons why a street may be underperforming and work with planners, policy boards and town officials to correct conditions that are likely contributing to that underperformance.

ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING CONDITIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following section presents the 16 indicators of WALQ (Walkability, Accessibility and Livability Quotient) and:

- The reasons why each indicator is important to downtown walkability and long-term viability;
- The criteria the design audit team used in assessing them;
- The score that Downtown Torrington received for each (on a three point scale); and,
- The team's recommendations on how Torrington can improve its downtown relative to each of the indicators.

P1 Connectivity to Surrounding Districts

Why is this indicator important?

Connectivity provides for logical and efficient traffic flow, linkages between surrounding neighborhoods and downtown. For connectivity to succeed, the land uses on the periphery of downtown need to be supportive of downtown. Connections between downtown and valuable natural features also serve to attract people and provide recreational amenities for urban dwellers.

Criteria developed to assess connectivity:

- Access to the central business district (CBD) is convenient and free of barriers that restrict or inhibit mobility (e.g. limited access highways, excessive number of one-way streets, RR corridors, escarpments, and rivers)
- Walkable and attractive connections between downtown and significant natural features (e.g. rivers, shorelines, prominent hilltops)
- There are few one-way streets leading to the CBD or within the CBD.
- Surrounding land uses complement the CBD and support walkability.

See also Map 2: Connectivity & Key Views in the Appendix.

Connectivity score for downtown Torrington:

1.9



Auto-dominated East Main Street

Recommendations to improve connectivity in downtown Torrington:

Downtown Torrington is surrounded on two sides by dense, stable, attractive residential neighborhoods with a diversity of housing stock; however, residential neighborhoods to the south are separated from downtown by strip shopping centers and abandoned or underutilized industrial facilities. Also, the gateway to Downtown from the east and Route 8 (the city's main highway access) is less inviting because of the auto-oriented uses and non-descript design of many of its buildings. The city should encourage redevelopment of these uses over time by:

- Adopting the recommendations and incentivizing developers to implement the Downtown Municipal Development Plan (MDP)* for the riverfront and south neighborhoods; except that the MDP recommendation to convert Main Street from a two-way street to a one-way street should not be adopted since one-way streets in a downtown network are not conducive to commerce, because two-way streets:
 - Improve access to shops and businesses;
 - Provide a greater volume of pass-by traffic during non-peak hours;
 - Improve visibility of storefronts and business signs;
 - Result in slower traffic speeds due to “friction” of on-coming vehicles;
 - Enable easier navigation and less circuitous driving; and,
 - Improve “Natural Surveillance (‘eyes on the street’).
- Applying downtown design guidelines to uses along East Main Street between Exit 44 of Route 8 and Downtown.
- Improving recreational access to its riverfront.

P2 Pedestrian and Bicycle Linkages

Why is this indicator important?

Pedestrian and bicycle transportation increase accessibility to the CBD and enhance commerce and social interaction. Cities that accommodate cycling and walking benefit in many aspects including reduced traffic congestion, reduced parking issues, and more importantly, improvement in the quality of life for its residents.

Criteria developed to assess pedestrian and bicycle linkages:

- Protected and continuous bicycle and pedestrian routes or on-street bike lanes are provided from the CBD to surrounding neighborhoods.
- The presence of off road shared use paths or greenways leading to the CBD, or in close proximity to downtown.



Sidewalks on Water Street

Pedestrian and bicycle linkages score for downtown Torrington:

1.0

Recommendations to improve pedestrian and bicycle linkages in downtown Torrington:

The ped-bike linkages score of 1.0 is quite low and reflects the lack of bicycle facilities both in Downtown Torrington and between the downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods. Also, many of the sidewalks leading into the downtown from its outskirts are in very poor condition. It is important that the City improve this score by:

- Extending planned multi-use trails, linear parks and greenways (e.g. the proposed Naugatuck River Greenway) along river corridors to downtown.
- Improving safety for vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle traffic throughout downtown by providing better pedestrian and bicycle facilities and utilizing appropriate traffic-calming techniques to reduce vehicular travel speeds.
- Planning and implementing construction of on-street bicycle lanes or sharrows and “Share the Road” signs to and through downtown.

Refer to recommendations under Indicator S1 – “Safe Street Crossings” for additional pedestrian and bicycle safety recommendations.

P3 Parking

Why is this indicator important?

On-street parking is valuable because it: a) supports commercial establishments; b) increases pedestrian comfort by providing a buffer from moving traffic; c) reduces need for off-street parking lots that require much more pavement per space and displace higher value development; d) facilitates safe and convenient curb-side drop-off of passengers; e) increases pedestrian activity on the street; (e.g. taxis, Zip cars); and, f) provides a cue to motorists that they are entering a low speed area.

The availability of parking is a key issue for most downtowns and main street business owners. Since land in older retail districts is often in short supply, and large surface parking areas are generally not conducive to a pedestrian environment, large parking lots are not good for Main Street retail districts. Surface parking lots often cover more ground than the commercial buildings they are intended to serve (U.S. EPA 2006). Communities often have to balance the need for parking and the inclination of businesses to provide parking to meet peak hour demand during the busiest shopping periods with the desire to have a compact, pedestrian-friendly, and aesthetically pleasing downtown or Main Street. Maximizing on-street parking is a smart way to meet parking demand in a downtown without destroying the essential qualities that contribute to walkability.

Criteria developed to assess parking:

- On-street parking should be provided along both sides of all streets, wherever possible
- CBD policies should encourage short-term parking and discourage long-term
- CBD parking policies should also recognize the traffic calming qualities that on-street parking provides (more on this topic is discussed under Indicator S1 'Complete Streets'.
- Large off-street parking lots should be avoided especially if they are visible from the street or disrupt the "street wall" (refer to Indicator E1 – "Strong Edges"). Small, discretely located off-street parking lots or well-designed parking structures are preferred.

Map 3: Traffic, Transit & Parking in the Appendix, provides a general overview of the availability and location of large surface or structure parking.

Parking score for downtown Torrington:

1.6

Recommendations to improve parking in downtown Torrington:

Downtown Torrington scored low for this indicator. Even though the CBD has relatively few large, off-street parking lots that are visible from the street, many of its streets do not provide on-street parking (refer to Map 3: Traffic, Transit & Parking in the Appendix).

The parking score for downtown can improved by:

- Recognizing the value of on-street parking to local merchants and businesses by increasing the number of on-street parking spaces.
- The City of Torrington should conduct a traffic study, not to improve the level-of-service of motor vehicles but to determine how downtown streets can serve to bring responsible motorists to downtown, not high speed traffic through downtown. This study should review the need for each vehicle turning lane that displaces on-street parking and reassess whether that turning lane is truly needed to avoid traffic gridlock. If the turning lane's utility is marginal, then it should be reconverted to on-street parking (at least during off-peak traffic hours).
- Screen surface parking lots to minimize a negative visual element of downtown. Landscaping, trees and low walls can mitigate the negative visual effects of parking lots and make a significant difference in the overall visual qualities of downtown.



Parking on Water Street

P4 Access to Transit

Why is this indicator important?

Providing a variety of transportation options - such as safe and reliable public transportation, sidewalks, bike paths and walking trails - promotes and improves health, reduces time spent commuting, conserves energy and safeguards the environment. Furthermore, many community residents are unable to drive or do not have access to a car. Providing transportation options creates communities where all citizens have a real choice on how they get around and where seniors, young people and people with disabilities can live comfortably.

Criteria developed to assess transit:

Within one-half mile (2,600 feet) of the center of the CBD there is convenient, robust and frequent:

- Local bus service
- Intercity bus service
- Paratransit service
- Commuter train or trolley
- Taxi service
- Zip Car (or other shared auto)

Transit score for Downtown Torrington:

1.0

Recommendations to improve transit in downtown Torrington:

Downtown Torrington scored quite low under this indicator because it lacks fixed bus routes and provides minimal regularly scheduled transit service. The only transit offerings within downtown are paratransit services offered by the Northwestern Connecticut Transit District under its "Dial-a-Ride Program" and a local "Candystriper" service operated by Kelley Transit. The City should work with regional and state agencies to improve the safety and efficiency of its transportation system in a manner that:

- Accommodates the variety of transportation choices necessary to support downtown development (i.e. enable better land use patterns and more compact development)
- Improves access to and use of public transit and reduces dependence on the single-occupant auto
- Minimizes the amount of land required for automobile travel and storage
- Provides an interconnected transportation network
- Better connects people to jobs
- Supports non-motorized transportation (walking and biking).

E1 Strong Edges

Why is this indicator important?

A strong, continuous street wall provides enclosure and intimacy to the street; it also enlivens the street by virtue of ambient light from windows and the movement of people. Strong edges also change the psychological feel of the street, they send a clear reminder to motorists of the dual functions of the street - as both a movement corridor and as a place for social and cultural activity (Engwicht 1999). Consequently, the attention to detail of the design of the street edge and the creation of an interesting and continuous “street-wall” on private property also have a moderating influence on motor vehicle speeds and obligate motorists to drive slowly and attentively (Nozzi 2011). All of these visual cues impart a distinctly downtown character to the street that will remind motorists that they are in special district and are using streets that are designed for multiple users. People, not cars, are the priority.

Buildings in the CBD should be at least two stories; the optimal height and spacing of buildings varies by block depending on the width, rhythm and intensity of development on the street. Off-street parking downtown should be carefully designed to avoid disruption of the street wall and should be discretely located to the rear of buildings.

Criteria developed to assess strong edges:

- Buildings at least two stories tall (optimal height and spacing varies by block per buildings on street that have a scale or prominence that relate well to the streets)
- Avoid parking garages fronting on street (unless they have retail uses on ground floor)
- Avoid vacant sites or surface parking lots close to the street
- Buildings should abut each other or be very closely spaced; if a gap is typically provided between buildings, then it should be of consistent width to create a rhythm
- Buildings set at the back of walk or consistent setback - e.g. 10 feet from back of walk)

Note: Iconic, religious, or stately civic buildings may be exempted if they provide civic/cultural benefit.

Strong edges score for downtown Torrington:

2.0

Recommendations to improve strong edges in downtown Torrington:

While Main Street and portions of East Main Street and Water Street have impressive “street walls”, the presence of strong edges throughout the rest of downtown is sporadic since many streets have gaps manifested as vacant lots or off-street parking, as evidenced by the relatively low score for this indicator.

- Torrington should review its zoning regulations to ensure that infill development is required to reinforce the street wall and that all buildings shall:
 - Be located at the back of sidewalk;
 - Be closely spaced;
 - Have no off-street parking lots between the building and the street; and,
 - Not have drive-through windows that disrupt the street wall and jeopardize pedestrian safety.

E2 Density

Why is this indicator important?

A critical mass of multi-story buildings on a downtown block adds great value to the economic vitality, social vitality and security by bringing people to downtown at many hours of the day or night.

Upper story residential space adds particular value since residents provide 24/7 activity and help to sustain retail commerce in the CBD. This high density of buildings contributes greatly to 'walkability' and allows people to visit multiple destinations without having to drive.



Continuous "Street Wall" on East Main

The proximity and mix of uses also allow for shared parking and serve to reduce parking demand - in part because each use would have a different or complimentary peak hour and because the development would have a 'park once-and-walk' layout that would allow people to visit multiple destinations without having to drive. Less space devoted to parking means that more space can be allocated for taxable, people-generating buildings.

Criteria developed to assess density:

- Floor Area Ratio* is used to measure critical mass of buildings because it compares all floors of all buildings on a block to the total land area of the block. Streets that possess a high ratio will score well.

*Floor Area Ratio (F.A.R.) is derived by dividing the number of square feet of land area of the block by the approximate total square footage of all floors of all buildings on the block.

See also Map 4: Building Density in the Appendix.

Density score for downtown Torrington:

2.0

Recommendations to improve density in downtown Torrington:

Downtown Torrington scored quite well under this density indicator category because many of its streets are fronted by tall and sizable buildings. However, there are many underutilized parcels, vacant lots or parking lots within downtown that could accommodate new development. The City can improve its density score by:

- Encouraging infill development that is planned, designed and constructed under the precepts of New Urbanism (or mimicking the old urbanism of historic downtown Torrington) would complement the density, height, scale, and character of the existing buildings that front on Main Street. Infill development would provide a critical mass of leasable space and retail services to improve the economic sustainability of downtown and support its long-term viability.
- Review zoning and parking regulations to ensure that a minimum density of 1.0 F.A.R. is enabled.

E3 Enclosure of street by canopy of street trees

Why is this indicator important?

A canopy of street trees can provide more than aesthetic enhancement. A healthy and continuous canopy of trees can: a) provide vertical and overhead enclosure to the street that results in a change of driver behavior (slows traffic); b) lowers the ambient temperature of sidewalks in the summer through shade and thereby improves the comfort of pedestrians; and, c) improve retail sales.

Criteria developed to assess the tree canopy:

- Street trees are spaced evenly along the edge of street at intervals that do not exceed 75 feet.
- Street trees are healthy, are of a species appropriate for downtown's urban conditions and of sufficient size to create shade and an effective canopy while not obscuring business storefronts and signage.



Enclosure score for downtown Torrington:

1.4

Lack of downtown street trees

Recommendations to improve enclosure in downtown Torrington:

Downtown Torrington's score for enclosure by street trees is quite low. The City should improve this score by:

- Revising municipal policies to require the planting of street trees when streets undergo significant reconstruction.
- Encouraging shopkeepers and building owners to plant and adopt a street tree. The City of New Haven has significantly increased the survival rate and improved the health of street trees through such a program.

E4 Engagement

Why is this indicator important?

Public art installations and monuments within the CBD express community identity, reflect community pride and reveal history and culture; where such features are frequently encountered in the CBD or are noted beyond the region for their iconic value, they can elevate the ability of the CBD to attract people and investments.

Criteria developed to assess engagement:

Public art and monuments should be:

- Unique and engaging
- Frequent and unexpected
- Allow people to associate a place with its culture and history
- Showcased in public and private sites
- Be welcoming to the pedestrians to touch or even sit or climb on

Engagement score for downtown Torrington:

2.0



Civil War Memorial at Coe Park

Recommendations to improve engagement in downtown Torrington:

Downtown Torrington possesses many impressive, historic and notable statues, monuments and murals. However, more can be done to encourage activity on the street and to make downtown more attractive to strolling and shopping:

- Install outdoor art such as permanent and temporary art or sculpture displays and murals.

D1 Diversity

(i.e. Mixed uses and mixed income development)

Why is this indicator important?

A diverse mix of uses that cater to or accommodate people from a diversity of incomes creates a more sustainable and stable CBD. A downtown commercial district should have retail and restaurants uses as the predominant ground floor use and offices or residential uses on upper floors. Uses must complement and support each other; for example industrial buildings, warehouses, drive-through restaurants, auto service or repair stations, windowless buildings are examples of buildings that do not complement or support the CBD or add value to the CBD.

Offering a range of housing choices downtown will spur new development. Not everyone has the same housing wants or needs. Some singles prefer to rent apartments, young couples may need starter homes and empty nesters often look for condominiums close to town. Most prefer to be within a short distance to their workplace or within a walking distance of a transit station.

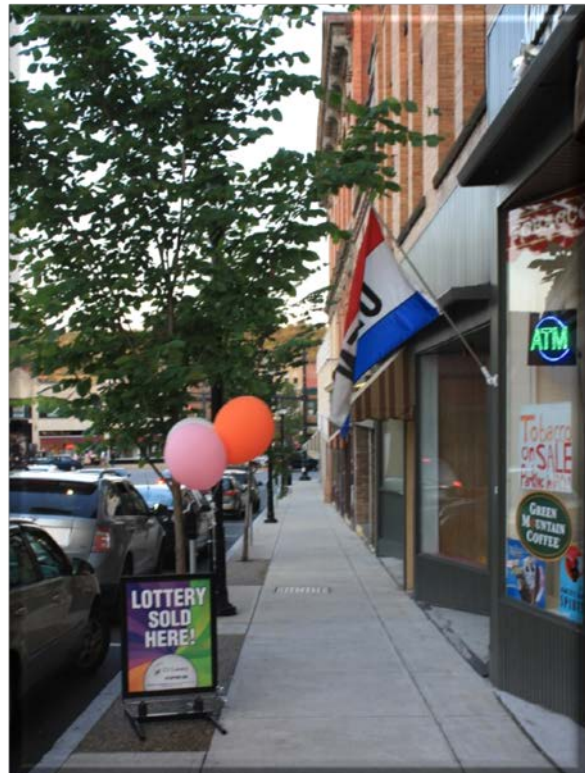
Criteria developed to assess diversity:

Diverse, mixed-use CBDs should possess:

- Predominantly retail and restaurant uses on the ground floor
- Supportive office or residential uses on upper floors
- Housing should be the dominant land use and should be designed and priced for individuals and families across a wide range of incomes from those classified as affordable housing to market rate housing and even luxury housing.
- Few vacant buildings

Diversity score for downtown Torrington:

1.9



A Mix of Uses Downtown

Recommendations to improve diversity in downtown Torrington:

While many of downtown Torrington's buildings accommodate multiple uses and municipal regulations allow multiple uses in the CBD, downtown's score for diversity is quite lackluster due to vacant or underutilized space in the CBD and a minimal amount of downtown housing. The City can improve diversity through the following:

- Enable construction of housing above retail uses to encourage people to work and shop close to where they live.
- Incentivize developers to provide a range of housing options for downtown living, including townhouses or condominiums, accommodations for dependent elders and homes that service-providers and Millennials can afford.
- Encourage infill development to match or complement the density, height, scale, and character of the existing buildings in downtown's core blocks.
- Identify underserved markets downtown and seek out businesses that can fill that void in order to reach a critical mass of retail space and services that will improve the economic sustainability of downtown and support its long-term viability.
- Identify niches of creative services or businesses that could compliment downtown businesses and attract a new demographic of downtown residents (such as artists, photographers, craftspeople, writers, musicians and other performers, computer technicians) and implement programs to attract and retain this creative class (e.g. live-work studios, tax incentives, partnerships with nearby colleges and universities).

D2 Design Coherence

Why is this indicator important?

Buildings with good proportions (e.g. balanced ratio of windows to wall area), prominent and ornate entrances, warm, natural materials, well-scaled and tasteful signage, interesting and engaging adornments (e.g. awnings, lighting and banners), and possess an architectural design that is emblematic of the city or region represent the ultimate place-making features.



Well-scaled & Well-designed Buildings

Criteria developed to assess design coherence:

Design coherence exists when buildings possess:

- Good proportions (e.g. ratio of windows to wall area)
- Prominent and ornate entrances
- Warm, natural materials

- Well-scaled and tasteful signage
- Interesting adornments (e.g. awnings, lighting)
- A regional architectural style

Design coherence score for downtown Torrington:

2.0

Recommendations to improve design coherence in downtown Torrington:

Downtown Torrington scored relatively well in this category because residents value their downtown and understand the importance of design coherence and its roles in creating a beautiful cityscape and in place-making. City officials have created and codified a set of design standards or guidelines that require new construction to echo the above design principles. The City should further improve this score by:

- Reinforcing its commitment to the principles of its *Torrington Design Review Guidelines*, *Downtown Historic Area* and redouble efforts to enforce the design standards.

The City should consider creating architectural and site design guidelines similar to the Design Review Guidelines for the Historic District that would apply to other areas in and around downtown Torrington (i.e. areas adjacent to the historic downtown that are not currently covered by the current guidelines. (Torrington Planning & Zoning Commission 2005)

D3 Distinctive Buildings and Civic Spaces

Why is this indicator important?

Historic or civic architecture, landmarks, public squares and other places of distinction convey community pride, provide forums for public gathering and offer respite from the busy urban environment. Examples include: 1) Historic structures; 2) iconic buildings of statewide import; 3) Notable landmarks, public squares or parks; 4) Prominent gateway buildings or those that attract through terminal views.

Criteria developed to assess distinctive buildings and civic spaces:

Landmarks include:

- Historic structures
- Iconic buildings of statewide import
- Public squares or parks
- Prominent gateway buildings (esp. those that provide a terminal view)



Prominent Landmarks

See also Map 5: Landmarks & Gateways and Map 6: Open Space & Civic Spaces in the Appendix.

Distinctive buildings and civic spaces score for downtown Torrington:

3.0

Recommendations to improve distinctive buildings and civic spaces in downtown Torrington:

Downtown Torrington received the best possible score for this indicator because it possesses an enviable inventory of distinctive landmark buildings and public spaces and is entrusted with the stewardship of numerous unique, historic and irreplaceable buildings.

- The City should continue to safeguard this treasured past and develop or refine policies that require new buildings in downtown to be designed and constructed in a manner that complements this rich and traditional architectural setting.

D4 Direct, Orient and Welcome Visitors

Why is this indicator important?

Wayfinding, gateways, information centers and promotional efforts help make the CBD welcoming to visitors, convey hospitality, promote tourism and increase investor confidence that the CBD is stable and attentive to details.

Criteria developed to assess hospitality:

Welcoming details include:

- Directory maps and directional signs (for every mode of travel: walking, biking, transit, and motor vehicle)
- Visitor info centers
- Attractive banners
- Attractive gateways
- Informative, current websites.

Hospitality score for downtown Torrington:

1.0



Way-finding

Recommendations to improve hospitality in downtown Torrington:

Downtown received a relatively low score for this category. More should be done to direct, welcome and orient visitors by:

- Implementing a program to create directory signs and way-finding signs throughout downtown.
- Coordinating Signage: Provide a coordinated, simple and visually unified system of directional signage to orient visitors to public parking, transit stations, parks and other points of interest should be established.
- Embracing Smart Phone technology: Implement program to orient visitors to services and activities using smart phone apps.
- Increasing appreciation of downtown Torrington's history and architecture such as through the historic walking tour under development by the Historic Society.

S1 Safe Street Crossings

Why is this indicator important?

Traffic calming and accommodating of pedestrians of all ages are important to walkability. Inadequate pedestrian signals, poor lighting, poorly marked crosswalks, long distances from curb to curb, long distances between crosswalks, and speeding vehicles are factors that contribute to a lack of safety.

Walkable Urbanism and Complete Streets (www.CompleteStreets.org) principles advocate more restrictive dimensional standards and traditional street design strategies to keep vehicles in check or calm traffic. A 'Complete Street' is a road that is designed and operated to enable safe access for all users: motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders. The focus is on designing streets to balance safety and convenience for everyone - older individuals, children, and people with disabilities.

In May of 2013, the City Council of Torrington approved a resolution supporting Complete Streets. The resolution included the following statement: *"...to the extent feasible, the City of Torrington will incorporate complete streets design considerations and practices as a routine part of infrastructure planning and implementation."*

This is an important step since it recognizes the many benefits of a walkable downtown including: a) reduced energy consumption through reduced dependence on automobiles; b) greater pedestrian activity on downtown streets and livelier retail sales; and, c) healthier lifestyles (people can get their exercise by walking to school, work, friends' homes or nearby businesses).

Criteria developed to assess safe street crossings:

Features that improve safety for pedestrians at urban intersections include:

- Highly visible crosswalks
- Pedestrian countdown signals
- Tight curb radii
- Narrow traffic lanes
- Pedestrian refuge islands (pedestrians should not have to travel more than 50 feet on any one crosswalk unless a pedestrian refuge island is provided)
- Curb extensions (or bulb-outs)
- Speed tables



Unsafe Street Crossings

Safe street crossings score for downtown Torrington:

1.2

Recommendations to improve safe street crossings in downtown Torrington:

Downtown Torrington scored poorly in this very important indicator. Following are general recommendations to create safer and more people-friendly streets; however, implementation of the recommendations will require significant further analysis and design because traffic-calming improvements and Complete Streets solutions are very location-specific and require traffic engineers, urban planners and transportation planners to address the multi-dimensional aspects of balancing street networks for all users.

- Downtown Torrington has several intersections that are not pedestrian friendly because of high traffic volumes, high vehicle speeds, and minimal pedestrian countermeasures.
- The City should follow-up on its Complete Streets Resolution and provide more guidance and prioritization of traffic calming measures. This should be done by adopting a 'Complete Streets' policy and creating a 'Complete Streets' manual of standards and guidelines.
- There is no distinct way to define a 'Complete Street', each street type has different needs depending on its setting and traffic volumes. Based on the context and the modes expected, a combination of elements such as wide sidewalks, bike lanes, crosswalks, median islands, curb extensions, and narrow travel lanes can be provided to moderate driver behavior and improve safety. The City of New Haven has developed a "toolbox" and other standards and guidelines to help promote and implement 'Complete Streets' improvements and traffic safety measures that Torrington could use as a model to improve its downtown street network.

Sources cited in above recommendations box: *City of New Haven, Complete Streets Design Manual* (DeStefano 2010); and definition of Complete Streets (LaPlante 2008).

S2 Sidewalks

Why is this indicator important?

Sidewalks that are continuous, free of tripping hazards and wide enough to accommodate appropriate levels of pedestrian activity create a comfortable walking environment and are essential to a well-functioning downtown.

Criteria developed to assess sidewalks:

Sidewalks should be:

- Continuous with few disruptions by driveways or wide curb-cuts
- Hazard-free (free of cracks, heaves or potholes)
- Wide enough to permit three people to walk side-by-side

Sidewalks score for downtown Torrington:

2.0

Recommendations to improve sidewalks in downtown Torrington:

Downtown Torrington's sidewalks are quite functional and attractive, hence the very good score for this category. Recommendations to improve the pedestrian environment include:

- Provide better sidewalks between peripheral neighborhoods and downtown.
- Improve pedestrian access between store entrances and rear parking lots to provide more direct and visually attractive pathways.
- Improve pedestrian connections and provide vehicular connections between rear parking lots to encourage the sharing of parking among multiple property owners or uses. Encourage wider sidewalks with pedestrian amenities such as curb extensions or parklets with sidewalk cafés, and benches.



Sidewalk Cafes

S3 Short Block Lengths (or high intersection density)

Why is this indicator important?

Short blocks result in a high density of intersections in a downtown district and thereby improve street connectivity. Street connectivity refers to the directness of links and the density of connections in the network. City streets (especially commercial streets) should be laid out as an interconnected network to improve traffic circulation and to improve walkability. A well-connected grid of streets has many short links, numerous intersections and minimal cul-de-sacs. To provide optimum circulation, access, and crossing opportunities, an ideal downtown block length is between 200 and 400 feet (Oregon Transportation and Growth Management Program 1999).

As connectivity increases, travel distances decrease and route options increase, creating a more accessible and flexible system for motorists and pedestrians. Short block lengths encourage walking and promotes safety and security while long block lengths stymie social interaction and inhibit pedestrianism.

A recent study found that the highest risk of fatal or severe crashes occurs in CBDs with very low street network density and that safety outcomes improve as the intersection density increases (Marshall and Garrick 2008). The study also found that cities with an intersection density of less than 80 intersections per square mile experience a much higher incidence of motor vehicle accidents than cities with more than 225 intersections per square mile.

Criteria developed to assess short block lengths:

- Maximum block length is 200 ft. by 400 ft.
- Optimal intersection density (which is a function of block length) is over 200 intersections per square mile.

Intersection density score for downtown Torrington:

2.0

Recommendations to improve intersection density in downtown Torrington:

The relatively high score of 2.5 for this indicator is due to the fact that the intersection density of downtown Torrington is 155 per square mile, which is comes close to the optimal density of 200 intersections per square mile.

- Avoid closing or cul-de-sac-ing downtown streets.
- Provide more street and pedestrian connections by improving undeveloped rights-of-way, improving alleys, and redeveloping larger blocks with new streets.
- Redevelop the street network to provide short street segments and walkable block sizes as much as possible.

S4 Security

Why is this indicator important?

The importance of personal security, improving the safety of streets, and reducing the incidence of crime cannot be understated. A sustainable CBD cannot be attained if people do not feel safe. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) strategies can improve public safety through the provision of adequate lighting, by increasing levels of police surveillance, and through other physical improvements and community-building principles that deter criminal behavior (cpted.net). Natural surveillance can be established by taking steps to increase the perception that people can be seen. This can be accomplished by designing building and streets to maximize visibility, foster increased activity, encourage positive social interaction within private and public space, and provide a greater sense of community (Crowe). Through adequate lighting, active and natural surveillance, potential offenders feel increased scrutiny which is often enough of a deterrent to crime (Saville and Mangat 2008).

Criteria developed to assess security:

Each segment of the street should have:

- Adequate street lighting
- Frequent sources of ambient light from adjacent buildings
- No blind alleys or areas where criminals could lurk (e.g. walls, hedges)

Security score for downtown Torrington:

2.0



Business Watch Sign on Water Street

Recommendations to improve security in downtown Torrington:

Downtown Torrington's security score is relatively good. Nonetheless, security is extremely important to the viability of downtown and to the safety of citizens and visitors; therefore, the following recommendations should be a priority for downtown:

- Conduct a street by street audit of lighting and natural surveillance using Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles.
- Improve personal security and the safety of the streets by providing adequate lighting, increased police presence, and other physical improvements and community building principles that deter criminal behavior and dispel any perceptions that streets are unsafe.

SUMMARY OF WALQ SCORES

As discussed above, CDM Smith assessed downtown Torrington for walkability, accessibility and livability under each of the 16 indicators. The score sheet which tabulates and calculates the scores for each street segment and for each indicator is provided in Appendix.

The scores for each street segment area also presented visually on a map of downtown Torrington (refer to the Appendix, Map 1: Walkability). The visualization of “Walkability” is depicted as color-coded street segments utilizing a chromatic scale as shown in Figure 8. Greenish hues indicate scores above the mean and reddish hues indicate scores below the mean. The color-coded ‘Walkability Map’ reveals patterns of walkability across blocks and throughout the downtown. It is quite a telling map relative to the economic viability and livability of downtown because it factors all 16 indicators including pedestrian accessibility, connections to peripheral supportive uses or CBDs, completeness and distinctiveness of the street edge (street wall), diversity of land uses, desirability of destinations and safety of street crossings.

W.A.L.Q. Color Code		
Very Poor	1.3 or lower	
Poor	1.4	
	1.5	
Below Average	1.6	
	1.7	
Marginal	1.8	
	1.9	
Good	2.0	
	2.1	
Very Good	2.2 or higher	

Figure 7
Color Key to Scoring System

Following is a summary of the WALQ scores for downtown Torrington (Note: references to scores are based on 3 point scale where 1.0 is the lowest score and 3.0 is the highest score):

- Highest scoring blocks are located in the center of CBD
- WALQ score for the entire downtown (average of all indicators) = 1.8
- “Good” and “Very Good” ranges of the scoring system:
 - E1 - Strong Edges (2.0)
 - E2 - Density (2.0)
 - E4 - Engagement through Community Identity (2.0)
 - D2 - Design Coherence (2.0)
 - D3 - Distinctive Buildings and Civic Spaces (3.0)
 - S2 - Sidewalks (2.0)
 - S3 - Short Block Lengths (2.0)
 - S4 – Security (2.0)
- “Marginal” or “Below Average” ranges of the scoring system:
 - P1 - Connectivity to Surrounding Districts (1.9)
 - P3 - On-Street Parking (1.6)
 - D1 - Diversity (1.9)
- “Poor” or “Very Poor” ranges of the scoring system:
 - P2 - Pedestrian and Bicycle Linkages (1.0);
 - P4 - Access to Transit (1.0)
 - E3 - Enclosure by tree canopy (1.4)
 - D4 - Direct, Orient and Welcome Visitors (1.0)
 - S1 - Safe Street Crossings (1.2)

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Appendix

Documents

Model Building Conditions Assessment

Model Building Photos

WALQ Score Spreadsheet

Urban Design Audit Maps

Map 1: Walkability

Map2: Connectivity & Key Views

Map 3: Traffic, Transit & Parking

Map 4: Building Density

Map 5: Landmarks & Gateways

Map 6: Open Space & Civic Spaces

Torrington

MODEL BUILDING CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT

11-12 Main Street

The building faces Main Street to the east (photos 1 & 2). The south side of the building is directly on the north bank of the Naugatuck River (photos 3 & 4). The north wall adjoins a neighboring building, and the rear of the building overlooks a parking lot that serves the buildings on the block (photo 5). The Main Street façade has glass storefronts with yellow brick walls above. The brick is soiled and in need of selective re-pointing (photos 7 & 8). There are four retail tenant storefronts and two entrances that lead to the apartments on the upper floors (photos 9-11). The storefronts, with aluminum frames, have a combination of single-pane glass and insulated glass. They are in fair condition. Most of the storefronts have wood paneled knee walls. Most of the entrances are paved with ceramic tile; one is stone. The second-story brick is rusticated, standard size modular brick; the third floor has long, narrow Roman brick with extensive Romanesque detailing between the arched windows and the metal cornice. Window lintels and sills are marble. The windows have been replaced with vinyl sash windows, in fair to poor condition. The original frames appear to be intact, concealed beneath aluminum panning.

The south and west walls are red brick and utilitarian in character. The foundation is rubble stone, likely granite. The windows have segmental arches and gray stone sills. The south wall has undergone significant modifications: most of the first floor windows have been in-filled, the second floor windows were replaced with smaller windows, and it appears that a single-story structure adjoined this wall at one time (photos 15-17). The masonry is soiled and in need of selective re-pointing. Windows on south wall have been replaced with vinyl sash windows, in fair to poor condition.

The brick masonry of the west (rear) wall has been painted. Much of the west wall is obscured behind the second and third floor wood porches. The porches and porch stairways have been heavily altered, with plywood used to replace the railings (photos 12 & 13). The porch structures are deteriorated and water damaged, causing the roof to sag at the rear of the building. Original 2/2 double-hung windows are intact, along with the second and third floor entry doors. The first floor windows have security bars (photo 14). The first floor entrances are replacement metal doors. At the rear of 21 Main Street is a small two-story brick addition (photo 12).

The roof is rolled metal, estimated to be over 20 years old. It was not accessible for inspection, but there is no evidence of leaks at present. The architectural team was informed, but could not confirm, that there is a roof drain in the center of the building. There are two yellow brick chimneys on the Main Street side of the building and one smaller red brick chimney on the south side.

The basement has stone (probably granite) foundation walls. Interior basement walls are combination of brick and brick combined with CMU. Joists are 3" x 12" at 16" on center. The first floor's subfloor is 7 1/2" beaded tongue and groove planking (photos 18-19).

On the first to third floors, the original wood stairs are intact, including wood paneling and railing (photo 20). The apartment interiors typically have wood floors along with some vinyl floors and ceramic tile, generally in kitchens and bathrooms and some hallways (photos 21- 30). Walls and ceilings are plaster, some concealed beneath drywall. Some kitchens and bathrooms have bead board paneling (photos 23, 24, 30). Wood doors and trim remain intact. Light well windows, designed to bring light deep into the interior are intact, often painted over (photos 25, 27). All interior spaces are in good to fair condition; kitchens and bathrooms are in fair to poor condition.

There are separate electric meters for each retail tenant and apartment units. Stoves were the original form of building heat; they were replaced with steam radiators that are still extant. A central boiler is located in the basement beneath 17 Main Street. It is single pipe, oil fueled, with 6000 BTU capacity. There is also gas service for residential stoves. In the apartments, electric outlets are typically installed with external wiring.

Cost estimate

The following is a preliminary statement of probable construction costs. This estimate is derived from our data base of costs for other projects of this type applied on a square footage basis. It is meant to provide a reasonably accurate estimate of costs for construction for purposes of creating the financial pro-forma. Costs are based on the project being bid and built by an independent general contractor. Confirming the estimate with local contractors is highly recommended.

The estimate includes the following interior finishes:

	<i>Floor</i>	<i>Wall</i>	<i>ceiling</i>
Living/Dining	refinish wood	sheetrock/exposed brick	sheetrock
Bedroom	refinish wood	sheetrock/exposed brick	sheetrock
Bath	vinyl tile/ceramic	sheetrock	sheetrock
Kitchen	vinyl tile/ceramic	sheetrock	sheetrock
Lobby	ceramic tile	sheetrock	sheetrock
Hallway	carpet	sheetrock	sheetrock
Stairway	carpet	sheetrock	sheetrock

Interior trim – paint grade wood

Kitchen cabinets – wood or laminate

Counters – Plastic laminate

Doors – 6 panel embossed solid core hardboard

BUILDING PHOTOS

The following are pictures of the buildings at 11-12 Main Street.

11-21 Main Street



1. Main Street façade, view west.



2. Main Street storefronts, view northwest.

11-21 Main Street

Torrington, Connecticut

Photos taken February-

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11-21 Main Street



3. South side of the building, on the banks of the Naugatuck River, view west.



4. Site at the rear of the building, view west.

11-21 Main Street

Torrington, Connecticut

Photos taken February-

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11-21 Main Street



5. Parking lot at the rear of the building, view west.



6. Site at rear of the building showing access to Water Street, view

11-21 Main Street

Torrington, Connecticut

Photos taken February-

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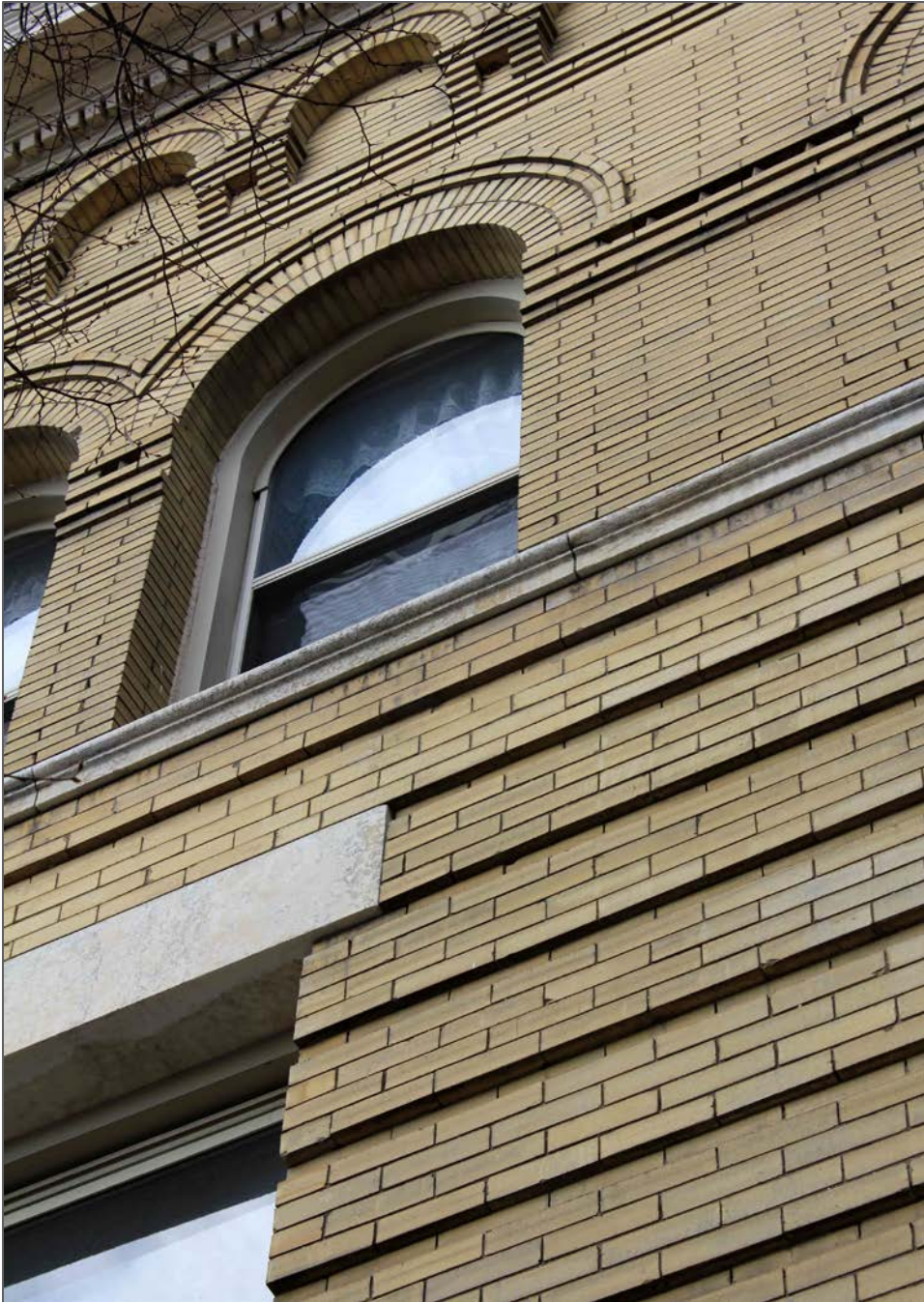
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11-21 Main Street



7. Main Street façade brickwork.

11-21 Main Street



8. Main Street second floor window, view southwest.





10. Main Street storefront, view northwest.

11-21 Main Street



11. Main Street storefront, view west.

11-21 Main Street



12. West elevation with two-story brick addition, view northeast.



11-21 Main Street

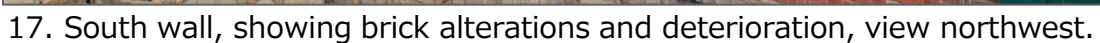


14. West wall with original windows at first floor, view southeast.

11-21 Main Street



15. South wall and southeast corner, view northwest.





11-21 Main Street



20. Stairs from second to third floors, view west.

11-21 Main Street



21. Apartment entrance from stairway.

11-21 Main Street



22. Apartment hallway.



23. Apartment kitchen.

11-21 Main Street



24. Apartment kitchen.



25. Typical apartment interior.

11-21 Main Street



26. Typical apartment interior.



27. Typical apartment interior.

11-21 Main Street



28. Typical apartment interior.



29. Typical apartment interior.



30. Apartment bathroom.

22-Apr-13

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W.A.L.Q. Color Code		
Very Poor	1.3 or lower	
Poor	1.4	
	1.5	
Below Average	1.6	
	1.7	
Marginal	1.8	
	1.9	
Good	2.0	
	2.1	
Very Good	2.2 or higher	

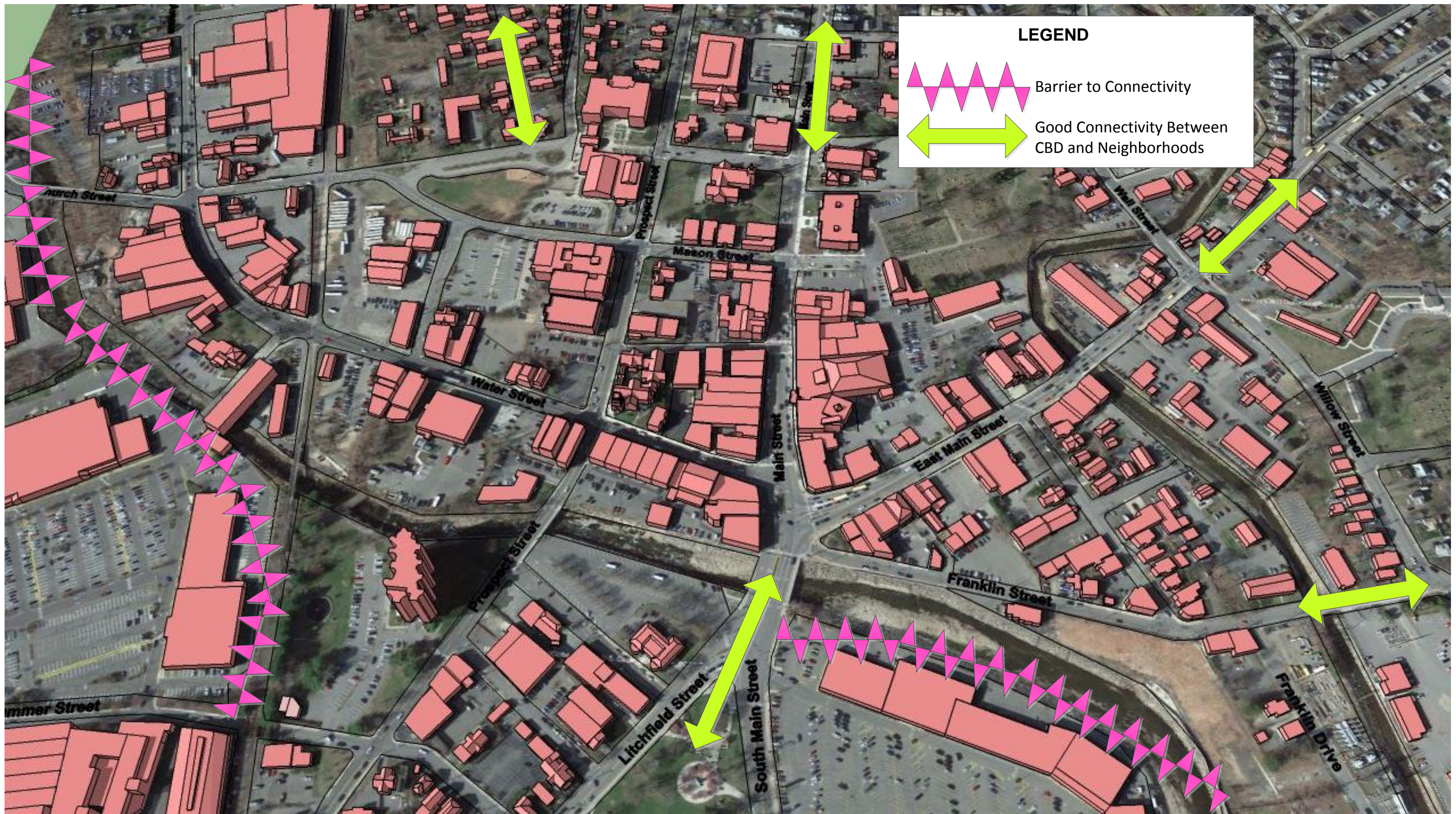


Urban Design Audit
Downtown Torrington, CT

Map 1:
Walkability


Date: July, 2013
Prepared for:
The Connecticut
Main Street Center


Prepared by:
**CDM
Smith**





LEGEND

 Large Surface Parking Lot





 Key Intersection







LEGEND

-  Gateway
-  Landmark Building
-  Civic Building
-  Religious Building or Institution



LEGEND

-  Plaza or Monument
-  Municipal Park
-  Civic Building



Urban Design Audit
Downtown Torrington, CT

Map 6:
Open Space & Civic Spaces

Date: July, 2013
Prepared for:
The Connecticut
Main Street Center

Prepared by:
**CDM
Smith**