



Bike lane on Route 34 in downtown New Haven, CT

COURTESY OF THE CITY OF NEW HAVEN

A BETTER **Vision**

DID YOU KNOW?



The Connecticut DOT, local activists and city officials collaborated to redesign Route 34 in downtown New Haven, lowering the highway to street level and adding pedestrian crossings and bike lanes.

GETTING IT RIGHT IN CONNECTICUT

To be economically competitive while protecting the environment, Connecticut needs to develop a 21st Century transportation system that provides consumers with transportation choices, reduces congestion and greenhouse gasses, and at the same time spurs development in the right places for better land use. The transportation system needs to provide easy and equitable access to jobs, education, health care, recreation and tourism for all users, and address the specific needs of the fastest growing segment of Connecticut's population - our senior citizens - as well as our lower income residents. We need to invest in more public transit, such as rail, bus and trolley systems, especially in high density areas that will connect our major transportation corridors, airports, stations and we need to make the streets in our cities and towns safe and easily accessible for all users, including pedestrians and cyclists.



Blue Back Square, West Hartford, CT

We have started to make some progress and begun to make better choices in some of our communities.

Blue Back Square in West Hartford is a good example of a new development featuring a mix of amenities including retail, office,

entertainment, and civic buildings as well as housing, in a walkable neighborhood that has bus service. Imagine if it had been built within walking distance of a train station, the area could allow for more commuting to jobs and a lifestyle of convenience marked by freedom from dependence on an automobile.

360 State Street, New Haven, is one of the best examples of a transit-oriented development in the state. The building has 500 apartment units on top of ground floor retail with on-site bike parking for 200 bikes. Notably, 30-40% of the residents do not own a car. This was possible because the building is directly across the street from New Haven's State Street train station and it provides access to nine different bus routes. 360 State Street uses land efficiently and also provides a mix of uses by being within walkable distance to downtown and Yale, and its proximity to jobs, schools, restaurants, and entertainment. It is also a certified LEED platinum building incorporating state of the art, energy and water efficiency measures.



360 State Street with New Haven train station in foreground.

COURTESY OF BRUCE REDMAN BECKER

TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

- 1 **Focuses development within ½ mile of transit service.**
- 2 **Allows more building in less space, creating more tax revenue.**
- 3 **Uses existing infrastructure such as sewer and water lines, saving money and resources.**
- 4 **Puts more housing, jobs and services closer to transit, reducing car trips and greenhouse gas emissions.**



COURTESY OF BRUCE REDMAN BECKER

Scene in front of 360 State Street, New Haven, CT

FACT

A Brookings Institution report shows that **MORE WALKABLE NEIGHBORHOODS PERFORM BETTER ECONOMICALLY** with higher real estate values in a recent study of the Metro Washington D.C. area.

A BETTER VISION



COURTESY OF MANSFIELD DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP, INC.

DID YOU KNOW?

COURTESY OF REGIONAL PLAN ASSOCIATION



Char-rette (shuh-ret) n. is an intensive planning session where citizens, design experts and other stakeholders collaborate on a vision for development

Even our state's more rural settings are looking for a better way to grow. The Town of Mansfield, home of the University of Connecticut, did a comprehensive community planning process that resulted in the Storrs Center Plan. The plan outlines a vision for a new downtown area for shopping, businesses, and housing that encourages students, residents, and visitors to walk, bike or use the bus. Development for the project is well under way. A new state-of-the-art intermodal transportation center and attached parking garage is near completion and will serve bicycles, buses, cars, and pedestrians. There will be spaces for a shared vehicle program and charging stations for electric vehicles. More than that, however, the center will serve as a hub for UConn buses, regional buses, and intercity and interstate buses that will form a network of public transportation services and link to pedestrian and bicycle routes.

The success of projects such as these largely depends on being sensitive to the unique character of our 169 cities and towns. All stakeholders from the community need to be involved in the early stages of the planning to have a hand in preparing workable, modern blueprints for their communities.

The town of Fairfield recently accomplished this when planning for the new Metro-North train station. The town rezoned the neighborhood around the train station following a year-long study that culminated in a community design plan. The outcomes of this visioning process were zoning improvements that will enable future retail, office and housing development within walking distance of this major transit stop.

Connecticut still has a lot of work ahead to ensure that our residents who choose a \$30 pair of shoes as their primary means of transportation are put on equal footing as those driving a \$30,000 car. Fortunately, Connecticut is well-situated with strong executive leadership in place to move in the right direction on to a long-term path of sustainability.