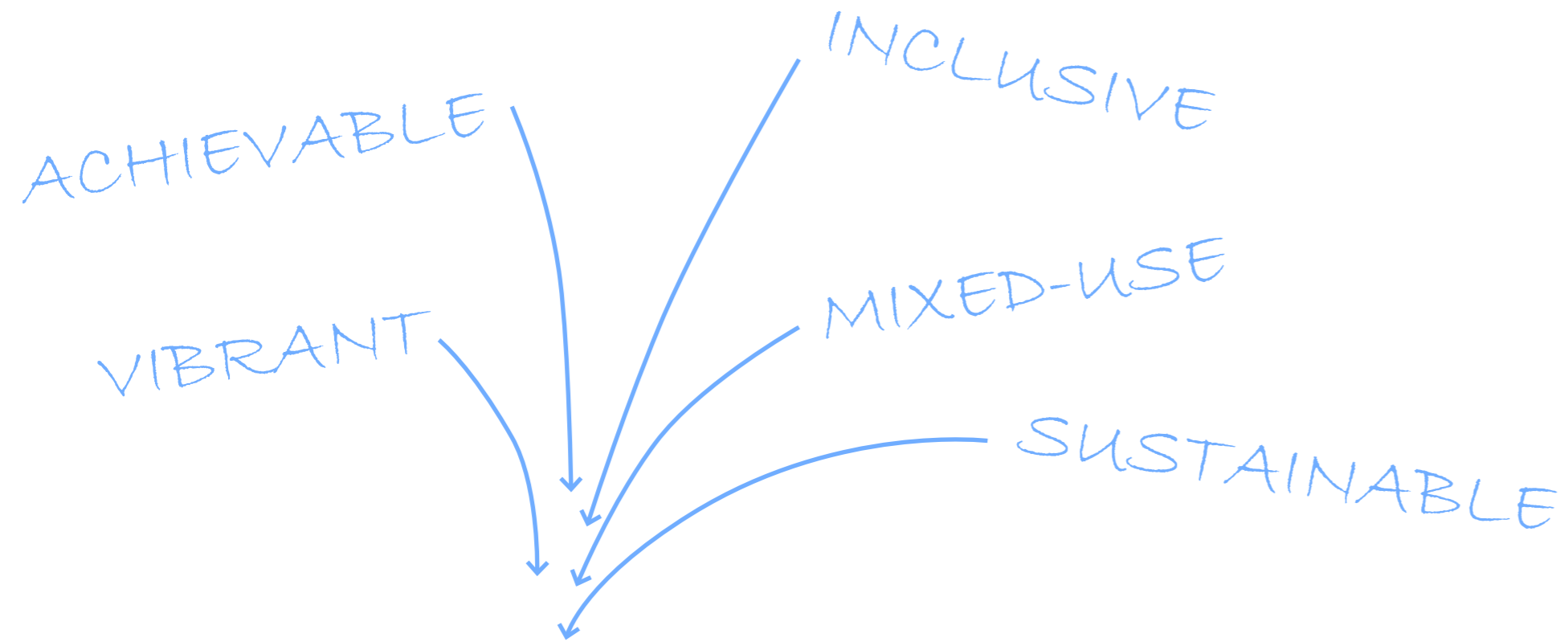


# RETURN TO THE RIVERBEND

Planning for our Future Together

COOPER ROBERTSON





# **A master plan for the future of Middletown's riverfront.**

# HOW WE GOT HERE

**2000** A city-sponsored charrette results in a riverfront vision document **THE MULLIN REPORT**

**2014** Project for Public Spaces (PPS) **FINAL RIVERFRONT REPORT**

**2014** Middletown Riverfront Redevelopment Commission (MRRC) **FINAL REPORT**

**2021** **2020-2030 PLAN OF CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT**

**2021** The City embarks on the **RETURN TO THE RIVERBEND INITIATIVE**



# OTHER RIVERFRONT EFFORTS



ROUTE 9 STUDIES

PROMENADE IMPROVEMENTS

CANOE CLUB REDEVELOPMENT

BOATHOUSE DESIGN

JACKSON SITE ACQUISITION

WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT DECOMMISSIONED

EPA BROWNFIELD ASSESSMENT

ARCADIE SITE

PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE

WASHINGTON ST

MAIN ST

UNION ST

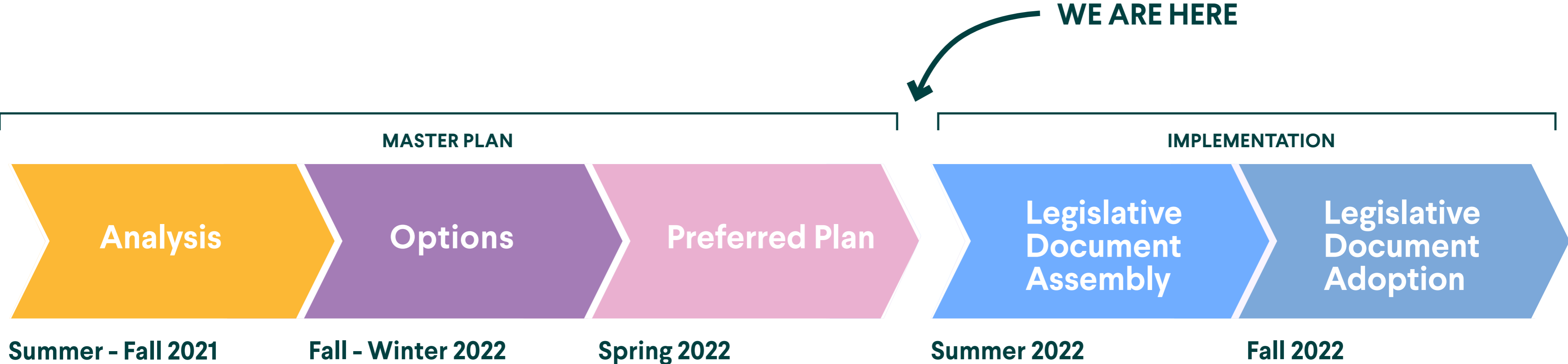
RIVER RD

ROUTE 9

SILVER ST

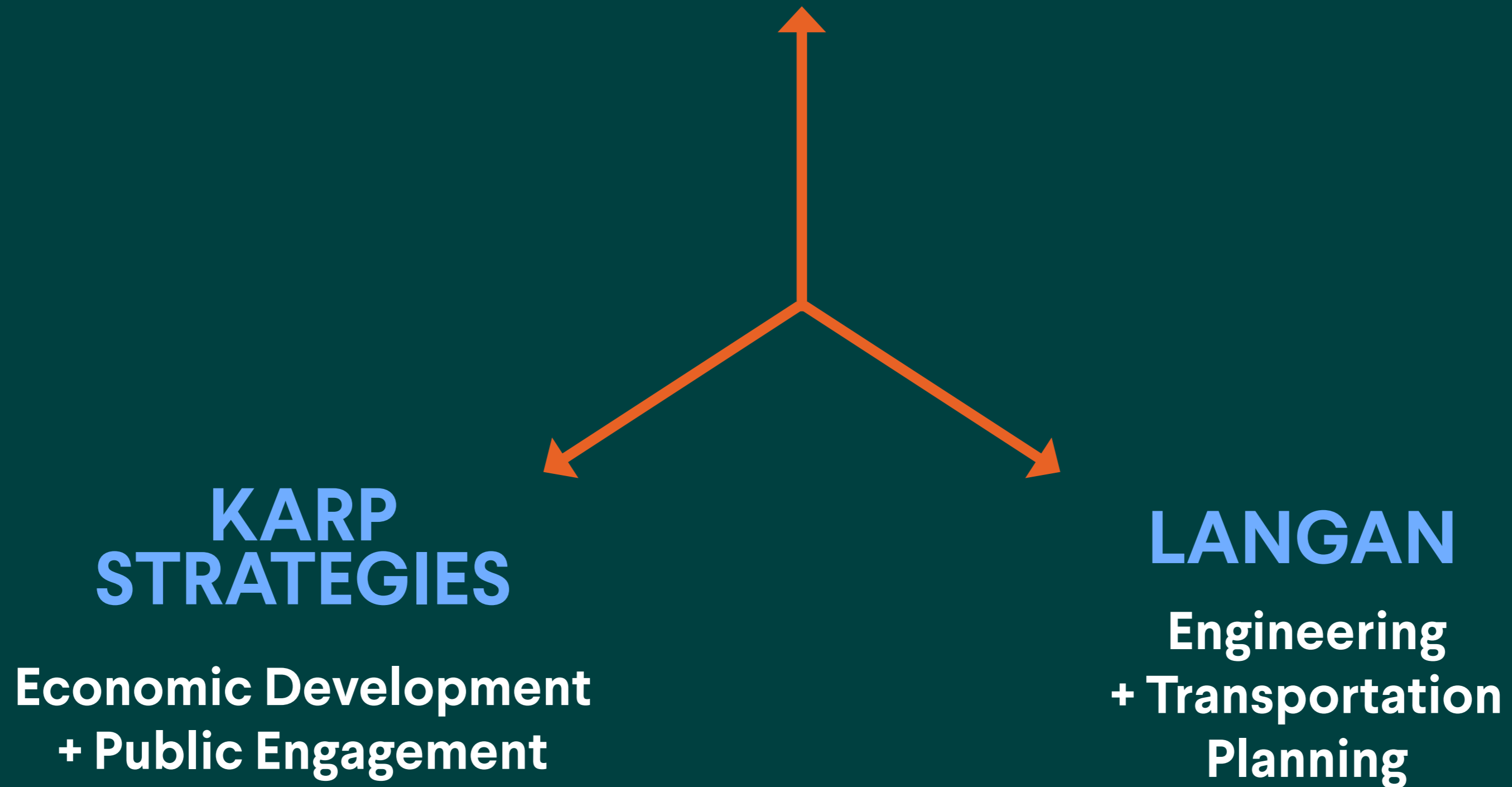
EASTERN DR

# THE PROCESS



# COOPER ROBERTSON

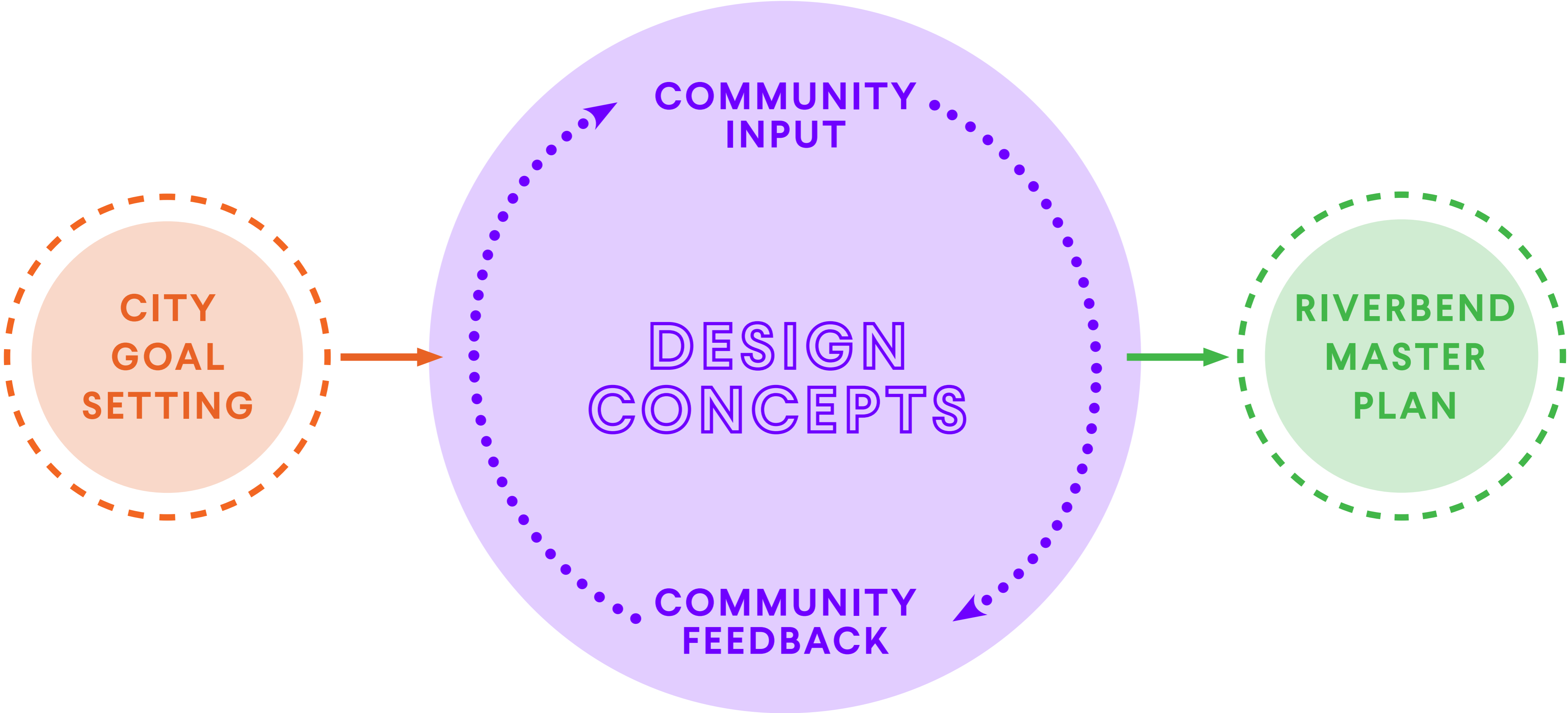
Master Planners + Architects





# BUILDING THE VISION

# COMMUNITY-CENTERED PROCESS





# COMMUNITY INPUT

Over 1,200 comments collected from hundreds of community members

- Online Surveys
- Social Media
- Community Workshops
- Pop-Up Events
- Door-to-Door
- Main Street Design Gallery
- Stakeholder Groups
- One-on-One Interviews



Project Website



Amistad Event



Social Media



Main St. Market Design Gallery

## **OTHERS THAT WE ENGAGED**

- Middletown Planning & Zoning Commission
- Middletown City Staff
- Middlesex Chamber of Commerce
- Middletown Complete Streets Committee
- Anti-Racism Task Force
- North End Action Team
- Middletown Housing Authority
- Middletown Chief of Police
- Middletown Fire Department Chief
- Middletown Library
- Middletown YMCA
- Middletown Garden Club
- Middlesex Hospital
- Middletown Environmental Engineers, Tighe & Bond
- Connecticut Valley Hospital
- State of Connecticut, DMHAS
- CT DOT Rail
- Genesee & Wyoming (Rail Operators)
- CT DOT Transportation
- Local Educational and Medical Institutions
- Wesleyan University
- Inn at Middletown
- Local Historians
- Former Long River Village Residents
- Wangunk Tribal Leader, Gary O'Neil
- Wangunk Academic Scholars
- Meadow Meat
- Local Senior Citizen Groups
- Omo Industrial Park Property Owners
- Eastern Drive and Walnut Street Residents
- North End Residents
- Local Real Estate Developers & Brokers
- And more...

# GUIDING PRINCIPLES



Create a truly Middletown riverfront,  
reflecting the community's interests and  
honoring its past



Promote environmental stewardship and  
community health



Create a rich network of public spaces  
that are accessible to all



Design places that are compatible with  
downtown, in both scale and character



Plan for a diversity of land uses that attract  
investment and complement downtown  
and the region



Create economic opportunities for all,  
including traditionally disadvantaged  
communities



Reconnect the riverfront with upland  
neighborhoods, both visually and  
physically



Plan for development to be funded and  
constructed in discrete phases



# A VISION FOR MIDDLETOWN'S RIVERFRONT

# THE RIVERBEND TODAY



WESLEYAN  
UNIVERSITY

MAIN STREET

HARBOR PARK

FORMER  
WASTEWATER  
TREATMENT  
PLANT

FORMER  
JACKSON  
CORRUGATED

CVH

FORMER LONG  
RIVER VILLAGE

SILVER STREET

ROUTE 9

WALNUT ST

EASTERN DRIVE

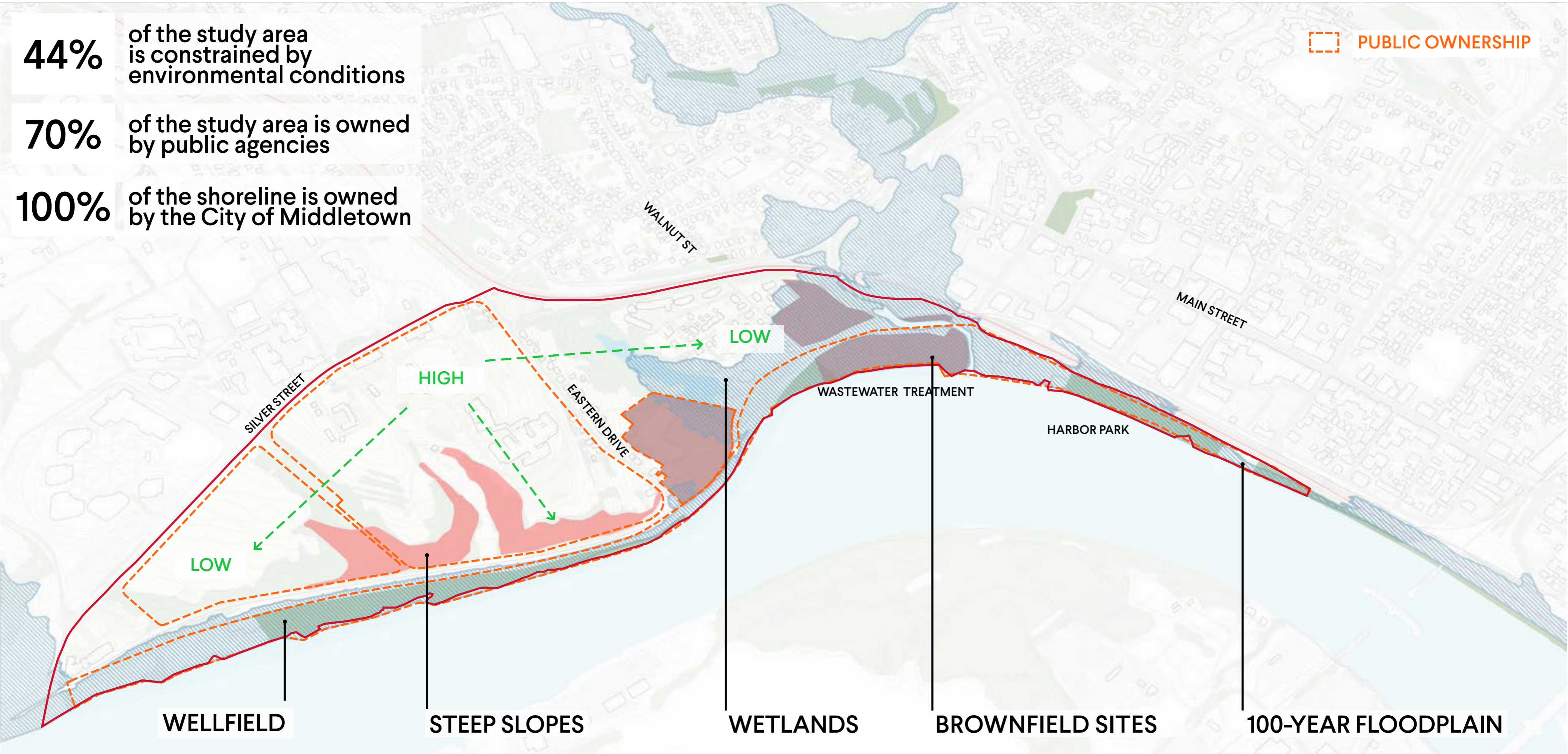
# EXISTING CONDITIONS

**44%** of the study area is constrained by environmental conditions

**70%** of the study area is owned by public agencies

**100%** of the shoreline is owned by the City of Middletown

 PUBLIC OWNERSHIP



# PLANNING DISTRICTS



# THE RIVERBEND VISION



**SOUTH END DISTRICT**

**HILLTOP DISTRICT**

**SUMNER BROOK DISTRICT**

**RIVERSIDE DISTRICT**

SILVER STREET

EASTERN DRIVE

WALNUT ST

MAIN STREET

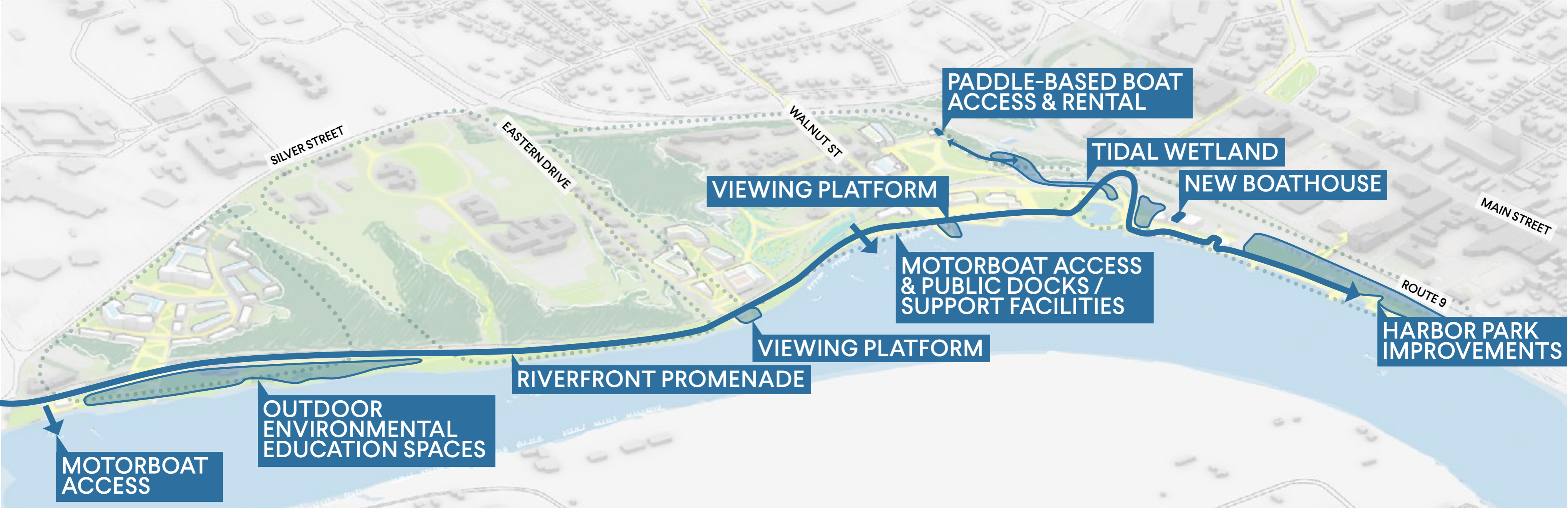
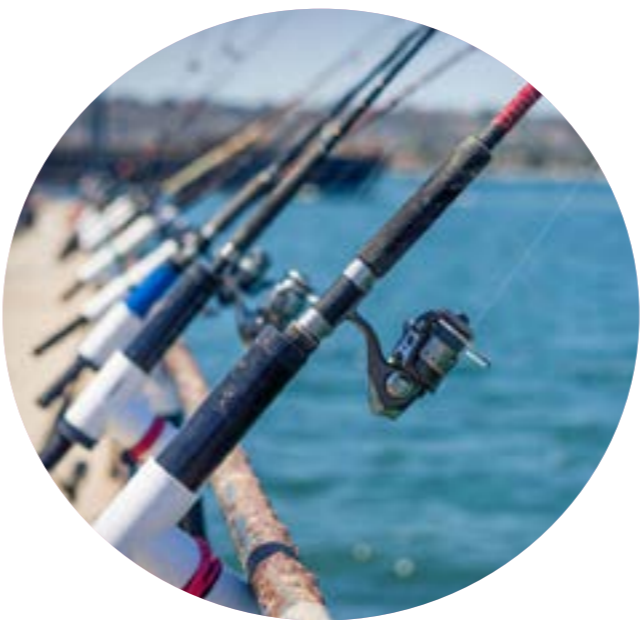
ROUTE 9



# OVER 50 ACRES OF PARK SPACES & 7 MILES OF PATHWAYS



# OVER 2 MILES OF PUBLIC RIVERFRONT AMENITIES



# UNION STREET AND RIVER ROAD TODAY



Sumner Brook

Former  
Peterson Oil  
Site

River Road

Union  
Street

Route 9

View of Sumner Brook from Harbor Drive and River Road

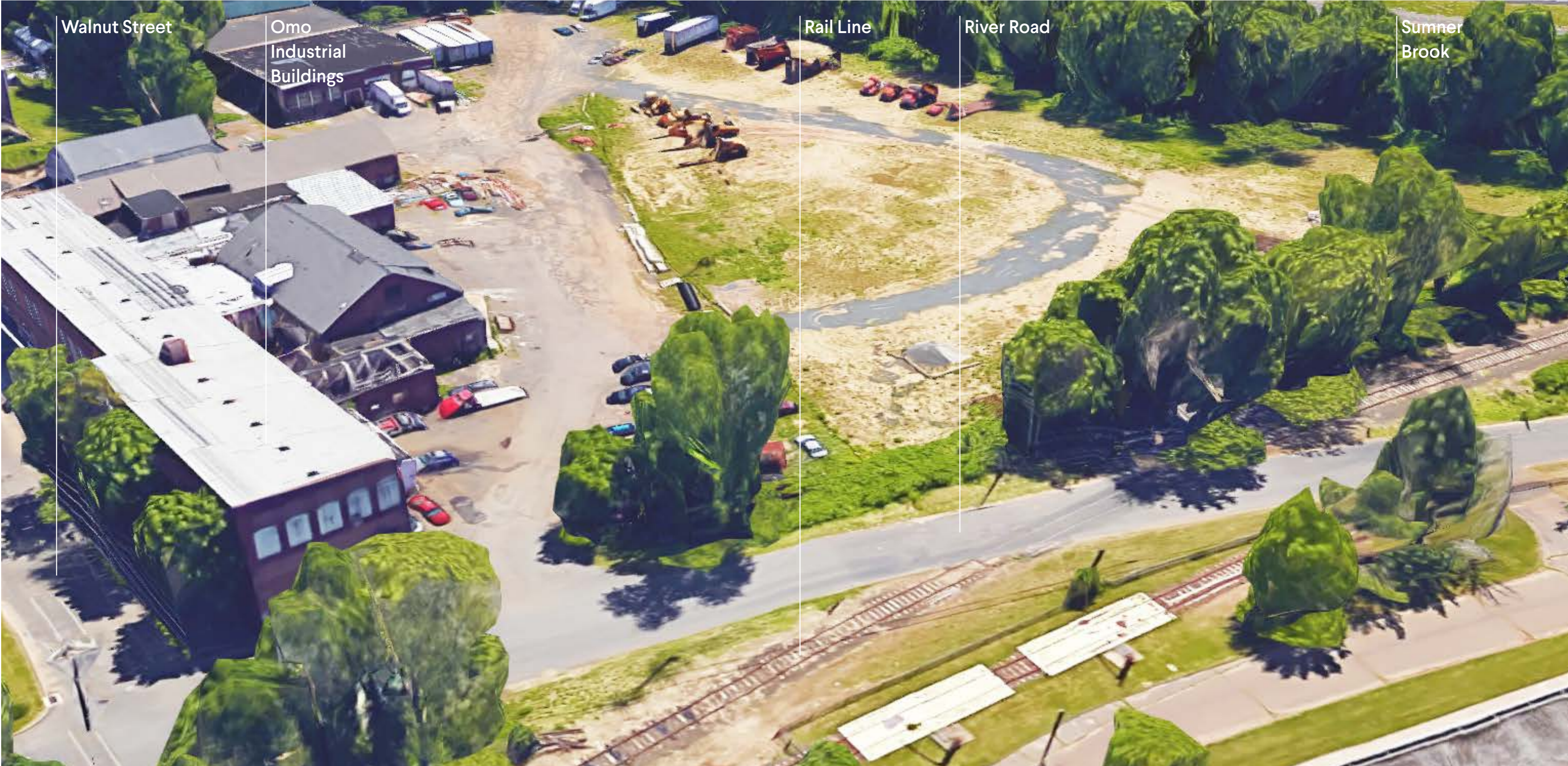
# UNION STREET GATEWAY



# RIVERBEND PARK



# OMO INDUSTRIAL AREA TODAY



# RIVERBEND NATURE PARK

Municipal  
Garage &  
Commercial /  
Retail Space

Four-Season  
Recreation  
Center

Seasonal  
Winter  
Festival

Seasonal  
Ice Skating  
Rink

Summer  
Brook  
Boat  
Center

Industrial  
Art

Play  
Spaces

Bus & Bike  
Transit  
Stations



# JACKSON CORRUGATED WETLANDS TODAY





# SOWHEAG WETLAND PARK



Boardwalks

Mixed-Income Housing

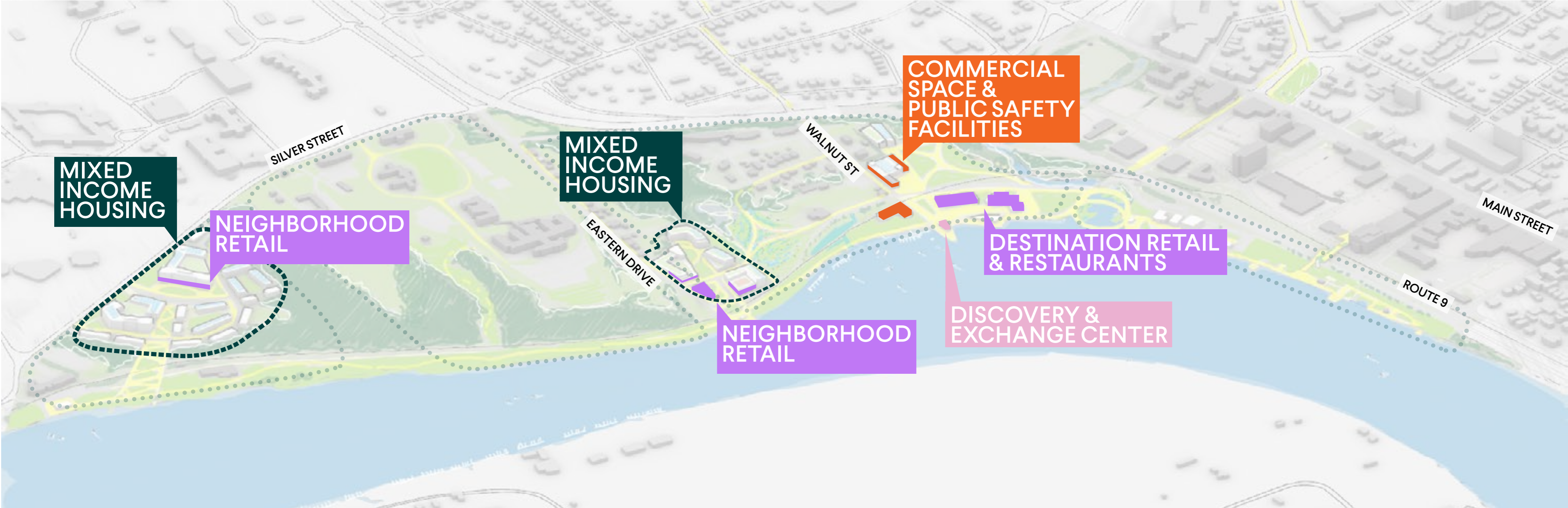
Bird Watching

Restored Wetlands

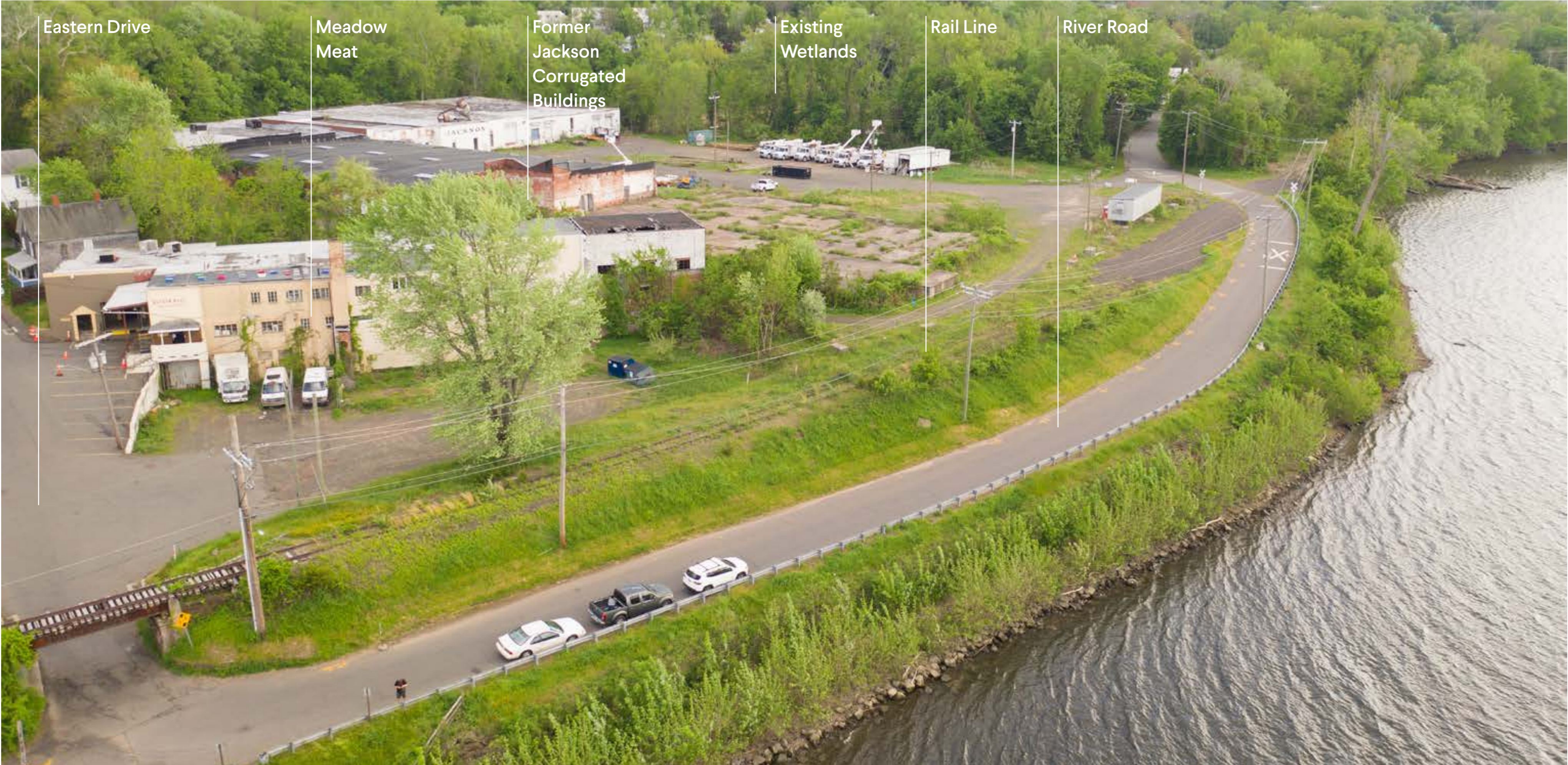
Pollinator Pathways

Return to the Riverbend  
Give us Your Ideas!  
We need a large  
natural area that  
can attract and  
support birds  
and other  
wildlife.

# MIXED-USE, WALKABLE AND INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT



# JACKSON CORRUGATED AND MEADOW MEAT TODAY



Eastern Drive

Meadow  
Meat

Former  
Jackson  
Corrugated  
Buildings

Existing  
Wetlands

Rail Line

River Road

# INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



# RIVERBEND LANDING



# WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT TODAY



River Road

Former  
Wastewater  
Treatment  
Plant

Downtown

# RIVERBEND LANDING

Rooftop  
Access

Restaurants &  
Retail

Outdoor  
Entertainment  
Areas

Amphitheater

Riverfront  
Promenade



RETURN TO THE RIVERBEND  
WRITE ABOVE OR DRAW YOUR ANSWER BELOW  
ESCRIBE Y/O DIBUJA TU RESPUESTA ABAJO

Outdoor  
concert  
Amphitheater  
☺

# SOUTH END DISTRICT





# A MORE CONNECTED RIVERFRONT



Give us Your Ideas!  
*Silver, better, better*

### Pedestrian, Bike, & Transit Network

- ⋯⋯⋯ Proposed Bicycle Route
- Proposed Walking Route
- ⋯⋯⋯ Proposed Transit Loop
- Existing MAT Route 581
- M Mobility Hub
- ⋯⋯⋯ Potential Extension (Bike & Pedestrian)
- Middletown Complete Streets Master Plan 2013
- ⋯⋯⋯ Existing Railroad



# ROUTE 9 TODAY



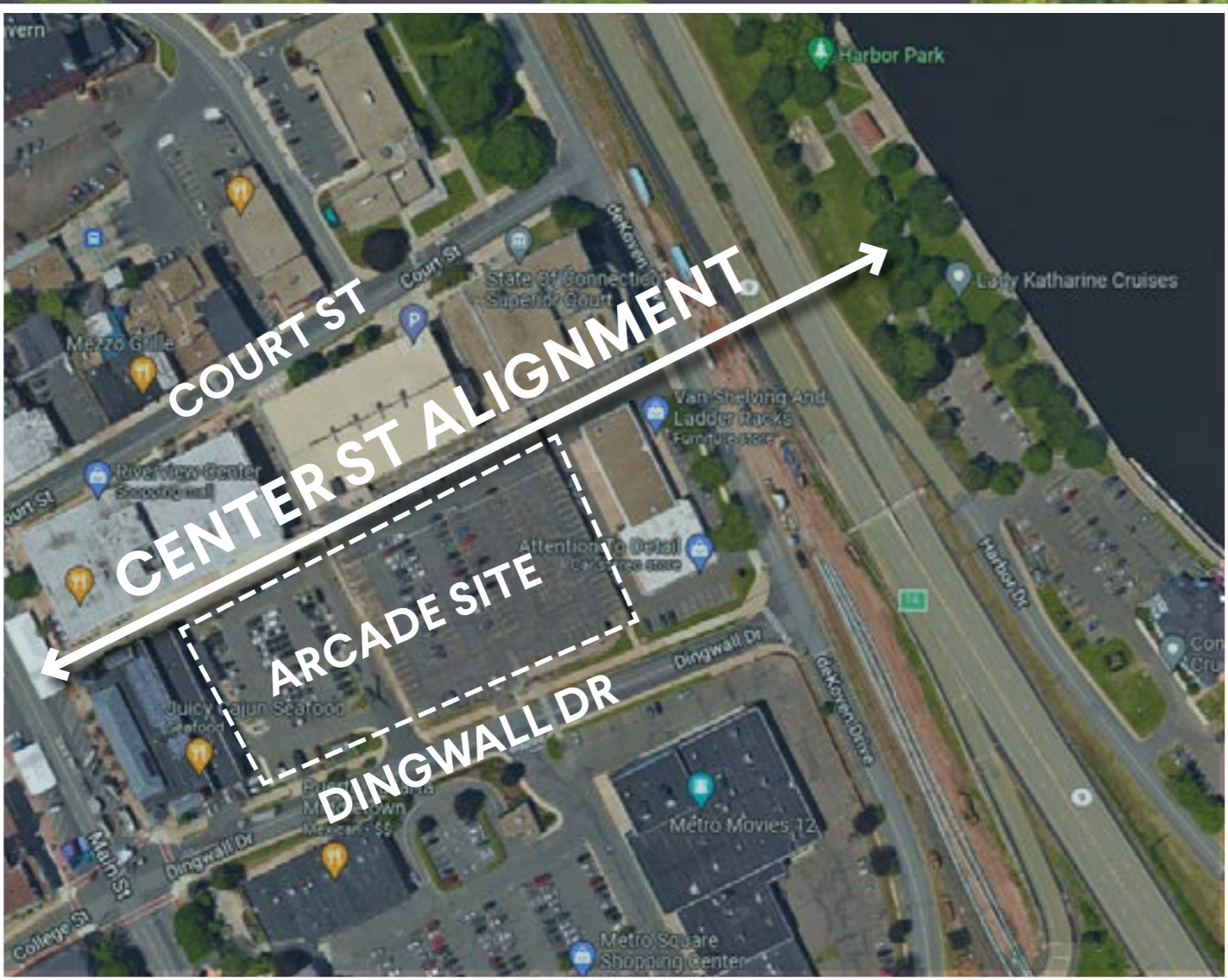
deKoven Drive

Rail Line

Harbor Park

Route 9

Restaurant  
(Former Canoe Club)



# CENTER STREET PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE



Harbor Park

Route 9

Overlook

Middletown Signage

Overlook

Elevator to Harbor Park

Gardens

Public Art

Rail Line

deKoven Dr

Return to the Riverbend  
Give us Your Ideas!  
over Rt 9  
and connect  
Harbor Park  
to the River!  
New economic  
development!

# HARBOR PARK PROMENADE TODAY



# CENTER STREET PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE PLAZA



Elevator  
Access

Bike  
Facilities

Overlook

Pedestrian  
Bridge Access

Educational  
Signage

Middle  
Passage  
Marker

Lawn  
Games

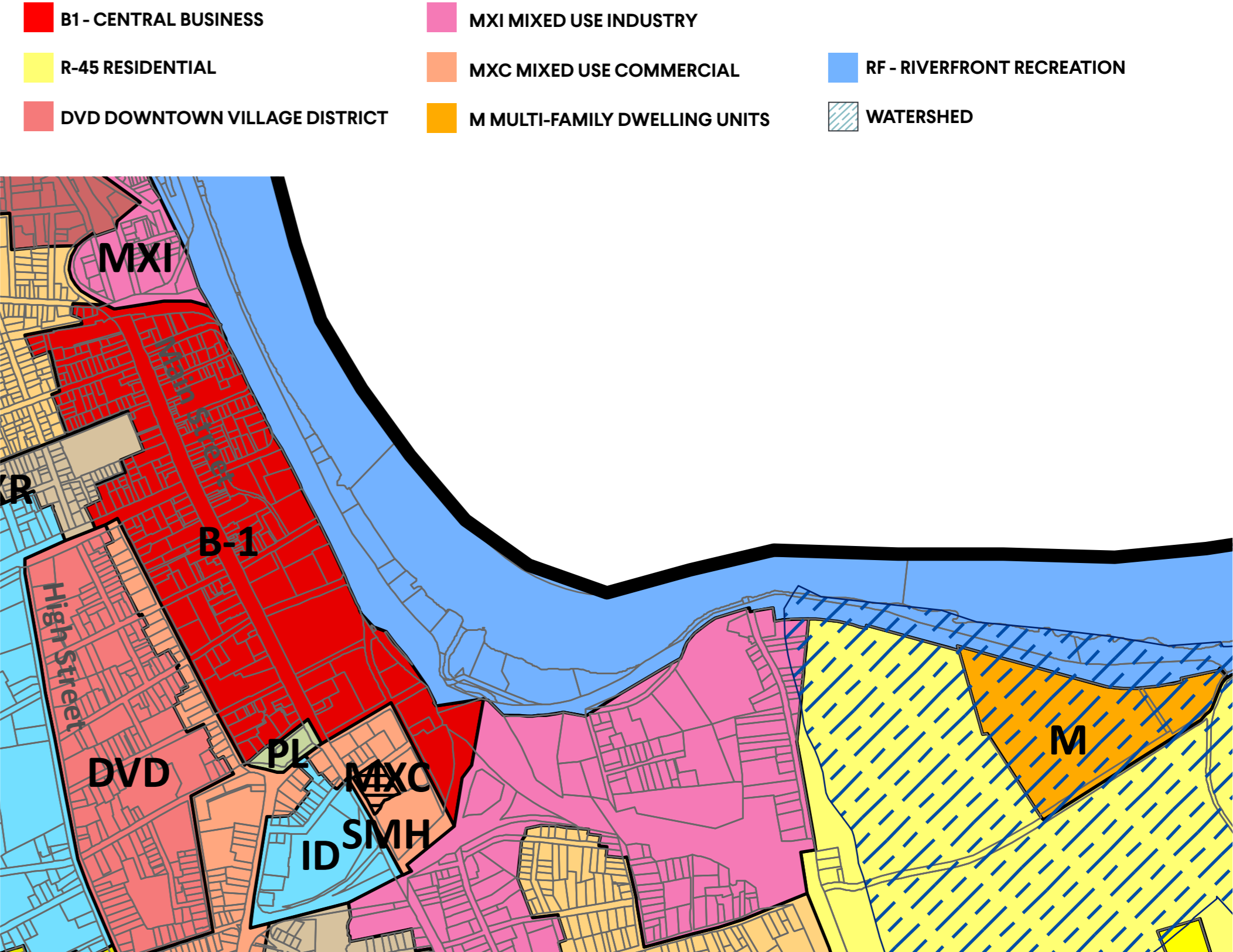
Pedestrian Bridge  
Bike  
GREAT



# REALIZING THE VISION

# ENABLING LEGISLATION

- Zoning Controls
  - New Zoning Districts & Regulations
  - Zoning Map Updates
  
- Private Development Guidelines
  - “Principle-Based”
  - Ensures Cohesion and Design Quality
  - Addresses Sustainability Goals
  
- Public Process



Middletown Zoning Map (2022)

# EARLY ACTIONS

## IMMEDIATE ACTIONS:

- Boardwalk at Harbor Park
- 80 Harbor Dr Renovation
- Legislative Actions (Rezoning and Guidelines)
- Arcade Site and Route 9 Center Street Pedestrian Bridge Design
- Union Street Underpass Art and Sidewalk Improvements
- Enhanced Riverfront Programming

## OTHER EARLY PHASE EFFORTS:

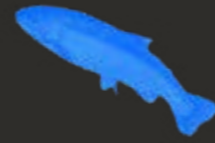
- Riverfront Event Lawn
- Union Street Gateway
- Sumner Brook Bridge
- Private Development
- Municipal Body / Community Organizations
- Continued Environmental Remediation Efforts





# STAYING INVOLVED

- Participating in upcoming legislative process
- Engaging with potential future riverfront governing bodies or commissions
- Joining local community organizations with special interest in the Riverfront (i.e. potential Friends of the River Group or Middletown Garden Club)
- Spreading the word and making your opinions known



RETURN TO THE RIVERBEND  
WRITE AND/OR DRAW YOUR ANSWER BELOW:  
ESCRIBE Y/O DIBUJA TU RESPUESTA ABAJO

Day Park

RETURN TO THE RIVERBEND  
WRITE AND/OR DRAW YOUR ANSWER BELOW:  
ESCRIBE Y/O DIBUJA TU RESPUESTA ABAJO

music/Ampitheater  
farmers market  
waterfront-  
pop up  
food trucks  
Love that this  
is getting some  
revamp 😊

RETURN TO THE RIVERBEND  
WRITE AND/OR DRAW YOUR ANSWER BELOW:  
ESCRIBE Y/O DIBUJA TU RESPUESTA ABAJO

Tiki Bar  
Make it so.

RETURN TO THE RIVERBEND  
WRITE AND/OR DRAW YOUR ANSWER BELOW:  
ESCRIBE Y/O DIBUJA TU RESPUESTA ABAJO

Old Fashion  
Ice Cream  
and a Roll  
Ice cream.



RETURN TO THE RIVERBEND  
WRITE AND/OR DRAW YOUR ANSWER BELOW:  
ESCRIBE Y/O DIBUJA TU RESPUESTA ABAJO

I like  
how there  
is a  
Pizza.  
I ♥

RETURN TO THE RIVERBEND  
WRITE AND/OR DRAW YOUR ANSWER BELOW:  
ESCRIBE Y/O DIBUJA TU RESPUESTA ABAJO

We like  
Do it!!!

RETURN TO THE RIVERBEND  
WRITE AND/OR DRAW YOUR ANSWER BELOW:  
ESCRIBE Y/O DIBUJA TU RESPUESTA ABAJO

Just needs  
more surfing  
Kahuna Amule

RETURN TO THE RIVERBEND  
WRITE AND/OR DRAW YOUR ANSWER BELOW:  
ESCRIBE Y/O DIBUJA TU RESPUESTA ABAJO

SCARY  
SEA  
MONSTER  
STATUE  
TO FRENCH  
OFF  
IN VADERS.



RETURN TO THE RIVERBEND  
WRITE AND/OR DRAW YOUR ANSWER BELOW:  
ESCRIBE Y/O DIBUJA TU RESPUESTA ABAJO

Bbe Park - place to  
look out  
Community  
Garden  
BBQ Grills  
Hammocks  
Soccer ball space

RETURN TO THE RIVERBEND  
WRITE AND/OR DRAW YOUR ANSWER BELOW:  
ESCRIBE Y/O DIBUJA TU RESPUESTA ABAJO

Good Ideas  
I'd also love  
to see a place  
for multiple  
Food Trucks.

RETURN TO THE RIVERBEND  
WRITE AND/OR DRAW YOUR ANSWER BELOW:  
ESCRIBE Y/O DIBUJA TU RESPUESTA ABAJO

SKATE  
PARK



RETURN TO THE RIVERBEND  
WRITE AND/OR DRAW YOUR ANSWER BELOW:  
ESCRIBE Y/O DIBUJA TU RESPUESTA ABAJO

Consider boat  
rentals too!



**Return to the Riverbend**  
Give us Your Ideas!

Need to be  
a  
middle town  
market!  
lets get this  
market done!

**RETURN TO THE RIVERBEND**  
WRITE AND/OR DRAW YOUR ANSWER BELOW:  
ESCRIBE Y/O DIBUJA TU RESPUESTA ABAJO:

Great  
Ideas  
Let's  
Do it!

**RETURN TO THE RIVERBEND**  
WRITE AND/OR DRAW YOUR ANSWER BELOW:  
ESCRIBE Y/O DIBUJA TU RESPUESTA ABAJO:

This is very  
Exciting.  
Let's make  
It happen.

**RETURN TO THE RIVERBEND**  
WRITE AND/OR DRAW YOUR ANSWER BELOW:  
ESCRIBE Y/O DIBUJA TU RESPUESTA ABAJO:

ITS GIVE  
MIDDLE TOWN THE  
LIVELY  
WATERFRONT  
IT  
PRESERVES!  
THANK YOU!