

# RETURN TO THE RIVERBEND

Planning for Our Future Together



The Return to the Riverbend initiative was guided by a diverse group of City staff and community stakeholders.

STEERING COMMITTEE

MAYOR BEN FLORSHEIM  
JEANETTE BLACKWELL, Common Council, Council Member  
ELAINE BANK, Riverfront Advocate  
STEPHEN DEVOTO, Former Chair of the Middletown Planning & Zoning Commission  
LARRY MCHUGH, President of the Middlesex County of Chamber of Commerce

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COOPER ROBERTSON, Master Planning Lead  
KARP STRATEGIES, Economic Development & Public Engagement  
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**Greetings Middletown Residents:**

I am excited and pleased to present to you the City of Middletown's Return to the Riverbend Master Plan. After collecting your ideas and feedback at community forums and our storefront workshop, the City of Middletown has developed this master plan to restore our riverfront to its rightful place at the heart of our community.

The plan breaks the riverbend area, stretching from the northern point of Harbor Park to the CVH campus, into four districts: Riverside, Sumner Brook, Hillside and the South End. Each district has its own characteristics, amenities, and mix of uses, including recreational activities, commercial and residential development, nature education, art performance spaces, and more, including a memorial monument for the Wangunk people who first settled at the great bend in the river.

I am grateful to our City staff and consulting team, consisting of Cooper Robertson, Karp Strategies, and Langan, for their hard work, as well as our Steering Committee for keeping that work on track: Larry McHugh, Elaine Bank, Councilwoman Jeannette Blackwell, and Stephen Devoto.

The final concepts and nearly all of the design elements you see here came from you: the people of Middletown. Our team started with a vision and a mission to develop a workable, achievable plan to reconnect our community to the river. Throughout the planning process, we collected more than 1,200 comments from hundreds of stakeholders and residents to get your ideas. I am grateful to everyone who contributed time and effort to realize this master plan, and I look forward to continuing our work together to make what you see in these pages a reality.

Thank you!

**Mayor Ben Florsheim**



# BUILDING THE VISION





# THE RIVERBEND MASTER PLAN

## What is this Master Plan?

The goal of this Master Plan is to present an inspired and achievable vision for the transformation of Middletown's riverfront into a vibrant extension of downtown to be enjoyed by all Middletown residents.

Reconnecting Middletown with the great bend in the Connecticut River has proved challenging, but recent public investments and a groundswell of community support have set the stage for the Riverbend Master Plan to mark a turning point in the City's riverfront renewal efforts.

To capitalize on this moment, the City of Middletown embarked on a year-long transparent and collaborative community-driven process to develop a physical vision for realizing the potential of Middletown's riverfront. The vision put the community's interests at the center of the process, and aligned their thoughts and ideas with expert analysis of the area's physical, economic, and regulatory issues.

## Project Goals

Building on decades of past planning efforts and public input, the Master Plan is a comprehensive physical vision and soon to be legislative framework for bringing new public amenities and investment to the riverfront.

The goals of the Master Plan:

- Ensure a People-Driven Process
- Create a Vibrant, Mixed-Use Riverfront
- Support Environmental Stewardship
- Plan for Accessibility and Affordability
- Promote Community Health and Equity
- Attract Private Investment

## Study Area

The study area stretches from Harbor Park towards the east along the Connecticut River shoreline to the Rushford Center, and from the river back towards Route 9 and Silver Street, covering over 200-acres.

This designated area reflects the riverfront study area first established in the 2014 Middletown Riverfront Redevelopment Commission for the Master Plan and adopted by the Common Council of Middletown.

The area includes various industrial, residential, open space, and undeveloped sites that offer great opportunities for future development, recreation, and open space. These sites include recent land acquisitions made by the City, such as the former Jackson Corrugated site located along River Road, with panoramic views of the river and downtown. The City has continuous land ownership along the full extent of the shoreline, while roughly 60% of the total land area is under public or quasi-public agency ownership.



"The Return to Riverbend project is a game-changer for downtown Middletown. We want people to live, and work downtown, but also play downtown. This project will not only enhance the quality of life for our residents, but the surrounding towns as well."

**PAMELA STEELE**, CHAIRPERSON FOR THE CENTRAL BUSINESS BUREAU (DOWNTOWN DISTRICT) OF THE MIDDLESEX COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



"After years of waiting for a vibrant riverfront, this Riverbend Master Plan is a dream come true. The time is right to embrace this plan and move forward. Once again let's capitalize on this opportunity and connect Middletown to its past and its future beside its beautiful natural resource."

**ELAINE BANK**, RIVERFRONT ADVOCATE, STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBER



# Project Phasing

The Master Plan was developed over 12 months, beginning in the summer of 2021. The process followed three stages of work, each roughly four months in duration.

During the initial Analysis Stage, the City led the Middletown community through a series of listening and goal-setting sessions, ultimately concluding with a comprehensive project vision, described in terms of programmatic needs and guiding principles.

With the project vision in hand, various planning concepts were tested and shared with the community during the Options Stage. The most successful aspects of each planning test were then combined into a single plan for development during the final Master Plan Stage.

Following this Master Plan, the consultant team will begin to work with City leadership, planning officials, and the community to adopt a zoning and regulatory framework for development.

The existing zoning for the waterfront is outdated and acts as a barrier to economic development. It will be updated to encourage responsible and inclusive new land uses. In addition to zoning updates, it is also expected that design guidelines will be adopted to promote high-quality development and ensure that development is cohesive and protects the interests of adjacent property owners.

# How We Got Here

This Master Plan builds on decades of thoughtful and dedicated work by City staff and the Middletown community to revitalize the waterfront. Several recent initiatives and investments, listed below, have generated significant momentum and set the stage for this pivotal moment:

**2014: Middletown Riverfront Redevelopment Commission (MRRRC): Final Report & Project for Public Space (PPS): Final Riverfront Report**  
*Community-focused process to define activity areas, or “nodes,” to activate public space along northern stretches of the riverfront*

**2019: The Wastewater Treatment Plant is decommissioned**  
*The culmination of a decades-long effort to unlock a key riverfront site and remove a long-standing and undesirable use*

**2021: 2020-2030 Plan of Conservation & Development**  
*Outlined high-level opportunities and goals for riverfront development across a 10-year planning horizon*

**2021: The City embarks on the Return to the Riverbend Initiative**  
*A community-driven visioning process, that will result in legislative actions that will enable and incentivize future improvements and investment*

**The Riverbend Master Plan builds on these efforts by:**

- Expanding the geographic area of past physical planning efforts to include land stretching along nearly 2 miles of the riverfront
- Aligning community input and existing environmental conditions with a detailed analysis of potential public financing and private development feasibility
- Pairing a physical Master Plan with legislative documents for adoption (in Phase 2)

## PHASE 1: MASTER PLAN

### Summer / Fall 2021

Physical & Economic Analysis  
Project Vision  
Guiding Principles

ANALYSIS

### Fall / Winter 2021-22

Plan Testing  
Economic & Equity Assessments

OPTIONS

### Spring 2022

Plan Refinement  
Implementation Strategies  
Final Documentation

PREFERRED  
PLAN

## PHASE 2: IMPLEMENTATION

### Summer / Fall 2022

Legislative Document Assembly  
Public Review  
Legislative Adoption

LEGISLATIVE  
ADOPTION

# Site Background & History

Looking back on past riverfront planning efforts, the City and the community both share the goal of fully and honestly reflecting the history of Middletown and its indigenous people.

Middletown has a rich and diverse history of economic activity and cultural events at this prominent bend in the Connecticut River. Prior to English settlement, indigenous people relied upon this resource for survival. Europeans saw the value of the watercourse and the abundant resources provided by it and settled in the area. Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, the river played a vital role in the socio-cultural and economic development of the City. During the 1800s, Middletown had the largest port in the state and had trade coming to its harbor from around the world, including enslaved people.

During the 1950s and 60s, Middletown, like so many other cities, was subject to sweeping, and often misguided, urban renewal initiatives. These efforts prioritized making cities more accessible by automobile, at the expense of displacing diverse downtown communities. In Middletown, this led to the construction of Connecticut State Highway's Route 9 project and the severing of downtown from its once-thriving waterfront - something this plan aims to reverse.

A more complete history of Middletown's waterfront was constructed with the support of local historians and is summarized below.



“Middletown’s history as a riverport in the West Indies sugar and slave trades, a manufacturing center, and a gateway for immigrants should shape the quest to bring all our citizens back to the river for recreation and communing with nature.”

DEBORAH SHAPIRO, MUNICIPAL HISTORIAN



“Since its beginning Middletown has relied on the river for its fortune. Now fortune impels us to plan for and protect the river, not just for commerce, but for enjoyment, contemplation, a sense of wonder and belonging.”

MARIA MADSEN HOLZBERG, FORMER MAYOR CITY OF MIDDLETOWN, PRESIDENT, MIDDLETOWN GARDEN CLUB

1634

The presence of Indigenous “River People” known as the Wangunk is evidenced by arrowheads and other stone implements dated to be 7,000 – 9,000 years old. Many believe that Mattabasset means “people at the bend in the river.”



1650

English settlers arrived, and in 1653, renamed the area from Mattabeseck to Middletown because the settlement was halfway between Saybrook on Long Island Sound and Windsor on the Connecticut River.



1669

Due to its deep-water anchorage, Middletown developed a shipping industry.

1750

Middletown becomes the largest and one of the wealthiest towns in Connecticut and a major shipping port in New England. Ships in its harbor were laden with agricultural produce, lumber, and horses and returned from the Caribbean with sugar, molasses, rum, and enslaved people.

1807

Shipping declines, and the City shifts towards a manufacturing industry, marking Middletown's first significant turn away from its river.



1870

The riverfront becomes an intermodal avenue for transportation with the completion of a new rail line. Parallel to the river, the rail tracks separate Middletown from its most significant natural feature, the Connecticut River.



1951

The completion of the Connecticut Route 9 highway further creates a barrier between the City and the riverfront.



1960-70

Urban renewal makes room for large developments, further displacing low-income and minority residents.

1971

A study of the City park system recognized the importance of the Connecticut River and made recommendations for increased usage of the river and park.



1973

Harbor Park (formerly Lion's Park) is built.

1979

The City of Middletown commissions a report to study how to “re-establish” its close relationship with the river.

1980-90

The revival of Main Street - new restaurants and stores opening attract residents and visitors to the Downtown.

2000

A planning charrette for the riverfront is held, resulting in the Mullin Report, a document articulating a vision for developing Middletown's waterfront.



2014

The Project for Public Spaces (PPS) Final Riverfront Report is released and later endorsed by the Middletown Riverfront Redevelopment Commission.



2016

To the River - Waterfront Design for Harbor Park, prepared for the City of Middletown and the Middletown Garden Club, refines the PPS report's design for Harbor Park.

2019

The Middletown Wastewater Treatment Plant is decommissioned, unlocking a crucial Riverfront site.



2021

The new 2020-2030 Plan of Conservation & Development envisions an accessible riverfront.

2021

The City of Middletown embarks on the Return to the Riverbend initiative, a comprehensive Master Plan to reconnect Middletown with the Connecticut River.



# Community Engagement

## Putting Community at the Center of the Process

The consultant team, in partnership with the City of Middletown, conducted extensive stakeholder engagement to capture community feedback to inform the Middletown Riverbend Master Plan. The engagement process included different events, each designed for Middletown stakeholders to express their views and imagine the future of the riverfront.

Collected more than **1,200 comments** from hundreds of stakeholders to inform the Master Plan

The engagement process kicked off on October 12, 2021, with the first City-wide community workshop. Approximately 258 stakeholders joined virtually to learn about the plan and offer suggestions on the potential uses of the riverfront. On January 11, 2022, the second virtual community workshop featured the presentation of potential design concepts by the consultant team and breakout sessions to hear stakeholders' reactions. City officials and the consultant team met with focus groups and held one-on-one meetings with key stakeholders through the spring of 2022.

During the entire process, the Main Street Market Gallery served as a permanent engagement point where stakeholders could pop in and learn about the Master Plan and leave input for the consultant team. The consultant team also regularly updated a public City website and actively engaged the community on social media throughout the process.



“We appreciate how the City made every effort to ensure that the North End was able to participate in discussions and give feedback throughout the process.”

THE NORTH END ACTION TEAM (NEAT)



The project design gallery at Main Street Market served as a public venue for community members to engage in the process and provide input as the project evolved.



Comment cards were collected to capture the community's feedback and suggestions. A selection of those are incorporated throughout this book.



The community was also engaged at events like the 2021 Amistad Docking Event.

# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The inspiration and foundation for this Master Plan was drawn from extensive community input and used to form the following Guiding Principles. These principles shaped the design concepts illustrated in the following chapter.



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



Promote environmental stewardship and community health



Construct a network of connected 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



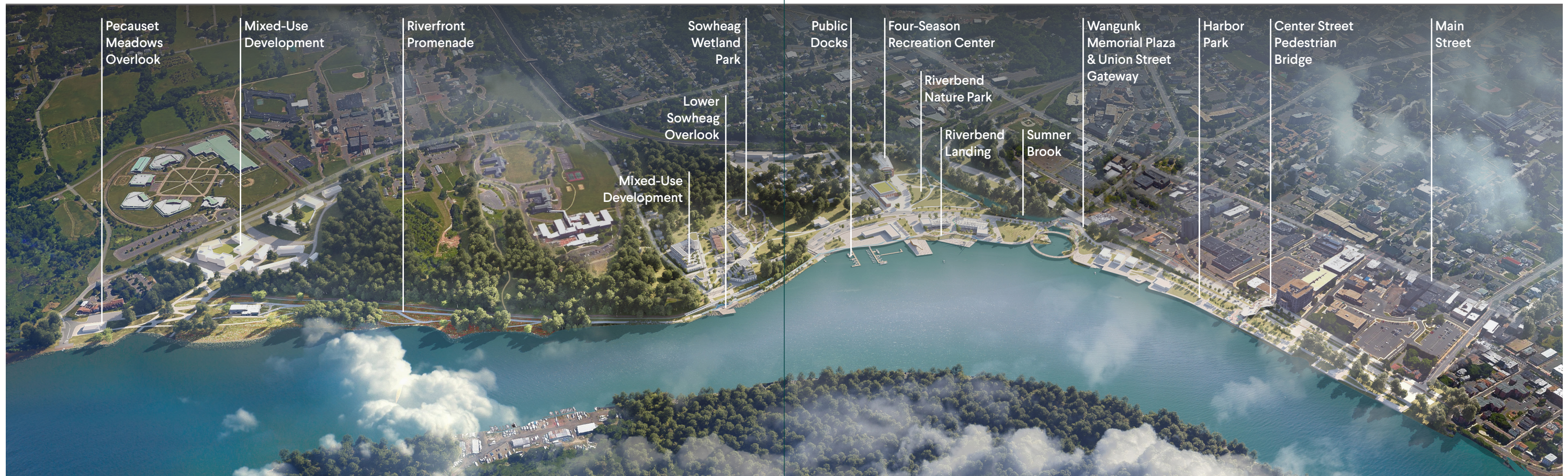
Develop a plan that can be funded and constructed in discrete phases



# A VISION FOR MIDDLETOWN'S RIVERFRONT







# MASTER PLAN VISION

The artistic renderings and graphics which follow are the representation of the long-term, multi-decade build-out of the Master Plan. Key project concepts include a rich system of parks and trails, new streets which create new development blocks, and new development on existing parcels. Additionally, certain elements of the transportation network are shown, such as the multi-use trail stretching the length of the project area, new transit hubs, and critically important improvements to key riverfront streets.

This holistic Master Plan was carefully formulated to be implementable and able to be built in discrete phases. Financial feasibility criteria were developed based on discussions with property owners, local and state agencies, conceptual cost estimating, and potential public financing strategies.

Beginning with the site's overall organization, the following pages depict key areas of the new riverfront and their potential to fulfill the community's guiding principles. We invite you to get inspired and become part of making this vision a reality!



"This master plan will make Middletown's riverfront the best in Connecticut and a place for all residents to enjoy. Its long term impact on the business community will be incredibly positive and will ensure continued economic growth in Middletown."

**LARRY MCHUGH**, PRESIDENT OF THE MIDDLESEX COUNTY OF CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBER



"This plan points the way to more than just a series of projects, it points the way to making us a waterfront city again."

**STEPHEN DEVOTO**, FORMER CHAIR OF THE PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION, STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBER



# A Framework for Development

The overall goal of this plan is to reconnect Middletown to its Connecticut River waterfront. Past generations of Middletown residents had strong connections to the waterfront as it was a center of transportation, commerce, and industry, in addition to having pockets of waterfront recreational activity.

In the more recent past, fewer and fewer industrial sites used the river for commerce, and in the second half of the 20th Century, waterfront industry drastically declined in the region. The result is a challenging waterfront landscape where the industry has receded, leaving behind large tracts of vacant or underutilized land with little public waterfront access.

In order to reestablish a strong waterfront connection, two conditions must be present:

- 1. There must be attractions and/or public amenities people want to visit.
- 2. There must be direct, safe, and attractive physical connections between the adjacent neighborhoods and the waterfront.

The desire for these two elements, integrated with the existing physical qualities and land uses of the riverbend study area, led to the formation of four distinct planning “districts.” Each district is bounded by major connections to the waterfront, and anchored with special public destinations, that create a rhythm of activity and public spaces along the two-mile shoreline.



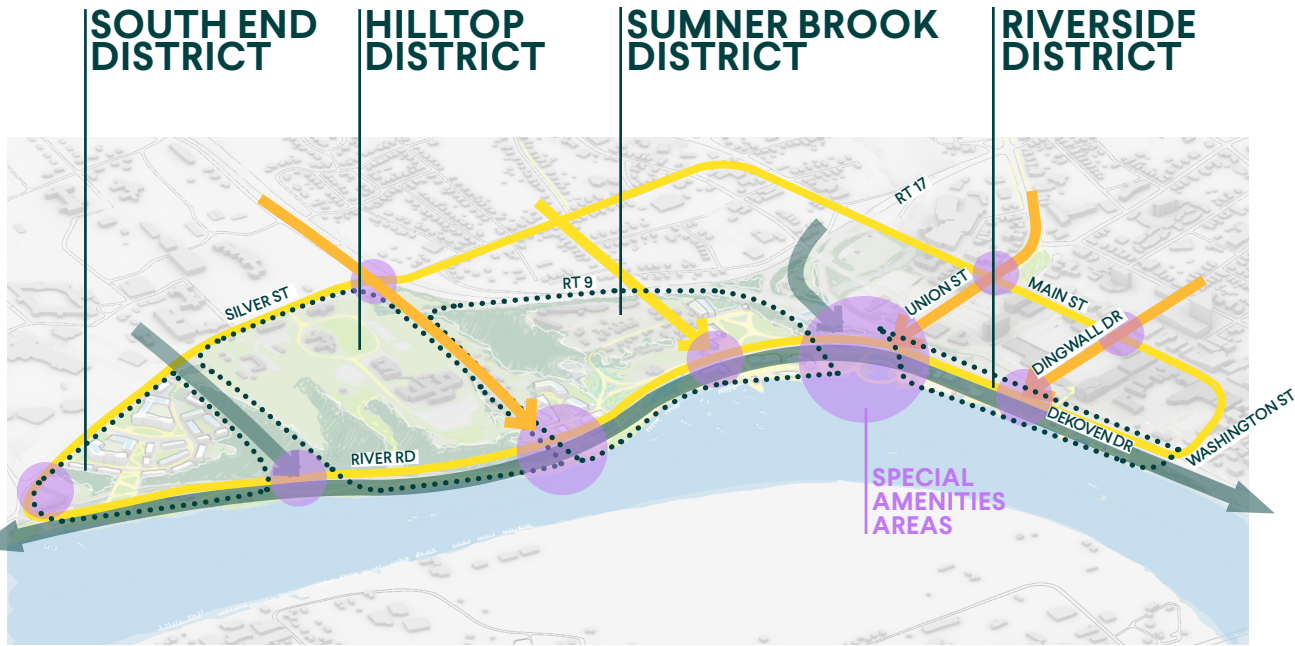
## RIVERSIDE DISTRICT

Improved pedestrian and bicycle connections to a renewed Harbor Park, including a new pedestrian bridge over Route 9, can make the waterfront a more accessible and vibrant extension of the bustling downtown experience.



## SUMNER BROOK DISTRICT

Through the redevelopment of several municipal-owned parcels and former industrial areas, this district could extend the experience of Harbor Park and become a model for sustainable, mixed-use riverfront development.



Master Plan Framework



## HILLTOP DISTRICT

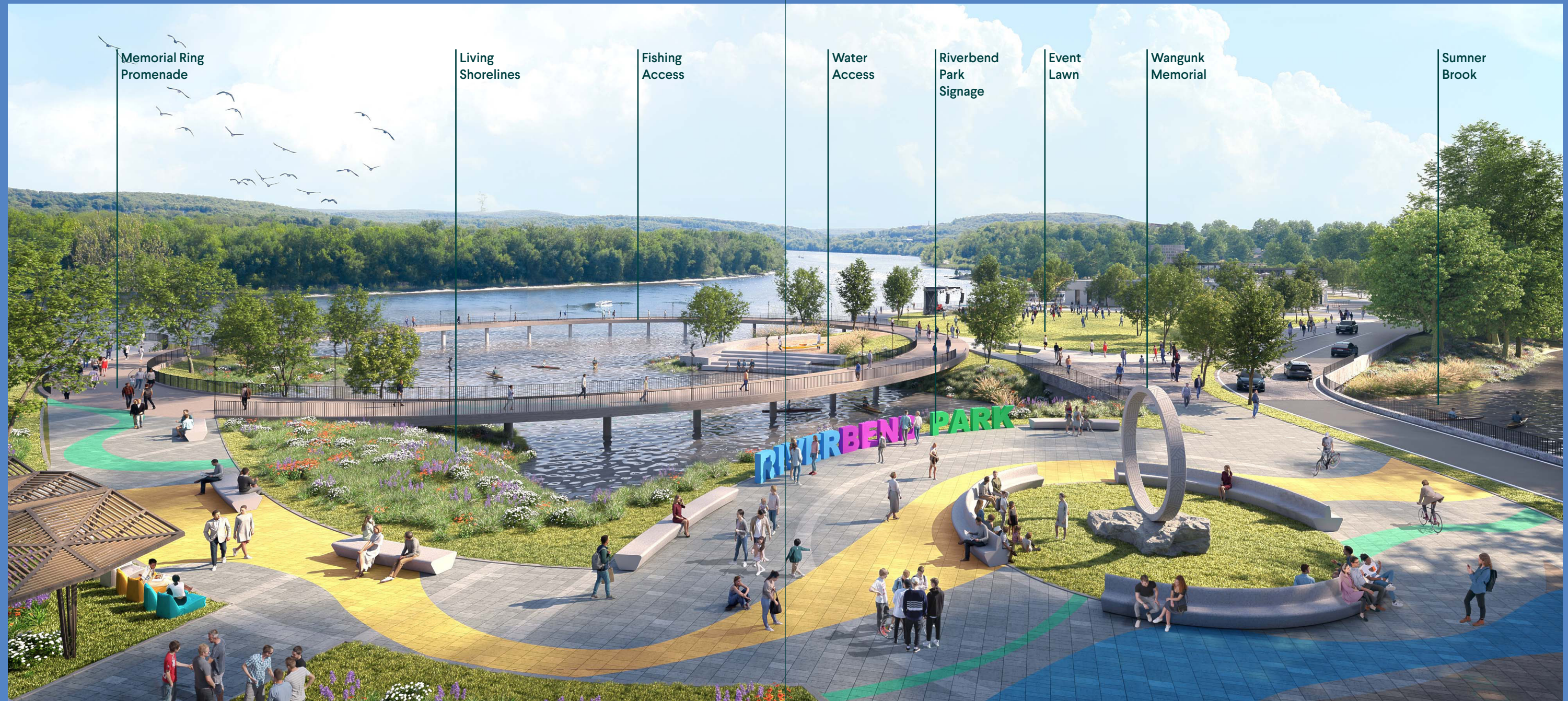
Largely under State of Connecticut ownership, landscape and open space improvements in this area can create greater connectivity and accessibility to the outdoors for both Connecticut Valley Hospital and Middletown community members.



## SOUTH END DISTRICT

Consisting of the former Long River Village site and wellfields (the land above and surrounding wells drilled into an aquifer) along the shoreline, this district presents a major opportunity to meet the City’s housing needs and honor the Long River Village community, while activating the far south end of the riverfront.

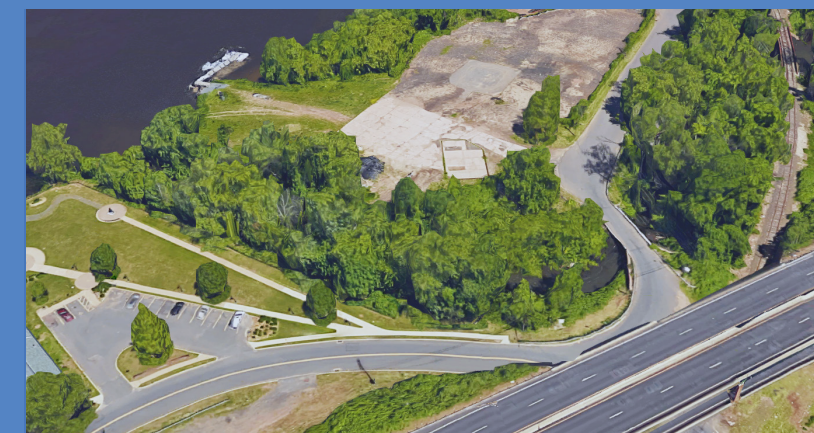




## UNION STREET GATEWAY

### *Celebrating Middletown's Future, While Honoring Its Past*

The Union Street Gateway is an iconic new arrival point to the riverfront. It features walking paths, boat access to Sumner Brook, and a memorial plaza honoring the Wangunk tribe and their contributions to the Middletown community.



View where Sumner Brook meets the Connecticut River looking south towards the former Wastewater Treatment Plant





## CENTER STREET PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE

### *Reconnecting Harbor Park with Main Street*

The new pedestrian bridge restores the historic Center Street alignment between Court Street and Dingwall Drive, which was eliminated as part of urban renewal. It reconnects Main Street to Harbor Park along a bustling new pathway lined with active uses, lush landscape elements, public art, and “only in Middletown” views of the Connecticut River.



View of deKoven Dr, Route 9 and Harbor Park today

Return to the Riverbend  
Give us Your Ideas!

*Cover Rt 9.  
and connect  
downtown  
to the River.  
True economic  
development*

Comment  
card from  
Main Street  
Market  
Gallery.





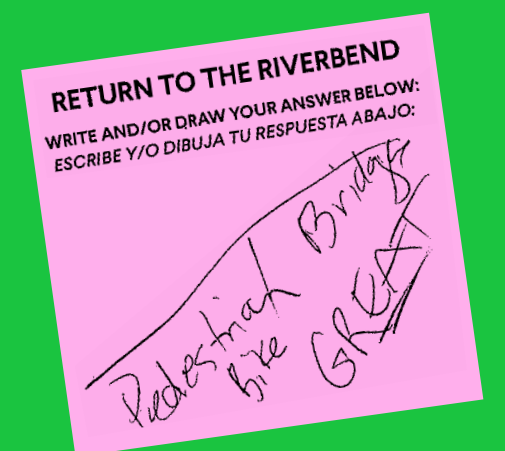
## CENTER STREET PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE PLAZA

### *A New Riverfront Destination*

The Center Street Pedestrian Bridge Plaza is a new hub for community events, people watching, and taking in the panoramic view of the Connecticut River. Lined with active landscape areas, flood-tolerant native planting, seating areas, and direct access to the Center Street Pedestrian Bridge via a monumental stair and universally accessible elevator, the Plaza promises to activate Harbor Park in new and exciting ways.



View of Harbor Park looking north towards the Arrigoni Bridge today







## RIVERBEND NATURE PARK

### *A Four-Season Park and Recreation Center*

A 16-acre park that restores this low-lying industrial area in the Sumner Brook flood zone to an amenity-rich public park, complete with low-impact landscape design and play spaces, walking trails, and direct paddle boat access to a restored Sumner Brook. The park can also be a wintertime destination with sheltered space for an ice skating rink, a four-season recreation center, sledding areas, and an outdoor winter market space. In the long-term, existing industrial buildings could be adapted to provide space for a new municipal parking garage and commercial space.



View today of the Omo industrial area looking north towards Sumner Brook, River Road in the foreground





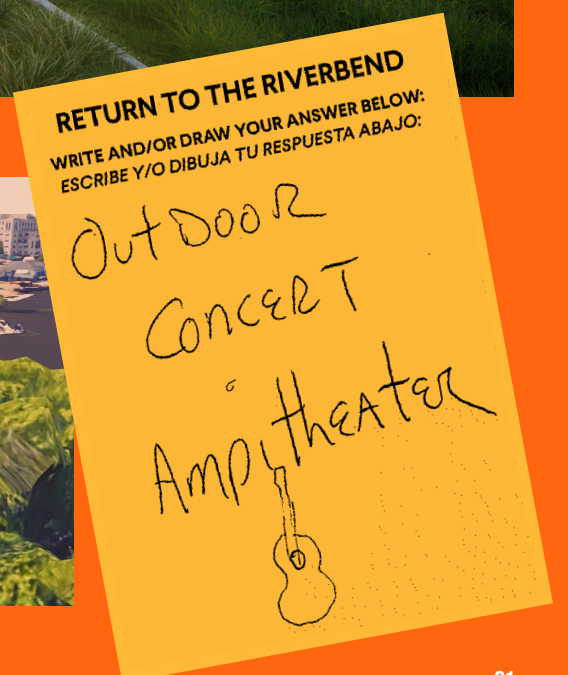
## RIVERBEND LANDING

### *A New Cultural and Entertainment Hub*

An exciting adaptive reuse of the existing wastewater treatment plant site provides a unique waterfront destination in the 16-acre Riverbend Park. Lively restaurants, game lawns, entertainment venues, and shoreline walks create a new hub with something for everyone, just a short walk, bike ride or bus stop away from downtown. New public dock facilities also make this a new dock 'n' dine destination for residents and visitors alike.



View today of the existing, remaining wastewater treatment plant buildings looking north







## NEW INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

### Activating and Connecting the Waterfront

New mixed-use and mixed-income development on the former Jackson Corrugated site provides tremendous opportunity to increase access and activity to the south end of the Sumner Brook District. It could be fronted by a continuous riverfront promenade for pedestrians and cyclists connecting the nearly two-mile waterfront from Harbor Park to the Silver Street boat launch. Tree-lined and generously furnished with seating areas, the promenade will also feature overlooks with panoramic views of the river.



View of the shoreline today at the intersection of Eastern Drive and River Road

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

NO SINGLE  
FAMILY ZONING!  
MIXED-USE!  
PARKS!  
BIKE TRAILS!  
THANK YOU FOR  
DOING THIS !!!  
— architecture student  
from Middletown &





# SOWHEAG WETLAND PARK

## A Restorative Escape

Named after the native political leader, Sowheag, this new wetland park combines landscape restoration and elevated boardwalk trails adjacent to the former Jackson Corrugated site. This new park allows the entire Middletown community to experience nature along peaceful walks perched above a renewed wetland area, perfect for birdwatching, pollinator pathways, and outdoor education.



View of the Jackson Corrugated site wetland area today looking south

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

We need a large natural area that can attract and support birds and other wildlife.



# Open Space & Development Opportunities

Interconnected & sustainable open spaces supporting renewed riverfront land uses

The riverfront’s new land-use framework reflects the best aspects of Middletown’s downtown neighborhoods. It proposes low and mid-rise, mixed-use development organized around a rich network of open spaces serving the local community, City, and region.

The Sumner Brook and South End Districts provide new housing and commercial development. New mixed-use development on these sites was planned to provide significant growth opportunities over the next two decades. In response to community interests and current market conditions, the housing is anticipated to be primarily apartments and townhomes, with a mix of income levels and opportunities for first-time homeowners.

The plan proposes an extensive park network with major public destinations and access points every 1/4 mile (approximately five minutes walking distance) along the waterfront between Harbor Park and the new boat launch at the intersection of River Road and Silver Street.

The park spaces will have a variety of uses and be as distinct in their character, activities, and design as the portions of the waterfront on which they are located. The park spaces will come alive with thoughtful and dynamic programming for

Middletown residents. They could accommodate a diversity of activities from playgrounds and splash pads to pickleball and bocce ball courts, and even a dog park.

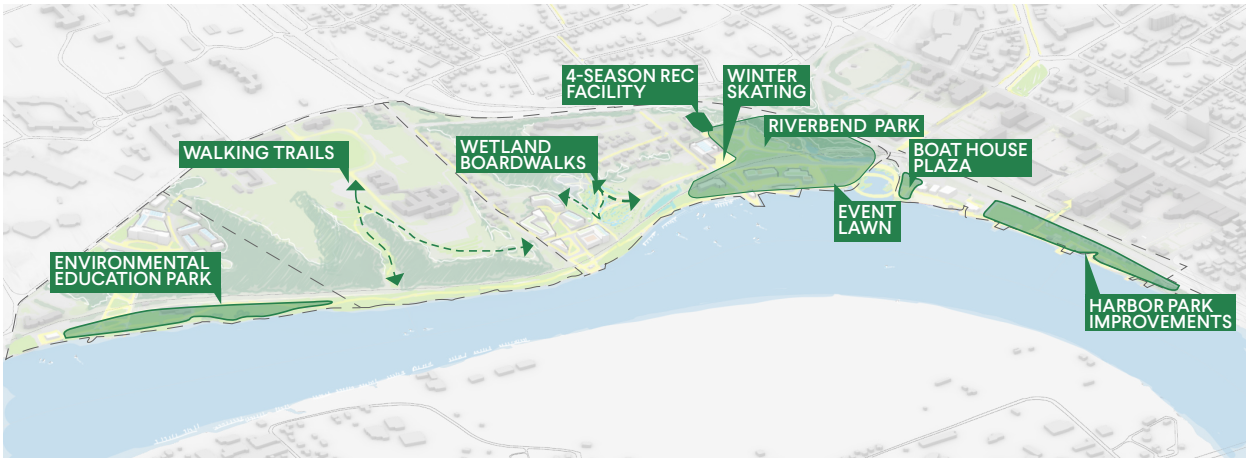
These park spaces could also include a Discovery & Exchange Center, a new shared facility that hosts youth center functions and educational programming for local schools, colleges and universities.

The centerpiece of the new park system is Riverbend Park, a 16-acre park anchored by the former municipal wastewater treatment plant site, proposed as a new cultural and entertainment destination, with flanking event lawn and public dock space. Each area of private development is also anticipated to have generous open spaces that would be accessible to residents and, when appropriate, the public.

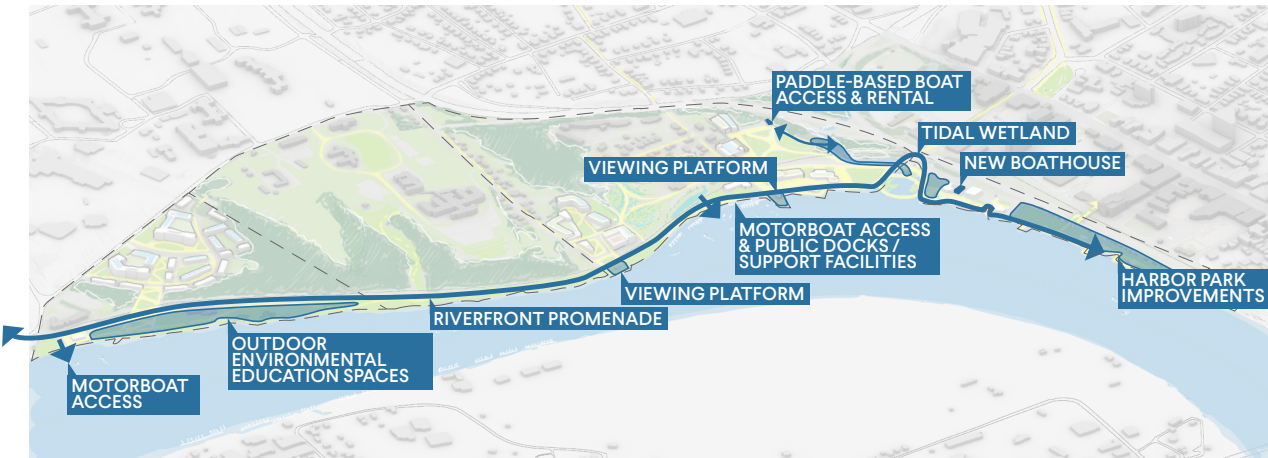
A key consideration in future land use planning was the underlying environmental condition of the riverfront parcels. The consultant team examined each parcel carefully to ensure the proposed uses would be viable and feasible given the anticipated remediation requirements and potential flood and other environmental risks.



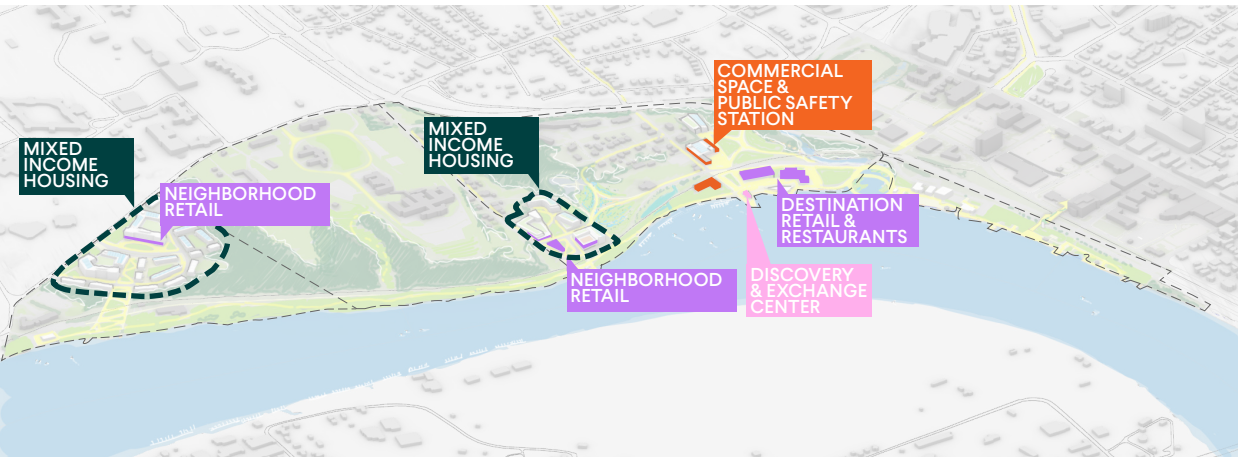
View of public riverfront promenade atmosphere



Public Parks & Recreation Spaces



Shoreline Access & Maritime Activities



Development Opportunities



# Circulation & Access

## A fully connected and accessible riverfront

The Master Plan recommends a comprehensive and inclusive approach to the transportation and circulation planning to support better access to the waterfront for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders and to encourage mixed-use development that is transit-friendly, walkable, and capable of contributing to the identity envisioned for the Riverbend.

The transformation of the waterfront's transportation network will take decades to complete; however, numerous improvements can be made to the various components of the transportation network in the project area in the short- and mid-term that will significantly improve the function and safety of the corridor for all users. These projects must be designed as a highly coordinated system that can be implemented in increments as City, State, and other funds become available.

These elements include:

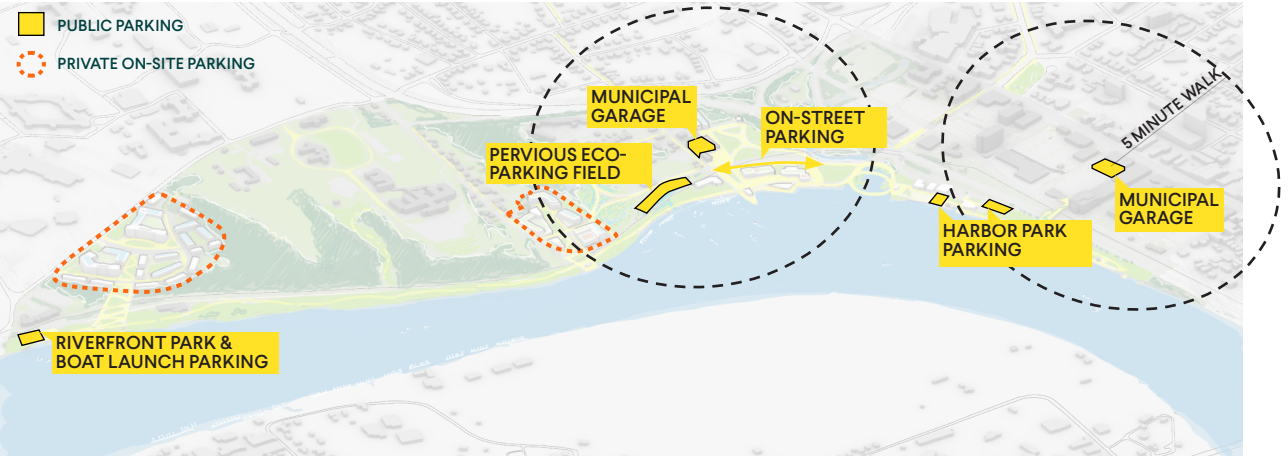
- A new pedestrian bridge over Route 9, extending the existing Riverview Walk Plaza at Main Street to Harbor Park
- Improved tunnel access, potentially with a widened passageway and park on the downtown side of Route 9

- Improved downtown east-west streetscapes, particularly those that connect to the North End community
- Connector and neighborhood streets that are designed to be “Complete Streets”, and balance vehicular uses with pedestrian and bicycle uses
- A multi-use riverfront promenade with multiple water access points
- Integration of transit through expanded bus service and micro-mobility hubs to provide bus to bike connection points
- Maintaining use of the existing rail line for industrial operations, improving safety crossings, and accommodating potential future passenger or tourist rail (i.e. Essex Steam Train)
- A distributed parking plan that provides convenient municipal parking within a five-minute walk of all riverfront park spaces
- Extensive trail networks for pedestrians and bicycles

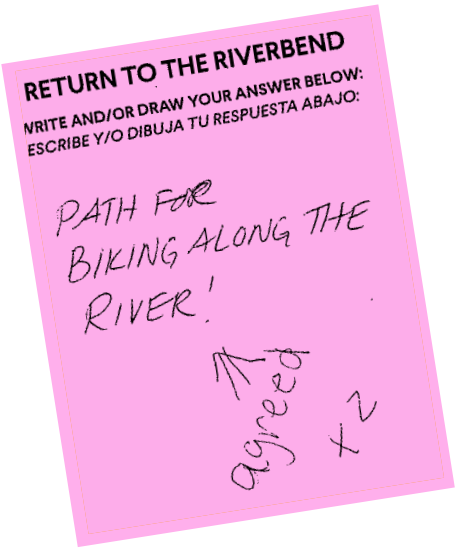
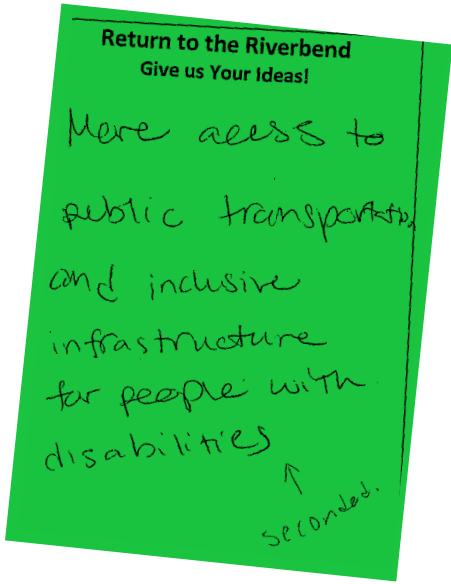


Pedestrian, Bike, & Transit Network

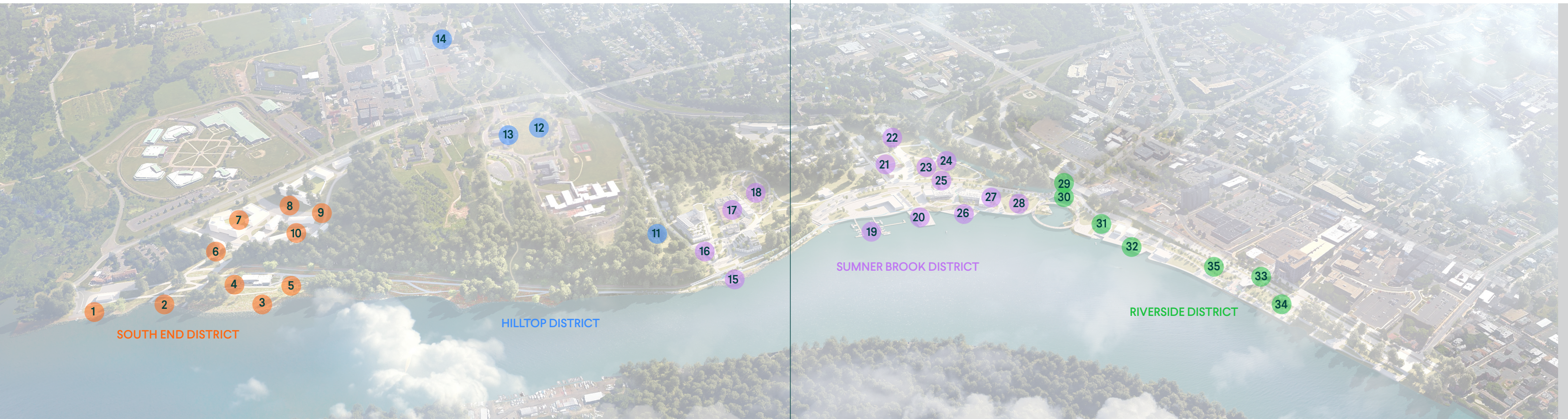
- Proposed Bicycle Route
- Proposed Walking Route
- Proposed Transit Loop
- Existing MAT Route 581
- Mobility Hub
- Potential Extension (Bike & Pedestrian)
- Middletown Complete Streets Master Plan 2013



Parking Distribution







## Places and Experiences for All

The public realm of the Master Plan is composed of a series of discrete project concepts for new open spaces and public facilities. These project concepts were developed after extensive conversations with the community and a rigorous analysis of the study area's unique opportunities and constraints regarding existing physical, economic, and cultural conditions. These projects are largely located on publicly owned land, both increasing their viability and ability to incentivize adjacent private development. A select number of those projects are identified on the map above.

### SOUTH END DISTRICT

1. Silver Street Public Boat Launch
2. Pecauset Meadows Overlook
3. Native Landscapes & Living Shorelines
4. Outdoor Classrooms
5. Environmental Education Park
6. Terraced Park
7. Mid-Rise Apartments
8. Long River Village Memorial
9. Community Gardens
10. Townhomes

### HILLTOP DISTRICT

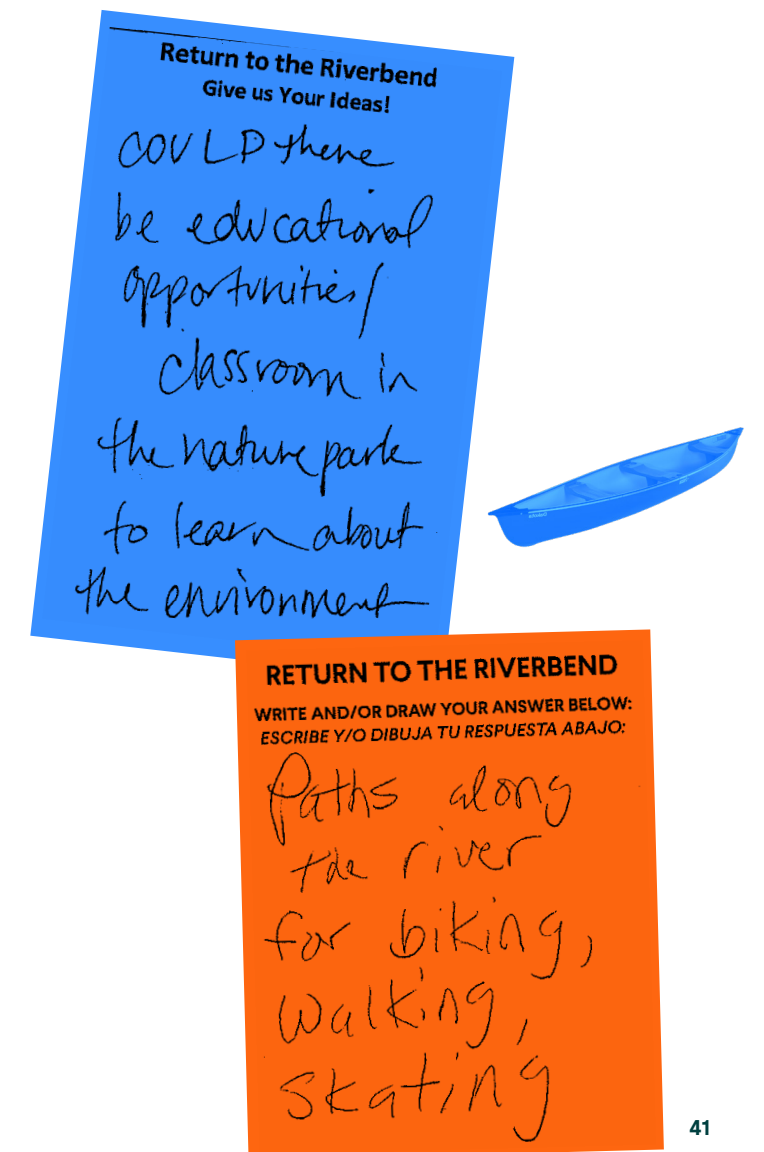
11. Walking and Biking Trails
12. Shared Community Landscapes
13. Repurposed Underutilized Sites
14. Repurposed Noble Hall Theater

### SUMNER BROOK DISTRICT

15. Lower Sowheag Overlook
16. Neighborhood-Scale Retail
17. Mixed-Income & Sustainable Housing
18. Sowheag Wetland Boardwalks
19. Public Boat Launch & Docking
20. Discovery & Exchange Center
21. Municipal Garage & Commercial Uses
22. Four-Season Rec Center
23. Riverbend Park
24. Nature Park & Playground
25. Mobility Hub / Transit Stop
26. Amphitheater
27. Retail & Restaurants
28. Event Lawn

### RIVERSIDE DISTRICT

29. Union Street Gateway
30. Wangunk Memorial Plaza
31. New Community Boathouse
32. Riverfront Promenade
33. Center Street Pedestrian Bridge
34. Middle Passage Marker
35. Harbor Park





# REALIZING THE VISION





# REALIZING THE VISION

The ultimate success of this Master Plan will be determined by the speed and quality of its implementation. As described in the introduction of this document, the immediate next step for this effort is to establish a clear and consistent land use policy to enable the various development projects envisioned in the Master Plan. Concurrent with those legislative actions, the City and its partner agencies and organizations can begin planning for investments in the riverfront public realm to attract new high-quality development.

## Land Use Policy Updates

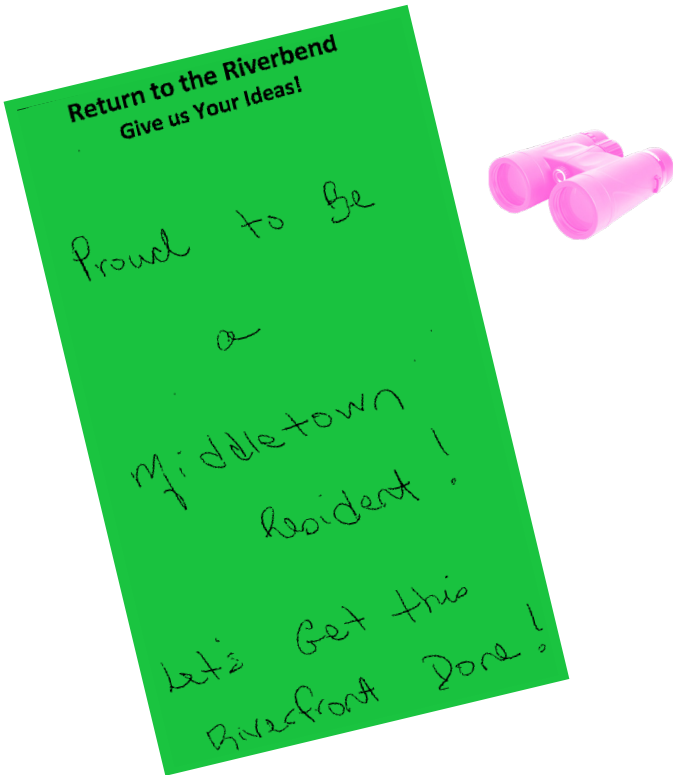
To enable the Master Plan's proposed development and bring some existing non-conforming uses into compliance, it is anticipated that the City's underlying zoning along the riverfront districts will be updated in the coming months. Further analysis and coordination with City commissions and agencies is needed to determine the precise actions required, but the overall goal will be to remove any barriers for private development to execute the vision developed in this Master Plan, and to incentivize development where it's feasible and appropriate.

Additionally, the incorporation of private development guidelines will also be explored in this subsequent phase of work. Successful development guidelines can ensure a level of consistency and coherence across new development projects without being overly prescriptive or constraining. Guidelines of this nature typically focus on the quality of the public realm experience and address themes such as active ground floors, architectural form, private street design, private open space design, and sustainable design elements through a principle-based approach.

## Staying Involved

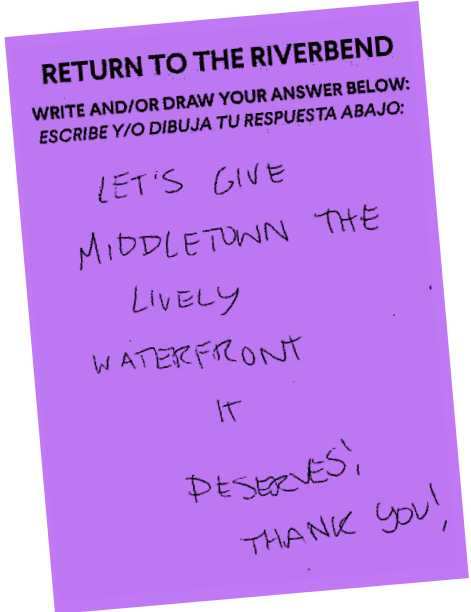
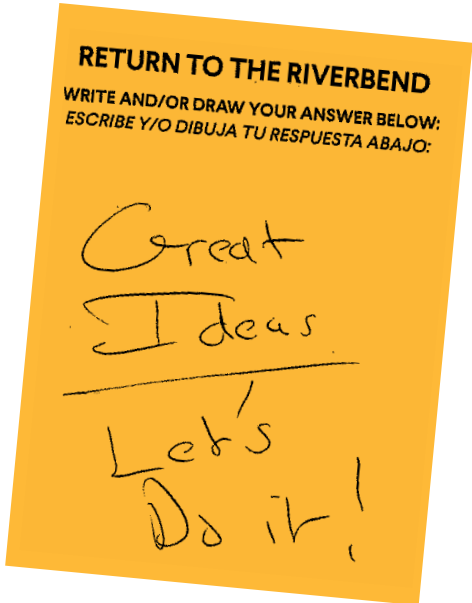
Support and momentum around riverfront renewal are at an all-time high in Middletown. The time is now for the City, partner agencies, and the community to continue working together to set the stage for long-term development. In addition to engaging in the upcoming legislative efforts, a number of other ongoing and upcoming initiatives can benefit from the momentum created over the past year, including:

- Potential formation of a riverfront governing body, special commission, or other representative community organizations (i.e. Friends of the Riverbend)
- Early physical improvements, such as a new event lawn on the Wastewater Treatment Plant site, the Union Street Gateway, and various streetscape/intersection upgrades
- DOT planning for Route 9 improvements, including planning for a new pedestrian bridge over Route 9 and improved connections to the North End
- Continued planning for a new Harbor Park Community boathouse
- Proactive economic development outreach
- Joining local community organizations with vested interests in riverfront activities, like the Middletown Garden Club or local rowing clubs
- Spreading the word, staying engaged, and making your opinions known!



"Each phase of the Riverfront development is an opportunity to illuminate the creative and innovative voices within our community. Moreover, it is my hope that this endeavor will draw us even closer!"

JEANETTE BLACKWELL, COMMON COUNCIL, COUNCIL MEMBER, STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBER





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

Dog park

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

Ice cream Shop



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

Pickle Ball Courts



to the Riverbend  
Give us Your Ideas!

Hiking Trails  
along the river  
a dog park!

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

Consider boat rentals too!

ESCRIBE Y/O DIBUJA TU RESPUESTA ABAJO:

I love the idea  
of a slave trade  
memorial.

♥  
Middletown

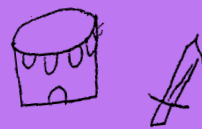
RETURN TO THE RIVERBEND  
WRITE AND/OR DRAW YOUR ANSWER BELOW:  
ESCRIBE Y/O DIBUJA TU RESPUESTA ABAJO:

Quiet spaces for  
meditation & yoga/  
qigong. ☺

Thank  
you.

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

Gladiator arena



↑ I second  
this ✓  
I Thira

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:

Me likey  
Do it!!!

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

Boat rentals  
Wind surfing?  
Kayak rentals

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

Bike Path + place to lock bike!  
Community Garden  
BBQ Grills  
Hammocks  
Bociball 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:

Old Fashion  
Ice Cream  
and a Rolled  
Ice Cream



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:

I like  
how there  
is a  
Plaza.  
I ♥



**COOPER ROBERTSON**