

Meriden Green & Commercial Center

overview

The ideas and recommendations presented in the City Center Initiative are intended to be examples of what could happen, given the appropriate circumstances, not a declaration of what will ultimately happen. It is not a plan in which the City builds office buildings or retail buildings. The City Center Initiative is a long-term vision in which necessary infrastructure improvements are implemented in a manner intended to create the opportunity for and enhance the overall impact of private development in the downtown area.

The City Center Initiative considers existing conditions for the greater downtown Meriden area. This downtown area, consisting of a mix of government, public safety, library, businesses, entertainment venues, and mass transit, offers the essential elements of a true "City Center", but requires several significant improvements in order to realize its full potential. This document presents recommended infrastructure improvements, development strategies, and planning goals that can be used by the City of Meriden as a "road map" in the pursuit of an economically productive City Center.



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The Meriden Green and Commercial Center will create an environment that maximizes the opportunity for new business, and which attracts a growing, diverse group of people to enjoy many of life's activities in a safe, well-planned, and attractive setting. When this core environment is successful, this vitality and success will naturally grow to adjacent neighborhoods, and contribute to a higher quality of life throughout the entire City.

results

The result of this phase of work is clear: Meriden is at a critical point in determining its future. It presently has a unique opportunity to correct some persistent problems, and along the way create a wonderful City Center. By fully implementing the City Center Initiative, Meriden will experience:

- The creation of new public space to accommodate community events, including the new Meriden Green.
- Establishment of a realigned, flood-proof Harbor Brook, as well as other public improvements, including new sidewalks and pedestrian connections, streets, landscaping and a parking structure.
- Transportation infrastructure improvements that will provide:
 - a. Better links between the City Center and the regional access points;
 - b. Better links between Downtown and the Westfield Shoppingtown Meriden area;
 - c. Less confusing downtown traffic patterns; and
 - d. Opportunity for growth of alternative transportation modes.
- Revitalization of an obsolete, under-utilized commercial area with a new, vibrant neighborhood for living, working, shopping, and gathering.
- A greater than \$2 million net increase in annual tax revenue, up from the \$289,000 generated by existing properties.
- "A Sense of Place," created by:
 - a. Identifiable and welcoming gateways into the City Center,
 - b. Expanded City Center pedestrian district with new streetscape and many unique public spaces, and
 - c. Additional livable and desirable residential uses adjacent to and in the downtown.

Key Objectives:

- Developing a vibrant City Center that takes advantage of Meriden's premier location, existing business-friendly environment, inherent livability and cultural diversity, assures the long-term economic vitality of the City Center, and restores pride and productivity to the entire City
- Addressing a chronic flooding problem that has plagued the downtown area for more than a century
- Creating and identifying opportunities for significant private sector-driven redevelopment
- Improving and encouraging safe and predictable vehicular and pedestrian circulation throughout the project area
- Creating a centrally located Meriden Green and Commercial Center that enhances the City's character by encouraging community gathering and pedestrian activity, and provides an identifiable "sense of place"
- Exploring opportunities for parking improvements and expansion of the existing mass transit infrastructure

Four Recognized Obstacles

to Economic Growth Downtown

1. Inadequate Flood Control Infrastructure
2. Confusing Transportation Network Infrastructure
3. Lack of Development Opportunity
4. Lack of a "Sense of Place" in City Center

