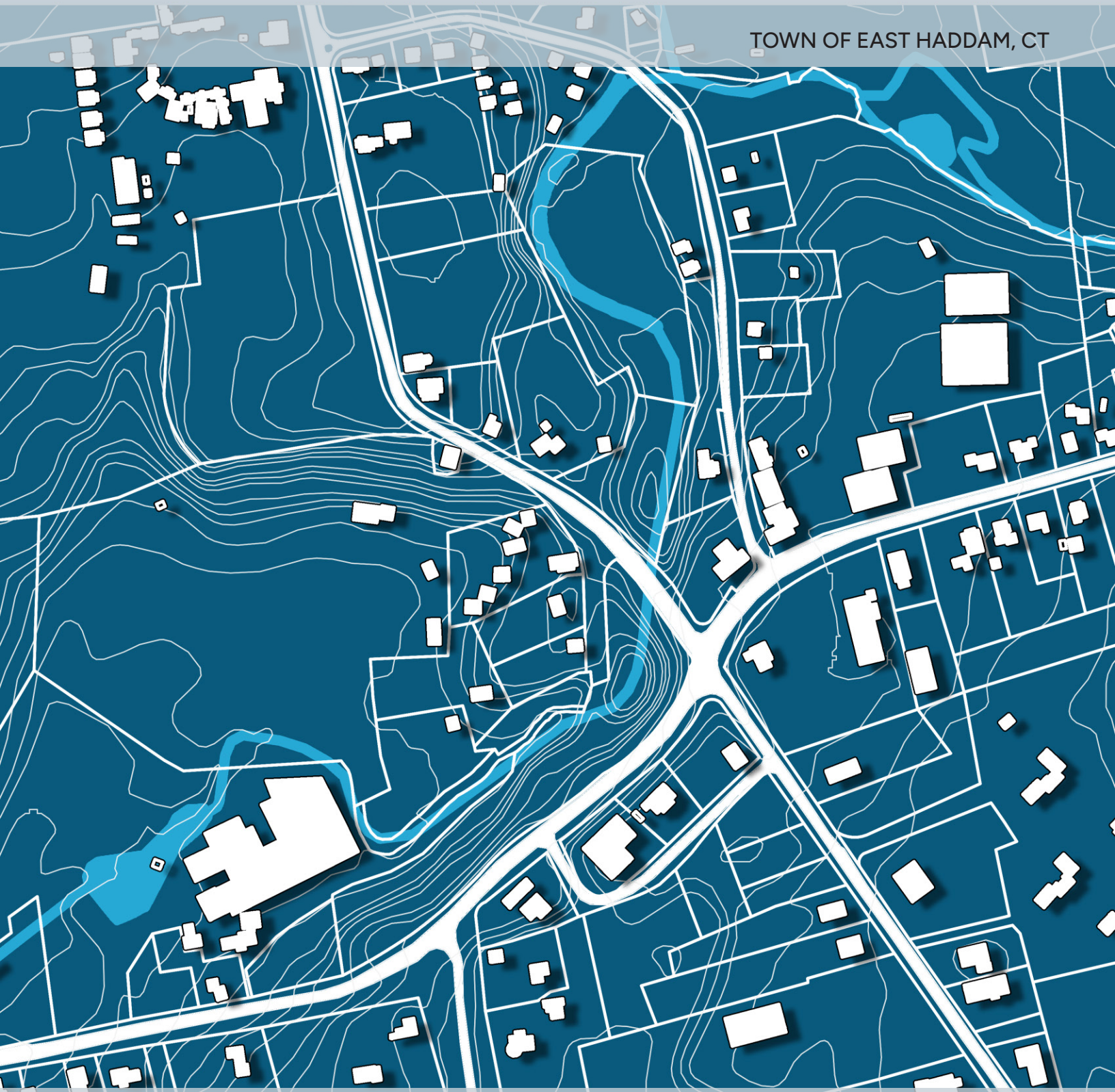
# MOODUS CENTER MASTER PLAN

TOWN OF EAST HADDAM, CT



OCTOBER 2025

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS


**East Haddam Planning and Zoning Commission & Economic Development Commission Subcommittee**

Irene Haines, Board of Selectmen

Crary Brownell, P&Z

Richard Pettinelli, P&Z

Ed Gubbins, P&Z

Robert Casner, EDC

David Merrick, EDC

Michael Robidoux, EDC

Jim Ventres, Land Use Administrator

Lauren Pszczolkowski, EDC Administrator

**Consultant**

SLR

**East Haddam Planning and Zoning Commission**
**and the**
**East Haddam Economic Development Commission**

September 2025

To Moodus Village and East Haddam Residents.
The Planning and Zoning Commission and the Economic Development Commission are pleased to present the Moodus Center Master Plan which reflects the culmination of a year-long process that included stakeholder discussions, a community survey, public open houses, and public commission meetings to gain valuable insight into establishing a new vision for Moodus Center. East Haddam's 2019 Plan of Conservation & Development (POCD) acknowledged past failures and the current Center's limitations and recommended undertaking a master plan process to redevelop and revitalize the Center.
Moodus Center was forever changed in the 1960s by a failed renewal plan that promised revitalization, economic development, and modernization. The 1967 Plan of Development Planning Proposals for the Town of East Haddam identified a renewal plan for Moodus Center. The renewal plan called for the removal of all substandard commercial structures and deteriorated residential structures. The existing commercial structures were to be replaced with public open space and the existing residential areas with a new auto-oriented shopping plaza. A total of 33 homes and commercial buildings were razed, taking with them much of the Village's history and character.
The 1967 renewal plan had great promises – elimination of blight and hazardous conditions – while providing open space and parks for public enjoyment, more opportunities for shopping, business growth and development, and improved traffic and parking situations. The proposed improvement would also lead to substantial increase in the Town's Grand List. These factors along with photos and models of the new commercial core and successful redevelopment project examples (including one in Washington, Connecticut) all persuaded the Town to pursue the renewal of Moodus Center.
However, the project did not deliver as promised. Federal and state grants for over $1 million were never received, population projections from the consultants widely overestimated the Town's population (30,000 at buildout versus 8,875 today), open space and parkland were never purchased and developed, the variety and scale of commercial entities envisioned by the plan were never built, and roadway improvements caused traffic and speed increases with no accommodation for sidewalks and pedestrians. In the end, the bright vision for the future was tarnished by delays, cost overruns, and local disputes. It proved to be too big a project for too small a space.
The Moodus Center Master Plan presents a new vision and provides a roadmap for achieving the vision. The master plan includes recommendations for short-term and long-term policy decisions and design considerations to reach the community's vision to revive the Center's physical character and vitality for new opportunities to work, live, and plan.

Sincerely,
The Planning and Zoning Commission and Economic Development Commission

# TABLE OF CONTENTS


1 INTRODUCTION

2 DATA, INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

3 MOODUS CENTER MASTER PLAN

4 IMPLEMENTATION

5 APPENDIX

MOODUS CENTER MASTER PLAN

1

# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Moodus Center Master Plan

What is a Master Plan

Community Engagement Process

# WELCOME TO THE MOODUS CENTER MASTER PLAN

The Village of Moodus is located within the northeast portion of the Town of East Haddam. Its Center, the focus of this Plan, is located at the crossroads of State Route 149 and Route 151. Moodus Center provides for a local economy that caters to those living in and around Moodus Village. The Village, which shares its name with the Moodus River that runs through the community, was known as a rural mill town in the mid-20th century. The Village's identity was overshadowed by urban renewal initiatives in the 1960s, which prioritized vehicular travel over pedestrian spaces. Today, Moodus Center suffers from a lack of a clear identity, aesthetics, and limited foot traffic.

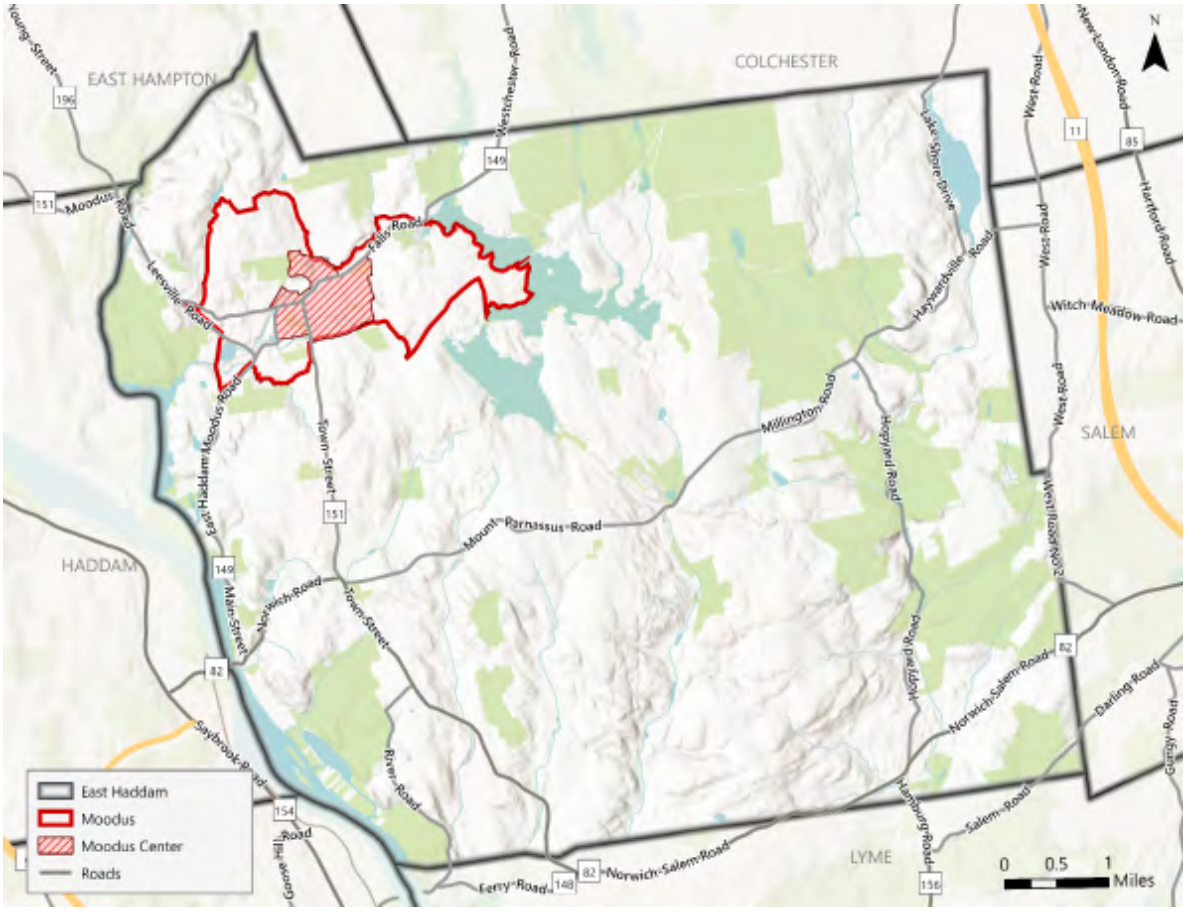



Figure 1. Moodus Center Context Map

East Haddam's 2019 Plan of Conservation & Development (POCD) acknowledges this limitation and identified interest in redevelopment and revitalization within the Center. This Master Plan sets the stage for this effort, serving as a roadmap for Moodus Center by providing direction for policy decisions and community projects that will aid in reaching the community's vision for its desired future.

The Town's POCD identified that "*traditional village neighborhoods such as Moodus Center and East Haddam Village hold further economic development potential*" and identified the following opportunities for pursuing redevelopment and revitalization:

- In order for Moodus' revitalization to be successful it must provide retail that aligns with the resident's day-to-day shopping needs. The EDC believes it is essential for services such as groceries, pharmacy, medical and dental continue to be available inside town limits for resident convenience.

- Moodus Center has also been hampered by the appearance and aesthetics of both public and private spaces. It will require effort by both the Town and private property owners to create an inviting environment for patrons to frequent and shop.

- Redevelopment opportunities exist at former and current mill facilities including the Brownell & Company and the long-vacant Cumberland Farms. Although these properties may have environmental challenges from prior uses, the Town has made remediation and reuse a priority. There is vacant commercial land along William F.. Palmer and Rae Palmer Roads that could support additional commercial development.

- There are opportunities to pursue adaptive reuse for historic residential buildings on Plains Road.

## WHAT IS A MASTER PLAN?

A Master Plan is a comprehensive, long-term plan providing a framework for the future of a specific area, in this case, Moodus Center. The Plan is comprised of a detailed analysis of the community's existing human, natural, and built conditions, which supports the identification of key challenges and opportunities and development of recommendations that align with the community's shared vision. This vision is crafted through community engagement input and is reflective of the community's values, priorities, and aspirations for its future.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

Localized planning presents an opportunity for community stakeholders to have an active role in shaping their community's future and building community consensus. Conducting public engagement early and throughout the planning process establishes trust between the project team and the community, creating a shared ownership of the final plan. For this reason, the project team worked with the Town staff and the project Working Group to develop a Community Engagement Plan that would reach a variety of stakeholders and bring diverse perspectives and knowledge to the table, enriching the master planning process. Moodus' community engagement plan included five (5) strategies for doing so:

- **Stakeholder Interviews**. Stakeholder interviews offer key community members and property owners the opportunity to share their detailed insight on the community and its ambitions for the future.

- **Community Survey**. A community survey presents an opportunity to gather broad community feedback to gauge participants' perceptions, concerns, priorities, and aspirations about a variety of relevant topics.

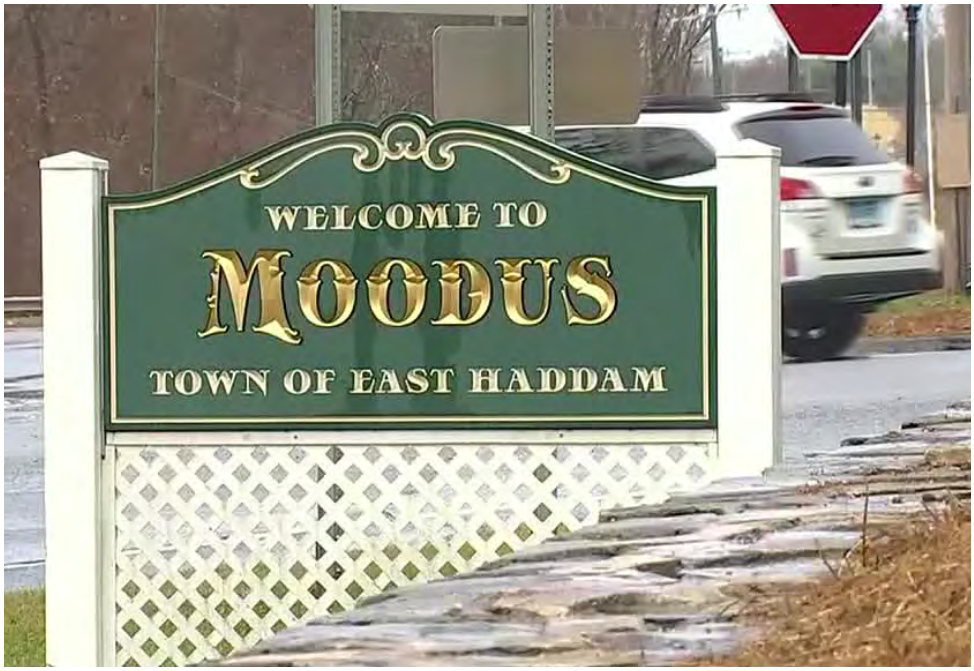
- **Community Workshop(s)**. Community workshops or open houses allow the public to engage directly with the project team and share valuable community input through small group or one-on-one discussions and visioning/idea generation activities.

- **Public Commission Meetings**. Public commission meetings ensure the community has the opportunity to engage with decision-makers throughout the plan development process.

- **Project Website.** The project website or StoryMap serves as an information-sharing hub for the plan, allowing the public to review materials as they become available and remain up to date on the plan's development.

The **stakeholder interviews** were held early in the planning process and included meetings with local property and business owners within the Center. These interviews offered invaluable knowledge about the Village's history, residents, businesses, infrastructure, and natural resources.

The Moodus Center Master Plan **community survey** was the first opportunity for the general public to participate in the planning process and share their knowledge of the area. The community survey was available online for approximately four (4) weeks in the Summer of 2024 and gathered 333 responses – 96 percent of which were residents of East Haddam. Results from this survey provided the project team with insight into the community's concerns and priorities for Moodus Center, related to its sense of place, housing and economy, and transportation infrastructure. The Community Survey Report is included as Appendix A.




Moodus Village Signage

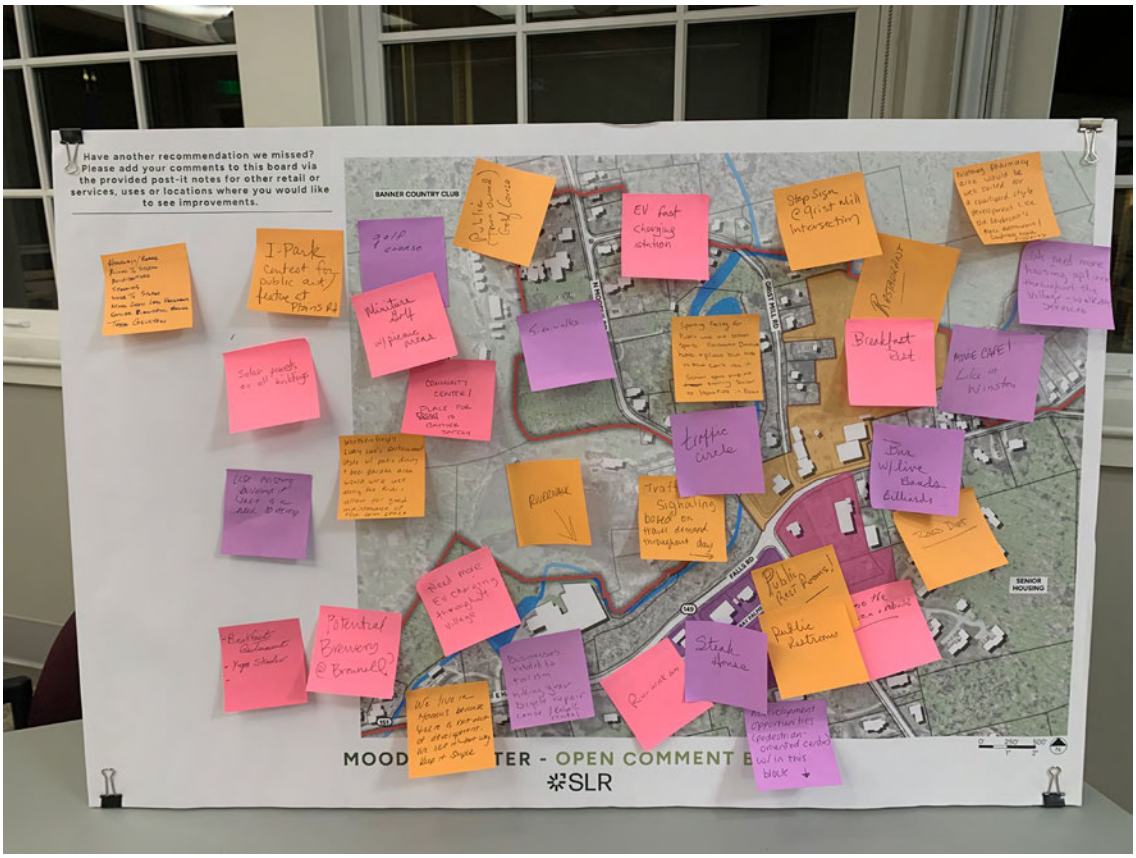
Two (2) **community workshops/open houses** were conducted throughout this Plan's development. The first workshop/open house was held in October 2024 and focused on introducing the project to the community and gathering preferences about three potential commercial development areas within the Center. Participants also had the opportunity to write a Postcard from the Future to share their vision for Moodus Center in 2035. Results from these activities informed the development of the vision statement and the final recommendations for the Center. A second community workshop/open house was held in July 2025 to present the draft master plan to the community. Detailed information about the attendance, activities, and results of the community events are available in Appendix B.



Moodus Open House

A variety of **public commission meetings** were held throughout the project. Initially a project Working Group was established that included Commissioners from both the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Economic Development Commission. The Working Group held three (3) public meetings in the Summer and Autumn of 2024 to review data, survey results, and plan for the initial project open house. Towards the end of the project (Spring and Summer 2025), joint public meetings were held with both Commissions to review recommendations and the final master plan.

A **project website** was created for the project using ArcGIS StoryMap, a digital platform for sharing information in an interactive webpage format. The Moodus Center Master Plan StoryMap hosted project information - including background information, community data, and site analyses - and was routinely updated with community events and public commission meeting announcements and presentations.




Moodus Open House

MOODUS CENTER MASTER PLAN

2

# DATA, INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

Moodus History

Moodus Today

Moodus Center Analysis

Development of the Moodus Center Master Plan began by reviewing the Center's past and gaining a full understanding of where the community is today. This section of the Master Plan summarizes the findings of data, reviews inventory information, and concludes with a Moodus Center site analysis that includes observations and opportunities. All of these items provide the groundwork for the Master Plan's vision and recommendations.

## MOODUS HISTORY

East Haddam, and Moodus Village, was first inhabited by Native Americans until settlers purchased the area in 1662. This area was known to the Native Americans as *Machimoodus* (the place of noises), which is attributed to frequent earthquakes recorded throughout the 17th-19th centuries. The area was further settled in 1685. Its early economy took advantage of the natural resources available, with a focus on agriculture, forestry, shipbuilding, and mill industry. Moodus Center became a central location for the broader village in the 1800s, with established community facilities (library, meeting hall, etc.) and a strong mill industry along the Moodus River, a number of which structures still existing today, as a reminder of the Town's heritage.[1]

The East Haddam Historic District Commission sponsored a survey of the architectural and historical resources of the Town of East Haddam. Over five hundred sites were identified throughout East Haddam. In the Moodus Master Plan Area over seventy (70) structures were identified. The surveys are available in the East Haddam Library and the Land Use office. The titles are as follows: A Survey of the Architectural and Historical Resources of the Town of East Haddam, Connecticut - Part I by Mark Hoskin (December 1977); and Part II by Dr. Karl Stofko & Rachel I. Gibbs (September 1980).




Falls Road circa 1950's



Neptune Twine and Cord Mill, circa 1900

1 Town of East Haddam (Town History)

# MOODUS TODAY

Today, Moodus remains a significant component of the Town of East Haddam's residential, commercial, and institutional activity. The following sections will discuss Moodus' general population characteristics and the Center's zoning, land use, transportation, infrastructure, and natural resources to establish an understanding of the area's existing conditions.



Falls Road, CT State Route 149



East Haddam Library, Plains Road



Senior Housing, Oak Avenue near
William F. Palmer Road

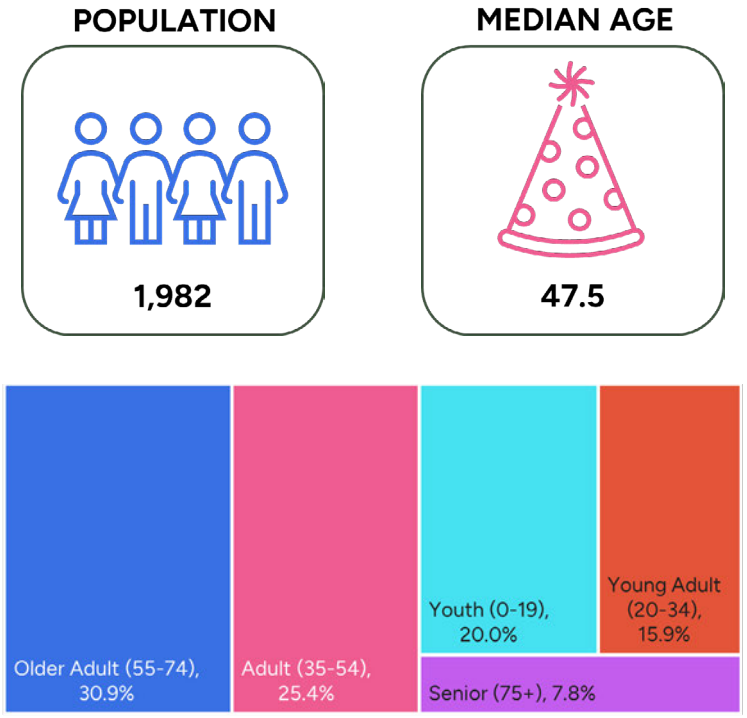


Moodus River, Hidden Valley Preserve
Photo credit: East Haddam Land Trust

## Demographics, Housing, & Employment/Market Conditions[2]

The United State's Decennial Census (2020) identifies Moodus' population as 1,982 people, representing 22 percent of the Town of East Haddam's total population (8,875). **Moodus' population declined approximately 2.3 percent between 2010 and 2020**. Neighboring communities, like Colchester, East Hampton, Portland, and Chester had similar declines in population, as did Middlesex County (0.9 percent), in this timeframe. The Village's **race and ethnicity profile mirrors that of East Haddam**; 90 percent of the population is White and Black/African American and Asian populations each make up less than 1 percent of Moodus' population. 4 percent of the population reports as Hispanic/Latino.

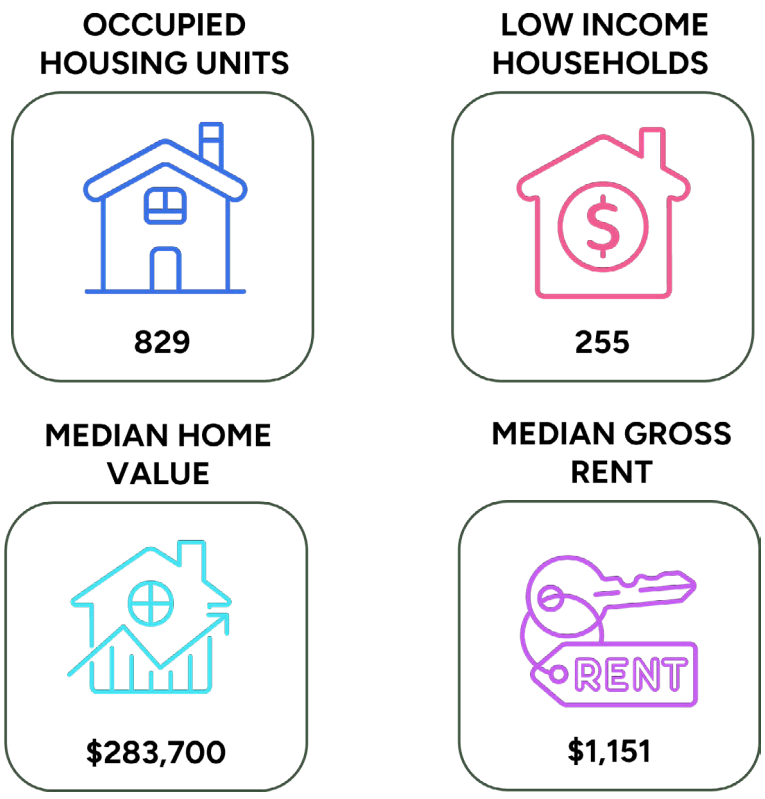
**Moodus has a slightly younger median age compared to East Haddam**; the median age within the Village is 47.5 years compared to 49.0 years townwide. Moodus' age profile is similar to both East Haddam and Middlesex County. The largest age group are those ages 55+ (38.7 percent). The youth population (0-19) makes up 20 percent of the Village's population.




2 Data presented in the Demographics, Housing, & Employment/Market Conditions section is from the United States Decennial Census (2020), the American Community Survey (2022, 5-Year Estimates), the Town of East Haddam, ESRI's Business Analyst, and others as noted. Data from the Census Bureau is reported for the Moodus Census Designated Place (CDP), which represents the entire Village of Moodus and is not specific to Moodus Center.

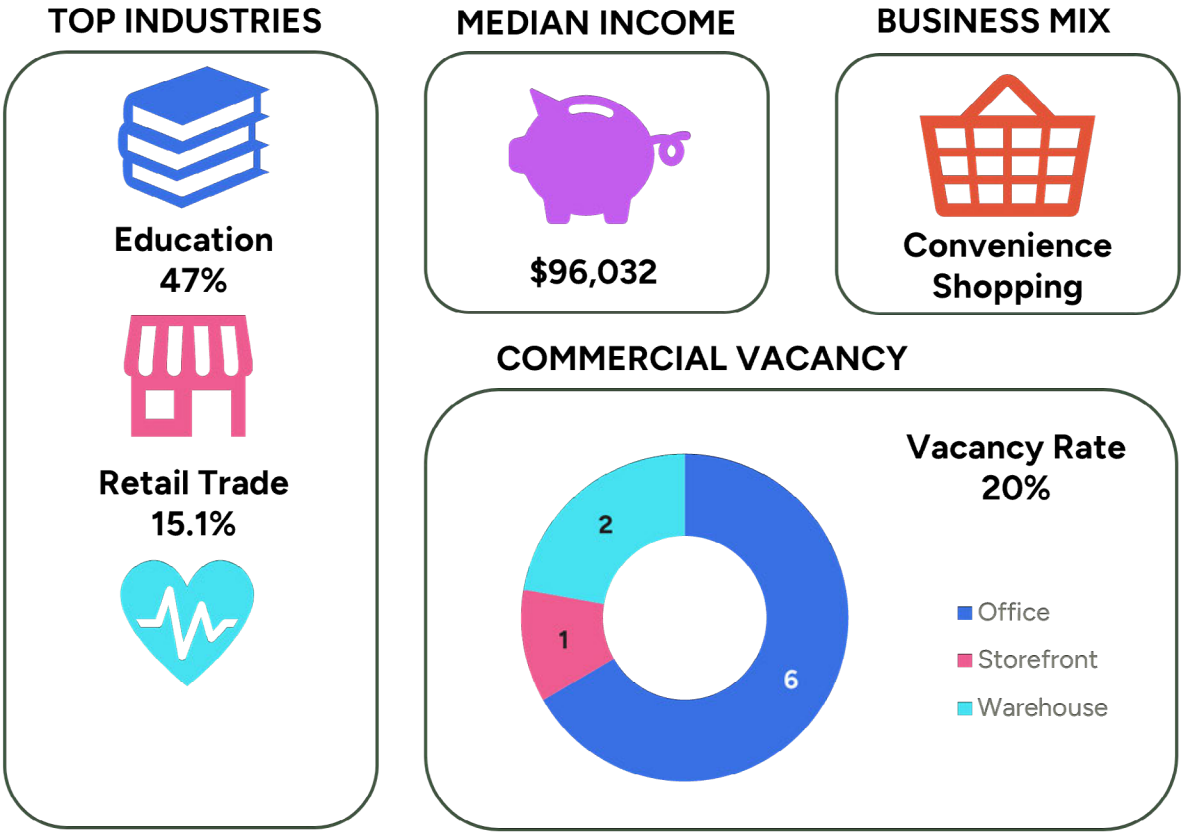
**Housing in Moodus is more diverse, both in tenure and type, than that of East Haddam as a whole**. Moodus is 47 percent owner-occupied and 42 percent renter occupied – far more evenly distributed than East Haddam's 70 percent owner-occupancy. Moodus has a relatively high vacancy rate of 11 percent, which may be attributed to the presence of three lake associations within the Village where 40% of residences are seasonal-only. Single-family detached homes are the most common type of housing in Moodus (67 percent) but there is a larger share of structures with two or more units in Moodus (31 percent) than in East Haddam (9 percent).

**Moodus and East Haddam have similar low-income household profiles, but housing costs appear slightly more affordable in Moodus**. According to the 2016-2020 Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy data provided by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), 29.1 percent of households (255) in Moodus qualify as low-income households, including 45.7 percent of renters and 18.1 percent of homeowners.[3] The median home value in Moodus is $283,700 compared to $342,000 in East Haddam; most homes in Moodus are valued between $200,000 and $299,000. Average gross rent in Moodus is $1,159.




3 Low-income households are defined as those making less than 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI); AMI is defined as the midpoint of a specific area's income distribution and is calculated on an annual basis by HUD and based on family size.

**Moodus' economy is predominately oriented toward local convenience shopping**. Early in the preparation of this Plan, the project team conducted a business inventory, that identified 36 active businesses within the Village's Center. Local businesses provide commercial goods and services and light industrial activities. See Appendix 3 for the complete business inventory of Moodus Center. While these businesses provide for some day-today needs of residents, many residents are known to travel out of Moodus/East Haddam for their regular shopping. Local competitors for this market include Middletown, Portland, East Hampton, Colchester, Chester, and Old Saybrook.



**Moodus Center's commercial vacancy rate is 20 percent.** In addition to the 36 identified businesses within Moodus Center, the business inventory identified nine (9) commercial vacancies within the area. These vacancies are currently suited for office space, warehouse, or storefront activities.

**Consumers in and around Moodus have common lifestyle and spending habits that could boost commercial activity in the Village**. A brief local market analysis was conducted using ESRI's Business Analyst Program to identify important market segments that would support local consumer's interests. Results suggested that these consumers would support the following business that provide for:

**TARGET MARKETS**



**Market Segments Identified within Moodus' Primary Trade Area**

- **Savvy Suburbanites:** Residents are educated, affluent, and enjoy suburban living. Families include empty nesters and those with adult children at home. They engage in home remodeling, gardening, sports, and exercise. They also appreciate good food, wine, and cultural events.
- **Green Acres:** They embrace country living and self-reliance. As avid DIYers, they maintain and remodel their homes with power tools. Gardening, especially vegetables, is a priority, using tillers, tractors, and mowers. Their outdoor activities include hunting, fishing, motorcycling, hiking, camping, and golf
- I**n Style:** Residents enjoy an urbane lifestyle, supporting the arts, travel, and extensive reading. They are tech-savvy and use mobile devices fully. Mostly professional couples or singles without children, they focus on their homes and interests. The population is slightly older and planning for retirement.
- **Workday Drive:** Affluent, family-oriented residents with a country flavor prefer new housing near professional job centers. Their suburban lifestyle balances the hectic pace of working parents with growing children. They favor time-saving devices and family-oriented activities.
- **Parks and Rec:** These suburbanites have achieved homeownership usually with older homes, including townhomes and duplexes. Many are two-income married couples nearing retirement, comfortable in their jobs and homes, and budget wisely. Established neighborhoods with amenities have supported their children through school and college and are now attracting a new generation of young couples.

## KEY INSIGHTS

Moodus Village's demographic, housing, and economic profile suggests the area is well positioned for attracting a mix of residents. Its more diverse housing options, combined with a more affordable housing market, present opportunities for smaller households, young families, and retirees to enjoy the community. Moodus Center currently provides for local convenience shopping, but redevelopment and revitalization efforts aimed at catering business and economic development towards local interests would have positive impacts to the community's identity and economic vitality.

## Zoning

Zoning is the regulatory component of a community's comprehensive plan and complements the land use policy guidance outline within a town's Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). Zoning guides development by regulating districts, uses, and development standards to accomplish desired outcomes; it presents an opportunity to shape the character and functionality of a specific area within the community.

The Moodus Center currently has unique zoning within the Town of East Haddam's broader zoning regulations. The core of Moodus Center is zoned as the **Moodus Center District (MCD)**, which includes two subdistricts known as the **Main Commercial Corridor** and the **Moodus Village**. The broader district is intended to permit mixed residential, commercial, and light industrial uses in an effort to promote revitalization. These regulations aim to create a village atmosphere with a community-oriented commercial center that enhances the Village's unique history. The Main Commercial Corridor subdistrict emphasizes mixed-use development with ground floor retail and residential or office uses on upper floors, whereas the Moodus Village subdistrict permits a variety of uses surrounding the commercial core.

Moodus Center encompasses other zoning districts that apply to the entire Town; these districts include the **Commercial-3**, **Residence-1** and **Residence-1/2**, and **Resort**:

- The Commercial-3 District, also known as the Plains Road Commercial Area, is an additional commercial area located along Plains Road and East Haddam Moodus Road. This District acts as an extension of the Moodus Commercial Core and is intended to maintain the historic character of the area while providing for diverse housing options (single-family through six-family dwellings) and some commercial uses. This District abuts the Moodus Village District, to the south and west, and the Residence-1/2 District to the north.

- Residence-1 (One-Acre Residential) and Residence-1/2 (Half-Acre Residential) make up a significant portion of the zoning in and around the study area. These Districts permit residential uses on various lot sizes, as well as community/ institutional uses.
- The Resort District (One-Acre Residential) makes up a small portion of the study area's zoning in the north, along North Moodus Road. The Resort District allows for campgrounds, recreational development, and additional commercial uses, in addition to those permitted within the Residential Districts.

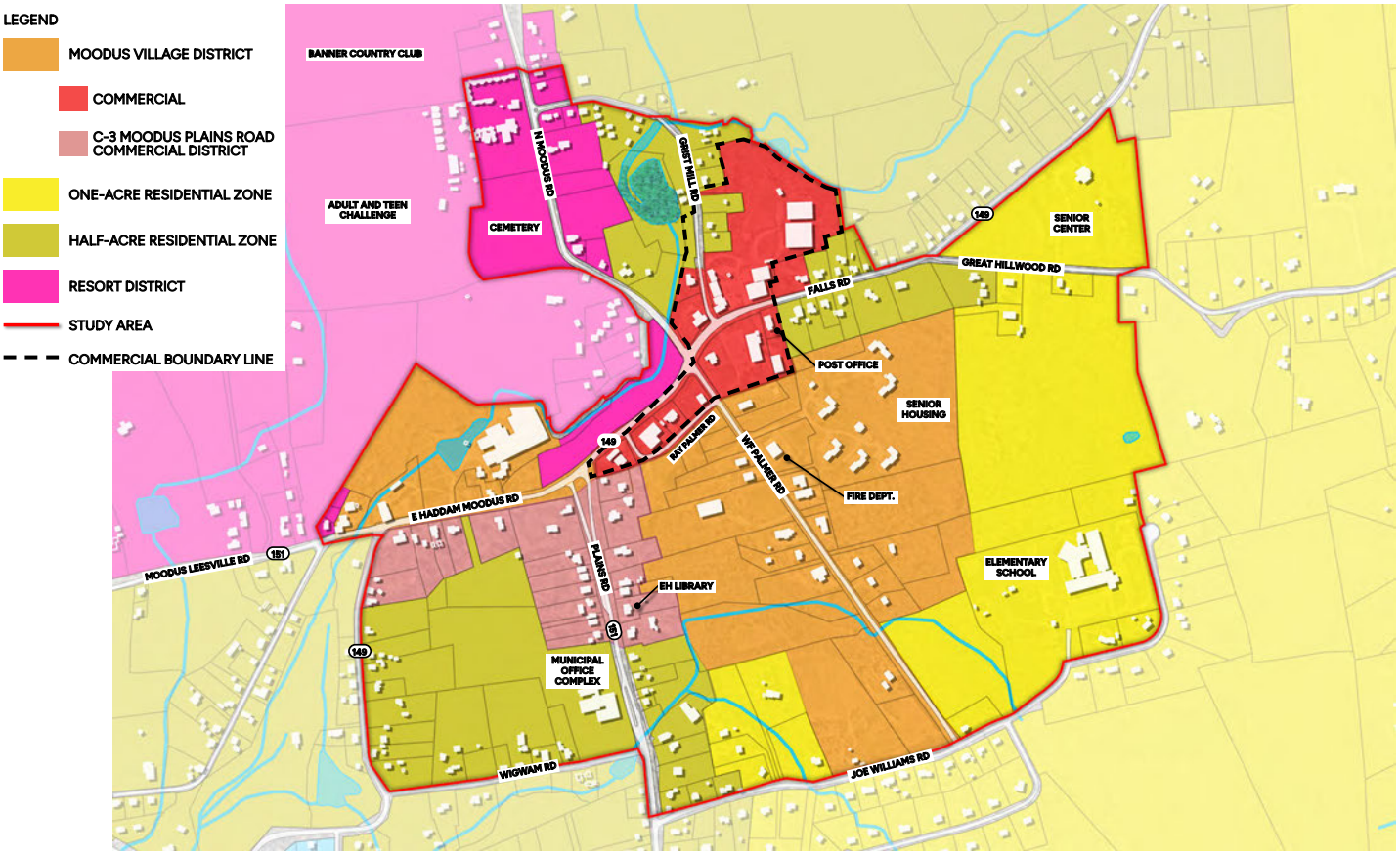



Figure 2. Moodus Center Zoning Map

## KEY INSIGHTS

Moodus Center benefits from having previously established village-like zones. The MCD and its subdistricts allow for the Town to specialize the area's zoning to accomplish its revitalization and redevelopment goals for Moodus. The existing MCD boundaries are limited; they encompass approximately a third of the study area and exclude surrounding residential, commercial, and institutional zones and land uses. Refinement of the existing MCD regulations is an opportunity for the Town to consider the surrounding land use patterns and their impact and value on the future of the Center. Opportunities for such refinement include boundary adjustments, additional subdistricts, broad permitted uses, and flexible development standards that would better guide Moodus Center towards the desired future, including appropriately scaled, mixed-use development.

## Land Use

Moodus Center consists of a mix of land uses, but is predominately residential (37.3 percent), institutional (21.2 percent), and undeveloped land (15.3 percent). Other land uses include commercial, industrial, and protected open space.

**Residential** land uses are found throughout the Moodus Center but are most concentrated in the southwest portion of the study area and much of this land is zoned Residence-1/2. Housing types within the Moodus Center are mixed and include single-family homes, condominiums, and apartments/multifamily units, providing both owner and renter opportunities in the Village. Consistent with the Zoning Regulations, minimum lot sizes are 1/2 - 1 acre, although many residential lots are larger, with the residence situated at the front of the lot, and large areas of land toward the rear. Moodus Village is also home to a senior housing development (apartments) known as Oak Grove.

**Survey Result:**

Participants felt that new housing proposed should be designed with 'the historical feel of the Town' and appropriately scaled for the community.



16 Rae Palmer Road Mixed Use Building



15 Plains Road, Historical Structure

**Institutional** land uses are the second most common in Moodus Center. Municipally owned properties include the Town of East Haddam's Municipal Office Complex (1 Plains Road), the East Haddam Library (18 Plains Road), the East Haddam Elementary School (45 Joe Williams Road), the Senior Center (15 Great Hillwood Road), the Fire Department (44 William F. Palmer Road), and a Post Office (34 Falls Road). The Amasa Day House, a local historic home and museum, is also located within the Village's Center. These land uses are spread throughout the study area; however the concentration of such uses in Moodus Center highlights the significance of this area to the broader community, providing services and amenities townwide.




East Haddam Municipal Offices, 1 Plains Road



Amasa Day House, 33 Plains Road

**Commercial** land uses make up 9.7 percent of the study area; this land use is largely concentrated along Falls Road, with some additional properties on Grist Mill Road and William F. Palmer Road. Moodus Center's commercial activity is primarily catered to local convenience shopping, with most customers being residents of East Haddam or those that regularly visit community facilities, such as the municipal offices or elementary school. The area also sees an increase in activity during summer months due to second homes, campers, and proximity to the Moodus Reservoir and Bashan Lake. Despite the focus of commercial activity being local convenience, many residents travel out of town for their daily needs. One of the large commercial properties in Moodus Center is the Gristmill Plaza - Old Lumber Yard property that includes eight building on 12 acres of land - much of which is occupied by personal services, food and beverage, and storage uses.



23 Falls Road



25 Falls Road

**Survey Result:**

Survey participants discussed Moodus Center's potential as a community asset - stating it has the potential to be 'a lovely bustling village' and 'lively center' with the opportunity to 'attract people for tourism, eating, and recreation' but 'needs a refresh'.

**Survey Result:**

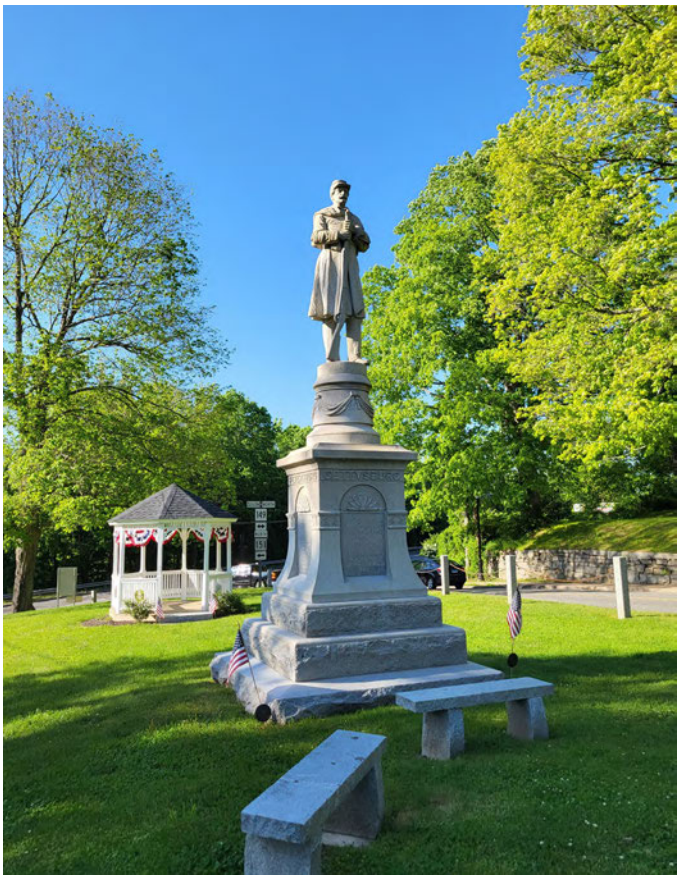
The most common services/shopping that people spend money on in the Village, according to survey participants, are groceries (78.4 percent), take out restaurants (71.8 percent), the package store (68.1 percent), personal services (54.2 percent), and sit-down restaurants (40.2 percent)

**Survey Result:**

77.2 percent of survey participants want to see more locally owned businesses in the Center.

**Industrial** land use makes up 7.5 percent of the study area. Some industrial properties are located along William F. Palmer Road, but the largest industrial area is located on the western edge of the study area. This larger parcel, known locally as the Brownell Building, contains an old factory building adjacent to the Moodus River. There are currently four tenants using the space, which includes recreational vehicle storage, a year-round softball and baseball training facility and an automotive, specialty-dealership.

Moodus Center also has some **protected open spaces**, which make up 9 percent of the study area's land. The Golet Farm Preserve and Trails is the largest protected area, located south of the Senior Center and north of the Elementary School. This Preserve is managed by the East Haddam Land Trust and comprises 32 acres of meadows, wetlands, and woodlands, with trails throughout.[4] Other protected open spaces surround Moodus Village but are located outside the study area (Hidden Valley Farm Preserve, Monica's Woods and Trails, and the Moodus Forest Trail System).



Moodus Village Green Civil War Memorial



Hidden Valley Farm Preserve
Photo credit: Alltrails.com

4 East Haddam Land Trust

**Undeveloped** land is the final land use category assessed within Moodus Center, making up just over 15 percent of land in the study; 17.7 acres are undeveloped, town-owned land, while 37 acres are undeveloped, privately-owned land. Town-owned undeveloped land is located on multiple parcels – one adjacent to the Elementary School and the remaining located on both sides along the Moodus River. Privately-owned undeveloped land is concentrated along William F. Palmer Road; these properties are larger in size and are surrounded by residential, commercial, and industrial land uses. Development on these properties may be limited due to topography and wetland soils.

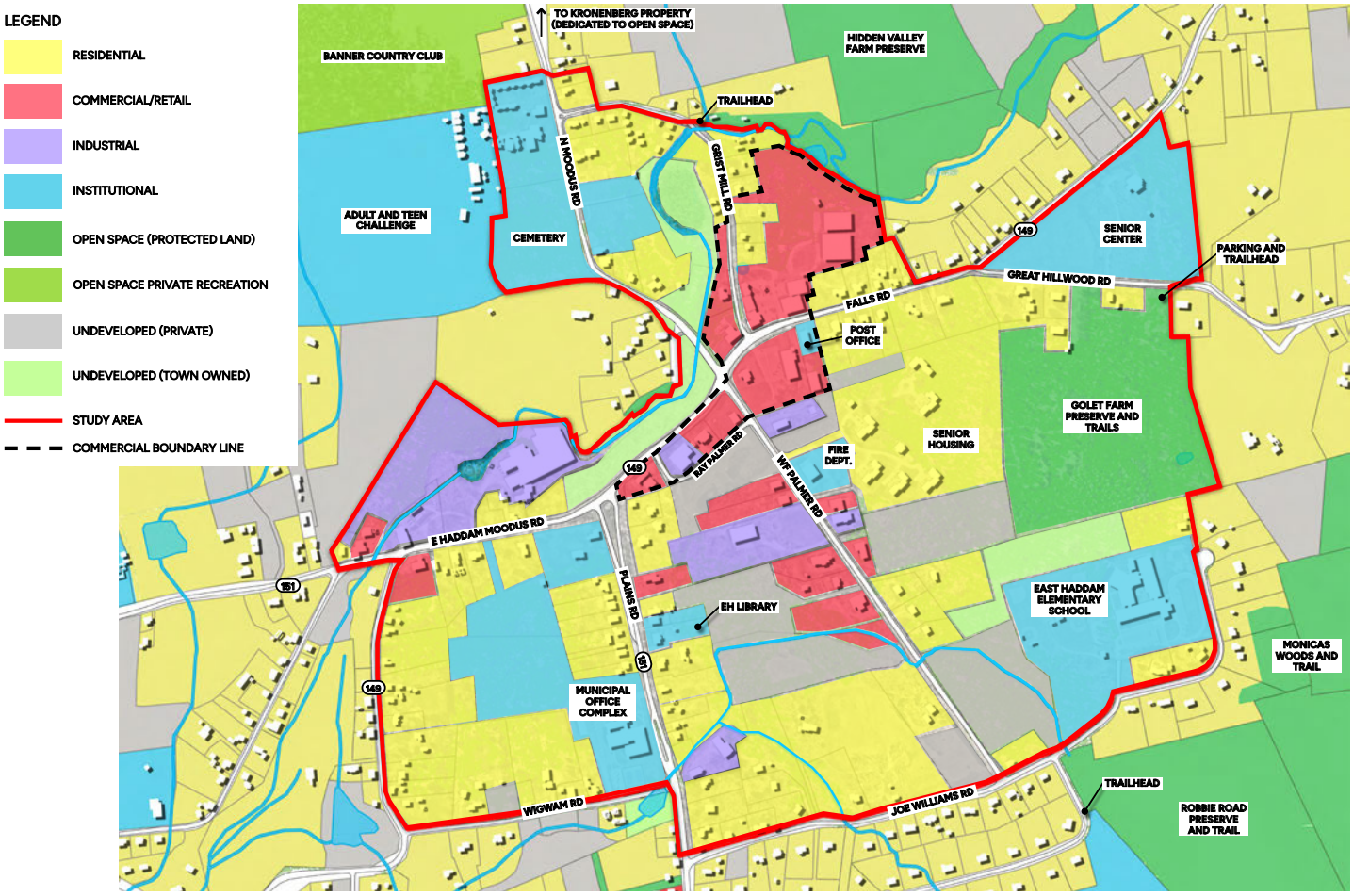


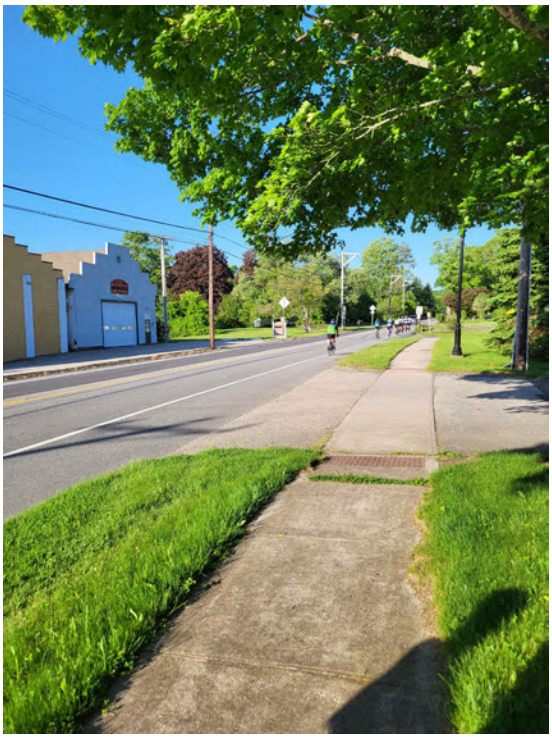

Figure 3. Moodus Center Land Use Map

## KEY INSIGHTS

Moodus Center has potential to be a thriving and independent economic center for the broader community; its existing land use patterns are a strong foundation for supporting mixed-use development that integrates residential, commercial, recreation, and community facility uses. Redevelopment and revitalization of commercial spaces, combined with suitable housing development, physical connections to community spaces, and enhanced community spaces would establish Moodus Center as an attractive, well-connected, village core.

## Transportation Network

Significant roadways in Moodus Center include East Haddam Moodus Road (State Routes 149 & 151) and Falls Road (State Route 149) and Plains Road (State Route 151). Route 149 is the primary east-west connector within the Village and Route 151 runs north-to-south, connecting the Moodus Center to Routes 434 (Mt Parnassus Road) and 82 (Town Street / Norwich Road) further south.



Falls Road



Plains Road at Wigwam Road



Falls Road near William F. Palmer Road



Intersection of Route 151 at Route 149

The Village of Moodus is fairly car-dependent; however, some pedestrian infrastructure exists within the Center. The existing sidewalk network branches out southwest from the intersection of Falls Road and William F. Palmer Road / North Moodus Road. This network primarily connects the local businesses to community facilities within the Center; sidewalks along Plains Road provide pedestrian access to the Municipal Office Complex, Town Library, the Amasa Day House, and the Village Green. Other sidewalks exist but are not fully connected to the network – in particular, sidewalks at the Senior Center are disconnected from those along Falls Road. Those along William F. Palmer Road connect to the Center but lack a connection to Joe Williams Road to the south.



Termination of Sidewalk on Falls Road


Lack of Sidewalks on William F. Palmer Road

**Survey Result:**

Survey participants agree that Moodus Center needs more sidewalks (65.7 percent), shared use trails (62.7 percent), and bike lanes (53.4 percent)

**Survey Result:**

Survey participants indicated interest in making the Center more pedestrian and bicyclist-friendly, with suggestions for additional bike lanes, bike loops, and sidewalk connections and crosswalks between existing amenities.

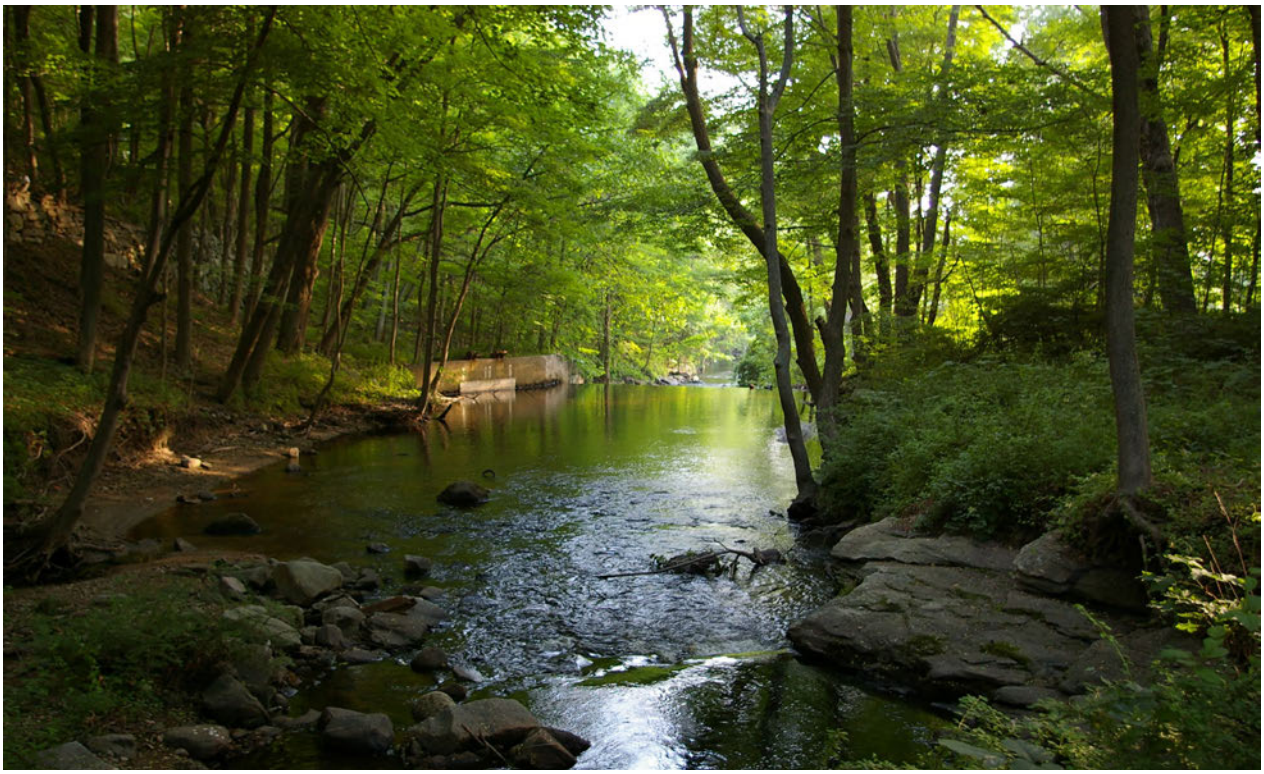
**KEY INSIGHTS**

Moodus' transportation network is predominately oriented toward vehicular travel, largely due to previous urban renewal initiatives which prioritized cars over people. The Center's redevelopment should support pedestrian travel; improved pedestrian infrastructure and safety would encourage a more active street front and commercial scene, adding to the vibrancy desired within the Center.

## Development Constraints

Moodus has historically been influenced by its natural environment and resources, in particular the Moodus River that shaped the Village's economic and built environment. The River flows through the northern portion of Moodus Center and meets the Connecticut River to the southwest. Moodus River is a FEMA regulated floodway with 100- and 500-year flood hazard areas within the village center. Other waterbodies include Shady Brook, located in the south-central area of Moodus Center. Numerous pockets of wetland soils existing within Moodus Center are a result of its hydrology and topography. Alluvial and floodplain soils are found along the course of the Moodus River. Other large wetland systems are found throughout the southeast portions of the Center, including on the Golet Farm Preserve and the Moodus Forest Trails System property and undeveloped lands.

Other development constraints within the Village include the lack of public utilities. East Haddam has very little sewer infrastructure, which is limited to the East Haddam Village along the Connecticut River. Public water is also limited, with just a few community water systems (community wells) within the area. Redevelopment in Moodus Center is, therefore, limited to the capacity of existing private septic and well systems within the Village. Additional commercial and housing opportunities could be considered in the future if investments and improvements are made to public infrastructure systems.



Moodus River

## KEY INSIGHTS

These development constraints present obstacles for redevelopment within Moodus Center. The area's waterways, floodplains, and wetlands soils need to be balanced with revitalization. These resources should be carefully considered in redevelopment and/or infill opportunities in the community; future projects should incorporate environmentally sustainable strategies into their design, such as low impact development techniques, to mitigate potential impacts. In addition, lack of sewer and water utilities present redevelopment limitations for the Center, but future utility expansions into the area would present substantial capital costs for the Town and be a long-term endeavor. Therefore, short term redevelopment opportunities in Moodus Center need to be designed with septic system capacity and limitations in mind.

## Recreational Assets

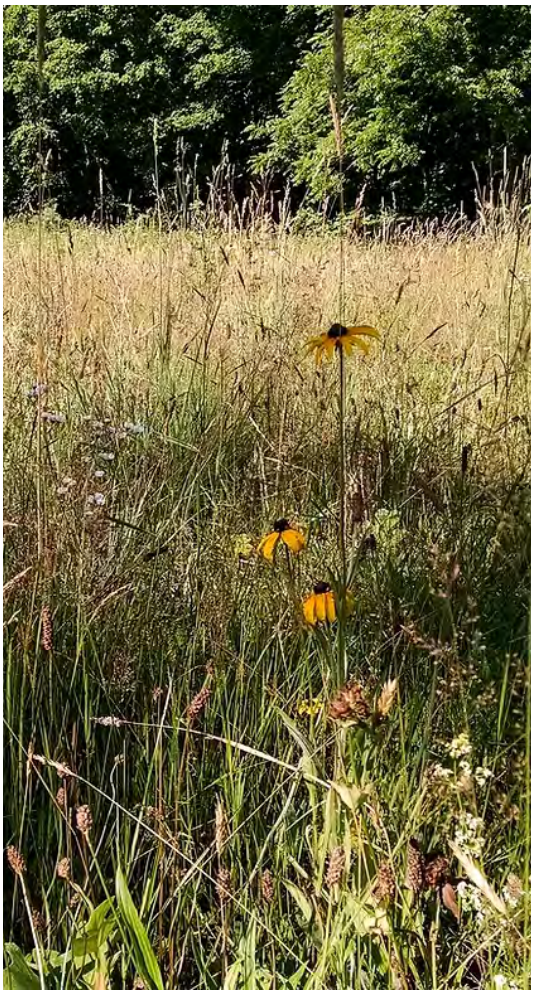
Moodus Center has some established parks and recreation areas, the largest of which are the recreational spaces associate with the Elementary School, along with the Village Green located across the street from the Amasa Day House. The Golet Farm Preserve and the Moodus Forest Trails System also provide passive recreation opportunities for the community, including an established trail system. Additional recreation opportunities exist in the Center; the Town owns four parcels of land located along the Moodus River which could be utilized as a riverfront park/trail, and other nearby open spaces outside of the immediate area could benefit from added connections.



Red Mill Bridge




Grandview Camp Resort



Golet Farm Preserve
Photo credit: East Haddam Land Trust

## KEY INSIGHTS

Moodus' historic connections to its natural landscape continues to influence the Village's feel today and the Center's redevelopment should utilize this relationship to strengthen the community's identity. Connecting the Village's water resources with existing green spaces is an opportunity to add valuable waterfront/passive recreation spaces to Moodus Center, especially through the Town's property along the Moodus River. This open space has potential for a riverfront trail, which would further connect community facilities to the commercial core of the village center.

# Moodus Center Analysis

## Observations and Opportunities

To conclude the understanding of Moodus Center today, a detailed site assessment was compiled to summarize a number of recurrent themes that arose through observation and community commentary during the early stages of the project. These themes have been organized for the site assessment into five topic areas: Pedestrian Experience and Connectivity, Streetscape Character, Traffic Concerns, Architectural Aesthetics, and Development or Rehabilitation Challenges.

Moodus Village is a small yet close-knit community, located in East Haddam, Connecticut. Once a thriving mill town, Moodus has undergone significant changes, particularly due to urban renewal efforts in the 1960s that altered its historic character. Moodus Village has several opportunities for redevelopment that could help restore its identity while fostering economic growth by attracting visitors and improve the quality of life for residents. Although the village faces several challenges when it comes to revitalization and new development that will require thoughtful planning and investment, specific opportunities that could make a significant impact have been identified below.

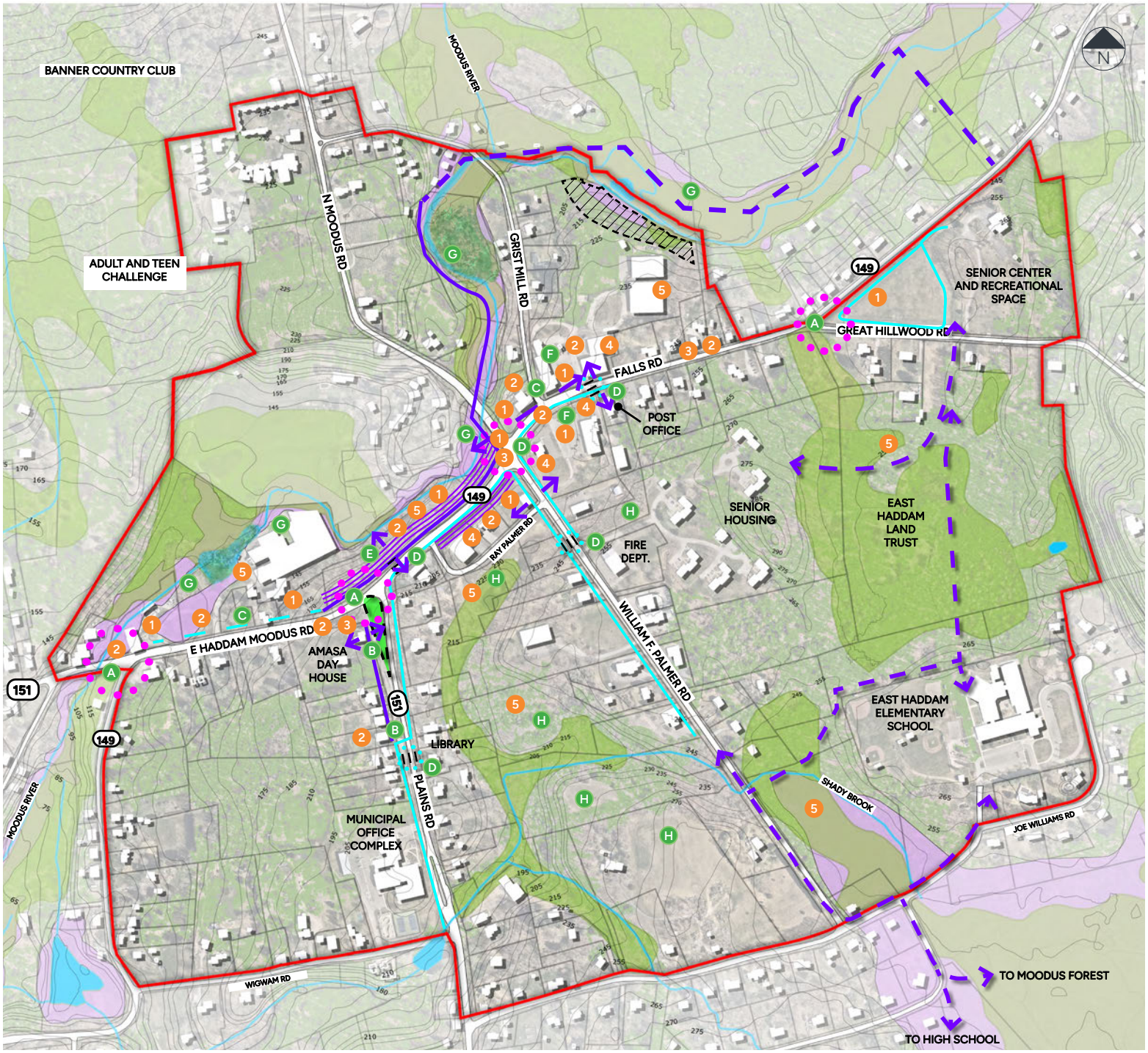



Figure 4. Moodus Center Site Analysis Map

**LEGEND**

- AREA OF STUDY
- NOTED OBSERVATIONS
- NOTED OPPORTUNITIES
- WETLAND SOILS
- FLOODWAY
- FUTURE CONSERVATION EASEMENT
- POTENTIAL CONNECTION
- MID-BLOCK CROSSING
- SIGNIFICANT INTERSECTION AND POTENTIAL GATEWAY OPPORTUNITY
- EXISTING SIDEWALK
- DETERIORATED BITUMINOUS WALKS
- STEEP SLOPES, LIMITED VIEWS

## SITE ANALYSIS OBSERVATIONS

### 1 PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE & CONNECTIVITY

- The village center streetscape and commercial plazas prioritize vehicles through scale, layout, and orientation, with limited or missing sidewalk connections. Oversized curb cuts also diminish pedestrian comfort resulting in walking being an unappealing option both to and throughout the Center.
- Gaps in sidewalks limit access to and between business, specifically along the north side of Falls Road.

### 2 STREETSCAPE CHARACTER

- Most buildings along Falls Road are not oriented to the street but to their respective parking lots.
- Portions of Plains and Falls Road have continuous sidewalks with pedestrian scale lighting. This should be encouraged throughout the village center.
- Physical separation from traffic should continue to be developed through broadened walks with amenity strips, street trees, and a consistent vocabulary of materials and furniture.

### 3 TRAFFIC CONCERNS

- High traffic speeds on Falls Road make non-vehicular travel unpleasant and potentially unsafe. Generous travel lanes and shoulders encourage faster travel speeds.
- Broad intersections make road crossing stressful for pedestrians or cyclists and mid block crossings can be challenging due to traffic speeds.

### 4 ARCHITECTURAL AESTHETICS

- While the Village contains a number of attractive historical residential structures, Falls Road lacks a harmonious character and most of the structures lack aesthetic appeal.
- Buildings are often oriented away from the streets and sidewalks in favor of their parking areas.

### 5 DEVELOPMENT OR REHABILITATION CHALLENGES

- These may include steep slopes, drainage challenges, high groundwater or wetland soils.
- Existing historical structures pose challenges related to costly materials, specialized trades, and compliance with modern building codes. The potential uses for and interest in development of these structures is therefore limited.

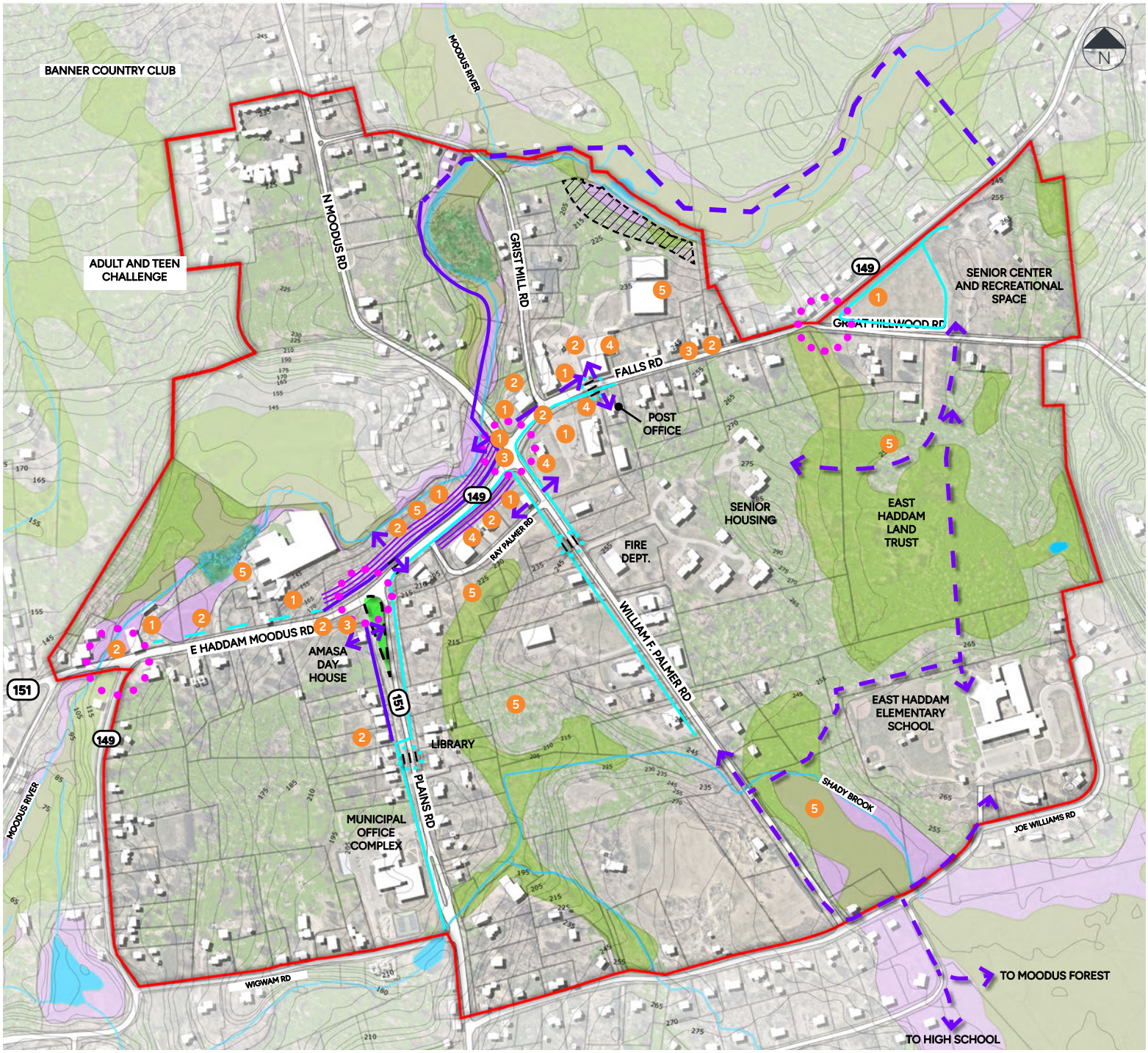



Figure 5. Moodus Center Site Analysis Observations

**LEGEND**

- AREA OF STUDY
- WETLAND SOILS
- FLOODWAY
- FUTURE CONSERVATION EASEMENT
- POTENTIAL CONNECTION
- MID-BLOCK CROSSING
- SIGNIFICANT INTERSECTION AND POTENTIAL GATEWAY OPPORTUNITY
- EXISTING SIDEWALK
- DETERIORATED BITUMINOUS WALKS
- STEEP SLOPES, LIMITED VIEWS

## SITE ANALYSIS AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

A
- Develop visual gateways at intersections to establish a sense of place and identity for the Village.

B
- Potential to unify Amasa Day House with memorial green and expand green space. Address drainage and parking needs for residences.

C
- Restore or expand sidewalk connections to unify business to central core. Reduce size of curb cuts for safer walking experience.

D
- Develop highly visible pedestrian crossings and calm traffic movement. Scale may be humanized by introducing new materials to the paved surfaces or through physical modifications such as curbed bump outs.

E
- Developing sidewalk access along north side of Falls Road continuing west. Strategic clearing to open views to the Moodus River should be identified.

F
- Patrons' experience would feel more inviting by reducing monolithic asphalt areas within the large commercial plazas and introduce pedestrian only spaces, with varied materials and landscaping.

G
- Explore potential to increase visual and physical access to natural resources as well as opportunities to provide walkable trails though public open spaces.

H
- Potential development opportunity parcels.

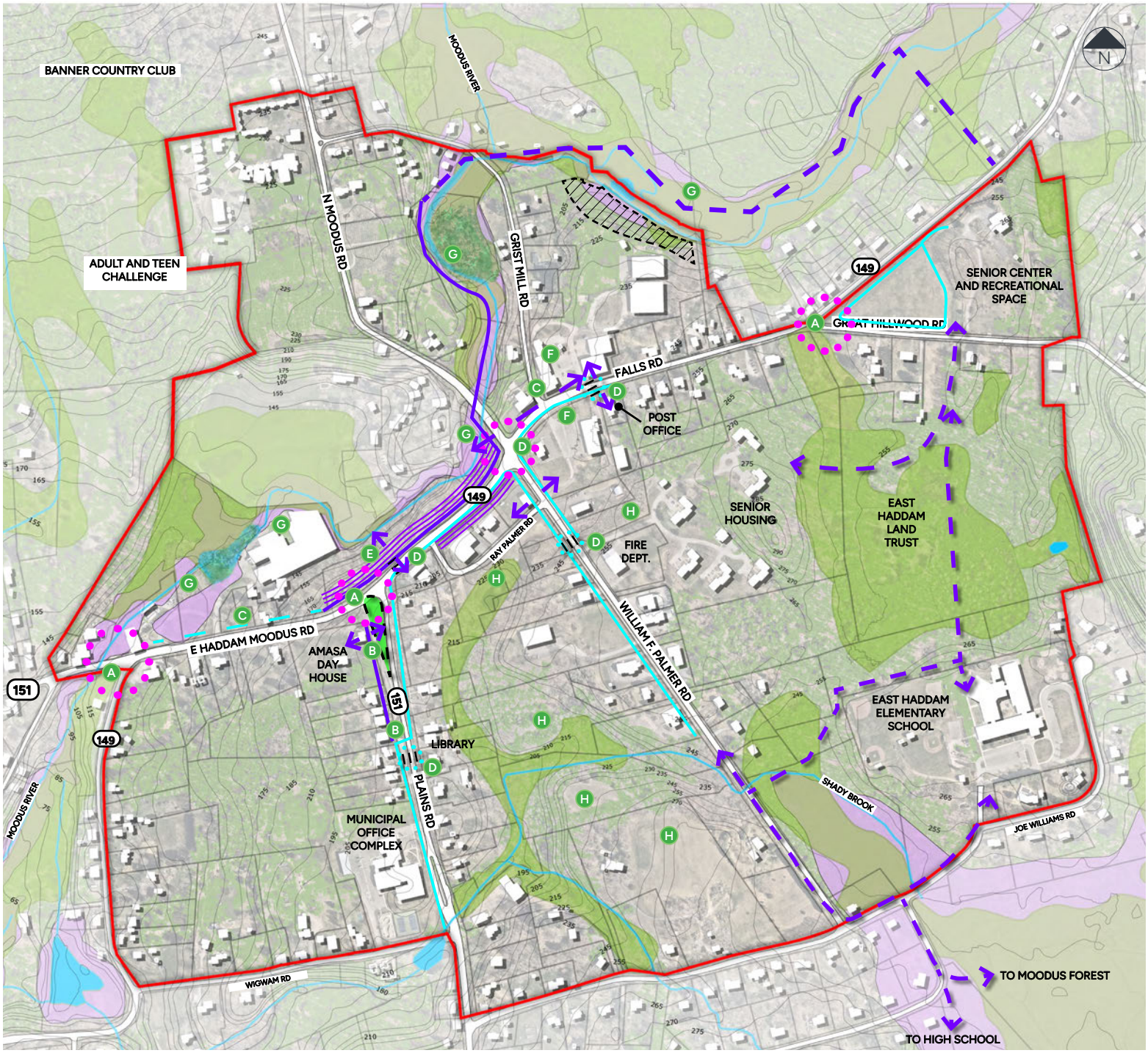



Figure 6. Moodus Center Site Analysis
Areas of Opportunity

**LEGEND**

- AREA OF STUDY
- WETLAND SOILS
- FLOODWAY
- FUTURE CONSERVATION EASEMENT
- POTENTIAL CONNECTION
- MID-BLOCK CROSSING
- SIGNIFICANT INTERSECTION AND POTENTIAL GATEWAY OPPORTUNITY
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- STEEP SLOPES, LIMITED VIEWS

3

# MOODUS CENTER MASTER PLAN

Moodus Center Community Vision

Recommendations

# VISION STATEMENT

Moodus Center is located within the small, historic Village of Moodus, East Haddam. Moodus has a deep-rooted history as a mill town and commerce hub lying at the crossroads of two state roads and the Moodus River. The Village has changed over time but today still functions as an important destination, providing locals with access to municipal services, including education, and small businesses to fill everyday needs. This existing concentration of goods and services is significant to the Center's future and provides a base for revitalization.

The Town will encourage mixed-use opportunities that blend residential, retail, and commercial spaces, in order to nurture the local economy and strengthen community connections, while prioritizing improvements to the pedestrian experience, embracing the natural environment, and enhancing the community's recreational character. This focus will ensure that Moodus Center becomes a vibrant village center that feels authentic and enduring within the existing community.

## OVERARCHING THEMES

### Village Center Character & Economic Development

- Place-Making
- Building Style / Architecture
- Land Use / Zoning / Mixed Use / Housing
- Economic Development / Business Renewal / Special Events
- Utility Infrastructure (Water / Well, Sewer / Septic)

### Streetscape Character

- Pedestrian Experience
- Connectivity
- Traffic / Vehicular Experience
- Road Infrastructure

### Park, Recreation & Natural Environmental Character

- Trail, Park Spaces, Recreation
- River Connections(s)
- Natural Environment, Sustainability, Resiliency
- Seasonal Variety

# A. MOODUS CENTER-WIDE RECOMMENDATIONS

## 1. OVERARCHING MOODUS CENTER CHARACTER

Based on community feedback, there is strong public interest in creating a more cohesive and aesthetically pleasing "village feel," that fosters a sense of community and pedestrian-friendly walkability embracing a classic New England village aesthetic. The redevelopment of the village center commercial core will provide the best opportunity to achieve the long-term community vision for Moodus Center.

**A.1.a Recommendation:**

Transform Moodus Center into a vibrant village center.

The overarching recommendation is to transform Moodus Center into a charming, vibrant, and walkable village (see Figure 8). Moodus Center should have a small-town character that includes desired businesses, destinations, and well thought-out improvements.

- Redevelopment of the commercial core area should foster both economic vitality and community life by emphasizing 1-2- and 3 story buildings with mixed-uses that provide opportunities for local businesses on the ground floor and housing or office space above. Orienting buildings to the street and placing them closer to the street will foster a sense of connection, vibrancy, and accessibility, thereby creating a more inviting and active streetscape. Aesthetic improvements, such as façade upgrades, cohesive streetscape design treatments, and village-style signage, will serve to create a more inviting and unified appearance, providing a "sense of place" to Moodus Center. (See Target Area B.1 for specific recommendations on the commercial core redevelopment).

- Improving walkability is a top priority, with residents noting the desire for more sidewalks, safer crosswalks, and shared-use trails as well. There is a shared desire to preserve the village's quiet character while introducing and connecting uses and amenities that will increase Moodus' vitality as a desirable place to live, work, visit, and invest. (See Target Area B.4 for specific recommendations on streetscape and pedestrian improvements).

**Moodus Center Commercial Core Long-Term Vision Recommendations**

1. Establish a village street facade oriented towards Falls Road (Route 149) for greater visibility and character. Buildings should have facades generally parallel to Falls Road with streetscape amenities including sidewalks, plazas, lighting, and building signage visible from Falls road and at appropriate scales to create an inviting village aesthetic.

2. Establish a new local road connecting Rae Palmer Road through Nathan Hale Plaza and the Old Lumberyard property.

    - Orient new commercial and mixed-use building parallel to the new road creating a continuous village streetscape that furthers the aesthetic of redeveloped Falls Road along a quieter streetscape that promotes walkability, slower vehicle speeds, and a variety of community spaces in a village cluster development.
    - Consider paving the new road with decorative treatments to promote its use as a "festival street" that is closed to vehicular traffic for events allowing for food trucks, vendor tents, and greater pedestrian access.
    - A variety of parking can be provided but should emphasize locations to the rear and side of new buildings as much as possible.

3. Establish a consistent village streetscape aesthetic for all roads, plazas, and parking areas using New England paving materials, native shade and ornamental trees, decorative pedestrian-scale lighting, and site furniture.

4. Incorporate a variety of plaza and community spaces within and surrounding new buildings to encourage outdoor dining, cafe seating, seasonal vendors, special events, and areas of respite. Spaces should include varied seating including options for accessibility and seniors, robust native landscaping, local art, historical references with interpretive signage, and wayfinding signage.

5. Establish a new community green visible from Falls Road and William F Palmer Road. Incorporate the green space with the surrounding building uses and promotes its use for community events and seasonal vendors.

6. Utilize low-impact design strategies throughout all redevelopment parcels particularly for stormwater management including rain grades, bioswales, and underground detention/retention.

**Specific Parcel Recommendations**

- Target area 1.a (North): 2-story Mixed-Use buildings. Combine lots to consolidate maximum allowable building footprint and reduce paved parking and driveway curb cuts.
- Target area 1.a (South): 2-story Mixed-Use building with rear parking incorporating LID strategies. Develop streetscape as recommended under short-term site improvement recommendations.
- Target area 1.b: Proposed mixed single and 2-story buildings to maximize village cluster development footprint and streetscape appeal. Provide head-in parking separated by landscaped buffer with larger rear lot parking. Incorporate LID strategies for stormwater management.
- Target area 1.c: Future development proposes driveway connection onto Grist Mill Road, reducing curb cuts onto Falls Road to minimize conflict points.
- Target area 1.d: Develop a multi-use trail connection between the commercial center and recreational trails, Moodus River, and resort amenities to the north. This area has the potential for further future development but can also successfully support larger events such as car boat shows, which offers a much-needed outlet for community cohesion and identity.

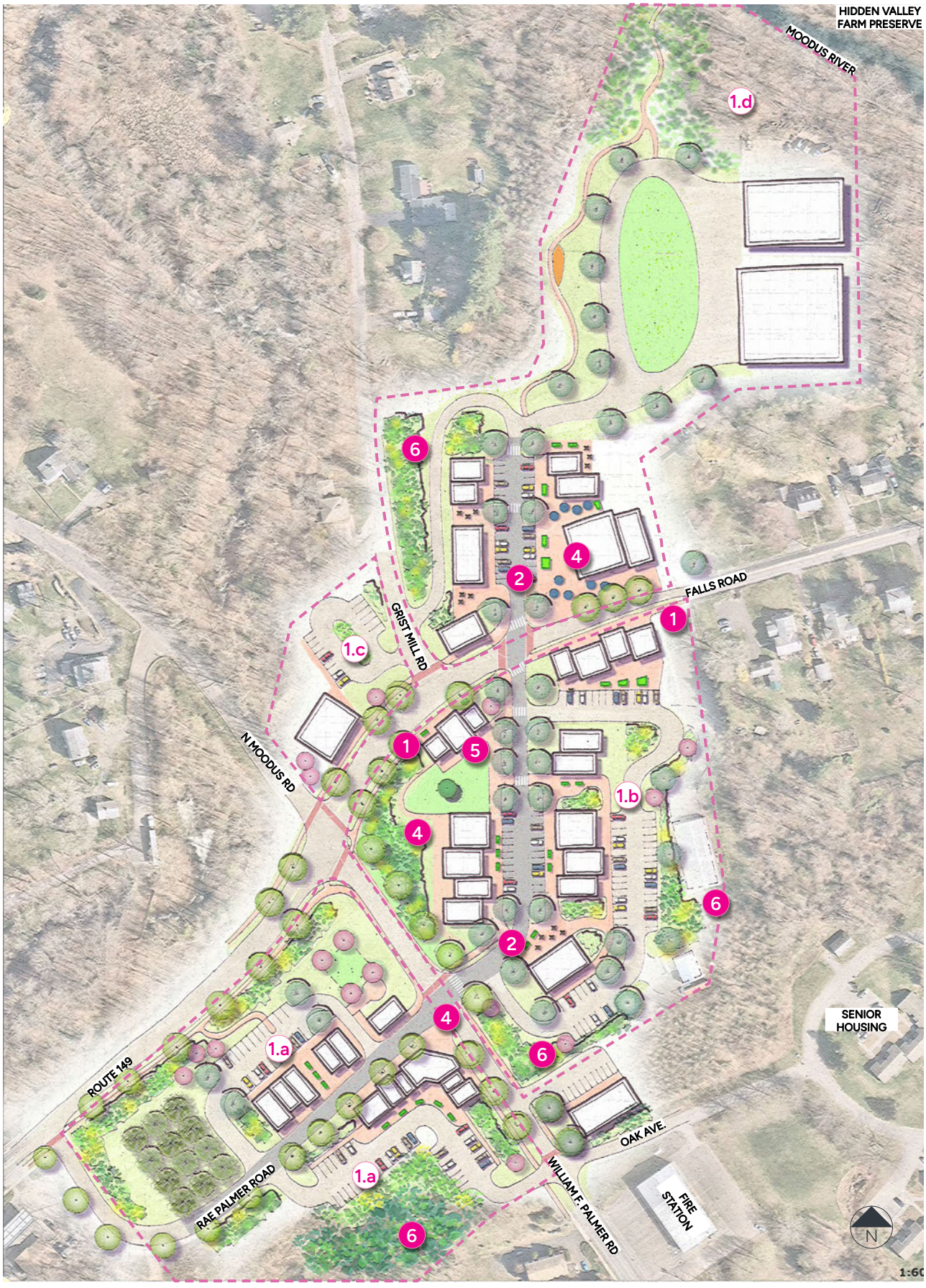



Figure 7. Moodus Center - Commercial Core Long-Term Vision Plan


NATURALLY GROWN VEGETABLES
FARM
STAND
OPEN


HAIR
GALLERY
CAFE



















Examples of village character, prioritizing street trees, traditional architectural elements, landscaped buffers and pedestrian friendly development.

## 2. ZONING / LAND USE / HOUSING



**A.2.a Recommendation:**
Amend the existing Moodus Center District (MCD) regulations to support the development of a more cohesive village center character and targeted uses.

Items to be included in the amended zoning regulations:

- **District Boundaries:** Existing MCD boundaries are irregular and exclude surrounding properties that should be included for a more cohesive village center. It is recommended that the MCD boundaries encompass the entire study area of this Master Plan to include community facilities and nearby residential properties. This adjustment would create a more cohesive framework for future development and targeted business development while allowing for greater flexibility in land use planning.
- **Subdistrict Designations:** Evaluate the existing MCD subdistricts and the need for additional subdistricts that would promote a holistic village center. Each subdistrict should have specific boundaries that follow property lines along with clear subdistrict purposes, uses, and development standards. The following subdistricts are proposed:
    - **Moodus Center Residential**: Intended to preserve and maintain the existing residential character of the village center while allowing for a range of housing options within a walkable, community-oriented environment.
    - **Moodus Center Commercial Core:** Intended to create a vibrant, mixed-use village center where ground floors are dedicated to active commercial uses (retail, dining, services, etc.) and second and third floors are focused on residential or office / nonactive commercial uses (storage).
    - **Moodus Center Commercial West (C3):** Intended to create a Moodus Center gateway on the west side of the village center and continue to promote the existing C3 uses of the areas that include supplemental commercial and light industrial.

- **Plains Road / Municipal:** Intended to create a more cohesive mixture of residential and municipal uses along Plains Road. This could also be applied to other municipal sites within the village center.

- **Moodus Center Parkland:** (Optional) Intended to create a dedicated zoning district to the park and open space within the village center.

- **Permitted Uses:** Update the permitted uses in the MCD to reflect existing businesses and future targeted uses in Moodus Center.

  - **Existing Businesses & Conformity:** Moodus Center currently features a convenience shopping business mix. Update existing permitted uses to ensure that all existing businesses are in conformance with the MCD regulations. In many instances, this can be addressed through a review and refinement of existing definitions.

  - **Future Uses:** Update permitted uses in the MCD to align with the Master Plan's target market finding and recommendation. Spotlighting and permitting specific uses in the MCD will assist in reducing barriers for attracting desired commercial activity and promoting the desired type of redevelopment for the village center. Specific uses / businesses to be included are: plant nurseries, gardening and home improvement, home maintenance and services, sports and recreational activities, arts and entertainment, and local farm and foods products.

- **Dimensional Standards:** Refine the required minimum and maximum dimensional standards for lots (setbacks, building heights, parking locations and setbacks) within the MCD, with special focus on ensuring that they support recommended building styles and orientations proposed by the Master Plan.



Moodus Village Commercial Area

**A.2.b Recommendation:**
Permit and promote middle-housing options within the Commercial Core and Residential Subdistricts to encourage a variety of housing options for infill and redevelopment opportunities in Moodus Center.

Middle-housing options for each subdistrict include:

- **Moodus Village Center Commercial Core** – Mixed use with 2nd Floor Residential and Live / Workspace units where existing utility systems permit.
- **Moodus Center Residential** – ADUs, townhomes, duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes, tiny homes, and small-scale multifamily buildings where existing utility systems permit. Adjust dimension standards for housing to allow for greater flexibility and to encourage middle housing (lot size, frontage, setbacks, and height). For density: existing residential density in Moodus Center is ½ acre per unit; consider a residential density increase to 1/3 acre per unit where on-site sewage disposal systems (septic systems) will allow.
- Suitable parcels for additional housing should take into consideration topography, septic capacity, and potential density. See Housing Target Area (B.5.a) for more information.






Examples of Cottage Court Style Housing and Mixed Use Buildings

## 3. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT / BUSINESS RENEWAL



**A.3.a Recommendation:**

Develop a targeted business strategy for Moodus Center.

Identify business types most likely to attract more users to the village center as an impetus to redevelopment.

Items to be considered include:

- Collaborate with the Town's Economic Development Administrator and the Economic Development Commission to develop an updated Moodus Center business strategy, with particular focus on expanding the target markets identified within the Master Plan.
- Develop a tenant recruitment strategy for the village center, in coordination with commercial property owners, to attract desired commercial activity. Steps include:
    - **Support Target Markets:** The Master Plan's market analysis identified the following target commercial audiences and markets to support local interests: gardening, home services and projects, fitness and recreation, arts and entertainment, and local foods.
    - **Enhance Existing Businesses:** In addition to supporting these new markets, business recruitment should continue to support existing, successful businesses, like local convenience uses (day care, pharmacy, quick grocery) and food / restaurants (market, takeout).
    - **Evaluate Tenant Preferences:** Work with the commercial property owners to evaluate their property's feasibility for supporting target market businesses in Moodus Center. In evaluating, consider location (proximity to water, municipal and school facilities), accessibility (in town vs neighboring communities), building style, and space requirements (small spaces for galleries and specialty shops vs breweries and fitness studios), among others.
- Utilize the Main Street Program or establish a Business Association to further Moodus Center economic development goals and target appropriate businesses, investors and developers.

**A.3.b Recommendation:**
Celebrate and promote Moodus Center through expanded community events.

- Host regular events such as outdoor markets (both seasonal and farmers), car shows, Pumpkin Festival, Lions Club 5K, pop-up events, annual events, water events, art installations, holiday events.
- Invest in Moodus Center branding (signage/banners/flags) and wayfinding to promote the identity of the Center.
- Incorporate elements from Moodus' past such as its earlier textile history which contributed heavily to the village's growth and prosperity during the 19th and early 20th centuries. Community cultural features should also be identified and highlighted within proposed improvement areas including gateways, gathering spaces, and trails.





Examples of Community Events and Relevant Village Branding

*confirm placemaking/ branding image*

## 4. UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE



**A.4.a Recommendation:**

Continue to explore public sewer and community subsurface sewage disposal systems for Moodus Center.

Confirm infrastructure expansion capabilities to determine developmental limits and appropriate use types and amenable locations.

- The 2015 Septic Capacity Study for the Moodus Commercial Area indicates that there are limited opportunities to expand the sewage disposal capabilities in Moodus Center. The Town and property developers should explore innovative technologies designed for decentralized septic systems. These systems require a smaller footprint than standard septic treatment systems and have a lower operational cost than a traditional sewage treatment plant. The State of Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection has approved these systems throughout the state. (See recommendation for B.1 and B.5.a for more information on existing opportunities for each property).



**A.4.b Recommendation:**

Explore creating a public water utility for Moodus Center.

- Creation of a public water utility for Moodus Center should be considered, although options are limited.

## 5. SUSTAINABILITY / RESILIENCE



**A.5.a Recommendation:**
Integrate low impact development (LID) principles into the Moodus Center District (MCD) zoning regulations to promote sustainable development patterns and techniques.

The following options are suggested:

- Establish preferred LID strategies for Moodus Center, including those related to stormwater management, green infrastructure, and water conservation.
    - **Stormwater Management:** Utilize existing Town Stormwater Management Regulations and current State Stormwater Management Manuel to promote the use of bioswales, infiltration trenches, or stormwater planters to mitigate stormwater runoff on properties.
    - **Green Infrastructure:** Include options for the use of green infrastructure in the village center regulations. Examples include permitting permeable pavement as an alternative to traditional paving materials, incentivizing installation of rain gardens and/or green roofs, or establishing protective tree canopy regulations.
    - **Water Conservation:** Utilize, expand on, and require existing water conservation regulations and policies of the Town be incorporated and promoted in the village center regulations. Specifically require the use of native and drought-tolerant plants, the use of efficient irrigation systems, and public and private use of harvesting rainwater.

- Identify and include in the MCD regulations when LID principles would be required to be implemented during new development or redevelopment. Options might include when impervious coverage exceeds a certain threshold (ex: 0.25 acres) or an increase of a designated amount of impervious surfaces (ex: 1,000 sf).
- Identify and include in the MCD regulations incentives to encourage the use of LID principles such as density bonus, expedited permitting, and reduced fees.



Stormwater Infiltration



Permeable Pavers

**A.5.b Recommendation:**

Encourage the use of renewable energy, including infrastructure, within Moodus Center.

- Within the MCD zoning regulations allow accessory renewable energy uses and infrastructure and provide development standards matching State requirements. Renewable energy infrastructure includes:
    - Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations and parking
    - Solar panels for buildings and signage



EV Charging



Solar Panels

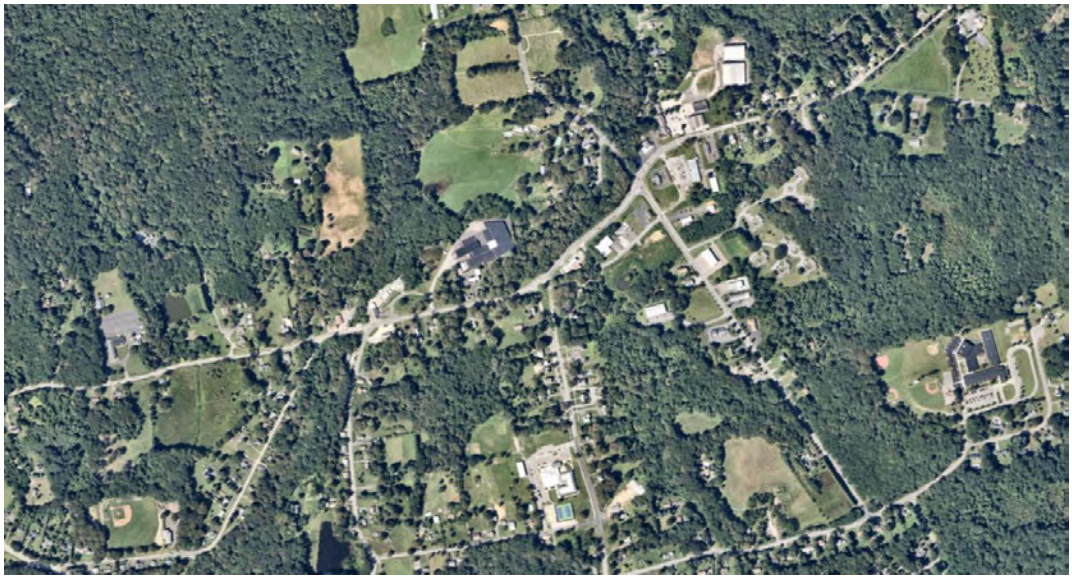
**A.5.c Recommendation:**

Encourage and promote natural environment resilience from changing environmental conditions.

- The natural environment plays an important role in the character of Moodus Center. The Master Plan proposes to promote and enhance the village center's natural setting. Protecting and planning for the impacts to the natural environment is crucial.

  The following options are suggested:

  - Incorporate Moodus Center specific items in the Regional and Town Hazard Mitigation Plans such as potential Moodus River flooding, erosion, and contamination.
  - Protect and expand the Moodus Center tree cover through a tree program that requires and plants a diverse group of native trees throughout the village center.



Aerial image: Nearmap.com

# B. TARGET AREAS RECOMMENDATIONS

## 1. MOODUS CENTER REDEVELOPMENT

The long-term vision plan (see 3.A) outlines a framework for redevelopment and future growth, emphasizing a presence along Falls Road, village-style clusters of mixed-use buildings with cohesive architecture, and integrated public spaces. The following sub-area recommendations for Moodus Center focus on near-term, strategic actions to support its transformation into a vibrant, walkable village. These include incremental improvements such as streetscape upgrades, enhanced pedestrian connectivity, traffic calming, landscaping, and façade renovations. This phased approach is necessary to coordinate with multiple property owners, attract developers, and align with long-term investment cycles—while avoiding the unrealistic promises of past plans. Together, these efforts will guide Moodus toward a thoughtful, sustainable evolution that reflects its desired identity and character.

**Objectives:**

- Identify and envision redevelopment opportunities for the various properties within the Moodus Center commercial core area. Review the commercial core area by sub-areas and establish specific site improvements and suggested design criteria that is guided by the overarching Moodus Center character goals.
- The sub-areas will be further guided by the center-wide recommendations for zoning changes, economic development, and infrastructure and by recommended target area public improvements for walkability / connectivity, gateways / streetscape, and parks / trails.
- Capitalize on the proximity to natural resources, existing sidewalk networks and neighborhoods.




Village Center



Pedestrian Mall



Mixed Use

Examples of Preferred Moodus Center Development Styles

**LEGEND**

AREA OF STUDY

1 MOODUS CENTER REDEVELOPMENT
- A Rae Palmer Road Properties (10-16 Rae Palmer Road and 7 Rae Palmer Road (vacant property))
- B Nathan Hale Plaza and Adjacent Properties (Primary Site: 26 Falls Road, Secondary Sites: 30 and 32 Falls Road and 50 and 52 William F. Palmer Road)
- C Moodus Package Store Property (23 Falls Road)
- D The Old Lumberyard Property (25 Falls Road)

2 GATEWAYS
- A Gateway - West (Route 149 and Route 151)
- B Gateway - East (Falls Road at Great Hillwood Rd)
- C Gateway - Center (Falls Road at William F. Palmer Rd)
- D Gateway - Secondary South-Central (William F. Palmer Road)
- E Gateway - Secondary North (N. Moodus Rd)
- F Gateway - Secondary South-West (Plains Road at Municipal Offices)

3 PARK AND TRAILS
- A Moodus River Park
- B Moodus River Trail
- C Recreational Field Expansion and Trail/ Municipal Office Complex

4 MOODUS CENTER STREETSCAPE
(Falls Road) (Plains Rd/Town Street)
(William F. Palmer Road)
(North Moodus Road)

5 HOUSING
(Joe Williams Road & William F. Palmer Road)

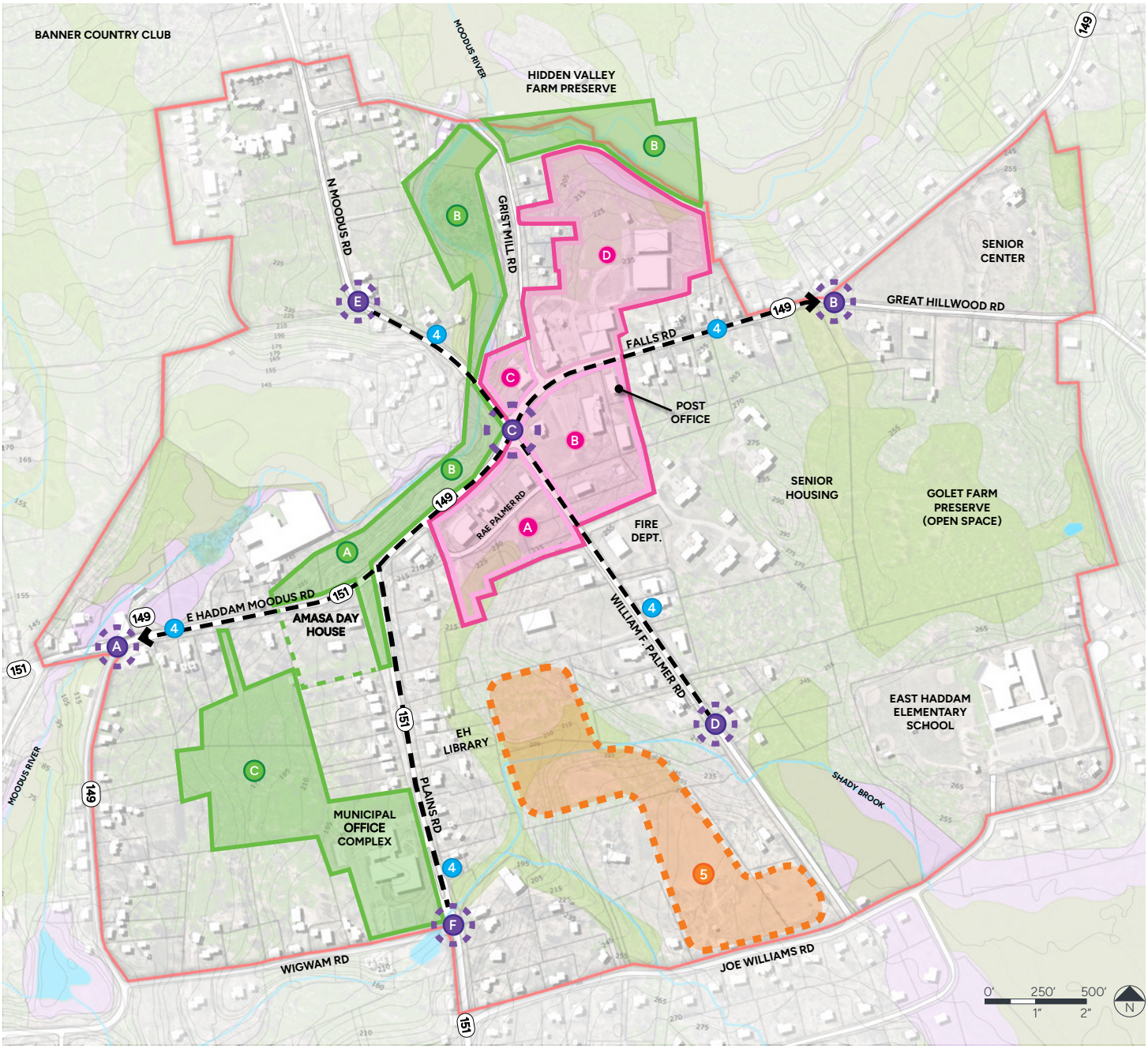



Figure 8. Moodus Center - Target Areas Map

## MOODUS CENTER REDEVELOPMENT SUB-AREA RECOMMENDATIONS:



**B.1.a Recommendation:**

Rae Palmer Road Properties (10-16 Rae Palmer Road / Undeveloped Property at 7 Rae Palmer Road ).

Development of the parcels associated with 7 Rae Palmer Road offer the greatest opportunity in this sub-area. For 10-16 Rae Palmer Road, the long term goal is for redevelopment of each parcel or as a consolidated redevelopment utilizing the village center character goals (See A.1). Short term improvements should focus on building façade and signage upgrades and targeted public investments.

- Specific Site Improvements:
    - Install curbed sidewalks, lighting, and street trees between William F. Palmer and Falls Road (Route 149). At a minimum, extend sidewalk and streetscape treatment to the existing restaurant at 12 Rae Palmer Road for connectivity to retail establishments.
    - Improve the appearance of 12 Rae Palmer Road (restaurant) by adding landscaping along the street frontage,modifications to better define and reducing the width of the driveway, and adding landscaping within the property to reduce unnecessary pavement.
- Suggested Design Criteria:
    - Structures should be oriented to face William F. Palmer and Rae Palmer Roads with consistent right-of-way setbacks and off-street parking.
    - Establish a minimum landscaping buffer requirements along roadway frontage to complete the Village Center District streetscape. (See B.4)
    - Require minimum internal planting and pervious surface requirements as a percentage of impervious coverage.
    - Require minimum and maximum driveway entrances onto Rae Palmer Road per property.

- Standardize site improvements such as dumpster enclosures, trash collection guidelines and overall landscape coverage requirements.

- The sloping area of each property facing Falls Road and adjacent to the ROW should be utilized to connect these properties to Falls Road through terraces, patios, pedestrian ways and decorative retailing walls (where necessary). Restaurant use on Rae Palmer Road could utilize the terraces and patios for outdoor seating.

- Based on the 2015 Septic Capabilities Study, existing sewage disposal systems for 10-16 Rae Palmer Road are at maximums or have very limited expansion possibilities (10 Rae Palmer Road). The parcels associated with 7 Rae Palmer Road (47 William F. Palmer Road) would allow for approximately 18,000 sq ft of development.




The potential for continuous street frontage infill exists at 7 Rae Palmer Road.
Photo credit: Village of Huntley, Ohio

**Area 1.a Short-Term Site Improvements, Rae Palmer Road Properties**

1. Install sidewalk, street trees, and post-top lighting along north side of Rae Palmer Road to Falls Road. Sidewalks should continue across driveways. Install street trees along south side of street to begin canopy establishment.
2. Install decorative crosswalks for enhanced visibility and aesthetics, and to promote walkability between plazas (B.4.b).
3. Establish and enforce internal and frontage landscape density requirements (B.4.b).
4. Reconfigure parking lot layouts and traffic circulation to incorporate more green space and consider Low Impact Development (LID) practices for stormwater management where appropriate (A.5.a). Reduce curb cuts to maximum 24 foot width.
5. Create a pedestrian connection from Falls Road with stairs and terraced landings to the existing restaurant.
6. Renovate existing structures to remain with recommended architectural treatments.
7. Cut back slope to open intersection sight lines, add stone walls and low-growing landscaping (B.4.b).
8. Narrow the roadway to accommodate two (2) 12' wide drive lanes (consider 11' lanes which are locally encouraged) with 4' shoulders as recommended by the 2023 East Haddam Road Safety Audit. Reduce curb radii and make associated sidewalk adjustments (B.2.c, B.4.a).
9. Multi-use trail leading to North Moodus Road, continuing to Grist Mill Road. (B.3.b)
10. Continuous sidewalk on the north side of Route 149. Connect to multi-use trail via a boardwalk along North Moodus Road. (B.3.a)

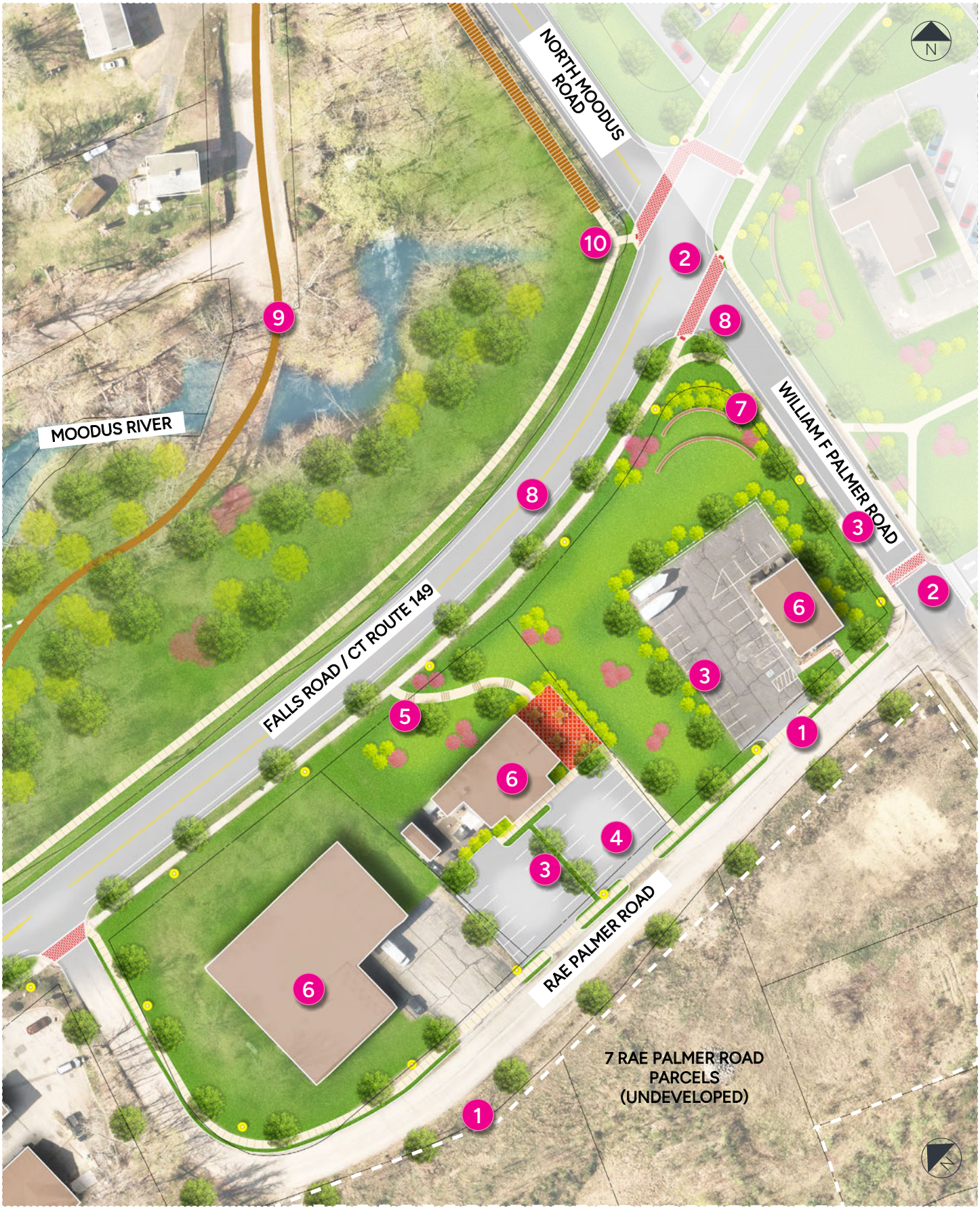



Figure 9. Moodus Center - Short-Term Site Improvements, Area 1.a, Rae Palmer Road Properties

**B.1.b Recommendation:**
Nathan Hale Plaza (26 Falls Road) and Adjacent Properties (30 and 32 Falls Road and 50 and 52 William F. Palmer Road ).

The potential redevelopment of 26 Falls Road, utilizing the recommended village center character goals (See A.1), offers significant potential to establish a new Moodus Center. The surrounding properties of 30 and 32 Falls Road and 50 and 52 William F. Palmer Road offer additional benefits if these properties are included in the long-term redevelopment of the south-east corner of Falls Road and William F. Palmer Road. Short-term improvements should focus on building facade, landscape, and signage upgrades, and targeted public investments.

- Specific site improvements to enhance the charm and character should consider the following (Figure 10):
    - Circulation: Enhance the pedestrian experience and improve traffic flow by making paved areas more balanced and efficient for pedestrians and vehicles. Separate vehicle traffic from bicycle and pedestrian traffic. Review actual parking needs with a goal of increasing pervious green space.
    - Outdoor seating areas: Allow outdoor seating for gathering, socializing, and dining that supports existing and attracts future businesses. Incorporate landscaping and site furniture particularly adjacent to food or drink related businesses.
    - Pedestrian Pathways: Establish internally connected pedestrian access into and throughout the plaza to ensure safe accessibility and connectivity accented by additional landscaping.
    - Landscaping: Incorporate expanded green spaces and seating areas within the plaza to create a more inviting environment for visitors. Add stone walls or wood fencing to strengthen the plaza's street presence and to add interest within the space.



Steep slopes obstruct sightlines.



Opportunity to encourage walkability between plazas and improve crosswalk visibility.

- Visibility: The separation created by the grade change between the plaza and town sidewalks is a challenge. Earthwork to soften the berm slope will improve visibility from the road.

- Lighting: Add pedestrian scaled traditional lighting to enhance safety and aesthetics and make the plaza more welcoming during evening hours. Bollard and catenary lighting can help define and liven patio spaces.

- Visual Interest and Placemaking: Consider incorporating public art features to add cultural and visual interest to the plaza.

- Building renovations: Introduce historical architectural elements while incorporatng modern design features to improve the aesthetic appeal of the existing structures.

- Parking: Implement shared parking for businesses to optimize space. Consolidate parking internally with decorative walkways connecting areas and incorporate LID components where appropriate.



Opportunity to develop community green space and pedestrian access into plaza.

- Suggested Design Criteria shall follow the village center character goals (see A.1) and should consider:
    - Structures should be oriented to face the primary right-of way.
    - Establish minimum landscaping buffer requirements along road frontage. Require minimum internal planting area requirements as a percentage of impervious coverage.
    - Use cohesive signage on buildings and on street facing signs.
    - Modify the entrances to provide one standard-width (24 feet) driveway onto each abutting road (Falls Road and William F. Palmer Road).
    - Consider restricting traffic exiting on Falls Road to be right turn only. West-bound traffic would exit on William F. Palmer Road and proceed to the traffic light.
    - Coordinate curb cuts with adjacent plazas to consolidate roadway interruptions, conflicting turning movements, and pedestrian interaction.
    - To emulate historical New England architecture, improvements may include:
        - Wood clapboard siding or brickwork facades, emphasizing natural materials quintessential to classical New England structures. Incorporate decorative trim such as wood moldings to mimic historical details.
        - Gable roofs and dormers with multi-pane windows.
        - Signage: Signage that utilizes natural materials, including routed wood signage emblematic of traditional New England style.
        - Where appropriate, incorporate covered porches with columns to highlight and emphasize entry points.

- Based on the 2015 Septic Capabilities Study, existing sewage disposal systems for 26 Falls Road are at maximums. Complete redevelopment of this property would allow for approximately 12,000 sq. ft. of development. Combining with adjacent parcels would allow for greater development particularly with the inclusion of 50 and 52 William F. Palmer Road Approximately 12,000 sq ft of additional development).



The potential for a town square or central green exists along William F. Palmer Road due to limited building footprint allowances.
Photo: Diamond Park, Borough of Ligonier, PA

**Area 1b Short-Term Site Improvements, Nathan Hale Plaza**

1. Narrow Falls Road to include two (2) 12' wide drive lanes (consider 11' lanes which are locally encouraged) with 4' shoulders as identified in the 2023 East Haddam Road Safety Audit (B.4.a).
2. Redesign plaza entrance to feature central landscaped island with more significant plaza signage, as well as ornamental planting. Consider restricting Falls Road driveway exit to eliminate left turn and direct west-bound traffic to William F Palmer Road intersection.
3. Provide new concrete sidewalk connecting plaza to existing sidewalk with landscaping.
4. Establish and enforce landscape buffer requirements along road frontage (A.2.a, B.4.a).
5. Reconfigure parking lot layout and traffic circulation and incorporate more green space, including stormwater infiltration areas (LIDs) (A.5.a).
6. Renovate existing structures with recommended architectural treatments. Add landscape buffer to separate pedestrians from parking area and expand patio and seating areas.
7. Establish a community green space with sidewalk connection from William F. Palmer Road, with seating, lighting, landscaping, and an anchoring feature such as a fountain or a locally significant monument or sculpture as a placemaking feature. Open lawn surrounding the area can be utilized for community events or seasonal markets.
8. Reduce curb radii and make associated sidewalk adjustments, provide landscape buffer.
9. Cut back slope to open sight lines, add new stone walls and low-growing landscaping (B.4.b).
10. Install decorative crosswalks for enhanced pedestrian visibility and aesthetics, and to promote walkability between plazas (B.4.a).




Figure 10. Moodus Center - Short-Term Site Improvements, Area 1.b, Nathan Hale Plaza

**B.1.c Recommendation:**

Moodus Package Store Property (23 Falls Road )

23 Falls Road is a small stand-alone property with limited redevelopment potential, but can contribute to the desired village aesthetic with targeted improvements.

- Specific Improvements:
  - Replace painted walkways with a concrete or brick sidewalk
  - Prioritize and define sidewalks along the roadway frontages by installing concrete driveway curb ramps and consolidating the number of curb cuts.
  - Reduce the width of driveways to standard widths, evaluate and modify entry and exit routes, parking, and vehicular circulation within the site.
  - Incorporate landscaped areas to soften the overall appearance.
- Suggested Design Criteria:
  - Add signage that reflects the character adopted for the commercial center. Prioritize natural materials such as wood and stone over back-lit signage.
  - Apply architectural enhancements to emulate the appearance of traditional New England architecture.
    - Install traditional siding material such as clapboard with decorative trim in traditional colors (e.g. white, gray, muted blue, green, or red).
    - Incorporate natural stone or brick accents to the structure, such as a natural stone base around the structure.
    - Replace large windows with multi-paned windows.
    - Incorporate a covered entry area to the front of the building.
    - Incorporate a pitched roof to emulate traditional New England architecture.
    - Consider a long-term plan to repurpose building use or replace the structure entirely to reflect the street facing intimate aesthetic supported by the community.

- Based on the 2015 Septic Capabilities Study, existing sewage disposal systems for 23 Falls Road is near capacity limited building expansion for this property. Redevelopment with a similar square footage would be possible (4,500 sq. ft.)






Examples of streetscape improvements such as landscaping, decorative paving, and street furniture can dramatically improve village aesthetics and the pedestrian experience for 23 Falls Road.

**Area 1c Short-Term Site Improvements, 23 Falls Road**

1. Reconfigure parking lot layout and traffic circulation. Extend lot with new retaining wall to accommodate small boat trailers.
2. Renovate building with recommended architectural improvements, add decorative awning.
3. Develop small plaza space with landscaping, lighting and seating area.
4. Redesign street frontage to feature two defined curb cuts with one-way travel and new concrete driveway aprons that provide a visible and continuous pedestrian zone along Falls Road.
5. Install street frontage landscape buffer to screen building and enhance streetscape aesthetic appeal (A.2.a, B.4.a).
6. Provide decorative roadway crosswalks for enhanced visibility and aesthetics (B.4.a).

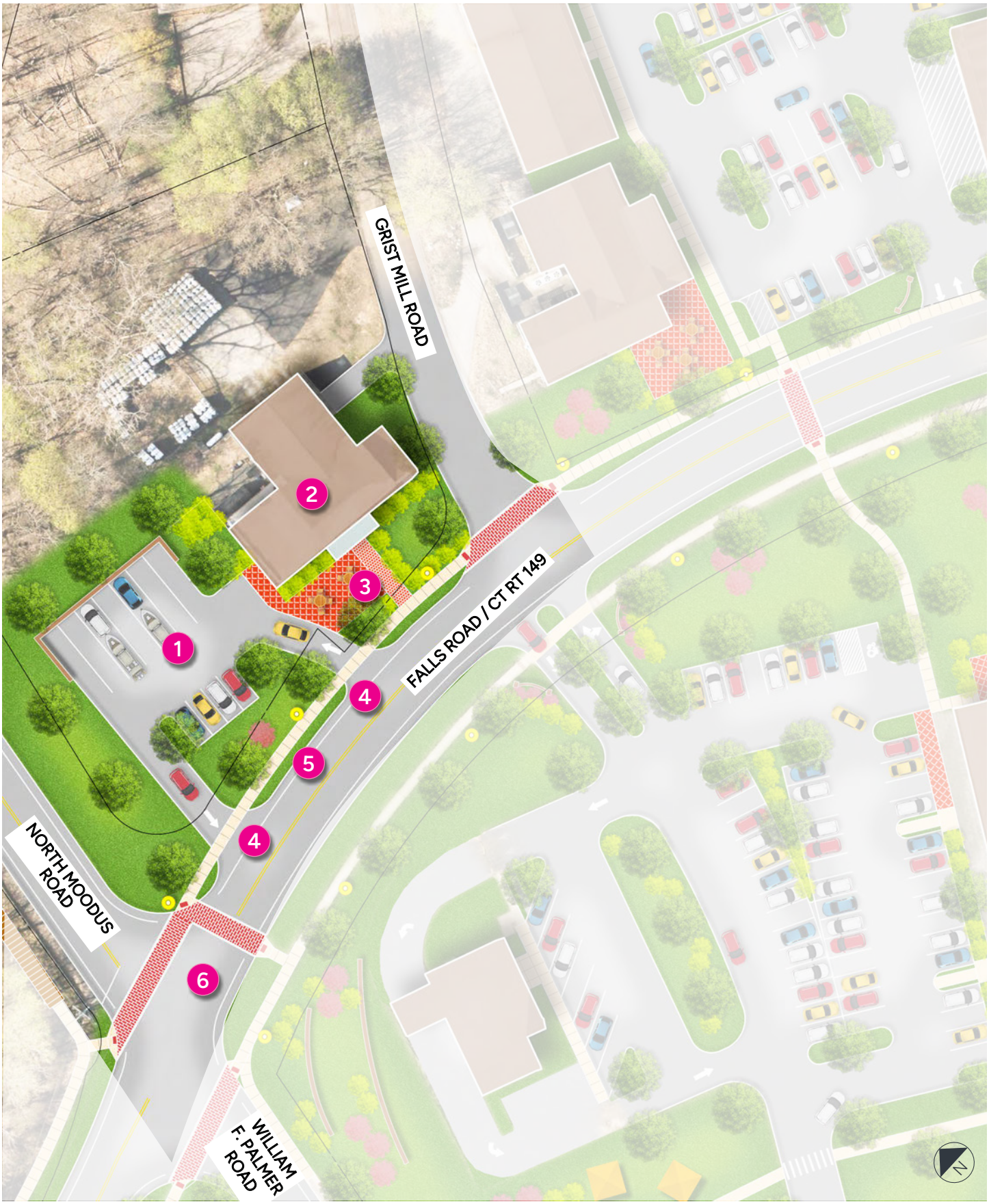



Figure 11. Moodus Center - Short-Term Site Improvements, Area 1.c, 23 Falls Road

**B.1.d Recommendation:**

The Old Lumberyard Property (25 Falls Road)

This property encompasses 13 acres and includes 8 buildings. It has large unbuilt areas and borders the Moodus River along its northern edge with access to Falls Road and minor access on Grist Mill Road. The potential for a connection to trails on conservation land to the north via an existing easement provides unique opportunities for development.

- Specific Improvements:
    - Assess and reorganize parking and vehicular circulation to balance the needs for vehicular and pedestrian movement. Implement shared parking for businesses to optimize space.
    - Provide pedestrian zones and internally connected systems between buildings and parking to ensure safe and efficient walkability within the site.
    - Ensure efficient accessible routes are provided which connect to public sidewalks and all areas of the village, promoting walkability and reducing reliance on vehicles.
    - Incorporate seating areas with landscaping and site furniture to encourage gathering and social interaction, particularly adjacent to food or drink related businesses.
    - Develop internal green spaces to define plaza areas and beautify the development.
    - Incorporate landscaping buffer zones along the streetscape.
    - Evaluate the potential for riverwalk development or an overlook destination for the public to view the river. Partner with the Village to provide right-of-way circulation to existing and proposed recreational trails across the river.

- Take advantage of large undeveloped areas to partner with the Village to host seasonal open-air community events (e.g. farmers markets, artist markets, music events).
- Prioritize expanding existing or attracting new business development that can be supported by the community as well as attract regional patrons to be the impetus to more extensive investment in Moodus Village.

- Suggested Design Criteria:

Community feedback indicates an interest in developing a village-style layout that is small scale and pedestrian friendly. Key elements of such a design include:

- Define zones for retail, office, and industrial uses to ensure efficiency and flow throughout the site.
- Uses should include a mix of retail and office spaces to create a vibrant community hub.
- Define village center district-specific design standards for architectural renovations and construction.
- Emphasize the use of natural materials such as brick, stone and wood for walks, plazas, additions, and new construction.
- Use cohesive understated signage on buildings and on street facing signs.
- Utilize a harmonious variety of traditional New England style architecture organized around a network of walkable pedestrian scaled streets.
- Buildings should be oriented toward sidewalks rather than parking lots, and should maintain a continuous façade along the street.
- Include amenities like street trees, benches, and outdoor dining areas.
- Include gathering areas to encourage social interaction and community engagement.

- Include interconnected street systems, rear parking where practical, and distinct service areas to prioritize pedestrian access.
- Incorporate local art, historical markers, or cultural features to celebrate the local heritage and emphasize a sense of place.

- Based on the 2015 Septic Capabilities Study, existing sewage disposal systems for 25 Falls Road is large and offers room for expansion. However, adding to the existing system would result in the system being classified as a DEEP community septic system unless the property is subdivided (potential for 30,000 sq. ft. of additional development).




Capitalize on available space to support social gatherings.





Examples of community event potential.




Locally and regionally appealing business development.



Expanded landscaping and seating areas.
Photo credit: themarketreportblog.com

Examples of development opportunities at 25 Falls Road.

**Area 1d Short-Term Site Improvements, 25 Falls Road (Old Lumberyard Property)**

1. Redesign entrance to feature more significant signage, as well as adding ornamental plantings and a concrete driveway apron.
2. Complete sidewalk connection from crosswalk into plaza and along Falls Road. Include street trees and post-top lighting.
3. Establish and enforce landscape buffer requirements along road frontage (A.2.a, B.4.a)
4. Provide continuous pedestrian walkways and marked crosswalks between plaza buildings, and continue concrete sidewalk along Falls Road.
5. Reconfigure parking lot layout and traffic circulation and incorporate landscaped areas, including stormwater infiltration areas (LIDs) (A.5.a).
6. Develop additional flexible plaza spaces with landscaping, lighting and seating areas.
7. Improve existing patio space near coffee roaster.
8. Install decorative crosswalks for enhanced pedestrian visibility and aesthetics, and to promote walkability between plazas (B.4.a).
9. Narrow Falls Road to include two (2) 12' wide drive lanes (consider 11' lanes which are locally encouraged) with 4' shoulders as recommended by the East Haddam Road Safety Audit (B.4.a).




Figure 12. Moodus Center - Short-Term Site Improvements, Area 1.d, 25 Falls Road

## 2. GATEWAYS

**Objective:**

- Install features that visually communicate the arrival into a distinctive, established community or zone.
- Utilize similar or complimentary landscaping, lighting, color palette, and hardscape materials at each location.

**B.2.a Recommendation:**

Western Gateway (Merge of Routes 149 and 151)

- Utilize information gathered from the Route 149 Road Safety Audit or consider conducting a new traffic study to address vehicle speeds and traffic conflicts at this location. Consider if the stop sign at Route 151 is sufficient while allowing for uninterrupted movement along Route 149.
- Specific Improvements:
    - Install a Moodus Center welcome sign utilizing branding developed for the village center.
    - Install visual cues such as varied paving materials, colored and stamped roadway overlay, and decorative crosswalks.
    - Install a sculptural or contextually unique feature in the open space on Dutch Oil property as a characteristic village element.
    - Propose curb radius reduction with CT DOT to slow speeds.




Route 149 looking west at junction of Route 151

**B.2.b Recommendation:**

Eastern Gateway (Falls Road at Great Hillwood Road)

- Specific Improvements:
    - Install a Moodus Center welcome sign utilizing branding developed for the village center.
    - Add colored and stamped roadway overlay, curb adjustments and other CT DOT approved modifications to signify the arrival into the village center.



Falls Road looking west at Great Hill Road

**B.2.c Recommendation:**
Central Gateway (Falls Road at William F. Palmer Road)

- Specific Improvements:
    - There is Town interest in establishing a significant Gateway at this location as the definitive village center.
    - Option to explore with CTDOT the installation of a roundabout to manage traffic speeds and improve pedestrian comfort and safety.
    - An alternative option is to incorporate a colored and stamped roadway overlay, curb adjustments to shorten pedestrian crossings, roadway medians, and other CT DOT approved modification to signify the center intersection of the village center. Physical installations have shown a positive influence over driver habits and improve pedestrian connectivity between adjacent commercial parcels. The inclusion of decorative crosswalks, distinctive paving materials, site furnishings, and landscaping will add to the aesthetic character of the village center.



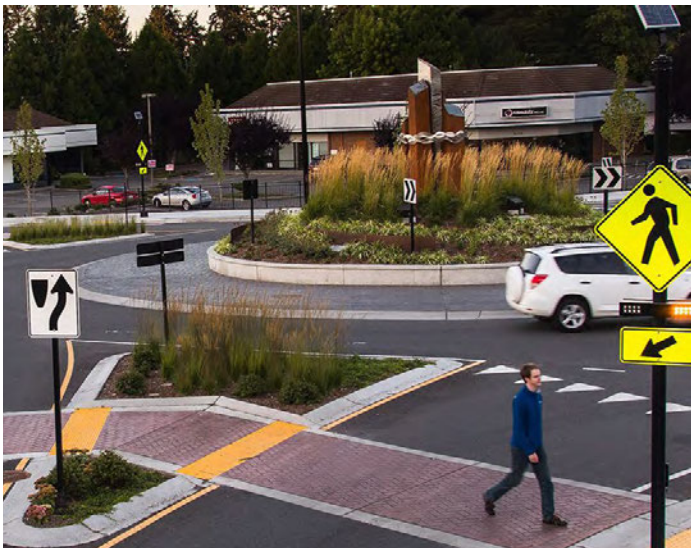

Falls Road at William F. Palmer Road

**Grant Opportunities:** Federal and State grants may be available for roadway improvements and design. Funding sources include:

- LOTCIP - Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program
- LOCIP - The Local Capital Improvement Program
- STEAP – Small Town Economic Assistance Program
- TAP – Transportation Alternatives Program (Federal)
- CCGP - Community Connectivity Grant Program
- SRTS – Safe Routes to School



Landscaped Median



Traffic Circle, Medians, and Decorative Crosswalks



Decorative Crosswalk




Refuge Island

Potential Gateway Improvements to Roadway

**B.2.d Recommendation:**

Secondary Gateway – South-Central (William F. Palmer Road)

- Specific Improvements:
    - Install a Moodus Center welcome sign utilizing branding developed for the village center.
    - Add decorative crosswalks, distinctive paving materials, and site furnishings.



William F. Palmer Road looking North towards Falls Road

**B.2.e Recommendation:**

Secondary Gateway – North (North Moodus Road)

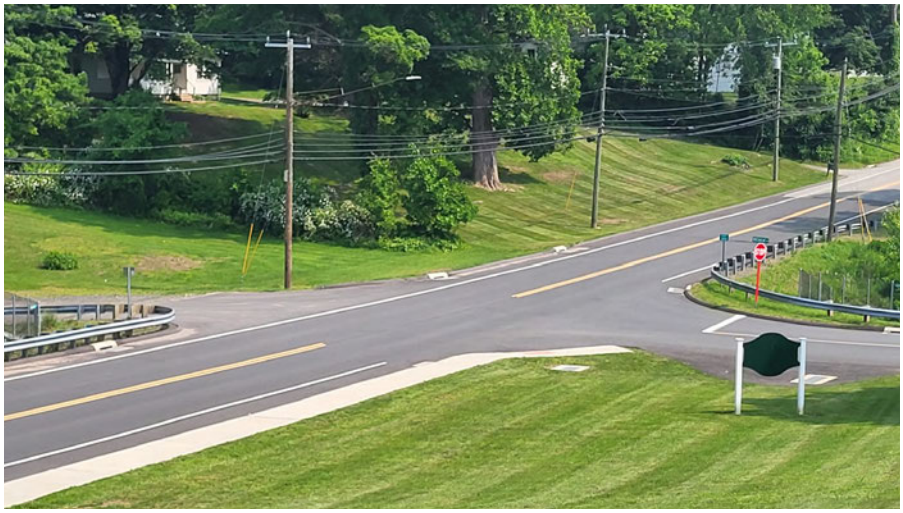
- Specific Improvements:
    - Install a Moodus Center welcome sign utilizing branding developed for the village center.
    - Add a sidewalk on west side of road from cemetery to Falls Road.



North Moodus Road

**B.2.f Recommendation:**

Secondary Gateway – South-West (Plains Road at Municipal Offices)



Plains Road near Wigwam Road

- Specific Improvements:
    - Install a Moodus Center welcome sign utilizing branding developed for the village center.
    - Add decorative crosswalks, distinctive paving materials, site furnishings and landscaping to signify arrival into the village center.

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## 3. PARK AND TRAILS

**Objectives:**

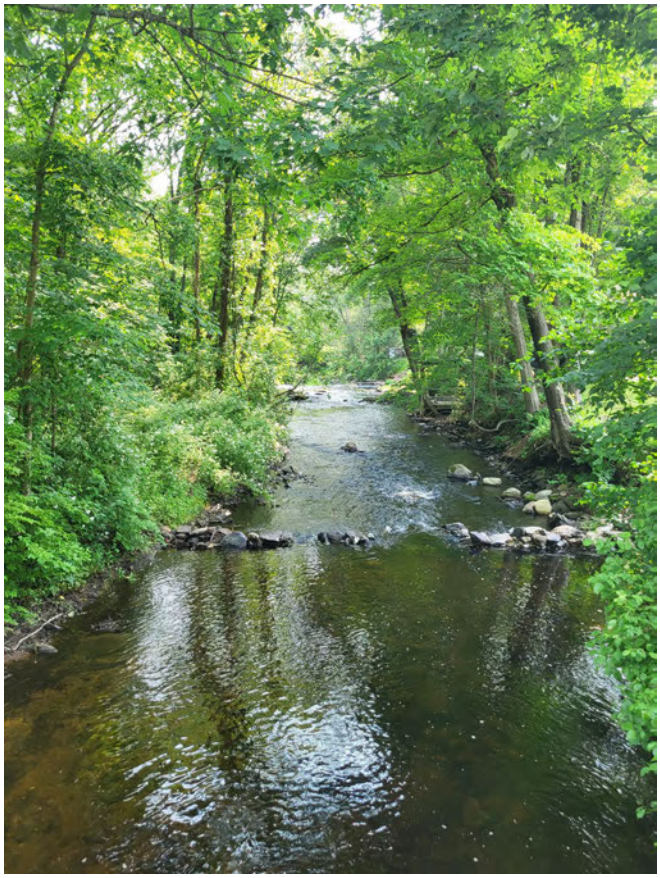
- Create a park to connect to the Village Green across Falls Road. Highlight river valley views and provide a connection to a Moodus River trail that engages with the local natural environment.
- Provide a walkable route / sidewalk linking the park space, Plains Road, and the Moodus Village commercial core area.
- Connect the proposed athletic fields behind the Municipal Office Complex via a trail to East Haddam - Moodus Road and then to the Amasa Day House property and the proposed Moodus River Park.
- As part of the planned Lower Connecticut River Valley Heritage Trail, Connecticut Landmarks has proposed an on-street bicycle route along Plains Road, traveling west on Falls Road, and continuing south to Route 149 via Johnsonville Road.[4] Multi-use trail development should coordinate a link to this planned route.



Conservation Land Trailhead



Cabin Campground North of the Village Center


Moodus River

4 Connecticut Landmarks, East Haddam Connectivity Project, 2022

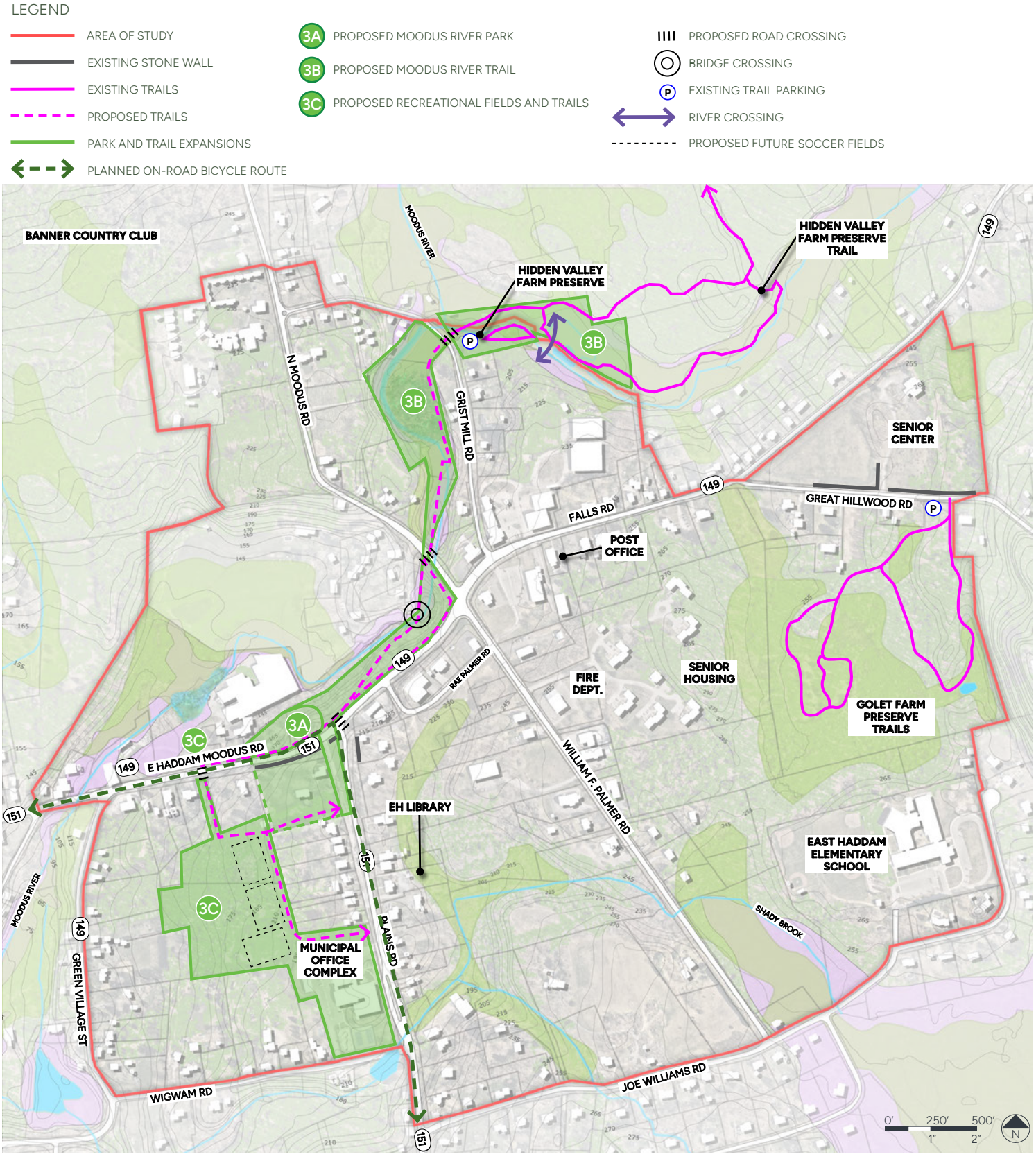



Figure 13. Moodus Center - Park and Trail Map



**B.3.a Recommendation:**
Proposed Moodus River Park

- Specific Improvements:
  - **River Views.** Conduct targeted tree and shrub clearing on the north side of Falls Road (State Route 149) to create views of the river valley and landscape below. Site assessment needed to select appropriate view locations.
  - **Moodus River Park.** Create a park and plaza space with planting and seating, with an overlook offering views of the landscape. Install a meaningful sculptural feature or architectural folly for visual impact to establish a unique contextual feature and destination point.
  - Highlight community history using memorials, maps and interpretive signage.
  - Connect the proposed park to the village center commercial core area with a paved sidewalk on the north side of Falls Road to North Moodus Road and joining other pedestrian improvements in the commercial core area.
  - Connect the proposed park to the Village Green and Amasa Day House with crosswalk and streetscape improvements at Route 149/151 and Plains Road.
  - Connect the proposed park to the proposed Moodus River Trail.

**Grant Opportunities:** Federal and State grants may be available for trail planning and design, maintenance and restoration, and ADA access among other support. Refer to CT.gov under DEEP's CT Recreational Trails Grants Program for additional resources and information.

**B.3.b Recommendation:**

Proposed Moodus River Trail

- Specific Improvements:
  - Connect Moodus River Park to the river and the stone bridge, and continue the trail to the east along the river valley through the Town-owned conservation land (one easement is needed).
  - Terminate the Moodus River Trail at the start of the Red Trail (Grist Mill Road at parking lot) in the East Haddam Land Trust Hidden Valley Farm Preserve property. The Red Trail connects properties to the north and also leads to the Blue Trail which trails along the Moodus River.
  - Incorporate seating areas, trail maps, and interpretive signage highlighting local history and ecology along the proposed trail. It is anticipated that much of this trail would require a cantilevered walkway due to steep slopes to the river.



Moodus River Dam

1. Develop a Moodus River Park with plaza space, landscaping, stone wall, lighting and seating overlooking the river and landscape beyond. Incorporate a meaningful sculptural feature or architectural folly for visual impact. (B.3.a)
2. Complete select tree clearing to create views to Moodus River.
3. Develop a multi-use trail leading to North Moodus Road, continuing to Grist Mill Road and town conservation lands and trails, with a spur foot trail providing engagement with the river. (B.3.b)
4. Install a sidewalk on the north side of Route 149 to connect the village center to Plains Road and west Green Village Street.
5. Add decorative crosswalks for more visible and continuous pedestrian access. Include a median refuge island at the Route 149 crossing. Option to install a curbed median west of the intersection. (B.4.a)
6. Remove vegetation from slope to reveal views of the Amasa Day property.
7. Remove the secondary roadway to unify the Amasa Day house with the median green and extend the existing stone wall. Develop sidewalk connection linking the property to existing features on the Green. (B.3a)

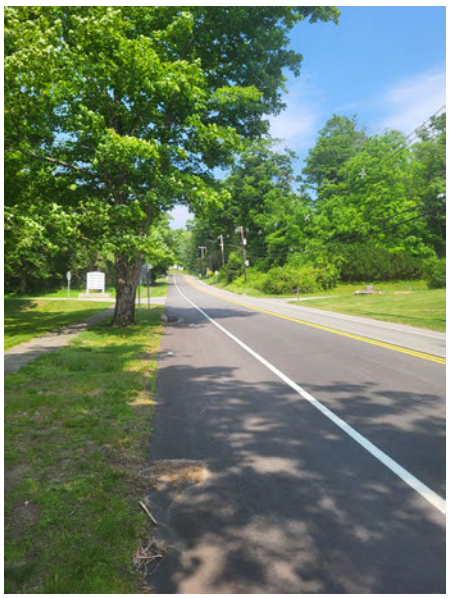



Figure 14. Moodus Center - Proposed Moodus River Park and Trail

**B.3.c Recommendation:**

Recreation Field Expansion and Trail / Municipal Office Complex

- Specific Improvements:
  - Install three proposed athletic fields in the level area north-west of the Municipal Office Complex adjacent to the parking area currently containing a grass recreational field.
  - Beyond the field to the north, the adjacent wooded parcel (3.4 Ac.) offers a connection opportunity to State Route 149/151 (E. Haddam Moodus Road) with a 30 foot elevation change over approximately 950 feet with some specific areas with steeper terrain. Through this property, create a nature trail that connects the Municipal Offices and parking lot, the proposed athletic fields, and Route 149/151.
  - Install pedestrian crossing signage and pavement markings to provide a connection to the proposed sidewalk on the north side of Route 149/151.
  - Visibility of vehicles moving Eastbound on Route 149/151 is straight and unobstructed. Westbound, a curve in the roadway approximately 600 feet in advance of the crossing point suggests advance notification signage alerting drivers will be warranted.



Route 149 Looking East



Route 149 Looking West

## 4. MOODUS CENTER STREETSCAPE

**Objectives:**

- Mitigate the impact of Falls Road as a bisecting factor through the Moodus Center.
- Expand on the roadway improvement recommendations within the East Haddam Road Safety Audit for Route 149 (Moodus Road / Falls Road between Grove Street and Great Hillwood Road).
- Establish a cohesive Moodus Center physical character through consistent and enhanced streetscape and roadway treatments and materials.
- Improve comfort and safety for pedestrians at intersections, driveways, and crosswalks to promote walkability.
- Complete pedestrian connectivity at noted sidewalk gaps (Figure 17).



Figure 15. Exhibit 32 from the CT DOT Safety Audit

## MOODUS CENTER STREETSCAPE RECOMMENDATIONS:



**B.4.a Recommendation:**

Falls Road (Route 149) from merge with Route 151 to Great Hillwood Road

Specific Improvements:

- Incorporate posts with banners or flags within the Moodus Center commercial core area.
- Install decorative and highly visible crosswalks at all intersections (Grist Mill Road, North Moodus Road, William F. Palmer Road, Plains Road). Incorporate stamped and colored street print and curbed bump-outs or refuge islands where width permits. Reduce curb radii to reduce crosswalk lengths, update insufficient signalization, and evaluate the existing vehicular turning movements and the potential for modifications.
- Complete roadway and sidewalk improvements for Route 149 as proposed in the East Haddam Road Safety Audit. An alternate option to roadway narrowing is to consider a curbed and landscaped median along portions of Falls Road as both a traffic calming measure and as a visual feature indicating the arrival into the village center. Additional recommended improvements include intersection crosswalks, and sidewalks on the north side of Falls Road from Plains Road to 25 Fall Road and extending the sidewalk on the south side of Falls Road from the Post Office (32 Falls Road to Great Hillwood Road to connect the Senior Center.
- Install consistent streetscape treatments throughout the walkable village center to include trees, decorative paving materials, and site furniture.
- Enhance and enforce landscape buffer requirements to commercial properties along the corridor.
- Special attention should be given to the pedestrian experience for Falls Road along the sloping conditions of properties at 10-16 Rae Palmer Road (See B.1.a for more information.)

LEGEND

- AREA OF STUDY
- EXISTING STONE WALL
- VILLAGE STREETSCAPE
- EXISTING SIDEWALKS
- PROPOSED SIDEWALKS
- EXISTING CROSSWALKS
- PROPOSED CROSSWALKS

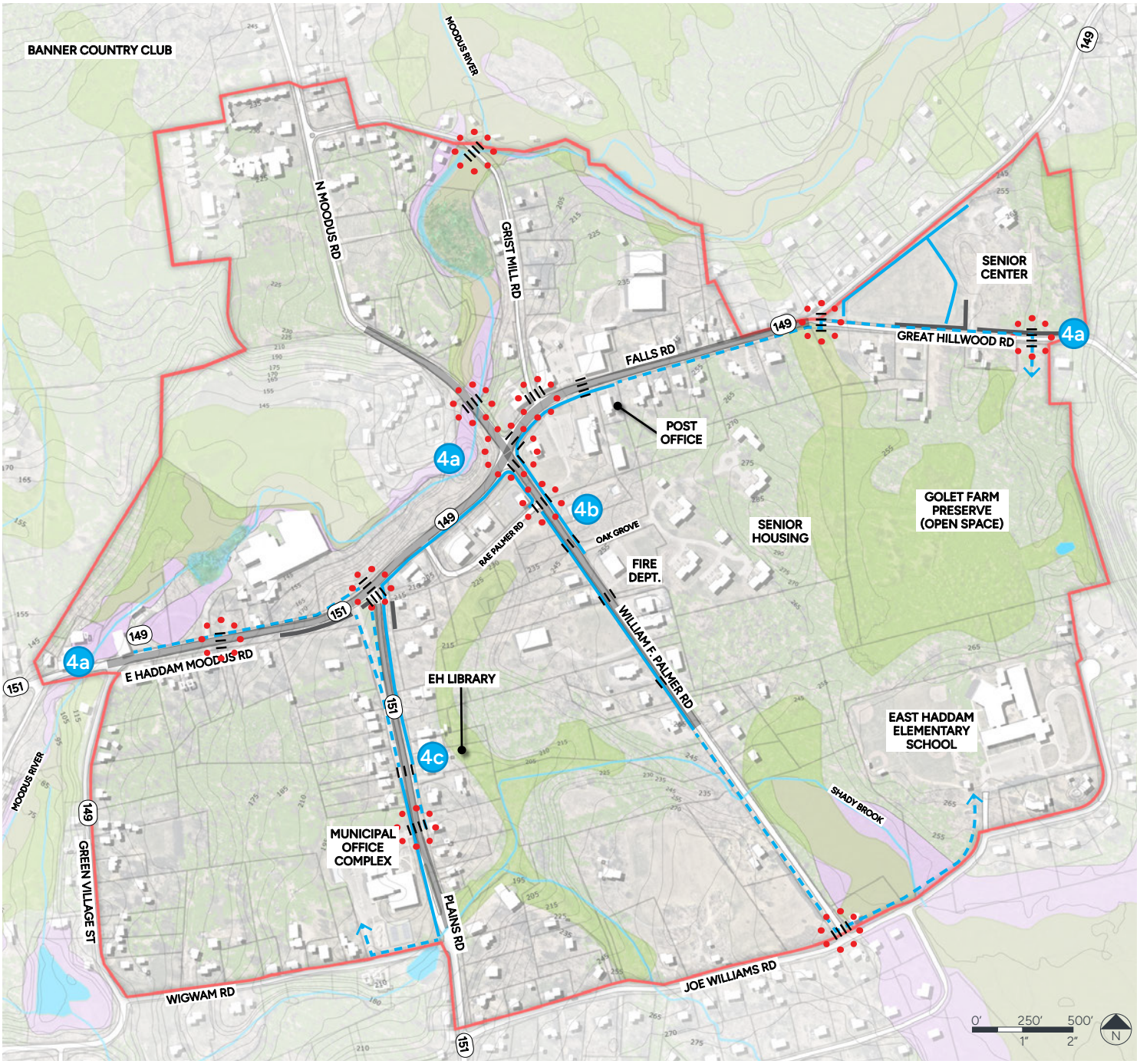



Figure 16. Moodus Center - Streetscape Map



**B.4.b Recommendation:**

William F. Palmer Road from Falls Road to secondary south-central gateway

- Specific Improvements:
  - Install decorative highly visible crosswalk at Oak Grove (Senior Housing development).
  - A new mid-block decorative crosswalk on William F. Palmer Road will provide a more convenient connection to the adjacent retail plaza, promoting walkable options. The need and location for this will be influenced by the future development of properties on each side of the road.
  - Install streetscape improvements from Oak Grove to Falls Road to define the area as part of the village center. Include new sidewalks, street trees, and decorative paving.

    Regrade and reshape berms at the intersection with Falls Road to improve visibility and allow for widening of sidewalks and streetscape treatment. Regrade or terrace the slopes, add pockets of landscaping, fencing or terraced stone walls to provide visual interest.
  - Specific sections of sidewalks and curbs between Oak Grove and Falls Road need landscape management to remove weeds and encroaching vegetation for general blight reduction.
  - Multi-family residential buildings at 43 and 41 William F. Palmer Road frontage should be landscaped to improve appearance. Increase and enforce landscape buffer requirements along roadway frontage.

**B.4.c Recommendation:**

Plains Road/Town Street (Route 151) from Falls Road to secondary south-west gateway at Municipal Center

- Specific Improvements:
  - Selectively clear vegetation to provide better visibility of the Amasa Day House from Falls Road and strengthen its presence as a community feature.
  - Remove the secondary roadway at Plains Road (State Route 151), extend the stone retaining wall, and physically connect the Amasa Day House to the existing median green. This will require improvements on Plains Road to address residential access, storm drainage and traffic circulation which is partially under CT DOT jurisdiction.
  - Maintain and improve parking within the ROW for properties at 19 through 25 Plains Road.

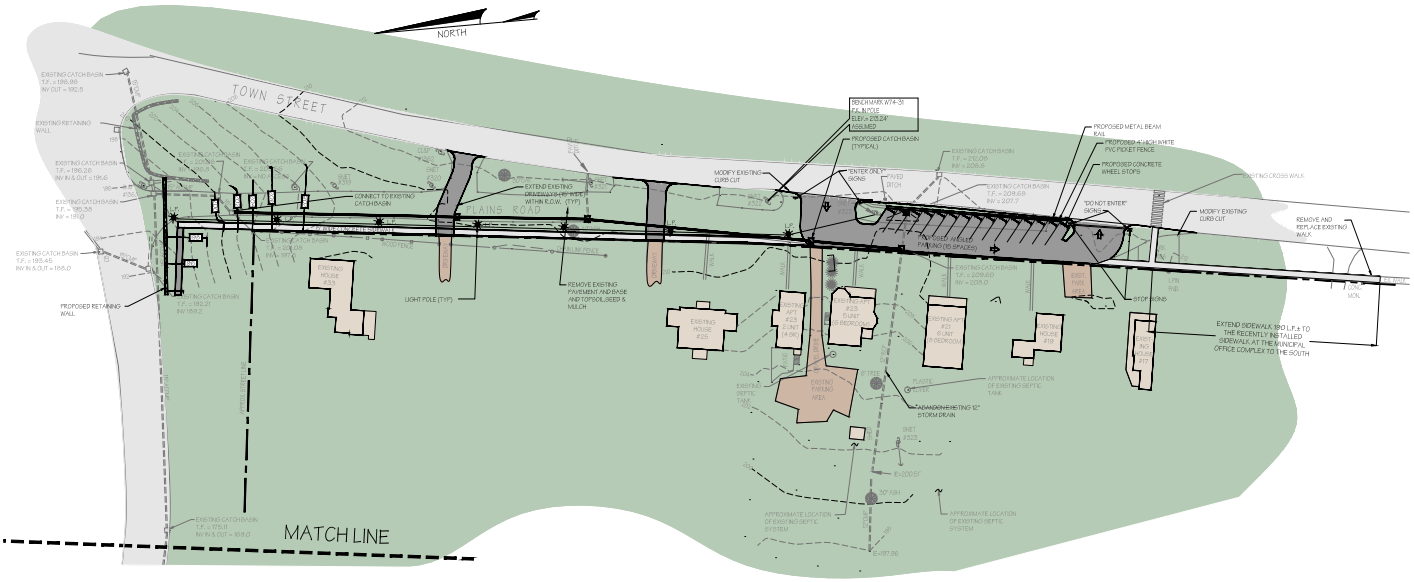



Figure 17. 2020 Plains Road Abandonment Preliminary Plan, Credit: Nemergut Consulting

## 5. HOUSING TARGET AREA

**Objective:**

- Provide additional housing for the Moodus Village Center based on availability of land and sewer disposal system capacities.



**B.5.a Recommendation:**

Undeveloped properties at Joe Williams Road and William F Palmer Road offer housing opportunity sites.

- Sewage disposal for these sites would need to be studied further but offer development possibilities for middle housing (medium density housing).
- See A.2 for suggested zoning amendments and middle housing options.



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Photo credit: https://atlanta.urbanize.city



Photo credit: City of Decatur/DDA/DLT



Photo credit: David W. Robinson

Examples of Cottage Court Housing.

# 4

# IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation Table

# IMPLEMENTATION

The following table summarizes the recommendations identified in the Moodus Center Master Plan. The table specifies lead and additional support entities responsible for executing each of the recommendations. In addition, the table provides a timeframe for completion of the recommendations.

In the Implementation Table:

- **Short-term actions are marked with an "S."** Short-term actions are those that should be implemented within the first year and include items that are a simple lift or are high priority and need to be completed prior to other actions.

- M**edium-term actions are marked with an "M."** Medium-term actions are likely to be completed within two to four years.

- **Long-term actions are marked with an "L."** Long-term actions are those that are likely to be completed in five or more years.

- **Ongoing efforts are marked with an "O."**

Legend for Responsible and Supporting Entities in the Implementation Table

| Code | Entity |
|---|---|
| BOS | Board of Selectmen |
| CC | Conservation Commission |
| CHD | Chatham Health District |
| EDC | Economic Development Commission |
| LUO | Land Use Office |
| MBG | Moodus Business Group |
| PZC | Planning and Zoning Commission |
| RCOG | Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments |
| RC | Recreation Commission |
| WPCA | Water Pollution Control Authority |

| Moodus Center-Wide Recommendations | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1. Overarching Moodus Center Character** | | | |
| **A.1.a Recommendation:** Transform Moodus Center into a vibrant village center. | | | |
| Projects / Action Steps | Responsible Entity | Support Entity | Timeline |
| Transform Moodus Center into a vibrant village center. | EDC / MBG | BOS / PZC | O |
| **2. Zoning / Land Use / Housing** | | | |
| **A.2.a Recommendation:** Amend the existing Moodus Center District (MCD) regulations to support the development of a more cohesive village center character and targeted uses. | | | |
| Projects / Action Steps | Responsible Entity | Support Entity | Timeline |
| a. Amend the MCD regulations. | PZC | EDC | S |
| **A.2.b Recommendation:** Permit and promote middle-housing options within the Moodus Center Commercial Core and Moodus Center Residential Subdistricts to encourage a variety of housing options for infill and redevelopment opportunities. | | | |
| Projects / Action Steps | Responsible Entity | Support Entity | Timeline |
| a. Amend the MDC regulations. | PZC | EDC / BOS | S |
| **3. Economic Development / Business Renewal** | | | |
| **A.3.a Recommendation:** Develop a targeted business strategy for Moodus Center. | | | |
| Projects / Action Steps | Responsible Entity | Support Entity | Timeline |
| a. Develop a targeted business strategy for Moodus Center. | EDC | MBG / BOS | M |
| **A.3.b Recommendation:** Celebrate and promote Moodus Center through expanded community events. | | | |
| Projects / Action Steps | Responsible Entity | Support Entity | Timeline |
| a. Host Regular Events in Moodus Center. | EDC | MBG | M / O |
| b. Invest in Moodus Center branding. | EDC | MBG | S |

1

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **4. Utility Infrastructure** | | | |
| **A.4.a Recommendation:** Continue to explore public sewer and community septic systems for Moodus Center. | | | |
| Projects / Action Steps | Responsible Entity | Support Entity | Timeline |
| a. Confirm infrastructure expansion possibilities / capabilities. | WPCA / LUO | CHD / PZC | O |
| **A.4.b Recommendation:** Explore creating a public water utility for Moodus Center. | | | |
| Projects / Action Steps | Responsible Entity | Support Entity | Timeline |
| a. Consider a public water utility. | WPCA / LUO | BOS / EDC | O |
| **5. Sustainability / Resilience** | | | |
| **A.5.a Recommendation:** Integrate low impact development (LID) principles into the Moodus Center District (MDC) zoning regulations to promote sustainable development patterns and techniques. | | | |
| Projects / Action Steps | Responsible Entity | Support Entity | Timeline |
| a. Amend Zoning Regulations to incorporate LID principals, requirements, and incentives. | PZC | EDC | S |
| **A.5.b Recommendation:** Encourage the use of renewable energy, including infrastructure, within Moodus Center. | | | |
| Projects / Action Steps | Responsible Entity | Support Entity | Timeline |
| a. Amend Zoning Regulations to allow renewable energy uses and infrastructure. | PZC | EDC / BOS | S |
| **A.5.c Recommendation:** Encourage and promote natural environment resilience from changing environmental conditions. | | | |
| Projects / Action Steps | Responsible Entity | Support Entity | Timeline |
| a. Update the Regional and Town Hazard Mitigation Plans to incorporate Moodus Center specific items. | RCOG | LUO / BOS | O / L |
| b. Develop a Moodus Center specific tree program. | LUO | EDC | O |

| **A.5.d Recommendation:** Encourage Historic Preservation in Moodus Village. | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Projects / Action Steps | Responsible Entity | Support Entity | Timeline |
| a. Recommend the Historic District Commission explore the feasibility of the creation of a Moodus Village Historic District. | HDC | LUO / BOS | L |
| b. Recommend the Planning and Zoning Commission create Architectural and Site Design Guidelines for Moodus Village. | PZC | EDC | S |

| **Targeted Areas Recommendations** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1. Moodus Center Redevelopment** | | | |
| **B.1.a Recommendation:** Rae Palmer Road Properties (10-16 Rae Palmer Road / Undeveloped Property at 7 Rae Palmer Road). | | | |
| Projects / Action Steps | Responsible Entity | Support Entity | Timeline |
| a. Public Improvements along Rae Palmer Road. | BOS | EDC / PZC | M |
| b. Coordinate with private property owners on improvements to properties and redevelopment opportunities. | LUO | EDC | O |
| **B.1.b Recommendation:** Nathan Hale Plaza (2 and 26 Falls Road) and Adjacent Properties (30 and 32 Falls Road and 50 and 52 William F. Palmer Road ). | | | |
| Projects / Action Steps | Responsible Entity | Support Entity | Timeline |
| a. Public Improvements adjacent to property on Falls Road and William F. Palmer Road. | BOS | LUO / EDC | L |
| b. Coordinate with private property owners on improvements to properties and redevelopment opportunities. | LUO | EDC | O |

| **B.1.c Recommendation:** Moodus Package Store Property (23 Falls Road). | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Projects / Action Steps | Responsible Entity | Support Entity | Timeline |
| a. Public Improvements adjacent to property on Falls Road and N. Moodus Road and Grist Mill Road. | BOS | LUO / EDC | M |
| b. Coordinate with private property owner on improvements to property and redevelopment opportunities. | LUO | EDC | O |
| **B.1.d Recommendation:** Old Lumberyard Property (25 Falls Road). | | | |
| Projects / Action Steps | Responsible Entity | Support Entity | Timeline |
| a. Public Improvements adjacent to property on Falls Road (RT 149). | BOS | LUO / EDC | L |
| b. Coordinate with private property owner on improvements to property and redevelopment opportunities. | LUO | EDC | O |
| **2. Gateways** | | | |
| **B.2.a Recommendation:** Gateway – West (Merge of Routes 149 and 151). | | | |
| Projects / Action Steps | Responsible Entity | Support Entity | Timeline |
| a. Public Improvements for Gateway – West. | BOS | LUO / EDC | L |
| b. Coordination with CT DOT on Improvements. | BOS | LUO / EDC | L |
| **B.2.b Recommendation:** Gateway – East (Falls Road at Great Hillwood Road). | | | |
| Projects / Action Steps | Responsible Entity | Support Entity | Timeline |
| a. Public Improvements for Gateway – East. | BOS | LUO / EDC | L |
| b. Coordination with CT DOT on Improvements. | BOS | LUO / EDC | L |

| **B.2.c Recommendation:** Gateway – Center (Falls Road at William F. Palmer Road). | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Projects / Action Steps | Responsible Entity | Support Entity | Timeline |
| a. Public Improvements for Gateway – Center. | BOS | LUO / EDC | L |
| b. Coordination with CT DOT on Improvements. | BOS | LUO / EDC | L |
| **B.2.d Recommendation:** Gateway – Secondary South-Center (William F. Palmer Road). | | | |
| Projects / Action Steps | Responsible Entity | Support Entity | Timeline |
| a. Public Improvements for Gateway – South-Center. | BOS | LUO / EDC | L |
| **B.2.e Recommendation:** Gateway – Secondary North (N. Moodus Road). | | | |
| Projects / Action Steps | Responsible Entity | Support Entity | Timeline |
| a. Public Improvements for Gateway – North. | BOS | LUO / EDC | L |
| **B.2.f Recommendation:** Gateway – Secondary South-West (Plains Road at Municipal Offices). | | | |
| Projects / Action Steps | Responsible Entity | Support Entity | Timeline |
| a. Public Improvements for Gateway – South-West. | BOS | LUO / EDC | L |

| 3. Park and Trails | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **B.3.a Recommendation:** Proposed Moodus River Park. | | | |
| Projects / Action Steps | Responsible Entity | Support Entity | Timeline |
| a. Targeted tree and shrub clearing to create river views. | BOS | CC / EDC | M |
| b. Public Improvements to create Moodus River Park. | BOS | CC / EDC | M |
| c. Coordinate with CT DOT on streetscape improvements on Routes 149 and 151 to connect Moodus River Park with Village Green and Amasa Day House. | BOS | LUO / EDC | L |
| **B.3.b Recommendation:** Proposed Moodus River Trail. | | | |
| Projects / Action Steps | Responsible Entity | Support Entity | Timeline |
| a. Public Improvements to create Moodus River Trail. | CC | BOS / LUO / EDC | M |
| b. Coordinate any needed easement agreements to connect the Moodus River Trail with the Trails on the Hidden Valley Farm Preserve Property. | CC | LUO / BOS | M |
| **B.3.c Recommendation:** Recreation Field Expansion and Trail / Municipal Office Complex. | | | |
| Projects / Action Steps | Responsible Entity | Support Entity | Timeline |
| a. Public Improvements to three athletic fields and connecting trails. | RC | BOS / LUO | L |
| b. Coordinate with CT DOT on streetscape improvements on Routes 149 and 151. | BOS | LUO / EDC | L |

| 4. Moodus Center Streetscape | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **B.4.a Recommendation:** Falls Road (Route 149 from merge with Route 151 to Great Hillwood Road. | | | |
| Projects / Action Steps | Responsible Entity | Support Entity | Timeline |
| a. Public Improvements for streetscape improvements along Falls Road (Route 149). | BOS | LUO / EDC | L |
| b. Coordination with CT DOT on improvements for Falls Road (Route 149). | BOS | LUO / EDC | L |
| **B.4.b Recommendation:** William F. Palmer Road from Falls Road to secondary south-central gateway. | | | |
| Projects / Action Steps | Responsible Entity | Support Entity | Timeline |
| a. Public Improvement for streetscape improvements along William F. Palmer Road. | BOS | LUO / EDC | M |
| **B.4.c Recommendation:** Plains Road (Route 151) from Falls Road to secondary south-west gateway at Municipal Center. | | | |
| a. Clear select vegetation at the Amasa Day House along Falls Road and Plains Road for better visibility of community feature. | BOS | LUO / EDC | M |
| b. Public Improvements for streetscape improvements along Plains Road (Route 151). | BOS | LUO / EDC | L |
| c. Coordination with CT DOT on improvements along Plains Road (Route 151). | BOS | LUO / EDC | L |
| **5. Housing Target Area** | | | |
| **B.5.a Recommendation:** Undeveloped properties at Joe Williams Road and William F Palmer Road offer housing opportunity sites. | | | |
| a. Coordinate with private property owners on housing development opportunities on the various parcels. | BOS | LUO / EDC | O |

5

# APPENDIX

Community Survey Report

Open House Summary Memorandums

Study Area Profile

# Appendix 1

# Moodus Center Master Plan

## Community Survey Report

### Town of East Haddam

1 Plains Road, Moodus, Connecticut

Prepared by:

**SLR International Corporation**

99 Realty Drive, Cheshire, Connecticut, 06410

SLR Project No.: 141.12352.00022

September 4, 2024

# Executive Summary

The Town of East Haddam conducted a Community Survey to gather public input related to Moodus Center and its Master Plan's development; the Community Survey is one of multiple public engagement opportunities planned for the Master Plan's development. The Community Survey, which was available on the Project's website, launched in July 2024 and ran for approximately four weeks.

The Community Survey gather 333 responses, or 3.75% of East Haddam's 2020 population (8,875).[1] The Survey provides the Town with valuable insight about the community's concerns and priorities for Moodus Center related to sense of place, housing, economic development, and transportation.

Participants were asked to provide basic demographic information to better understand the population participating; nearly half (48.4 percent) of participants described their household has *couple with children living at home* and 72.9 percent of participants were between the ages of 35 and 64. 96.2 percent of all participants are residents of East Haddam; of those participants, 44.8 percent have lived in the community for 20 or more years. When asked why they choose to live in East Haddam, the top responses included *location* (72.9 percent), *family and friends* (41.4 percent), *housing and neighborhoods* (35.2 percent), *parks, recreation and open spaces* (33.7 percent), and *the affordability* (33.3 percent).

[1] SLR generally aims to collect a minimum of a 2.0 percent response rate, as a portion of an area's total population for voluntary surveys. The community survey is intended to gather feedback and overall sentiment from those who choose to participate in the survey. Statistical conclusions regarding the overall Town/Village/Region population should not be drawn or extrapolated from these results as they represent a voluntary response sample.

# Table of Contents

**Executive Summary** ..... ii
**1.0 Sense of Place / Community Character** ..... 1
**2.0 Housing** ..... 2
**3.0 Economic Development** ..... 2
**4.0 Transportation** ..... 3

# Appendices

**Appendix A Community Survey Responses**

# 1.0 Sense of Place / Community Character

Survey Questions 1 – 4 addressed Moodus Center's overall character and sense of place. Participants were asked why they visit Moodus Center, what they find special about Moodus Center, and what improvements they would like to see related to community character. They were also given the opportunity to share any other questions, comments, or concerns related to community character through an open-ended question. Responses indicated that:

- **Reasons to Visit:** Local businesses and the concentration of municipal offices are the two most common reasons people visit Moodus Center, with 75.8 percent and 65.6 percent stating so. Other common reasons to visit include the library (42.6 percent), living in the Village (42 percent) and the school (41.1 percent).
- **What's Special? (221 Responses):** Participants feel that the local businesses (24.9 percent) and small-town atmosphere (21.7 percent) are what make Moodus Center special. An additional 22.6 percent stated there is nothing special about the Village, while 8.6 percent noted its potential as an important asset – stating it has the potential to be 'a lovely bustling village' and 'lively center' with the opportunity to 'attract people for tourism, eating, and recreation' but 'needs a refresh'.
- **Desired Improvements:** The top six improvements that participants are interested in seeing in the Village include more local businesses (78.9 percent), outdoor markets (55.4 percent), more walkways/paths to connect amenities (50.6 percent), community spaces (46.7 percent), community events and attractions (45.8 percent), and safer sidewalks and crosswalks (44 percent). There are numerous participants that suggest beautification, façade improvements, and landscaping would make the Center more vibrant and attractive to businesses and visitors.
- **Other Comments (135 Responses):** Some participants discussed other topics related to community character including commercial development (25.2 percent), beautification (20 percent), and having a village atmosphere (19.3 percent).
    - **Commercial Development:** Participants addressed the fact that Moodus Center is the commercial hub for the Town of East Haddam and generally encourage economic development to be the focus on the Center, without losing its 'small-town charm'. There is interest in keeping businesses small/local, but some openness to medium-sized retail if it would address community needs. Suggestions include restaurants, coffee shops, hardware stores, and other gathering places.
    - **Beautification:** Participants addressed the need for village beautification to make the space more inviting and suggest so through quality landscaping, a unified streetscape, and addressing property and/or building blight. One participant noted that the Village has an industrial feel / appearance and suggest aligning it better with a rural, residential feel. Other participants suggest that the strip-mall style of development is 'uninspiring' and not aesthetically pleasing.
    - **Village Atmosphere:** Participants indicated their desires to keep and improve the village atmosphere 'quaint' using an 'old town charm' rather than a more modern appearance. Some participants note that making the Center more walkable and

connected would be a 'natural way to encourage community interaction' and suggest moving away from plaza-oriented development.

## 2.0 Housing

Survey Questions 5 – 8 addressed housing within Moodus Center. Participants were asked about the quantity of various housing options within the Village, whether they feel existing housing is affordable and accessible, and the preferred type of housing they would choose to add to the Village. They were also given the opportunity to share any other questions, comments, or concerns related to housing through an open-ended question. Responses indicated that:

- **Existing Housing Stock:** There are enough large (67.1 percent) and small (59.7 percent) single-family homes within the community, as well as nursing homes (49.2 percent), but too few reasonably priced housing (46.7 percent), mixed-use (46.2 percent). There were mixed opinions on the amount of apartments (too few, 37.7 percent; too many 9.8 percent; about the right amount, 22.3 percent), condominiums and townhomes (too few, 35.6 percent; too many, 12.3 percent; about the right amount, 23.9 percent). Most participants were unsure of the amount of options for age-restricted, continuing care retirement communities, assisted living, and duplexes.
- **Accessibility and Affordability:** Nearly half of participants (46.6 percent) feel that housing in the Village is not accessible and affordable to people of different ages and lifestyles and the preferred types of housing to focus on are mixed-use (48.5 percent), small single-family homes (44.7 percent), and condominium and townhouses (32.8 percent).
- **Other Comments (89 Responses):** Some participants shared their additional thoughts on housing in the Village. 14.6 percent of respondents indicated that they felt that additional housing should not be the focus for Moodus, stating that there are infrastructural limitations and concern for losing the Village's rural feel; they mention that if new housing is proposed, additional services and amenities should be created within the Village (grocery stores, shopping, etc.). 16.9 percent of respondents indicated a need for more affordable housing – particularly for younger people, single parents, and seniors. There is consensus that any new housing proposed should be designed with 'the historical feel of the Town' and appropriate scaled for the community.

## 3.0 Economic Development

Survey Questions 9 – 15 addressed business and economic development conditions within the Village. Participants were asked how often they visit the local businesses, what type of services/shopping they spend money on in the Center, and what additional commercial uses they would like to see. The Survey also asked what other downtown / village centers participants visit for shopping and services and what they prefer about those locations. Finally, participants were given the opportunity to share any other questions, comments, or concerns related to economic development through an open-ended question. Responses indicated that:

- **Visiting the Center:** 54.8 percent of participants visit the local business in Moodus Center on a weekly basis. The most common services/shopping that people spend money on in the Village are groceries (78.4 percent), take out restaurants (71.8 percent), the package store (68.1 percent), personal services (54.2 percent), and sit-down restaurants (40.2 percent). Participants agreed that they would visit the Center more if there were more restaurants

(87.5 percent), more local retail stores (84.7 percent), outdoor dining (74.2 percent), recreational spaces (70.9 percent), and access to the river (60.2 percent).[2]

- **Additions & Expansions:** 77.2 percent of participants want to see more locally owned businesses in the Center. Commonly chosen options include a café/coffee shop (71.1 percent), sit-down restaurants (68.1 percent), recreational facilities (53 percent), brew pubs/bars (52.7 percent), and retail stores (50 percent).
- **Other Downtowns/Villages:** Participants often travel to Colchester (83.8 percent), Old Saybrook (73.4 percent), and East Hampton (64.6 percent) for their downtown/village centers. When asked what they prefer about these other areas, participants noted the wide range of food and dining options (84.7 percent), the variety of stores (83 percent), and their historic charm (41.7 percent) as primary reasons.
- **Other Comments (64 Responses):** Some participant provided additional input about economic development in Moodus Center. In general, people would like more variety in food establishments and access to everyday needs, suggesting bakeries, coffee shops, a laundromat, and a larger grocer. Participants also indicate they would like more kid-oriented, family-friendly, and senior options within the Village – some suggestions include a playground, community pool, and multiuse trails. There were also calls for more walkability, with well-lit sidewalks and connections among amenities.

# 4.0 Transportation

Survey Questions 16 – 18 addressed transportation elements within the Village. Participants were asked their opinions on traffic and road conditions and multimodal transportation options within the Village. They were also given the opportunity to share any other questions, comments, or concerns related to transportation through an open-ended question. Responses indicate that:

- **Traffic & Roads:** Participants do not feel that traffic congestion in Moodus Center is an issue (73.1 percent)[3], but that speeding is (49.8 percent)[2]. Road conditions are generally regarded as good (48.0 percent) and safe (51.8 percent).[2]
- **Multimodal Transportation:** Participants agree that Moodus Center needs more sidewalks (65.7 percent), shared use trails (62.7 percent), and bike lanes (53.4 percent).[2] Most participants disagreed with the statements that they feel safe walking (45.5 percent) and biking (46.6 percent) on roads in Moodus Center.[3]
- **Other Comments (62 Responses):** Some participants shared additional thoughts about transportation issues within the Center. There is interest in making the Center more pedestrian and bicyclist-friendly, with suggestions for additional bike lanes, bike loops, and sidewalk connections and crosswalks between existing amenities. Participants do, however, note that safety must be considered with expanded connectivity and cite vehicular speeding as a deterrent for walking and biking on the roads. Suggestions for

[2] This question presented participants with the following options: *strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree*. These percentages report a combined value for those that answered *strongly agree or agree*.

[3] This question presented participants with the following options: *strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree*. These percentages report a combined value for those that answered *strongly disagree or disagree*.

addressing this issue include road diets, pedestrian/vehicular separation, installation of speed bumps and/or traffic lights, and improved site lines.

# Appendix A Community Survey Responses

## Moodus Center Master Plan

Survey Monkey Report

**Town of East Haddam**

SLR Project No.: 141.12352.00022.12352.00022



Making Sustainability Happen

# Appendix 2a

# Technical Memorandum

**To:**

Town of East Haddam

**From:**

**SLR International Corporation**

**Date:** October 28, 2024

**Project No.** 141.V20923.00001

**RE: Moodus Center Master Plan – First Open House Summary Report**

On October 22nd, 2024, the Town of East Haddam hosted its first Open House for the Moodus Center Master Plan at the Municipal Office Complex. The Open House was centered around introducing the project to the public and gathering preferences about three potential commercial development areas (see **Figure 1** for details). Twenty-nine (29) participants signed into the event; this memorandum will discuss the various stations and activity results from the Open House event. All comments received are provided in **Appendix A**.

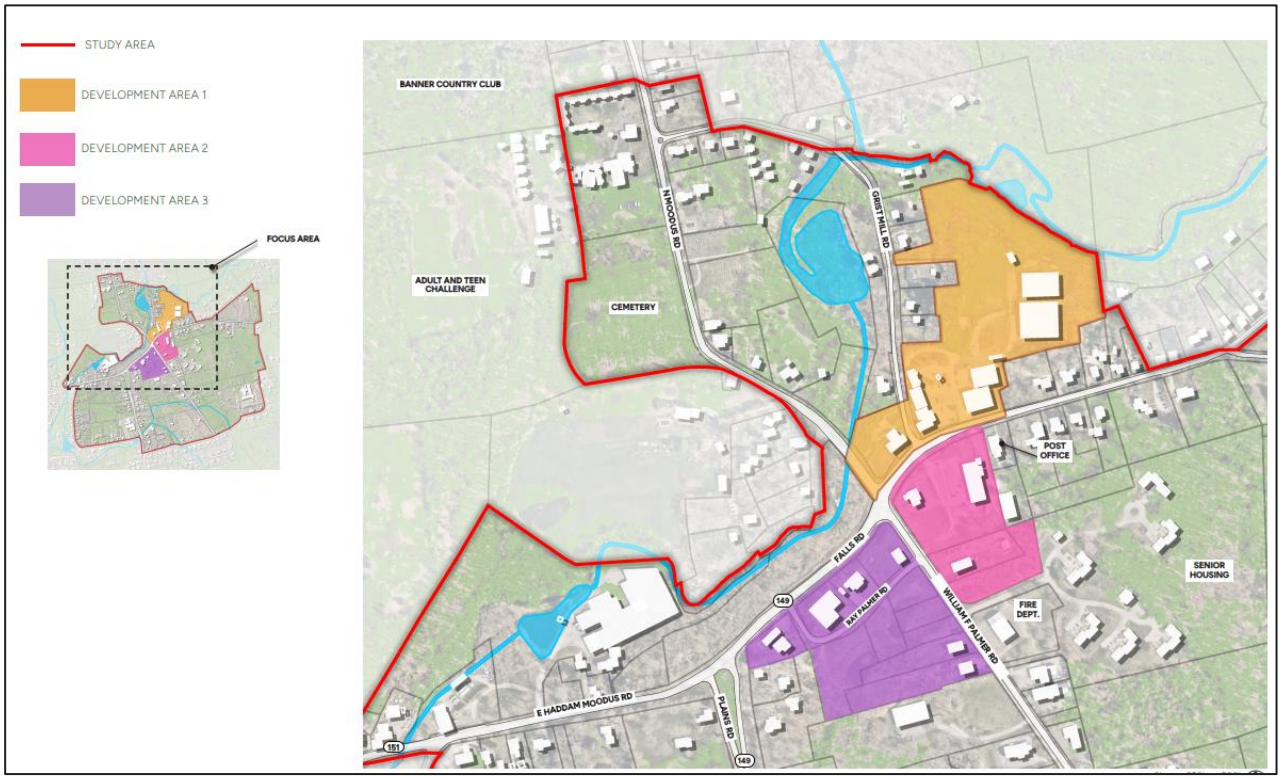



**Figure 1: Development Areas**

## Welcome / Project Information

This station introduced attendees to the project – including the project's goals and process and what we've learned so far. Attendees had the opportunity to review the project website, the Community Survey Results, and the Study Area Profile at this station.

## Commercial Development Areas & Uses

The station focused on three commercial areas and tested attendees' preferences for a variety of commercial uses and retail types. Participants were asked to use color-coordinated stickers, to indicate what use types and retail opportunities they would be interested in seeing in each of the commercial areas presented.[1]

**Use Types:** Eight (8) use types were presented to participants in this activity: community uses, dining, hospitality, open air market space, mixed-use (office/retail), mixed-use (residential/retail), public space, and residential. Results were analyzed in two ways:

*What were the top three use types preferred within each Development Area?*

- **Area 1:** Dining (12), Mixed-Use - Office/Retail (11), Mixed-Use – Residential/Retail (11)
- **Area 2:** Dining (11), Residential (5), Open Air Market Space (4), Public Space (4)
- **Area 3:** Mixed-Use – Residential/Retail (12), Residential (8), Dining (8)

*How did each use type rank across the three Development Areas?*

- **Dining:** 31 votes – **Area 1 (39%)** / Area 2 (35%) / Area 3 (26%)
- **Mixed-Use (Residential/Retail):** 26 votes - Area 1 (42%) / Area 2 (12%) / **Area 3 (46%)**
- **Mixed-Use (Office/Retail):** 19 votes - **Area 1 (58%)** / Area 2 (16%) / Area 3 (26%)
- **Residential:** 18 votes – Area 1 (28%) / Area 2 (28%) / **Area 3 (44%).**
- **Open Air Market Space:** 13 votes - **Area 1 (38%)** / Area 2 (31%) / Area 3 (31%)
- **Community Uses:** 11 votes – **Area 1 (36%)** / Area 2 (28%) / **Area 3 (36%)**
- **Public Spaces:** 11 votes – **Area 1 (46%)** / Area 2 (36%) / Area 3 (18%)
- **Hospitality**: 8 votes – **Area 1 (50%)** / Area 2 (12%) / Area 3 (38%)

**Retail Types:** In addition to the above use types, participants were also asked to indicate their preferences for twelve (12) different retail types to be considered for Moodus Center. The top three retail types preferred included:

- **Coffee/Breakfast:** 24 votes – **Area 1 (42%)** / Area 2 (33%) / Area 3 (25%)
- **Brew Pub:** 20 votes - Area 1 (35%) / Area 2 (15%) / **Area 3 (50%)**
- **Casual Dining/Takeaway:** 19 votes - **Area 1 (37%)** / Area 2 (26%) / **Area 3 (37%)**

Based on these results, participants are interested in dining options throughout Moodus Center and are particularly interested in coffee/breakfast locations, brew pubs, and casual dining/takeaway options. Participants are also open to mixed-use approaches for office, retail, and residential uses. Development Area 3 appears to be the preferred location for residential-based development, with the most votes for pure residential and mixed-use (residential/retail). Please see **Appendix A** for the full range of responses for this activity.

[1] The use and retail types presented at this activity were directly related to those with the strongest interest gathered by the earlier online community survey data.

## Commercial Development Areas & Building Organization

This station focused on the three previously introduced commercial areas and tested attendees' preferences related to building organization and development archetypes. Participants were asked to review six different development archetypes (Boutique Row, Main Street Corridor, Mixed Use, Pedestrian Mall/Promenade, Town Square, and Village Center) and place color-coordinated stickers on each archetype they were most interested in seeing within each of the commercial areas presented.

**Building Organization Styles:** Of the six building organization styles presented, participants preferred the pedestrian mall/promenade (23 votes), the village center (23 votes), and the mixed-use style (22 votes). These preferences align with previously expressed comments from the community survey, in which respondents voiced a desire to establish a more cohesive and intimate village atmosphere. This aesthetic is identified by smaller scale buildings that embrace historical and traditional New England architectural elements, like those of the other town centers mentioned as aspirational examples in the survey. The preferred styles support a pedestrian-centric layout that encourages social interaction by both the walkable aspect and the mixed-use option which provides overlapping uses, encouraging a wider variety of activities in a concentrated area.

## Open Comments

This station was an open-ended opportunity for attendees to leave any additional comments about Moodus Center that were not directly addressed through the other activities at the Open House. Thirty-eight (38) comments were collected at this station; seven related to Development Area 1, six related to Development Area 2, five related to Development Area 3, and 20 additional miscellaneous comments relevant to all of Moodus Center. Comments included various recommendations and ideas for commercial development and community amenities, among other suggestions. Please see **Appendix A** for the full range of responses for this activity.

## Postcards from the Future

This station was focused on visioning for Moodus Center. Participants were asked to write a postcard from the future to anyone of their choosing, from Moodus Center in 2035, describing what they see, feel, and enjoy about the area at that time.

**Activity Results:** The results of this activity provided the project team with guidance in developing the Center's vision; nine (9) postcards were collected and indicated interest in a Moodus Center that is:

- Walkable: Particpants want a more pedestrian-friendly atmosphere.
- Lively: Particpants would lke to have a variety of places to eat, shop, and socialize.
- Beautiful: Particpants would like to see aesthetic improvements, including building facades, streetscape and landscaping, and public art.

In addition to the above themes, postcards suggest that Moodus Center should retain the small, rural feel; particpants suggest keeping businesses small/local and avoiding overdevelopment. To review all postcard responses, please see **Appendix A.**

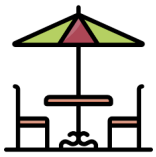
# Appendix A Open House Activty Responses

**Moodus Center Master Plan**

**Town of East Haddam**

141.V20923.00001

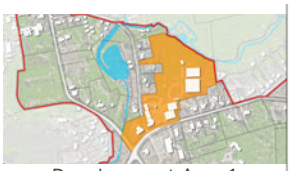
FOR EACH DEVELOPMENT AREA:
Select up to 5 development uses you feel would be valuable to enhance the Moodus Village Center. Place a sticker under the development area where you think they would be most suitable.

| USES |  Development Area 1 |  Development Area 2 |  Development Area 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
|  COMMUNITY - Studio and classroom space for arts programs, youth and adult education, etc. | 4 | 3 | 4 |
|  DINING - Year round dining and socializing, including outdoor dining | 12 | 11 | 8 |
|  HOSPITALITY - Lodging (Bed and Breakfast, Tiny House Rental Units, etc.) | 4 | 1 | 3 |
|  OPEN AIR MARKET SPACE - Flexible open market spaces for varous seasonal markets | 5 | 4 | 4 |
|  MIXED USE - Office use above retail space | 11 | 3 | 5 |
|  MIXED USE - Residential units above retail space | 11 | 3 | 12 |
|  PUBLIC SPACE - Mini park or plaza space for gathering and socializing | 5 | 4 | 2 |
|  RESIDENTIAL - Multi-tenant residential options | 5 | 5 | 8 |

# MOODUS CENTER - DEVELOPMENT USE PREFERENCES

SLR

FOR EACH DEVELOPMENT AREA: Select up to 5 development uses you feel would be valuable to enhance the Moodus Village Center. Place a sticker under the development area where you think they would be most suitable.

| RETAIL TYPES |  Development Area 1 |  Development Area 2 |  Development Area 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
|  Auto Supply/ Repair | 5 | 3 | 2 |
|  Barber/ Beauty Salon | 4 | 2 | 1 |
|  Brew Pub | 7 | 3 | 10 |
|   Coffee/ Breakfast | 10 | 8 | 6 |
|  Casual Dining / Takeaway | 7 | 5 | 7 |
|  Convenience Store | 2 | 2 | |
|   Food Trucks | 2 | 1 | 3 |
|  Fitness Studio | 1 | 2 | 5 |
|  Grocery / Gourmet Market | 3 | 1 | |
|   Hardware Store | 2 | 1 | |
|  Home & Garden Supply | 1 | 1 | |
|  Pet Supply / Grooming | 2 | 2 | 6 |

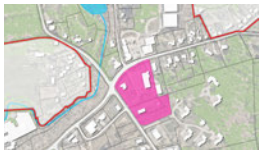
# MOODUS CENTER - RETAIL PREFERENCES

SLR

SELECT UP TO THREE (3) PREFERRED ORGANIZATION STYLES FOR EACH DEVELOPMENT AREA.
YOUR INPUT WILL INFLUENCE NEW ZONING GUIDELINES FOR BUILDING MASSING AND ORGANIZATION TO SHAPE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT IN THE VILLAGE CENTER.

## BUILDING ORGANIZATION STYLES


Development Area 1


Development Area 2


Development Area 3





BOUTIQUE ROW -
- Smaller, unique shops or cafes attached or in close proximity, with narrower roads and limited parking. More suitable for strolling than quick in-and-out.
- Typically includes locally owned busnisses catering to both local and seasonal/intermittent clientelle.
- May include shorter term temporary ("pop-up") stores that provide small business opportunities and novelty.

5

3

4





MAIN STREET CORRIDOR -
- Building layout is aligned with the street with parallel storefronts. May also be oriented to a primary driveway/thoroughfare.
- Parking is typically along the street or behind the buildings.
- Typically designed to offer convenience oriented services suited to the local community and may include broader merchandise offerings attracting a greater regional audience.

6

3

3





MIXED USE -
- Buildings with commercial storefronts on the ground level and residential or office spaces above.
- Parking is typically along the street or behind the buildings.
- May provide a greater variety of overlapping uses at varying times of day.

6

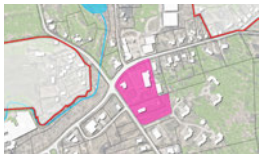
7

9

SELECT UP TO THREE (3) PREFERRED ORGANIZATION STYLES FOR EACH DEVELOPMENT AREA.
YOUR INPUT WILL INFLUENCE NEW ZONING GUIDELINES FOR BUILDING MASSING AND ORGANIZATION TO SHAPE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT IN THE VILLAGE CENTER.

## BUILDING ORGANIZATION STYLES


Development Area 1


Development Area 2


Development Area 3





PEDESTRIAN MALL/PROMENADE -
- A street or alley closed to vehicle traffic, lined with smaller storefronts and outdoor seating. Street closure may be temporary or seasonal.
- Buildings may be single use or multi-story mixed use.
- Provides opportunities for pop up community events without disrupting normal vehicle flow.
- Parking would be provided in a nearby lot or via on-street parking.

11

6

6





TOWN SQUARE -
- Designed around a centralized, open area surrounded by shops, restaurants, or cafes, without visible parking from the shopping area.
- Provides the convenience of a traditional strip mall but offers a more interesting and customized architectural design and distributes parking around multiple sides of the development.
- Parking is typically located on the outer perimeter of the shopping area.

2

4





VILLAGE CENTER -
- Compact and pedestrian-friendly with independent or adjoined buildings typically with a more residential style.
- Parking is distributed throughout the Center in smaller clusters.
- Includes convenience oriented services suited to the local community and may include broader merchandise offerings attracting a larger regional audience.
- May include common open spaces for relaxing and socializing.

13

7

3

# MOODUS CENTER - DEVELOPMENT TYPES

SLR

# Open-Ended Comments Board

## Development Area 1 Comments

1. Movie Café! Like in Winston.
2. Restaurants.
3. River walk.
4. Stop sign at Grist Mill intersection.
5. Sporting facility for public use and school sports. Colchester Bearcats have a place but kids in Town can't use it. School sport prep and training, similar to Homefield in Essex.
6. Wethersfield's Lucky Lue's Restaurant style with patio dining and a beer garden area would work well along the River and allow us to maintain the open space.
7. Riverwalk.

## Development Area 2 Comments

1. The Nutmeg Pharmacy plaza/area would be well-suited for a courtyard style development like at Old Saybrook's Aspen Restaurant/Saybrook Home property.
2. Breakfast Restaurant.
3. Community center – place for teens to gather safely.
4. Demo the plaza and rebuild.
5. Public restrooms!
6. Breakfast restaurant and yoga studio

## Development Area 3 Comments

1. Bar with live bands and billiards.
2. Steakhouse.
3. There is pedestrian-oriented redevelopment opportunity within the Williams F Palmer / Joe Williams / Town St block.
4. I-Park contest for public art feature at Plains Road.
5. Businesses related to tourism, hiking gear, bicycle repair, canoe/kayak rentals.

## Other Miscellaneous Comments

1. We need more housing options throughout the Village – walkable services.
2. EV fast charging stations.
3. Sidewalks.
4. Potential brewery at Brownell's?
5. Public, town-owned golf course.

6. Golf course.
7. Miniature golf, with picnic areas.
8. Need more EV charging throughout Village.
9. Traffic signaling based on travel demand throughout the day. Difficult traffic patterns during school/work drop off times.
10. Traffic circle.
11. Use the existing buildings if there is a need to develop.
12. Road diets.
13. Public restrooms.
14. Roads need to be made pedestrian friendly / slow down traffic.
15. Architecture will be important.
16. Ability to walk to stores and access between stores.
17. More grass, less pavement.
18. Easier and plentiful parking
19. Solar panels on all buildings.
20. We live in Moodus because there is not a lot of development, we like it that way – keep it simple.

## Postcards from the Future

1. A center serving both residents and visitors – with a mixture of shops and amenity spaces (parks, public rest areas, bike racks, dog spaces) and keeping with energy conservation systems – i.e. solar, electric car charging, etc. A hiking trail kiosk.
2. A much more pedestrian friendly road with a lot more building enhancement and plantings along with public areas with restrooms.
3. Phase out industrial architectural buildings. Maybe more flex space? Please no plastic playgrounds.
4. More small businesses, artisan shops, community spaces, less traffic, more affordable housing. No chain stores!!!
5. I see a lot of people walking around. The cars are parked a little distance, so people have to walk around. There is public art. There are 4-5 restaurants, A good basic and gourmet store and bookstore. Maybe a cinema or other kid friendly activity center. A lot of fun.
6. A walkable Moodus Center. Welcoming tourists and town people to socialize, patronize local businesses. Outdoor activities, restaurants, music and dancing.
7. I want to see a landscape that makes me feel that I am living in a rural area.
8. We live in this town because it is a beautiful town without commercialization and too much development. There are many of us who are happy with the way it is, we would love for it to be the same in 2035.
9. I'd like to see some more places to eat, a few small businesses, an indoor training facility for town use (ex: baseball, basketball) No big stores and don't overdevelopment. Keep it small and cozy.

# Appendix 2b

# Technical Memorandum

**To:**

Town of East Haddam

**From:**

**SLR International Corporation**

**Date:** July 24, 2025

**Project No.** 141.V20923.00001

**RE: Moodus Center Master Plan**
**Open House Summary**

The Town of East Haddam and SLR hosted a second open house event for the Moodus Center Master Plan on July 22, 2025. The Open House was an all-day event held in conjunction with a Town election that was also occurring at the Municipal Offices at 1 Plains Road in Moodus. After voting residents were encouraged (through signage) to stop by and view project information boards, site plans, and copies of the draft Master Plan. The Open House was visited by 244 people and 83 comments were received.

This various comments received are attached to this document.

| MOODUS VILLAGE MASTER PLAN - RESIDENT COMMENTS - July 22, 2025 | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | GOLF COURSE |
| 1 | Why only Moodus data & existing conditions to SLR? | |
| | | |
| 2 | Definitely believe and want us to improve our historic town. | |
| | | |
| 3 | Should not focus more on small local business, as they struggle | |
| | to survive. Chains should be the focus, something that brings | |
| | people not just for locals. | |
| | | |
| 4 | Thank you for all the hard work. | |
| | | |
| 5 | Concerned seniors from Oak Grove: We are concerned over our | |
| | woods being destroyed. Woods abutting the elementary school | |
| | and to Great Hillwood Rd. Please leave the woods. | |
| | | |
| 6 | Increase Green Space in plaza center Green Space. Make the | |
| | plaza façade Main Street like. | |
| | | |
| 7 | Breakfast Place! | |
| | | |
| 8 | Are decorative sidewalks worth the cost? | |
| | What value do they add? | |
| | | |
| 9 | The town should buy the golf course on Banner Rd. This town needs | Yes, Golf Course |
| | reasons for people to come to. Look how well the disc golf course | |
| | is doing! | |
| | | |
| 10 | Will there be increased traffic law enforcement (speed) to match | |
| | the expected increase in pedestrian traffic? | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 11 | Long Term Vision: Is there sufficient parking? | |
| | | |
| 12 | What about the Moodus Library? | |
| | | |
| 13 | Looks Great! I One suggestion, continue sidewalks, crosswalks | |
| | across intersection of 151/149 to connect residents of that area | |
| | to walk into town. | |
| | | |
| 14 | Minimize parking requirements. Density is good. Maximize taxed | |
| | per acre. | |
| | | |
| 15 | Looks Fantastic! I'm a fan! Thank you! | |
| | | |
| 16 | Great Ideas! Love small business, definitely need restaurant | |
| | variety. How is this funded? | |
| | | |
| 17 | Especially like the parking behind the commercial businesses! | |
| | Great Job! | |
| | | |
| 18 | Municipal Golf Course at Black Birch Course would encourage out | Yes, Golf Course |
| | of town dollars and perhaps encourage new retail businesses. | |
| | | |
| 19 | Golf Course?? YES! | Yes, Golf Course |
| | | |
| 20 | Public Restrooms: These are bin in areas like Lake Surapee | |
| | and Newport. Areas that want walking crowds, think about | |
| | that please. | |
| | | |
| 21 | Rest rooms in Moodus Center for visitors | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | and everyone, thanks! | |
| | | |
| 22 | Clean up unsightly house near Banner Rd. Currently an eyesore | |
| | for any other improvements envisioned. | |
| | | |
| 23 | Golf Course brings people here! Vacant house on No Moodus Rd | Yes, Golf Course |
| | is an eyesore. | |
| | | |
| 24 | Don't let the golf course go to ruin -profitable to the town. | |
| | | |
| 25 | Nice work on a difficult task. The phases make sense. Hope we | |
| | see phase III. | |
| | | |
| 26 | I like this! Consider a golf course if it makes sense for the town | Yes, Golf Course |
| | to buy. | |
| | Consider limiting light, pollution and special road lights. No | |
| | corporate apartments. | |
| | | |
| 27 | This town needs the Golf Course for revenue along with | Yes, Golf Course |
| | this vision. | |
| | | |
| 28 | No more corrugated buildings! Planning should include uniformity | |
| | of construction of any of the buildings. | |
| | | |
| 29 | With out the Golf Course Re-opening Moodus will not improve, | Yes, Golf Course |
| | 25,000 visitors a year! | |
| | | |
| 30 | We are retired (75+), but our colonial house is way to much house | |
| | would love to stay in East Haddam . Cottage housing option in | |
| | community. PLEASE | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | |
| 31 | The Golf Cours would be an asset to this town. YES!! | Yes, Golf Course |
| | | |
| 32 | Library? Doesn't the town own a R.O.W to river off Falls Rd? | |
| | Could it be used to extend the Green Space (loop)? | |
| | | |
| 33 | Combine the libraries and purchase Black Birch Golf Course. | Yes, Golf Course |
| | | |
| 34 | No low income housing! | |
| | | |
| 35 | A light is needed at awkward intersection of Falls Rd. No Moodus Rd. | |
| | W. Palmer Rd. | |
| | | |
| 36 | Moodus needs the Golf Course for this vision! | Yes, Golf Course |
| 37 | YES! | |
| | | |
| 38 | More small business especially restaurants. Historical information | |
| | plagues on walkways. | |
| | | |
| 39 | Consider rescoping property adjacent to Rae/Palmer Rd. to Rte. 149 level. | |
| 40 | Yes! Safety features are needed on Rte. 149 but lets deal with that, no need to over develop. | |
| 40 | | |
| | | |
| 41 | Recommend mentioning town wide complete street policy. | |
| | | |
| 42 | Consider how to "connect " the library better. | |
| | | |
| 43 | Affordable housing / apartments for all ages. | |
| | | |
| 44 | No traffic lights is "good". - We live here for small - Colchester didn't work , don't let us | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | become that - small/local businesses, yes. | |
| | | |
| 45 | Agree with: To include the Golf Course. More restaurants a plus! | Yes, Golf Course |
| | | |
| 46 | What about business condominiums in area of the current Brownell Property? | |
| | | |
| 47 | Love it! Hurry up! Make a village with housing / apartments. | |
| | | |
| 48 | Please no traffic circles! | |
| 49 | DITTO | |
| | | |
| 50 | Looks good on paper, hope it ends up better than the 1960's end result. | Yes, Golf Course |
| | Golf Course would be an asset & incentive for people to visit & shop. | |
| | | |
| 51 | More mixed use small business/ apartment space. | |
| | | |
| 52 | What about the elementary school? Shouldn't its use be considered? | |
| | Declining enrollment brings opportunity. | |
| | | |
| 53 | 30 year vision should include envisioning of town developing along William Palmer Rd and also | |
| | include the part along Town St. | |
| | | |
| 54 | Thank You! | |
| | | |
| 55 | I would love to see the library at the community center. Good Job! | |
| | | |
| 56 | East Haddam is one of the few towns in CT that has no traffic lights. We like it that way! | |
| | | |
| 57 | Move Forward! | |
| | | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 58 | Incorporate signage for existing businesses up W.F. Palmer Rd. | |
| | | |
| 59 | Moved here for its simplicity and beauty. Lets keep it this way. | |
| | | |
| 60 | 30 year vision should include a larger town sewage system. | |
| | | |
| 61 | Provide opportunity for store fronts along Falls Rd. in front of N.H. Plaza. Areas 3 & 4 on Area 1.b | |
| | | |
| 62 | Provide street site lighting that is dark sky friendly and also does not shine out into the road. | |
| | | |
| 63 | Bring larger businesses to town first before investing money in many of the improvements. | |
| | | |
| 64 | Put big pictures of the commercial buildings on one side of the road and the demolished houses on the other. | |
| | Reference the history of Moodus. | |
| | | |
| 65 | A trail along the Moodus River with displays about the history of the mills would be great addition to the trail . | |
| | | |
| 66 | Thanks for your work. Golf Course would be an asset to this town and bring in revenue. | Yes, Golf Course |
| | | |
| 67 | Comments of those who are not for this development are not reflected. Posters are misleading. | |
| | | |
| 68 | Moodus was destroyed once. Not Again! | |
| | | |
| 69 | Make crosswalks and speed humps. | |
| 70 | Love that its prioritizing walking. Add bike lanes too! | |
| | | |
| 71 | Breakfast place, store. No Golf course. | No Golf Course |
| | | |
| 72 | What is your "draw" to the area? I see nothing specific. | |
| | | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 73 | Consider dark sky lighting please! | |
| | | |
| 74 | Please be aware of peoples concerns. | |
| | | |
| 75 | Much needed - limit light pollution and keep our dark skies. Looks promising. Thank you. | |
| | | |
| 76 | More small businesses! Sporting goods?? Activities spaces? Clothing! | |
| | | |
| 77 | Want to keep this town simple not over developed as presented. | |
| | | |
| 78 | Keep fixing our streets. Maple Ave is a disaster! | |
| | | |
| 79 | Incorporate library better in the plan! | |
| | | |
| 80 | Incorporate East Haddam free library in the plan. | |
| | DO NOT MOVE TO BASEMENT!! | |
| | | |
| 81 | More small businesses! | |
| | | |
| 82 | Looks good. Anything that includes trees. | |
| | | |
| 83 | Looks like just grass, sidewalks and trees! | |
| | | |

# Appendix 3



SLRCONSULTING.COM

# Moodus Center

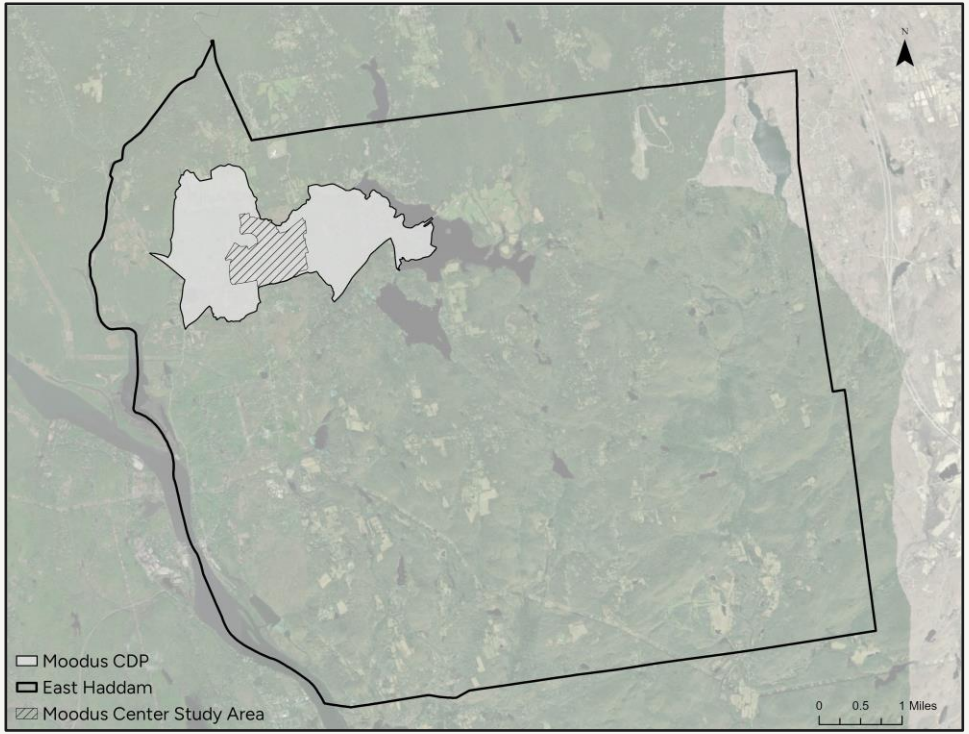
## Study Area Profile

September 2024

SLR

# About this Data

- This analysis serves as a snapshot of Moodus (East Haddam) today.
- Data was collected for the Town of East Haddam and the Moodus Census Designated Place (CDP) geographies.[1]
  - Where data refers to 'Moodus' it shall be understood that this data is for the 2022 Moodus CDP, not the smaller study area.
- Sources include the most recent United States Decennial Census (2020), the American Community Survey (2022, 5-Year Estimates), On the Map (2021), the Town of East Haddam, ESRI's Business Analyst, and others as noted.
- Because the Moodus CDP has a small population, detailed data from the American Community Survey may be unreportable due to large margins of errors.




*[1]CDPs are a statistical geography representing closely settled, unincorporated communities that are locally recognized and identified by name.*

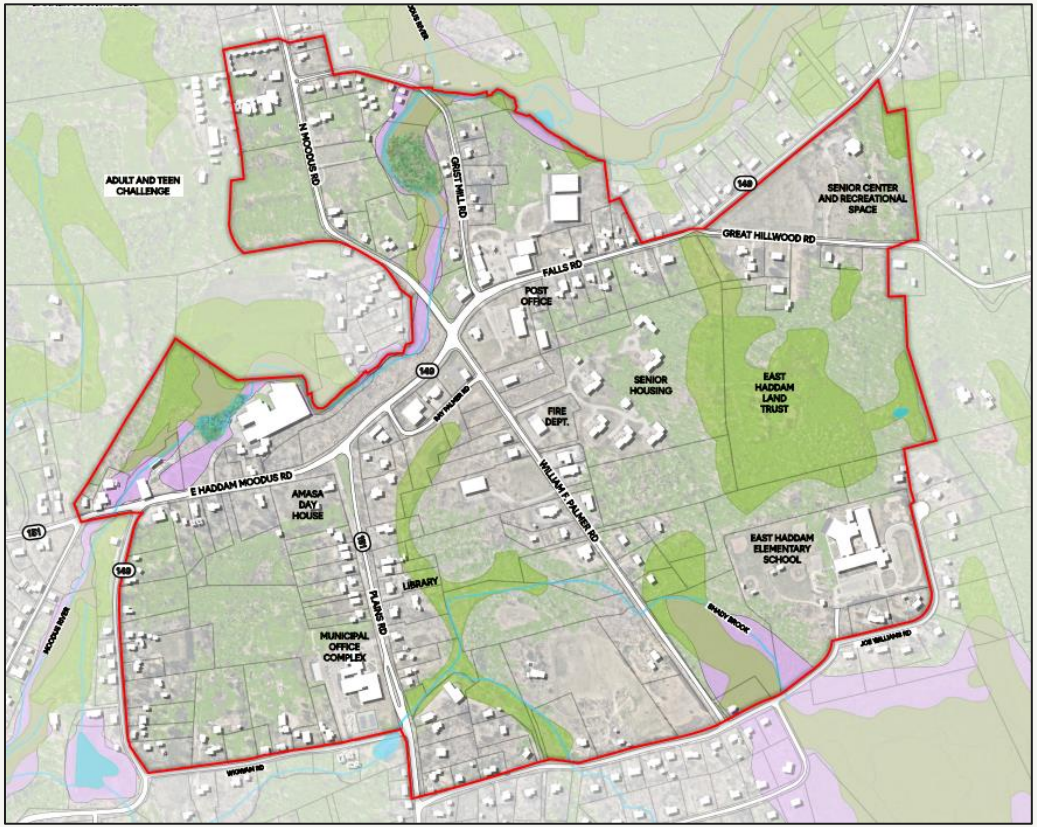
# Moodus Center

Locational Context

# Moodus Center

- Moodus is located within East Haddam (Lower CT River Valley Council of Governments).
- Moodus Center (the Study Area) is a smaller portion of the Moodus Census Designated Place (CDP) and consists of residential, commercial, and community facility properties.
  - The commercial core of the Study Area follows Route 149 / East Haddam Moodus Road and North Moodus Road / Rae Palmer Road.
  - Community facilities within the Study Area include the East Haddam Elementary School, the Municipal Offices, Public Library, and Police Department.

**Moodus Center – Study Area**

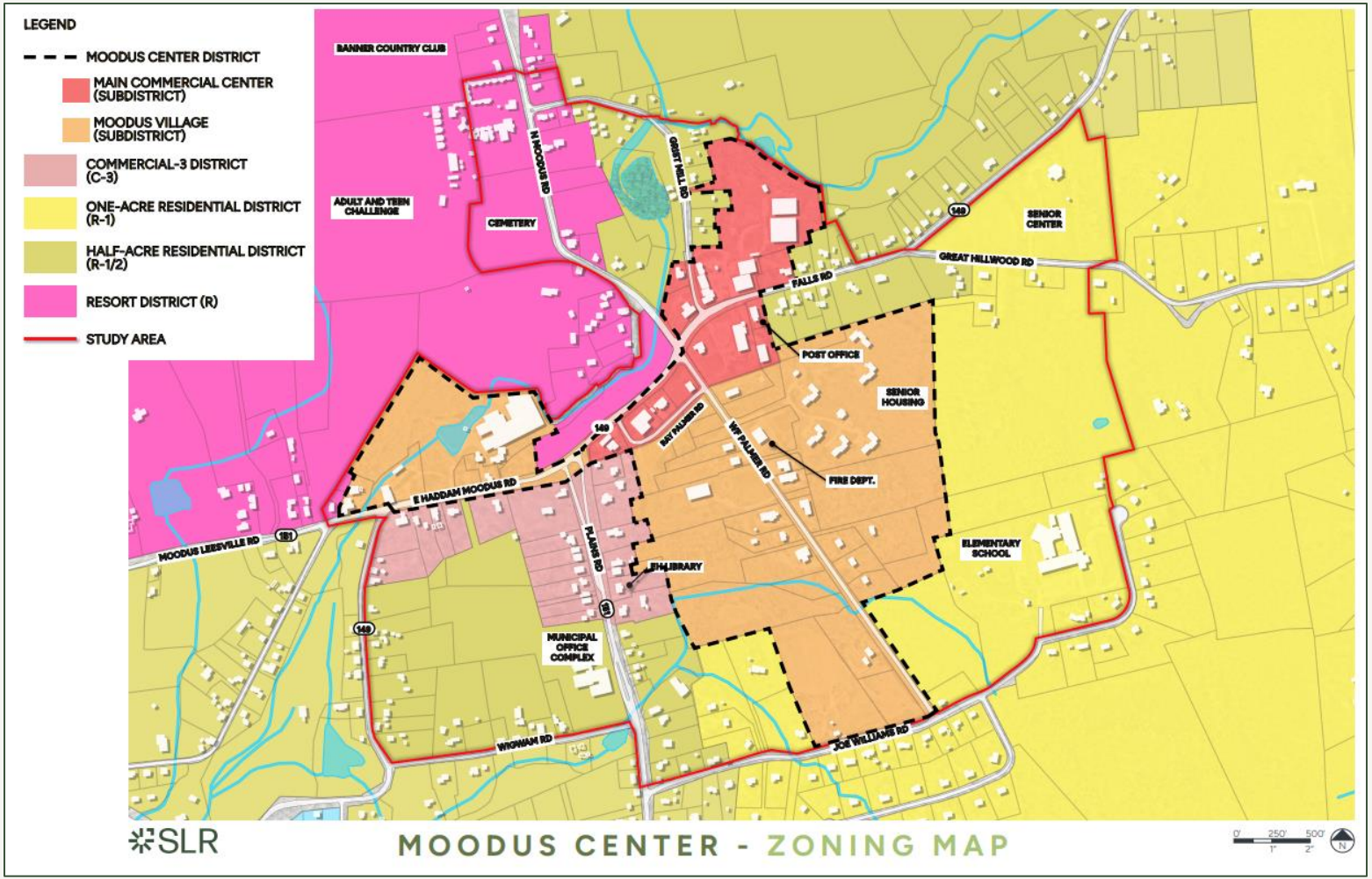


# Zoning

- The Moodus Center District (made up of two subdistricts)
  - Created with the intention of "reinvigorating a community oriented commercial center" and "allowing the combined uses of businesses, light industrial, and residential uses and promote the re-creation of a village atmosphere with new structures intended to enhance the nearby historic residential structures located on Falls and Plains Road"
  - **Main Commercial Center Subdistrict**: To provide a mix of uses with ground floor retail activity and residential or office uses on upper stories
  - **Moodus Village Subdistrict:** The remainder of the District, with a variety of commercial, residential, and light industrial uses.
- The Commercial-3 District (Plains Road Commercial Area)
  - Intended to more adequately maintain the historic character within the Moodus Plains Road Commercial Area. Allows for various residential uses based on lot size, ranging from single-family to four-family dwellings. Commercial uses are permitted by special exception.
- Residence-1, Residence-1/2, Resort
  - Residence Districts permit various residential, institutional, and accessory uses based on lot sizes.
  - The Resort District permits campgrounds, planned recreational development, and various commercial uses, in addition to those uses permitted within the Residence Districts.

*Source: Town of East Haddam Zoning Regulations, 2023*

# Zoning Map


LEGEND
MOODUS CENTER DISTRICT
MAIN COMMERCIAL CENTER (SUBDISTRICT)
MOODUS VILLAGE (SUBDISTRICT)
COMMERCIAL-3 DISTRICT (C-3)
ONE-ACRE RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT (R-1)
HALF-ACRE RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT (R-1/2)
RESORT DISTRICT (R)
STUDY AREA
BANNER COUNTRY CLUB
ADULT AND TEEN CHALLENGE
CEMETERY
N MOODUS RD
GRIST MILL RD
149
SENIOR CENTER
GREAT HILLWOOD RD
FALLS RD
POST OFFICE
SENIOR HOUSING
RAY PALMER RD
WP PALMER RD
FIRE DEPT.
E HADDAM MOODUS RD
MOODUS LEESVILLE RD
151
PLAINS RD
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
JTH LIBRARY
MUNICIPAL OFFICE COMPLEX
WIGWAM RD
JOE WILLIAMS RD
SLR
MOODUS CENTER - ZONING MAP
0' 250' 500'
1" 2"
N

# Land Use

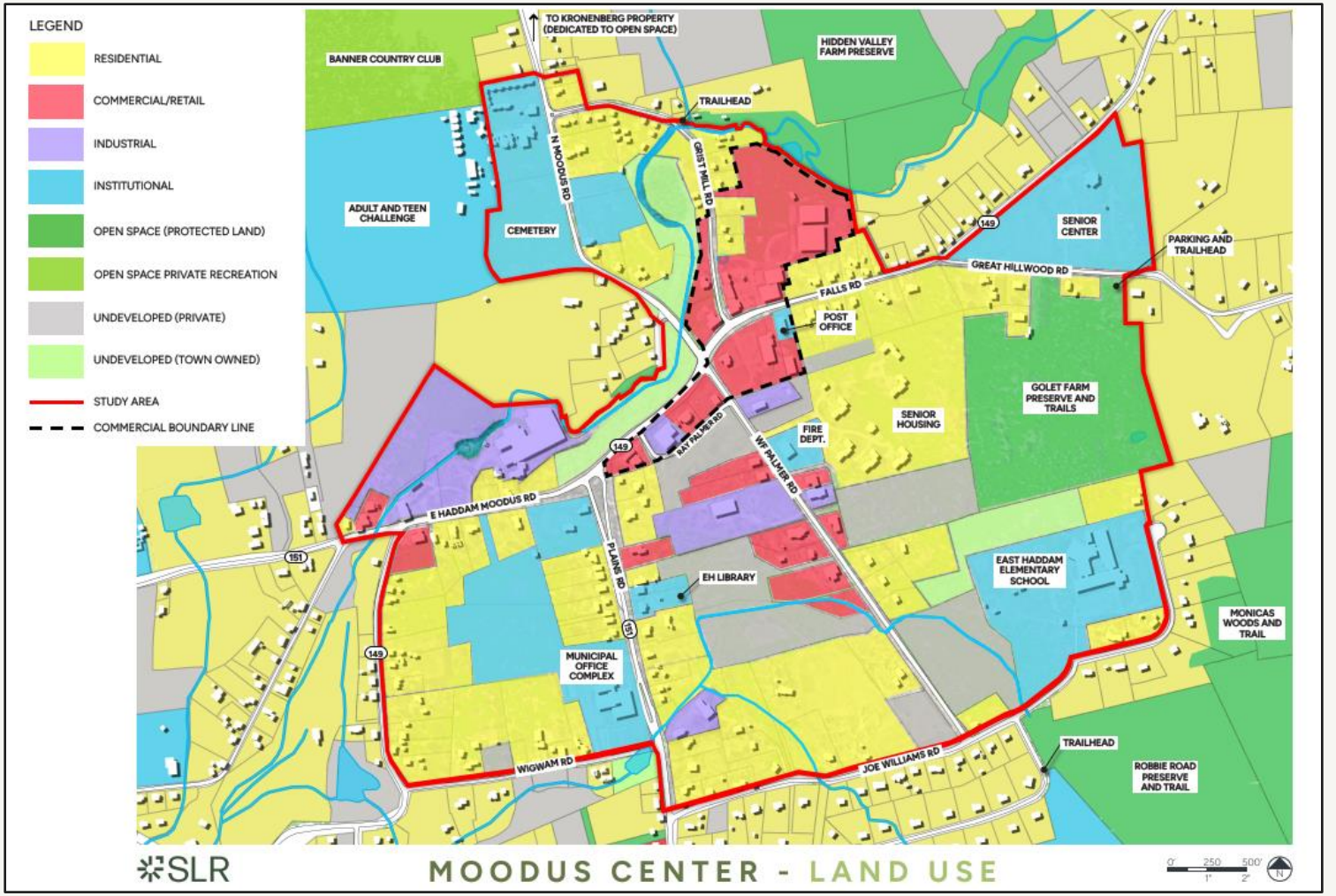
- The Study Area consists of a mix of land uses, but is predominately residential, institutional, and undeveloped land.
- Residential land use includes single-family, multifamily, condominium, and apartment style housing.
  - Residential land is most concentrated within the southwest portion of the study area but is found throughout.
- Commercial land is concentrated along Grist Mill Road, Falls Road, and William F. Palmer Road.

| Land Use | % of Study Area |
|---|---|
| Residential | 37.3% |
| Commercial | 9.7% |
| Industrial | 7.5% |
| Institutional | 21.2% |
| Open Space (Protected) | 9.0% |
| Undeveloped (Private) | 10.4% |
| Undeveloped (Town Owned) | 4.9% |

*Not including right-of-way areas.*

*Source: Town of East Haddam Parcel Data*

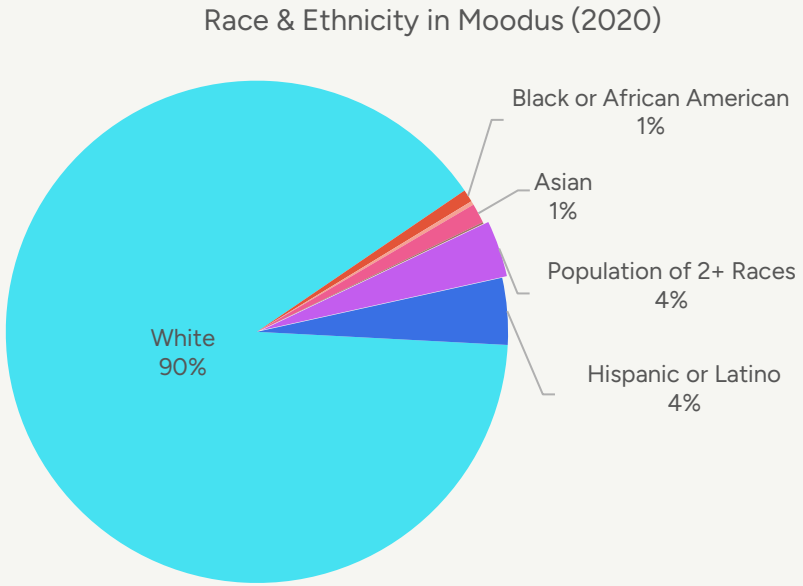
# Land Use Map


LEGEND
RESIDENTIAL
COMMERCIAL/RETAIL
INDUSTRIAL
INSTITUTIONAL
OPEN SPACE (PROTECTED LAND)
OPEN SPACE PRIVATE RECREATION
UNDEVELOPED (PRIVATE)
UNDEVELOPED (TOWN OWNED)
STUDY AREA
COMMERCIAL BOUNDARY LINE
TO KRONENBERG PROPERTY (DEDICATED TO OPEN SPACE)
BANNER COUNTRY CLUB
HIDDEN VALLEY FARM PRESERVE
TRAILHEAD
N MOODUS RD
GRIST MILL RD
ADULT AND TEEN CHALLENGE
CEMETERY
SENIOR CENTER
PARKING AND TRAILHEAD
GREAT HILLWOOD RD
FALLS RD
POST OFFICE
GOLET FARM PRESERVE AND TRAILS
SENIOR HOUSING
FIRE DEPT.
BAY PALMER RD
WF PALMER RD
E HADDAM MOODUS RD
PLAINS RD
EH LIBRARY
EAST HADDAM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
MONICAS WOODS AND TRAIL
MUNICIPAL OFFICE COMPLEX
WIGWAM RD
JOE WILLIAMS RD
TRAILHEAD
ROBBIE ROAD PRESERVE AND TRAIL
149
151
SLR
MOODUS CENTER - LAND USE

# Demographics

# Population, Race, & Ethnicity

- Moodus' 2020 population was 1,982, or 22% of East Haddam's total population (8,875).
  - Based on census tract analysis, Moodus' population declined approximately 2.3% between 2010 and 2020.[1]
  - The surrounding communities of Colchester, East Hampton, Portland, and Chester also saw similar declines, ranging from -6.1% (Chester) to -1.3% (Portland) during this time. Middlesex County's population declined 0.9%
- Moodus' race and ethnicity profile mirrors that of East Haddam and is predominately white (90%).
  - 4% of the population is Hispanic or Latino;
  - Black or African American and Asian populations each make up 1% of the population;
  - 4% of the population reported as two or more races.

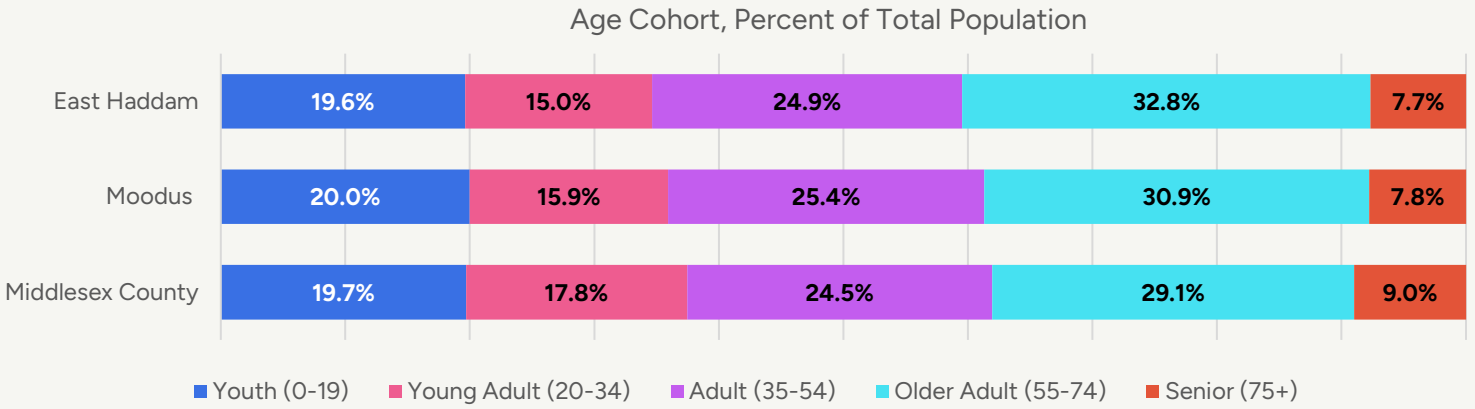



*Source: U.S Decennial Census, 2010 & 2020, Tables P1 & P9*

*1.* The U.S. Census geography for Moodus CDP changed between the 2010 and 2020 Census. To enable comparison between 2010 and 2020, SLR used the census tract that encompasses the 2020 Moodus CDP.

# Age Dynamics

- Moodus' median age is 47.5, as of 2020, which is slightly younger than the Town's median age of 49.0.
- Moodus' age cohort profile is similar to that of East Haddam, with approximately 40% of the population ages 55+.
- Both Moodus and East Haddam have a similar age cohort profile as Middlesex County as a whole.



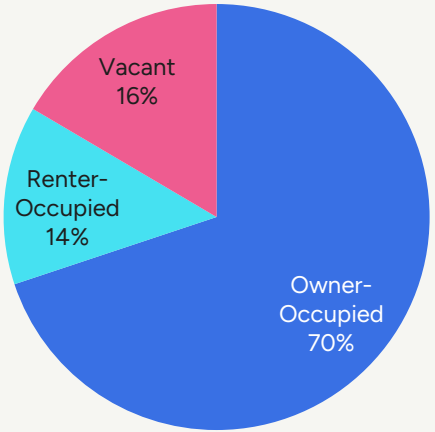

*Source: U.S Decennial Census, 2020, Tables P12 & P13*

# Housing

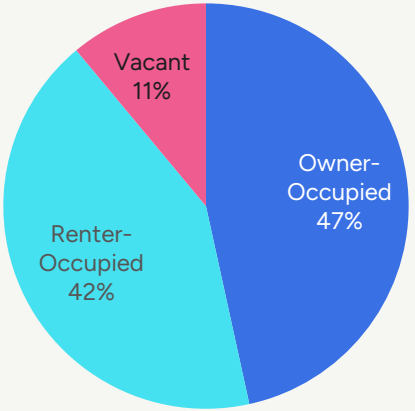
# Housing Tenure

- Moodus has a greater share of renters as compared to the Town.
  - In Moodus, 47% of housing units are owner-occupied compared to 70% of housing units in East Haddam.
  - Renter-occupied units make up a larger share of housing units in Moodus (42%) than the Town (14%)
- Both Moodus and East Haddam have large vacancy rates (11% and 16%, respectively).
  - This higher vacancy rate within the Moodus CDP may be attributed to the presence of three lake associations, in which 40% of residences are seasonal-only.

Tenure in East Haddam




Tenure in Moodus

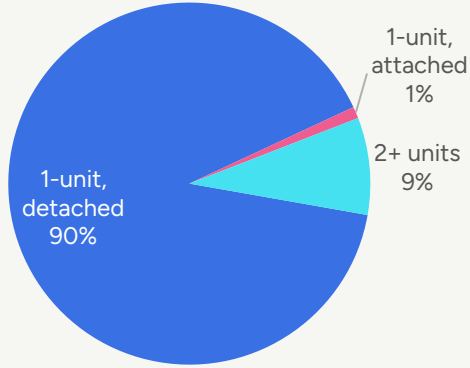



*Source: American Community Survey, 2022 5-Year Estimates, Table DP04*

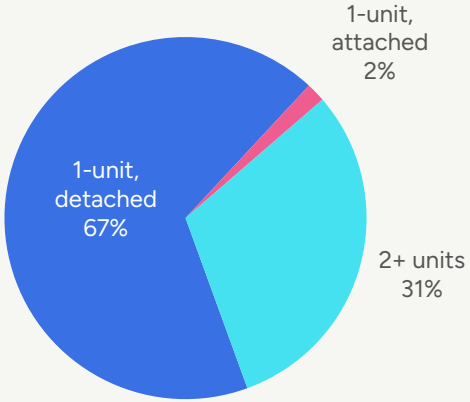
# Housing Type

- Moodus has a greater diversity of housing types than East Haddam.
- In Moodus, 67% of housing units are in 1-unit, detached structures (single-family homes) compared to 90% within the Town.
- Moodus has a larger share of multifamily structures than East Haddam.
  - 31% of units are in structures with 2+ units, compared to 9% within the Town.

Units in Structure in East Haddam



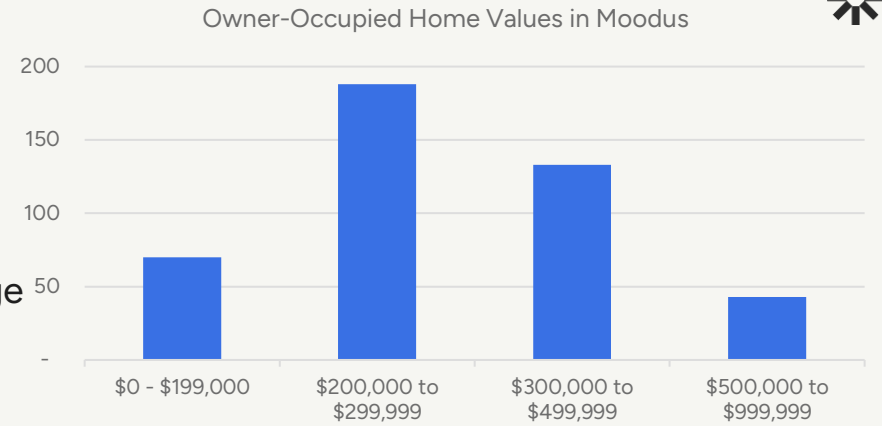

Units in Structure in Moodus




*Source: American Community Survey, 2022 5-Year Estimates, Table DP04*

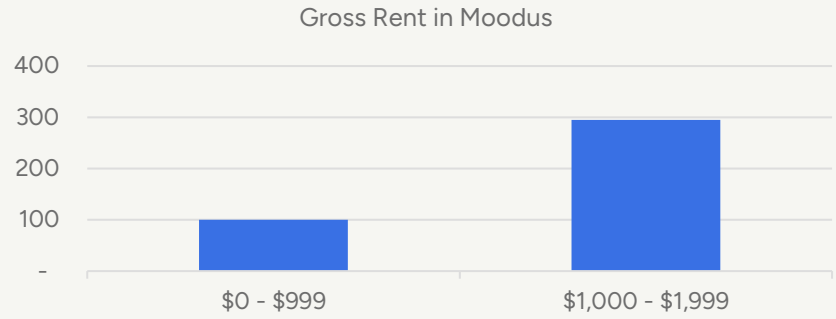
# Housing Market

- The median home value in Moodus in 2022 was $283,700, compared to $342,000 in East Haddam.
- There are 395 rental units in Moodus, with an average gross rent of $1,151 which is similar to that of the Town as a whole ($1,259).
- A brief review of current listings in Moodus found the following 5 properties available:




| Property Type | Listing Price | Bed/Bath | Size (sf or acres) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Single Family Home | $380,000 | 2/1 | 788 sf |
| Single Family Home | $550,000 | 3/1.5 | 1,515 sf |
| Condominium | $299,900 | 2/2 | 1,677 sf |
| Multifamily Home | $475,000 | 7/4 | 3,211 sf |
| Land | $119,000 | -- | 0.25 acres |

*Data from Realtor.com on 8/1/2024*




*Source: American Community Survey, 2022 5-Year Estimates, Table DP04*

# Affordable Housing

- Low-income households are defined as those making less than 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI).
  - Moodus is within the Hartford-West Hartford-East Hartford, CT HUD Metro FMR Area, which is used to determine the AMI. Within this area, a family of four making less than $97,450 a year, or an individual making less than $68,250, would qualify as low income.
- According to CHAS 2016-2020 data (the most recent available data), 255 households (29.1%) in Moodus qualify as low-income, including 45.7% of renters and 18.1% of owners.
  - This breakdown is similar to that of the Town as a whole, where 28.4% of households qualify as low income (49.6% renters and 24.8% owners).
- The State defines protected affordable units (PAU) as those units that are deed restricted, governmentally assisted, receive tenant rental assistance, or have CHFA/USDA mortgages; 2.8% of housing units in East Haddam are PAUs.
- East Haddam's municipal goal related to affordable housing is to "encourage affordable and diverse housing opportunities to meet the needs of all residents, regardless of age and income, while ensuring the preservation of the Town's historic and rural charm."
  - The Town's affordable housing strategies include investigating suitable properties for Town acquisition and development of affordable housing, Connecticut Housing Finance Authority partnerships, and the continued strengthening of the Region's affordable housing capacity.

*Source: Affordable Housing Appeals List 2023, Department of Housing & Urban Development FY 2024 Income Limits & CHAS 2016-2020.*

# Regional Housing Plan

- RiverCOG adopted their Regional Housing Plan (RHP) in 2022 and notes that the Region has a weak housing market; while there is a need for more affordable, diverse, and accessible housing, it will be difficult to incentivize new development.
  - The RHP suggests that strategic additions of "diverse, accessible, and affordable" new housing and repurposing the existing housing stock to better meet modern needs could potentially attract new residents.
  - The Plan also states that the Region's housing stock *"is not well matched to the Region's aging demographic and shrinking household size, is not likely to attract or retain the younger population the region needs in order to thrive and is not attainable to many who work in the Region."*
- The RHP also identified environmental constraint areas that are not suitable for housing development.
  - Portions of Moodus may support additional housing density, but there are surrounding natural resource constraints.

*Source: RiverCOG Regional Housing Plan, 2022 & East Haddam Appendix, 2022*

# Market Conditions

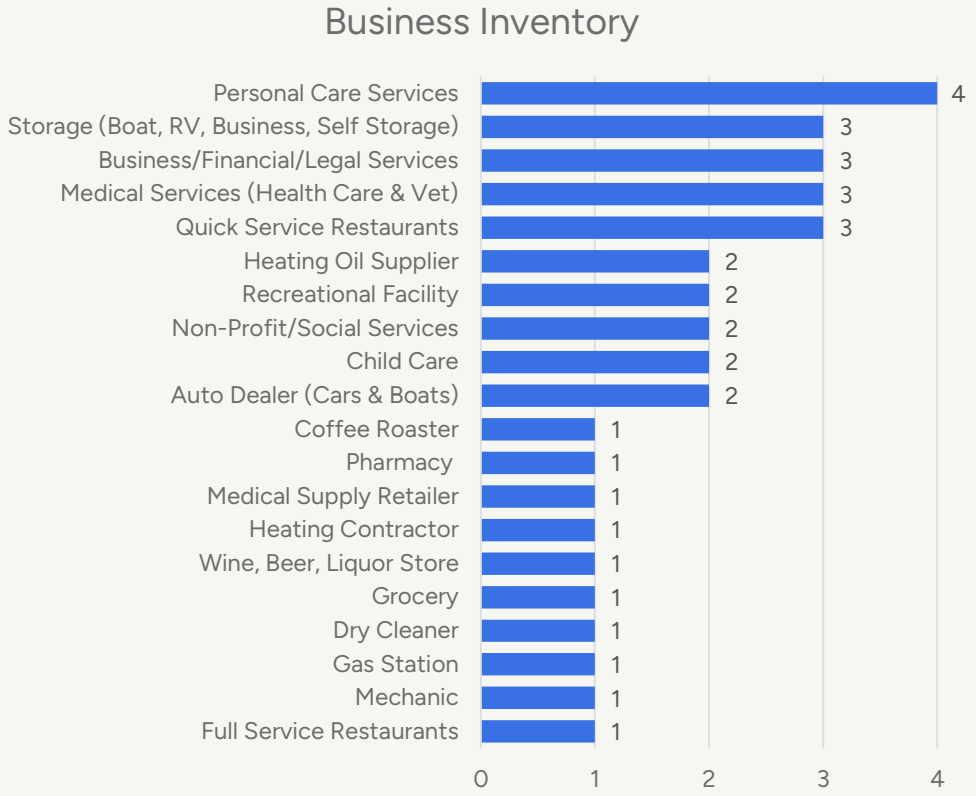
# Employment & Household Income

- The top three industries in the Moodus CDP are educational services (47%), retail trade (15.1%), and health care and social assistance (8.2%).
- 50.7% of those working in the Moodus CDP have a Bachelor's degree or higher.
- Median household income in Moodus is $96,032 in 2022 dollars.
- Of those working in the Moodus CDP:
  - 42.5% live in East Haddam;
  - 12.5% live within the Moodus CDP (within East Haddam);
  - 15.9% travel from Colchester, East Hampton, and Middletown.

*Source: On the Map, 2021 (Moodus CDP), American Community Survey 2022 5-Year Estimates, Table S1901*

# Business Inventory

- Moodus Center's business mix is primarily catered to local convenience shopping.
- The primary customers are residents of East Haddam and those that visit Moodus regularly for the schools or municipal offices.
- Moodus Center experiences an increase in visitors during the summer months due to second homeowners and campers.

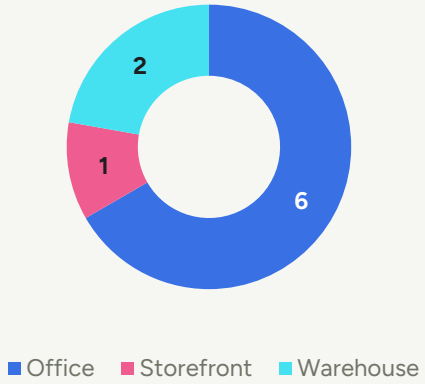



*Source: Google Maps, Stakeholder Interviews and Site Visit, July 2024*

# Commercial Market

- Moodus Center has 45 commercial units (storefronts, offices, warehouses).
- 9 out of the 45 commercial units are vacant, which is a 20 percent vacancy rate.
- 3 commercial properties are listed as available for lease or sale in Moodus Center

Vacancy by Unit Type




**Commercial Properties for Sale or Lease in Moodus Center**

| Address | Note | Asking Price | Square Footage |
|---|---|---|---|
| 16 Rae Palmer Road | Office building for sale. | $349,000 | 5,184 SF |
| 32 William F Palmer Road | Office space for lease. | $1,000/month | 850 SF |
| 423 E Haddam Moodus Road | Warehouse for lease. | $7 - $8/SF/YR | 38,600 SF |

Source: Loopnet, Crexi; Listings as of July 2024

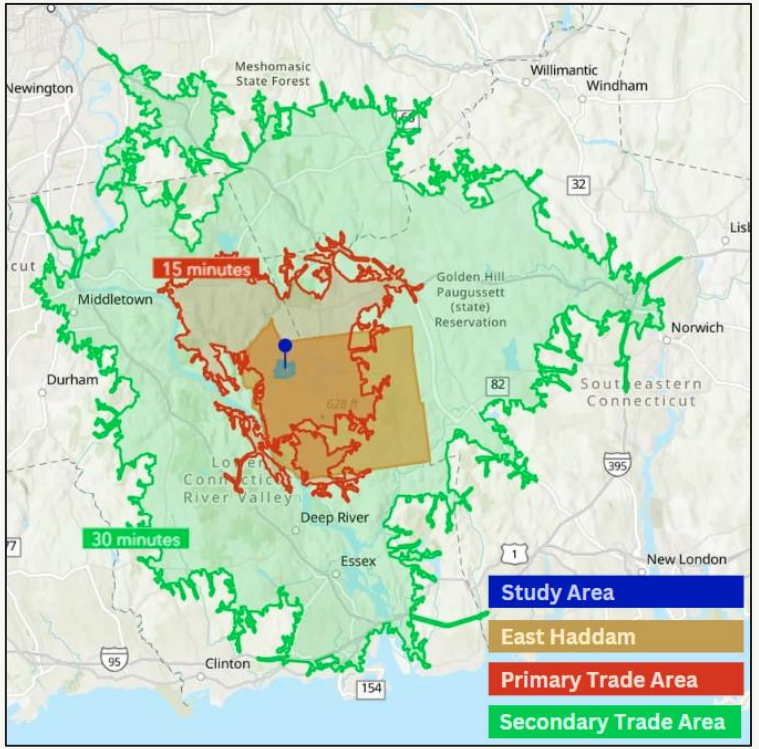
*Source: Stakeholder Interviews, Moodus Center Site Visit, Loopnet, and Crexi, July 2024*

# Trade Areas

- Primary Trade Area – 15-minute drive time.
  - The residents within the primary trade area are likely to shop in Moodus Center on a regular basis due to its proximity and convenience.
- Secondary Trade Area – 30-minute drive time
  - The residents within the secondary trade area are potential consumers that would travel to Moodus Center for a specific purpose or destination.

| | Primary Trade Area | Secondary Trade Area |
|---|---|---|
| Population | 17,758 | 147,741 |
| Median Age | 46.3 | 45.6 |
| Households | 7,075 | 59,358 |
| Average Household Size | 2.48 | 2.39 |

- Other Consumers – Tourists
  - The tourists who visit Moodus and the surrounding areas for seasonal camping are potential convenience and destination consumers.



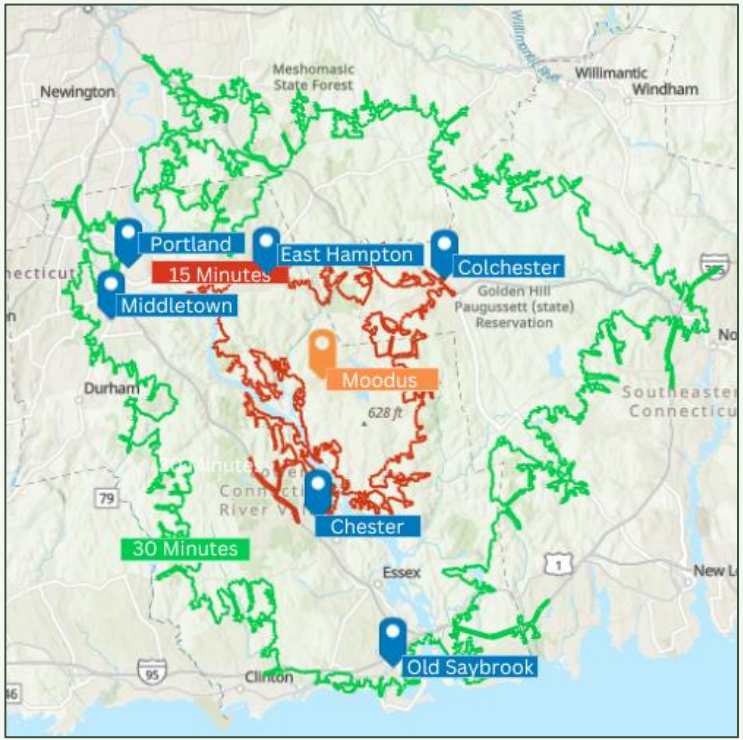

*Source: ESRI Business Analyst*

# Competition

- Due to Moodus Center's primarily convenience shopping business mix, the primary competitors are other village and town centers in neighboring communities, including:

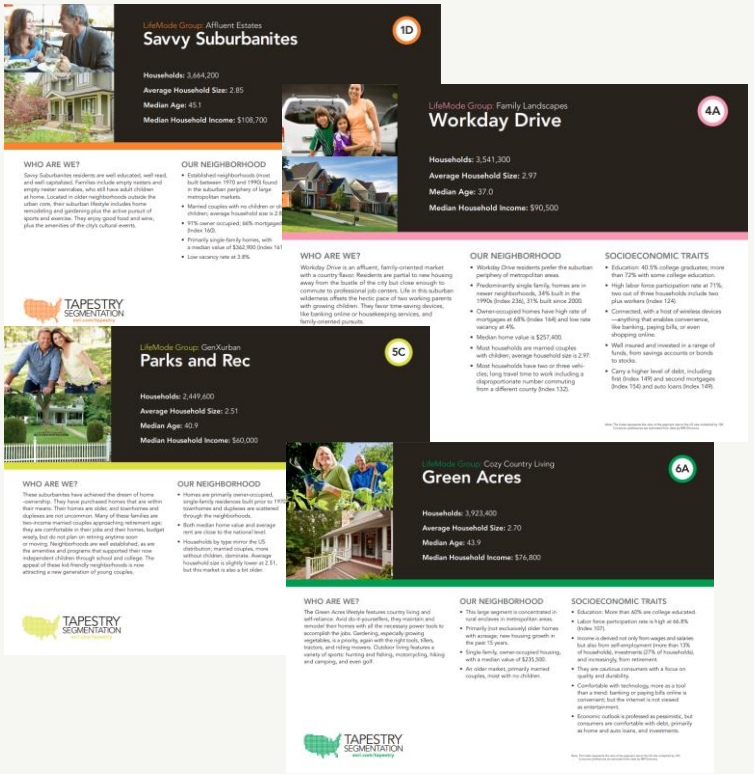
| | |
|---|---|
| Middletown | East Hampton |
| Portland | Old Saybrook |
| Colchester | Chester |

- These commercial areas provide residents with similar shopping options, but residents may choose to visit another community's commercial area due to its charming character, walkability, or variety of shopping options.



# Tapestry Segmentation

- Esri Business Analyst Tapestry Segmentation provides information about the consumers within the Primary and Secondary Trade Areas.
- Tapestry Segmentation is a market segmentation system that uses an array of demographic and socioeconomic variables to describe the characteristics of diverse communities and classifies them into different segments.
- Esri Business Analyst provides a breakdown of the demographics, spending habits, and lifestyles of each segment which helps us understand the type of businesses or amenities the population would support.




*Source: ESRI Business Analyst, Tapestry Segmentation Area Profile*

# Tapestry Segmentation

The tables below provide a breakdown of the top five tapestry segments in the primary and secondary trade area. The following slide will include a summary of the key characteristics for each of the tapestry segments in the trade areas.

### Primary Trade Area – Tapestry Segmentation

| Tapestry Segment | Percent of Households | Median Age | Average Household Size | Median Household Income |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Savvy Suburbanites | 23.9% | 45.1 | 2.85 | $108,700 |
| Green Acres | 23.4% | 43.9 | 2.70 | $76,800 |
| In Style | 17.2% | 42.0 | 2.35 | $73,000 |
| Workday Drive | 16.6% | 37.0 | 2.97 | $90,500 |
| Parks and Rec | 9.2% | 40.9 | 2.51 | $60,000 |

### Secondary Trade Area – Tapestry Segmentation

| Tapestry Segment | Percent of Households | Median Age | Average Household Size | Median Household Income |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Savvy Suburbanites | 26.5% | 45.1 | 2.85 | $108,700 |
| Parks and Rec | 13.5% | 40.9 | 2.51 | $60,000 |
| In Style | 9.5% | 42 | 2.35 | $73,000 |
| Green Acres | 7.7% | 43.9 | 2.7 | $76,800 |
| Exurbanites | 7.3% | 51 | 2.5 | $103,400 |

*Source: ESRI Business Analyst, Tapestry Segmentation Area Profile*

# Tapestry Segment Summary

- **Savvy Suburbanites** – Residents are educated, affluent, and enjoy suburban living. Families include empty nesters and those with adult children at home. They engage in home remodeling, gardening, sports, and exercise. They also appreciate good food, wine, and cultural events.
- **Green Acres** –They embrace country living and self-reliance. As avid DIYers, they maintain and remodel their homes with power tools. Gardening, especially vegetables, is a priority, using tillers, tractors, and mowers. Their outdoor activities include hunting, fishing, motorcycling, hiking, camping, and golf
- **In Style** – Residents enjoy an urbane lifestyle, supporting the arts, travel, and extensive reading. They are tech-savvy and use mobile devices fully. Mostly professional couples or singles without children, they focus on their homes and interests. The population is slightly older and planning for retirement.
- **Workday Drive** – Affluent, family-oriented residents with a country flavor prefer new housing near professional job centers. Their suburban lifestyle balances the hectic pace of working parents with growing children. They favor time-saving devices and family-oriented activities.
- **Parks and Rec** – These suburbanites have achieved homeownership usually with older homes, including townhomes and duplexes. Many are two-income married couples nearing retirement, comfortable in their jobs and homes, and budget wisely. Established neighborhoods with amenities have supported their children through school and college and are now attracting a new generation of young couples.
- **Exurbanites** – Residents approaching retirement remain active in their communities, generous in donations, and seasoned travelers. They support the arts in nearby metropolitan centers but prefer spacious homes in less crowded neighborhoods, cultivating an affluent and urbane lifestyle.

*Source: ESRI Business Analyst, Tapestry Segmentation Area Profile*

# Tapestry Segments – Lifestyle & Spending Habits

The top five tapestry segments in the primary and secondary trade area have different demographic and economic makeups but they share some similar lifestyle and spending habits.



Sports & Recreational Activities



Gardening and DIY Home Projects



Arts & Entertainment



Home Maintenance Services



Organic and Local Foods

*Source: ESRI Business Analyst, Tapestry Segmentation Profiles*

# Conclusions

# Demographic Takeaways

- Approximately 1/5th of East Haddam's population lives within Moodus.
- Moodus has a similar racial, ethnic, and age profile as the Town.
- Moodus' median age is slightly younger than that of the Town, however those ages 55+ make up 39% of the total population.

**POPULATION**

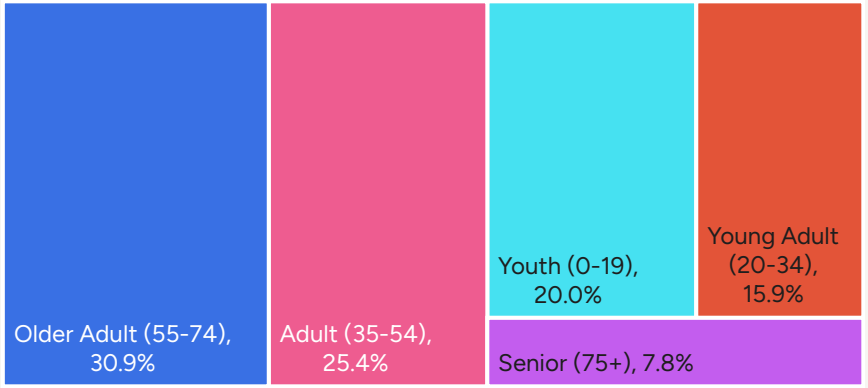


**1,982**

**MEDIAN AGE**



**47.5**



# Housing Takeaways

- Moodus housing stock is more diverse in tenure and type than the Town; with 47% of households being owner-occupied and 42% renter occupied, compared to 70% and 14% within the Town.
- Moodus has a larger share of multifamily units than East Haddam as a whole; 31% of units are in structures with 2+ units in Moodus compared to 9% within the Town.

**OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS**



**829**

**LOW INCOME HOUSEHOLDS[1]**



**255**

**MEDIAN HOME VALUE**



**$283,700**

**MEDIAN GROSS RENT**




**$1,151**

[1]Low-income households are defined as those making less than 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI).

# Market Takeaways

## TOP INDUSTRIES

Education
47%

Retail Trade
15.1%

Health Care &
Social Assistance
8.2%

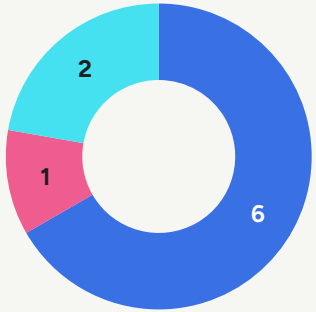
## MEDIAN INCOME

$96,032

## BUSINESS MIX

Convenience
Shopping

## COMMERCIAL VACANCY




Vacancy Rate
20%

- Office
- Storefront
- Warehouse

## TARGET MARKETS

- Gardening & DIY Home Projects
- Home Maintenance Services
- Sports & Recreational Activities
- Arts & Entertainment
- Organic & Local Foods



# MOODUS CENTER MASTER PLAN

TOWN OF EAST HADDAM, CT
OCTOBER 2025