REVIVE & RENEW ROUTES 163 / 32

STRATEGIC INVESTMENT PLAN

MONTVILLE, CT
JULY 2026

CONNECTICUT Economic & Community Development
BJH ADVISORS
PIRIE ASSOCIATES

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Route 32 and Route 163 Investment Plan was shaped through the participation, guidance, and support of many individuals and organizations. The Town of Montville extends its appreciation to elected and appointed officials, members of the Project Steering Committee, local stakeholders, and community partners whose time, in sight, and commitment helped inform the planning process.

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- Sara Lundy, PZC Chair (Jan. 2025 – Sept. 2025)
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- Meredith Badalucca, Assistant Planner
- Eric Marsh, Oxoboxo Lofts
- Mario Infante, Rand Whitney
- Dave Waddington, DW/CT Scrap and Yale's
- Dennis Goderre, Director of Land Use & Development

Thank you to the Mohegan Tribe, whose leadership met with the Town's officials and its consultant, having provided valuable insight and support throughout this project.

Much appreciation for the efforts of Cindy Breton, Executive Assistant to the Mayor, who kept us all organized and on time during this 20-month process.

Note that funding for the Revive and Renew Routes 163 and 32 Investment Plan is provided through a Connecticut Community Investment Fund (CIF) 2030 grant, administered by the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Montville's Route 32 and Route 163 Investment Plan is a practical, phased program of public action and private investment aimed at revitalization of these corridors. Montville is well positioned to capture a larger share of regional housing, service, and commercial demand generated by major nearby employers and destinations; however, doing so will require more intentional placemaking, targeted infrastructure investment, supportive zoning, and a disciplined implementation strategy focused on a limited number of nodes rather than corridor-wide change all at once. The process to create this Investment Plan emphasized public engagement to ensure that community priorities informed the plan's recommendations.

Purpose and Context

Using a State of Connecticut Community Investment Fund 2030 Round 5 grant, the Town of Montville initiated this effort to create an actionable framework for reinvestment along the Route 32 and Route 163 corridors in Uncasville and Palmertown, with the goal of translating market opportunity and community priorities into realistic development, infrastructure, and funding strategies. These two corridors are Montville's best opportunity to expand housing choice, improve community identity, strengthen the Town's tax base, and capture more spillover demand associated with Electric Boat, Mohegan Sun, the former Norwich State Hospital properties, Great Wolf Lodge, and other regional economic drivers.

At the same time, this study recognizes that Montville starts from a constrained position. The market analysis found a community with aging building stock, limited housing diversity, fragmented auto-oriented development patterns, and a history of capturing only a modest share of regional growth, despite its location near major employment and visitor destinations.

Major Findings

The report finds that Montville has real market opportunity, especially if future growth is directed into identifiable mixed-use and housing nodes instead of dispersed strip-style development. The strongest opportunities are tied to a broader mix of housing, neighborhood-serving commercial uses, adaptive reuse, stronger public spaces, and corridor improvements that help the Montville compete more effectively for households, businesses, and investment.

Several findings are especially important for framing an investment strategy:

- Montville's housing stock is dominated by owner-occupied single-family homes, while multifamily and other alternative housing types remain limited.
- Rent burdens remain significant for local renter households, reinforcing the need for more attainable rental options and a broader range of housing formats.
- Community engagement consistently favored medium-density and mixed-use development over high-density apartment forms, along with strong support for active public spaces, trails, restaurants, coffee shops, arts and maker spaces, and village-style character.
- After identification and review of 11 potential candidate nodes along Route 32 and Route 163, the Town Center, the nearby Cove District, and Palmertown Village emerged as the three most important nodes because they best combine placemaking potential, housing opportunity, public-realm value, and implementation leverage.
- Financial testing showed that prototype mixed-use and residential projects in the Town Center and the Cove District do not currently produce positive residual land value under conventional private financing alone, although townhouses and simpler apartment forms perform better than more ambitious medium-density mixed-use concepts. Almost all recent multifamily development in Southeastern Connecticut receives some form of public subsidies.

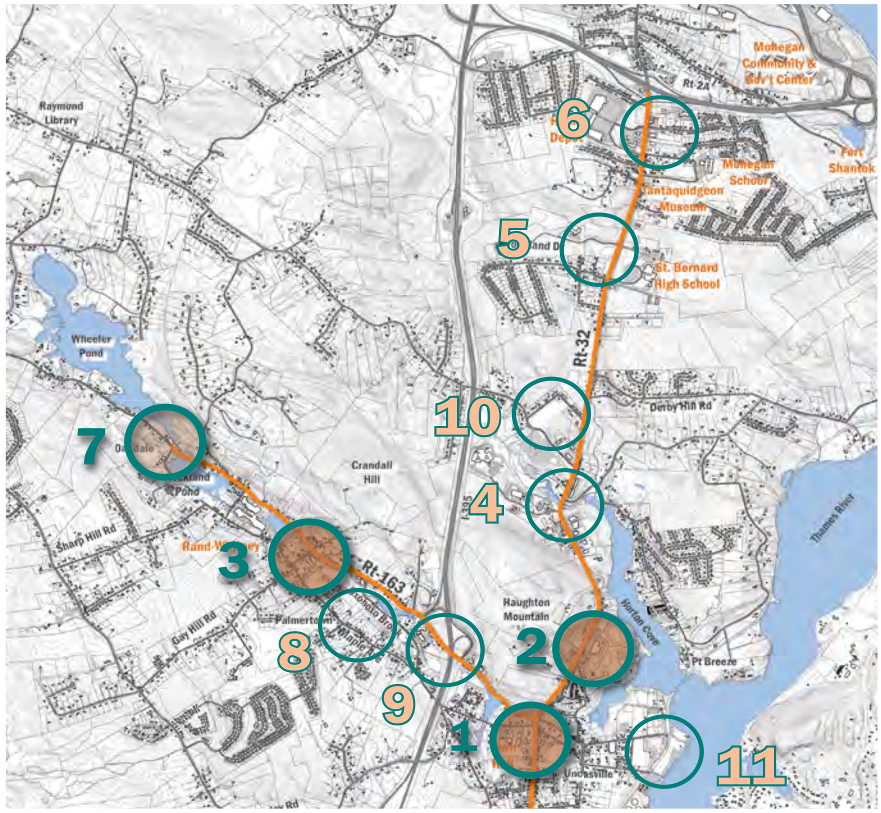
Taken together, these findings suggest that Montville's challenge is not a lack of underlying demand, but a lack of development-ready places, predictable regulatory pathways, and public improvements that can reduce risk and improve market confidence.

Vision and Priority Nodes

The plan recommends a place-based development strategy centered on three primary nodes, each with a distinct character and development composition. In addition, the plan identifies a brownfield opportunity site at the former Bank Paper Mill and water tower on Route 163. Rather than trying to transform all segments of Routes 32 and 163 at once, the Town should focus resources where public investment, private redevelopment, housing diversification, and placemaking can reinforce one another most effectively.

Primary Nodes:

Figure 0-1: Potential Candidate Nodes



Source: Pirie Associates Architects

1. Town Center

The Town Center (Node 1) is identified as the first priority because it offers Montville's best opportunity to create a recognizable mixed-use civic and commercial center. Community input strongly supported a town green or similar public gathering space here, along with improved walkability, mixed-use development, civic identity, and village-scale design with medium-density residential development.

2. The Cove District

The Cove District (Node 2) is treated as a connected extension of the Town Center, with a stronger emphasis on recreation, trails, open space, waterfront access, and district connectivity. Its long-term opportunity is significant, including potential residential development and public access improvements anchored around the existing Center of Montville Shopping Center. Near-term implementation should focus on enabling infrastructure, connections, and visible placemaking investments rather than expecting immediate large-scale vertical development.

3. Palmertown Village

Palmertown Village (Node 3) is envisioned as a more modest village node along Route 163, supported by incremental revitalization, adaptive reuse, contextual housing, and selective placemaking. The report emphasizes that Palmertown's success will depend on tailored zoning and design tools, parcel-owner coordination, and realistic, small-scale implementation rather than a single transformative project.

Additional Activity Hubs

The implementation chapter also identifies a brownfield opportunity site at the former Bank Paper Mill (Node 7) and adjacent water tower, which can be repositioned as a recreational asset with longer term potential for some residential development as well. Two potential additional activity hubs, the North Gateway and the Thames River waterfront, have also been identified. These are not presented as core nodes, but as complementary locations that can strengthen the broader Route 32 strategy through regional commercial access, gateway improvements, waterfront recreation, and longer-term redevelopment opportunity.

Implementation Strategy

The strongest message of the report is that implementation should be selective, cumulative, and tied to a phased sequence of visible public action, regulatory reform, site strategy, and funding pursuit. The plan does not recommend equal investment everywhere; instead, it calls for concentrating effort on several opportunity nodes while using additional hubs as longer-term opportunities.

Table 0-1: Implementation Strategy

Near-Term: 0-2 Years	Mid-Term: 2-5 Years	Longer-Term: 5-10 Years
Align POCD with priority nodes	Adopt node-specific regulatory changes and monitor performance	Phase larger mixed-use and housing projects in Town Center and the Cove District
Revise Route 32 Overlay Zone	Pursue brownfield, infrastructure, and transportation funding	Strengthen district connections and infrastructure
Adopt node-specific form/ design standards	Issue RFPs or other partnership solicitations for priority catalyst sites	Evaluate need for land assembly or financing tools
Identify catalytic publicly owned and other parcels in each node	Deliver initial capital projects in the Town Center and the Cove District	Update phasing and schedule as preliminary projects are completed and markets evolve
Advance visible and high-impact public-realm projects	Demonstrate progress in Palmertown Village	

Source: BJH Advisors

Funding and Delivery

A central finding of the financial analysis is that Montville cannot rely on conventional private development economics alone to deliver the plan's vision. Apartments and townhouses are closer to feasibility than larger mixed-use prototypes, but even these will often require public support, site strategy, or capital stacking to move forward.

For that reason, the implementation strategy emphasizes a layered funding approach built around two complementary categories.

Table 0-2: Funding & Delivery

Funding category	Primary use	Illustrative tools
Project gap financing	Support mixed-use, multifamily, workforce, and mixed-income development that does not yet pencil with private financing alone.	State housing finance tools, LIHTC where appropriate, discounted land, public-private partnerships, and coordinated capital stacks.
Public infrastructure and place-based funding	Fund shared improvements that improve site readiness, connectivity, public realm quality, and corridor competitiveness.	Brownfield funding, transportation grants, infrastructure programs, TIF, CMDA tools, USDA infrastructure programs, and other state and federal public improvement sources.

Source: BJH Advisors

The report stresses that funding applications should be tied to clearly defined public outcomes in each node, not generic corridor improvement language. Town Center funding should emphasize civic identity, walkability, mixed-use housing, and public space; Cove District requests should emphasize recreation, access, open-space linkage, and waterfront connectivity; and Palmertown requests should emphasize village revitalization, adaptive reuse, and small-scale placemaking.

Priority Recommendations

To maximize impact, the Town should focus on the following key recommendations:

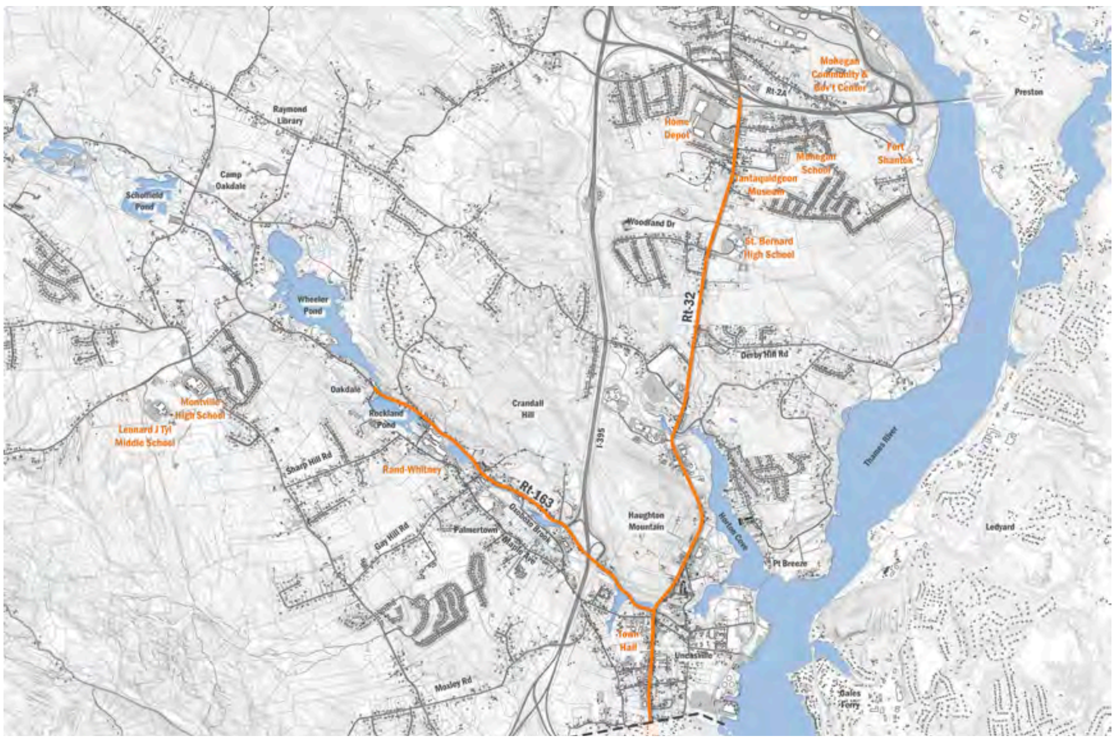
- **Focus implementation on the Town Center first**, followed by the Cove District and Palmertown Village; however, note that opportunities or other issues may arise which may suggest or present a need to address one node over another, in addition to the secondary hubs identified in this report.
- **Use the upcoming POCD update to formally anchor the priority nodes**, their intended roles, and the Town's commitment to directing growth, housing diversification, placemaking, and infrastructure investment to those locations.
- **Modernize the Route 32 Overlay Zone** and related regulations so that they produce predictable, node-based, walkable development outcomes rather than simply permitting them in theory.
- **Prioritize housing types that are closer to market feasibility**, especially townhouses, smaller multifamily, mixed-income apartments, and missing-middle forms, while treating more complex mixed-use prototypes as longer-term opportunities.
- **Pair every major development objective with a public-realm or infrastructure action** that improves site readiness, visibility, access, or district identity.
- **Pursue early wins that are visible to residents and funders**, including town center public-space design, trails and waterfront access planning, tree canopy and greening projects, and intersection or sidewalk improvements.
- **Use Town-owned land and public-facing parcels more strategically** to support partnerships, catalytic projects, access improvements, and public-space creation.
- **Treat implementation as an ongoing program** of annual work plans, grant pursuit, and partnership development rather than as a one-time capital project.

1. INVESTMENT PLAN OVERVIEW

In June, 2024, the Town of Montville submitted a grant application to the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) for a Community Investment Fund (CIF) 2030 Round 5 grant. The purpose of the grant application was to create a Route 32 and Route 163 Investment Plan, now referred to as "Revive and Renew 163/32". This plan is intended to develop an actionable framework for investment in key areas along these corridors in Uncasville and Palmertown. The Town's goals in undertaking this study are to revitalize these two corridors and to identify strategies and funding sources that could help move the plan's recommendations toward implementation.

The Town received notice from DECD that it had been recommended for award of the grant in September, 2024 and the grant award was approved by the State Bond Commission in October. An Assistance Agreement with the State was fully executed in June 2025 and the selected consultant team began working with the Town on the project the following month.

Figure 1-1: Routes 32 & 163 Corridors



Source: Pirie Associates Architects

Consultant Selection Process

The Town of Montville's procurement process was structured to identify a team capable of linking planning, economic development, and implementation. The Town's Request for Proposals required candidate firms to demonstrate specialized professional competence, relevant comparable experience, capacity to perform the work within the project schedule, and a strong record of performance on municipal assignments in Connecticut.

In April 2025, BJH Advisors and Pirie Associates were selected through this competitive process as the Town's consultant team for this initiative. BJH and Pirie emphasized that the project required more than a conventional planning study, rather it needed a place-based strategic approach intended to ensure that development recommendations would look and feel like Montville, a data-informed analytical method combining real estate market data, community stakeholder input, and a strong grounding in Connecticut and Northeast economic development practice.

BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

The Revive and Renew 163/32 Investment Plan developed from a combination of long-standing local need and emerging regional opportunity. Montville was identified by the Connecticut Office of Policy and Management as a Public Investment Community, as determined by the Town's comparatively low per capita income, a low equalized net grand list ranking, and a relatively elevated poverty rate as indicators of structural disadvantage. Areas of Uncasville and Palmertown along the two target corridors also include concentrations of residents living amid aging infrastructure and disinvestment.

At the same time, this Investment Plan is a chance to reposition these corridors to benefit from broader economic momentum in southeastern Connecticut, including such regional drivers as the anticipated expansion of employment at General Dynamics Electric Boat in Groton and New London, redevelopment potential associated with the former Norwich State Hospital property in Preston by Mohegan Sun, possible redevelopment on the Norwich component of the former State Hospital Property, and the recent opening of the Great Wolf Lodge in Mashantucket, in addition to continued activity at Mohegan Sun. The Town's objective was not only to address visible challenges along Routes 32 and 163, but also to create a strategy that would allow Montville residents and businesses to capture more of the housing, services, and commercial demand generated by these regional investments.

The context of this plan, therefore, is both local and regional, and both physical and financial. Locally, Montville faces a set of corridor and neighborhood challenges tied to older building stock, limited housing diversity, disinvestment, and auto-oriented development patterns. Regionally, Montville sits near major employment and visitor generators and has an opportunity to capture greater demand for housing, local services, and neighborhood-serving commercial activity if it can create the right conditions for investment, which includes enhanced infrastructure, including water, sewer, and placemaking to enhance visitor and resident experience. Financially, the Town's aspirations will need to be matched with practical implementation tools, funding sources, and development partnerships to close the gap between vision and market feasibility.

GOALS & STRATEGIES

The Revive and Renew 163/32 Investment Plan is intended to be both a vision for corridor revitalization and a practical roadmap for action. The purpose of this plan is to rejuvenate the Uncasville and Palmertown corridor areas through strategies that respond to local needs, reflect community input, and position Montville to benefit from broader regional growth and investment trends. The planning process and supporting market analysis have reinforced that this effort must move beyond broad concepts and instead identify realistic actions, priority sites, and implementation tools that can guide public decision-making and future investment.

A central goal of this project is to ensure that the planning process is community-driven. Both the Town's CIF grant application and project work scope called for residents, business owners, and other stakeholders to play a meaningful role in shaping the plan through outreach, engagement, and participation on a Project Steering Committee, with continued involvement beyond adoption of the plan. This objective recognizes that long-term revitalization will only be successful if the resulting recommendations reflect local priorities and build confidence among those most directly affected by future change.

The project is also intended to translate community priorities into an actionable set of policy, program, design, and regulatory strategies. In practice, this means tying redevelopment opportunities to the public actions needed to support them, including zoning and regulatory updates, partnership structures, and funding strategies.

Housing has emerged as one of the most important strategic priorities in the plan. The Town of Montville has explicitly framed housing as a key economic development issue, citing limited supply, aging and functionally obsolete stock, and insufficient affordable and

workforce housing options, including housing for the elderly. The planning work that has been undertaken as part of this study further supports this direction by emphasizing that appropriately scaled multifamily and mixed-use housing can help Montville retain households, support local businesses, and better capture spillover demand associated with broader regional growth.

Taken together, the Revive and Renew 163/32 Investment Plan points toward a focused set of strategies for these corridors:

- **Concentrate investment in a limited number of activity nodes** rather than attempting corridor-wide transformation at once; this place-based approach can better support walkability, visibility, identity, and phased reinvestment;
- **Expand housing choice through market-rate and mixed-income residential development**, especially in locations that can support workforce households, older residents, and mixed-use activity;
- **Target commercial development toward uses that fit Montville's market position**, including neighborhood-serving retail and professional services;
- Advance a short list of **realistic catalyst sites** where new development and adaptive reuse can unlock potential;
- Align land use recommendations with **public realm, mobility, infrastructure and streetscape improvements** needed to improve development feasibility and corridor identity;
- **Ground recommendations in market evidence and feasibility testing** so that proposed concepts are ambitious but still realistic in terms of timing, absorption, and financial support needs;
- Create a **phased implementation framework** that identifies near-term actions, medium-term partnership and funding steps, and longer-term redevelopment opportunities tied to evolving market conditions;
- Position the Town of Montville to **pursue state, federal, and public-private funding opportunities** by linking the plan's recommendations to site readiness, cost considerations, and a viable implementation pathway.
- **Update the Town's comprehensive plan** to include the appropriate recommendations of this work and future efforts; this may include new zoning, design standards, subdivision, and amendments to the Plan of Conservation and Development.

The plan's central strategy is to concentrate investment in a limited number of key activity nodes to capture more of the housing, services, and commercial demand while supporting community identity, visibility, and phased reinvestment.

APPROACH & METHODOLOGY

The Revive and Renew 163/32 Investment Plan was structured as a data-driven, community-informed planning and economic development effort. The methodology began with a baseline assessment of demographic, economic, land use, infrastructure, and real estate conditions in Montville and the surrounding market area. Using U.S. Census data, Local Employment Dynamics, CoStar, ESRI, Town of Montville records, and other available sources, the consulting team evaluated population and workforce trends, housing conditions, commercial market performance, and development pipeline activity in order to identify realistic opportunities and constraints.

The process also emphasized community engagement as a core part of the scope of work. This included coordination with the Project Steering Committee, public information sessions, meetings with community stakeholders, and additional outreach methods designed to reach residents, businesses, and other stakeholders in accessible ways and to ensure that community priorities informed the plan's recommendations. These included a project website, social media page, and online and paper surveys.

A further component of the work involved identifying and testing redevelopment opportunities within the two corridors. This included review of planned development activity, site conditions, and optimal locations for housing, mixed-use, and commercial development. For selected sites and concepts, the consultant team also considered site feasibility, construction costs, residual land value, and potential funding sources so that recommendations would be grounded in market realities and implementation needs.

In summary, the project scope of work included:

- Baseline analysis of demographic, economic, land use, and market conditions.
- Review of planned and anticipated development activity affecting the project area.
- Community engagement through Steering Committee meetings, public sessions and targeted outreach tools.
- Assess existing Zoning and other land use regulations and evaluate their impact on different types of development.
- Identification and evaluation of opportunity sites for housing, mixed-use, and commercial development.
- Development of strategies related to land use, housing, infrastructure, public realm improvements, and corridor revitalization.
- Feasibility and funding analysis to support implementation, phasing, and future grant pursuits. Preparation of final plan documents and implementation recommendations.

Recommended Plan

Building upon the analysis and engagement outlined above, a comprehensive recommended plan, Revive and Renew 163/32, outlining development strategies, priority sites, and actionable steps for implementation has been prepared. At the conclusion of this project the plan was presented to the Montville Town Council, Planning and Zoning Commission, and Project Steering Committee. It is hoped that this plan will assist those agencies in seeking further funding opportunities, the development of future regulatory and planning actions, the attraction of private investment, and a renewed sense of community pride in these two historic corridors.

2. MONTVILLE PROFILE & MARKET ASSESSMENT

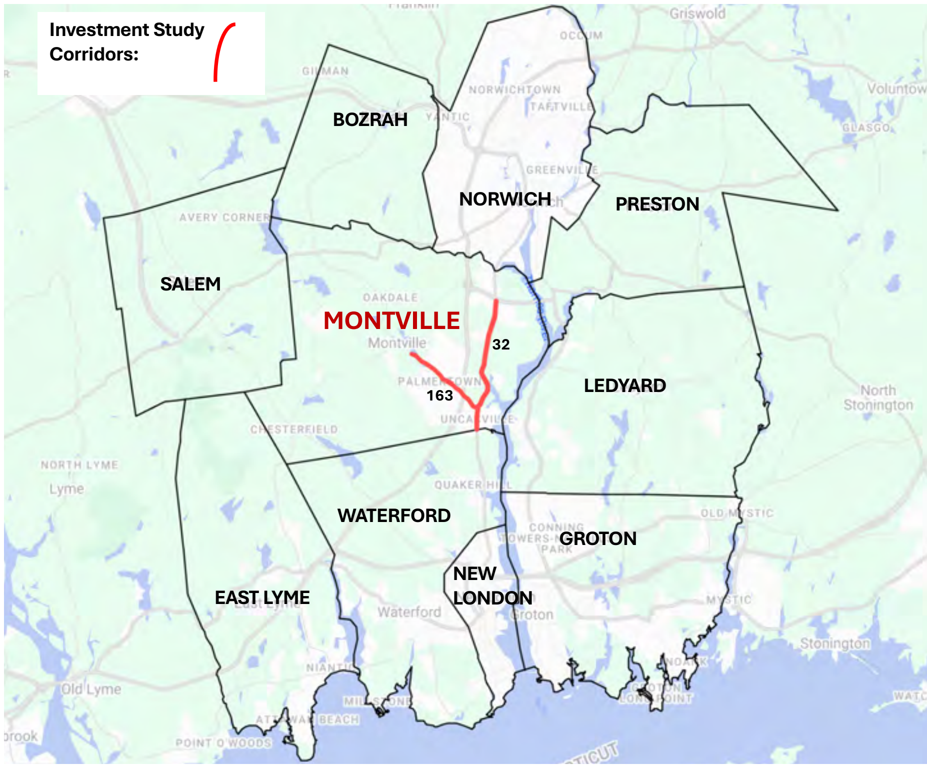
Montville is entering an important period of transition. While the town has historically played a more modest role than some neighboring communities in capturing new housing and commercial growth, it is increasingly well-positioned to benefit from economic forces reshaping southeastern Connecticut, including the continued expansion of Electric Boat in Groton and New London, the regional draw of the Mohegan Sun, and rising demand for housing and services within commuting distance of the area's major employment centers.

Against this backdrop, the Route 32 and Route 163 corridors represent more than transportation spines; they are Montville's primary opportunity to channel growth into places that can strengthen the Town's tax base, expand housing choice, support local businesses, and create more identifiable centers of community activity. The market analysis shows that Montville's housing and retail market are relatively constrained today, but also that the Town has a meaningful opportunity to capture a larger share of regional demand if it invests in placemaking, public realm improvements, corridor functionality, and mixed-use activity hubs or nodes, particularly along Route 32.

This chapter summarizes the demographic, economic, and market conditions that shape this opportunity. It draws from the full Market Analysis Report, included as Appendix A, and highlights the trends that matter most for the Investment Plan: who lives in Montville today, how the local and regional economy is changing, where market demand is strengthening and how corridor improvements can help position Montville to compete more effectively for new housing, businesses, and investment.

For the purposes of this analysis, the Consultant Team identified a Study Area, a broader market geography used for comparison as part of the market analysis. The Study Area includes Montville and the surrounding municipalities that are most connected to the town through commuting patterns, housing demand, shopping activity, and shared economic relationships, providing a regional context for evaluating demographic and market conditions. The Study Area and its population trends are shown in Figure 2-1 and Table 2-1.

Figure 2-1: Montville Market Study Area



Source: BJH Advisors

Table 2-1: Population Trends for Towns in Study Area (2014-2024)

Town	2014	2024	% Change
Salem	4,176	4,282	+2.5%
Ledyard	15,073	15,433	+2.4%
Preston	4,735	4,821	+1.8%
Waterford	19,499	19,673	+0.9%
New London	27,536	27,625	+0.3%
Norwich	40,378	39,973	-1.0%
East Lyme	19,118	18,721	-2.1%
Groton	40,153	38,130	-5.0%
Montville	19,649	17,950	-8.6%
Bozrah	2,631	2,296	-12.8%
Total	192,948	188,901	-2.1%

Source: U.S. Census: American Community Survey 5-year Estimate, 2014 & 2024

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE & ASSESSMENT

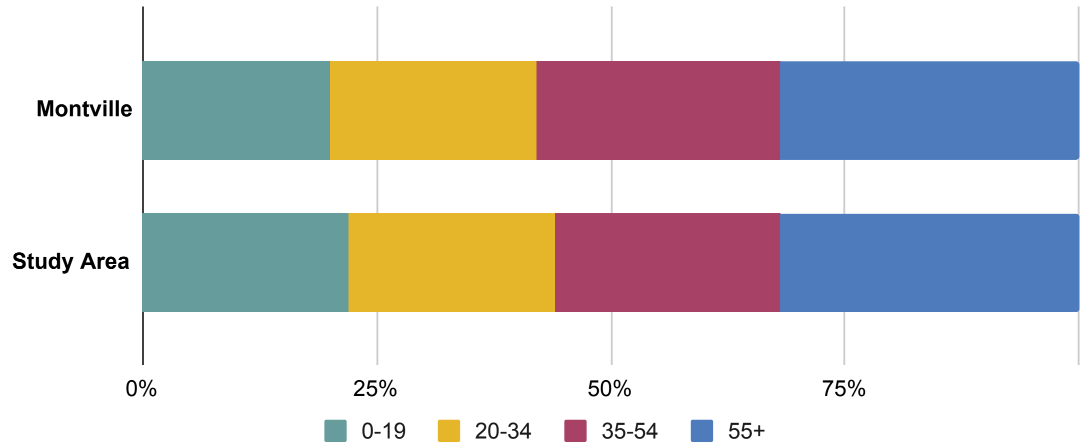
Montville's demographic profile reflects a mature, largely built-out community with modest recent growth pressures, an aging population, aging commercial building stock, and a housing stock dominated by owner-occupied single-family homes. At the same time, Montville is well-positioned within a broader regional economy that is expected to generate increased housing and service demand over the coming years, particularly as employment growth in southeastern Connecticut continues to spill across municipal boundaries.

Between 2014 and 2024, Montville's population declined by 6.8 percent, one of the larger population declines in the Study Area, even as Connecticut as a whole recorded modest growth. However, it should be noted that Montville's recent population figures are influenced by the inclusion of the Corrigan-Radgowski correctional population in U.S. Census American Community Survey estimates and that the closure of the Radgowski correctional facility at the end of 2021 complicates direct comparisons over time.

Age trends indicate both challenges and opportunities for future investment in the Routes 32 and 163 corridors. U.S. Census data show continued growth in older age cohorts, especially residents age 55 and over, alongside declines in school-age children and many prime earning-age households. At the same time, Montville has seen notable growth in the 20-to-34 age cohort, suggesting potential to attract younger workers and households in the town can offer a wider range of housing choices, services, and amenities.

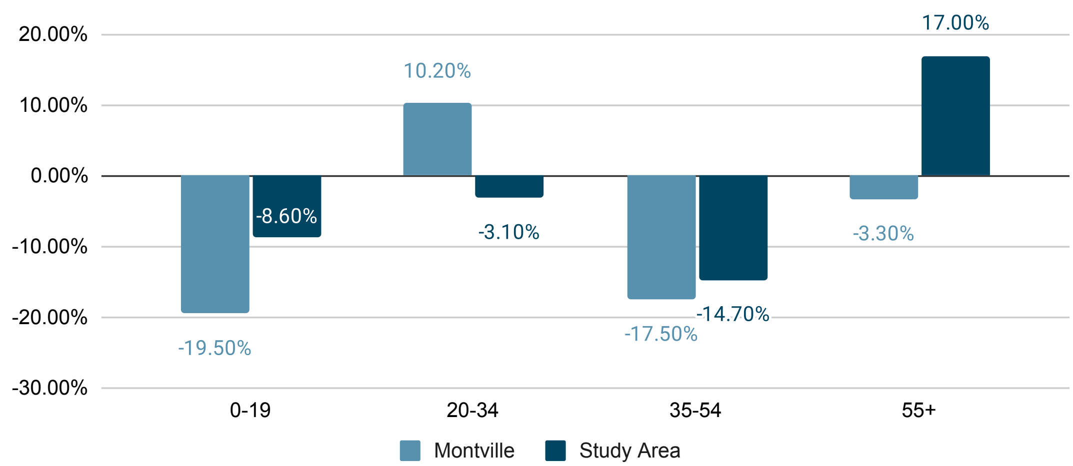
Age groups and percent change in population by age in Montville are shown in Figures 2-2 and 2-3.

Figure 2-2: Age Groups (2024)



Source: U.S. Census: American Community Survey 5-year Estimate, 2014 & 2024

Figure 2-3: Percent Change in Population by Age (2014-2024)



Source: U.S. Census: American Community Survey 5-year Estimate, 2014 & 2024

Household and income data present a picture of a working- and middle-income community with relatively small household sizes and improving economic conditions. As shown in Figure 2-4, median household income in Montville is approximately $95,950, up 42 percent from 2014, while average household size in 2.6 persons. The poverty rate is 7.8 percent, below the Study Area's average of 11.3 percent, indicating that although affordability pressures exist, Montville compares favorably to the broader regional context on several economic indicators.

Figure 2-4: Median Household Income & Average Household Size

	Median Household Income (2024)	Avg Household Size (2024)
Montville	**$95,950** (+42.3% since 2014)	**2.6** (-0.2% since 2014)
Study Area	**$89,647** (+39.9% since 2014)	**2.3** (-3.8% since 2014)

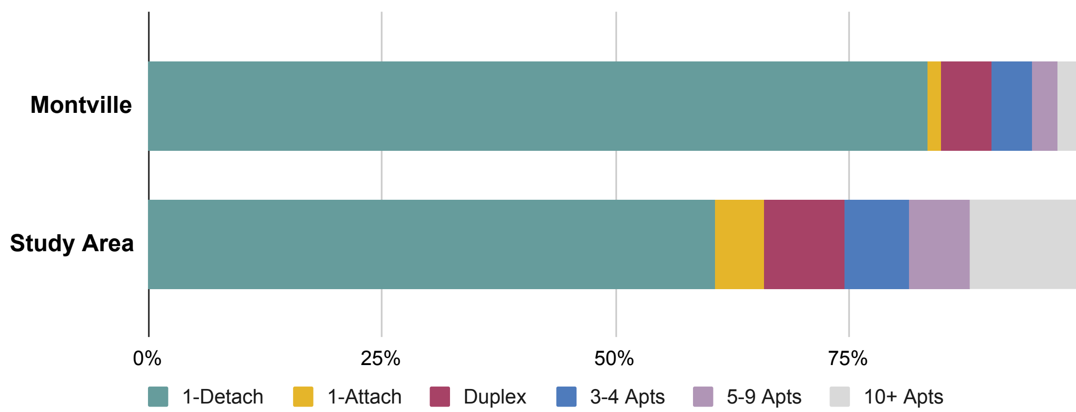
	Total Housing Stock (2024)	Home Value (2024)
Montville	**6,722** (-9.9% since 2014)	**$298,420** (+42.1% since 2014)
Study Area	**85,667** (+2.2% since 2014)	**$328,006** (+34.7% since 2014)

	Poverty Rate
Montville	**7.8%** (+2.4% since 2014)
Study Area	**11.3%**

Source: U.S. Census: American Community Survey 5-year Estimate, 2014 & 2024

Montville's housing stock is overwhelmingly owner occupied and predominantly single-family in character. As shown in Figure 2-5, approximately 78 percent of homes in Montville are owner-occupied, compared with just under 57 percent in the Study Area, and multifamily housing remains a small portion of the local inventory. This limited range of housing types constrains options for young adults, smaller households, workforce renters, and older residents seeking to downsize without leaving the community.

Figure 2-5: Housing Stock in Montville (2024)

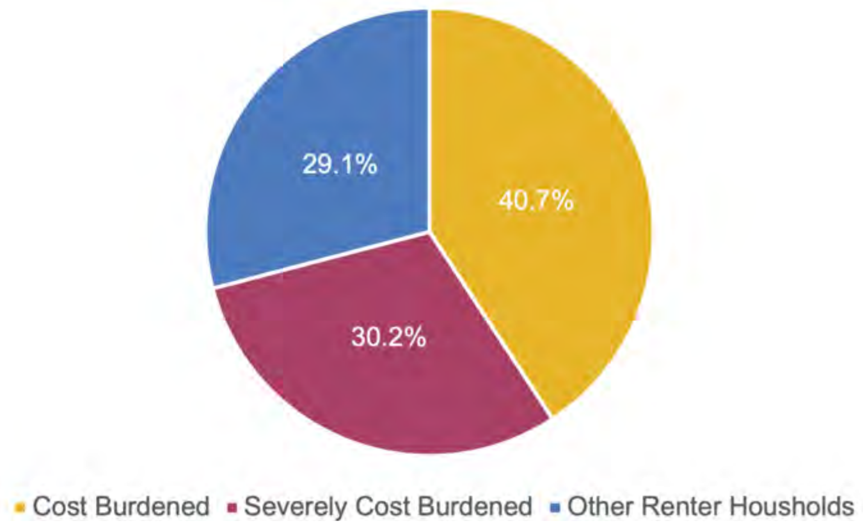


Source: U.S. Census: American Community Survey 5-year Estimate, 2024

Montville's housing stock is primarily owner-occupied single-family homes with limited multifamily options. As a result, younger workers, smaller households, workforce renters, and older residents have relatively fewer housing choices.number of key activity nodes to capture more of the housing, services, and commercial demand while supporting community identity, visibility, and phased reinvestment.

Housing affordability remains a concern, particularly for renters. Of Montville's 1,166 renter households, 475, or just under 41 percent, are cost burdened, while 352 are severely cost burdened.

Figure 2-6: Cost Burdened Households in Montville (2024)



Source: U.S. Census: American Community Survey 5-year Estimate, 2014 & 2024

Although these burdens are somewhat lower than in the Study Area overall, they still point to a need for a broader supply of attainable rental housing and more varied housing formats in and around the Route 32 corridor.

Most Montville residents commute by car, nearly half work outside New London County, and average commute times exceed 26 minutes. These patterns underscore the continuing importance of Routes 32 and 163 as travel corridors, while also suggesting that investments in walkability, node-based development, and multimodal improvements could strengthen Montville's ability to retain residents and capture more local economic activity.

Overall, Montville's demographic profile suggests that future investment should respond to two parallel realities: an aging resident base that will require accessible services and housing options, and an emerging opportunity to attract younger households and workers seeking relatively attainable locations within southeastern Connecticut. Corridor planning should therefore support a broader mix of housing, modestly higher-intensity mixed-use development in targeted nodes, and public realm improvements that make those nodes more functional and appealing.

MARKET & ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Montville's market and economic context is shaped by its position between large employment centers, entertainment destinations, and regional retail hubs. The town benefits from proximity to Mohegan Sun and Electric Boat in Groton, and employment centers in Norwich and New London, in addition to its access to Interstate 395, but it has historically captured only a limited share of regional growth in housing and commercial development. One partial explanation for this is infrastructure and site constraints in Montville has historically limited the supply of shovel-ready, market competitive locations for new housing and commercial projects, even as nearby communities have been able to offer more readily developable sites.

The market analysis nevertheless finds that Montville is well-positioned to absorb a larger share of future demand if the Route 32 / Route 163 corridors are upgraded to support more attractive and better organized activity hubs.

Local Housing Market

The multifamily housing market in Montville is small but tightening. As of 2025, Montville had 29 multifamily buildings (buildings with at least three dwelling units) containing 813 units, with an average asking rent of $1,213 per unit and a vacancy rate of 2.5 percent, compared with $1,724 and 4.1 percent, respectively, in the Study Area. As shown in Figure 2-7, over the past decade, rents in both Montville and the Study Area have remained relatively stable over the past decade, though with a slight upward trend since 2020. Rents in Montville are lower than in the Study Area as a whole. Vacancies have fluctuated, though they are at a ten-year low with vacancies in Montville lower than in the Study Area as a whole.

This points to a relatively limited but competitive local rental market, with lower rents than nearby communities and little excess supply. One partial explanation for Montville's lower rents, despite constrained supply, is that much of Montville's current rental housing stock consists of smaller-scale, older, and less amenity-rich buildings.

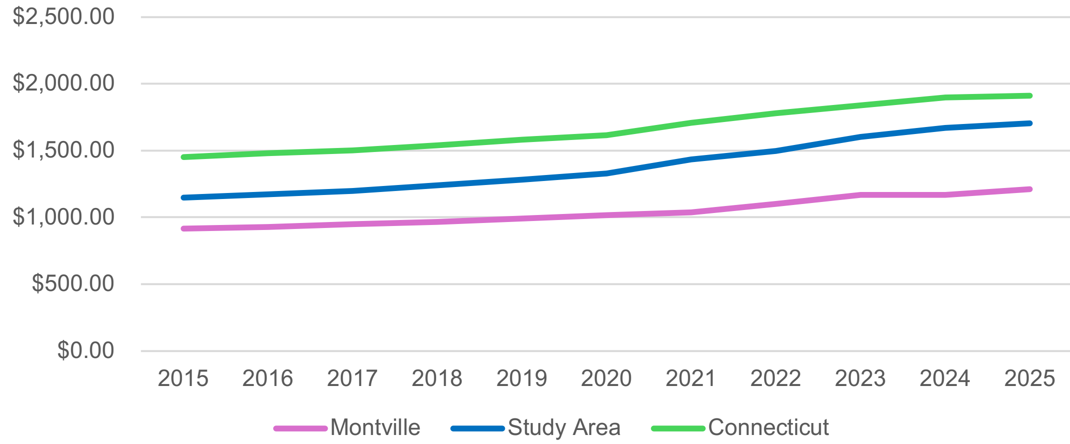
Table 2-2: Inventory of Multifamily Buildings, Rents, and Vacancy (2025)

	Inventory Buildings (2025)	Inventory Units (2025)	Asking Rent Per Unit (2025)	Vacancy Rate (2025)
Montville	29	813	$1,213	2.5%
Study Area	497	20,132	$1,724	4.1%

Source: CoStar 2026

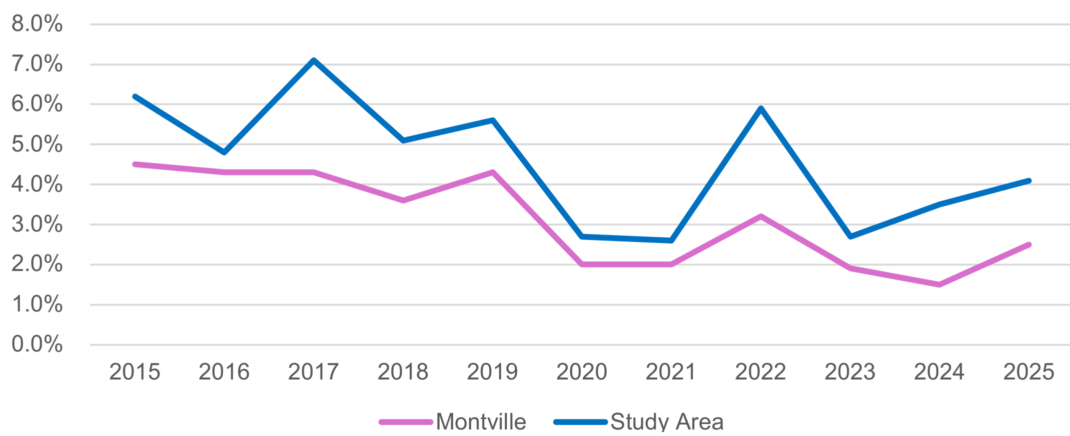
Over the past decade, rents in Montville have risen steadily while vacancy has generally trended downward. The town added no new multifamily supply for many years until the opening of Oxoboxo Lofts in 2025, a 72-unit adaptive reuse project that was fully leased before opening. This quick lease-up is evidence of latent demand for newer multifamily product in Montville, although it should be noted that Oxoboxo Lofts also relied on public subsidy and is therefore not directly representative of purely market-rate development economics in Montville.

Figure 2-7: Multifamily Rent (2015-2025)



Source: CoStar 2026

Figure 2-8: Multifamily Vacancy (2015-2025)



Source: CoStar 2026

Recent absorption trends across the broader market area have been positive. Between 2015 and 2025, the ten-town Study Area recorded net absorption of 2,990 apartment units, while Montville recorded positive absorption of 88 units.

Based on a set of recent benchmark developments across Montville, Groton, New London, Norwich, and Waterford, shown in Figure 2-9, the study estimates a weighted annual absorption rate of roughly 126 units for recent projects overall (including income-restricted projects) and approximately 139 units annually for market-rate product.

Figure 2-9: Weighted Monthly Average Absorption at Recent Developments in Region

Property Address	Town	Property Name	Number of Units	Absorption / Month	Product
42 Pink Row	Montville	Oxoboxo Lofts	72	6	432.0
1 Triton Sq	Groton	Triton Square	304	19.3	5,867.2
22 Georgetown Rd	New London	60 Mansfield Road Phase II	89	5.8	516.2
99 Gold Star Hwy	Groton	GoodHomes Groton	112	5.3	593.6
85 Main St	Norwich	Walter Street Lofts	41	1.8	73.8
908 Hartford Tpke	Waterford	Brookside Commons	41	1.9	76.4
394 Willets Ave	Waterford	Waterford Woods	204	13.5	2,754.0
174 Bank St	New London	Vessel	30	2.3	69.0
221 Howard St	New London	The Beam	203	5.3	1,075.9

Total Number of Units	1,096		11,458.1
		Month	10.5
		Year	125.5

Income Restricted Development

Mixed Use Market-Rate/Affordable Development

Source: CoStar 2026; Individual Calls with Leasing Agents, Apartments.com; Zillow.com, Q1 2026

The market study also identifies a substantial pipeline of multifamily developments in the region. As shown in Figure 2-10, across the Study Area, over 2,650 units are expected over the next five to eight years, including over 550 units in Montville's own development pipeline. While this represents a large volume relative to the current absorption, the local market is not at immediate risk of oversupply because many projects remain speculative, timing is likely to be staggered, and demand growth tied to regional job expansion is expected to continue.

Figure 2-10: Pipeline of Multifamily Development in the Study Area

Address	City	Property Type	Projected Year Built	Rentable Built Area (SF)	Unit Number
344 Main St	East Lyme	Multi-Family	2027	13,947	18
120 Broad St	New London	Multi-Family	2025	59,629	49
90-100 Garfield Ave	New London	Multi-Family	2027	95,708	90
66 Union St	New London	Multi-Family	2028	46,000	46
Fort Trumbull (28 Walbach St)	New London	Multi-Family	N/A	251,600 (total)	250
194 Bank St	New London	Multi-Family	N/A	N/A	37
345 Main St	Norwich	Multi-Family	N/A	5,600	8
23 Thermos Ave	Norwich	Multi-Family	N/A	98,600	57
394 Willetts Ave (Waterford Central)	Waterford	Multi-Family	2026	100,000	216
334 Long Hill Rd*	Groton	Multi-Family	N/A	N/A	18
1154 Poquonnock Rd*	Groton	Multi-Family	N/A	N/A	20
375 Drozdyk Dr*	Groton	Multi-Family	N/A	N/A	195
12 Governors Cir*	Groton	Senior Housing	N/A	N/A	20 additional
0 Fort Hill Rd	Groton	Multi-Family	N/A	N/A	138
517, 529, 553, 571 Gold Star Hwy	Groton	Multi-Family	N/A	N/A	395
1002 Rt 12	Groton	Multi-Family	2026	N/A	58
0 Crystal Lake Rd	Groton	Multi-Family	N/A	N/A	92
244 Monument St	Groton	Multi-Family	2029	24,801	17

Source: CoStar 2026, Towns of Groton and New London

Table 2-3: Montville PZC Multifamily Application Pipeline (2026)

Address	Unit Count	Construction Status
82 Jerome Rd	160	Not under construction
90 Maple Ave	87	Not under construction
245 Route 32	22	6 completed, other phases not under construction
303 Route 32	16	16 units completed
1758-1790 Route 32	200	Not under construction
2280 Route 32	57	Obtained zoning permit to begin construction
18 Powerhouse Rd	11	Zoning permit issued for Phase 1; stop work order

Source: Town of Montville, 2026

From an economic development standpoint, housing is one of Montville's clearest opportunities. The town is more affordable than nearby employment centers and is located within commuting distance of Electric Boat, Mohegan Sun, Backus Hospital, L&M Hospital, Pfizer, Foxwoods, and other major employers. The market study concluded that the Montville could capture approximately 15 percent of current multifamily demand in the Study Area under baseline conditions, equivalent to roughly 105 new units over five years, and potentially 25 to 33 percent of demand with corridor improvements, stronger activity nodes, and supportive land use policies.

Despite constrained local housing and retail markets, the study finds that Montville is well-positioned to absorb a larger share of regional demand if the Route 32 and Route 163 corridors are upgraded into mixed-use activity hubs with stronger placemaking and public realm improvements.

Local Retail Market

Montville's retail market is underbuilt but stable, with moderate pricing power and room for selective expansion. Retail inventory total approximately 843,400 square feet in 96 buildings, which equates to roughly 47 square feet per capita compared with 74 feet per capita in the broader Study Area, This suggests Montville has less retail space than comparable communities relative to its population and exposure to traffic along heavily traveled corridors.

Figure 2-11: Montville Retail Demand Outlook (2026)

Retail Demand Outlook	2025 Consumer Spending	2025 Consumer Spending per Household	Percentage of Total Spending	2030 Forecasted Demand	2030 Forecasted Demand per Household
Food	$75,898,540	$10,800	33%	$82,375,188	$11,900
Transportation	$52,141,533	$7,400	23%	$56,579,775	$8,200
Entertainment & Recreation	$28,058,645	$4,000	12%	$30,456,323	$4,400
Travel	$20,077,496	$2,900	9%	$21,799,553	$3,200
Apparel and Services	$16,126,673	$2,300	7%	$17,503,493	$2,600
Household Operations	$15,520,455	$2,200	7%	$16,846,998	$2,500
Household Furnishings & Equipment	$12,507,013	$1,800	5%	$13,574,476	$2,000
Health	$5,402,334	$800	2%	$5,861,639	$900
Computer	$1,766,270	$300	1%	$1,917,119	$300
Total	$227,498,959	$32,500	100%	$246,914,564	$35,500

Source: ESRI Business Analyst, Retail Demand Outlook, 2026

Consumer spending patterns support a measured expansion strategy. As shown in Figure 2-11, ESRI Business Analyst projects that household consumer spending in Montville will increase from about $227.5 million in 2025 to about $246.9 million in 2030, an increase of roughly $19.4 million. The largest spending categories are food, transportation, and entertainment, and the market study translated this growth into support for about 48,500 to 129,300 square feet of additional retail space if demand is captured locally. This projected growth in retail spending and demand is shown in Figure 2-12.

Figure 2-12: Montville Retail Demand Outlook (2026)

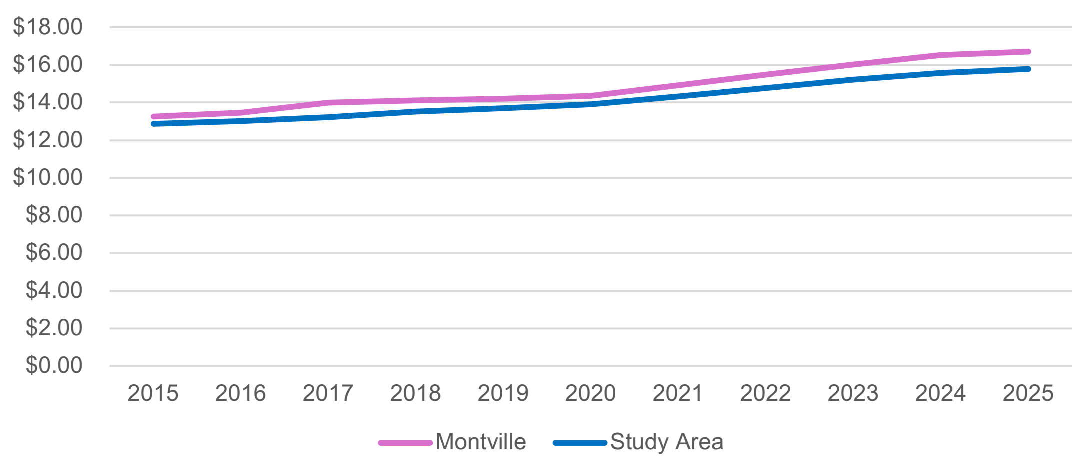
Category	Total Spending (2025)	Per Household Spending	% of Total
Food & Beverage (F&B)	$75,900,000	$10,800	33%
GAFO (General Merchandise, Apparel, Furniture & Other)	$30,400,000	$4,400	13%
Neighborhood Goods & Services	$121,200,000	$17,300	53%
Total	**$227,500,000**	**$32,500**	**100%**

Source: ESRI Business Analyst, Retail Demand Outlook, 2026

The market analysis emphasized that this potential is best suited to incremental, corridor-oriented formats. The Route 32 corridor functions as Montville's primary commercial spine and already contains many convenience, service, and food uses. Route 163 is less intensely developed but may offer opportunities for smaller scale neighborhood-serving retail, especially in proximity to new residential development. The market analysis does not support pursuing new large-format shopping centers; rather, it points toward infill, redevelopment, and targeted additions such as neighborhood retail, food service, health and wellness, and selected experiential concepts.

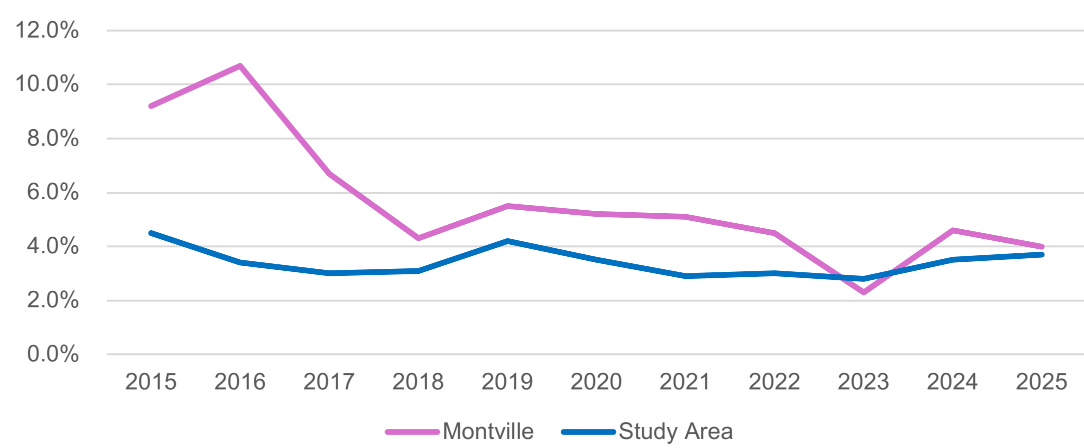
Retail rents and vacancy also suggest a reasonably healthy market. As shown in Figure 2-13, asking rents in Montville are $16.51 per square foot, slightly above the Study Area average of $15.66, while vacancy is 4.6 percent compared with 3.4 percent in the Study Area. In the decade between 2015 and 2025, retail rents have remained relatively stable with a pronounced upward trend since 2020. Retail vacancies are now at a ten-year low while, during this period, Montville recorded net retail absorption of about 135,000 square feet, indicating modest but positive long-term demand despite periodic volatility.

Figure 2-13: Retail Rent (2015-2025)



Source: CoStar 2026

Figure 2-14: Retail Vacancy (2015-2025)



Source: CoStar 2026

The market study also cautions that future retail growth may be constrained by corridor design, parcel size and configuration, and competition from larger retail nodes elsewhere in the region. Additionally, many traditional GAFO (General Merchandise, Apparel, Furniture, and Other) retail categories face structural pressure from e-commerce, suggesting that Montville should focus on convenience, food, service, and experiential retail formats that are less vulnerable to online substitution. In this regard, Montville's success with Supercharged (Indoor Karting and Axe Throwing) and the presence of the Mohegan Sun reinforce the town's broader entertainment identity, although any new experiential retail should complement, rather than directly compete with, those destinations.

Local Office Market

Montville's office market is small, functional, and largely oriented toward local-serving uses rather than regional office demand. The market study reports roughly 126,000 square feet of office inventory across 24 buildings, with asking rents of $22.51 per square foot and effectively no vacancy, compared with five percent vacancy in the Study Area overall. This indicates a healthy but very limited office market in which small medical, professional, and service tenants account for most demand.

The strongest office opportunities in Montville are not in large speculative office buildings, but in smaller-scale flexible space, medical office, and adaptive reuse. The market study identified potential demand for 5,000- to 15,000-square-foot office or coworking formats near corridor nodes, especially where they could be paired with housing, neighborhood retail, or civic uses. In practice, this suggests that office should be viewed as a supporting use within mixed-use nodes rather than a primary driver of transformation in the Route 32 and Route 163 corridors.

Local & Regional Labor Market & Commuting Patterns

As noted above, Montville's regional labor market is heavily shaped by the Mohegan Sun, public-sector employment, and major nearby employers such as Electric Boat. In 2023, Montville supported approximately 10,165 jobs, with the Arts and Entertainment, Accommodation and Food Services category accounting for nearly 60 percent of employment, followed by Education and Health Care and Public Administration. This employment structure highlights both Montville's regional role and the importance of diversifying the economy over time.

Only six percent of working age residents in Montville work from home and most workers who live in town commute by car. Montville both sends workers to other communities and attracts a large in-commuting workforce. As shown in Table 2-4, Eighty-five percent of workers in Montville commute into town for work from elsewhere and only 15 percent of jobs are filled by local residents, illustrating Montville's strong integration with the wider regional economy.

Table 2-4: Montville Workers by Place of Residence (2023)

Place of Residence	Count	Share
Norwich	2,268	22.3%
Montville	1,475	14.5%
New London	542	5.3%
Groton	522	5.1%
Waterford	436	4.3%
All Other	4,922	48.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau in collaboration with Local Employment Dynamics, a federal-state partnership, 2023

Recent Investments

Recent investment activity demonstrates that Montville can attract and support new development, but that such investment has generally been incremental and sensitive to product type and site conditions. In housing, the opening and immediate lease-up of Oxoboxo Lofts in 2025 provides the clearest recent evidence of pent-up demand for multifamily living in Montville, particularly where product quality and location align with regional workforce needs. However, as noted, Oxoboxo Lofts financial viability as a development project was dependent on the State public subsidies that it received.

In retail, the study points to recent projects and upgrades along Route 32, including properties such as Dollar General, TotalVision, and Oriental Bar & Grill, as evidence that the corridor can accommodate newer retail and service investment. However, recent and prospective retail growth is likely to occur through small- and mid-scale additions, tenant turnover, and the repositioning of existing properties rather than major ground-up shopping center development.

The market study also identified a respectable multifamily development pipeline within Montville, including proposed projects on Jerome Road, Maple Avenue, and multiple sites along Route 32, along with smaller infill projects. Although many of these proposals remain in preliminary stages, they indicate growing market interest in Montville and suggest that public improvements to the corridor could help convert entitlements and interest into delivered projects.

In late 2025, construction began on Horizon View, a 57-unit, mixed-income apartment development at 2268-2284 Route 32, north of Route 2A. The building is expected to be finished in February 2027 and will include 25 one-bedroom units and 32 two-bedroom units, with 80 percent of the units affordable to households earning 60 percent of the area median income or below and 20 percent at market rate.

Zoning & Land Use

Montville's existing zoning framework provides an initial foundation for the Revive and Renew 163/32 Investment Plan, but it does not yet fully support the scale and form of development envisioned for the corridor's primary nodes. Along Route 32, the Town's principal regulatory tool is the Route 32 Overlay Zone, which was created to encourage a mixture of commercial and multifamily residential uses on qualifying parcels and to leverage corridor visibility and available infrastructure for economic development and housing growth, The Overlay Zone has been important because it establishes a clear policy signal that mixed-use and multifamily development are appropriate outcomes along Route 32, and it has helped facilitate recent apartment and mixed-income development proposals without requiring parcel-by-parcel rezoning.

The current Overlay Zone, however, is relatively limited in scope and does not function as a fully controlling zoning tool. In most cases, the Route 32 Overlay Zone defers to the standards of the underlying zoning districts rather than independently establishing corridor-specific rules for density, setbacks, parking, landscaping, or site design. As a result, while the Overlay expands the range of uses that may be combined on a site, it does not by itself guarantee the higher density, walkable, village-scale development pattern sought through the Investment Plan. This makes the current Overlay Zone more of a permissive mixed-use framework than a comprehensive implementation tool.

The underlying commercial districts along much of Route 32 already allow a broad range of retail, service, restaurant, office, and upper-floor residential uses. C-1 zoning is generally more neighborhood-oriented, while C-2 zoning is somewhat more oriented toward corridor and destination uses, including hotels, recreation uses, and certain larger commercial activities. Together, these zoning districts can accommodate many of the uses contemplated in the Investment Plan. However, the existing regulations are less effective at supporting more refined mixed-use nodes that combine housing, neighborhood services, and improved public realm design. In addition, aspects of the current zoning text remain ambiguous, including broad language concerning activities "carried out for profit," which can create uncertainty in interpreting which uses are actually permitted. For most of the Route 32 corridor, the larger issue is not whether development is technically allowed, but whether the zoning framework is calibrated to produce the kind of planning, building form, and public realm character that the Town desires.

Recent Connecticut State housing policy, especially HB 8002, makes this issue more urgent. HB 8002 shifts municipalities in the state toward clearer as-of-right approval pathways for middle housing in commercial and mixed-use areas and limits the continued use of minimum parking requirements for many new developments. For Montville, this reinforces Route 32's role as the Town's most logical housing growth corridor and creates an opportunity to align local zoning with State policy by allowing smaller and mid-sized multifamily and mixed-use projects through predictable site plan review rather than discretionary special permit processes. At the same time, because HB 8002 reduces reliance on case-by-case discretion, it increases the importance of adopting more explicit design standards if the Town wants new development to contribute to a coherent corridor identity.

SUMMARY OF TAKEAWAYS

The market assessment indicates that Montville has a credible opportunity to capture a larger share of southeastern Connecticut's next wave of residential and commercial growth but doing so will require focused intervention (i.e., self-investment, state funding, regulatory adjustments) rather than passive market evolution. The town's strongest near- and medium-term market opportunities are in multifamily and mixed-use residential development, neighborhood-serving retail, and small-scale office, medical, and flex-space that support activity nodes along the Route 32 and Route 163 corridors rather than isolated auto-oriented sites.

Several conclusions emerge from the market study:

- Montville's demographic profile points to the need for more diverse housing options, especially for younger workers, smaller households, and older residents seeking alternatives to single-family homeownership.
- The local housing market is underbuilt relative to emerging regional demand.
- Retail prospects are real but should be approached selectively, emphasizing convenience, services, food, and experiential retail formats rather than large-format retail.
- Office and industrial-supportive uses along the Route 32 and Route 163 corridors should be viewed as complementary elements within a broader mixed-use and employment strategy, not as stand-alone anchors.

Montville's current zoning framework supports the general direction of the Investment Plan, especially along Route 32, where the Overlay Zone has helped open the door to mixed-use and multifamily development. However, because the Overlay largely defers to underlying zoning and provides limited form and design guidance, additional zoning refinements will likely be needed to produce the compact, walkable development pattern envisioned for the corridor's priority nodes.

Finally, it is clear that the physical conditions along the Route 32 and Route 163 corridors matter. The ability of these corridors to attract new investment will depend not only on market fundamentals, but also on whether the Town can help create more coherent, visible, and attractive development environments, through infrastructure upgrades, public realm improvements, zoning flexibility, and coordinated implementation.

The Opportunity

Taken together, these conditions create a clear opportunity for Montville to differentiate itself from neighboring communities by positioning the Route 32 and Route 163 corridors as compact, mixed-use hubs that offer more attainable housing, everyday services, and small-scale employment spaces within a short drive of major regional job centers. By combining public real improvements in select nodes with more directive zoning that supports village-scale hubs, Montville can market itself as a convenient, livable alternative to higher-cost communities, rather than another location filled with auto-oriented strip development. In practical terms, the Investment Plan is a chance for Montville to translate these advantages into a distinct identity and value proposition for residents, businesses, and visitors.

3.
A COMMUNITY-INFORMED APPROACH

This chapter documents the community engagement process that informed the Revive and Renew 163/32 Investment Plan and provides an overview of the priorities and preferences that emerged through this process. Our community engagement program combined broad public outreach, small-group discussions, audience-specific meetings, in-person and online surveys, and ongoing digital communications through a project website and social media channels.

The process was designed to do more than collect general reactions. Because the Investment Plan addresses land use, redevelopment, housing, retail, placemaking, public realm improvements, and long-range implementation, the community engagement program was structured to test how different parts of the two corridors should function, what kinds of uses and development types were seen as appropriate, and what physical character residents and other stakeholders wanted to see in the Investment Plan's key focus areas.

ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

The Route 32 / Route 163 Investment Plan, known to the community as "Revive and Renew 163/32," was designed from the outset as a community-informed planning effort. The Town and the Consultant Team used a layered engagement approach so that community input could be gathered in multiple formats and at multiple points in the planning process. This approach recognized that no single meeting format reaches all audiences equally well, and that effective planning requires both broad participation and more focused conversations with audiences whose perspectives are especially relevant both to the investment focus areas and the Montville community.

The community engagement program therefore combined public information-sharing, stakeholder discussions, interactive workshop activities, an online survey, and continuing outreach through digital platforms, including a designated project website, the Town of Montville website, and social media channels, including Facebook. Early outreach introduced the project and built awareness; later engagement activities tested emerging ideas, gathered more detailed input on uses and character, explored priority focus areas, and helped confirm recurring themes that could inform the plan's final recommendations.

Several principles guided our community engagement strategy throughout the process. First, the process sought to meet people where they were by using a mix of open public events, audience-specific meetings, and online tools. Second, the program was intentionally iterative, allowing input from one phase of work to shape later materials and discussions. Third, community input was treated as a core planning input to be considered alongside market analysis, land use assessment, and physical planning.

Source: Montville Connecticut Patch

STEERING COMMITTEE

A Project Steering Committee was established by the Town of Montville to guide the planning process, review interim work products, and help ensure that the Investment Plan remained grounded in local priorities and implementation realities. The Steering Committee provided continuity over the course of the study and served as an important link between the Consultant Team, Town leadership, and the broader public process.

The Steering Committee met three times during the planning process – in August 2025, October 2025, and February 2026 – and participated in the final presentation to the Town Council and Planning and Zoning Commission on June 8, 2026. At key points in the process, the Steering Committee helped review project goals, discussed opportunities and constraints, reacted to community input, affirmed priority focus areas, and refined the direction of the plan's emerging strategies and implementation framework.

The Steering Committee's role was advisory in that it did not replace public engagement. Instead, its members lent their expertise and experience to help interpret local conditions, identify practical considerations, and ensure that the plan remained connected to municipal decision-making and implementation needs.

ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

The public engagement process was organized as a sequence of complementary activities, each designed to reach different audiences and generate different kinds of input. Together, these events created a feedback cycle in which early engagement built awareness, targeted meetings identified issue-specific perspectives and tested preferences more explictly in a workshop format. Later public presentations reported back on what washeard and how it was shaping the plan, and provided a opportunity for the community to see and comment on whether the plan was evolving in alignment with input.

Community Outreach and Information

Public-facing outreach began in the fall of 2025 with community information-sharing events, including an outreach table at the Montville Farmers Market. These early efforts introduced the goals of the Investment Plan, explained the Route 32 / 163 focus, and encouraged residents and other stakeholders to participate in upcoming meetings and online engagement opportunities.

This initial outreach was important in establishing the project as a long-range planning effort rather than a fixed redevelopment proposal. Public materials emphasized that the plan was intended to create a practical framework for step-by-step implementation over time, not a shovel-ready redevelopment project for immediate construction and not an invitation for uncoordinated growth. That framing helped set expectations and supported more productive participating later in the process.

Audience-Specific Presentations and Discussions

In addition to broad public outreach, the Town and Consultant Team held smaller presentations and discussions tailored to specific audiences in the fall of 2025. These sessions created opportunities for more focused discussion about land use, mobility, housing, services, and tribal and community needs.

One of the more significant early sessions was a meeting with the **Mohegan Tribal leadership** in October 2025. This discussion focused on the project's core goals while also raising a set of coordination questions related to shared visioning, tribal and workforce housing initiatives, land use transitions between trust lands and town-zoned parcels, infrastructure priorities, environmental stewardship, opportunities for community facilities and partnerships, and ways the Investment Plan could better recognize Mohegan heritage in civic spaces.

These issues reinforced the importance of seeing the Route 32 and Route 163 corridors as shared spaces influenced by municipal, community, and tribal relationships. The discussion helped frame our planning effort not only as a local land use exercise but also as an opportunity for stronger coordination around identity of place and long-term stewardship.

The public engagement program also included a presentation and discussion at the **Montville Senior Center** in October 2025. That session helped ensure that the perspectives of older residents were reflected in the planning process, particularly with respect to accessibility, services, safety, Montville history, and the kinds of places that support daily life and aging in the community.

Discovery Session and Workshop

The November 20, 2025 Discovery Session and Workshop at the Community Center at Fair Oaks, with approximately 50 attendees was a major milestone in the engagement process because it moved beyond open-ended discussion and asked participants to respond directly to potential uses, development types, public realm elements, and visual character options for the Town Center, the Cove District, and Palmertown Village. Although the session was open to all members of the community, it placed particular emphasis on the needs and preferences of young residents and young families, recognizing that this is an important and growing segment of Montville's population and a key audience for the Town's long-term planning efforts. Through a combination of facilitated discussion and in-person survey exercises, participants evaluated housing types, building character, public realm features, and suggested uses for the key focus areas.

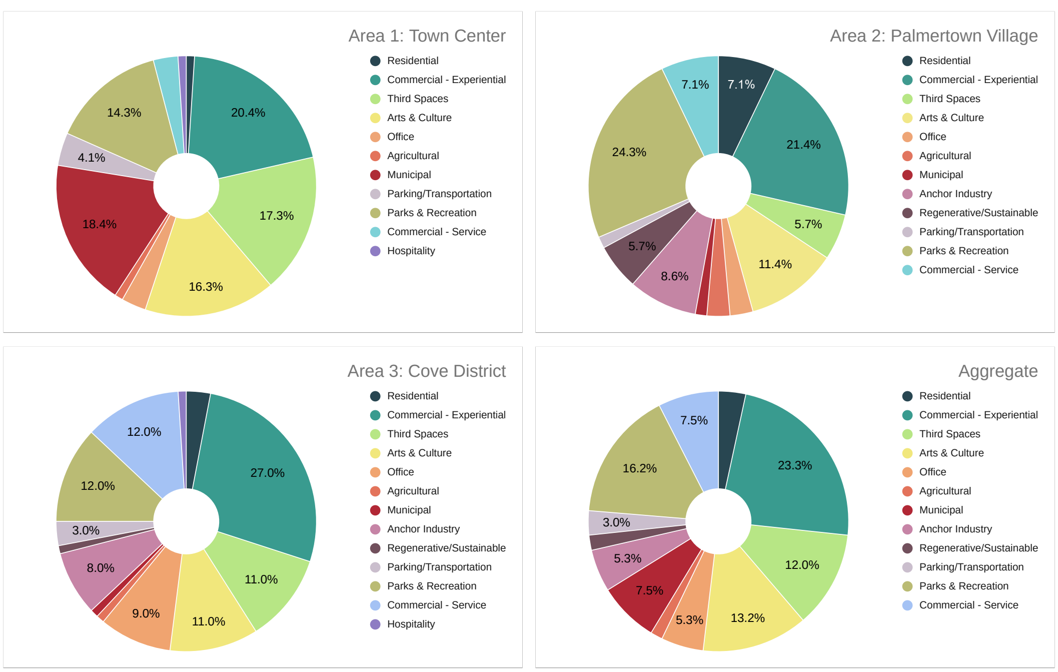
The results provided some of the clearest early direction for the plan. Participants consistently favored active and programmed public spaces over generic or purely passive infrastructure, showed a very high interest in recreational and trails-based passive outdoor uses, and they showed strong interest in spaces that could support gathering, social activity, and year-round use. The Town Center emerged most clearly as the place where civic, cultural, and commercial activity should be concentrated, including a town green or similar social/civic hub.

The workshop also showed support for mixed-use and missing-middle housing approaches, with very little support for high-density apartments. In the Town Center, participants showed relatively strong support for low-density and medium-density mixed-use, as well as townhouses and medium-density apartments, while high-density apartments were the clear low performer. Palmertown Village was more often associated with smaller-scale housing types, while the visual preference results suggested strong interest in village-like character and traditional or naturalistic streetscape treatments.

During this workshop we were also delighted to hear from high school-aged residents who were at the event to provide babysitting, but who became engaged and boldly stated their wish for entrepreneurial spaces where they could explore and built their own businesses and third spaces for high school students to gather in a productive and collaborative manner.

The Discovery Session was especially useful because it linked land use preferences with place and character. It showed that residents were not simply reacting to abstract development categories but were expressing a coherent vision for each focus area node. The Discovery Session was also valuable in helping the Town better understand what younger residents and young families would like to see in Montville, including housing choices, social and recreational spaces, passive outdoor recreation uses and connecting trail systems, and amenities that would make the community more active, welcoming, and supportive of long-term household retention.

Figure 3-1: Discovery Session Survey (In-Person) Results



Source: Discovery Session Survey Respondents (November 20, 2025)

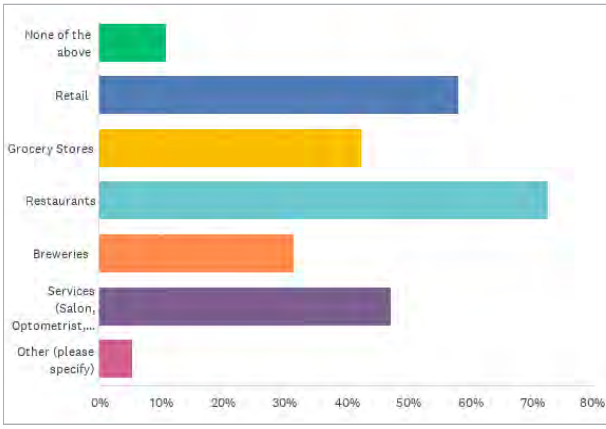
Online Survey

To broaden participation beyond in-person events, the Consultant Team and the Town also conducted an online survey that ran from December 2025 through February 2026 and was reopened in April 2026. The survey allowed residents to participate on their own schedule and provided another opportunity to test community preferences for the three focus hubs.

The survey results as of April 2026, with 259 responses, reinforced the themes that had already emerged through the Discovery Session. For the Town Center, respondents preferred an active, main street-style environment anchored by a Town Green and supported by everyday destinations. Restaurants emerged as the strongest commercial priority, followed by retail, grocery, and services, while coffee shops ranked highly as a preferred third-space use.

Across the focus areas, the online survey again showed stronger support for low- and medium-density housing than for high-density apartment formats. The survey also suggested that traditional aesthetics were generally preferred for public realm placmaking element character, with naturalistic options also well supported, and contemporary treatments less favored.

Figure 3-2: Online Survey Results: Town Center Commercial Uses



- Preference for a Town Center that supports daily life and stays active.
- Restaurants are the clearest commercial priority, backed by retail, grocery, and services.
- Favored “missing middle” approaches (medium-density mixed-use and townhouse / lower-density mixed-use). The demand for low-density mixed-use has increased since last reported.

Source: Online Survey Respondents (December 2025 through April 2026)

Community engagement strongly identified the Town Center as the preferred location for a town green and mixed-use civic hub with a village-like character.

Town Hall Meeting

The **March 26, 2026 Town Hall Meeting**, with over 130 attendees, served as a key point of synthesis in community engagement process. By that time, the project had benefited from targeted presentations, the Discovery Session, and the online survey, allowing the Consultant Team to focus on reporting back, presenting clear design visions for each of the nodes, and showing how prior input was informing the work.

The Town Hall presentation emphasized that the Investment Plan was intended to be strategic, long-term, and implementation oriented. Materials summarized several recurring themes from earlier engagement, including support for active public spaces, medium-density housing, preference for the Town Center as a civic and commercial hub, and broad support for village-like character and traditional streetscape aesthetics, and an active network of passive recreation outdoor space and trails. In this way, the Town Hall presentation functioned as both a public update and a validation point for the plan's emerging framework.

An important issue raised at the Town Hall was concern among a substantial contingent of attendees about the potential change of use the Investment Plan conceptualized for St. John's Roman Catholic Church within the Town Center node. In response, the Consultant Team addressed these concerns directly and explained that the Town Center vision was not dependent on changing the use of the church, but rather to show how the surrounding public realm and mixed-use improvements could complement and strengthen the church campus as a longstanding civic, institutional, and visual anchor in the center of Montville. This discussion helped clarify that the Town Center concept was meant to build on existing community assets and identities, and not to treat the area as a blank slate for redevelopment.

Figure 3-3: Town Hall Meeting (March 26, 2026)

Source: BJH Advisors

COMMUNITY PRIORITIES & PREFERENCES

Several clear themes emerged consistently across the full community engagement process. While individual events emphasized different topics and reached different audiences, the overall pattern of input was notably aligned:

- Residents and other stakeholders expressed a **strong preference for more active, inviting and functional public spaces** along the Route 32 and Route 163 corridors.
- Support for a broader range of housing options with clear preferences about scale and form. **Medium-density formats, including townhouses, 2-3 family buildings, medium density mixed-use and some low-density** were much more preferred than high-density apartment formats.
- Participants consistently **distinguished among the corridor's major nodes and supported a place-based strategy** in which each node serves a different role. The Town Center was most strongly associated with civic identity, gathering spaces, and a more visible mixed-use center anchored by a Town Green.
- Young adult participants (ages 24-40) specifically appreciated the idea that the traditional auto-retail corridor on **Route 32 could be transformed into a mixed use, walkable node** where new residential units located on the public transportation corridor and would also provide access to outdoor recreational amenities at the Cove District and Thames River creating a new type of neighborhood in Montville.
- Support for a **village-like character in Montville's most visible hubs**, especially the Town Center. Traditional design treatments were generally preferred for branding and streetscape features while contemporary design treatments were less popular overall.

Finally, the community engagement process indicated that Montville residents are looking for hubs that better support daily life, local identity, and connected activity. Repeated interest in restaurants (explicitly not fast food), coffee shops, community services, arts and maker spaces, trails, and neighborhood-serving commercial uses suggests that the community is seeking more than isolated development projects. The broader preference is for places where housing, services, recreation, civic life, and local business activity are better connected and more intentionally organized than they are today.