

O'Riordan Migani Architects

Building Community through Architecture. omarchitects.com



February 24, 2020

Transportation Public Hearing on Rail Infrastructure Improvements
Waterbury Branch Line
Legislative Office Building, Room 1E
300 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Sir or Madame:

This is to provide public comment regarding a proposal to relocate the Train Station in Seymour out of the downtown reported by Eugene Driscoll in an 02-23-20 article in the Valley Independent Sentinel.

We are advocate of revitalization of historic downtowns in Connecticut. Our work has been as follows:

- In 1993 we ghost wrote a successful grant application for then First Selectman John O'Toole to the CT DECD. The grant allowed the Town to install new brick sidewalks and provide grants for façade restoration.
- In 1994, when a vacant and blighted 20,000 SF historic property in the downtown was threatened with demolition, we purchased and restored it. See www.beachesblock.com. It took us ten years to restore and tenant the former Seymour Furniture Company because we could not find a bank willing to invest in the downtown.
- In 2002, we purchased the blighted Eckhardt Furniture building in downtown Seymour and with funding from the State DECD, Department of Housing and the Federal Home Bank Board of Boston restored and renovated the property into four retail ground floor stores and twelve upper level senior apartments. The property was brought online in 2008.
- In 2010 we successfully changed the zoning ordinance and obtained approval to build a new 'urban infill' apartment building in downtown Seymour with 26 senior apartments. The project was funded by CT DOH and Capital for Change (C4C). The project was brought online in 2018.
- Our initiatives in downtown Seymour have created an antiques district with eight shops. See <https://www.ctvisit.com/listings/shops-seymour>.
- Businesses which we own or are tenants in our buildings include the following
 - www.omarchitects.com
 - www.seymourantiques.com
 - www.heavenleesent.com/
 - www.thewildflourconfections.com/
 - www.theglasssource.com/
 - www.teawithtracy.squarespace.com/
 - www.genevievesalon.com/
 - www.facebook.com/trishstresuresandmore/
- Our initiative has resulted in a direct investment of 10MM in the downtown since 1994.

There is currently a proposal before the Transportation Committee to relocate the train station out of the downtown to a remote land parcel owned by a private developer. This proposal is supported by the current First Selectman. Seymour has a very small downtown. It is an oasis of historic buildings which has antiques and gift shops, galleries, a bakery, a tea shop, two restaurants and two bars. The district has been slowly been built up over decades. Walk three hundred feet in any direction and you leave the downtown. The train station, which is on Main Street, is the center and heart of this district. **Relocating it out of the downtown would cause severe economic distress to a struggling historic district in order to provide a significant monetary windfall to a private developer.**

Sincerely,
Joseph Migani, AIA
Cc file