

ROUTE 1



CORRIDOR STUDY



**Route 1 Corridor Study Committee
Planning and Zoning Commission**

Town of Stonington, CT
(revised November 8, 2007)



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INTRODUCTION

1

Overview

In December 2006, the Stonington Planning and Zoning Commission formed a Route 1 Study Committee to evaluate and establish a shared vision for the Route 1 corridor throughout Stonington.

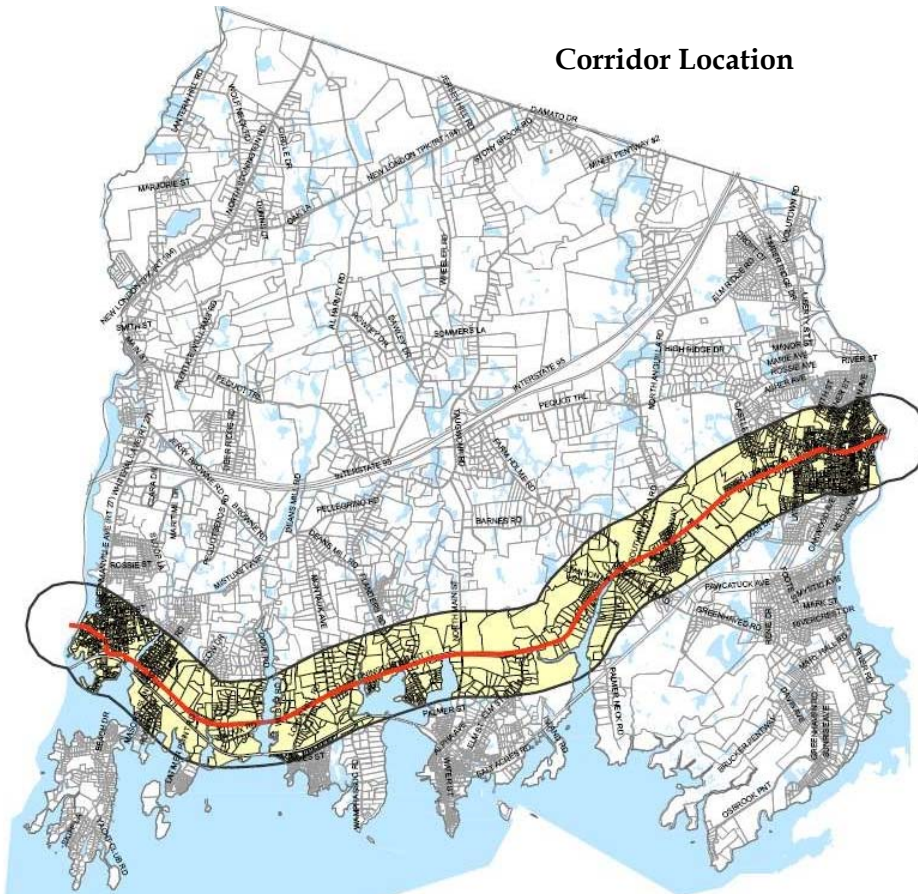
The Study Committee was established in response to concerns about the types and locations of zoning designations in the corridor and the types of development proposals that might result. To allow time for the study to take place, the Planning and Zoning Commission also declared a twelve-month moratorium.

Route 1

U.S. Route 1 is a major transportation corridor which travels up the entire east coast of the United States - a total of 2,377 miles from Key West Florida to Fort Kent, Maine. Prior to the establishment of the Interstate Highway System, Route 1 was the original east coast highway for the nation and elements of the route date back to the 17th century.

Approximately eight miles of this roadway pass through the town of Stonington (from Groton to Westerly, Rhode Island) and serve as the principal connection between the villages of Mystic and Pawcatuck, the borough of Stonington, and the historic Wequetequock area. The roadway has average daily traffic volumes ranging from 6,000 to 23,000 vehicles per day on different segments. Due to the overall development pattern of Stonington and these traffic volumes, portions of Route 1 have developed commercially.

Corridor Location



Issues and Concerns Stated By Residents

As part of the overall process (Committee meetings and public meetings and exercises), the following issues and concerns were identified:

Community Character

- Potential loss of small town charm
- Potential loss of small businesses
- Potential for “strip development”
- Potential for “big box” stores
- Potential for “chain” businesses
- Aesthetics
- Potential intensity of growth permitted by the commercial zones in the Wequetequock area

Environmental Resources

- Protecting coastal resources
- Preserving and enhancing water quality

Economic Development Opportunities

- Desire for grand list growth
- Desire to reduce local property taxes

Transportation and Traffic

- Encouraging bike trails and sidewalks/trails
- Reducing or minimizing traffic
- Reducing or minimizing traffic congestion

Village Resources

- Aesthetics, parking and management issues such as noise

Open Space and Greenways

- Providing for hiking trails
- Preserving scenic views and vistas
- Providing coastal public access
- Preserving undeveloped land

CORRIDOR STRATEGIES

Overall Principles

The following overall principles emerged about how to guide development in the corridor.

Overall Principles

1. Guide design throughout the corridor
2. Carefully limit and manage additional development in the corridor
3. Respect the environment and character of the corridor
4. Take care of what we have (maintain areas and properties)

Geographic Approach

Since the Route 1 corridor contains areas with different characters and intensities, strategies were developed for each type of area:

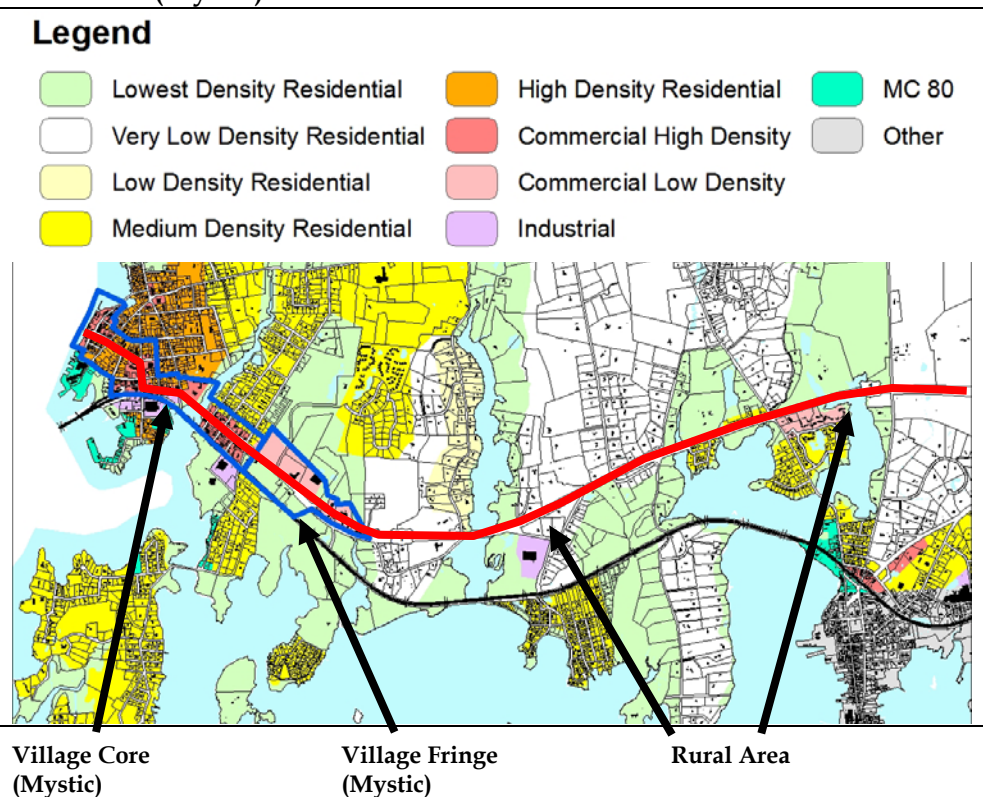
1. Village Core
2. Village Fringe
3. Rural Areas
4. Wequetequock Commercial Area

Corridor Structure

Evaluation of the Route 1 corridor reveals an underlying structure which consists of four main elements:

Village Core	<p>Includes the historic villages of Mystic (ship-building) and Pawcatuck (industrial mills). Stonington Borough (fishing) is also a village core, located outside the main study area.</p> <p>The core areas represent the traditional centers of the villages. These areas typically contain mature development at a higher density and mixture of land uses.</p>
Village Fringe	<p>Consists of areas east of the village of Mystic and west of the village of Pawcatuck which have developed with a mixture of business uses as an extension of the village commercial areas.</p> <p>The village fringe areas lie just beyond the boundaries of the traditional village style settlement pattern. These areas are developing at a moderate density and are more likely to have been recently developed and may exhibit some strip-type development patterns.</p>

West Side (Mystic)



Note that the “village core” and “village fringe” areas are different than what is contained in the 2004 Plan of Conservation and Development (page 5-3) since the more detailed look conducted as part of this study indicated that a different taxonomy was warranted.

Rural

Consists of the large portions of the corridor which are generally rural and residential in nature (although some business uses may be interspersed).

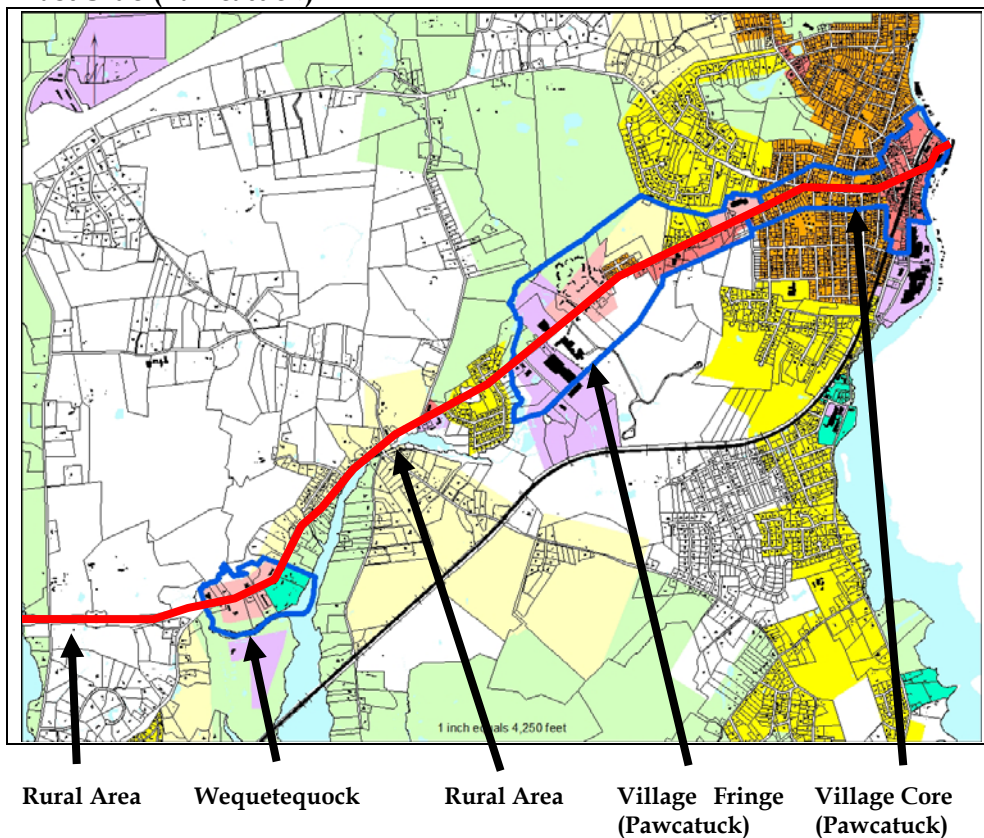
This area is characterized by a predominance of forest, agriculture and low density residential land uses.

Wequetequock

Consists of the commercial zoning districts in and around the initial settlement at Wequetequock Cove.

The Wequetequock commercial area is essentially an anomaly within the rural area which spans the distance between the village areas of Mystic and Pawcatuck.

East Side (Pawcatuck)



Village Districts

Section 8-2j of the Connecticut General Statutes enables the establishment of what are called “village districts.”

A “village district” is a special type of zoning district where, due to the unique character of an area, zoning approvals can clearly consider aesthetic issues such as the design of buildings and sites.

In fact, design review approval is required in a “village district” and a proposal can be denied if the design is inappropriate.

While originally enabled for “villages”, the terminology has outgrown its original name and can now be applied to areas which are recognized in the Plan of Conservation and Development as having unique character, landscape, or historic value.

More information can be found in CGS Section 8-2j or by typing the phrase “Connecticut village district” into an Internet search engine.

Village Core Areas

Locations (see maps)

Mystic
Pawcatuck

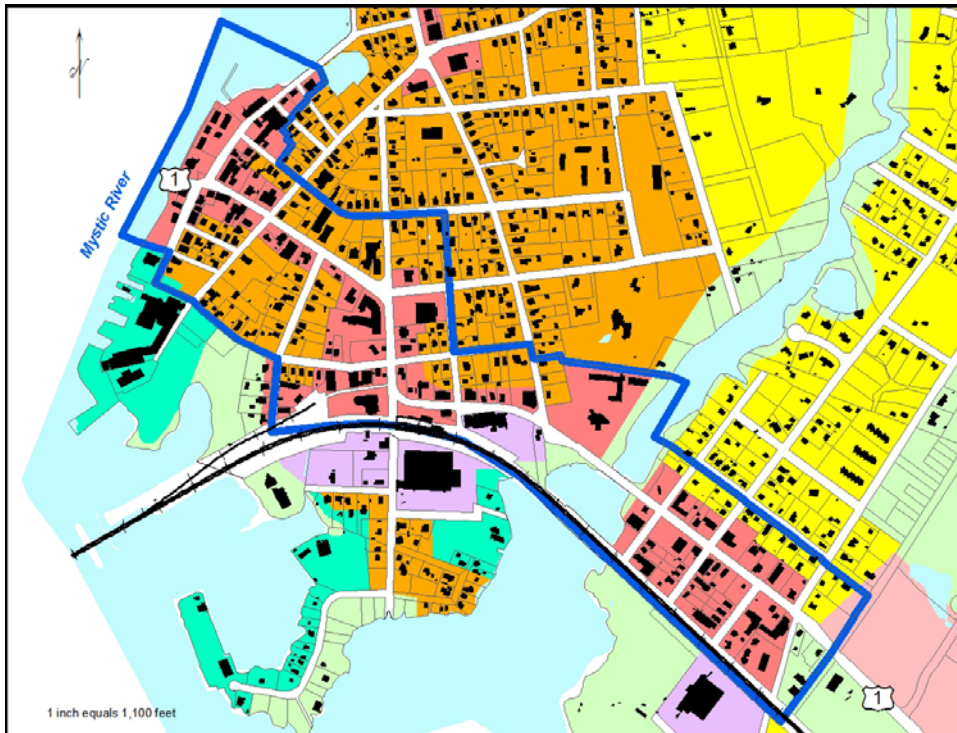
Desired Development Characteristics

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Commercial Areas | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mixed use buildings / 2-3 stories with mass proportionate to height• Traditional New England style architecture• Buildings set close to the street / on-street parking and sidewalks• Street trees and hedges to screen parking areas |
| Residential Areas | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Residential scale and architecture• Traditional New England style architecture• Buildings set close to the street / on-street parking and sidewalks• Street trees |

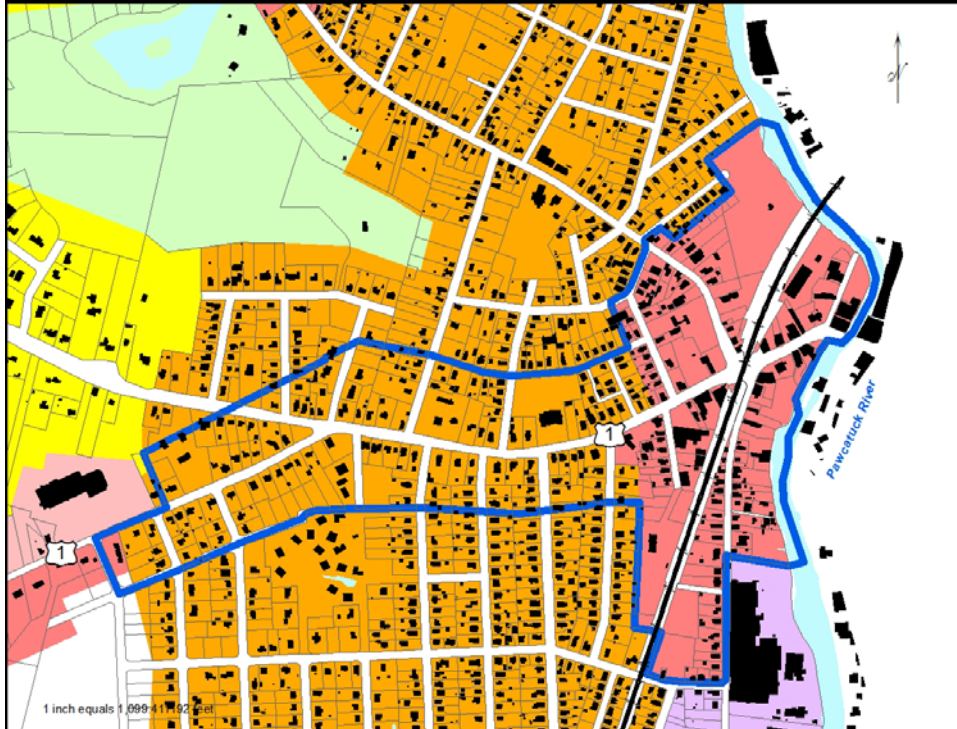
Recommended Strategies

1. Establish design review for commercial uses and consider utilization of a “village district” under CGS Section 8-2j (see sidebar) for mandatory design oversight.
2. Encourage traditional New England architecture in the village core areas - guided by the buildings in the historic districts.
3. Discourage traditional strip-commercial development (parking in front of buildings , drive-through’s and single story buildings).
4. Reinforce and enhance existing streetscapes and promote pedestrian and bicycle connections.
5. Coordinate parking and access arrangements among and between properties to maintain village character and address area needs.
6. Promote coordination between property owners and tenants to ensure activities support and encourage the entire core area.
7. Require village style signage (smaller, pedestrian-oriented).
8. Amend local regulations, as necessary, to ensure they promote the desired development characteristics.

Mystic Village Core



Pawcatuck Village Core



Village Fringe Areas

Locations (see maps)

Mystic (near Mason's Island Road to near Old Stonington Road East)
Pawcatuck (near Lathrop Avenue to Anguilla Brook)

Desired Development Characteristics

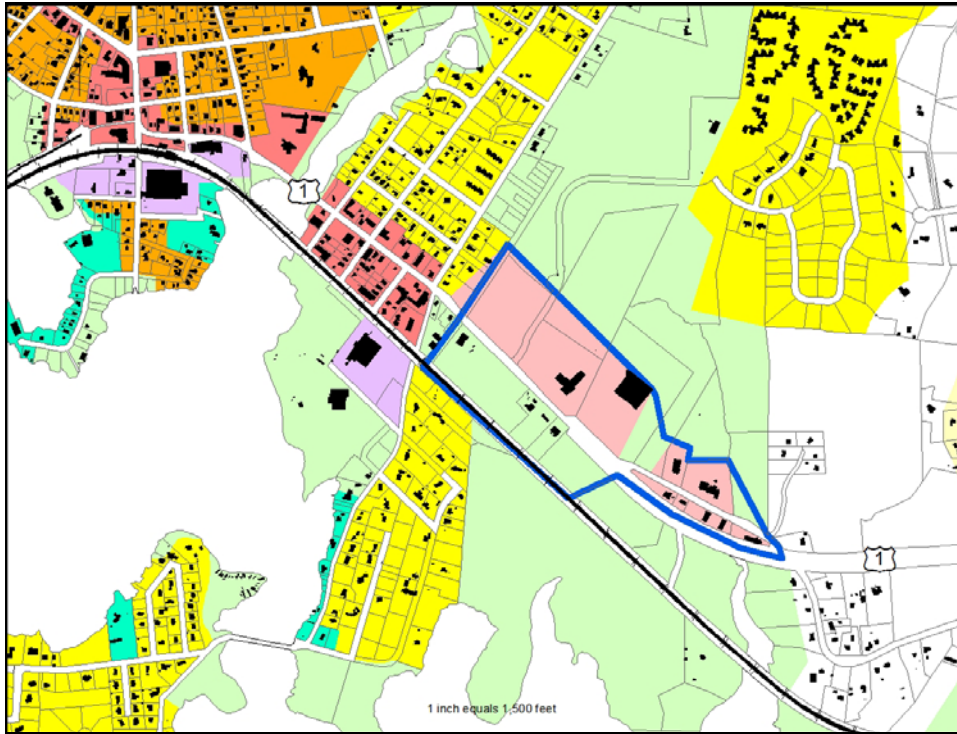
- Commercial Areas**
- Combination of mixed use buildings and some single use buildings
 - Typical New England architectural styles and scale
 - 1½ - 2 story buildings located not too far from street
 - Small, landscaped parking lots if visible from street

- Residential Areas**
- Residential scale and architecture
 - Typical New England architectural styles and scale
 - Buildings located not too far from street

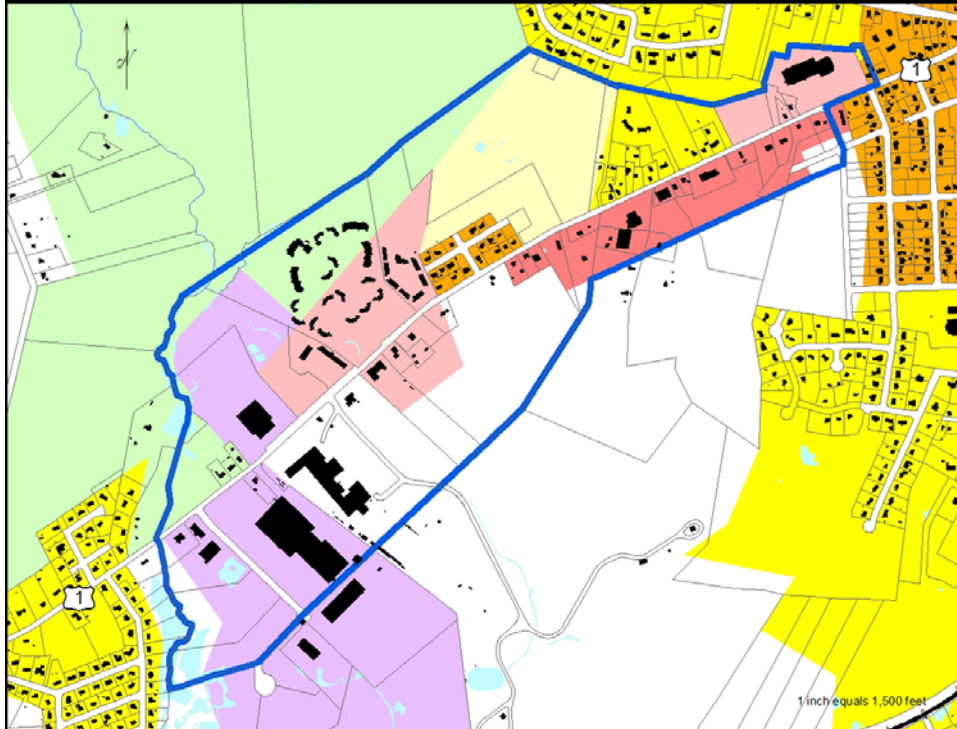
Recommended Strategies

1. Establish design review for commercial uses and consider utilization of "village districts" per CGS Section 8-2j (see sidebar on page 8) for mandatory design oversight.
2. Amend local regulations, as necessary, to make areas more "village-like" and less "strip-like".
3. Ensure that parking lots visible from the street are small and well landscaped.
4. Protect natural resources and preserve scenic views and features.
5. Promote pedestrian and bicycle connections.
6. Coordinate parking and access arrangements among and between properties to address area needs.
7. Amend local regulations, as necessary, to ensure they promote the desired development characteristics.

Mystic Village Fringe



Pawcatuck Village Fringe



Rural Areas

Location (see maps)

Near Old Stonington Road East to Anguilla Brook

Does not include Wequetequock Commercial Area (see page 14)

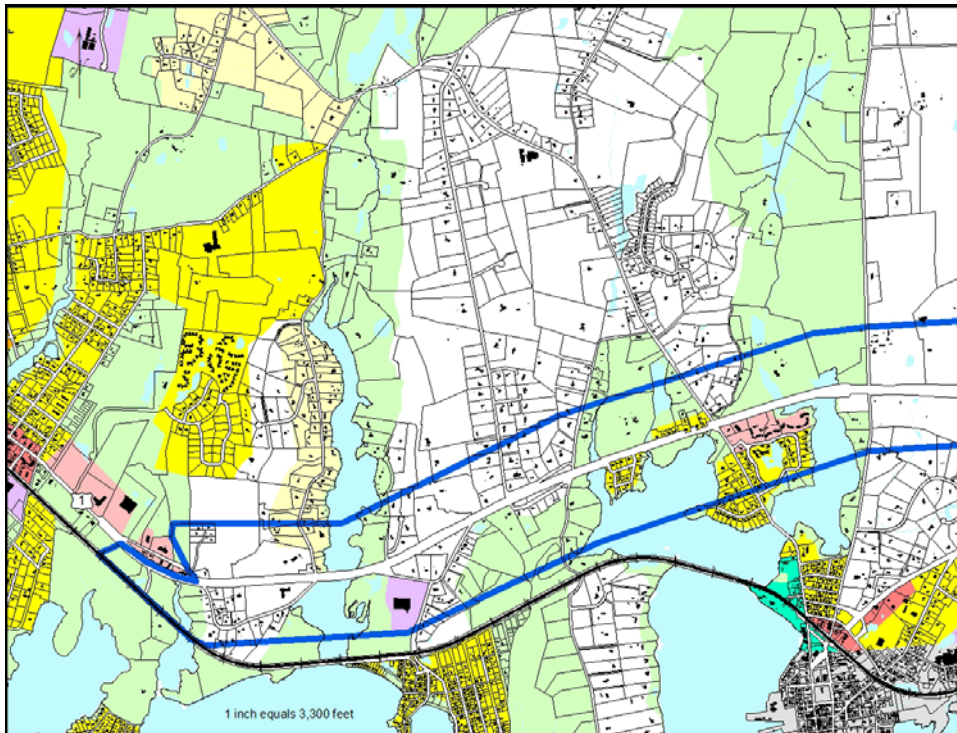
Desired Development Characteristics

- Commercial Areas**
- Enhance character of existing commercial areas at:
 - Quiambog Cove / Wilcox Road (office building)
 - Lord's Hill Road (industrial building)
 - Quannaduck Cove / Flanders Road (gas station / office building)
 - South Anguilla Road (office, industrial buildings)
- Residential Areas**
- Residential uses in modest New England style buildings
 - Meadows, farmland, forest land, fences, stone walls
 - Scenic water views

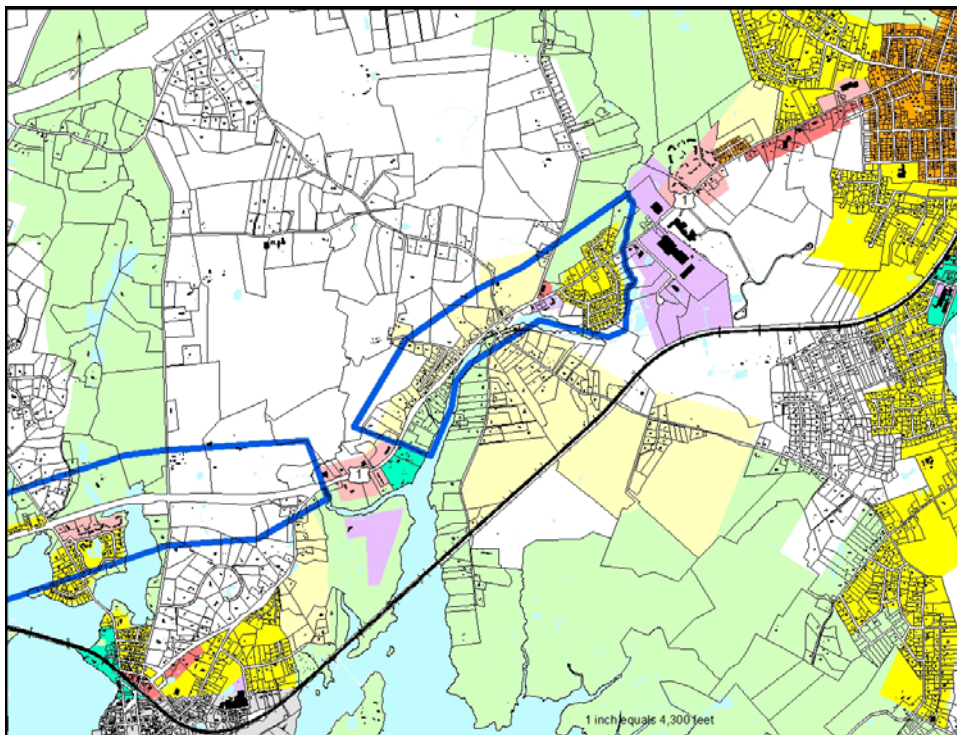
Recommended Strategies

1. Do not expand business zoning in the rural areas.
2. Adopt an overlay zone along the Route 1 corridor to:
 - a. Require design review,
 - b. Promote flexible residential patterns, and
 - c. Preserve scenic views and features.
3. Aggressively protect natural resources.
4. Aggressively encourage acquisition and/or preservation of open space.
5. Recommend that the Town adopt an "open space assessment" policy under CGS 12-107e which will provide for a reduced assessment for residentially zoned property within the Route 1 corridor for that portion of the property in excess of the minimum lot size requirement.
6. Promote bicycle connections.
7. Promote designation of Route 1 as a scenic road by the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT).

Rural Area - Western Parts



Rural Area - Eastern Parts



Utilities

As indicated on page 25 of this report:

“Providing utilities does not automatically mean that development has to expand at a larger scale, particularly if the utility is necessary to protect the environment or to support the existing land uses. Coordination among the utilities and zoning scheme, along with sound planning can control how growth occurs, rather than ignoring infrastructure improvements to control the growth. Interconnection of similar utilities enables system redundancy and provides a higher level of service for the community and should be encouraged.

Wequetequock

Location (see map)

Wequetequock (essentially consisting of the areas currently zoned General Commercial (GC-60) and Marine Commercial (MC-80)).

Desired Development Characteristics

During the Route 1 Corridor Study, it became apparent that the current zoning districts in Wequetequock (GC-60 and MC-80) allow a variety of uses at a scale and intensity that is not desired for this area.

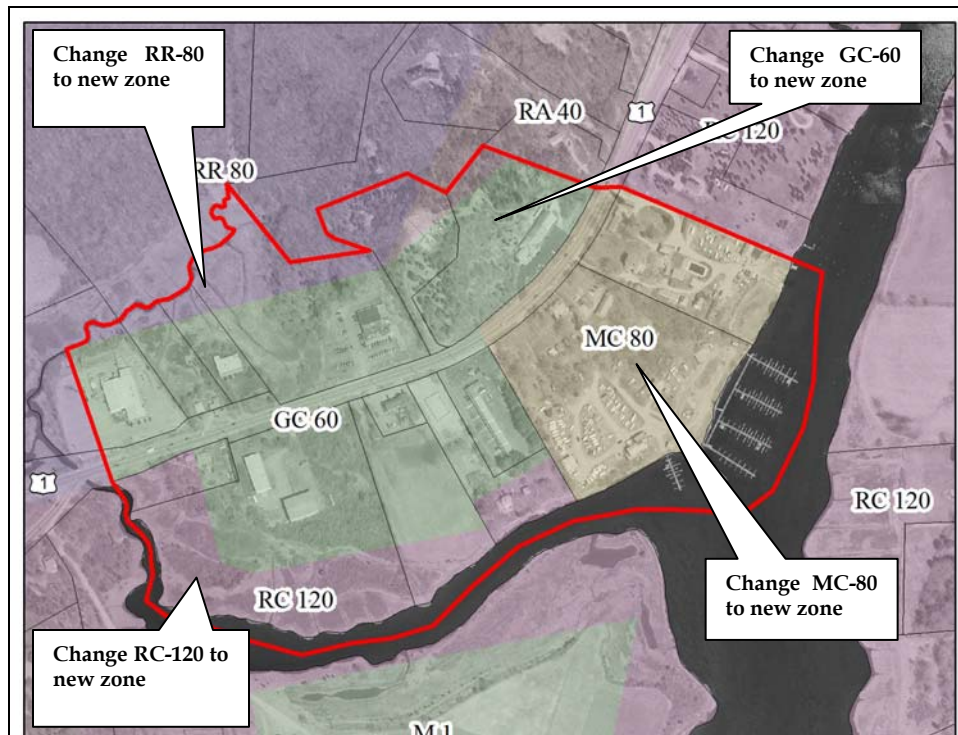
Further, since water and sewer services are not currently available in Wequetequock, the overall density of the development in Wequetequock will need to be compatible with the natural carrying capacity of the land. This is also consistent with the State of Connecticut *Conservation and Development Plan 2005-2010*.

To encourage appropriate development, it is recommended that a new zoning district be established for Wequetequock which would provide for a cluster of mixed business uses, residential uses, and water dependent uses – all at a small scale and with a low to moderate level of intensity and appropriate character.

Due to its distinctive landscape and character, the Wequetequock area should also be considered for designation as a “village district” (see sidebar on page 8) in order to ensure that the design, relationship and compatibility of structures, signs, roadways, street hardware and other objects in public view all contribute to its overall character. Any new development should occur in a way that protects and enhances the character and scale of Wequetequock.

Designation as a “village district” (see sidebar on page 8) would give the Planning and Zoning Commission, with the assistance of the Design Review Committee, the opportunity to evaluate the design of a building and site and recommend changes in order to make it more compatible with the desired character of the area. Initially, the design criteria used in the Wequetequock area could include those identified in the “Form Matters” report (2005). Over time, the Design Review Committee should be encouraged to develop Wequetequock-specific design objectives that will help ensure that building and site design promotes the New England character desired for this area. Such guidelines should also help promote integrated development of adjacent parcels, sharing of access, shared parking, reduction of curb cuts, pedestrian inter-connections, and other shared amenities.

Wequetequock



Recommended Strategies

1. Establish a new “Wequetequock” zone to provide for a cluster of mixed uses at a small scale and with a low to moderate level of intensity and appropriate character provided that the “Wequetequock” zone is designated as a “village district” as authorized by CGS Section 8-2j (see sidebar on page 8).
2. The Wequetequock zone would, in no way, be a candidate for a “floating zone” (see sidebar).
3. Require that all uses be approved through a Special Permit process to ensure that future development occurs in ways which are appropriate for the area.
4. Require that appropriate landscaping and buffers be established to:
 - enhance the character along Route 1,
 - protect coastal, scenic and environmental resources, and
 - protect any directly abutting residential zones and uses.
5. Continue to protect natural resources, coastal resources, scenic views, and provide for public access.
6. Promote pedestrian and bicycle connections.

Village District

Regardless of how the future zoning for the Wequetequock commercial area is resolved, the Planning and Zoning Commission should ensure that a “village district” as provided in CGS Section 8-2j is established in the Wequetequock area.

Floating Zone

Section 1.2.2 of the Stonington Zoning Regulations defines a “floating zone” as follows:

A floating zone is a zoning district that is added to the zoning law but that “floats” until an application is made to apply the new district to an eligible parcel. Parcel eligibility is identified within the district language and is related to particular characteristics. The zoning map amendment required to designate an area includes a master plan depicting the proposed use of the subject property as part of the review process. Upon the approval of the application, the zoning map is amended to apply the floating district to the subject parcel(s) of land.

Suggested Text

The following text is intended only to illustrate possible considerations for adoption of a Wequetequock-specific zoning district.

It is not intended to prescribe or mandate specific provisions.

Further, it is only intended to apply to the commercially-zoned areas of Wequetequock.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR WEQUETEQUOCK ZONING

Purpose

The zone should provide for a cluster of mixed business uses, residential uses, and water dependent uses – all at a small scale and with a low to moderate level of intensity.

Village District (see sidebar on page 8)

The Wequetequock zone shall be designated as a “village district” as authorized under CGS Section 8-2j. This designation will enable the Planning and Zoning Commission, as part of an application, to require a proposed development to be in harmony with design guidelines.

Buffering Considerations

1. A non-infringement area of at least 100 feet from tidal marsh and significant natural resources (such as inland wetlands, estuary shoreline and bodies of water) shall be provided, excepting only water dependent uses (such as marina, boat and yachting facilities) after necessary State, Federal, and local permits are acquired.
2. In addition, adequate landscaped area / buffer shall be provided from commercial or marine use to a residential use or zone.

Permitted Principal Uses (By Special Permit)

It is recommended that all principal uses be required to obtain a Special Permit in order to ensure appropriate development in the Wequetequock village area.

1. Single-family housing in a village-type setting.
2. Multiple family housing in a village-type setting on common land.
3. Residential mixed use in accordance with the provisions of Section 6.6.21.
4. Retail/wholesale sales buildings (including bait and tackle sales).
5. Office buildings.
6. Restaurants use less than 5,000 square feet (no fast food drive-ins).
7. Auto sales provided the use was in operation as of <<effective date>>.
8. Hotels and motels in accordance with the provisions of Section 6.6.10.
9. Liquor sales for consumption on and off premises. See Section 6.6.16 for on-premises consumption.
10. Medical and veterinary clinics.
11. Buildings for public assembly.
12. Day care centers.
13. Wellness centers.
14. Marina/yacht club including boat storage as an accessory use.
15. Outdoor boat sales accessory to a marina.
16. Municipal facilities.
17. Public utilities, structures and facilities.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR WEQUETEQUOCK ZONING (continued)

Accessory Uses

1. Off-street parking incidental to a permitted use.
2. Storage of goods or supplies incidental to a permitted use.
3. When accessory to a residential use:
 - a. Home occupations.
 - b. Family day care home.
 - c. Recreational uses / structures such as swimming pools and tennis courts.
4. When accessory to a commercial use, recreational facilities such as pools and tennis courts.
5. When accessory to a permitted marina use:
 - a. Boat repair facilities.
 - b. Boat livery.
 - c. Seasonal marina structures, subject to Section 7.18.

Potential Bulk Considerations (for refinement by PZC)

Minimum Lot Area	60,000 SF
Minimum Frontage	100 Feet
Minimum Front Yard	50 Feet
Minimum Side Yard	25 Feet
Minimum Rear Yard	50 Feet ¹¹
Maximum Building Floor Area	15,000 square feet
Maximum Building Height	30 Feet
Maximum Floor Area Ratio	N/ A
Maximum Impervious Coverage	75% (see Section 7.5)
Maximum Effective Impervious Coverage	60% (see Section 7.5)

See note #11 in Zoning Regulation Section 5.2.1

Possible Design Standards

While the Special Permit and “village district” process (see sidebar on page 8) may be sufficient, additional design guidelines could be included using the format and standards in Section 4.9 of the current Zoning Regulations as a guide.

3

OTHER STRATEGIES

Protect Environmental Resources

Due to its proximity to the coastline, Route 1 abuts and crosses critical wetland and watercourse areas. As a result, development along the Route 1 corridor is placed in close proximity to these features.

In some instances these developments have encroached upon wetlands, either as part of a permitting process or prior to the adoption of environmental protection regulations. Regardless, the impact to the resource is an area of concern for the community and additional encroachments should be heavily scrutinized.

New development and redevelopment should utilize context sensitive solutions, best management practices (BMPs) and low impact design, because it is recognized that the largest impacts are caused by unmanaged stormwater runoff. Appropriately designed redevelopment provides the community with the opportunity to integrate current environmental management practices into the site development process, thereby reducing environmental impacts.

Recommended Strategies

1. Heavily scrutinize environmental encroachments and impacts to natural resources.
2. Require new development to utilize best management practices (BMPs) and low impact design in order to reduce environmental impacts.

Preserve Scenic Views and Resources

Scenic views are important to the overall character of the Route 1 corridor and should be protected. Route 1 provides several opportunities to view Long Island Sound and associated coves. In many instances, these views are across private property and, therefore, may not be protected at the present time.

Protection of these views may be enhanced by the adoption of a scenic view overlay district to ensure that structure placement is sensitive to these views, while providing private property owners with their rights to develop.

Reduce Grading - Recent developments along the corridor have involved significant grading to enable the construction of roads and housing and this has detracted from the overall character. Stonington should evaluate alternative development options to prevent this degree of topographic manipulation in the future.

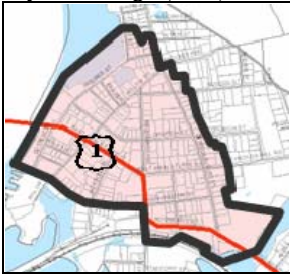
Limit Pavement Width - Much of the character of Route 1 is affected by the width of the pavement. The Town should encourage the Department of Transportation (CTDOT) to limit or reduce pavement widths along Route 1 for vehicular use (but reserve pavement for bicycle and/or pedestrian use, where appropriate).

Preserve Extra ROW Width As Open Space - Large state highway rights-of-way, resulting from the realignment of Route 1, add to the scenic quality of the corridor and should be kept as open space and in a natural state to the extent feasible. The Town should encourage CTDOT to consider a long-term management strategy that includes open space preservation for these areas (not exclusive of utility needs).

Recommended Strategies

1. Continue to protect scenic views.
2. Consider adoption of a scenic view overlay district to ensure that structure placement is sensitive to scenic views, while providing private property owners with their rights to develop.
3. Evaluate alternative development options to prevent excessive grading ("cut" and "fill") in the future.
4. Encourage CTDOT to limit pavement widths along Route 1, as appropriate.
5. Encourage CTDOT to consider a long-term management strategy that includes open space preservation for areas with excess ROW width.

Mystic Bridge (1979)



Mechanic Street (1988)



Protect Historic Buildings and Sites

The Route 1 corridor is flanked by two districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places (Mystic Bridge in Mystic and Mechanic Street in Pawcatuck). As a result of this designation, income-producing properties are eligible for federal tax credits if they are renovated in accordance with federal guidelines.

Establishment of “village districts” (see sidebar on page 8) in these areas will help to maintain the historic character of each area. In Mystic, potential threats include the encroachment of commercial uses into residential neighborhoods, demolition of historic structures, and the possible widening of Route 1 (which is not currently proposed or planned). Roadway improvements in Pawcatuck may also be a concern to the character of this area.

Recommended Strategies

1. Promote the use of federal tax credits for income-producing properties which are renovated in accordance with federal guidelines.
2. Establish “village districts” (see sidebar on page 8) to help to maintain the historic character of each area.
3. Strive to minimize potential threats to historic character.

Preserve Open Space and Establish Greenways

The Stonington Open Space Plan, created by the Conservation Commission, outlines open space strategies and priorities for the community. This document will serve as a useful guide for evaluating open space acquisitions within the Route 1 corridor as well as elsewhere in Stonington.

During the Route 1 planning process, there was strong support for providing bicycle and pedestrian paths in the Route 1 corridor. Ideally, a safe bicycle facility would be separated from the road system and typically, these corridors have become classified as “greenways”. While no greenways are currently established within Stonington, the core greenway networks should focus on existing transportation corridors and river/stream corridors. Creating a safe pedestrian and bicycle connections may be most effectively provided along these corridors.

Recommended Strategies

1. Strive to preserve open space within the Route 1 corridor.
2. Seek ways to provide bicycle and pedestrian paths in the Route 1 corridor, especially through “greenways”.

Provide For Coastal Public Access And Uses

Stonington is committed to enhancing opportunities for coastal public access points via the Connecticut Coastal Area Management Act (CAM). Currently, the only public access points located along the Route 1 Corridor are in the village centers of Mystic (Mystic River Park and S&P Oyster Company along the Mystic River) and Pawcatuck (Pawcatuck Park along the Pawcatuck River).

The Town's most successful public access acquisition projects have resulted from the land use permitting process. Often, the location and type of access required as part of the permitting process is reactionary and may not satisfy long-term planning objectives, as they are not well expressed at this time. While aggressive efforts to establish public access should continue, this goal should be balanced with environmental impact so that public access does not compromise environmental quality.

There is no direct commercial access to Long Island Sound in the Route 1 corridor, although there are numerous ports of call for private vessels. However, encouraging the proper form of redevelopment in certain areas may provide unique opportunities to bring people to the water, including the Mystic River and the Pawcatuck River, and the Town should welcome and participate whenever the occasion presents itself.

In addition, Stonington should continue to provide for water-dependent uses in waterfront areas in accordance with the coastal management policies of the state.

Recommended Strategies

1. Continue to seek opportunities to enhance coastal public access.
2. Develop a strategic plan for coastal public access.
3. Establish goals and objectives for acquiring the appropriate types of coastal public access to serve the community's needs.
4. Explore whether the opportunity to accept mitigation for public access is allowable, when the access could compromise environmental quality.
5. Promote opportunities to bring people to the water, including the Mystic River and the Pawcatuck River.
6. Require water-dependent uses in appropriate locations along the corridor.
7. Encourage water-dependent uses to provide public access.

Calm Traffic

Historically, transportation improvement projects implemented by the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) have focused on moving vehicles and have paid less attention to pedestrians and bicyclists. Should CTDOT consider any roadway improvement projects in the future, the Town should encourage or require CTDOT to also provide for pedestrian movements and, in village core areas, adequate on-street parking which is appropriate for village centers.

Recommended Strategies

1. Encourage or require CTDOT to provide for pedestrian movements and adequate on-street parking appropriate for village centers should they consider any roadway improvement projects in the future.

Support Pedestrians and Bicycles

While areas in downtown Mystic and Pawcatuck have high levels of pedestrian activity with sidewalks on both sides of the road and multiple crosswalks, other areas do not have any pedestrian improvements. Stonington needs to develop a strategy for providing for pedestrian improvements (especially where commercial and/or higher density residential development exists) and communicate this to CTDOT and others.

Bicycles are also an important consideration. Mystic is a popular tourist destination and a very attractive place to ride a bicycle. Due to the inherent conflict which arises when both bicycles and vehicles use the same roadway, Stonington should seek to establish appropriate bicycle facilities. Stonington should also prepare a town-wide bicycle plan and, in the increase motorist awareness of bicyclists via a "Share the Road" signage and education campaign.

Recommended Strategies

1. Develop a strategy for providing for pedestrian improvements (especially where commercial and/or higher density residential development exists) and communicate this to CTDOT and others.
2. Seek to establish appropriate bicycle facilities, as appropriate.
3. Prepare a town-wide bicycle plan.
4. Increase motorist awareness of bicyclists via a "Share the Road" signage and education campaign.
5. Attention should be paid to ensuring safe pedestrian crossing points at existing key intersections and pedestrian destinations.

Promote Bus Transit

Stonington is serviced by the Southeast Area Transit (SEAT) District, which provides bus service within the community and the Southeastern Connecticut Area. The service is currently limited to a route along Interstate 95, with stops at Exits 90 and 92. The Town should approach SEAT to expand this service with a connection between Mystic and Pawcatuck along the Route 1 Corridor to complete public transportation connections to the developed areas of the town.

Recommended Strategies

1. Approach SEAT to expand local bus service with a connection between Mystic and Pawcatuck along the Route 1 Corridor.

Promote Rail Transit

Stonington has a railroad station in Mystic (adjacent to Route 1) and there is also a railroad station in Westerly, Rhode Island (just east of Pawcatuck). These railroad stations are under-used resources and expansion of their potential should be explored.

Over the next two decades, transit-oriented development will dominate decisions about where people will choose to live, work, and play. The historic Mystic Train Depot creates a tremendous opportunity to attract both visitors and residents to the Mystic area in a way that is not reliant on the automobile. The same holds true for Pawcatuck.

Whenever and wherever an opportunity presents itself to encourage any transit-oriented development in the villages of Mystic and Pawcatuck, the town should engage in the process with whatever means it has at its disposal to assist such a development - from participating in the dialogue to procuring and providing resources.

For example, discussion is underway about extending commuter rail service from Boston southerly to Westerly and the possible establishment of transit-oriented development (TOD) to support this extension. If this extension occurs, a pedestrian link across the Pawcatuck River from Pawcatuck to Westerly could be a critical element to enable capitalization of this resource.

At the same time, the State of Connecticut is considering expanding the railroad service (frequency and/or extent) for areas east of New Haven. While the current service extends only to New London, it might be possible to extend this service to Stonington (Mystic Station), especially if it could be supported through the addition of transit-oriented development options around the Mystic train station. Parking at the Mystic Station would require a solution, which may involve the utilization of Amtrak land behind the fire station. The Town should actively participate in such discussions to ensure that the village of Mystic is included.

Recommended Strategies

1. Explore ways to increase the potential of railroad service in Mystic and Westerly.
2. Consider establishing a pedestrian link across the Pawcatuck River from Pawcatuck to Westerly to support transit use.
3. Explore and support ways to extend railroad service from New Haven to Stonington (Mystic Station).
4. Investigate ways to support transit-oriented development options around the Mystic train station.

Manage Public Utility Expansion

Stonington's public utility infrastructure along the Route 1 Corridor involves a number of unconnected or poorly connected systems. Portions of Route 1 have sewer, water and gas, while others have no access to utilities. Portions of Route 1 in Pawcatuck are served by the Pawcatuck Sewer Treatment Plant, the Westerly Water Company and Yankee Gas. Portions of Mystic are served by both the Mystic Sewer Treatment Plant and the Borough Sewer Treatment Plant, with water service from Aquarion Water Company, as are areas along Route 1 and the southern intersection of Route 1A.

Access to public utilities enables redevelopment opportunities at a different scale than what currently exists, therefore it is important that the community establish how, when and why expansions will be authorized, especially in light of stresses that these systems have recently experienced related to permitting, supply or capacity issues.

Providing utilities does not automatically mean that development has to expand at a larger scale, particularly if the utility is necessary to protect the environment or to support the existing land uses. Coordination among the utilities and zoning scheme, along with sound planning can control how growth occurs, rather than ignoring infrastructure improvements to control the growth. Interconnection of similar utilities enables system redundancy and provides a higher level of service for the community and should be encouraged.

Recommended Strategies

1. Establish how, when and why utility expansions will be authorized in order to carefully manage development scale and utility capacity.
2. Coordinate utilities and with the overall zoning scheme in order to control how and where growth occurs.
3. Encourage interconnection of utilities for system redundancy and improved levels of service.

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EMERGING ISSUES

Seek to Establish Façade Improvement Funding

Building appearance contributes significantly to overall community character. In several areas, there are property owners who want to make improvements to their property, but do not presently have the financial capacity. A façade improvement program is a tool to enable aesthetic enhancements that add value to the community in numerous ways, including additional tax revenue from increased building values. Stonington should seek to establish a façade improvement program.

Strive To Remove Billboards

Route 1 contains several non-conforming billboards. The placement and overall lack of aesthetic quality of these signs detract from the overall corridor. While difficult to removal legislatively, the Town should work with billboard property owners to find a reasonable alternative to the existing conditions.

Promote Pedestrian-Oriented Mixed-Use Development

Both Mystic and Pawcatuck were developed with a pedestrian-oriented pattern. Although this pattern was diluted for many years due to the focus on the automobile, new attention is being paid to promoting pedestrian oriented patterns. Stonington should do the same.

Pawcatuck has the potential to become more of a tourist/entertainment oriented downtown - as does downtown Westerly. This trend should be encouraged and can be supported, in part, by integrating additional housing opportunities into the downtown and enabling other businesses to succeed in this environment. To illustrate this point, it is unique within southeastern Connecticut that there is a supermarket located within walking distance of downtown Pawcatuck.

Promote Parking Solutions

A common complaint in village centers is “the lack of parking.” Often, it is learned that there is adequate parking available, just not in visible places that is most convenient relative to the traveler’s destination. Many village centers simply need better directions to existing spaces, and Pawcatuck is an example of an adequate supply with poor guidance as to where spaces exist.

Parking in the village cores is an important issue, especially when the demand for commercial use parking “invades” the residential neighborhoods. Many options exist and should be utilized in conjunction with one another to resolve parking management issues, whether myth or reality. These options might include the following examples:

1. Limiting on-street parking in residential neighborhoods to “resident only” by utilizing a sticker program with enforcement through towing (rather than fines) allowing the police to focus on other town issues.
2. Another option may be to limit vehicle direction to one-way, for example:
 - Holmes Street – one-way from Route 27 to Route 1.
 - Cottrell Street – one-way from Route 1 to Washington Street.
 - Washington Street – one-way from Cottrell Street to Willow Street.
 - Willow Street – one-way from Washington Street to Broadway Avenue.
 - Broadway Avenue – one-way from Route 27 to Route 1.
3. Another option for consideration may be a “fee-in-lieu-of-parking” as authorized by the Connecticut General Statutes. This tool allows business owners to pay a fee rather than providing on-site parking, and the money can be used for transportation-related improvements in the affected neighborhood (municipal parking, bus shelters and route, etc.) This provides all land users with the same responsibility to manage parking issues.

Redevelopment opportunities revolve around parking and the perceptions surrounding access to parking. Most downtown parking issues arise due to conflicts between different classes of users. Employees for example tend to require the least amount of access to their vehicle once it is parked, but most employers (as do the zoning regulations) desire to have on-site parking for the employees. The business employee is the user class that is the least susceptible to alienation due to parking, but is equally accommodated.

Promote Transit Services

Stonington should support the establishment of transit services in the community. One option would be to consider re-introducing the Mystic Shuttle. While an expensive option, with limited opportunities for non-municipal funding, a successful program must establish a consistent and reliable daily schedule and should consider:

- Route map with stops clearly identified.
- Evening runs through midnight on Thursday through Saturday.
- Satellite parking facilities along Mystic Shuttle Route.
- Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) zoning regulations.

In addition, if SEAT establishes bus routes along Routes 27 and 1, then the Town and others can work with business owners to encourage employees to park remotely and use SEAT buses or the Mystic Shuttle (if available) or to park remotely and walk.

Relocate Commuter Parking Areas

The Commuter Parking Lot on Route 1 at the intersection of North Main Street is a facility that is not primarily used by commuters. This parking lot is the frequent source of illegal uses and the town should encourage its removal. The commuter parking lot at the intersection of Route 95, Taugwonk Road and Pequot Trail is better situated to meet commuter needs.

Enhance Pedestrian Connections

To reduce parking issues, it is critical that residential areas surrounding a downtown have good pedestrian connections to facilitate social connections within the village core. These social connections strengthen the sense of place that exists within the community.

In Pawcatuck, it is important that there be strong pedestrian connectivity with Westerly, beyond the current connection at Route 1. The proposed pedestrian bridge from Coggswell Street to Westerly is a critical element in this respect, as is a connection under the Amtrak railway right of way. It is also important that residential neighborhoods to the north and west of the village center are also well connected.

The same holds true for Mystic. In addition to connecting residential areas to the village core, providing connections between the Mystic Train Station and parking areas, water access, and the downtown village core is also crucial.

IMPLEMENTATION

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Implementation is always the key step of the planning process.

The primary responsibility for implementation of the strategies and recommendations in this report rests with the Planning and Zoning Commission. Many of these recommendations and strategies will also benefit from the assistance of the Design Review Committee. These efforts will also be supported by Town Staff.

The following charts are intended to aid in implementation by providing a mechanism for the Planning and Zoning Commission and/or the Plan Implementation Committee to recommend who should be responsible for doing what and when it should be completed by.

Tasks and Policies

The following tables outline two types of recommendations - tasks and policies.

Tasks are activities which can be clearly defined and can be monitored in terms of implementation. Such activities lend themselves to target completion dates.

Policies, on the other hand, are continuing types of activities that may never be fully implemented. Such activities are difficult to monitor in terms of implementation and do not lend themselves to target completion dates.

In the following tables, policies have a diagonal slash in the column for the target completion date.

Corridor Strategies

Village Core Areas

What	Who	Target Completion Date	Done
1. Establish design review for commercial uses and consider utilization of "village districts".			<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Encourage traditional New England architecture in the village core.			
3. Discourage traditional strip-commercial development patterns.			
4. Reinforce and enhance existing streetscapes and promote pedestrian and bicycle connections.			
5. Coordinate parking and access arrangements among and between properties.			
6. Promote coordination between property owners and tenants.			
7. Require village style signage (smaller, pedestrian-oriented).			<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Amend local regulations to ensure they promote the desired development characteristics.			<input type="checkbox"/>

Village Fringe Areas

What	Who	Target Completion Date	Done
1. Establish design review for commercial uses and consider utilization of "village districts".			<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Amend local regulations, as necessary, to make areas more "village-like" and less "strip-like".			<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Ensure that parking lots visible from the street are small and well landscaped.			
4. Protect natural resources and preserve scenic views and features.			
5. Promote pedestrian and bicycle connections.			
6. Coordinate parking and access arrangements among and between properties.			
7. Amend local regulations to ensure they promote the desired development characteristics.			<input type="checkbox"/>

Rural Areas

What	Who	Target Completion Date	Done
1. Do not expand business zoning in the rural areas.			
2. Adopt an overlay zone to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Require design review, b. Promote flexible residential patterns, and c. Preserve scenic views and features. 			<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Aggressively protect natural resources.			
4. Aggressively encourage acquisition and/or preservation of open space.			
5. Recommend that the Town adopt an "open space assessment" policy under CGS 12-107e.			<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Promote bicycle connections.			
7. Promote designation of Route 1 as a scenic road by State DOT.			<input type="checkbox"/>

Wequetequock

What	Who	Target Completion Date	Done
1. Establish a new "Wequetequock" zone provided it is designated as a "village district."			<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Require that all uses be approved through a Special Permit process.			<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Require that appropriate landscaping and buffers be established to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Enhance the character along Route 1, b. protect coastal, scenic and environmental resources, and c. protect any directly abutting residential zones and uses. 			<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Continue to protect natural resources, coastal resources, scenic views, and provide for public access.			
5. Promote pedestrian and bicycle connections.			

Other Strategies

Protect Environmental Resources

What	Who	Target Completion Date	Done
1. Heavily scrutinize environmental encroachments and impacts to natural resources.			
2. Require new development to utilize best management practices (BMPs) and low impact design in order to reduce environmental impacts.			

Preserve Scenic Views and Resources

What	Who	Target Completion Date	Done
1. Continue to protect scenic views.			
2. Consider adoption of a scenic view overlay district.			<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Evaluate alternative development options to prevent excessive grading in the future.			<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Encourage CTDOT to limit pavement widths along Route 1, as appropriate.			
5. Encourage CTDOT to preserve open space for areas with excess ROW width.			

Protect Historic Buildings and Sites

What	Who	Target Completion Date	Done
1. Promote the use of federal tax credits for income-producing properties.			
2. Establish "village districts" to help to maintain the historic character of each area.			<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Strive to minimize potential threats to character.			

Preserve Open Space and Establish Greenways

What	Who	Target Completion Date	Done
1. Strive to preserve open space within the Route 1 corridor.			
2. Seek ways to provide bicycle and pedestrian paths in the Route 1 corridor.			

Provide For Coastal Public Access And Uses

What	Who	Target Completion Date	Done
1. Continue to seek opportunities to enhance coastal public access			
2. Develop a strategic plan for coastal public access.			<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Establish goals and objectives for acquiring the appropriate types of coastal public access.			<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Explore whether accepting mitigation for public access is allowable.			
5. Promote opportunities to bring people to water, including the Mystic and Pawcatuck Rivers.			
6. Require water-dependent uses in appropriate locations along the corridor.			
7. Encourage water-dependent uses to provide public access.			

Calm Traffic

What	Who	Target Completion Date	Done
1. Encourage CTDOT to provide for pedestrian and parking needs in village centers.			

Support Pedestrians and Bicycles

What	Who	Target Completion Date	Done
1. Develop a strategy for providing for pedestrian improvements and communicate this to others.			<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Seek to establish appropriate bicycle facilities, as appropriate.			
3. Prepare a town-wide bicycle plan.			<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Increase awareness of bicyclists via a "Share the Road" signage and education campaign.			
5. Ensure safe pedestrian crossing points at existing key intersections and pedestrian destinations			

Promote Bus Transit

What	Who	Target Completion Date	Done
1. Approach SEAT to expand local bus service with a connection between Mystic and Pawcatuck.			<input type="checkbox"/>

Promote Rail Transit

What	Who	Target Completion Date	Done
1. Explore ways to increase the potential of railroad service in Mystic and Westerly.			
2. Consider establishing a pedestrian link across the Pawcatuck River from Pawcatuck to Westerly.			
3. Explore and support ways to extend railroad service from New Haven to Stonington.			
4. Investigate ways to support transit-oriented development around the Mystic train station.			

Manage Public Utility Expansion

What	Who	Target Completion Date	Done
1. Establish how, when and why utility expansions will be authorized in order to carefully manage development scale and utility capacity.			<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Coordinate utilities and with the overall zoning scheme in order to control how and where growth occurs.			
3. Encourage interconnection of utilities for system redundancy and improved levels of service.			

Emerging Issues

What	Who	Target Completion Date	Done
1. Seek to establish a façade improvement program.			<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Strive to remove billboards.			
3. Promote pedestrian-oriented mixed-use development in Mystic and Pawcatuck.			
4. Promote parking solutions such as providing better directions to parking areas.			
5. Consider limiting on-street parking in residential neighborhoods to “resident only”.			
6. Consider limiting vehicle direction to one-way on certain streets to manage traffic and parking.			
7. Consider a “fee-in-lieu-of-parking” strategy.			<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Promote transit services such as the Mystic Shuttle, SEAT, and other approaches.			
9. Relocate commuter parking areas.			
10. Enhance pedestrian connections.			

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

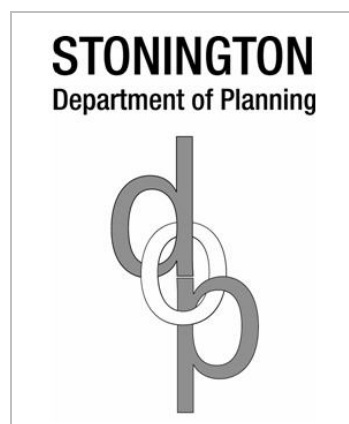


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