

Stonington



2004 Plan of Conservation and Development

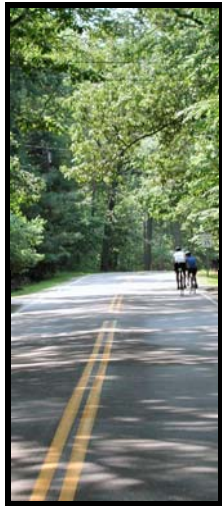
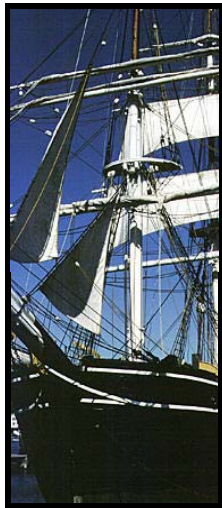


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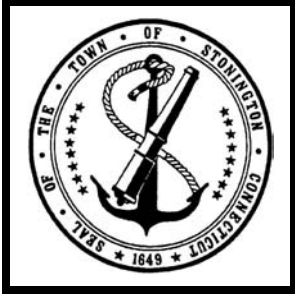
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WELCOME

July 9, 2004

To All Concerned:

Within the following pages, of the *Stonington Plan of Conservation and Development*, are the expressions of our community's aspirations and framework for the next ten years. For 350-odd years the Town of Stonington has progressed through challenges and opportunities with the assistance of goal-orientated civic leaders and community members. The community has forged ahead in times of trouble and strife and has created a town to be proud of, and one that is replicated throughout the country.

However, the Town's recent goals, and the outcomes of these goals, have not been representative of the historical development, and this diametrical opposition has created great concern. A group of residents, organized as a Steering Committee wholly interested in the direction of the community, worked diligently, with *Planimetrics, LLP* of Avon, Connecticut, over the past eighteen months to define the essence of our community. They also realized the opportunity to create manageable goals and achievable tasks to protect our community. The Plan of Conservation and Development Steering Committee, as appointed, adopted an unspoken call to arms, "The time to preserve the community's character, and define our community is now."

The Steering Committee recognized that the progression and transformation of our community would continue, regardless of our participation as residents. The Steering Committee, through this document has created a bold initiative, albeit unstated--*The vision to make Stonington one of the premier communities in the State of Connecticut.*

On June 29, 2004 the Stonington Planning and Zoning Commission adopted the *Plan of Conservation and Development* (effective July 19, 2004) and has embraced the work completed by the Plan of Conservation and Development Steering Committee.

It is with a great sense of pride that I invite you to read our articulation of this vision, and the implementation strategy we have developed to make this a reality.

Sincerely,

Charles A. Sneddon, Jr.
Chairman

PREFACE



Purpose of the Plan

This Plan of Conservation and Development is a tool for guiding the future of Stonington. It is intended to be both visionary and action oriented.

One purpose is to establish a common vision for the community's future. The vision consists of determining a positive future outcome or positive strategies for Stonington to follow.

Another purpose is to outline action steps that, when implemented, will help attain that vision.

If steadily implemented by Stonington residents and officials, this Plan will help protect important resources, guide appropriate development, protect community character and enhance the quality of life of current and future residents.

Statutory Reference

Section 8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes requires that the Planning and Zoning Commission prepare, adopt, and amend a Plan of Conservation and Development for Stonington.

Village of Mystic





Use and Maintenance of the Plan

The Plan is intended to provide a framework for consistent decision-making by Town boards, commissions and residents with regard to conservation and development activities.

While generally intended to guide conservation and development over the course of a decade, this Plan will lay the foundation for long term goals reaching far into the future.

This Plan is intended to be a dynamic document. As strategies are implemented and evaluated, the Plan should be refined to address new issues, adjust a course of action, or refine strategies.

The challenge for the Planning and Zoning Commission will be to keep the Plan up to date and keep implementation on course in the face of changing conditions.

Village of Pawcatuck





Preparation of the Plan

Preparation of the Plan began in March of 2002 and was coordinated by a Steering Committee made up of representatives of different boards and commissions and other Stonington residents that met twice a month over the course of two years.

Stonington residents helped guide the overall process through a series of four public meetings and workshops. In addition, a random telephone survey was conducted to help the Steering Committee finalize preliminary strategies.

With the assistance of Planimetrics, a planning consultant from Avon, CT, an inventory and assessment of technical and policy issues was conducted.

The Steering Committee reviewed and modified the draft Plan before submitting it to the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) for their review. Before adopting the Plan, the PZC referred the Plan to the Town Meeting for its review and comment before holding a public hearing of their own for its adoption.

Growing Municipal Complex at Spellman Drive



The Planning Process





Jurisdiction of the Plan

Many non-residents of the Town of Stonington associate the name “Stonington” with the Borough of Stonington (Borough). While an important part of the greater Town of Stonington, the Borough functions as a separate and distinct political jurisdiction, governed by a Board of Warden and Burgesses. The Borough’s Planning and Zoning Commission regulates land uses within the Borough in accordance with its own regulations and Plan of Conservation and Development.

As a significant and integral part of the Town, it is particularly important that there be discussion of the Borough throughout this Plan. Despite its inclusion, this Plan is not intended in any way to dictate fiscal or land-use policy for the Borough. On the other hand, Borough residents pay the majority of their property taxes to the Town and receive many Town services in return. Because of many interdependent policies and strategies, cooperation between the Borough and Town is encouraged, in order to make implementation of this plan as effective as possible. As one example, zoning districts and/or land uses along the common municipal boundary may or may not be fully compatible, which could be the subject of future joint study.

The Location of the Borough is shown on all exhibits of the entire Town, which are included in this plan. Detailed information within the Borough boundaries is either shown or not shown, depending on its relevance to the map or plan in question.

INTRODUCTION

1

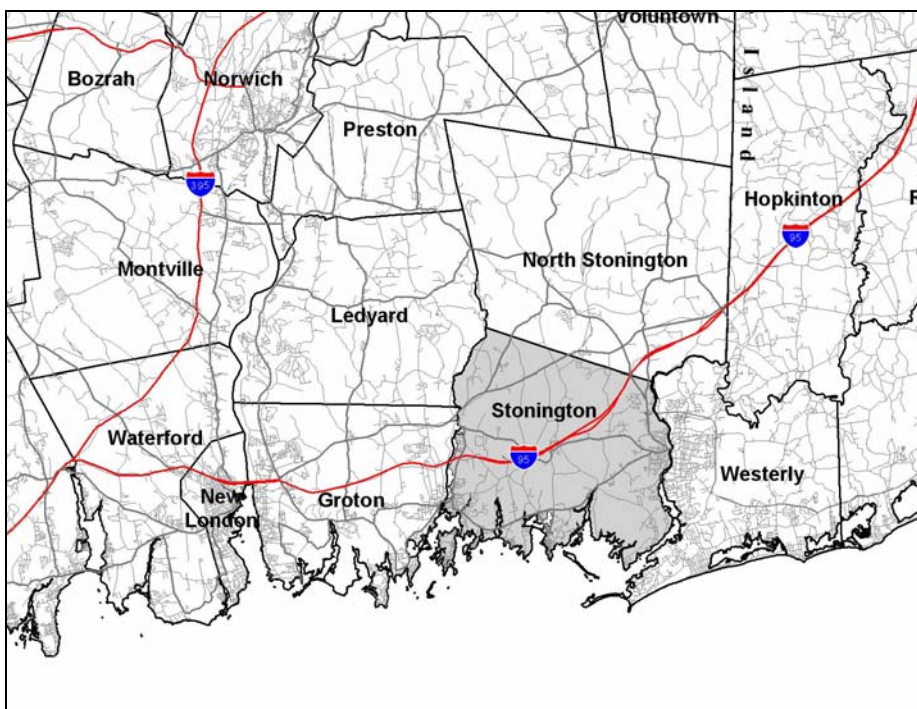
Introduction to Stonington

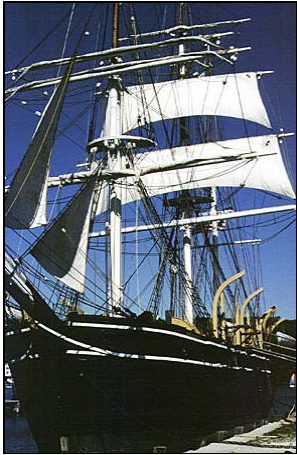
Stonington is located in New London County in southeast Connecticut. The Town is bounded by Ledyard, Groton and the Mystic River to the west, Westerly, RI and the Pawcatuck River to the east, Fishers Island Sound and Little Narragansett Bay to the south and North Stonington to the north.

Stonington shares the village of Mystic with the Town of Groton while the Borough of Stonington is a separate governing entity within its borders. Pawcatuck, like Mystic, is closely tied to its neighbor, Westerly, RI, sharing many common issues and services.

With its quaint historic villages, spectacular waterfront views, and rocky, stone-wall lined uplands; the aptly named Town of Stonington is one of the most scenically beautiful towns in Connecticut and plays a major role in the State's growing tourist economy. Stonington covers 50 square miles and is home to nearly 18,000 residents.

Stonington and Surrounding Towns





Historical Context

Stonington's present geographic shape and pattern of development owes much to its natural setting. The brooks, marshes, rivers, and Sound define three borders of the Town. The saw-tooth pattern of points, harbors, necks and coves created the impetus for much of the Town's settlement and growth.

Colonial Period (1614-1780)

The first settlement of Stonington occurred on Wequetequock Cove in 1649, followed several years later by settlements on the Mystic and Pawcatuck Rivers. Most of the earliest settlers were subsistence farmers and this was supplemented by some fishing and other maritime activities.

In 1669, Stonington's first shipyard was constructed on the Pawcatuck River, followed by a second shipyard downstream in 1680. Early maritime activity was limited to fishing, shell-fishing, trade with larger New England ports and crude attempts at whaling.

Early Industrial Period (1780-1850)

In 1784, the first of five shipyards was constructed on the Mystic River with still more in the Stonington Borough (known as Long Point until 1801). In its hey-day, the Town's harbors were home to as many as 78 whaling vessels with Stonington Borough becoming the second largest whaling port in Connecticut after New London. Mystic and Stonington Borough were not completely dependent on whaling and became preeminent sealing ports in addition to maintaining fishing and shipping fleets.

The three main villages of Long Point, Mystic and Pawcatuck formed during this era to serve the growing maritime, printing and other industries. Long Point was almost fully developed during this period, becoming the Borough of Stonington in 1801.

Mystic Seaport



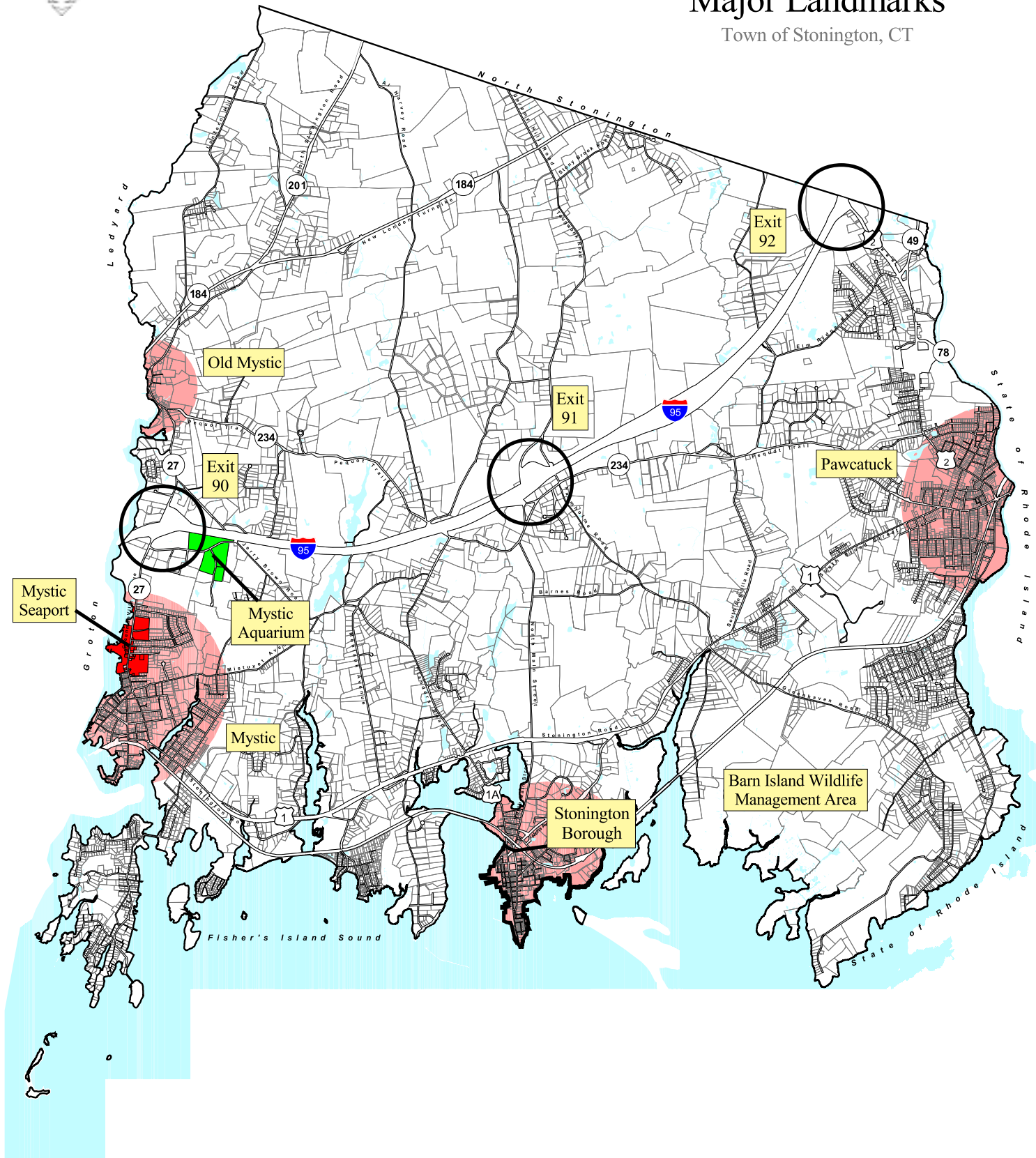
Old Mystic





Major Landmarks

Town of Stonington, CT



Planimetrics
31 Eledge Drive, Avon, CT 06001 860-671-5263

Industrial Period (1850-1950)

Despite the dominance of shipyards and other maritime industries, Stonington became home to a significant concentration of textile and allied industries as early as 1848. The construction of woolen mills in Pawcatuck and Old Mystic led to a succession of textile machine manufacturers and textile mills. With the influx of new manufacturing facilities, the two villages and the Borough saw significant growth and redevelopment, becoming the villages and Borough that we recognize today.

The maritime industries would peak and wane during this period. The decline of seal and whale populations would lead to the eventual demise of the sealing and whaling industries during the 1920s.

Modern Period (1950-Present)

In the latter half of the twentieth century, the economy of Stonington went through some fundamental changes. The fishing and textile industries which offered local employment were affected by economic changes and the availability of resources.

With the end of World War II and the increasing use of automobiles, residents were no longer tied to the villages or the Borough where they worked. Stonington residents began to commute to jobs further from home. Stonington's maritime history became the basis for some major tourist attractions (Mystic Seaport and Mystic Aquarium & Institute for Exploration).

At the same time, Stonington's farms and forests became the raw material for suburban expansion, with thousands of acres consumed during the latter half of the century as people were attracted to Stonington's location and overall quality of life.

It is these changes in the overall economy and land use that set the stage for this Plan of Conservation and Development.

Former Foundry



Plastics Machinery Manufacturer



Regional Context

Stonington plays an integral role in the region in several ways.

While about 3,000 Stonington residents worked within the community in the year 2000, another 7,000 Stonington residents worked in other communities in the region. As a result, one regional role that Stonington provides is a labor force that supports the overall economy of the region.

In addition, there are approximately 7,000 jobs in Stonington and so Stonington also provides about 4,000 jobs for non-Stonington residents. Again, Stonington is major contributor to the region's economy.

Stonington also provides a number of regional amenities such as:

- Mystic Seaport,
- Mystic Aquarium and Institute of Exploration,
- Downtown Mystic,
- Stonington Borough,
- Parks and open space,
- Retail uses,
- Hospitality uses, and
- Coastal amenities.

Overall, Stonington is a balanced community providing a labor pool and employment opportunities that benefit the overall region. In other words, Stonington is neither a pure residential suburb nor an economic hub.

Mystic Seaport



Mystic Aquarium & Institute for Exploration



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CONTEXT

2

Overview

This section of the Plan outlines the conditions and trends affecting the community at the time the Plan was prepared.

“If we could first know where we are, and whither we are tending, we could better judge what to do, and how to do it.”

Abraham Lincoln

Demographics



Housing



Economy



Land Use



Buildout Potential



Fiscal Considerations



Borough of Stonington

Unless specified, all demographic and housing figures include the Borough.

Population Growth

Year	Population
1774	5,412
1782	5,245
1800	5,437
1810	3,043
1820	3,056
1830	3,401
1840	3,898
1850	5,431
1860	5,827
1870	6,313
1880	7,355
1890	7,184
1900	8,540
1910	9,154
1920	10,236
1930	11,025
1940	11,002
1950	11,801
1960	13,696
1970	15,940
1980	16,220
1990	16,919
2000	17,906
2010	(18,893)
2020	(19,880)

1774 – 2000 Census, Projections in italics based on a simple extrapolation of past growth.

Household Sizes

	Town	State
1980	2.67	2.76
1990	2.40	2.59
2000	2.31	2.53

A Growing and Changing Population

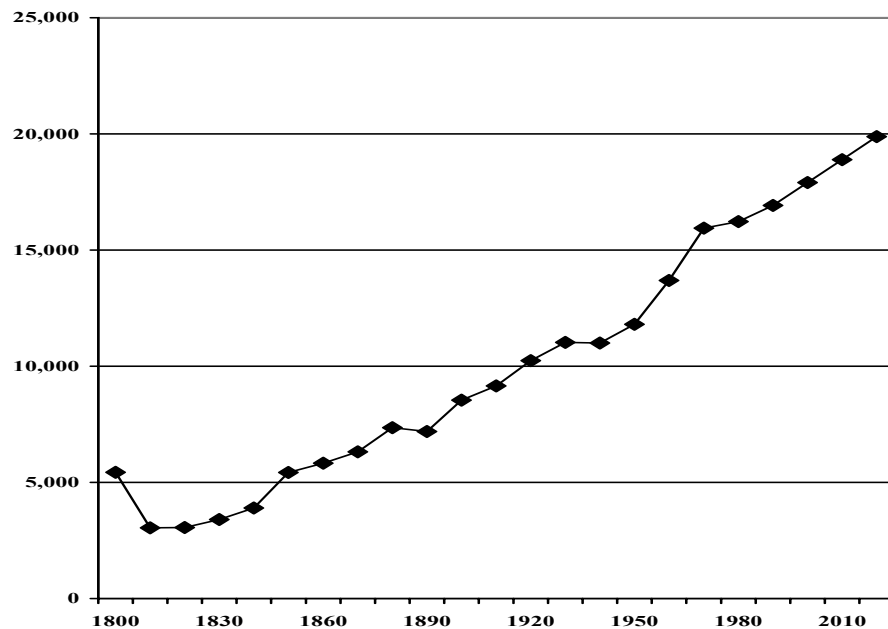
Stonington is Growing Faster Than the State or County ...

According to the Census Bureau, Stonington had a population of 17,906 in the year 2000 and grew by 987 people (about six percent) during the 1990s. This rate of growth was greater than that for the State (about 4 percent) or the County (about 2 percent).

Population Growth is Projected to Continue ...

As can be seen from the following chart, the population of Stonington has been growing since the early 1800s and this growth is projected to continue to increase over the next 20 years.

Population Change (1800-2020)



Age Composition is Also Changing ...

While overall population growth is important, changes in age composition may actually have more far reaching implications both in terms of future housing choices and community service demands.

With people living longer and healthier lives, the older age groups will be more stable in the future. At the same time, the 'baby boom' (people born between 1946 and 1964) will enter these older age groups during the next 20 years. By the year 2020, adults aged 55 and over will comprise almost 35 percent of the total population of Stonington, up from only 22 percent in 1970.

Stonington Age Composition (1970 to 2020)

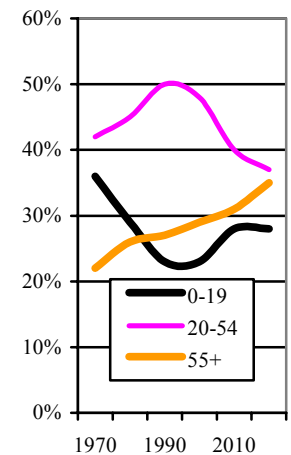
Ages	Actual				Projections	
	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
0-4	1,454	859	1,011	993	1,086	1,393
5-19	4,252	3,782	2,806	3,173	4,294	4,205
20-34	3,072	3,637	3,847	2,776	2,576	3,521
35-54	3,635	3,707	4,689	5,826	4,998	3,885
55-64	1,717	1,978	1,812	2,013	2,656	2,875
65+	1,810	2,257	2,754	3,125	3,283	4,001
Total	15,940	16,220	16,919	17,906	18,893	19,880

1970 - 2000 Census, Projections by Planimetrics (2003)

The following table depicts the various life-stages of Stonington residents that will each have specific needs during the next twenty years.

Life-cycle Needs			
Description	Age Range	Needs	Projection to 2020
Infants	0 to 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Care Recreation programs 	Higher by 2020
School-Age	5 to 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School facilities Recreation facilities Recreation programs 	Higher by 2020
Young Adults	20 to 34	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rental housing Starter homes Social destinations 	Higher by 2020
Middle Age	35 to 54	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family programs Trade-up homes 	Much Lower by 2020
Mature Adults	55 to 65	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smaller homes Second homes 	Higher by 2020
Retirement Age	65 and over	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tax relief Housing options Elderly programs 	Higher by 2020

Age Composition



2000 Age Comparison

	Town	State
0 - 4	6%	7%
5 - 19	18%	21%
20 - 34	16%	19%
35 - 54	33%	31%
55 - 64	11%	9%
65+	17%	13%

Source: 2000 Census

2000 Median Age

Stonington	41.7
Waterford	41.7
N. Stonington	39.6
East Lyme	39.0
Westerly, RI	38.9
Salem	37.1
Ledyard	37.1
Groton	32.5
County	37.0
State	37.4

Source: 2000 Census and CT. DECD

Borough of Stonington

Unless specified, all demographic and housing figures include the Borough.

Housing Growth

Year	Units
1980	6,482
1990	7,923
2000	8,591

Source: 1980-2000 Census

Median Home Value 2000

Groton	\$135,500
Ledyard	\$138,000
Westerly, RI	\$149,900
Waterford	\$150,400
N. Stonington	\$152,500
Stonington	\$154,000
East Lyme	\$163,300
Salem	\$178,600
County	\$142,200
State	\$169,900

Source: 2000 Census and CT, DECD

Affordable Housing

State	11%
Stonington	4%

Source: CT-DECD

Housing Tenure

	Town	State
Owner Occupied	63%	63%
Renter Occupied	26%	31%
For Rent or Sale	4%	4%
Occasional Use	6%	2%

Source: 2000 Census

Changing Housing Conditions

Housing Growth is Expected to Continue ...

According to the Census Bureau, 668 housing units were added to Stonington's housing stock during the 1990s (about an eight percent increase).

With a population growth of 987 people and addition of 668 units, each new unit housed about 1.5 new residents. If this trend were to continue, the anticipated population growth over the next 20 years could result in a demand for about 1,300 new housing units.

Stonington's Housing Stock is Getting Less Diverse ...

Stonington has a fairly diverse housing stock with about one-third of all housing units in Town being non-single-family housing. This is a reflection of its older, densely populated villages combined with more recent suburban development.

However, during the past ten years, 699 new single-family housing units were built (according to Census data), 64 new multi-family units were built, and about 95 other housing units were eliminated, for a net gain of 668 housing units.

2000 Housing Mix

(ranked by percent one-unit detached)

	1-Unit Detached	1-Unit Attached	2-4 Units	5+ Units	Mobile Home
North Stonington	92%	1%	2%	0%	5%
Waterford	85%	3%	5%	6%	1%
Ledyard	85%	2%	6%	3%	4%
East Lyme	82%	4%	6%	8%	0%
Salem	76%	1%	4%	4%	1%
Stonington	68%	3%	19%	7%	3%
Westerly, RI	64%	3%	24%	8%	0%
Groton	49%	11%	15%	21%	3%
State	59%	5%	18%	17%	1%
County	64%	4%	16%	13%	3%

Source: 2000 Census

Housing Is Less Affordable Than In Other Areas ...

At \$154,000, the median home price in Stonington is higher than any town in the immediate area and higher than the median for New London County. Despite this, Stonington's median house price is below the state median, making the Town affordable by statewide standards.

While Stonington certainly has housing that is affordable, an affordable mortgage or rent alone does not constitute an "affordable" housing unit by State standards (assisted housing, CHFA financed, or sale price restricted by deed). Stonington is below both the state and regional averages with four percent of its housing units qualifying as affordable. Since the Legislature adopted Section 8-30g in the late 1980s, no qualifying affordable housing has been constructed in Stonington (see Page 78).

Changing Economic Conditions

The Regional Economy Is Changing ...

During the past 20 years, there have been some major structural shifts in the economy of southeast Connecticut. With the end of the 'Cold War', defense industries in the region reduced employment. At the same time, casinos established on Native American land holdings have replaced many of those skilled manufacturing jobs with lower-paying service jobs. Recently, the expansion of a major pharmaceutical research and development facility has brought new economic activity to the region.

While there was some economic 'spillover' from defense industries, there has been limited economic growth in the region from the development of casinos. While the number of visitors to the region has grown, this has not always resulted in increased activity at the Mystic Seaport or Mystic Aquarium & Institute for Exploration or at local retail or hospitality venues.

Exit 90 of Interstate 95 in Mystic



Income of Residents is Strong ...

Stonington's per capita income (\$29,653) is the highest among neighboring towns as well as higher than both the county and the state averages.

On the other hand, Stonington's median household income (\$52,437) is more in keeping with state and regional averages due to smaller average household sizes in Stonington.

Employment Growth

1970s	12.6%
1980s	16.7%
1990s	14.9%

Source: CT Labor Dept

1999 Household Income

Salem	\$68,750
East Lyme	\$66,539
Ledyard	\$62,647
N. Stonington	\$57,887
Waterford	\$56,047
Stonington	\$52,437
Groton	\$46,154
Westerly, RI	\$44,613
County	\$50,646
State	\$53,935

Source: 2000 Census

1999 Per Capita Income

Stonington	\$29,653
East Lyme	\$28,765
Salem	\$27,288
Waterford	\$26,807
N. Stonington	\$25,815
Ledyard	\$24,953
Westerly, RI	\$24,092
Groton	\$23,995
County	\$24,678
State	\$28,766

Source: 2000 Census

Definitions

Developed Land - land that has buildings, structures, or improvements used for a particular economic or social purpose (such as residential or institutional)

Committed Land - land that is used for a particular economic or social purpose (including open space)

Vacant Land - land that is not developed or committed

Underutilized Land - developed or committed land that is underdeveloped based on the density or uses permitted by zoning.

Dedicated Open Space - land or development rights owned by the Federal government, the State, the Town, land trusts, or conservation organizations intended to remain for open space purposes.

Managed Open Space - land owned by fish and game clubs, cemeteries, recreational clubs, and other organizations which is used for other purposes but provides open space benefits.

A Growing and Changing Town ...

Stonington contains approximately 39 square miles (about 24,780 acres) of land area. Research conducted as part of the planning process found that approximately 60 percent of all the land area in Stonington is presently developed or committed to different uses.

Of the land that is developed or committed, about 42 percent (6,300 acres) is developed with residential uses and about 25 percent (5,700 acres) is committed to open space uses.

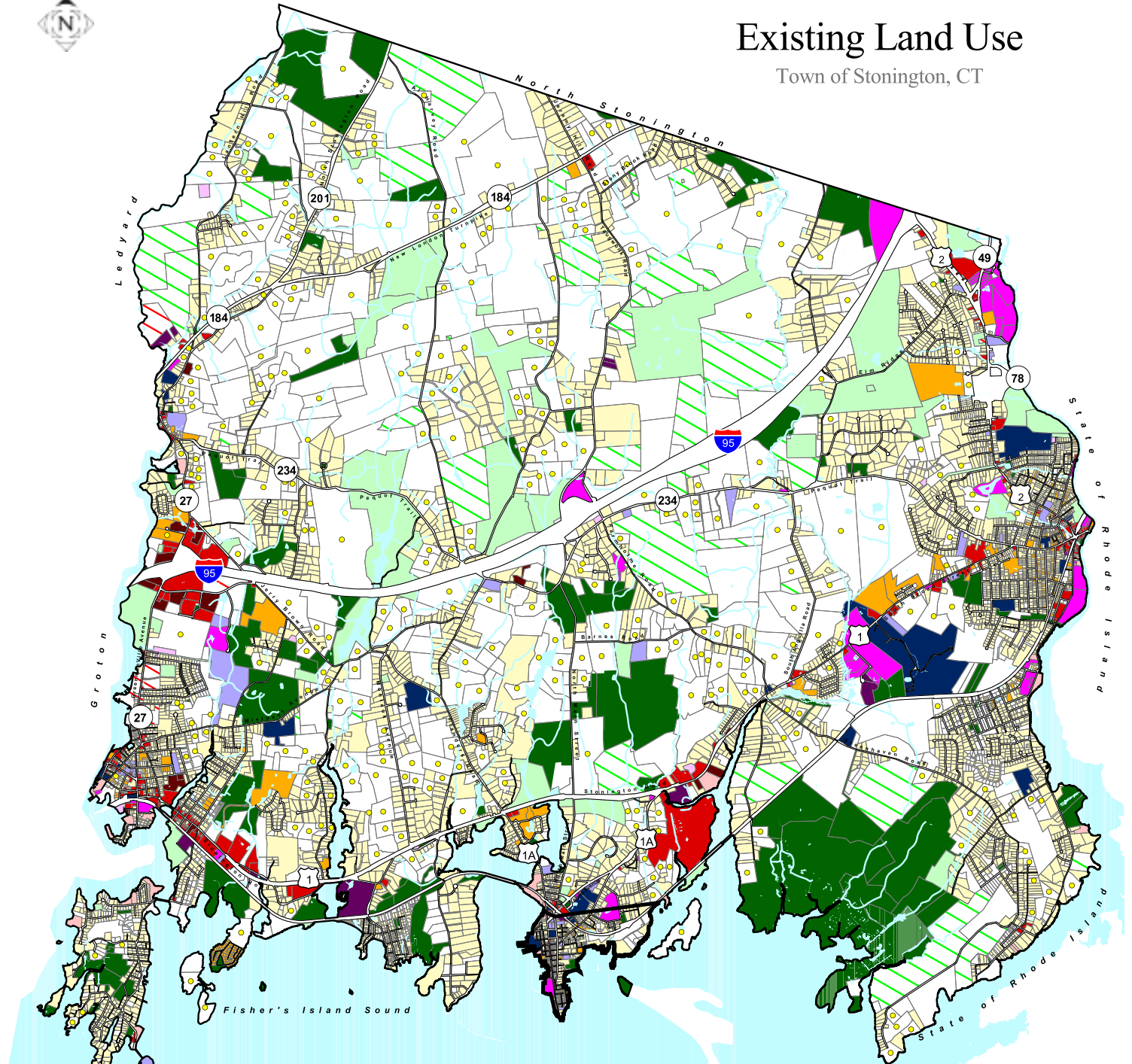
2001 Stonington Land Use			
Use	Acres	Percent of Developed Land	Percent of Total Land
Residential	6,294	42%	25%
Single Family	5,963		
Multi-Family	331		
Commercial	632	4%	3%
Retail / Service	310		
Tourism	96		
Office	46		
Lodging	67		
Marine	72		
Auto	41		
Industrial	394	3%	2%
Industrial	296		
Warehouse	76		
Utility	22		
Agriculture	1,818	12%	7%
Open Space	3,753	25%	15%
Dedicated Open Space	2,134		9%
Managed Open Space	1,618		7%
Institutional	463	3%	2%
Transportation	1,621	11%	7%
Developed / Committed	14,975	100%	60%
Vacant / Underutilized	9,804		40%
Total Land Area	24,779		100%

Planimetrics (Totals may not add due to rounding). Land use information from Stonington with field updates by Planimetrics.



Existing Land Use

Town of Stonington, CT



Legend

Residential

- Single Family
- Multi-family
- Residential with Excess Acreage

Open Space

- Dedicated Open Space
- Managed Open Space

Commercial

- Commercial General
- Commercial Lodging
- Commercial Marine
- Tourism

Community Facility/ Institutional

- Community Facility
- Institutional Other

Industrial

- Industrial General
- Industrial Utility
- Industrial Warehouse

Other

- Agriculture
- Vacant/Uncommitted

Stonington Borough

0 4000 Feet



Planimetrics

30 Bridge Street, Avon, CT 06001 860-677-5207

With Room To Grow...

With over 10,400 acres or 40 percent of the Town consisting of vacant or underutilized land, there is considerable potential for additional development in Stonington. The map on the facing page shows the location of vacant or underutilized land zoned for residential, commercial, or industrial purposes.

Based on the present regulations, future development may occur on properties that are currently vacant, have land area for future development, or may be redeveloped.

Subtracting the approximately 390 acres of vacant commercial and industrial land leaves approximately 10,000 acres of vacant or underutilized residential land remaining to be developed. After factoring in such variables as zoning, open space set-asides, road acreage, and natural constraints, that acreage could yield approximately 3,530 additional housing units. Adding this number to the Town's existing housing stock results in approximately 12,100 housing units at full build-out.

By multiplying the potential number of dwelling units by Stonington's average household size, there is the potential for over 28,000 residents at full build-out: an increase of approximately 10,100 residents. This represents a hypothetical 56 percent increase over the 2000 population with potentially significant impacts on community services and quality of life.

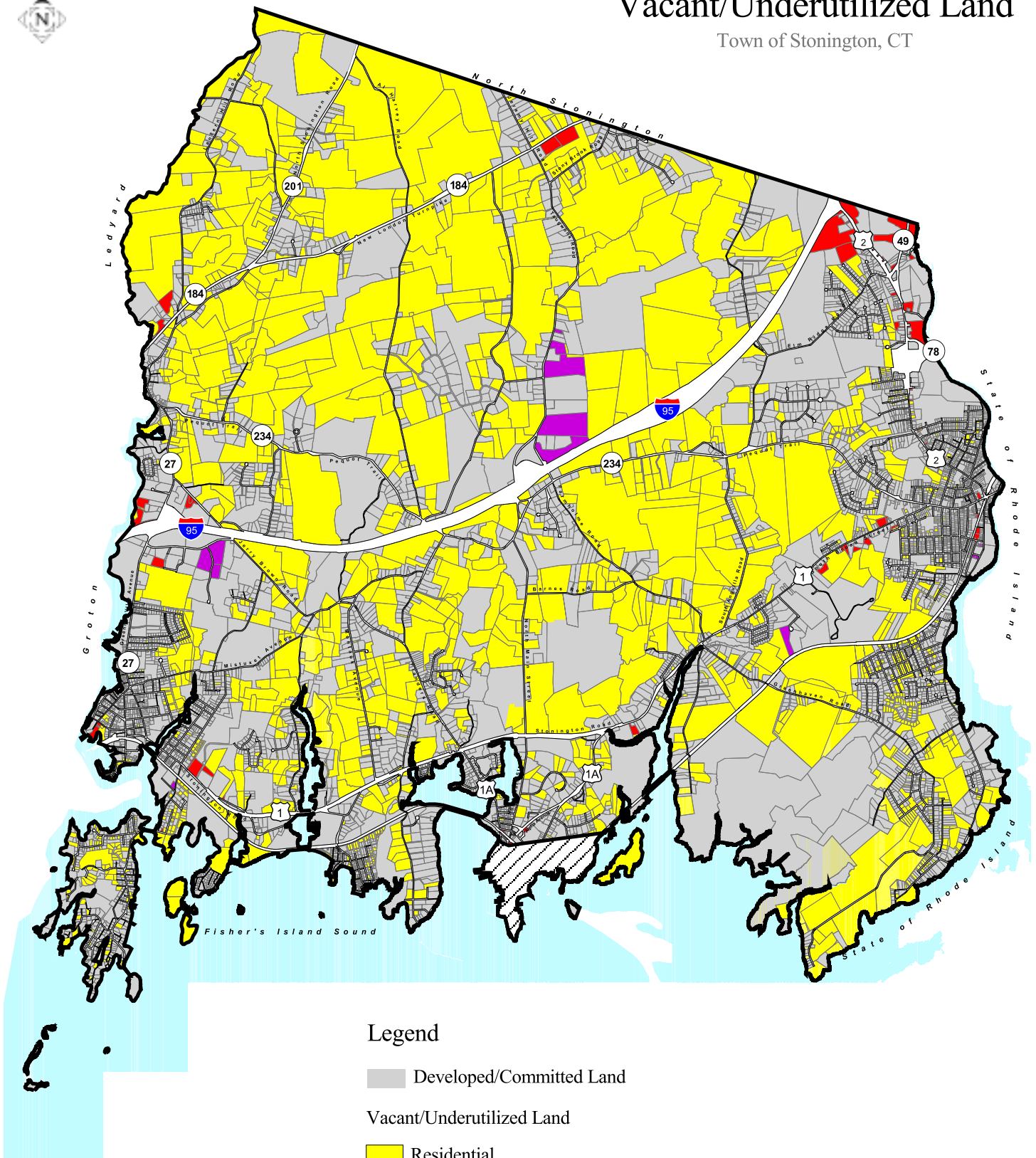
There is no telling when or if this potential will ever be reached. Many of the conservation and development strategies contained in this Plan have the potential to alter these figures significantly by protecting important resources, preserving more open space and guiding more appropriate development patterns.





Vacant/Underutilized Land

Town of Stonington, CT



Legend

Developed/Committed Land

Vacant/Underutilized Land

Residential
Commercial
Industrial

Stonington Borough

0 4000 Feet

Zone	Minimum Square Feet
GBR-130	130,000
RC-120	120,000
RR-80	80,000
RA-40	40,000
RA-20	20,000
RA-15	15,000
RM-20	20,000
RM-15	15,000
RH-10	10,000
DB-5	5,000
CS-5	5,000
LS-5	5,000
GC-60	60,000
TC-80	80,000
HI	200,000
M-1	80,000
MC-80	80,000

Builder's Acre

Stonington's Zoning Regulations utilize a concept known as a builder's acre. A conventional acre of land is equal to 43,560 square feet. For simplicity sake, a builder's acre rounds down to 40,000 square feet, thus the RA-40 zone is a one-acre zone while the RH-10 zone is a quarter-acre zone.

Zoned for Residential Growth...

Stonington has nine residential zoning districts, ranging from the high-density RH-10 zone with 10,000 square-foot minimum lots (approximately 1/4 acre) to the very-low-density GBR-130 zone with 130,000 square-foot minimum lots (approximately three acres). Residentially zoned land accounts for almost 93 percent of the land area of Stonington.

Commercial development is generally limited to seven commercial districts ranging in size from the three 5,000 square-foot minimum lot size DB-5, CS-5 and LS-5 zones to the 200,000 square-foot Highway Interchange (HI) zone that actually allows a mix of commercial and light-industrial uses.

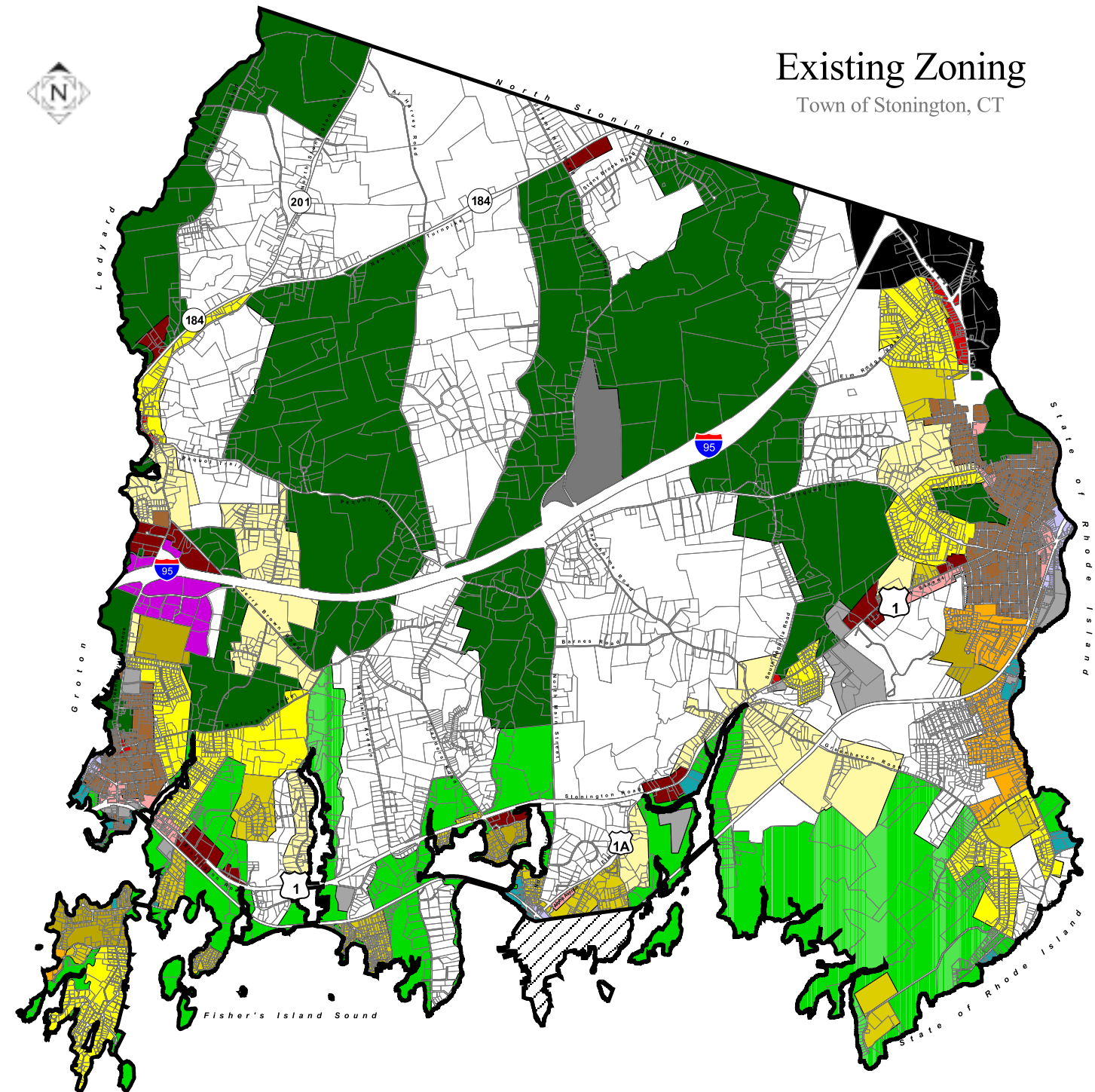
In addition to the HI zone, industrial development is permitted in three industrial districts that range in minimum size and intensity from the 80,000 square-foot M-1 and MC-80 zones to the 130,000 square-foot LI-130 Zone. Industrial and commercial land makes up six percent of the land area of Stonington, with the Stonington Borough making up the difference at one percent of the total land area.

New Luxury Home



Existing Zoning


Town of Stonington, CT



Legend

GBR 130	Greenbelt Residential
RC 120	Residential Coastal
RR 80	Rural Residential
RA 40	Residential Low Density
RA 20	Residential Single Family
RA 15	Residential Single Family
RM 20	Residential Moderate Density
RM 15	Residential Moderate Density
RH 10	Residential High Density

DB 5	Development Area
CS 5	Convenience Shopping
LS 5	Local Shopping
GC 60	General Commercial
TC 80	Tourist Commercial
HI	Highway Interchange
LI 130	Light Industry
M 1	Manufacturing
MC 80	Marine Commercial

 Stonington Borough is a Separate Zoning Jurisdiction

0 4000 Feet



Planimetrics
31 Ensign Drive, Avon, CT 06001 860-671-5267

Per Capita Expenditures

Waterford	\$3,075
N. Stonington	\$2,673
Salem	\$2,567
Ledyard	\$2,337
East Lyme	\$2,272
Groton	\$2,270
Stonington	\$2,218
State	\$2,444

CT Policy & Economic Council 2000-2001

Per Capita Property Taxes

Waterford	\$2,742
Stonington	\$1,773
N. Stonington	\$1,695
East Lyme	\$1,435
Salem	\$1,505
Ledyard	\$1,298
Groton	\$1,076
State	\$1,612

CT Policy & Economic Council -2000-2001

Per Capita State Aid

Salem	\$887
N. Stonington	\$864
Groton	\$863
East Lyme	\$496
Stonington	\$233
Ledyard	\$136
Waterford	\$110
State	\$1,612

CT Policy & Economic Council -2000-2001

Equalized Net Grand List

ENGL estimates the market value of property in every town across the state for a given year, adjusting for varying revaluation dates.

Fiscal Overview

Expenditures And Revenues Are Changing ...

On a per capita basis, Stonington spends at about the state average with the exception of public works and other expenditures which are higher than the state average. Education accounts for more than half of local expenditures at 58 percent or nearly 24 million dollars. These figures are for basic illustrative purposes only, as the fire districts and the Borough are separate taxing entities that are not reported here.

2000 - 2001 Per Capita Expenditures Distribution

	Stonington		Connecticut	
Education	\$1,278	58%	\$1,386	57%
Police	\$154	7%	\$162	7%
Fire	\$1	0%	\$93	4%
Debt Service	\$187	8%	\$181	7%
Public Works	\$291	13%	\$191	8%
Other Expenditures	\$307	14%	\$431	18%
Total	\$2,218	100%	\$2,444	100%

Source: Connecticut Policy & Economic Council Note: Fire Districts and the Borough tax separately and are not reported by CPEC

Since Stonington receives less state-aid than the state average, it relies more heavily on property taxes to generate most of its revenue. In the future, it is possible that state-aid will decline and local reliance on property taxes will increase.

2000 - 2001 Per Capita Revenue

	Stonington		Connecticut	
Current Taxes	\$1,773	80%	\$1,612	69%
State Aid	\$233	11%	\$627	27%
Surplus	\$16	1%	\$39	2%
Other	\$197	9%	\$166	7%
Total	\$2,218	100%	\$2,345	100%

Source: Connecticut Policy & Economic Council

Tax Base

Stonington has a strong tax base and ranks 39th out of 169 Connecticut towns in terms of the property value per capita. In addition, about 25 percent of the local tax base consists of business property and Stonington ranks 54th out of 169 Connecticut towns.

Tax Base Comparison

(Ranked by 1999 per capita ENGL)

	Per Capita ENGL	State Rank		Percent Business	State Rank
Waterford	\$266,576	6	Waterford	73%	1
Stonington	\$134,782	39	Groton	51%	3
East Lyme	\$97,220	68	Stonington	25%	54
No. Stonington	\$91,588	80	No. Stonington	15%	102
Salem	\$91,218	82	Ledyard	15%	107
Groton	\$88,459	86	East Lyme	12%	116
Ledyard	\$70,412	126	Salem	10%	124
State	\$96,546		State	26%	

Source: Connecticut Policy & Economic Council

COMMUNITY ISSUES

3

Overview

To gain a comprehensive understanding of issues and concerns that were important to the community, a series of public meetings, community surveys, interviews and other exercises were conducted throughout the planning process.

The Plan of Conservation and Development Steering Committee used the results of these activities to identify and prioritize the most important community issues before developing strategies to address them.

It is important to note at the outset most people are very pleased with the overall quality of life in Stonington and some residents did not offer any opinion on how things could be improved in the community. In fact, 92 percent of residents rate the overall quality of life in Stonington as good or very good.

“It is really the community itself which must try to pull together ... in order to preserve those things that the community values and to foster the growth and change that the community wants.”

Russell Peterson
Former EPA Director

Workshop Meetings



Public Meetings



Telephone Survey



Working Meetings



Residents clearly value Stonington's open spaces as well as scenic and historic character.

Things to Encourage ...

At a meeting early in the planning process, residents were asked to identify things in Stonington that they were particularly proud of.

This type of question typically results in residents identifying things that make their community special to them and things they would like to encourage in the future.

	"Prouds" in Stonington	Votes
Open Space	Barn Island, river parks, preserved open space, village greens, nature trails, and farmland.	122
Community Facilities	Police Station, community centers, schools, libraries, Town Hall, fire departments, transfer station	90
Unique Facilities	Mystic Aquarium & Institute for Exploration, Mystic Seaport, Denison-Pequotsepos Nature Center, Mystic Information Center	65
Villages / Neighborhoods	Mystic, Pawcatuck, Stonington Borough, Mason's Island	50
Coastal Resources	Harbors, coves, lighthouses, public access, boating, fishing, scenery, waterfront homes, Town Docks, marinas	46
Community Character	Variety: urban, rural, suburban; mills, farms, scenery, history	42

Open Space



Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center



Things to Discourage ...

Residents were also asked to identify things in Stonington that they were particularly sorry about.

This type of question typically results in residents identifying things that concern them about their community and its direction and things they would like to discourage in the future.

Residents also expressed desire for improved transportation facilities, diverse housing opportunities and appropriate economic development.

	"Sorrys" in Stonington	Votes
Transportation Issues	RT 1, RT 2, RT 27 (development, traffic, intersections), I-95, Amtrak, Casino traffic, truck traffic, bridges, lack of bikeways, paths, mass transit, wheelchair access, village parking.	157
Residential Patterns	Too many large homes, trailer parks, lack of affordable and elderly housing, high-density housing, housing blight, sprawl	46
Business Patterns	Strip centers, Exit 90 area, lack of business sites, need businesses for taxes and jobs, no industrial parks, overdeveloped tourism, poor shopping, scattered commercial development, underutilized industrial buildings, vacant factory outlets	39
Utilities	Sewage treatment plants, overhead wires, cell towers, lack of sewers expansion, limited DSL service	50
Community Character	Mechanic Street blight, sprawl, Monsanto mill, bright lights, business infringing on neighborhoods, too much construction	30

New Home Under Construction



Trailer Park



Residents overwhelmingly identified Conservation Issues as the most important theme for inclusion in the Plan, which is consistent with the value that residents place in Stonington's open spaces and community character

Things to Focus On ...

In other exercises, residents were asked to identify the top issues they were concerned about that might be addressed in a Plan of Conservation and Development.

In one exercise at a public meeting in October 2002, residents were asked to identify, from a list of topics typically addressed in a Plan, the issues most important to them. These results were compared with the results of a random sample telephone survey of Stonington residents in November 2003.

Primary Issues

	Source	Percent
Open Space	Public Meeting	26%

Preserving open space was the most important issue to residents attending the public meetings. The telephone survey confirmed this sentiment with the following results.

Open Space	Source	Response
Stonington should preserve more open space.	Telephone Survey	61%
Stonington should connect open spaces into a system of greenways, with trails.	Telephone Survey	78%
Stonington should require open space as part of every new development.	Telephone Survey	77%,
Would pay \$50 more per year in taxes, to have the Town acquire more open space.	Telephone Survey	51%

Open Space



Major Secondary Issues

	Source	Percent
Education	Telephone Survey	19%
Taxes	Telephone Survey	18%
Natural Resources	Public Meeting	15%
Business Development	Public Meeting	12%

In the telephone survey, residents identified education and taxes as issues they were concerned about. More than half of all residents surveyed (55%) felt that taxes in Stonington were too high for the level and quality of services provided by the Town, while two-fifths (39%) thought taxes were about right.

At the public meetings, residents wanted to protect natural resources and encourage business development (primarily to reduce the residential tax burden).

While protecting natural resources was a major issue for residents attending public meetings, almost three quarters of residents surveyed by telephone felt that Stonington is doing a good job protecting natural resources. This may reflect an overall concern about the perception of development and possible future impacts.

Business development was an important issue identified by residents. The telephone survey results tabulated below confirm these mixed feelings.

Business Development	Source	Response
Stonington could do a better job of controlling the design of commercial development in town.	Telephone Survey	64%
The area surrounding Route 2 at I-95 should be developed with a variety of commercial uses.	Telephone Survey	55%
Stonington should encourage a variety of uses in village areas.	Telephone Survey	75%
Stonington should create flexible regulations to encourage historic mill development.	Telephone Survey	67%
The Town should work with the Mystic Aquarium & Institute for Exploration, Mystic Seaport, and other organizations on projects for everyone's mutual benefit.	Telephone Survey	91%

While the Mystic Aquarium & Institute for Exploration and Mystic Seaport are tax-exempt institutions, residents clearly recognize their importance to the local economy, community character and quality of life.

Other Secondary Issues

Community character was another planning issue areas identified as important by residents. A number of factors can influence community character such as development patterns, historic resources and scenic resources. The survey confirms residents' strong feelings towards protecting community character.

Other issues considered by residents to have some importance included pedestrian and bicycle circulation, historic resources, over-development, and village enhancement.

Community Character	Source	Response
Stonington is doing a good job protecting historic resources.	Telephone Survey	86%
Stonington should do more to protect scenic resources.	Telephone Survey	72%
The Town should do more to protect scenic stone walls, street trees and barns.	Telephone Survey	69%
	Source	Percent
Community Character	Public Meeting	8%
Pedestrian/Bicycle Circulation	Public Meeting	7%
Historic Resources	Public Meeting	7%
Over-Development	Telephone Survey	7%
Village Enhancement	Public Meeting	5%

Community Character



Tertiary Issues

Other issues that were of concern to residents included vehicular circulation, housing needs community facilities, utilities, and residential development.

	Source	Percent
Vehicular Circulation	Public Meeting	4%
Housing Needs	Public Meeting	4%
Community Facilities	Public Meeting	4%
Utilities	Public Meeting	4%
Residential Development	Public Meeting	3%

Age-Restricted Housing



Overall Plan Direction

Overall Philosophy

Based on public meeting exercises, Steering Committee input, and the results of the random telephone survey, the overall guiding philosophy of this Plan is to:

**Protect and enhance
Stonington's community character and
high quality of life.**

Themes

To accomplish this goal, the Plan has been organized under the following themes.

Themes	Components
Protect Important Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preserve open space• Protect natural resources• Conserve coastal resources• Protect historic resources• Preserve scenic resources
Protect and Enhance the Villages	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reinforce village development patterns• Re-use the mills
Guide Appropriate Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve residential development patterns• Address changing housing needs• Protect existing neighborhoods• Guide appropriate business development• Address the impacts and needs of institutional uses• Support desired development patterns
Address Community Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Address community facility needs• Ensure a safe and efficient transportation system

PROTECT IMPORTANT RESOURCES

4

Overview

Much of Stonington's character and high quality of life is derived from its unique combination of natural, historic, coastal and scenic resources.

By protecting these important resources and guiding future development, Stonington can maintain and enhance community character and quality of life for generations to come.

Protecting important resources is a critical element in maintaining community character and ensuring quality of life for current and future generations.

Open Space



Natural Resources



Historic Resources



Scenic Resources



Preserving open space was a primary concern of Stonington residents and is a high priority in the Plan.

Blueways

Blueways are recreational water trails accessible by small boats such as canoes and kayaks.

Detention / Retention Basins

Stonington currently accepts stormwater detention / retention basins as mandatory open space in new subdivisions. While Stonington may wish to continue to accept these facilities, their value as open space is questionable since they rarely achieve common open space goals.

As the most responsible party to maintain them, Stonington should continue to accept these stormwater facilities, but they should not be used to defray the requirement for mandatory open space.

Preserve Open Space

Preserving meaningful open space will help conserve important natural resources, protect wildlife habitat, create more environmentally sensitive development patterns, provide fiscal benefits, protect community character and enhance the quality of life for Stonington residents.

The main open space strategies include:

- preserving more open space;
- preserving meaningful open space and connecting open spaces into a system of greenways and “blueways” (water trails);
- obtaining coastal open space; and
- forming a Stonington Land Trust.

Preserve More Open Space

For Stonington to protect and enhance community character and quality of life, attention must be paid to preserving more open space. This can be done through regulation (such as a ‘set-aside’ as part of new residential development) or through donation or purchase of land. Both strategies will need to be pursued for Stonington to preserve the open space that it wants.

Regulatory Approaches

In terms of regulation, it is recommended that Stonington increase the mandatory open space “set-aside” from 15% to 20% of every residential subdivision application. The Conservation Commission can work cooperatively with the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) to help identify the most appropriate open space within each development.

To ensure the quality of mandatory open space set-asides in subdivisions, Stonington should require that the amount of wetlands, watercourses, floodplains and steep slopes within the open space be proportional to the amount of these constrained areas within the overall development. The PZC should retain the ability to waive this requirement when taking a higher proportion of constrained land would achieve a desirable open space goal such as providing a critical greenway or wildlife corridor link.

Some communities also permit greater development flexibility in return for preserving open space above and beyond any mandatory set-aside. Stonington may wish to consider a similar regulation.

Some communities require ‘open space development patterns’ that result in a higher percentage of open space preservation and require a special permit for ‘conventional subdivisions.’ Such an approach might be particularly appropriate in coastal and northern areas of Stonington. Stonington should consider a similar regulation in conjunction with modifications to the coverage/bulk requirements to permit the prevailing large-footprint home on smaller conservation subdivision lots (see page 76 for additional discussion of open space development patterns).

When there is no appropriate open space within a new subdivision, the PZC should accept an off-site dedication of open space and the subdivision regulations should be modified to allow for this possibility. A variation on off-site dedication might be ‘open space banking’ in which the Town would purchase desirable open space and allow developers to gradually pay down the purchase as they develop parcels of land elsewhere in Town.

If there is still no appropriate open space offered as part of an application, the PZC should accept a ‘fee in lieu of open space’ equal to 10% of the fair-market value of the undeveloped parcel(s) (as currently authorized in the subdivision regulations) to be used to purchase open space elsewhere in Town. Fees must be placed in the Town’s dedicated open space fund.

Transfer of development rights is yet another regulatory option that preserves open space by allowing the transfer of ‘development rights’ to another parcel, better suited for development. Transfer of development rights is explained in greater detail in Chapter 6.

In any event, the Planning and Zoning Commission should obtain desirable open space or a fee-in-lieu-of open space as part of every residential subdivision, regardless of size.

Acquisition Approaches

For Stonington to be able to preserve the open space parcels that are most important, the community must be prepared to purchase some properties and/or work with property owners for a full or partial donation of the land as open space.

The Town should finance the dedicated open space fund on an annual basis. In this way, funds will be available when needed to purchase important properties either before or when they come on the market.

Even better, the Town may wish to consider an open space bond where funds can be immediately obtained (and paid back over time) to allow the purchase of open space whenever it becomes available. Several communities (including Groton) have done this and used the funds to acquire important open space properties.

Open space preservation does not always have to mean purchase of an entire property. Some communities have purchased ‘development rights’ to reduce the amount of development on sensitive parcels or preserve meaningful open space. Some other communities have used this type of approach to preserve agricultural land. Land can also be purchased outright today and be paid for through a ‘reverse mortgage’, leased back to an owner, or an owner can be granted ‘life use’ of the property.

Donating land or development rights can also be an effective estate planning tool. Many property owners have an emotional attachment to their land and given a choice, would prefer to see their property preserved in a way that enhances the community rather than be developed. The active solicitation of open space donations (land, development rights and easements) is an increasingly popular and successful open space tool that should be promoted in Stonington.

What Is Open Space?

While most people think of “open space” as land that is not built upon, the Plan defines open space as land that is preserved as open space.

Open space preserved in adequate quantities and appropriate locations, conserves important natural resources, shapes development patterns, and maintains quality of life.

And the survey says...

- 61% of residents think that Stonington should preserve more open space.
- 77% agree that open space set-asides should be required for all new subdivisions.
- 56% of residents would be willing to pay \$50 or more per year in taxes to purchase more open space.

Fiscal Benefits

Several studies have shown that purchasing open space can be fiscally responsible over time when compared to the perpetual costs and benefits of residential development that might otherwise occur.

For this reason, the Town may wish to enhance the open space fund with annual Town contributions or to create a more effective open space fund that can be used to immediately purchase significant open space, consider bonding for open space acquisition.

When adequately funded, the land acquisition fund can be used to leverage matching open space grants, making local funds twice as effective.

And the survey says...

- 78% agree that open spaces should be connected into a system of greenways.
- 63% agree that the Town should acquire waterfront property for a Town beach.

Open Space Inventory

An Open Space Subcommittee of the Conservation Commission is in the process of inventorying existing open space and desirable open space acquisitions. If the subcommittee completes their work prior to adoption of the Plan, their work will be incorporated into the Plan.

Preserve Meaningful Open Space and Create a Greenway System

Open spaces are more meaningful when they contribute to an overall open space system, enhance existing open space, provide access to coastal resources, or protect important natural or scenic resources.

Overall Open Space System

Interconnecting open spaces with greenways is the most effective way for Stonington to establish a meaningful open space system that provides benefits for both passive recreation and wildlife. A system of greenways can function as wildlife corridors, allowing wildlife to migrate between larger open space habitats. By connecting to the villages, the Borough, museums and attractions, and other outlying activity nodes, a trail system within the greenways can not only provide passive recreation but can also reduce dependency on automobiles.

Greenway programs on both the Mystic and Pawcatuck Rivers would be desirable. The Pawcatuck River Greenway could link Pawcatuck with Westerly, RI via a pedestrian bridge between the two sister villages.

In order for the system of greenways to be most effective, the Town should: encourage other open space organizations to allow public access; secure easements over private property when necessary (especially along the Mystic and Pawcatuck Rivers); and encourage the creation of recreational waterways or “blueways”, such as kayak trails, that interconnect with greenways and open spaces. The greenway system should also tie into regional trails wherever practical.

Enhance Existing Open Space

When opportunities arise to acquire open space adjacent to existing preserved lands, they should be given strong consideration. The value of the existing open space will be enhanced through such strategic expansions, and the overall utility of the open space system for passive use and wildlife habitat will be enhanced.

Coastal Open Space

Coastal resources play an important role in the history, economy and character of Stonington. Acquisitions should be prioritized based on critical resource protection and recreational potential (e.g., bathing beach). Priorities should include: obtaining privately owned beach property (if and when available) to create a Town beach and obtaining coastal access with appropriate public access signage as a condition of any development approval in coastal areas.

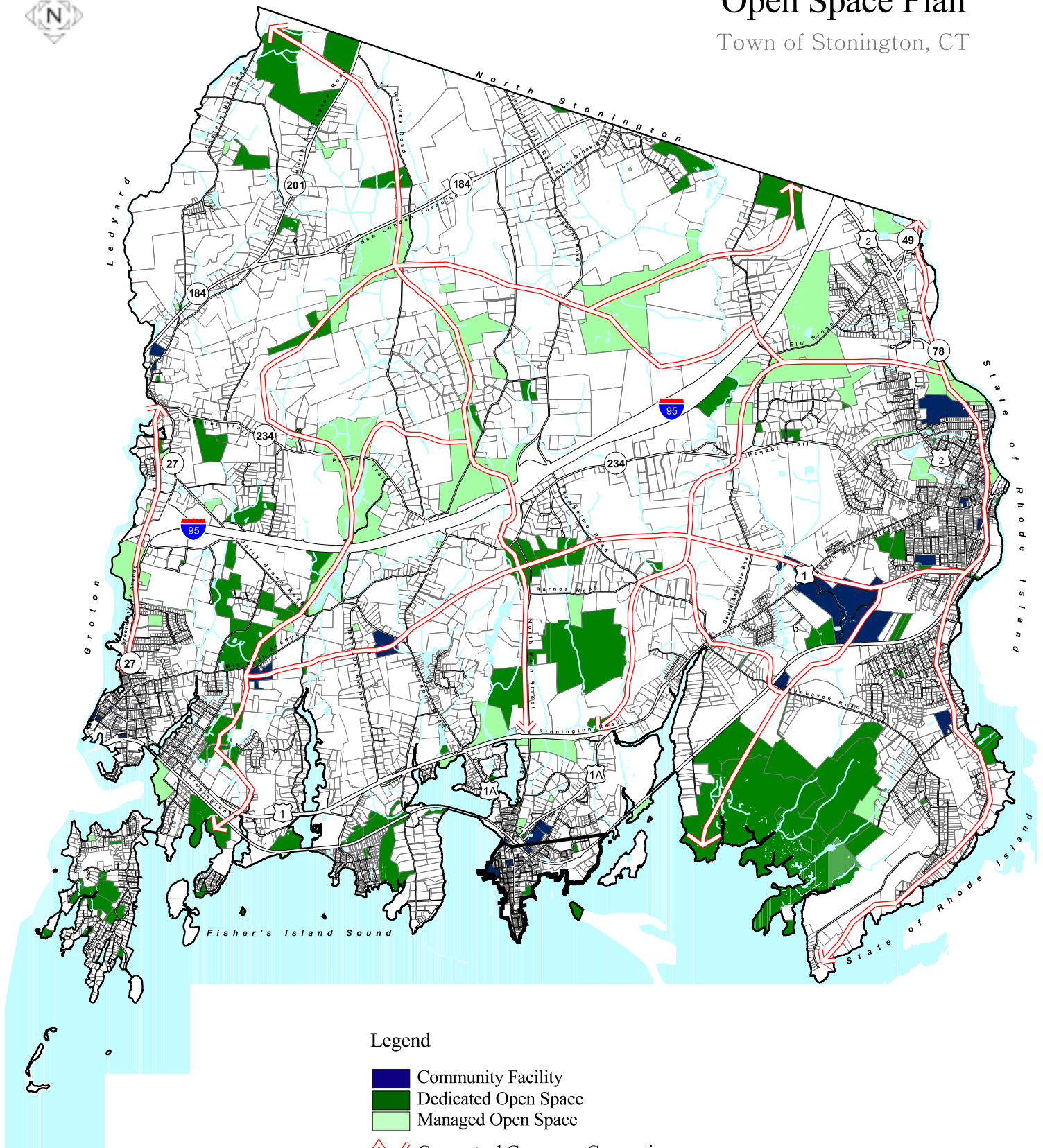
Protect Important Resources

Open space is a significant tool for preserving natural and scenic resources. While acquisition of the land might provide the greatest benefits, preservation of the natural or scenic resource might also be accomplished through the use of conservation easements.








Open Space Plan

Town of Stonington, CT



Legend

-  Community Facility
-  Dedicated Open Space
-  Managed Open Space
-  Conceptual Greenway Connections
-  Stonington Borough

0 4000 Feet

The PZC and Inland Wetlands Commission (IWC) can require conservation easements to protect important resources during the application review process.

Investigate Formation of a Stonington Land Trust

Land trusts are important open space organizations since they can devote far more time, energy and resources towards open space preservation than a municipality can.

While the Avalonia Land Conservancy (ALC) has done an exemplary job of preserving open space in Stonington, their focus is regional in scope. If a critical open space opportunity presents itself in Stonington and the ALC has committed its resources towards another parcel in the region, the opportunity may be lost.

An independent, non-profit Stonington Land Trust would complement the ALC's continued efforts by focusing on preserving important open space in Stonington while working cooperatively with the ALC.

Barn Island Wildlife Management Area



Greenway Trails



Wildlife Habitat



Coastal Islands



Open Space Preservation Strategies

Preserve More Open Space

1. Increase the mandatory open space "set-aside" to 20%.
2. Require open space for every residential development application or accept a fee-in-lieu equal to 10% of the predevelopment value of the parcel(s).
3. Require the amount of constrained land within an open space set-aside to be proportional to the amount of constrained land within the overall development, unless waived by the PZC for good cause.
4. Enhance the open space acquisition fund through annual contributions in the budget and/or by bonding to have a more immediate effect.
5. Continue to pursue state and/or federal open space grants.
6. Convert unprotected and perceived open space into protected open space by acquiring land or easements.
7. Investigate adopting density-based zoning to encourage open space subdivisions.
8. Investigate adopting regulations to allow development flexibility for open space preservation.
9. Require conservation easements or other measures during approvals.
10. Investigate allowing off-site dedication and/or banking of open space.
11. Investigate *requiring* "open space developments" resulting in higher percentage of open space.
12. Educate residents about benefits of open space donation and sale of development rights.

Preserve Meaningful Open Space and Create a Greenway System

13. Interconnect open spaces into a system of local and regional greenways.
14. Establish trails along greenways and tie into regional trails to encourage passive recreation.
15. Encourage other organizations to allow for public access and use.
16. Prioritize coastal open space acquisition by critical resource protection and recreational potential (e.g., town beach).
17. Acquire an appropriate public beach property.

Investigate Formation of a Stonington Land Trust

18. Investigate creating a Stonington Land Trust.

Additional Strategies

Chapter 6 contains additional strategies that may result in additional, more desirable open space.

Chapter 5 and Chapter 7 contain additional strategies for creating a system of greenways.

Protecting natural resources is important to enhancing community character and the overall quality of life in Stonington.

Protect Important Natural Resources

Conserving natural resources is important in terms of preserving environmental functions, maintaining biodiversity and preventing environmental damage.

Despite the fact that nearly three-quarters of residents surveyed agree that the Town is doing a good job protecting natural resources, there are some ways that Stonington can enhance protection of natural resources:

- address natural resources at the time of development;
- strengthen wetland and watercourse setbacks; and
- preserve natural diversity.

Address Natural Resources at the Time of Development

The main pressure on natural resources is from human activity, particularly development activity. When natural resources are not fully considered at the time of development, there can be irreversible impacts on natural functions. Buildable land regulations and/or soil-based zoning can address these issues.

Adopt a Buildable Land Regulation

To relate development potential to the capability of the land, Stonington should adopt a buildable land regulation that excludes sensitive areas such as wetlands, watercourses, floodplains and steep slopes (>25%) from the overall acreage of the parcel when determining the overall density within a residential development.

Consider Soil-Based Zoning

Soil-based zoning is a tool used by some communities to relate residential development to the underlying capabilities of the soils. Naturally, such an approach is most appropriate in areas that rely on soil characteristics to support the wells and septic systems that are a major part of residential development in certain areas of Stonington (it would not be relevant to areas served by public water and sewer).

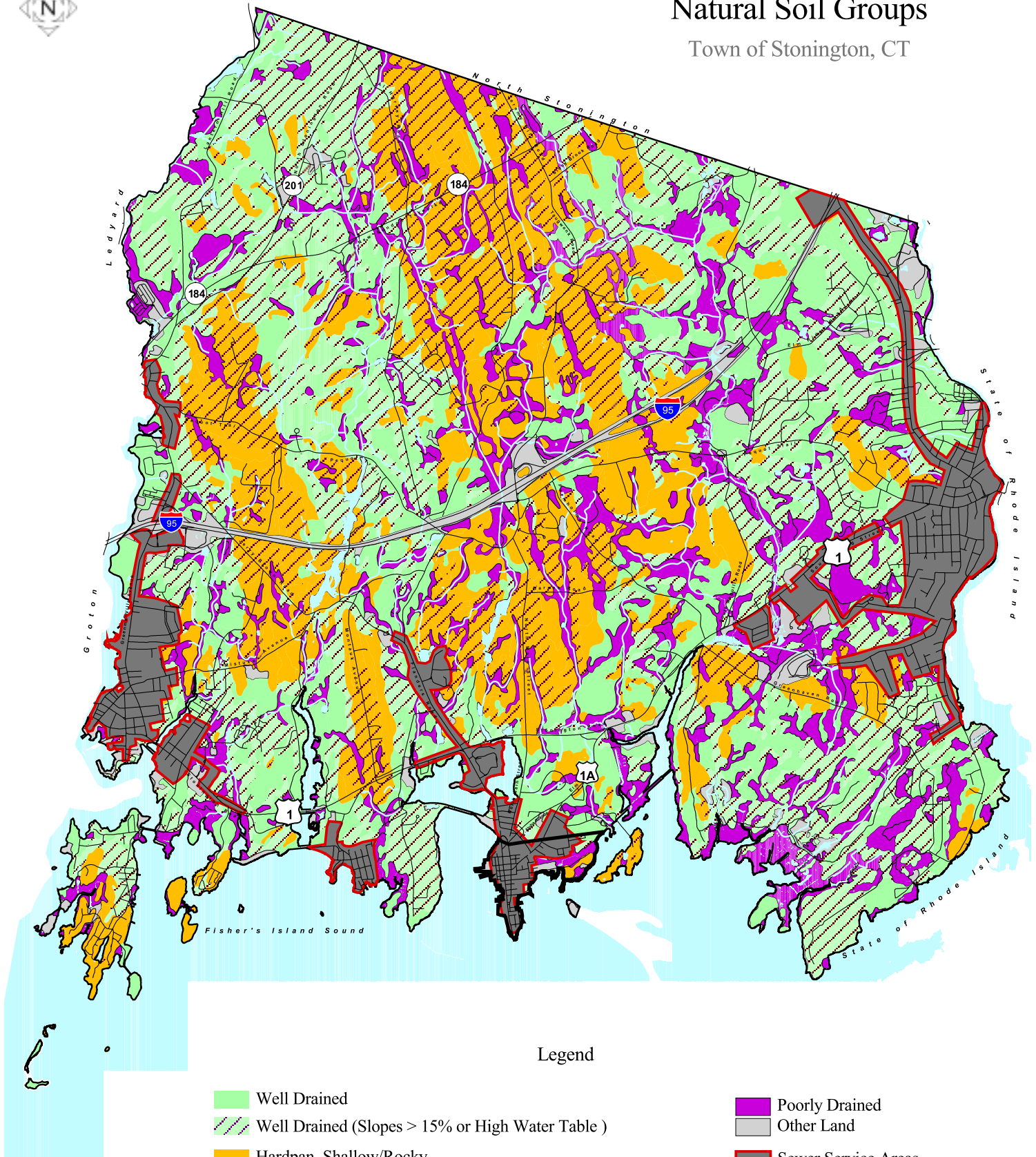
Natural soils groups are described below and illustrated on the following map.

Development Potential	Natural Soil Group	Description
Good	Well Drained	Generally well drained soils.
	Well Drained (slopes >15% or high water table)	Generally well drained soils.
Fair	Hardpan, shallow/rocky	Restricted drainage is a constraint
	Shallow and Rocky (slopes >15% or high water table)	Presence of rock is a constraint.
Poor	Poorly Drained (Wetlands)	Poor drainage or flooding is a constraint
Varies	Other Land	Soil types are not discernible.



Natural Soil Groups

Town of Stonington, CT



Legend

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| Well Drained | Poorly Drained |
| Well Drained (Slopes > 15% or High Water Table) | Other Land |
| Hardpan, Shallow/Rocky | Sewer Service Areas |
| Hardpan, Shallow/Rocky (Slopes > 15% or High Water Table) | Stonington Borough |

0 4000 Feet

Important Habitats

The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) maintains a Natural Diversity Database (NDDDB) that identifies areas where species of concern that are threatened or endangered may exist within Stonington.

When development proposals occur in these areas (depicted on the Conservation Plan on the facing page), applicants should work closely with Town and DEP staff to mitigate any impacts on the species of concern and its habitat.

Strengthen Wetland and Watercourse Setbacks

While the Inland Wetlands Commission (IWC) has a policy of an ‘upland review area’ of 100 feet adjacent to inland wetlands and watercourses, this is not a regulation. In addition, the Planning and Zoning Commission has a ‘non-infringement area’ standard in the GBR-130 and RC-120 zones which applies to both inland and coastal wetlands. These standards should be both simplified and strengthened.

The Inland Wetlands Commission (IWC) should formally adopt a regulation or definition establishing an upland review area within 100’ of a wetland or watercourse. Some consideration must be given to continuing to make exceptions for boating facilities and other water dependent uses with proper permits in the RC-120 and other zones.

The Planning and Zoning Commission should expand the requirement of the non-infringement area for coastal wetlands in the RC-120 Zone to include other appropriate zones within coastal areas but eliminate the requirement in the GBR-130 Zone in favor of the IWC’s upland review area.

Preserve Natural Diversity

With 55 percent of the Town preserved as open space or remaining undeveloped, large tracts of wildlife habitat exist in Stonington. However, many of these areas may be developed in the future, threatening wildlife habitat. Consideration should be given to preserving additional wildlife habitat and migration corridors in the future. This is especially true for rare or endangered species (see sidebar).

A simple measure of added protection for preserving the natural ecosystem is to prohibit the deliberate introduction of harmful non-native or invasive species during the site development or subdivision process. Invasive plant and animal species can aggressively multiply; replacing native wildlife food sources, causing costly property damage and even threatening human health and safety.

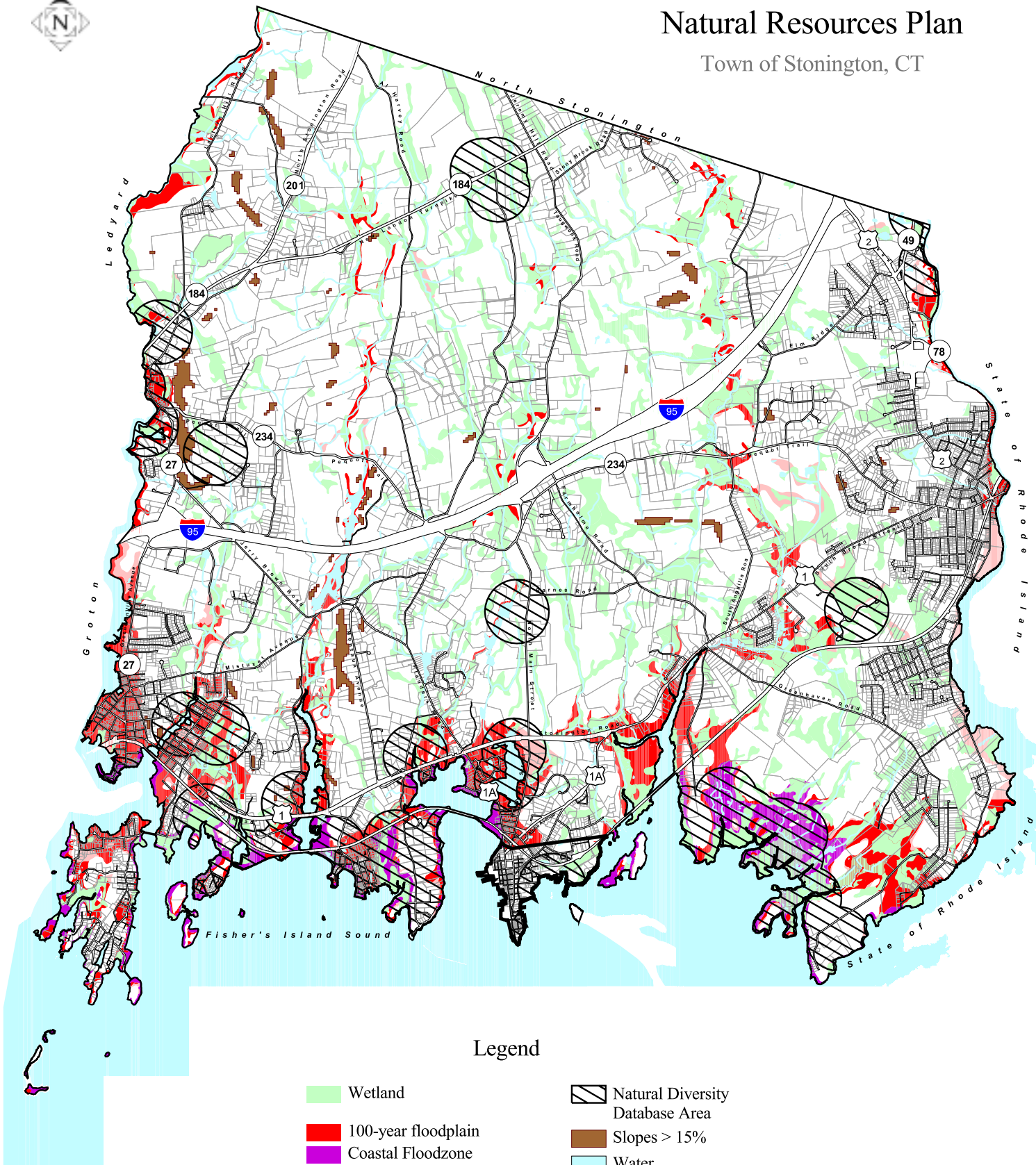
Important Natural Resource Protection Strategies

1. Adopt buildable land regulations to reduce development pressure on sensitive areas.
2. Consider adopting soil-based zoning to relate density of development to the capability of soils to support development.
3. Work with applicants to ensure that important Natural Diversity Database (NDDDB) resources are protected.
4. Minimize wildlife habitat loss through the preservation of open space and natural resource areas
5. Adopt buffer areas to wetlands and watercourses and eliminate conflict between buffers and non-infringement areas.
6. Prohibit the introduction of non-native or invasive species during the site development or subdivision process.



Natural Resources Plan

Town of Stonington, CT



Legend

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| Wetland | Natural Diversity Database Area |
| 100-year floodplain | Slopes > 15% |
| Coastal Floodzone | Water |
| 500-year floodplain | Stonington Borough |

0 4000 Feet

Protection of water quality may be Stonington's most important natural resource protection priority.

Important Water Resources

The water quality categories shown on the following page are described as follows:

Aquifer Protection Area – a DEP designated area intended to protect public water supply wells;

Aquifer Protection Zone – an overlay zone intended to protect aquifers and public water supply watersheds;

Areas of High Groundwater Availability – aquifers and other areas thought capable of supplying significant volumes of water for private and public use;

Meets State water quality standards – surface water that is acceptable for all uses except certain discharges;

Not meeting State water quality standards – surface water that is not acceptable for some uses (ex. potability or recreation);

Not Potable – groundwater that is known to be undrinkable due to pollution;

Potable (may not meet State water quality standards) – groundwater that may be affected by pollution;

Shellfishing restrictions apply – surface water that is acceptable for most uses except that shellfish must be purified before being consumed; and

Water Quality Event – the location of a documented water pollution incident.

Protect Water Quality

Protecting water quality may be the top priority for natural resource protection in Stonington. Stonington's surface and groundwater resources provide potable water, contribute to biological diversity, support water dependent uses and add to the overall quality of life for residents.

While Stonington already has an Aquifer Protection Zone (APZ), it only applies to two aquifer areas and the Copps Brook watershed feeding the Mystic Reservoir. Stonington contains other areas that might be categorized into the following water resource protection areas:

- Level A Aquifer Protection Areas (APA)- areas known to supply existing public drinking wells,
- public water supply watersheds - where water drains to a public drinking water reservoir,
- Level B APAs - thought to supply existing public drinking wells or with the potential for new wells,
- high groundwater availability areas - thought capable of supplying significant volumes of water for private and public use, or
- watersheds with aquifers or other high groundwater availability areas - areas thought capable of supporting public wells.

The Aquifer Protection Zone should be modified to prescribe uses according to their potential risk to these water resource protection areas. The following table ranks land uses from lowest to highest risk for polluting water resources and makes recommendations for their use in the water resource protection areas described above.

Recommendations for New Uses in Water Resource Protection Areas

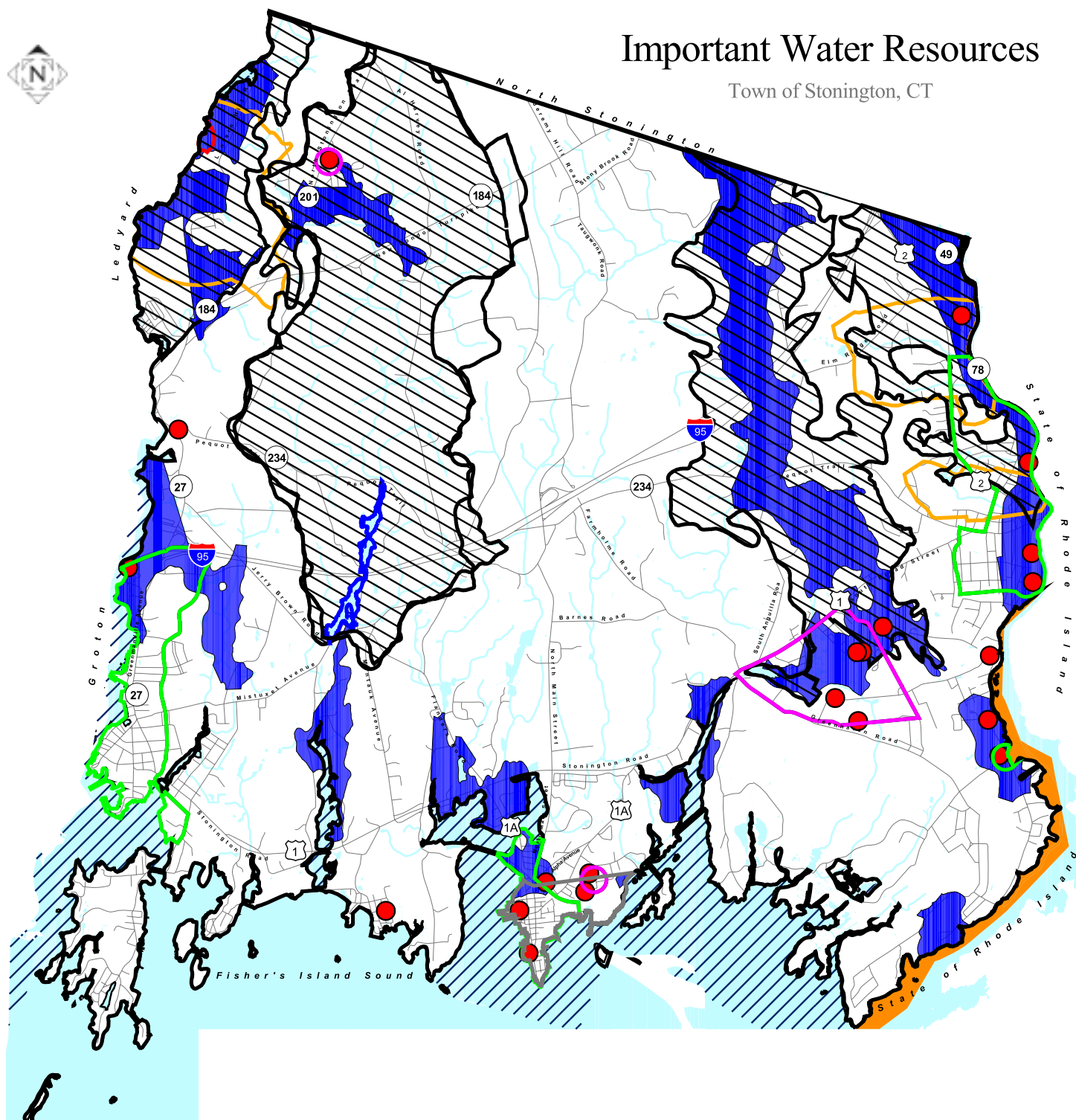
Use	Recommendation
1. Open space and passive recreation 2. Forests / land for forest products 3. Developed recreation, public parks	Can be permitted anywhere
4. Field crops or permanent pasture 5. Low density residential (<1 units/acre) 6. Churches, municipal offices	Can be permitted anywhere
7. Agricultural - dairy, livestock, poultry, nursery, tobacco, orchards	Best management practices recommended.
8. Medium density residential (1 to 2 units/acre) 9. Golf course	Conditionally permitted in all water resource protection areas except only in Level A APAs upon adherence to best management practices and connection to public sewers where applicable.
10. High density housing (>2 units/acre) 11. Commercial - with nothing more than domestic sewage discharges 12. Schools, hospitals, nursing homes	Conditionally permitted in all areas upon adherence to best management practices and connection to public sewer.
13. Other Retail / Commercial 14. Manufacturing, processing, research 15. Waste lagoons, bulky waste landfills 16. Cemeteries	Prohibited in Level A and B APAs, public water supply watersheds and designated high groundwater availability areas. Conditionally permitted elsewhere upon adherence to best management practices and connection to public sewers where applicable.

Use risk factor information from Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection



Important Water Resources

Town of Stonington, CT



- Groundwater**
- Areas of High Groundwater Availability
 - Aquifer Protection Zone (Town)
 - Aquifer Protection Area (DEP Level A)
 - Aquifer Protection Area (DEP Level B)
 - Potable
 - Potable (May Not Meet State Water Quality Standards)
 - Not Potable
 - Water Quality Events

- Surface Water**
- Reservoir
 - Meets State Water Quality Standards
 - Shellfishing Restrictions Apply
 - Not Meeting State Water Quality Standards
 - Stonington Borough

0 4000 Feet



Planimetrics
31 Edge Drive, Avon, CT 06001 800-671-5207

According to Aquifer Protection Regulations proposed by the Department of Environmental Protection (Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies - Section 22a-354i-9. Best Management Practices for Regulated Activities), best management practices for sensitive water resource areas include:

1. Every regulated activity shall be conducted in accordance with the following:
 - a. Hazardous materials may be stored above ground within an aquifer protection area only in accordance with certain conditions.
 - b. No person shall increase the number of underground storage tanks used to store hazardous materials.
 - c. An underground storage tank used to store hazardous materials shall not be replaced with a larger tank except under certain conditions.
 - d. No person shall use, maintain or install floor drains, dry wells or other infiltration devices or appurtenances which allow the release of waste waters to the ground, without specific approval.
 - e. A materials management plan shall be developed and implemented in accordance specified criteria and standards.
2. The development and implementation of a storm water management plan shall be required for regulated activities, as follows:
 - a. A storm water management plan shall assure that storm water run-off generated by the subject regulated activity is (i) managed in a manner so as to prevent pollution of ground water, and (ii) shall comply with all of the requirements for the General Permit of the Discharge of Storm Water associated with a Commercial Activity issued pursuant to section 22a-430b of the Connecticut General Statutes; and
 - b. Upon approval by the Commissioner or the municipal aquifer protection agency, as appropriate, the storm water management plan shall be enforceable by the Commissioner or such agency, as appropriate.

Reduce Impervious Coverage

The HI-200 Zone is currently the only zone with impervious coverage regulations which require at least 40% of a development to remain in a landscaped or natural vegetative state to reduce runoff and promote groundwater infiltration. The HI-200 zone and other commercial and industrial zones should be amended to include flexible “effective impervious coverage” requirements that take into account such measures as roof leaders that allow clean water from building roofs to infiltrate the ground or porous paving materials that allow a portion of stormwater to infiltrate the ground. Effective impervious coverage requirements should be tailored to the characteristics of each zone (i.e. stronger in environmentally sensitive areas such as the aquifer protection zone and relaxed in historically dense developed areas such as the villages).

Other methods of protecting water quality throughout Stonington include:

- reducing residential density and/or lot coverage in sensitive watersheds;
- adopting an underground storage tank program or ordinance to monitor; regulate or prohibit underground fuel oil storage tanks;
- improving stormwater treatment by natural or mechanical means; and
- continuing to provide water quality educational resources to land use commissions and the public.

Address Stormwater Management

Dispersed or “non-point” sources of pollution such as road runoff, pesticides and fertilizers can be harmful when collected, concentrated and discharged into waterways. In the past, the discharge of stormwater was treated like a free good and discharged into a roadway storm drain system or detention pond and forgotten. Under the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) new National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II guidelines, Stonington will be responsible for reducing the discharge of pollutants to the “maximum extent practical” through the implementation of a series of “minimum control measures” and “best management practices”.

Although no water monitoring is mandated, the Town and commercial properties tying into its system will be responsible for meeting the new water quality standards, regardless of the cost. Stonington has formed a Stormwater Management Study Group to study the issue and several initiatives are currently underway including:

- a catch basin marking project in conjunction with Pine Point School;
- a feasibility study for the creation of a stormwater utility; and
- a Stormwater Management Plan and regulation administered by the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Water Quality Protection Strategies

1. Modify the Aquifer Protection Zone to allow uses according to their potential risk to water resource protection areas.
2. Require the identification, licensing, and/or removal of residential underground storage tanks.
3. Create a stormwater management plan that includes best management practices for stormwater management.
4. Investigate creating a stormwater utility to pay for compliance with NPDES Phase II guidelines.
5. Require that the “first flush of runoff be appropriately treated in terms of quality and rate of runoff.
6. Encourage site designs that minimize impervious surfaces, promote infiltration of stormwater, and reduce runoff.
7. Adopt “effective impervious coverage” requirements for commercial and industrial zones.
8. Provide vegetative buffers to wetland and watercourses to filter pollutants and protect them from direct receipt of runoff.
9. Limit the clearing and grading of sites so as to minimize the impact on natural drainage patterns.
10. Promote public education programs that address “non-point” pollution issues.

Stonington should preserve historic resources to protect community character and enhance quality of life.

National Register Historic Districts

- Mechanic Street
- Mystic Bridge
- Stonington Borough

National Historic Landmarks

- Emma C. Berry (Fishing Smack)
- Charles W. Morgan (Whaler)
- L.A. Dunton (Fishing Schooner)

National Register of Historic Places

- Capt. Nathaniel B. Palmer House
- Pequotsepos Manor (Denison Homestead),
- Thomas Stanton House (Davis Homestead)
- Sabino (Excursion Steamer)
- Stonington Lighthouse
- Borough School
- Whitehall Mansion

Preserve Historic Resources

Stonington and its residents have made important contributions to state, national and even world history. Thanks to the foresight of many residents who followed them, much of Stonington's history has been preserved in its architecture, villages and museums.

A survey of residents revealed that an overwhelming 86% feel that Stonington is doing a good job of protecting historic resources. Surprisingly, all of the preservation efforts thus far have been voluntary, as there are no controls in place to protect these historic resources. Stonington's tourist economy, and to some degree, the property values in its historic villages, are dependent upon the continued integrity of these resources.

Encourage "Sensitive Stewardship"

Owners who are emotionally and financially committed to maintaining a historic resource are the most effective means of preserving it. Sensitive stewardship should be encouraged since without it, no regulatory or incentive program can prevent the loss of historic resources due to demolition or neglect. Stonington should consider ways to provide educational programs and technical assistance for historic preservation.

Recognize Significant Historic Resources

Another way to encourage historic preservation is through recognition programs such as the National Historic Landmark program, the National Register of Historic Places, and the State Register of Historic Places.

Stonington should also consider establishing a local register of historic places to acknowledge properties of local historic significance. Such a program can be administered by local historical societies and sometimes entails voluntarily placing a small placard on historic structures to indicate the original owner and date of construction. While adding no protection to a property, it can instill pride in ownership and encourage preservation efforts.

Captain Nathaniel Palmer House



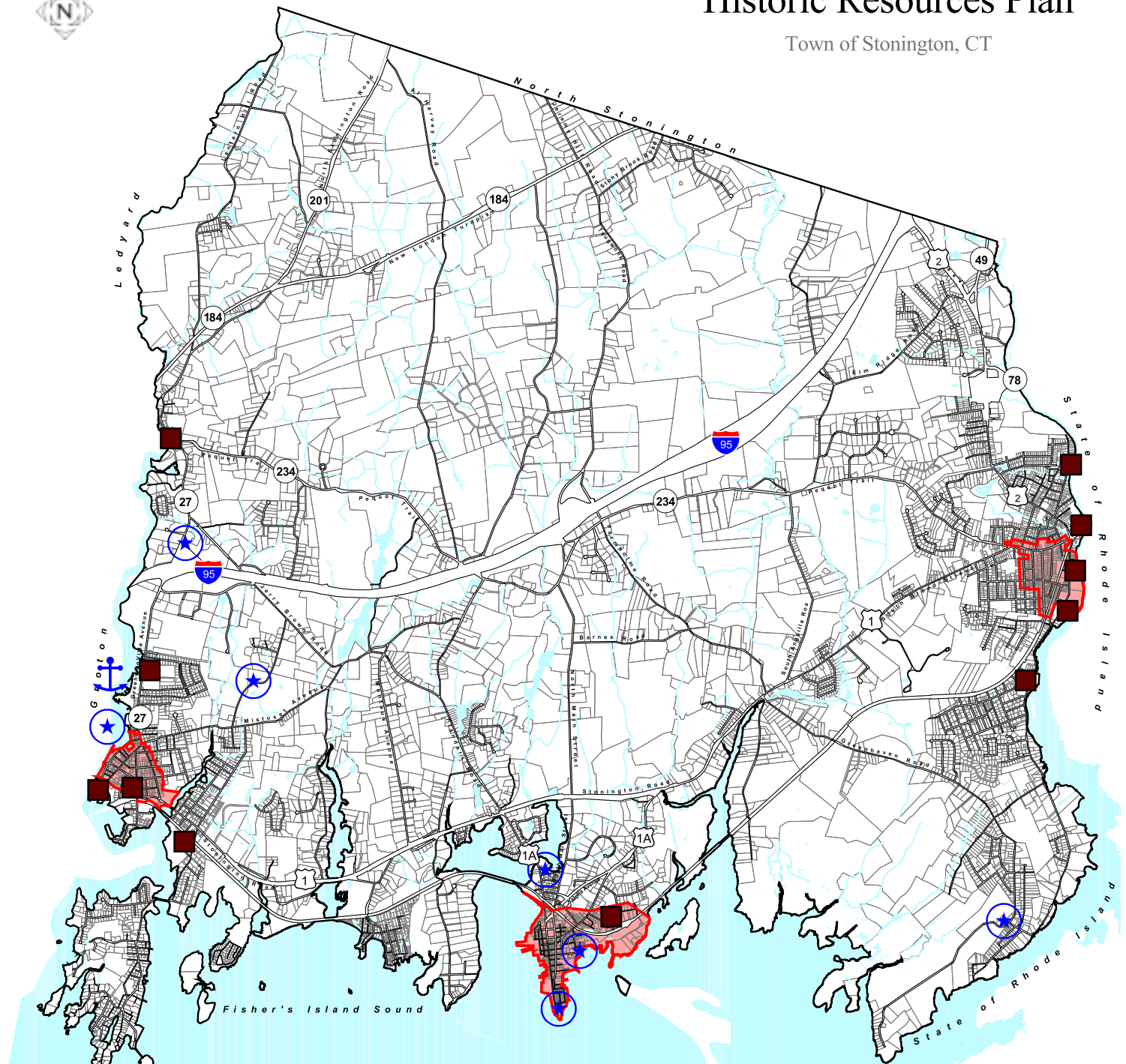
Historic Recognition Plaque









Historic Resources Plan

Town of Stonington, CT



Legend

-  National Register Historic Districts
-  National Register Historic Places
-  National Historic Landmarks
-  Historic Mill Thematic Group

0 4000 Feet

Definition of “Historic”

Various dictionaries define “historic” as anything having importance in or influence on history. National Historic Landmarks and structures on the National Register of Historic Places typically fit this definition due to the significance of these places and/or their owners in the history of the United States. The same can be said for properties of State or local significance.

In terms of other historic buildings, there is no widely accepted definition. Some jurisdictions arbitrarily define historic buildings as any building over 50 years old for the purpose of establishing a demolition delay ordinance or other historic preservation program.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation takes a broader approach asking not whether a building is historic but whether it is worth saving because of its architectural character or because it has useful life left in it.

Many buildings in Stonington fit this broader definition because their destruction and/or replacement with contemporary structures would alter the character of their properties, neighborhoods and ultimately the Town.

Establish Preservation Programs

Stonington already has three National Register Historic Districts, essentially covering the most historic portions of its two main villages and the Borough. These district designations are mostly honorary in nature but also offer tax advantages for the rehabilitation of historic commercial properties within them. Essentially, these are recognition programs, not protection programs.

Establish Local Historic Districts

In order to exercise regulatory control over the architectural integrity of historic resources, local historic districts should be established. Such districts are established by a vote of the property owners within the proposed districts. Historic District Commissions, appointed by the Board of Selectmen (BOS), would then adopt and administer regulations requiring a Certificate of Appropriateness for certain exterior improvements within each district.

While the scope of regulations may vary from district to district, the intent should be to ensure that repairs and improvements do not harm the architectural character of properties or the surrounding district. Preservation minded property owners within local historic districts often appreciate the assurance that their investment in maintaining and rehabilitating their properties is protected by the continued historic and architectural integrity of neighboring properties.

Pursue Certified Local Government Status

Once a local historic district(s) is established, Stonington would become eligible for designation as a Certified Local Government allowing a Historic District Commission(s) to apply for historic preservation grants to be used for education, historic rehabilitation and other purposes.

Establish Village Districts

Another tool for protecting the aesthetic character of historic properties is the “village district.” Adopted by the Planning & Zoning Commission (PZC), a village district is a zoning district that allows for a high degree of architectural and site design control within established villages that would otherwise be beyond their jurisdiction. A village district ensures that as properties are redeveloped or infill development occurs; it will be in character with the surrounding village.

Unlike a local historic district, village districts may be adopted unilaterally by the PZC after an application and public hearing in accordance with their established zoning procedures.

Consider Regulatory Incentives

To encourage historic preservation, regulatory incentives such as adaptive re-use provisions can be adopted by the PZC to give property owners of historic mills or other significant historic properties flexibility in re-tenanting their properties in return for making repairs that ensure the continued architectural and historic integrity of the property.

Provide Financial Incentives

The Board of Selectmen should provide economic incentives such as tax abatements for the restoration of historic resources. By deferring the tax increase on the improved value of a property, a major disincentive for making improvements is reduced. The Town ultimately benefits from both the visual improvements to properties and the eventual increases in property taxes when the properties are assessed at their new full values.

Adopt a Demolition Delay Ordinance

Another measure that should be taken by the BOS is to adopt a demolition delay ordinance that requires as much as a 90-day waiting period before historic buildings can be demolished. While not preventing the demolition of an historic building, the waiting period allows the opportunity to seek alternatives to demolition such as purchasing the property, relocating the structure(s), or at a minimum, salvaging architectural components. The Borough of Stonington already has a demolition delay ordinance in place.

Update the Historic Resources Inventory

Stonington has completed several historic resource surveys to identify clusters of architecturally and historically significant structures for inclusion in what are now three National Register Historic Districts. A more comprehensive townwide inventory should be conducted to identify all such properties so that they may be recognized for their significance, included in historic registers or possibly historic districts, and preserved through various preservation programs.

Historic Preservation Strategies

1. Establish local historic districts that require a Certificate of Appropriateness for exterior renovations in the district.
2. Establish “village districts” (by the Planning & Zoning Commission) in Mystic, Old Mystic and Pawcatuck that allow architectural review of proposals within the district.
3. Adopt a demolition delay ordinance that requires as much as a 90-day waiting period before historic buildings can be demolished.
4. Adopt regulatory incentives (such as historic overlay and/or adaptive reuse provisions in zoning regulations).
5. Provide economic incentives such as tax abatements, grants or loans for restoration of historic resources.
6. Continue to identify and recognize important historical resources through national and state recognition programs.
7. Establish a local register of historic places.
8. Encourage sensitive stewardship as the most effective means of preserving historic resources.
9. Continue to provide educational programs and technical assistance about historic preservation to historic property owners.
10. Conduct a townwide historic resources inventory.

Coastal resources contribute to Stonington's character and quality of life.

Conserve Coastal Resources

Prior to the Modern Era, many Stonington residents made their living by working the sea - a tradition that continues today in Connecticut's last remaining sizable fishing fleet. Much of Stonington's character can be attributed to its maritime legacy, and its coastal resources contribute towards resident's quality of life.

Protect Coastal Water Quality

Coastal water quality can be affected by pollution and changes in salinity due to increased freshwater runoff, which in-turn can harm coastal ecosystems and fisheries. To protect coastal water quality, Stonington should consider implementing the following:

- lowering density and/or lot area coverage in sub-watersheds proximate to tidal wetlands and coastal waters;
- requiring that the first inch of stormwater runoff from significant new development be captured, treated and discharged at lower rates; and
- adopting uniform setbacks of 75-100 feet from all tidal wetlands with provisions for minor incursions into the setback area when unavoidable.

Provide For Marinas and Water-Dependent Uses

Stonington's 22 marinas, yacht/boat clubs and boatyards are protected uses under the State Coastal Management Act. However, current zoning regulations may not be adequate to preserve such uses from non-water-dependent encroachment. To ensure the continued survival of these uses, the Planning and Zoning Commission should consider prohibiting all but ancillary, non-water-dependent uses such as parking and dining in the Marine Commercial (MC) Zone.

The PZC should also consider a new "neighborhood marine" overlay district to restrict residential uses while encouraging new and existing boating facilities in appropriate water-dependent use locations.

Protect Coastal Islands

Coastal islands provide critical habitat for a number of plants and animals. Their further development raises issues related to water quality, scenic views and the provision of public services. The PZC should consider a new Island Conservation Zone that respects existing development while restricting new development.

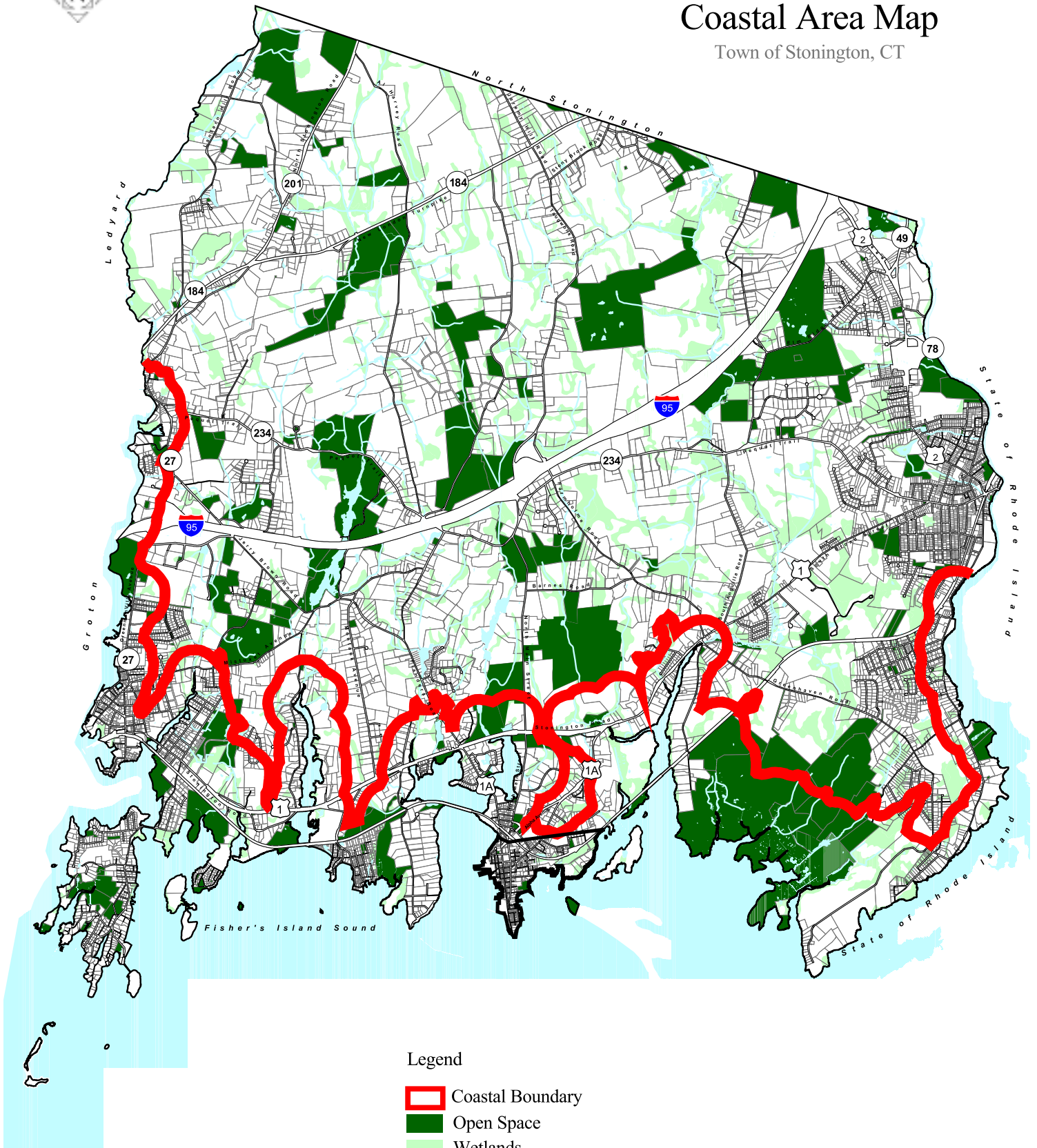
Ensure Public Access to Coastal Open Space

Coastal open space can protect important resources and provide increased recreational opportunities. Past attempts to require public access have met with mixed results due to confusing signage and difficulty in finding access points. The Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) should adopt a uniform public access sign program and require appropriate public access signage as a condition of approval for coastal site plan reviews, when public access is required.








Coastal Area Map

Town of Stonington, CT



Legend

-  Coastal Boundary
-  Open Space
-  Wetlands
-  Water and Watercourses
-  Stonington Borough

0 4000 Feet



Planimetrics
31 Bridge Street, Avon, CT 06001 800-637-5267

And the survey says...

- 63% of residents agree that the Town should acquire coastal open space for a Town beach.
- 62% agree that there should be more public access to coastal open space.
- 82% agree that the Town should restrict development in sensitive coastal areas.

Coastal Agencies

As many as six agencies are responsible for regulating activities in coastal areas.

The Mystic Harbor Management Commission plans for the management of Mystic River Harbor resources.

The Pawcatuck River Harbor Management Commission manages Pawcatuck River Harbor Resources but has not adopted a Harbor Management Plan.

The Planning and Zoning Commission regulates land and water dependent uses in the Town.

The Stonington Borough Planning and Zoning Commission regulates land and water dependent uses in the Borough.

The Shellfish Commission manages shellfish resources in Stonington waters.

Stonington Harbor Management Commission plans for the management of Stonington Harbor resources.

The Waterfront Commission manages Town owned waterfront properties.

Restrict Development in Coastal High Hazard (V) Flood Zones

Development in Coastal High Hazard Flood (V) Zones creates hazards to life and property and elevated structures designed to mitigate these hazards can result in negative visual impacts and impair landward property values. To reduce these threats to life and property, Stonington should adopt setbacks from V Zones for all non-water dependent uses, discourage the extension of sewers, and restrict densities and/or lot coverage in extensive V Zone areas.

Coordinate Coastal and Harbor Management Efforts

Coastal activities are regulated by six or more agencies with varying, often overlapping jurisdictions. To ensure that development plans for projects on or contiguous to harbors comply with all applicable plans and regulations, a uniform referral process should be established between the PZC and the many agencies with jurisdiction over coastal waters so that they may all review, provide comment and where applicable, approve applications in a timely manner. Marina development proposals should be reviewed jointly to ensure that upland elements are adequate to support water-based activities.

Confusing Coastal Access Signage



Water Dependent Uses



Coastal Resource Protection Strategies

1. Lower density and/or lot area coverage in undeveloped areas of sub-watersheds proximate to tidal wetlands and coastal waters.
2. For significant new development, require that the first inch of runoff be captured, treated and discharged slowly at lower rates.
3. Adopt additional management buffer areas adjacent to regulated wetlands.
4. Adopt uniform setbacks of 75-100 feet from all tidal wetlands with provisions for necessary minor incursions into the setback area
5. Prohibit all but ancillary, non-water dependent uses in MC-80 zone.
6. Create a “neighborhood marine” overlay district to restrict residential uses while encouraging new and existing boating facilities in appropriate water dependent use locations.
7. Consider creating an “Island Conservation” Zone.
8. Prioritize open space acquisitions based on critical resource protection and recreational potential.
9. Identify and take a proactive approach to acquiring beach property for public use through land acquisition or donation, if and when available.
10. Require appropriate public access signage as a condition of coastal site plan review approval when public access is required.
11. Create setbacks from V Zones for all non-water dependent uses.
12. Restrict densities and coverage in extensive V Zone areas
13. Foster better cooperation between the PZC, Harbor Commissions and other agencies responsible for coastal management.
14. Review marina development proposals jointly to ensure that upland elements are adequate to support water-based activity.

Coastal Wildlife



Maritime Heritage



Scenic resources contribute to Stonington's character and quality of life.

Preserve Scenic Resources

Stonington is fortunate to possess an exceptional combination of natural and man-made scenic character that is the envy of most towns in Connecticut. From its picturesque coastline to its pastoral uplands and from its quaint historic sea-side villages to its stone-walled scenic roads, Stonington's scenic beauty has attracted tourists and residents for generations and is a major component of the Town's overall community character.

Like natural, historic and coastal resources, if not adequately protected, these scenic resources can be lost. Stonington residents agree and feel that the Town should do more to protect these important resources. Nearly three-quarters of Stonington residents surveyed agreed that Stonington should do more to protect scenic resources.

Protect Scenic Areas and Vistas

Scenic resources can be grouped into two main categories: vistas that offer distant scenic views and scenic areas that may offer scenic views from within as well as from afar.

Scenic vistas abound in Stonington. Much of Stonington's coastline offers scenic coastal vistas but the majority of it is privately owned. The general public is still able to enjoy many glimpses from various roads while locations such as Stonington Point and Barn Island offer the public expansive coastal views. Stonington's gently rolling uplands do not offer many vistas but there are occasional expansive views across pastures and water bodies such as the Mystic Reservoir. Some of these vistas have been identified on the plan on the following page.

Scenic areas include such areas as Barn Island and Mystic Seaport as well as significant portions of Mystic, Pawcatuck and Stonington Borough. The latter derive their scenic character from a combination of natural and historic elements.

The Conservation Commission is conducting a more thorough inventory of scenic resources. If their work is completed prior to adoption of this plan, it will be incorporated into the Scenic Resource Plan.

Preserve Undeveloped Land As Long As Possible

Undeveloped land contributes to the overall character and quality of life in Stonington. Such land should be preserved for as long as possible.

Public Act 490 (a program where property is assessed based on use, not value) can be effective in reducing the cost of owning undeveloped land. This program would allow the Town to reduce property taxes on farmland, forest and open space in return for not developing the land for a ten-year period. If the land is developed during the ten-year time frame, a recapture provision allows the Town to recoup a prorated share of the taxes that would have otherwise been paid without the tax reduction.



Scenic Resources

Town of Stonington, CT



Legend

- Scenic Views
- Scenic Areas
- National Register Historic Districts
- Scenic Roads
- Proposed Scenic Roads
- Open Space
- Mills
- National Historic Landmarks
- National Register of Historic Places
- Water

0 4000 Feet

Protect Scenic Roads

Stonington has a wealth of scenic roads throughout Town, lined with stone walls, majestic trees and offering pastoral views.

Many of these roads have been designated as scenic by both the State and Town, offering a degree of protection by limiting road improvements that might alter their scenic character. Unfortunately, many of the elements that make the roads scenic often lie beyond the road or right-of way. Stone walls, significant canopy trees, rustic barns and scenic meadows are typically beyond the reach of state and local scenic road regulations, requiring a second level of protection.

More than two-thirds of residents surveyed agreed that the Town should do more to protect scenic road features such as stone walls, street trees and barns.

As development threatens the character of these roads, consideration should be given to protecting scenic elements through conservation easements or open space acquisition: limiting the disturbance of stone walls, street trees, and other scenic features, while pushing development away from road. The Scenic Road Ordinance should be modified if necessary to improve scenic road protection.

Utility maintenance is another major threat to scenic roads as utility companies and their contractors disfigure street trees for the sake of electrical or telephone reliability. While a noble effort, such maintenance does not always have to be so destructive to scenic character. The Town's Tree-Warden (the First Selectman or his/her designee) can intervene and work cooperatively with the utility companies to limit pruning to the extent necessary to maintain reliability.

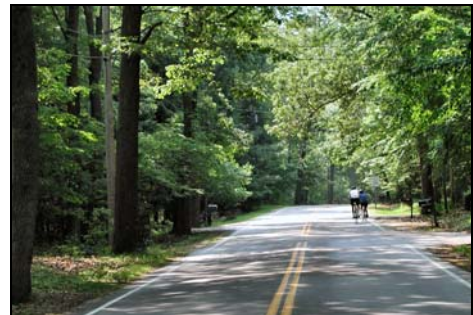
Scenic Resource Protection Strategies

1. Inventory scenic resources and establish policies and regulations to protect them.
2. As scenic roadsides are developed, preserve scenic elements through conservation easements or open space set-asides.
3. Modify the Scenic Road Ordinance if necessary.
4. Consider expanding the PA. 490 open space program.
5. Work with utility companies to preserve scenic streetscapes.

Scenic View



Scenic Road



PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE VILLAGES

5

Overview

In recent years, there has been a growing awareness in the country about development patterns and their impact on community character. Many communities have come to realize that the residential 'sprawl' and commercial 'strip' development, which has characterized much of America over the past 50 years, is not what they want for their communities.

Instead, many people are looking to create village-style development patterns that are pedestrian-friendly and create a sense of place. Places where people can live, work, shop and play with reduced dependency on motor vehicles

One of the unique things about Stonington is that it already has not one - but four - such villages in the community. Moreover, the villages of Mystic, Pawcatuck, Borough of Stonington, and to a lesser degree, Old Mystic are focal points in the daily life of the community and defining elements of the Town. To reinforce their overall importance, it is estimated that more than half of Stonington's residents live within its two main villages and the Borough of Stonington.

Protecting and enhancing these villages is critical to maintaining community character and quality of life in Stonington.

Stonington's villages are focal points in the daily life of the community and defining elements of the Town ...

Borough of Stonington

Despite being considered one of Stonington's three main villages and making significant contributions to the overall character of Town, the Borough of Stonington functions as a separate and distinct political jurisdiction.

The recommendations of this Chapter are not intended to apply to the Borough of Stonington, whose Planning and Zoning Commission regulates its land uses in accordance with its own regulations and Plan of Conservation and Development.

Mystic



Pawcatuck



Stonington's villages are major contributors to community character and the quality of life of many residents.

Reinforce Village Development Patterns

Stonington's villages developed at a time when compact, mixed-use development patterns were a necessity and not a choice. Employment, basic goods and services, schools, and churches were all within walking distance for village residents.

The advent of the automobile initiated a decline of American villages. People felt that new development on the outskirts of a community somehow would translate to a higher quality of life.

Sadly, there are indications that the adoption of zoning further eroded some villages by imposing suburban development patterns of larger lots, deeper building setbacks, suburban parking requirements and single-purpose zones.

Define Village Boundaries

The first step in protecting and enhancing the villages is for the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) to define the boundaries between the villages and the rural areas of Stonington. The map on the facing page suggests possible village boundaries based upon the current and potential extent of sewer service.

In addition to establishing different 'program areas' (village development patterns inside and rural development patterns outside), these boundaries can be reinforced with landscaping and signage at key gateways into the villages to add to their sense of place.

Develop Village Plans

Once firm village boundaries are established, the PZC should prepare comprehensive plans for each village to guide future land use decisions within them. Such plans should clearly define the character of each village and provide guidance on how new development can best blend with that character. In both Mystic and Pawcatuck, extra attention should be given to guiding land uses adjacent to the Mystic and Pawcatuck Rivers to protect water quality, secure open space or access easements and ultimately create riverwalks.

Pawcatuck



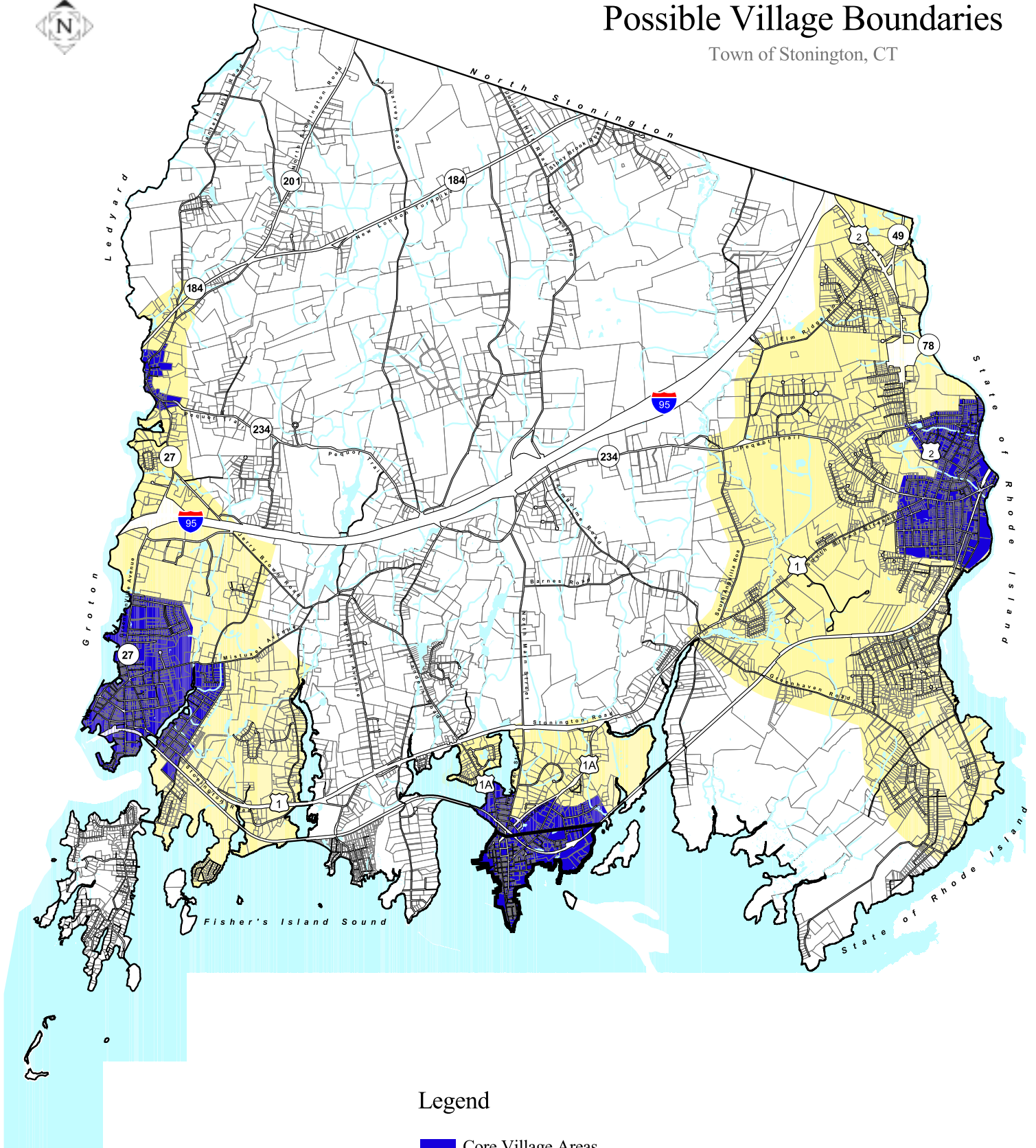
Mystic








Possible Village Boundaries

Town of Stonington, CT



Legend

-  Core Village Areas
-  Village Fringe
-  Stonington Borough

0 4000 Feet

Village Standards

In order to be effective, the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) should establish architectural standards to ensure that future development or redevelopment will be compatible with the character of each village (Mystic, Old Mystic and Pawcatuck).

Other standards governing such elements as building setback, parking, sidewalks and signs can be used to ensure that the design and layout of development emulates the village development patterns of old.

For example, new commercial development might front on wide tree-lined sidewalks with parking to the side or rear of the building and pedestrian scaled signage, oriented towards the sidewalk.

Establish Village Districts

One of the more powerful tools for protecting and enhancing village character is the “village district”. Authorized by the State Legislature to protect the architectural and historical integrity of villages, the Village District Act enables planning and zoning commissions to stringently control the design and appearance of development within villages - a power typically reserved for historic district commissions.

The Planning and Zoning Commission should consider establishing village districts in Mystic, Old Mystic, and Pawcatuck. If either the Borough or Town considers establishing a village district in or near their mutual boundary, such a proposal should be the subject of close cooperation between the respective agencies.

Since mixed uses in the same building and on adjacent properties contribute to the overall character and ambience of the villages in Stonington, mixed-use development should be encouraged in the village districts. Upper floor residential and office uses located over first-floor small businesses will enhance the streetscape and provide opportunities for small offices as well as small, affordable rental housing units within walking distance of goods and services.

This diversity of use and activity in multi-story buildings makes for vibrant, active places with a strong sense of place. Stonington residents recognize this. In fact, three-quarters of residents surveyed felt that the Town should encourage a variety of uses within the villages.

While the charm of Stonington’s villages makes them ideal locations for tourist oriented boutiques and galleries, retail and service uses should also address basic village needs to reduce the need for driving to suburban shopping destinations.

Institutional uses such as churches, social clubs and fraternal organizations should be permitted by Special Use Permit within the villages. Not only can they draw their memberships from within the villages, they also attract regular visitors to the villages, who support local businesses.

Alternative housing options for active-adults could also be mutually beneficial to both residents and businesses placing residents within walking distance of everyday goods and services.

Mixed-Use Development



Institutional Use



Mystic

Town of Stonington, CT

Possible
Rope
Ferry

Proposed
Dinghy
Dock

Train Station
Visitors Center

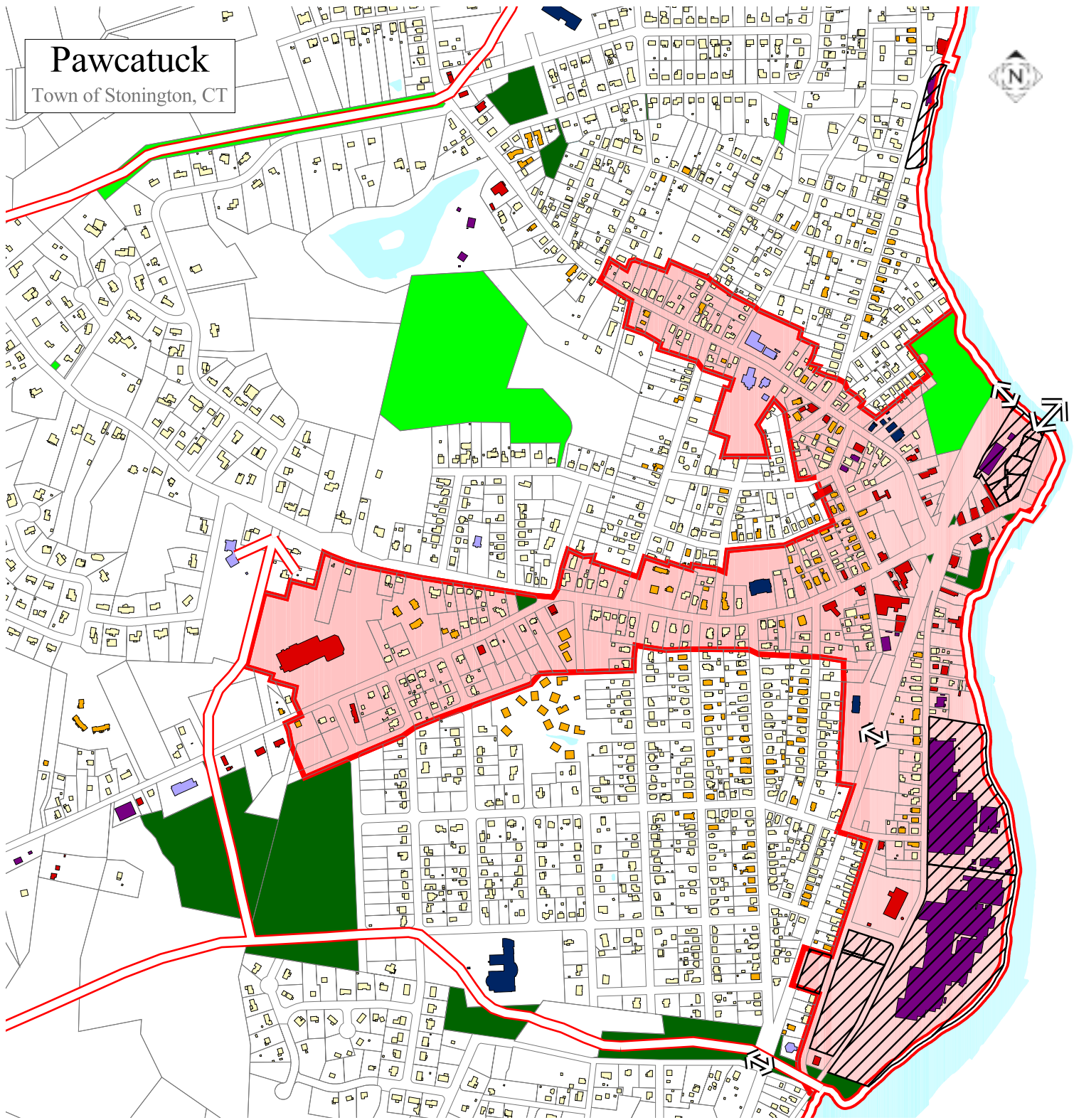
Existing

- Single Family
- Multi-family
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Community Facility
- Institutional Other
- Dedicated Open Space
- Managed Open Space

Conceptual

- Village District
- Greenway Trail
- Pedestrian Linkage
- Mill Redevelopment Area
- Maritime Historical/ Educational Zone

0 400 800 Feet



Pawcatuck

Town of Stonington, CT



Existing

- Single Family
- Multi-family
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Community Facility
- Institutional Other
- Dedicated Open Space
- Managed Open Space

Conceptual

- Village District
- Greenway Trail
- Pedestrian Underpass/Overpass
- Mill Redevelopment Areas

0 400 800 Feet

Enhance Walkable Villages

Maintaining and enhancing pedestrian access throughout Stonington's villages will continue to contribute to community character and quality of life by reducing traffic, parking and dependence on motor vehicles as well as promoting a healthier, more convenient environment for residents and visitors. Nearly three-quarters of residents surveyed agreed that the Town should do more to create walkable villages.

Creating a walkable village requires sidewalks that are appropriately sized for their use, safe pedestrian street crossings, streetscape amenities such as shade trees, seating areas and pedestrian scaled lighting, and even pedestrian oriented business signage such as on windows and awnings.

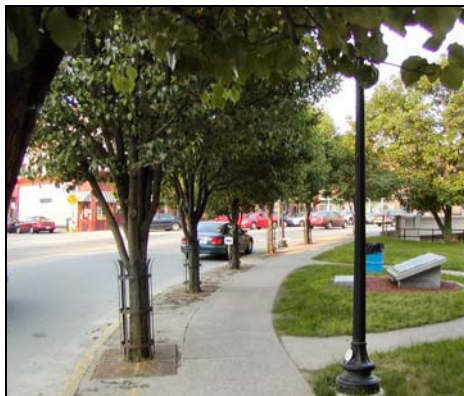
In the village of Pawcatuck, where there are three public schools and a parochial school, pedestrian access within walking distance of the schools should be a priority. Public parks, libraries, community centers and other points of interest should also be a priority. Pedestrian safety at crosswalks should be maintained through signage, pavement marking and other improvements.

Implement the Pawcatuck Riverwalk

The redevelopment of the mills in Pawcatuck should provide several opportunities to reclaim portions of the Pawcatuck riverfront for recreational use as part of the Pawcatuck Riverwalk.

Extending the riverwalk along the rear of the Mechanic Street mills would create an ideal pedestrian and bicycle link between the mills and downtown Pawcatuck, adding to the vitality of both areas and the quality of life of the village as a whole.

Pawcatuck



Mystic



Sidewalk Standards

Sidewalks in the commercial portions of the village districts zones should be provided on both sides of the street and at least eight feet in width if possible. Even wider sidewalks are needed for seasonal outdoor dining.

Coordinated streetscape elements such as lighting, benches, trash receptacles and tree grates, can create an attractive, comfortable pedestrian environment and add significantly to community character and sense of place.

Burial of overhead utilities in these areas can also greatly enhance the streetscape by eliminating overhead wires and allowing the unimpeded growth of street trees.

Outside of the commercial areas, sidewalks should be located on both sides of major streets and at least one side of residential side streets. Five foot widths allow pedestrians to walk side by side and comfortably pass. Sidewalks should be either integrated into curbs or separated by several feet to accommodate an area large enough for grass to thrive.

Stonington's mills provide an incredible opportunity to address changing community needs while enhancing community character and quality of life.

Reuse the Mills and Other Underutilized Commercial and Industrial Sites

Master Plan the Larger Mill Sites

Stonington's historic mills hold great potential for economic development and increased vitality within the villages.

While some of these buildings have become functionally obsolete in terms of their original uses, they are well located relative to existing villages and have untapped potential to help meet some of the housing and other needs anticipated in the community. Two-thirds of residents surveyed agreed that the Town should create flexible regulations to encourage the adaptive reuse of the mills.

For mill redevelopment efforts to be successful and enhance the overall village ambience, flexibility in permitted uses will be desirable. Some of the mills would provide a unique and attractive environment for small-scale business uses such as offices, restaurants, boutiques, art studio/galleries and antique markets - supporting Stonington's already strong tourist economy.

Mills represent a significant opportunity to address many of Stonington's housing needs and some may be suitable for combinations of affordable, luxury, active-adult and elderly housing for both rent and sale. Due to the unique configuration of sites and buildings, residential densities may be higher than is typical in new construction but still be appropriate for the village location given the size of the building and the availability of parking.

Of unique concern is the Velvet Mill which straddles the line between the Town and Borough, although all of the buildings lie within the Borough. Redevelopment of this property will require close cooperation between the planning and zoning commissions for both jurisdictions.

Require Redevelopment Plans

Because of their size and potential impact on surrounding neighborhoods, the larger mill sites should be required to prepare redevelopment master plans that identify the general location of uses, access, parking and drainage facilities, as well as identify:

- which structures are to be rehabilitated; and
- which architecturally or historically insignificant structures are to be removed to facilitate redevelopment.

A design development district (perhaps called an "Industrial Heritage Overlay Zone") could incorporate such a master planning process and allow development flexibility, while respecting the architectural and historic integrity of the mill sites.

Careful planning will be required to ensure the compatibility of a broad mix of uses and avoid conflicts arising from noise, vibration, odors, parking and other impacts.

The Economic Development Commission has initiated a planning program called “Rivision” that is designed to study the revitalization of Pawcatuck’s five mills. The program successfully kicked off with the Cogswell Street Charrette (in co-operation with the National Park Service).

Following that success, the Pawcatuck Revitalization Organization has been re-instituted to study the creation of a Neighborhood Revitalization Zone on Mechanic Street and take advantage of a Community Economic Development Fund grant to study the 20 acre Harris Graphics site at 99/100 Mechanic Street and downtown Pawcatuck.

Overall Concept from Cogswell Street Charrette



Village Protection and Enhancement Strategies

1. Create village boundaries to define the desired extent of village development patterns.
2. Initiate comprehensive village planning programs for both Mystic and Pawcatuck.
3. Establish different village districts for Mystic, Old Mystic and Pawcatuck to control the design of commercial development in a manner that is consistent with the distinct character of each village.
4. Encourage mixed-use development in appropriate locations within the villages.
5. Where appropriate, encourage multi-story infill development with office and residential uses on the upper floors.
6. Where appropriate, attract a mix of retail and service uses that not only cater to the Town's tourist economy but also address everyday village needs.
7. Allow appropriate community and institutional uses such as churches, social clubs and museums that add to the vitality of the villages by Special Use Permit.
8. Ensure pedestrian access throughout the villages with emphasis on access to schools and other points of interest.
9. Provide pedestrian enhancements such as benches, shade trees and trash receptacles in commercial areas and other appropriate locations.
10. Bury utilities underground in village commercial areas.
11. Ensure safe pedestrian crossings of major streets
12. Continue the work of the EDC on the "Revision" program in Pawcatuck to master plan the larger underutilized mills. Similarly address mills in other areas of Town.
13. Allow mixed-use development within the mill sites including residential, restaurant, retail and service uses that add to the vitality of the villages.
14. As riverside mills are redeveloped, require access to the Pawcatuck River to enhance the Pawcatuck Riverwalk project.

GUIDE APPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT

6

Overview

There is no doubt that Stonington will continue to grow and change in the future. With the projected growth in population and housing units, coupled with Stonington's high quality of life, development will continue to occur.

How this growth and change is managed will have a large impact on the overall character and quality of life in Stonington in the future. In addition, this development has the potential to alter the fiscal balance in Stonington due to the varying ability of certain uses to generate tax revenue or require municipal services.

Because the villages are predominantly built-up (except for anticipated infill development and mill redevelopment), much of the future growth will occur in the outlying areas of the community. Unless this development is guided in appropriate ways, it may adversely affect Stonington's character and quality of life.

Stonington needs to manage the fiscal impacts of growth while recognizing that residential 'sprawl' and commercial 'strip' development threaten Stonington's character and quality of life.

Scenic Rural Charm



New Commercial Strip Development



Economic development is an important issue in Stonington in terms of providing for a vital community and protecting community character.

Encourage Appropriate Economic Development

At public meetings on the Plan, Stonington residents were very supportive of encouraging economic development in the community. Upon further examination, residents indicated that they wanted to enlarge the non-residential tax base to reduce taxes. This was considered to be a higher priority than providing employment opportunities or providing goods and services for residents.

However, residents also indicated that any economic development should also be compatible with, and enhance the overall character of, the community. To accomplish this, economic development activity should be focused in the existing villages, as discussed in Chapter 5, and at Stonington's three interstate highway exits.

Support the Villages

While the villages represent major focal points in the community and support a range of business uses, the potential for major economic development in these areas is limited.

Nevertheless, the villages should continue to be supported and nurtured as economic focal points in the community (see Chapter 5).

Address the Highway Interchange Zone

Available water and sewer combined with the adjacent highway infrastructure give the Highway Interchange Zone (at the interchange of Route 2 and I-95 at Exit 92) the greatest potential for new economic development in Stonington but the area also has a number of major environmental and regulatory constraints.

Due to this potential, a comprehensive study of the HI Zone was conducted, which established major principles for future development in the HI Zone:

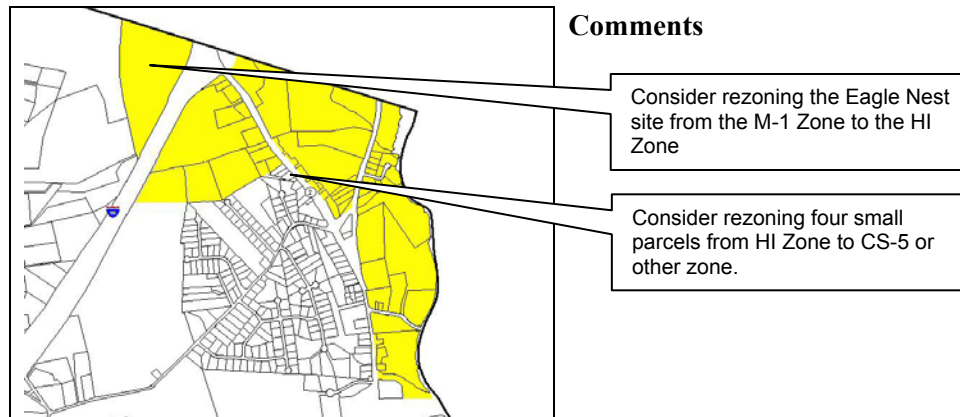
- increase the economic development potential of the area,
- protect important water resources,
- remove regulatory impediments to development while protecting the character of this gateway into Town, and
- manage access to major roadways and encourage consolidated development.

The recommended program includes the following components:

1. Refine the geography of the HI Zone
2. Revise the HI Zone and other Zoning Regulations
3. Develop plans for each sub-area of the HI Zone
4. Increase the utility of the land in the HI Zone

Refine the Geography of the HI Zone

The following map depicts recommended changes to the geography of the HI-Zone.



Revise the HI Zone Regulations

To achieve the main principles for the future development of the area, the HI Zone should be revised to:

- modify permitted and special permit uses,
- increase lot coverage and add an “effective impervious coverage” limit,
- reduce area and frontage requirements,
- protect natural resources, and
- encourage consolidated development and access management controls.

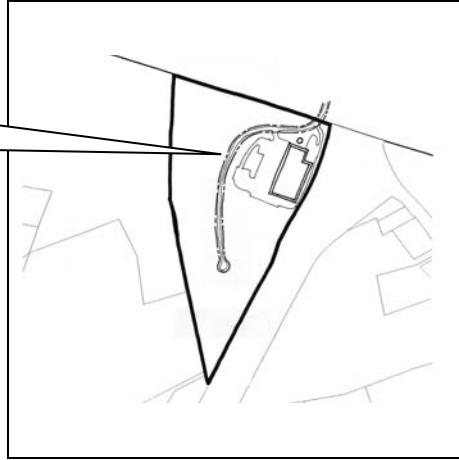
In the future, the Planning and Zoning Commission may wish to consider allowing additional types of development in the HI Zone if such uses provide net tax revenue to the Town and do not prevent other more economically beneficial uses from using these important sites (such as active-adult housing or mixed-use apartments).

To protect the character of the Zone as a gateway into Stonington, the Town should also create a Design Review Committee to draft and administer design guidelines, as recommended on page 75.

Plans for HI Zone Areas

Comments

New access road providing frontage for future development.



Area 1 (Eagle Nest Site) -- The 42-acre Eagle Nest site north of I-95 appears to have potential for further development. Rezoning this site to the HI Zone will increase the range of allowable uses, provide additional water quality protection, and encourage further development or redevelopment.

The current driveway (with wetland crossings in North Stonington already in place) could form the basis for approximately 1,800 feet of new public road providing access to the rear land.

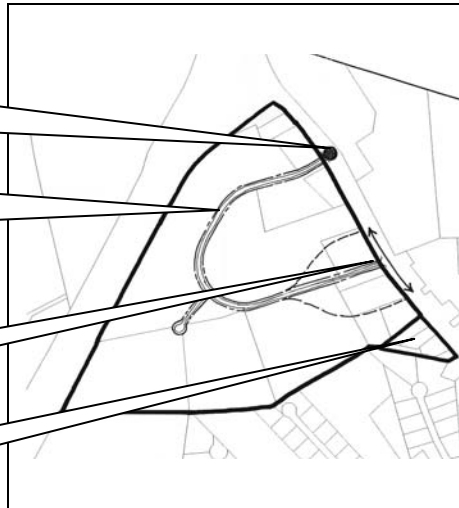
Comments

Recommended required location of signalized intersection

Public road construction should be required in this general alignment

Possible location(s) of secondary access and egress

Consider rezoning from HI Zone



Area 2 (Northwest Corner) -- With almost 62 acres of land, this area has significant potential for development due to minimal environmental constraints and the presence of the largest undeveloped parcel in the Zone.

Key development considerations in this area include restricting access to Route 2 and requiring the construction of a public road to provide frontage and access for the rear land.

Comments

Reserve land for possible future I-95 north-bound on-ramp

Recommended required location of signalized intersection

Protect wetlands and ponds (typical)

Require interconnections of sites and consolidated development (typical)

Acquire "excess land" from CTDOT

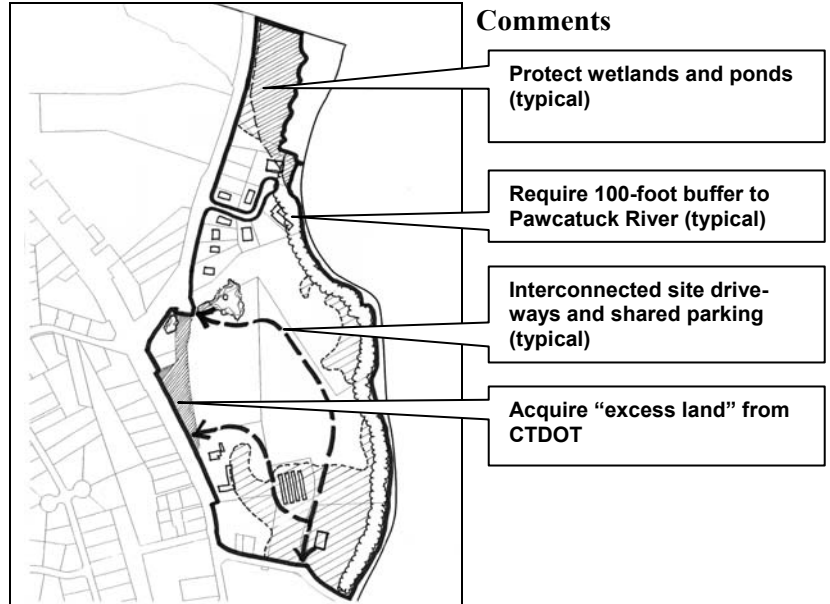


Area 3 (The Triangle) -- At 84 acres, Area 3 is the largest of the four development areas but is partially developed and contains several constraints that limit future potential.

Key development considerations in this area include restricting access to Route 2, requiring construction of a public road or interconnected driveways to provide access, and incorporating additional land (Aquarion and excess CTDOT land).

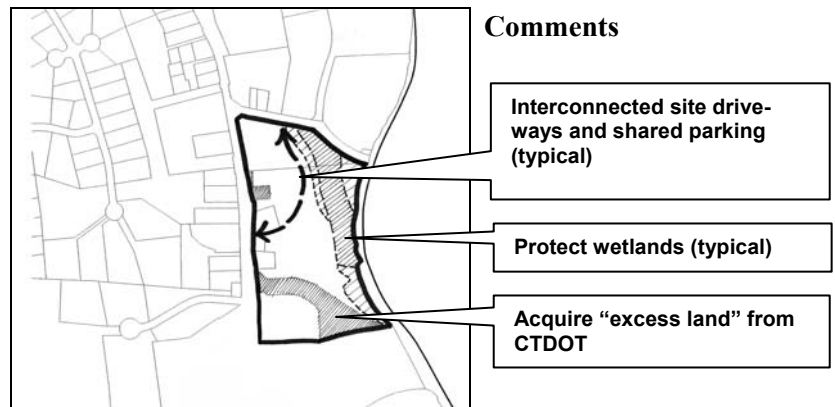
Area 4 (Northeast Corner) -- The northeast corner has for the most part been developed industrially.

Key development considerations include protecting natural resources and providing for a “riverway” trail along the Pawcatuck River, requiring interconnected driveways that will encourage consolidated development and manage access to major roadways, provide access for the rear land and manage access onto State highways, and incorporating excess CTDOT land.



Area 5 (Southeast Corner) -- The southeast area is the smallest of the five development areas.

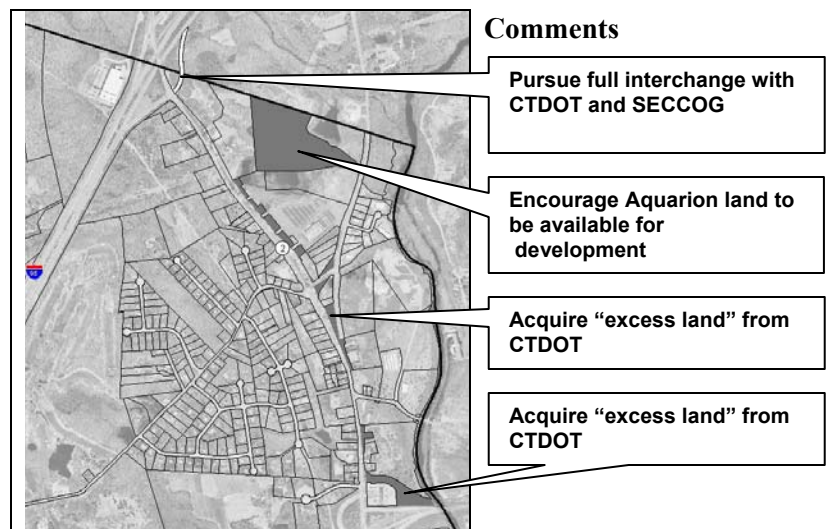
Key development considerations include protecting natural resources and providing for a “riverway” trail along the Pawcatuck River, requiring interconnected driveways that will encourage consolidated development and manage access to major roadways, provide access for the rear land and manage access onto State highways, and incorporating excess CTDOT land.



Increase the Utility of Land in the HI Zone

The utility (and potential yield) of land in the HI Zone is limited by an irregular street line along Route 2, an unrealized Route 78 off-ramp, and the Aquarion Water Company’s sludge disposal facility. Stonington should:

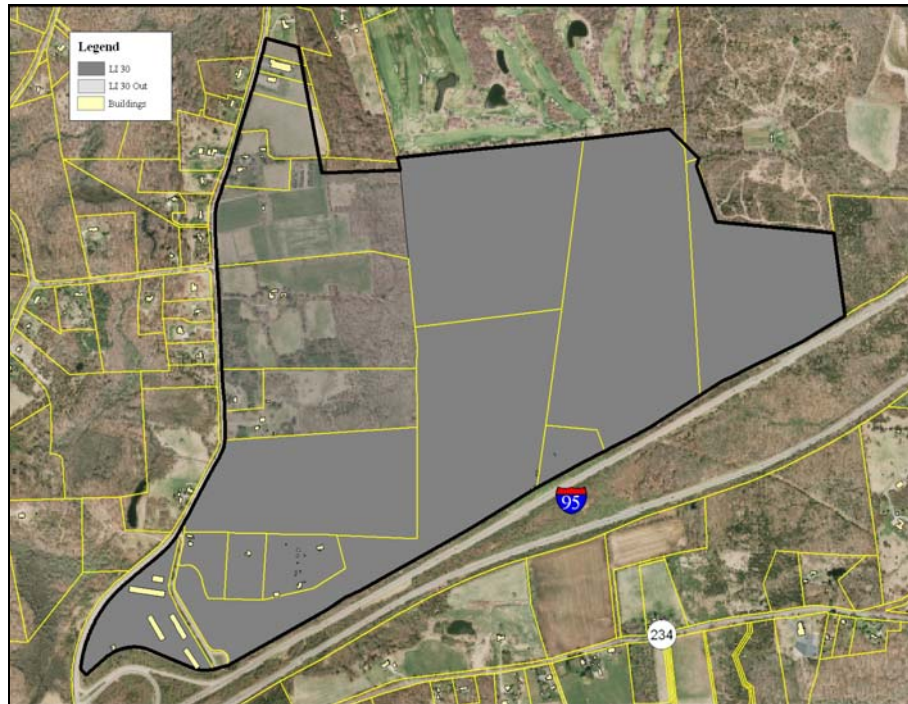
- work with CTDOT to release “excess land” along Routes 2 and 78
- pursue with CTDOT and the Southeast Connecticut Council of Governments, the creation of a full interchange with I-95 and Route 2, and
- explore ways to include the Aquarion land in HI development.



Guide Appropriate Industry to Exit 91

The LI-130 zoned area at Exit 91 of I-95 benefits significantly from direct access to a full highway interchange but at the same time is limited by the lack of public water and sewer. The lack of water and sewer limits the number of employees that can be supported by on-site septic systems, discouraging most uses while encouraging low-intensity office or assembly/storage uses.

Exit 91



This area's strength is its full interchange, which makes it suitable for such uses as warehousing and distribution. By directing such uses to this area, additional heavy truck traffic can be avoided on Route 1, Route 2 and Route 27.

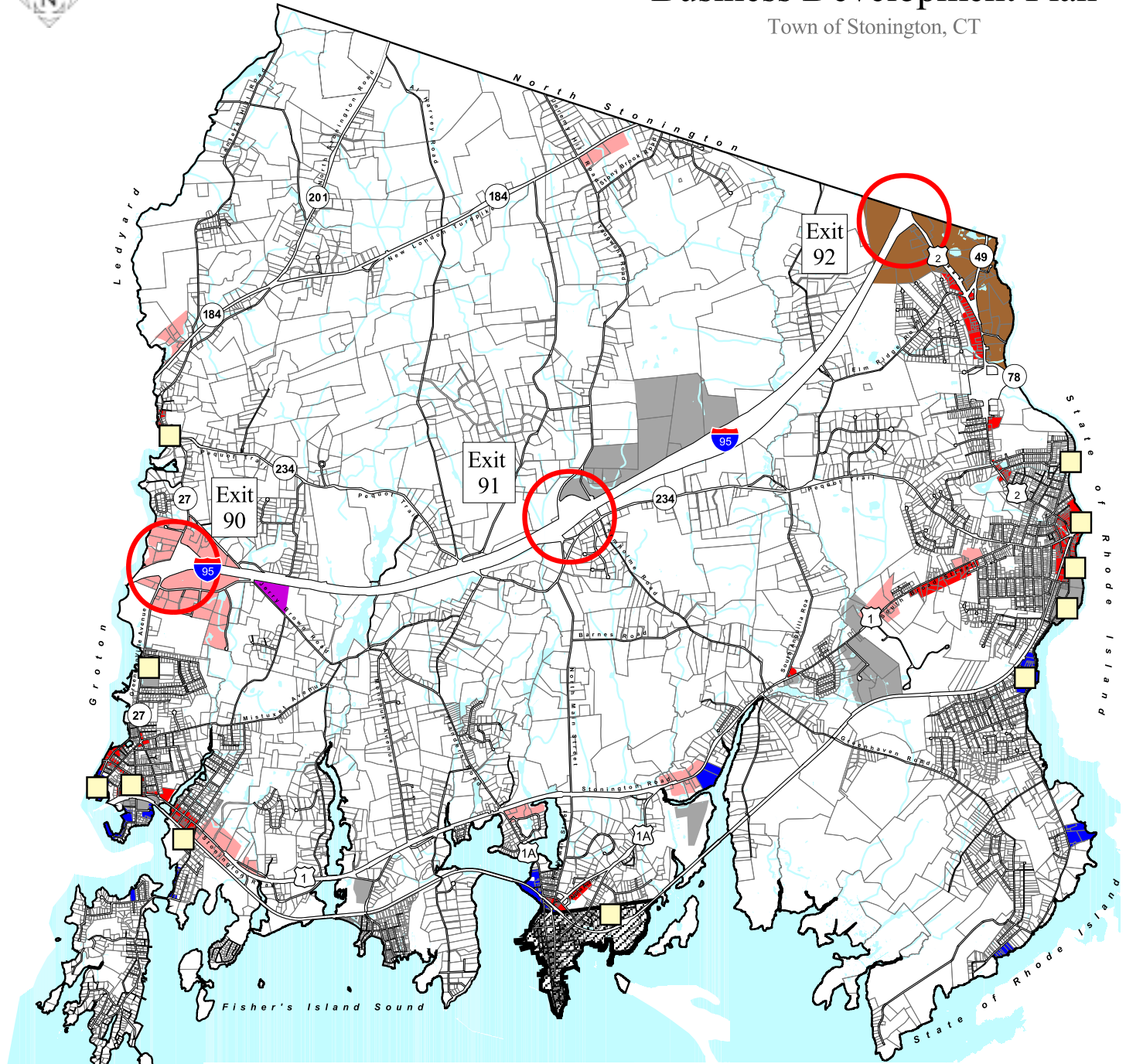
Non-labor-intensive light-manufacturing is also a suitable use for the area. Plastic component manufacturing is particularly suitable due to the presence of Davis Standard and other businesses in town whose primary business is the manufacturing and support of plastic manufacturing equipment. Such operations can sometimes run unattended in what is called "lights-out" manufacturing.

Because Exit 91 is a gateway into the rural heart of Stonington and scenic roads bracket the area, extra care should be taken to ensure that development is sensitive to the surrounding area. To minimize the potential impact of light industrial development on scenic Taugwonk Road, to take maximum advantage of the adjacent Exit 91, and to make the best use of land adjacent to I-95, it is recommended that the orientation of the LI-130 Zone at Exit 91 be reoriented in an east-west direction paralleling I-95 as depicted in the above map. Once land to the east of the current LI-130 Zone is rezoned to LI-130, the northern portion of the current LI-130 Zone should be rezoned to the RR-80 Zone in keeping with the surrounding area.










Business Development Plan

Town of Stonington, CT



Legend

- | | |
|---|---|
|  Neighborhood Business |  Business Park |
|  Community Business |  Marine Commercial |
|  Regional Business |  Transition Area |

 Stonington Borough

 Historic Mills

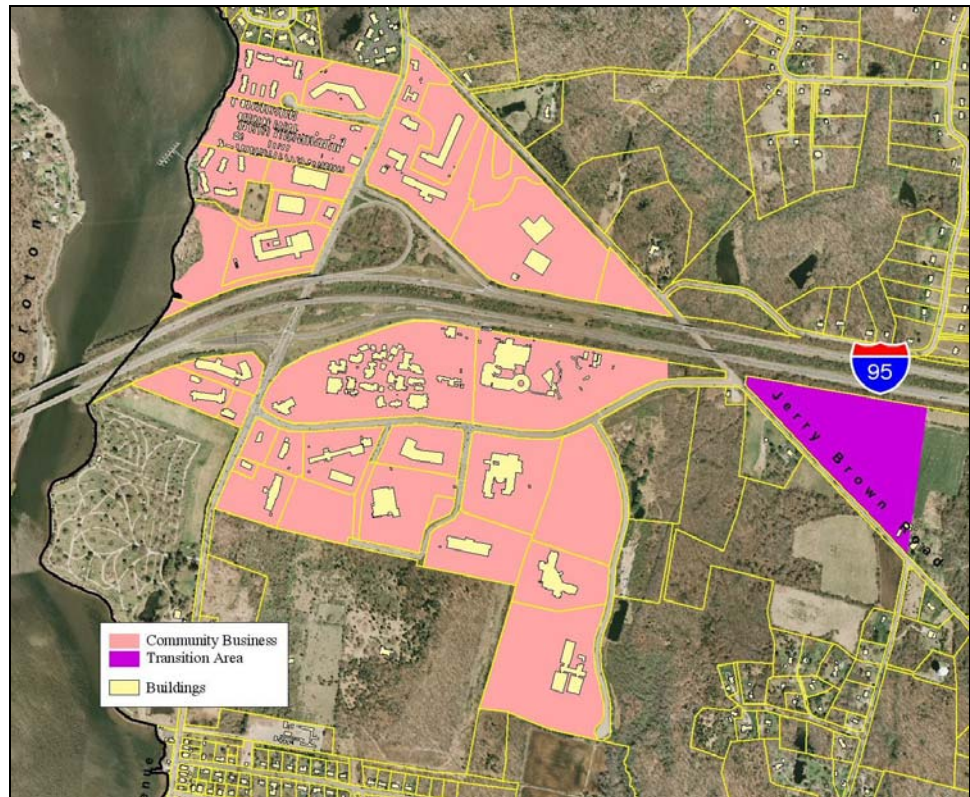
0 4000 Feet

Guide Appropriate Development to Exit 90

The close proximity of the Mystic Aquarium & Institute for Exploration (Mystic Aquarium) and the Mystic Seaport to Exit 90 has acted as an economic engine for development around Exit 90 as well as in Mystic. Mystic Seaport, Mystic Aquarium, and the character of the villages and Borough in Stonington contribute to the overall economy of the community and support economic development in Stonington.

Due to the intensity of uses, potential for redevelopment and sensitivity of surrounding residential neighborhoods, it is recommended that a more detailed analysis of the Exit 90 area be undertaken in a manner similar to a village plan. Such plan should address appropriate land uses, define the boundaries of tourist and commercial activity, and address both vehicular and pedestrian circulation within the area.

Exit 90



Allow Limited Expansion of Commercial Activity

With the exception of industrial zoned land in the southeast corner of the area, there is limited land available for commercial development without redeveloping existing parcels. One other area that may have additional potential for economic development is the land northeast of Jerry Brown Road and south of Interstate 95. The highway infrastructure is available and water and sewer infrastructure could be extended to support higher and better uses in this area.

Being located adjacent to a congregate housing facility to the south and low-intensity agricultural and residential uses to the east, special care is needed to avoid the expansion of more intense commercial uses found to the west. What is needed is a transitional zone that can act as a buffer between incompatible uses yet allow low-intensity economic development. Such a zone should allow professional offices as well as active-adult and other age-restricted housing that will generate additional taxes, require only modest services, and be compatible with surrounding land uses.

Create a Maritime Historical/Educational Zone

In terms of the Mystic Seaport and the Mystic Aquarium & Institute for Exploration, these two uses have special situations that should be considered as part of the Plan. In the telephone survey, 91 percent of residents surveyed agreed that the Town should work with the Mystic Aquarium & Institute for Exploration, Mystic Seaport and other institutions for everyone's mutual benefit.

The Mystic Seaport has been in existence since 1929, growing to become a pre-eminent museum of maritime history. The Mystic Seaport has also physically grown over time to encompass adjacent properties for parking, storage and research facilities. In doing so, it is now situated in two residential zones and one industrial zone, none of which is really supportive of a maritime museum.

To allow the Mystic Seaport to continue as a perpetual non-conforming use is to imply that it is not an appropriate use for its location and that its replacement with residential and industrial use would be preferable. Given that it embodies the essence of early Stonington and is a major economic engine for the Town, this is likely not the case.

The Mystic Seaport has had many discussions with the Town over creating a new Maritime Historical / Educational Zone to eliminate their non-conforming status and allow them the flexibility to adapt to change. Residents of the surrounding neighborhood have expressed opposition to these proposals, citing concerns over traffic and parking as well as noise and exhaust from idling busses.

To address both the Mystic Seaport's needs and neighbors' concerns, the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) should facilitate one or more workshops between the Mystic Seaport and neighborhood residents to openly discuss current problems and future plans in an effort to identify mutually agreeable solutions before a formal zone change application is made.

Given the importance of the Mystic Seaport to the Town, region and State, careful consideration of a Maritime Historical / Educational Zone that both legitimizes and regulates the Mystic Seaport is recommended. Due to the unique character of the Mystic Seaport and the difficulty in predicting future impacts, such a regulation might require Special Use Permits for significant new activities within the zone, allowing the PZC to exercise more discretion and receive additional neighborhood input in the future.

Mystic Seaport

This Plan recommends the creation of a Maritime Historical/Educational Zone (with significant input from surrounding residents), to address the non-conforming status of the Mystic Seaport, but does not recommend or endorse specific regulatory language.

Consider Creating a Transportation/Visitor Center

One of the biggest concerns regarding the Mystic Seaport and the Mystic Aquarium & Institute for Exploration is traffic ‘congestion’ and, in the case of the Seaport, the noise and exhaust from idling busses. In the telephone survey, nearly two-thirds of residents surveyed agreed that traffic congestion around the Mystic exit (Exit 90) is a problem.

One possible solution would be to require busses to drop visitors off before parking at a remote transportation center to wait until needed. Such a transportation center could serve multiple functions such as providing convenience facilities for bus drivers while they wait or a visitor’s center where tourists can purchase attraction tickets and ride the Mystic jitney, leaving their cars behind.

This also has the potential to promote greater economic activity by integrating these uses more into the overall fabric of Mystic as a maritime village.

Create Commercial Development Boundaries

Like the villages, firm boundaries should be established around Exit 90 as well as Exits 91, and 92 to encourage the development of available properties within them and protect surrounding neighborhoods from commercial encroachment by developers seeking cheaper land beyond the fringes of these areas.

Improve Signage and Streetscapes

Stonington might also facilitate better identification through new signage to accommodate the institutional uses. The Mystic Aquarium & Institute for Exploration and the Mystic Seaport (and the overall visitor experience) might benefit from an appropriately designed highway-oriented sign, shared by both entities to attract visitors.

Working in cooperation with the Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT) and the Town, the Mystic Aquarium & Institute for Exploration and the Mystic Seaport could also develop a uniform design theme for “wayfinding” signs and other streetscape elements throughout the area to direct motorists and pedestrians to their destinations and help create a cohesive sense of place.

Consider Reconfiguring Coogan Boulevard and Jerry Brown Road

Poor signage and complicated traffic patterns lead to confusion for tourists unfamiliar with the area, causing some to mistake the Olde Mistick Village shopping area for the Mystic Seaport or the village of Mystic itself. Directional signs and the configuration of intersections at Jerry Brown Road at Coogan Boulevard and Jerry Brown Road at Whitehall Avenue (Route 27) add to visitors’ confusion and create unnecessary traffic congestion.

Coogan Boulevard has been envisioned to become a true divided boulevard with bicycle and pedestrian amenities. The new design should incorporate the reconfiguration of Jerry Brown Road to direct northbound vehicles onto Coogan Boulevard where they can make right turns to access I-95. The northernmost leg

Commercial / Institutional Signage

The Planning and Zoning Commission is currently considering comprehensive amendments to the sign regulations that will address the signage problems and needs for both commercial and institutional uses, including wayfinding signage to guide visitors to destinations throughout Stonington.

of Jerry Brown Road should intersect Coogan Boulevard at a right angle, creating a “T” intersection that discourages northbound motorists headed for I-95 from continuing on Jerry Brown Road, only to turn left at an unsignalized intersection.

Conceptual realignment of Coogan Boulevard at Jerry Brown Road



The intersection of Jerry Brown Road at Whitehall Avenue (Route 27) is scheduled to be redesigned into a signalized intersection. An alternative configuration incorporating a roundabout would both calm traffic headed for Old Mystic and allow motorists on Jerry Brown Road to safely make left turns by circling the roundabout to the right.

Conceptual Roundabout at Route 27 and Jerry Brown Road



Encourage Non-Traditional Types of Economic Development

Economic development such as office, retail and manufacturing uses have an obvious positive tax impact. Certain housing developments (such as congregate housing, assisted living, and multi-family developments with few bedrooms per unit) can also have a positive tax impact due to the absence of school children that account for approximately two-thirds of the annual Town budget. In addition to their net tax benefit to the community, such uses can also be used to meet housing needs, reinvigorate the mills, and add vitality to village centers.

Some forms of economic development have more indirect economic impacts. Tourism uses such as the Mystic Seaport and the Mystic Aquarium & Institute for Exploration attract and support other forms of economic development in the community such as hotels and restaurants, generating new dollars in the local economy.

Enders Island & St. Edmunds Retreat is an institution that's unique character and mission are an asset to the community, in both public access and the services they provide. The island, retreat and surrounding community should be protected while enabling the best use of the facility.

Marine uses (such as marinas, boat building, and boat repair) can also generate net tax revenue to a community like Stonington. Such uses can also attract seasonal visitors who will support local businesses.

Consider Local Perceptions

In the telephone survey, residents were asked to evaluate the mix of businesses in the community.

Business Use	Too Many	About Right	Too Few	Don't Know
Residents May Support More:				
Corporate Offices	4%	43%	38%	15%
Light Industrial Uses	8%	44%	32%	16%
Small Offices	4%	64%	23%	9%
Restaurants	9%	43%	21%	27%
Residents Seem Comfortable With:				
Village Retail Stores	13%	67%	20%	0%
Large Retail Stores	19%	51%	26%	4%
Residents May Not Support More:				
Shopping Centers	21%	60%	18%	1%
Hotels	15%	73%	8%	4%
Tourist Attractions	19%	74%	6%	1%

From this analysis, it appears that residents would support the concept of corporate office and light industrial development in a business park-type setting. In

addition, they appear to support the concept of small offices and restaurants, possibly in a village-type setting or elsewhere.

It also appears that residents may be comfortable with the number and location of village retail stores and large retail stores.

Residents did not appear to support the development of additional shopping centers, hotels or tourist attractions.

Office and Light Industrial Use



Implement Design Review

How economic development occurs in Stonington may be as important as what type of economic development occurs. Nearly two-thirds of residents surveyed felt that the Town could do a better job of controlling the design of commercial development.

In recent years, much of the commercial development occurring around the country (and even in Stonington) can be characterized as strip development, catering to motorists and their vehicles. In addition, industrial development can sometimes consist of utilitarian metal buildings located in mixed environments, juxtaposed against residential areas, or at gateways into the community. This can undermine the community character that residents value so highly.

To address the design and appearance of commercial and industrial development, Stonington should consider creating a Design Review Committee (DRC).

The DRC would develop and consistently administer voluntary architectural design guidelines to encourage new development that is in keeping with the character of the community. The DRC would then review applications and forward their findings to the PZC to help guide their decisions.

There are a number of methods beyond design review that can be used to mitigate other negative impacts of business development such as unsightly parking lots, excessive stormwater runoff and glare from commercial lighting.

Design Consistency

The Planning and Zoning Commission and Department of Planning have experienced high rates of turnover in recent years, leading to inconsistency in both vision and interpretation of standards.

By establishing design guidelines administered by a Design Review Committee, a more consistent vision and long term consistency with respect to design can be achieved.

Economic Development Strategies

1. Revise the HI Zone and other Zoning Regulations as prescribed.
2. Refine the geography of the HI Zone as prescribed.
3. Manage access to Routes 2 and 49 and encourage consolidated development.
4. Increase the utility of the land in the HI Zone by seeking the release of excess ConnDOT right-of-way and Aquarion Water Company land.
5. Demand from ConnDOT more direct access from Route 2 to northbound I-95 at Exit 92 due to its critical importance to the success of the HI- Zone.
6. Consider allowing additional uses in the HI Zone if such uses provide net tax revenue and do not conflict with other economically beneficial uses
7. Direct uses such as non-labor intensive light manufacturing, warehousing and distribution to Exit 91 to take advantage of direct access to I-95.
8. Reorient the LI-130 Zone at Exit 91 in an east-west direction by rezoning land to the east paralleling I-95 to LI-130 Zone followed by rezoning the northern LI-130 zoned land along Taugwonk Road to the RR-80 Zone.
9. Create a new Maritime Historical / Educational Zone, with significant neighborhood input that both legitimizes and controls the Mystic Seaport, allowing it to adapt to change.
10. Initiate a comprehensive area plan for the area surrounding Exit 90.
11. Create a new transition zone northeast of Jerry Brown Road and south of Interstate 95 to allow for low-intensity professional office and age-restricted housing uses.
12. Consider creating a transportation/visitor center to mitigate idling busses, promote area attractions and reduce dependency on private motor vehicles between I-95 and the village of Mystic.
13. Limit commercial sprawl with fixed growth boundaries around major commercial areas.
14. Work cooperatively to create unified directional signage and streetscape elements throughout tourist areas and improve pedestrian connections to the Mystic village center.
15. Allow the major institutional uses to share a common highway oriented promotional sign.
16. Reconfigure Coogan Boulevard into a true boulevard with bicycle and pedestrian enhancements.
17. Consider redirecting northbound Jerry Brown Rd. into Coogan Blvd.
18. Consider creating a roundabout at Jerry Brown Road and Whitehall Avenue to calm traffic and facilitate left turns.
19. Create a Design Review Committee to create and consistently administer design guidelines for business development.

Manage Residential Growth

Around the country, people are beginning to realize that the traditional zoning patterns of inflexible, large-lot zoning regulations has resulted in what people perceive to be "residential sprawl." This is an unflattering name for what has been recognized as the systematic consumption of rural land into characterless subdivisions that offer residents little more than privacy.

While Chapter 4 contains a number of recommended strategies to reduce the amount of raw land being consumed by residential development, increase the quality and quantity of open space preserved, and relate development potential to the ability of the land to support it, there are additional tools available to improve the pattern of residential growth.

Adopt a Residential Density Regulation

Stonington should adopt a residential density regulation and rely on this system to manage the amount of future residential growth in outlying areas.

Density-based zoning replaces conventional minimum lot size requirements with a simple density factor that limits the total number of houses in a development. For example, the RA-40 Zone, which requires an approximately one-acre minimum lot size, could be modified to allow one dwelling unit per acre of land in a development. In this example, the number of dwelling units permitted in a density-based RA-40 development would be the same as in a conventional RA-40 development but the developer would have the flexibility to locate houses more carefully. Through this method, total growth can be anticipated and planned for and development patterns can be made more flexible.

Density-based zoning can also be combined with buildable area regulations (also described in Chapter 4) to reduce density in sensitive areas, thus alleviating development pressure on important natural resources.

The benefits of density-based zoning over conventional minimum lot area regulations include:

- lot sizes can be reduced without increasing the number of housing units;
- the total buildout potential of the Town can be moderated through adjustments in density;
- densities can be adjusted without creating non-conforming lots;
- the amount of infrastructure to be constructed and maintained can be reduced, thus reducing stormwater to be collected and treated;
- sensitive areas within a subdivision can be avoided and the impacts on larger sensitive areas such as aquifers and watersheds can be reduced;
- the amount of raw land consumed can be reduced as much as soil conditions will allow; and
- residents and wildlife are able to enjoy all of the benefits of the larger open spaces surrounding their homes.

Residential growth has the greatest potential to affect community character and quality of life for Stonington residents.

Bulk Requirements

Bulk requirements such as maximum building height, maximum lot coverage and minimum lot size are intended to control density, ensure adequate light and air, and ensure that the size and scale of structures are appropriate to the character of a zone.

Despite their effectiveness, bulk standards are an imperfect tool for controlling density because they create an inflexible pattern of development that consumes unnecessary amounts of undeveloped land.

Current Status

The Conservation Commission is currently developing regulations for conservation subdivisions that may achieve many of the same benefits of density-based zoning within Stonington's conventional zoning pattern.

Encourage Open Space Development Patterns

If a density regulation is used to specify the total number of housing units in a development (based on soil-types, existing zoning districts or some other factor), more attention can be placed upon overall development patterns.

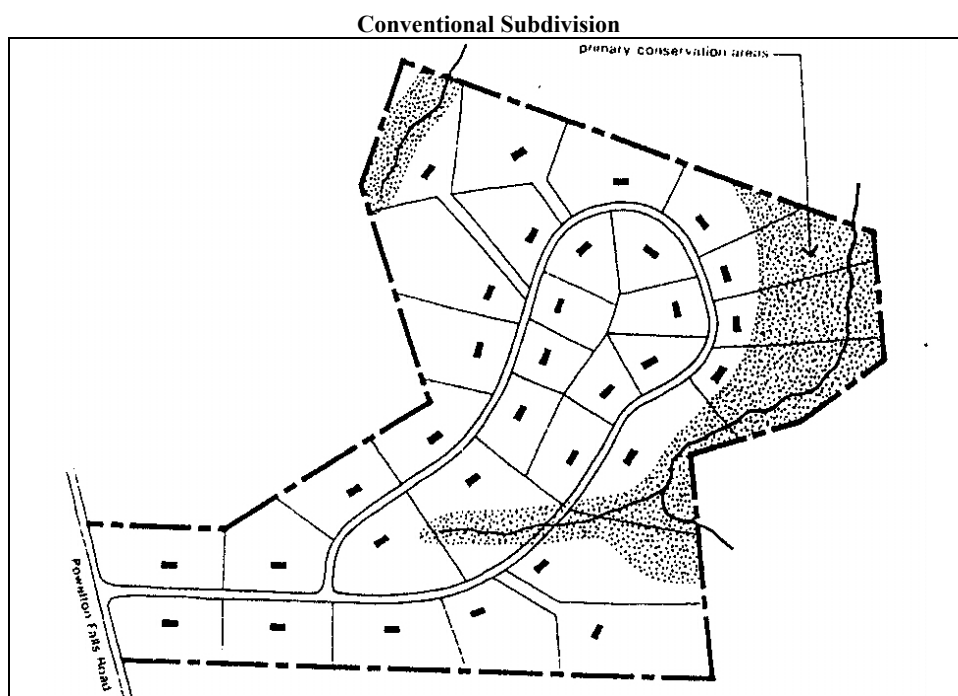
The problem experienced with conventional zoning regulations is that developers typically try to fit as many housing units as possible on a property in order to maximize revenue and profit from the development. This often frustrates the provision of meaningful open space and results in development patterns that do little for community character.

In a conservation subdivision, once the number of housing units is specified, a developer can design the development in a way that is more sensitive to site characteristics in order to maximize revenue and profit. In addition, more of the land can be preserved as open space which will benefit the buyers of homes in the new development and other residents of the community, as well as preserve important natural resources, and protect community character.

This type of development pattern can preserve rural streetscapes, protect natural resources, and result in more open space that benefits the community.

The following illustrations demonstrate how a conservation subdivision can preserve sensitive areas and scenic features such as wetlands and meadows while preserving more open space, without increasing the number of houses.

Noted planner Randall Arendt has developed a four step process for designing a conservation subdivision that is contrary to yet simpler than designing a conventional subdivision due to its flexibility.



Source: From Randall Arendt's *Growing Greener*

The first step in the process is to identify primary conservation areas such as wetlands, floodplains and steep slopes, followed by secondary conservation areas that are also worthy of protection such as scenic road frontages, meadows, mature stands of trees, etc. Under conventional subdivision development, protecting these resources and preserving open space is the last step in the process, resulting in minimal protection of natural and scenic resources and often meaningless open space.

The second step is to carefully locate houses with respect to conservation areas, while maximizing the benefits of those areas. Houses can be sited to:

- minimize disturbance of sensitive natural and scenic resources;
- preserve the most meaningful open space;
- maximize privacy with wooded open space to the rear;
- maximize views of meadows, common areas and water features such as ponds and streams; and
- provide a buffer between homes and a busy main road.

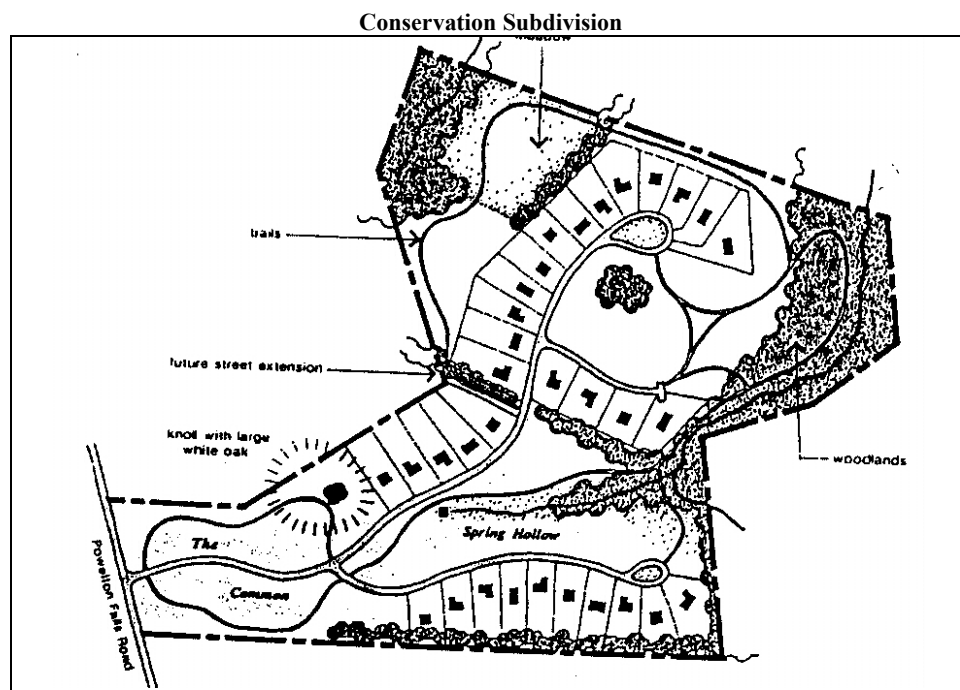
The final two steps are to design the streets to serve the homes and to draw lot lines around each home. Under conventional subdivision development, these are often the first steps in the design process.

To discourage the use of conventional development patterns in sensitive areas such as aquifers, watersheds and coastal management areas, conventional subdivisions could be required to secure Special Use Permits before being allowed instead of lower impact conservation subdivisions permitted by right.

Stonington should consider modifications to the coverage/bulk requirements to permit large-footprint homes, so prevalent in today's housing market, on smaller conservation subdivision lots.

Conservation Subdivisions

The Town of Granby requires mandatory conservation subdivisions within a designated conservation zone that accounts for the bulk of the Town's residential area.



Source: From Randall Arendt's *Growing Greener*

Investigate Allowing Transfer of Development Rights

Transfer of development rights (TDR) is the process of transferring the right to develop a piece of land from one parcel (the “donor” parcel) to another parcel (the “receiver” parcel). In doing so, TDR reduces or eliminates the development potential of the donor parcel (helping to protect natural resources or provide open space), and increases the development potential of the receiver parcel (perhaps enhancing a village or addressing housing needs in the community).

The Town designates specific areas called “sending zones,” where development rights can be transferred from in order to preserve more open space or discourage development of environmentally sensitive areas. The Town then directs the transfer of those development rights to appropriate “receiving zones,” where adequate infrastructure or better development conditions can support increased densities.

For example, a rural three-acre parcel in the GBR-130 zone has the potential to accommodate one house. Under TDR, the right to build that house might be transferred to a ten-acre “receiver parcel” in the RA-40 zone that is served by public water and sewer, allowing 11 houses to be built instead of the ten that zoning would normally allow. The three acre “donor parcel” can no longer be built upon, thus preserving it for agriculture, open space or other purposes. The impact of the 11th dwelling unit on the receiver parcel might be imperceptible, simply reducing the average lot size by ten percent.

To facilitate TDR, development rights can be purchased and held (“banked”) until a buyer can be found to purchase and use them in a receiver site, thus allowing open space or sensitive natural resources to be immediately preserved. While the TDR process can be difficult to administer and sustain, there have been successful programs. A case study of the program that has been used in Groton Massachusetts is provided on the facing page.

Residential Growth Management Strategies

1. Adopt density-based zoning to allow more flexible development patterns to avoid environmentally sensitive areas and increase the percentage of dedicated open space.
2. Require Special Use Permits for conventional subdivisions in environmentally sensitive areas.
3. Consider allowing the transfer of development rights to redirect growth from sensitive areas to more suitable locations.

CASE STUDY - Transfer of Development Rights

Groton, MA (pop. 9,547), 35 miles northwest of Boston, has had a TDR program since the early 1980s and has preserved more than 600 acres in just over two decades. The Groton, MA program is unique in that it has no defined donor or receptor zones, only donor criteria. Groton also does not have a bank for holding development rights, leaving developers to find and purchase their own.

In the late 1980s, Groton instituted a growth control program that is triggered when new housing construction exceeds 120 units over a 24 month period. Beyond this threshold, all subdivisions are capped at no more than 10 units over those same 24 months. This program has acted as a catalyst for the TDR program by allowing developers to exceed the cap and build two new dwelling units for every dwelling unit development right purchased, up to a maximum of six units built. The subtlety of this program is that developers are actually purchasing and then surrendering the right to build one dwelling unit for the privilege of building two deferred dwelling units that are already approved as part of an existing subdivision (thus reducing development potential by one unit).

Groton, MA development rights can also be used as part of a flexible cluster development, increasing the permitted base density by 25 percent. Interestingly, such a cluster development requires ten percent of the dwelling units to meet the State definition of affordable housing, effectively accomplishing multiple goals: protection of natural resources, preservation of open space, protection of the community's character, and the provision of affordable housing.

Stonington could implement a similar program, designating sensitive areas such as the aquifer protection zone as sender zones and areas with sewer service or good soils as receiver zones but it is uncertain whether the growth control program that drives the Groton, MA program could be implemented in Connecticut under the planning statutes.

Address Changing Housing Needs

In recent years, Stonington's housing supply has become increasingly oriented towards luxury single-family homes. However, changing demographics over the next 20 years suggest that some alternative housing types will be desired by Stonington residents in the future. In addition, the telephone survey revealed that 83 percent of residents felt that Stonington needs a variety of housing types.

In the telephone survey, residents were asked to evaluate the mix of housing types in the community.

Housing Styles	Too Many	About Right	Too Few	Don't Know
Residents May Support More:				
Starter Homes	3%	32%	54%	11%
Moderate Homes	14%	28%	46%	12%
Senior Housing	3%	38%	43%	16%
Active Adult 55+	4%	36%	37%	23%
Nursing Homes	4%	40%	32%	24%
Apartments	11%	47%	29%	13%
Residents Seem Comfortable With:				
Single-Family Homes	5%	76%	7%	12%
Condominiums	14%	52%	17%	17%
Residents May Not Support More:				
Luxury Homes	54%	41%	0%	5%

The results indicate that residents perceive a need for more starter homes, homes for moderate income households, as well as age-restricted housing, and may be supportive of efforts to provide housing in these categories. Residents also seem comfortable with the amount of single-family homes and condominiums but do not appear to be supportive of the continuing trend towards building luxury homes.

While little can (or should) be done to reduce demand for large luxury homes, the Town can take steps to encourage more diverse housing options in addition to these large luxury homes.

Increase Age-Restricted Housing Options

Stonington's population aged 55 and older is expected to grow to 35 percent of the total population by the year 2020. According to the telephone survey results (tabulated below), 64% of Stonington residents aged 55 and older want to stay in their current homes and this trend is likely to continue.

Next Housing Choice by Age

Next Housing Choice	55-64	65-74	75-84	85 +	55+
Existing Home	71%	74%	56%	23%	64%
Rental	7%	-	3%	-	3%
Condominium	7%	-	-	-	1%
Smaller Single-Family Home	9%	4%	-	-	5%
Life-Care Facility	-	9%	22%	-	7%
Affordable/Subsidized Home	-	4%	-	77%	8%
Senior Housing	3%	4%	6%	-	4%

To facilitate this, the Town should consider instituting an elderly tax relief program for age- and income-eligible residents, and anticipate expanding existing programs such as meals on wheels and dial-a-ride services to support them. Even with tax relief, encouraging "empty nesters" to remain in their homes can be revenue positive for the Town when compared to the expenditures generated by young families with children that might replace them in their single-family homes.

For those who choose to downsize or can no longer maintain their single-family homes, options such as active-adult and congregate housing should be encouraged, preferably within the villages where residents can be within walking distance of daily needs.

Stonington's accessory apartment regulations could also be made more flexible to create additional options for elderly or infirm residents.

A 300 unit assisted-living facility is currently under construction on Jerry Brown Road, which should help address the needs of elderly and/or infirm residents in Stonington and the region. At a cost of \$30 million, the tax benefits of the project are expected to be substantial.

As stated in Chapter 5, Stonington's many vacant and underutilized mills represent a significant opportunity to address many of the Town's housing needs and may be suitable for combinations of affordable, luxury, active-adult and other age-restricted housing for both rent and sale.

Affordable Housing

According to the Connecticut General Statutes, affordable housing means housing that is:

- subsidized housing,;
- financed by CHFA or other mortgage assistance programs; or
- is deed restricted to affordable prices.

According to Section 8-30g of the Connecticut General Statutes, an affordable housing development is one in which 20% of the units remain affordable for 30 years to households earning 80% or less of the regional median household income without spending more than 30% of their gross income on housing costs such as mortgage, taxes, rent or utilities. Ten percent of the units must be similarly affordable to households earning 50% or less of the regional median household income

About 4% of Stonington's housing stock meets these criteria and this is below the State threshold of 10% affordable housing units in a community.

As a result, Stonington is subject to the State Affordable Housing Appeals Procedure which allows developers of affordable housing developments considerable regulatory flexibility as part of their development proposal.

Accommodate Affordable Housing

As for many communities, the cost of land and the strength of the housing market are making it more difficult to provide affordable housing in general. This is made even more difficult in Stonington due to its desirability as a place to live

The survey results presented on the preceding pages show that residents believe there is a real need for both affordable and age-restricted affordable housing in Stonington.

Affordable housing is often misunderstood to be limited to low-income, high-density, government-assisted housing "projects." While such housing is affordable, there is a much broader range of affordable housing options ranging from elderly apartments to modest single-family starter homes, no different from many homes found in Stonington today.

Habitat for Humanity, churches and other organizations are able to construct small scale projects, often as small as one or two homes on existing vacant lots. Stonington could encourage moderate income housing on a similar scale by allowing development flexibility in return for providing one or more affordable units within a proposed development, similar to the program in Groton, MA.

Surprisingly, affordable elderly housing projects can provide multiple benefits for Stonington including:

- meeting the need for affordable housing;
- counting towards the State goal of 10% affordable housing units in Town;
- meeting the growing demand for elderly housing;
- allowing elderly residents to remain in Town, and
- generating more revenue than expenditures due to lack of school children.

As stated earlier, this type of housing should be located in or within walking distance of one of the villages to allow residents to access local amenities.

Another simple way to provide or retain affordable housing is through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. The CDBG program allows the Town to create a low- or no-interest loan program for income-eligible residents to renovate their homes, thereby retaining and/or creating additional affordable housing units. An added benefit of this program is that it often eliminates blighted conditions due to a resident being unable to maintain their property.

Section 8-2i of the Connecticut General Statutes enables municipalities to require affordable housing units as part of every new housing development, which would distribute affordable housing units throughout the community.

Similar to mandatory open space set-asides (described in Chapter 4), the Town can also accept a fee-in-lieu of affordable housing that is placed in a housing trust fund to be used to create affordable housing elsewhere in the community.

This program can give the Town or a community housing organization (working in partnership with the Town) the ability to:

- locate affordable housing units in the most appropriate locations;
- control the density of affordable housing developments;
- control the design and aesthetics of affordable housing developments to make them compatible with surrounding neighborhoods;
- purchase land for affordable housing to be built by other housing organizations such as Habitat for Humanity;
- purchase blighted properties to rehabilitate them and guarantee their affordability through rent or deed restrictions; and
- leverage grants and loans available for building affordable housing.

Housing Need Strategies

1. Maintain or enhance elderly tax relief programs.
2. Encourage active-adult and elderly housing where appropriate.
3. Expand options for accessory apartments as elderly units.
4. Allow modest density bonuses or design flexibility in exchange for affordable units.
5. Seek additional Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds and staffing to rehabilitate older homes and create or retain affordable units.
6. Consider requiring mandatory affordable housing within every residential development and accepting a fee-in-lieu thereof to be used to purchase affordable housing in appropriate locations.

Ordinance vs. Zoning Regulation

While Zoning Regulations are an effective tool for regulating land uses and their impacts, there are instances where a Town Ordinance can be more effective due to the subject matter and enforcement options.

Enforcement of a Town Ordinance can be more effective than Zoning Regulations because they can be enforced by the Police Department, Building Department, Health Department, etc. with financial and criminal penalties as opposed to a protracted process of Cease and Desist Orders and prosecution in civil court for zoning violations. Zoning enforcement is also generally limited to weekday hours, while many ordinances can be enforced by the Police Department 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

For these reasons, the issues of “hot bunking”, blighted properties, junk cars, excessive noise, and similar nuisances are best regulated by Town Ordinance.

Protect Existing Neighborhoods

Stonington has many attractive, livable neighborhoods, both within and outside of its villages. However, there are some issues that have the potential to undermine the stability of some of these neighborhoods, threatening both neighborhood character and quality of life.

Address the Hot Bunking Issue

The casino and hospitality industries are contributing to the shortage of affordable housing in the region, creating a phenomenon called “hot-bunking,” which is a Navy term for sharing a bed on a rotating basis between shift-workers. Hot bunking is overtaking Stonington’s affordable housing stock by creating overcrowded conditions as well as parking problems and could eventually lead to residential blight. By adopting an ordinance to restrict dwelling unit occupancy to families consisting of persons related by blood, marriage or adoption, or a fixed number of individuals living as a family unit, the potential for hot bunking can be reduced. The boarding house regulations can also be strengthened and used to create more appropriate, affordable housing for transient casino and hospitality industry employees.

Address Blighted Conditions

Property owners’ inability or unwillingness to maintain their properties has also led to isolated cases of residential blight. Creating and enforcing a blight ordinance can be an effective tool in controlling blight but doing so is a difficult and labor intensive task (requiring administrative staff) and should be considered carefully.

Stonington should evaluate the extent of blighted conditions in Town to determine whether a property maintenance ordinance is warranted. If the problem is limited to a few properties or areas, there may be more cost effective means of addressing the problem such as:

- organizing neighborhood cleanup programs;
- using CDBG loans in eligible areas to rehabilitate properties and create affordable housing units; and
- using affordable housing trust funds to purchase and rehabilitate properties, creating affordable housing units in the process (see preceding page).

Discourage Inappropriate Building Teardowns

Another threat to Stonington neighborhoods is a phenomenon known as “teardowns.” A “teardown” is the inappropriate demolition of a serviceable building (as opposed to a blighted or nonfunctional building) to accommodate new construction and can occur for many reasons. Typically when land becomes far more valuable than the structures on it, it becomes ripe for a teardown.

For example, the former Monsanto mill was originally proposed to be demolished and replaced with condominiums before another developer agreed to renovate the existing buildings. The highly desirable neighborhood and waterfront views combined to make the teardown and replacement economical.

There are other equally attractive neighborhoods throughout Stonington where small homes and vacation cottages could be demolished for new larger homes that are out of scale and character with surrounding properties, perhaps even blocking scenic views. To reduce the threat of teardowns, the Planning and Zoning Commission should examine floor-area-ratios and other bulk requirements in areas susceptible to teardowns and strengthen them where necessary.

Neighborhood Protection Strategies

1. Adopt an ordinance to restrict dwelling unit occupancy to families or individuals living as a family unit.
2. Adopt boarding house regulations to create regulated, affordable housing for transient casino and hospitality industry employees.
3. Evaluate the extent of blighted conditions in town to determine whether a property maintenance ordinance is warranted.
4. Restore the CDBG loan program to rehabilitate older homes and eliminate blighted conditions.
5. Strengthen floor-area-ratios, building height and other requirements in areas susceptible to teardowns (see Demolition Delay Ordinance on page 45).

CDBG Funds can be Used to Rehabilitate Blighted Properties



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SUPPORT DESIRED GROWTH

7

Overview

For Stonington to preserve those things that the community values and to foster the growth and change that the community wants, it must also support the desired conservation and development activities with appropriate infrastructure and services.

Desired patterns of conservation and development must be appropriately supported.

Community Facilities



Vehicular Transportation



Pedestrian / Bicycle Circulation



Utilities



Address Community Facility Needs

Historically, many of the community services and facilities in Stonington were oriented towards the villages and the Borough. As a result, the community has sometimes ended up with multiple facilities for municipal services.

During the planning period, Stonington will need to evaluate the configuration of local facilities and services (and consider town-wide needs) in order to efficiently and cost-effectively meet local needs.

When addressing growing community facility needs, new or expanded facilities should be located according to the following hierarchy:

- 1) enlarge the existing facility'
- 2) relocate within core village areas, or
- 3) relocate within village fringes.

Village core and fringe areas are identified on the map on page 55.

The following items are the main issues among many that need to be addressed:

- enlarging or relocating the Town Hall,
- reducing fragmentation in providing emergency services,
- addressing the needs of the Public Works Department, and
- meeting the changing recreation needs of all Stonington residents.

Address Town Hall Needs

Built in 1929, Stonington Town Hall suffers from a shortage of meeting rooms, suitable office space, storage space and bathrooms. In plain terms, the building is inadequate to meet community needs.

Interestingly, while 59 percent of residents rated improving Town Hall as a moderate improvement priority in the telephone survey, when asked directly, only 36% of residents felt that Town Hall needs to be expanded.

Nevertheless, there is little doubt that Stonington needs a better facility to meet current (and future) community needs.

While an addition has been planned to address the shortage of meeting rooms, this addition is more of a 'band-aid' than a realistic solution to the space issues at Town Hall. There should be sufficient land surrounding Town Hall to construct an addition capable of meeting not only current space needs but future needs as well. Planning for such an addition should begin early in the planning period. In order to accommodate the necessary floor space, the Zoning Regulations may need to be amended to modify the floor-area-ratio (FAR) for community facilities in the residential zones.

In the interim, electronic document management can be used to address storage space needs in the Town Clerk's vault and throughout Town Hall.

Address Public Safety Services

Stonington is well served from an emergency services standpoint with a paid police department, six volunteer fire departments and three volunteer ambulance corps (most with new or recently renovated facilities).

Encourage Volunteerism

The fire departments and ambulance corps are served by volunteers, in some cases supplemented by minimal paid full-time staff to respond during weekdays. In the future, recruiting and training volunteers is expected to be a growing issue due to increased training requirements. Some communities that were unable to continue attracting and retaining volunteers have been forced to establish paid fire departments - a much more expensive undertaking than a volunteer department.

Study Ways to Improve Efficiency and Reduce Redundancy of Fire Departments

The current system of six independent fire departments funded by 11 different organizations may be creating inefficiencies and inequities between departments in terms of funding, staffing, training, equipment, facilities, communications, and response times. A comprehensive study of the fire services should be conducted to determine whether consolidation or closer coordination between departments could result in manpower and equipment economies of scale, more consistent training, better communications and improved response times.

Address Emergency Communication Issues

The Borough, Quiambug and Wequetequock Fire Departments as well as Stonington Volunteer Ambulance Corp have obsolete communications equipment. Radio repeaters have been recommended to close gaps in radio coverage.

Police Station



B. F. Hoxie Engine Company



GASB 34

Government Accounting Standards Board Statement 34 (GASB 34) created new standards for state and local financial reporting, making financial reports more useful and easier to understand from the perspective of both residents and financial institutions.

GASB 34 now requires municipalities to account for all capital assets, including buildings, equipment, vehicles, roads, sewers, etc. As municipal assets depreciate, they can impact the community's financial health and ability to bond for future capital improvement projects.

Rather than allow all of these assets to depreciate, municipalities can maintain and even improve the value of major assets such as roads, bridges and sewers through an Asset Management Plan that tracks their condition and schedules regular maintenance to prevent their physical deterioration and premature failure.

Address Public Works Issues

Like the Fire Departments, the public works function is also fragmented between the Town, Borough and several fire districts that contract for public works functions.

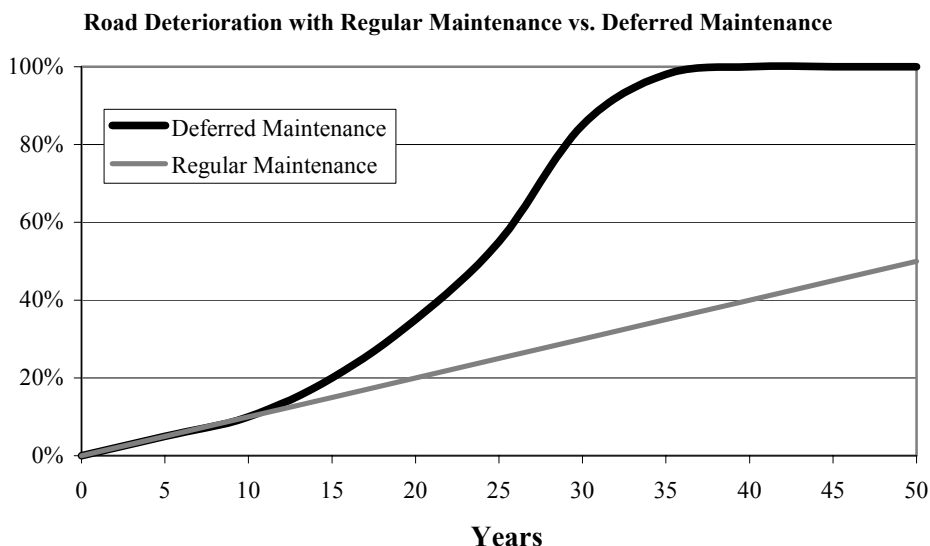
Improve Funding of Public Works Maintenance

The Town's Public Works Department is hampered in accomplishing their mission by a shortage of personnel, inconsistent road maintenance funding, lack of asset management, and minor facility needs.

While two-thirds of residents ranked the overall condition of Town roads as good to excellent, some roads are beginning to show severe wear. As Stonington continues to grow and new roads and drainage facilities are added, the Public Works Department is continually being asked to keep pace without adding personnel. At the same time, funding for maintenance has been sporadic.

This is a significant issue that will likely cost the Town more in future years. While some people may choose to ignore the increasing need for infrastructure improvements and maintenance, GASB 34, the new accounting standards for municipalities will increase the visibility of under-funded infrastructure maintenance (see sidebar).

The following chart illustrates how deferred maintenance can shorten the lifespan of a road and increase repair costs over time.



To avoid more costly repairs and premature replacement of roads and other improvements, Stonington should seek ways to provide more consistent funding and adequate staff to properly maintain roads, sidewalks and storm drainage facilities. An asset management program would help to track the condition of improvements and plan for road, drainage, sidewalk, and other maintenance needs before institutional memory is lost to retirement of key personnel.

Consider Consolidating Public Works Functions

To address the fragmentation of public works functions throughout Stonington, the various entities such as the Town, Latimer Point Association, Lord's Point Association, Stonington Public Schools and possibly the Stonington Borough (that each provide or contract for public works services) should consider consolidation of public works functions under one department to take advantage of economies of scale in labor, equipment and materials. If necessary, it can be done on a contractual basis (in much the same way that fire protection is provided to the private associations) to maintain the independent ownership of roads by each entity.

The Public Works Department has minor space needs including office space and an additional bathroom in the Old Highway Garage. These items are included in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and should be constructed as planned.

Relocate the Dog Pound

The dog pound is adequate in size and functionality for Stonington's needs but the approximately 30 year old facility is in serious disrepair due to a settling foundation (built on the former landfill). Pending the decision on a stray cat ordinance that would require a small addition, the facility should be replaced.

Old Highway Garage



New Highway Garage



Address Recreation Needs

Town recreation facilities are limited, with private organizations such as the Mystic YMCA, Pawcatuck Little League and Stonington Community Center doing an excellent job of filling many of the Town's recreation facility and activity needs.

Consider Public Rather Than Private Facilities

While 60% of residents surveyed agree that Stonington has adequate recreation facilities, many of these facilities are private. Residents are often dependent on three independent community/neighborhood centers to meet their recreation needs with some programs funded in part by the Town and the balance coming from membership fees, program fees and grants.

Overall, the fragmentation of these services may be leading to inefficiencies in the provision of services. While this system keeps municipal property taxes low, the different and often limited focus of each of these organizations can require some families to pay membership and program fees to multiple private organizations to gain access to the recreation facilities and services they need.

As Stonington continues to grow, the population may outstrip the ability of these community centers to meet the growing demand for services and the Town may wish to explore options for supplementing the village and Borough community centers to better meet town-wide social and recreational needs.

Seek Additional Field Space

The major recreation need identified by Town staff is additional multi-purpose fields. The continuing growth in the popularity of field sports such as field hockey, lacrosse and soccer are overtaking available fields, causing them to deteriorate. Additional multi-purpose fields would alleviate scheduling pressure on existing fields and allow overworked fields to be rotated so that they have time to recover. Land is available for additional fields at both the Recreation Complex and adjacent to the Pawcatuck pollution control facility.

Mystic YMCA



Additional Field Space is Needed



Seek a Location for a Town Beach

Acquiring waterfront property suitable for a Town beach is an open space and coastal resource priority. Nearly two-thirds of the townwide survey respondents agreed that the Town should acquire waterfront open space for a Town beach.

It is estimated that 15 percent of Stonington's shoreline is considered beach. The Town should inventory and then try to obtain suitable privately owned beach property through purchase or donation, if and when available. If outright purchase is not an option, creative techniques such as securing a right of first refusal or allowing continued life tenancy by the owner after purchase can be explored.

If such a beach is not attainable, the Town should consider providing alternative outdoor water recreation such as a pool or less expensive alternatives such as an "aqua fountain" or "splash pad" to allow children to stay cool on hot summer days.

Address Other Recreation Issues

The Town and Board of Education are both experiencing storage problems, requiring the gymnasium at the Board of Education offices to be used for overflow storage needs. This gymnasium is also needed to alleviate a shortage of indoor recreational facilities. Alternative storage should be found to free this facility for its intended use. Other minor issues include: updating playground equipment, addressing unsafe conditions, and providing portable or permanent toilets at isolated recreation facilities.

Acquire Waterfront Property



Reclaim the Gym at the Board of Education



Address Human Service and Senior Service Needs

The mature adult population (ages 55+) accounts for the majority of the human services caseload and this population segment is expected to increase to over one-third of population by 2020. The Human Services Department should anticipate increased demand for human/senior services as the senior population continues to grow to ensure adequate staffing and facilities.

While the office needs of the Human Services Department are adequately met (in a newly renovated facility), the Department is dependent upon private community centers and the schools for many programs and activity space. Senior services such as recreation programs, dial-a-ride, meals on wheels and hot meals programs are distributed across many organizations and in various locations.

The Town and its residents must continue to support the three community centers in their efforts to meet the growing demand for senior services anticipated during the planning period and beyond.

Support the Libraries

Library services are provided by three independent library associations funded in part by the Towns of Stonington, Groton and Westerly with the balance coming from donations and other sources. All three libraries are at capacity, requiring extensive weeding and reorganization to make room for new materials. Capital improvement funds must be continually raised from private sources and annual operating budgets limit staffing levels, often reducing hours of operation.

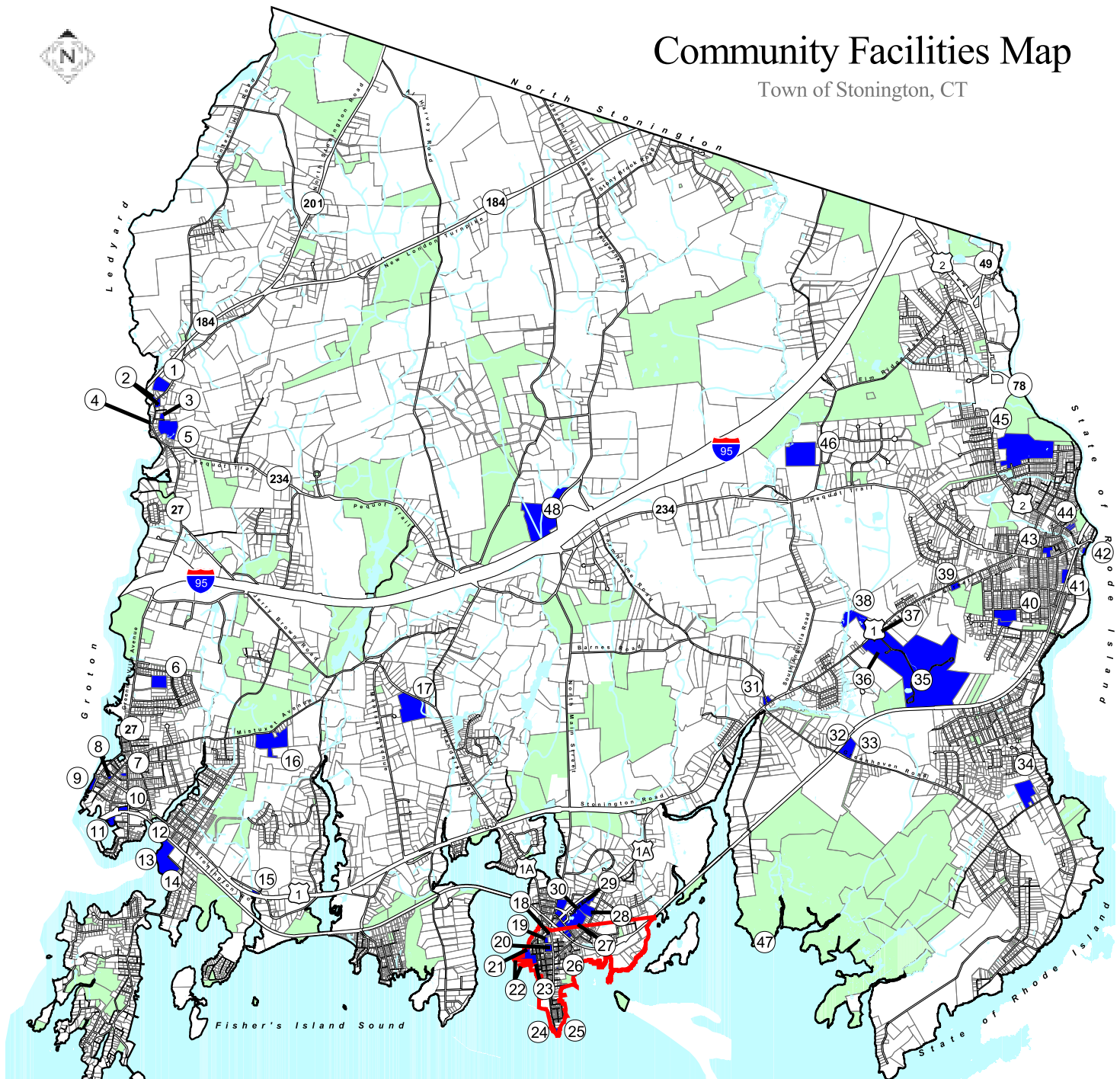
As population growth and space constraints increasingly limit their ability to meet residents' needs, the Town and its residents will need to provide increasing support to the three libraries in their efforts to provide library services at the village and Borough level.

In the telephone survey, 82 percent of residents ranked library improvements as a moderate or high priority.



Community Facilities Map

Town of Stonington, CT



Public Safety Facilities

- 2. Old Mystic Fire Department
- 10. Mystic Fire Department
- 15. Quiambug Fire Department
- 18. New Stonington Fire Department
- 26. Stonington Borough Hall & Old Stonington Fire Department
- 30. Stonington Volunteer Ambulance Corps.
- 31. Wequetequock Fire Department
- 38. Police Department
- 44. Pawcatuck Fire Department

Town Hall/Community Centers

- 27. Stonington Community Center
- 28. Stonington Town Hall
- 41. Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center

Schools




- 16. Mystic Middle School
- 17. Deans Mill School
- 36. Stonington High School
- 40. Pawcatuck Middle School
- 43. West Broad Street School
- 45. West Vine Street School

Recreation Facilities

- 3. Old Mystic Playground
- 6. Mystic Little League
- 9. Mystic River Park (Mystic Fire District)
- 12. Mystic Babe Ruth Fields
- 13. Williams Beach (Mystic YMCA)
- 14. Mystic YMCA
- 22. Town Docks
- 23. Playground
- 24. DuBoise Beach
- 35. Stonington Recreation Area
- 42. Pawcatuck Park
- 46. Pawcatuck Little League
- 47. Barn Island Boat Launch (D.E.P.)
- 48. Stonington Soccer Club

Other Facilities

- 1. Stonington Public Schools Board of Education Offices
- 4. Old Mystic Post Office
- 5. Old Mystic United Methodist Church
- 7. 4th District Voting Hall
- 8. Mystic Post Office
- 11. Mystic Water Pollution Control Facility
- 19. Stonington Post Office
- 20. Stonington Free Library
- 21. Stonington Water Pollution Control Facility
- 25. Stonington Point (Stonington Borough)
- 29. Stonington Highway Garage
- 32. Transfer Station
- 33. Dog Pound
- 34. Pawcatuck Water Pollution Control Facility
- 37. Human Services Building
- 39. Pawcatuck Post Office

-  Stonington Borough
-  Community Facilities
-  Open Space

0 4000 Feet



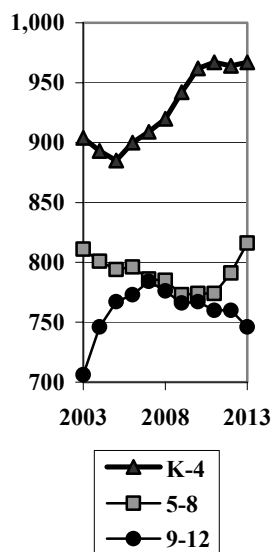
Planimetrics

31 Ensign Drive, Avon, CT 06001

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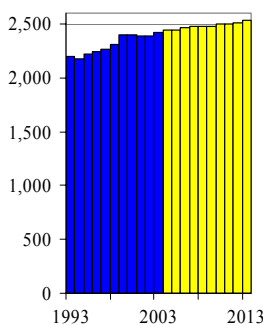
Sites that are purchased in advance of their need (for educational purposes) are a prudent local investment and can be used for open space and recreation in the meantime.

Projected Enrollment by Grade Groupings



Source: State Department of Education

Historic and Projected (K-12) School Enrollment



Source: State Department of Education

Address School Facility Needs

School facilities are important since education funding totals about 58 percent of the local budget. Local residents are supportive of education and 59 percent of residents surveyed ranked school improvements as a high priority.

Stonington utilizes six schools in three age groupings. Their configuration and capacities are as follows.

School	Grades	Current Enrollment	Capacity ¹	Cumulative Capacity ¹
Deans Mill School	K-4	518	599-600	1,227
West Vine Street School	K-2	242	281-312	to
West Broad Street School	3-4	183	347-360	1,272
Mystic Middle School	5-8	468	454-600	803 to
Pawcatuck Middle School	5-8	345	349-480	1,080
Stonington High School	9-12	705	800-880 ²	800 to 880 ²
Total	K-12	2,461	2,830 to 3,232	

Source: Stonington Schools ¹Low value is based on square feet per student, high value is based on class sizes of 22-24 students ²As renovated

According to new Connecticut Department of Education (DOE) projections, Stonington's school enrollments are expected to increase throughout the planning period.

In the elementary grades (K-4), enrollment is expected to decline before increasing again towards the middle of the planning period. While not expected to approach the cumulative capacity of the three elementary schools, individual schools may experience enrollment pressure due to the geographic distribution of students, which can be addressed by redistributing students between schools.

In the middle schools (5-8), enrollment is expected to decline before returning to current levels towards the end of the planning period. Adequate capacity is expected to be available.

High school enrollments (9-12) are expected to increase to the year 2007 before gradually declining. The Stonington High School is currently undergoing approximately \$40 million in renovations and additions that should bring capacity well above the peak enrollment anticipated for 2007.

Between 1980 and 2000, the ratio of public school students to total population in Stonington (enrollment ratio) peaked at about 15 percent. If Stonington becomes a community of 25,000 residents and the enrollment ratio again reached this level, total school enrollment of about 3,750 students could result, far exceeding the total capacity of the current school system.

During the planning period, Stonington should evaluate its long term educational strategy to ensure that adequate sites are available to accommodate the eventual educational facility needs of the community. Sites that are purchased in advance of their need are a prudent local investment and can be used for open space and recreation in the meantime.

Community Facility Strategies

1. Build an addition to Town Hall to meet current as well as future needs, modifying the FAR regulations if necessary.
2. Provide adequate funding and staff to properly maintain roads, sidewalks and storm drainage facilities and avoid more costly repairs or replacement.
3. Create an asset management program to plan for road, drainage, sidewalk, and other maintenance needs.
4. Investigate consolidating townwide public works functions under one department (on a contractual basis if necessary) to take advantage of economies of scale.
5. Address space needs in the Old Highway Garage.
6. Construct additional multi-purpose fields at the Recreation Complex and/or adjacent to the Pawcatuck pollution control facility.
7. Acquire waterfront property suitable for a Town beach or provide alternative outdoor water recreation such as a pool, "aqua fountains," or "splash pads."
8. Update playground equipment, address unsafe conditions and provide toilets at recreation facilities as needed.
9. Address Town/Board of Education overflow storage needs to free the gymnasium at the Board of Education offices for recreational use.
10. Replace the Dog Pound.
11. Continue to support the three libraries in their efforts to provide library services at the village and Borough level.
12. Explore options for supplementing the three community centers in the future to better meet townwide social and recreational needs.
13. Monitor capacities of individual schools to determine if additional space will be needed. If growth cannot be accommodated in place, appropriately located land should be secured before it is lost to development.

Address Vehicular Transportation Needs

An efficient transportation system that safely combines private automobiles, pedestrians, bicycles, paratransit and mass transit can contribute significantly to overall quality of life by meeting the transportation needs of all residents, regardless of age or ability.

Access Management

Direct access to arterials should be restricted, requiring shared driveways, interconnected parking lots, access roads and similar measures to reduce curb cuts and maximize the movement of through traffic. Acceleration/Deceleration lanes could also be required at access points to facilitate the efficient flow of traffic.

Major connector and major feeder roads can provide both direct and indirect access to adjacent land but access management measures should be encouraged.

Minor feeder and residential access roads should provide direct access.

Relate Road Design to Desired Land Use

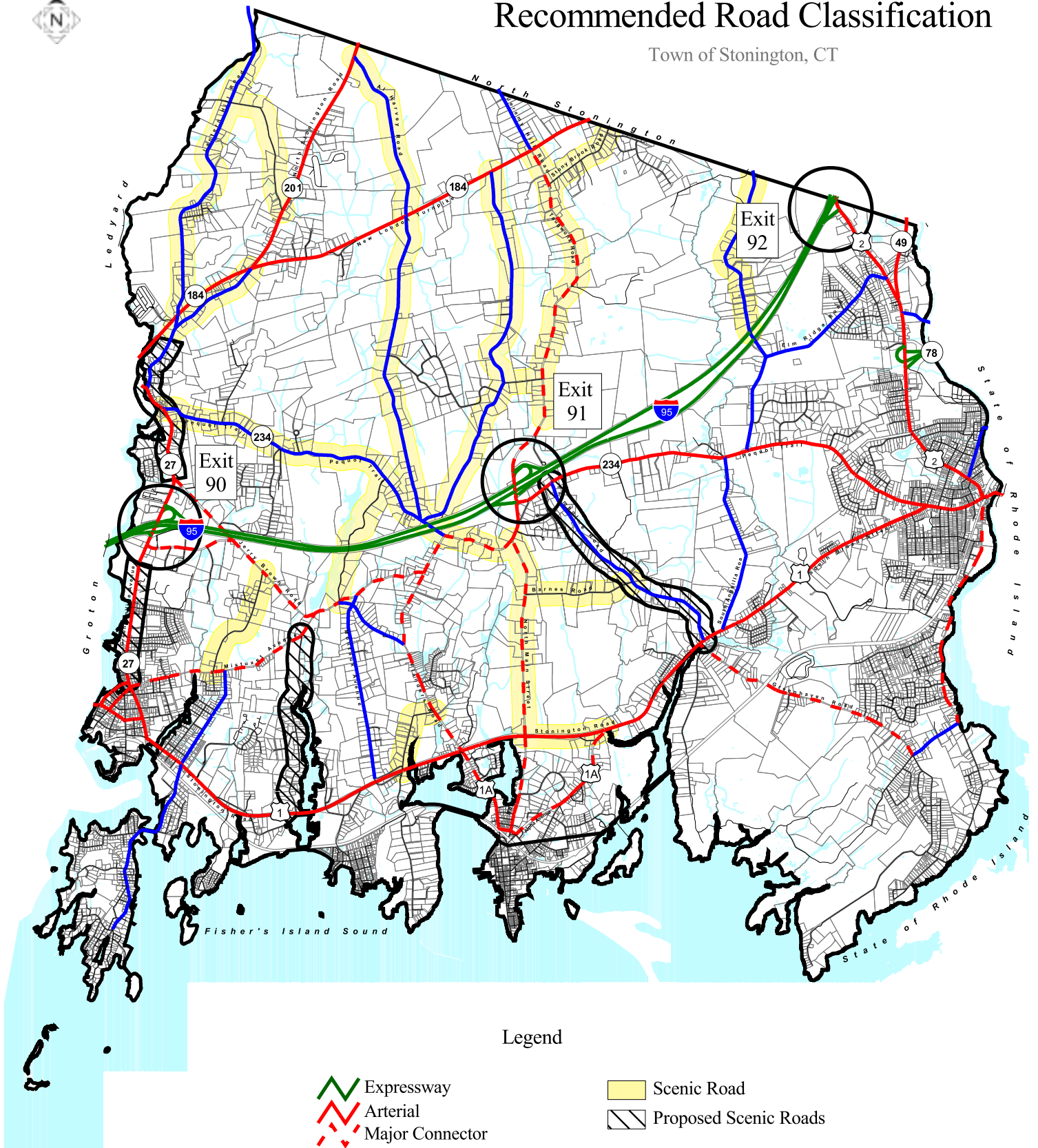
Road classifications are important for matching the design of roads to their location, adjacent land uses and function. Recommended road classifications are outlined in the table below and illustrated on the facing page.

Recommended Road Classifications		
Limited Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interstate 95 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Route 78
Arterials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Route 1 • Route 1A • Route 2 • Route 27 • Route 49 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Route 78 • Route 184 • Route 201 • Pequot Trail from N. Main Street to Route 1
Major Connectors (Collector Road)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coogan Boulevard • Flanders Road • Greenhaven Road • Holmes Street • Jerry Brown Road • Mechanic Street • Mistuxet Avenue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pellegrino Road • North Main Street • Pequot Trail from Flanders Road to N. Main Street • River Road • Taugwonk Road • Willow Street
Major Feeder Roads (Collector Road)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Al Harvey Road • Deans Mill Road from Mistuxet Avenue to Flanders Road • Elm Ridge Road • Farmholme Road • Hewitt Road • Jeremy Hill Road • Main Street 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mary Hall Road • Pequot Trail from Route 27 to Flanders Road • N. Anguilla Road • N. Stonington Road • S. Anguilla Road • Stillman Avenue • Wheeler Road • White Rock Avenue
Minor Feeder Roads (Local Streets)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boulder Avenue • Old North Road 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All remaining roads except non-through street serving 15 homes or less.
Residential Access (Local Streets)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-through street serving 15 homes or less.



Recommended Road Classification

Town of Stonington, CT



Legend

- Expressway
- Arterial
- Major Connector
- Major Feeder
- Minor Feeder and Residential Access

- Scenic Road
- Proposed Scenic Roads
- Stonington Borough

0 4000 Feet



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New Scenic Roads

Strategies to make new or reconstructed roads more scenic and enhance Stonington's community character might include:

- narrower paved widths,
- slower design speeds
- steeper grades,
- alternative drainage systems,
- limiting grading and tree clearing within the right-of-way,
- retaining or building stone walls,
- developing guidelines for plantings and tree trimming/maintenance; and
- planting street trees.

Review and Revise Road Construction Standards

Stonington's current road design standards may be excessive for the intended purpose of many classifications. Roads that are too straight, too flat, or too wide encourage speeding, require excessive clearing and grading, and potentially detract from community character.

While Stonington has a number of scenic roads today, the Town's current road standards do not allow for new construction of the scenic roads in the future.

The road design standards should be examined by a comprehensive group of stakeholders and revised to strike a balance between function (safety, capacity and drainage) and scenic character so that Stonington can build, restore and reconstruct scenic roads of the future (see page 51 for more scenic road recommendations).

Address Desirable Road Improvements

The Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT) has identified nine places in Stonington where accident experience may indicate problem areas:

- Route 1 between Gravel Street and Cottrell Street,
- Route 1 at Mason's Island Road,
- Route 1 between Hewitt Road and Long Wharf Road,
- Route 2 at Elm Ridge Road,
- Route 2 between Lincoln Avenue and Route 1,
- Route 2 at Route 1,
- I-95 at Pequot Trail (Exit 91),
- I-95 at Route 2 (Exit 92), and
- I-95 between Route 2 and Route 49.

The intersection of Route 1, Route 2 and Mechanic Street, and Route 1 between Gravel and Cottrell Streets are of particular concern as accident rates are much higher than anticipated for their traffic load and configuration.

To ensure that these and other State roads and intersections continue to function safely and efficiently, the Town should pursue funding for the design and construction of necessary improvements. Such funding can be coordinated through the Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments' (SECCOG) Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

The Town of Stonington, through its Public Works Department is responsible for maintaining Town roads and has scheduled the following roads for construction or major repairs:

- Burdick Lane – build connection to Cronin Avenue
- Cove Road - realign curve
- Reynolds Road - rebuild
- North Main Street - rebuild
- Washington Street (Mystic) - rebuild

Vehicular Transportation Strategies

1. Classify roads according to both their function and the desired pattern of growth it is intended to support.
2. Create context sensitive road design standards.
3. Work with ConnDOT and SECCOG to address critical accident locations on State highways.
4. Complete scheduled safety improvements on Town roads.

Route 1 at Mechanic Street



Neighborhood Street



Address Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation

While sidewalks are not always necessary in suburban and rural areas, there are instances where residents and visitors could benefit from sidewalks and trails that allow them to safely walk or cycle between the villages, the Borough and other activity nodes such as the areas around Exits 90 and 92, the Stonington High School/Recreation Park campus at Spellman Drive, or the grocery stores located just outside of Mystic and Pawcatuck.

Where residential densities permit, pedestrian access should be provided within walking distance of schools, parks and playgrounds. Sidewalks should be incorporated into all new development proposals and Town road improvement projects in these areas.

Sidewalks strictly for pedestrians should be at least five feet wide. Improved trails for both bikes and pedestrians should be at least eight feet wide. Bicycles can also be safely accommodated on major roads through the use of wide shoulders, bicycle friendly catch basin grates and even dedicated bike lanes.

All major road construction projects should be required to consider bicycle accommodations during the design phase and incorporate them where possible and within fiscal reason. The Planning and Zoning Commission should also consider requiring bicycle racks where appropriate during the site plan approval process.

Pedestrian / Bicycle Transportation Strategies

1. Connect villages, Borough and other activity nodes with sidewalks or trails.
2. Require sidewalks as part of all development proposals and road improvement projects within walking distance of schools parks and playgrounds
3. Consider bicycle accommodations in all road improvement and site development projects.

Bicycle Shop in Mystic

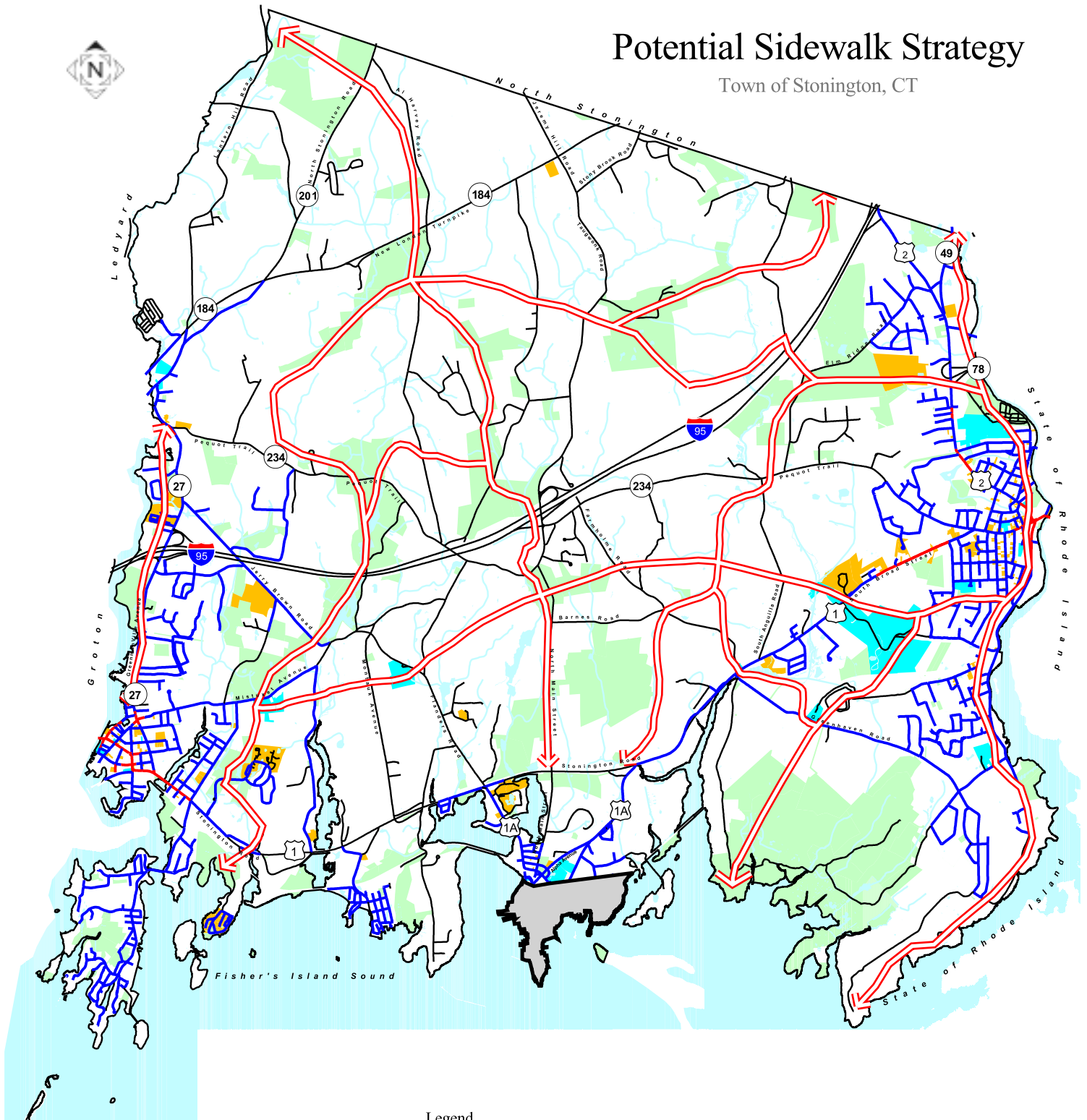


Consider Bicycle Accommodations










Potential Sidewalk Strategy

Town of Stonington, CT



Legend

-  Eight Foot Sidewalks
-  Five Foot Sidewalks
-  Possible Greenway Connections

-  Open Space
-  Community Facility
-  Multi-Family Development
-  Stonington Borough

0 4000 Feet



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Address Transit Options

Southeast Area Transit (SEAT) provides bus service to Stonington but has cut back service to only 14 daily stops at Olde Mistick Village on a route between the New London train station and Foxwoods Casino. Bus service should be explored to the two main villages and Borough, which could benefit from direct bus service to employment centers such as Groton, New London and the casinos.

Jitney bus service is available during summer months between Mystic and Exit 90 attractions for a nominal fee but ridership has been low. This valuable service has the potential to reduce traffic and parking issues in Mystic and can even act as a bridge service between Mystic and the SEAT bus stop at Olde Mistick Village during the summer. To increase ridership, the service should be promoted through clearly marked stops, informational signage, brochures at major attractions and other means.

Dial-a-Ride services are provided free to elderly and disabled residents by the Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center and for a nominal fee, by the Eastern Connecticut Transportation Consortium. The Stonington Community Center offers daily rides to congregate lunches at the Center and a weekly trip to the grocery store. As Stonington's elderly population continues to grow, these programs should be carefully monitored to ensure that they continue to be able to meet residents' needs.

Despite fares and schedules that make it generally unsuitable for daily commuting, Amtrak Northeast Corridor Service is available in both Mystic and Westerly seven days a week to serve residents and visitors alike. Stonington should pursue improved service to Mystic to further enhance this valuable transportation asset.

Transit Strategies

1. Explore expansion of SEAT bus service to serve the two main villages and the Borough.
2. Work with Mystic Chamber of Commerce to improve and promote Mystic jitney bus service.
3. Pursue improved Amtrak service to Mystic.

Mystic Train Station



Amtrak Train



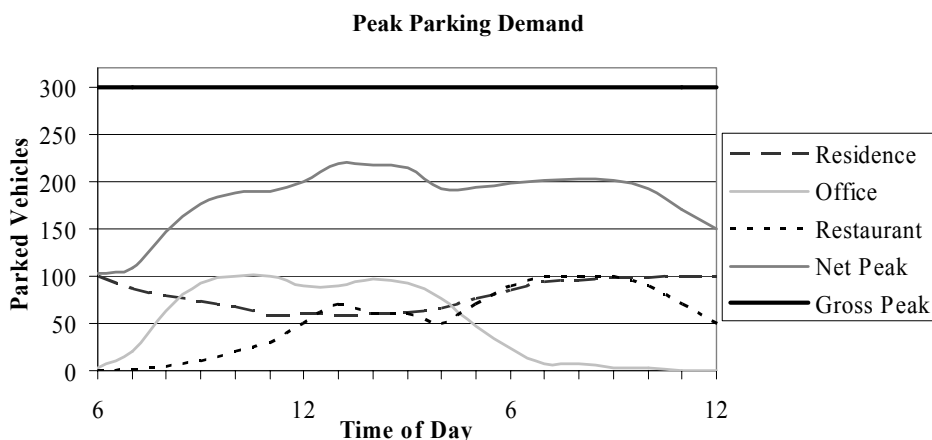
Modify Parking and Other Standards

Communities use parking standards to ensure that each use has sufficient parking to meet its own needs without impairing traffic, public safety or the use of adjacent land. Unused parking wastes valuable land, creates additional stormwater runoff and detracts from community character by adding unnecessary pavement.

Shared Parking Requirements

Mixed-use village areas with walkable streets have lower parking needs than the typical single-use developments that most zoning regulations are intended for. An overabundance of parking can detract from the village ambience. Suburban shopping centers with a mix of uses or other mixed use developments can also result in an unnecessary amount of parking.

The following chart (explained in the sidebar) illustrates how a mix of residential, office and restaurant uses, each requiring a minimum of 100 parking spaces under the current regulations, would actually use 27% less parking than the minimum requirement during the net peak hour (1:00 p.m.). By allowing shared parking requirements, 81 unnecessary parking spaces and all of the negative impacts associated with them can be avoided.



Section 7.10.2 of the Zoning Regulations allows reductions in off-street parking based on the availability of public parking and other unspecified reasons. Over-reliance on available public parking can lead to a shortage of parking if multiple establishments are given credit for the same parking spaces. Section 7.10.2 should be modified to include specific conditions under which parking can be reduced such as offset peak parking demands, captive markets and availability of mass transit or public parking

Parking Requirements Outside Villages

Stonington's retail parking standard is relatively high compared to other recognized standards. Since parking needs per square foot tend to decrease with the size of the building, the PZC should consider adopting graduated minimum parking requirements that also decrease with the size of buildings and place a maximum parking requirement to limit the deliberate overbuilding of parking spaces.

The Planning and Zoning Commission is currently considering changes to the parking regulations that incorporate many of these strategies.

Peak Parking Demand

The chart to the left illustrates the hourly parking requirements for a mix of residential, office and restaurant uses, each totaling 100 parking spaces under the Zoning Regulations for a gross-peak parking requirement of 300 parking spaces. Because the parking standards are not time sensitive, the minimum parking requirements apply 24 hours a day as illustrated by the gross-peak parking demand of 300 spaces.

The three lowest lines on the chart represent the average hourly parking demands for residential, office and restaurant uses throughout the day. The chart clearly illustrates that the parking demands of these different uses vary significantly from one another.

The second highest line represents the cumulative hourly parking demand of the three uses or net-peak demand. What this line shows is that the net-peak parking demand of the three uses is 81 to 200 parking spaces lower than the gross-peak demand of 300 parking spaces required by zoning (depending on time of day).

Source: Urban Land Institute [Shared Parking Requirements](#)

Landscaping

Landscaping in and around parking lots is another way to maintain community character. By screening parking lots with stone walls, berms or landscaping, their visual impact can be reduced. Landscaping within parking lots can define parking and travel lanes, provide shade, filter views of large buildings, provide snow storage and recharge groundwater.

In areas outside of the Aquifer Protection Zone and especially within the Coastal Boundary, groundwater recharge can be increased by reducing impervious pavement through the use of alternative paving materials such as porous block and grass pavers. These paving systems are typically used in limited applications such as fire lanes to the rear of buildings and peak seasonal parking that is unused for most of the year.

Lighting Standards

In an effort to create a sense of safety and security, lighting for parking lots and commercial buildings can often be excessive for their intended purpose, creating light pollution, glare, and impairing the use of adjacent properties. Full-cutoff lighting reduces glare and directs light downward by recessing light bulbs and lenses inside opaque light fixtures.

The PZC should require full-cutoff fixtures for all high-intensity commercial lighting. A separate ordinance would be needed to prohibit the practice of installing floodlights on utility poles within a road right-of-way to illuminate adjacent commercial properties and other forms of unnecessary light pollution.

Stormwater Management

Under guidelines being developed by the Conservation Commission as part of a Stormwater Management Plan, applicants for new developments will be required to enter into stormwater management agreements with the Town to maintain their private stormwater management facilities in accordance with the EPA's new National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II guidelines (see page 41).

Parking and Other Standards Strategies

1. Create graduated minimum retail parking requirements and consider parking maximums for larger developments.
2. Allow parking reductions for mixed-uses with offset peak parking demands.
3. Create more stringent parking lot landscaping requirements for all commercial areas.
4. Allow alternative pervious paving materials for appropriate applications (such as summer overflow parking) outside Aquifer Protection Zones.
5. Modify lighting requirements to reduce excessive lighting
6. Adopt an ordinance to prohibit off-site floodlights and other sources of light pollution.

Provide For Adequate Utility Services

Encourage Provision of Adequate Water Service

The availability of adequate water and sewer capacity is critical to supporting commercial and industrial activity as well as the medium- to high-density residential patterns found in and around Stonington's many villages and the Borough. Domestic water is provided by two major water systems as well as five minor systems serving isolated areas.

The Aquarion Water Company (Aquarion) serves the greater Mystic area and Stonington Borough, drawing its water from both the Mystic Reservoir (1.0 million gallons per day or MGD) and a high-capacity well system (1.0 MGD). Mystic Reservoir water is treated at the Deans Mill treatment plant before being distributed.

In order to meet anticipated needs during the planning period, Aquarion will need to increase capacity during the next 10 years through either new wells or interconnection to adjacent water systems.

The Westerly Water Department (WWD) serves the greater Pawcatuck area, drawing all of its water from high-capacity wells (6.6 MGD). After previously experiencing bacterial contamination in one of its wells, it now treats its water prior to distribution.

The WWD has acquired land along the Pawcatuck River north of Pawcatuck and is currently seeking to add 1.0 MGD to capacity with plans for an additional 1.0 MGD in the near future.

Both major water systems could benefit from interconnection between these and other regional water systems to meet both daily demand and emergency needs. Both major water systems require additional wells during the planning period to maintain adequate capacity and margins of safety, underscore the need for stronger groundwater protection measures outlined in the Chapter 3.

Address Water Supply Issues

Fire hydrant water volume and pressure is an issue in several locations, most notably in the Borough south of Cannon Square. The water mains in the Borough are being enlarged to address the issue but other isolated problems remain and should be addressed between the affected fire departments and water companies.

The majority of Stonington's land area is not served by hydrants, relying on tanker trucks and drafting from surface water sources when available. There are no plans to expand hydrant coverage unless required by new construction.

As a result, Stonington should require the installation of fire ponds or underground fire tanks as part of new developments. In addition, a water re-supply master plan (including emergency use of private ponds) should be prepared to facilitate water availability for fire events.

Adequate utility services in appropriate locations will help to support the desired conservation and development strategies for Stonington.

Definitions

Infrastructure - in the preparation of this Plan, the term infrastructure refers to utility services such as:

- piped utilities (water, sanitary and storm sewers and natural gas);
- wired utilities (electricity, telephone, cable TV, and internet); and
- wireless communications (telephone, paging, satellite TV and radio).

Margin of Safety – The Department of Public Utility Control requires water companies to maintain the capacity to safely exceed daily demand by 15%.

Definition

Sewer Limit Line – a boundary beyond which public sewer service will not be provided. Inclusion within the sewer limit line boundary is not a guarantee that service is available or will be provided.

Electricity

There are no known long-term reliability issues relating to Connecticut Light and Power's (CL&P) provision of electricity to Stonington.

CL&P has recently installed a new substation in North Stonington and upgraded their high-voltage "backbone," which should address any issues that may have affected Stonington in the past.

Telephone Service

Local telephone service is provided by SBC. There are no known issues with the provision of this service.

Television

Cable television is available from Comcast throughout Stonington and will also soon be available from Groton Utilities. Satellite television is available from a number of providers.

Provide Adequate Sewer Capacity

The Town of Stonington Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) provides sewer service to the three villages, the Borough and surrounding areas utilizing three treatment plants located in or near each of the main villages.

The Mystic treatment plant is near capacity and must divert sewage to the Borough plant, bringing that plant near its capacity as well.

The Pawcatuck treatment plant should have adequate capacity for the planning period and beyond. If future redevelopment proposals within the larger Pawcatuck mills include significant residential and commercial activity, capacity will have to be closely monitored and increased if necessary to support this important economic development and village enhancement strategy.

Two options are being explored to handle growth in the Mystic and Borough systems. One option is to construct a new 2.5 million gallon per day (MGD) treatment plant with a discharge somewhere on Stonington Harbor to replace all three existing plants. The second alternative is to connect to the Groton Utilities treatment plant which is planned to be expanded to 7.5 MGD, with potential for up to 10.0 MGD capacity. The latter would require piping beneath the Mystic River.

If economically and technically feasible, Stonington should consider connecting to Groton Utility's sewer system to avoid permitting and building a fourth treatment plant, taking advantage of Groton's economy of scale.

Consider Adopting a Septic Management Plan and Ordinance

Outside of areas served by public sewers, homes and businesses rely on private septic systems. Without proper maintenance and inspection, these systems can fail and become a public health hazard by contaminating surface drinking water supplies. Stonington should consider adopting a Septic Management Plan and Ordinance to require the regular inspection and maintenance of all septic systems.

Ensure Adequacy of Other Utility Services

Electrical Service

Electricity is provided locally by Connecticut Light and Power Company (see sidebar)

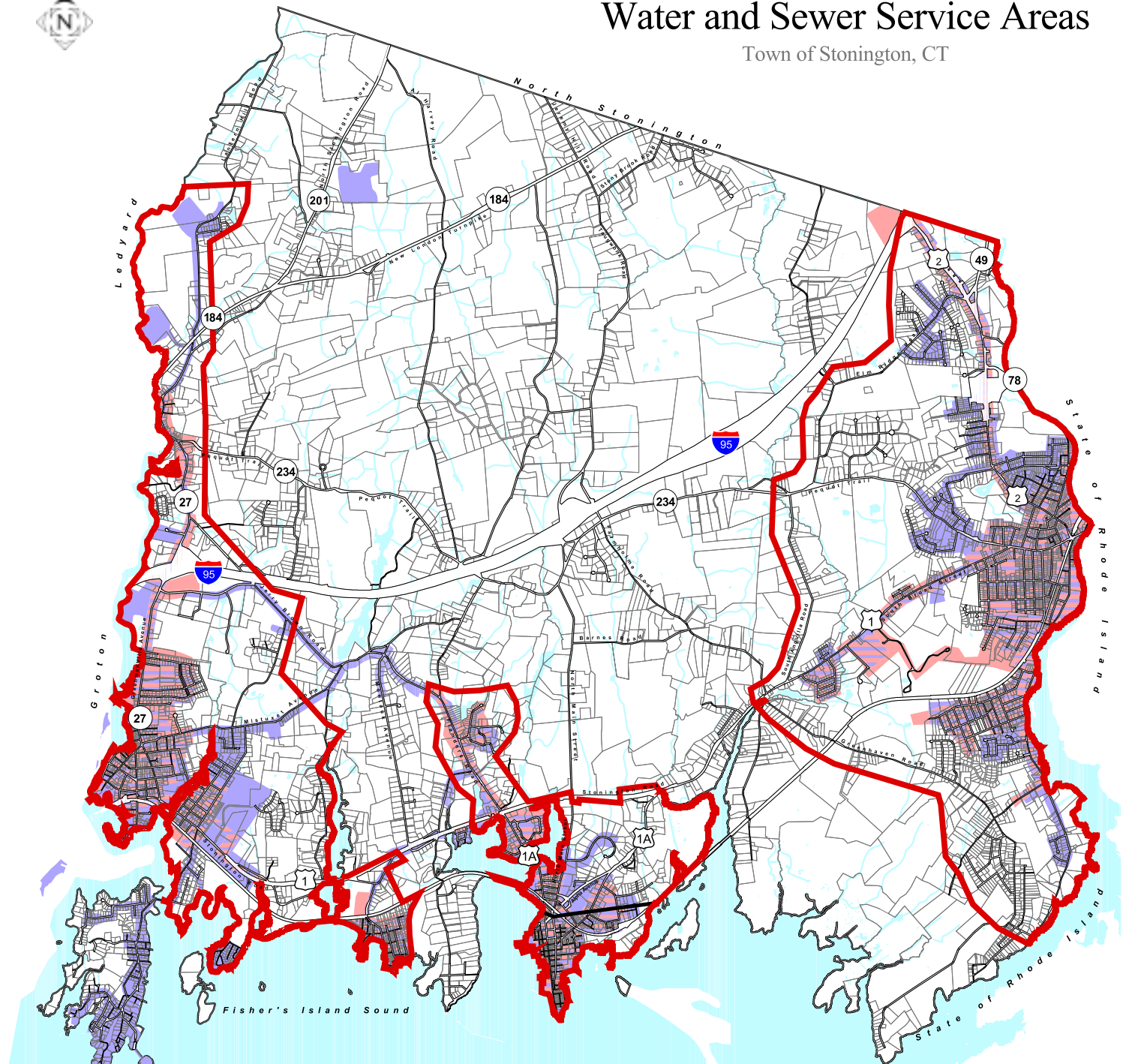
Natural Gas Service

Natural gas service is provided by Yankee Gas in the vicinity of Pawcatuck and along Route 1 to Anguilla Brook, with future plans to extend service to Mystic from Route 184 in Groton. With this expansion, natural gas service should be available to support business activity within all targeted commercial growth areas, with the exception of the Borough and Exit 91 industrial area.








Water and Sewer Service Areas

Town of Stonington, CT



Legend

-  Sewer Service Areas
-  Water Service Areas
-  Water and Sewer Service Areas
-  Sewer Limit Line
-  Stonington Borough

0 4000 Feet

Definitions

Dial-up service – digital data transfer using a standard telephone line at speeds approaching 56k (56,000 bits of data per second).

Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) - shared use of telephone and digital data transmission over a standard telephone line at speeds approaching 6Mbps (32 million bits per second).

T-1, T-3 Lines - dedicated lines that carry up to 1.5Mbps and 43Mbps respectively.

Broadband Cable – shared use of the same cable that brings cable TV into homes with digital data transfer rates up to 2Mbps.

Wired Communication

Wired telephone services are available through SBC and such service is reported to be available and reliable town-wide to meet current and anticipated future needs. Cable television is provided by Comcast and Groton Utilities.

Internet and other data services are provided by SBC, Comcast and Groton Utilities in the form of dial-up service, high-speed DSL, T1 and T3 lines, and broadband cable. Such services are becoming increasingly critical for attracting a broad spectrum of commercial and industrial activity to desired locations. Both DSL and cable modem service are limited by the distance to switching facilities. SBC offers DSL service within three miles of their Mystic switching station but has no immediate plans to implement DSL service from their Mystic-Stonington station. Comcast high-speed cable modem access is generally available town-wide and is soon to be joined by Groton Utilities.

Wireless Communication

Given its location along I-95, Stonington should have better than average wireless communication coverage. As a result of recent changes in Federal guidelines allowing the transfer of telephone numbers and a major shift in technology by several wireless communication providers, there will be a growing need for still more communications towers in Stonington.

Due to a Connecticut Superior Court ruling, the Connecticut Siting Council (CSC) currently has jurisdiction over all commercial telecommunication towers (municipal towers are exempt).

To ensure the most appropriate locations, minimize unnecessary towers and protect community character, Stonington should:

- proactively plan for future tower sites;
- adopt guiding principles for locating towers to be considered by applicants and the CSC and work cooperatively with them to ensure that local concerns are addressed; and
- consider repealing their telecommunication tower regulations.

Utility Strategies

1. Ensure adequate quantities of safe drinking water to support existing and future development.
2. If feasible, connect the Stonington's sewer systems into the Groton Utilities sewer system
3. Consider creating a septic management plan and adopting an ordinance to require the inspection and regular cleaning of septic systems.
4. Take a proactive approach towards telecommunication towers by planning for the most desirable future sites; adopting guiding principles for locating tower; and consider repealing the telecommunication tower regulations.

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

8

Overview

The recommendations of each of the preceding chapters can be combined to present an overall Future Land Use Plan for Stonington. The Future Land Use Plan is a reflection of the stated goals, objectives, and recommendations of the Plan as well as an integration of the preceding elements of the Plan of Conservation & Development.

In essence, the Future Land Use Plan is a statement of what the Stonington of tomorrow should look like.

While the Future Land Use Plan looks very similar in appearance to a zoning map, it should not be construed as such. The colored areas represent desired future land uses which do not necessarily correspond to zoning classifications. The Future Land Use Plan will serve to guide the Planning and Zoning Commission as it makes changes to the official Town Zoning Map in the future.

Any modifications to this Future Land Use Plan that affect areas adjacent to the Borough should be referred to the Borough Planning and Zoning Commission as a courtesy for their non-binding review and comment. Likewise, similar changes to the Borough Future Land Use Plan should be referred to the Town Planning and Zoning Commission for their review and comment.

The Future Land Use Plan is a depiction of the Plan's recommendations for the future conservation and development of Stonington...

Conservation



Development



Descriptions of Future Land Use Categories

Open Space

Dedicated Open Space	Areas currently preserved for open space purposes.
Desirable Open Space	Areas that would make a significant contribution to Stonington's open space network and greenbelt system.
Proposed Trail Network	Proposed overall trail system intended to interconnect open spaces, villages and nodes in a greenbelt system.
Natural Resources	Areas with significant environmental constraints that represent the highest priorities for conservation.

Business Areas

Commercial / Retail	Areas that have, and are intended to be, developed with retail, personal service, and office facilities.
Office / Industrial	Areas that have, and are intended to be, developed with office and industrial development and similar facilities.
Tourist	Areas that contain tourist attractions, hotels and other tourist amenities.
Village	The area where a village pattern of development is intended to be concentrated.

Residential Areas

Very Low Density	Areas where density less than one unit per two acres is expected due to existing zoning, natural resources, infrastructure limitations, or desired patterns of development.
Low Density	Areas where residential development is expected to occur at a density less than one unit per acre due to existing zoning, natural resources, infrastructure limitations, or desirable patterns of development.
Multi-Family	Areas where apartments, condominiums, congregate facilities or other multiple dwelling units exist.
Village	Areas where residential development is expected to occur at a density greater than one unit per acre in a village environment supported by public water and sewer.

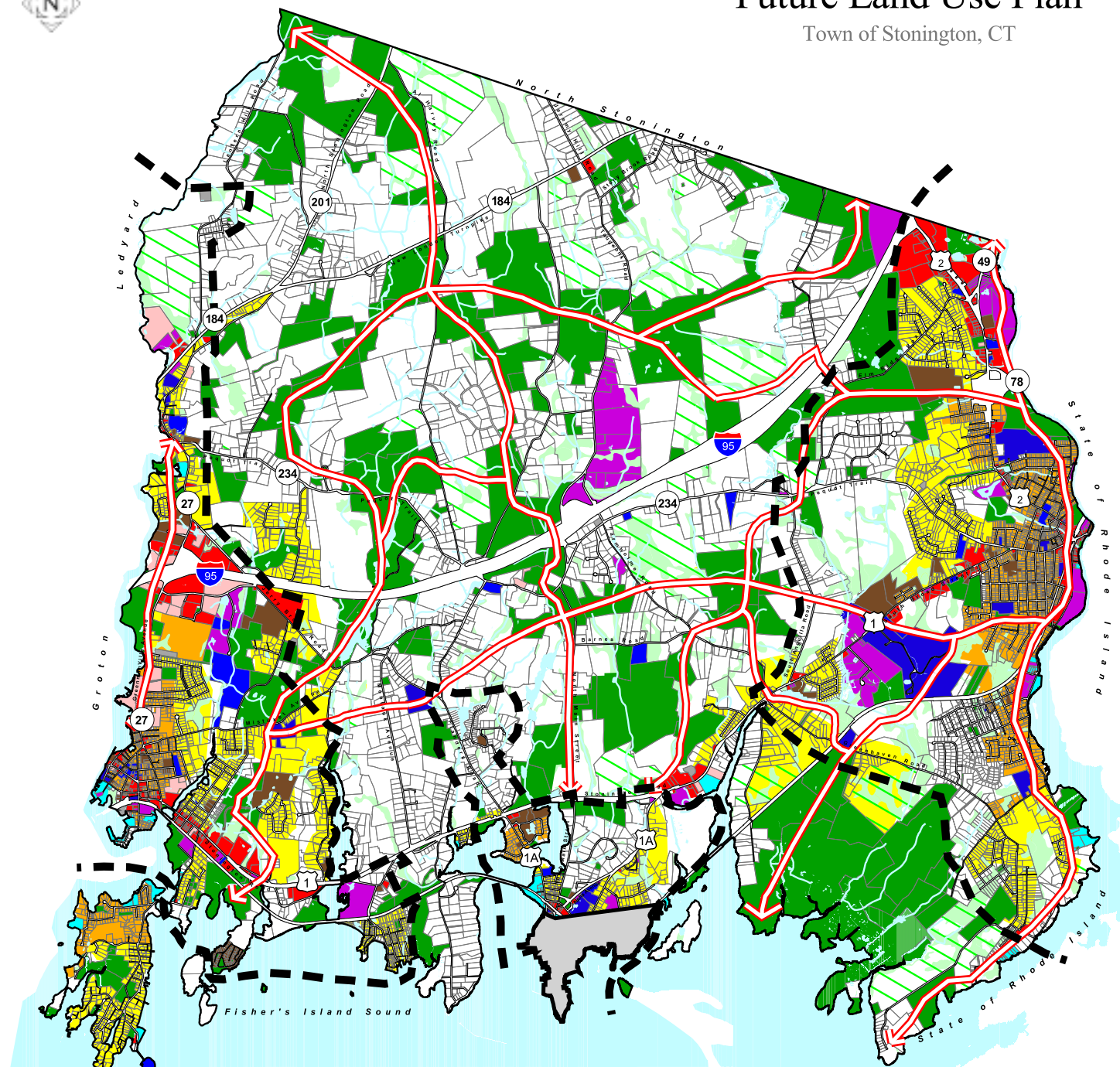
Other Areas

Community Facility / Institution	Areas that have developed or are intended to develop with community facilities or institutional uses.
---	---



Future Land Use Plan

Town of Stonington, CT



Legend

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Agriculture | Open Space |
| Low Density Residential | Environmental Constraints |
| Medium Density Residential | Water |
| Village Residential | Sewer Limit Line |
| Multi-Family | Possible Greenway Linkages |
| Commercial | Stonington Borough |
| Tourism and Lodging | |
| Marine Commercial | |
| Industrial | |
| Institutional Uses | |
| Industrial Utility | |

0 4000 Feet



Planimetrics
31 Long Grove Ave., CT 06001 800-677-5267

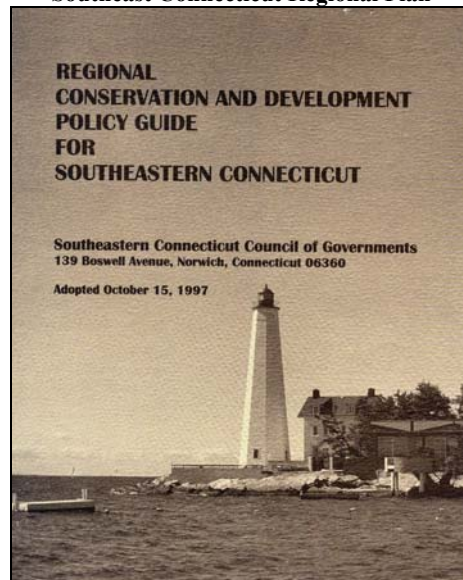
Plan Consistency

This Plan was compared with the Locational Guide Map in the 1998-2003 State Plan of Conservation & Development and found to be generally consistent with that Plan. In addition, this Plan was compared with the Regional Plan of Development for the Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments and found to be generally consistent with that Plan.

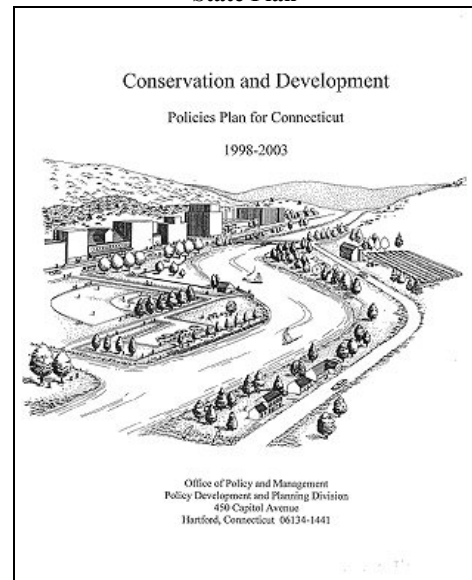
Any inconsistencies can be generally attributed to:

- differences in definitions of desirable uses or development densities,
- local (as opposed to State or regional) desires about how Stonington should grow and change in the coming years, or
- the fact that the State Plan and the Regional Plan make policy recommendations for relative intensity and environmental sensitivity while this Plan suggests specific land use types.

Southeast Connecticut Regional Plan



State Plan



IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

9

Overview

Implementation of the strategies and recommendations of the Plan of Conservation and Development is the main purpose of the planning process.

Implementation of a Plan typically occurs in two main phases:

- some major recommendations can (and will) be carried out in a relatively short period of time since they are critical to the implementation of the Plan,
- other recommendations will be implemented over time because they may require additional study, coordination with (or implementation by) others, or involve the commitment of financial resources.

The Planning and Zoning Commission can (through regulation amendments, application reviews, and other means) implement many of the recommendations of the Plan of Conservation and Development. The Planning and Zoning Commission has the primary responsibility of implementing many of the Plan's recommendations.

Other recommendations may require cooperation of and action by, other local boards and commissions such as the Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance, and similar agencies.

However, if the Plan is to be realized, it must serve as a guide to all residents, businesses, builders, developers, applicant, owners, agencies, and individuals interested in the orderly conservation and development of Stonington.

Progress to Date

As the planning process has progressed, Town staff, boards and commissions have taken the initiative to begin implementing many of the strategies discussed and ultimately contained in this plan.

The amount of progress thus far has been exemplary and includes:

Conservation Recommendations

- developing an Open Space Plan,
- providing non-point pollution education programs,
- inventorying scenic resources,
- adopting fees in lieu of open space,
- developing a stormwater management plan and regulations,
- studying the creation of a stormwater management utility,
- planning for Mystic River and Pawcatuck River greenways,

Village Recommendations

- master planning historic mill sites and surrounding neighborhoods;
- reinstating the Pawcatuck Neighborhood Revitalization Organization; and
- conducting a neighborhood/mill design charette.

Development Recommendations

- developing conservation subdivision regulations,
- studying the HI-200 Zone,

Infrastructure Recommendations

- developing new parking regulations,
- developing new sign regulations,
- developing plans for the reconstruction of Coogan Boulevard, and
- implementing numerous sidewalk and streetscape improvement projects.

Tools

Using the Plan of Conservation & Development

Using the Plan of Conservation & Development as a basis for land use decisions by the Planning & Zoning Commission will help accomplish the goals and objectives of the Plan. All land use proposals should be measured and evaluated in terms of the Plan and its various elements.

Plan Implementation Committee / Annual Work Program

A Plan Implementation Committee (PIC) is an effective way to help implement the Plan. Stonington's PIC could use the implementation schedules that follow to develop an annual implementation program of issues to be addressed by boards and commissions.

The PIC should be modified to include representatives of various boards and commissions to help to prioritize, coordinate, and refine implementation of the Plan. The PIC could meet two to four times a year to establish priorities and guide implementation of the Plan's recommendations. In addition, the Committee could assess the status of specific recommendations, establish new priorities, and suggest new implementation techniques.

Alternatively, the Planning & Zoning Commission can assume the responsibility for coordinating implementation of the Plan's recommendations.

Annual Update Program

A Plan that is only updated once every ten years can be silent on emerging issues, trends and current policy objectives, which could lead to conflicts in land use decisions or missed opportunities. When a Plan is considered strictly a reference document rather than a working document, its effectiveness in guiding the community can diminish over time. Stonington should consider keeping this Plan current and not waiting to update it every ten years. A preliminary schedule might be as follows:

Conservation Themes	Development Themes	Community Needs
2005	2006	2007
2008	2009	2010

Each review and update would extend the Plan's ten-year life until the community felt that a comprehensive update was required. A work program for annual updates of the Plan is discussed in the sidebar. A Plan Implementation Committee could also assist in this effort.

The Borough Planning and Zoning Commission should be kept apprised of any amendments to the Plan of Conservation and Development and should return the courtesy when amending their own Plan of Conservation and Development.

Annual Update Process

An appropriate way to regularly update the Plan may be to update major sections of the Plan every year by:

- holding a public informational meeting to summarize the Plan recommendations and receive feedback from the community,
- holding a workshop session for local boards and other interested persons to discuss Plan strategies and suggest alternative language,
- revising Plan sections, as appropriate, and
- re-adopting the Plan (even if there are no text or map changes).

Regulation Updates

The importance of updating local regulations as soon as possible cannot be over-emphasized.

Updating Zoning and Subdivision Regulations

Many of the recommendations in the Plan of Conservation and Development can be implemented by the Planning & Zoning Commission through regulation amendments, application reviews, and other means. The Zoning and the Subdivision Regulations provide specific criteria for land development at the time of applications. As a result, these regulations are important tools to implement the recommendations of the Plan. However, this is only true if the regulations reflect the recommendations of the Plan.

In the near future, the Planning & Zoning Commission should undertake a comprehensive review of the zoning regulations, zoning map, and subdivision regulations and make whatever revisions are necessary to:

- make the regulations more user-friendly,
- implement Plan recommendations, and
- promote consistency between the Plan and the regulations.

Capital Improvement Program

The Capital Improvement Program or CIP is a tool for planning major capital expenditures of a municipality so that local needs can be identified and prioritized within local fiscal constraints that may exist.

The Plan contains several proposals (such as acquisition of a Town beach) whose implementation may require the expenditure of Town funds. The Plan recommends that these and other items be included in the Town's CIP and that funding for them be included as part of the Capital Budget.

Referral of Municipal Improvements

Section 8-24 of the Connecticut General Statutes requires that municipal improvements (defined in the statute) be referred to the Planning & Zoning Commission for a report before any local action is taken. A proposal disapproved by the Commission can only be implemented after a two-thirds vote by Town Meeting. All local boards and agencies should be notified of Section 8-24 and its mandatory nature so that proposals can be considered and prepared in compliance with its requirements.

Inter-Municipal and Regional Cooperation

Stonington can continue to work with other towns in the region, the Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments, the State of Connecticut, and other agencies to explore opportunities where common interests coincide.


Staff Support

The various boards and commissions that are responsible for carrying out the many policies and tasks contained in this Plan cannot do so effectively without adequate support from Town Staff. Sufficient Town staffing levels are critical to the success of this plan.

Implementation Schedule

As illustrated below, implementation tables will assign primary responsibilities and preliminary schedules to the Plan's recommendations. In many instances, the responsibilities are shared by a number of entities (see sidebar).

Preserve More Meaningful Open Space

What	Who	Priority	Done
 1. Increase the mandatory open space set-aside to 20%	PZC	1	<input type="checkbox"/>

In addition, the tables identify both policies and tasks. Policies are long-term guidelines that do not readily lend themselves to a specific schedule or measurement. Tasks, on the other hand, are specific actions that can typically be scheduled, measured and their implementation readily identified.


Preliminary priorities are identified in the tables and are ranked according to a three step scale. High priorities are items that are either critical to the success of a planning strategy or are relatively easy to implement and can be handled without delay. Moderate priorities are policies and tasks that are not as time sensitive as high priorities and may be more difficult to implement due to funding constraints or complexity. Moderate priorities should be addressed by the middle of the ten year planning period. Lower priorities are typically longer range items that might require a "wait and see" approach or are preceded by higher funding priorities. Lower priorities may be addressed towards the end of the planning period and beyond.

Implementation of the Plan is a gradual and continual process. While some recommendations can be carried out in a relatively short period of time, others may only be realized towards the end of the planning period or beyond. Further, since some recommendations may involve additional study or a commitment of fiscal resources, their implementation may take place over several years or occur in stages.


Sample Legend

BOS	Board of Selectmen
CC	Conservation Commission
DEP	Department of Environmental Protection
HD	Health Department
IWC	Inland Wetlands Commission
PZC	Planning & Zoning Commission
Staff	Department of Planning

Priorities

	Task
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1	High Priority
2	Moderate Priority
3	Lower Priority



	Policy
---	--------

A	High Priority
B	Moderate Priority
C	Lower Priority

Legend












BOF	Board of Finance
BOS	Board of Selectmen
CC	Conservation Commission
DOP	Department of Planning
PZC	Planning & Zoning Commission

Priorities






	Task
1	High Priority
2	Moderate Priority
3	Lower Priority
	Policy
A	High Priority
B	Moderate Priority
C	Lower Priority

Preserve Open Space


Preserve More Open Space (Page 4-2)

		Who	Priority	Done
	1. Increase the mandatory open space set-aside to 20%.	PZC	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	2. Require open space as part of every residential development application or accept a fee-in-lieu equal to 10% of the value of the parcel(s).	PZC	A	
	3. Require the amount of constrained open space land to be proportional to the amount of constrained land within the overall development, unless waived by the PZC.	PZC	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	4. Enhance the open space acquisition fund through annual contributions in the budget and/or by bonding	BOF BOS	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	5. Continue to pursue state and/or federal open space grants,	All	A	
	6. Convert unprotected and perceived open space into protected open space by acquiring land or easements.	BOS CC PZC	3	
	7. Investigate adopting regulations to allow development flexibility for open space preservation.	PZC	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	8. Require conservation easements or other measures during approvals.	PZC	A	
	9. Investigate allowing off-site dedication and/or banking of open space.	PZC	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	10. Investigate <i>requiring</i> “open space developments” resulting in higher percentage of open space.	PZC	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	11. Educate residents about benefits of open space donation and sale of development rights	CC	B	

Preserve Meaningful Open Space and Create a Greenway System (Page 4-4)



		Who	Priority	Done
	12. Interconnect open spaces into a system of local and regional greenways	CC PZC	A	
	13. Establish trails along greenways and tie into regional trails to encourage passive recreation.	All	A	
	14. Encourage other organizations to allow for public access and use.	All	A	
	15. Prioritize open space acquisitions based on critical resource protection and recreational potential.	CC	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	16. Identify and take a proactive approach to acquire beach property for public use through land acquisition or donation, if and when available.	BOS CC	1	<input type="checkbox"/>

Investigate Formation of a Stonington Land Trust (Page 4-6)


		Who	Priority	Done
	17. Investigate creating a Stonington Land Trust.	CC DOP	1	<input type="checkbox"/>

Protect Important Natural Resources




Address Natural Resources at Time of Development (Page 4-8)

	Who	Priority	Done
 1. Adopt buildable land regulations to reduce development pressure on sensitive areas.	PZC	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
 2. Investigate adopting soil-based zoning to relate density of development to the capability of soils to support it	PZC	1	<input type="checkbox"/>



Strengthen Wetlands and Watercourse Setbacks (Page 4-10)

	Who	Priority	Done
 3. Adopt upland review areas for inland wetlands and watercourses and modify non-infringement areas to include only appropriate coastal zones.	IWC PZC	1	<input type="checkbox"/>









Preserve Natural Diversity (Page 4-10)

	Who	Priority	Done
 4. Work with applicants to ensure that important Natural Diversity Database (NDDDB) resources are protected.	CC IWC PZC	A	<input type="checkbox"/>
 5. Minimize wildlife habitat loss through the preservation of open space and natural resource areas	All	A	<input type="checkbox"/>
 6. Prohibit the introduction of non-native or invasive species during the site development or subdivision process.	IWC PZC	2	<input type="checkbox"/>

Protect Water Quality (Page 4-12)

	Who	Priority	Done
 7. Modify the Aquifer Protection Zone to allow uses according to their potential risk to water resource protection areas.	PZC	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
 8. Adopt an ordinance to require the identification, licensing, and/or removal of residential underground storage tanks.	BOS	1	<input type="checkbox"/>


Address Stormwater Management (Page 4-15)

	Who	Priority	Done
 9. Require that the “first flush of runoff be appropriately treated in terms of quality and rate of runoff.	IWC PZC	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
 10. Encourage site designs that minimize impervious surfaces, promote infiltration of stormwater, and reduce runoff.	IWC PZC	B	<input type="checkbox"/>
 11. Create a stormwater management plan that includes best management practices for stormwater management.	DOP DPW IWC PZC SMSG	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
 12. Investigate creating a stormwater utility to pay for compliance with NPDES Phase II guidelines	SMSG	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
 13. Provide vegetative buffers to wetland and watercourses to filter pollutants from stormwater runoff.	IWC DOP	B	<input type="checkbox"/>
 14. Limit the clearing and grading of sites so as to minimize the impact on natural drainage patterns.	DOP PZC SMSG	B	<input type="checkbox"/>
 15. Promote public education programs that address “non-point” pollution issues.	CC	B	<input type="checkbox"/>
 16. Adopt “effective impervious coverage” requirements for commercial and industrial zones.	PZC	1	<input type="checkbox"/>

Legend

BOS	Board of Selectmen
CC	Conservation Commission
DOP	Department of Planning
DPW	Department of Public Works
IWC	Inland Wetlands Commission
PZC	Planning & Zoning Commission
SHS	Stonington Historical Society
SMSG	Stormwater Management Study Group
WC	Waterfront Commission



Priorities

 Task	
1	High Priority
2	Moderate Priority
3	Lower Priority

Legend



BOS	Board of Selectmen
CC	Conservation Commission
DOP	Department of Planning
MRHS	Mystic River Historical Society
PZC	Planning & Zoning Commission
SHS	Stonington Historical Society

Priorities



	Task
1	High Priority
2	Moderate Priority
3	Lower Priority
	Policy
A	High Priority
B	Moderate Priority
C	Lower Priority

Preserve Historic Resources








Encourage “Sensitive Stewardship” (Page 4-16)

		Who	Priority	Done
	1. Encourage sensitive stewardship as the most effective means of preserving historic resources.	DOP MRHS SHS	B	
	2. Continue to provide educational programs and technical assistance about historic preservation to historic property owners.	DOP MRHS SHS	B	

Recognize Significant Historic Resources (Page 4-16)





		Who	Priority	Done
	3. Continue to identify and recognize important historical resources through national and state recognition programs.	DOP MRHS SHS	B	
	4. Establish a local register of historic places.	DOP MRHS SHS	2	<input type="checkbox"/>

Establish Preservation Programs (Page 4-18)



		Who	Priority	Done
	5. Establish local historic districts that require a Certificate of Appropriateness for exterior renovations in the district.	All	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	6. Establish “village districts” (by the Planning & Zoning Commission) that allow architectural review of proposals within the district.	PZC	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	7. Adopt a demolition delay ordinance that requires as much as a 90-day waiting period before historic buildings can be demolished.	BOS	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	8. Adopt regulatory incentives (such as historic overlay and/or adaptive re-use provisions in zoning regulations).	PZC	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
	9. Provide economic incentives such as tax abatements, grants or loans for restoration of historic resources.	BOS	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
	10. Update the Historic Resources Inventory.	DOP MRHS SHS	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
	11. Seek Certified Local Government designation to become eligible for historic preservation grants.	BOS DOP	1	<input type="checkbox"/>

Conserve Coastal Resources


Protect Coastal Water Quality (Page 4-20)

		Who	Priority	Done
	1. Lower density and/or lot area coverage in undeveloped areas proximate to tidal wetlands and coastal waters.	PZC	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	2. For significant new development, require that the first inch of runoff be captured, treated and discharged at lower rates.	IWC PZC	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	3. Adopt additional management buffer areas adjacent to regulated wetlands.	IWC	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	4. Adopt uniform setbacks of 75-100 feet from all tidal wetlands with provisions for necessary minor incursions.	PZC WC	2	<input type="checkbox"/>


Provide for Marinas and Water-Dependent Uses (Page 4-20)

		Who	Priority	Done
	5. Prohibit all but ancillary, non-water dependent uses in MC-80 Zone.	PZC	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	6. Create a “neighborhood marine” overlay district to restrict residential uses while encouraging new and existing boating facilities in appropriate water dependent use locations.	PZC	1	<input type="checkbox"/>



Protect Coastal Islands (Page 4-20)

		Who	Priority	Done
	7. Investigate creating an “Island Conservation” Zone.	PZC	2	<input type="checkbox"/>



Ensure Public Access to Coastal Open Space (Page 4-20)

		Who	Priority	Done
	8. Require appropriate public access signage as a condition of coastal site plan review approval if public access is required.	PZC	1	<input type="checkbox"/>

Restrict Development in Coastal (V) Flood Zones (Page 4-22)

		Who	Priority	Done
	9. Create setbacks from high hazard V Zones for all non-water dependent uses.	PZC	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	10. Restrict densities and coverage in extensive V Zone areas.	PZC	1	<input type="checkbox"/>


Coordinate Coastal & Harbor Management Efforts (Page 4-22)

		Who	Priority	Done
	11. Improve the referral process between the PZC, Harbor Commissions and other agencies responsible for coastal management to ensure more timely responses.	DOP HC PZC WC	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	12. Review marina development proposals jointly to ensure that upland elements are adequate to support water-based activity.	HC PZC WC	A	

Legend

BOS	Board of Selectmen
CC	Conservation Commission
DOP	Department of Planning
IWC	Inland Wetlands Commission
HC	Harbor Commissions
PZC	Planning & Zoning Commission
WC	Waterfront Commission


Priorities

	Task
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1	High Priority
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2	Moderate Priority
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3	Lower Priority
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	Policy
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A	High Priority
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B	Moderate Priority
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C	Lower Priority
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Legend

BOS	Board of Selectmen
CC	Conservation Commission
DOP	Department of Planning
DPW	Department of Public Works
PZC	Planning & Zoning Commission


Priorities

	Task
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1	High Priority
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2	Moderate Priority
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3	Lower Priority
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	Policy
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A	High Priority
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B	Moderate Priority
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C	Lower Priority
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Preserve Scenic Resources




Protect Scenic Areas and Vistas (Page 4-24)

		Who	Priority	Done
	1. Inventory scenic resources and establish policies and regulations to protect them.	CC DOP DPW PZC	1	<input type="checkbox"/>

Preserve Undeveloped Land as Long as Possible (Page 4-24)


		Who	Priority	Done
	2. Consider expanding the PA. 490 open space program.	BOS	2	<input type="checkbox"/>

Protect Scenic Roads (Page 4-26)


		Who	Priority	Done
	3. As scenic roadsides are developed, preserve scenic elements through conservation easements or open space set-asides.	CC PZC	A	<input type="checkbox"/>
	4. The Tree Warden or his/her designee should work with utility companies to preserve scenic streetscapes.	BOS CC	A	<input type="checkbox"/>
	5. Improve the Scenic Road Ordinance	BOS CC	1	<input type="checkbox"/>

Reinforce Village Development Patterns






Define Village Boundaries (Page 5-2)

	Who	Priority	Done
 1. Create village boundaries to define the desired extent of village development patterns.	PZC	1	<input type="checkbox"/>





Develop Village Plans (Page 5-2)

	Who	Priority	Done
 2. Initiate comprehensive village planning programs for Mystic, Old Mystic and Pawcatuck.	PZC EDC	1	<input type="checkbox"/>


Establish Village Districts (Page 5-4)

	Who	Priority	Done
 3. Establish separate and distinct village districts for Mystic, Old Mystic and Pawcatuck to control the design of commercial development in a manner that is consistent with the distinct character of each village.	PZC	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
 4. Encourage mixed-use development in appropriate locations within the villages.	PZC	A	
 5. Where appropriate, encourage multi-story infill development with office and residential uses on the upper floors.	PZC	A	
 6. Where appropriate, attract a mix of retail and service uses that not only cater to the Town's tourist economy but also address everyday village needs.	PZC EDC	A	
 7. Allow appropriate community and institutional uses such as churches, social clubs and museums that add to the vitality of the villages (by Special Use Permit).	PZC	2	<input type="checkbox"/>

Enhance Walkable Villages (Page 5-7)

	Who	Priority	Done
 8. Ensure pedestrian access throughout the villages with emphasis on access to schools and other points of interest.	DOT DPW	A	
 9. Ensure safe pedestrian crossings of major streets.	DOT DPW	A	
 10. Provide pedestrian enhancements such as benches, shade trees and trash receptacles in commercial areas and other appropriate locations.	DPW	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
 11. Seek funding to improve village streetscapes by burying overhead utilities.	DPW	2	<input type="checkbox"/>


Implement the Pawcatuck Riverwalk (Page 5-7)


	Who	Priority	Done
 12. As riverside mills are redeveloped, require access to the Pawcatuck River to enhance the Pawcatuck Riverwalk project and expand the Pawcatuck River Valley Greenway.	PZC	A	

Legend

BOS	Board of Selectmen
CC	Conservation Commission
DOP	Department of Planning
DOT	Connecticut Department of Transportation
DPW	Department of Public Works
EDC	Economic Development Commission
PZC	Planning & Zoning Commission

Priorities

	Task
1	High Priority
2	Moderate Priority
3	Lower Priority

	Policy
A	High Priority
B	Moderate Priority
C	Lower Priority

Legend

DOP	Department of Planning
EDC	Economic Development Commission
PZC	Planning & Zoning Commission


Priorities

	Task
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1	High Priority
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2	Moderate Priority
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3	Lower Priority
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	Policy
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A	High Priority
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B	Moderate Priority
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C	Lower Priority
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Reuse the Mills and Other Underutilized Commercial and Industrial Sites

Master Plan the Larger Mill Sites (Page 5-8)







		Who	Priority	Done
	1. Continue the work of the EDC on the “Revision” program in Pawcatuck to master plan for the larger underutilized mills. Similarly address mills in other areas of Town.	EDC PZC DOP	1	<input type="checkbox"/>

Require Redevelopment Plans (Page 5-8)



		Who	Priority	Done
	2. Through a floating zone or other creative land-use tools, allow mixed-use development within the mill sites including residential, restaurant, retail and service uses that add to the vitality of the villages.	PZC	1	<input type="checkbox"/>

Encourage Appropriate Economic Development










Address the Highway Interchange-200 Zone (Page 6-2)

	Who	Priority	Done
 1. Revise the HI Zone and other Zoning Regulations as prescribed.	PZC	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
 2. Refine the geography of the HI Zone as prescribed.	PZC	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
 3. Manage access to Routes 2 and 49 and encourage consolidated development.	PZC	A	
 4. Increase the utility of the land in the HI Zone by seeking the release of excess ConnDOT right-of-way and Aquarion Water Company land.	AWC BOS COG DOT	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
 5. Demand from ConnDOT more direct access from Route 2 to northbound I-95 at Exit 92 due to its critical importance to the success of the HI- Zone.	BOS COG DOT	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
 6. Consider allowing additional uses in the HI Zone if such uses provide net tax revenue and do not conflict with other economically beneficial uses.	PZC	1	<input type="checkbox"/>

Guide Appropriate Industry to Exit 91 (Page 6-6)

	Who	Priority	Done
 7. Direct non-labor intensive uses to Exit 91 to take advantage of direct access to I-95.	EDC DOP	A	
 8. Reorient the LI-130 Zone at Exit 91 in an east-west direction paralleling I-95.	PZC	1	<input type="checkbox"/>



Guide Appropriate Development to Exit 90 (Page 6-8)

	Who	Priority	Done
 9. Initiate a comprehensive area plan for the area surrounding Exit 90.	PZC	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
 10. Create a new transition zone northeast of Jerry Brown Road and south of Interstate 95 to allow for low-intensity professional office and age-restricted housing uses.	PZC	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
 11. Create a new Maritime Historical / Educational Zone, with significant neighborhood input that both legitimizes and controls the Mystic Seaport, allowing it to adapt to change.	PZC	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
 12. Limit commercial sprawl with fixed growth boundaries around major commercial areas.	PZC	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
 13. Consider creating a transportation/visitor center to mitigate idling busses, promote area attractions and reduce dependency on private motor vehicles between I-95 and Mystic.	BOF BOS DOT	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
 14. Allow the major institutional uses to share a common highway oriented promotional sign.	PZC MA MS	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
 15. Work cooperatively to create unified directional signage and streetscape elements throughout tourist areas and improve pedestrian connections to the Mystic village center	All	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
 16. Reconfigure Coogan Boulevard into a true boulevard with bicycle and pedestrian enhancements.	DOT DPW	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
 17. Consider redirecting northbound Jerry Brown Road into Coogan Boulevard.	DOT DPW	2	<input type="checkbox"/>

Legend

BOF	Board of Finance
BOS	Board of Selectmen
COG	Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments
DOP	Department of Planning
DOT	Department of Transportation
DPW	Department of Public Works
EDC	Economic Development Commission
MA	Mystic Aquarium
MCC	Mystic Chamber of Commerce
MS	Mystic Seaport
PZC	Planning & Zoning Commission


Priorities

	Task
1	High Priority
2	Moderate Priority
3	Lower Priority
	Policy
A	High Priority
B	Moderate Priority
C	Lower Priority

Legend

BOS	Board of Selectmen
DOP	Department of Planning
DOT	Department of Transportation
DPW	Department of Public Works
PZC	Planning & Zoning Commission


Priorities

	Task
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1	High Priority
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2	Moderate Priority
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3	Lower Priority
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	Policy
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A	High Priority
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B	Moderate Priority
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C	Lower Priority
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	18. Consider creating a roundabout at Jerry Brown Road and Whitehall Avenue to calm traffic and facilitate left turns.	DOT DPW	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Implement Design Review (Page 6-13)


Who Priority Done

	19. Create a Design Review Committee to create and consistently administer design guidelines for business development.	BOS	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Manage Residential Growth


Adopt a Residential Density Regulation (Page 6-15)

Who Priority Done

	1. Adopt density-based zoning to allow more flexible development patterns to avoid environmentally sensitive areas and increase the percentage of dedicated open space.	PZC	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Encourage Open Space Development Patterns (Page 6-16)

Who Priority Done

	2. Require Special Use Permits for conventional subdivisions in environmentally sensitive areas.	PZC	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Investigate Allowing Transfer of Development Rights (Page 6-18)




Who Priority Done

	3. Investigate allowing the transfer of development rights to redirect growth from sensitive areas to more suitable locations.	PZC	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Address Changing Housing Needs





Increase Age-Restricted Housing Options (Page 6-21)

Who Priority Done

	1. Maintain or enhance tax relief programs for older residents.	BOS	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	2. Encourage age-restricted housing where appropriate.	PZC	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	3. Expand options for accessory apartments as units for older residents.	PZC	2	<input type="checkbox"/>



Accommodate Affordable Housing (Page 6-22)

Who Priority Done



	4. Allow modest density bonuses or design flexibility in exchange for affordable units.	PZC	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
	5. Create a joint commission/taskforce to investigate fees-in-lieu of affordable housing and other regulations to provide affordable housing.	DOP PZC	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	6. Restore the CDBG loan program to rehabilitate older homes and create or retain affordable units.	DOP	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
	7. Consider requiring mandatory affordable housing within every residential development and accepting a fee-in-lieu thereof to be used to purchase affordable.	PZC	2	<input type="checkbox"/>

Protect Existing Neighborhoods


Address the Hot Bunking Issue (Page 6-24)

		Who	Priority	Done
	1. Adopt an ordinance to restrict dwelling unit occupancy to families or individuals living as a family unit.	BOS	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	2. Adopt boarding house regulations to create regulated, affordable housing for transient casino and hospitality industry employees.	PZC	2	<input type="checkbox"/>

Address Blighted Conditions (Page 6-24)

		Who	Priority	Done
	3. Evaluate the extent of blighted conditions in town to determine whether a property maintenance ordinance is warranted.	BOS	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
	4. Restore the CDBG loan program to rehabilitate older homes and eliminate blighted conditions.	DOP	2	<input type="checkbox"/>

Discourage Inappropriate Building Teardowns (Page 6-24)

		Who	Priority	Done
	5. Strengthen floor-area-ratios, building height and other requirements in areas susceptible to teardowns.	PZC	3	<input type="checkbox"/>


Legend

BOS Board of Selectmen

DOP Department of Planning

PZC Planning & Zoning Commission


Priorities

	Task
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1	High Priority
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2	Moderate Priority
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3	Lower Priority
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	Policy
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A	High Priority
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B	Moderate Priority
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C	Lower Priority
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Legend


BOE	Board of Education
BOF	Board of Finance
BOS	Board of Selectmen
CC	Conservation Commission
DOP	Department of Planning
DPW	Department of Public Works
EMS	Emergency Medical Services
FD	Fire Departments
RC	Recreation Commission

Priorities



	Task
1	High Priority
2	Moderate Priority
3	Lower Priority
	Policy
A	High Priority
B	Moderate Priority
C	Lower Priority

Address Community Facility Needs





Address Town Hall Needs (Page 7-2)

		Who	Priority	Done
	1. Build an addition to Town Hall to meet current as well as future needs, and modify FAR regulations if necessary.	BOS BOF DPW	2	<input type="checkbox"/>


Address Public Safety Services (Page 7-3)

		Who	Priority	Done
	2. Continue programs to attract and retain volunteers.	BOS EMS FD	A	<input type="checkbox"/>
	3. Conduct a comprehensive study of the emergency services to determine whether consolidation or increased coordination between departments could result in economies of scale, more consistent training, better communications and improved response times.	BOS EMS FD	2	<input type="checkbox"/>





Address Public Works Issues (Page 7-4)

		Who	Priority	Done
	4. Provide adequate funding and staff to properly maintain roads, sidewalks and storm drainage facilities and avoid more costly repairs or replacement.	BOF BOS	A	<input type="checkbox"/>
	5. Create an asset management program to plan for road, drainage, sidewalk, and other maintenance needs.	DPW	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
	6. Investigate consolidating fragmented townwide Highway Department functions under one department (on a contractual basis if necessary) to take advantage of economies of scale.	BOS DPW	3	<input type="checkbox"/>
	7. Address space needs in the Old Highway Garage.	BOS	1	<input type="checkbox"/>


Replace the Dog Pound (Page 7-5)

		Who	Priority	Done
	8. Replace the Dog Pound and enlarge it to accommodate stray cats if necessary.	BOS DPW	2	<input type="checkbox"/>


Address Recreation Needs (Page 7-6)

		Who	Priority	Done
	9. Construct additional multi-purpose fields at the Recreation Complex and/or adjacent to the Pawcatuck pollution control facility.	BOS RC	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
	10. Acquire waterfront property suitable for a Town beach or provide alternative outdoor water recreation such as aqua fountains.	BOS CC RC	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
	11. Update playground equipment, address unsafe conditions and provide toilets at recreation facilities as needed.	BOS DPW RC	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	12. Address Town/Board of Education overflow storage needs to free the gymnasium at the Board of Education offices for recreational use.	BOS BOE	2	<input type="checkbox"/>


Address Human Service and Senior Service Needs (Page 7-8)

		Who	Priority	Done
	13. Explore options for supplementing the three community centers in the future to better meet townwide social and recreational needs.	BOS DHS	3	<input type="checkbox"/>

Support the Libraries (Page 7-8)

		Who	Priority	Done
	14. Continue to support the three libraries in their efforts to provide library services at the village level.	BOF BOS	A	


Address School Facility Needs (Page 7-10)

		Who	Priority	Done
	15. Monitor capacities of individual schools to determine if additional space will be needed. If growth cannot be accommodated in place, appropriately located land should be secured before it is lost to development.	BOE BOF	C	

Legend

BOE	Board of Education
BOF	Board of Finance
BOS	Board of Selectmen
DHS	Department of Human Services


Priorities

	Task
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1	High Priority
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2	Moderate Priority
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3	Lower Priority
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	Policy
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A	High Priority
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B	Moderate Priority
----------	-------------------

C	Lower Priority
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Legend

BOS	Board of Selectmen
COG	Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments
DOP	Department of Planning
DOT	Department of Transportation
DPW	Public Works Department
PZC	Planning & Zoning Commission


Priorities

	Task
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1	High Priority
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2	Moderate Priority
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3	Lower Priority
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	Policy
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A	High Priority
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B	Moderate Priority
----------	-------------------


C	Lower Priority
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Address Vehicular Transportation Needs



Relate Road Design to Desired Land Use (Page 7-12)

		Who	Priority	Done
	1. Classify roads according to both their function and the desired pattern of growth it is intended to support.	DOP DPW PZC	A	

Review and Revise Road Construction Standards (Page 7-14)





		Who	Priority	Done
	2. Create context sensitive road design standards.	DOP DPW PZC	1	<input type="checkbox"/>

Address Desirable Road Improvements (Page 7-14)

		Who	Priority	Done
	3. Work with ConnDOT and SECCOG to address critical accident locations on State highways.	BOS COG DOP DOT DPW	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	4. Complete scheduled safety improvements on Town roads.	DPW	1	<input type="checkbox"/>




Address Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation

Address Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation (Page 7-16)

		Who	Priority	Done
	1. Connect villages and other activity nodes with sidewalks or trails.	BOS DOT DPW	A	
	2. Require sidewalks as part of all development proposals and road improvement projects within walking distance of schools parks and playgrounds	DOT DPW PZC	A	
	3. Require all road improvement projects to consider bicycle accommodations in their design.	DOT DPW	B	
	4. Require site development projects to consider bicycle accommodations in their design.	DOP PZC	B	





Address Transit Options

Address Transit Options (Page 7-18)




		Who	Priority	Done
	1. Explore expansion of SEAT bus service to serve all villages.	DOP SEAT	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
	2. Work with Mystic Chamber of Commerce to improve and promote Mystic jitney bus service.	BOS DOP MCC	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	3. Pursue improved Amtrak service to Mystic.	BOS DOP MCC	2	<input type="checkbox"/>

Modify Parking and Other Standards

Modify Parking Standards (Page 7-19)

		Who	Priority	Done
	1. Create graduated minimum retail parking requirements and Investigate parking maximums for larger developments.	PZC	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	2. Allow parking reductions for mixed-uses with offset peak parking demands.	PZC	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
	3. Create more stringent parking lot landscaping requirements for all commercial areas.	PZC	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	4. Allow alternative pervious paving materials for limited applications outside Aquifer Protection Zones.	PZC	2	<input type="checkbox"/>


Modify Lighting Standards (Page 7-20)


		Who	Priority	Done
	5. Modify lighting requirements to reduce excessive lighting.	PZC	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
	6. Adopt an ordinance to prohibit off-site floodlights and other sources of unnecessary of light pollution.	BOS	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
	7. Investigate Town ownership of street lights on Town Roads.	DPW	2	<input type="checkbox"/>

Legend

BOS	Board of Selectmen
COG	Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments
DOP	Department of Planning
DOT	Department of Transportation
DPW	Public Works Department
MCC	Mystic Chamber of Commerce
PZC	Planning & Zoning Commission
SEAT	Southeastern Area Transit

Priorities


	Task
1	High Priority
2	Moderate Priority
3	Lower Priority

	Policy
A	High Priority
B	Moderate Priority
C	Lower Priority

Legend

CSC	Connecticut Siting Council
DOP	Department of Planning
FD	Fire Departments
WC	Water Companies / Departments
WPCA	Water Pollution Control Authority


Priorities

	Task
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1	High Priority
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2	Moderate Priority
----------	-------------------

3	Lower Priority
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	Policy
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A	High Priority
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B	Moderate Priority
----------	-------------------



C	Lower Priority
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Provide for Adequate Utility Services


Encourage Provision of Adequate Water Service (Page 7-21)

Who	Priority	Done
 1. Ensure adequate quantities of safe drinking water to support existing and future development.	WC	1 <input type="checkbox"/>
 2. Address fire hydrant volume and pressure issues.	FD WC	1 <input type="checkbox"/>
 3. Develop requirements for fire ponds and/or underground water tanks (cisterns) in or near new developments not served by public water systems.	FD PZC	1 <input type="checkbox"/>
 4. Prepare a water re-supply master plan to ensure availability of fire protection water supplies.	FD	1 <input type="checkbox"/>

Provide Adequate Sewer Capacity (Page 7-22)

Who	Priority	Done
 5. If feasible, connect the Mystic sewer system into the Groton sewer system.	WPCA	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
 6. Consider creating a septic management plan and adopting an ordinance to require the inspection and regular cleaning of septic systems.	WPCA	2 <input type="checkbox"/>

Ensure Adequacy of Other Utility Services (Page 7-22)

Who	Priority	Done
 7. Take a proactive approach towards telecommunication towers by planning for the most desirable future sites; adopting guiding principles for locating tower; and consider repealing the telecommunication tower regulations.	CSC DOP PZC	2 <input type="checkbox"/>

CONCLUSION

10

Overview

The Plan of Conservation & Development has been prepared to meet the challenges that will confront the Town of Stonington in the future.

The first step in the planning process was to understand Stonington and its residents. A great deal of information was collected, presented, reviewed, and discussed as part of the process of developing this Plan.

The second step was to determine where the people of Stonington want to go. Many meetings were held to assess local issues and discuss alternative strategies. Through this work, general goals were developed and a vision for the future of Stonington was confirmed.

The third step was to develop actions and policies to guide Stonington's residents and agencies towards achieving this vision. These specific strategies are detailed throughout the Plan and summarized in the implementation tables.

While a lot of thought and hard work went into preparing this Plan, the most important step of the planning process will be implementation of the recommendations. While the task of implementation falls on all Stonington residents, the responsibility for implementing the Plan lies with the Planning and Zoning Commission and other Town agencies.

The Plan is intended as a guide to be followed in order to enhance the quality of life and the community character of Stonington. It is intended to be flexible in terms how specific goals and objectives are reached, provided that the long-term goals of the community are achieved.

During the next few years, many of the higher priority tasks will be completed and goals will hopefully be achieved. Some circumstances will certainly arise that may suggest that it is time to reconsider the Plan or some of its elements. Such situations should be welcomed since it will mean that the Plan is being actively used and considered by residents. By preparing this Plan of Conservation & Development, Stonington has taken the first step towards creating a better future for all Stonington residents.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Residents of Stonington

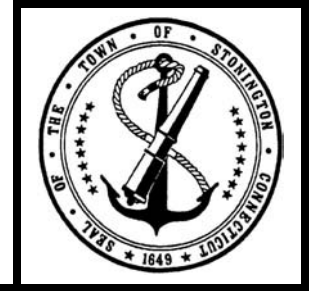
--- The Plan of Conservation and Development Steering Committee ---

Webster Copp	Chairman
James O'Boyle	Vice Chairman
Charles A. Sneddon, Jr.	Secretary
William Abt	
Michele Crowley	
Robert Granato	
Peter Hewitt	
Sara H. Lathrop	
Thomas Lyon	
Sheila Lyons	
Katharine H. Robinson	
John Swenarton	
Lynn Young	

--- The Planning and Zoning Commission ---

Charles A. Sneddon, Jr.	Chairman
Paul Altman	Vice Chairman
Lynn Young	Secretary
George Thayer	
Alisa Morrison	
Victor Liburdi	Alternate
Julianne McCabe	Alternate
Joseph Basile	Alternate

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Town Staff

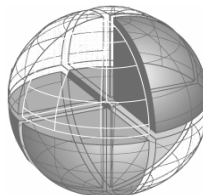
William Brown	Acting First Selectman (after 6/04)
Peter Dibble	First Selectman (until 6/04)
Jason Vincent, AICP	Director of Planning (after 6/03)
Barbara Blycker	Inter. Director of Planning (until 6/03)
Gail Hantman	Land Use Clerk
Denise Collard	Community Development Clerk
Joe Larkin, CZEO	Zoning Enforcement Officer
Ed Piver	Inland Wetland Enforcement Officer
George Silvestre	Director of Administrative Services
Mariana Stevens	Director of Finance
Beth Stewart	Director of Human Services
David Erskine	Chief of Police
Joseph Bragaw	Town Engineer
William Stewart	Highway Superintendent
John Phetteplace	Solid Waste Manager
Harold Storrs	Water Pollution Control Authority

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Leonard Desson	GIS Analyst



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Coastal Planning

Dan Rothenberg	Principal
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Telephone Survey



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