

# WESTPORT

## 2007 Plan of Conservation and Development



Westport Planning and Zoning Commission

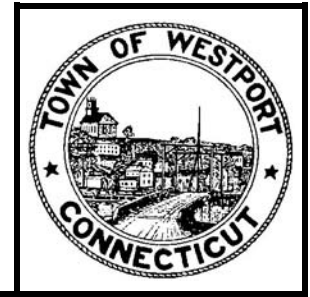


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# Preface



The Town of Westport is always in the process of evolving. Each time the Planning and Zoning Commission strives to fulfill the mandate to produce a new Plan of Conservation and Development the Commission must look to the wise planning of the past to inform future planning. Whether expanding or contracting, it is normal and expected that a town will change in order to thrive and maintain its identity. To meet the challenge of the needs Westport may face during the next decade and beyond, its leaders and citizens must undertake careful planning. They must neither ignore necessary changes nor sacrifice the essence of what has made Westport a unique and desirable place to live midst a natural New England setting.

This Plan is a guide to be followed in order to enhance the quality of life and the community character of Westport. It is intended to be flexible in order to allow for adjustments. Specific goals and objectives are to be achieved while maintaining stability in the long-term goals of the community.

Throughout the preparation process of this Plan, a great deal of information was collected, analyzed, presented and discussed during many interviews, meetings and workshops. An overall vision, general goals and policies were developed, resulting in the specific strategies presented.

The Plan was prepared with the assistance of those Westport residents who came to the many public workshop meetings and gave freely of their ideas and insight about how to make Westport a better place.

*This Plan of Conservation & Development has been prepared to help the Town of Westport get ready for the challenges that it will face during the next decade and beyond.*

## **Why Plan?**

Planning is something that people and organizations perform regularly since it helps prepare for future challenges and opportunities. Communities are no different. Planning provides the opportunity to:

- focus on the 'bigger picture' and identify significant goals,
- promote overall values and achieve important purposes,
- coordinate efforts and produce consistent results, and
- achieve efficiency and economy in implementation.

Planning helps Westport identify and address community needs, foresee the long-term consequences of current actions, make good decisions, and produce desired results.

The Connecticut General Statutes (CGS 8-23) also require municipalities to adopt a plan of conservation and development every ten years. Westport's previous Plan was adopted in 1997.

## **How This Plan Was Prepared**

Over an 18-month period, the Planning and Zoning Commission collected information and discussed desirable strategies in order to prepare this 2007 Plan of Conservation and Development for Westport.

The Planning and Zoning staff interviewed Town departments as to their needs for the future. The Planning and Zoning Commission interviewed Town boards and commissions, asking for their needs and suggestions. A consultant was enlisted to assist with the preparation of Plan elements and to coordinate the overall process.

Public participation in the Plan involved four workshop meetings oriented towards general topics and a town-wide telephone survey conducted by a professional polling firm. Surveys of high school students were also prepared and presented to the Commission. Additionally, a public meeting was held on a draft of the Plan and, with further revisions, the proposed Plan was presented at a public hearing.

The Plan was reviewed and accepted by the Board of Selectmen. The South Western Regional Planning Agency (SWRPA) found the Plan consistent with their Regional Plan of Conservation and Development and with the State Plan of Conservation and Development. The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection found the Plan to be consistent with Connecticut coastal management policies.

Following a public hearing on October 4, 2007, the Plan was adopted at a meeting on October 25, 2007 with an effective date of December 15, 2007.

## **How This Plan Is Organized**

Over the past decade or so, there has been considerable discussion around the country about how to best manage the growth of communities in order to produce the best results. It is recognized that strict separation of uses is still important in single-family residential areas. But there is growing interest in allowing or encouraging mixed uses and encouraging development patterns that will create or reinforce a “sense of place.”

This discussion has produced a set of principles which can be used to organize land use strategies at the municipal level as well as regional and larger levels. For Westport, those principles have been distilled to the following basic themes:

**Preserve Critical Environmental Areas**

**Preserve Open Space And Natural Beauty**

**Protect and Manage Residential Neighborhoods**

**Create A Range of Housing Opportunities and Choices**

**Maintain Distinctive Centers With A Strong Sense Of Place**

**Provide A Variety of Transportation Choices**

**Address Community Facility Needs**

**Address Infrastructure Needs**

**Promote Sustainable Initiatives**

**Saugatuck River**



**Westport Country Playhouse**



## Evolution of Planning Issues In Westport

This Plan of Conservation and Development is the most recent of several plans which have been prepared for Westport over the years. Other plans were prepared and adopted in 1959, 1975, 1982, 1987, and 1997.

Each plan addressed the community needs and interests as perceived at the time. Yet, as the community has grown and developed over time, there have been notable shifts in Westport priorities and concerns.

In the 1950s and 1960s, as residential growth took off and school expansion costs were an issue, there was a willingness to promote commercial development to expand the tax base in order to off-set those costs. In addition, there was discussion about how to best guide the residential growth which was occurring. During this time, Westport was able to preserve some of the significant open spaces which residents presently enjoy (Longshore).

In the 1970s there was a shift away from the expansion of commercial development as concern grew over the changing community character and increased traffic associated with that philosophy. In addition, due to concern over the potential impacts of multi-family residential development, there was reduced emphasis on providing for such types of housing. School enrollments began to decline following the peak from the “baby boom”.

**Longshore Club**



**Sailing On The Sound**





In the 1980s, there was a growing emphasis on environmental protection and a strengthened emphasis on neighborhood character as Westport became almost entirely built up. Changing demographics and economic policies resulted in rapid escalation in residential sale prices.

In the 1990s, the emphasis continued on conservation of natural and cultural features and maintaining the quality of residential neighborhoods and business districts. Due to the lack of building sites, people began to acquire older homes to replace them with larger homes. School enrollments again began to rise as older households who settled in Westport in the 1950s and 1960s were replaced with younger families.

After the year 2000, Westport completed upgrades to its educational facilities to accommodate the enrollment increase. Replacement of older houses with larger homes continued. Traffic volumes on local streets continued to grow.

The Planning and Zoning Commission recognized that the passage of time and changing community issues pointed to a need to revisit the 1997 Plan. With the assistance of a consultant and Town Staff, the Commission held a number of public meetings and collected, analyzed, and discussed a great deal of information.

**Historic Home**



**Playground at Compo Beach**



## Overall Philosophy Of This Plan

As in the 1997 Plan, a theme that weaves through the various chapters of the 2007 Plan of Conservation and Development is that conservation of existing natural and built resources is valued more in Westport than the promotion of new or expanded commercial or residential development.

The underlying philosophy of this Plan is to:

1. Conserve and protect natural resources.
2. Protect the predominantly single-family residential focus and small-town feeling of Westport.
3. Provide additional housing opportunities for Westport residents.
4. Restrict commercial development to existing commercial zones.
5. Promote needed traffic and drainage improvements.
6. Encourage the protection of historical properties.
7. Protect waterfront areas from adverse development.
8. Actively pursue the acquisition of open space; ensure that land is retained for future needs.

As with all plans it must be implemented in order for its strategies to be put into action and its vision fulfilled. Each component, each entity named in this plan has an implicit role. The seriousness with which the community approaches the next decade of Westport's conservation and development is vital.

It is up to each citizen to take the challenge as Westport moves into the future.

**Natural Resources**



**Residential Home**





**In The Beginning ...**

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The area known as Westport has been inhabited by humans for the past 10,000 years or so, but written history goes back only about 400 years. Those early inhabitants of the area were Native American tribes who hunted in the woods, fished in the sea and grew crops on the land.

They must have been very surprised when, in 1614, they sighted the sailing ships of Dutch explorer Adraien Block as he explored Long Island Sound. Subsequently - and the exact date is not known - trade between the Native Americans and the Dutch and English traders began to flourish.

Native Americans



Sailing Ship



## **And Then The Europeans Began To Arrive ...**

The English settlements of New England began in 1620 in what is now Massachusetts, while Dutch settlements began, in what is now New York, in about 1624. Settlement of the area now recognized as Connecticut began in the 1630s at Windsor, Wethersfield and Old Saybrook.

Early settlers had a difficult existence that was complicated by trading disagreements with Native American tribes, competition between Native American tribes and growing resentment among Native Americans over the European settlements that were popping up everywhere.

In 1637 this resentment spilled over into bloodshed between the Native American Pequots (of Eastern Connecticut) and settlers along the Connecticut River. In retaliation for killing of some traders, settlers from Windsor and other areas joined with the Native American Mohegans (also of Eastern Connecticut) and Narragansetts (from what is now Rhode Island) and, in the middle of the night, attacked and set fire to the Pequot fort in what is now Groton, Connecticut.

The Pequots were decimated and those who managed to escape set out in a westward direction, away from the Mohegans and Narragansetts, while being tailed by the European settlers. The survivors arrived in a swampy area on the Southport - or westerly - side of Fairfield where, in July 1637, in what is known as the Great Swamp War, most of them were either killed or captured. As a result of this disastrous event, Native Americans never really challenged European settlements again, and the settlements began to spread throughout the area.

Following the Great Swamp War, settlers came from the Hartford area in 1639 and acquired land from the Native Americans in what is now known as Fairfield. It is unlikely that the Native Americans fully understood this transaction since they were unfamiliar with the concept of land ownership. These first European settlements in area began with the settlement of what is now Fairfield (1639), Stamford (1641) and Norwalk (1649).

## **And Then There Was Green's Farms ...**

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Around 1648 five Fairfield settlers moved to an area of what is now Beachside Avenue and established their homesteads. They knew a good thing when they saw it. As other families joined them, the growing settlement became known as "Machamux."

During this expansion residents continued to attend church in Fairfield – in those colonial days the church was also the government. The western boundary of Fairfield was the Saugatuck River, a long way from the center of Fairfield and so, because they were tired of traveling long distances to church and town meetings in Fairfield, in 1711 the residents of Machamux successfully petitioned the General Assembly to create what became known as "the West Parish of Fairfield," with an initial membership of 270.

Roads were established to access property and enable trade. River crossings were created on the Saugatuck River and other waterways to connect settlements along the shore. And, as the population grew, mills were set up on almost every available stream or river, in order to grind grains. The first schoolhouse was established in 1703.

## **And Then There Was Westport ...**

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While the above arrangement lasted for over 120 years, the growing success of the port in Saugatuck, plus the interests of residents, combined to create support for the establishment of a new municipality. Up to that time, the eastern bank of the Saugatuck River was generally considered to be part of Fairfield and the western bank was considered to be part of Norwalk.

A petition to the General Assembly was approved in 1835 and the Town of Westport was born. The name reportedly came from a blend of "West" Parish, and the "Port" on the Saugatuck River. Additional land from Weston was added in 1842 to create the community known today as Westport.

## Economic Evolution

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While Westport began as an area for subsistence farming, it grew into an active port around 1800 because the Saugatuck River was navigable for quite a way up river. This was a competitive advantage since the port was closer to the farmers and this helped Westport become a center for trade in the region. In fact, Westport was a major supplier of farm products to the growing population in New York City.

When the railroad came around 1850, it was proposed for the middle of the port area and near where ferry service was located. This location was opposed by owners of property further upstream on the Saugatuck River, who felt this reorientation of traffic flow would harm their interests. Nevertheless, the railroad was established and, in spite of its inland location, Westport continued as a bustling community for farming, trade and commerce.

As the population grew, new municipal services were established (such as a fire station) and new transportation services were added (such as trolley services). Almost all of today's major roads in Westport follow the paths of roads from 19<sup>th</sup> century Westport and earlier.

In the late 1800s, due to its waterfront location and rail access, Westport was considered a resort area and, after the turn of the century, it also developed a reputation as a haven for artists, writers and other celebrities. Population continued to grow, even through the "Great Depression" in the 1930s.

Until the Merritt Parkway was built in the 1930s, Westport was relatively inaccessible except by railroad, water or the Post Road (Route 1). Following World War II, the proliferation of the automobile and a desire for suburban living resulted in significant in-migration to Westport. Residential developments replaced farmlands as people sought to blend urban employment with suburban living. Westport's population grew from about 8,000 people in 1940 to about 12,000 people in 1950 to about 21,000 people in 1960, and today it hovers around 27,000.

During this period, businesses and employment in Westport grew substantially, and today Westport has more jobs in town (almost 16,000) than people in the labor force (about 12,000).

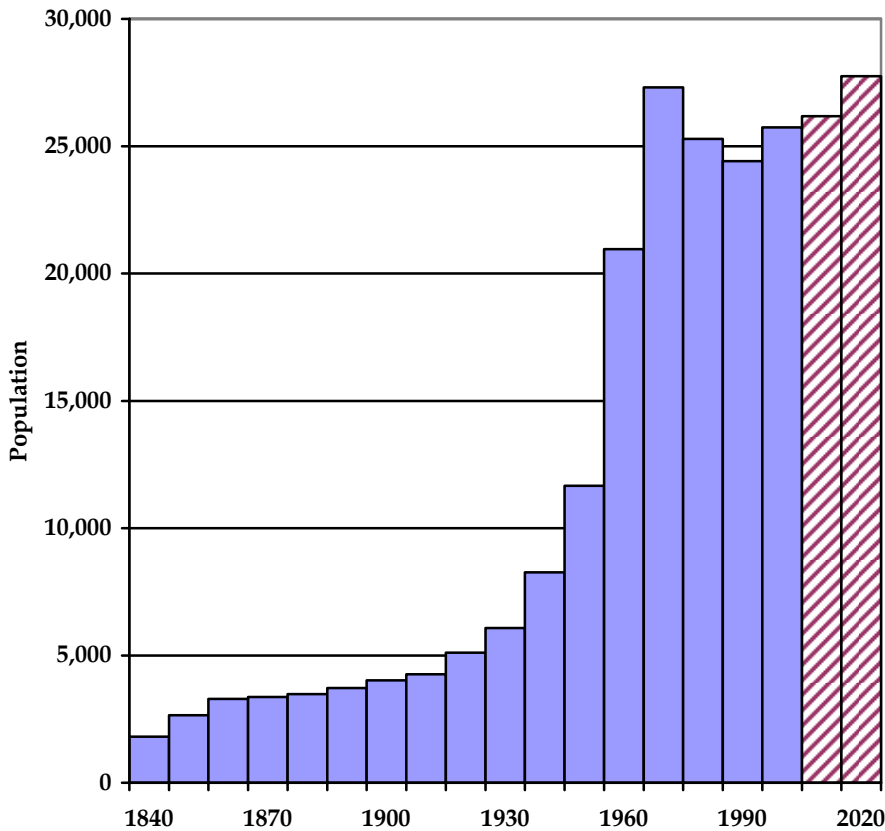
Although Westport's population declined slightly from 1970 to 2000, a result of the aging of the population that had moved here in the previous four decades, the population is increasing again, a trend that is expected to continue.

# Conditions, Trends And Issues



## Population Growth

After several decades of fluctuation, modest population growth is projected in Westport through to the year 2020. Westport needs to consider how this growth will affect the community and how to address it.



Sources: US Census 1840-2000, Connecticut Office of Policy and Management



# Components Of Growth

Population growth over the next several decades is expected to result from natural increase (more births than deaths) and, even without significant zoning changes, from net in-migration (more people moving in than moving out).

This is partly a reflection of smaller older households, who may have moved to Westport in the 1960s and 1970s, being replaced with younger and larger households.

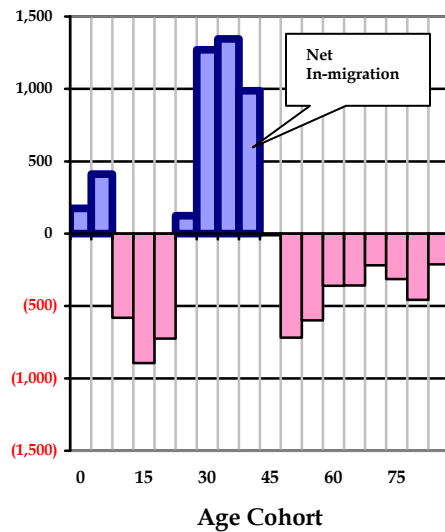
	1950s	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s
<b>Total Change In Decade</b>	9,288	6,363	(2,028)	(880)	1,339
<b>Births</b>	3,218	2,850	1,671	2,050	3,178
<b>Deaths</b>	1,301	1,730	1,767	1,804	1,771
<b>Natural Increase</b>	1,917	1,120	(96)	246	1,407
<b>Estimated Net Migration</b>	7,371	5,243	(1,932)	(1,126)	(68)

Sources: US Census 1950-2000, Connecticut Department of Health 1950-2000

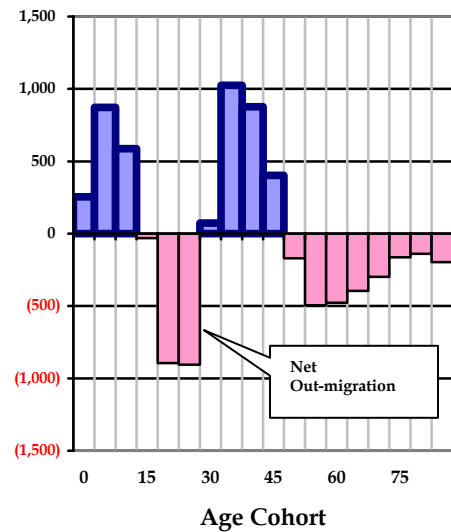
In fact, Census data shows that, during the 1980s and 1990s, Westport experienced:

- net in-migration of families with school age children,
- net out-migration of young adults (aged 20 to 30), and
- net out-migration of older persons (ages 50+).

1980-90 Net Migration By Age Group



1990-00 Net Migration By Age Group

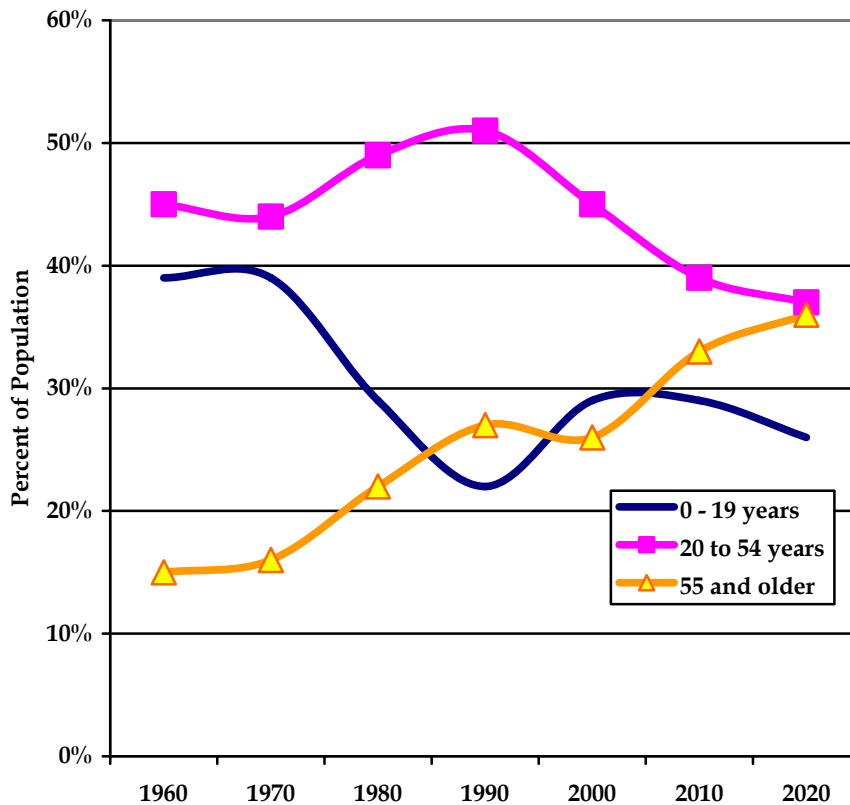


Sources: US Census 1980-2000, Planimetrics

## Changing Age Composition

In 1970, the children of the “baby boom”, people born between 1945 and 1965, comprised 40 percent of Westport’s population. Now, these “baby boomers” are 45 to 65 years of age and the number of people in these age cohorts is expected to change the overall age composition of the community. Even though Westport has experienced net out-migration in these age groups over the last two decades (more people moving out than moving in), the large number of people “aging” into these age groups means that it will grow significantly in the future.

As people live longer and healthier lives, the “mature adult” component, considered to be ages 55 and over, is growing significantly and, after 2020, may become the largest demographic group in Westport.



Sources: US Census 1960-2000, Connecticut Office of Policy and Management

See page 4-2 for a description of open space designations.

## Land Use

Since Westport is approximately 97 percent developed, most development activity in the future will be redevelopment within existing neighborhoods.

	Acres	Percent
<b>RESIDENTIAL</b>		8,628      65.8%
Single Family Development	8,418	
Multi-Family Development	131	
2 Family Development	68	
3 Family Development	9	
Rooming and Boarding House	3	
<b>COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL</b>		416      3.2%
Commercial	395	
Marina	14	
Industrial	5	
Commercial Recreation	2	
<b>OPEN SPACE/AGRICULTURE</b>		1,322      10.1%
Preserved Open Space	525	
Managed Open Space	793	
Agriculture	4	
<b>COMMUNITY FACILITY / INSTITUTIONAL</b>		439      3.3%
Community Facility / Other Municipal Land	274	
Institutional	164	
<b>TRANSPORTATION / UTILITY</b>		1,844      14.1%
Right of Way	1,782	
Parking	33	
Utility	29	
<b>WATER FEATURES</b>		128      1.0%
<b>VACANT</b>		342      2.6%
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>13,119      100.0%</b>

Sources: Westport GIS System, PZC Adjustments, Planimetrics  
 Totals may not add due to rounding

## Land Use Map

At the introductory public meeting, residents:

- indicated that preserving open space and community character were important and
- were hopeful that something could be done to address traffic circulation and housing needs

## Community Input

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### Plan Review Meetings

To help prepare for this Plan of Conservation and Development, the Planning and Zoning Commission interviewed other local boards, commissions and agencies about their experience with the 1997 Plan. Topics for discussion included frequency of use of the Town Plan, overall importance of the Town Plan, and progress made towards implementation. Planning and Zoning staff also interviewed other Town staff to collect similar information.

From this investigation, the Commission developed concepts about how to prepare this Plan to improve its effectiveness and implementation.

### Introductory Planning Meeting

At an initial public planning meeting, residents were asked to assign “planning points” to topics they felt were most important as part of the planning process for Westport. Residents indicated that preserving open space and community character were important and were hopeful that something could be done to address traffic circulation and housing needs.

### Top Tier Issues

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Open Space  
Community Character  
Vehicle Circulation  
Housing Needs

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Public Meeting



Commission Session





At the introductory planning meeting, Westport residents were also asked to identify what they were particularly proud of in Westport. This type of question typically results in residents identifying what is important and should be encouraged in the community.

<b>Comm. Facilities</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>Comm. Character</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>Open Space</b>	<b>31</b>
• Beaches	68	• Playhouse	11	• Green space	21
• Library	44	• Nature Center	8	• Sherwood Island	10
• Longshore	43	• Overall appearance	6		
• Schools	33	• Comm. activities	4		
• Levitt Pavilion	15	• People	3		
• Winslow Park	12	• Specific places	7		
• Senior Center	11				
• Rec. Facilities	10				
• Other (multiple)	9				

At the same meeting, Westport residents were asked to identify what they were particularly sorry about. This typically results in residents identifying what should be discouraged or items which need attention.

<b>Transportation</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>Residential Areas</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>Comm. / Centers</b>	<b>42</b>
• Traffic (general)	46	• Big houses (scale)	39	• More chain stores	28
• I-95	22	• No starter housing	11	• No outdoor dining	6
• RR station parking	10	• Overdevelopment	9	• Downtown parking	4
• Bikes / sidewalks	8	• Other (multiple)	3	• Saugatuck Center	4
• Road "rudeness"	6				
• Specific locations	21				

**"Prouds"**



**"Sorries"**



## Public Workshop Meetings

Three public workshop meetings were held to involve residents in identifying strategies to address issues. These meetings, which were held at Bedford Middle School, were organized around the following topics:

<b>Conservation Issues</b>	Natural Resources
	Open Space
	Historic Resources
	Community Character
<b>Development Issues</b>	Overall Structure
	Residential Development
	Housing Needs
	Business Development
<b>Infrastructure Issues</b>	Community Facilities
	Vehicular Transportation
	Pedestrian / Bicycle / Transit
	Utility Infrastructure

## Telephone Survey of Residents

In addition, a comprehensive telephone survey of 400 randomly selected Westport residents was conducted in April 2007. The survey was designed to provide input on a variety of local issues. The results of this telephone survey are presented throughout the Plan.

Respondents were considered qualified for the survey if they were one of the "heads of the household", at least eighteen years of age, and were current residents of Westport.

Statistically, a sample of 400 surveys represents a margin for error of +/- 5.0% at a 95% confidence level. In other words, it is estimated that the sample of Westport residents will differ no more than +/-5.0% than if all Westport residents were contacted and included in the survey.

## Survey of High School Students

In the spring of 2007, two surveys of high school students were conducted at Staples High School. One survey was designed, administered, and tabulated by the Youth Commission and the other survey was initiated by the Representative Town Meeting's Long Range Planning Committee in conjunction with the Student Assembly.

Since both surveys asked students about facility needs in Westport, the general results of these surveys are presented in Chapter 8 - Support Community / Infrastructure Needs.

## Preserve Critical Environmental Areas

# 3

One of the themes which has run through Westport Plans for the past five decades has been the desire to protect the natural environment and preserve the overall character of the community.

From the telephone survey and the public meetings held as part of this planning process, Westport residents have made it clear that this is a key theme of this Plan as well.

*Westport residents have indicated that they want to preserve and protect natural assets ...*

### Goals

Preserve and enhance the quality of the environment in order to provide long term use of the resources to ensure potable water, flood storage, recreation, and scenic beauty.

Preserve coastal resources and carefully manage development in those areas to assure continued use of Long Island Sound and tidal areas for flood storage, preservation of wildlife and public use.

Land Resources



Water Resources



## Preserve or Conserve?

According to Webster's Dictionary, "preserve" means "to protect from harm, to maintain intact or unchanged".

The same dictionary defines "conserve" as meaning "to save from loss or depletion, to avoid wasting".

## Special Habitat Areas

The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection maintains the Natural Diversity Database which identifies locations of rare, endangered, and threatened species and areas of unique features. In this Plan, these areas are referred to as "special habitat areas."

# Protect Important Natural Resources

Natural resources in Westport should continue to be preserved and conserved (see sidebar) due to their contribution to environmental health and community character. In the telephone survey, approximately 80 percent of respondents felt that Westport is doing a good job protecting natural resources overall, but the town should strive to improve protection.

Some resources are so important to environmental quality or community character that alterations to these areas should continue to be avoided to the extent feasible and the land preserved in its natural state. For other resources, it is important that the overall environmental function or value continue to be conserved -- in other words, activities might occur within these areas provided controls are in place and their function is not lost:

### Resources For Preservation

- Watercourses
- Inland and tidal wetlands
- Very steep slopes (>25 percent)
- Inland floodplain (1.0% probability of flooding, called "100-year")

### Resources For Conservation

- Inland floodplain (0.2% probability of flooding, called "500-year")
- Coastal floodplain (1.0% probability of flooding, called "100-year")
- Areas of high groundwater availability
- Identified aquifers and wellhead recharge areas
- Special habitat areas

**Flooding**



**Habitat Areas**



## Natural Resources Plan



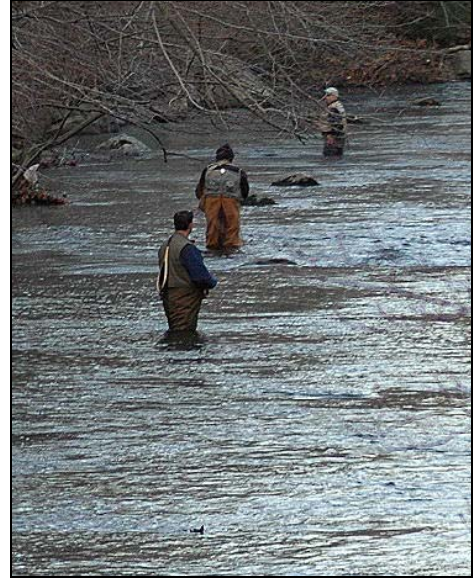
## Protect Water Resources and Water Quality

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Protection and improvement of water quality is the most important natural resource protection priority for Westport. Rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, wetlands, marshes, vernal pools and aquifers contribute to the overall health and quality of life in Westport and the region.

Most threats to water quality in Westport come from stormwater runoff which has picked up sediment, automobile emissions and debris, pesticides, fertilizers, and other pollutants. Westport is participating in the nationwide program to help address the issue of polluted stormwater runoff. This program, known as the Non-point Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES - Phase II) focuses on educational and other programs to address water pollution from diffuse origins. These efforts should continue.

Fishing the Saugatuck River



In addition, failing septic systems pollute water and encourage growth of invasive species. Along with the NPDES program, education of land owners and a septic system management ordinance should reduce polluted runoff.

In order for the Saugatuck River to continue to be a viable resource for recreation and shellfish and to improve its water quality and provide flood control, the river needs to be dredged. This is a project being undertaken by the Army Corps of Engineers, which is awaiting final approvals from the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection to dredge from Long Island Sound to the Post Road bridge. Once approval has been granted, funding will be requested by the Army Corps of Engineers from the State of Connecticut via the Connecticut General Assembly. Westport should advocate for this funding. If funding is not forthcoming, the Town should pursue other means to fund the project.

## **Manage Activities In Coastal Areas**

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Westport has an incredibly beautiful coastal area and, as a result, considerable pressure for coastal development. An appropriate balance needs to be maintained between protecting coastal resources and managing coastal development.

Long Island Sound has been officially designated as an estuary of national significance. The Sound is a predominant natural feature and community asset in Westport. It provides the Town with unique beauty, natural habitat and recreation opportunities. Clean water, clean beaches and a viable ecosystem are a regional vision for Long Island Sound.

### **Manage Development**

The Coastal Area Management Act, established in 1979 as part of the Connecticut General Statutes, was created to protect Long Island Sound and encourage water dependent uses (see sidebar). Westport's zoning regulations follow the Coastal Management Act guidelines in the designated coastal area.

With increasing concern over global climate change and sea level rise, zoning regulations for the coastal areas need to encourage a gradual retreat from the vulnerable low-lying waterfront areas. For the near future, Westport should ensure that the amount of development in low-lying, flood prone sections of the coastline is not increased. Plans should be made to limit development. This is especially true in the Saugatuck Shores area where sewer extensions to address health issues may increase development and in the "V" flood zones where structures are subject to intense wave action.

Through the coastal site plan review process, the Town has been diligent in obtaining public access along the borders of Long Island Sound and other water bodies. Vegetated buffers have been required to control pollution in these same areas. These efforts should be increased. Public access areas should be marked with adequate signage, be accompanied with parking where feasible and be publicized through brochures or other media.

Town control of shellfish beds has been returned to Westport. The Westport Shellfish Commission's management of this resource will ensure healthy shellfish beds while providing public access to these beds wherever possible, limited only to control depletion.

### **Coastal Management Act**

The Coastal Area Management Act states:

"The coastal area is rich in a variety of natural, economic, recreational, cultural and aesthetic resources, but the full realization of their value can be achieved only by encouraging further development in suitable areas and by protecting those areas unsuited to development".

The first goal of the act is:

"To insure that the development, preservation or use of the land and water resources of the coastal area proceeds in a manner consistent with the capability of the land and water resources to support development, preservation or use without significantly disrupting either the natural environment or sound economic growth."

Since Westport has a number of public and private marinas as well as moorings and there are competing interests for the waterfront, the Town should investigate whether or not a Town of Westport harbor management commission and plan (CGS Section 22a-113k et seq.) would help preserve a good balance of water-dependent uses and improve coordination with state and federal in-water permitting authorities.

In terms of erosion potential from wave action and flooding, the Plan recommends that new projects be required to provide non-structural solutions in the coastal area as opposed to groins, seawalls, revetments, etc. A comprehensive study should be undertaken in concert with state and federal agencies to recommend specific strategies for effective erosion abatement.

### **Protect Coastal Resources**

Coastal areas contain a number of significant resources which must be protected. Concerns associated with the coastal resources include:

- point and non-point sources of pollution;
- erosion control management along beaches and on the islands;
- sedimentation of the Saugatuck River and Sherwood Mill Pond;
- the continued viability of local shellfish beds; and
- prevention of eutrophication within Bermuda Lagoon.

There is also need for:

- better public access and scenic enhancement,
- increased boating facilities,
- restricted redevelopment,
- flood hazard mitigation and
- tidal wetlands habitat protection.

Improving water quality, as discussed earlier in this chapter, is an important strategy for Westport since storm water runoff into coastal waters affects uses such as swimming and affects resources such as shellfish, marine plants and organisms that keep the sound healthy. Runoff also increases sedimentation of navigation channels and other shallow waters.

Tidal wetlands areas should continue to be protected through acquisition and the use of vegetated buffers and conservation easements in order to better protect them from runoff, erosion, construction, and other potential adverse impacts.

The Saugatuck River, Sherwood Mill Pond and Sasco Creek/Pond are unique coastal resources requiring special management due to the variety of issues affecting them. The Town should continue to support Westport's committees addressing these areas including Fairfield's involvement in the Sasco Creek/Pond oversight.

## Coastal Area Map

## Organize For Conservation

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At the present time, Westport has a combined Conservation Commission and Inland Wetlands Commission. While this Commission functions well, its work and the Conservation Department are heavily focused on regulatory issues at the expense of overall environmental policy issues. The following table summarizes the Connecticut General Statutes' (CGS) guidelines for conservation issues:

<b>Policy Issues</b>	<b>Regulatory Issues</b>
<b>Conservation Commission</b> (CGS 7-131a)	<b>Wetland / Watercourses Commission</b> (CGS 22a-36 et seq.)
Advisory commission established to prepare information aimed at protecting and improving the environment.	Regulates activities in designated inland wetland & watercourse areas (and within a buffer area).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prepare an open space inventory.</li><li>• Conduct research and studies concerning utilization of land in town.</li><li>• Disseminate materials concerning protection of the environment.</li><li>• Coordinate activities with others concerned with the protection and improvement of the environment.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adopt regulations to protect wetlands and watercourses.</li><li>• Administer regulations to protect wetlands and watercourses.</li><li>• Acquire wetlands and watercourses by gift or purchase, in fee or lesser interest.</li></ul>

If additional floodplain or aquifer protection functions are to be re-assigned, it may make sense to have a separate Conservation Commission with related support staff to develop long-range strategies for the overall conservation issues in Westport. A separate Wetlands Commission would take the regulatory roles.



## Strategies

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*See pages 13-7 to 13-10 for implementation priorities and responsibilities.*

### Protect Important Natural Resources

1. Educate the public about protection and conservation of natural resources through school programs, the media and via other public and private entities.
2. Identify and publicize regulations that will *preserve* and protect watercourses, waterbodies, wetlands, steep slopes, and floodplains, and those that will *conserve* floodplain fringe areas, wellhead areas, areas of high groundwater availability, and unique/special habitat areas.
3. Further control building in floodplain areas.
4. Continue Westport's participation in the Community Rating System (CRS) flood insurance program. When new floodplain regulations are recommended by state or federal agencies, consider:
  - a. Adopting a separate set of "Floodplain Regulations" that consolidates existing programs into one overall program.
  - b. Designating one organization/agency to administer floodplain regulations.
5. When Level A aquifer maps are completed (scheduled for 2008), update the zoning map and the existing "Aquifer Protection Regulations" administered by the Conservation Commission. Assure that other land use boards refer proposed changes in these areas to the Conservation Commission. Evaluate the need for additional groundwater protection requirements to protect water quality outside of the State-defined "aquifer" areas.
6. Continue Westport's participation in the Saugatuck River Watershed Partnership with the Nature Conservancy.
7. Require conservation easements where appropriate as a means of protecting adjacent natural resources, steep slopes and scenic vistas.
8. Dredge the Saugatuck River up to the Post Road. If not funded by the state legislature, establish funding via grants and other programs.

*See pages 13-7 to 13-10 for implementation priorities and responsibilities.*

## **Protect Water Resources and Water Quality**

1. Update local regulations to protect water resources and water quality.
  - a. In order to reduce runoff and sedimentation, incorporate limits on tree clearing into the Town Code or the Zoning Regulations to the maximum extent allowed by law. Consider allowing the use of lower runoff coefficients when existing trees are retained.
  - b. Adopt a septic system management ordinance which would require the periodic inspection and maintenance (pumping) of septic systems.
  - c. Update sediment and erosion control zoning regulations to reflect the need for further protection of neighboring properties, water bodies and storm drains.
  - d. To avoid pollution from underground tank leakage, adopt an ordinance requiring the removal of existing underground residential fuel tanks.
  - e. Require to the extent possible, minimization of site imperviousness, maintenance of natural buffers, and use of natural drainage systems.
  - f. The Town should use integrated pest management strategies and natural fertilizers at minimal amounts to control pollution and non-native species in water bodies. Educate the public as to the benefits of this policy on private property.
2. Educate all landowners and tenants in residential and commercial areas of the importance of protecting water quality for continued availability of marine life, healthy non-invasive vegetation, and continued use of these areas for recreation. Specifically, educate on the importance of:
  - a. Proper septic system use, care and maintenance
  - b. Effect of overuse of fertilizers and pesticides.
  - c. Effect of dumping and filling in wetlands
  - d. The importance of local floodplain and wetland resources.
  - e. Non-point source pollution.

## Manage Activities In Coastal Areas

1. Educate the public about the effect of non-point source pollution on the viability of Long Island Sound and its continued use for recreation and fishing.
2. Use Coastal Area Management Policies to protect coastal resources.
3. Ensure that proposed sewer extensions into the Saugatuck Shores area will not allow for increased development.
4. Prohibit intensification or expansion of the high density areas at Saugatuck Shore, Compo Beach, Sherwood Mill Pond and Compo Cove since these areas are not consistent with current environmental standards or coastal area flood safety standards.
5. Minimize the amount and intensity of development in coastal "V" flood zones:
  - a. Eliminate new non-water dependent development from FEMA-designated coastal high hazard "V" flood zones
  - b. For structures in the "V" flood zones destroyed by storms, only allow new structures that meet current "V" zone construction standards.
6. Support the Shellfish Commission's efforts to manage shellfish resources and public access to shellfish beds wherever possible.
7. Require and enforce long-term maintenance of privately-constructed public access areas to coastal resources, as a condition of coastal site plan approval.
8. Establish a uniform signage standard for public access areas and require that such signs be installed and maintained at all commercial, institutional, and publicly-owned public access sites.
9. Investigate establishing a Town of Westport harbor management commission and plan that would help preserve a good balance of water-dependent uses and improve coordination with state and federal in-water permitting authorities.
10. Promote non-structural activities in the coastal area as opposed to groins, seawalls, revetments, etc.
11. Undertake a comprehensive study with state and federal agencies to recommend specific strategies for effective erosion abatement
12. Establish a Canada Goose management plan.

*See pages 13-7 to 13-10 for implementation priorities and responsibilities.*

***See pages 13-7 to 13-10 for implementation priorities and responsibilities.***

13. Require vegetated buffers on all coastal applications. Consider adopting “performance standards” where the buffer becomes more substantial as distance decreases and/or slope increases.
14. Address Saugatuck River, Sherwood Mill Pond and Sasco Creek/Pond maintenance and management with strategies to address silting, pollution and invasive species.
  - a. Appropriate funds to improve the Saugatuck River, Sherwood Mill Pond and Sasco Creek/Pond
  - b. Enhance and improve the town-owned parcels on the Saugatuck River, Sherwood Mill Pond and Sasco Creek/Pond.

### **Organize For Conservation**

1. Because of the continuing need to protect our natural resources and do this on a broader scale than now in place, consider whether Westport should establish the following:
  - a. a non-regulatory commission whose sole task is to oversee preservation, protection and enhancement of environmental functions in the town, to develop a Natural Resources Preservation Plan, to recommend policies to all departments and boards and to educate the public as to the importance of protection and conservation of natural resources, with staff to support the function (a conservation commission), and
  - b. a separate regulatory agency and board processing specific applications concerning wetlands and aquifer protection (a wetlands/aquifer commission).

## Preserve Open Space And Natural Beauty

# 4

Westport residents value the open spaces, historic resources, and other elements that add to the overall beauty of the community and want to continue to protect them.

*Westport residents have indicated that they want to preserve and protect open space, historic resources, and other assets ...*

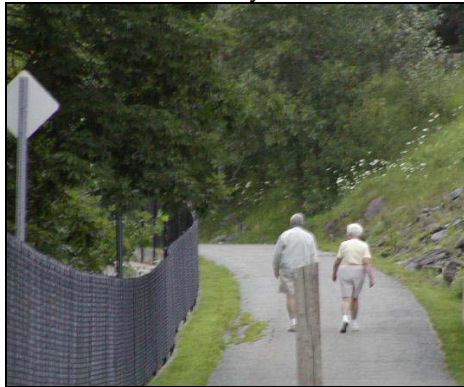
### Goals

Preserve and enhance open space and create pedestrian connections within and between open space areas.

Preserve historic structures and other significant amenities in order to retain Westport history over time.

Assure that Westport, as it changes, retains a sense of community, beauty and history.

Greenway Trail



Historic Resource



## Open Space Designations

The term “preserved open space” is used to refer to land that is controlled through deed restrictions for permanent conservation or through zoning regulations that restrict development to active or passive recreation.

The term “managed open space” is used to refer to land that is used for recreational purposes (such as a recreational club) or some ball fields, does not carry restrictions other than for the commercial or residential zoning district, but provides open space benefits. Such land is not considered permanently preserved as open space.

*See Chapter 9 where the Plan recommends creating a permanent Land Acquisition Committee.*

## Preserve Open Space and Create Greenways

Preservation of open space is an important issue to Westport residents. It will help protect natural resources; provide flood storage, wildlife habitat, and tree canopy; enhance overall community appearance; and enhance the quality of life of residents and visitors.

Open space may also be used for passive recreation such as walking, bicycling, and picnicking. On the other hand, active open space allows more organized recreation such as sports fields. Additionally, some open space, such as wetland areas require restrictions to protect the land in a natural state.

In the telephone survey, while over 70 percent of respondents felt Westport was doing a good job preserving open space, similar numbers felt that the Town should be doing more to preserve open space along Long Island Sound (78%) and along the Saugatuck River (77%).

In addition to preserving open space where opportunities can be found, The Plan recommends, as a priority, that Westport strive over the long term to create a “greenway” system of open spaces and pathway connections:

- a “shoreway” - extending from Fairfield to Norwalk along and near Long Island Sound,
- a “riverway” - from Long Island Sound to Weston along and near the Saugatuck River (and
- a “trailway” - from Norwalk to Fairfield within the right-of-way of the Merritt Parkway.

In some instances, the land for the shoreway and riverway systems may have to be purchased and in other instances, such as those in non-profit ownership, negotiations would be made with the landowners for rights of passage. Where adjacent land is not available, connections will have to be made with sidewalks and bicycle paths along and near roads.

The greenway strategies along waterways build on the open space resources most prized by residents and seek ways to make them even better. The trailway along the Merritt Parkway, while requiring cooperation with adjacent towns to create a viable system, will provide additional open space and recreational opportunities for residents of Westport and the region.

Open Space Plan



## **Acquire and Maintain Open Space**

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Westport should continue to require open space provision as part of every residential subdivision development (land set-aside or fee-in-lieu of land). In general, the Plan recommends a preference for land set-aside. However, to ensure that the open space being provided will help meet overall community needs and desires, land trusts and other similar non-profit agencies should be included in discussion of required subdivision open space.

Westport should consider updating local land use regulations to enhance open space preservation requirements (require provision by multi-family developments, allow off-site dedication, lot area flexibility, etc.).

Over the long run, Westport will have the best chances of implementing its overall open space vision if funds are available to take advantage of opportunities to acquire open space parcels as they occur.

In addition to Town funding, State of Connecticut open space programs provide grants for qualifying open space purchases. Westport should participate in these and similar programs.

Organizations such as land trusts and others whose mission is to protect land are an important part of open space preservation efforts. Westport should continue to seek opportunities to partner with these types of organizations to accomplish overall open space objectives. In addition, Westport should promote donations of land for preservation.

Along with preservation of open space for active and passive recreation is the enhancement and maintenance of the land. The Parks and Recreation Commission and Department should make all of their recreation areas welcoming and available with adequate signage, parking areas, vegetation and appropriate facilities for their designated uses. Funds must be provided to develop and maintain these properties. Consider zoning additional parcels of land as park zones, some for passive use and others for active use, in order to help protect their use as open space.

## Promote Use Assessment To Defer Development

One of the ways that Westport can help to defer development is through “use value assessment” of some properties (as opposed to “market value assessment”).

Use value assessment is a tax reduction program which preserves undeveloped land in private hands by making qualifying land less expensive to own. Although this type of program does not preserve land indefinitely, the Plan recommends that Westport continue to utilize the “use value assessment” program as authorized by Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) Section 12-107 (also known as Public Act 490) in order to retain undeveloped land that provides the community with farming, scenic views, less development, and fiscal and other benefits.

The program has three parts – farm use, forest use, and open space use.

### **Farm Use Assessment**

Westport has had properties utilize the farm assessment portion of the program and the Plan supports the application of “farm use assessment” for any property which qualifies. The Westport assessor determines whether the land meets the eligibility criteria (see sidebar).

### **Forest Use Assessment**

Westport has also had properties utilize the forest assessment portion of the program and the Plan supports the application of “forest use assessment” for any property which qualifies. A State forester determines whether the land meets the eligibility criteria (see sidebar).

### **Open Space Use Assessment**

Under the open space use assessment program, the assessor may incorporate land into the program provided that:

- a. the land parcel is designated (or the eligibility criteria are specified) in the Plan of Conservation and Development, and
- b. the designation is (or criteria are) approved by the legislative body.

Since the open space use assessment program was adopted by Westport (in 1971), it has been utilized by several properties. At the present time, the assessment is being utilized by:

- Birchwood Country Club (Kings Highway South),
- Fairfield County Hunt Club (Long Lots Road),
- Sprite Island Yacht Club (Sprite Island), and
- Irina Pabst (Bayberry Lane).

### Farm/Forest Assessment

**Farm Land** - Under the PA 490 program, the assessor may designate land for farm use assessment based on an application by the owner and after considering such factors as:

- the overall acreage,
- the portion actually used for agricultural operations,
- the gross income derived,
- the nature and value of the equipment used in connection therewith, and
- other factors.

**Forest Land** - Under the PA 490 program, the assessor must designate land for forest land use assessment based on an application by the owner and a demonstration of compliance with the criteria:

- at least 25 acres of land (in one or more tracts), and
- bearing tree growth that conforms to the forest stocking, distribution and condition standards established by the State Forester.

The Plan of Conservation and Development recommends the open space use assessment program continue to be made available to these properties and also be made available to other properties in Westport which can demonstrate that they meet the statutory definition (CGS 12-107) where the preservation or restriction of the use of such land would:

- maintain and enhance the conservation of natural or scenic resources,
- protect natural streams or water supply,
- promote conservation of soils, wetlands, beaches or tidal marshes,
- enhance the value to the public of abutting or neighboring parks, forests, wildlife preserves, nature reservations or sanctuaries or other open spaces,
- enhance public recreation opportunities,
- preserve historic sites, or
- promote orderly urban or suburban development;

Based on a specific request by the Cedar Point Yacht Club, the open space use assessment is hereby recommended for this property.

While the “open space use assessment” designation must be approved by the legislative body before a property owner can apply for this assessment, the continued support of this program by the Plan of Conservation and Development is a pre-requisite to such action.

## **Protect and Enhance Scenic Resources**

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Scenic resources are one of the factors that contribute to community character. They include scenic areas that are viewed from elsewhere, and scenic vistas, which are locations affording scenic views from them.

Some major scenic resources, such as coastal areas and the sound itself, are located on the map on the facing page. Other scenic resources include stone walls, barns, fences, tree canopies, and scenic roads. Since these resources enhance the character of Westport and would compromise the unique beauty of the Town if not given special consideration, increased efforts must be made to identify, maintain, and preserve these and other scenic resources.

In addition, there is growing recognition that tall walls and fences detract from scenic views and the overall character of Westport. The zoning regulations should be reviewed for better management of these structures.

## Scenic Areas Map

## **Protect Historic Resources**

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Westport is committed to preserving its unique historic character and beauty. In so doing, it fosters community pride, conserves the personality and architecture of its historic residential neighborhoods and commercial areas, enables citizens and visitors to enjoy and learn about local history, and provides a framework for making appropriate preservation planning decisions.

The identification, conservation and protection of its historic and archaeological heritage are the Town's responsibility, aided by nonprofit organizations that help to educate the citizenry about Westport's history.

Westport must protect its inventory of significant historical properties from destruction or architectural degradation by employing the full range of methods available to protect and enhance Westport's historic and cultural resources.

### **Promote Awareness of Westport's Historic Resources**

The Westport Historic District Commission (HDC) is Westport's recognized commission charged with historic preservation. The HDC should continue efforts to protect Westport's inventory of significant historical properties from destruction or architectural degradation. In addition, the HDC should employ the full range of preservation methods available to protect and enhance Westport's historic and cultural resources.

In order to assure that Westport residents understand the significance of historic buildings and properties, the HDC should promote public awareness of historic preservation through:

- contact with owners of historic properties in order to help them preserve the historic integrity of their property;
- news articles and widely distributed publications
- distribution of *Westport Historic District and Properties Handbook* and other reference sources;
- noting changes to the *Westport Historic Resources Inventory* and publishing relevant information on preservation issues;
- annual Preservation Awards Program, which recognizes local properties; and
- on-line resources for HDC information.

## **Expand Protection of Historic Resources**

In order to maintain the Town's historic character and qualities represented in its many significant buildings, structures, monuments, landscapes, cemeteries, public rights-of-way, districts and sites, the HDC should:

- propose, as appropriate, the establishment of additional local historic districts and local historic properties as defined by state statute;
- where appropriate, expand the existing local historic districts;
- work towards listing additional properties on the National Register of Historic Places;
- enforce local historic district and historic property commitments;
- designate scenic roads through a scenic road ordinance;
- suggest relevant zoning regulations and tax incentives to preserve historic properties in commercial and residential zones;
- continue with the oversight of Town-owned historic buildings and sites;
- continue to provide relevant boards and commissions with advice and comment on historic preservation matters; and
- update and expand the *Westport Historic Resources Inventory*.

## **Assure Continuity in Preservation Action**

Westport is a Certified Local Government (CLG) as established by the National Preservation Act and as such must maintain preservation management consistent with the responsibilities of a CLG and the quality and quantity of the historic resources in the Town of Westport. In order to maintain its CLG status and its ability to receive matching federal grant funds, the Town should continue to provide a full-time CLG program coordinator who also acts as the administrative staff support for the HDC. In its operations, the HDC must maintain standards and procedures for review of changes proposed to existing local historic districts and local historic properties. When the Town Charter is revised, update Chapter 29 to reflect all of the duties and responsibilities of the Historic District Commission.

For ease of recognizing historic resources, it has been established that Tax Assessor's field cards indicate whether a property is designated a local historic property, included in a local historic district or listed on the *Westport Historic Resource Inventory*. All relevant departments should be aware of this system in order to be alerted to the significance of the property.

## **Encourage Unique Facilities and Events**

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Unique facilities such as public and private arts and theater facilities and organizations add immeasurably to the overall ambience and quality of life in Westport. Efforts to develop, improve, and maintain performance and exhibition facilities should be supported and encouraged in order to enhance the overall community.

Similarly, the unique events that occur in Westport such as concerts at the Levitt Pavilion, First Night on New Years Eve, and festivals and events sponsored by private organizations help support the overall concept of community and the shared experience of living in Westport. These types of facilities, programs and events should be supported and encouraged in order to enhance vibrancy and connections amongst residents in the community. The governmental, volunteer, and non-profit organizations which help make all of this happen should be supported and encouraged.

**Saugatuck River**



**Levitt Pavilion**



## Strategies

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*See pages 13-11 to 13-14 for implementation priorities and responsibilities.*

### Preserve Open Space and Create Greenways

1. Focus open space efforts on creating a system of open spaces and pedestrian connections along:
  - a. Long Island Sound (a “shoreway”),
  - b. the Saugatuck River (a “riverway”),
  - c. the Merritt Parkway (a “trailway”),
  - d. and other areas.
2. Within these areas, the following strategies are recommended:
  - a. Obtain land to support the “shoreway” / “riverway” vision (pocket parks, water access, parking areas, etc.),
  - b. Interconnect open spaces in the “shoreway” / “riverway” area by creating sidewalk and trail connections through open spaces and along existing streets, and
  - c. Build a “trailway” along the Merritt Parkway and work with Fairfield and Norwalk to extend this trailway.

### Acquire and Maintain Open Space

1. Acquire additional open space and improve existing open space parcels.
2. Continue to require open space provision as part of every residential subdivision development (land set-aside or fee-in-lieu of land).
3. Include land trusts and other similar non-profit agencies in discussion of required subdivision open space.
4. Update local land use regulations to enhance open space preservation requirements (require provision by multi-family developments, allow off-site dedication, lot area flexibility, etc.).
5. Make all passive and active recreation areas welcoming and available with adequate signage, parking areas, vegetation and appropriate facilities for their designated uses.
6. Zone additional parcels of land as park zones, some for passive use and others for active use
7. Provide adequate funds to take care of and enhance town parks and open space.



*See pages 13-11 to 13-14 for implementation priorities and responsibilities.*

### **Promote Use Assessment To Defer Development**

1. Continue to utilize the “use value assessment” program as authorized by CGS 12-107 (also known as Public Act 490).
2. Support the application of “farm use assessment” for any property which qualifies.
3. Support the application of “forest use assessment” for any property which qualifies.
4. Continue to make the “open space use assessment” program available to properties currently enrolled and to other properties which can demonstrate that they meet the statutory criteria.

### **Protect and Enhance Scenic Resources**

1. Identify and preserve scenic views, scenic roads, and scenic features (such as stone walls, barns, fences, and tree canopies).
  - a. Amend land use regulations to include protection of scenic resources.
  - b. Review the impact of the currently allowed placement of tall walls and fences and their impact on scenic views.
2. Enhance programs and policies related to the “greening” of the Post Road and the “adopt-a-spot” program.
  - a. Work with the Connecticut Department of Transportation to have Westport manage and enforce the use of the state rights-of-way, in the areas of tree maintenance, signage and parking.
3. Establish a program and funds for expanding the planting of trees along the town and state rights-of-way.
4. Regularly evaluate the health of town roadway trees; trim or remove dangerous branches and remove unhealthy trees.

## **Protect Historic Resources**

1. Maintain existing local historic districts and expand those districts where appropriate.
2. Propose the establishment of additional local historic districts and list properties on the National Register of Historic Places.
3. Enforce local historic district and historic property commitments.
4. Establish a scenic road ordinance to designate and protect scenic roads.
5. Expand the historic zoning designation to additional commercial properties.
6. Enact additional zoning regulations which will help protect historic resources including use flexibility, dimensional flexibility, or both.
7. Explore tax incentives to preserve historic resources.
8. Maintain the demolition delay regulation to continue to work with property owners to find ways to preserve historic structures via modifications to the original versus demolition of the entire structure.
9. Maintain Certified Local Government status in order to receive funds from the Connecticut Historical Commission.
10. Enhance programs related to historic preservation in general and assistance to owners of historic properties in particular:
  - a. Make Westport residents and developers aware of the importance of retaining the physical history of Westport
  - b. Encourage “sensitive ownership” of historic structures and properties.
11. Maintain staff dedicated to preservation of historic resources.
12. Continue to update the Historic Resources Inventory in order to identify all significant properties and reflect relevant changes.
13. Link information from the Historic Resources Inventory and other sources to a town-wide database and notify relevant departments and boards.
14. Revise the Town Charter to reflect the duties and responsibilities of the HDC.

*See pages 13-11 to 13-14 for implementation priorities and responsibilities.*

*See pages 13-11  
to 13-14 for im-  
plementation  
priorities and re-  
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#### **Encourage Unique Facilities and Events**

1. Continue to support and encourage facilities for the arts and theater, both public and private.
2. Continue to support established events that bring the community together (such as concerts at the Levitt Pavilion, plays at the theaters, First Night, holiday fireworks, and those sponsored by private entities).
3. Encourage the establishment of new facilities or events to continue to strengthen town-wide and neighborhood sense of community.

## Protect and Manage Residential Neighborhoods

# 5

It is a central goal of this Plan and of prior plans to maintain the low density single family residential character of Westport's neighborhoods. The overall character and ambience of existing neighborhoods is responsible for the recognized quality of life in Westport.

In order to achieve this goal, regulations protecting residential districts and zoning standards must be maintained, improved, strengthened where needed, and enforced. Westport must strive to maintain a balance between its established neighborhoods and the need to revitalize, modernize and allow for the diverse economics of its citizenry.

At the same time, families live differently today than they have in the past utilizing various housing configurations, home-based businesses and so on. Some strategies should be considered to address these needs.

*Maintaining the integrity of residential neighborhoods is central to this Westport Plan ...*

### Goal

Maintain Westport's predominantly single-family residential focus and small town feeling.



## **Protect Residential Neighborhoods**

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Westport's wide variety of housing types from modest homes and historic structures to grand manor homes is one of its strongest features. In fact, the recognized quality and diversity of its residential neighborhoods is an asset which has helped make Westport the desirable community that it is.

Protecting residential neighborhoods is a fundamental philosophy of the Plan. To implement this policy:

- Residential neighborhoods will continue to be protected from the intrusion of commercial activities.
- Boundaries between residential neighborhoods and non-residential zoning districts shall remain clear.
- Transitions from residential neighborhoods to non-residential zoning districts should be logical and have appropriate buffering, as necessary.
- Regulations protecting residential districts and zoning standards must be maintained, strengthened, improved where needed, and enforced.
- Special Permit uses in residential zones must be reviewed to ensure that they are still suitable for neighborhoods, especially since so little undeveloped property remains.
- Review Special Permit criteria and enforce the Special Permit standards to meet the regulations.

# Manage Housing “Rebuilds”

One of the ways that residential neighborhoods are changing in Westport is due to housing “teardowns” and “rebuilds”. This is occurring because:

- some older housing units are not well-configured for the housing needs of families in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (size of rooms, size of kitchen, lack of insulation, lack of storage space, etc.),
- vacant lots are not available in Westport to satisfy the demand for new construction, and
- the local housing market supports such activity.

In addition, the zoning regulations in place in Westport allowed such development to occur. When the regulations were adopted more than a half century ago, nobody anticipated that future homeowners would attempt to maximize every dimensional standard in what was intended to be a flexible “building envelope”.

In the telephone survey, 79 percent of respondents felt that Westport needs to do more to limit the size of residential homes.

Westport’s zoning regulations need to be amended to ensure that housing units being built are in scale and proportion with the lot size and the neighborhood.



Age of Housing		
Built 1990 to 1999	553	6%
Built 1980 to 1989	1,012	11%
Built 1970 to 1979	791	8%
Built 1960 to 1969	1,701	18%
Built 1950 to 1959	2,562	27%
Built 1940 to 1949	788	8%
Built 1939 or earlier	2,179	23%
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,586</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: US Census 2000

## “Teardowns”

In the following table, “teardown” refers to the number of houses built on properties where a prior house was torn down. On the other hand, “vacant land” refers to the number of houses built on properties that had no house previously.

Since the late 1990s, most houses built in Westport occurred on properties where a house was torn down.

Year	“Teardown”	Vacant Land
1998	22	29
1999	27	16
2000	54	17
2001	51	14
2002	54	8
2003	47	8
2004	93	9
2005	103	11
2006	85	10

Source: PZC Office

## Consider Revising Zoning Districts

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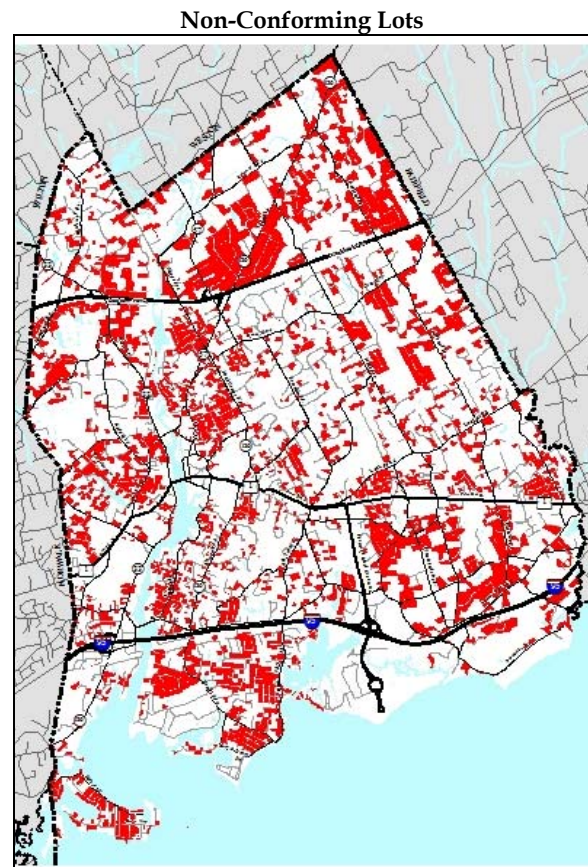
About 49 percent of all residential lots in Westport are non-conforming as to area. One of the impacts of this is that some of the zoning standards for these lots such as setbacks or building coverage may not be appropriate and property owners may need variances from the zoning regulations via the Zoning Board of Appeals for many things they might like to do.

This issue is most significant in the shoreline areas of Saugatuck Shores and Compo Beach where the zoning designations (A and AA) require half-acre and one-acre lots and many of the lots sizes are much smaller (as small as 1/10<sup>th</sup> of an acre).

To address these issues, Westport should consider:

- establishing town-wide standards for setbacks, coverage, height, and other standards which are based on the size of the lot rather than the zone, or
- establishing a “Beach Residential” district with dimensional standards based on the prevailing lot sizes in the Saugatuck Shores and Compo Beach areas.

In either case, Westport may also want to adopt a density regulation which would prevent additional subdivision of lots in these areas beyond what is presently allowed.





## Address Home-Based Businesses

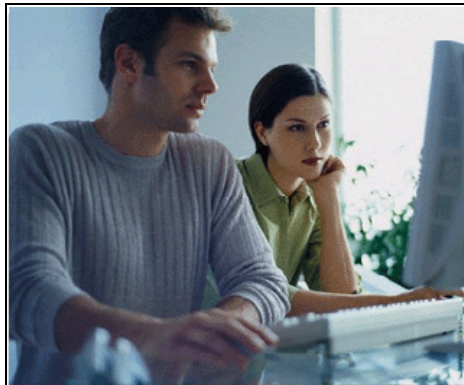
The number of home-based businesses is growing in Westport and elsewhere around the country. Recognizing this, the regulations in Westport should be re-evaluated to ensure that the standards and limitations are appropriate. For example:

- the list of permitted home-based business uses might be expanded since unlisted uses would have to pursue a regulation change,
- the limitation to one home occupation and one resident may be removed allowing a couple to work in the same business or have separate businesses,
- a home-based business might be allowed in an accessory structure by Special Permit, and
- the floor area limitation might be allowed to exceed 600 square feet by Special Permit.

Westport may wish to consider categorizing home-based businesses into several tiers and applying a regulatory structure to those tiers that reflects their potential impact on residential neighborhoods, such as:

<b>Home Office</b>	An office-type use with no employees	No permit required
<b>Minor Home Business</b>	An office-type use with one non-resident employee Up to 25% of floor area or a set square footage, whichever is less	Zoning Permit required
<b>Major Home Business</b>	A home office or minor home business involving more employees or greater floor area	Special Permit required

**Home-Based Business**



**Home-Based Business**





*See page 13-15  
for implementa-  
tion priorities  
and responsibili-  
ties.*

## **Strategies**

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### **Protect Residential Neighborhoods**

1. Continue to protect existing residential neighborhoods from intrusion of commercial activities.
2. Ensure that boundaries between residential neighborhoods and non-residential zoning districts remain clear and provide for logical transitions with appropriate buffering as necessary.
3. Protect Westport's diverse residential architectural styles.
4. Maintain, improve where needed, and enforce zoning standards and regulations protecting residential districts.
5. Review Special Permit uses in residential zones to ensure that they are still suitable for neighborhoods.
6. Review Special Permit criteria and enforce the Special Permit standards to meet the regulations.

### **Manage Housing "Rebuilds"**

1. Adopt a building coverage limitation for all zones.
2. Consider reducing allowable building heights and eliminating the regulation of building height based on stories.
3. Consider using building sections when measuring building height.
4. Consider limiting building height adjacent to side setbacks to reduce the impact on neighboring properties.
5. Consider adjusting what elements are considered in building coverage and total coverage.

### **Consider Revising Zoning Districts**

1. Consider establishing town-wide standards for setbacks, coverage, height, and other standards which are based on the size of the lot rather than the zone.
2. Consider establishing a "Beach Residential" zone in the Saugatuck Shores / Compo Beach areas.

### **Address Home-Based Businesses**

1. Update regulations for home-based businesses to reflect current trends and issues.

## Create A Range of Housing Opportunities and Choices

# 6

It is a goal of this Plan to seek ways to expand the variety of housing choices and options in Westport in order to help meet the needs of existing and future residents while maintaining the character and integrity of the town.

Meeting the needs of our long-time residents and the workforce which contributes significantly to the quality of our lives is key to achieving this balance.

*Westport will seek ways to diversify its housing portfolio ...*

### Goal

Strive to create a range of housing opportunities and choices.

Multi-Family Housing



Housing Choices



## Diversify Westport’s Housing Types

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Approximately 87 percent of Westport’s housing stock (about 7 of every 8 housing units) consists of single-family detached housing types. While this housing mix was attuned to local needs during the 1950s and 1960s, it may not reflect the needs or desires of increasingly diverse households (aging, empty-nester, and single-person households). Westport should continue efforts to help seniors who may not want or need large single-family houses to remain in Westport and to provide opportunities for others.

Since single-family detached housing may not meet the needs of all people, the Plan recommends that Westport explore ways to diversify the housing portfolio of the community.

Future planning must recognize the relationship between adding to housing supply and the effect on traffic congestion, increased demand for services and manpower, increased enrollment in the schools, over-crowding at the beaches and other municipal facilities and the impact on the overall quality of life for residents of Westport.

In the telephone survey, 74 percent of respondents felt that Westport needs a choice of housing types. In terms of specific housing types, respondents indicated there was a strong need for moderate income housing, housing for first-time buyers, and housing for elderly persons.

Housing Types	Too Few	Right Amount	Too Many	No Opinion
Moderate income housing	68 %	9 %	3 %	20%
Housing for first-time buyers	67 %	18 %	3 %	22%
Housing for elderly persons	67 %	18 %	3 %	22%
Rental apartments	50 %	22 %	6 %	22%
Condominiums	40 %	41 %	10 %	9%
Single-family homes	8 %	74 %	10 %	8%

When asked whether some locations in Westport might be appropriate for potential new apartments, condos and other multi-family housing, respondents felt that locations in and near Westport Center (62 %), along Post Road (60 %), and in and near Saugatuck Center (54 %) might be appropriate. Any new housing in these areas must be appropriately designed and take into consideration proximity to services, transportation and existing infrastructure. In all instances, the density of each area must be evaluated and impacts on the town should be studied.

## Promote Housing Affordability

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Housing prices can make it difficult for Westport to attract young adults, young families, or people who may not be well compensated financially. This can make it difficult to attract people to work at local businesses, local schools, service jobs or other positions.

Since less than ten percent (10%) of Westport's housing units meet the State definition of affordable housing (assisted housing, CHFA financed, or deed-restricted to persons or families earning less than 80 percent of the state median income) means that Westport is subject to the State Affordable Housing Appeals procedure (codified as CGS 8-30g) where a private landowner may choose to not comply with local land use regulations.

Even though Westport has been pro-active over the years in terms of addressing housing options and housing diversity, it has not reached the ten percent threshold. High land value in Westport as in other similar towns in the region creates a limiting factor to achieving this goal.

As Westport work towards providing more housing choices, it will do so in ways that are appropriate for the community and that protect the public health and safety. In addition, Westport will consider ways of integrating affordable, workforce and market rate housing in future projects in partnerships with public and private organizations.

Westport can and should try to do more in terms of affordable housing and the following strategies are suggested:

### **1. Support and encourage the Westport Housing Authority.**

The Westport Housing Authority (not a municipal agency) operates 50 units of senior / disabled housing and 114 units of below market rate housing within Westport. The Authority would like to find ways to expand their housing offerings (they have an extensive waiting list at the present time). These efforts should be encouraged since they will help Westport meet its overall housing goals.

### **2. Support and encourage supporting non-profit organizations.**

Non-profit organizations can provide important services such as emergency shelters for the homeless, permanent supportive housing and housing options for Westport citizens in times of need. These efforts should be encouraged since they will help Westport meet its overall housing goals.

## Affordable Housing Appeals Procedure

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According to 2007 figures from the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development, Westport had 10,065 housing units and was credited with having 209 units of assisted housing, 5 units of CHFA-financed housing, and 3 units of deed-restricted housing.

These 217 units result in an affordable housing percentage of 2.16 percent, well below the CGS 8-30g threshold of 10.0 percent

**3. Require that all housing construction in Westport either provide affordable housing units or pay into an affordable housing trust fund.**

CGS Section 8-2i provides that a community may, through its zoning regulations, require:

- “the setting aside of a reasonable number of housing units for long-term retention as affordable housing through deed restrictions or other means”, and
- “the making of payments into a housing trust fund to be used for constructing, rehabilitating or repairing housing affordable to persons and families of low and moderate income.”

For larger developments, Westport should require the setting aside of housing units meeting affordability criteria. However, since Westport is predominantly built up and few opportunities remain for larger development projects, Westport might consider requiring a payment be made into an affordable housing trust fund for every type of zoning permit issued in the community in order to establish a funding source for the creation of housing opportunities.

A payment into an affordable housing fund is not the preferred mechanism for achieving the goal of creating affordable units. There may be a significant lag time for building affordable units elsewhere on undetermined sites as opposed to completing market rate units. In addition, allowing market rate units only without an affordable unit component on site will actually decrease the percentage required by regulation and increase multifamily units in general.

**4. Consider requiring that any multi-family development provide affordable housing units.**

The Town should adopt an inclusionary zoning regulation requiring some percentage of units in a multi-family development to be deed restricted to affordable levels.

Strategies giving priority to residents and Town employees should be established to ensure affordable housing serves the needs of Westport.

**5. Seek ways to create more housing units with deed-restrictions on income.**

If the following types of housing units are deed-restricted to affordable levels and rented to income-eligible families, Westport can count these units as affordable housing under CGS Section 8-30g (and make progress towards the 10% threshold and a moratorium level):

- existing Town rental housing units at Longshore and elsewhere in Westport.
- new rental housing units on town owned property and elsewhere in Westport.
- accessory apartments in private homes.

**6. Review regulations for impediments.**

The Town should review zoning requirements in the R-AHZ district to ensure they do not impede development.

**7. Purchase property for affordable housing.**

The Town should purchase property that comes on the market for affordable housing. These could be existing homes which would be rented or sold. Alternatively, it could be land that would be developed by the Town or a non-profit agency or which could be approved and sold to a private developer. Either way, municipal housing should focus on the needs of households with lower incomes.

**8. Consider providing financing options.**

The Town should consider offering low-interest loans to income-eligible purchasers provided that the property would be deed restricted.

**9. Support legislation at the State level to get a “rolling exemption” for creating affordable housing units.**

At the present time, a community can become exempt from CGS 8-30g in two ways: by reaching the 10% threshold or by creating sufficient units (or equivalent points) to be eligible for a three-year moratorium. Such thresholds are so high for Westport and most other communities in Connecticut that there is no incentive to produce units. On the other hand, if Westport qualified for a one-year exemption for producing a small designated number of units there might be an incentive to do so. While this sounds modest, this simple policy change could result in the *annual* construction in Connecticut of several hundreds units of affordable housing by the communities that are not presently exempt from CGS 8-30g.

In Westport, the annual threshold could be met through the creation of eligible housing units by the Town of Westport, the Westport Housing Authority, non-profit organizations, private developers and other organizations producing affordable housing.

**10. Allow some accessory apartments to be approved by Staff.**

Allow accessory apartments for those under age 62 with the requirement they meet state affordability requirements.

**11. Pursue ways to utilize existing multi family housing stock to convert into affordable units in conformance with state requirements.**

There are units in Westport that could be deed restricted as affordable and counted toward the state requirement to help alleviate pressure to create new construction.

**Housing Conference**



**Non-Profit Housing**



**12. Support legislative efforts to amend CGS 8-30g.**

As Westport works toward providing more housing choices, it will seek to do so in ways that are appropriate for the community and that protect the public health and safety. Westport will continue to support legislative efforts to amend CGS 8-30g which will give each community incentives and more credit for providing affordable housing in ways appropriate for that community.

**13. Consider a separate cap on the number of accessory apartments permitted in single-family zones.**

Should the efforts made to convert new or existing accessory apartments become popular and the result is an over-abundance of rental units, consideration should be given to instituting a cap.



*See page 13-16  
for implementa-  
tion priorities  
and responsibili-  
ties.*

## **Strategies**

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### **Diversify Westport's Housing Types**

1. Implement ways to diversify Westport's housing types.
2. Allow for additional multi-family housing opportunities in and near Westport Center, along and near Route 1, and also consider in limited quantities in Saugatuck Center and Riverside Avenue.

### **Promote Housing Affordability**

1. Support and encourage the Westport Housing Authority in their efforts to provide more affordable housing opportunities.
2. Require any multi-family development provide affordable housing units
3. Review zoning regulations for impediments to affordable housing
4. Consider revising the accessory apartment regulations to legitimize existing units and address affordable housing needs.
5. Explore ways to utilize existing housing to count toward state affordability standards.
6. Support legislative efforts to amend CGS 8-30g in ways which will give each community incentives and more credit for providing affordable housing in ways appropriate for that community.
7. Consider a separate cap on the number of accessory apartments permitted in single-family zones.

## Maintain Distinctive Centers With A Strong Sense Of Place



A major goal of this Plan is to enhance the appearance and functioning of all commercial areas. Since future development in these areas should create a strong “sense of place”, this Plan recommends a defined focus on building and site design. At the same time, the Plan recommends that changes and improvements within commercial zones minimize negative influences on neighboring residential quality of life. The Plan recommends that when considering development proposals, commercial land use areas should be maintained within their existing zoning limits without extending into residential areas.

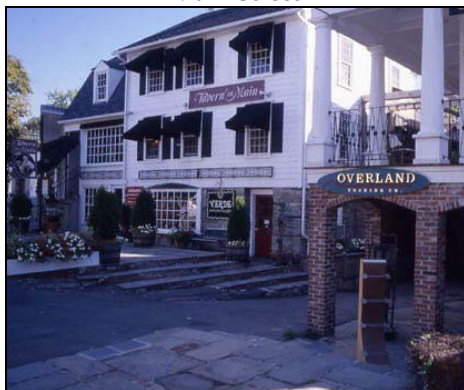
*Enhancing commercial areas is an important goal of this Plan ...*

A key charm of Westport is the variety of commercial styles in the town including Saugatuck, the Westport Center area, the Post Road as well as the scattered and well-scaled office parks and even tiny commercial uses embedded in some of the residential areas. The Plan welcomes this variety and believes is an important element of Westport’s unique strength.

**Goal**

Improve the appearance and functioning of all commercial areas and minimize negative influences on neighboring residential quality of life.

Main Street



Saugatuck



## Maintain and Enhance Westport Center

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Westport Center is the main activity center and focal point of Westport -- the heart of a vital, well developed, and yet balanced community. An area of 110 acres of land (144 acres total) that offers a blend of government, retail, office, food, cultural, recreation, and leisure activities in a fairly compact setting, the downtown area is most active during the business day; activity drops-off noticeably after 6:00 PM.

Westport Center



The Plan of Conservation and Development strives to support, even facilitate, a dynamic, attractive, centrally focused yet expansive downtown area with varied points of interest for community life.

## Major Issues

Three major issues dominate discussions regarding the downtown area:

- Types of Establishments -- Will the current and future needs of the community be served within what is considered the downtown area?
- Parking -- Is there too much? Too little? Is it in the right places?
- Aesthetics - Is the area visually appealing? Enjoyable? Relaxing?

What Westport residents think about the downtown area was revealed in both the survey and in the public meetings held regarding the Plan as well as in public hearings on applications before the Commission and everyday conversation with citizens and merchants. There is some consistency in views but some differences as well.

### Types of Establishments

Many residents lament the loss of a downtown of the past which had numerous smaller, family-owned businesses and a broader variety of retail establishments in the downtown area. Since such businesses are not likely to come back, the question is: How to evolve a new downtown area that is vibrant, and vital, has aesthetic appeal, is functional for the citizens and meets the needs of both the residents and the commercial interests and other public and private establishments located there? How does Westport go forward? The strategies listed in this chapter are intended to move Westport in a productive direction.

In terms of the types of businesses in Westport in general (not just the downtown area), respondents to the telephone survey indicated the following:

Businesses	Right			No Opinion
	Too Few	Amount	Too Many	
Locally owned retail stores	70 %	22 %	5 %	3%
Family restaurants	50 %	41 %	3 %	6%
Fine dining restaurants	22 %	63 %	11 %	4%
Quick service restaurants	14 %	60 %	23 %	3%
National retail chain stores	6 %	27 %	65 %	2%

A significant proportion of the population (59 percent) feels that the downtown area needs more arts/cultural attractions and 56 percent felt that the downtown area needs recreational activities / a community center and a movie theater.

The Commission believes that the downtown area lacks evening vitality and encourages the development of restaurants, galleries, public events and activities that would expand the use of the downtown area at those times. In addition, whereas there are powerful, cultural and economic forces that encourage the development of national chains as replacements for locally owned businesses, the Plan recommends that the Town of Westport review its tax system with an eye toward providing special incentives for non-chain businesses in the downtown area and consider limiting the maximum size of individual businesses.

As this Plan is being created there is significant discussion regarding the possible location or relocation of a variety of public and private facilities either within the downtown area or outside of it. In this regard the Plan speaks to broad principles and general directions for conservation and development in Westport. Although there are those who believe the Plan should comment on the specific proposals, the Planning and Zoning Commission believes it is unwise to go beyond the statements of principle included in this document.

#### Parking

Issues around parking in the downtown area have also drawn considerable discussion. Many residents feel that the parking facilities are inadequate. In fact, the telephone survey found that 64 percent of respondents felt that the Town should provide for more parking in the downtown area.

The Plan strongly recommends that some parking in the downtown area be reconfigured. Three studies have been done in and about the downtown area since the year 2000 (2001 Downtown Plan, 2007 Downtown Merchants, 2007 Weston and Sampson) and each of these studies has recommended some form of parking improvement. The passage of time and actions taken by the Town, business and organizations indicate that some recommendations of these past studies require modification and updating. Westport should take the best strategies from each report, evaluate and coordinate them and then implement them with any modifications which may be desired.

## Traffic

Integral to discussing parking is a need to consider traffic, both existing and any incremental volume added by additional parking or commercial development. The limited number of streets, their narrowness, and the few access routes to get to the downtown area from other areas needs to be taken into account. Traffic is a repeated and high concern of residents and cannot be ignored in any redevelopment or improvement in the downtown area.

## Aesthetics

Finally, the aesthetics of the downtown area need to be improved. There is a rich, varied and interesting core built around the river but there is much that needs to be done to create a downtown area of special charm and appeal. There are few benches or tables in many areas; few opportunities to 'pause' and rest; essentially nothing for bicyclers; the river is not an integral part of the area and there is little green outside of Jesup Green. The Town has a major resource in the Parks and Recreation Commission and Department - both of which should be involved in the development and delivery of park-related plans and activities within the downtown area.

Whereas less than 50% of those who responded to the survey felt that Main Street would benefit from wider sidewalks or that Westport needs more restaurants and more apartments in the downtown area, the Plan takes a different position. These elements are believed to be essential to recreating a dynamic 'sense of place' in a revitalized, aesthetically appealing downtown area.

## Overall Goals

Therefore, with respect to Westport Center, the overall goals of the Plan are to:

- Create a dynamic, attractive, centrally focused yet expansive downtown area with varied points of interest for community life.
- Encourage the creation and execution of an overall, comprehensive conceptual design and plan that integrates and coordinates the extended physical elements already in the Center.

Specifically, the Plan seeks to:

- Retain much of the scale of the current architecture while considering the creation of additional floors over some current retail levels to create new retail options, restaurants, recreation and apartments for residents.
- Encourage and facilitate pedestrian life through establishment of new and expanded areas and uses for pedestrian convenience and community access – pocket parks; benches and places to sit, stroll.
- Encourage the community use of ‘outdoors’ in both traditional green spaces (parks) and in retail/restaurant corridors.
- Build on the unique visual aesthetics and physical assets of Westport, especially around improved access to the river, benches for dining and relaxing, fountains, outdoor art, etc.
- Go ‘up’ instead of ‘out’ in commercial zones to add vitality and save ground space for greenery and pedestrian access. At the same time, special consideration should be given to limiting changes such that the overall aesthetic and visual attractiveness of the downtown area is maintained.
- Identify ways to provide space for public restrooms in the downtown area.
- Develop a coordinated design policy for paving, planting, lighting, and signage for Westport Center, including the commercial districts along the west bank of the Saugatuck River.

## **Downtown Planning Studies**

Considerable thought, energy and resources both public and private have been invested in a series of studies regarding a wide range of issues/opportunities for the downtown area. Many suggestions and proposals have resulted.

In 2001, a study of the downtown area was prepared by the firm of Buckhurst, Fish, and Jacquemart. This study, a recommendation of the 1997 Plan of Conservation and Development, contains a number of observations and proposals which are still relevant and so the study continues to provide valuable insight as a planning tool for Westport's future needs.

In 2007, the First Selectman contracted with the firm of Weston & Sampson to evaluate possible uses for Baron's South and Jesup Green. The initial reason was to develop feasibility studies to determine the uses that would best fit on each respective property. Multiple scenarios were evaluated for each site. The final Weston and Sampson report will be given consideration as plans are tendered in the downtown area.

Another study completed in 2007, prepared for the Downtown Merchants Association by their consultant Milone & MacBroom, included concepts about increasing opportunities for parking in the downtown area, providing for riverfront enhancements on Parker Harding Plaza, and streetscape improvements along Main Street. The study also addressed some specific needs for refuse disposal for merchants and improving some problem intersections, traffic flow patterns and pedestrian improvements. While the use of a paid parking system was suggested in this report there may also be other funding that should be explored. The use of decked parking and the potential acquisition of some privately owned parking lots were also mentioned in the report.



There is much that is commendable in these studies as reflected in the Recommendations and Strategies provided in this chapter. The Plan recommends that the work already done be built upon. However, a major shortcoming is that the studies are not integrated and there is no overall comprehensive plan for the entire downtown area. A comprehensive plan for the entire downtown area would be a major benefit for the community and would provide considerable guidance to the Commission as it reviews land use applications over the next decade.

### **Establishment Of A Village District**

Westport's downtown area is an important asset to the community and the design, relationship and compatibility of structures, plantings, signs, roadways, street hardware and other objects in public view all contribute to the overall attractiveness of the downtown area and its economic vitality. It is important that:

- the distinctive character, landscape and historic value of the downtown area be protected and preserved,
- the conversion, conservation and preservation of existing buildings and sites be encouraged in a manner that maintains the historic or distinctive character of the district, and
- any new development occurs in a way that protects and enhances the character of the downtown area.

One of the best tools available to protect the distinctive character, landscape and historic structures within the downtown area is a "village district" zoning designation as authorized by CGS Section 8-2j. Designation of all or part of the downtown area as a "village district" will allow the Commission to have greater authority over the design aspects of applications in the downtown area and help ensure that the character is preserved and enhanced in the future. The Architectural Review Board could be designated as the village district consultant to assist the Commission with design matters.

The Commission should consider adopting a new zoning district in the downtown area which is a "village district" or establishing an overlay zone which is a "village district" in the downtown area.

## Recommendations

For the downtown area, the Plan recommends the following:

1. Promote pedestrian circulation and make the pedestrian the “lead player” in planning for the downtown area:
  - a. Widen the sidewalks, increase access to the river, and commit to a program to enhance pedestrian connections (including the creation of an “emerald necklace” of park and green space).
  - b. Change regulations to encourage the creation of places for ‘picnics’, outdoor dining, and relaxation in appropriate locations.
  - c. Create pedestrian ‘loops’ so that citizens can stroll across and along the river and through parks and return by different routes without having to cross major streets.
  
2. In the commercial areas (such as along parts of Main Street /Post Road / Myrtle Avenue, etc.), enact regulatory changes that:
  - a. Result in the creation of a “village district” (as authorized by Section 8-2j of the Connecticut General Statutes) in order to better guide the design of buildings and sites in the downtown area.
  - b. Allow additional uses which promote evening activities and outdoor life. These may include additional outdoor seating permitted for restaurants; seasonal kiosks/food vendors with their own seating in parks, plazas or other feasible locations.
  - c. Under Special Permit, consider addition or conversion of 3<sup>rd</sup> floors for residential, restaurants, art galleries, etc. consistent with the scale and style of the area.
  - d. Limit the overall size of any single retail space.
  - e. Allow for larger aggregations of space for community purposes (theaters including a movie theater which could be community sponsored, galleries, and recreation).
  - f. Encourage the maintenance and development of major community and cultural facilities in the downtown area.
  - g. Identify ways to provide space for public restrooms in the downtown area.
  - h. Develop a coordinated design policy for paving, planting, lighting, and signage for Westport Center, including the commercial districts along the west bank of the Saugatuck River.

3. Conduct a major study of traffic / parking for the entire downtown area (including private parking lots) and, as part of the study, consider the following options or alternatives:
  - a. restructuring Parker Harding Plaza to capture much of the land near the river for a “riverwalk” and to replace the lost parking elsewhere.
  - b. “decked” parking.
  - c. metered parking with rates based on proximity to Main Street (‘high’ rate along the Parker Harding lot and at more modest rate in the Baldwin parking lot and other public lots on the south side of the Post Road).
  - d. a minibus to access outlying lots.
4. Enhance the ‘natural’ aesthetics of the downtown area (the parks, river, open spaces) in a compelling and interesting way:
  - a. A plan should be created for Winslow Park.
  - b. Integrate Baron’s South and Winslow Park with easy access, outdoor art, seating areas, and other beautification improvements, with a clear separation between people space and dog space.
  - c. Any improvement of Baron’s South and Winslow Park should be done in a fashion that endeavors to preserve their natural beauty and terrain.
  - d. Encourage public access to Baron’s South and Winslow Park with improved parking at both facilities.
  - e. Enhance Jesup Green and Veteran’s Green.
  - f. Development of river banks should provide for public views and public access.
5. Establish an organization in the downtown area, such as a special services district, drawing its membership from both public and private sectors, to serve as the official coordinator of public and private funding and to facilitate development and coordination within the downtown area.
6. The Town should purchase parcels of land that are *strategically* located within the overall downtown area, for widely used community purposes.

The Plan recognizes and supports redevelopment of existing commercial properties in Westport Center when such redevelopment is designed to be in keeping with its distinctive character. The Plan also promotes an energetic Westport Center with businesses and other attractions that will draw shoppers and patrons alike to the downtown area.

## Enhance Saugatuck Center

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Saugatuck Center is a significant community focal point in its own way - containing a different mix of uses than Westport Center and regarded fondly by Westport residents because of its resources, location, and charm.

As this Plan is being created, Saugatuck is going through a transformation in that areas that had been zoned for commercial development have been rezoned for mixed commercial and residential uses. Most of the already existing retail uses will be retained and will provide convenient services for the new local residents. Beyond the currently approved applications, the larger Saugatuck area is being targeted for re-development and the neighborhood is likely to experience even more intense private development for housing and retail commercial uses.

One of the primary roles of Saugatuck is as a transportation hub. In addition to the Westport train station, Saugatuck contains an interchange on Interstate 95 and some harbor-related activities. Significant features in Saugatuck include:

- Transit hub with Saugatuck Station as an important element of the Town and region's transportation needs.
- Parking facilities, service businesses and commuter bus terminus.
- Convenience stores, coffee shops, dry cleaners and other businesses that serve the commuters and those using the area as a destination.
- Restaurants in close proximity to one another that provide a night-life business that attracts Westporters and out-of-towners.
  - The large parking lots at the station that are empty at night and on weekends can support and handle more of this use.
- Proximity to train station makes mixed use (residential and commercial) a smart alternative to commercial-only development.
- Marinas, boat yards and a rowing club are the heart of waterfront uses.
- Traffic will remain a problem regardless of the recommendations of this plan for changes or expansion of use within Saugatuck.

The fact is that the Saugatuck area will suffer from traffic congestion in several key intersections especially during peak hours given:

- the constrained area in Saugatuck;
- the need for vehicles and pedestrians to cross the Saugatuck River;
- the proximity of Exit 17 for I-95; and
- the train station.

## Saugatuck Center

Saugatuck Center is considered to be the area lying between the east side of Saugatuck Avenue and the Saugatuck River (but including the small RORD #2 Zone on the west side of Saugatuck Avenue) and extending south from the Saugatuck / Riverside / Treadwell intersection to Ferry Lane.

## Train Station Parking

Discussion of train station parking is contained in Chapter 8 - Provide A Variety of Transportation Choices.

Town citizens are understandably reluctant to adopt more radical approaches such as replacing the current Bridge Street Bridge, creating roundabouts or additional river crossings; widening streets and the like. In addition, there is the general traffic irony that improvements in traffic flow often draw new and additional traffic. As a result, absent a willingness to do more radical things, the “least/worst solution” to the traffic issues will continue to be manual management during peak hours with traffic officer intervention at key intersections as is being done today.

The Plan recommends that future development be configured so that Saugatuck Center maintains its existing character and a similar scale of its buildings and streetscapes. Saugatuck Center should continue to afford opportunities for small-scale business and services including those that can serve additional housing in the area, particularly water-dependent and marine related operations and increased opportunity for residential use. It should provide increased riverfront visibility and access. Saugatuck Center will continue as a center of commuter activity focused around the train station. Traffic circulation should be improved in conjunction with railroad improvements, as well as neighborhood appearance.

### **Establishment Of A Village District**

The Saugatuck area is an area where creation of a “village district” (as authorized by CGS Section 8-2j) will help to manage the amount and type of development while maintaining the character and scale of this area.

The design, relationship and compatibility of structures, plantings, signs, roadways, street hardware and other objects in public view all contribute to the overall attractiveness of the Saugatuck area. It is important that:

- the distinctive character, landscape and historic value of the Saugatuck area be protected and preserved,
- the conservation and preservation of existing buildings and sites be encouraged in a manner that maintains the historic or distinctive character of the district, and
- any new development occurs in a way that protects and enhances the character of the Saugatuck area.

The Commission should consider adopting a new Saugatuck zoning district which is a “village district” or establishing a Saugatuck overlay zone which is a “village district”.

## Improve Route 1

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Route 1 (also known as the Post Road) has two distinct characters.

- Post Road West (from the downtown area to Norwalk) tends to have a corporate image with larger buildings set back on landscaped lots with on site parking often screened from the roadway.
- Post Road East (from the downtown area to Fairfield) has developed into more of a traditional suburban strip, with a mix of shopping centers, retail stores, office buildings, gas stations and food establishments.

In the telephone survey, 63 percent of respondents felt that the Town should do more to enhance the appearance of the Post Road.

The Plan recommends that developments along the Post Road be encouraged to consider incorporating residential uses on commercial properties in order to create mixed-use buildings along the corridor. As residential units are added, this will increase the variety of housing choices in locations with access to shopping and public transportation.

The Plan recommends that developments along the Post Road be encouraged or required to share driveway access and parking in order to preserve the traffic-carrying capacity of Route 1, reduce intersection conflict points, and make the available parking more efficient.

In order to promote public safety, improved traffic flow, and additional greening of commercial properties, every use along the Post Road, especially Post Road East, should be required to provide cross easements to the Town which can be assigned to the abutting properties if or when needed.

The Plan recommends that Westport investigate ways to require that all properties along the Post Road which are improved or redeveloped make some provision for pedestrians and bicycles in ways that will result in a meaningful and safe pedestrian system along the Post Road (especially Post Road East).

In addition, the Plan recommends the provision of bus shelters, benches and schedule boards at appropriate places along Route 1 to meet the needs of workers and businesses.

The Plan recommends that Westport investigate ways to require that all uses along the Post Road which are improved or redeveloped provide landscaping in ways to enhance the Post Road, especially Post Road East.

The Plan recommends that the existing Highway Service District be reviewed with the intent of allowing upgrades and changes in use for existing gasoline stations and existing automobile repair shops. At the present time most gasoline service stations and automobile repair garages are non-conforming and as such are limited in their ability to improve or expand.

## **Continue To Promote Good Design**

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Westport has an Architectural Review Board (ARB) which advises Town officials as to planning, design, and aesthetic considerations and other matters relating to:

- new commercial structures,
- exterior alterations to commercial structures,
- fixed awnings, and
- free-standing signs.
- any multi-family or institutional use,
- any special permit use, and
- other uses that could have a significant impact on the community.

The ARB's recommendations are forwarded to the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Zoning Board of Appeals to be considered as part of application reviews. ARB's recommendations are advisory only. The ARB helps preserve and enhance the character of Westport and maintain the overall "sense of place."

In addition, the ARB should develop design review guidelines within the community as a whole and for specific areas (since a different development character may be appropriate in the downtown area as compared to Saugatuck). Experience in other communities has shown that when developers understand what design standards are expected or encouraged, they are more likely to provide what the community has indicated that they want.

## Strategies

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*See pages 13-17 to 13-20 for implementation priorities and responsibilities.*

### Maintain and Enhance Westport Center

1. Make the pedestrian the focus of development:
  - a. Commit to a program to enhance pedestrian connections.
  - b. Encourage the creation of pedestrian gathering places.
  - c. Create pedestrian 'loops' via different routes.
2. Commit to a major effort to develop Westport Center as the community focal point. Encourage the development and maintenance of major community and cultural facilities in the downtown area.
3. Allow additional uses which promote evening activities and outdoor life. These may include additional outdoor seating permitted for restaurants; seasonal kiosks/food vendors with their own seating in parks, plazas or other feasible locations.
4. To provide more space for some additional uses, consider increasing the number of stories allowed on commercial buildings, while maintaining the scale relative to adjacent properties.
  - a. Under Special Permit, consider addition or conversion of 3<sup>rd</sup> floors for residential, restaurants, art galleries, etc. consistent with the scale and style of the area
  - b. Allow for larger aggregations of space for community purposes (theaters including a movie theater which could be community sponsored, galleries, and recreation).
5. Establish a "village district" (as authorized by CGS Section 8-2j) in the downtown area.
6. Pursue a comprehensive strategy for addressing parking, parking regulations and traffic circulation.
7. Conduct a major study of traffic / parking for the downtown area (including private parking lots).
8. Coordinate and, with some modifications, implement the elements of the various studies that relate to parking, pedestrians, circulation and physical environment in the downtown area.
9. Consider establishing organizations that may be desirable to support the downtown area:
  - a. A voluntary organization drawing its membership from both public and private sectors, to serve as the official coordinator of public and private funding and to facilitate development and coordination within the downtown area, or
  - b. a special services district (as authorized by CGS Sec. 7-339m) to facilitate funding and coordination within the downtown area.



***See pages 13-17 to 13-20 for implementation priorities and responsibilities.***

10. Add a component of residential housing to any development program in the downtown area.
11. Limit the floor space of any one retail business in certain zones.
12. Evaluate ways to provide for public restrooms in Westport Center.
13. Develop a coordinated design policy for paving, planting, lighting, and signage for Westport Center, including the commercial districts along the west bank of the Saugatuck River.
14. Enhance the 'natural' aesthetics of the downtown area (the parks, river, and open spaces) in a compelling and interesting way.
15. Create a plan for Winslow Park.
16. Integrate Baron's South and Winslow Park with easy access, outdoor art, seating areas, and other beautification improvements, with a clear separation between people space and dog space.
17. Endeavor to preserve the natural beauty and terrain of Baron's South and Winslow Park.
18. Encourage public access to Baron's South and Winslow Park with improved parking at both facilities.
19. Review the 2007 Weston and Sampson report and consider its recommendations as the Town determines appropriate land uses for the Baron's South / Jesup Green area.
20. Enhance Jesup Green and Veteran's Green.
21. The Town should purchase parcels of land that are *strategically* located within Westport Center, for widely used community purposes.
22. Development of river banks should provide for public views and public access.

### **Enhance Saugatuck Center**

1. Establish a “village district” (as authorized by CGS Section 8-2j) in the Saugatuck Center area.
2. Encourage through regulation mixed use and multifamily residential in commercial zones to take advantage of proximity to the train station while being sensitive to the potential over-development of this area.
3. Where feasible, safe and buffered from residential uses, require public access to the waterfront on suitable commercial and mixed use properties.
4. Encourage marine uses through regulation.
  - a. If a Town of Westport Harbor or Waterfront Commission is created, include the Saugatuck waterfront, docks and landside support in the mission of such commission.
5. Develop a coordinated design policy for paving, planting, lighting and signage for Saugatuck Center, and advocate landscape improvement of the several extensive public parking facilities in the neighborhood.
6. Consider revising the zoning in Saugatuck Center to permit apartments at an appropriate density.

*See pages 13-17 to 13-20 for implementation priorities and responsibilities.*

### **Improve Route 1**

1. Promote mixed use and multifamily residential use when properties along Post Road East are redeveloped and in limited areas on Post Road West.
  - a. Encourage property owners to consider such uses when planning to redevelop larger Post Road properties
  - b. Consider adopting zoning regulations to allow greater building heights by Special Permit (within limits) for buildings with apartments.
2. Encourage 2<sup>nd</sup> floor apartments to be built on properties that are presently one story commercial since this will:
  - a. Provide more housing opportunities.
  - b. Make complementary use of the parking
  - c. Add apartments along major arterial road, close to shopping, and reduce the pressure to build them in single family residential zones.
3. Review the Highway Services District regulations with the intent of allowing upgrades and changes in use for existing gasoline stations and existing automobile repair shops.

*See pages 13-17 to 13-20 for implementation priorities and responsibilities.*

4. Encourage the placement of bus stops, benches and schedule boards at more locations to make bus commuting on Coastal Link safer and more comfortable.
5. Regrade “bumps” at intersections along the Post Road and elsewhere (bottoming of front or rear end of car and trucks is a hazard and consistently damages vehicles and slows traffic flow.).
6. Transition to a greener, safer, more pedestrian and bicycle friendly Post Road East by creating incentives for green space, sidewalks, and bicycle use. (e.g. exclude pavement under a permanent bike rack from coverage)
7. Through changes in zoning regulations, manage driveway access and parking capacity.
8. Through changes in the Zoning Regulations, consider reducing required parking for some commercial uses and permit/encourage the use of “pavers” in appropriate locations.
9. Maintain present zoning districts that provide a variety of scale on the Post Road and in other commercial areas.

#### **Continue To Promote Good Design**

1. Continue to focus on enhancing the architecture of Westport’s commercial, multifamily, institutional and special permit facilities and to maintain the overall “sense of place.”

## Provide A Variety of Transportation Choices

# 8

It is a goal of this Plan to support a variety of transportation options in Westport. In addition to the roadway system (highways and streets), Westport will also seek to provide alternatives to automobiles including pedestrian, bicycle, and transit.

*Westport will support alternatives to the automobile including pedestrian, bicycle, and transit ...*

Although the population of Westport has not changed significantly since 1970, traffic volumes have increased on local roads. As a result, traffic congestion was the number one issue identified as a “sorry” by Westport residents in a group session held to gain input from Westport residents.

### Goals

Minimize traffic congestion.

Facilitate the expansion of sidewalks and bike lanes across town.

Rail Service



Roadway Congestion



**Road Classifications**

**Limited Access Roads** - Designed to carry large volumes of traffic between regions and towns at high speed. They afford no access to abutting properties and have grade separated interchanges with ramps providing the only access.

**Arterials** - Roads carrying heavy volumes of traffic, often providing access to expressways and connecting important points within the community.

**Collectors** - Carry traffic between points in the community and collect traffic from residential neighborhoods for distribution to arterials and/or other points in the community.

**Local Roads** - The primary function is to provide access to individual properties. It carries traffic that has its destination or origin within the neighborhood.

**Address Roadway Safety and Capacity Issues**

Congestion on roads in Westport has been identified as one of the most significant issue that residents are concerned about.

To address areas with congestion and safety issues, Westport should continue to work with the South Western Regional Planning Agency (SWRPA) and the Connecticut Department of Transportation to obtain state and federal funding for the highest priority transportation improvements. Westport should be aggressive in identifying and acting upon opportunities to minimize congestion through actions including - but not limited to - changing the timing of traffic lights, adding "turn" lanes, utilizing rotaries, and redirecting traffic flows in particularly congested areas.

**Road Classifications**

<b>Limited Access Roads</b>	• Interstate 95	• Merritt Parkway
<b>Four Lane Arterials</b>	• Post Road (Route I)	• Sherwood Island Connector
<b>Arterials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Route 33</li> <li>• Route 57</li> <li>• Route 136</li> <li>• Avery Place</li> <li>• Compo Road (N and S)</li> <li>• Cross Highway</li> <li>• Ferry Lane (not E or W)</li> <li>• Green's Farm Road</li> <li>• Hillspoint Road</li> <li>• Jesup Road</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kings Highway North</li> <li>• Long Lots Road</li> <li>• Lyons Plains Road</li> <li>• Main Street</li> <li>• Myrtle Avenue</li> <li>• North Avenue</li> <li>• Riverside Avenue</li> <li>• Roseville Road</li> <li>• Saugatuck Avenue</li> <li>• Turkey Hill Rd (N and S)</li> </ul>
<b>Collector Streets</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bayberry Lane</li> <li>• Beachside Avenue</li> <li>• Broad Street</li> <li>• Bulkley Avenue (N and S)</li> <li>• Center Street</li> <li>• Clapboard Hill Road</li> <li>• Clinton Avenue</li> <li>• Coleytown Road</li> <li>• Colony / Pumpkin Hill / Terhune</li> <li>• Compo Beach Rd / Soundview Drive</li> <li>• East Main Street</li> <li>• Evergreen Avenue</li> <li>• Harbor Road / Duck Pond Road</li> <li>• Hillandale Road</li> <li>• Imperial Avenue</li> <li>• Kings Highway South</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maple Avenue (N and S)</li> <li>• Morningside Drive (N and S)</li> <li>• New Creek Road</li> <li>• Newtown Turnpike</li> <li>• Old Hill Road</li> <li>• Parker Harding</li> <li>• Partrick Road</li> <li>• Prospect Road</li> <li>• Stony Brook Road</li> <li>• Sturges Highway</li> <li>• Sylvan Road (N and S)</li> <li>• Sylvan Lane</li> <li>• Treadwell Avenue</li> <li>• Valley Road</li> <li>• Westway Road</li> <li>• Whitney Street</li> </ul>

## Vehicular Transportation Plan

## Accessibility

When provisions are made for public access, the Plan recommends that consideration be given to universal accessibility to ensure that the needs of residents of all ages with disabilities of all kinds are addressed in order that they may participate fully in community life.

Westport recognizes that traffic congestion is a regional problem, not just a local one. Delays on Interstate 95 can snarl local traffic within Westport. Likewise, new development, both within Westport as well as within nearby communities, has a cumulative effect that contributes to traffic congestion. Although incremental traffic flows from a single new project can be shown to have a negligible impact on additional traffic congestion, numerous projects viewed as a whole have the potential to significantly increase congestion. For these reasons, when seeking solutions to traffic congestion Westport should always look at the larger context.

Westport has a comprehensive inventory of pavement conditions of local streets, called a pavement management system, and uses this to prioritize road maintenance and repairs. This program should continue.

## Address Public Parking Needs

While private property owners are typically required to provide adequate parking on their property for their use, there are two general exceptions to this rule - Westport Center and the Saugatuck train station.

### **Westport Center**

The telephone survey found that 64 percent of survey respondents felt that the Town should provide for more parking in the downtown area. In terms of financing the creation of such additional parking, 56 % favored assessing merchants and businesses, 37% favored the addition of metered parking, and 8% felt that Westport property taxes should be increased to create such parking.

Nearly three quarters of all respondents (70 %) agreed that more parking is needed at the train stations. More than half (54 %) agreed with the need for a parking garage at the Saugatuck train station.

The Plan recommends that ways be found to reconfigure the parking supply in the downtown area to ensure sufficient parking exists to meet the needs of existing activities while also facilitating greater use for recreational purposes of the space along the Saugatuck River. Managing parking in the downtown area is a delicate balancing act; this Plan seeks to encourage greater activity during evening hours (i.e. restaurants and recreational activities) - and during all times for recreational and community activities - but it seeks to discourage the further transformation of the downtown area into a shopping mall populated by "formula" chain stores.

## **Saugatuck and Green's Farms Train Stations**

Westport residents attempting to utilize the stations after the peak morning period often find no parking spaces available - whether they hold permits or need a daily use space.

There has been considerable discussion in Westport regarding a desire for increased parking at the train stations, especially at Saugatuck. Merely adding capacity may not solve the problem for Westport residents since many of those using the parking facilities are not residents of the town and state law does not allow Westport to restrict the parking to town residents. Suggestions have been made to upgrade the Westport Transit District services provided by the Norwalk Transit District to meet additional trains, expand the routes, provide additional areas to park and ride the bus to the train and advertise schedules prominently. Some of these suggestions should be implemented for a period of time and reviewed for effectiveness.

However, it is not clear there is a panacea for this issue and so the Plan recommends a comprehensive study of parking associated with the commuter train service be conducted immediately and that appropriate action follow the study.



## **Provide For Pedestrians and Bicycles**

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There is interest in Westport for more and better facilities for pedestrians and bicycles. In the telephone survey, 61 percent of all respondents saw a need for more sidewalks along Post Road / Route 1 and 55 percent of all respondents felt more sidewalks are needed in residential neighborhoods. More than two-thirds of respondents (69 %) felt that Westport needs more facilities and trails for bicycles.

### **Pedestrians**

For some time, it has been the policy of the Town of Westport to encourage or require sidewalks in the higher density areas around Westport Center, Saugatuck Center and the Post Road. To provide more and better opportunities for pedestrian safety and access, the Plan recommends that:

- the policy of encouraging or requiring sidewalks in the higher density areas around Westport Center, Saugatuck Center and the Post Road be continued,
- residential areas be considered for sidewalks along arterial and collector roads,
- any gaps in the sidewalk system be closed, and
- the sidewalk system be maintained and improved.

### **Bicycles**

Interest is growing in the use of bicycles as a means of recreation and as a mode of transportation. To support bicycling in Westport, the Town should establish a bicycle committee to:

- oversee the repair, marking and maintenance of the existing and new bicycle lanes,
- promote bicycle use, and
- establish new safe bicycle routes, especially along arterial and collector roads.

The committee should also consider the potential for bicycle commuting and the need for bicycle facilities (racks, lockers, etc.) at the train stations, business locations, or elsewhere.

Pedestrian / Bicycle Map

# Continue To Support Transit

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## Rail Service

Metro North Railroad provides railroad service for Westport residents and workers from two stations - Saugatuck and Green's Farms. Service is available to and from stations on the New Haven line including Bridgeport, Stamford, and Grand Central Terminal in Manhattan.

This service is extensively used by local residents and workers and is a significant asset to Westport. Westport should continue to support these rail services.

## Bus Transit

The Norwalk Transit District, with support from the Town of Westport, provides a variety of transit services in the community. The services most used by residents are the commuter routes. While three quarters of all respondents to the telephone survey were aware of the commuter service, only eleven percent said they use the service often or sometimes.

Still, these transit services meet a wide variety of local needs and should continue to be supported. In addition, Westport should seek ways to support service enhancements: bus shelters and benches at major areas, increased frequency, expanded hours, express bus routes, expanded hours for the after school shuttle, expanded services, additional routes, additional outlying parking lot pick-up points, etc. In the telephone survey, 69 percent of respondents felt that Westport should provide for more shelters and benches along bus routes

2007 Service	Route(s)	Primary Function
<b>Coastal Link</b>	Service along Route 1 from Norwalk to Milford	Brings workers to Westport
<b>Saugatuck Shuttles</b>	Shuttle routes from Saugatuck Station to downtown, Imperial Avenue, Nyala Farms	Bring workers to Westport
<b>Commuter Routes (Saugatuck)</b>	Kings Highway / Newtown Turnpike (S2), Main St. / Weston Rd. / Compo Rd. (S3), Whitney / Hillspoint / Compo Beach (S4)	Bring residents to the train station
<b>Commuter Routes (Greens Farms)</b>	Coleytown / North / Morningside (G1) Bayberry / Meeker / Sturges / Maple (G2)	Bring residents to the train station
<b>After School Shuttle</b>	Three (3) routes from schools to downtown and other after-school destinations	Used by students
<b>Curb-To-Curb</b>	Origin to destination for elderly and disabled persons	Needs of elderly and disabled persons

## Transit Plan

*See pages 13-21 to 13-22 for implementation priorities and responsibilities.*

## **Strategies**

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### **Address Roadway Safety and Capacity Issues**

1. Aggressively seek ways to minimize traffic congestion.
2. Support local programs, such as "Greening of the Post Road," which help to maintain and enhance the overall appearance of the community.
3. Continue to work with the South Western Regional Planning Agency (SWRPA) to obtain state and federal funding for our highest priority transportation improvements.
4. Continue to work with the Connecticut Department of Transportation to ensure that areas with potentially unsafe conditions are systematically addressed.
5. Continue to maintain local roadways.

### **Address Parking Needs**

1. Immediately undertake a comprehensive study of parking issues associated with the commuter train service and take appropriate action following the study (increased parking rates, increased parking supply, increased transit use, etc.).
2. Find ways to reconfigure the parking supply to meet current needs and to enable additional recreational access to the River, but control the expansion so it does not further encourage the transformation of the downtown area into a shopping mall.
3. Improve the drop-off / pick-up area for transit.

### **Provide For Pedestrians and Bicycles**

1. Create a greenway that enhances pedestrian and bicycle access near waterways (Sound and river).
2. Give zoning incentives to commercial establishments in return for providing bike racks and other accommodations for bicyclists.
3. Maintain and enhance the sidewalk system in Westport, especially along busy roads and near the railroad stations.
4. Eliminate gaps in the sidewalk system.
5. Establish and maintain safe bicycle routes.

*See pages 13-21 to 13-22 for implementation priorities and responsibilities.*

*See pages 13-21 to 13-22 for implementation priorities and responsibilities.*

### **Continue To Support Transit**

1. Continue to support transit services in the community, and improve their attractiveness by better tailoring services to the needs of users
2. Support the construction of bus shelters and benches at service locations
3. Seek ways to support transit service improvements being considered by the Westport Transit District (post schedules at bus stops, promote the transit system more aggressively, consider increased frequency and additional routes, etc.).

## Address Community Facility Needs

# 9

Community facilities and services contribute significantly to Westport's community character and its quality of life. The key purpose of the Plan of Conservation and Development is to evaluate strategic long-term options and state a broad outline for physical space to meet anticipated community needs both present and future.

It is important to point out that Westport non-governmental organizations, both voluntary and not-for-profit, provide a wide spectrum of appreciated services to the Town's residents and make important contributions to the Town's quality of life.

*Community facilities such as Compo Beach and the Library are highly valued by Westport residents ...*

### Goals

Create a vigorous program for obtaining and retaining land for municipal requirements, recreational purposes, and open space buffering to assure that future needs will be met as available land diminishes.

Provide for community facilities.

Compo Beach



Town Hall





## Land Acquisition Criteria

Criteria which might be used by the Committee to determine whether to retain or acquire property for municipal purposes might include:

- 1) land adjacent to Town-owned property,
- 2) land that can be used for recreation specific municipal uses,
- 3) land currently designated as open space in the Plan of Conservation and Development,
- 4) land consisting of over 5 acres,
- 5) land that is waterfront property,
- 6) land with freshwater wetlands, tidal wetlands, steep slopes, ponds and streams, and /or offers flood storage,
- 7) land left undeveloped to prevent over development,
- 8) land that offers abundant wildlife habitat, and
- 9) land that acts as a buffer between commercial and residential zones or low and high density areas.

## Establish A Land Acquisition Committee

As Westport has grown and changed over the years, the type of services and facilities desired by residents has also changed. This trend is anticipated to continue. The amount of land in Westport is finite and will become increasingly more difficult to acquire.

In order to meet the future needs of the community, Westport needs to have land readily available for open space, new facilities or expansion of existing facilities. Whenever a land acquisition would provide a reasonable opportunity or flexibility to address foreseeable community needs, the Plan recommends that the Town of Westport:

- acquire available land parcels,
- acquire land adjacent to existing Town owned properties, and
- accept gifts of land when offered.

To accommodate future municipal needs and to protect open space, Westport should establish a permanent Land Acquisition Committee with the responsibility to identify new opportunities for acquisition and help to negotiate acquiring property.

## Expand Utilization of Existing Sites

### **Retain Existing Facilities**

Land suitable for municipal use is in limited supply and expensive. The Plan recommends that Westport not dispose of existing land or buildings unless absolutely necessary. One of the ways that Westport was able to accommodate the recent school enrollment surge was because the Town owned existing buildings which could be re-deployed for school use. This would not have been possible had the Town disposed of these buildings when school enrollments were in a low cycle.

### **Enable More Use Of Existing Sites**

At the present time, the coverage limitations in the zoning regulations limit the ability of the Town to add onto some existing municipal buildings. The Plan recommends that the Planning and Zoning Commission consider changing the zoning regulations to allow, through a Special Permit process, greater lot coverage for municipal facilities. Such a process will provide an opportunity for the Commission to evaluate any impacts (drainage, buffering, aesthetics, etc.) during the application review.

## Address Community Facility Issues

**Education Facilities** - While the school system is expected to have adequate classroom capacity for anticipated enrollments through the year 2017, the Board of Education should continue to monitor and project enrollments in order to anticipate future needs and present these needs to the appropriate Town commissions in advance.

**Indoor Cultural / Recreation Facilities** - Local agencies should continue to share the use of school buildings and other facilities such as the Library, Senior Center, Teen Center, etc. The Plan recommends that the Town evaluate the interest and utility of a centrally-located multi-purpose facility which could provide needed community space and avoid replication of similar facilities at different locations. The current Senior Center facility is expected to run out of space by the year 2011. Expansion of this facility should be considered.

**Outdoor Cultural / Recreation Facilities** - The Parks and Recreation Department should add new outdoor facilities to meet community needs and to maintain and enhance the facilities that currently exist. A study should be conducted to evaluate the feasibility and impact of adding night lighting to facilities to expand their usefulness and provide venues for community events. The Plan supports the upgrade of Parks and Recreation facilities as needed.

To make the most efficient and effective use of the outdoor fields which are available, the Department has added all-weather surfacing to some existing fields. With appropriate safeguards and after careful review, this program should continue.

**Public Works** - The Public Works facility, located on the Sherwood Island Connector does not have adequate space for storage of materials or equipment maintenance / storage. To meet future needs, the facility should be expanded or relocated. In addition, additional sites for yard waste and storm debris should be identified and developed.

In terms of waste management, the Plan recommends that the Town make long-term arrangements for disposal of solid waste and expand the area needed for recyclables. New recycling requirements will likely result in needing additional space.

**Police Station / Emergency Medical** - The Police Station / Emergency Medical Service building on Jesup Road is not adequate for current needs for either department. Studies on how to address this need should be completed and implemented.

## Telephone Survey Results

In the telephone survey of Westport adults, about 48 percent of respondents could not name any additional community facility needs in Westport.

Other respondents identified the following potential facility needs:

- Teen Center / more teen activity
- Community Center
- More parks / more open space
- Don't move the YMCA
- Build a new YMCA
- Environmental issues
- Movie theatre
- Public safety increase

## Student Surveys

In the spring of 2007, two surveys were conducted at Staples High School asking students about potential facility needs. The results of these surveys were very similar and the responses are blended here:

- Movie theater
- Mini-golf course
- Outdoor concerts
- Bowling alley

In addition, the students expressed interest in longer weekend hours at Compo Beach, additional amenities at Tocquet Hall, a "safe rides" program, and other facilities.

Like their parents, students also expressed support for more parking in the downtown area and less traffic on local streets.

**Fire Department** - Westport has a paid fire department operating out of four fire stations (Post Road East, Saugatuck, Green's Farm, Coleytown). All of the fire stations are suffering from size / maintenance / design issues and are at risk of becoming obsolete as equipment changes. At some point, Westport may need to decide between ordering custom equipment to fit some of the stations or renovating stations to fit the equipment. Since some of the stations may have other issues such as access and egress, the situation at each station should be evaluated to determine the optimal outcome. For example, it is possible that it may make sense in the long run to consolidate / relocate some existing stations to best meet present and future community needs.

**General Government** - There is a lack of space at the Town Hall for municipal departments which affects the Town's ability to efficiently meet community needs. The Plan recommends that the building department be relocated back to the Town Hall to provide "one-stop" permitting for many people. The Town should study whether the unfinished space in the building could be used to provide additional finished floor area and whether there is the potential to add onto the building.

**Other Issues** - A "maintenance study committee" has been evaluating how to best maintain municipal facilities and equipment and their recommendations should be considered for inclusion in the Plan once the report is complete. A study should be conducted of ways to address Town-wide grounds maintenance.

The construction of a vehicular access to the parking lot on Imperial Avenue should be built or included as part of any project in the Jesup Green area and to benefit other activities in the downtown area.

There is evidence of unmet demand for additional dock and mooring space for boats and the Boating Advisory Committee should be encouraged to continue seeking ways to address this need.

The current animal shelter is in a state of significant disrepair and this should be addressed.

To expand the utility of the Baron's South property, the Town should consider acquiring some properties along Imperial Avenue and the Post Road.

Use of Town land for Levitt Pavilion, the outdoor concert / entertainment venue overlooking the Saugatuck River, should continue to be supported.

Facilities Map

*See pages 13-23 to 13-25 for implementation priorities and responsibilities.*

## **Strategies**

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### **Land Acquisition Committee**

1. Establish and maintain a permanent, independent committee appointed by the First Selectman which would meet regularly to oversee the acquisition and retention for present and future needs, land for open space, active recreation, schools and municipal function growth. This committee, in consultation with municipal boards and agencies would oversee the acquisition for the following reasons:
  - a. Protect important resources (natural, scenic, etc.),
  - b. Provide land to meet identified or future municipal needs
  - c. Expand existing land holdings
  - d. Make connection to and enhance existing open spaces
  - e. Interconnect open spaces to create greenways
2. The Land Acquisition Committee should:
  - a. at a minimum, be made up of representatives from the Parks and Recreation Commission, Representative Town Meeting, and Conservation Commission, and
  - b. be in consultation with the land use department for information and guidance on parcels of land.
3. The Land Acquisition Committee and the First Selectman would use at least the following methods:
  - a. Outright purchase of property
  - b. Establish rights of first refusal with landholders.
  - c. Seek opportunities to participate in grant programs to acquire land.
  - d. Seek opportunities to partner with other organizations.
  - e. Encourage existing private clubs, institutional properties and other “managed” open space to remain, or alternatively the town should seek to acquire or preserve these properties as “preserved” open space.
  - f. Encourage land trusts and other nonprofit agencies to acquire open space.
  - g. Encourage non profit groups to connect greenways with land holdings of other non-profits and with municipal land.
4. The Land Acquisition Committee should make recommendations for the appropriate funding mechanisms to facilitate the purchase of land.

### **Expand Utilization of Existing Sites**

1. Be cautious about disposing of existing facilities since such facilities may be desirable for future community needs.
2. Acquire land adjacent to existing facilities when it would provide a reasonable opportunity or flexibility to address community needs.
3. Consider modifying the zoning regulations to allow municipal facilities to have greater coverage (building and impervious) through a Special Permit.

*See pages 13-23 to 13-25 for implementation priorities and responsibilities.*

### **Address Community Facility Issues**

1. Continue to monitor and project school enrollments in order to anticipate possible future needs.
2. Investigate options for consolidating Board of Education administrative space and for storing school buses.
3. Continue to coordinate the use of school buildings and other facilities (Library, Senior Center, Teen Center, etc.).
4. Evaluate the interest in a multi-purpose facility to provide community space and programs.
5. Upgrade Parks and Recreation facilities as needed.
6. Provide and maintain outdoor cultural / recreational facilities to meet community needs.
7. Consider implementing the recommendations of the “maintenance study committee”.
8. Conduct a study of ways to address the location of facilities for town-wide grounds maintenance.
9. As appropriate and with careful review, continue to add all-weather surfacing to existing fields.
10. Expand the Public Works Facility to provide adequate space for storage of materials or for equipment maintenance / storage.
11. Identify additional sites for yard waste and storm debris.
12. Make long-term arrangements for disposal of solid waste.
13. Expand the area needed for recyclables.

*See pages 13-23 to 13-25 for implementation priorities and responsibilities.*

**Address Community Facility Issues (continued)**

14. Complete and implement a study to address the needs of the Police / Emergency Medical services.
15. Evaluate the overall configuration of fire stations and determine the optimal outcome (consolidation / relocation / renovation) to best meet present and future community needs.
16. Seek to expand the space at Town Hall to best meet community needs.
17. Build vehicular access from the Library / Police area to the parking lot on Imperial Avenue, incorporating a public parking lot and other community facilities.
18. Encourage the Boating Committee to continue seeking ways to address increased demand for boat storage (both on-water and on-land).
19. Address the need for a clean and sanitary animal shelter.
20. Consider acquiring some of the properties along Imperial Avenue and the Post Road in order to expand the utility of the Baron's South property for community purposes.

## Address Infrastructure Needs

# 10

The availability of utility infrastructure such as piped utilities (water, sewer, natural gas, and storm drainage), wired utilities (such as electric, telephone, and cable communications) and wireless services can influence overall community development.

Westport intends to guide the provision of utility services to improve the health and welfare of the community but not allow utility availability to dictate a land use structure, patterns, or development. The Plan seeks to ensure that utilities are suitably located and have adequate capacity to support the goals of the community.

*Utility infrastructure should serve the current and desired future land use patterns in Westport...*

### Goals

Address utility infrastructure needs.

Configure utility infrastructure to support the growth patterns approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Sewer Services



Water Service





## Address Storm Drainage Issues

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Storm drainage is a major issue in Westport. As stated in the 1997 Plan:

“... only limited progress has been made on identified stream drainage deficiencies due to conflicting priorities of flood control and environmental conservation committees and general objection by property owners abutting proposed project areas. Neighbors continue to be more concerned about the aesthetic impact on their properties rather than the enhanced safety from flooding. Major improvement along Muddy Brook and Pussy Willow Brook did not proceed because of these problems.”

In the telephone survey, 72 percent of Westport residents felt that the Town needs to do more about drainage.

Some people feel that the replacement of older, smaller houses with larger structures and the increased lot coverage that occurs has resulted in more runoff and more downstream drainage problems.

On the other hand, the Town has implemented a policy requiring a “zero net increase in the *rate* of runoff” for new residential construction. Although the *amount* of runoff may increase as a result of new development, the *rate* of runoff should not increase.

Drainage is a significant issue in Westport and Town agencies should continue to find ways to address the storm drainage issues which are identified.

The Plan recommends that Westport undertake an update to the 1970 master drainage plan (the “Jackson” study). Since so much has changed in Westport since completion of that study, the assumptions and recommendations in this document should be reviewed and compared with development trends and current “best management practices” to ensure that Westport has the best tools available to manage drainage issues in the community.

## Address Issues In Unsewered Areas

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While the majority of the land area in Westport will be served by public sewers, there are still large areas that will rely on individual septic systems.

Over the past ten years, Westport has adopted two policies to help define and manage activities in these areas:

**Sewer Avoidance** - In 2005, the Water Pollution Control Authority adopted a policy of sewer avoidance in all areas outside the “blue line” on the 2002 Wastewater Facilities Master Plan and indicated that it will not permit the extension of sewer infrastructure to serve properties outside the boundaries of the sewer service area, except when municipal sewers are the only reasonable means of mitigating water pollution problems or health or safety problems caused by the failure of subsurface disposal system(s) in the same geographic area.

**Maintenance of Large Septic Systems** - In 2006, the Town adopted an ordinance requiring that large septic systems (more than 5,000 gallons per day) establish and maintain both an “operation fund” (to fund the cost of operating the system for a five-year period) and an “emergency fund” (to repair the system if it should fail) as well as provide additional protections.

However, these strategies do not address a key issue that occurs in unsewered areas - the lack of maintenance of septic systems. Westport should adopt a “septic management” ordinance and program that will ensure that all septic systems in the community are properly maintained.

Such an ordinance will help people who move to Westport but have little experience managing a septic system and help protect water quality. Although the WPCA “desires to encourage proper maintenance, permitting and oversight of on-site septic systems ...”, this is not enough to ensure that the appropriate actions are taken.

In the telephone survey, 57 percent of households surveyed felt that Westport should adopt a septic management ordinance to ensure that septic systems are properly maintained.

## Septic Management

For septic management, properties with septic systems should be identified and notified every three years that their septic system must be pumped.

Properties that do not get pumped (tracked by septic pumping records at the Westport Weston Health District) would be inspected and targeted for enforcement.

Pumping reports should also comment on the overall condition of the tank and the septic field.

## **Address Public Sewer Issues**

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### **Maintain The Sewer Limit Line**

It is the goal of the Plan to promote a sewer service and waste treatment system that is adequate to serve the disposal requirements of the Town of Westport, but is not intended to promote new or more intensive development.

Westport has made great strides in sewage treatment in the past ten years. The Wastewater Facilities Master Plan which identified areas which were likely to need sewage treatment in the future and the capacity needed to service these areas was completed in 2002. Based on this master plan, Westport is in the process of upgrading the capacity of the sewage treatment plant and improving the quality of the discharge.

The capacity of the sewage treatment plant is projected to be adequate for community needs to the year 2025. Further, with the planned extension to Saugatuck Shores, the most pressing sewage treatment issues in Westport will have been addressed.

The potential sewer service area was codified in that Plan by what has become known as the “blue line”. The “blue line” defines the limits of sewage extensions which are anticipated in Westport.

### **Consider A Sewage Allocation Strategy**

In order to ensure that sewer extensions do not promote additional development (or more intensive development), Westport may wish to consider adopting a sewage allocation strategy whereby properties within the “blue line” are allocated a maximum sewage discharge. Land use activities which require more sewage capacity than allocated by the WPCA would be required to go through a more rigorous approval process.

Sewer Plan

## **Address Public Water Issues**

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Westport has public water service in many areas. Public water service helps to ensure that an adequate quality and quantity of water is available to support public health and safety and meet community needs.

While water service in Westport is provided by a private company (Aquarion), the Town is an important partner to ensure the protection of the water system. There are two wellfields in Westport (Coleytown and Canal Street) where the quality of the water supply needs to be protected. The Aquifer Protection Overlay Zone, Section 38 of the Zoning Regulations, and regulations by the Conservation Commission, which is the designated aquifer protection agency, is a good start. The aquifer protection regulations and the zoning map should be reviewed and updated in the future as Level A aquifer mapping is completed by Aquarion (due by 2008). State regulations will likely require the adoption of new regulations for these aquifer areas within the next several years.

During the planning period, the Town should continue to promote the extension of public water. Public water service will help to provide a potable water supply to users in Westport and help extend fire protection to additional areas of the community.



## **Manage Wired Utilities**

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Westport has adequate wired utility systems (electricity, telephone, cable) in place to meet community needs.

While residents were generally pleased that these services tended to be “transparent” in the home or office (they worked when they were needed), residents wished that they were more invisible along the streets of Westport. Underground utilities reduce outages due to storms and enhance the scenic streetscape. In the future, Westport should seek ways to encourage wired utilities to be placed underground whenever opportunities to do so present themselves and should explore alternatives to conventional “undergrounding” techniques. The “undergrounding” of wired utilities should be a priority in the downtown area, in Saugatuck, along the Post Road, and in scenic areas (such as the shore area).

So that such wired services continue to be available, Westport should continue to work with utility companies who seek to improve the reliability of their systems by undertaking tree trimming projects. There is a delicate balance between community character (which can be adversely affected by aggressive tree trimming) and utility availability and reliability (which can be enhanced by tree trimming). Westport should encourage the planting of appropriate trees when near to utility lines and then protect tree canopies from unreasonable destruction from utility pruning.

## **Enhance Wireless Services**

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Over the past ten years, there has been a significant increase in the usage and availability of wireless communications services. While the primary concern with cellular phones ten years ago was the visibility of towers, the primary issue for many has shifted to the availability of service. Fortunately, as call volume has increased, it is now becoming increasingly viable to establish smaller cells which have less visible antennae. Westport should continue to work with wireless communication companies to address the communication needs of its residents in the most appropriate way.

Over the last several years, Westport has made significant strides in offering wireless Internet connections at the Town Hall and other facilities. These efforts should continue and be expanded.

## **Strategies**

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*See pages 13-26 to 13-27 for implementation priorities and responsibilities.*

### **Address Storm Drainage Issues**

1. Undertake preparation of an update to the 1970 master drainage plan (the "Jackson" study).
2. Identify and address storm drainage and flooding issues on private property and in the streets.
3. Address the effect of groundwater on drainage.
4. Include provision for street drainage improvements and maintenance projects in the municipal budget on an annual basis.

### **Address Public Sewer Issues**

1. Continue to provide a sewage treatment system which meets local needs but does not promote more intensive development.

### **Address Issues In Unsewered Areas**

1. Adopt a septic maintenance ordinance and program requiring that septic systems be pumped and maintained regularly.
2. Distribute information on a regular basis on how to maintain a septic system.



*See pages 13-26 to 13-27 for implementation priorities and responsibilities.*

#### **Address Public Water Issues**

1. Promote an adequate supply of public water to serve the domestic, commercial and fire protection requirements of Westport.
2. Support the extension of public water service and fire hydrants throughout Westport.
3. When Level A mapping is completed by Aquarion, update the aquifer protection regulations and the zoning regulations and map.

#### **Manage Wired Utilities**

1. Seek opportunities to place wired utilities underground.
2. Take whatever action possible to require utility companies to retain, replant, preserve and protect the trees affected by their projects and require growth-appropriate trees for locations under utility wires.

#### **Enhance Wireless Services**

1. Work with wireless communication companies to address the communication needs of residents in the most appropriate way.
2. Expand the availability of wireless internet connectivity.

## Promote Sustainable Initiatives

11

### **“Green” Strategies**

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Reducing pollution that causes global warming, including inefficient consumption of resources and excessive greenhouse gas emissions has become a priority in the United States and other countries.

In 2006, the Town of Westport established a Green Energy Task Force (GETF) to encourage and assist Westport residents, businesses and the town itself to reduce energy consumption through conservation and increased use of green energy options. The task force is charged with the mission to develop a Clean Energy Action Plan for the town and include recommendations to the First Selectman on measures Westport can implement to reduce the use of fossil fuels.

In early 2007, Westport joined ICLEI (founded as the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives), an international membership association of local governments dedicated to addressing environmental issues. Through these actions, Westport has committed to being a part of the solution to protect and conserve water, air and land by local methods and in cooperation with neighboring communities and the state and federal governments.

Each action the town undertakes through local government and private initiatives will provide multiple long term benefits, save money, protect our valuable resources and provide for the health of citizens.

The Plan recommends that Town boards and commissions review their policies and regulations, focusing on creating opportunities, requirements and incentives for optimizing energy efficiency, identifying alternative sources of energy and replacing energy sources with renewable ones, reducing consumption of valuable resources, and reducing carbon dioxide and other polluting emissions.

The Town should establish renewable energy sources for buildings and transportation, reduce water consumption, reduce consumption of all products and increase the use of recycled and recyclable ones, and evaluate ways to further protect land.

*During the next ten to twenty years, there are some issues and strategies that are expected to consume more attention and require more action in order to promote sustainable initiatives ...*

Inherent in the Town's goals is the cooperation of Westport citizens to incorporate practices into their lives to reduce consumption of energy, water, land and products; eliminate polluting materials; and use energy saving methods, including reuse of resources and increased energy efficiency. Both the Town and Westport citizens should identify and evaluate opportunities for savings and investments, examining energy usage in production, including transportation, and whether the resources used in the product are renewable. In addition, reducing the size of homes lowers the demand for heat and electricity.

Westport has entered into a State of Connecticut program with a goal to have 20 percent of its electrical use come from renewable sources by the year 2010. The town has already begun the process of switching to alternative and renewable sources of energy, including the installation of solar panels on Town buildings. The Town should be aggressive in the use of the present and developing technology to conserve and reduce pollution and employ new sources of renewable energy as they become available.

Funding will be required for a wide variety of initiatives to optimize and increase energy efficiency including, but not limited to:

- town energy audits
- guidelines and regulations for municipal construction projects consistent with these goals, including new construction and renovation of the town infrastructure, such as buildings, streetlights and parking lot lights to lower water and power consumption and reduce maintenance costs
- conversion to sources of renewable resources where available
- purchase of vehicles with decreased energy consumption and renewable fuel sources
- Implementing educational outreach programs
- Implementing recommendations by the GETF as set forth in its plan
- Implementing a long term plan to continue to reduce greenhouse gas emissions

## **"Green" Buildings**

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There is growing interest in making buildings more environmentally responsible. While efforts to date have largely been voluntary on the part of owners and builders, Westport should become a leader in this area.

The most recognized program in the United States promoting the design, construction, and operation of buildings that are environmentally responsible is the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System. This program was put together by the United States Green Building Council (USGBC), a non-profit organization working to promote buildings that are environmentally responsible, prof-

itable and healthy places to live and work. More information is available at [www.usgbc.org](http://www.usgbc.org).

At the present time, LEED is a voluntary national rating system for developing high-performance, sustainable buildings. Based on published standards, LEED emphasizes state-of-the-art strategies for sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection and indoor environmental quality.

Westport should adopt some level of LEED certification for new buildings and major renovations.

## **“Green” Developments / Neighborhoods**

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Just as standards have been developed for “green” buildings, standards are also being developed for environmentally responsible, sustainable developments. These standards are also part of the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program ([www.usgbc.org](http://www.usgbc.org)).

While not yet finalized, the LEED for Neighborhood Development Rating System integrates the principles of smart growth, urbanism, and green building into national standards for neighborhood design. Some of the criteria being considered include:

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Sample Elements (partial)</b>
<b>Smart Location &amp; Linkage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proximity to wastewater infrastructure</li> <li>• Natural resource conservation</li> <li>• Floodplain avoidance</li> <li>• Brownfield redevelopment</li> <li>• Reduced automobile dependence</li> </ul>
<b>Neighborhood Pattern &amp; Design</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compact development</li> <li>• Diversity of uses / housing types</li> <li>• Walkable streets / transit facilities</li> <li>• Access to public spaces</li> <li>• Community outreach and involvement</li> </ul>
<b>Green Construction &amp; Technology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pollution prevention</li> <li>• Resource efficiency in buildings</li> <li>• Building reuse and adaptive reuse</li> <li>• Minimize site disturbance</li> <li>• Best management practices</li> </ul>
<b>Innovation &amp; Design Process</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Innovation</li> <li>• Exemplary performance</li> </ul>

At some time in the future, Westport should require some level of LEED certification for new development or include it as a consideration in discretionary zoning approvals.

## Sea Level Rise

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Sea level rise as a result of global warming is a trend which is unprecedented in written history and for which there is little public policy guidance. While some are still debating whether sea level rise will occur, the key issue that most are grappling with is the magnitude of sea level rise in some defined time period.

A 1995 report prepared for the United States Environmental Protection Agency " (The Probability of Sea Level Rise, James G. Titus and Vijay Narayanan. 1995. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. 186 pp. EPA 230-R95-008) indicated that sea level was already rising 2.5-3.0 mm/year (10 to 12 inches per century) along much of the United States coast.

Since Westport is a coastal community, sea level rise will affect many properties in town, both directly and indirectly. How to respond to the issues of sea level rise depends, in part, on the magnitude of the increase or the probability that the sea will rise by a given magnitude.

According to the EPA report, global warming is most likely to raise sea level 15 cm by the year 2050 and 34 cm by the year 2100. There is even some possibility that the increase will be higher and/or that the rate of change will be greater than anticipated. For example, the same EPA study found that "along the coast of New York, which typifies the United States, sea level is likely to rise 26 cm by 2050 and 55 cm by 2100." The factors which might contribute to this larger increase in the New York area include compaction and subsidence of land, groundwater depletion, and natural climate variations.

One public policy option which might be considered in response to sea level rise includes whether to increase the applicable regulatory flood elevations in coastal areas. This would increase the cost and difficulty of building in coastal areas yet would provide better long-term protection for properties in flood-prone areas.

## Strategies

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### "Green" Strategies

1. Require Westport government and schools to reduce water and energy consumption, including carbon emissions by 10% by 2011 (approximately 3-5 years) with a further evaluation of the goals and objectives in GETF's plan, when available, to increase the reduction.
2. Direct 10% of Westport's energy budget toward energy saving measures.
3. Lobby the State of Connecticut for building code changes to require the use of energy reducing and recyclable materials and to allow for use of all renewable energy sources.
4. Establish regulation and policy changes to both require some and allow for other energy savings and renewable energy sources.
5. Partner with organizations that provide consumers with energy saving programs.
6. Establish regulation and policy changes to reduce water consumption.
7. Establish regulation and policy changes to use recycled and recyclable materials.
8. Establish incentives, such as property tax reductions, for private citizen conversion to renewable energy sources and hybrid vehicles.
9. Evaluate the zoning regulations for ways to reduce land coverage and building size to conserve energy.
10. Publicize in the community and the schools on a regular basis, available methods to reduce energy consumption, use renewable energy, and reduce use of other valuable resources.
11. Preserve to the greatest extent possible, existing mature forested areas.
12. Promote tree planting, other plants and ground covers on Town property. Encourage this practice in private and commercial spaces.
13. Encourage best practices for the maintenance of lawns and green spaces.

*See pages 13-28 to 13-29 for implementation priorities and responsibilities.*

*See pages 13-28 to 13-29 for implementation priorities and responsibilities.*

#### **“Green” Buildings**

1. Continue to monitor evolution of standards for “green” buildings.
2. Incorporate “green” building standards and low impact development standards into the land use regulations.

#### **“Green” Developments / Neighborhoods**

1. Continue to monitor evolution of standards for “green” developments and neighborhoods.
2. Incorporate “green” development / neighborhood standards and low impact development standards into the land use regulations.

#### **Sea Level Rise**

1. Continue to monitor information on global sea level rise.
2. Evaluate how to best prepare for the implications of global sea level rise to best balance public health, safety, and welfare.
3. Change the floodplain regulations to require at least one foot of free-board for new or substantially improved homes.

As the Plan is implemented, the following map illustrates the location and intensity of *future* land uses that are desired. Since this map illustrates the stated goals, policies, objectives, and recommendations of each of the Plan sections when combined together, it is called the Future Land Use Plan for Westport.

Residential Areas



Business Areas



Open Space



Community/Institutional Uses



Natural Resources



Infrastructure





## Future Land Use Plan Categories

The Future Land Use Plan contains the following categories:

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<b>Residential Areas</b>	Areas used or intended for lowest, low, or moderate density residential uses <u>Map Legend</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lowest Density Residential</li><li>• Low Density Residential</li><li>• Moderate Density Residential</li></ul>
<b>Business Areas</b>	Areas used or intended for development of business or industrial uses <u>Map Legend</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• General Business / Business Center</li><li>• Restricted Business</li><li>• Other Business</li></ul>
<b>Open Space</b>	Areas with existing or desirable open space and greenway trails <u>Map Legend</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Open Space</li></ul>
<b>Community / Institutional</b>	Existing or desired uses that will help meet community needs <u>Map Legend</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Municipal Facility / Institutional</li></ul>
<b>Natural Resource Constraints</b>	Areas where natural resource protection is a priority of the Plan <u>Map Legend</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 100-Year Coastal Floodzone</li><li>• Natural Resource Constraints</li></ul>
<b>Infrastructure</b>	Sewer Limit Line - the boundary of areas intended to be served with public sewer service <u>Map Legend</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sewer Limit Line</li><li>• Parking</li></ul>

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Future Land Use Plan

## Action Areas Categories

While the Future Land Use Plan shows the overall categorization of all areas of Westport, the “Action Areas” map on the facing page highlights the major policy recommendations of this Plan:

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<b>Downtown Action Area</b>	Focus on enhancing the main activity center of Westport
<b>Saugatuck Action Area</b>	Focus on enhancing the secondary activity center in Westport
<b>Route 1 Action Area</b>	Focus on enhancing the appearance and function of the Post Road
<b>Generalized Potential Housing Diversity Areas</b>	Areas with the most potential to provide for housing diversity and where sidewalks should be a priority
<b>Proposed Greenway Trails</b>	Areas proposed for the eventual establishment of off-street and on-street trails interconnecting different areas

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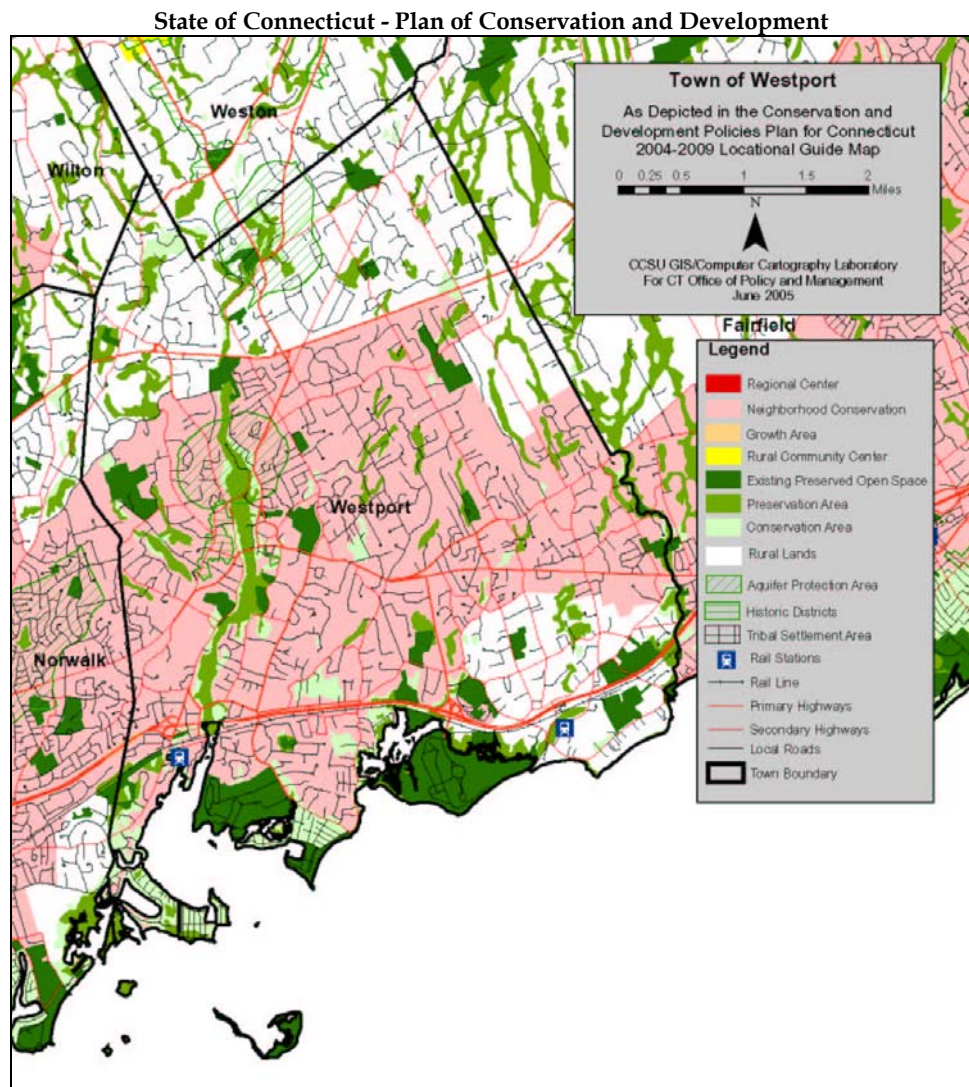
Action Areas Map

## Consistency With State and Regional Plans

In accordance with CGS 8-23, the Future Land Use Plan was compared to state and regional plans and was found to be generally consistent with both the State Plan of Conservation and Development and the Regional Plan of Conservation and Development (note that the Regional Plan is the same map and classifications as the State Plan).

All three plans:

- identify natural resource, open space, aquifer and historic areas for conservation, and
- identify desirable development densities based on the existing zoning designations of these areas.



## Consistency With Growth Principles

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In accordance with CGS 8-23, the Plan of Conservation and Development has been evaluated for consistency with statewide growth management principles.

**Principle 1 - Redevelop and revitalize regional centers and areas of mixed-land uses with existing or planned physical infrastructure.**

Although Westport does not contain any areas designated as a “regional center”, the Plan does promote areas of mixed land uses in Westport Center, Saugatuck Center, and along Route 1. Each of these areas contains existing physical infrastructure which has adequate capacity for the development encouraged by the Plan.

Overall, the concept of encouraging mixed use centers which have adequate infrastructure is a key element of the Plan.

**Principle 2 - Expand housing opportunities and design choices to accommodate a variety of household types and needs.**

The Plan recommends a number of strategies to expand housing opportunities and types to accommodate a variety of household types and needs.

In particular, the Plan recommends that Westport:

- diversify the range of housing types available in the community to address the housing needs of an aging population and a trend towards smaller households, and
- implement a variety of strategies to promote housing affordability.

**Principle 3 - Concentrate development around transportation nodes and along major transportation corridors to support the viability of transportation options and land reuse.**

The Plan promotes the integration of land uses in Westport with the transportation nodes and transit corridors in the community. Westport is very fortunate to have two stations on the Metro-North rail corridor and a local transit service that is available to most areas of the community.

The Plan promotes development in the Saugatuck Center area and along Route 1 in accordance with the availability of transit in these areas.

**Principle 4 - Conserve and restore the natural environment, cultural and historical resources, and traditional rural lands.**

The Plan of Conservation and Development contains a chapter which identifies strategies to:

- protect natural resources,
- preserve open space,
- protect historic resources,
- protect coastal resources, and
- protect community character.

These strategies will help conserve and restore the natural environment, cultural and historical resources.

**Principle 5 - Protect environmental assets critical to public health and safety.**

The Plan of Conservation and Development also contains recommendations to protect environmental assets critical to public health and safety.

This includes goals, policies and objectives to protect water quality, preserve floodplain areas, preserve sensitive hillsides, renovate storm water discharges, minimize runoff, and other similar strategies.

**Principle 6 - Integrate planning across all levels of government to address issues on a local, regional, and statewide basis.**

The Plan of Conservation and Development is part of the process of integrating planning with other levels of government and with other agencies. The Plan will be used to coordinate efforts with:

- adjacent communities,
- regional organizations, and
- state agencies.

If the Plan is to be realized, it must serve as a guide to all those it affects -- residents, businesses, developers, applicants, owners, agencies, and individuals interested in the orderly conservation and development of Westport. Therefore, implementation of the strategies and recommendations of the Plan of Conservation and Development is essential for the planning process to have meaning and value.

The Planning and Zoning Commission ("Commission") has primary responsibility for promoting implementation of the Plan's recommendations. Some of the recommendations of the Plan of Conservation and Development can be implemented through amendments to the Zoning Regulations, Zoning Map, Subdivision Regulations, application reviews, and other means.

However, the Commission is not the sole facilitator. Many recommendations require active cooperation with, and action by, other local boards, commissions and departments such as Conservation, the First Selectman, the Representative Town Meeting, the Board of Finance, the Board of Education, Public Works, Parks and Recreation, and others working either independently or in tandem.

Finally, the Plan strongly recommends that the Planning and Zoning Department use all the authority at its disposal to enforce the regulations that already exist and those adopted subsequent to adoption of the Plan.

Minuteman Statue



Saugatuck River View





A Plan Implementation Committee (PIC) should include representatives of various boards and commissions and coordinate, implementation of the Plan.

The Committee should assess the status of specific recommendations, evaluate the priorities, and even suggest new implementation techniques.

## **Implementation Tools**

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### **Plan Implementation Committee (PIC)**

Though the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) has the responsibility for coordinating implementation of the Plan's recommendations the Commission is neither an administrative nor an operational arm of the Town. Therefore, it is recommended that, within 45 days of the effective date of this Plan, the Town establish a Plan Implementation Committee (PIC) which draws its membership from the appropriate Town boards, commissions, Town legislative and operating entities and be chaired by the First Selectman. The PIC will have the responsibility of coordinating and monitoring the implementation of this Plan and should issue an annual report on Plan implementation progress.

### **PIC/PZC - Plan Maintenance**

Though a Plan of Conservation and Development is by definition a long range strategic document, it should have a dynamic element as well. The PIC may at its discretion recommend to the PZC that selected sections of the Plan be updated if it seems appropriate to do so.

### **PZC - Application Reviews**

Since the Plan of Conservation and Development serves as a basis for land use decisions by the PZC, all land use applications should be measured and evaluated in terms of compliance with the Plan and its various elements.

### **PZC - Update Regulations**

A key next step in the implementation of the POCD is for the PZC to undertake a comprehensive review of the Zoning Regulations and the Subdivision Regulations, making whatever revisions are necessary to:

- make the regulations more user-friendly (such as using graphics),
- implement Plan recommendations, and
- promote consistency between the Plan and the Regulations.

### **Town - Other Boards, Commissions and Departments**

Many of the strategies in this Plan are to be implemented by Town departments and elected and appointed boards and commissions, other than the PZC. This implementation should be accomplished in a timely manner under the coordination of the PIC.

## **PIC/PZC/Town - Education**

Education is an essential element of implementing and maintaining a Plan of Conservation and Development. People will understand the Plan better and support its implementation if they are knowledgeable about the Plan's recommendations.

The PIC should actively seek ways to involve the public in implementation actions. In addition, the PIC should explore and deploy the use of public/private partnerships (and the associated resources) to address a wide range of conservation and development matters.

Education about the Plan and overall community objectives also needs to be integrated into customer service, enforcement, and other programs of the Planning and Zoning Department. As part of general permitting procedures, it is important to inform people of why programs are important to meeting community goals. Likewise, it is important during enforcement procedures (especially with more aggressive enforcement techniques) to ensure that people understand why enforcement is important.

## **BOS/BOF/RTM - Operating Budget**

The Town annual budget is the blueprint for spending in Westport and is an essential tool for implementing municipal policy goals. The annual budget must reflect the objectives of this Plan since it is *the* meaningful way to be effective in implementing the Plan's recommendations.

If the annual budget reflects the priorities and recommendations of the Plan, Westport will be successful in accomplishing its overall strategic objectives and "leveraging" private investment in the community.

## **BOS/BOF/RTM - Capital Budget**

Section 8-24 of the Connecticut General Statutes requires that municipal improvements, as defined in the statute, be referred to the Planning and Zoning Commission for a report before any local action is taken. Westport's Capital Forecast is a tool for planning the major capital expenditures so that local needs can be identified and prioritized within the fiscal constraints that may exist. The Capital Forecast is used to coordinate the financing of major public improvements and other long-term capital investments in a community.

The Planning and Zoning Commission has statutory authority for review of municipal improvements and the Capital Forecast. The Commission should strive to ensure that spending on capital projects also reflects the priorities and recommendations of the Plan.

## **Other Agencies**

Municipal agencies alone cannot implement the Plan. In fact, the most successful implementation will likely involve local organizations, businesses, and residents in ensuring that the Plan is implemented.

*See page 13-30  
for implementa-  
tion priorities  
and responsibili-  
ties.*

## **Implementation Strategies**

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1. Establish a Plan Implementation Committee (PIC) which draws its membership from the appropriate Town boards, commissions, Town legislative and operating entities; chaired by the First Selectman
2. As necessary, review and update the Plan of Conservation and Development.
3. Use the Plan of Conservation and Development as a basis for land use decisions.
4. Undertake a comprehensive review of the Zoning Regulations and the Subdivision Regulations.
5. Educate the community about the Plan and overall community objectives.
6. Integrate the Plan and overall community objectives into customer service, enforcement, and other programs
7. Encourage the annual budget to reflect the priorities and recommendations of the Plan.
8. Encourage the capital budget to reflect the priorities and recommendations of the Plan.
9. Utilize the CGS 8-24 process for reviewing municipal capital improvements to ensure that the priorities and recommendations of the Plan are implemented.

# Implementation Tables

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Implementation of the Plan is an ongoing process. While the Town can carry out some recommendations in a relatively short period, others may only be realized by the end of the planning period or beyond.

## Responsibilities

The implementation tables on the following pages assign primary responsibilities and preliminary schedules to the Plan's recommendations. In many instances, the responsibilities are shared by a number of entities.

<b>Responsibility Legend</b>	
<b>ARB</b>	Architectural Review Board
<b>CC</b>	Conservation Commission (proposed)
<b>BOE</b>	Board of Education
<b>BOF</b>	Board of Finance
<b>BOS</b>	Board of Selectmen
<b>CRC</b>	Charter Revision Commission
<b>FECB</b>	Flood & Erosion Control Board
<b>FS</b>	First Selectman
<b>HDC</b>	Historic District Commission
<b>HMC</b>	Harbor Management Commission
<b>IWC</b>	Inland Wetlands Commission
<b>LAC</b>	Land Acquisition Committee
<b>OSC</b>	Open Space Committee (proposed)
<b>PIC</b>	Plan Implementation Committee
<b>PRC</b>	Parks / Recreation Commission
<b>PW</b>	Public Works
<b>PZC</b>	Planning / Zoning Commission
<b>RTM</b>	Representative Town Meeting
<b>SC</b>	Shellfish Commission
<b>SCPC</b>	Sasco Creek / Pond Committee
<b>SMPC</b>	Sherwood Mill Pond Committee
<b>Staff</b>	Town Staff
<b>Town</b>	Town Agencies and Officials
<b>WHA</b>	Westport Housing Authority
<b>WHS</b>	Westport Historical Society
<b>WPCA</b>	Water Pollution Control Authority
<b>WTD</b>	Westport Transit District
<b>WWHD</b>	Westport Weston Health District
<b>ZBA</b>	Zoning Board of Appeals

## Priorities

Preliminary priorities as contemplated by the Planning and Zoning Commission are identified in the implementation schedules and ranked according to a three-step scale. The Commission anticipates that the Plan Implementation Committee will use these preliminary priorities as a guideline for establishing a time line for completion of the strategies in this document.

High priorities are, in the opinion of the Commission, items that are either critical to the success of a planning strategy or are relatively easy to implement. Such items should be handled within one to two years or represent continuing priorities that should be monitored through the life of the Plan.

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 generally be addressed within two to four years from adoption of this Plan.

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.

### Priorities Legend

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<b>1</b>	High Priority
<b>2</b>	Moderate Priority
<b>3</b>	Lower Priority

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# Preserve Critical Environmental Areas

## Protect Important Natural Resources

What	Priority	Who
1. Educate the public about protection and conservation of natural resources through school programs, the media and via other public and private entities.	1	CC Town
2. Identify and publicize regulations that will <i>preserve</i> and protect watercourses, waterbodies, wetlands, steep slopes, and floodplains, and those that will <i>conserve</i> floodplain fringe areas, well-head areas, areas of high groundwater availability, and unique/special habitat areas.	1	PZC IWC CC
3. Further control building in floodplain areas.	1	PZC
4. Continue Westport's participation in the Community Rating System (CRS) flood insurance program. When new floodplain regulations are recommended by state or federal agencies, consider: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adopting a separate set of "Floodplain Regulations" that consolidates existing programs into one overall program.</li> <li>Designating one organization/agency to administer floodplain regulations.</li> </ol>	2	PZC
5. When Level A aquifer maps are completed (scheduled for 2008), update the zoning map and the existing "Aquifer Protection Regulations" administered by the Conservation Commission. Assure that other land use boards refer proposed changes in these areas to the Conservation Commission. Evaluate the need for additional groundwater protection requirements to protect water quality outside of the State-defined "aquifer" areas.	2	PZC IWC CC RTM
6. Continue Westport's participation in the Saugatuck River Watershed Partnership with the Nature Conservancy.	2	RTM
7. Require conservation easements where appropriate as a means of protecting adjacent natural resources, steep slopes and scenic vistas.	2	PZC CC
8. Dredge the Saugatuck River up to the Post Road. If not funded by the state legislature, establish funding via grants and other programs.	1	CC FS BOF

## Protect Water Resources and Water Quality

What	Priority	Who
<p>1. Update local regulations to protect water resources and water quality.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. In order to reduce runoff and sedimentation, incorporate limits on tree clearing into the Town Code or the Zoning Regulations to the maximum extent allowed by law. Consider allowing the use of lower runoff coefficients when existing trees are retained.</li> <li>b. Adopt a septic system management ordinance which would require the periodic inspection and maintenance (pumping) of septic systems.</li> <li>c. Update sediment and erosion control zoning regulations to reflect the need for further protection of neighboring properties, water bodies and storm drains.</li> <li>d. To avoid pollution from underground tank leakage, adopt an ordinance requiring the removal of existing underground residential fuel tanks.</li> <li>e. Require to the extent possible, minimization of site imperviousness, maintenance of natural buffers, and use of natural drainage systems.</li> <li>f. The Town should use integrated pest management strategies and natural fertilizers at minimal amounts to control pollution and non-native species in water bodies. Educate the public as to the benefits of this policy on private property.</li> </ul>	<p><b>1</b></p>	<p>PZC IWC RTM FEC PW WWHD</p>
<p>2. Educate all landowners and tenants in residential and commercial areas of the importance of protecting water quality for continued availability of marine life, healthy non-invasive vegetation, and continued use of these areas for recreation. Specifically, educate on the importance of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Proper septic system use, care and maintenance</li> <li>b. Effect of overuse of fertilizers and pesticides.</li> <li>c. Effect of dumping and filling in wetlands</li> <li>d. The importance of local floodplain and wetland resources.</li> <li>e. Non-point source pollution.</li> </ul>	<p><b>1</b></p>	<p>IWC CC WWHD</p>

## Manage Activities In Coastal Areas

What	Priority	Who
1. Educate the public about the effect of non-point source pollution on the viability of Long Island Sound and its continued use for recreation and fishing.	1	CC
2. Use Coastal Area Management Policies to protect coastal resources.	1	PZC
3. Ensure that proposed sewer extensions into the Saugatuck Shores area will not allow for increased development.	1	PZC WPCA
4. Prohibit intensification or expansion of the high density areas at Saugatuck Shore, Compo Beach, Sherwood Mill Pond and Compo Cove since these areas are not consistent with current environmental standards or coastal area flood safety standards.	1	PZC
5. Minimize the amount and intensity of development in coastal "V" flood zones: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eliminate new non-water dependent development from FEMA-designated coastal high hazard "V" flood zones.</li> <li>For structures in the "V" flood zones destroyed by storms, only allow new structures that meet current "V" zone construction standards.</li> </ol>	2	PZC
6. Support the Shellfish Commission's efforts to manage shellfish resources and public access to shellfish beds wherever possible.	2	Town
7. Require and enforce long-term maintenance of privately-constructed public access areas to coastal resources, as a condition of coastal site plan approval.	2	PZC CC
8. Establish a uniform signage standard for public access areas and require that such signs be installed and maintained at all commercial, institutional, and publicly-owned public access sites.	2	PZC CC
9. Investigate establishing a Town of Westport harbor management commission and plan that would help preserve a good balance of water-dependent uses and improve coordination with state and federal in-water permitting authorities.	2	RTM HMC
10. Promote non-structural activities in the coastal area as opposed to groins, seawalls, revetments, etc.	2	PZC IWC
11. Undertake a comprehensive study with state and federal agencies to recommend specific strategies for effective erosion abatement	3	CC Staff
12. Establish a Canada Goose management plan.	1	CC PRC
13. Require vegetated buffers on all coastal applications. Consider adopting "performance standards" where the buffer becomes more substantial as distance decreases and/or slope increases.	1	PZC
14. Address Saugatuck River, Sherwood Mill Pond and Sasco Creek/Pond maintenance and management with strategies to address silting, pollution and invasive species. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appropriate funds to help improve the Saugatuck River, Sherwood Mill Pond and Sasco Creek/Pond</li> <li>Enhance and improve the town-owned parcels on the Saugatuck River, Sherwood Mill Pond and Sasco Creek/Pond.</li> </ol>	1	SMPC SCPC PRC CC



## Organize For Conservation

What	Priority	Who
<hr/> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Because of the continuing need to protect our natural resources and do this on a broader scale than now in place, consider whether Westport should establish the following:<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. a non-regulatory commission whose sole task is to oversee preservation, protection and enhancement of environmental functions in the town, to develop a Natural Resources Preservation Plan, to recommend policies to all departments and boards and to educate the public as to the importance of protection and conservation of natural resources, with staff to support the function (a conservation commission), and</li><li>b. a separate regulatory agency and board processing specific applications concerning wetlands and aquifer protection (a wetlands/aquifer commission).</li></ol></li></ol> <hr/>	2	RTM BOS

# Preserve Open Space And Natural Beauty

## Preserve Open Space and Create Greenways

What	Priority	Who
1. Focus open space efforts on creating a system of open spaces and pedestrian connections along: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Long Island Sound (a “shoreway”),</li> <li>the Saugatuck River (a “riverway”),</li> <li>the Merritt Parkway (a “trailway”),</li> <li>and other areas.</li> </ol>	1	LAC PRC CC PZC
2. Within these areas, the following strategies are recommended: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Obtain land to support the “shoreway” / “riverway” vision (pocket parks, water access, parking areas, etc.),</li> <li>Interconnect open spaces in the “shoreway” / “riverway” area by creating sidewalk and trail connections through open spaces and along existing streets, and</li> <li>Build a “trailway” along the Merritt Parkway and work with Fairfield and Norwalk to extend the trailway.</li> </ol>	1	LAC PRC CC PZC

## Acquire and Maintain Open Space

What	Priority	Who
1. Acquire additional open space and improve existing open space parcels.	1	LAC PRC BOS RTM
2. Continue to require open space provision as part of every residential subdivision development (land set-aside or fee-in-lieu of land).	1	PZC
3. Include land trusts and other similar non-profit agencies in discussion of required subdivision open space.	2	PZC
4. Update local land use regulations to enhance open space preservation requirements (require provision by multi-family developments, allow off-site dedication, lot area flexibility, etc.).	2	PZC
5. Make all passive and active recreation areas welcoming and available with adequate signage, parking areas, vegetation and appropriate facilities for their designated uses.	1	PRC
6. Zone additional parcels of land as park zones, some for passive use and others for active use	2	PRC PZC
7. Provide adequate funds to take care of and enhance town parks and open space.	1	PRC BOS BOF

## Promote Use Assessment To Defer Development

What	Priority	Who
1. Continue to utilize the “use value assessment” program as authorized by CGS 12-107 (also known as Public Act 490).	1	Staff RTM
2. Support the application of “farm use assessment” for any property which qualifies.	1	Staff RTM
3. Support the application of “forest use assessment” for any property which qualifies.	1	Staff RTM
4. Continue to make the “open space use assessment” program available to properties currently enrolled and to other properties which can demonstrate that they meet the statutory criteria.	1	Staff RTM

## Protect and Enhance Scenic Resources

What	Priority	Who
1. Identify and preserve scenic views, scenic roads, and scenic features (such as stone walls, barns, fences, and tree canopies). <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Amend land use regulations to include protection of scenic resources.</li> <li>b. Review the impact of the currently allowed placement of tall walls and fences and their impact on scenic views.</li> </ol>	1	CC PZC HDC RTM
2. Enhance programs and policies related to the “greening” of the Post Road and the “adopt-a-spot” program. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Work with the Connecticut Department of Transportation to have Westport manage and enforce the use of the state rights-of-way, in the areas of tree maintenance, signage and parking.</li> </ol>	2	PZC RTM CC
3. Establish a program and funds for expanding the planting of trees along the town and state rights-of-way.	2	PZC RTM CC
4. Regularly evaluate the health of town roadway trees; trim or remove dangerous branches and remove unhealthy trees.	2	PW

## Protect Historic Resources

What	Priority	Who
1. Maintain existing local historic districts and expand those districts where appropriate.	1	HDC
2. Propose the establishment of additional local historic districts and list properties on the National Register of Historic Places.	1	HDC
3. Enforce local historic district and historic property commitments.	1	HDC
4. Establish a scenic road ordinance to designate and protect scenic roads.	1	RTM
5. Expand the historic zoning designation to additional commercial properties.	1	PZC
6. Enact additional zoning regulations which will help protect historic resources including use flexibility, dimensional flexibility, or both.	1	PZC
7. Explore tax incentives to preserve historic resources.	1	BOS BOF
8. Maintain the demolition delay regulation to continue to work with property owners to find ways to preserve historic structures via modifications to the original versus demolition of the entire structure.	1	RTM
9. Maintain Certified Local Government status in order to receive funds from the Connecticut Historical Commission.	1	HDC
10. Enhance programs related to historic preservation in general and assistance to owners of historic properties in particular: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Make Westport residents and developers aware of the importance of retaining the physical history of Westport</li> <li>b. Encourage "sensitive ownership" of historic structures and properties.</li> </ul>	1	HDC
11. Maintain staff dedicated to preservation of historic resources.	1	HDC RTM BOS BOF
12. Continue to update the Historic Resources Inventory in order to identify all significant properties and reflect relevant changes.	2	HDC
13. Link information from the Historic Resources Inventory and other sources to a town-wide database and notify relevant departments and boards.	2	HDC
14. Revise the Town Charter to reflect the duties and responsibilities of the HDC.	3	HDC CRC

## Encourage Unique Facilities and Events

What	Priority	Who
1. Continue to support and encourage facilities for the arts and theater, both public and private.	1	Town
2. Continue to support established events that bring the community together (such as concerts at the Levitt Pavilion, plays at the theaters, First Night, holiday fireworks, and those sponsored by private entities).	1	Town
3. Encourage the establishment of new facilities or events to continue to strengthen town-wide and neighborhood sense of community.	2	Town

# Protect and Manage Residential Neighborhoods

## Protect Residential Neighborhoods

What	Priority	Who
1. Continue to protect existing residential neighborhoods from intrusion of commercial activities.	1	PZC
2. Ensure that boundaries between residential neighborhoods and non-residential zoning districts remain clear and provide for logical transitions with appropriate buffering as necessary.	1	PZC
3. Protect Westport’s diverse residential architectural styles.	1	PZC
4. Maintain, improve where needed, and enforce zoning standards and regulations protecting residential districts.	1	PZC
5. Review Special Permit uses in residential zones to ensure that they are still suitable for neighborhoods.	1	PZC
6. Review Special Permit criteria and enforce the Special Permit standards to meet the regulations.	1	PZC

## Manage Housing “Rebuilds”

What	Priority	Who
1. Adopt a building coverage limitation for all zones.	1	PZC
2. Consider reducing allowable building heights and eliminating the regulation of building height based on stories.	1	PZC
3. Consider using building sections when measuring building height.	1	PZC
4. Consider limiting building height adjacent to side setbacks to reduce the impact on neighboring properties.	1	PZC
5. Consider adjusting what elements are considered in building coverage and total coverage.	1	PZC

## Consider Revising Zoning Districts

What	Priority	Who
1. Consider establishing town-wide standards for setbacks, coverage, height, and other standards which are based on the size of the lot rather than the zone.	2	PZC
2. Consider establishing a “Beach Residential” zone in the Saugatuck Shores / Compo Beach area.	2	PZC

## Address Home-Based Businesses

What	Priority	Who
1. Update regulations for home-based businesses to reflect current trends and issues.	2	PZC

# Create A Range of Housing Opportunities and Choices

## Diversify Westport’s Housing Types

What	Priority	Who
1. Implement ways to diversify Westport’s housing types.	2	PZC
2. Allow for additional multi-family housing opportunities in and near Westport Center, along and near Route 1, and also consider in limited quantities in Saugatuck Center and Riverside Avenue.	1	PZC

## Promote Housing Affordability

What	Priority	Who
1. Support and encourage the Westport Housing Authority in their efforts to provide more affordable housing opportunities.	2	Town
2. Require any multi-family development provide affordable housing units	1	PZC
3. Review zoning regulations for impediments to affordable housing	3	PZC
4. Consider revising the accessory apartment regulations to legitimize existing units and address affordable housing needs.	1	PZC
5. Explore ways to utilize existing housing to count toward state affordability standards.	2	PZC
6. Support legislative efforts to amend CGS 8-30g in ways which will give each community incentives and more credit for providing affordable housing in ways appropriate for that community.	1	FS BOS RTM PZC Town
7. Consider a separate cap on the number of accessory apartments permitted in single-family zones.	3	PZC

# Maintain Distinctive Centers With A Strong Sense Of Place

## Maintain and Enhance Westport Center

What	Priority	Who
1. Make the pedestrian the focus of development. a. Commit to a program to enhance pedestrian connections. b. Encourage the creation of pedestrian gathering places. c. Create pedestrian 'loops' via different routes.	1	PZC
2. Commit to a major effort to develop Westport Center as the community focal point. Encourage the development and maintenance of major community and cultural facilities in the downtown area.	1	PZC
3. Allow additional uses which promote evening activities and outdoor life. These may include additional outdoor seating permitted for restaurants; seasonal kiosks/food vendors with their own seating in parks, plazas or other feasible locations.	1	PZC
4. To provide more space for some additional uses, consider increasing the number of stories allowed on commercial buildings, while maintaining the scale relative to adjacent properties. a. Under Special Permit, consider addition or conversion of 3rd floors for residential, restaurants, art galleries, etc. consistent with the scale and style of the area b. Allow for larger aggregations of space for community purposes (theaters including a movie theater which could be community sponsored, galleries, and recreation).	1	PZC
5. Establish a "village district" (as authorized by CGS Section 8-2j) in the downtown area.	1	PZC
6. Pursue a comprehensive strategy for addressing parking, parking regulations and traffic circulation.	1	PZC
7. Conduct a major study of traffic / parking for the downtown area (including private parking lots).	1	PZC
8. Coordinate and, with some modifications, implement the elements of the various studies that relate to parking, pedestrians, circulation and physical environment in the downtown area .	1	PZC
9. Consider establishing organizations that may be desirable to support the downtown area. a. A voluntary organization drawing its membership from both public and private sectors, to serve as the official coordinator of public and private funding and to facilitate development and coordination within the downtown area, or b. a special services district (as authorized by CGS Sec. 7-339m) to facilitate funding and coordination within the downtown area.	1	RTM BOS
10. Add a component of residential housing to any development program in the downtown area.	2	PZC
11. Limit the floor space of any one retail business in certain zones.	2	PZC



<b>What</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Who</b>
12. Evaluate ways to provide for public restrooms in Westport Center.	2	FS BOS PZC RTM
13. Develop a coordinated design policy for paving, planting, lighting, and signage for Westport Center, including the commercial districts along the west bank of the Saugatuck River.	1	ARB PZC
14. Enhance the 'natural' aesthetics of the downtown area (the parks, river, and open spaces) in a compelling and interesting way.	2	PRC PZC
15. Create a plan for Winslow Park.	1	PRC PZC
16. Integrate Baron's South and Winslow Park with easy access, outdoor art, seating areas, and other beautification improvements, with a clear separation between people space and dog space.	2	PRC PZC
17. Endeavor to preserve the natural beauty and terrain of Baron's South and Winslow Park.	1	PZC
18. Encourage public access to Baron's South and Winslow Park with improved parking at both facilities.	1	PRC
19. Review the 2007 Weston and Sampson report and consider its recommendations as the Town determines appropriate land uses for the Baron's South / Jesup Green area.	2	PRC BOS PZC RTM
20. Enhance Jesup Green and Veteran's Green.	1	PRC
21. The Town should purchase parcels of land that are <i>strategically</i> located within Westport Center, for widely used community purposes.	1	LAC PRC BOS RTM
22. Development of river banks should provide for public views and public access.	1	PZC

## Enhance Saugatuck Center

What	Priority	Who
1. Establish a “village district” (as authorized by CGS Section 8-2j) in the Saugatuck Center area.	1	PZC
2. Encourage through regulation mixed use and multifamily residential in commercial zones to take advantage of proximity to the train station while being sensitive to the potential over-development of this area.	1	PZC
3. Where feasible, safe and buffered from residential uses, encourage or require public access to waterfront on suitable commercial and mixed use properties.	2	PZC
4. Encourage marine uses through regulation a. If a Town of Westport Harbor or Waterfront Commission is created, include the Saugatuck waterfront, docks and land-side support in the mission of such commission.	2	PZC HMC
5. Develop a coordinated design policy for paving, planting, lighting and signage for Saugatuck Center, and advocate landscape improvement of the several extensive public parking facilities in the neighborhood.	2	PZC ARB
6. Consider revising the zoning in Saugatuck Center to permit apartments at an appropriate density.	2	PZC

## Improve Route 1

What	Priority	Who
1. Promote mixed use and multifamily residential use when properties along Post Road East are redeveloped and in limited areas on Post Road West. a. Encourage property owners to consider such uses when planning to redevelop larger Post Road properties b. Consider adopting zoning regulations to allow greater building heights by Special Permit (within limits) for buildings with apartments.	1	PZC
2. Encourage 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor apartments to be built on properties that are presently one story commercial. a. Provide more housing opportunities. b. Make complementary use of the parking c. Add apartments along major arterial road, close to shopping, and reduce the pressure to build them in single family residential zones.	1	PZC
3. Review the Highway Services District regulations with the intent of allowing upgrades and changes in use for existing gasoline stations and existing automobile repair shops.	2	PZC
4. Encourage the placement of bus stops, benches and schedule boards at more locations to make bus commuting on Coastal Link safer and more comfortable.	1	WTD PZC
5. Regrade "bumps" at intersections along the Post Road and elsewhere (bottoming of front or rear end of car and trucks is a hazard and consistently damages vehicles and slows traffic flow.).	3	Town
6. Transition to a greener, safer, more pedestrian and bicycle friendly Post Road East by creating incentives for green space, sidewalks, and bicycle use. (i.e. exclude pavement under a permanent bike rack from coverage)	3	PZC
7. Through changes in zoning regulations, manage driveway access and parking capacity.	3	PZC
8. Through changes in the Zoning Regulations, consider reducing required parking for some commercial uses and permit/encourage the use of "pavers" in appropriate locations.	3	PZC
9. Maintain present zoning districts that provide a variety of scale on the Post Road and in other commercial areas.	1	PZC

## Continue To Promote Good Design

What	Priority	Who
1. Continue to focus on enhancing the architecture of Westport's commercial, multifamily, institutional and special permit facilities and to maintain the overall "sense of place."	1	ARB

# Provide A Variety of Transportation Choices

## Address Roadway Safety and Capacity Issues

What	Priority	Who
1. Aggressively seek ways to minimize traffic congestion.	1	PZC
2. Support local programs, such as "Greening of the Post Road," which help to maintain and enhance the overall appearance of the community.	1	PZC
3. Continue to work with the South Western Regional Planning Agency (SWRPA) to obtain state and federal funding for our highest priority transportation improvements.	1	PZC BOS PW
4. Continue to work with the Connecticut Department of Transportation to ensure that areas with potentially unsafe conditions are systematically addressed.	1	PW FS
5. Continue to maintain local roadways.	1	PW

## Address Parking Needs

What	Priority	Who
1. Immediately undertake a comprehensive study of parking issues associated with the commuter train service and take appropriate action following the study (increased parking rates, increased parking supply, increased transit use, etc.).	1	PZC BOS RTM
2. Find ways to reconfigure the parking supply to meet current needs and to enable additional recreational access to the River, but control the expansion so it does not further encourage the transformation of the downtown area into a shopping mall.	1	BOS PZC Staff
3. Improve the drop-off / pick-up area for transit.	2	WTD

## Provide For Pedestrians and Bicycles

What	Priority	Who
1. Create a greenway that enhances pedestrian and bicycle access near waterways (Sound and river).	1	CC PRC
2. Give zoning incentives to commercial establishments in return for providing bike racks and other accommodations for bicyclists.	2	PZC
3. Maintain and enhance the sidewalk system in Westport, especially along busy roads and near the railroad stations.	2	PW
4. Eliminate gaps in the sidewalk system.	2	PW PZC
5. Establish and maintain safe bicycle routes.	2	PW PZC

## Continue To Support Transit

What	Priority	Who
1. Continue to support transit services in the community, and improve their attractiveness by better tailoring services to the needs of users	1	WTD
2. Support the construction of bus shelters and benches at service locations	1	WTD PW PZC
3. Seek ways to support transit service improvements being considered by the Norwalk Transit District (post schedules at bus stops, promote the transit system more aggressively, consider increased frequency and additional routes, etc.).	1	WTD

# Address Community Facility Needs

## Land Acquisition Committee

What	Priority	Who
1. Establish and maintain a permanent, independent committee appointed by the First Selectman which would meet regularly to oversee the acquisition and retention for present and future needs, land for open space, active recreation, schools and municipal function growth. This committee, in consultation with municipal boards and agencies would oversee the acquisition for the following reasons: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protect important resources (natural, scenic, etc.),</li> <li>Provide land to meet identified or future municipal needs</li> <li>Expand existing land holdings</li> <li>Make connection to and enhance existing open spaces</li> <li>Interconnect open spaces to create greenways</li> </ol>	1	RTM FS
2. The Land Acquisition Committee should: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>at a minimum, be made up of representatives from the Parks and Recreation Commission, Representative Town Meeting, and Conservation Commission, and</li> <li>be in consultation with the land use department for information and guidance on parcels of land.</li> </ol>	1	RTM FS
3. The Land Acquisition Committee and the First Selectman would use at least the following methods: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outright purchase of property</li> <li>Establish rights of first refusal with landholders.</li> <li>Seek opportunities to participate in grant programs to acquire land.</li> <li>Seek opportunities to partner with other organizations.</li> <li>Encourage existing private clubs, institutional properties and other "managed" open space to remain, or alternatively the town should seek to acquire or preserve these properties as "preserved" open space.</li> <li>Encourage land trusts and other nonprofit agencies to acquire open space.</li> <li>Encourage non profit groups to connect greenways with land holdings of other non-profits and with municipal land.</li> </ol>	1	OSC FS
4. The Land Acquisition Committee should make recommendations for the appropriate funding mechanisms to facilitate the purchase of land.	1	LAC RTM BOF

## Expand Utilization of Existing Sites

1. Be cautious about disposing of existing facilities since such facilities may be desirable for future community needs.	1	BOE BOS RTM PZC
2. Acquire land adjacent to existing facilities when it would provide a reasonable opportunity or flexibility to address community needs.	1	BOE BOS RTM
3. Consider modifying the zoning regulations to allow municipal facilities to have greater coverage (building and impervious) through a Special Permit.	1	PZC

## Address Community Facility Issues

What	Priority	Who
1. Continue to monitor and project school enrollments in order to anticipate possible future needs.	1	BOE
2. Investigate options for consolidating Board of Education administrative space and for storing school buses.	1	BOE
3. Continue to coordinate the use of school buildings and other facilities (Library, Senior Center, Teen Center, etc.).	1	BOE BOS
4. Evaluate the interest in a multi-purpose facility to provide community space and programs.	1	BOS RTM
5. Upgrade Parks and Recreation facilities as needed.	2	PRC PZC BOF RTM
6. Provide and maintain outdoor cultural / recreational facilities to meet community needs.	1	PRC BOS RTM
7. Consider implementing the recommendations of the "maintenance study committee".	1	RTM BOS
8. Conduct a study of ways to address the location of facilities for town-wide grounds maintenance.	2	PRC
9. As appropriate and with careful review, continue to add all-weather surfacing to existing fields.	2	PRC
10. Expand the Public Works Facility to provide adequate space for storage of materials or for equipment maintenance / storage.	2	RTM PW
11. Identify additional sites for yard waste and storm debris.	1	PW
12. Make long-term arrangements for disposal of solid waste.	1	PW RTM
13. Expand the area needed for recyclables.	2	PW

(continued)

## Address Community Facility Issues (continued)

What	Priority	Who
14. Complete and implement a study to address the needs of the Police / Emergency Medical services.	1	RTM
15. Evaluate the overall configuration of fire stations and determine the optimal outcome (consolidation / relocation / renovation) to best meet present and future community needs.	3	RTM
16. Seek to expand the space at Town Hall to best meet community needs.	2	RTM BOS
17. Build vehicular access from the Library / Police area to the parking lot on Imperial Avenue, incorporating a public parking lot and other community facilities.	3	RTM PZC
18. Encourage the Boating Committee to continue seeking ways to address increased demand for boat storage (both on-water and on-land).	3	RTM BOS
19. Address the need for a clean and sanitary animal shelter.	1	RTM BOS
20. Consider acquiring some of the properties along Imperial Avenue and the Post Road in order to expand the utility of the Baron's South property for community purposes.	2	RTM BOS FS



# Address Infrastructure Needs

## Address Storm Drainage Issues

What	Priority	Who
1. Undertake preparation of an update to the 1970 master drainage plan (the "Jackson" study).	1	PW RTM
2. Identify and address storm drainage and flooding issues on private property and in the streets.	1	PW RTM
3. Address the effect of groundwater on drainage.	1	PW RTM
4. Include provision for street drainage improvements and maintenance projects in the municipal budget on an annual basis.	1	RTM BOF

## Address Public Sewer Issues

What	Priority	Who
1. Continue to provide a sewage treatment system which meets local needs but does not promote more intensive development.	1	WPCA PZC

## Address Issues In Unsewered Areas

What	Priority	Who
1. Adopt a septic maintenance ordinance and program requiring that septic systems be pumped and maintained regularly.	1	RTM WWHD
2. Distribute information on a regular basis on how to maintain a septic system.	1	WWHD

## Address Public Water Issues

What	Priority	Who
1. Promote an adequate supply of public water to serve the domestic, commercial and fire protection requirements of Westport.	1	Town
2. Support the extension of public water service and fire hydrants throughout Westport.	2	Town
3. When Level A mapping is completed by Aquarion, update the aquifer protection regulations and the zoning regulations and map.	1	PZC

## Manage Wired Utilities

What	Priority	Who
1. Seek opportunities to place wired utilities underground.	2	Town
2. Take whatever action possible to require utility companies to retain, replant, preserve and protect the trees affected by their projects and require growth-appropriate trees for locations under utility wires.	2	Town

## Enhance Wireless Services

What	Priority	Who
1. Work with wireless communication companies to address the communication needs of residents in the most appropriate way.	2	Town
2. Expand the availability of wireless internet connectivity.	2	Town

## Promote Sustainable Initiatives

### “Green” Strategies

What	Priority	Who
1. Require Westport government and schools to reduce water and energy consumption, including carbon emissions by 10% by 2011 (approximately 3-5 years) with a further evaluation of the goals and objectives in GETF's plan, when available, to increase the reduction.	1	FS BOE Town
2. Direct 10% of Westport's energy budget toward energy saving measures.	1	FS BOE Town
3. Lobby the State of Connecticut for building code changes to require the use of energy reducing and recyclable materials and to allow for use of all renewable energy sources.	1	FS BOE Town
4. Establish regulation and policy changes to both require some and allow for other energy savings and renewable energy sources.	1	FS BOE
5. Partner with organizations that provide consumers with energy saving programs.	2	CC Town
6. Establish regulation and policy changes to reduce water consumption.	1	CC Town
7. Establish regulation and policy changes to use recycled and recyclable materials.	1	CC Town
8. Establish incentives, such as property tax reductions, for private citizen conversion to renewable energy sources and hybrid vehicles.	2	CC Town
9. Evaluate the zoning regulations for ways to reduce land coverage and building size to conserve energy.	2	PZC Town
10. Publicize in the community and the schools on a regular basis, available methods to reduce energy consumption, use renewable energy, and reduce use of other valuable resources.	2	CC Town
11. Preserve to the greatest extent possible, existing mature forested areas.	1	PZC CC Town
12. Promote tree planting, other plants and ground covers on Town property. Encourage this practice in private and commercial spaces.	1	CC Town
13. Encourage best practices for the maintenance of lawns and green spaces.	1	CC Town

## **“Green” Buildings**

<b>What</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Who</b>
1. Continue to monitor evolution of standards for “green” buildings.	<b>2</b>	PZC
2. Consider ways to incorporate “green” building standards into the land use regulations.	<b>2</b>	PZC

## **“Green” Developments / Neighborhoods**

<b>What</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Who</b>
1. Continue to monitor evolution of standards for “green” developments and neighborhoods.	<b>2</b>	PZC
2. Incorporate “green” development / neighborhood standards into the land use regulations.	<b>2</b>	PZC

## **Sea Level Rise**

<b>What</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Who</b>
1. Continue to monitor information on global sea level rise.	<b>1</b>	CC Staff
2. Evaluate how to best prepare for the implications of global sea level rise to best balance public health, safety, and welfare.	<b>1</b>	PZC Town
3. Change the floodplain regulations to require at least one foot of freeboard for new or substantially improved homes.	<b>1</b>	PZC Town

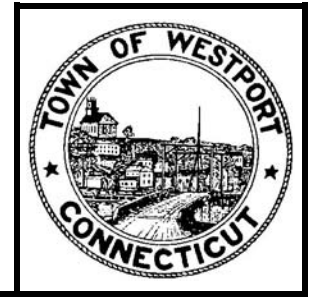
# Implementation

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## Implementation Strategies

<b>What</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Who</b>
1. Establish a Plan Implementation Committee (PIC) which draws its membership from the appropriate Town boards, commissions, Town legislative and operating entities; chaired by the First Selectman	<b>1</b>	FS PZC
2. As necessary, review and update the Plan of Conservation and Development.	<b>1</b>	PIC PZC
3. Use the Plan of Conservation and Development as a basis for land use decisions.	<b>1</b>	PZC
4. Undertake a comprehensive review of the Zoning Regulations and the Subdivision Regulations.	<b>1</b>	PZC
5. Educate the community about the Plan and overall community objectives.	<b>1</b>	PIC PZC
6. Integrate the Plan and overall community objectives into customer service, enforcement, and other programs	<b>1</b>	PIC PZC
7. Encourage the annual budget to reflect the priorities and recommendations of the Plan.	<b>1</b>	PIC PZC
8. Encourage the capital budget to reflect the priorities and recommendations of the Plan.	<b>1</b>	PIC PZC
9. Utilize the CGS 8-24 process for reviewing municipal capital improvements to ensure that the priorities and recommendations of the Plan are implemented.	<b>1</b>	PZC

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



## Planning and Zoning Commission

Eleanor S. Lowenstein Co-Chair  
Ronald D. Corwin Co-Chair  
Helen Martin Block Secretary

Bruce Kasanoff  
Howard B. Lathrop  
David B. Press  
Timothy Wetmore

Joyce Colburn Alternate  
Cheryl Bliss Alternate  
Robert Galan Alternate (to July 2007)  
Kenneth DeSanctis Alternate (from September 2007)

## Planning and Zoning Staff

Laurence Bradley, AICP Director  
Mary Young, AICP Deputy Director  
Michelle Frye, AICP Planning Assistant

Susan Reynolds Zoning Enforcement Officer  
Mary Papadakos Zoning Inspector  
Elijah Ferrari Zoning Inspector (to June 2007)  
Stanley Ruszkowski Zoning Inspector (from March 2007)

Nancy Curcio Administrator  
Annie Alcaraz Administrator

Laurie Montagna ZBA Clerk  
Carol Leahy HDC Administrator / CLG Coordinator

## Planimetrics

Glenn Chalder, AICP Principal  
Leonard Desson GIS Manager



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## Town of Westport

Gordon F. Joseloff    First Selectman  
Shelly A. Kassen    Selectman  
Robert F. Lasprogato    Selectman

## Representative Town Meeting (as of October 2007)

<b>District 1</b>	<b>District 2</b>	<b>District 3</b>
Diane D. Cady Matthew I. Mandell Rose Anne Preston Judith K. Starr	Dorothy Harris Jay Keenan Alice H. Shelton Sean M. Timmins	Peter A. Gold Robert Galan William F. Meyer, III Hadley C. Rose
<b>District 4</b>	<b>District 5</b>	<b>District 6</b>
Garry Boxer Valerie S. Fischel Elizabeth P. Milwe Gene Paul Seidman	John W. Booth Chris Grimm Ralph Hymans Richard Lowenstein	Jo Ann W. Davidson Ann M. Flynn Velma E. Heller Ronald F. Malone
<b>District 7</b>	<b>District 8</b>	<b>District 9</b>
Allen S. Bomes John G. Klinge Lisa S. Rome Stephen M. Rubin	Dewey J. Loselle Michael A. Rea Lois G. Schine Jonathan P. Steinberg	Eileen L. Flug Michael A. Gilbertie Kim Mathias Maria J. Petti

## Town Attorney

Ira Bloom    Town Attorney  
Gail Kelly    Assistant Town Attorney

## Picture Credits

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Glenn Chalder





Preserve Critical  
Environmental Areas

Preserve Open Space  
and Natural Beauty

Protect and Manage  
Residential  
Neighborhoods

Create A Range of  
Housing Opportunities  
and Choices



Maintain Distinctive  
Centers With A  
Strong Sense Of Place

Provide A Variety of  
Transportation Choices

Address Community  
Facility Needs

Address Infrastructure  
Needs