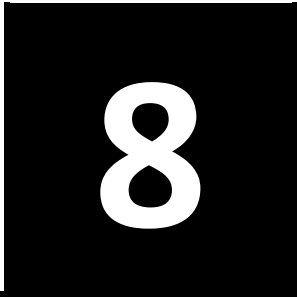


MAINTAIN STRONG CENTERS WITH A SENSE OF PLACE



8.1. Overview

Westport has a remarkable downtown which serves at least two roles:

- the main activity center and focal point of the community in terms of civic and other functions, and
- a place that attracts many people from outside Westport due to its ambience and attractions.

The Saugatuck Center area is also an important part of Westport.

The overall goal of the POCD is to maintain and enhance the “sense of place” and economic strength of Downtown Westport and Saugatuck Center.



Maintaining and enhancing Downtown Westport and Saugatuck Center will help make Westport a more sustainable community by balancing social, economic, and environmental considerations in the community’s key gathering place.

Goal

Maintain and enhance strong centers with a “sense of place” in Westport.

Downtown



Saugatuck Center



Downtown Studies

- A 2001 study of the Downtown area by the firm of Buckhurst, Fish, and Jacquemart.
- A 2007 study for the Downtown Merchants Association by Milone & MacBroom.
- A 2014 Village District Study by FHI / Cecil Group which primarily looked at ways to maintain and enhance the overall “sense of place” within the Downtown area.
- a 2015 Downtown Master Plan by RBA Group which primarily looked at ways to enhance the “public realm” in the Downtown area.

8.2. Maintain and Enhance Downtown

As for prior Plans, this POCD strives to support, even facilitate, a dynamic, attractive, centrally focused yet expansive Downtown area with varied points of interest for community life.

Downtown has been studied extensively in the last 20 years or so (see sidebar) and, from these studies, the following general themes have emerged:

- Address traffic issues / challenges.
- Maintain and strengthen the economic vitality of Downtown.
- Encourage and facilitate pedestrian life and enhance the overall streetscape.
- Retain the scale of the current architecture.
- Address parking issues / challenges.
- Provide for improved access to the river.

These issues break down into two main components:

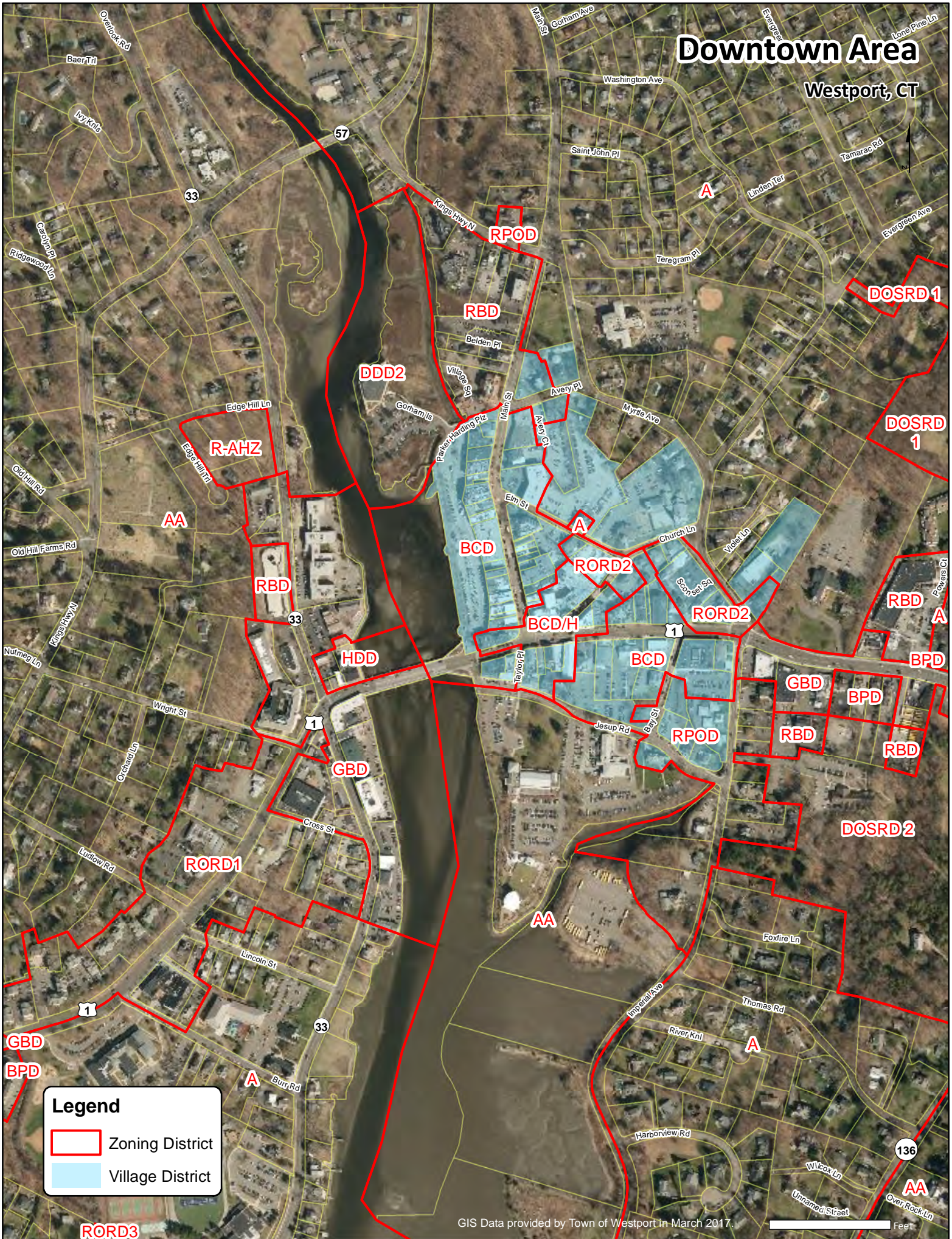
- Improving Downtown areas within the street right-of-way or beyond the control of private property owners (referred to in this Chapter as the “public realm”), and
- Guiding and managing activities on private properties or necessitated by private activities (referred to in this Chapter as the “private realm”).

Maintaining and enhancing Downtown will involve the participation of many people and organizations - the Planning and Zoning Commission, the Downtown Merchants Association, the Chamber of Commerce among other volunteer groups.

A. OVERALL DOWNTOWN	Leader	Partners
1. Address traffic issues / challenges in the Downtown area.	PD PW TA	PZC Town CT-DOT
2. Maintain and strengthen the economic vitality of Downtown.	Town	PZC
3. Encourage and facilitate pedestrian life and enhance the overall streetscape in the Downtown.	Town	PZC
4. Retain the scale of the current architecture.	PZC	ARB
5. Address parking issues / challenges in the Downtown area.	PZC Town	
6. Provide for improved access to the river.	Town	PZC
7. Support the establishment of a Special Services District if desired to help provide common services in the Downtown.	Town	DMA PZC BOF PIC
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Downtown Area

Westport, CT



Legend

- Zoning District
- Village District

GIS Data provided by Town of Westport in March 2017.

Feet



8.3. Improve Downtown’s “Public Realm”

In 2015, the Town of Westport continued its efforts with regard to maintaining and enhancing Downtown by undertaking a comprehensive study of the area (the Downtown Master Plan). The report is a summary of possible strategies for the future of the Downtown and provides an overall view of how some things could be accomplished as part of improving the “public realm” in the Downtown area.

In the on-line survey, participants were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the following statement:

We have enough parking in Downtown Westport.

Strongly agree	6%
Agree	40%
Not sure	4%
Disagree	32%
Strongly disagree	17%

The sidewalks and pedestrian areas in Downtown are adequate.

Strongly agree	14%
Agree	49%
Not sure	1%
Disagree	25%
Strongly disagree	12%

Through the multi-faceted public outreach process, the study found that participants wanted to:

- maintain a “small town” character,
- focus on a downtown for Westport residents, and
- implement strategies in a fiscally- and environmentally-responsible way.

The study looked at a number of areas in and near the Downtown and considered a variety of ideas submitted by residents and other participants in the process. These concepts were organized around four main themes:

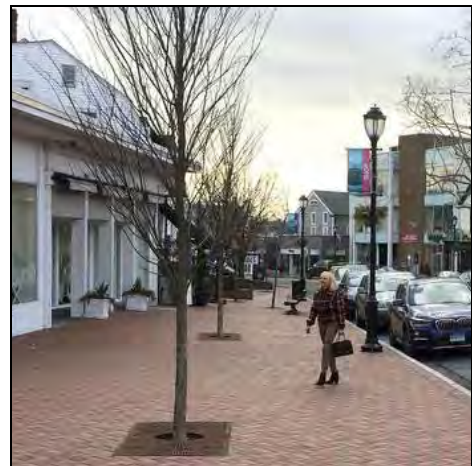
- **Places** - enhance and activate public open spaces, improve streetscape and landscape attractiveness, and enhance connections between key Downtown destinations.
- **Mobility** - enhance pedestrian connections, walkways, and bike paths.
- **Parking** - improve traffic flow and parking management.
- **Water** - reclaim and enhance riverfront access, views, and walkways.

Then, the various ideas and strategies were evaluated and organized into short-term, mid-term, and long-term approaches to the public realm. A more complete description of the strategies and recommendations can be found in the report. Each strategy or recommendation in the study is not to be construed as being endorsed by the Planning and Zoning Commission or the POCD. Each strategy or recommendation will need to be reviewed on its own merits by the Planning and Zoning Commission at the appropriate time.

Downtown



Downtown



The relocation and renovation of the Kemper-Gunn house is an excellent example of adaptive reuse and historic preservation of a historic building.

The “village district” (as discussed on page 65) can be an important framework to ensuring that the distinctive character, landscape and historic value of the “public realm” in the Downtown area is protected and preserved.

Kemper-Gunn House



A. PUBLIC REALM	Leader	Partners
1. Refer to the Downtown Westport Master Plan study as a potential guide to improving the public realm in Downtown Westport.	Town	PZC DMA PW
<i>Code legend is on inside back cover</i>		

Enhance Wayfinding

Westport should seek to build on and enhance its existing wayfinding system, both in the Downtown area and in other parts of the community. While people can use GPS and smartphones to navigate to specific destinations, wayfinding can help them locate parking, shops, restaurants, and other amenities while they are here.

A Wayfinding-Type System





8.4. Manage Downtown’s “Private Realm”

What happens on private property in Downtown Westport is as important as what happens within the public realm. Both activities must support each other in a symbiotic relationship.

Types of Uses

The market study conducted as part of the Downtown Westport Master Plan found that half of all retail establishments in Westport are apparel-related, including jewelry stores. While such retailers certainly attract Westport residents, this number of businesses and amount of floor area is mostly supported by customers from outside Westport. While there is market demand for some specialty stores, the supply of space is limited and so the market demand (perhaps up to 78,000 SF) is unrealized.

The retail landscape is changing in other ways. Downtown must now also compete with on-line shopping. When people focus only on the cost of item or want a broader selection of a particular item or do not value the “experiential” aspect of retail offered by an area like Downtown Westport, they may gravitate towards an on-line source. This will pose challenges for Downtown Westport and other places like it in the future. Westport should continue to enhance the “experiential” retail environment it already has.

The key issue for Westport going forward will be to attract and retain a mix of uses (retail, restaurant, entertainment, recreation, etc.) with a variety of scopes (national, regional, local) that will distinguish Westport from other areas and continue to make Downtown relevant and attractive. This may involve new types of uses that extend the activity period in the Downtown area.

Housing is encouraged in the Downtown area in order to extend the activity period and help support an active mixed-use area. First floor retail uses should be maintained in mixed use buildings in order to maintain an inviting streetscape. Any development or redevelopment should maintain an appropriate character and scale in accordance with the village district controls.

Size of Establishments

Maintaining the character and scale of Downtown Westport is important to the community. Section 29-5 of the Zoning Regulations limits buildings and structure to two (2) stories and a height of either twenty-five (25) feet to the top of a flat roof or thirty (30) feet to the mid-point of a pitched roof. Section 29-8 of the Zoning Regulations limits buildings and single establishments to 10,000 square feet of floor area as an absolute limit. These regulations should be maintained.

In the on-line survey, participants were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the following statement:

We need more stores in Downtown Westport.

Strongly agree	6%
Agree	22%
Not sure	4%
Disagree	44%
Strongly disagree	23%

We need more housing in and near Downtown.

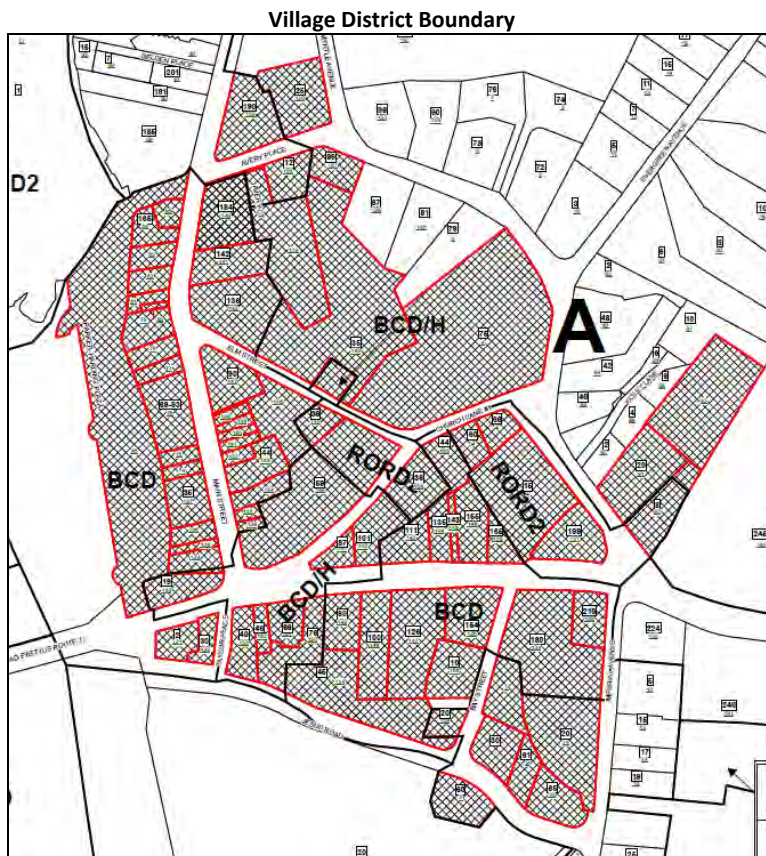
Strongly agree	17%
Agree	28%
Not sure	13%
Disagree	29%
Strongly disagree	12%

Design of Buildings

Downtown Westport is an important community asset and the design, placement, 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. It is important that:

- the distinctive character, landscape and historic value of the Downtown area be protected and preserved, and
- any new development occurs in a way that protects and enhances the character of the Downtown area.

The Planning and Zoning Commission established a “village district” (as authorized by CGS Section 8-2j) in 2017 in order to help do this. A “village district” includes specific regulations and design principles / standards to protect the distinctive character, landscape and historic structures within the district by regulating new construction and substantial reconstruction or rehabilitation of properties within the district and in view from public roadways (including the Saugatuck River).



In the on-line survey, participants were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the following statement:

In Downtown, it would be OK to have taller buildings if they were well designed.

Strongly agree	12%
Agree	16%
Not sure	2%
Disagree	35%
Strongly disagree	35%

We should establish a "village district" for Downtown which will allow the Town to regulate the design of new buildings.

Strongly agree	27%
Agree	37%
Not sure	11%
Disagree	17%
Strongly disagree	8%

In addition, the Village District Study and the Downtown Westport Master Plan suggested some regulation changes to help rationalize the regulatory approach to Downtown (and reduce the number of non-conforming properties):

- reducing or eliminating lot area and/or frontage requirements that are larger than existing lots and make them non-conforming,
- revisiting setback regulations,
- simplifying the zoning categories and language and removing redundancy by combining districts to help make the rules easier to understand.
- revisiting parking requirements and ratios.

Attention should also be paid to carefully siting, designing, and screening utility and service areas (refuse, recycling, deliveries, etc.) so that the quality of the streetscape and overall environment is not negatively affected. Utility and service areas should be shared, if possible.

Downtown



Downtown



Downtown



Downtown



A. PRIVATE REALM	Leader	Partners
1. Encourage the establishment of a mix of local retailers in Downtown in order to distinguish Westport from other areas with national chains.	Town	PZC
2. Monitor the changing nature of on-line retailing and its impact on Westport.	Town	PZC
3. Seek to attract and retain a mix of uses (retail, restaurant, entertainment, recreation, etc.) that will distinguish Westport.	Town	PZC
4. With the village district design review, ensure that new or redeveloped buildings and structures in Downtown (public or private) maintain or enhance the character of the area.	PZC	HDC/ ARB
5. Revisit the Downtown zoning regulations.	PZC	
<input type="checkbox"/> a. Revisit the location and extent of the various zoning districts in Downtown Westport and consider if it is possible to consolidate any of them.	PZC	
<input type="checkbox"/> b. Revisit the dimensional requirements in the Downtown area and consider if it is possible to modify any of them to make more properties conforming.	PZC	
6. Monitor the effectiveness of the new village district review process and design standards and modify as necessary.	PZC	HDC/ ARB
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Flexibility

Since the retail environment is rapidly evolving, Westport should strive to remain nimble to anticipate changing needs and respond to them.

This may include being flexible in how spaces are used within buildings and allowing existing businesses to expand their offerings or experiences. It might also include allowing shared spaces and “pop-up stores” to enhance the overall Downtown experience.

Downtown



Downtown



In 2016, the Town received a grant from the State of Connecticut to develop a master plan for the Saugatuck area.

That project got started while the POCD was being prepared and will be completed after the POCD has been adopted.

As a result, the role of the POCD is to provide a framework for future activities in Saugatuck Center as will be addressed in the “Saugatuck: Gateway For Westport” study.

8.5. Enhance Saugatuck Center

Much of the reason why Saugatuck Center has been a focus area for Westport is that there is a lot going on in a small area. Consider the following:

- The main Metro-North train station for Westport is located in Saugatuck Center and thousands of people travel to and from the station on a daily basis. Traffic can be such a challenge at some peak hours that the Police Department has a designated officer directing traffic to react instantaneously to changes in traffic flow.
- The main Westport exit and entrance with Interstate 95 is located in Saugatuck Center and thousands of additional people from within Westport and from adjacent communities travel through Saugatuck Center on a daily basis to travel to and from the highway.
- If I-95 gets backed up, hundreds of vehicles can exit the highway and empty into Saugatuck Center in the hopes of finding a faster route.
- There are a number of water-related uses (both commercial and recreational) that take advantage of the riverfront location.
- A number of residential neighborhoods are located near Saugatuck Center and residents must travel through Saugatuck to get to other destinations.

Improve Saugatuck Center’s “Public Realm”

In Saugatuck Center, the POCD recommends that programs and activities be undertaken to improve the streetscape, pedestrian friendliness, traffic flow, and other aspects of the “public realm” in this area in order to:

- maintain a “small town” character,
- focus on a village-type area for Westport residents, and
- implement strategies in a fiscally- and environmentally-responsible way.

Saugatuck Center





Saugatuck Area

Westport, CT

PRD
1 GBD

GBD

AA

GBD

GBD

DOSRD3

A

RORD2

GBD

GBD/S

R-AHZ
/W

RORD2

GBD/S

GBD

136

B

RBD

B

AA

AAA

DDD2

510 Feet



Survey Results

In the on-line survey, participants were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the following statements:

We should encourage the revitalization of Saugatuck Center.

Strongly agree	26%
Agree	48%
Not sure	9%
Disagree	11%
Strongly disagree	7%

We need more housing in and near Saugatuck Center.

Strongly agree	10%
Agree	30%
Not sure	22%
Disagree	23%
Strongly disagree	16%

The sidewalks / pedestrian areas in Saugatuck Center are adequate.

Strongly agree	7%
Agree	34%
Not sure	11%
Disagree	37%
Strongly disagree	11%

In Saugatuck Center, it would be OK to have taller buildings if they were well designed

Strongly agree	12%
Agree	20%
Not sure	3%
Disagree	33%
Strongly disagree	32%

In Saugatuck, it would be OK to have a parking structure for the train station

Strongly agree	25%
Agree	36%
Not sure	4%
Disagree	18%
Strongly disagree	18%

We should establish a "village district" for Saugatuck Center which will allow the Town to regulate the design of new buildings

Strongly agree	24%
Agree	36%
Not sure	14%
Disagree	20%
Strongly disagree	6%

Manage Saugatuck Center’s “Private Realm”

As recognized in the Downtown discussion, what happens on private property in Saugatuck Center is as important as what happens within the public realm. Both activities must support each other in a symbiotic relationship.

A key issue for Saugatuck Center going forward will be to attract and retain a mix of uses (retail, restaurant, entertainment, recreation, etc.) that will distinguish Saugatuck Center from other areas and continue to keep this area relevant and attractive.

Housing should be encouraged in the Saugatuck Center area in order to extend the activity period and help support an active mixed-use area. First floor retail uses should be maintained in mixed use buildings in order to maintain an inviting streetscape. Any development or redevelopment should maintain an appropriate character and scale in accordance with the General Business District – Saugatuck (GBD-S) provisions.

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 Center area and its economic vitality. It is important that:

- the distinctive character, landscape and historic value of the Saugatuck Center area be protected and preserved, and
- any new development occurs in a way that protects and enhances the character of the Saugatuck Center area.

The POCD recommends that action be taken to preserve and enhance the character of this area through either:

- establishment of a village district (as authorized by CGS Section 8-2j) as was done for the Downtown area, or
- establishment of a form-based code or other approach.

Saugatuck Waterfront



Michael Cammeyer

Saugatuck Design Principles

1. Enhance the pedestrian experience in Saugatuck with emphasis on:
 - Waterfront access;
 - Additional civic / park space; and
 - Sidewalk / streetscape / landscape / lighting improvements throughout.
2. Encourage and enhance multi-modal choices, including local transit service to the station to reduce the demand for additional commuter parking.
3. Provide parking strategies to support both commuters and local businesses while reducing the appearance of parking as the primary land use in Saugatuck.
4. Enhance the gateway experience to Saugatuck and the Town of Westport.
5. Promote a mix of uses and resiliency that protects the vibrancy and character of Saugatuck.
6. Reduce traffic congestion and discourage cut through traffic.
7. The Cribari Bridge’s existing function and structure shall be preserved.
8. Establish a regulatory framework for implementation of development plan recommendations that:
 - Recognizes the importance of Saugatuck’s transportation infrastructure;
 - Celebrates and integrates the existing historic resources of Saugatuck; and
 - Enhances the unique character of Saugatuck

A. SAUGATUCK CENTER		Leader	Partners
1.	Maintain and strengthen the economic vitality of Saugatuck Center.	PZC	Town
2.	Retain the scale of the current architecture.	PZC	ARB
<input type="checkbox"/>	a. Consider establishing a “village district” (as authorized by CGS Section 8-2j) in the Saugatuck Center area.	PZC	
3.	Allow 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.	PZC	
4.	Encourage and facilitate pedestrian life and enhance the overall streetscape in Saugatuck Center.	Town PZC	
5.	Refer to the “Saugatuck – Gateway For Westport” study as a potential guide to improving the public realm in Saugatuck Center.	Town PZC	
6.	Address traffic issues / challenges in the Saugatuck Center area.	PD PW TA	PZC Town CT-DOT
7.	Address parking issues / challenges in the Saugatuck Center area.	Town PZC	PD CT-DOT
8.	Provide for improved access to the Saugatuck River.	PZC	
9.	Require public access to the Saugatuck River waterfront on suitable commercial and mixed use properties\ and provide for improved access to the river whenever opportunities arise.	PZC	
10.	Support the establishment of a Special Services District if desired to help provide common services in Saugatuck Center.	Town	PZC
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Saugatuck Center



Saugatuck Center



GUIDE BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

9

9.1. Overview

Business and economic development in Westport enhances the community by increasing the grand list, providing jobs, making goods and services available, and enhancing the quality of life in the community.

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.

Westport desires appropriate economic development and seeks to guide it so that it fits into the overall fabric of the community. Part of this overall goal is to strengthen the business environment in all areas of the community and to enhance the appearance and functioning of these areas. The POCD recommends that new development (and redevelopment):

- enhance the overall appearance of the building and function of the site,
- enhance overall community character, and
- minimize any potential negative impacts.



Promoting suitable business and economic development and redevelopment will help make Westport a more sustainable community by helping to meet community needs in appropriate ways and locations.

Goal

Guide business and economic development in Westport so that it is appropriate for the community, enhances community character, and minimizes any potential negative impacts while striving to increase the Grand List.

“Smart Growth”

The term “smart growth” is used to describe strategies that address a variety of community-building objectives. While development in years past might have only looked at the site itself, “smart growth” looks at the context of the location and how to meet multiple development, conservation and infrastructure strategies at the same time.

Business Zoning Districts

As discussed in Section 9.3, Westport has a plethora of business zoning districts.

It may make sense to consolidate some of the 14 separate business zoning districts in order to establish a cogent “comprehensive plan” of zoning where similarly situated properties get similar treatment.

This review might occur as part of a larger update and review of the Zoning Regulations.

9.2. Support Appropriate Economic Development

The POCD supports the establishment and expansion of appropriate uses that provide net tax revenue to support municipal services. This includes business uses and some residential uses (such as assisted living facilities) which provide more in tax revenue than they require in services.

However, any future business or economic development has to fit into the overall fabric of Westport both in terms of location and design. Westport wants to attract *appropriate* business and economic development that enhances the overall character of the community.

A. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT		Leader	Partners
1.	Encourage economic development that is consistent with the POCD and that harmonizes with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Westport’s locational advantages, the natural environment, and surrounding structures and uses. 	Town	PZC
2.	Continue to promote concepts of “smart growth.”	Town	PZC
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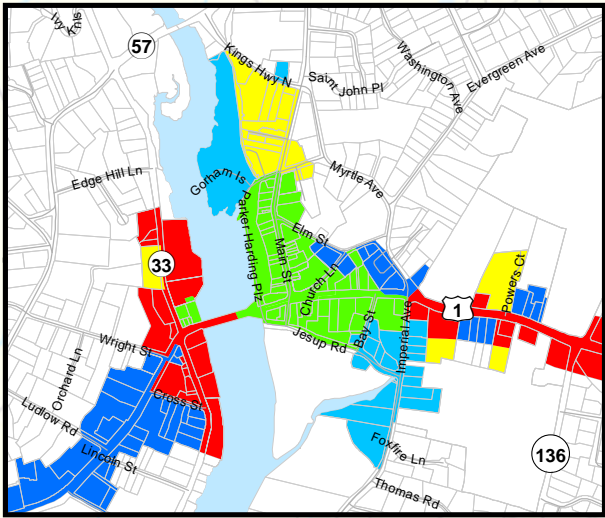
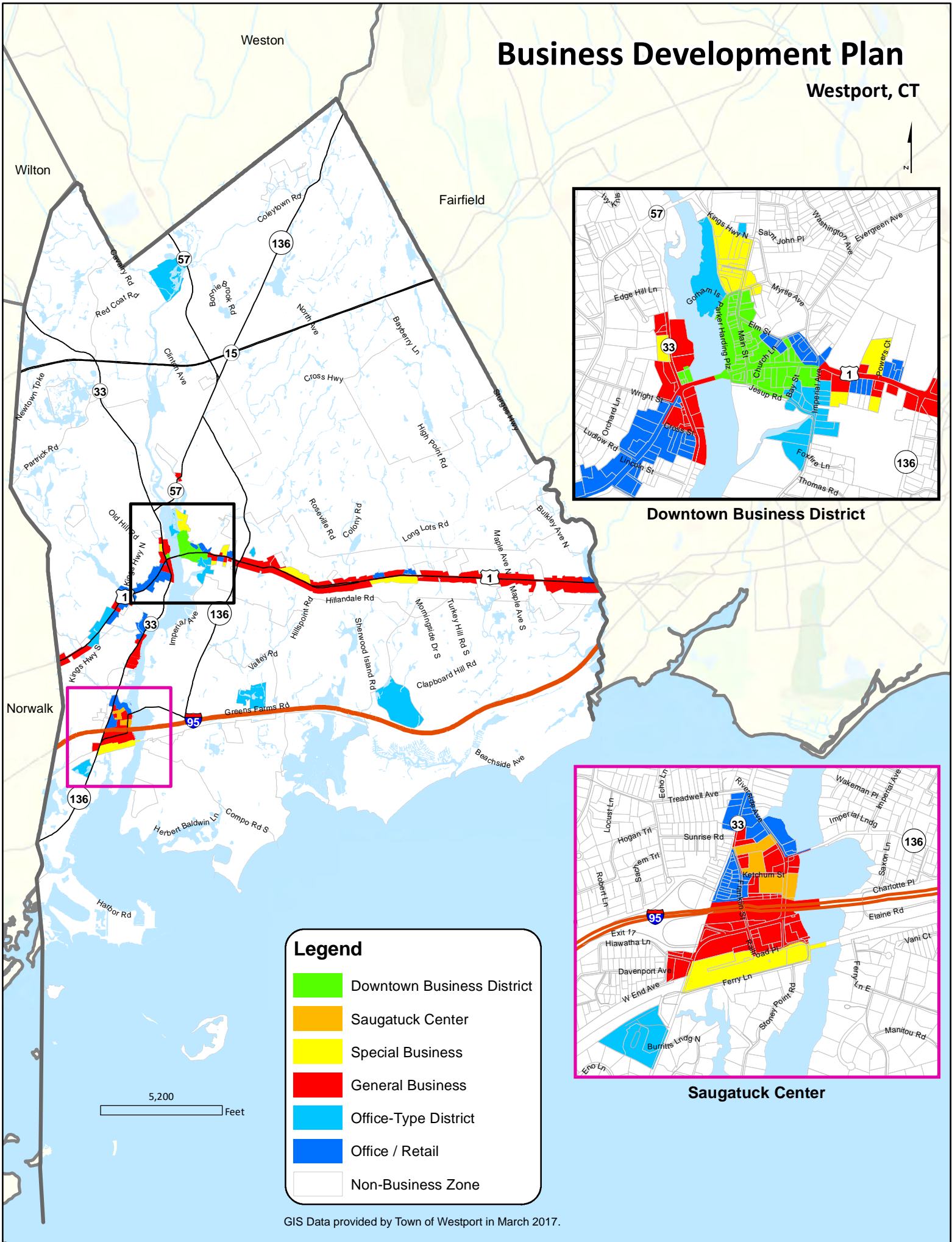
9.3. Revisit Business Zoning Districts

During the planning period, Westport should revisit the number, location, extent, and type of business zoning districts. The zoning map shows a wide variety of business zoning districts, sometimes in quite small areas, and the rationale for the resulting distinctions between adjacent properties (or even parts of the same property) are not always clear. The detail maps on following pages 76-77 may illustrate this more fully.

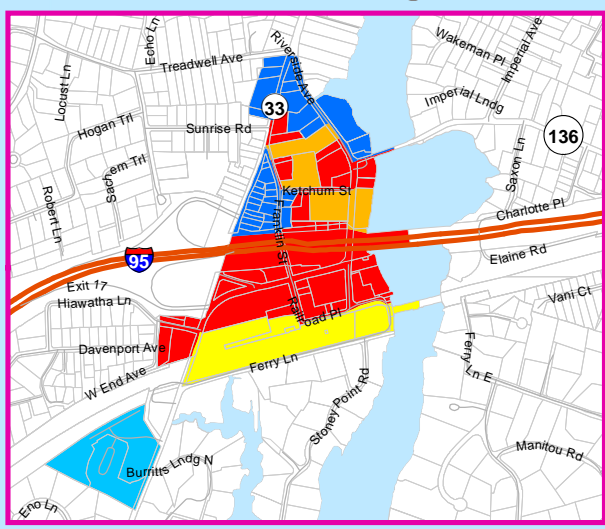
A. BUSINESS ZONING		Leader	Partners
1.	Encourage a comprehensive approach to business zoning to provide a clear picture of what is permitted where.	PZC	
2.	Discourage a site-based approach to business zoning unless there are good public policy reasons for doing so.	PZC	
<input type="checkbox"/>	a. Undertake a comprehensive review of the location of business zoning districts (location, boundaries, etc.) to ensure they are configured for encouraging appropriate future development.	PZC	
<input type="checkbox"/>	b. Review the uses allowed in business zones to see if there are opportunities to expand the uses to be allowed in some areas to promote appropriate economic development.	PZC	
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Business Development Plan

Westport, CT



Downtown Business District



Saugatuck Center

Legend

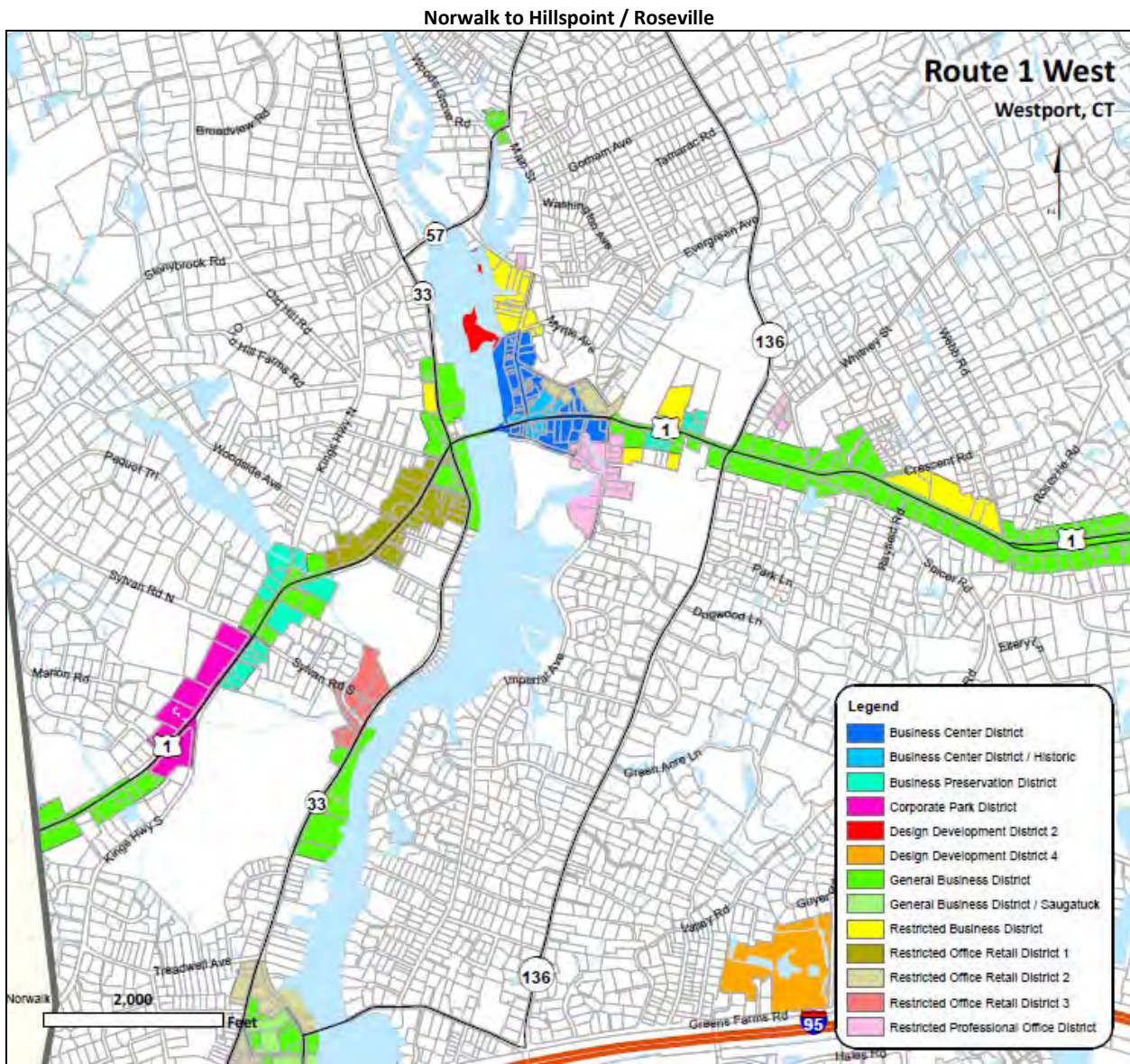
- Downtown Business District
- Saugatuck Center
- Special Business
- General Business
- Office-Type District
- Office / Retail
- Non-Business Zone

GIS Data provided by Town of Westport in March 2017.

9.4. Improve Business Areas Along Route 1

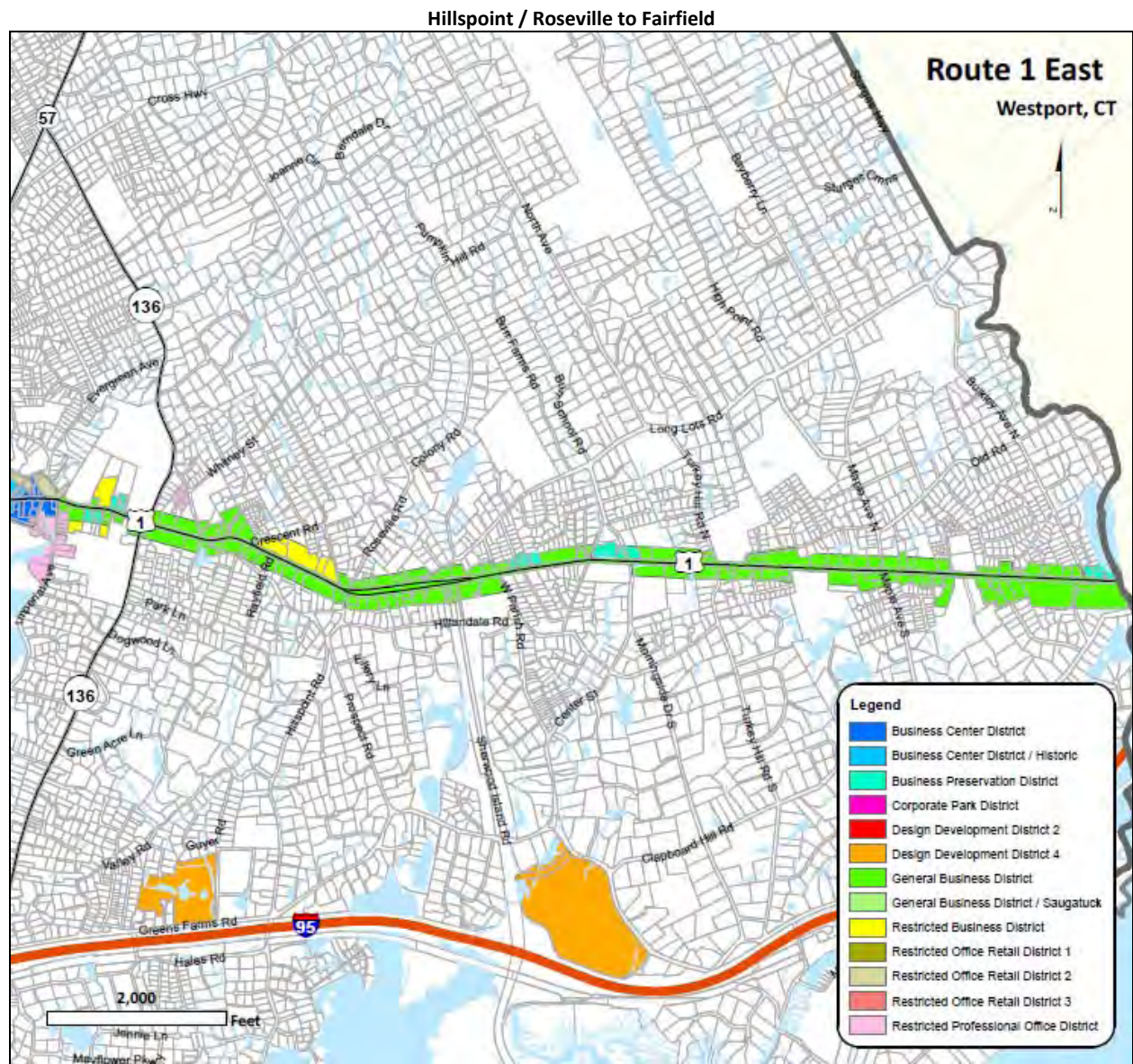
Route 1 (also known as the Post Road) has two distinct characters.

- 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.



As recommended on page 112, developments along both sections of the Post Road, especially Post Road East, be encouraged or required to implement access management techniques (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 for vehicles and pedestrians and improved traffic flow, every use along the Post Road 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 uses along the Post Road, especially Post Road East, which are improved or redeveloped provide landscaping in ways to enhance the Post Road.



What About ...?

How will the increase in on-line shopping affect Westport in the future?

Will the increase in home-based employment make it more difficult to fill office buildings in the future?

Will on-line apps help us better provide for train station parking or will they reduce the need for parking since people may use driverless cars or on-demand services?

B. IMPROVE ROUTE 1		Leader	Partners
1.	Encourage or require developments along the Post Road to share driveway access and parking.	PZC	PD
2.	Require developments along the Post Road to mitigate the impacts from any increase in traffic generated.	PZC	
3.	Require all new or redeveloped sites along the Post Road to install sidewalks and provide landscaping in ways to enhance the Post Road.	PZC	
4.	Seek ways to modify the Zoning Regulations to encourage appropriate improvements and/or redevelopment along the Post Road.	PZC	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>a. Revisit the parking ratio for business uses since:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requiring more parking spaces than are needed increases impervious coverage and reduces economic development and/or landscaping opportunities, and reducing the parking requirements may open up the opportunity for redevelopment of some parcels and result in improved buildings, more landscaping, access management, and other desirable outcomes. 	PZC	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>b. Consider the potential for some properties on the Post Road to accommodate mixed-use <u>buildings</u> and/or mixed-use <u>developments</u> (containing housing) in order to increase the variety of housing choices in locations with access to shopping and public transportation.</p>	PZC	
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Example of Post Road East



GUIDE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

10

10.1. Overview

As with prior Plans, it is a central goal of this Plan to maintain the single-family residential character and density of Westport's existing neighborhoods. The overall character and ambience of existing neighborhoods is responsible for the recognized quality of life in Westport.

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.



Guiding residential development will help make Westport a more sustainable community by balancing individual and community desires for housing with overall impacts.

Goal

Maintain the preponderance of single-family homes increase housing diversity as to size of units, and promote housing affordability.



Single-Family Character

Since 2007, Westport has had a regulation limiting multi-family dwellings to no more than ten percent (10%) of the total number of single-family dwellings (Section 4-5 of the Zoning Regulations). Affordable housing units and certain other housing units are exempt.

A 2016 analysis estimated that there might be the potential for an additional 97 market-rate multi-family units in Westport under this Regulation.

10.2. Maintain Residential Character

Maintaining residential character is a fundamental philosophy of the Plan and this has three components:

- Maintaining the overall residential density of an area (units / acre) within a range that is reflective of the built form of the neighborhood or otherwise appropriate for the location,
- Protecting residential neighborhoods from encroachment by inappropriate uses, and
- Managing residential development and redevelopment and other activities on residential properties to ensure they are appropriate for the site and/or given the impacts on neighbors.

Maintaining Density

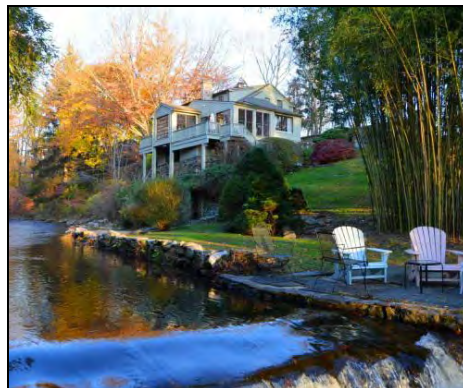
As the map on the facing page indicates, there is a general pattern to the residential densities throughout Westport. The POCD recommends that this residential density pattern be maintained within a range that is reflective of the built form of the neighborhood or otherwise appropriate for the location.

Protection From Encroachment

To protect residential neighborhoods from inappropriate uses:

- Residential neighborhoods will continue to be protected from the intrusion of commercial activities.
- Boundaries between residential neighborhoods and non-residential zoning districts will remain clear.
- Transitions from residential neighborhoods to non-residential zoning districts will be logical and have appropriate buffering, as necessary.
- Special Permit requests in residential zones will be carefully reviewed to ensure that they appropriate and suitable for that location.

Residential Home

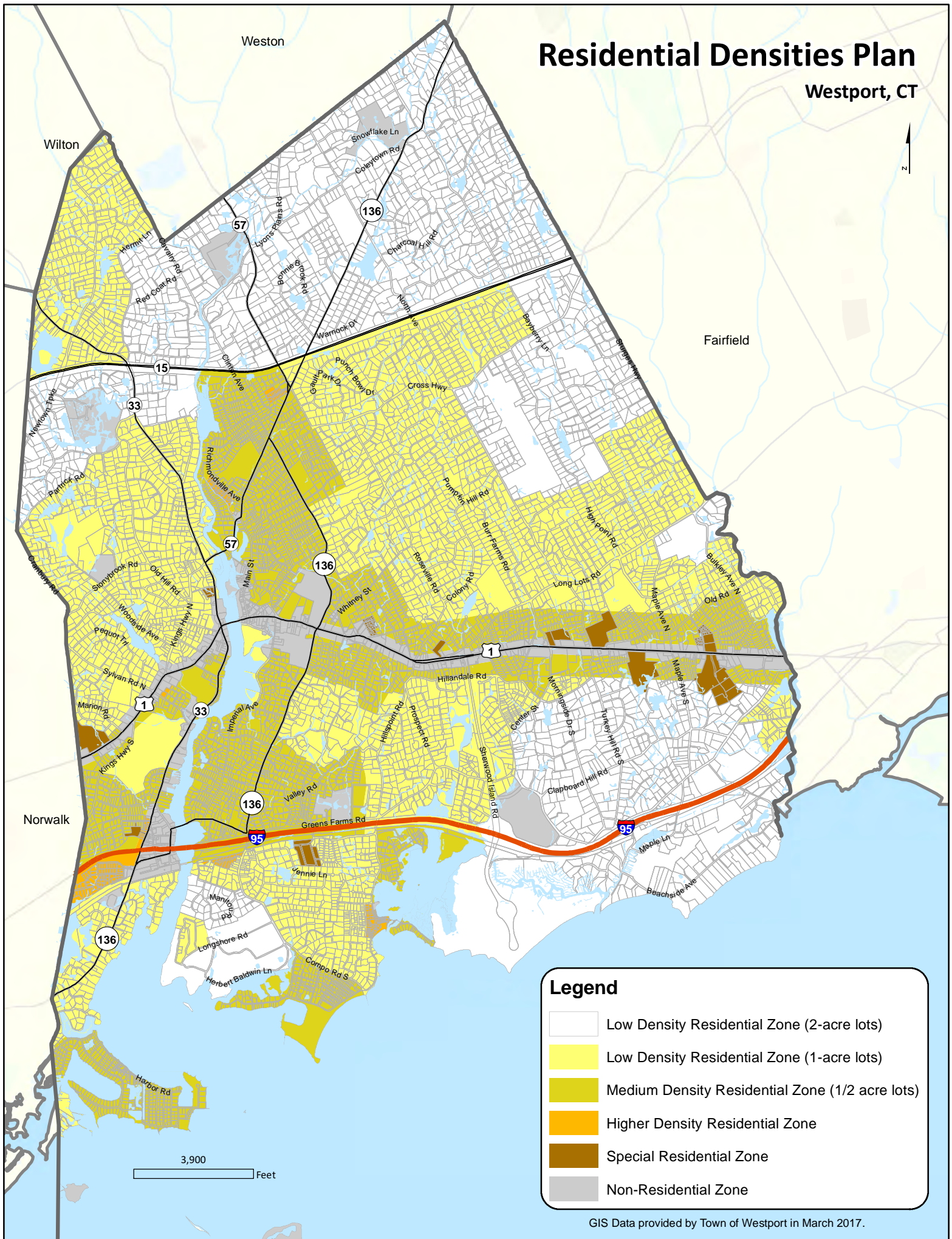


Residential Home



Residential Densities Plan

Westport, CT



Legend

- Low Density Residential Zone (2-acre lots)
- Low Density Residential Zone (1-acre lots)
- Medium Density Residential Zone (1/2 acre lots)
- Higher Density Residential Zone
- Special Residential Zone
- Non-Residential Zone

GIS Data provided by Town of Westport in March 2017.



Managing Residential Development And Redevelopment

Westport is a desirable community and there is strong demand for housing from people who want to live here. Since Westport is mostly built out, there are not many opportunities for new development other than through redevelopment of existing properties.

Westport experienced significant housing growth in the 1950s and 1960s when housing desires were significantly different than they are today. One only has to read an article in a home improvement magazine or look at a home improvement show on television to realize that the housing units of that time had smaller kitchens, fewer bathrooms, fewer closets, and a general layout that does not conform well to current lifestyles.

While a number of Westport residents feel that the older housing stock should be retained for a variety of reasons, the overall housing market drives housing in Westport to prices where it makes financial sense for purchasers to replace an older unit that does not meet their needs with a newly constructed house that does.

While it may seem counter-intuitive to some people that buyers spend hundreds of thousands of dollars to purchase a residence only to then tear the house down, this simply reflects the overall desirability of the community we have chosen to live in. They are not making any more land in Westport. There have been years in which there were more houses built in Westport as a result of a "teardown" than were built on "vacant land" (i.e., had no house previously).

Since Census data indicates that more than half of the Westport housing stock is at least 60 years and may not be well configured for current lifestyles, the POCD recommends that residents be allowed to adapt the housing stock to the needs of modern households. If housing in Westport ever becomes what people do not want, it will be an issue of considerable concern.

In the on-line survey, participants were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the following statement:

Westport has good regulations in place to manage the size of new houses and those resulting from "teardowns."

Strongly agree	4%
Agree	21%
Not sure	10%
Disagree	31%
Strongly disagree	34%

Before Teardown



After Redevelopment



The approach for Westport then is to ensure that any new residential development or redevelopment is ***appropriate in scale and character*** for its setting.

In the on-line survey, 65 percent of participants ***did not feel*** that the Town has good regulations in place to manage the size of new houses and those resulting from "teardowns."

Westport’s zoning regulations should be revisited to ensure that housing units being built are in scale and proportion with the lot size and the neighborhood. Some concerns expressed by Westport residents include:

- The size of new homes relative to the size of the lot is causing drainage problems which are affecting abutters.
- New homes seem excessively tall and this is affecting abutters.
- The grading associated with new homes is changing drainage patterns and increasing the height relative to neighbors.
- The amount of building coverage seems excessive for the lot size in certain locations.
- It seems the grade is being manipulated to accommodate the house rather than the house being sited in harmony with the grades.
- A reduce building height closer to a property line might help a building fit in better to its setting.

Preserving Existing Homes

While keeping Westport's housing stock competitive and desirable probably necessitates some building modification or redevelopment, the Town encourages the reuse of existing housing stock and sustainable redevelopment as an alternative to teardowns.

Due to the amount of waste generated, the "greenest" building may result from reusing the one already built.

In the event that redevelopment is not considered feasible or appropriate, the Town favors "deconstruction" of the building(s) to reduce waste and encourage salvage / recycling of materials.

Westport will continue to consider ways to encourage and incentivize the redevelopment / reuse of existing structures.

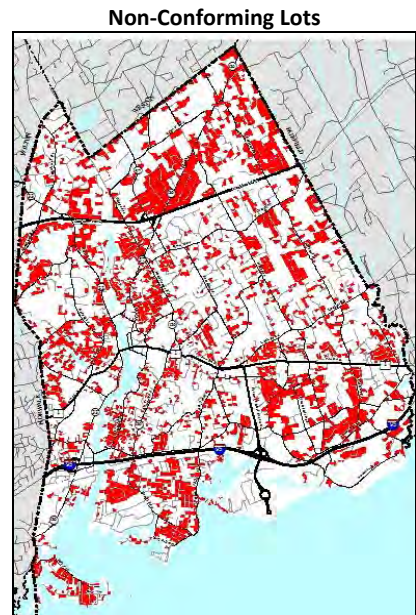
A. MANAGING DEVELOPMENT	Leader	Partners
1. Maintain the overall residential density pattern within a range that is reflective of the built form of the neighborhood or otherwise appropriate for the location.	PZC	
2. Protect residential neighborhoods from encroachment from inappropriate uses.	PZC	
3. Manage residential development and redevelopment to ensure that new construction is appropriate in scale and character for its setting.	PZC	
<input type="checkbox"/> a. Revisit zoning definitions and regulations related to residential building bulk and location (coverage, setbacks, height, floor area) to ensure that new construction is appropriate in scale and character for its setting.	PZC	
4. Encourage and incentivize the sustainable improvement / reuse of existing houses and residential structures.	PZC	
5. Establish programs and policies that support aging in place in existing homes.	PZC	
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10.3. Revisit Residential Zoning Districts

About *one-half* of all residential lots in Westport are non-conforming as to lot size.

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 Board of Appeals for things they might like to do. Even very simple things can require a property survey and an attorney and end up costing homeowners thousands of dollars before they know if they can proceed.

While this issue may be most significant in the shoreline areas, the adjacent map indicates it is an issue throughout Westport.



To address these issues, Westport should revisit the residential zoning standards and consider:

- revisiting 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.

A. REVISIT ZONING		Leader	Partners
1.	Comprehensively analyze the residential zone locations to see if more lots can be made conforming as to lot area.	PZC	
□	a. Revisit the location of residential zoning districts with regard to the prevailing lot sizes in each area to see if more lots can be made conforming as to lot area.	PZC	
2.	Revisit the residential zoning standards with regard to setbacks, coverage, height, and other standards.	PZC	
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10.4. Monitor Changing Housing Needs

In the future, it is expected that there will be growing interest in housing choices for “empty nesters” and retirees who want to remain in Westport, either seasonally or year-round. There may also be situations where property owners would like a caretaker or caregiver to be able to live on the premises. In addition, there will be a growing number of older residents who may outlive their savings or seek alternative housing in a community where they may have lived their whole life.

Given the housing costs in Westport, there may also be situations where workers in local businesses or children of Westport residents may want their own living unit in Town.

The POCD recommends that Westport continue to seek ways to address changing housing needs ***while maintaining the character and integrity of Westport.*** Some ways to do this might include:

- retaining / repurposing older housing,
- small scale developments in multiple areas,
- transitional locations between business areas and residential areas,
- accessory apartments,
- house sharing, and
- other approaches that maintain the character and integrity of Westport.



In the on-line survey, participants were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the following statement:

It would be nice if Westport had more housing choices for "empty nesters" and others.

Strongly agree	35%
Agree	40%
Not sure	11%
Disagree	12%
Strongly disagree	3%

A. MONITOR CHANGING HOUSING NEEDS	Leader	Partners
1. Seek ways to address changing housing needs while maintaining the character and integrity of Westport.	PZC	
2. Support and encourage the Westport Housing Authority in their efforts to provide affordable housing opportunities in ways that are compatible with the character of Westport and its neighborhoods.	PZC	
3. Consider ways of integrating affordable and workforce housing in future projects.	PZC	
4. Support and encourage non-profit organizations that help address housing needs in ways that maintain the character and integrity of Westport.	PZC	
5. Consider ways of collaborating with public and private organizations in terms of addressing housing needs.	PZC	
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10.5. Continue To Address Housing Needs

To help Westport address the issue of having a range of housing opportunities to meet different housing needs and housing choices, the Planning and Zoning Commission reactivated the Affordable Housing Subcommittee in 2017 to explore how Westport can make progress towards this while:

- maintaining its town character, and
- preserving antique housing, existing neighborhood density and streetscape.

At the present time, Westport has a diverse array of housing types with housing available at different levels of affordability. For example, the Westport Housing Authority operates and maintains several developments for income-limited and disabled persons and families. In recent years, the Town of Westport supported the initiatives of the Westport Housing Authority to upgrade and expand two housing complexes (Hales Court and Sasco Creek) to create more units and more modern units.

Hales Court



Sasco Creek



Mixed Use Housing on Riverside Avenue



Mixed Use Housing In Saugatuck



In addition, Westport also has some “naturally occurring affordable housing” that is affordable. The Town has documented 1,069 apartments in private homes (accessory units, elderly conversion, and/or pre-1959 units), many of which are available at affordable prices. There is other housing provided as group homes and low income options that are affordable.

The Town of Westport has demonstrated its commitment to affordable housing. In recent years, the Town has modified the zoning regulations on several occasions to increase the diversity of the housing stock while maintaining Westport’s small town character. One regulation change allowed for the conversion of Saugatuck School into 36 units of low cost housing for the elderly although these units are not counted by the State. Another regulation change implemented an “inclusionary housing” approach which resulted in at least one approval of additional affordable units.

Still, the demand for affordable housing in Westport outstrips the supply. As a result, the Planning and Zoning Commission will continue to seek ways to address the need for “below market rate” housing. In addition to public actions, this could include encouraging private actions and/or public-private partnerships to provide for housing that is affordable for people and families who need it. These efforts may result in a “housing plan” of some type identifying strategies to help address Westport’s housing goals while maintaining its town character and accomplishing other goals.

However, while the Planning and Zoning Commission is seeking to address these issues, Westport is still subject to the State’s Affordable Housing Appeals Procedure (codified as Section 8-30g of the Connecticut General Statutes). This procedure may allow a qualifying development containing affordable housing units to be exempt from local zoning rules.

As stated previously, Westport would prefer to address local housing needs in ways that maintain its town character and past experiences with CGS 8-30g development shows that might not always be the case when the development is exempt from local zoning rules.

In order to address local housing needs in ways that maintain its town character, Westport would like to:

- promote actions (public, private, and/or public-private) to provide for housing that is affordable for people and families who need it, and
- become exempt from CGS 8-30g.



In the on-line survey, participants were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the following statement:

We should do more in Westport to provide for housing that is more affordable to people who need it.

Strongly agree	26%
Agree	38%
Not sure	8%
Disagree	20%
Strongly disagree	8%

Affordable Housing As Defined By Statute

Norwalk	12.3%
State	11.6%
Wilton	3.9%
Darien	3.4%
Westport	3.1%
New Canaan	2.6%
Fairfield	2.3%
Weston	0.1%

CT Department of Housing, 2017

“Housing Points”

A calculation done in September 2016 estimated that Westport had accumulated 153 “housing unit equivalent points” (HUEP) out of the 208 HUEP needed to qualify for a four-year moratorium from the affordable housing appeals procedure.

Moreover, if certain projects approved before that time are completed, there may be another 83.25 HUEP and this will make Westport eligible for a moratorium.

Communities in Connecticut are exempt from CGS 8-30g if at least ten percent (10%) of the housing units in the community are “affordable.” However, since the statutory definition of affordable housing units only counts certain types of units (assisted housing, financed by Connecticut Housing Finance Authority mortgages, or sale price restricted by deed), a lot of the affordable units in Westport are not counted in the State reporting of affordable housing.

There have been several recent affordable housing applications approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission. Once built, these developments will establish enough “housing unit equivalent points”(see sidebar) for Westport to have earned for four-year moratorium from the provisions of CGS Section 8-30g. During the moratorium, the Town will work to establish additional affordable housing units.

As current housing issues and concerns are addressed, it is possible that the Affordable Housing Subcommittee may become less active over time. If this occurs, the Planning and Zoning Commission should reactivate or reinvigorate the Affordable Housing Subcommittee every few years to relook at the issue of housing needs in the community and consider appropriate strategies to address issues and concerns.

A. ADDRESS HOUSING NEEDS		Leader	Partners
1.	Continue to address housing needs in Westport (affordable, aged, special needs, ADA).	PZC	
2.	Seek to address affordable housing in ways that are appropriate for the community rather than dictated by private developers.	PZC	
	<input type="checkbox"/> a. Apply for a four-year moratorium under CGS 8-30g as soon as eligible.	PZC	
	<input type="checkbox"/> b. During the moratorium, seek to establish additional housing units in order to continue the moratorium.	PZC	
3.	Maintain an accurate database of affordable units.	PZC	
	<input type="checkbox"/> a. Maintain and update the inventory of affordable units of all types in Westport (including pre-1959 apartments).	PZC	
	<input type="checkbox"/> b. Make a concerted effort to get pre-1959 apartments documented as affordable housing units.	PZC	
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PROMOTE SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCY

11

11.1. Overview

Westport has been and will continue to be a leader in promoting sustainability and resiliency. The 2007 Westport POCD was one of the first in Connecticut to include a chapter devoted to sustainability. In 2017, Westport was the first town in Connecticut to both establish “Net- Zero by 2050” as a town goal, and have that goal endorsed by its elected body - the Representative Town Meeting.



Promoting sustainability and resiliency will help make Westport a more sustainable community by becoming more efficient and economical in our use of resources.

Goal

Use best efforts to become a Net Zero community by the year 2050, using approaches that are economically viable, of social benefit, and environmentally responsible.

Sustainability



Resiliency





11.2. Promote Sustainability

For the purposes of the POCD, “sustainability” refers to the philosophy of encouraging activities that allow present generations to meet their needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

Promote Energy Conservation / Sustainability

In the on-line survey, participants were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the following statement:

Westport needs to find ways to be more sustainable (conserve energy, conserve water, reduce waste, reduce carbon footprint, etc.).

Strongly agree	42%
Agree	39%
Not sure	7%
Disagree	9%
Strongly disagree	3%

Since 2006, Westport’s Green Task Force has been working to move Westport toward becoming a sustainable green community through actions by both the public and private sectors. The Task Force has made significant progress and continues to guide Westport towards a more sustainable future by providing policy recommendations and implementing energy efficiency and renewable energy programs with the goal to reduce fossil fuel usage, increase energy reliability and efficiency, and save money with regard to space heating and air conditioning, electrical consumption and generation, vehicle usage, and other matters.

For example, the Green Task Force has been recognized by EnergizeCT for its commitment to energy efficiency and conservation as well as renewable energy promotion. Overall, the Town has:

- reduced its usage of fossil fuels and begun the transition to renewable energy sources (including on-site generation),
- committed to decreasing municipal building energy use by twenty percent (20%) by 2018, and
- ascribed to a vision to use its best efforts to become a Net Zero community by the year 2050, where the community has reduced its impacts across energy, water and waste so that they are sustainably managed, using approaches that are economically viable, of social benefit, and environmentally responsible.

The Task Force has also launched the Westport Home Energy Challenge and Solarize Westport to help Westport residents and businesses “go green” and become more and more sustainable over time.

Residential Rooftop Solar Installation



Commercial Rooftop Solar Installation



Sustainability Toolbox

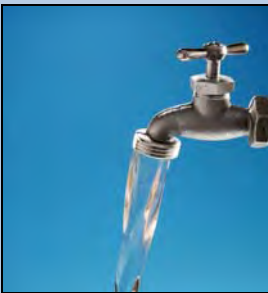
Some of the items to be considered as part of an overall approach to sustainability could include:

- **Energy-Related**
 - Reducing energy use
 - Becoming more efficient in use of energy resources
 - Promoting “net zero” approaches
 - Life cycle costing of energy alternatives
 - Promoting / accommodating solar power installations
 - Promoting / accommodating wind power installations
 - Establishing “micro-grids” (also see Section 14.2)
 - Installing fuel cells where feasible (also see Section 14.2)

- **Waste-Related**
 - Promoting “zero waste” practices
 - Increasing recycling
 - Reducing food waste
 - Reducing commercial and industrial waste
 - Reducing residential waste
 - Recycling clothing and other household items
 - Promoting better stewardship of battery products

- **Health-Related**
 - Reducing idling traffic (schools, traffic congestion, etc.)
 - Detoxification of home products / building materials
 - Disposal of paint and other household hazardous waste

Water Conservation



Recycling



Electric Vehicle



“Net Zero”

Net-zero greenhouse gas emissions is when the natural world can absorb the emissions from human activity. For a town like Westport it means reducing the whole community’s energy consumption through energy efficiency and conservation measures; and producing or buying enough clean energy to meet those needs.

Net-zero water means preserving and protecting the quality and availability of water to sustain our community, and that the water we return to the water table and downstream estuaries is clean.

Net-zero waste means we reduce our waste to a minimum, we reuse what we can, recycle the rest, and send zero waste to landfill.

“Green Houses”

More and more “green homes” are being built in Westport and such houses can use less energy and water, and are built to be healthier and safer by providing cleaner indoor air.

The Town's Green Task Force has started a program "Greenbuilt Westport" to recognize buildings that meaningfully contribute to a sustainable future for the town.

Sustainable Development

Sustainable development can occur through:

- re-utilizing existing buildings (reducing waste and preserving community character),
- life-cycle costing of energy equipment and other building systems, and
- similar approaches.

The Preservation Green Lab (a collaboration between building constructors, sustainability consultants and the National Trust for Historic Preservation) is an example of new perspectives on sustainability. The collaboration is preparing case studies that help quantify the benefits of building reuse compared to new construction.”

Promote Water Conservation

Westport is also seeking to become more sustainable in terms of water usage. Connecticut experienced drought-like conditions in 2016 and lower Fairfield County was subject to water use guidelines and restrictions. This served to remind residents of the need to remain vigilant and active in terms of water conservation and reduced water usage.

Promote Waste Reduction / Recycling

Reducing the overall waste stream is another way Westport is seeking to become more sustainable. While great strides have been made in recent years in terms of awareness of recycling and individual behavior, this is another area to be explored.

Educate Residents About Sustainability Concepts

Efforts will be devoted towards educating residents and school children about sustainability concepts.

A. SUSTAINABILITY		Leader	Partners
1.	Promote sustainability in Westport.	GTF	CC
<input type="checkbox"/>	a. Introduce zoning regulations to promote sustainability.	PZC	GTF
2.	Promote energy conservation in Westport.	GTF	
3.	Promote the use of green building principles / low impact practices and materials in public and private construction.	GTF	
1.	Encourage the use of pervious asphalt in appropriate areas.	GTF	
2.	Encourage the establishment of electric vehicle recharging stations in Westport (possibly including a user fee).	GTF	
3.	Promote water conservation.	CC	WWHD AWC
4.	Promote waste reduction / recycling including “pay as you throw” and other strategies to increase awareness.	GTF	PW
5.	Educate residents about sustainability concepts.	CC	GTF AWC
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11.3. Promote Resiliency

The term “resiliency” refers to the community’s ability to withstand, respond to, and readily recover from sudden changes or adversity.

Westport has participated with adjacent communities and the Western Connecticut Council of Governments on the preparation of a Hazard Mitigation Strategy to identify and then reduce or eliminate risk to human life and property resulting from recurring natural hazards such as hurricanes, flooding and winter storms. Recent hurricanes and major storm events have proven this to be a worthwhile exercise and exercises like this should continue so that Westport can be a resilient community when events like these occur in the future.

However, some future events may not be discrete events but actually part of a longer term trend. This might include sea level rise or increasing storm frequency and/or severity. Over the long term, Westport should consider ways to adapt to, mitigate, or reduce the likelihood of such trends. The Town also has to encourage private property owners to approach these same issues with a long-term approach and perspective.

Emergency Response

For small-scale events that cannot be anticipated, Westport has a variety of public safety services (police, fire, and emergency medical) that are trained and equipped to respond to emergencies in the community.

Westport will continue to review and improve training procedures in order to be best prepared for future events.

Resiliency Toolbox

Some of the items to be considered as part of an overall approach to resiliency could include:

- **Response-Related Strategies**
 - Public safety training exercises
 - Pre-event response plans
- **Mitigation-Related Strategies**
 - Identification / avoidance / risk reduction
 - Community training exercises
 - Pre-event response plans
- **Evolution-Related Strategies**
 - Evaluating probability / risk scenarios
 - Evaluating approaches (protection / adaptation)
 - Balancing of cost / benefit
- **Prevention-Related Strategies**
 - Hardening infrastructure (e.g. burying utilities)
 - Requiring resilient buildings in coastal areas
 - Promoting grid independence / interconnected community

As an initial step, Westport should assess the vulnerability of public and private infrastructure (e.g., utilities, transportation, structures) to climate change and increased frequency of extreme storms and develop adaptation strategies.

A. RESILIENCY	Leader	Partners
1. Continue to regularly review and improve hazard mitigation plans for recurring events, such as flooding.	Town	PD FD PW
2. Consider and discuss options and strategic responses to evolutionary events (such as sea level rise or increases in storm frequency and/or severity).	Town	PD FD PW
<input type="checkbox"/> a. Assess the vulnerability of infrastructure (e.g., utilities, transportation, structures) to climate change and increased frequency of extreme storms and develop strategies.	Town	PD FD PW
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Example of Resiliency Education

Before a Flood — Make a Plan

Floods can happen anywhere it rains.





BUY FLOOD INSURANCE

Learn your flood risk and find an agent near you with the One-Step Flood Risk Profile at FloodSmart.gov. Typically, it takes 30 days for a new flood insurance policy to take effect, so get or renew your policy now.



KNOW YOUR STUFF

Thoroughly document your belongings to support a flood insurance claim. Visit knowyourstuff.org to create your home inventory.



MAKE A PLAN

Create and share a family emergency plan. Make sure it includes evacuation routes from home, work, and school. Assemble a safety kit with drinking water, canned food, first aid supplies, blankets, a radio, and a flashlight. Learn more at ready.gov/floods.