

4.2. Protect Historic Buildings And Sites

Historic buildings and sites in Westport contribute to the overall character of the community, foster community pride, conserve the personality and architecture of its historic residential neighborhoods and commercial areas, enable citizens and visitors to enjoy and learn about local history, and provide a framework for making appropriate preservation planning decisions. As a result, the identification, conservation and protection of its historic and archaeological resources is part of maintaining and enhancing community character in Westport.

The Westport Historic District Commission (HDC) is the organization charged with historic preservation in Westport. The HDC should continue efforts to protect 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.

Identification

Identifying and recognizing historic resources is the first step to preserving them. Westport has a Historic Resources Inventory which consists of information on more than 1,500 local properties. This inventory (first completed in 1977 and updated as time and resources permit) is used as a reference in preservation planning.

There has also been little investigation of archeological resources in Westport. During the planning period, it may be desirable to undertake an assessment of those sites with the greatest potential for containing archeological resources.

Recognition / Protection

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, Westport should:

- Support the preservation of historic resources.
- Where appropriate, establish zoning regulations which will help protect historic resources including use flexibility, adaptive reuse of historic buildings, dimensional flexibility, and/or other approaches.
- Encourage "sensitive ownership" of historic structures and sites by private owners.
- Support the listing of local sites and districts on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Support existing local historic districts and the creation of new local districts and local historic properties where supported by property owners.
- Maintain the demolition delay regulation.
- Encourage / support village district regulation.



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

Westport is doing a good job protecting historic resources and historic character.

Strongly agree	10%
Agree	42%
Not sure	5%
Disagree	23%
Strongly disagree	20%

State / National Registers of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) identifies resources significant in the history of the nation. The State Register of Historic Places (SRHP) identifies resources significant in the history of the state.

These designations are not regulatory in nature and only directly affect activities involving federal and/or state funding. Property owners may be eligible for tax benefits for improvements to these resources.

The designations may be for districts (areas containing multiple properties) or for individual properties. More information is available from the Westport Historic District Commission website.

Sample Of National / State Districts

Westport Center
Merritt Parkway
Compo / Owenoke
Mill Cove
National Hall
Kings Highway North

Sample Of National / State Sites

Town Hall
Green's Farms School
Saugatuck River Bridge
Cong. Church of Green's Farms
Inn at National Hall
Westport Country Playhouse

Local Districts or Properties

A local historic district is regulatory in nature and a local Historic District Commission *regulates* exterior changes in view from a public street. A supermajority of property owners must consent to the establishment of a local historic district.

A local historic property may be similarly protected or may be protected by ownership, easement, or other means consented to by the property owner.

More information is available from the Westport Historic District Commission website.

Sample Of Some Local Historic Districts

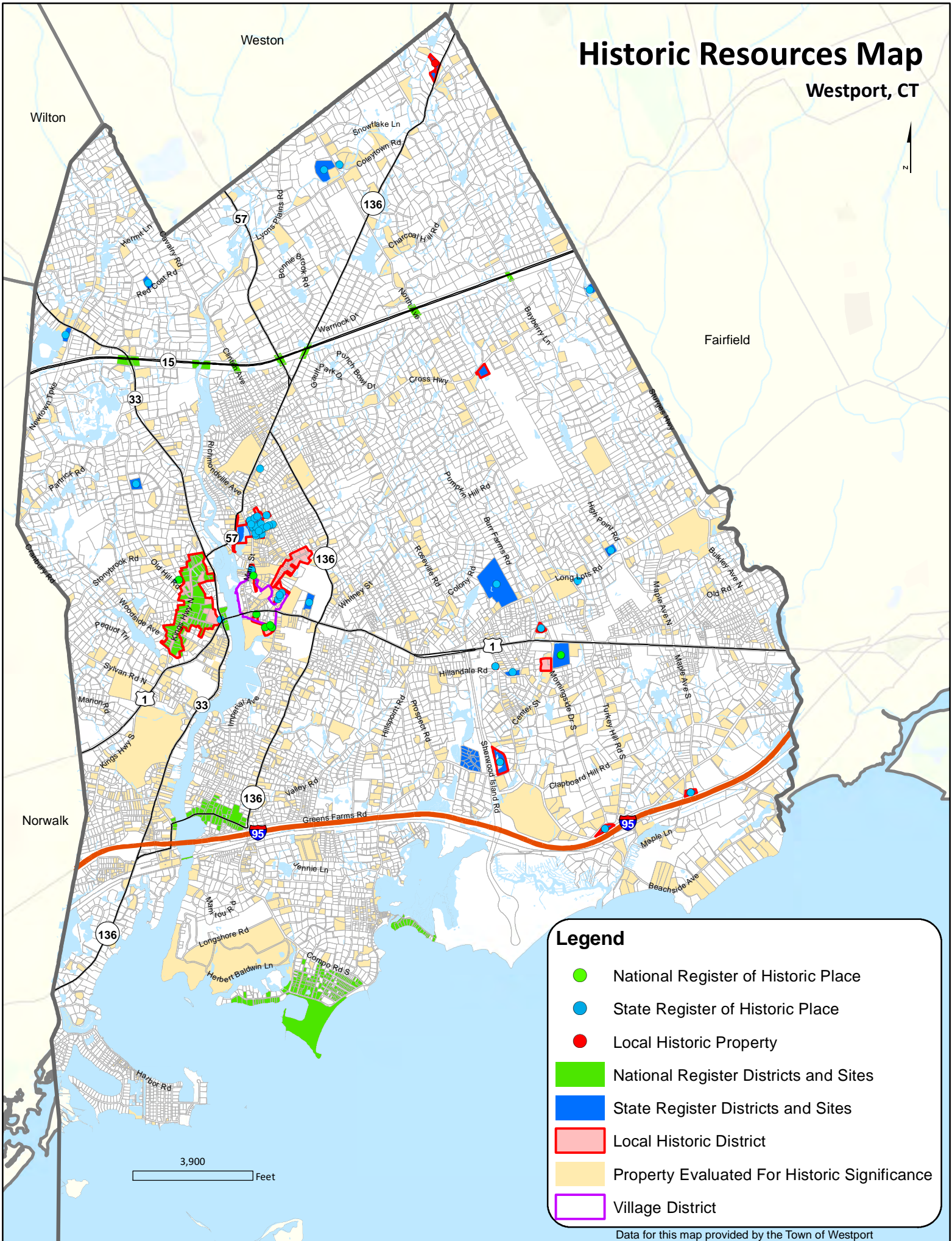
Kings Highway North
Jesup Road
Gorham Avenue
Evergreen Avenue
Morningside Drive South
Violet Lane

Sample Of Some Historic Properties

Green's Farms Colonial Church
New Town Common
Machamux Boulder
West Parish Meeting House
Lower Green's Farms Burying Ground
Wakeman Farm

Historic Resources Map

Westport, CT



Legend

- National Register of Historic Place
- State Register of Historic Place
- Local Historic Property
- National Register Districts and Sites
- State Register Districts and Sites
- Local Historic District
- Property Evaluated For Historic Significance
- Village District

Data for this map provided by the Town of Westport

Encourage Preservation Organizations

The Westport HDC should continue to collaborate with the State Historic Preservation Office and non-governmental entities (such as the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation) to coordinate preservation efforts and stay informed of preservation opportunities.

As a result of the work of the HDC, Westport is a Certified Local Government (CLG) as established by the National Preservation Act. Maintaining CLG status allows Westport to be eligible for matching federal grant funds. Westport should strive to retain its CLG status.

Education

So that residents appreciate the significance of historic buildings and sites, Westport should, through the HDC, promote public awareness of historic preservation through:

- general educational programs highlighting local sites and events,
- specific educational programs directed towards owners of historic properties to help them preserve the historic integrity of their property,
- annual Preservation Awards to recognize local properties,
- sharing of other relevant information, and
- encourage preservation organizations to activate community interest.

Historic Bridges

In the early 20th century, Westport undertook a program to upgrade a number of bridges in the community to accommodate the automobile. In all, some 19 matching Craftsman style stone bridges were built and eight remain. These bridges are unique to Westport and contribute to our distinctive character and help remind us how Westport evolved through time.

Cross Highway Bridge



Greens Farm Road Bridge



A. HISTORIC RESOURCES		Leader	Partners
1.	Support the preservation of historic resources, including the Cribari Bridge.	PZC	HDC
<input type="checkbox"/>	a. Consider requesting the State Archeologist conduct an overall assessment of archeological potential in Westport.	PZC	HDC
2.	Encourage the ongoing efforts of public and private owners to sensitively preserve and maintain historic structures and sites (purchase, maintain, use, etc.).	HDC	PZC PW PRC
3.	Support the listing of local sites and districts on the National Register of Historic Places.	HDC	
4.	Support existing local historic districts and the creation of new districts and local historic properties where supported by property owners.	HDC	
5.	Maintain the demolition delay ordinance to provide an opportunity to preserve, relocate, or document historic buildings.	HDC	RTM
<input type="checkbox"/>	a. Revisit the demolition delay ordinance to discourage the dismantling of historic homes before a demolition permit is issued.	PZC	HDC RTM
6.	Maintain the Historic Resources Inventory in order to help identify historic resources.	HDC	
<input type="checkbox"/>	a. Link information from the Historic Resources Inventory to the town GIS system.	HDC	Town
<input type="checkbox"/>	b. Continue to update the Historic District Commission website to clearly identify historic resources, historic districts, and other such information.	HDC	Town
7.	Maintain Certified Local Government status in order to receive funds from the State Historic Preservation Office.	HDC	
8.	Work with Town agencies to incentivize preservation of historic structures.	HDC	PZC
9.	Within any adopted Village District Overlay Zone, work to ensure the preservation of the historic character of the designated area.	HDC	PZC
		<i>Code legend is on inside back cover</i>	

Cribari Bridge

The Cribari Bridge carries Route 136 (Bridge Street) over the Saugatuck River in the Saugatuck section of Westport. Built in 1884, the bridge is the oldest surviving movable bridge in Connecticut and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The preservation of the Cribari Bridge is important to Westport residents since:

- the bridge is historic,
- the bridge is a gateway to Saugatuck and Westport and enhances the character of Saugatuck and the entire community,
- the current bridge is a natural barrier to trucks and excessive through traffic from I-95 when I-95 is backed-up, and
- expanding the bridge could place pedestrians and cyclists on nearby roads at greater risk of harm.

Westport recognizes that ongoing maintenance of the bridge to maintain it in a state of good repair; but not expansion, is needed.

Historic Home



Historic Image

