

# TOWN OF STONINGTON

## 2015 Plan of Conservation & Development



**Adopted May 7, 2015**

**Effective June 30, 2015**





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# WELCOME!



Welcome.

After nearly three years of work by many dedicated individuals, from a cross section of the Town's population, it is with pleasure that I welcome you to the 2015 Plan of Conservation and Development for the Town of Stonington.

Think of this document as the operating manual for the Town, and a blueprint as to how we, as a community, would like to progress over the next ten years. We have worked hard to keep this a Plan of Conservation *and* Development, rather than one or the other. While they are often seen as opposing goals, I believe we can achieve both if we use this guide wisely. A careful balance of the two will assure us vibrant villages and a sustainable, livable community.

Major events have shaken the region over the past ten years that have caused us to reevaluate some of the goals and proscriptions of the previous edition of this document. A major economic downturn, caused by a bubble in the real estate sector, has forced us to re-consider some of the tools that seemed so promising in 2004. While many large projects have been permitted since the last Plan, a number of them remain un-built as of this writing. So it is that we take a more sober view of development tools that were promoted in the past, in favor of traditional zoning practices that assure consistency and fairness in approving new projects, for both the would-be applicants and the residents who make their lives here.

Several major storms, and their resulting property damage, have caused us to rethink how we will develop, or redevelop our coastal communities as we go forward. We have chosen a cautious path with regard to building in flood zones, rather than embracing either the best case or worst case scenarios associated with rising sea levels.

This plan envisions a broad scope of business development to diversify our economy, rather than rely so heavily on the tourism sector. It is envisioned that aggressive marketing will attract technology and light manufacturing businesses to the Town. Also, over the last ten years, Stonington has seen a growth in senior-related facilities. Recognizing the changing age demographic not only locally, but nationwide, it was suggested that the Town continue to be receptive to these kinds of businesses. They tend to have a lesser demand on Town services and keep the Town a desirable place for its current residents to age.

Most importantly, we have included a rigorous framework for the implementation of the individual elements contained herein. It is my hope that in ten years, when this Plan needs to be updated, we won't first have to blow the cobwebs from the cover, as we will have put it to continuous use in the intervening years.

Ben Tamsky, Chairman PZC

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# INTRODUCTION

# 1

## Overview

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This Plan of Conservation and Development is a strategic plan to guide the future of the Town of Stonington so as to continue to protect its character, preserve precious resources and encourage appropriate economic development. It is an advisory document of recommended policies and actions that are intended to provide a framework for consistent decision-making with regard to conservation and development activities over the next decade. Although addressed where appropriate, this Plan does not have jurisdiction over the Borough of Stonington.

*This Plan has been prepared to help guide Stonington's future conservation and development ...*

The character of Stonington is determined by its many unique features such as:

- Having four villages with residential / commercial uses and areas of historical significance
- Being bounded on three sides by rivers and scenic coastal areas
- Containing both rural residential and agricultural lands
- Having three interstate highway exchanges and two state route corridors with a mix of existing commercial development
- Having town facilities and services that have evolved over many years
- Having an AMTRAK station directly linking the Town with other areas along the northeast corridor

## 1.1 Purpose of This Plan

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

One purpose is to establish a common vision for the community's future supported by recommended land uses. It provides policy and strategy recommendations to provide a framework for consistent decision-making. It serves as a guide for elected officials, boards and commissions, town employees and residents in conducting town business with consideration of achieving desired future outcomes.

An additional purpose is to provide recommended tasks that, when implemented, are intended to accomplish positive actions towards achieving desired goals. It is expected that these tasks will be prioritized but may be modified as needed for changing circumstances over the implementation period.

If steadily implemented as recommended, this Plan will help protect important resources, guide appropriate development, protect community character and ensure that Stonington is moving toward a more sustainable future.

## 1.2 Overarching Principles

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This Plan is organized around the following four major themes:

- Things We Want to Protect
- How We Want to Grow
- What We Want to Provide
- How We Want to Make it Happen

This organization is intended to make the Plan easier to read and understand and also make it easier for people to find what they may be looking for.

Still, there are some overarching principles which run through all of the themes and will further help people understand the overall vision for Stonington:

### Overarching Principles of This Plan

- Providing for sustainable development
- Strengthening existing villages
- Promoting low impact commercial and residential approaches

### Providing for Sustainable Development

The first overarching principle of the Plan relates to encouraging and providing for sustainable development in Stonington. In recent years, this philosophy has also come to be known as “smart growth.” Definitions of “smart growth” emphasize the concept of economic growth that preserves and enhances the character of the area and consciously seeks to avoid waste of resources and damage to the environment and communities. While “smart growth” can be called different things in different places, the principles are similar:

**Village Business**



**Local Farm**



National “Smart Growth” Principles
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities</li> <li>2. Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place</li> <li>3. Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions</li> <li>4. Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost effective</li> <li>5. Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas</li> <li>6. Mix land uses</li> <li>7. Create a range of housing opportunities and choices</li> <li>8. Take advantage of compact building design</li> <li>9. Create walkable neighborhoods</li> <li>10. Provide a variety of transportation choices</li> </ol>

Source: Smart Growth Network

State of Connecticut Growth Management Principles
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Redevelop and revitalize regional centers and areas with existing or currently planned physical infrastructure</li> <li>2. Expand housing opportunities and design choices to accommodate a variety of household types and needs</li> <li>3. Concentrate development around transportation nodes and along major transportation corridors to support the viability of transportation options</li> <li>4. Conserve and restore the natural environment, cultural and historical resources, and traditional rural lands</li> <li>5. Protect and ensure the integrity of environmental assets critical to public health and safety</li> <li>6. Promote integrated planning across all levels of government to address issues on a statewide, regional and local basis</li> </ol>

Source: State of CT 2013-2018 Conservation and Development Policies Plan

### **Strengthening Existing Villages**

Stonington has several villages, each with its own character and function; and each village contributes to the overall community in different ways. Simply put, Stonington would not be the community it is today without its villages.

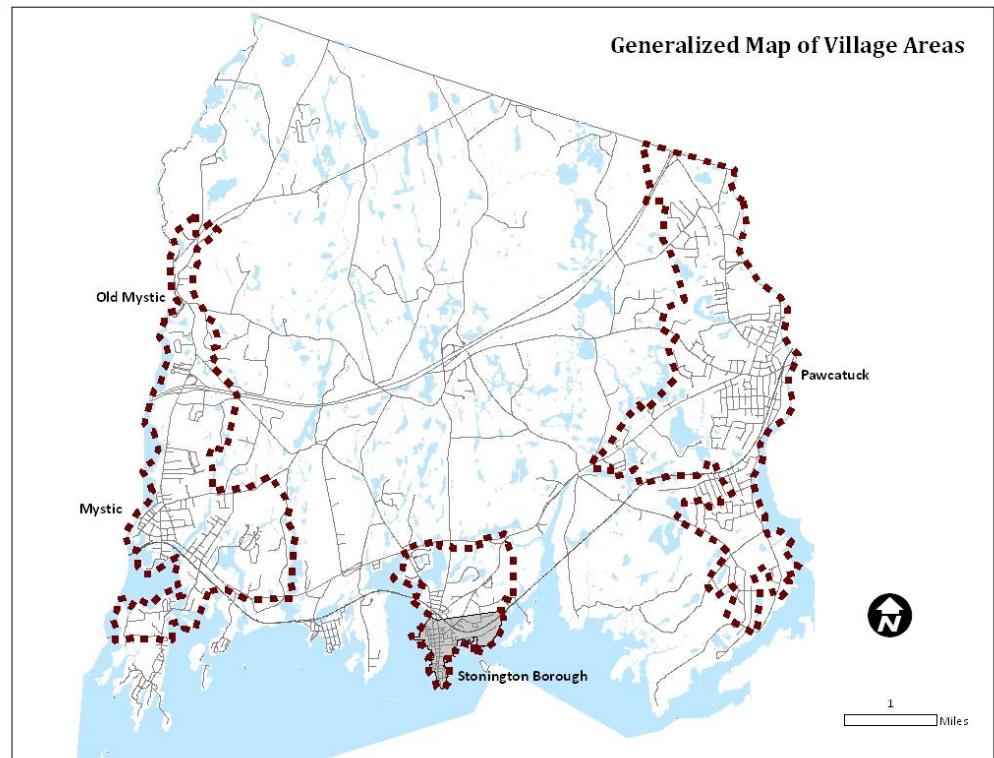
Preserving, enhancing, and strengthening these villages is an important principle which runs throughout this Plan. By guiding growth that is consistent with the character of the villages, we will make them stronger economically and socially. By encouraging mixed residential and commercial uses, more diversified housing options, support of existing businesses and reuse of existing buildings, we create an environment conducive to both attracting new and retaining existing residents and businesses.

### **Promoting Low Impact Commercial and Residential Approaches**

Commercial growth encouraged outside of the villages can be accomplished with minimal negative impact if focused around Interstate Exits 90 and 92 and along appropriate areas of Routes 1 and 2 where there is supporting water and sewer infrastructure. Any future uses of undeveloped commercial property in the area of Exit 91 should be sensitive to the scenic rural environment and natural resources in that area.

Residential growth in the more rural areas should also occur in ways that minimize the overall impact on sensitive resources and preserve as much open space as possible. Any such development should strive to protect water resources, preserve farmland, enhance community character, preserve scenic resources, provide open space and make other contributions to the overall environmental quality and health of the community.

At the risk of oversimplification, viewing the Town as comprised of villages and non-village areas can provide a useful context for the overarching principles referenced in this chapter. Such a visualization provides broad guidance for the “smart growth” principles of strengthening existing villages and protecting the irreplaceable open spaces and resources in the areas between the villages. The map below is an overview of village and non-village areas in Town. Please see the Future Land Use Plan in Chapter 15 for more specific recommendations on land uses and densities in various areas of town.



### 1.3 Jurisdiction of the Plan

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

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



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

**Town Hall**



**Village of Old Mystic**



**Statutory Reference**

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

**Village of Mystic**



**Village of Pawcatuck**



## 1.4 Preparing this Plan

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This Plan is an update of the Plan of Conservation and Development prepared in 2004.

Preparation of the update began in August of 2012 with the appointment of a Subcommittee made up of representatives from local boards and commissions and Stonington residents. The Subcommittee met monthly in 2012 to make plans for the update process. The 2004 Plan was reviewed for potential additions, deletions and modifications with a goal of organizing updated content under four sections:

- Things We Want to Protect
- How We Want to Grow
- What We Want to Provide
- How We Want to Make it Happen

In December 2012 a public workshop was held to obtain ideas and input from local residents. A detailed questionnaire was developed to obtain additional input and was made available both on-line and in hard-copy form at various locations in town. The



questionnaire was active for about 3 months and over 700 responses were received in that time. Input was also solicited from Town officials, boards and commissions, and selected not-for-profit organizations.

Throughout 2013 the Subcommittee met twice a month to work on update of the Plan. Using the ideas and input received, three working sessions were held to develop key strategies for each of the Plan topics. Subcommittee members then drafted specific chapters of the Plan updating and re-organizing information from the 2004 Plan and considering an inventory/assessment of current conditions as appropriate. The approach of recommending policies and tasks to accomplish desired strategies was used as it was in the 2004 Plan. Several of the recommended policies and tasks are carry-overs from the 2004 Plan that were determined to still be applicable to current circumstances. After chapter drafts were reviewed by the Subcommittee, comments were incorporated; and the individual chapter drafts were edited into a first draft of the Plan with the assistance of planning consultants, Planimetrics, LLC.

The Subcommittee met with the PZC in February 2014 to discuss initial comments on the first draft; and then after initial refinements, comments were incorporated into a second draft. In May 2014, the draft was provided to Town officials and various boards and commissions for their review and buy-in of recommended policies and tasks. At this time the draft was also made available for public review, and another workshop was held in June 2014 for additional public comment. After final revisions by the Subcommittee, the Plan went through the process of formal reviews and a public hearing prior to adoption by the PZC. The Plan was adopted at the May 7, 2015 meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission with an effective date of June 30, 2015.

The Subcommittee was aided in much of this work by the planning firm, Planimetrics, LLC. Planimetrics facilitated two public workshops, attended strategy sessions and provided assistance in developing the first draft of the Plan.

## **1.5 Use and Maintenance of the Plan**

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This Plan is a guidance document intended for use by Town officials, boards and commissions in the conduct of routine Town business. As recommended policies are used and evaluated and tasks are implemented, the Plan may be refined to address new issues, adjust a course of action, or fine tune strategies.

An Implementation Committee chaired by the First Selectman and including representatives from boards, commissions and residents shall be established to provide the oversight needed to monitor and encourage on-going implementation. The committee shall meet at least twice a year to provide a status of recommended tasks and to identify any areas where recommended policies or actions may require refinement due to changing conditions. Additional details are provided in Chapter 16 Implementation.

The Planning and Zoning Commission is expected to keep the Plan up to date with formal revision, if needed, regarding recommended policy and future land-use guidance as this is a core purpose of the Plan. The recommended tasks are a more flexible part of the Plan and may be maintained as a separate file by the Planning Department. The task file may be updated on a regular basis by direction of the Implementation Committee to address task priorities, status and changes as needed and will be posted quarterly for information on the Town's website.

While generally intended to guide conservation and development over the course of the next decade, this Plan lays the foundation for goals reaching far into the future and supporting long term sustainability.

**Mystic Aquarium**



**Mystic Seaport**



**Stonington Vineyard**



**Blessing Of The Fleet**



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## Overview

This section of the Plan outlines the conditions and trends affecting the community up to the time the Plan was prepared and summarizes input received from a community questionnaire done for this plan. Unless otherwise specified, all demographic and housing figures include Stonington Borough.

In addition to the socio-economic conditions and trends described on the following pages, Stonington also experienced the following over the past ten years:

- Several major storms which resulted in shoreline flooding and power outages
- A substantial economic recession which affected the national economy and hindered economic growth
- A consequential slowing of tourist activity and visitors

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

*Abraham Lincoln*

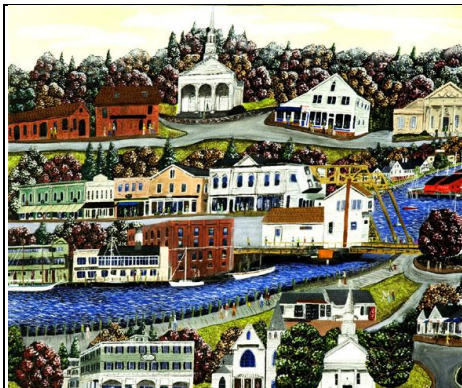
Population



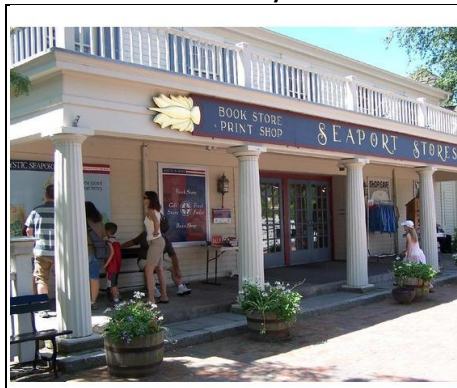
Housing



Land Use



Economy



## 2.1 Community Questionnaire

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### Questionnaire Respondents

- 83% of respondents were Stonington residents
- 13% owned a business in Stonington
- In terms of age:
  - About 16% were younger than 40
  - About 58% were aged 40 to 60
  - About 26% were over age 60

In early 2013, the Subcommittee preparing the Plan update developed a detailed questionnaire to obtain additional input to the planning process. The questionnaire was made available both on-line and in hard-copy form at various locations in town. The questionnaire was active for about three months and over 700 responses were received as of March 2013.

The results of the questionnaire were very influential in guiding the recommendations of the Plan.

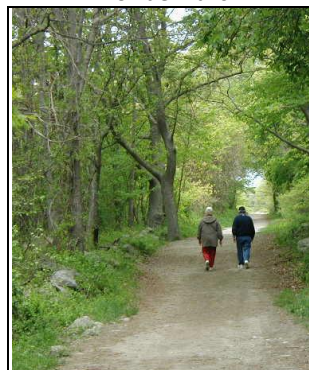
Things people indicated they would like to *see more of*:

- Bicycle and walking trails (89%)
- Open space and nature preserves (79%)
- Waterfront public access (78%)
- Park and recreation facilities (77%)
- Development with more open space (73%)
- Small scale retail (68%)
- Arts and cultural establishments (65%)
- Research and development (64%)
- Agriculture (61%)
- Public parking in village areas (57%)

Respondents agreed with the overall concept of:

- Developing additional walking and biking trails (94%)
- Investing in road/infrastructure maintenance to avoid more costly repairs (90%)
- Encouraging the preservation of open space (89%)
- Encouraging use of alternative energy sources (88%)
- Encouraging low-impact development (87%)
- Doing more to create additional sidewalks (83%)
- Facilitating agriculture (81%)
- Doing more to protect aquifer areas (81%)
- Encouraging incentives for new businesses (80%)

**Provide Trails**



**Maintain Roads**



**Preserve Open Space**



Things people indicated they would like to see less of:

- 10+ unit residential buildings (52%)
- Drive-thru restaurants (49%)
- 3-10 unit residential buildings (45%)
- Large scale retail stores (39%)
- Self-storage facilities (35%)

When asked to score 10 issues in terms of their importance in the Town of Stonington, respondents indicated the following (1 = lowest score, 10 = highest score):

- Protection of natural resources and open space preservation (7.45)
- Enhancement the school system (6.70)
- Maintenance of local roads and utility infrastructure (6.48)
- Expansion of parks / recreational / walking paths / trails / sidewalks (6.30)
- Revitalization of existing village areas and filling current commercial vacancies (5.87)
- Protection of historic sites and buildings (5.75)
- Protection and enhancement of agriculture (5.15)
- Promotion of new commercial development (4.41)
- Expansion of public transportation opportunities (3.61)
- Promotion of affordable housing (3.31)

In terms of taxes:

- About 67% felt the current level of taxes was appropriate
- About 26% felt the current level of taxes was too high
- About 7% felt the current level of taxes was too low

When asked if they would be willing to vote for an increase in taxes to provide increases/improvements in different categories, respondents indicated the following:

- Education (70%)
- Infrastructure (60%)
- Open space (59%)
- Service (38%)
- Other (21%)

When asked if they would be willing to bond monies in different categories, respondents indicated the following:

- Education (67%)
- Infrastructure (65%)
- Open space (52%)
- Development (32%)
- Other (11%)



## 2.2 Population

### Population Growth

Year	Population
1900	8,540
1910	9,154
1920	10,236
1930	11,025
1940	11,002
1950	11,801
1960	13,696
1970	15,940
1980	16,220
1990	16,919
2000	17,906
2010	18,545
2020	18,626
Projection	

Source: US Census Bureau  
 Projection from CT State Data Center

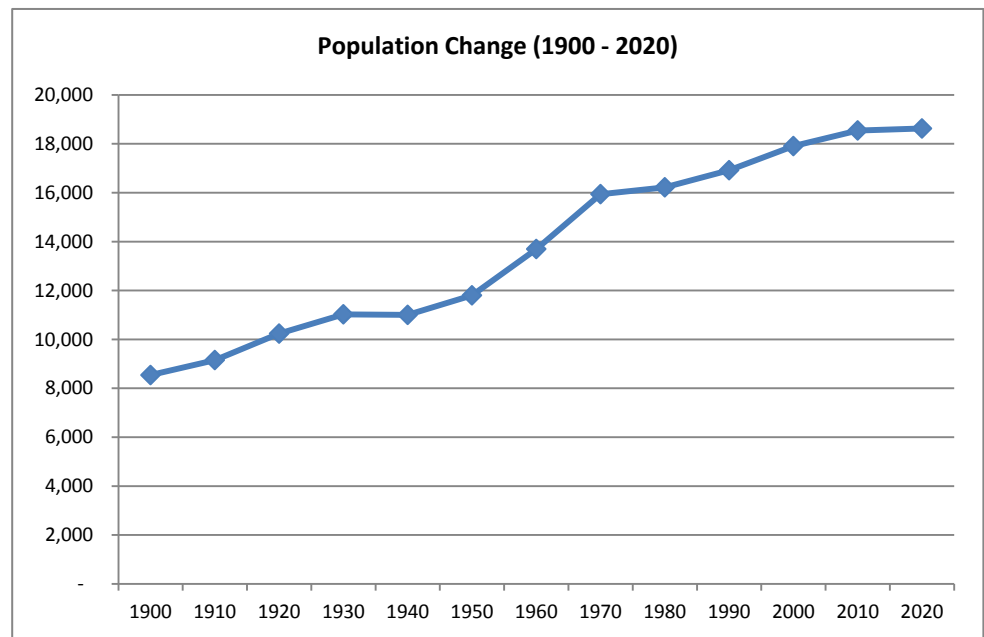
Decade	Percent Change
1900 - 1910	7.2%
1910 - 1920	11.8%
1920 - 1930	7.7%
1930 - 1940	-0.2%
1940 - 1950	7.3%
1950 - 1960	16.1%
1960 - 1970	16.4%
1970 - 1980	1.8%
1980 - 1990	4.3%
1990 - 2000	5.8%
2000 - 2010	3.6%
2010 - 2020	0.4%
Projection	

Source: US Census Bureau  
 Projection from CT State Data Center

### Trend #1 *Population Growth is Projected to be Modest*

According to the Census Bureau, Stonington had a population of 18,545 in the year 2010 and grew by 639 people (about 3.6 %) during the 2000's. This rate of growth was about equal to the State as a whole and about half of the rate of growth for New London County. This is a change from the previous decade when the Town's growth rate was greater than those of the County and State.

As can be seen in the chart below, the population of Stonington has been growing since 1900, with increases leveling off over recent decades. Population projections estimate only a 0.4% growth in population between 2010 and 2020.



Source: US Census Bureau. Projections from CT State Data Center

## Trend #2 Stonington's Population is Getting Older

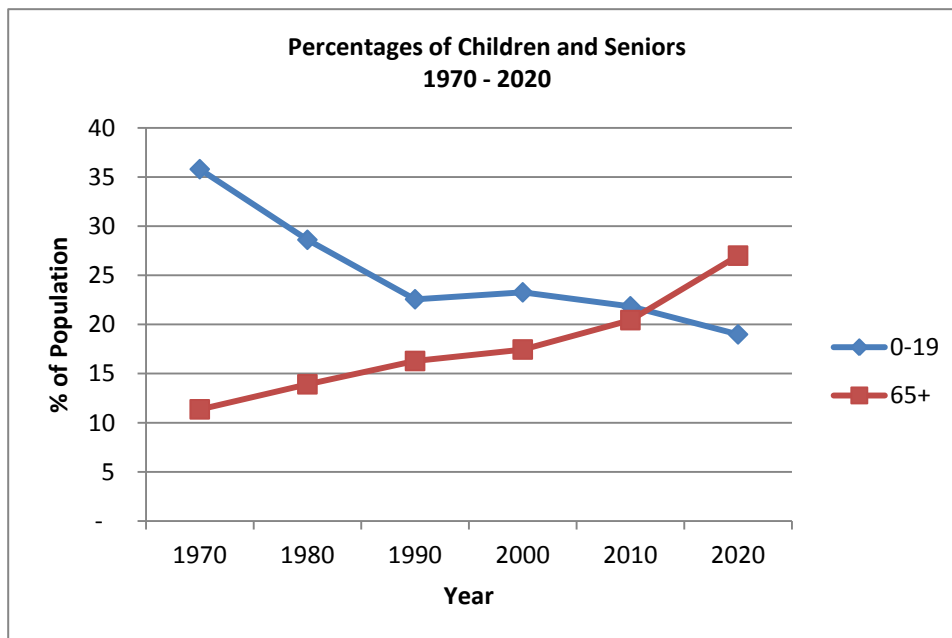
While overall population growth is important, changes in age composition may actually have more far reaching implications both in terms of future housing choices and community service demands.

Stonington is a “graying” community with older age groups projected to become a larger share of the population. This is partly due to people living longer and partly due to the “baby boom” generation (people born between 1946 and 1964) now entering these older age groups.

Younger age groups, particularly those under 19, have become a smaller proportion of the population. This can be attributed to a trend towards smaller families and higher housing costs. As shown by the data in the sidebar, the number of children *decreased* by over 1,600 between 1970 and 2010 despite a total population that increased by over 2,600 people.

If State population projections are reliable, the percentage of the Town's population under 20 years old will have shrunk from 36% to 19% in the 50 years between 1970 and 2020. During the same timeframe the percentage of those over 65 years old will have grown from 11% to 27%. In the next 10 years, the number of seniors is expected to grow while the number of children is expected to decrease.

One implication of these trends is that, in the future, the Town may face greater pressure to invest in services for older residents. At the same time there may be a decline in school enrollments and a growing demand for smaller units accessible to an aging population.



Source: US Census Bureau. Projections from CT State Data Center

## Age Composition

### 1970

Ages	#	%
0-19	5,706	36%
20-34	3,072	19%
35-64	5,353	34%
65+	1,810	11%
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,940</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 1980

Ages	#	%
0-19	4,641	28%
20-34	3,637	22%
35-64	5,685	35%
65+	2,257	14%
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,220</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 1990

Ages	#	%
0-19	3,817	23%
20-34	3,847	23%
35-64	6,501	39%
65+	2,754	16%
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,919</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 2000

Ages	#	%
0-19	4,166	24%
20-34	2,776	16%
35-64	7,839	44%
65+	3,125	17%
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,906</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 2010

Ages	#	%
0-19	4,051	22%
20-34	2,265	12%
35-64	8,438	45%
65+	3,791	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>18,545</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 2020 (projected)

Ages	#	%
0-19	3,537	19%
20-34	2,454	13%
35-64	7,540	41%
65+	5,097	27%
<b>Total</b>	<b>18,628</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: US Census Bureau.  
Projection from CT State Data Center



## 2.3 Housing

### Average Household Size

As shown in the table below, average household sizes have been falling in both the Town and the State since at least 1980.

Year	Town	State
1980	2.67	2.76
1990	2.40	2.59
2000	2.31	2.53
2010	2.25	2.52

Source: US Census Bureau

Over the past 30 years the Town has averaged fewer people per dwelling unit than has the State as a whole.

Even though Stonington has been adding housing units, the overall population growth has been modest because housing units are housing fewer people per unit.

### Trend #3 Housing Growth is Expected to Continue

The number of housing units in Stonington has increased for the past several decades. The past decade saw a 10% increase in the number of total housing units, despite the fact that population only grew by only 3.6%. This disparity is largely due to the decrease in average household sizes as fewer people are living in households. As was the case in much of the state and country, Stonington saw rapid housing growth during the first half of the past decade with an economic recession significantly slowing housing growth during the second half of the decade.

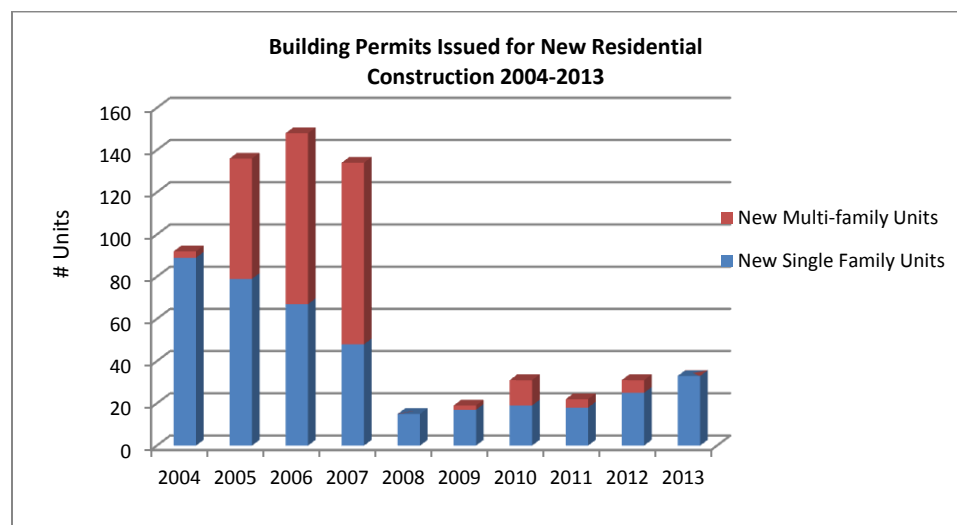
Housing Growth			
Year	Total Units	Change	% Change
1980	6,482		
1990	7,923	1,441	22.2%
2000	8,591	668	8.4%
2010	9,467	876	10.2%

Source: US Census Bureau

### Trend #4 Stonington's Housing Stock is Getting Less Diverse

About one-third of all housing units in Stonington are *non-single-family* housing. This diverse housing stock is a reflection of the housing mix in the older, densely populated villages.

However, this housing stock has been getting less diverse over time. Between 2004 and 2013 single family homes accounted for 79% of new residential units permitted. During this time period 410 building permits were granted for new single family housing units with 251 new multi-family units (2 units or more) permitted. As shown in the chart below, the years 2005 - 2007 showed an uncharacteristically large percentage of multi-family units due to the permitting of both the StoneRidge senior living facility and the renovation of the Threadmill on River Road into residential units (which is just beginning construction several years later).



## Trend #5 Housing is Less Affordable than in Other Areas

As of 2010, Stonington's median home price of \$343,100 is higher than any town in the immediate area and higher than the median for New London County or the State.

While the past decade has seen large fluctuations in prices, the Town's median home value increased by 123% between 2000 and 2010. This increase surpassed the increase in median home prices both in New London County and statewide. By 2010 the median value in the Town exceeded that for the State as a whole.

The Town's Housing Affordability Index, a measure of housing prices vs. median income, is also the highest in the region. The "Housing Wage" (the hourly pay rate needed to afford a typical 2-bedroom apartment in the region) for the Stonington-New London Metro Area is \$20.92 as calculated by the National Low Income Housing Coalition.

While Stonington certainly has housing units that are affordable, an affordable mortgage or rent alone does not constitute an "affordable" housing unit by State standards (assisted housing, CHFA financed, or sale price restricted by deed). Stonington is below both the state and regional averages with four percent of its housing units qualifying as affordable. Since the Legislature adopted Section 8-30g in the late 1980s, no qualifying affordable housing has been constructed in Stonington. However, approximately 44 units have been permitted by the Planning and Zoning Commission over the past 5 years which have yet to be constructed.

### Median Home Value

#### 2000

Area	Value
Stonington	\$154,000
NL County	\$142,200
State	\$169,900

Source: US Census Bureau

#### 2010

Area	Value
Stonington	\$343,100
NL County	\$265,700
State	\$293,100

Source: US Census Bureau

#### 2000-2010 Change

Area	Change
Stonington	123%
NL County	87%
State	73%

Source: US Census Bureau

### 2012 Home Affordability Index (ranked from most affordable to least affordable)

Town	Median Price	Median Income	Affordability Index
Voluntown	\$146,950	\$78,257	1.88
Sprague	\$133,500	\$70,499	1.89
Colchester	\$221,000	\$94,577	2.34
Griswold	\$155,000	\$65,634	2.36
Montville	\$170,000	\$71,693	2.37
Bozrah	\$180,000	\$75,062	2.40
Lisbon	\$185,000	\$76,568	2.43
Franklin	\$182,450	\$74,828	2.44
Ledyard	\$206,000	\$84,938	2.46
Lebanon	\$190,000	\$77,241	2.46
Salem	\$274,000	\$101,933	2.69
Waterford	\$206,500	\$71,612	2.88
Preston	\$225,500	\$78,103	2.89
North Stonington	\$257,000	\$86,683	2.96
New London	\$138,000	\$44,619	3.09
Old Lyme	\$313,775	\$93,611	3.35
Lyme	\$330,000	\$98,067	3.37
East Lyme	\$286,000	\$84,420	3.39
Groton	\$228,750	\$61,709	3.71
<b>Stonington</b>	<b>\$312,000</b>	<b>\$77,199</b>	<b>4.04</b>

Source: New London Day "Buyers' Delight: Homes Here More Affordable" Lee Howard 3/7/13. Data from Les Bray - Sound Investments.

## 2.4 Land Use

### **Trend #6      *Stonington Still Has Much Growth Potential***

Stonington contains approximately 42 square miles (about 26,799 acres) of land area. Research conducted as part of the planning process found that approximately half of the town’s acreage consists of either vacant land or residential and/or agricultural land with excess acreage (not including managed or committed open space). Even though much of this land may have constraints to development such as wetlands, surface water or steep slopes, there is still significant development potential remaining based on how the land is currently zoned. After factoring in such variables as zoning, required open space set-asides, road acreage and natural constraints, that acreage could potentially yield approximately 2,803 housing units. When this estimate is added to the number of existing housing units, it results in a total build-out of approximately 12,270 units.

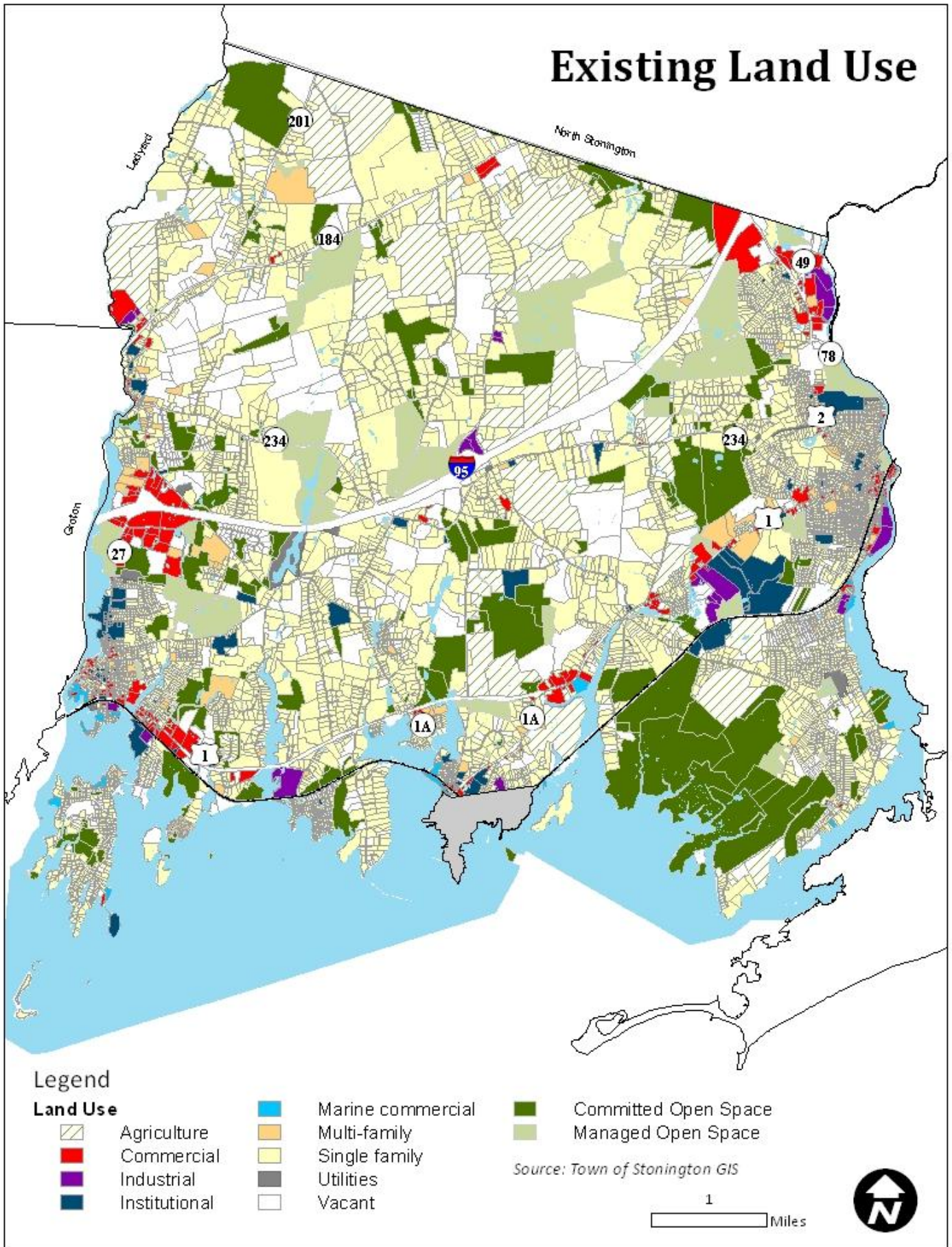
By multiplying the potential number of dwelling units by Stonington’s average household size, there is potential for approximately 24,852 residents at full build-out: an increase of approximately 6,307 residents. This represents a hypothetical 34% increase over the 2010 population with potentially significant impacts on community services and quality of life.

There is no telling when or if this potential will ever be reached. As mentioned above, this exercise did not account for the development constraints of individual properties and does not account for market demand. In addition, many of the conservation and development strategies contained in this Plan have the potential to alter these figures significantly by protecting important resources, preserving more open space and guiding more appropriate development patterns.

<b>Land Use</b>	<b>Acreage</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
Agriculture	2,813	10
Commercial	718	3
Committed Open Space	3,718	14
Industrial	217	1
Institutional	495	2
Managed Open Space	1,629	6
Marine Commercial	67	0
Multi-family	540	2
Other	815	3
Single family	9,702	36
Transportation	1,964	7
Utilities	111	0
Vacant	3,853	14
<i>Borough</i>	<i>157</i>	<i>1</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>26,799</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Stonington Assessor’s Database. Figures are approximate.

# Existing Land Use





## **Trend #7      Stonington is Zoned for Residential Growth**

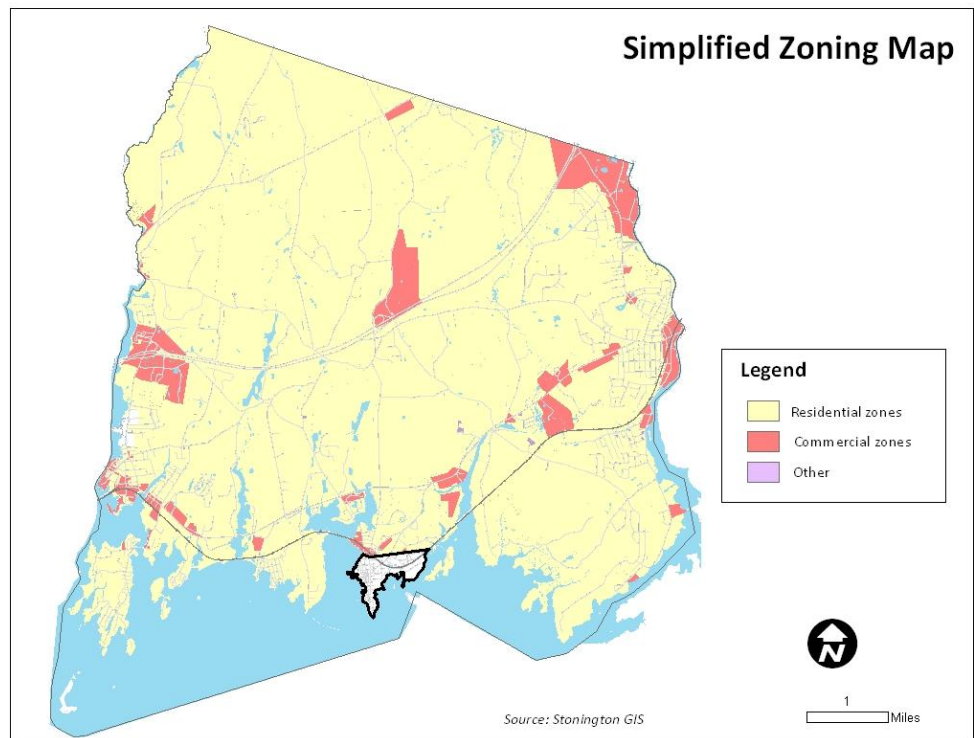
Like most towns, Stonington’s main tool in managing its growth is its zoning regulations. While plans such as this one set broader policies and make recommendations, zoning regulations establish which uses are allowed in which areas of Town (displayed through the Town’s Zoning Map).

Another important feature of zoning is its establishment of “minimum lot sizes” and other bulk requirements which control how many residential dwelling units can be developed on a given property. Therefore, how the Town grows is largely affected by the rules the Town sets in place through its zoning regulations.

As shown in the table and maps below, Stonington is largely zoned for residential growth with over 93% of its land area falling in various residential zones.

Stonington has nine residential zoning districts, ranging from the high-density RH-10 zone with 10,000 square-foot minimum lots (approximately 1/4 acre) to the very-low-density GBR-130 zone with 130,000 square-foot minimum lots (approximately three acres).

Commercial and industrial development is generally limited to nine different kinds of districts which require various minimum lot sizes and allowed uses. Zones range from those with smaller lot sizes, such as the DB-5, CS-5 and LS-5 zones (5,000 square foot minimum lot size), to those with larger lot sizes such as the LI-130 industrial zone with a 130,000 square foot minimum lot size. Typical industrial uses are also allowed in the M-1 (Manufacturing) and MC-80 (Marine Commercial) zones. Land zoned industrial or commercial makes up approximately six percent of the Town’s land area.



**Stonington Zoning Districts**

<b>Zoning District</b>	<b>Minimum Square Feet</b>	<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
<b>Residential</b>			
GBR-130 (Greenbelt Residential)	130,000	6,739	27.5
RC-120 (Residential Coastal)	120,000	2,767	11.3
RR-80 (Rural Residential)	80,000	9,102	37.1
RA-40 (Residential Low Density)	40,000	1,326	5.4
RM-20 (Residential Moderate Density)	20,000	571	2.3
RM-15 (Residential Moderate Density)	15,000	288	1.2
RA-20 (Residential Single Family)	20,000	1,238	5.0
RA-15 (Residential Single Family)	15,000	292	1.2
RH-10 (Residential High Density)	10,000	617	2.5
<b>Total Residential Zones</b>		<b>22,940</b>	<b>93.5</b>
<b>Commercial</b>			
DB-5 (Developed Area Commercial)	5,000	53	0.2
CS-5 (Convenience Shopping)	5,000	50	0.2
LS-5 (Local Shopping)	5,000	105	0.4
GC-60 (General Commercial)	60,000	239	1.0
TC-80 (Tourist Commercial)	80,000	148	0.6
HI-60 (Highway Interchange Commercial)	60,000	300	1.2
LI-130 (Light Industry)	130,000	232	0.9
M-1 (Manufacturing)	80,000	328	1.3
MC-80 (Marine Commercial)	80,000	104	0.4
<b>Total Commercial Zones</b>		<b>1,558</b>	<b>6.4</b>
<b>Other</b>			
MHD (Maritime Heritage District - Mystic Seaport)	-	27	0.1
IHRD (Industrial Heritage Re-Use District)	-	9	0.0
NDD (Neighborhood Development District)	-	4	0.0
<b>Total Other Zones</b>		<b>40</b>	<b>0.2</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>24,539</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Stonington GIS. All figures are approximate. Figures do not include Stonington Borough or public right of ways.

## 2.5 Economy

### **Trend #8      *Strong Income Data Masks Those in Need***

Stonington’s median household income of \$72,445 is similar to state and regional figures. However, due to smaller average household sizes in Stonington, the per capita income of \$42,184 is the highest among neighboring towns and is higher than the state average.

Nevertheless, there are local residents who have been feeling the effects of the recent economic downturn and high housing prices. For example, the United Way’s top five housing related requests for services in Stonington, as measured through their “211” info-line, include several requests for housing at homeless shelters and rent payment assistance. The number of foreclosure filings in Stonington peaked at 24 in 2008.

**2010 Per Capita and Median Household Income**

<b>Town</b>	<b>Per Capita Income</b>	<b>Median HH Income</b>	<b>Poverty Rate</b>
New London	\$ 22,386	\$ 45,509	17.3%
Groton	\$ 31,948	\$ 59,887	7.2%
Westerly, RI	\$ 33,210	\$ 60,432	7.7%
<b>NL County</b>	<b>\$ 33,478</b>	<b>\$ 67,010</b>	<b>7.2%</b>
East Lyme	\$ 36,761	\$ 80,293	2.3%
Ledyard	\$ 37,268	\$ 87,344	2.0%
<b>State</b>	<b>\$ 37,627</b>	<b>\$ 69,243</b>	<b>9.2%</b>
Waterford	\$ 38,245	\$ 72,036	3.8%
North Stonington	\$ 38,970	\$ 81,905	4.0%
<b>Stonington</b>	<b>\$ 42,184</b>	<b>\$ 72,445</b>	<b>5.4%</b>

Source: US Census Bureau

**Trend #9      The Regional Economy is Changing**

During the past few decades, there have been some major structural shifts in the economy of southeastern Connecticut. The region and Town have transitioned away from manufacturing as a primary economic driver. Like most other communities in the region, Stonington’s manufacturing sector has been hiring fewer and fewer people over the past several decades. However, as shown in the table below, a majority of Stonington’s employment is now in the “trade” and “services” sectors. One of the Town’s major manufacturing facilities, Yardney Technical Products, relocated from their Pawcatuck location in 2011. Pfizer has also relocated much of their workforce out of state over the past 5 years. In 2011, Zachry Nuclear Engineering, Inc. relocated their headquarters from Groton to Stonington. After significant downsizing in previous decades, the defense industry in southeastern CT has stabilized and may be increasing.

There has been limited additional economic growth in the region spurred by the development of casinos. Even though the number of visitors to the region grew due to the casinos, this did not necessarily result in increased activity at the Town’s major tourist attractions or at local retail or hospitality venues. In fact, visitation to Mystic Seaport and Mystic Aquarium has been declining over the past 12 years. With increasing casino competition on the horizon in surrounding states, the regional economy may be changing again as increasing casino competition may have an impact on our economy.

**Stonington Business Profile (% of Total Employment)**

Sector	Stonington	County	State
Services	39 %	29 %	39 %
Trade	28 %	18 %	21 %
Manufacturing	13 %	10 %	13 %
Finance, insurance and real estate	5 %	3 %	8 %
Construction and mining	5 %	4 %	5 %
Transportation and Utilities	4 %	3 %	5 %
Government (inc. Navy)	4 %	30 %	8 %
Agriculture	2 %	1 %	1 %

Source: CERC Town Profile

Over the past seven years, the number of jobs in Stonington has been fluctuating. The number of employed residents has been continuously declining since 2008. In this period, due to overall economic conditions, the local unemployment rate doubled; although in 2013 it was still lower than that of the County (7.9%) and the State (7.8%).

**Change In Jobs And Employed Residents 2006-2013**

Year	Jobs (Positions in Town)	Employed Residents	Unemployment Rate
2006	7,072	10,131	2.9
2007	7,168	10,123	3.3
2008	7,222	10,294	4.2
2009	7,057	10,105	6.0
2010	6,885	9,884	6.8
2011	7,063	9,814	6.4
2012	7,131	9,530	6.1
2013	7,162	9,389	6.1
<b>Total change 2006 - 2013</b>	<b>-90</b>	<b>-742</b>	<b>3.2</b>

Source: CT Dept. of Labor



## Trend #10 Fiscal Conditions are Changing

### Per Capita Expenditures

Town	Spending
Waterford	\$ 3,632
N. Stonington	\$ 3,338
Ledyard	\$ 3,260
East Lyme	\$ 3,244
Groton	\$ 3,072
Stonington	\$ 2,954
New London	\$ 2,865

Source: CERC Town Profiles 2012

### Expenditure Distribution

Town	%
Education	59%
General	32%
Government	
Debt Service	8%
Capital	2%
Improvements	
Open Space	0%
Preservation	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Town of Stonington Adopted Budget FY 2014-2015

### Per Capita Taxes

Town	Taxes
Waterford	\$ 3,236
Stonington	\$ 2,597
N. Stonington	\$ 2,447
East Lyme	\$ 2,440
Ledyard	\$ 2,029
Groton	\$ 1,871
New London	\$ 1,498

Source: CERC Town Profiles 2012

### Tax Base Distributions

Town	%
Residential	81%
Commercial	16%
Other land	3%
<b>Total land</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Town of Stonington Adopted Budget FY 2012-13

In terms of overall spending (almost \$57 million annually), the Town of Stonington spends at about the state average on a per capita basis. Education accounts for about 59 percent of local expenditures. These are rough figures since they do not include spending by the fire districts or the Borough which are separate taxing entities.

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

Although Stonington has a strong tax base in terms of the property value per capita, about 80% of net real estate property tax dollars are generated from residential real estate. As a result, residents are sensitive to increases in the tax rate.

The net taxable Grand List had been growing at about three percent per year before the recent recession. Ignoring the effect of revaluation (which rebalances the tax burden among properties), the Grand List has been growing at less than one percent per year on average since 2007.

Looking at Stonington's largest taxpayers reveals two residential facilities catering to an aging population, three utility companies, two lodging facilities, a manufacturing company, a retail shopping center and the Mashantucket Pequots.

The largest employers in Stonington include a manufacturing company, the Mashantucket Pequots, the Town government (including schools) and two tourist attractions.

### Major Taxpayers and Major Employers

#### Major Taxpayers 2013

CT Light & Power  
 LCS-Westminster Partnership I, LLP  
 (StoneRidge Assisted Living)  
 Aquarion Water Co.  
 Mashantucket Pequot Tribe  
 VII-HII-Whitehall Mansion Avenue, LLC  
 (Residence Inn)  
 Mall, Inc. (Olde Mistick Village)  
 RLH II – HH Mystic, LLC (Mystic Hilton)  
 Davis Standard, LLC  
 SMV Mystic, LLC  
 (Pendleton Nursing Home)  
 Yankee Gas Services Co.

Source: Stonington Assessor's Office

#### Major Employers

Davis-Standard  
 Mashantucket Pequot Tribe  
 Town of Stonington  
 Mystic Seaport  
 Mystic Aquarium

Source: CERC Town Profile. 2006 Data

# COASTAL RESOURCES

# 3

## Overview

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Stonington is a coastal community - with all of the benefits and risks associated with such a location. From its earliest inhabitants, this area we now know as Stonington has enjoyed the abundant coastal resources including inlets, tidal coves, peninsulas, islands and the wildlife and scenery that come with it.

Since Stonington's history revolves much around its relationship to the sea, it should come as no surprise that the most developed areas in Stonington are near the water. These areas include the villages of Mystic, Old Mystic and Pawcatuck and Stonington Borough.

Today our coastline is at risk from our changing climate and the pressure for development. Striking a proper balance is the challenge Stonington faces in the coming decade.

*"We are tied to the ocean. And when we go back to the sea, whether it is to sail or to watch - we are going back from whence we came."*

*John F. Kennedy*

**Barn Island Wildlife Refuge**



**Stonington Harbor**



**Mystic Seaport**



**Coastal Storms**



## Coastal Management Act

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The Coastal Management Act request that Plans of Conservation and Development adopted by municipalities located contiguous to Long Island Sound include reasonable consideration for restoration and protection of the ecosystem and habitat of the Sound. Such measures shall be designed to reduce hypoxia (oxygen depletion), pathogens, toxic contaminants, and floatable debris in the Sound.

The recommendations in this Chapter are intended to meet this requirement.

### 3.1. Protect and Restore Coastal Resources

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In the 1970s, due to increasing concerns about land uses and activities along Connecticut's shoreline, the state legislature adopted the Connecticut Coastal Management Act (CGS 22a-90 to 111). This act defines the coastal areas, identifies important coastal resources, and established important policies for the management of coastal areas. This responsibility typically falls to the Town with state oversight and assistance.

Key objectives of the Connecticut Coastal Management Act include:

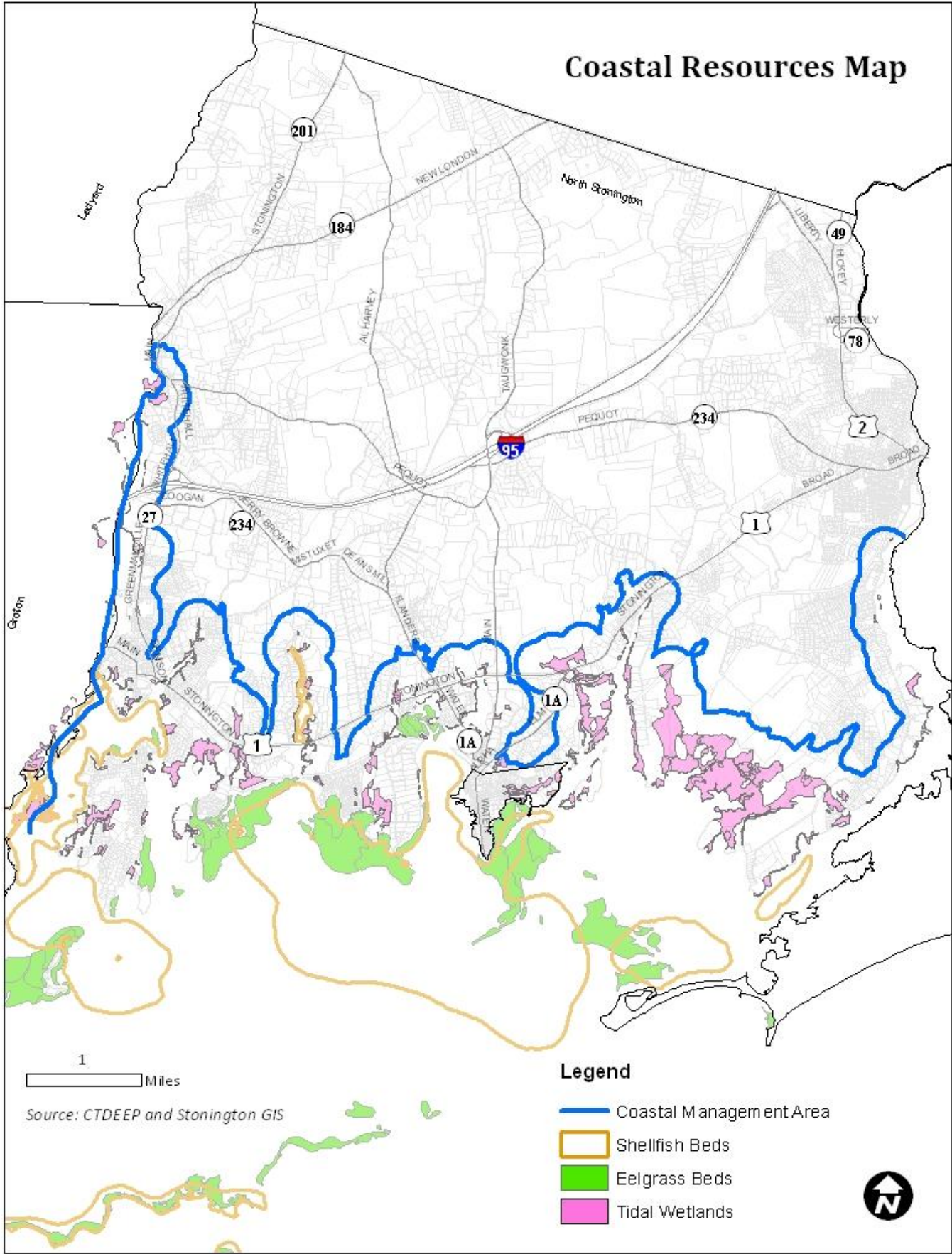
- To balance the preservation and/or use of coastal resources
- To preserve and enhance coastal resources
- To give preference to water-dependent uses and facilities
- To resolve conflicts between competing uses
- To consider the potential impact of a rise in sea level, coastal flooding and erosion patterns on coastal development
- To encourage appropriate public access within the coastal area
- To conduct, sponsor and assist research in coastal matters
- To coordinate the activities of public agencies
- To coordinate planning and regulatory activities of public agencies
- To provide adequate planning for facilities and resources which are in the national interest

The fragility of the remaining tidal marshes, wetlands, eelgrass flats, flood plains, stream belts and the like require that they be protected. These protections are crucial for the habitats and the breeding grounds for our fin, feather and fur resources and to provide buffering from wave surges during coastal storm events. Protections will also help to preserve our tourism and boating industries and the recreational enjoyment of the coast.

The identified wetlands, floodplains and adjoining uplands need to be protected through restrictions on new building with construction standards, setbacks and buffering so as to provide a margin from storm induced wave action, septic infiltration, increased flooding and more intense rain and wind events. Several of the Town's coastal waterbodies are listed by DEEP as "impaired" by not meeting water quality standards for specific uses such as swimming or shellfishing. Water quality studies by CUSH, Inc. additionally show seriously impaired water quality conditions with Aquatic Health Index Ratings of Poor and Fair in critical estuaries. As also discussed in Chapter 5, addressing both point and non-point source pollution wherever possible can help address this issue. Impaired coastal resources such as tidal wetlands should be restored whenever possible. Public and private boat pump out facilities should be supported and encouraged in order to help reduce the amount of waste polluting coastal waters.

The Town of Stonington has three separate Harbor Management Commissions. The Pawcatuck, Stonington and Mystic Harbor Management Commissions are responsible for preparing and implementing plans which manage these public resources. There is not an active Pawcatuck Harbor Management Plan as draft plans have been rejected by voters several times.

# Coastal Resources Map



Source: CTDEEP and Stonington GIS



## 3.2. Guide Development in Coastal Areas

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### Water Dependent Uses

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“...those uses and facilities which require direct access to, or location in, marine or tidal waters and which therefore cannot be located inland...”

Excerpted From CGS Section 22a-93 (16)

### Living Shoreline

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A shoreline erosion control management practice which also restores, enhances, maintains or creates natural coastal or riparian habitat, functions and processes. . . Living shorelines may include structural features that are combined with natural components to attenuate wave energy and currents.

Source: CTDEEP

Balancing the preservation of coastal natural resources with the economic interests of the owners of the developed waterfront has been a long standing challenge for coastal communities.

The natural resource base which attracted settlement to Stonington has resulted not only in its use, but also in the modification of the shoreline by the filling of tidal areas and coastal waters, the building of bulkheads, breakwaters, bridges, marinas, shipyards, homes, commercial structures and infrastructure. All those features amount to a large investment to be protected during the review process for future projects.

The Town should promote water dependent uses in coastal areas. At the same time, the Town should strive to preserve and restore sensitive coastal resources where they exist in other areas. Water dependent uses are those that require direct access to, or location in, marine or tidal waters and therefore cannot be located further inland. If water dependent uses are diminished on a site, the adverse impacts must be minimized by including additional water-dependent uses, such as a public access component, on or as close to the site as possible. Where development does occur, “green infrastructure” techniques should be used to manage stormwater, avoiding structural solutions (pipes, concrete, etc.) wherever possible. Non-structural solutions, such as vegetated buffers, wetlands and living shorelines, should be used instead of seawalls and other “armoring” techniques for flood and erosion protection along the shoreline since tidal wetlands are expected to expand over time. Development in coastal flood hazard areas (V-Zones) should be restricted to prevent loss of life and property during major storm surges.

It is critical to improve the communication and coordination of the activities among the agencies and commissions responsible for coastal area management which include:

- Two Planning and Zoning Commissions (Town of Stonington and Borough of Stonington)
- Three Harbor Management Commissions (Mystic, Stonington and Pawcatuck)
- Three Harbor Masters (Mystic, Stonington and Pawcatuck)
- One Waterfront Commission (Town of Stonington)
- One Shellfish Commission (Town of Stonington)
- One State Agency (Department of Energy & Environmental Protection)

Marina



Waterfront Residences



### 3.3. Prepare and Plan for Climate Change

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Maintaining a balance between environmental preservation and waterfront uses is expected to become increasingly difficult as the prospect of sea level rise, caused by increasing global temperature, impacts the world's coastlines.

The International Panel on Climate Change is in the process of organizing and releasing thousands of independent scientific studies that document the effects of increasing greenhouse gases that result in worldwide climatic shifts: including sea level rise, loss of sea ice at the poles and the increasing severity of storm events. NOAA has predicted that the Northeast coastline of the United States will be affected greatly by climate change.

While coastal hazards have always been an issue for Connecticut, changes in sea level and changes in the frequency and severity of storm events are expected to create additional issues in the future. The Office of Long Island Sound Programs, which is part of the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protections (DEEP), has established *Coastal Hazards Analysis and Management Project (CHAMP)*, an interactive mapping tool to get a glimpse of what coastal hazards (e.g., changes in sea level, storm surges, erosion, etc.) may affect our community.

We should anticipate that Stonington will bear its share of the impact of the rising sea and the increase in severity of storm events. A municipal Coastal Resilience Task Force has been recently established to work with the Borough to identify climate-related vulnerabilities in Town and issue a Climate Change Impact Report with recommendations for possible mitigation measures. Planning for sea level rise will help minimize potential loss of life and destruction to property and also minimize the necessity of public expenditures to protect future development from such hazards.

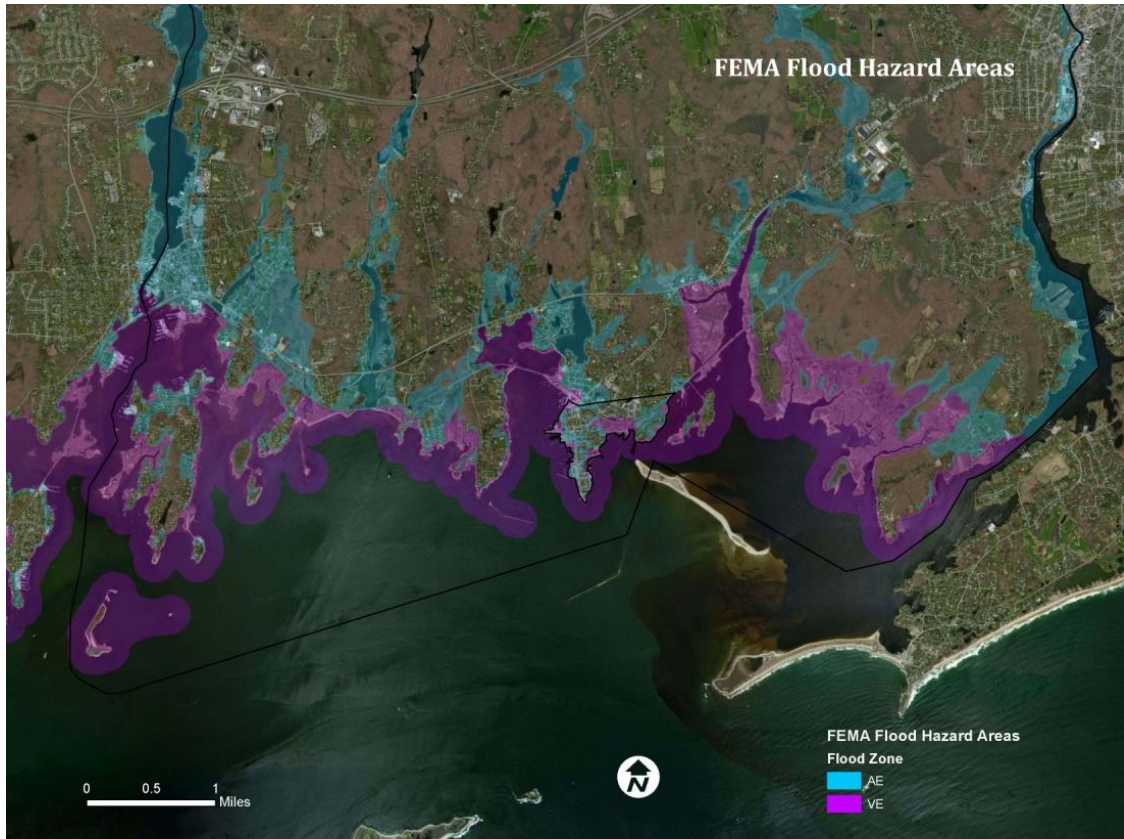
One project that is currently being planned to address storm surges is the restoration of the Old Stonington Wharf/Breakwater which helps to protect Stonington Borough from storm surges. Funding for this planning is being provided by the State of Connecticut and a task force has been appointed with members of Town and Borough governments and the Stonington Harbor Management Commission.

**Dubois Beach**



**Tidal Wetland**





Mean High Water Inundation at 24 Inches Sea Level Rise



Source: CTDEEP Coastal Hazard Visualization Tool

24 inch sea level rise projections based on 2007 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change "High Emissions" estimate with a planning horizon of the year 2100



## Recommendations

<b>3.1 Protect and Restore Coastal Resources</b>		
<b>Policies</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
3.1.1 Protect environmentally sensitive coastal areas and hazard-prone areas such as coastal flood plains and coastal wetlands.	PZC	CC, DPW, IWWC
3.1.2 Restore impaired coastal resources such as tidal wetlands wherever possible.	CC	HMC, WC, PZC, DOP, DEEP
<b>Initial Tasks</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
3.1.3 Adopt a Harbor Management Plan for the Pawcatuck River.	Pawcatuck HMC	BOS
3.1.4 Support and encourage public and private boat pump out facilities.	HMC	WC, CC

### Leader / Partners

See the inside back cover for a legend to the leaders and partners identified in this table.

<b>3.2 Guide Development in Coastal Areas</b>		
<b>Policies</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
3.2.1 Review development proposals, public and private, to ensure local, state and federal coastal policies are implemented.	PZC	DPW, DOP
3.2.2 Use “green infrastructure” techniques to manage stormwater, avoiding structural solutions wherever possible.	DPW	IWWC, PZC
3.2.3 Strive to ensure that all Planning and Zoning development proposals shall address provisions for public access to the coast, its resources and recreational opportunities.	PZC	CC, HMC, BOS, DPW, BTF
3.2.4 Encourage the use of living shorelines and other non-structural flood and erosion control techniques.	DPW	DOP, CC, HMC, WC, PZC, DEEP
3.2.5 Promote water dependent uses coastal areas.	PZC	DOP, HMC
3.2.6 Coordinate communication between the commissions charged with managing activities in coastal areas.	DOP	PZC, DPW, BOS, HMC, WC
<b>Initial Tasks</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
3.2.7 Propose improvements to the referral process between PZC, Harbor Management Commissions, Harbor Masters, DEEP & other affected agencies.	DOP	DEEP, HMC



<b>3.3 Prepare and Plan for Climate Change</b>		
<b>Policies</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
3.3.1 Plan to adapt to the projected rise in sea level.	CRTF	DOP DPW, BOS, CC, PZC, HMC, WC
3.3.2 Discourage new public infrastructure or development in flood prone areas.	DPW,	SHA, BOS, PZC, WPCA, CRTF
3.3.3 Preserve barrier beaches by prioritizing these areas for open space acquisition and restricting development during the application review process.	PZC	BOS, BOF, WC, CC, CRTF
<b>Initial Tasks</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
3.3.4 Plan for tidal wetland “advancement zones,” in which such wetlands are expected to expand, by restricting densities and lot coverage in “V” flood zones.	DOP	PZC, CRTF
3.3.5 Identify possible modifications to public infrastructure to account for increases in sea level.	DPW	WC, BOS, WPCA, CRTF
3.3.6 Review regulations to assure that appropriate setbacks for residential uses from the Coastal Jurisdiction Line are provided. Discourage seawalls as a solution to protecting development when other options are feasible.	DOP	DPW, WC, PZC, CRTF
3.3.7 Restrict assisted living facilities, hotels elderly housing and schools, which have the potential to increase exposure of vulnerable populations in coastal flood hazard areas.	DOP	PZC, CRTF
3.3.8 Modify regulations for all large scale residential development in flood hazard areas to provide detailed evacuation plans assuring that the routes are not to be subject to flooding themselves.	DPW	PZC, DOP, EMD, CRTF
3.3.9 Review and evaluate plans for emergency evacuation and transportation for coastal storm events.	EMD	DPW, DOT, SEAT, BOS, PC, FD, CRTF
3.3.10 Work with the Borough to identify climate-related vulnerabilities in Town and issue a Climate Change Impact Report with recommendations for mitigation measures.	CRTF	BOS, DOP, DPW, CC, HMC, WC, PZC

# AGRICULTURE

# 4

## Overview

Agriculture has a long history in Stonington and remains a vital component of our community. Agricultural activities have an economic impact and also provide environmental, scenic, food security, recreational, tourism, and fiscal benefits. Moreover, residents and consumers are increasingly seeking locally grown and raised products, healthier foods and more direct access to their food sources.

*“Agriculture not only gives riches to a nation, but the only riches she can call her own.”*

*Samuel Johnson*

## 4.1 Support Farms, Farmers, Fishermen, Lobstermen and Aquaculture

Interest in agricultural activities has been increasing in recent years due to “increasing consumer demand for healthy food and organic produce and concerns about obesity and health” (*Planning for Agriculture: A Guide for Connecticut Municipalities*). This interest has resulted in several popular farmer’s markets and several Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farms.

Agricultural operations in Stonington produce fresh food and other products and contribute in other ways as well. Agricultural activities are identified in the 2011 Southeastern CT Enterprise Region’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy as one of the industry groups that contributes to the economic base of the region.

Sea-Based Agriculture



Land-Based Agriculture



## Agriculture

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The words “agriculture” and “farming” shall include:

- cultivation of the soil
- dairying
- forestry
- raising or harvesting any agricultural or horticultural commodity
- raising, shearing, feeding, caring for, training and management of livestock, including horses, bees, poultry, fur-bearing animals and wildlife
- the raising or harvesting of oysters, clams, mussels, other molluscan shellfish or fish
- the production or harvesting of maple syrup or maple sugar, or any agricultural commodity
- the harvesting of mushrooms,
- the hatching of poultry

Excerpted From CGS Section 1-1

## Aquaculture

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“Aquaculture -- also known as fish or shellfish farming -- refers to the breeding, rearing, and harvesting of plants and animals in all types of water environments including ponds, rivers, lakes, and the ocean.

Excerpted From NOAA Fisheries  
[www.nmfs.noaa.gov/aquaculture](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/aquaculture)

Despite this growing support, there are many challenges that the farm community faces today. These include loss of farmland to development, high costs of fuel, transportation and utilities, and a shortage of labor. Organizations such as the Working Land Alliance (WLA), a coalition of Connecticut organizations, citizens and businesses working to raise awareness of the need to save valuable and vanishing farmland and recognizes that a thriving agricultural economy is essential to maintaining Connecticut’s unique quality of life and precious natural resources. Locally, a number of organizations have formed to advocate, collaborate, and raise awareness of local farmers and farming.

The Town should seek ways to minimize some of the challenges and obstacles that farms and farmers face. In addition to state and federal assistance which may be available, the Town should strive to support local farmers. A viable agricultural base will help to support the fiscal health of our town and contribute to a stronger and more diverse economic base. One of the key recommendations of this chapter is the formation of a local Agricultural Commission to help implement recommended policies and tasks. This new commission could help convene farmers and produce groups to identify business needs and opportunities. The Town should adopt a “Right to Farm” Ordinance which would protect agriculture operations from nuisance claims.

In addition to Stonington’s land based agriculture, the Town and surrounding region are home to marine based agricultural uses including fishing and shellfishing. In fact, Stonington is home to Connecticut’s last commercial fishing fleet. Several of the recommendations in this chapter apply to these uses as well. Coastal waters and shellfish beds must especially be protected by reducing point and non-point source pollution.

## 4.2 Preserve Agricultural Land and Shellfishing Areas

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The Town should encourage the preservation of farmland and seek to discourage its potential loss in Stonington. Local agricultural lands are needed primarily to produce local food. Agricultural lands are needed to support a healthy environment, help safeguard important ecological functions and contribute to critical green space and scenic landscapes. The Town, with the assistance of a new Agricultural Commission, should identify important farmland and determine ways to keep it in agriculture. The Town could lease suitable Town-owned land to local farmers for agricultural use. The Town should also work with the Shellfish Commission to enable preservation of shellfishing areas.

Under the state program known as PA-490, landowners in Connecticut can receive a reduced property assessment for land that is used for agricultural purposes if the landowner meets certain qualifications and declares such a use to the Tax Assessor (See Section 6.1 for more information). While a 2011 report by a local farmer showed that 136 landowners declared 3,132 acres as farmland, the report also indicated there is land eligible for the program which has not been declared. Since the PA-490 Program will help preserve local farmland, any eligible property owners should be encouraged to declare their properties.

## 4.3 Support Agricultural Activities

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Town support of agricultural activities is an important aspect of encouraging a more livable community and a sustainable future. An increase in agricultural activities can promote jobs, provide more opportunities for fresh, healthy and seasonable food, and reduce our reliance on distant suppliers. Local agricultural activities help residents reconnect with their culture, their food, their environment and each other. To address the issues and engage the community, policies and initiatives to foster local farms and farmland preservation must be developed.

While agriculture and use of land and waters for farming purposes has the longest history in Town, the Town does not have a formal process or group to address agricultural needs. The 2004 Plan of Conservation and Development did not include a section on Agriculture. The increasing attention to farms, farming, and agriculture raises many questions for Planning and Zoning, as well as, the Town in general. There are many tools that can be used to support local farms and marine agriculture and to protect farmland that Stonington does not currently have available. Some of these tools to support and protect farmland are:

- Form an Agricultural and Aquacultural Commission
- Update and clarify zoning regulations dealing with agriculture
- Provide educational programs related to agriculture
- Advise farmers to implement best management practices for agriculture
- Adopt a Right to Farm ordinance
- Adopt a local Food Policy to increase access to local, healthy food, strengthen the Town's food economy and encourage healthy and sustainable food choices
- Encourage Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Programs, farmers markets, community gardens and other programs
- Conduct a town-wide inventory of agricultural operations, define agricultural resources and assess the benefits of the agricultural cluster
- Sponsor an annual "Celebrate Agriculture" event

**Vineyard**



**Farmers Market**







## Recommendations

<b>4.1 Support Farms and Farmers, Fishermen, Lobstermen and Aquaculture</b>		
<b>Policies</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
4.1.1 Support local farmers (including marine based agriculture) and seek ways to address some of the challenges and obstacles they face.	AC	BOS
<b>Initial Tasks</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
4.1.2 Establish a town Agricultural and Aquacultural Commission.	BOS	SC
4.1.3 Adopt the statutory definitions of “agriculture,” “farming,” “farm,” “livestock” and “poultry.”	BOS	AC, PZC
4.1.4 Adopt a “Right to Farm” ordinance.	BOS	AC
4.1.5 Convene local farmers, produce groups, fishermen, lobstermen (Southern New England Fisherman’s and Lobsterman’s Association) and aquaculture groups to identify ways to improve Town policies towards their businesses and to encourage business opportunities between groups.	AC	BOS, SC

### Leader / Partners

See the inside back cover for a legend to the leaders and partners identified in this table.

<b>4.2 Preserve Agricultural Land</b>		
<b>Policies</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
4.2.1 Encourage eligible property owners to participate in the PA-490 assessment program for farmland and forest land.	AC	BOS, CC
4.2.2 Explore programs to encourage the preservation of farmland and shellfishing areas in Stonington.	AC	BOS, CC
<b>Initial Tasks</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
4.2.3 Identify important farmland and shellfishing areas and help determine ways to keep it in agriculture.	AC	CC
4.2.4 Identify town owned parcels suitable for agriculture and recommend the town lease it to local farmers.	AC	BOS, CC

<b>4.3 Support Agricultural Activities</b>		
<b>Policies</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
4.3.1 Encourage Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Programs, farmers markets, community gardens and other programs.	AC	PZC, BOS

<b>Initial Tasks</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
4.3.2 Conduct a town-wide inventory of agricultural operations and assess the economic, cultural and environmental benefits of the agriculture cluster.	AC	DOP
4.3.3 Sponsor an annual “Celebrate Agriculture” Event.	AC	BOS
4.3.4 Consider adoption of a local Food Policy and Food Council.	AC	BOS, CC



# NATURAL RESOURCES

# 5

## Overview

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There are a number of important natural resources in Stonington including water resources, wetlands, plants, animals and landforms. Preserving and conserving these resources is crucial for preserving environmental functions, maintaining clean drinking water, preventing environmental damage, and enhancing the quality of life of residents.

Preservation of the Town's natural resources was found to be a top priority of Stonington residents in a 2013 questionnaire. As more areas of Town become developed, the pressure to build on environmentally sensitive properties increases. These resources must be protected while allowing for appropriate development.

*“Conservation is a state of harmony between [people] and land.”*

*Aldo Leopold*

## 5.1 Protect Water Quality and Quantity

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Protecting water quality is the top priority for natural resource protection in Stonington. The freshwater resources in the Town of Stonington include a variety of streams, rivers, ponds, reservoirs, aquifers and inland wetland areas. Protecting these water resources from contamination and sedimentation is essential in providing clean drinking water, preserving ecosystems, providing recreation and fishing opportunities and protecting Long Island Sound. This is especially important since almost all residents and businesses get their drinking water from local surface and groundwater resources.

The protection of water quality has been a major goal of the Town's land use regulations for the past several decades. For example, in 1984, the Town designated a Groundwater Protection Overlay District to help protect sensitive water resource areas from incompatible activities. Since that time, the State of Connecticut instituted its own Aquifer Protection Program which restricts development of certain land use activities and requires certain existing uses to register and follow best management practices. However, this program only applies to the recharge area of pumping public water supply wells within the state. Since the recharge area for wells in Rhode Island servicing Pawcatuck and Westerly extends into Stonington, the Connecticut Aquifer Protection Program has little direct influence. The Town must continue to allow appropriate economic development in the area surrounding Exit 92 that does not pose a risk to the aquifer that serves thousands of people in Pawcatuck and Westerly.

CTDEEP's 2014 report entitled "CT Pawcatuck River Watershed Bacteria Total Maximum Daily Load" (TMDL) labels the Pawcatuck River as "impaired" from near the Rt. 1 crossing north to the RI state line, with the specific impairment being recreation for swimming and other contact water-related activities. The recommendations of this report should be implemented in order to prevent further contamination and improve water quality above acceptable standards. Steps should also be taken to improve water

## Technical Standards

Since the adoption of the 2004 POCD, the Town has established Technical Standards for Land Development and Road Construction. This document establishes specific standards for construction that better protect the Town's water resources from erosion and sedimentation.

This document has been already adopted by the Board of Selectmen. Changes to the Zoning and Subdivision regulations will also be necessary before the document will be completely effective.

quality in other impaired waterbodies in Town such as Wequetequock Cove, Quiambaug Cove, Pequotsepos Cove, Inner Stonington Harbor, Stonington Point and portions of the Mystic River.

Addressing "non-point" pollution is also an issue. Given the great strides which have been made nationwide in the past 40 years or so, the greatest threat to water quality is no longer industrial discharges (at specific points) to water bodies. Instead, the focus is turning to "non-point" contamination such as runoff from parking lots and fertilized lawns, underground storage tanks that leak (but go undetected), and effluent from malfunctioning septic systems. While less dramatic, these more "suburban" sources of contamination are often more difficult to regulate and mitigate since they are created by the cumulative actions of a wide variety of residents and businesses.

**Example of Potential for "Non-Point Source" Contamination from Parking Lot Runoff**



Creation of a Watershed Plan will help find solutions to stormwater runoff problems in the Town's various drainage basins.

Agricultural uses also present unique challenges to the protection of water resources. Poor field and farmyard drainage management practices can cause nutrient-loaded runoff to flow into streams, rivers, coves and inlets, clogging them with algae. Additionally, poorly managed runoff from areas inhabited by farm animals present health risks to both shellfish and humans. The Town should promote best management practices for drainage of farms to reduce these risks.

Another area requiring attention will be implementing the clean-up of "brownfield" sites. A brownfield site is "a former industrial or commercial site where future use is affected by real or perceived contamination." Contamination from one site can leach to surrounding areas and can threaten drinking water. Cleaning up these sites will not only reduce pollution but also promote economic development as underutilized properties are used productively. Some of these properties may have historic value as well.

The Town should enhance protection of groundwater quality and quantity by preventing contamination, encouraging responsible Low Impact Development (LID) and preserving sensitive groundwater areas. The Town should reactivate the Stormwater Committee to help address these issues.

Transportation policies can also have a significant effect on natural resources including water and air quality. Encouraging enhancements to pedestrian, bicycle and mass transit infrastructure can lead to fewer automobile trips and less space dedicated to parking lots.

## 5.2 Protect Inland and Coastal Wetlands

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Protection of inland and coastal wetlands is also a priority. Wetlands serve several important functions including cleaning and filtering storm water runoff, mitigating impacts of floods and providing important habitats for wildlife. The Town and its land use commissions have prioritized protection of inland and coastal wetlands.

One of the key issues in protecting wetlands and natural resources is enhancing erosion and sedimentation controls. Erosion and sedimentation occur when soil is worn away by water, wind, ice or gravity and is deposited elsewhere. While erosion and sedimentation are usually a natural process, they become serious problems when they are accelerated due to human activity such as construction, regrading of land, paving and redirected stormwater flows. Sediment can cause physical, chemical and biological damage to surface waters and ecosystems. The Erosion Susceptibility Map on the facing page shows areas in Town which are most at risk for erosion. During a site's construction is when wetlands and watercourses are most at risk and when controls are most crucial. As the risks and potential nuisances associated with such uses become clearer, the Town should consider amending its regulations to prohibit any new excavation operations, such as quarries or gravel pits.

The Town should address the protection of natural resources during the permitting process to prevent negative impacts on natural functions. Advances in Low Impact Development (LID) can mitigate some of the negative impacts of development on the natural environment. Regulations limiting extensive cuts and fills and construction on steep slopes may also limit erosion and sedimentation problems. To help meet these objectives, zoning regulations regarding buffers from natural resources in residential zones should be clarified and/or strengthened. In order to minimize the amount of floatable debris and sedimentation in wetlands and watercourses, regular street sweeping should be provided and catch basins should be regularly cleaned out by the Town and private property owners.

**Wetland Area**



**Slope Erosion**



### Stormwater Management

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Through the federal Environmental Protection Agency's "MS-4" requirements, municipalities have been required to obtain permits and develop stormwater management programs to reduce the contamination of stormwater runoff and prohibit illicit discharges. Minimum control measures include public education and outreach, illicit discharge detection and elimination, construction and post-construction runoff control and pollution prevention / good housekeeping.

### Low Impact Development (LID)

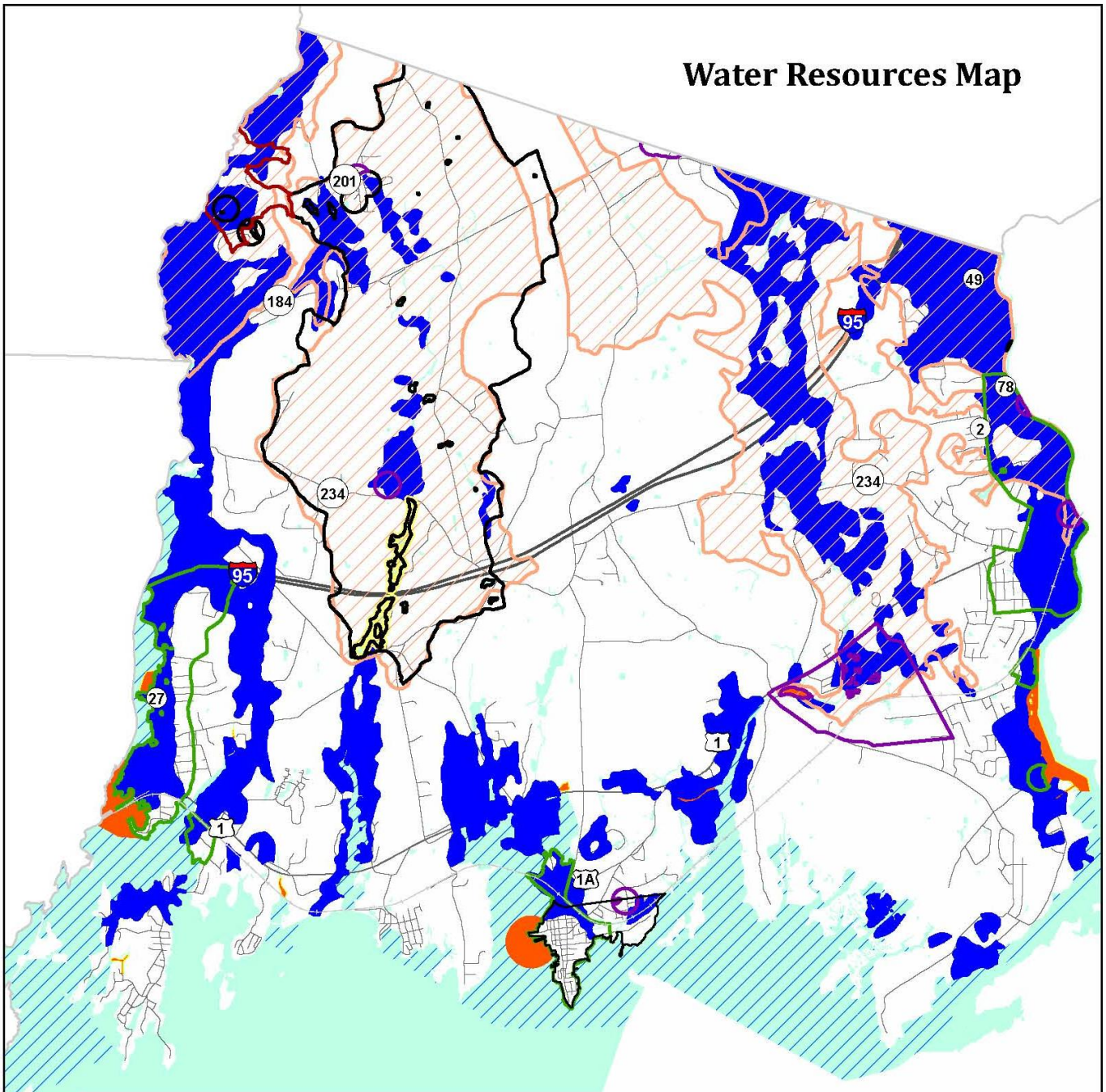
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LID is an approach to land development (or re-development) that works with nature to manage stormwater as close to its source as possible. LID employs principles such as preserving and recreating natural landscape features, minimizing effective imperviousness to create functional and appealing site drainage that treat stormwater as a resource rather than a waste product. There are many practices that have been used to adhere to these principles such as bioretention facilities, rain gardens, vegetated rooftops, rain barrels, and permeable pavements.

Source: US EPA

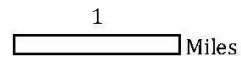


# Water Resources Map



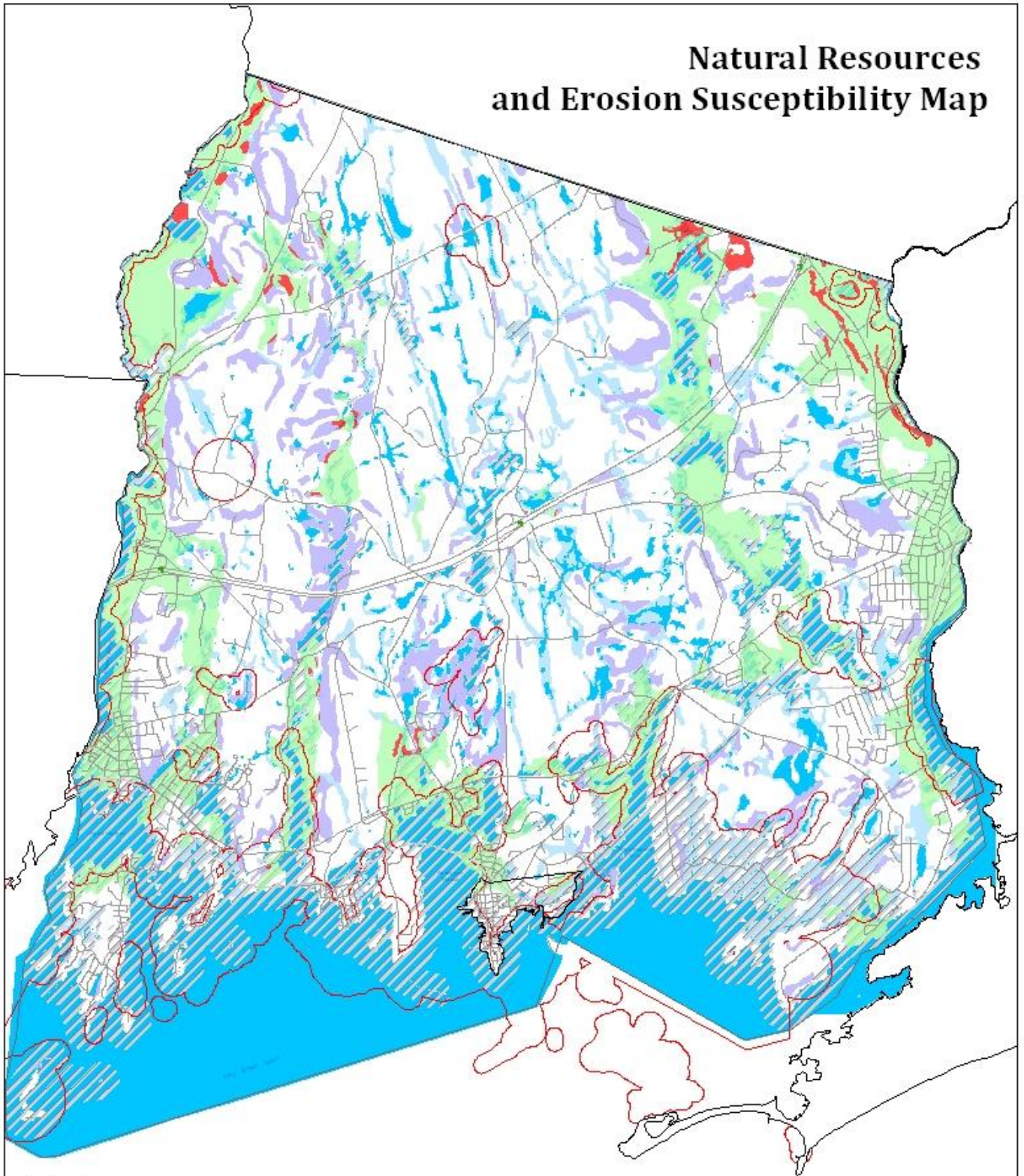
- | Groundwater   | Surface Water  |
|---|--|
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: blue; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Areas of High Groundwater Availability | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: yellow; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Reservoir                               |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; border: 1px dashed orange;"></span> Aquifer Protection Zone (Town)                               | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: lightgreen; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Meets State Water Quality Standards |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; border: 1px solid red;"></span> Aquifer Protection Zone (DEP Level A)                            | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: cyan; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Shellfish Restriction Apply               |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Potable  | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: orange; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Not Meeting State Water Quality         |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; border: 1px solid green;"></span> Potable (May Not Meet State Water Quality Standards)           | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Stonington Borough  |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; border: 1px solid purple;"></span> Not Potable   |  |

Source: CT DEEP





# Natural Resources and Erosion Susceptibility Map



## Legend

- |  |   |
|--|---|
|  Most Susceptible to Erosion                |  Natural Diversity Database Area |
|  Highly Susceptible to Erosion              |  Flood Hazard Areas              |
|  Surficial Materials Susceptible to Erosion |  Water                           |
|  Soils Susceptible to Erosion               |  Wetlands                        |

1 Miles



Source: CTDEEP and Stonington GIS

### 5.3 Protect Other Natural Resources

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The Town possesses many other natural resources including plants, animals and wildlife habitats. The Town and local land conservation organizations have been targeting open space preservation efforts in environmentally sensitive areas to help preserve key resources. Since this strategy will not be effective in all areas, the Town should seek to use land use regulations and other approaches to preserve its natural diversity, minimize habitat loss, preserve flood hazard areas, and protect fisheries and shellfish beds.

The completion of a town-wide Natural Resource Inventory would benefit the Town through documentation of all known environmental resources in order to facilitate preserving important areas. Diminishing the presence of invasive species is also an important goal to protect the native species that are key parts of the local ecosystem.

**Shellfishing**



**Wildlife Habitat**



## Recommendations

<b>5.1 Protect Water Quality and Quantity</b>		
<b>Policies</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
5.1.1 Encourage Low Impact Development (LID) standards for site designs that maximize pervious surfaces, promote infiltration of stormwater and reduce runoff.	PZC	IWWC, ADRB
5.1.2 Promote public education programs that address “non-point” pollution issues.	CC	DPW
5.1.3 Apply best practices for stormwater management and apply assure that staff training is provided.	DPW	RC, BOE, IWWC, PZC
5.1.4 Continue to implement the Town’s Stormwater Management goals including public education and outreach, eliminating illicit discharges, controlling site runoff including run-off from construction sites and municipal good housekeeping / pollution prevention.	DPW	PZC
5.1.5 Encourage re-use and redevelopment of “brownfield” sites in order to implement remediation of contamination.	PZC	BOS, EDC
5.1.6 Resurrect and maintain an active Town Stormwater Committee.	BOS	PZC, CC
5.1.7 Promote best management practices for agricultural uses.	AC	STF, CC, IWWC, DPW
5.1.8 Encourage transportation policies that reduce automobile dependence.	DPW	DOP, PZC, BOS, PC, BTF
<b>Initial Tasks</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
5.1.9 Investigate strengthening the Town’s Groundwater Protection Overlay District to limit uses according to their potential risks using the State’s Aquifer Protection Program as a model.	PZC	Water Providers, DOP
5.1.10 Adopt an ordinance to require the identification, licensing and/or removal of residential underground storage tanks.	BOS	TS
5.1.11 Consider adopting “effective impervious coverage” requirements for all commercial and industrial zones which may possibly replace floor area ratio requirements in these zones.	PZC	DOP
5.1.12 Investigate the possibility of preserving Aquarion Water Company’s undeveloped land surrounding the Mystic Reservoir.	CC	BOS

### Leader / Partners

See the inside back cover for a legend to the leaders and partners identified in this table.



5.1.13	Explore development of a pumping station for recreational vehicles.	CC	BOS
5.1.14	Consider the formation of a municipal stormwater utility.	STF	DPW, BOS
5.1.15	Address the recommendations in CTDEEP's Pawcatuck River Watershed Bacteria TMDL Report.	DPW	DOP, CC, STF, HMC, WPCA
5.1.16	Create a Watershed Plan to address stormwater management in the Town's various drainage basins.	DPW	STF

<b>5.2 Protect Inland and Coastal Wetlands</b>			
<b>Policies</b>		<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
5.2.1	Require vegetative buffers, swales and other appropriate drainage diversion and minimization methods to wetland and watercourses to filter pollutants from stormwater runoff.	IWWC	PZC, STF
5.2.2	Ensure best practices regarding clearing and grading of sites so as to minimize the impact on natural drainage patterns.	PZC	IWWC, ADRB, STF
5.2.3	Perform regular street sweeping and cleaning of catch basins in order to minimize the amount of floatable debris and sedimentation in wetlands and watercourses.	DPW	STF
<b>Initial Tasks</b>		<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
5.2.4	Clarify land use regulations regarding buffers from natural resources particularly in residential zones.	PZC	DOP

<b>5.3 Protect Other Natural Resources</b>		
<b>Policies</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
5.3.1 Encourage open space developments in order to better preserve natural resources.	PZC	CC
5.3.2 Minimize wildlife habitat loss through preservation of open space and natural resource areas.	CC,	IWWC, PZC
<b>Initial Tasks</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
5.3.3 Prepare a town wide Natural Resource Inventory.	CC	DOP
5.3.4 Amend regulations to prohibit the introduction of invasive species during the site development process.	PZC	IWWC, CC, DOP
5.3.5 Amend regulations to require review of CTDEEP's Natural Diversity Database (NDDDB) when land use applications fall under the NDDDB area of concern.	PZC	DOP
5.3.6 Amend regulations to prohibit new excavation operations, such as quarries, in Town.	PZC	DOP, STF

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# OPEN SPACE

# 6

## Overview

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Open space contributes to community character and quality of life. Stonington is fortunate that a number of open space areas have been preserved in the community. However, development in the future may reduce the amount of land we perceive to be “open” today; so the importance of open space is expected to grow in the future.

The Conservation Commission, an advisory body, completed an Open Space Plan in 2007 which became an addendum to the Town’s 2004 POCD.

Similar to the need to maintain the physical infrastructure of the town, there is a corresponding need to strategically invest in and maintain a system of open space “green infrastructure” which relies upon natural landscape features and ecosystems to perform or supplement the types of functions performed by costlier human – engineered systems. Open space is an important aspect of a sustainable future.

*“The quicker we humans learn that saving open space and wildlife is critical to our welfare and quality of life, maybe we'll start thinking of doing something about it.”*

*Jim Fowler  
American Scientist*

Open Space



Open Space



## Definitions

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In the Plan of Conservation and Open Space, the Conservation Commission defines open space land within two broad categories:

Committed Open Space - Undeveloped land that is legally protected and preserved by deed restrictions to ensure it will remain permanently undeveloped. Examples are State or Town land designated with open space restrictions, land trust owned property committed to remain undeveloped and privately owned land subject to conservation easements.

Managed Open Space - Currently undeveloped land, or land that is used for activities that by their nature provide open space, but has no legal or special protection that ensures that it remain open space. Examples are farms, golf courses and other municipal and privately owned land that is not protected by an open space deed or easement.

Municipal Land Acquisition and Development Authority Any municipality may, by vote of its legislative body, establish a land acquisition and development authority to assist the municipality to acquire or develop any agricultural, recreational or open space land or to assist the municipality to acquire any easements, interest or rights therein and to enter into covenants and agreements with owners of such land or interests therein to acquire, maintain, improve, protect, limit the future use of or otherwise conserve such land.

## 6.1 Protect and Preserve More Open Space

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Open spaces and rural landscapes contribute to our character and quality of life as well as provide more functional values such as storm water management, flood control, oxygen production and carbon storage, and the filtration and purification of water for human consumption and habitat preservation. In the 2013 POCD questionnaire Stonington residents indicated that expanding and protecting open space in Town should continue to be a priority.

The 2004 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) and the 2007 Open Space Plan prepared by the Conservation Commission recommended increasing the amount of committed open space in Stonington (land with the protection necessary to ensure long-term preservation).

In 2007, it was estimated that approximately 10% of the Town's land was permanently protected as open space. Due to various efforts since then, progress has been made and committed open space has increased to approximately 15% of the Town's land. A goal to preserve 21% of the Town's land as committed open space has been adopted by the Conservation Commission to mirror the State of Connecticut's 21% goal.

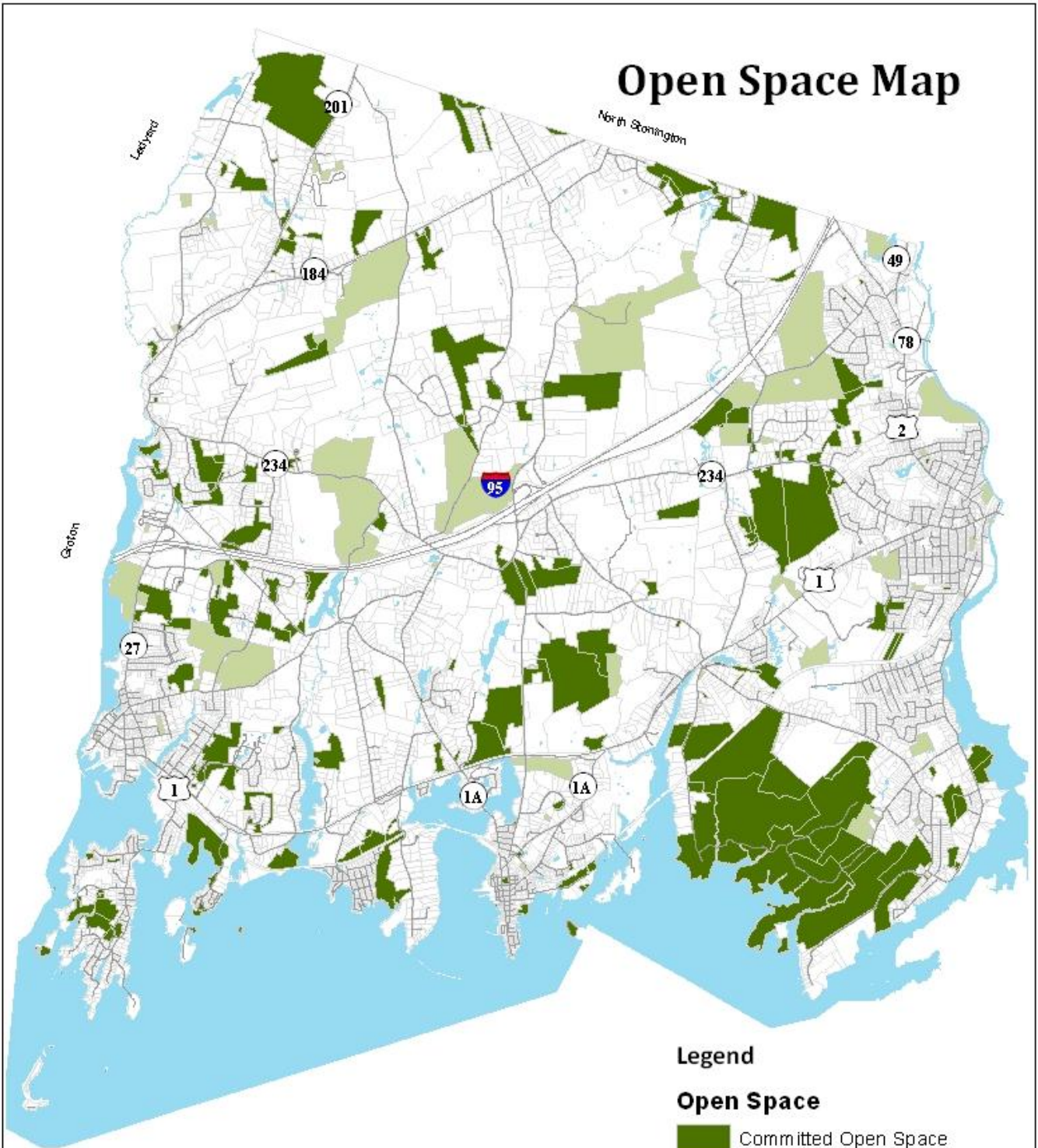
Some of the methods available to convert land to committed open space include public and/or private acquisition (ownership or conservation easements), subdivision "set-asides" and open space development patterns. These methods have been used with varying degrees of commitment and success over the past 10 years.

Public / Private Acquisition - While there is general public support for open space, the Town has not committed funding for the acquisition of open space land or development rights. Even though the 2007 Open Space Plan provides a rating scale for potential open space acquisitions, requests by the Conservation Commission to include annual budget appropriations for an open space fund or open space bonding have generally been rejected by the Board of Finance. The Town has not pursued state and federal funding grants that may be available for open space acquisition and easements.

Stonington currently has two private non-profit land trusts that foster the protection of open space in the Town. Both land trusts acquire land and conservation easements with private funding and through donation. The Town should also form a Municipal Land Acquisition and Development Authority under CT General Statutes Section 7-131p which would assist the Town in acquiring open space land or easements. The Town and the land trusts should exercise all available methods that may be used to encourage an increase of committed open space lands. The Town should consider cooperative initiatives with the private land trusts to actively acquire more open space and conservation easements where feasible.

PA-490 Program - The Town participates in the State of Connecticut's PA-490 program which offers owners of forests of over 25 acres or farms tax relief in exchange for preserving their properties for at least 10 years. PA-490 properties are not considered "committed open space" since the designation is not permanent and owners can still develop their properties (after paying financial penalties). Expanding the PA-490 to include "open space" in addition to farms and forests would increase the amount of land protected under this program by reducing the pressure on property owners to develop their land.

# Open Space Map



## SUMMARY OF STONINGTON OPEN SPACE

Type	Acres	% of Total
Committed Open Space	3,718	14
Managed Open Space	1,629	6
Committed and Managed Open Space	5,347	20
Total Town Land Area	26,799	100

## Legend

### Open Space

- Committed Open Space
- Managed Open Space

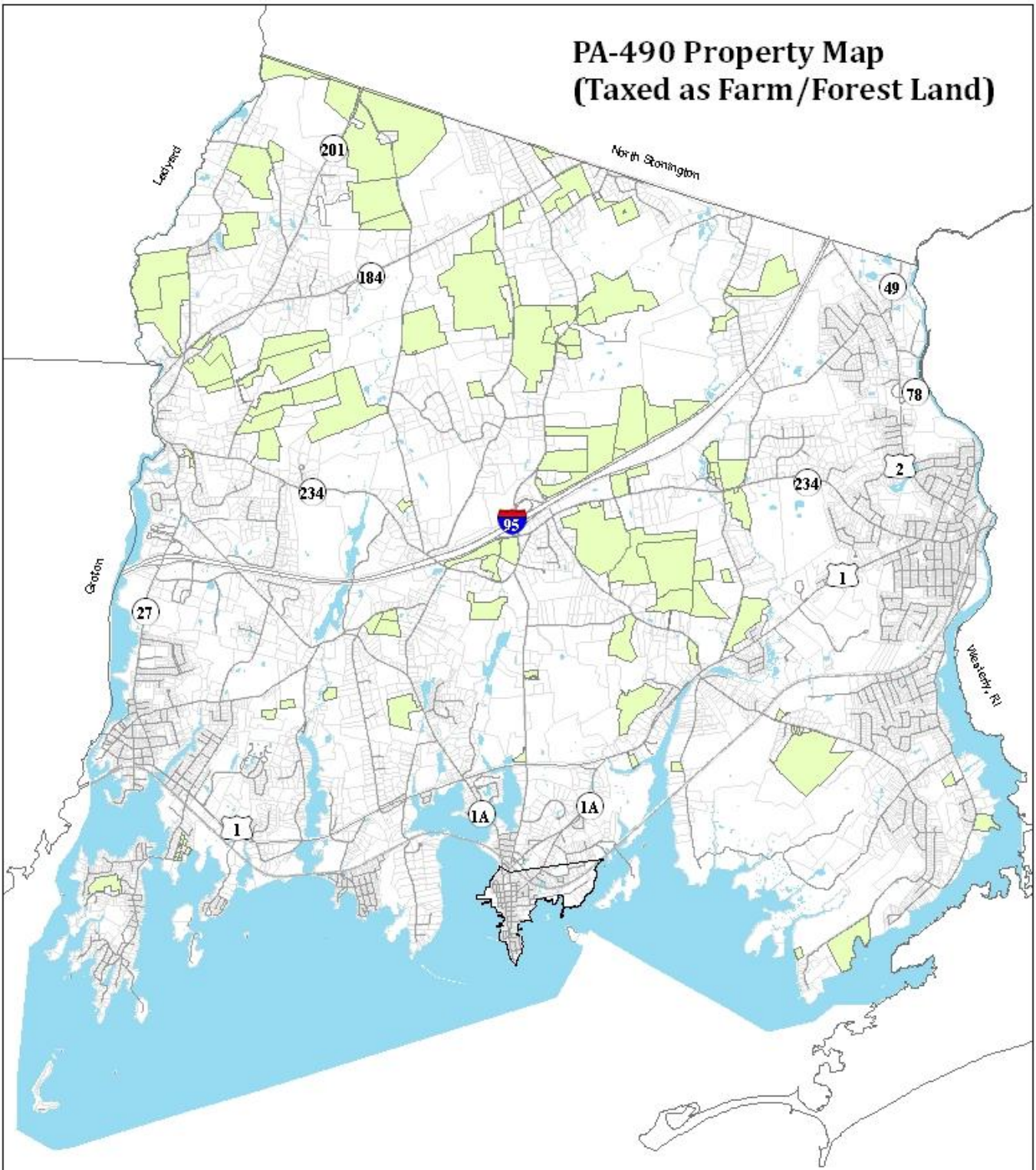
Source: Stonington Assessor's Database and Conservation Commission

1 Miles






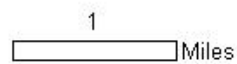
# PA-490 Property Map (Taxed as Farm/Forest Land)



## Legend

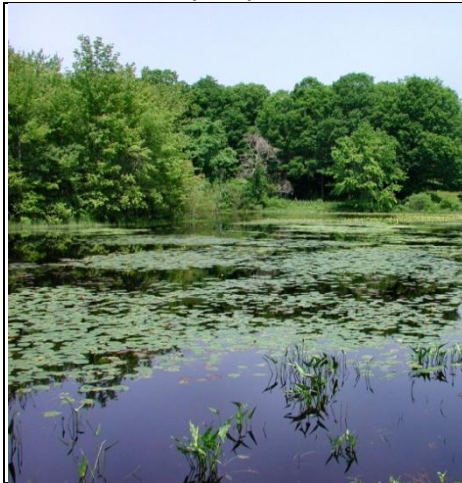
 PA-490 Properties (taxed as farm/forest land)

Source: Stonington Tax Assessor's Database



Subdivision “Set-Asides” - The Town has made some progress over the past ten years in regulations and procedures to preserve more open space. Subdivision Regulations have been revised to ensure that either open space is part of every residential development or a fee equal to 10% of the parcel value is collected for the purpose of open space acquisition elsewhere. A proposal to increase the open space set-aside from 15% to 20% of the development area was not endorsed by the Planning and Zoning Commission, but the Commission has been requiring easements over natural resource areas during development application approvals.

**Open Space**



**Open Space**



**Open Space**



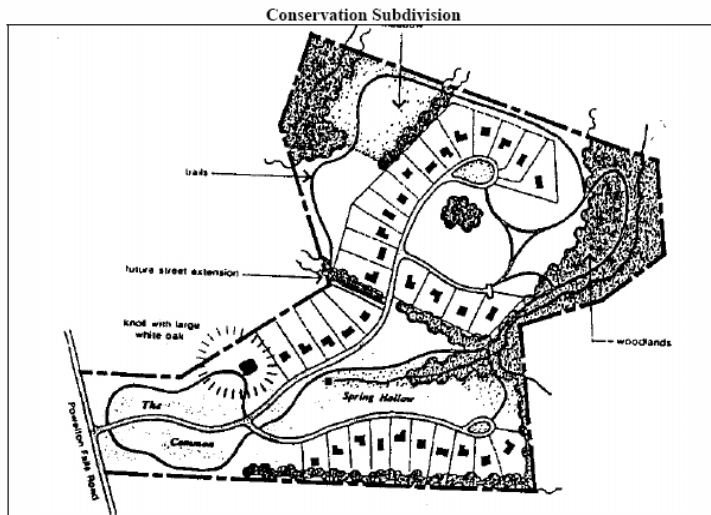
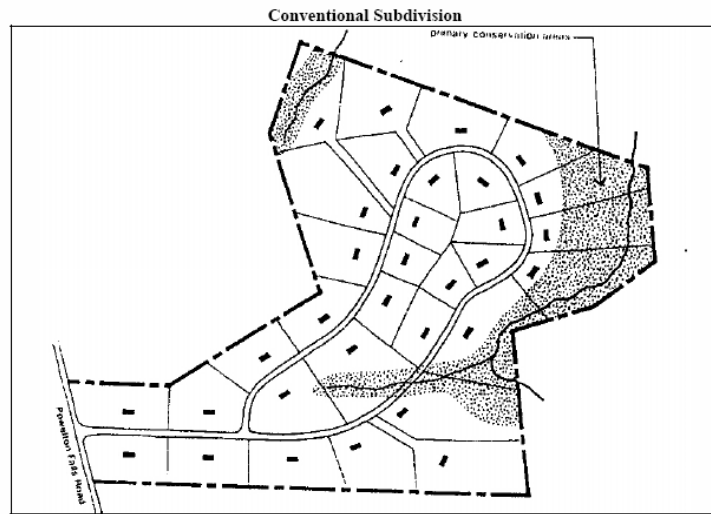
**Open Space**



Fee-in-Lieu-of-Open Space – State statutes allow communities to accept a monetary fee in-lieu-of actual open space set-asides when the land would have little value as open space and would not positively contribute to an overall open space system. Over the past 10 years or so, Stonington has accepted such fee payments and these funds are placed in a dedicated fund for open space preservation. The Stonington Conservation Commission advises decision making authorities such as the Board of Finance and Board of Selectmen who would approve such a purchase of land for conservation. Approval by tax payers at a Town Meeting would also be required for such a purchase.

Open Space Development Patterns - Open Space Developments (also known as conservation subdivisions) are a tool that can be used to increase the preservation of open space. In an Open Space Development (OSD) a developer can be granted flexibility with lot sizes, setbacks and other bulk requirements in exchange for preserving a large portion of the entire parcel as permanent open space (at least 50% of the entire parcel).

Rather than the “cookie cutter” approach of conventional subdivisions, OSDs allow development to be focused in areas of the site where it can best be supported while sensitive areas are protected from encroachment. Shorter roads and utility connections can also lead to reduced costs for the developer to build and the Town to maintain this infrastructure. An Open Space Development alternative was made part of Stonington’s regulations in 2006 and revised in 2009. The regulation has resulted in one such development currently under construction off North Stonington Road.



Source: “Growing Greener” by Randal Arendt

## 6.2 Maintain the Open Space Plan

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The 2007 Open Space Plan prepared by the Conservation Commission set a goal that 30% of the Town's land be committed open space by 2020. The Conservation Commission has since endorsed a goal of preserving 21% of the Town's land as committed open space to mirror the State's goal. The Plan also provides an overall resource ranking for consideration of open space acquisitions.

The 2007 Open Space Plan provides an important and useful guide to conservation and open space preservation in the Town. A commitment to support on-going maintenance of the Plan is essential to its success in helping to protect our natural resources and providing for more and connected open space. The Town should annually examine the progress towards obtaining the open space goal. This should include plans for funding through the budget, through grants, through funds obtained for fee-in-lieu of open space.

## 6.3 Encourage Public Use of Open Space

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The Plan recognizes that acquiring open space that adjoins or is nearby to existing open space land provides the opportunity to create an expanded greenbelt infrastructure which can link both residential and commercial neighborhoods with walking trails and bike paths. This type of potential recreational use is an important aspect of public support for open space initiatives as indicated in the 2013 POCD questionnaire.

The Town and the two land trusts, where it is appropriate, should establish and maintain trails on their properties for passive enjoyment, such as hiking, bird watching, nature study and photography.

While the Conservation Commission uses a system of ratings to rank and prioritize properties for potential acquisition, this ranking system does not currently reflect community desires for public accessibility of open space, nor does it include possibilities for recreational land purchases. The Town should acknowledge increasing public support and expectations regarding access and use of open space for passive recreational purposes as this is important to both existing and potential new residents.

The Conservation Commission has held open space forums to help educate residents on the value of open space to promote a better understanding of the process to donate land or easements as part of preservation efforts.

### Open Space Management

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The Town does not presently have a policy to limit improvements to land it owns as committed open space areas. The Town should adopt a policy that limits improvements to those that are consistent with long-term preservation and appropriate public enjoyment of the natural resources and open space value of the site.

Town owned open space could be used for other purposes if not protected by deed restrictions, and a proposed change in use may be approved by a town meeting or referendum.

An option that has been exercised by the Town is to transfer municipally owned committed open space land to one of the private land trusts. This ensures it will be maintained and used as open space and relieves the Town of stewardship responsibilities.

In the future the Town should consider cooperative initiatives with the private land trusts for the acquisition of committed open space land or conservation easements.



**Leader / Partners**

See the inside back cover for a legend to the leaders and partners identified in this table.

**Recommendations**

<b>6.1 Protect and Preserve More Open Space</b>		
<b>Policies</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
6.1.1 Strive to achieve the goal of preserving 21% of the Town’s land as committed open space.	CC	BOF, BOS
6.1.2 Actively search for open space that is contiguous to other deeded open space and forms a green infrastructure.	CC	
6.1.3 Actively search for federal/state grants to help in acquiring open space.	CC	DOP, BOS
6.1.4 Actively seek cooperative initiatives with private land trusts to acquire open space land and development rights / easements.	CC	BOS
6.1.5 Monitor and enforce municipal conservation easements.	CC	DOP
<b>Initial Tasks</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
6.1.6 Add a line item in the budget and make an appropriation each year for a fund to purchase open space.	BOS	BOF
6.1.7 Consider revising regulations to prohibit detention basins, sewerage pumping stations and utility rights of way from being counted towards the percentage of open space set-asides.	PZC	CC, DOP
6.1.8 Update Open Space Development regulations to eliminate requirement that open space cannot have a greater percentage of wetlands than the entire property.	PZC	CC, DOP
6.1.9 Review procedures and standards for recording of subdivision open space set-asides and the enforcement of conservation easements.	DOP	PZC, CC, Land Trusts
6.1.10 Inventory municipally owned open space for possible conversion to committed open space.	CC	DOP
6.1.11 Explore expansion of the Town’s participation in the PA-490 program to include open space in addition to farms and/or forests of over 25 acres. Consider a recommendation to local legislatures that PA-490 be modified to a lower minimum acreage requirement to modify the lower minimum acreage requirement from 25 to 15 acres.	BOS	CC, BOF, DOP

6.1.12	Establish a Municipal Land Acquisition and Development Authority under CT General Statutes Section 7-131p.	BOS	CC
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<b>6.2 Maintain the Open Space Plan</b>			
<b>Policies</b>		<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
6.2.1	Limit improvements to Town owned open space areas to those that are consistent with long-term preservation and appropriate public enjoyment of the natural resources and open space value of the site.	BOS	CC
6.2.2	Continue to maintain the Open Space Plan.	CC	DOP
<b>Initial Tasks</b>		<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
6.2.3	Provide an annual review of open space properties and report to partners on progress towards the goal of the Open Space Plan.	CC	BOS, PZC, BOF

<b>6.3 Encourage Public Use of Open Space</b>			
<b>Policies</b>		<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
6.3.1	Strive to create opportunities for bike paths and trails linking residential and commercial areas and between neighboring open space.	BTF	PZC, CC, BOS
<b>Initial Tasks</b>		<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
6.3.2	Apply for Connecticut DEEP Greenway designation for selected and planned greenways.	CC	BOS
6.3.3	Modify the open space rating process to consider the potential to establish a trail system or enhance public accessibility of open space.	CC	
6.3.4	Continue to hold public forums to educate the residents about the benefits of actively acquiring / donating open space.	CC	
6.3.5	Develop a guide to open space public access in Town.	CC	DOP, RC, HMC, BTF
6.3.6	Investigate creation of a public trail between the Parkwood Drive area and Spellman Park.	DPW	CC, BTF



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# SCENIC & HISTORIC RESOURCES

# 7

## Overview

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Stonington is fortunate to possess an exceptional combination of natural and man-made scenic and historic resources. From its picturesque coastline with quaint historic villages to its pastoral uplands with stone walled country roads, Stonington's scenic beauty has attracted people to live and visit here for generations. Stonington's significant history has been well preserved in its historic homes, farms, commercial buildings and museums. Many of these features can also be referred to as "cultural landscapes," defined by the Natural Park Services as "geographic areas, including both cultural and natural resources and the wildlife or domestic animals therein, associated with a historic event, activity, or person or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values." These areas are locations in Stonington where man and nature come together and the results are valued.

Like other resources, these scenic and historic resources can be lost if not adequately protected. Protecting these resources is important to the Town's residents, tourists and overall economic wellbeing.

*"All Americans need a sense of place. That's what makes our physical surroundings worth caring about."*

*Ed McMahon  
American Celebrity*

Scenic View



Scenic Road



## 7.1 Maintain the Scenic Character of the Town

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### Property Maintenance

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In 2010, a Blight Ordinance was adopted by the Town to evaluate the extent of blighted conditions in town and determine whether a property maintenance ordinance is warranted.

While the ordinance has been utilized, the conditions persist, predominantly in downtown Pawcatuck.

### Conflicting Concerns

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Since the two major hurricanes, Sandy in 2012 and Irene in 2011, issues have arisen concerning flood regulations, requirements for rebuilding and height limits.

Zoning regulations can be problematic when rebuilding because flood regulations (federal program) require elevating habitable floors where building height limits in coastal areas (local zoning) may not permit this.

A conflict between character (coastal views, neighborhood scale, etc.) and flood safety can result.

Scenic resources abound in Stonington. Scenic resources include significant portions of the villages of Mystic, Old Mystic, Pawcatuck and Stonington Borough. Each village has unique physical characteristics with historic backgrounds that contribute to their scenic nature and character. From many locations, there are scenic coastal views ranging from glimpses along various roads to expansive coastal views from parks and open space areas. Scenic coastal areas also include such unique areas as the trails on Barn Island and the historic riverfront village at Mystic Seaport Museum.

Stonington's gently rolling uplands are a combination of wooded areas, open fields and pasture land; and there are several historic homes and farm buildings. Undeveloped land contributes to the scenic beauty of Stonington. While some of this land is permanently protected from future development, much of it is privately owned land which might be developed at some time in the future.

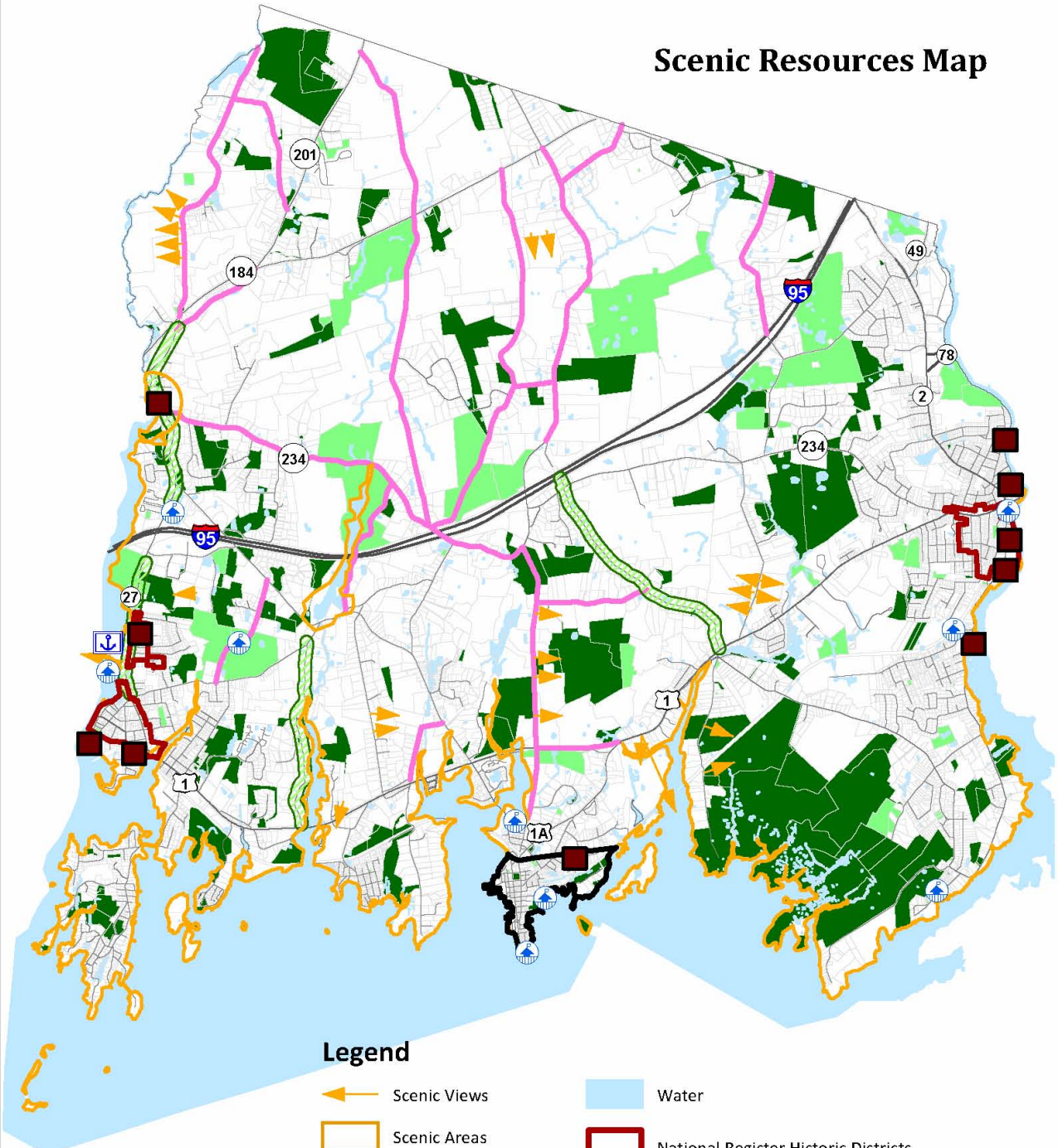
There are also a number of scenic roads lined with stone walls, majestic trees and offering pastoral views. Residents responding to a questionnaire in 2013 agreed that the Town should work to protect scenic road features. Some roads are designated as "Scenic Roads" by the State or the Town, and this offers a small amount of protection from inappropriate widening or other changes. The Town's Scenic Road Ordinance should be reviewed to ensure it has good tools for protecting scenic roads. The Scenic Resources Map on the next page shows designated "Scenic Roads" as well as roads proposed for this designation. The Town has an "Adopt the Road" program to recognize public groups that volunteer to periodically pick up litter from their designated road, and there are roads in need of additional volunteers to help preserve their scenic beauty.

Still, many of the elements that make roads scenic lie beyond the road or right-of-way. Stonewalls, significant canopy trees, rustic barns and scenic meadows are maintained by caring property owners. It is important that development along scenic roads limit the disturbance to stone walls, street trees, and other scenic features.

Utility maintenance is another potential threat to scenic character. Finding an appropriate balance between community character and electrical and telephone reliability will be a continuing challenge. The Town's Tree Warden is a part-time position and at times it is difficult to work cooperatively with the utility companies to limit pruning along scenic roads to the extent absolutely necessary to maintain reliability.

Maintaining the physical nature of the Town is an important aspect of ensuring that its scenic character is preserved. Its current diversity of village and rural areas with many scenic roads is an important part of its overall appeal both for tourists and for residents' quality of life. Preserving undeveloped land where possible is a long-term goal. Promoting agriculture and other managed open space activities is an effective approach to preserving scenic character. The Town must ensure that when development occurs, it is sensitive to the scenic nature of the area.

# Scenic Resources Map



## Legend

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



1  
 Miles

Source: Stonington GIS and National Park Service.

## 7.2 Encourage Protection of Historic Resources

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### Preservation Progress

In the past decade or so, the Town has made progress in preserving community character.

The Town formed an Architectural Design Review Board. The ADRB reviews new business developments as well as significant redevelopment projects and offers advisory comments to the Planning and Zoning Commission. This approach seems to be successful in guiding development in a manner that is consistent with, and sensitive to, the historic nature of nearby areas.

The Town also adopted Industrial Heritage Districts (IHRD) regulations to encourage preservation and adaptive re-use of historic mill structures. Master plans have since been approved for the redevelopment of several historic mill structures. Although economic conditions have delayed initiation of some projects, this approach is helping to reduce regulatory barriers and promote historic preservation, economic development and pollution mitigation.

As shown on the map on the facing page, Stonington has a number of historic resources in the community. For example, Stonington has three National Register Historic Districts covering the most historic parts of Mystic, Pawcatuck and the Borough. It is important to note that these districts are largely honorary and do not provide any protection.

To help protect historic resources and community character, the 2004 POCD recommended a number of strategies for consideration. However, *none* of the following strategies were implemented:

- Providing educational programs and technical assistance for historic preservation
- Establishing a local register of properties that may not meet national standards but are important to the community
- Expanding the historic resources inventory to include historic properties town-wide
- Adopting a demolition delay ordinance to provide a waiting period (such as 90 days) before a historic structure is demolished
- Considering establishment of additional local historic districts in eligible areas overseen by a Historic District Commission
- Considering establishment of “village districts” (as authorized by CGS Section 8-2j) overseen by the Planning and Zoning Commission

Although the Town is not active in offering historical educational programs, several local organizations do offer programs and services to residents on a regular basis. The Stonington and Mystic River Historical Societies, which are private non-profit organizations, offer lectures, exhibits, walking tours, and local authors’ publications among other activities. In partnership with members of the Stonington Historical Society, a faculty member of Stonington High School teaches a class on the Town’s history; and for over 30 years fourth grade students have been taught local history and given historical tours by Society members. These societies manage historical sites and archives, and make available several publications on the area’s history. The Stonington Historical Society manages the Old Lighthouse Museum, the Captain Palmer House and the R. W. Woolworth Library of Historical Archives. The Mystic River Historical Society manages the William A. Dowes Archives Building and Portersville Academy both located in the Groton side of Mystic.

The Indian and Colonial Research Center, located in an 1850’s era former bank building in Old Mystic, also houses a collection of local historical and genealogical records, artifacts and photographs relating to Native Americans, colonials and the local area. The materials are available to the public for research.

Mystic Seaport embodies the relationship between historic preservation and tourism in Stonington. For eighty-five years, the Seaport has engaged in the preservation of seafaring history to the point that it has grown into a national center for research and education. The Seaport has also preserved several historic buildings under its ownership.

Another part of the Town’s scenic and historical resources is its many cemeteries, some of which date back to before the Town was incorporated. Several of these cemeteries are maintained by the Town’s Public Works Department while others are maintained by private / volunteer groups. Stonington’s cemeteries are a good place to visit by those



seeking a unique window into the Town's historic past. A guide, entitled Stonington Graveyards, is available through the Stonington Historical Society.

Helping owners of historic properties be aware of various preservation programs and incentives is an effective way to encourage and support their preservation efforts. Promoting creative re-use of the Town's mill buildings and other historic commercial buildings will help to ensure that Stonington's wealth of historic resources will continue to be available for use and enjoyment by future generations.

### 7.3 Protect Archaeological Resources

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Stonington has had a long and storied history with over 300 years of European settlement and Native American settlement for many hundreds of prior years. Many artifacts and other evidence from the regions earliest residents potentially remain in both undeveloped and developed areas of town. The true scope of these resources may never be known. Once archaeological treasures are lost, they are lost forever.

New zoning regulations, adopted in 2009, detail the information required for archaeological studies to be submitted by developers. Since the Town is located in an area that is rich in archaeological resources, development activities in both rural and village areas should be sensitive to archaeological considerations.

**Mystic 1912 Photo**



**Historic Mill**



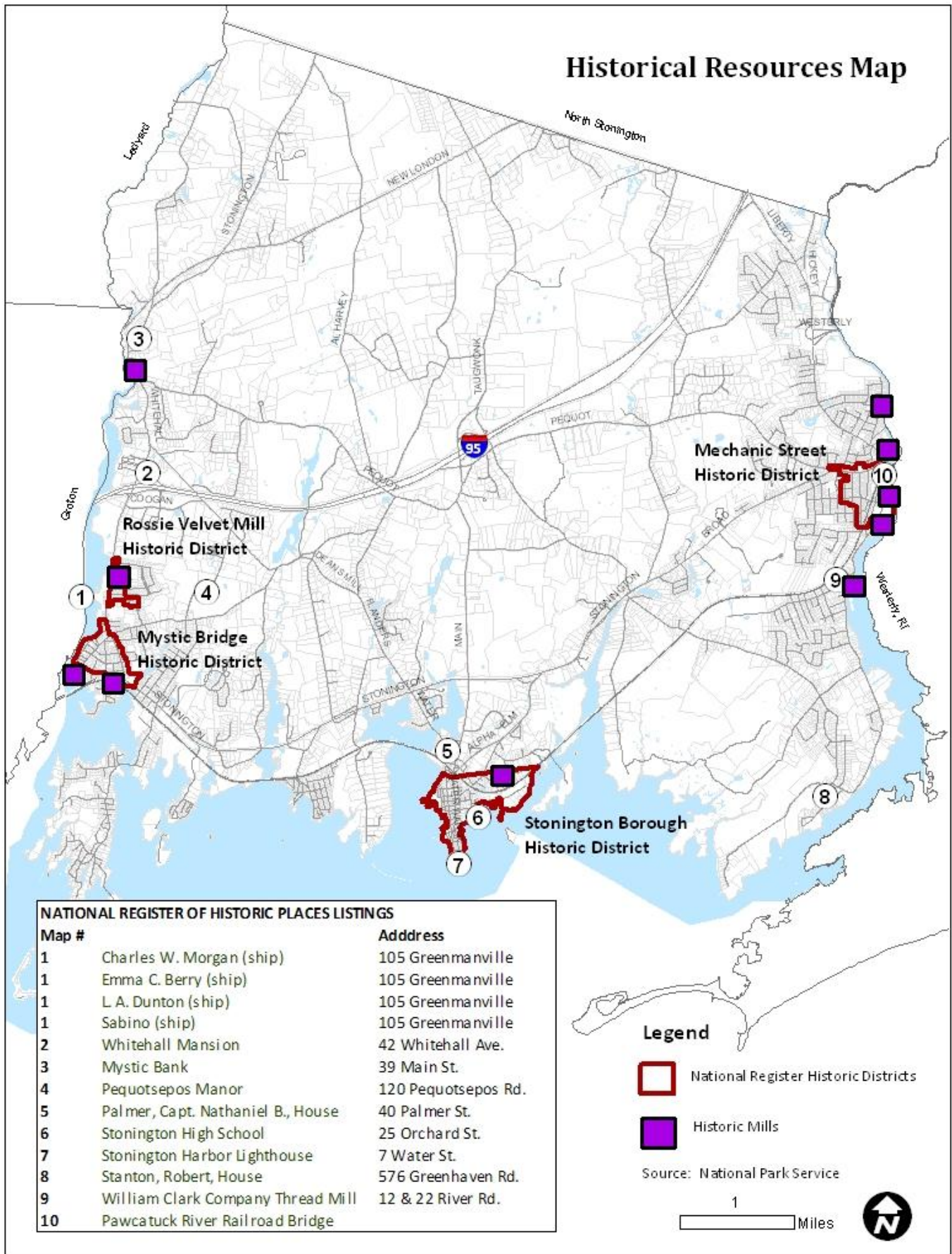
**Historical Map**



**Davis Farm**



# Historical Resources Map



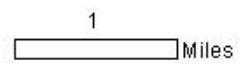
**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES LISTINGS**

Map #	Description	Address
1	Charles W. Morgan (ship)	105 Greenmanville
1	Emma C. Berry (ship)	105 Greenmanville
1	L. A. Dunton (ship)	105 Greenmanville
1	Sabino (ship)	105 Greenmanville
2	Whitehall Mansion	42 Whitehall Ave.
3	Mystic Bank	39 Main St.
4	Pequotsepos Manor	120 Pequotsepos Rd.
5	Palmer, Capt. Nathaniel B., House	40 Palmer St.
6	Stonington High School	25 Orchard St.
7	Stonington Harbor Lighthouse	7 Water St.
8	Stanton, Robert, House	576 Greenhaven Rd.
9	William Clark Company Thread Mill	12 & 22 River Rd.
10	Pawcatuck River Rail road Bridge	

**Legend**

- National Register Historic Districts
- Historic Mills

Source: National Park Service



## Recommendations

### Leader / Partners

See the inside back cover for a legend to the leaders and partners identified in this table.

<b>7.1 Maintain the Scenic Character of the Town</b>		
<b>Policies</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
7.1.1 Encourage agricultural uses as a way to preserve the scenic nature of rural areas.	BOS	PZC, CC
7.1.2 When scenic roadsides are developed, preserve scenic elements through measures such as open space set-asides.	PZC	CC
7.1.3 Work pro-actively with utility companies to ensure roadside tree pruning is done in a manner that considers scenic streetscapes.	DPW	BOS
7.1.4 Ensure that the Architectural Design Review Board is actively used to influence development and redevelopment projects.	ADRB	PZC
7.1.5 Preserve public views to the water whenever feasible when siting waterfront structures and signage.	PZC	ADRB, DOP
<b>Initial Tasks</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
7.1.6 Develop a town-wide inventory of scenic resources.	CC	DOP
7.1.7 Establish policies and regulations as needed to protect scenic resources.	PZC	CC, BOS, DPW,
7.1.8 Review the Scenic Road Ordinance for potential updates and revise as needed.	CC	DPW, PZC, DOP, BOS
7.1.9 Designate additional Scenic Roads as shown on the Scenic Resources Map in this chapter.	PZC	CC, DPW, DOP, BOS
7.1.10 Update and maintain the “Adopt a Road” program records and actively seek new volunteer group participants.	DPW	BOS

<b>7.2 Encourage Protection of Historic Resources</b>		
<b>Policies</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
7.2.1 Encourage sensitive stewardship by property owners as an effective means of preserving historic resources.	HS	DOP

7.2.2	Continue to provide educational programs and technical assistance about historic preservation to historic property owners.	HS	DOP, ADRB
7.2.3	Provide economic incentives such as tax abatements, grants or loans for restoration of historic resources.	BOS	BOF, EDC
7.2.4	Continue to identify and recognize important historical resources through national, state and local recognition programs.	HS	DOP
7.2.5	Promote adaptive re-use of the Town's mill buildings and other underutilized historic commercial buildings through regulatory incentives.	PZC	EDC
<b>Initial Tasks</b>		<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
7.2.6	Conduct a town-wide Historic Resources Inventory.	DOP	BOS, HS, PZC
7.2.7	Adopt a demolition delay ordinance that requires as much as a 90 day waiting period before historic buildings can be demolished.	BOS	DPW
7.2.8	Publicize the benefits of preservation programs to owners of historic properties.	HS	EDC
7.2.9	Review regulations dealing with the impact of development on historic resources.	PZC	DOP, HS

<b>7.3 Protect Archaeological Resources</b>			
<b>Policies</b>		<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
7.3.1	Enhance protection for undeveloped land that is valuable in terms of archaeological resources.	PZC	CC, HS
<b>Initial Tasks</b>		<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
7.3.2	Review regulations for identifying and protecting archaeological resources and update as needed.	PZC	DOP



## Overview

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One of the unique things about Stonington is that it already has not one - but four villages in the community. Moreover, the villages of Mystic, Pawcatuck, Borough of Stonington and Old Mystic are focal points in the daily life of the community and defining elements of the Town.

### 8.1 Strengthen and Enhance the Village Centers

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Protecting and enhancing the villages in Stonington is critical to maintaining community character and quality of life in Stonington. These villages are, and have been, highly desirable places. In fact, it is estimated that more than half of Stonington's residents live within Pawcatuck, Mystic and the Borough of Stonington.

Village centers attract residents and visitors alike by offering retail and service businesses, public events and tourist attractions, thus creating a strong sense of place. While the charm of Stonington's villages makes them ideal locations for tourist-oriented boutiques and galleries, retail and service uses should also address basic village needs to reduce the need for driving to suburban shopping destinations by:

- Attracting a mix of retail and service uses that not only cater to the Town's tourist economy, but also address everyday village needs
- Encouraging increased foot and bicycle traffic in villages and maintaining a safe pedestrian and cycling environment
- Encouraging village-scale residential development
- Protecting historic structures

*"To know after absence the familiar street and road and village and house is to know again the satisfaction of home."*

*Hal Borland*

Mystic



## 8.2 Encourage and Support Vibrant Villages

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The villages are expected to experience continued strong demand in the future. Research has found that both older and younger generations favor living in walkable places with amenities and shops within walking distance, proximity to jobs, and prefer bicycling and walking to driving. Stonington has these features in some areas already and should enhance them.

Although the potential for major business development is limited within the village areas, these areas are major focal points in the community and nurturing and strengthening the vibrancy and vitality of our villages will enhance our overall quality of life, support the changing needs of current residents and help attract residents.

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

- Allow appropriate community and institutional uses such as churches, social clubs and museums that add to the vitality of the villages by Special Use Permit
- Encourage mixed-use development in appropriate locations within the villages and within the mill sites
- Encourage redevelopment consistent with village character while addressing future population needs
- Encourage affordable housing options in villages
- Encourage quality rental units
- Address parking issues

As this chapter is an overview of village needs, the Town should develop more detailed neighborhood plans for each of its villages. Plans should also be developed for municipal buildings that may be vacated in the coming years including West Broad Street School in Pawcatuck, the School Administration Building in Old Mystic and the 4<sup>th</sup> District Voting Hall in Mystic.

Mystic



Pawcatuck





## 8.3 Address Village Business Needs

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While the villages represent major focal points in the community and support a range of business uses, the potential for major economic development in these areas is limited. Stonington should address the needs of businesses in order to nurture and strengthen vitality in our villages. Business retention and supporting existing businesses' needs are a priority. Foot traffic is vital to businesses in a village and can be enhanced with greater accessibility and support for bicycles, pedestrians, and mass transit visitors. To implement this goal, Stonington should:

- Support and strengthen existing businesses (business retention)
- Encourage investment in commercial properties
- Encourage additional investment in Pawcatuck by promoting tourism, pursuing grants for a façade improvement program and promoting mill redevelopment
- Seek to balance newer flood plain requirements with preservation of character
- Address parking issues
- Support greater pedestrian, bicycle and transit accessibility

**Mystic**



**Old Mystic**



**Pawcatuck**



## Recommendations

### Leader / Partners

See the inside back cover for a legend to the leaders and partners identified in this table.

8.1 Strengthen and Enhance the Village Centers		
Policies	Leader	Partners
8.1.1 Seek to attract a mix of residential, retail and service uses to address everyday village needs and tourists.	EDC	PZC, DOP, COC
8.1.2 Use the Architectural Design Review Board to guide development in the villages.	PZC	ADRB, DOP
8.1.3 Allow appropriate community and institutional uses within village areas by Special Use Permit.	PZC	
8.1.4 Pursue grants for façade improvement and prioritize mill redevelopment in Pawcatuck.	DOP	PZC, EDC
Initial Tasks	Leader	Partners
8.1.5 Develop more detailed neighborhood plans for each village of Mystic, Old Mystic and Pawcatuck.	DOP	PZC
8.1.6 Determine a future plan for the West Broad Street School in Pawcatuck.	BOS	EDC, DOP, BOE
8.1.7 Determine a future plan for the School Administration Building in Old Mystic.	BOS	EDC, DOP, BOE
8.1.8 Determine a future plan for the 4th District Voting Hall property.	BOS	EDC, DOP, BOE

Cottrell Brewing, Pawcatuck



Mystic



<b>8.2 Encourage and Support Vibrant Villages</b>		
<b>Policies</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
8.2.1 Strive to attract a mix of businesses that support both the tourist and local needs within the villages.	EDC	COC
8.2.2 Maintain and improve pedestrian and bicycle access, safety and comfort within village areas and points of interest.	DPW	ADRB, PZC, BTF
8.2.3 As riverside properties are redeveloped in the villages, encourage increased public access.	PZC	
8.2.4 Encourage an appropriate balance in the implementation of new floodplain requirements in existing village settings.	PZC	ZBA
<b>Initial Tasks</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
8.2.5 Review the NDD and IHRD zoning requirements for potential updates.	PZC	DOP

<b>8.3 Address Village Business Needs</b>		
<b>Policies</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
8.3.1 Support and strengthen existing businesses (business retention).	EDC	COC
8.3.2 Encourage investment in commercial properties.	EDC	COC
<b>Initial Tasks</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
8.3.3 Address parking issues.	PZC	EDC, COC, DOP, DPW

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# RESIDENTIAL HOUSING

# 9

## Overview

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Housing and housing-related issues affect all Stonington residents. The form, layout, condition, and cost of housing available within the community are important to the overall character of the community and the quality of life for existing and potential residents.

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

The Town's existing residential development pattern of higher density development near village areas should be strengthened and rural areas should protect their natural resources and scenic character. As the Town's demographics change, more housing options will be needed in the coming years.

*"A house is a home when it shelters the body and comforts the soul."*

*Phillip Moffitt*

**Townhouse Development**



**Single Family Home**





## 9.1 Diversify our Housing Portfolio

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### Affordable Housing Report

In 2008, the Stonington Housing Affordability Report was completed and contains a detailed analysis of Stonington's housing data, projections, and challenges.

The Affordable Housing Committee investigated a number of strategies in the report.

### 10% State Threshold

In 1989, the Connecticut legislature adopted the "affordable housing appeals procedure" (codified as CGS 8-30g). Any community with less than 10 percent of its housing stock meeting the state criteria is subject to the appeals procedure.

Under the law, an affordable housing development meeting statutory criteria may be proposed almost anywhere in the community and the burden falls on the municipality to prove why, regardless of any existing zoning requirements, the proposed development would not be feasible.

As our age composition changes in the future, it is anticipated that Stonington will need greater diversity in its housing stock. With more smaller-size households and more people living longer (perhaps even outliving their retirement savings), it is anticipated there will be a demand for smaller housing units with maintenance or other services available.

Consider More Multi-Family Housing / High Quality Rentals - According to the 2010 Census, about 74% of Stonington's housing stock was comprised of single-family housing at that time. While there is expected to be demand for such units in the future, there will also be demand for housing in multi-unit situations (such as two-family units or multi-unit buildings). There is a demand for accessory apartments where existing owner-occupied homes are adapted to accommodate a family member or a rental unit. Regulations should be modified to better accommodate such units.

Multi-family residential housing should be located in close proximity to village areas and in proximity to public utilities.

Consider Housing Needs for Older Residents - There are some housing options for elderly residents in Stonington to live independently or with assisted care. StoneRidge, a continuing care retirement community at the corner of Jerry Browne and Pequotsepos Roads, contains 270 residential units. The Masonicare at Mystic development of 245 units is currently under construction off Clara Drive. With long waiting lists reported for the Stonington Arms and Edith K. Richmond developments, there is clearly a need for additional affordable elderly housing.

In the future, there may be greater demand for smaller homes, condominiums with maintenance provided, cluster housing in a life-care facility, intergenerational housing opportunities, mobile homes and similar options.

Consider Ways to Provide for Housing that is More Affordable - According to the Connecticut Department of Housing, 4.0% of the housing units in Stonington in 2013 (379 units) met the state criteria for being classified as "affordable housing" units. Units are eligible for this classification if they are financed by State or Federal programs which ensure long-term affordability or if they are deed-restricted to sell or rent at affordable prices to lower income households. A housing development must have a minimum of 30% of its dwelling units dedicated as affordable units for the development to be considered "affordable." A housing development meeting this threshold can be built in almost any area of town regardless of zoning requirements.

Not only does Stonington not meet the State goal of 10% of the housing units being affordable, the level of affordability has dropped from 4.4% of the units which were affordable in the year 2000. The more conventional housing units are approved by the Town, the farther the percentage falls behind the goal of 10%.

Stonington currently has three affordable housing developments (Brookside Village, Edith K. Richmond Homes and Stonington Arms). The Town has also approved three more developments that include the minimum percentage of deed restricted units to be considered "affordable." These include the Spruce Meadows and Spruce Ridge developments on South Broad Street and the redevelopment of the Clark Thread Mill on River Road. Despite these additions, the Town is still required to provide additional

units or be subject to the “Affordable Housing Appeals Procedure” spelled out in CT General Statutes Section 8-30g.

State law allows Towns to create “Incentive Housing Zones,” which are zoning overlay districts in which developers can increase housing density in exchange for creating affordable housing. The program provides municipalities with control over the location, amount, type and design of the homes created while also offering a tool that allows residents of a town to have input into housing decisions.

## **9.2 Strengthen Residential Development Patterns**

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The overall pattern of residential development in Stonington largely consists of:

- Four distinct villages (core and transitional areas) with established stocks of single family, multi-family and mixed used housing opportunities
- Low density areas between the villages (outside of the village core and fringe) which are predominately single family residential

These two types of areas face distinctly different challenges from a planning perspective.

Village Development - New development and/or redevelopment within or in close proximity to the villages is highly desirable due to the services available to support such development. The village areas are very walkable and offer a range of goods and services. Walkable areas appeal to all generations. The obstacle is the villages are mostly built up and have the least amount of vacant land available for new projects.

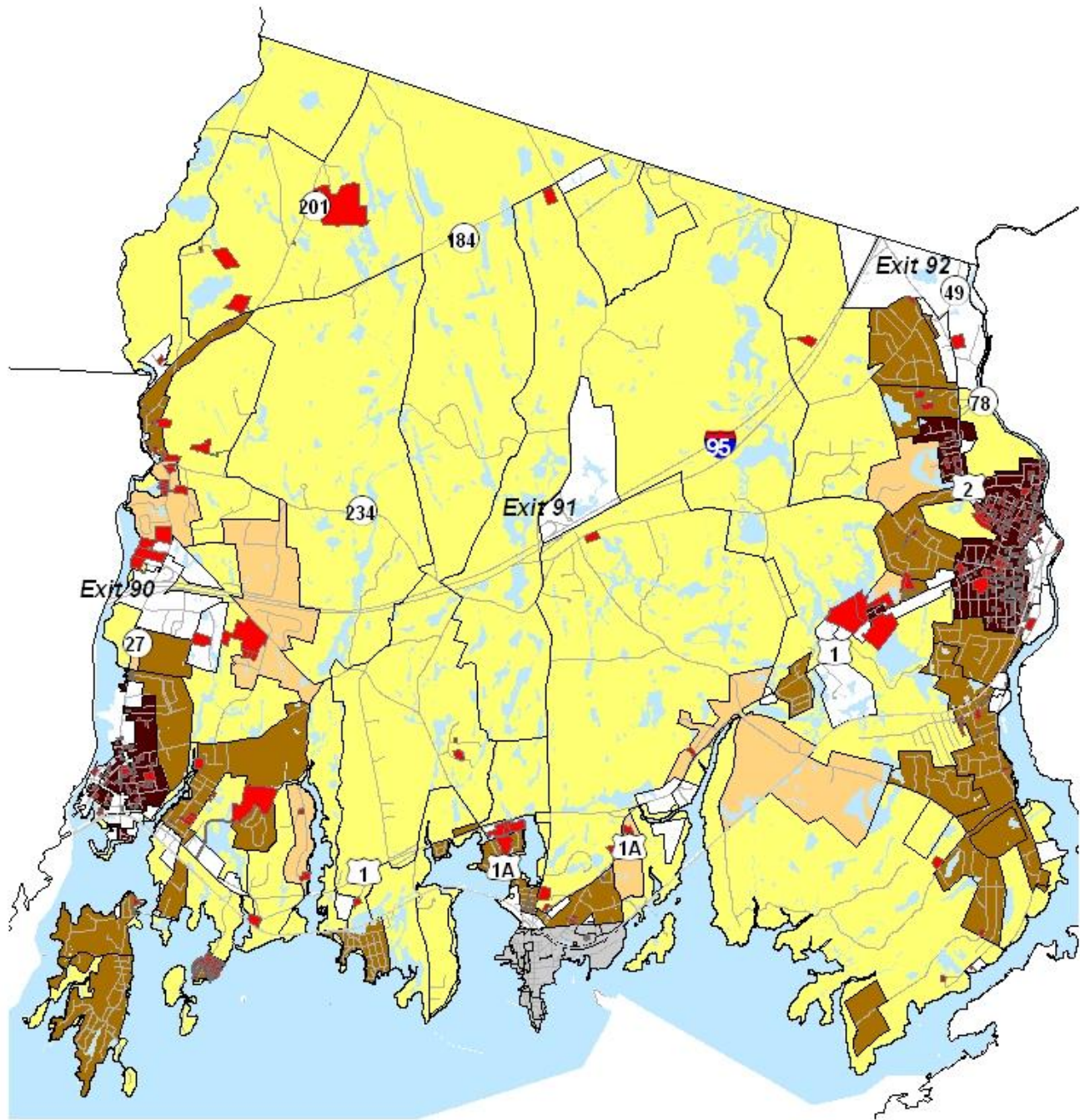
Within the village areas, the Plan recommends new development, infill development, and redevelopment which are in keeping with the overall character of the neighborhood. The re-use of mills is strongly encouraged. Mixed use buildings (commercial on lower floors and residential on upper floors) is encouraged, as appropriate, on major streets in village areas. Increased residential densities should not be allowed in Coastal Flood Hazard areas (V-Zones).

Rural Development - On the other hand, the challenge facing the lower density areas located outside the villages is reducing the impact of development and preserving more open space in future residential subdivisions.

It is the goal of the Plan to require more flexible development in rural areas of town to conserve natural resources, help preserve rural character, and provide greater opportunities for greenways and walkability.

# Residential Densities Map

Based on Densities Permitted in Residential Zoning Districts



### Legend

- Units per Acre Permitted
- < 1
  - 1-2
  - 2-3
  - 4-5
- Multi-family properties
- Stonington Borough
- Commercial / Industrial Zones

1 Miles

Source: Stonington GIS



## 9.3 Address Other Housing Issues

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The current zoning regulations do not allow mixed use development such as residential units above new or existing commercial spaces in all areas. The undeveloped mills may be candidates for mixed use development.

The Town does not currently promote or encourage energy efficient housing designs, construction techniques and “green buildings.” Incentivizing such designs could lead to decreased energy consumption in Town.

The Town should explore restoration of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) loan program to assist in the rehabilitation of older homes and the creation of affordable housing units. Enhancement of tax relief programs for low income older residents should also be analyzed.

Residential zone metrics have not been reviewed recently, and the Town may benefit from a comprehensive review of its bulk requirements. Over the past 50 years Zoning Regulations have often been modified on a “piecemeal” basis and a thorough rewrite, or, at a minimum, reformatting of the regulations would serve to benefit the Town.

**Allen Spool Mill Mixed Use Redevelopment**



**Rural Residence**



## Recommendations

### Leader / Partners

See the inside back cover for a legend to the leaders and partners identified in this table.

<b>9.1 Diversify our Housing Portfolio</b>		
<b>Policies</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
9.1.1 Encourage diversification of housing stock.	AHC	PZC
9.1.2 Encourage increasing housing options for an aging population of all income levels.	PZC	AHC
9.1.3 Promote the inclusion of affordable housing in the adaptive reuse of older buildings.	PZC	AHC, DOP
<b>Initial Tasks</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
9.1.4 Update and maintain the 2008 Affordable Housing Report.	AHC	PZC, DOP
9.1.5 Modify zoning regulations to make more provision for mixed use development, including residential units.	PZC	DOP
9.1.6 Explore changes to the Attached Housing regulation to allow for additional development options.	PZC	DOP
9.1.7 Study adoption of an Incentive Housing Zone (CGS 8-13m) to provide additional housing opportunities.	DOP	AHC, PZC
9.1.8 Restore CDBG loan program to rehabilitate older homes and create or retain affordable units.	BOS	
9.1.9 Investigate potential use of affordable housing (or a fee-in-lieu payment) as part of every residential development.	PZC	AHC, DOP



**9.2 Strengthen Residential Development Patterns**

<b>Policies</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
9.2.1 Within the village areas, promote new development, infill development and redevelopment which are in keeping with the overall character of the neighborhood.	PZC	EDC, ADRB
9.2.2 Encourage the re-use of mill buildings for housing where appropriate.	PZC	EDC
9.2.3 Encourage mixed use buildings, as appropriate, on major streets in village areas.	PZC	
9.2.4 Promote more flexible development in rural areas of town to conserve natural resources, help preserve rural character and provide greater opportunities for greenways and walkability.	PZC	CC, DOP

**9.3 Address Other Housing Issues**

<b>Policies</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
9.3.1 Promote energy efficient housing designs, construction techniques and “green buildings.”	PZC,	ADRB, DPW, DOP
9.3.2 Encourage re-use of existing buildings and mills for mixed use developments in village areas.	PZC	EDC
<b>Initial Tasks</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
9.3.3 Explore modification of regulations to expand use of accessory apartments.	DOP	PZC
9.3.4 Conduct a comprehensive rewrite of zoning regulations to revisit, update and modernize residential zoning and streamline the planning process. (Also see 10.2.6)	DOP	PZC, AHC
9.3.5 Explore potential enhancement of tax relief programs for low income older residents.	BOS	BOF, AHC

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# COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

# 10

## Overview

Economic development is important to Stonington for several reasons:

- Providing for a healthy tax base to support local services, facilities and education
- Providing, retaining, and creating jobs and income for residents of Stonington and the region
- Providing the goods and services the community needs

Commercial and industrial development can attract new residents and businesses. Future growth to generate tax revenue can be done by making efficient use of existing commercial land and buildings. Development has the potential to alter the fiscal balance in Stonington due to the varying ability of certain uses to generate tax revenue or require municipal services.

*“Development is about transforming the lives of people, not just transforming economies.”*

*Joseph E. Stiglitz*

## 10.1 Increase Commercial Tax Base

The tax base in Stonington supports municipal services, facilities and education. From 2004, growth of the Grand List has slowed; and this has placed stress on the local budget and resulted in challenging decisions about what can be funded. Since the bulk of the Grand List is made up of residential property, residents are sensitive to tax increases. Growing and diversifying the tax base with more commercial property can help address this situation.

Stonington must grow the Town’s Grand List and diversify its tax base to increase the commercial tax revenue. To grow the Grand List on an annual basis, Stonington must encourage and prioritize development.

**Hotel**



**Underutilized Commercial Building**



## 10.2 Guide Business Development

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### Economic Clusters

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The phrase “industry clusters” refers to groups of businesses in similar economic activities. Through their strength, clusters can generate an influx of new dollars into the region.

In 2011, the Southeastern Connecticut Enterprise Region (SECTer) and the Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (SCCOG) completed the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs) for Southeastern Connecticut.

The 2004 CEDs identified six regional clusters that continue to be the primary economic drivers in the region in 2014:

- Bioscience
- Creative
- Defense
- Maritime
- Tourism
- Agriculture

Any economic development should be compatible with, and enhance, the overall character of the community. To accomplish this, economic development activity should be focused in the existing villages, along selected areas of Route 1 and at Stonington’s three interstate highway exits. High value, development with minimal negative impact is encouraged.

Feedback from a questionnaire of over 700 Stonington residents, property and business owners indicate that the community is very supportive of encouraging economic development in the community to create jobs and grow the grand list. The POCD questionnaire showed the community to be very supportive of redevelopment of existing buildings and filling existing commercial vacancies with small businesses to enhance the villages and highway interchanges areas.

Since 2005, new zoning designations have been introduced which have:

- Encouraged appropriate development in the villages and fringe areas
- Used master plans to specify what is proposed
- Added flexibility to the development process
- Involved the neighborhood in preliminary discussions about potential development to create mutually beneficial outcomes

Projects approved and built using this approach include:

- Prospect Park in Pawcatuck (Neighborhood Development District)
- Allen Spool Mill in Mystic (Industrial Heritage Reuse District)

Projects approved using this approach (and development is pending or under construction) include:

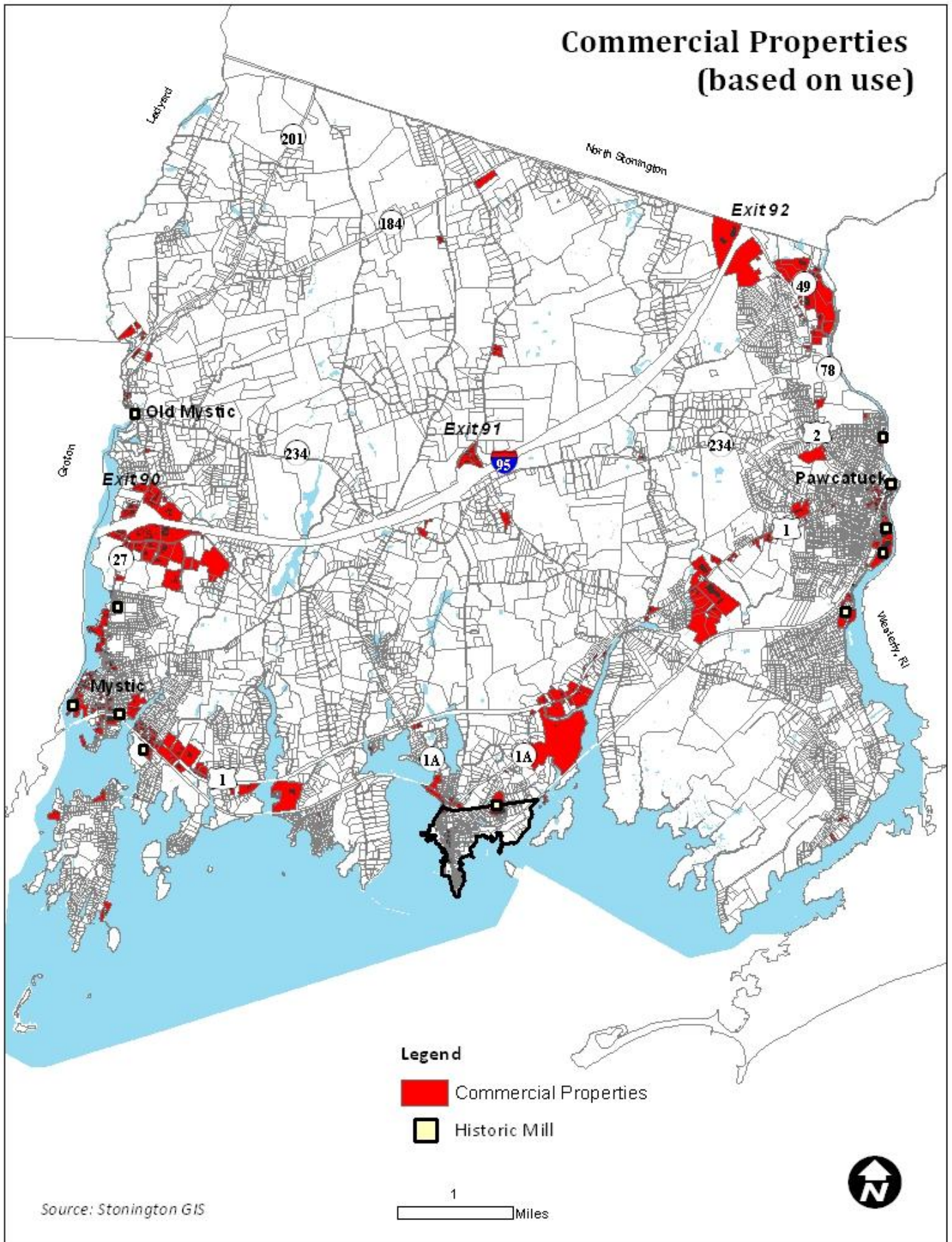
- Threadmill in Pawcatuck (Industrial Heritage Reuse District)
- Mystic Color Lab property in Mystic (Industrial Heritage Reuse District)
- Pawcatuck Landing in Pawcatuck (Industrial Heritage Reuse District)

The increased use of these floating zones is one strategy to stimulate economic development while maintaining control over community character through use of master plans.

The zoning regulations of commercial zones, including allowed uses, have not been updated comprehensively to modernize language, objectives, uses and purpose of commercial zones, specifically the Manufacturing (M-1), Light Industrial (LI-130) and Tourist Commercial (TC-80) zones.

The Town should encourage a wider range of uses in all of the manufacturing zones to make efficient use of the properties, particularly with its older mill sites and use flexible zoning tools for creative and smart growth redevelopment in village areas. The Town should encourage mixed used developments to attract new residents and businesses. For the historic mills located in the M-1 zoning district, the Town should explore rezoning these sites to a new designation (such as “Heritage Mill”) to remove some of the impediments to the productive use of these buildings.

# Commercial Properties (based on use)





## ***Opportunity Areas***

There are seven main areas for economic development in Stonington. These include the four villages: Mystic, Pawcatuck, Old Mystic and Stonington Borough and the three highway interchanges at Exits 90, 91 and 92. Additionally, the Route 1 Corridor is the major artery through Town with areas for development and re-development.

Village of Old Mystic - The Village of Old Mystic is the smallest of the villages with the least amount of commercial development. Old Mystic is not suitable for new commercial development because there is no buildable commercial land available. However, opportunities exist for higher value residential development. The Stonington Schools Administration Building is located in a residential zone, and the Board of Education has recommended selling the building to relocate on Route 1 closer to other school facilities.

**Old Mystic**



Stonington Borough - Stonington Borough has its own government, its own Plan of Conservation and Development and its own zoning authority.

As a result, recommendations for this area are not considered here.

**Stonington Borough**



Village of Mystic - The Village of Mystic spans both the town of Stonington and the Town of Groton. It is commonly referred to as “historic downtown Mystic” and is a mix of commercial and residential uses along the Mystic River. There are significant opportunities for mixed use development in Mystic.

Within the last 5 years an IHRD Master Plan was successfully executed on the Allen Spool Mill property which abuts Seaport Marine. Today, the Allen Spool property has commercial offices on the first floor and residential apartments on the two floors above. The Village of Mystic currently has low commercial and residential vacancy rates. Mystic River Park has become a popular site for community events.

The Mystic Streetscape project was completed in Stonington in 2013. Major challenges for downtown Mystic are lack of public parking and the balance of newer flood plain requirements with preservation of character.

The Mystic Mobility Study was completed to explore options for many 2004 POCD concerns, including implementation of a trolley and water taxi service, creation of “mobility hubs” (small transit centers) and signage and streetscape improvements along many area roads. The study provided various options for improvements, but funding for the recommended changes is a major obstacle to implementation.

**Mystic**



Village of Pawcatuck - The Village of Pawcatuck borders Westerly, Rhode Island, and shares the Pawcatuck River with downtown Westerly. The POCD questionnaire showed that there is overall desire, need and opportunity for economic development in Pawcatuck and is the priority area for economic development in Stonington. There are many opportunities for reuse and re-development including the Mechanic Street mills and properties near the intersection of Rt. 2 and Rt. 1. Pawcatuck has very little vacant land in the village and will require private investment in the existing downtown area properties.

There are no major regulatory obstacles to development in the village of Pawcatuck with conducive zoning, parking and infrastructure. The village is a Downtown Business Zone (DB-5) as is downtown Mystic, so any changes to help stimulate Pawcatuck development would apply to downtown Mystic as well.

The 2004 POCD recommended the creation of the Industrial Heritage Re-Use District (IHRD) zoning designation which was adopted soon after. In 2005, the Pawcatuck Revitalization Strategies study was completed. Outcomes of this study include the rezoning of vacant M-1 land between Mechanic and Prospect Street to the Neighborhood Development District (NDD) for construction of Prospect Place housing development and the development of Pawcatuck Parking Study (completed in 2007). This study resulted in the Planning and Zoning Commission's decision to create a Pawcatuck Overlay District which eliminated the requirement for on-site parking for existing commercial buildings. The Pawcatuck Streetscape was completed and Donahue Park was also renovated. The main challenges in downtown Pawcatuck today include the lack of interest in investment in commercial properties for lease and deferred maintenance on key commercial buildings in the village.

**Pawcatuck**





Exit 90 (Route 27) - The Exit 90 highway interchange is considered the gateway to Mystic. This exit provides accessibility to Mystic's major attractions, historic downtown Mystic, Olde Mistick Village, Route 27/connector to Route 1 and major arteries for access to residential areas. The new Hampton Inn hotel is a recent addition to this interchange area which has developed as a tourist area. As much of this area was developed upon the construction of Route 95, the next ten years may see a demand for redevelopment of existing commercial sites.

The StoneRidge continuing care community is located in this area as well as Masonicare at Mystic, an assisted living complex which is currently under construction off Clara Drive. These were strong additions to the tax base. On Maritime Drive there are a few properties zoned M-1 which could possibly be developed.

**Exit 90 (Route 27)**



Exit 91 (Taugwonk Road) – The only Light Industrial zoned land in Stonington is at this highway interchange. Thirty acres of LI-130 land was purchased by a land trust reducing the amount of LI-130 land available for development by 15%.

While there are areas for new development in the LI-130, there is no public water or sewer infrastructure in place; and there has been no initiative by the Town to extend utilities to this area. There is high voltage electrical power service suitable for light industry along Taugwonk Road. There has been concern expressed over the impact of LI-130 regulations on existing agricultural and residential uses in this area.

The 2004 POCD made a recommendation to re-orient the LI-130 zone from a North South configuration to an East West configuration in order to help preserve the rural character and the environmental resources in this area. Since then, there have been two attempts to change the LI-130 zone to GBR-130. Both applications were denied by the Planning & Zoning Commission.

To ensure appropriate development in the future which balances economic growth with community character, the LI-130 regulations should be reviewed to update allowable uses and bulk requirements and prohibit those uses that are inappropriate due to the rural character.

**Exit 91 (Taugwonk Road)**





Exit 92 (Route 2) - The 2004 recommendation to create a new Highway Interchange Zone (HI-60) specifically at Exit 92 to encourage more economic development has been completed. After the change in zoning, new commercial buildings were completed in the Pawcatuck Farms commercial complex, including a new Stop & Shop supermarket, bank and fast-food restaurant. Also constructed over the past 10 years were a new La Quinta hotel and Tractor Supply retail store. Additional buildings are planned as part of the approved but un-built Liberty Crossing commercial complex. This development was approved in 2006 and included two large national retailers.

Additional commercial development continues to be appropriate for the Exit 92 highway interchange area. There are a number of planned and permitted projects and pads that are shovel ready but lack funding due to the change in the economy. At the southern end of the Highway Interchange (HI-60) zone, the former Maple Breeze Park property was foreclosed and is available for development. Due to market conditions, the biggest challenge has been attracting new businesses to the area.

There are no major zoning impediments to development in this area of Pawcatuck, but new development must continue to meet environmental and regulatory constraints to protect groundwater resources in this area. The Town needs to work with property owners to find a good balance between the business uses and the sensitive groundwater and other natural resources in this area, especially in the Alice Court area.

**Exit 92 (Route 2)**



Route 1 Corridor - A Route 1 Corridor Study was completed and adopted in 2008. Emerging issues identified in the study included: façade improvement funding, removal of billboards, pedestrian-oriented mixed-use development, parking solutions, transit services, relocation of commuter parking areas, and enhancement of pedestrian connections. These issues continue today.



### **10.3 Retain, Support and Encourage Businesses Development**

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The Town should include planning for retention of existing businesses as part of its economic development efforts. Maintaining and supporting the businesses that are already here is as important as attracting new businesses. The Town should work with the Chambers of Commerce to identify and support needs of existing local businesses.

### **10.4 Maintain and Promote the Town’s Economic Drivers**

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The Town should develop a comprehensive economic development plan that focuses on enhancing economic drivers, including but not limited to, tourism, high value manufacturing, research and development, retirement/senior care, agriculture and marine services. These and other economic drivers are critical to the Town’s vitality and prosperity.

Two of Connecticut’s major tourist attractions are located in Stonington, and “Mystic Country” is the major economic driver in the State’s tourism industry. With tourism being such a large part of our community and our economy, the needs of visitors are an important consideration in planning. A tourism master plan should be created for the region that reaches towards and beckons the visitor of tomorrow. The area’s tourist attractions would benefit from being better integrated and more easily navigable via different forms of transportation such as bicycles, sidewalks, public transportation and water taxis (see also recommendations in Chapter 13). The Mystic Mobility Study,

completed in 2011, offers more detailed and specific recommendations for meeting this goal.

Retirement / senior care should also be considered as a strategic business cluster for the Town since it can increase the tax base without a concomitant increase in service demands. As mentioned in Chapter 4, the Town should promote agriculture as an important and growing part of the local economy.

## Recommendations

### Leader / Partners

See the inside back cover for a legend to the leaders and partners identified in this table.

<b>10.1 Increase Commercial Tax Base</b>		
<b>Policies</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
10.1.1 Encourage appropriate economic development.	EDC	COC, PZC
10.1.2 Strive to diversify and increase the tax base annually.	EDC	BOS, DOP
10.1.3 Actively market Stonington for business.	EDC	BOS
<b>Initial Tasks</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
10.1.4 Encourage bringing a new 100+ employer to Town in the next 10 years.	EDC	DOP, BOS

<b>10.2 Guide Business Development</b>		
<b>Policies</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
10.2.1 Encourage re-use of the mills and other underutilized commercial and industrial sites.	EDC	PZC
10.2.2 Encourage flexibility and creative adaptations regarding some flood hazard requirements in historic zones, specifically for historic structures.	PZC	DPW
10.2.3 Strive to preserve business-zoned land for economic development purposes.	PZC	EDC
10.2.4 Guide development to Exit 92 and Village of Pawcatuck.	EDC	PZC
<b>Initial Tasks</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
10.2.5 Conduct a comprehensive rewrite of zoning regulations to revisit, update and modernize commercial zoning and streamline the planning process. (Also see 9.3.4)	DOP	EDC, PZC
10.2.6 Study the economic impact of new FEMA regulations regarding re-building after major storms.	PZC	EDC, DOP
10.2.7 Amend the LI-130 zone regulations to allow agricultural uses and allow expansions to existing residential uses.	PZC	DOP
10.2.8 Review text of LI-130 zone to update for new uses, review bulk requirements and eliminate uses considered inappropriate.	PZC	DOP

10.2.9	Review text of the current zoning regulations to modernize language, objectives, uses and purpose of commercial zones, specifically the M-1 and TC-80 zones.	PZC	DOP, EDC
10.2.10	Create a Heritage Mill District (HM) zone for historic mill sites.	PZC	EDC, DOP
10.2.11	Provide an annual report to partners with analysis and summary to identify additional economic drivers for the Town such as high-value manufacturing and retirement/senior care.	EDC	BOS, BOF, PZC
10.2.12	Investigate the creation of a new zoning district for Maritime Drive that focuses less on manufacturing, better reflects the current businesses on Maritime Drive and preserves the character of the area	DOP	PZC
10.2.13	Investigate increased flexibility in parking regulations.	DOP	PZC

<b>10.3 Retain, Support and Encourage Businesses Development</b>			
<b>Policies</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>	
10.3.1	Support existing businesses through business retention programs.	EDC	COC, BOS
<b>Initial Tasks</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>	
10.3.2	Work with local businesses to assure their expansions take place in Town whenever possible.	EDC	BOS
10.3.3	Investigate developing local incentives for business attraction, retention and expansion.	EDC	BOS, BOF

<b>10.4 Maintain and Promote the Town's Economic Drivers</b>			
<b>Policies</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>	
10.4.1	Promote economic drivers including but not limited to tourism, high value manufacturing, research and development, retirement/senior care, agriculture and marine services.	EDC	BOS, COC
<b>Initial Tasks</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>	
10.4.2	Develop a comprehensive economic development plan for the Town, reflecting primary economic drivers and identifying the resources required to compete successfully in	EDC	BOS, COC



	these areas.		
10.4.3	Participate in the creation of a regional tourism master plan to identify current and potential visitor attractions/amenities/experiences.	EDC	DOP, COC
10.4.4	Develop ways to make tourist attractions/destinations more connected/integrated and more easily navigable via different forms of transportation, including bikes, sidewalks, public transportation, water taxi, etc.	DOP	EDC, BOS, PC, DPW, BTF, COC
10.4.5	Consider changes to zoning to offer additional flexibility for the future growth of Mystic Aquarium.	PZC	DOP
10.4.6	Investigate changes to address some of the unique requirements of small and large marinas.	EDC	DOP, PZC, HMC, WC

# COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

# 11

## Overview

For Stonington to preserve those things that the community values and to foster the growth and change that the community wants, it must also support the desired conservation and development activities with appropriate infrastructure and services. This chapter addresses the physical facilities and the community services provided by Town government and local non-profit organizations.

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

Stonington will need to evaluate the configuration of local facilities and services, considering town-wide needs, in order to efficiently and cost-effectively meet local needs.

*“This country will not be a good place for any of us to live in unless we make it a good place for all of us to live in.”*

*Theodore Roosevelt*

High School Field



Fire Station



## 11.1 Address Community Facility Needs

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### Questionnaire Results

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Based on results of the Resident Questionnaire, respondents are generally satisfied with the current level of public services with most indicating that the services are adequate to good.

There is a consistent and strong demand for more community recreational opportunities and arts and cultural establishments.

Respondents indicated the Town should invest in facilities and services in the following order:

1. Education
2. Infrastructure
3. Open Space

The majority of respondents indicated that they would be willing to vote for tax increases or Town bonding to do so.

School Facilities - School facilities are important to any community since they contribute to an educated community and help maintain the Town as a desirable place to live. They are also important since education funding consumes the lion's share of the Town budget. Local residents are supportive of education and a significant percentage of questionnaire respondents (28.5%) considered enhancing the school system to be their most important issue. Based on historical data, as well as CT State Data Center projections, the school-aged population will remain relatively constant, with a slight decline. Stonington school facilities include one high school, two middle schools, three elementary schools and one former elementary school currently used as a central administration building. The current K-12 School Building Committee has received funding for an architectural study of the cost-benefit accrued in consolidating one or more of the Town's schools.

Town Hall - Built in 1929 and recently renovated, Town Hall suffers from a shortage of meeting rooms, suitable office space, bathrooms and, especially, storage space. The 2004 POCD advocated for enlarging the Town Hall. However, expansion or modification of the Town Hall has not been supported by Town residents or by the Board of Finance or even in the recent POCD Resident Questionnaire. Electronic document management to address storage space needs in the Town Clerk's vault and throughout Town Hall was recommended in the 2004 POCD, to limited success. The Town lacks an adequate public meeting space at Town Hall.

Public Safety Facilities - The Stonington Police Station is adequate for the space needed in the next decade. However, future equipment needs will include generator replacement, re-roofing (25 year-old shingles) and antenna maintenance when the current antenna is turned over to the Town. The six volunteer fire departments and three volunteer ambulance corps are located in new or recently renovated facilities. Consolidation of the departments to ease duplication of equipment has been broached, however, no formal discussions are in place.

Public Works Facilities - Public works functions are fragmented between the Town, Borough and several fire districts that contract for public works functions. Currently, a lack of appropriate equipment storage facilities in the Old Highway Garage negatively impacts the useful life of expensive heavy-duty equipment. Needs for the department are presented through the Capital Improvement Program where they are prioritized but may not be funded due to budget constraints.

Solid Waste Management Facilities - The Town provides for the collection of municipal solid waste and recyclables for both its residential and commercial properties. The cost of this program is offset by revenue collected through volume-based user fees. The residential collection is a "pay-per-bag" program while the commercial collection costs are recovered by billing for container size and frequency. The Town also operates a municipal solid waste and recyclables Transfer Station on Greenhaven Road. It is a resident-only drop off site for municipal solid waste and recyclables. As the former town dump, this facility has been upgraded on a regular basis and is capable of handling future solid waste disposal needs.

Animal Control Facilities -The 2004 POCD advocated for relocating the dog pound built at the Transfer Station on Greenhaven Road. The pound has been renovated and upgraded and now accommodates stray cats.

Recreational Facilities - Recreational facilities in Town are limited, with private non-profit organizations doing an excellent job of filling many of the Town's recreation facility and activity needs. Recent improvement and expansion of the multi-purpose playing fields behind the high school has increased both the number and quality of recreation opportunities; use of the facilities by non-school groups requires a fee. The executive director of the Stonington Community Center, for a fee, has offered the use of the Center's playing fields for additional Town sport's needs.

Feedback from a questionnaire of over 700 residents, property and business owners indicates that the community is very supportive of additional recreation options such as walking trails, bike paths, ATV trails, to be overseen and managed by the Recreation Commission, including adoption of the logical initial bikeway from Masons Island Road, Mystic to Greenhaven Road, Pawcatuck along Route One. As recreational opportunities are expanded in Town, funds must be budgeted for field maintenance programs.

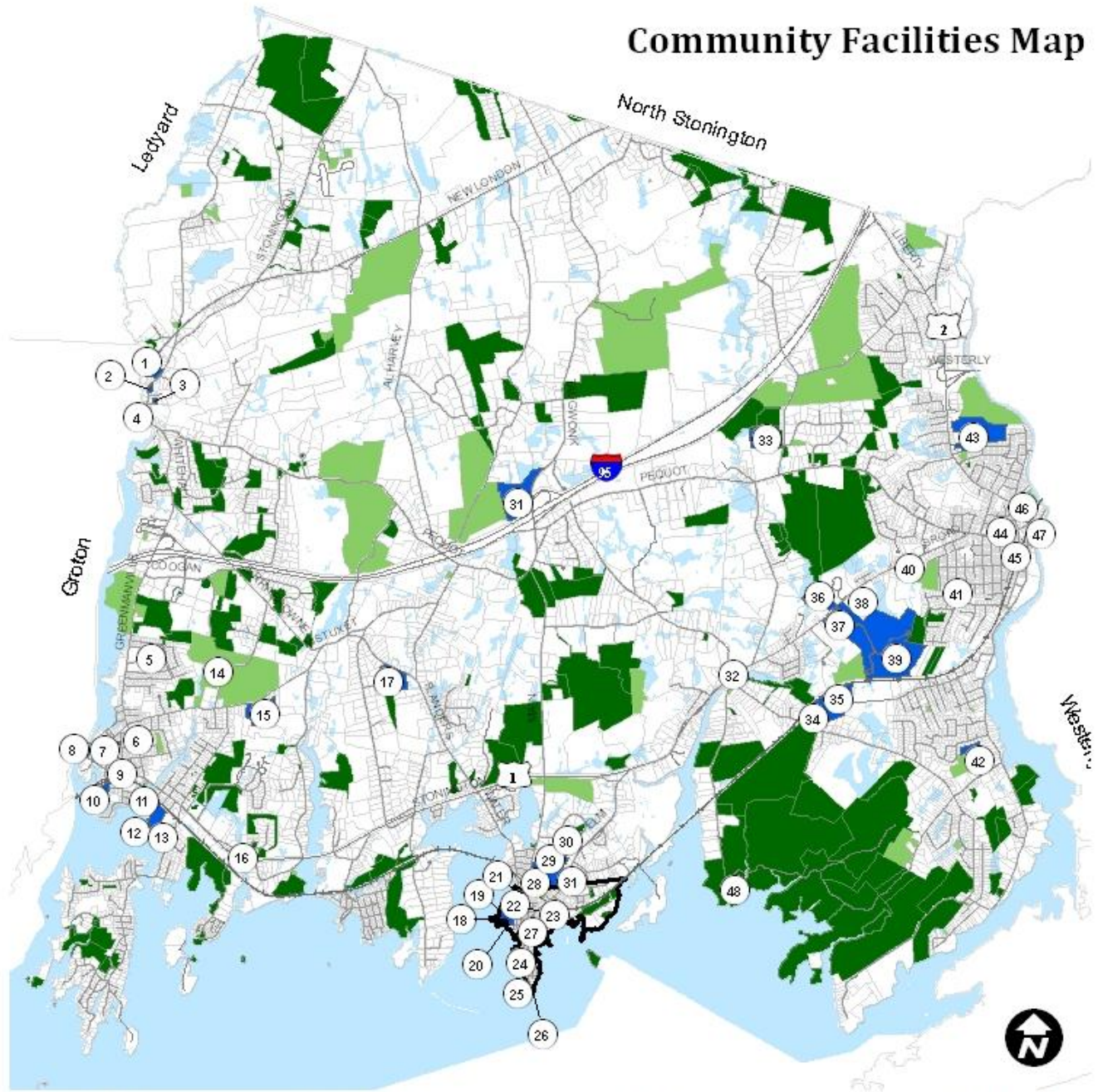
Playground equipment in the area behind the high school has been updated. Land adjacent to the Pawcatuck pollution control facility remains available. Establishment of the Granato Senior Center adjacent to the Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center has made possible regularly scheduled exercise and recreational activities for the Town's senior citizens.

Human/Senior Service Facilities - Establishment of a senior center in Pawcatuck and the opportunity for residents to participate in programs at the three community centers have helped meet the community needs. With the projected aging of Town population, concern for the lack of supportive services aiding seniors who wish to remain in their homes will increase. The establishment of adult day care programs for senior citizens who are mentally and/or physically impaired, but not nursing home ready, would significantly improve the quality of life for these residents. An all-day facility similar to the Westerly Day Care Center could be established to provide meals, adult programs and socialization under the guidance of skilled medical personnel.

Library Facilities – While Stonington does not have a Town-owned Library, it should continue to financially support the three local non-profit libraries.

Permanent Committee to Study Needs and Use of Town Public Buildings – After a proposal to expand Town Hall was abandoned in 2006, a Permanent Committee to Study Needs and Use of Town Public Buildings was established. The Committee engaged an architectural firm to prepare a Space Needs Assessment and Feasibility Study for Town Hall. This study recommended various changes to the interior layout of Town Hall, some of which have been implemented. The Committee has not met in several years, and it is recommended that they are re-formed to address some of the issues in this chapter.

# Community Facilities Map



## Public Safety Facilities

- 2. Old Mystic Fire Dept.
- 9. Mystic Fire Dept.
- 16. Quilimburg Fire Dept.
- 21. Stonington Fire Dept.
- 29. Stonington Volunteer Ambulance Corps.
- 32. Wequetequock Fire Dept.
- 36. Police Dept.
- 46. Pawcatuck Fire Dept.

## Town Hall/Community Centers

- 27. Stonington Borough Hall
- 28. Stonington Community Center (COMO)
- 31. Stonington Town Hall
- 38. Stonington Human Services Building
- 45. Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center/Granato Senior Center

## Recreation Facilities

- 3. Old Mystic Playground
- 5. Mystic Little League\*
- 8. Mystic River Park (Mystic Fire District)
- 11. Mystic Babe Ruth Fields\*
- 12. Williams Beach (Mystic YMCA)\*
- 13. Mystic YMCA\*
- 14. Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center\*
- 18. Town Docks
- 20. Playground
- 25. DuBoise Beach
- 31. Stonington Soccer Club\*
- 33. Pawcatuck Little League\*
- 39. Spellman Park
- 47. Donahue Park
- 48. Barn Island Boat Launch (DEEP)

## Other Facilities

- 1. Stonington Dept. of Education Administrative Offices
- 4. Old Mystic Post Office
- 6. Former 4th District Voting Hall
- 7. Mystic Post Office
- 10. Mystic Water Pollution Control Facility
- 19. Stonington Water Pollution Control Facility
- 22. Stonington Post Office
- 23. Stonington Free Library
- 24. La Grusa Center
- 26. Stonington Point (Stonington Borough)
- 30. Stonington Highway Garage
- 34. Animal Control Facility
- 35. Transfer Station
- 40. Pawcatuck Post Office
- 42. Pawcatuck Water Pollution Control Facility

## Public Schools

- 15. Mystic Middle School
- 17. Deans Mill School
- 37. Stonington High School
- 41. Pawcatuck Middle School
- 43. West Broad Street School
- 44. West Vine Street School

- Community Facilities
- Open Space
- Existing Committed Open Space
- Existing Managed Open Space

\*Private Facility

Source: Stonington GIS

1 Miles



## 11.2 Address Community Service Needs

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Public Safety Services - Public safety services in Stonington include a paid police department, six volunteer fire departments and three volunteer ambulance corps. Currently, Stonington's professional police department is adequately staffed; however, in light of future development, the Police Chief has stated that one additional trained police officer will be required for every increase of 500 residents. The same would also hold true of firefighters.

The 2004 POCD recommended that a study of the emergency fire and ambulance services be conducted. In light of the inability of some departments to continue attracting and retaining volunteers and the redundancy of fire departments, a comprehensive study of fire services to determine whether consolidation could result in manpower and equipment economies of scale, more consistent training, better communications and improved response times. Consolidation of the three volunteer ambulance corps could be considered to maximize volunteer recruitment, training and the opportunity to upgrade obsolete communications equipment.

Public Works - Public Works Department functions are fragmented between the Town, Borough and several fire districts that contract for public works functions. The Department has been hampered by a shortage of personnel, inconsistent road maintenance funding and aging equipment. As recommended in the 2004 POCD, an asset management program was instituted to plan for road, sidewalk and other maintenance needs. With the passage of a bond issue in 2013, a comprehensive maintenance program is being implemented in Mystic and Pawcatuck to correct many problem areas and stabilize roads before they deteriorate beyond repair.

Solid Waste Management - Solid waste generated in Stonington is transported to Southeast Connecticut Resources Recovery Authority (SCRRA) Facility in Preston, CT for processing. The contract, due to expire in 2017, has provided the Town with stable and affordable waste disposal for many years; and the Town is currently negotiating with the plant operator for a new long term contract.

The Town has programs in place for recycling/disposal of leaves, brush, bulky waste, hazardous waste, electronics and other recyclables. In the next 5-10 years the challenge for the Department will be to find additional ways to increase the recycling rate and find additional economies in the waste management process.

Recreation Services – The fragmentation of services as a result of the three independent community/neighborhood centers may lead to inefficiencies in the provision of services. While this system keeps municipal property taxes low, the different and often limited focus of each of these organizations can require some families to pay membership and program fees to multiple private organizations to gain access to the recreation facilities and services they need. As Stonington continues to grow, the population may outstrip the ability of these community centers to meet the growing demand for services; and the Town should explore options for supplementing the village and Borough community centers to better meet town-wide social and recreational needs.

Human/Senior Services - Human/Senior Services will experience a significant demand for services in the coming decade. The mature adult population (55+) accounts for the majority of the human services caseload, and this population is expected to increase to over one-third of the Town's population in 2020. As the Baby Boomer generation

reaches retirement age, the Human Services Department must anticipate increased need for human/ senior services by providing adequate staffing and facilities. Additionally, the continued lack of new job openings in turn creates pressure on the ability to serve low-income and unemployed members of the community and must be addressed.

Library Services - Library services are provided by three independent library associations funded in part by the Town. All three libraries are at capacity, requiring extensive weeding and reorganization to make room for new materials. Capital improvement funds must be continually raised from private sources; the Board of Finance has increasingly cut funds to support the library functions from the Town budget, creating a financial crisis to these key community resources.

**Pawcatuck Middle School**



**Stonington Police Station**



**Stonington High School**



**Stonington Free Library**



## Recommendations

<b>11.1 Address Community Facility Needs</b>		
<b>Policies</b>		
11.1.1 Provide adequate funding for ongoing implementation of the Capital Improvement Program.	BOF	BOS, DPW
<b>Initial Tasks</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
11.1.2 Resume the work of the Permanent Committee to Study the Needs and Use of Town Public Buildings.	BOS	DPW, DOP
11.1.3 Conduct a comprehensive analysis of all town-owned facilities to determine future needs.	PCTB	BOF, BOE BOS
11.1.4 Initiate a study of fire and ambulance services to determine the value of consolidation.	BOS	FD, EMS, BOF
11.1.5 Initiate a long-term plan to address increased need for senior services; i.e., staffing and facilities.	DHS	BOS

<b>11.2 Address Community Service Needs</b>		
<b>Policies</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
11.2.1 Encourage improved interaction between Town departments and local, non-profit organizations that currently provide essential services to residents.	BOS	RC, DHS
11.2.2 Continue programs to attract and retain volunteers.	BOS	EMS, FD
11.2.3 Provide adequate funding and staff to properly maintain roads, sidewalks and storm drain facilities to avoid more costly repairs and replacement.	BOS	BOF, DPW
11.2.4 Encourage the establishment of private and non-profit adult day care programs for senior citizens.	DHS	BOS
11.2.5 Include future equipment and facility maintenance needs in the Town budget for public safety and public works facilities.	BOS	BOF, DPW, PC
11.2.6 Encourage flexible plans for increasing playing field options, utilizing existing assets owned by community facilities.	RC	BOS
11.2.7 Continue to support the libraries in their efforts to provide library services at the village level.	BOS	BOF

### Leader / Partners

See the inside back cover for a legend to the leaders and partners identified in this table.

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## Overview

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The availability of adequate water and sewer capacity along with other public utilities is critical to supporting commercial and industrial activity as well as the medium to high-density residential patterns found in and around Stonington’s villages. This chapter addresses the Town’s public water services, sewer systems, electrical and natural gas services, and communication systems.

### 12.1 Manage Public Water Service

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Over 4,000 properties and over 6,000 residential and commercial customers in Stonington are currently served by public water systems. Water for residential and commercial use in town is provided by three water companies.

The Aquarion Water Company serves the greater Mystic area and Stonington Borough. System capacity is expected to be adequate for the next 10 years or more. An emergency interconnection is available to the Groton system, if needed. The Connecticut Water Company serves Masons Island. The Westerly Water Department (WWD) serves the greater Pawcatuck area. Conservation efforts have paid off in the form of flat to reduced water usage over the past 15 years. Therefore, the capacity of these systems is believed to be adequate.

The importance of preserving water quality is addressed in Chapter 5.

In terms of fire protection, water volume and pressure for fire hydrants had been an issue in some parts of the Borough; but this is being addressed by Aquarion. In most areas of Stonington, fire response involves tanker trucks and water resupply from surface water sources. There are no plans to expand hydrant coverage unless required as part of a new development where public water supply is available. Stonington does not have any fire ponds or underground fire tanks in support of rural development areas. In addition, the Town lacks a water re-supply master plan (including emergency use of private ponds) that could facilitate water availability for rural fire events.

Existing water systems are a critical part of Stonington’s infrastructure. With ongoing improvements and a commitment to identify and address changing situations, these systems will continue to serve the Town well for the long term.

*“The form a city assumes as it evolves over time owes more to large-scale works of civil engineering – what we now call infrastructure – than almost any other factor save topography.”*

*Martin Filler*



## 12.2 Manage Public Sewer Service

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### Future Sewer Planning

The 2004 POCD recommended that, if economically and technically feasible, Stonington should consider the possibility of future system expansion by connecting to Groton Utility's sewer system taking advantage of Groton's economy of scale. Stonington and Groton officials met and this approach was determined to be not feasible.

Although future system expansion is not a current concern, the future effects of rising sea levels may pose a long term threat to the current infrastructure; and now is the time to start investigating potential impacts and potential solutions.

The Town of Stonington Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA), under Connecticut General Statutes, is responsible for constructing, operating and managing the Town's wastewater collection and treatment facilities. The WPCA manages sewer systems for the Borough, Mystic, Pawcatuck and surrounding areas utilizing three water pollution control facilities (WPCF) located in or near each of the villages, 17 pump stations and approximately 50 miles of sewer lines. Mystic was brought on line in 1972, the Borough in 1975 and Pawcatuck in 1980.

As a result of recent upgrades to the treatment plants, adequate sewage treatment capacity is expected to be available to meet community needs for the foreseeable future. The Mystic WPCF was designed to treat an average wastewater flow of 0.80 million gallons per day (MGD) and projected average flow for year 2025 is 0.73 MGD. The Borough WPCF was designed to treat an average wastewater flow of 0.66 MGD and projected average flow for year 2025 is 0.30 MGD. The Pawcatuck WPCF was designed to treat an average wastewater flow of 1.3 MGD, and projected average flow for year 2025 is 0.94 MGD.

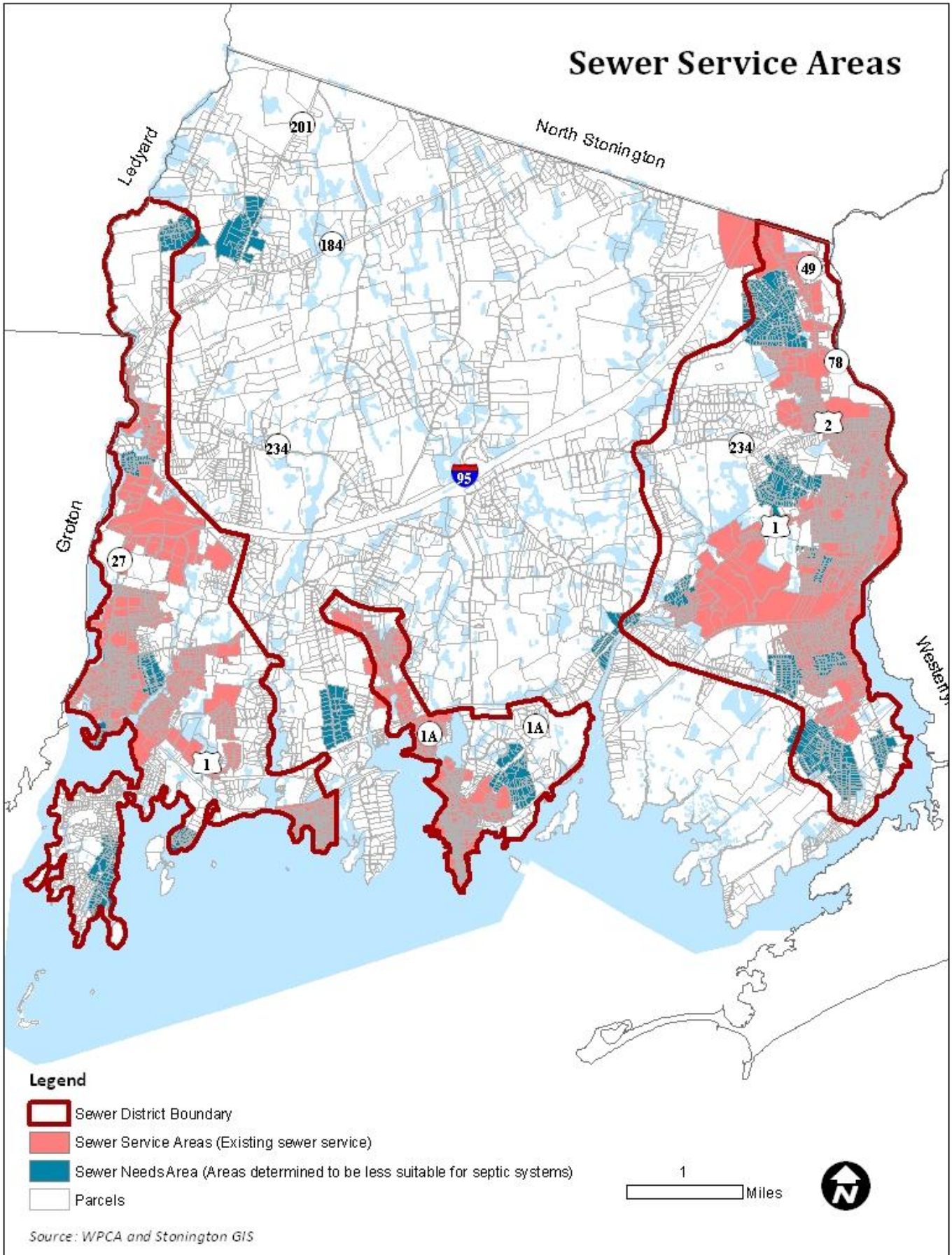
Upon completion of current system improvements, and based on projected flow rates, there is not a need for expansion of the system in the next decade.

The map on the facing page shows the areas that currently have sewer service and indicates a sewer limit line that is a boundary beyond which public sewer service cannot be provided by the current system. Although new service for areas within this boundary is feasible, there is no guarantee that future service areas will be provided. The CT Coastal Management Act also requires that sewer and water lines be located and phased to encourage concentrated development in areas which are suitable for development. Extension of sewer and water lines into coastal resources including beaches and tidal wetlands is prohibited except to mitigate existing sources of pollution.

Outside of areas served by public sewers, homes and businesses rely on private septic systems. Potential concerns with septic systems involve those that may not function properly and cause damage to the environment including pathogens and nitrogen which contributes to hypoxia (low-dissolved oxygen) in Long Island Sound.

Sewer systems are a critical part of Stonington's infrastructure, and they must continue to serve the Town well. With ongoing improvements and a commitment to identify and address changing situations, such as the future rise in sea levels, these systems will continue to serve the Town well for the long term.

# Sewer Service Areas



## 12.3 Support Electrical Service Improvements

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Electrical service is provided to all areas of the Town by Connecticut Light and Power Company (CL&P); and although all delivery services are provided by CL&P, customers have a choice for provider of generation services. In the past fifteen years, CL&P has installed a new substation in North Stonington and upgraded their high-voltage “backbone” network; there are no known long-term reliability issues relating to their infrastructure.

In recent years Stonington, along with much of the state, has experienced major power outages for extended periods resulting from tree damage to power lines caused by hurricanes and other severe storms. CL&P has under taken a statewide program of tree pruning to protect utility lines from potential storm damage in an attempt to minimize the potential for future power outages, and work has been accomplished along Stonington’s main roads.

An approach to protecting utility lines from damage is to go underground when possible. Since Stonington’s utility lines were installed many years ago, very little currently exists underground; but, in new developments and potential major road projects, this approach, although expensive, should be evaluated for long-term benefits.

Although it may still be a long way off, solar and wind powered electrical generation options have potential to be a component of a sustainable future. There are currently 132 properties in town that receive a solar power tax exemption.

**Downed Power Lines**



**Residential Solar Panels**



## **12.4 Support Extension of Natural Gas**

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Natural gas service is currently provided by Yankee Gas in the Pawcatuck area and along Route 1 to Anguilla Brook. The gas main comes into Stonington from the north along Route 2.

Yankee Gas indicated it has desired for several years to extend service to Mystic from a main on Route 184 in Groton, but there is no specific plan or timetable. Obstacles have included a lack of customer demand (especially large commercial customers) and the difficulty of laying gas lines along existing roads. It would help if major roadwork were planned for key areas so that new gas lines could become part of the project.

The State currently has an initiative to expand natural gas service areas; so now is a good time to pursue any assistance that might become available for such projects. Based on current and future trends in energy costs, an increasing demand for natural gas services by both residential and commercial customers is expected over the next decade.

Over the next decade there is excellent potential for increased customer desire to have access to gas services, and now is the time for the Town to take advantage of current trends and State initiatives to support expansion of natural gas service areas.

## **12.5 Enhance Communications**

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Over the past 10 years, communications technologies (land line phones, cellular phones, television and internet services) have significantly evolved and the latest options are readily available to Stonington residents and businesses by the three main providers (Frontier, Comcast and Thames Valley Communications). It is expected that these companies will continue to provide reliable services that meet both current and future needs.

With an ever growing volume of cellular devices, and less dependency on land lines, it is anticipated there will be a growing need for more cell towers in Stonington. The Connecticut Siting Council (CSC) currently has jurisdiction over all commercial telecommunication towers (municipal towers are exempt). In 2010, Stonington revised the Planning & Zoning Regulations as they pertain to cell towers. The Town has a set of guidelines but not a plan for determining potential future locations that minimize local impacts and protect community character.

Although Stonington's villages have areas where many visitors, residents and business people congregate, there is a lack of internet "hot spots." This type of service to support use of wireless devices is becoming increasingly common in popular areas and can help promote an area. The Town could work with various potential providers to determine the possibilities.

As part of an effort to keep residents better informed during both routine and emergency situations, the Town is planning to implement a radio broadcasting capability on an FM channel.

## Recommendations

### Leader / Partners

See the inside back cover for a legend to the leaders and partners identified in this table.

<b>12.1 Manage Public Water Service</b>		
<b>Policies</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
12.1.1 Continue to manage adequate quality and quantity of safe drinking water.	BOS	PZC, CC, DPW
12.1.2 Properly maintain existing infrastructure to support existing and future development.	BOS	PZC, CC, DPW
<b>Initial Tasks</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
12.1.3 Develop requirements for fire ponds and/or underground water tanks (cisterns) in or near new developments not served by public water systems.	FD	PZC
12.1.4 Prepare a water supply master plan to ensure availability of fire protection water supplies in rural areas.	FD	

<b>12.2 Manage Public Sewer Service</b>		
<b>Policies</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
12.2.1 Manage and maintain an adequate and effective sewer system.	WPCA	
12.2.2 Maintain sufficient, effective and compliant sewer plant capacity for Town businesses and residents.	WPCA	
12.2.3 Locate and phase sewer lines to encourage concentrated development in areas which are suitable for development. Prohibit extension of sewer lines into coastal resources except that sewers with limited excess capacity may be used to accommodate existing uses by abating existing sources of pollution when necessary.	WPCA	
<b>Initial Tasks</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
12.2.4 Initiate a study to develop a long-term plan for addressing the potential impacts of rising sea levels on the WPCA infrastructure.	WPCA	

<b>12.3 Support Electrical Service Improvements</b>		
<b>Policies</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
12.3.1 Seek opportunities to install new, and relocate existing, utility lines underground.	DPW	BOS



<b>12.4 Support Extension of Natural Gas</b>		
<b>Policies</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
12.4.1 Encourage opportunities for the expansion of natural gas services in high-density areas of the Town.	EDC	BOS, DOP, DPW
<b>Initial Tasks</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
12.4.2 Review current locations of natural gas lines to determine priority areas for potential expansion to benefit both commercial and residential users.	BOS	DOP, DPW
12.4.3 Investigate availability of both state and federal funding to expand natural gas infrastructure.	BOS	DOP, DPW

<b>12.5 Enhance Communications</b>		
<b>Policies</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
12.5.1 Take a proactive approach towards location of future telecommunication towers.	BOS	PZC
12.5.2 Encourage the development of internet “hot spots” in appropriate areas of town.	BOS	DOP
<b>Initial Tasks</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
12.5.3 Develop guidelines for locating telecommunication towers including a plan to identify the most desirable future sites.	PZC	DOP
12.5.4 Work with adjacent municipalities to pursue creating Wi-Fi hot spots in downtown areas.	BOS	COC

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# TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

# 13

## Overview

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Transportation and mobility are important to residents and businesses. This includes our system of roads, bus and rail services, and transportation services for seniors and the disabled. It also includes transportation for pedestrians (sidewalks and trails) and bicycles. Since Stonington is a coastal community, it also includes the potential for water transportation on the Mystic and Pawcatuck Rivers.

### 13.1 Address Roadway Needs

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For most people, the private automobile is the primary means of transportation in Stonington. The road system has developed over time and thus follows historic paths as well as more recently designed highway systems. The result is a varied system of interstate, state and local roads that serve the community.

The three Interstate 95 interchanges provide convenient tourist access to the major tourist sites, commuter access both into and out of Stonington and serve as potential hubs for future economic development. They also provide residents easy access to the surrounding communities.

The state and local roads provide local access while preserving much of the scenic ambience of the region. It has been the choice of the community to preserve the tree and stone wall lined roads where possible as they do much to define the character of the community.

Maintenance of local roads is important. Residents approved a \$3.5 million bond issue in 2012 to fund repairs to about 25 miles of town roads and associated sidewalks if applicable. Annual funding from the town budget over the next four years will support minor repairs to another 42 miles of roadway. While this support is substantial, the local road system has an additional 42 miles of roads that need maintaining. The Department of Public Works estimates that it would require \$14 million to repair all of the town roads.

Recently, the Town has adopted its Technical Standards for Land Development and Road Construction document which should be followed in the maintenance and repair of the roads. Accident data compiled by the Police Department have been used in the past to indicate areas of safety concern. Improved signage, street markings and traffic signals have been, and will continue to be, used by the Department of Public Works to address these concerns as appropriate.

*“Our unity as a nation is sustained by free communication of thought and by easy transportation of people and goods.”*

*Dwight D. Eisenhower*

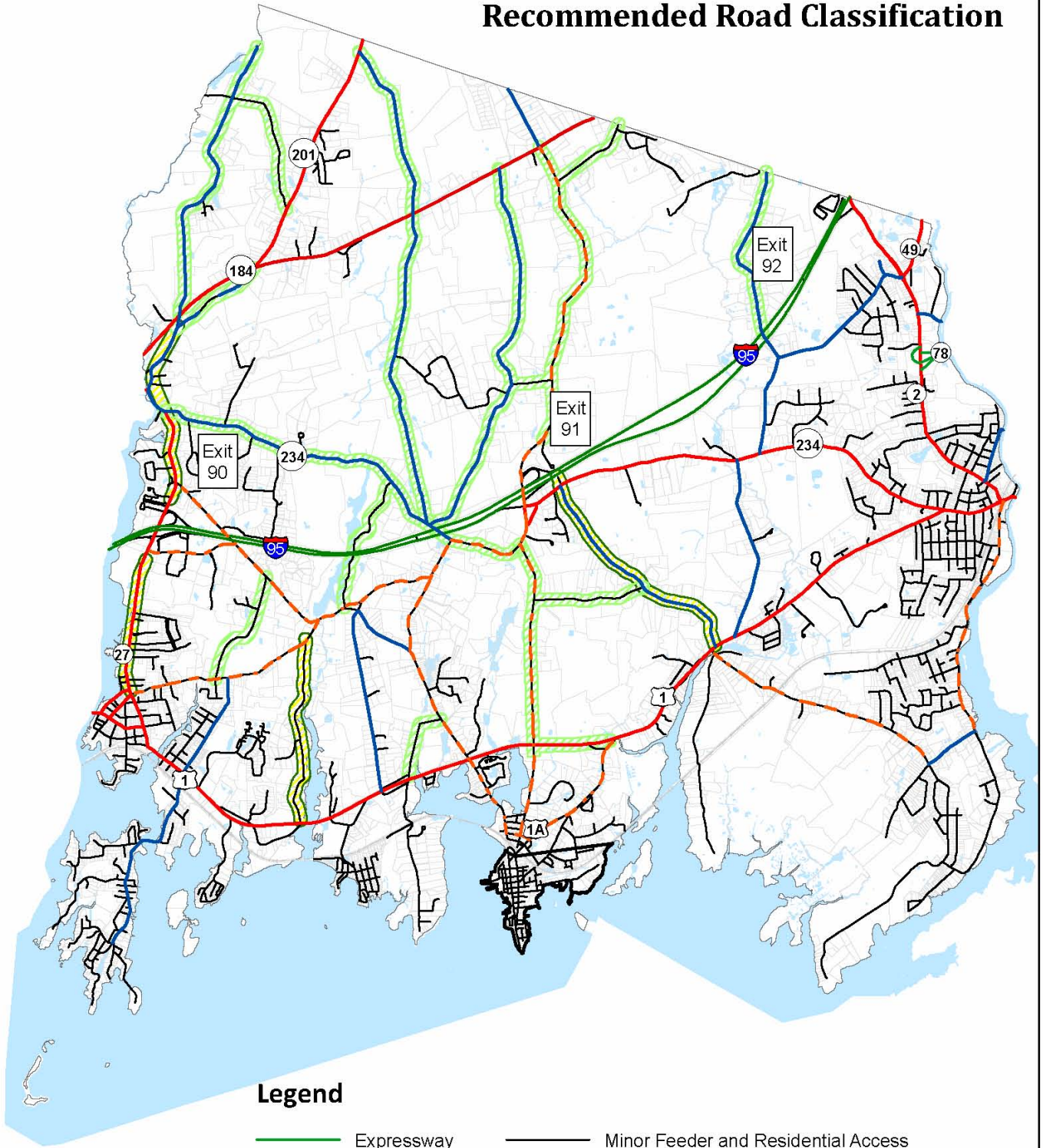
The 2004 POCD suggested a classification of the roads in the town indicated in the table shown below and the map on the following page. These include Limited Access, Arterials, Major Connectors, Major Feeder Roads, Minor Feeder Roads and Residential access – scenic roads are also indicated.

**Recommended Road Classifications**


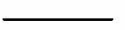






Road Classification	Roads
<b>Limited Access/Expressway</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interstate 95</li> <li>• Route 78</li> </ul>
<b>Arterials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Route 1</li> <li>• Route 1A</li> <li>• Route 2</li> <li>• Route 27</li> <li>• Route 49</li> <li>•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

The Town must continue to provide maintenance for the existing roadways following the recently adopted Technical Standards for Land Development and Road Construction document. Any substandard roads should be upgraded to meet current standards. Working with the police department, issues of safety concern should be routinely addressed. Although currently not economically feasible, ideas for relieving seasonal traffic addressed in the Mystic Mobility Study should be reconsidered if economic conditions change. As addressed in Chapter 5, the Town should also continue to address non-point source pollution from its roadways.

# Recommended Road Classification

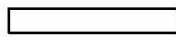


## Legend

- |   |   |
|---|---|
|  Expressway      |  Minor Feeder and Residential Access |
|  Arterial        |  Scenic Roads                        |
|  Major Connector |  Proposed Scenic Roads               |
|  Major Feeder    |  Stonington Borough                  |



1

 Miles

Source: Stonington GIS



## 13.2 Provide for Pedestrians

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### Community Support

There is a general desire in the town as expressed in the public questionnaire (winter 2012-2013) to make the town more pedestrian and bicycle friendly.

The villages are generally well served by sidewalks. There are, however, missing links to several of the schools and commercial areas. These include the sidewalk from Pawcatuck to the high school and the continuation of the sidewalk along Route 1 from Hewitt Road to the Big Y supermarket. Past efforts to fill these gaps have been thwarted by costs associated with installing the sidewalks and by objections of the property owners, in part due to the responsibility of property owners to clear sidewalks in the winter. If these gaps are to be filled it will require a commitment from residents and the Town to move forward.

The Town does have a maintenance program for some sidewalks. A sidewalk inventory completed in 2011 evaluated the condition of the approximately 32 miles of town sidewalks and identified those that would be repaired as part of the road maintenance program. The addition of sidewalks in the town in recent years has been limited to those provided by developers in new housing subdivisions. There are also potential greenways which could provide pathways to connect many areas thus providing both foot and bicycle paths for transportation and recreation purposes.

The Town should implement the Complete Streets Resolution adopted by the Board of Selectmen in 2008. The resolution primarily urges decision makers in Stonington to adopt and implement policies and practices that design roads for all users including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit vehicles and users and motorists of all ages and abilities. In addition, adopting the State's Safe Routes to School Program would help improve the safety of students walking and biking to school.

**Incomplete Sidewalk**



**Village Walkways**



### 13.3 Provide for Bicycles

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At the present time, Stonington has modest provision for bicycles. There are no off-road bike trails, marked on-road bike lanes or “share the road” signs. Route 1 is one road with sufficient width to easily permit these enhancements. Bicycle policies should be different for villages, low density zones and routes between villages.

On the other hand, there is an operating bike share program which provides temporary bike use at no cost. Bike racks are available at some commercial and tourist locations. A local bicycle group is attempting to work with the town to promote bicycle improvements as part of an overall plan for pedestrian and cycling activity in the Town.

The number of residents and visitors who are enjoying the Town’s scenic resources by bicycle has increased over the past several years. Steps should be taken to make Stonington more bicycle-friendly by providing better linkages between different areas of Town and providing additional safety for cyclists. The town needs to work with citizen groups to develop a comprehensive bicycle plan for the town. A Bicycle Task Force should be formed to prepare such a plan which would include members of citizen groups and relevant municipal departments. Strategies could include “share the road signage” to improve safety, marking of bicycle lanes where possible, the installation of bike racks in tourist and commercial areas, incentive programs to promote biking and the construction of off-road bike trails. The existing bike share program should be supported and a similar program could be started in Pawcatuck / Westerly. Some of these may require both private and public funding.

“Share The Road” Signage



Shared Roadway Markings





## 13.4 Address Transit Needs

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Public transportation in Stonington is limited but functional.

Southeast Area Transit (SEAT) provides local bus service via two routes. The #10 route runs from the Olde Mistick Village near exit 90 of I-95, connecting to the Mystic Seaport, Mystic Village, Stonington Borough, Pawcatuck Village and ending at the commuter lot near exit 92 of I-95. The buses run Monday through Friday from 7:15 AM to 5:15 PM at two-hour intervals. This route connects the major commercial areas in Stonington with commuter transport as well as connections to the bus routes in neighboring towns. Ridership is concentrated primarily in the early morning and late afternoon. Bus route #108 connects the area near exit 90 of I-95 to Foxwoods, Groton and New London. Other area bus routes may be accessed in Groton and New London. Service runs 7 days a week from 6:00 AM to 10:00 PM at 2 hour intervals with a shortened schedule on Sundays. The bus service is heavily subsidized with fares covering only a small fraction of the operating costs. These subsidies are not guaranteed to continue and will require community support to continue.

Rhode Island Public Transportation (RIPTA) offers limited express commuter bus service to and from Providence from the Westerly Amtrak station. The Peter Pan Bus Company was offering service from Mystic to Boston, Providence and New York but service was terminated as of December 2013.

Amtrak provides connection to the coastal cities and transportation hubs with local stops in Mystic and nearby Westerly. Again, the service is limited by demand but is functional. More frequent service is available from New London. This resource is one that has the potential to be expanded upon in the future with the possibility of expanding Shoreline East commuter rail service to Mystic and possibly even Westerly. In addition, Westerly could also see MBTA commuter rail service extended from Providence and Boston.

There is an additional important transportation service that will only grow in importance as the population of Stonington ages. This is the so called “dial-a-ride” service available to the disabled and elderly. Currently two groups supply this service to Stonington residents. These are the Eastern Connecticut Transportation Consortium (ECTC) which provides dial-a-ride medical transport and the Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center. The ECTC service provides transport for medical purposes only but covers the disabled 18 and over as well as seniors. The Pawcatuck service covers seniors only but will provide rides for shopping, medical and other purposes. These are supported by various funding sources at little or no cost to the users. The growth in usage for the Pawcatuck service over the past decade has been significant, increasing from about 400 trips per month to about 1,800 per month currently.

The various public transportation systems including SEAT buses, RIPTA, Amtrak and “dial-a-ride” services require continued support to remain operational. Water taxi services and tourist trolley services should be considered if demand justifies them in the future. Working with the Harbor Management Commissions to promote additional public access docks would encourage potential water taxi service as well as be a general benefit to coastal public access.

### Mystic Mobility Study

An extensive transportation study for Mystic was completed and summarized in the spring of 2011 – the Mystic Mobility Study.

Numerous suggestions for bike lanes, road improvements, tourist oriented mobility centers, trolley services, water taxi services and aesthetic improvements were made.

The heart of the plan was to provide a series of strategically located mobility hubs connected by a free trolley service and an expanded water taxi service. This would get tourists out of their cars, reduce seasonal traffic, provide for a more enjoyable experience and encourage tourists to explore more than just major attractions such as the Mystic Aquarium and the Mystic Seaport.

It was determined that most of these suggestions were not economically feasible at the present time but could be ideas for the future.



## Recommendations

### Leader / Partners

See the inside back cover for a legend to the leaders and partners identified in this table.

<b>13.1 Address Roadway Needs</b>		
<b>Policies</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
13.1.1 Provide adequate funding and staff to maintain roads and avoid more costly repairs or replacement.	BOS	DPW, BOF
13.1.2 Monitor accident locations and make any required safety modifications.	PC	BOS, DPW
<b>Initial Tasks</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
13.1.3 Explore means to ease in season traffic congestion.	PC	COC, DPW, DOP

<b>13.2 Provide for Pedestrians</b>		
<b>Policies</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
13.2.1 Provide adequate funding and staff to properly maintain sidewalks.	BOS	DPW, BOF
13.2.2 Promote connections to neighborhoods, villages and other activity nodes with sidewalks or trails.	BOS	DPW, BTF, PZC, DOP
13.2.3 Require sidewalks as part of development and road improvement projects within walking distance of schools, parks and playgrounds and in high density areas.	PZC	DPW, DOP
13.2.4 Implement the Town's Complete Streets Resolution which balances vehicular transportation with pedestrian and bicycle transportation needs in road design and/or reconstruction projects.	DPW	BOS, BTF, PZC
13.2.5 Adopting the State's Safe Routes to School Program to improve the safety of students walking and biking to school.	DPW	BOS, BTF, BOE
<b>Initial Tasks</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
13.2.6 Create a comprehensive plan to increase walking and bike paths on Town property.	DOP	BOS, CC, BTF, PZC
13.2.7 Create a town-wide connected greenway trail plan.	DOP	CC, PZC, BTF
13.2.8 Develop and implement bicycle and pedestrian paths along Route 1.	BTF	DOT, DPW, DOP
13.2.9 Improve pedestrian connections to Westerly.	DPW	DOT, PC



13.2.10	Develop sidewalks between downtown Pawcatuck and the high school and between Hewitt Road and the Big Y supermarket.	DPW	DOT, BOS
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<b>13.3 Provide for Bicycles</b>			
<b>Policies</b>		<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
13.3.1	Require road improvement projects to consider bicycle accommodations in their design.	DPW	BTF, DOT, PC, BOS
13.3.2	Require site development projects to consider bicycle accommodations in their design.	PZC	BTF, DPW
<b>Initial Tasks</b>		<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
13.3.3	Adopt initial bikeway plan on Route 1.	BTF	DOT, DPW, DOP
13.3.4	Create a task force and seek funding for a town-wide bicycle plan.	DOP	PC, PZC, DPW
13.3.5	Provide share the road signage.	PC	BTF, BOS, DPW,
13.3.6	Provide bicycle racks in commercial and tourist areas.	DPW	BTF, BOS

<b>13.4 Address Transit Needs</b>			
<b>Policies</b>		<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
13.4.1	Promote bus transportation.	BOS	SEAT
13.4.2	Promote improved Amtrak service to Mystic and expansion of Shoreline East service to Mystic and Westerly.	BOS	COC, EDC
<b>Initial Tasks</b>		<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
13.4.3	Explore creation of a water taxi service in season.	COC	BOS, HMC, WC
13.4.4	Explore funding to implement the recommendations of the Mystic Mobility Study.	DOP	DPW, BOS, COC

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# SUSTAINABILITY & RESILIENCY

# 14

## Overview

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The term “sustainability” is becoming more widely discussed as a result of concerns about the consumption of our natural resources and some of society’s inefficient or wasteful practices. This Plan of Conservation and Development intends to introduce the concept of sustainability so that it may become part of our vision for moving forward and result in an approach to the future which is sensitive to building a stronger community that balances sound economics, quality design, and the public good.

For the purposes of this Plan, “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. The term “resiliency” refers to the community’s ability to readily recover from sudden changes or adversity.

## 14.1 Promote Energy Conservation

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Energy availability and cost are likely to be more significant issues in Stonington in the future. This has financial implications for all residents – whether for leading their daily lives or for supporting functions provided by the Town. Some of the key energy conservation / sustainability issues to consider might include:

- Preparing an energy conservation action plan to reduce operating costs, reduce lifecycle costs and lower the carbon footprint of the Town / school buildings
- Reviewing municipal facilities for energy conservation opportunities (lighting, controls, equipment, building envelope, etc.)
- Investigating opportunities for energy generation (solar, wind, fuel cell, etc.) as a way to lower energy costs and enhance resiliency
- Expanding opportunities and incentives for property owners to install wind generators and/or solar panels that generate electricity or hot water
- Identifying ways to involve the community in implementing energy conservation practices
- Initiating transition to renewable energy for town vehicles (natural gas, electric, bio-fuels and hybrids)
- Pursuing State assistance for the installation of solar arrays on all town buildings
- Design and implement bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in order to reduce carbon emissions and decrease parking needs

It should be noted that the Town updated its regulations to allow small wind energy systems in 2012. A next step will now be to update the regulations regarding installation of solar energy equipment to account for changes in technology.

*“I am I plus my surroundings and if I do not preserve the latter, I do not preserve myself.”*

*Jose Ortega Y Gasset*

## Sustainability

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A number of sections of the Plan address issues of sustainability.

Some of the sustainable land use practices recommended elsewhere in the Plan include

- Promotion of village-scale development
- Promotion of walking and alternative transportation
- Protection of natural resources
- Historic preservation and reuse of existing buildings

## 14.2 Promote Water Conservation

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The United States has one of the highest rates of personal water consumption in the world (100 gallons of water per person per day for domestic purposes). Simple changes to some everyday activities can reduce most people's domestic water use by 10% or more. Stonington should encourage water conservation especially since many areas of the community rely on groundwater for domestic use. One way to accommodate this goal is to collect rainwater off of roofs for reuse and encourage infiltration where appropriate.

## 14.3 Promote Waste Reduction / Recycling

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The overall waste stream and recycling is another potential area for investigation and education in Stonington. The Town processes bulky waste, brush clipping and leaf composting at its transfer station on Greenhaven Road. It also has a reuse shed where residents can drop off and pick up items left there. Reducing the waste stream and promoting recycling should be promoted.

## 14.4 Promote "Green Buildings"

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Programs such as the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED, "Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design," are transforming the way America thinks about how our buildings and communities are designed, constructed, maintained and operated. Comprehensive and flexible, LEED is a green building tool that addresses the entire resource lifecycle recognizing best-in-class strategies. Local regulations could promote incentives for buildings and sites that meet these standards. The Town could also consider using the LEED-ND Neighborhood Design rating tool which applies to new land development or redevelopment projects to promote sustainable land development.

## 14.5 Educate Residents About Sustainability

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

**Water Conservation**



**Single Stream Recycling**



**Electric Vehicle**



## 14.6 Promote Resiliency

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One of the lessons for Stonington from Hurricane Irene in 2011, an unusual October 2011 snowstorm, Storm Sandy in 2012, and winter storm Charlotte in 2013 was the value of emergency preparedness planning. In these situations, power was lost to large sections of the community for a week or more. This was quite a challenge until electrical service was restored. During these storms, a number of roads became impassable.

The Town of Stonington and many public and private organizations were able to respond with emergency shelters, bottled water, and other supplies and services. Residents appreciated this response and were grateful for it.

Stonington should continue to review and improve hazard mitigation plans for recurring events, such as flooding. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the Town should begin planning for sea level rise to promote resiliency of low lying areas that are most at risk. Stonington should also continue to review and improve emergency preparedness plans (single events) in order to be able to respond to these events in the future. This can also include protecting electrical lines by placing them underground as opportunities present themselves. This should also include establishing “smart grids” to identify the location of circuit interruptions and other problems as soon as possible.

Despite the Town’s maintenance of the Flood Control Barrier on Mechanic Street, this structure has never been accredited by FEMA. Therefore, despite the added safety it provides, the barrier has not provided area property owners with relief from flood hazard regulations.

The Town should work with Connecticut Light and Power (CL&P) to find a good balance between necessary tree trimming over power lines and maintaining attractive tree canopies.



## Recommendations

### Leader / Partners

See the inside back cover for a legend to the leaders and partners identified in this table.

<b>14.1 Promote Energy Conservation</b>		
<b>Policies</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
14.1.1 Promote clean energy usage such as natural gas, solar, wind and water by residents and businesses.	BOS	CC, PZC
14.1.2 Identify ways to involve the community in implementing energy conservation practices.	BOS	CC
<b>Initial Tasks</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
14.1.3 Prepare an energy conservation action plan for Town and school buildings.	BOS	DPW, BOE

<b>14.2 Promote Water Conservation</b>		
<b>Policies</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
14.2.1 Encourage water conservation.	Water Providers	BOS, CC

<b>14.3 Promote Waste Reduction / Recycling</b>		
<b>Policies</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
14.3.1 Reduce the waste stream.	SW	
14.3.2 Promote recycling.	SW	
14.3.3 Support the expansion of the Town's reuse-recycling-composting program.	SW	BOS

<b>14.4 Promote "Green Buildings"</b>		
<b>Policies</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
14.4.1 Encourage the reuse of existing buildings in the community.	PZC	EDC
14.4.2 Consider ways to encourage the creation of "greener" buildings and site developments.	PZC	ADRB, DPW, DOP

<b>14.5 Educate Residents About Sustainability</b>		
<b>Policies</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
14.5.1 Educate residents and school children about sustainability concepts.	CC	BOE

<b>14.6 Promote Resiliency</b>		
<b>Policies</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
14.6.1 Continue to review and improve hazard mitigation plans for recurring events, such as flooding as well as the threat of sea level rise.	EMD	BOS, DPW, PC, FD
14.6.2 Continue to review and improve emergency preparedness plans.	EMD	BOS, DPW, PC, FD
<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
14.6.3 Pursue accreditation of the Mechanic Street Flood Control Barrier.	DPW	BOS

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# FUTURE LAND USE

# 15

## Overview

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The Future Land Use Plan is intended to guide the Town in future zoning regulation and map changes, infrastructure investments and other decisions.

However, this Plan of Conservation and Development does ***not*** recommend specific land uses for each individual property in Stonington. A map recommending particular uses was considered too limiting for a diverse community where mixed use development on individual properties is one of the key foundations of the Plan. Therefore a map depicting both specific uses and relative intensities was considered more relevant to Stonington's needs.

This map is intended be used in conjunction with the preceding recommendations and maps in the plan. This map is not intended to supersede any duly adopted regulatory or other legally binding document such as zoning maps, flood hazard area locations or wetlands maps.

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

**Conservation**



**Development**



## 15.1 Descriptions of Map Categories

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The following categories are referenced to the *Future Land Use Plan* on page 130.

### Commercial / Mixed Use Areas

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<b>Village Mixed Use</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Higher densities recommended where best supported by public water and sewer</li><li>• Mixed use on main roads in commercial areas</li><li>• Preservation of historic resources</li><li>• Enhancement of pedestrian scale and village character</li><li>• Buildings set close to street</li><li>• On-site parking behind buildings</li><li>• Traditional New England style architecture</li></ul>
<b>Transitional Commercial</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Areas which generally transition from village scale development to either low impact residential areas or highway interchange commercial areas</li><li>• Combination of mixed use and single use buildings on main roads in commercial areas</li><li>• Discourage strip-commercial style buildings and layouts</li><li>• On-site parking to the side or behind buildings</li></ul>
<b>Highway Interchange Commercial</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Focus on larger scale commercial development near highway interchanges</li><li>• Sensitive to environmental resources, including groundwater resources, traffic impacts and community character</li></ul>
<b>Industrial</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Areas that are primarily intended to be developed with industrial and similar commercial uses</li><li>• Adaptive reuse of existing mill complexes encouraged</li></ul>
<b>Marine Commercial</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Areas mainly devoted to water dependent uses such as marinas and related uses</li></ul>
<b>Light Industrial</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Light industrial development that is especially sensitive to environmental resources, traffic impacts and rural area character of the Taugwonk Road (Exit 91) area</li></ul>

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*(continued)*



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## Residential Areas

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- Village Residential**
- Higher residential densities where best supported by public infrastructure and community facilities
  - Residential development expected to occur at a density greater than 2 units per acre
  - Enhancement of pedestrian scale and village character
- 

- Medium Density Residential**
- Moderate density residential areas where public utilities are available
  - Residential development expected to occur at a density of between 1 and 2 units per acre
  - Transition between higher density village scale development and low impact residential areas
- 

- Low Density Residential**
- Areas that lack the public infrastructure for intensive development
  - Lower densities of less than 1 unit per acre recommended
  - Agricultural uses supported as both land conservation and an economic resource
  - Sensitive redevelopment or enhancement of any existing commercial areas recommended
  - “Open Space Development” recommended for new residential construction
  - Conservation of sensitive areas recommended
- 

## Open Space

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- Committed Open Space**
- Undeveloped land that is permanently protected by deed restriction at the time of adoption of this plan
- 

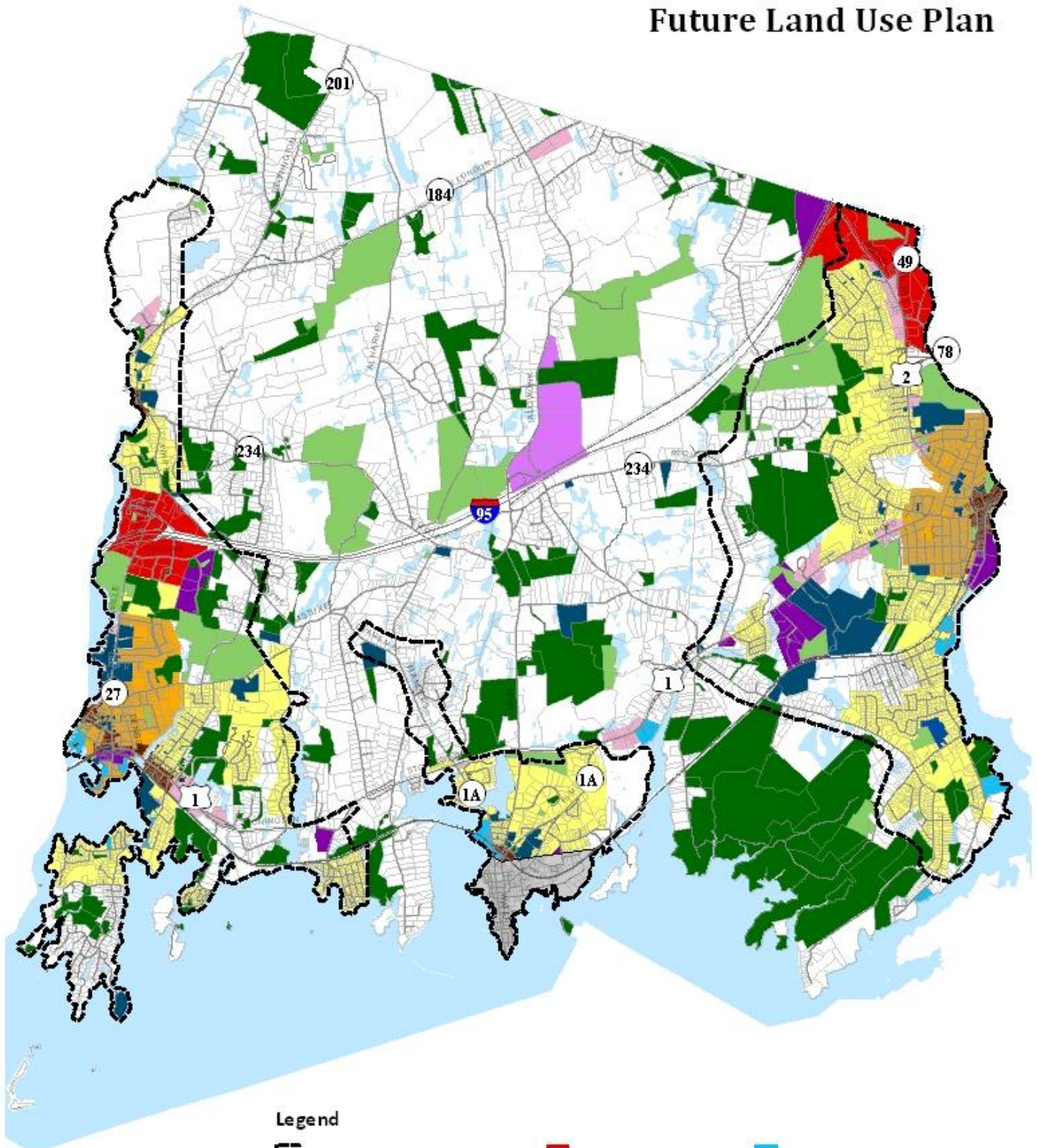
- Managed Open Space**
- Undeveloped land used for activities that by their nature provide open space but has no legal or special protection that ensures that it remains open space
- 

## Other

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- Institutional / Community Facility**
- Areas developed as publicly or privately owned community facilities, including such uses as municipal facilities, schools, community centers and religious institutions
-

# Future Land Use Plan



## Legend

- |                               |                            |                            |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Sewer Service Areas           | Highway Interchange        | Marine Commercial          |
| Stonington Borough            | Institutional              | Medium Density Residential |
| <b>Open Space</b>             | Low Density Residential    | Village Mixed Use          |
| Existing Committed Open Space | Light Industrial (Exit 91) | Transitional Commercial    |
| Existing Managed Open Space   | Industrial                 | Village Residential        |

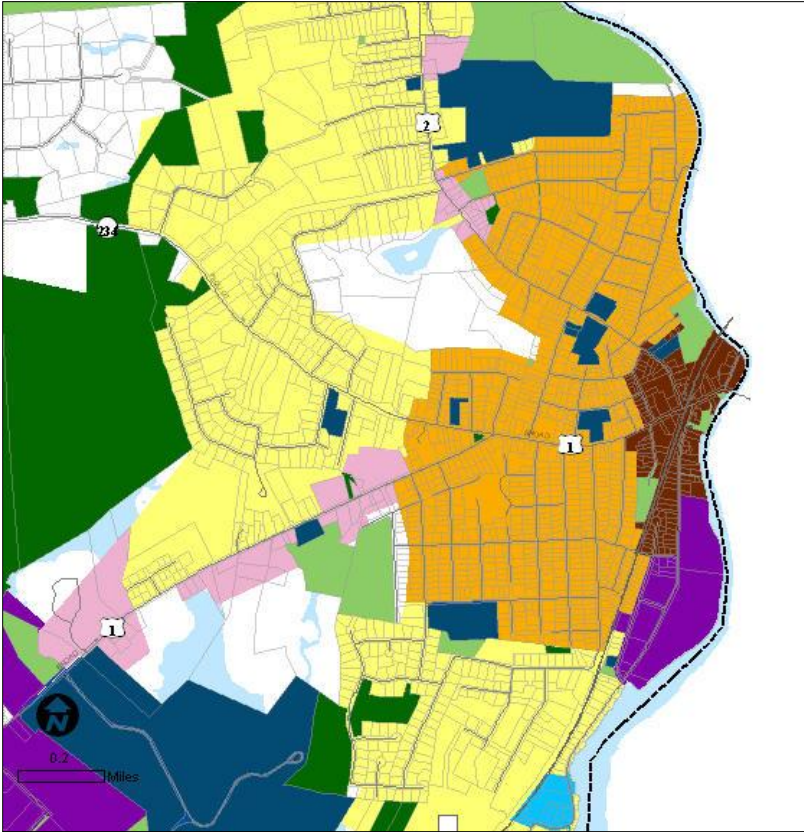


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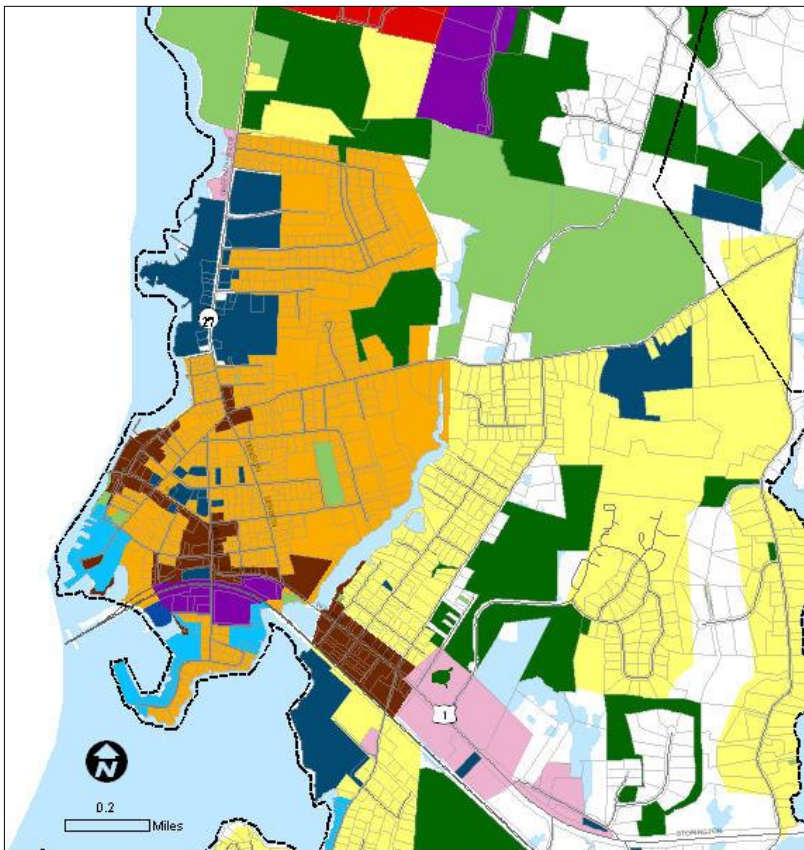
Miles



### Future Land Use Plan - Pawcatuck



### Future Land Use Plan - Mystic



#### Map Legend

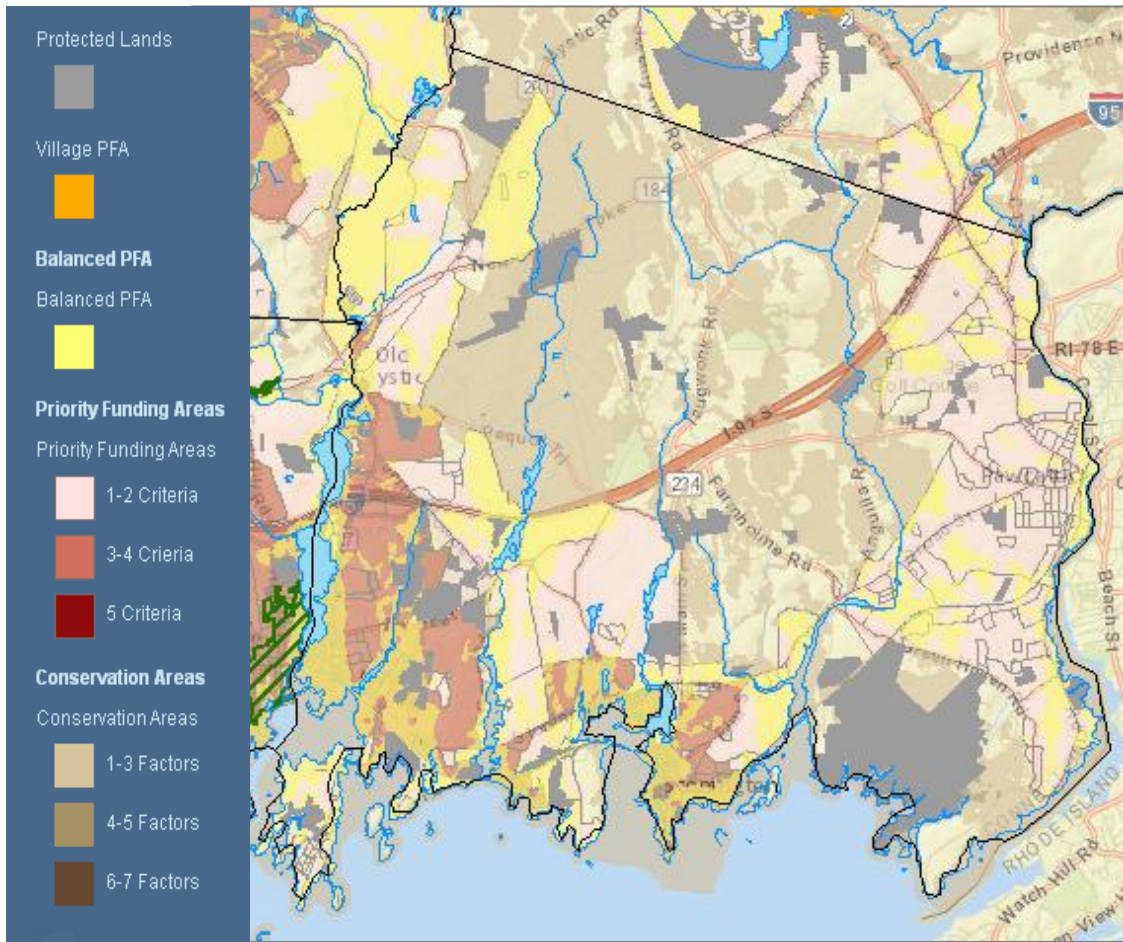
- Highway Interchange
- Institutional
- Low Density Residential
- Light Industrial (Exit 91)
- Industrial
  
- Marine Commercial
- Medium Density Residential
- Village Mixed Use
- Transitional Commercial
- Village Residential
  
- Sewer Service Areas
- Stonington Borough
- Open Space**
- Existing Committed Open Space
- Existing Managed Open Space

## 15.2 Plan Consistency

### *State Plan – Locational Guide Map*

In accordance with CGS Section 8-23, this Plan of Conservation and Development was compared with the 2013-18 State Conservation & Development Policies Plan and found to be generally consistent with that Plan and its Locational Guide Map.

State Locational Guide Map (2013-18)



**State Plan –Growth Principles**

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

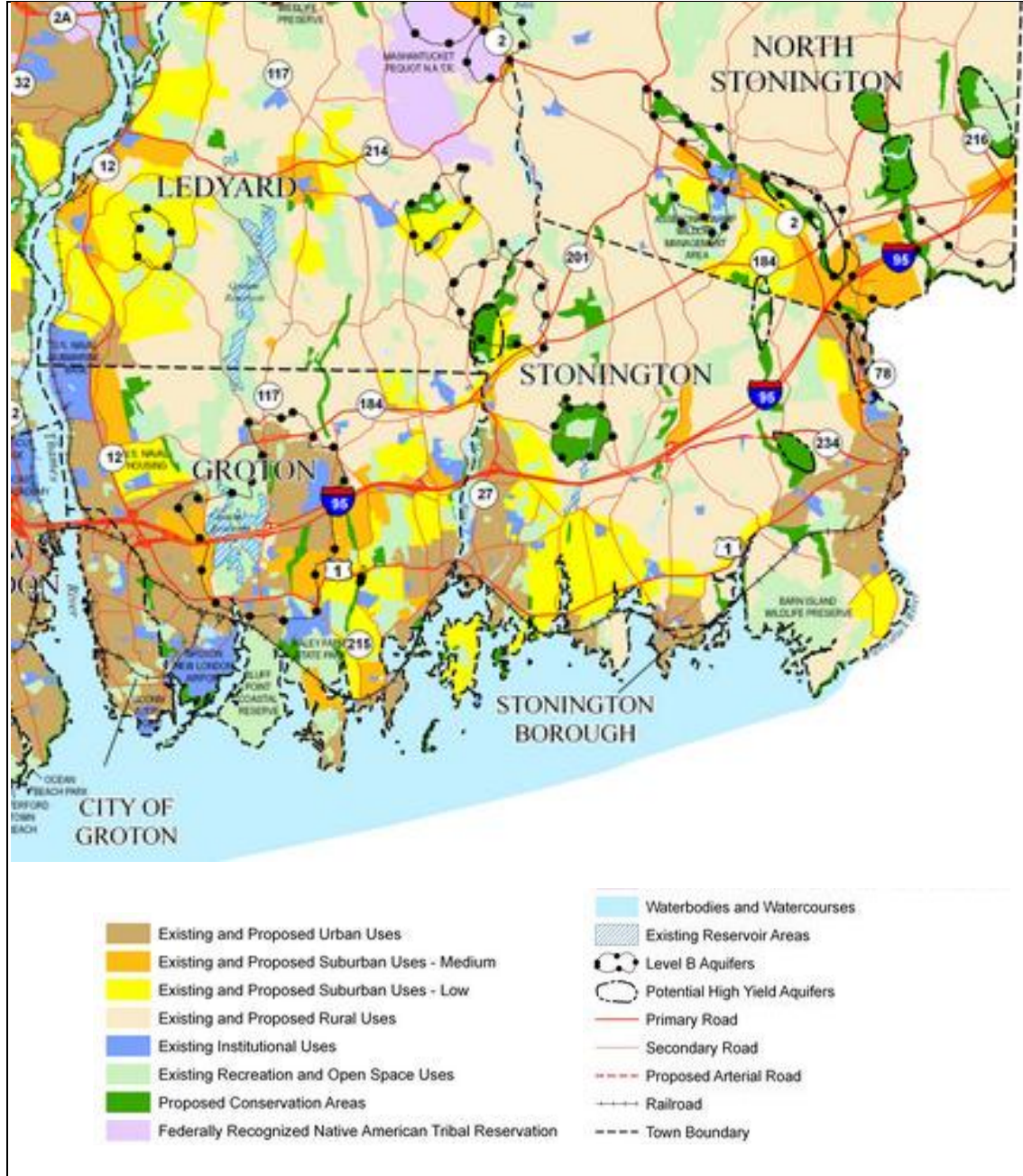
<u>STATE PLAN GROWTH PRINCIPLES</u>	<u>FINDING OF CONSISTENCY</u>
<p><b>Principle 1</b></p> <p><b>Redevelop and revitalize regional centers and areas of mixed-land uses with existing or planned physical infrastructure.</b></p>	<p><b>FINDING – Consistent</b></p> <p>The Plan encourages growth in and near Stonington village centers where mixed land uses are already permitted and are encouraged. Stonington does not have a designated “regional center.”</p>
<p><b>Principle 2</b></p> <p><b>Expand housing opportunities and design choices to accommodate a variety of household types and needs.</b></p>	<p><b>FINDING –Consistent</b></p> <p>The Plan recommends that Stonington seek to diversify its housing “portfolio” and address recognized housing needs – housing that is more affordable and housing for an aging population.</p>
<p><b>Principle 3</b></p> <p><b>Concentrate development around transportation nodes and along major transportation corridors to support the viability of transportation options and land reuse.</b></p>	<p><b>FINDING – Consistent</b></p> <p>The Plan continues with the overall zoning framework of more intensive development in the village centers where development can be more readily served by transit and arterial roads.</p>
<p><b>Principle 4</b></p> <p><b>Conserve and restore the natural environment, cultural and historical resources and traditional rural lands.</b></p>	<p><b>FINDING – Consistent</b></p> <p>The Plan identifies the importance of protecting important community resources such as the natural environment, open spaces, and historical resources.</p>
<p><b>Principle 5</b></p> <p><b>Protect environmental assets critical to public health and safety.</b></p>	<p><b>FINDING – Consistent</b></p> <p>The Plan contains recommendations to protect environmental assets critical to public health and safety. In particular, the Plan stresses the importance of protecting water quality and public water supply watershed lands.</p>
<p><b>Principle 6</b></p> <p><b>Integrate planning across all levels of government to address issues on a local, regional, and statewide basis.</b></p>	<p><b>FINDING – Consistent</b></p> <p>The Plan 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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• adjacent communities</li> <li>• regional organizations</li> <li>• state agencies</li> </ul>



## Regional Plan of Conservation and Development

This Plan was also compared with the 2007 Regional Plan of Conservation and Development prepared by the Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments and found to be generally consistent with that Plan.

Regional Locational Guide Map



## Overview

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Implementation of the Plan is intended to be an on-going process. Recommended policies and future land use guidance is provided for use by Town officials, boards and commissions while conducting the routine business of the Town. The recommended tasks are actions intended to implement changes to help move Stonington in a direction for future conservation and development that is consistent with the desires of town residents.

An implementation committee chaired by the First Selectman with representatives from boards, commissions and residents would monitor the on-going implementation of plan recommendations with support from the Planning Department. Over time, changing conditions or circumstances may lead to refinements or changes to the Plan recommendations prior to the next ten-year update.

**Policy Application**



**Task Implementation**



## **16.1 Application of Policy Recommendations**

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The policy and future land-use recommendations are a core element of the Plan. It is this type of guidance that is a baseline requirement imposed by the State of Connecticut for towns to include in their Plans of Conservation and Development. This type of guidance is intended to be used over the long term to help achieve a consistency in making the day-to-day decisions of routine town business. This is very important to help guide town officials and board or commission members who may come and go from town service on a regular basis.

Although policy and future land use recommendations are intended to convey a general intent applicable for the long term, it is recognized that experience using this guidance for practical applications or future changes could lead to the need for policy refinements prior to the next scheduled update of the Plan.

The recommended policies listed in each chapter of the Plan identify a lead group as well as partners. While these may be the primary groups using the policy recommendations provided, this designation is not intended to limit use of the policy by any group that may find the guidance applicable to their area of responsibility. If during the course of applying policy recommendations to practical applications, it is determined that a refinement is needed, the designated group would take the lead to propose a change through the implementation committee to the PZC.

Future land use guidance may be used by a wide variety of groups and Town officials; and if changing circumstances lead to a need for a refinement in this area, any group may propose an interim change through the implementation committee for consideration by the PZC.

The importance of recommended policies and land use guidance merit a formal revision or amendment to the Plan if needed during the period prior to the next ten-year update. If the PZC concurs with the need for any proposed interim changes regarding policies and future land use, the PZC shall conduct a formal change process for the Plan in accordance with applicable general statutes.

## 16.2 Implementation of Task Recommendations

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Recommended tasks are not required to be included in POCDs per State regulations, but tasks are included in this Plan as they are considered important actions to help implement future change in Stonington. In the table of recommended tasks, each specific task identifies a lead group and partners who are expected to carry out the implementation of the task. Through the review and approval process for this 2015 update to the Plan, the various groups identified as task leads have acknowledged this responsibility for implementation. Upon formal approval of the 2015 Plan, task lead groups are expected to prioritize recommended tasks and establish a schedule for accomplishment. It is recognized that some tasks may be accomplished in the near term while others may require a long-term plan.

Task lead groups are expected to take the actions required to carry out the intent of each specific task. This process may require further definition and refinement of the scope of the task or refinement of those who are required to help with the task; that is considered a normal part of the implementation process. Over time, a specific task may no longer be supportive of long-range goals; and ideas for new or modified tasks may emerge. In any case, task lead groups may propose task changes as needed for consideration by the Implementation Committee. A main objective for task lead groups is to keep recommended or modified task actions moving forward one way or another.

**Task Implementation**



**Task Completion**



## 16.3 Implementation Committee

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It is recommended that an Implementation Committee be established within 90 days of Plan approval to oversee the implementation of the policies and tasks recommended in the Plan. Upon adoption of this Plan, the existing POCD Implementation Committee should be disbanded. It is important that committee members have a vested interest in the success of this plan and that the Committee remain active over the long period of the Plan to encourage its on-going implementation.

It is recommended that the Implementation Committee be chaired by the First Selectman, and that members be representatives selected by various boards and commissions that are primary stakeholders in implementing recommended policies and tasks. It is recommended that initial committee membership include the First Selectman, representatives from the PZC, CC, EDC and others to be determined based on the policies and tasks. It is also recommended that three residents be selected by the Board of Selectmen to participate on the committee. Once established, the committee would determine its detail procedures and make adjustments to future membership as may be needed. This type of committee offers a unique opportunity for various town officials, boards and commission members, as well as residents, to communicate and work together on a regular and on-going basis in shaping Stonington's future.

It is recommended that the committee would meet at least twice a year, and group representatives would provide a schedule and status of specific tasks. If needed, representatives would propose changes to specific policies or tasks for endorsement by the committee. Committee endorsed changes to recommended policies would be provided to the PZC for formal action as required. Committee endorsed changes to recommended tasks would be provided back to the lead group for their action as required.

The committee would be administratively supported by the Planning Department which would maintain a master file of the status of recommended tasks. The file would be updated on an on-going basis by the Planning Department to reflect the schedule, status and any specific changes or accomplishment notes for each task. The Planning Department would maintain the data in the master task file under the guidance of the Implementation Committee and make this information available to residents with periodic updates of the status file posted on the Town's website.

The implementation guidance provided herein is considered recommended Plan policy. Upon approval of the 2015 Plan, proposed changes to implementation policy provided herein may be endorsed by the Implementation Committee for consideration and formal action as required by the PZC.



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## Overview

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

In preparing this Plan, a great deal of information was collected, presented, reviewed and discussed. Many meetings were held to assess issues in Stonington and discuss alternative strategies. Through this work, an overall vision and general goals and policies were developed. Finally, specific strategies were prepared and refined.

However, it is important to realize that the most important step of the planning process is implementation of the recommendations. While the task of implementation rests with all Stonington residents, the realization of the Plan is orchestrated by the Planning and Zoning Commission and other Town agencies and officials.

The Plan is intended as a guide to be followed in order to enhance the quality of life and the community character of Stonington. It is intended to be flexible in order to allow adjustments in the manner that specific goals and objectives are achieved while maintaining stability in the long-term goals of the community.

During the next few years, some of the goals will hopefully be achieved, some circumstances will undoubtedly change and some conditions will certainly arise that will suggest that it is time to reconsider the Plan or some of its elements. Such situations are to be welcomed since it will mean that the Plan is being used by residents.

Programs that help achieve community consensus, establish community goals and promote community welfare will all turn out to be positive steps in the history of Stonington.



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

## The Residents of Stonington and the

### Plan of Conservation and Development Subcommittee

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Sara Lathrop	<i>Chair</i>
Wendy Bury	<i>Vice Chair</i>
Robert Birmingham	
Walter Grant	
William Lyman	
Robert Mohr	
Curtis Lynch	<i>PZC Liaison</i>
John Prue	<i>Former Member</i>
Alisa Morrison	<i>Former Member</i>
James Kelley	<i>Former Member</i>

### Planning and Zoning Commission

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Ben Tamsky	<i>Chair</i>
John Prue	<i>Vice Chair</i>
Frances Hoffman	<i>Secretary</i>
Curtis Lynch	
Robert Mercer	
Shaun Savoie	<i>Alternate</i>
A. Gardner Young	<i>Alternate</i>
Robert Marseglia	<i>Former Chair</i>

### Department of Planning

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Keith A. Brynes, AICP	<i>Town Planner</i>
Candace Palmer, CZEO	<i>Zoning / Wetlands Enforcement Officer</i>
Gayle Phoenix, CZET	<i>Planning and Zoning Clerk</i>
Kathy Tallardy, CZET	<i>Inland Wetlands/ZBA Clerk</i>

### Board of Selectmen

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George Crouse	<i>First Selectman</i>
Robert Simmons	<i>Selectman</i>
Michael Spellman	<i>Selectman</i>
Edward Haberek, Jr	<i>Former First Selectman</i>
Glee McAnanly	<i>Former Selectman</i>

# LEADER / PARTNER KEY



Name	
AC	Agricultural Commission
ADRB	Architectural Design Review Board
AHC	Affordable Housing Commission
BOE	Board of Education
BOF	Board of Finance
BOS	Board of Selectmen
BTF	Bicycle Task Force
CC	Conservation Commission
COC	Chambers of Commerce
CRTF	Coastal Resilience Task Force
DEEP	CT Dept. of Energy and Environmental Protection
DHS	Dept. of Human Services
DOP	Dept. of Planning
DOT	CT Dept. of Transportation
DPW	Dept. of Public Works
EDC	Economic Development Commission
EMD	Emergency Management Director
EMS	Emergency Medical Services

Name	
FD	Fire Districts
HMC	Harbor Management Commissions
HS	Historical Societies
IWWC	Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commission
PC	Police Commission
PCTB	Permanent Committee to Study the Needs and Use of Town Public Buildings
PZC	Planning & Zoning Commission
RC	Recreation Commission
SC	Shellfish Commission
SEAT	Southeastern Area Transit
SHA	Stonington Housing Authority
SW	Solid Waste Dept.
STF	Stormwater Taskforce
TS	Town Sanitarian
WC	Waterfront Commission
WP	Water Providers
WPCA	Water Pollution Control Authority
ZBA	Zoning Board of Appeals

