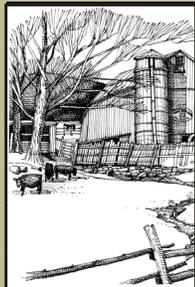
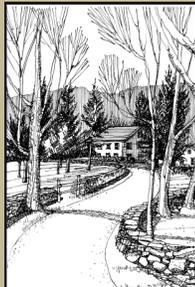
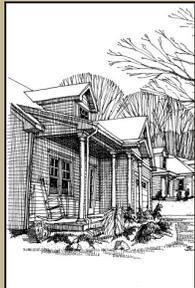
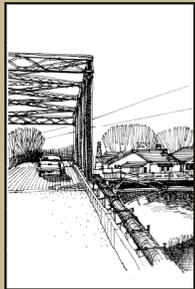


# Westbrook, Connecticut

## Plan of Conservation and Development

ADOPTED JUNE 30, 2011  
EFFECTIVE JULY 15, 2011



# Planning Team

## Steering Committee

Lee Archer – Zoning Commission  
Eve Barakos – Zoning Board of Appeals  
Lee Bridgewater – Regional Planning  
Commission / Board of Education  
Darlene Briggs – Economic Development  
Commission / Chamber of Commerce /  
Town Center Revitalization Committee  
John Britt – at large member  
Francis Burke – at large member  
Mark Damiani – Zoning Board of Appeals  
Tom Elliott – Westbrook Land Trust

Sylvia Guinan – Economic Development  
Commission  
Tony Marino – Zoning Commission  
Bill Neale – Planning Commission / Regional  
Planning Commission  
Tom O'Dell – Conservation Commission  
Marcia Simon – at large member  
Marilyn Ozols – Planning Commission /  
Town Center Revitalization Committee /  
Water Pollution Control Commission  
Damian Ranelli – at large member

## Planning Commission

Marilyn Ozols  
Bill Neale  
Phil Bassett  
Ashley Jones  
Carole Ketelsen  
Marie Farrell  
Robert Furno  
Lisbeth Waldron

Chairperson  
Vice Chairperson  
Secretary  
  
Alternate  
Alternate  
Alternate

## Conservation Commission

Tom O'Dell  
Marty Marx  
Randy Bell  
Don Harger  
Bob Peterson  
John Rie

Chairman  
Vice Chairman

## Board of Selectmen

Noel Bishop  
Jim Crawford / Chris Ehlert  
John Hall III

First Selectman  
Selectman  
Selectman

## Residents of Westbrook

### Town Staff

Meg Parulis, AICP  
Nancy Rudek, CZEO

Town Planner  
Zoning Official

### Planimetrics

Glenn Chalder, AICP  
Jason Vincent, AICP  
Heidi Samokar, AICP  
Leonard Desson, GISP

President  
Vice President  
Senior Planner  
GIS Manager

This Plan and associated Maps have been developed to be viewed on the internet.

The document is available in an Adobe Acrobat .pdf format, on the Town of Westbrook website:  
[www.westbrookct.us](http://www.westbrookct.us)

The online version of this Plan is free and environmentally-friendly.

Cover and Chapter art work by Tom Elliott



## TOWN OF WESTBROOK

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WESTBROOK, CONNECTICUT 06498  
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July 15, 2011

This document is a testament to the dedicated staff, volunteers and citizenry who offered their insights, ideas, suggestions and opinions on making Westbrook a better place. It not only provides critical guidance for decision makers going forward, but also unites the community in a common vision. We now have a clear direction to focus our respective efforts and can be confident of a positive and meaningful outcome. The Plan has been endorsed by the Regional Planning Agency, the CT Department of Environmental Protection, Office of Long Island Sound and our local Board of Selectmen.

When the Planning Commission set out to develop the Plan, it was their goal *“to create a plan that unites and inspires the community to implement it.”* With its adoption, the baton has now been passed to all Town Boards, Commissions and other agencies to carry out the recommendations in the Plan. The forthcoming Implementation Guide will help to set priorities, assign specific responsibilities and establish benchmarks against which we can measure our progress.

I trust that the same spirit that went into developing the Plan will carry forward as we work to create a Healthy Environment, a Vibrant Community and a Strong Economy. On behalf of the Town, I offer my heartfelt gratitude to all those who participated in the crafting of the 2011 Plan of Conservation and Development and to those who will take an active role in its implementation.

Sincerely,

Noel Bishop, First Selectman

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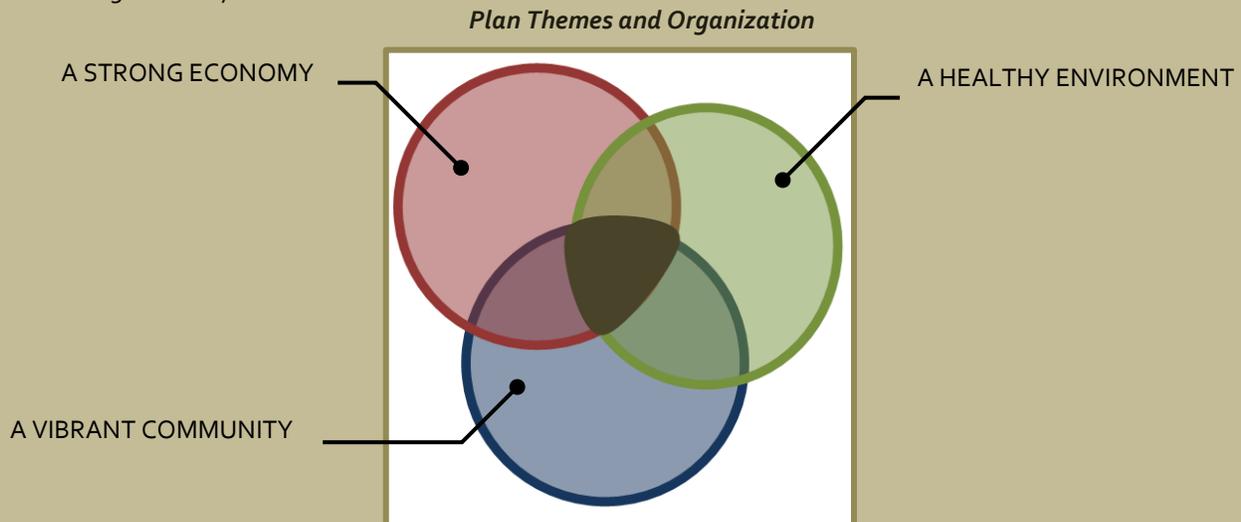
# ABOUT THIS PLAN

## How This Plan Is Organized

Westbrook is committed to the concept of being a sustainable and resilient community. In terms of the Plan, “sustainable” means that current environmental, economic, and social factors that contribute to the overall quality of life and ambience of the community will continue for future generations. The word “resilient” means that the community will retain the ability to adapt to stress or change.

The strategic recommendations of the Plan are organized around three themes that are key components of the concepts of “sustainability” and “resiliency”:

- 🌳 a Healthy Environment;
- 🌳 a Vibrant Community; and
- 🌳 a Strong Economy.



The Plan also contains:

- 🌳 an introductory chapter on “People and Place” to provide descriptive background information (before the strategic themes);
- 🌳 action summaries in each chapter; and
- 🌳 concluding chapters summarizing the map recommendations into a Future Land Use Plan and presenting implementation strategies.

# OVERVIEW

This Plan of Conservation and Development ("Plan") is a tool for guiding the future of Westbrook.

The Plan establishes a vision and common goals for the community's future and identifies action steps that, when implemented, will help attain that vision. If steadily implemented by Westbrook residents and officials, this Plan will help protect important resources, guide appropriate development, protect community character, and enhance the quality of life for current and future Westbrook residents.

In addition to being an overall guide for the community, the Plan is a legal document adopted by the Planning Commission pursuant to Section 8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes. The Plan is advisory in nature and provides guidance for Town decisions related to land use regulations and capital improvements.

## Guiding Principles

The guiding principles for the Plan were based on input from and discussion by residents and various participants throughout the planning process.

Westbrook intends to balance conservation and growth while ensuring the long-term social, economic and environmental health and vitality of the community. To achieve this, Westbrook will:

- strive to maintain a small town feel;
- guide growth to areas where growth is most appropriate;
- develop well-planned green space that increases property values and decreases the costs of public infrastructure and services;
- protect natural resources because they are an integral component of community character and well-being;
- value Long Island Sound as a community asset of statewide and national significance; and
- embrace the Town Center as the heart of community, a social gathering spot that is a visual representation of community pride and New England heritage.

The requirement for a community to prepare and adopt a Plan of Conservation and Development every ten years is contained in Section 8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes.

While the statutes require that the Planning Commission prepare a Plan, the main reason that Westbrook prepared this Plan was to establish a pro-active approach to guide the community's future.

For any municipality that is contiguous to Long Island Sound, such plan shall be:

- consistent with the municipal coastal program requirements of sections 22a-101 to 22a-104, inclusive;
- made with reasonable consideration for restoration and protection of the ecosystem and habitat of Long Island Sound; and
- designed to reduce hypoxia, pathogens, toxic contaminants and floatable debris in Long Island Sound.

## Plan Development Process

### Steering Committee:

- held public input meetings;
- reviewed and discussed research booklets;
- developed goals and strategies;
- prepared and conducted a survey;
- created and reviewed draft Plan; and
- forwarded draft to Planning Commission for review and approval

### Planning Commission

- reviewed draft Plan;
- held Public Information Meeting on draft Plan;
- forwarded to Board of Selectmen and others for required review;
- held public hearing on adoption of Plan; and
- adopted Plan and set effective date.

### Resident Survey

Westbrook conducted a survey as part of this planning process. The survey results confirmed many of the issues and strategies contained in this Plan.

# Background Information

## Why Plan?

Planning is something that people and organizations perform regularly to prepare for future challenges and opportunities. Communities are no different. Planning allows a community to focus on the 'bigger picture' and identify significant goals, coordinate efforts, produce results, and achieve efficiency and economy in implementation.

### Planning helps Westbrook:

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

## How This Plan Was Prepared

This Plan was prepared by a Steering Committee comprised of representatives of various Town boards and commissions. The Committee solicited input from the public, other boards and commissions, and from Town agencies and officials. The Steering Committee used this input to guide their discussions and deliberations, draft the Plan and then forward the Plan to the Planning Commission for consideration and adoption.

The Planning Commission then reviewed the Plan, held a public information meeting and initiated the formal adoption process. The Commission held a public hearing on adoption on June 27, 2011 and adopted the plan on June 30, 2011 with an effective date of July 15, 2011.

## Supporting Documents and Information

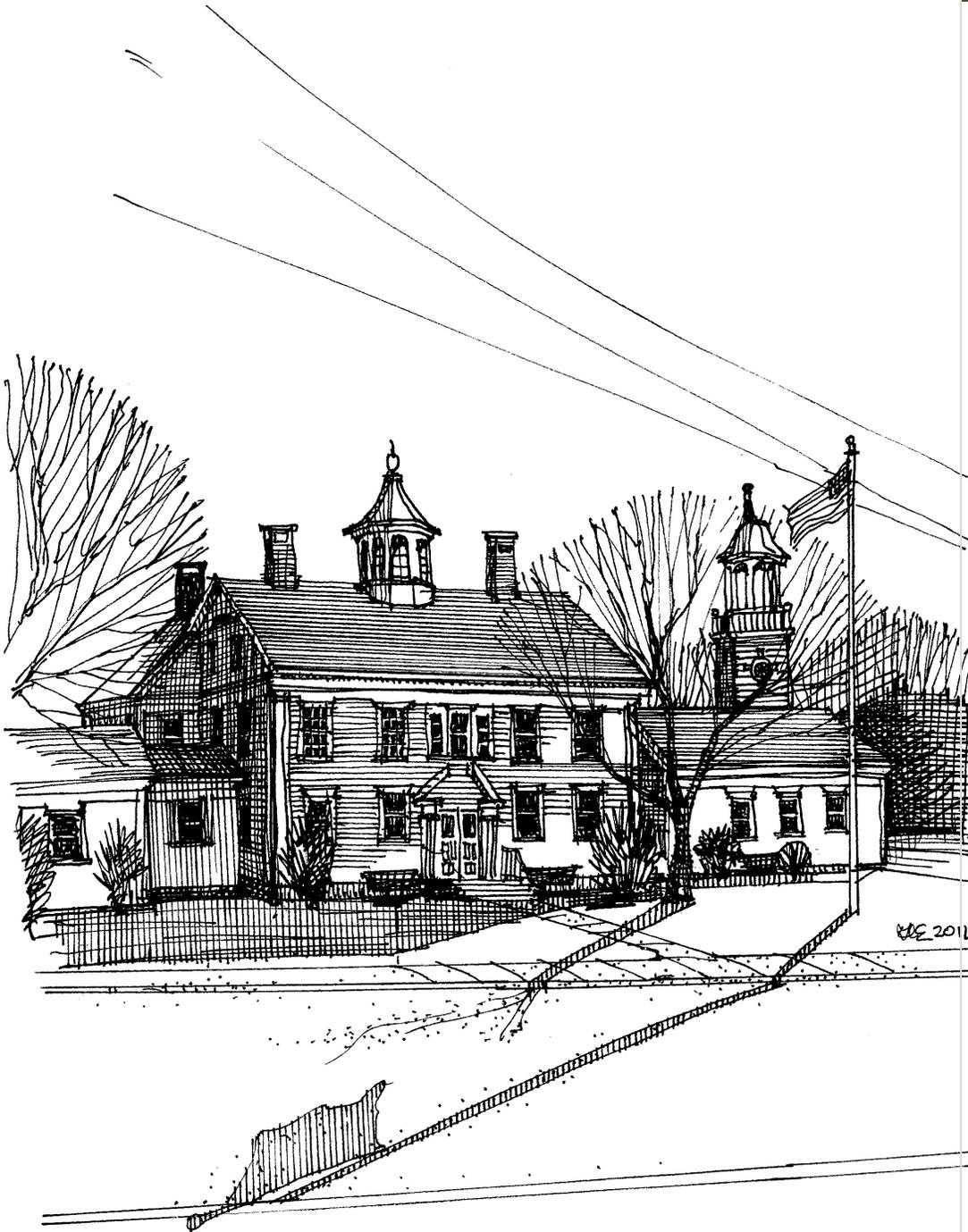
This Plan of Conservation and Development is a strategic document – that is, it focuses on where Westbrook intends to go from here.

As a result, much of the inventory and assessment information which was used to formulate the strategies will be found in background documents that collectively make up the Town's "Planning Library." The Planning Library is a collection of information that provides background and more detailed information about topics in this Plan. Documents in the Planning Library include, or will include:

- the Coastal Resources Management Plan;
- the Hazard Mitigation Plan;
- various flood studies;
- the Sewer Avoidance Plan;
- the Strategic Energy Management Plan;
- the Historic and Architectural Resource Survey;
- the Affordable Housing Study;
- the Route 1 Corridor Study;
- the Sidewalk Plan;
- plans related to the Town Center revitalization; and
- Census information.

# PEOPLE AND PLACE

# 1



John P. Riggio Building

## History of Planning In Westbrook

**1956** – In response to rapid growth, Westbrook establishes a Planning and Zoning Commission and adopts zoning and subdivision regulations.

**1960** – Planning and Zoning Commission splits into two commissions. Planning Commission works on a Plan of Development but it is not adopted.

**1968** – Planning Commission undertakes preparation of a Plan of Development but it also is not adopted.

**1977** – First formal adoption of a Plan in Westbrook (Plan of Development, Past, Present and Future)

**1982** – Master Plan of Development with Municipal Coastal Program is adopted

**1990** – Plan of Development with Municipal Coastal Program is adopted.

During this timeframe, additional planning studies were also undertaken.

## History

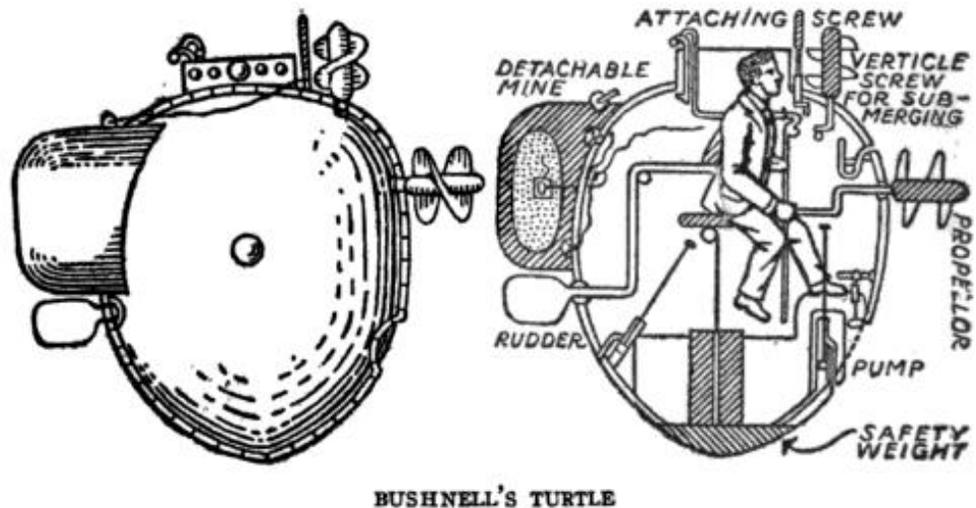
Westbrook was initially inhabited by Native Americans who hunted and fished in this area. Historic information suggests a large Native American settlement was located at Hawk's Nest, now known as Pilot's Point.

A European settlement was established at the mouth of the Connecticut River by 1635 and the settled area expanded as population grew. What is now known as Westbrook was first occupied about 1648 as the Oyster River Quarter of the Town of Saybrook. While first used as farm and pasture land for residents living on Saybrook Point, permanent settlement soon followed as people chose to live closer to their land.

In 1724, the residents of the area successfully petitioned to have their own church rather than to have to travel to Saybrook. The "West Parish" was the first measure of independence for the residents of this area. At the time, most residents were occupied as subsistence farmers and fishermen. Early industries included making barrel staves and some boat building. In 1840, Westbrook was incorporated as its own municipality and the separation from Old Saybrook was complete.

With the arrival of rail service in 1852, Westbrook became more connected to areas beyond its borders. While initially used to import and export products, Westbrook's coastal location and improved access caused it to become a resort destination as people from other areas sought summer houses along the shore. This new prosperity and population growth resulted in the establishment of a trolley line which ran from Old Saybrook westerly to Branford.

One of Westbrook's contributions to the American Revolutionary war was the "Turtle" submarine, made by David Bushnell a Westbrook resident (see sketch below).



Wikipedia

Change accelerated after the Second World War as the increasing availability of the automobile and a trend toward suburbanization increased the number of people who could live in Westbrook and work elsewhere. The completion of Interstate 95 in the late 1950s and Route 9 in the 1960s contributed to overall growth. From 1960 to 2010 the total population of Westbrook grew from about 1,550 people to almost 7,000 year-round residents.

Originally an agricultural community, Westbrook has grown and evolved into a more diverse community as a result of improved transportation systems. In the last 50 years, people have been attracted to Westbrook due to:

- ✿ proximity to employment centers (including Hartford and New Haven);
- ✿ ease of transportation;
- ✿ availability of housing that is more affordable than in other shoreline towns;
- ✿ quality of education; and
- ✿ rural character, coastal character and overall quality of life.

These attributes are expected to support a demand for additional growth in Westbrook in the future.



Seaside Avenue

Connecticut Historical Society



# Geography

Westbrook, Connecticut is located along the shore of Long Island Sound. The Town is bordered by Old Saybrook to the east, by Essex and Deep River to the north, by Killingworth to the northwest, and by Clinton to the west.

Westbrook is approximately 21 square miles in area, with about 16 square miles of land area. Westbrook is a scenic community that has retained elements of its agricultural and maritime past. The Town's location along major transportation routes coupled with its shoreline and beaches continues to attract new residents and visitors to the Town.

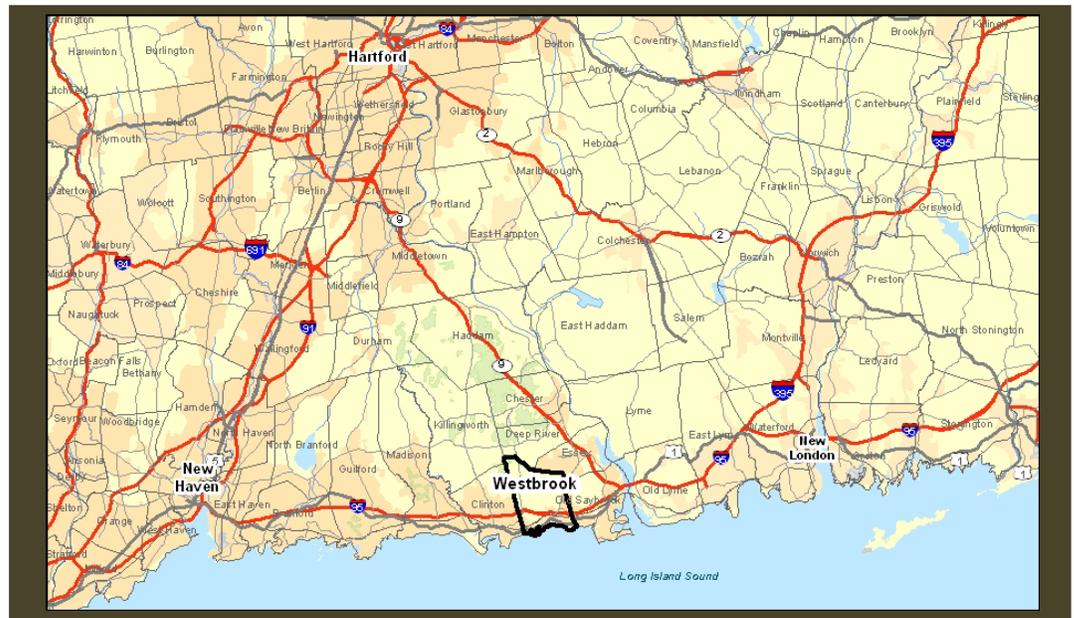
## Regional Connections

Westbrook is located in Middlesex County and is a member of the Connecticut River Estuary Regional Planning Agency (CRERPA). The regional planning agency has been active in transportation planning issues.

Westbrook is also located in the Middlesex County Economic Development Region and is considered part of the Lower River Labor Market Area.

As mentioned earlier, Interstate 95 and Route 9 have greatly improved access to and from Westbrook. As a result, Westbrook residents commute to jobs located over a wide area. Conversely, residents of towns in Middlesex, New Haven and New London Counties come to Westbrook to work.

*Location Map*

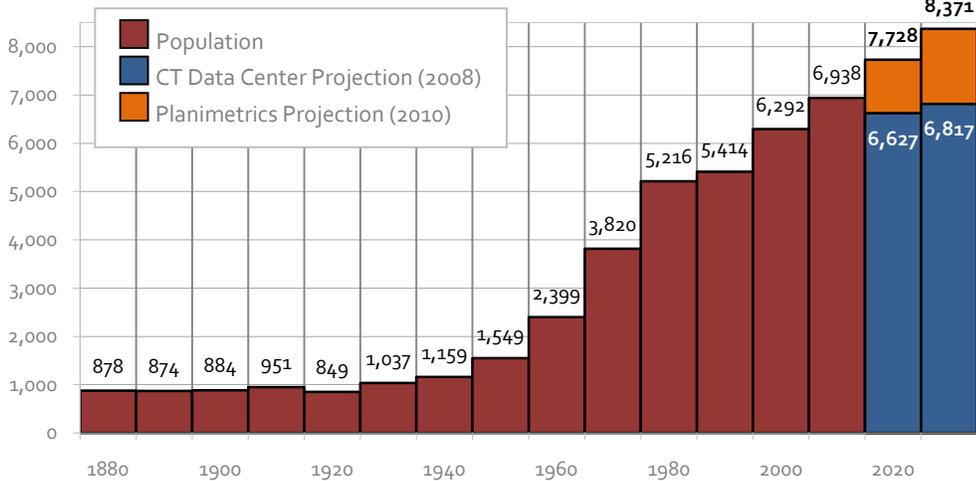


# People of Westbrook

According to the Census, Westbrook had 6,938 residents in 2010. This represents an increase of 747 people since the 2000 Census.

While the magnitude of projected growth varies, population projections indicate that Westbrook will continue to grow through 2030. Projected growth rates range from -2 to 20 percent.

Population in Westbrook 1880 – 2000 (Projections to 2030)

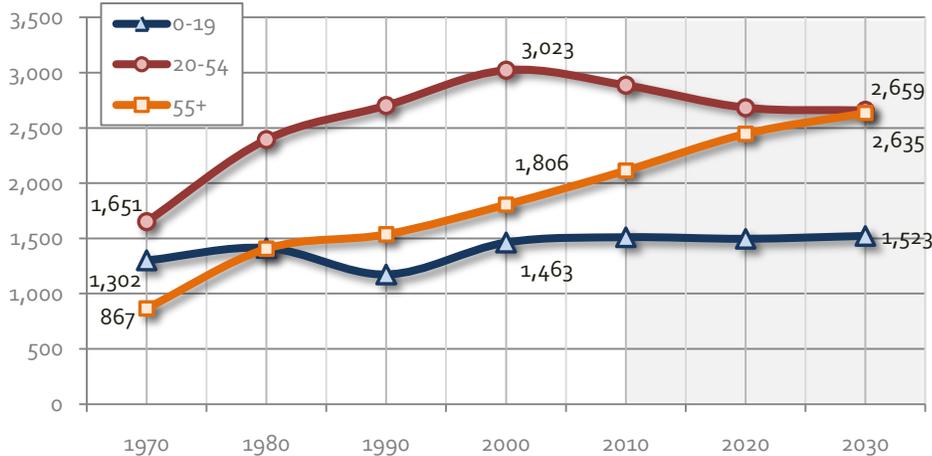


1970 - 2000 Census; 2010-2030 Projections by CT Data Center (2007)

Overall population growth is important, but how Westbrook’s age composition is changing may have greater implications, especially if it affects the need for municipal services. Over the next 20 years (to 2030), it is anticipated that Westbrook will experience:

- ✿ a fairly stable share of younger residents (school age population);
- ✿ a decrease in the share of adults aged 20-54 (due to the aging of the “baby boom” – people born between 1946 and 1964); and
- ✿ an increase in the share of residents aged 55 and older.

Change in Population by Age Cohort



1970 - 2000 Census; 2010-2030 Projections by CT Data Center (2007)

## About the Data

This Plan uses the most recently available data.

It is important to examine trends over time in Westbrook. However, because this section compiles data from a variety of sources, it is not always possible to use consistent time frames. Rather, the analysis relies upon the best available data.

Data sources include:

- US Census (in most cases 2000 data; 2010 data not available at the time of adoption)
- CT State Data Center
- CT Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD)
- Connecticut Economic Resource Center (CERC)
- The Warren Group (a subscription real estate data service)

**Change in Housing Units**

		% Change
1990	3,231	--
2000	3,460	+7%
2010	3,937	+14%
TOTAL 2000-2010		477

Census 1990; 2010

**Household Size**

1970	3.00
1980	2.57
1990	2.39
2000	2.39
2010	2.29

Middlesex County	2.43
State	2.53

Census 1990; 2000, 2010

**Tenure**

Owner-occupied	73%
Renter-occupied	27%

Census 2000

**Other Housing in Westbrook**

Jensen	57
Mobile homes	200
Apartments	244

**8-30g Affordable Housing Threshold**

In order to qualify as a recognized affordable unit under Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) Section 8-30g, a dwelling must be:

- assisted housing (funded under a State or Federal program);
- CHFA-financed housing (financed under a program for income-qualifying persons or families); or,
- housing that is deed-restricted to be affordable to low- or moderate-income persons or families for at least 40 years.

8-30g does not apply when a community has 10 percent of its housing stock as recognized affordable housing

**Median Sales Price Data Source**

The Warren Group, a company that collects and publishes information about Connecticut real estate.

# Housing in Westbrook

**Existing Housing Stock**

There were about 3,937 housing units in Westbrook in 2010, according to the Census.

According to the 2000 Census (the latest detailed information) the majority of the housing units (80 percent) were single-family units. Of the year-round units, 73 percent were owner-occupied. Approximately 730 housing units were kept for seasonal or recreational use. The continuing conversion of these seasonal units to year-round occupancy may have implications for municipal services, coastal flood hazard area management, and wastewater treatment.

**Affordable Housing**

The median sales price of single family homes in Westbrook in 2010 (\$266,750) was higher than the state figure (\$225,000). This is a reduction from the peak median sales value of \$385,000 in 2007. Given the slowdown in the housing market starting in 2008 and continuing into 2011, it is likely that, for the near future, housing growth and value in Westbrook will not match that of past decades.

In 2008, about 5 percent of Westbrook’s housing stock (178 units) was classified as “affordable” by the state’s definition (see 8-30g affordable housing threshold sidebar). Westbrook is below the state guideline of 10 percent. Because of state rules, this does not include mobile home parks or other naturally-occurring affordable housing.

*Types of State Recognized Affordable Housing In Westbrook (2008)*

2000 CENSUS HOUSING UNITS	GOVERNMENTALLY ASSISTED UNITS	CHFA MORTGAGES	DEED RESTRICTED	TOTAL ASSISTED	PERCENT
3,460	143	11	24	178	5.14%

Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development

**Potential Housing Growth**

A build-out analysis conducted as part of the planning process found that, under current regulations, Westbrook may eventually be a community of about 4,800 housing units. This estimate is predicated on potential build-out of the 2,225 acres of residentially-zoned land that is free of environmental constraints and is either vacant, over-sized, or presently used for other purposes.

As part of any estimate of future residential growth, it is also important to consider that some seasonal units may also be converted to year-round units.

# Economy of Westbrook

According to the Connecticut Economic Resource Center, there were approximately 3,800 jobs in Westbrook in 2007.

About 60 percent of these jobs were related to wholesale / retail trade or services. Another 25 percent of local jobs were in manufacturing companies. This heavy reliance on these sectors of the economy could make Westbrook’s economy vulnerable to economic changes that affect these types of businesses.

BUSINESS SECTOR	ESTABLISHMENTS	EMPLOYMENT (JOBS)
Agriculture	4.5%	3.0%
Construction and Mining	10.7%	3.5%
Manufacturing	4.5%	24.2%
Transportation and Utilities	3.6%	5.9%
Wholesale and Retail Trade	33.0%	27.8%
Finance, Insurance and Real Estate	4.9%	2.4%
Services	33.9%	31.1%
Government	4.9%	2.1%
	100%	100%

CERC

Westbrook imports workers from other communities. While 461 new jobs were created from 1990 to 2000, Westbrook residents continued to hold the same percentage of jobs (26 percent). The remainder of local jobs are filled by residents of other communities.

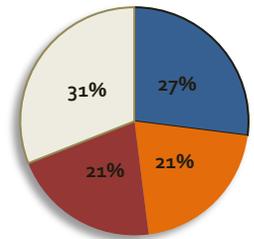
In 2000, about 25 percent of Westbrook residents worked in Westbrook, which represents little change from the 1990 Census. In 1990, the second most popular work destination for Westbrook residents was Old Saybrook. This changed in 2000, as more commuters worked further away in New Haven County.

## Top Five Employers

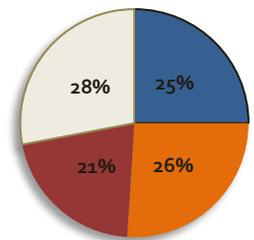
- The Lee Co.
- IPC Communications
- Tanger Outlet Center
- Valley-Shore YMCA
- Waters Edge

CERC 2008

## Where Workers Commute From, 2000



## Where Westbrook Residents Work, 2000



- Westbrook
- East
- North
- West

Census

**Parcels with Additional Development Potential (Depicted on the Existing Land Use Map on Page 11)**

These lots may have additional development potential because they exceed the minimum lot size for the zone in which they are located. Challenges include meeting other requirements such as road frontage.

The Existing Land Use Map on the facing page is an inventory of land uses. This is not a policy map.

## Land Use in Westbrook

Westbrook contains about 10,352 acres (16 square miles) of land area. Almost two-thirds of this area is devoted to different types of uses (e.g., residential, business, dedicated open space) and about one-third is vacant or potentially available for future development.

Of the land area that is committed to a use, most of it is devoted to residential uses.

The community is predominantly residential with about 27 percent of land used for residential purposes. About 24 percent of the land area is existing open space and agriculture.

LAND USE	ACRES	SUBTOTAL	PERCENT
<b>Residential</b>		<b>2,741</b>	<b>26%</b>
Single Family Residential	2,644		
Multi-family Development	85		
Mobile Home Park	12		
<b>Business</b>		<b>690</b>	<b>7%</b>
<b>Open Space / Agriculture</b>		<b>2,497</b>	<b>24%</b>
Existing Open Space	1,914		
Commercial Agriculture	326		
Agriculture	257		
<b>Community Facilities / Institutional</b>		<b>257</b>	<b>3%</b>
Town Owned Land (non-open space)	115		
Institutional	65		
Cemeteries	77		
<b>Other</b>		<b>758</b>	<b>7%</b>
Right of Way (e.g., roads, railroad)	623		
Water	98		
Utility	37		
<b>Vacant</b>		<b>3,409</b>	<b>33%</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>10,352</b>		

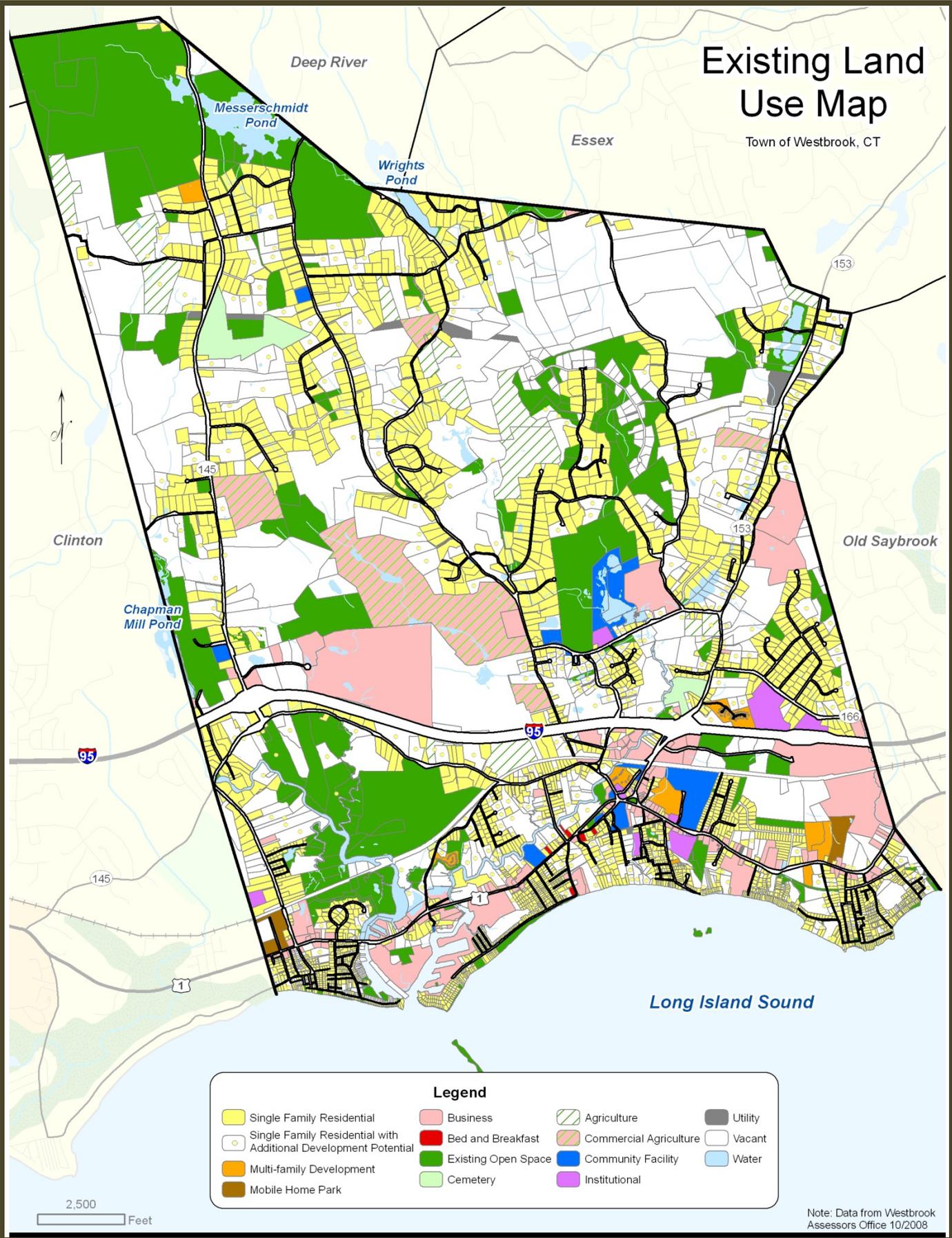
Assessor's Office

Some residential land use patterns were set before zoning was enacted in 1956. This includes the dense single-family houses and cottages on the shore. Other residential patterns resulted due to zoning – much of the larger lot single-family pattern seen away from the shore occurred after 1956.

Business land uses are clustered around the Town Center at the intersection of Routes 1 and 153. Business development is also located along Route 1 and at the highway interchanges.

# Existing Land Use Map

Town of Westbrook, CT



Legend			
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:yellow; border:1px solid black;"></span> Single Family Residential	<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:lightcoral; border:1px solid black;"></span> Business	<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background: repeating-linear-gradient(45deg, transparent, transparent 2px, lightgreen 2px, lightgreen 4px); border:1px solid black;"></span> Agriculture	<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:gray; border:1px solid black;"></span> Utility
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; border:1px solid black; border-style:dashed;"></span> Single Family Residential with Additional Development Potential	<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:red; border:1px solid black;"></span> Bed and Breakfast	<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background: repeating-linear-gradient(-45deg, transparent, transparent 2px, lightgreen 2px, lightgreen 4px); border:1px solid black;"></span> Commercial Agriculture	<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:white; border:1px solid black;"></span> Vacant
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:orange; border:1px solid black;"></span> Multi-family Development	<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:green; border:1px solid black;"></span> Existing Open Space	<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:blue; border:1px solid black;"></span> Community Facility	<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:lightblue; border:1px solid black;"></span> Water
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:darkorange; border:1px solid black;"></span> Mobile Home Park	<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:lightgreen; border:1px solid black;"></span> Cemetery	<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:purple; border:1px solid black;"></span> Institutional	

2,500 Feet

Note: Data from Westbrook Assessors Office 10/2008

# A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

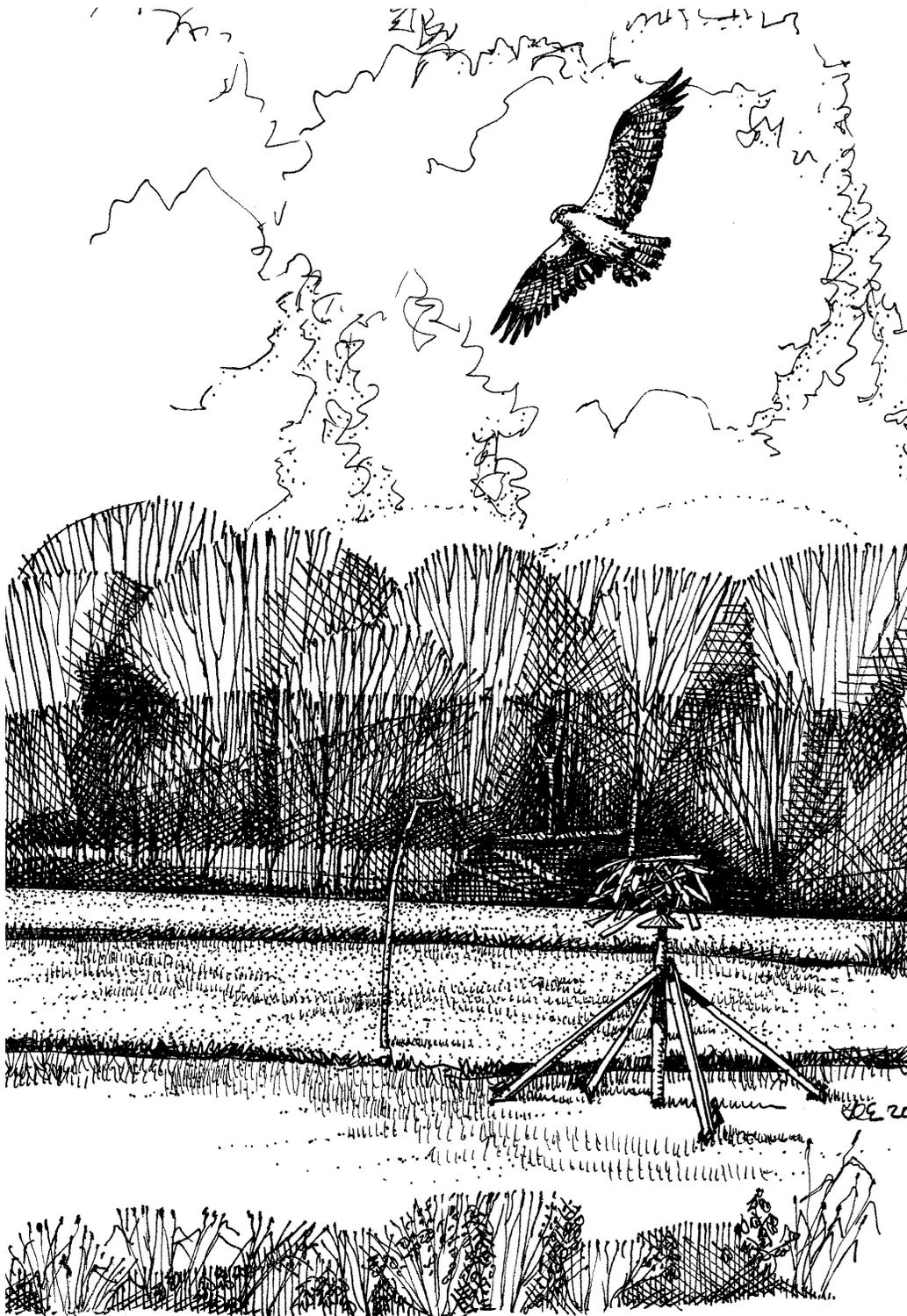
Westbrook's Goals for a Healthy Environment Include:



# THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

# 2

*Protect natural resources...*



Tidal Marsh

Strategies to move forward with a “green infrastructure” approach are outlined in this chapter.

Later chapters focus on detailed strategies to protect specific natural resources and open space.

### Green Infrastructure

The term “Green Infrastructure”, as used in this Plan, is intended to describe the comprehensive natural system rather than site specific strategies such as the use of low impact development techniques discussed later in this Chapter.

## Maintain and Enhance our “Green Infrastructure”

Westbrook’s natural features and open space collectively form what the Plan refers to as the community’s “green infrastructure.”

“Green infrastructure” is Westbrook’s natural life support system – an interconnected network of waterways, wetlands, woodlands and forests, wildlife habitats and other natural areas; greenways, parks and other conservation lands; working farms and forests; and other open spaces. Together, these resources support native species, maintain natural ecological processes, sustain air and water resources and contribute to environmental health and quality of life.

As Westbrook has grown and developed, there is less land available to perform these functions. It is not hard to see that if this trend continues, eventually, there will not be enough land to provide the natural life support system Westbrook desires. As a result, a more holistic “green infrastructure” approach is warranted in order to preserve our natural resources, protect community character and enhance our quality of life.

#### NATURAL RESOURCE ELEMENTS OF WESTBROOK’S GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

	Water (Watercourses and Long Island Sound)
	Wetlands (Tidal and inland wetlands)
	Floodzones (100 year and 500 year floodplains)
	Steep slopes (slopes with >20 percent grade)
	Natural Diversity Areas (Unique or special habitat areas)
	Public Water Supply Resources (Aquifers / groundwater recharge areas that might have sufficient water to serve as a public water supply, or are serving as a public water supply)
	Contiguous forested areas (forested areas >250 acres)

Westbrook should strive to maintain the integrity of its “green infrastructure” for the benefit of current residents and future generations. While the map on the facing page depicts the location of the natural resource elements listed above, a natural resource inventory could help advance the knowledge about important resources.

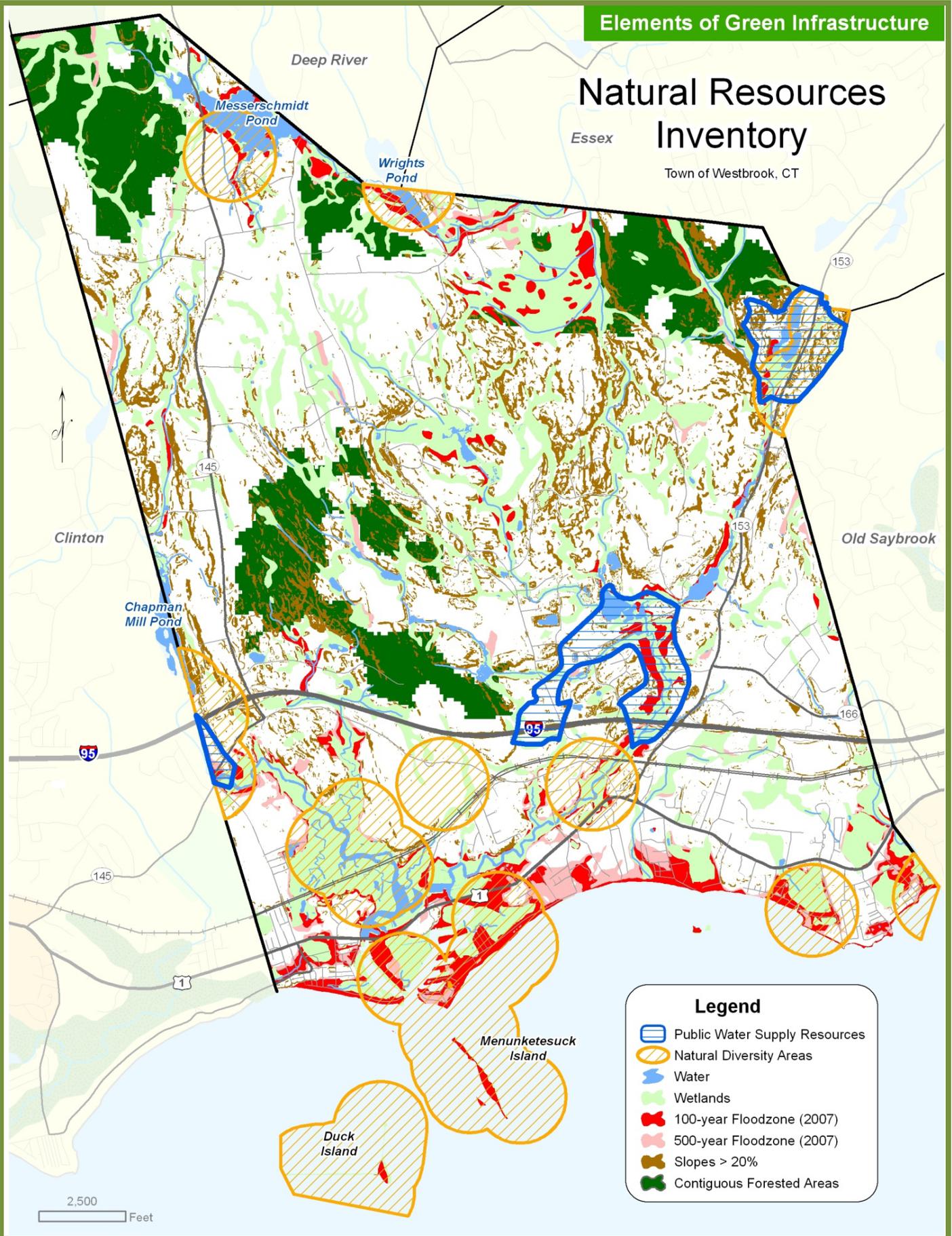
This “green infrastructure” approach can help forge a connection between land conservation and land use planning because it protects natural resources and can help promote more efficient and sustainable land use patterns. This “green infrastructure” approach should be integrated into land use decision-making and serve as a guide for land use regulation updates, development reviews, and open space acquisition evaluations.

Since this holistic view of “green infrastructure” transcends municipal boundaries, the Town should coordinate efforts with neighboring communities, the region and the state. Coordination with land trusts and other conservation organizations will also be important because of the important role such organizations play in natural resource protection.

Elements of Green Infrastructure

# Natural Resources Inventory

Town of Westbrook, CT



### Legend

- Public Water Supply Resources
- Natural Diversity Areas
- Water
- Wetlands
- 100-year Floodzone (2007)
- 500-year Floodzone (2007)
- Slopes > 20%
- Contiguous Forested Areas

## Plan for a Comprehensive Open Space System

Westbrook intends to devote efforts to create a meaningful overall open space system since such lands:

- ✿ help preserve the natural life support system which is integral to the concept of “green infrastructure”;
- ✿ help preserve and protect the overall ambience of the community; and
- ✿ provide opportunities for residents and visitors to go for walks in the woods and experience nature.

In meetings during the planning process, Westbrook residents identified open space preservation as a high-priority issue. Currently, 18 percent of land in Westbrook is designated as open space. An additional 6 percent is used for agriculture (working lands).

The specific components of this open space system include:

OPEN SPACE ELEMENTS OF WESTBROOK’S GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE	
<b>Existing Open Space</b>	Lands currently preserved as open space
<b>Greenways</b>	Desired corridors for pedestrian, bicycle and equestrian linkages between open spaces and other destinations
<b>Blueways</b>	Desired water “trails” that have launch points and points of interest
<b>Potential Links</b>	A smaller greenway that could connect hubs
<b>Gateways</b>	The main entrance to a hub or a link
<b>Hubs</b>	Large areas of existing and desired open space, large forested tracts or working lands that are recognized places in Westbrook (e.g., Cockaponset State Forest)
<b>Working Lands</b>	Land Used for agriculture (e.g., greenhouses, equestrian facilities, forestry)

A map showing the location of these elements is presented on the facing page. It depicts Westbrook’s vision for open space and highlights opportunities for enhancing Westbrook’s open space system. The map is not an inventory.

This vision:

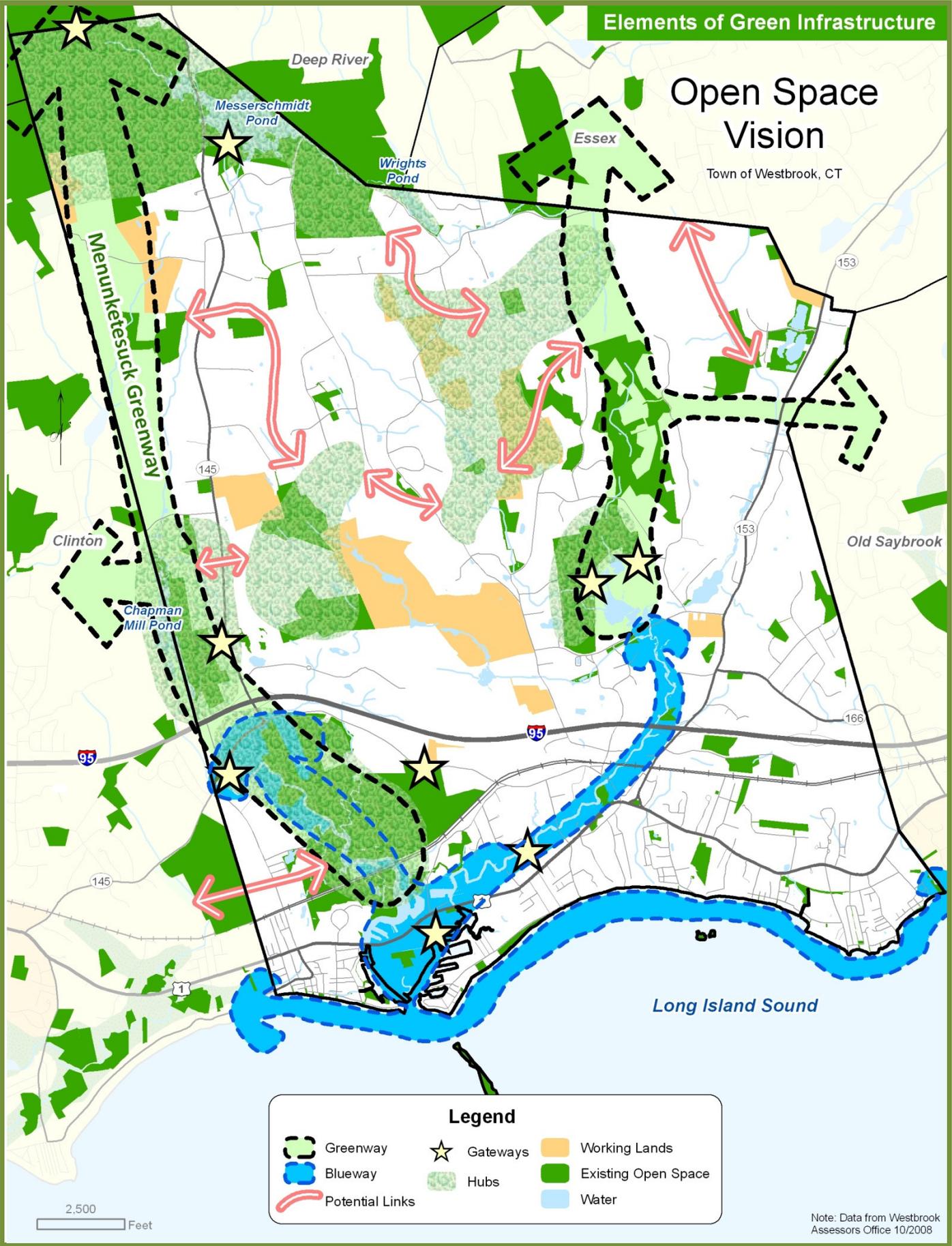
- ✿ guides future open space acquisitions;
- ✿ aids in the creation of greenways and blueways; and
- ✿ helps set priorities for the management and enhancement of existing open space.

Westbrook should develop an Open Space Plan based upon the Open Space Vision.

Elements of Green Infrastructure

# Open Space Vision

Town of Westbrook, CT



2,500 Feet

**Legend**

Greenway	Gateways	Working Lands
Blueway	Hubs	Existing Open Space
Potential Links	Water	

Note: Data from Westbrook Assessors Office 10/2008

## Open Space Funding Sources

Open space and greenway development can be funded by a number of different mechanisms, including:

- private acquisition (e.g., land trust or conservation organization);
- donation (land or easement);
- required as part of new development;
- grant funds;
- town funds; or
- any combination of these tools.

# Link Open Spaces With Greenways and Trails

Greenways can provide pedestrian, bicycle and equestrian linkages between open space parcels and between other destinations. Greenways are important components of “green infrastructure.”

Westbrook should create a cohesive overall greenway / multi-use trail system to:

- significantly enhance community character;
- improve the quality of life of residents;
- enhance the quality of the experience for visitors;
- increase accessibility for all residents and visitors;
- provide more opportunities for active or passive use; and
- provide recreational opportunities closer to where residents live.

## Create and Recognize Greenways

Westbrook’s greenways should focus on linking existing open space, community facilities, neighborhoods, recreation areas and “green infrastructure.” The Open Space Vision depicts possible greenways to accomplish these goals.

Greenways should be designed to allow use by multiple users (pedestrians, bicyclists and equestrians). Where feasible, trails should be made accessible under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Once they are established, Westbrook should publically recognize the greenways. For example, Westbrook should work to have the Menunketesuck River Greenway (and others when created) recognized by the Connecticut Greenway Council. Greenways designated by the Connecticut Greenway Council will be listed in the upcoming revision of the state Plan of Conservation and Development and may receive increased consideration for grants.

## Consider Creating Blueways

Blueways are water “trails” that have launch points and points of interest for canoeists and kayakers. They would offer a creative way to draw attention to Westbrook’s natural resources. Since Westbrook already has a number of public access points, it may be relatively simple to create blueways in the rivers by installing signs and creating maps.

# Continue to Preserve Open Space

To help preserve open space, Westbrook intends to make use of all of the tools that are available.

## Continue Requiring Open Space At The Time Of Development

When new residential subdivisions are proposed, Westbrook requires developers to use a conservation subdivision technique, where a minimum of 50 percent of the land is set aside as open space. Westbrook should continue this policy.

## Coordinate Land Dedication With The “Green Infrastructure” Concept

When reviewing residential subdivisions, the Planning Commission should compare the location of the proposed open space with the “green infrastructure” concept. If the land offered does not contribute to the open space concept or protect significant natural resources, the Commission should consider using the “fee-in-lieu-of-open-space” provisions in the subdivision regulations to accept a donation of funds. These funds then could be used to acquire open space elsewhere. Additionally, the criteria for evaluating open space contained in the regulations should be evaluated for consistency with this Plan.

For areas that are currently developed, Westbrook might consider allowing reductions in zoning requirements (e.g., minimum lot frontage, minimum lot size) if land is dedicated as open space (see sidebar). This strategy might be effective in areas along waterbodies where development has been set back from the resource and there is sufficient room to create a meaningful greenway.

## Seek Funding Sources and Additional Techniques for Open Space Acquisition

Open space acquisition can be expensive and it may be difficult to arrange municipal funding for acquisition. Westbrook has used bonding to create an open space fund. Westbrook should continue to aggressively seek creative funding sources and develop partnerships to preserve open space. The Town should also try to regularly allocate funds to the Open Space Fund and build off of the success of existing open space efforts.

The Westbrook Land Conservation Trust and other organizations, such as The Nature Conservancy, the Trust for Public Land, and the State of Connecticut are important players in the effort to preserve open space. The Town should continue to build partnerships with organizations interested in open space preservation in order to leverage funding.

## Evaluate the Use of the PA-490 Open Space Program

Undeveloped forest and working lands add considerably to the overall character of Westbrook. Even though the land may not be preserved as open space in perpetuity, it may still be an important part of the “green infrastructure”. Public Act 490 (see sidebar) can be a valuable tool to retain land in an undeveloped state. Westbrook currently uses the PA-490 forest and farmland provisions as provided by state law, but does not use the open space use assessment program. Westbrook should consider whether the open space use assessment program is an appropriate tool to temporarily preserve undeveloped land.

To implement an open space use assessment program, it must be recommended in the Plan of Conservation and Development and adopted by the legislative body (Town Meeting). There are several ways that a community can implement the open space assessment program. In Westbrook, the PA 490 open space program might focus on protecting important green infrastructure resources, such as riparian zones (mapped on page 25) and other resources.

## Zoning Reductions for Open Space

Some communities have created an Open Space Flexibility Tool in their Zoning regulations that allows property owners to reduce their lot size, below the minimum required under the conventional zone, without creating a nonconformity.

The reduction can only occur upon transfer of the excess land to the Town to be set aside for open space purposes deemed appropriate by the Town. This can be an effective way to create a greenway system without purchasing land.

## Public Act 490

In the 1960s, Connecticut recognized that increasing property taxes were making undeveloped land more expensive to own and thereby “pushing” the land into development. To address this, the state established a “use assessment” program that allows municipalities to assess certain lands based on their current use rather than potential value if developed. This policy is known as Public Act 490 and is codified as CGS Sec. 12-107e.

The PA-490 program contains three parts:

- farm land (land used for farming, criteria set by statute);
- forest land (ownership of 25 acres or more, criteria set by statute); and
- open space land (local option, criteria set by municipality).

If a property owner sells or changes its use while enrolled in the 10 year program, a penalty must be paid.

### Conservation Easement

A legally-enforceable land preservation agreement between a landowner and a government agency or a land protection organization, for the purposes of land conservation.

### Typical Elements of Management Plans for Town-owned Land

Management plans for town-owned land might include for each property:

- an inventory (e.g., significant features of the property, all information related to the properties, such as deeds, surveys);
- an assessment (e.g., parties that have rights to all or portions of the property, such as easements, the current and future use of the property, and the property's current oversight and management); and
- strategies (e.g., future use; and for future oversight and management, including budgeting).

## Manage Town-Owned Open Space and Conservation Easements

### Create Management Plans

A management plan minimizes false assumptions or expectations about the future of Town-owned land and enables the Town to clearly set forth appropriate and inappropriate uses. These plans should also address how Town-owned properties will be managed and the agency responsible for oversight and implementation of the management strategies.

There are some instances where land acquired by the Town may not have been formally designated for a specific purpose at the time of acquisition (e.g., the American Legion property on Route 1). A management plan can identify a parcel's long-term use, such as for a municipal facility, for active recreation or for passive recreation.

Developing a long-term use strategy is an important task for these properties. For open space management plans, Westbrook should develop a classification system to identify where active and passive open space areas should be located and how these areas should be managed.

### Maintain and Promote Trails

Westbrook should continue to maintain trails and develop promotional materials and maps to raise awareness about these facilities. Because trails are a valuable part of Westbrook's recreation facilities, the Town should consider providing funding for maintenance and promotional activities, for signage and for creating off-street parking. These amenities are particularly important in the Open Space Gateways.

### Manage Open Space Inventories

Westbrook's open space is owned by a number of groups including the federal government, state government, the Town, and land trusts. As a result, it is challenging to accurately track existing open space and new acquisitions and to measure progress. Westbrook should continue to use the Geographic Information System (GIS) to maintain information about open space properties.

Some of Westbrook's open space inventory is land that is subject to a conservation easement. The use of conservation easements (see sidebar) is an important open space tool that allows the land to remain in private ownership but ensures the land will be preserved. Enforcement of conservation easements can be challenging, especially if there is no inventory of the resources within the easement area, or if the easement is not clearly marked.

To help track conservation easements, the Town should conduct a baseline inventory of easement areas to identify key resources (e.g., vernal pools, stone walls, trees) and require the installation of boundary markers. Westbrook should also continue to include conservation easements in the open space inventory.

## Protect and Restore Habitat

Many areas in Westbrook were developed before environmental protection measures were in place. The Town should encourage the restoration of habitat on previously-developed sites, particularly when redevelopment is proposed. Multiple small improvements to properties can have cumulative positive impacts on the natural environment.

*The Connecticut Endangered Species Act*, passed in 1989, recognizes the importance of our state's plant and animal populations and the need to protect these species and their habitats. The CTDEP provides general data on habitat locations, but it does not provide detailed biodiversity data. With 33 percent of Westbrook undeveloped, more detailed data could help the community develop area-specific strategies to protect species and habitat and make informed decisions on development applications in habitat areas. The Town should continue to work with and seek assistance / cooperation from the CTDEP, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other natural resource organizations.

Strategies to protect habitat include limiting development near important habitat areas, minimizing the clearing and fragmentation of forests and preserving forest lands located adjacent to other preserved forest lands. Fragmentation is a particularly important issue in Westbrook. Westbrook should identify key forested areas and develop policies and programs to minimize fragmentation.

Westbrook is confronted with invasive species issues, which impact native plants and animals. The Town should assess the impact of invasive plant species on its existing resources and create a plan of action, if needed, to eradicate or control them. The Town should also prohibit the use of invasive plant species and encourage the use of native plants.



Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge



Forested Area in Westbrook

### Endangered Species

Any native species documented by biological research and inventories to be in danger of extermination throughout all or a significant portion of its range within the state, and any species determined to be an "endangered species" pursuant to the federal Endangered Species Act.

### Threatened Species

Any native species documented by biological research and inventories as likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range within the state and to have no more than nine occurrences in the state, and any species determined to be a "threatened species" pursuant to the federal Endangered Species Act.

### Species of Special Concern

Any native plant species or any native non-harvested wildlife species documented by scientific research and inventory to have a naturally restricted range or habitat in the state, to be at a low population level, to be in such high demand by humans, that its unregulated taking would be detrimental to the conservation of its population or has been extirpated from the state.

## Watersheds

All of the land that drains to a particular watercourse.

## Nonpoint Source Pollution

Water pollution that comes from many diffuse sources. It includes:

- excess fertilizers, herbicides and insecticides;
- oil, grease and toxic chemicals;
- sediment from construction sites;
- salt from deicing activities;
- bacteria from livestock, pet wastes; and
- malfunctioning septic systems.

## GROUND WATER RESOURCES PLAN –LEGEND DETAILS (see facing page)

**Manage Wastewater** in areas where septic system malfunctions have been a concern.

**Restore** water quality in areas where groundwater contamination is a concern.

**Continue to Protect** areas where Westbrook currently has land use regulations in place to protect groundwater resources; this category includes the “Public Water Supply Resources” identified on page 15.

**Protect Possible Future Water Supply** in areas identified as having a potential to serve as a public water supply because of the amount of groundwater that is potentially available.

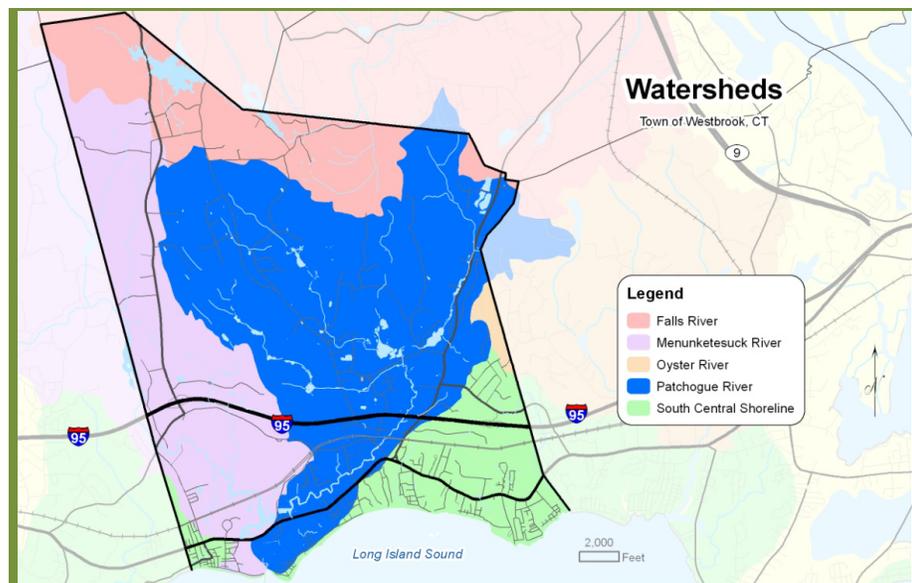
**Protect Water Supply for Individual Wells** in areas where the majority of property owners rely on private wells.

# Protect Water Resources

Water resources are perhaps the most critical component of Westbrook’s “green infrastructure.” Water resources provide scenic value, recreation opportunities, drinking water, and habitat. Some water resources, such as wetlands, protect our health by filtering pollutants. Other resources, particularly coastal, provide economic opportunity.

## Protect Watersheds on a Regional Basis

The health of Westbrook’s water resources depends upon the activities that occur throughout the watersheds – not just in Westbrook. Land activities throughout an entire watershed can impact water resources. To protect its water resources, the Town should continue to plan on a watershed basis and prioritize those land activities that can have the most impact on water resources. These strategies apply to Westbrook’s coastal resources also, which are discussed in more detail in Chapter 4. The first step for planning on a watershed scale is to work with surrounding communities and regional agencies.



## Continue to Protect Groundwater Resources

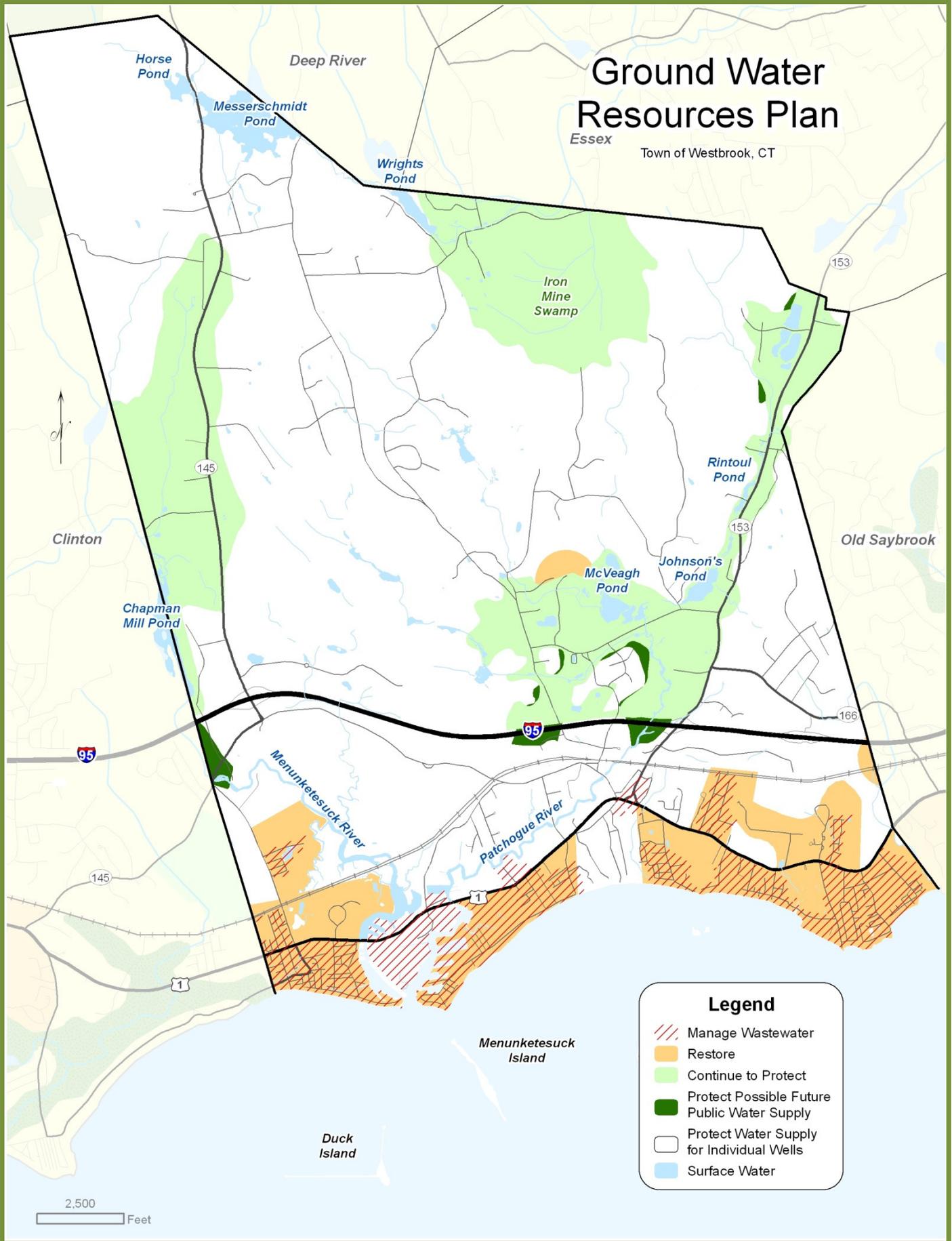
Whether using a well or connected to a public water source, Westbrook residents rely on groundwater to provide their drinking water and other water needs. As a result, protecting the quality of groundwater is a strategy that is critical to public health as well as overall environmental health. This is especially true in certain areas which have the potential to store significant quantities of water (aquifers and areas of high groundwater availability).

Since the mid-1980s, Westbrook has had zoning regulations intended to protect significant groundwater resource areas. These regulations should be maintained. Westbrook should continue efforts to protect water quality from impairment from discharges, spills, or other sources.

Preserving water quantity is also important. When water is diverted for other uses or is channeled away from water supply aquifers, the overall amount of available water can be reduced. Excessive irrigation and water consumption might impact groundwater levels. Since a large part of Westbrook relies on private wells, the Town should monitor groundwater availability (i.e., compile information about well water issues and identify trends or clusters). If a problem is identified, the Town should initiate discussions about how to ensure an adequate supply of groundwater.

# Ground Water Resources Plan

Essex  
Town of Westbrook, CT



**Legend**

- Manage Wastewater
- Restore
- Continue to Protect
- Protect Possible Future Public Water Supply
- Protect Water Supply for Individual Wells
- Surface Water

## Riparian

Relating to or located on the bank of a watercourse.

## Riparian Buffer Effectiveness

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has identified factors, in addition to buffer width, that contribute to a buffer's effectiveness. These include

- vegetation (amount and type);
- soil compaction;
- adjacent land use activity; and
- the amount of water that flows through the buffer.

Construction activities can impact buffers. Westbrook can minimize disturbances during construction by requiring developers to:

- place construction materials on elevated ramps to prevent soil compaction and destruction of vegetation;
- restrict equipment movement to non-vegetated areas; and
- restore and re-vegetate disturbed areas to predevelopment conditions.

## SURFACE WATER RESOURCES PLAN –LEGEND DETAILS (see facing page)

**Restore** water quality in areas with known surface water quality issues.

**Manage Floodplain** in federally-designated floodplain areas.

**Protect Riparian Zones** along watercourses.

**Monitor / Improve** areas where known surface water quality issues may be beyond the control of Westbrook.

## Continue to Protect Surface Water Resources

Efforts to protect surface water resources in Westbrook should also continue.

Many people are surprised to learn that a major source of water quality impairment is the storm drainage system. Historically, these systems were designed to “catch and convey” the water quickly from where the rain fell to a discharge point. Over the years, it has been observed that this approach had the effect of increasing peak flows and flooding, sending pollutants directly to water bodies, and reducing groundwater recharge. Westbrook should continue to address water quality issues resulting from the stormwater system.

“Riparian zones” (see sidebar) are an effective strategy for protecting surface water resources. Riparian zones are buffer areas along watercourses and adjacent to water bodies where vegetation can trap and remove sediment, phosphorus, and other contaminants. Buffer areas adjacent to wetlands can also serve this purpose. Westbrook should continue to provide for riparian / wetland buffers in order to protect surface water resources.

While Westbrook currently requires a 50-foot buffer from tidal wetlands, the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (CTDEP) generally recommends a 100-foot wide vegetated buffer area as optimal. In order to protect surface water resources, Westbrook should seek ways to increase the riparian / wetland buffer width or effectiveness. The Town should also consider expanding the existing buffer regulation to prohibit any site disturbance or impervious surface within the riparian and / or wetland buffers.

For new development, it is recognized that some properties, particularly along the coast, may not be able to provide a 100-foot buffer. In these cases, applicants should be required to provide an alternative that meets pollution-reduction performance standards. Conditions such as proximity to the water resource and steepness of slopes should be factored into performance standards. Such a buffer requirement should not extend to water dependent uses, such as marinas.

Since attempts have been made to reduce or eliminate existing riparian buffers or avoid providing such buffers, special efforts may be necessary. Specifically, the Town should ensure that riparian / wetland buffers are not reduced by variance, except in cases of clear “legal hardship” as defined in the Connecticut zoning statutes.

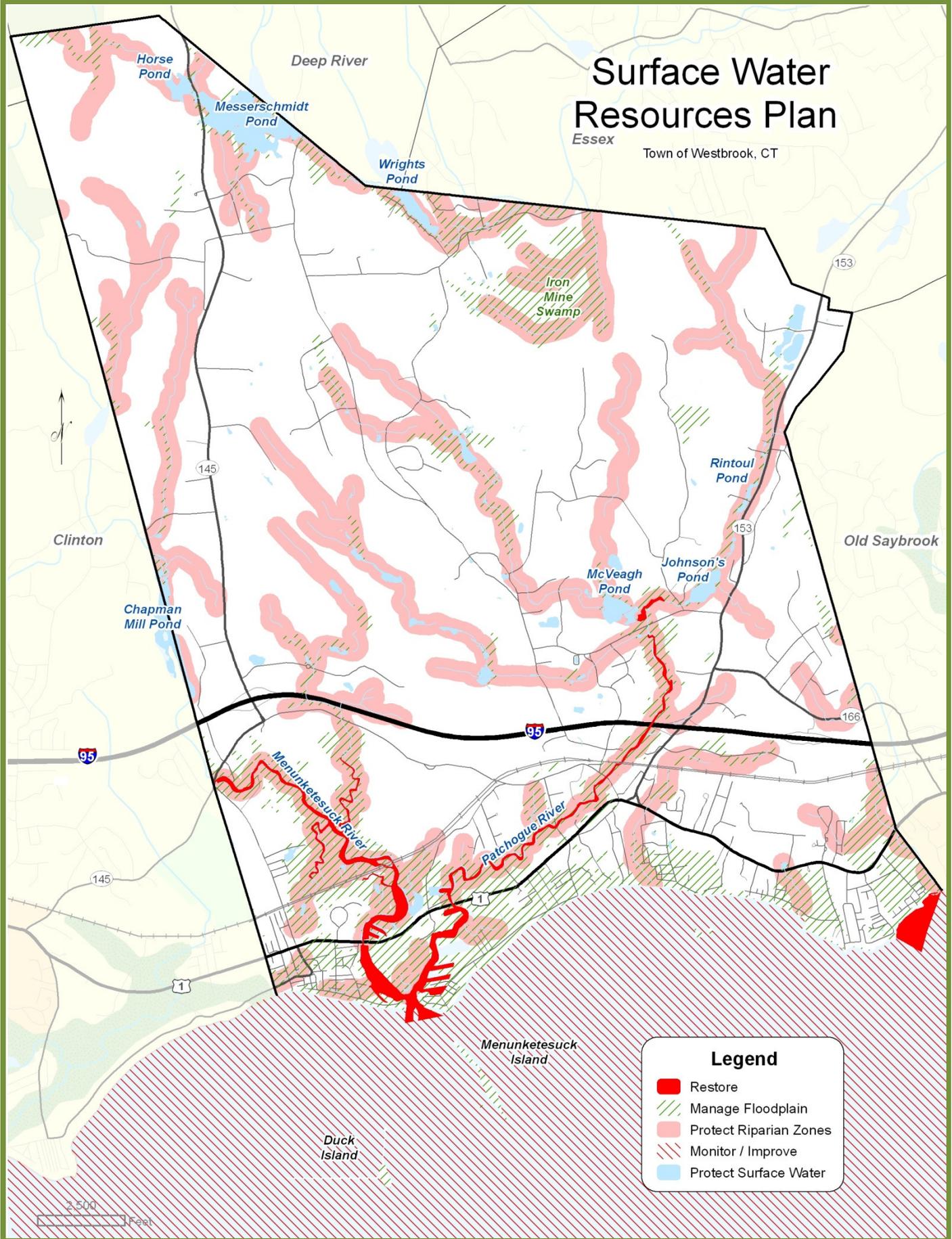
## Monitor and Improve Stormwater Management Systems

Given the impact of stormwater drainage on water resources, Westbrook should continue to monitor and improve drainage systems in the community. As part of its continuing obligations under state and federal permits, Westbrook should continue to:

- complete and maintain an inventory of its stormwater system;
- improve inspections and maintenance (including detection and remediation of illicit discharges);
- adopt additional stormwater management programs; and
- undertake a public education effort.

# Surface Water Resources Plan

Essex  
Town of Westbrook, CT



**Legend**

- Restore
- ▨ Manage Floodplain
- Protect Riparian Zones
- ▨ Monitor / Improve
- Protect Surface Water

### Low Impact Development (LID)

An ecologically-friendly approach to site development and stormwater management that aims to mitigate impacts to land, water, and air.

The approach emphasizes the integration of site design and planning techniques that conserve natural systems and hydrologic functions on a site.

Low impact development techniques can offer many benefits, which include:

- protecting water quality by reducing impacts to water bodies;
- preserving the integrity of ecological and biological systems;
- reducing municipal infrastructure and utility maintenance costs (streets, curbs, gutters, sidewalks, storm sewer); and
- preserving trees and natural vegetation.

The four key tenets of LID are:

- minimizing site disturbance and clear cutting;
- working with existing site elevation contours and hydrology;
- minimizing and disconnecting impervious surfaces (i.e., disconnecting a gutter downspout that discharges to a driveway which then drains to the street, and redirecting that downspout to a rain barrel or rain garden to allow infiltration onsite); and
- applying small-scale water quality controls as close to the source of runoff as possible.

### Impervious and Pervious Surfaces

Impervious surfaces are areas covered by impenetrable materials that prevent rainwater from infiltrating into the ground. Pervious surfaces allow water to infiltrate into the ground.

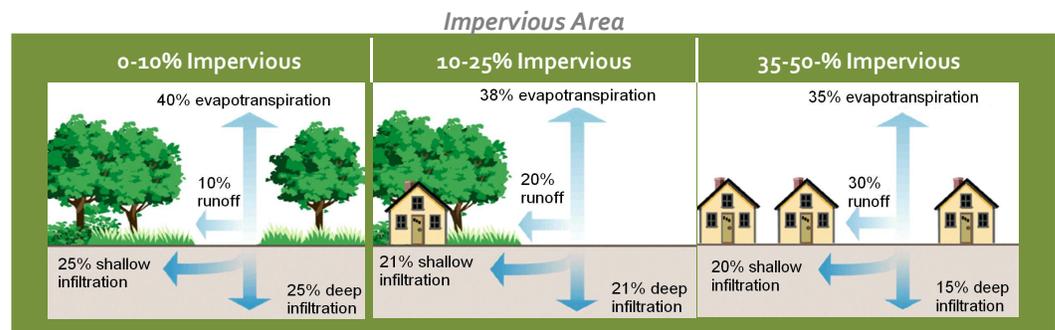
More and more communities around the country are evaluating storm drainage strategies which move away from the “industrial-type” approach of the past (i.e., relying on pipes) and seek to use a more natural approach which is known as “low impact development” (LID) strategies. These strategies seek to manage stormwater through infiltration and other techniques closer to where the raindrop falls.

Westbrook has used some LID techniques in recent projects and these efforts should continue. Additional techniques could include:

- providing natural stormwater management through the use of vegetated swales, filter strips, native groundcover, and performance buffers;
- minimizing impervious surfaces (see sidebar), through the use of pervious pavers or similar materials;
- retrofitting town-owned roads to implement water quality measures;
- encouraging the use of required parking lot landscaping areas as stormwater infiltration or filtration areas; and
- improving site layout and design to preserve natural resources by using conservation development techniques or limiting the disturbed area.

While minimizing impervious surfaces can be an effective LID strategy, Westbrook may also wish to consider a “performance-based” approach whereby there is flexibility in the techniques that are used provided the overall objectives of groundwater recharge, peak reduction, and pollution removal are accomplished. Research indicates that water quality degrades when more than 10 percent of a watershed is impervious.

Much of Westbrook is currently at or below this threshold. The Town should limit the amount of impervious surface in order to maintain this standard. Tools that encourage remediation may be needed for areas that exceed this threshold.



## Action Summary for the Natural Environment

**Maintain and Enhance our "Green Infrastructure"- Page 14**

- 2.1 Maintain the integrity of "green infrastructure"
- 2.2 Create a natural resource inventory
- 2.3 Integrate the "green infrastructure" approach in the land use planning and decision-making
- 2.4 Work with local, regional and state partners to enhance "green infrastructure"

**Plan for a Comprehensive Open Space System- Page 16**

- 2.5 Continue to preserve land that helps achieve open space, recreation and green infrastructure goals
- 2.6 Develop an Open Space Plan based on the Open Space Vision.

**Link Open Spaces With Greenways and Trails- Page 18**

- 2.7 Create additional greenways
- 2.8 Design greenways for use by multiple users as feasible (pedestrians / bicyclists / equestrians), including consideration of ADA-accessibility
- 2.9 Publicly recognize greenways
- 2.10 Consider creating blueways

**Continue to Preserve Open Space- Page 19**

- 2.11 Continue requiring open space at the time of development
- 2.12 Coordinate land dedication with the "green infrastructure" concept
- 2.13 Consider using the "fee in lieu of open space" tool in the Subdivision Regulations
- 2.14 Evaluate the criteria for evaluating open space contained in the land use regulations
- 2.15 Consider allowing zoning incentives to create additional open space
- 2.16 Allocate funding to the Open Space Fund
- 2.17 Continue to build partnerships with other organizations (land trust, state)
- 2.18 Evaluate the use of the PA-490 open space assessment program

**Manage Town-Owned Open Space and Conservation Easements- Page 20**

- 2.19 Create management plans for Town-owned parcels
- 2.20 Maintain and promote existing open space and trails
- 2.21 Provide amenities, such as parking, at open space gateways
- 2.22 Perform a baseline inventory of new conservation easement areas
- 2.23 Continue to manage and update the open space database; add / update conservation easements to the GIS
- 2.24 Require boundary markers to delineate conservation easements; perform inspections

Continued on Page 28

## Action Summary for the Natural Environment

### Protect and Restore Habitat- Page 21

- 2.25 Work with partners to collect more detailed data on species and habitat
- 2.26 Limit new development near important habitat areas
- 2.27 Minimize the clearing of forest habitat when sites are developed
- 2.28 Limit forest fragmentation in key forested areas
- 2.29 Assess the impact of invasive species and develop a plan of action to eradicate or control
- 2.30 Encourage the use of native plant species
- 2.31 Prohibit the introduction of invasive plant species
- 2.32 Support habitat restoration projects on previously-developed sites

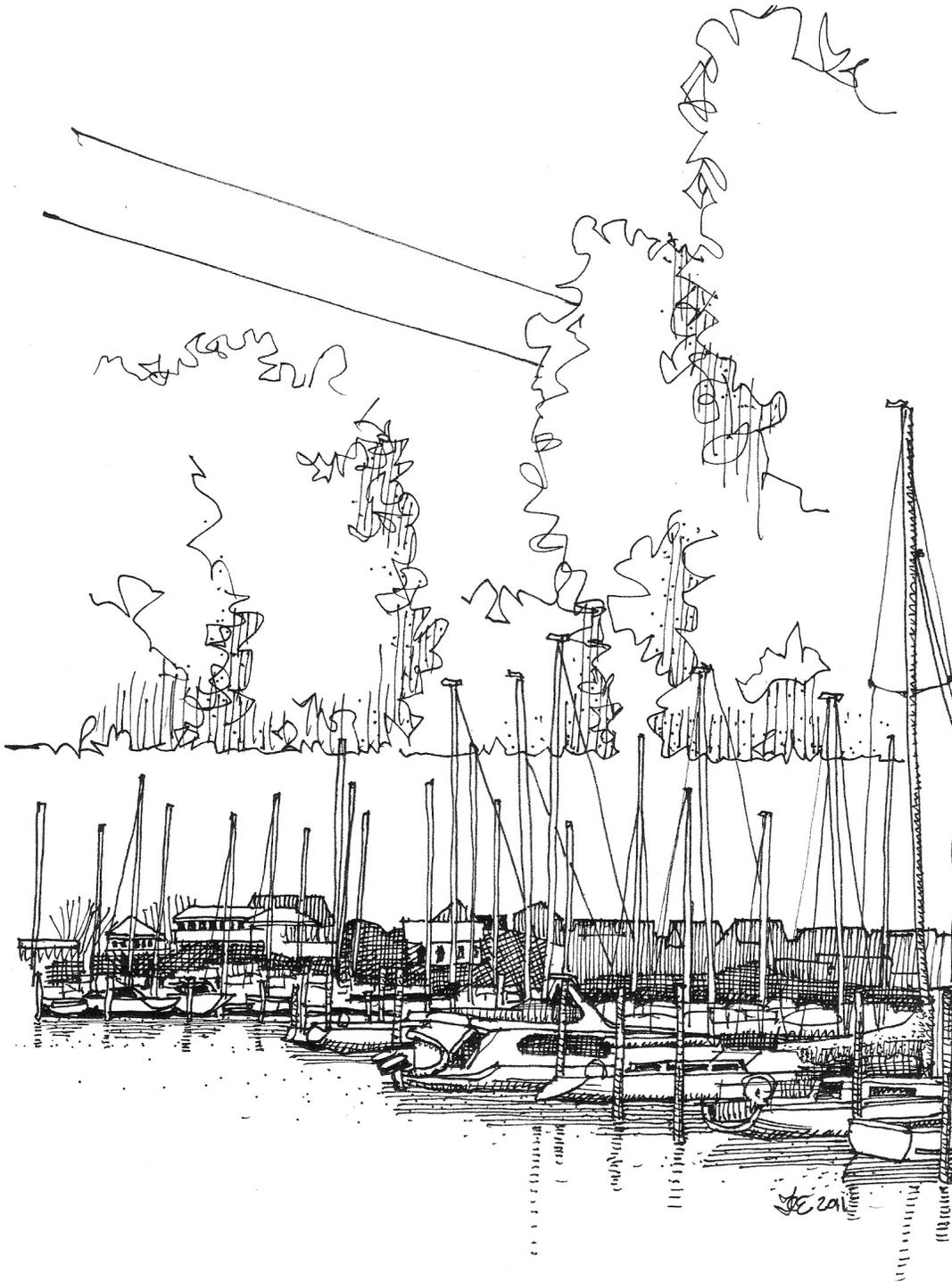
### Protect Water Resources- Page 22

- 2.33 Coordinate watershed efforts with regional partners
- 2.34 Continue to protect groundwater resources
- 2.35 Maintain groundwater protection regulations
- 2.36 Monitor the quality and quantity of groundwater in areas served by private wells
- 2.37 Continue to protect surface water resources
- 2.38 Continue to address water quality issues resulting from the stormwater system
- 2.39 Require the use of vegetated buffers (with performance standards) to protect water resources; Consider expanding buffer width
- 2.40 Ensure that existing buffers are not reduced
- 2.41 Continue to monitor and improve stormwater management systems
- 2.42 Adopt additional LID techniques; Consider a "performance-based" approach
- 2.43 Limit impervious surfaces

# THE COASTAL ENVIRONMENT

# 3

*Continue to give special consideration to Long Island Sound and coastal resources...*



Marina

### Connecticut Coastal Management Act

Sections 22a-90 through 22a-112 of the Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) became effective on January 1, 1980. The passage of the CCMA was based on several findings that stressed the importance of Connecticut's coastal resources to the overall quality of life for the state's residents.

The CCMA outlines coastal policies and identifies specific types of coastal resources. In addition to general development and use policies with the CCMA, it contains specific coastal resources policies.

36 Connecticut coastal towns, including Westbrook, have a delineated Coastal Area Management (CAM) boundary.

## Finalize and Adopt the Coastal Resource Management Plan

A municipal coastal program was first included in the 1982 Westbrook Plan of Development. Westbrook's coastal area is about 2,565 acres or about 24 percent of the town's land area.

In 2005, the Town of Westbrook received a grant to prepare a Coastal Resources Management Plan (CRMP). This work includes a comprehensive inventory of coastal features and strategies to protect coastal resources. Westbrook should add an implementation chapter and adopt the CRMP. The CRMP is incorporated by reference into this Plan and these two documents along with regulations protecting coastal resources constitute the Town's Municipal Coastal Program.

Westbrook will continue to act in accordance with the goals and policies of the Coastal Management Act, and to coordinate with Connecticut's coastal management office "to ensure that development, preservation or use of the land and water resources of the coastal area proceeds in a manner consistent with the capability of the land and water resources to support development, preservation or use without significantly disrupting either the natural environment or sound economic growth." (CCMA Section 22a-92(1)) Westbrook incorporates the resource and use policies of the Connecticut Coastal Management Act into this Plan of Conservation and Development.

The Connecticut Coastal Area Management Program will continue to be enacted in Westbrook by:

- ✿ having all town land use review boards address the land and water resource policies of the CAM program in reviewing development projects;
- ✿ reviewing the coastal use policies of the CAM program to determine if proposed land use designations are consistent with coastal resources;
- ✿ promoting the coordination of planning and regulatory activities to ensure protection of Westbrook's coastal resources; and
- ✿ managing uses in the coastal boundary, giving highest priority and preference to water-dependent uses and facilities at all shorefront areas.

## Enhance Protection of Coastal Resources

Westbrook is a coastal community. For hundreds of years, residents, visitors and businesses have been drawn to Westbrook because of the quality of life and economic benefits that a coastline provides. The ecological roles of each coastal resource collectively and individually are important components of Westbrook's "green infrastructure."

Westbrook's coast includes not just natural elements, but uses and activities that are important to the community and can only occur on the coast (i.e., "water dependent"). Coastal elements include habitat for fish, shellfish, birds, wildlife and plants; passive and active recreation; public access to the water; commercial fishing; and marine trades.

Westbrook is one of 36 Connecticut communities that are subject to the Connecticut Coastal Management Act (see sidebar). The Act aims to ensure that coastal resources continue to contribute to the quality of life of residents of the Town and state. Westbrook has long recognized the importance of protecting its coastal resources. Continued preservation and enhancement of these resources are integral to Westbrook's planning efforts and are critical to the Town's future.

### **Maintain and Restore Flushing of Tidal Wetlands**

Tidal flushing is an exchange of water in a tidal wetland system during high tide. This exchange removes potentially stagnant water and provides input of sea water, nutrients, and sediment, which are important factors in the ecological health of a tidal wetland system. Development impacts to tidal wetlands have impacted tidal flushing. Westbrook should work to maintain tidal flushing and restore flushing in impacted areas. As outlined in the coastal water quality section, freshwater discharges into tidal wetlands impacts salinity and should be avoided.

### **Protect Beach and Dune Areas**

Beach erosion affects the recreational quality of the shoreline and reduces the protection of properties from wave action. The extent of erosion varies based on tides, currents, wind, wave action, sea level, and the rate of natural replenishment of sand and gravel. Under natural conditions, as beaches erode, upland sand and gravel areas serve as sources for natural beach replenishment. Development and the building of erosion control structures have reduced or eliminated beach replenishment. As a result, the beach above the mean high water has become smaller or nonexistent during high tide.

Historically, the heaviest property damages caused by coastal storms have occurred along the 4,200 feet of shorefront between (and including) West Beach and Middle Beach. It is important that publicly-owned shorefront protection be properly managed.

Groins and jetties (types of shoreline flood and erosion control structures) placed perpendicular to a beach are intended to interfere with the natural transport of sand along the shoreline. Studies in Westbrook indicate that groins have been reasonably effective in trapping sediment. Westbrook should maintain the jetties at the Town Beach and improve other Town-owned erosion control structures.

Coastal property owners often request engineered beach replenishment. Several key areas have been targeted for restoration work, including Menunketesuck Island and Westbrook Town Beach. Westbrook should support these efforts, but care must be taken to ensure that the natural dynamic relationship between sediment sources and depositional areas is respected.

### **Protect Coastal Habitat**

Many of Westbrook's coastal resources contain important habitat areas. Beaches and dunes provide critical nesting habitat for shore birds and unique habitats for plant species and communities. Intertidal flats serve as rich sources of, and reservoirs for, nutrients. They provide valuable feeding areas for invertebrates, fish, and shorebirds, and provide significant shellfish habitat.

Tidal wetlands are among the most naturally fertile areas of Connecticut. Tidal wetlands provide habitat, nesting, feeding, and refuge areas for shorebirds; serve as nursery grounds for larval and juvenile forms of many Long Island Sound resident species and estuarine-dependent oceanic species; and provide significant habitat for shellfish.

The Town should continue to protect coastal habitats overall, and focus on two specific issues that have emerged:

- continue to protect the nesting and breeding habitats of terns, plovers, and other shore birds that occupy beach areas (the islands are also important nesting and breeding sites and should be restricted during nesting and breeding seasons); and
- control pedestrian and pet access, ensure proper trash control and set temporary restrictions on access to nesting and feeding areas during breeding season.

### Coastal Water Quality and Nonpoint Source Pollution

Runoff can carry road sand, oil, nutrients, sediments, heavy metals, and bacteria and viruses (pathogens) to waterbodies. This polluted runoff is also known as nonpoint source pollution.

The effects of this pollution can include beach closures, fishing and shellfishing restrictions and prohibitions, sedimentation of bottom habitats, and low dissolved oxygen (hypoxia), which in turn can cause fish kills and loss of other marine organisms.

Large amounts of freshwater runoff discharged directly into saltwater tidal wetlands can also upset the balance of the wetland ecosystem.

Failing or inadequate septic systems can cause localized water quality problems, releasing pathogens and nutrients to groundwater and surface waters.

## Address Coastal Water Quality Issues

The Town should continue to improve coastal water quality. As discussed earlier, pollution from stormwater runoff impacts water resources. On the coast, such runoff can affect resources such as shellfish, impact water-dependent uses such as swimming, and increase sedimentation of navigation channels and other shallow waters (see sidebar).

The “green infrastructure” approach, discussed earlier, should support the protection of coastal water quality. In addition to the strategies discussed in this section, strategies discussed in Chapters 2 and 4 will also help to address coastal water quality. Such strategies include protection / provision of buffers, addressing wastewater management, preservation of open space, and use of low impact development (LID) measures.

### Continue to Protect Coastal Water Quality

Westbrook protects water quality from the impacts of new development on a case-by-case basis as part of the coastal site plan review process. The Town has required mitigation measures such as minimizing impervious surface area and providing catch basin stormwater treatment systems, dry wells, and other facilities. This process has worked. The Town should continue to require the use of these and other Best Management Practices, in consultation with the State of Connecticut’s Integrated Water Quality Report and Impaired Waterbodies List, during site development review and for Town infrastructure improvement projects.

In terms of LID, the Town should identify opportunities in the Coastal Management Area to reduce existing impervious surface areas and provide incentives for conversion to pervious pavement. Specific efforts should be made to reduce, or eliminate, stormwater discharges to coastal waters in order to maintain salinity and minimize the proliferation of invasive species.

Education is an important component for a water quality program. The Town can provide guidance to property owners in coastal areas on sound landscaping practices, stormwater management, how to recognize and avoid invasive species, septic system maintenance and ways to minimize use of impervious surfaces for driveways, parking areas, patios and pool areas.

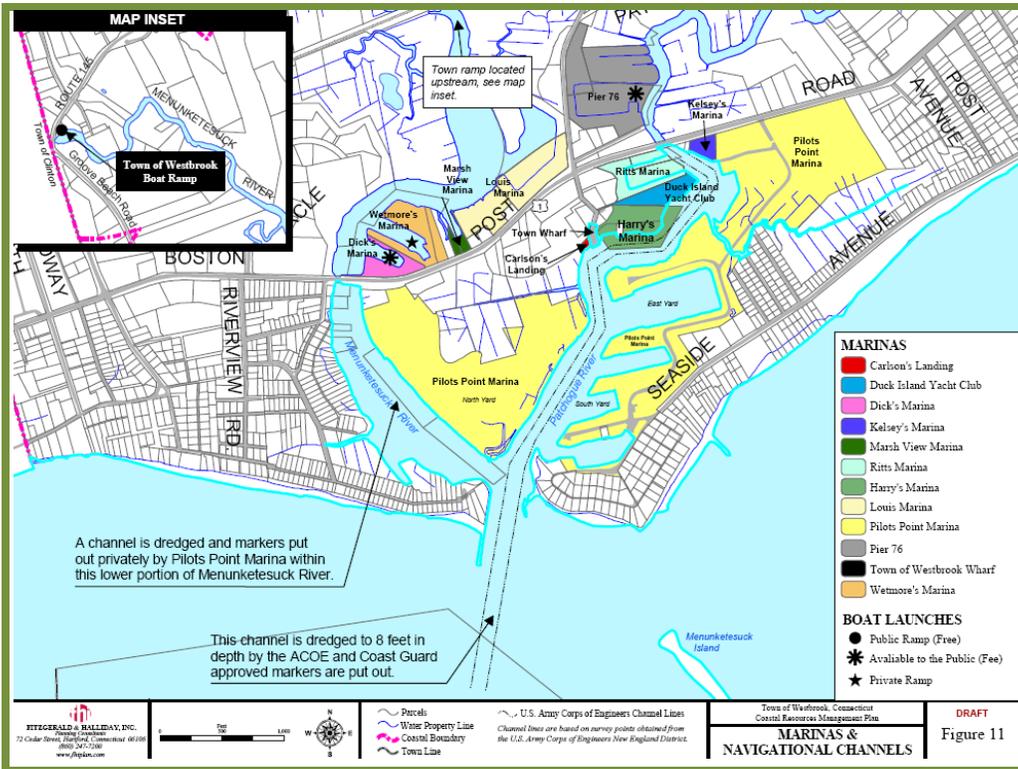
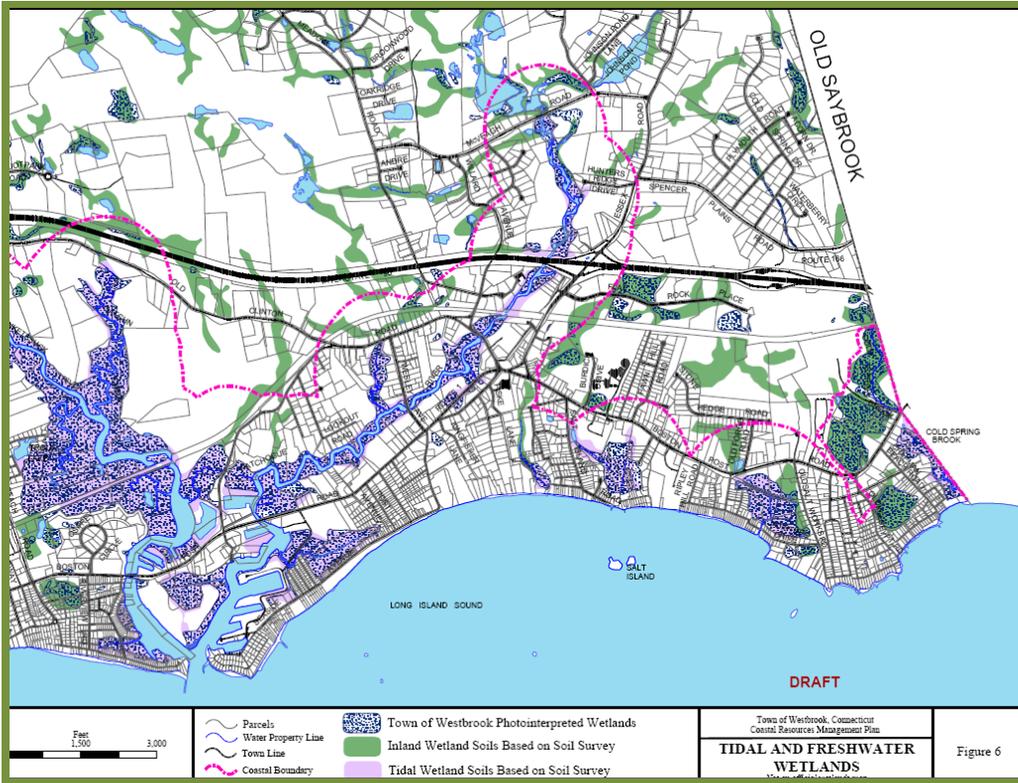
The removal of invasive species can be challenging due to local and state permitting requirements. Westbrook should continue to support private efforts by residents to remove invasive species and work with the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection to develop a permitting process that better accommodates residents’ efforts.

**Coastal Resources Management Plan (CRMP)**

Extensive information about coastal resources is contained in Westbrook's Coastal Resources Management Plan.

Two maps from the CRMP are shown here to illustrate the type of information found in the Plan - the Tidal and Freshwater Wetlands map (top left) and the Marinas and Navigational Channels map (bottom left).

Refer to the CRMP for official coastal maps available on the Town's website: [www.westbrookct.us](http://www.westbrookct.us)



### **Certified Clean Marinas in Westbrook**

- Harry's Marine Repair - 76 slips (7/2003)
- Ritt's Marine Center -75 slips (9/2008)
- Brewer's Pilots Point Marina - 863 slips (9/2008)

### **NPDES Water Quality Monitoring**

The National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES), regulates discharges into surface waters (either directly or through municipal storm sewer drainage systems, or through other drainage systems such as wetlands or swales).

The program requires communities to develop a plan to manage stormwater runoff. Best Management Practices include detection of illegal dumping, which might be identified through water quality testing and monitoring.

### **Support "Clean Marina" Efforts**

Boating can present a water pollution risk in part due to spills and leaks at marina gas stations. The DEP has a Clean Marina Program, which is a voluntary program that encourages marina operators to reduce nonpoint source pollution associated with the operation of recreational boating facilities. Three marinas in Westbrook are certified as Clean Marinas, including Harry's, which was the second Clean Marina designated in Connecticut. These facilities are recognized by the DEP for their voluntary efforts to operate at standards above and beyond regulatory compliance. Westbrook should encourage all marinas to seek this certification.

### **Work to Open Shellfish Beds**

Shellfishing is banned in Westbrook due to public health concerns. Westbrook should work with the public health officials to develop a shellfish testing program, which at a minimum, could serve as a gauge as to how well the water quality strategies are working. With water quality data, Westbrook may be able to restore shellfishing. If done correctly, the water testing conducted for these purposes may also be suitable to meet other water quality monitoring and reporting requirements (such as the NPDES reporting required by US EPA – see sidebar).

### **Retrofit Stormwater Management Systems on Roads in Coastal Areas**

Westbrook has a network of private and public roads along the shore. These roads were built at a time when stormwater management did not address water quality. Westbrook should work with the owners of the private roads (i.e., the Beach Associations) to develop a retrofit program. To make the initiative worthwhile for the Associations, this program may require a public-private partnership, such as the use of Town-owned equipment and labor to install the retrofit equipment. The Town should also retrofit the stormwater management systems on public roads along the coast.

## Enhance Public Access

The coastline and beaches in Westbrook are significant recreational resources. However, most waterfront properties are under individual ownership (60 percent) and private beach associations (25 percent). Only 15 percent of the coastline in Westbrook is publicly owned.

This predominance of private ownership limits public access to beaches and affects the ability to create future public beaches. As a result, it is especially important to maintain and enhance existing public access areas and plan for potential new public access locations.

Recommendations for existing public access points include:

- 🌿 identify the locations of existing access points, especially those that might not be evident to residents;
- 🌿 consider possible improvements to the access point along Middle Beach;
- 🌿 maintain access and parking at the Town Beach;
- 🌿 encourage the continued public use of privately-owned boat ramps;
- 🌿 enhance the Town Dock facilities (e.g., fishing, site access);
- 🌿 consider upgrades to the Kirtland Landing boat ramp due to its popularity; and
- 🌿 maintain “informal” public access points for fishing and crabbing, such as the Wesley Avenue bridge and Clark’s bridge, while ensuring river banks are not damaged.

Additional public access points could include:

- 🌿 developing a fishing area and a car-top boat launch at the Mulvey Municipal Center;
- 🌿 developing an overlook at the Town-owned American Legion property (“Chapman parcel”) to the Patchogue River marsh; and
- 🌿 determining if there is a need for additional public boat launches.

Residents cannot take full advantage of Westbrook’s coast if they do not know the location of access points. The CTDEP and the University of Connecticut manage a public access website and database (see CT Public Access Website sidebar). Westbrook should review this information from time to time to make sure it is up-to-date. The Town should create a public access sign program that helps residents easily find public access points. Future public access points should also be well-marked.

In the 1970s, Westbrook inventoried all public access points located where road rights-of-way converge with Long Island Sound. These areas were assessed to determine legal ownership of the land. The Town found that in some instances private entities had installed “No Trespassing” signs at public access points.

Westbrook should update this study, add all public access points to the public access inventory, install signs where appropriate, and enforce public access. Parking at public access areas can become a management issue and a lack of adequate parking can impact abutting property owners. This is an issue that needs to be carefully evaluated when new public access sites are proposed.

### CT Public Access Website

[lisrc.uconn.edu/coastalaccess](http://lisrc.uconn.edu/coastalaccess)

### Water-Dependant Versus Water Related Uses

**Water-dependent** uses are activities and facilities which require direct access to, or location in, marine or tidal waters and cannot be located inland. The definition of this term can be found in the Connecticut Coastal Management Act.

**Water-related** uses rely on the proximity of the water and may offer activities that take advantage of being near the water.

## Continue to Support Marinas and Other Water-Dependent and Related Activities

### Support Water-Dependent Uses

Water-dependent uses include marinas, recreational and commercial fishing, boating facilities, waterfront docks, boat-building facilities, water-based recreational uses, navigation aids and channels, and general public access. These uses, which contribute greatly to Westbrook's economy, depend upon a coastal location.

Marinas are particularly important maritime attractions and economic contributors in Westbrook. Marinas also support an array of ancillary water-dependent uses such as recreational boating, sport-fishing, professional boat racing and building, boating services, and boat dealerships. The success and sustainability of the marinas and the businesses connected with them depend on periodic maintenance dredging of the channels within the Patchogue and Menunketesuck Rivers (the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is responsible for dredging the navigational channels within the Patchogue River).

Westbrook has made it a priority to support and promote water-dependent uses and has adopted zoning districts to meet this goal. In addition, Westbrook should work with marina owners to evaluate zoning and other restrictions and develop strategies that will support the needs of the marina operators while preserving community character and quality of life. Possible zoning strategies might include a reduction in the minimum parking requirements and a streamlined process for permitting temporary structures.

### Support Water-Related Uses

Water-related facilities, such as Waters Edge Inn and Resort, are also important to the local tourism economy. Westbrook should continue to work with these types of facilities to adapt to ever-changing consumer demands.

### Require New Waterfront Development to Include Public Access, Where Appropriate

Due to the highly-developed and residential nature of Westbrook's coastline, there is little available land or space for new water-dependent uses, such as marinas or public access. Therefore, new waterfront development is required to include space for water-dependent uses (single-family houses are exempt from this requirement). Public access may also be required when a use is changed to a non-water dependent use. Westbrook should continue to identify opportunities to expand public access and develop a strategy for areas where development is likely to occur in the future.

# Improve the Management of Navigable Waterways

Westbrook's Harbor Management Commission manages navigable waterways in the Town. They also coordinate dredging. The state provides the opportunity (but not a mandate) for coastal towns to develop and implement harbor management plans as a means to better coordinate the sometimes competing or conflicting uses along the waterfront and in harbor areas. Westbrook is in the process of developing a Harbor Management Plan (see sidebar) and should continue this effort.

Navigable waters are transportation routes. They, like any roadway, should be managed to minimize use conflicts and congestion. As mentioned, the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers is responsible for dredging the public navigation project in Westbrook Harbor. Financial resources for dredging are limited, but partnering with all interested stakeholders may increase the ability to obtain funding. Westbrook should support dredging efforts. The Town should continue to build partnerships with public (regional and state) and private stakeholders to identify short and long term funding strategies to meet current and future dredging needs.

Another issue that impacts the navigability of Westbrook's waterways is dock encroachment. Harbor lines are used to demarcate navigable waters and have been an effective tool to manage the navigable waters south of Route 1. Dock construction north of Route 1 has been a developing issue and area of concern because of inaccurate harbor lines. Westbrook should develop a strategy to address this issue and regulate dock construction north of the Route 1 bridges for both the Menunketesuck and Patchogue Rivers.

## Harbor Management Plan

A public policy document that contains goals, objectives, policies, guidelines and recommendations for the balanced use of the harbor management area. It applies to recreational, commercial and other purposes.

Among other things, these plans provide for the preservation and use of the coastal resources of the harbor; for the location and distribution of seasonal moorings and anchorages; and for unobstructed access to federal navigation channels.

## Action Summary for the Coastal Environment

**Finalize and Adopt the Coastal Resource Management Plan - Page 30**

3.1 Finalize and adopt the Coastal Resources Management Plan

**Enhance Protection of Coastal Resources - Page 30**

3.2 Maintain and restore flushing of tidal wetlands

3.3 Protect beach and dune areas

3.4 Maintain the jetties at the Town Beach and reinforce other Town-owned erosion control structures

3.5 Protect coastal habitat:

a. Nesting and breeding habitat of shore birds

b. Control pedestrian and pet access, ensure proper trash control and set temporary restrictions on access during breeding season

**Address Coastal Water Quality Issues - Page 32**

3.6 Continue to protect water quality from the impacts of development by performing case-by-case reviews as part of the coastal site plan review process

3.7 Continue requiring best management practices as part of coastal site plan review approvals and for Town infrastructure improvement projects

3.8 Identify LID opportunities in the Coastal Management Area

3.9 Reduce, or eliminate, direct stormwater discharges to coastal waters

3.10 Educate property owners about sound landscaping practices, stormwater management and invasive species avoidance, septic system maintenance and impervious surfaces

3.11 Support efforts to remove invasive species from tidal wetlands

3.12 Support "Clean Marina" efforts

3.13 Work to open shellfish beds

3.14 Work with beach associations to retrofit stormwater management systems on private roads

3.15 Retrofit the stormwater management systems for public roads along the coast

**Enhance Public Access - Page 35**

3.16 Identify and promote existing public access points

3.17 Provide additional public access points where feasible

3.18 Create a public access sign program

3.19 Update the right-of-way inventory and keep public access inventories up-to-date

3.20 Enforce public access

**Continue to Support Marinas and Other Water-Dependent and Related Activities - Page 36**

3.21 Support water-dependent uses

3.22 Evaluate zoning and other restrictions in marina areas

3.23 Continue to support water-related uses

3.24 Require that new waterfront development include public access, where appropriate

3.25 Develop a public access strategy for areas where development is likely to occur in the future

**Improve the Management of Navigable Waterways - Page 37**

3.26 Develop and adopt a Harbor Management Plan

3.27 Continue to support dredging of the federal navigation channel

3.28 Discourage uses that unreasonably congest navigation channels

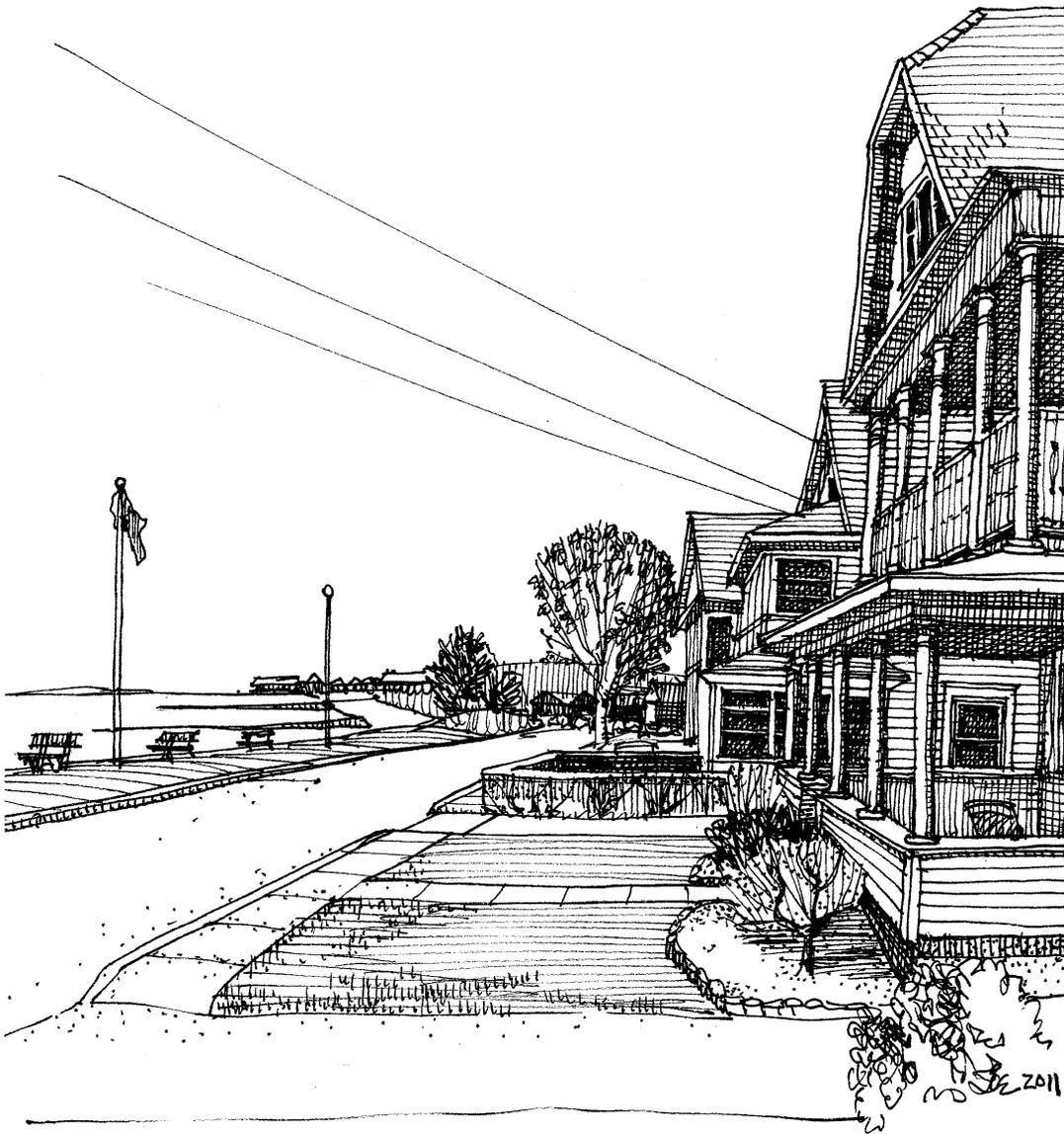
3.29 Continue to build partnerships with public and private stakeholders

3.30 Explore alternate methods for regulating dock construction north of Route 1 on the Menunketesuck and Patchogue Rivers

# SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCY

# 4

*Minimize impacts  
from new and  
existing  
development...*



Seaside Avenue

### FEMA-Designated Flood Zones

FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, identified areas that are at risk to flooding.

- A-Zones are defined by FEMA as areas subject to inundation by the 1-percent-annual-chance flood event (100-year storm); and
- V-Zones are defined by FEMA as areas along coasts subject to inundation by the 1-percent-annual-chance flood event (100-year storm) with additional hazards associated with storm-induced waves.

### Base Flood Elevation (BFE)

The elevation shown on the Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) that indicates the water surface elevation resulting from a flood that has a one percent chance of equaling or exceeding that level in any given year.

### Freeboard

The area between the lowest floor and the base flood elevation.

### Reasons to Increase Freeboard

Increasing freeboard provides additional protection from floods and storms, better preparation for on-going sea level rise, and additional flood insurance premium reductions.

## Adopt and Implement A Hazard Mitigation Plan

A key concept of sustainability and resiliency is the ability to understand potential threats and how to prevent and/or mitigate them. The Town has been working with the Connecticut River Estuary Regional Planning Agency to develop and adopt a Hazard Mitigation Plan. This plan identifies areas at risk from natural hazards and strategies to address these issues. The Plan also makes the Town eligible for certain federal mitigation funding programs. Westbrook should adopt the Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Ultimately, the Plan's effectiveness lies in its implementation. Westbrook should identify which agencies will implement the Plan and provide funding to carry out plan recommendations.

## Manage Flood Risks

Floodplains are areas subject to occasional flooding. Development in floodplains can increase flooding which can result in property damage and even loss of life during significant flood events. Additionally, public safety is compromised when roads, bridges and other transportation infrastructure are subject to flooding.

Westbrook should continue to ensure that new development or redevelopment in floodplains has minimal flood-related risks. To accomplish this, the Town should improve and maintain its flood regulations, continue to participate in federal programs, address emerging issues such as sea level rise, and focus on areas with a history of flood losses.

### Address Current Flood Risks

Flood zones are vulnerable to storm damage today. In FEMA-designated flood zones (see sidebar) along the coast, structures are potentially subject to rising water and wave damage during coastal storms. While about 90 percent of Westbrook's shore has erosion control, large storms can still cause damage to property and place lives at risk.

Activities in floodplains are regulated locally by the Zoning Commission. To address these risks, Westbrook requires that commercial properties increase the freeboard to a minimum of one foot above the Base Flood Elevation (see sidebar). This measure provides additional flood protection for coastal properties. Westbrook should consider extending this requirement to residential properties.

The state's Coastal Management Policy [Section 22a-92 (b)(2)(F)] is: "... to manage coastal hazard areas so as to insure that development proceeds in such a manner that hazards to life and property are minimized ..." It should be a general policy of the Town to minimize new non-water dependent development in flood zones. The Town should ensure that the number of dwelling units (and hence residents) in the low-lying, flood-prone sections of the coastline is not increased, and perhaps, is decreased in areas where evacuation routes are flooded during a 100-year storm event. Variances on non-conforming lots in low-lying, flood-prone areas should be very carefully considered and allowed only on the basis of strict, statutorily-defined hardship.

### Continue to Participate in and Comply with Federal Programs

Westbrook's floodplain regulations comply with federal flood insurance guidelines. This compliance allows Westbrook property-owners within floodplains to apply for flood insurance from the National Flood Insurance Program. The Town should maintain its federally-compliant floodplain regulations and update as needed.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has created a voluntary Community Rating System (CRS – see sidebar) program to reward communities that undertake certain floodplain management activities. Individual property owners benefit from reduced flood insurance premiums. The program requires the Town to document compliance. Westbrook is currently participating in the Community Rating System and should consider improving its rating.

Compliance and participation in these programs require record-keeping and reporting. To ensure continued compliance with these programs, the Town should improve record-keeping, provide training for decision-makers, and use the Town's Geographic Information System to track permit activities.

This program provides credit for activities that exceed national program objectives. Certain activities, such as acquiring open space in the flood hazard areas, can help Westbrook satisfy multiple objectives contained in this Plan (i.e., CRS and green infrastructure). Other activities, such as updating flood studies should continue.

### Prepare Coastal Floodplains for Sea Level Rise

Sea-level rise is an emerging issue that could create greater flooding risks. The topography of coastal Westbrook, with two rivers and several tidal creeks and marshes, makes it particularly vulnerable to sea level rise. Coastal management policies that encourage a gradual retreat from the vulnerable low-lying waterfront make good sense and good public policy. Westbrook should assess which community facilities may be at risk and whether retreat or adaptation (see sidebar) may be needed.

New assessment tools, such as the Coastal Resilience Tool (see sidebar) can help communities plan for sea level rise. Ultimately, sea level rise is not the Town's responsibility to solve, however it should partner with private interests to coordinate efforts.

### Evaluate Properties Impacted by Other Hazards

Floodplain maps identify some, but not all areas vulnerable to flooding and other natural hazards. Supplemental resources can help Westbrook better assess the vulnerability of areas. One additional tool is the SLOSH (*Sea, Lake and Overland Surges from Hurricanes* – see sidebar) map prepared by the National Hurricane Center.

Westbrook should evaluate parcels located within the SLOSH area and develop policies for these areas. One simple policy change might be to make sure all municipal properties in the SLOSH area have flood insurance.

### Educate the Public on Risks

The Town should continue to educate the public on the risks associated with natural hazards and what they can do to minimize these risks. The Town's Geographic Information System (GIS) should be kept up-to-date with information about natural hazards, the SLOSH and other information. This geographic data can be used to effectively educate residents about the types of risks and vulnerable locations. It could also be used to inform residents about the benefits of programs like the CRS, discussed earlier.

### Community Rating System (CRS)

A voluntary incentive program that recognizes and encourages community floodplain management activities that exceed the minimum NFIP requirements.

CRS communities can receive flood insurance premium rate reductions by meeting, or exceeding, NFIP goals:

- reduce flood losses;
- facilitate accurate insurance rating; and
- promote the awareness of flood insurance.

### Adaptation

Involves preparing for change by modifying facilities to accommodate the change.

### Coastal Resilience Tool

This tool, developed by the Nature Conservancy, can help stakeholders explore flooding scenarios of sea level rise and storm surge, analyze the potential ecological, social, and economic impacts of each scenario at local and regional scales, and provide proactive solutions to address issues.

### Sea, Lake and Overland Surges from Hurricanes (SLOSH)

An estimate of storm surge heights resulting from hurricanes by taking into account:

- pressure;
- size;
- forward speed;
- track; and
- winds.

### Brownfields

Property for which, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. Cleaning up and reinvesting in these properties protects the environment, reduces blight, and takes development pressures off green spaces and working lands.

### Connecticut's Voluntary Remediation Program

A program available to facilitate the remediation of contaminated property. This is an elective program that is designed to expedite the voluntary investigation and remediation of any contaminated property.

### Bioremediation

The use of microorganism metabolism to remove pollutants. This can be a less expensive solution for properties where immediate remediation is not required.

## Encourage Restoration of Brownfields

Brownfields are properties with environmental contamination (see sidebar). Communities often support the clean-up and re-use of these sites to reduce development pressure on undeveloped land.

However, environmental contamination issues can be complex and challenging to address, especially due to costs of clean-up and liability concerns. Fortunately, there are programs that can help assess contamination issues and aid in the clean-up of these properties. The Town should educate the public and landowners on the availability of these programs.

To facilitate the clean-up and re-use of brownfields, Westbrook should identify contaminated sites and determine which might be priorities for redevelopment. The Town can work with affected landowners to identify their site restoration needs, explore alternative remediation methods (e.g., bioremediation – see sidebar) and determine if additional assistance is needed. The Town might seek funding to help move these restoration projects along.

Zoning updates could help foster the re-use of brownfields. Specific zoning techniques are discussed on page 90.



Turnpike Auto Wreckers Site



Asbestos Abatement

# Implement Sustainability Practices

## Implement New Energy Practices and Use Energy More Wisely

Westbrook has crafted a draft Strategic Energy Management Plan for the community. The plan identifies three priority tiers and 12 specific priorities to institute a long-term energy management strategy for the community:

### TIER I

- ☛ Support homeowners in becoming more energy efficient.
- ☛ Be fiscally responsible by developing a formalized process to access funding.
- ☛ Increase the energy efficiency of Town lighting.
- ☛ Implement energy efficiencies resulting from energy audits.
- ☛ Create a culture of energy conservation and awareness.
- ☛ Utilize the schools and students to build and implement green programs.
- ☛ Develop “green” procurement policies.
- ☛ Examine opportunities to optimize energy purchasing practices.
- ☛ Coordinate and integrate municipal, school, and energy committee activities.

### TIER II

- ☛ Explore the potential for renewable or alternative energy.
- ☛ Establish a Town-wide building energy master plan.

### TIER III

- ☛ Develop a mechanism to generate funding for green technologies or energy efficiencies.

This Strategic Energy Management Plan should be adopted and implemented.

## Consider Using Green Building Criteria for New Buildings

There is growing interest in creating buildings that are more environmentally responsible. Efforts to date have largely been voluntary on the part of owners and builders. The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System is the most recognized program in the United States that promotes the design, construction, and operation of environmentally responsible buildings (see sidebar). Westbrook should adopt some level of LEED criteria (or similar program) for new buildings and major renovations of public and private buildings.

## Energy Initiatives

**2007** – Capital Replacement Plan for Westbrook Municipal Buildings, Capital Region Education Council.

**2008** – Trane Energy Analyzer Report, Mulvey Municipal Center.

**2009** – Energy Conservation Awareness Program for Schools.

**2009 / 2010** – Westbrook High School new electrical heating system.

**2010** – Regional Energy Manager program initiated.

## Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)

An internationally-recognized certification system that measures how well a building or community performs across many metrics:

- energy savings;
- water efficiency;
- CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reduction;
- improved indoor environmental quality; and
- stewardship of resources and sensitivity to their impacts.

Developed by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), LEED provides building owners and operators a concise framework for identifying and implementing practical and measurable green building design, construction, operations and maintenance solutions.

### Consider Green Neighborhood Criteria

Similar to standards for green buildings, standards are also being developed for environmentally green neighborhoods. While not yet finalized, LEED is developing a Neighborhood Development Rating System that integrates the principles of smart growth and green buildings into national standards for neighborhood design.

Some of the criteria being considered include:

THEME	SAMPLE ELEMENTS (PARTIAL)
Smart Location & Linkage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• natural resource conservation</li> <li>• floodplain avoidance</li> <li>• brownfield redevelopment</li> <li>• reduced automobile dependence</li> </ul>
Neighborhood Pattern & Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• compact development</li> <li>• diversity of uses / housing types</li> <li>• walkable streets / transit facilities</li> <li>• access to public spaces</li> <li>• community outreach and involvement</li> </ul>
Green Construction & Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• pollution prevention</li> <li>• resource efficiency in buildings</li> <li>• building reuse and adaptive reuse</li> <li>• minimized site disturbance</li> <li>• best management practices</li> </ul>
Innovation & Design Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• innovation</li> <li>• exemplary performance</li> </ul>

At some time in the future, Westbrook should consider incorporating some level of LEED certification for new development or include it as a consideration in discretionary zoning approvals (e.g., special permit process, Planned Residential Development District)

### Incorporate Green Practices at Municipal Facilities

Westbrook residents have indicated that they want an environmentally-sound community. The Town could incorporate green practices into its operations. In addition to energy reductions discussed earlier and other strategies found throughout this Plan, additional measures could include the use of natural and renewable products in building construction, minimal use of chemical lawn care and the improvement of indoor air quality.

**Provide Education**

Westbrook should work with other communities and organizations to promote energy conservation and green practices. The community should also partner with organizations that provide educational tools and guidance on best practices. One organization, the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), has developed a Cities for Climate Protection campaign as a resource and Westbrook should consider joining this or similar programs.

These programs provide educational materials that can be tailored to meet local needs. Westbrook might also expand resident education into the classroom by adding sustainability elements to the curriculum, where possible.

**Expand Recycling Programs and Promote Waste Reduction**

Waste generation is often overlooked. Waste reduction and recycling programs are integral to a community that is striving to be environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable.

In 1993 the state increased the recycling / source reduction goal from 25 percent to 40 percent. Few communities have developed a plan to achieve or surpass this goal. Westbrook should develop a plan to reduce waste, increase recycling efforts and prevent litter. Westbrook can also adopt purchasing policies to favor products made from recycled material. Public education should play an important role.

**Conserve Water**

Many communities in New England faced drought advisories in the past ten years. While Westbrook normally receives about 50 inches of rainfall annually, small changes in precipitation along with additional impervious coverage can reduce aquifer recharge. Strategies to monitor groundwater quantity and encourage recharge were discussed earlier. The Town should also promote water conservation and reuse.

**Cities for Climate Protection**

A program that assists cities to adopt policies and implement quantifiable measures to reduce local greenhouse gas emissions, improve air quality, and enhance urban livability and sustainability.

**Reduce Emissions**

Air is an important natural resource issue that tends to be outside of a community's control. For the most part, air quality is impacted by industrial facilities and vehicle emissions. Air pollution issues, such as smog, carbon dioxide emissions, smoke and particulates generally are regulated by the state and federal governments.

There are measures a community can take to reduce local sources of air pollution. Westbrook should strive to ensure that air quality impacts from local land use and other activities, such as dust and odors, are minimized or eliminated. The Town might also install "Do Not Idle" signs at community facilities and upgrade to low emission and hybrid vehicles for municipal vehicles. The Town should provide bike racks, install "Share the Road" signs and provide sidewalks to support and promote the use of non-motorized transportation.

The Town can also take measures to mitigate air pollution, particularly by planting more trees. Trees help reduce carbon levels and can provide energy conservation in the summer. Westbrook should encourage tree planting on public property, when appropriate, and evaluate landscaping standards in the land use regulations to encourage tree planting within new site development.

## Action Summary For Sustainability and Resiliency

**Adopt and Implement A Hazard Mitigation Plan - Page 40**

4.1 Develop and adopt the Hazard Mitigation Plan

4.2 Implement the Hazard Mitigation Plan

**Manage Flood Risks - Page 40**

4.3 Continue to ensure that new development or redevelopment in floodplains has minimal flood-related risks

4.4 Consider extending the freeboard requirement to residential properties

4.5 Maintain compliance with the National Flood Insurance Program

4.6 Continue to participate in the Community Rating System program and aim to improve Westbrook's rating

4.7 Improve record-keeping, provide training, and use GIS to track activity in vulnerable areas

4.8 Continue to update flood studies

4.9 Adopt measures to help prepare the coastal areas for sea level rise

4.10 Evaluate properties affected by other hazards (e.g., hurricanes)

4.11 Educate the public on natural hazards and vulnerable areas (e.g., floodplains, hurricanes)

4.12 Partner with private interests to coordinate efforts regarding seal level rise

**Encourage Restoration of Brownfields - Page 42**

4.13 Educate the public and land owners on brownfield programs and funding

4.14 Identify contaminated sites and work with landowners

4.15 Consider seeking funding sources for restoration activities

**Implement Sustainability Practices - Page 43**

4.16 Adopt and implement the Strategic Energy Management Plan

4.17 Consider using "green building" criteria for new buildings (e.g., LEED)

4.18 Consider "green neighborhood" criteria

4.19 Incorporate "green practices" at municipal facilities

4.20 Work with other communities and organizations to promote energy conservation and "green practices"

4.21 Expand recycling programs

4.22 Promote waste reduction

4.23 Provide education about recycling and waste reduction

4.24 Promote water conservation and reuse

4.25 Reduce emissions from local sources

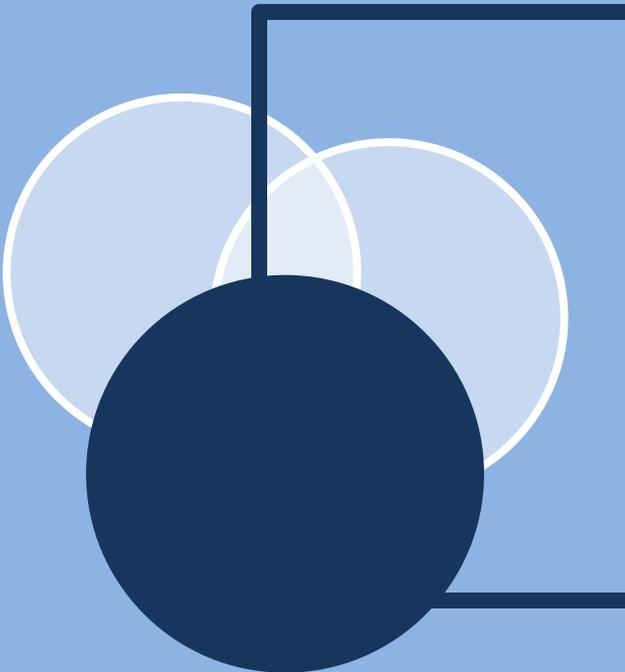
4.26 Mitigate air pollution with tree planting

4.27 Evaluate landscaping standards in the land use regulations to encourage tree planting within new site development

# A VIBRANT COMMUNITY

Westbrook's Goals for a Vibrant Community  
Include:

CHAPTER



## Community Character and **5** Sense of Place

*Ensure that new development and redevelopment enhances small town character*  
*Protect elements that contribute to community character*

## Community Facilities and **6** Services

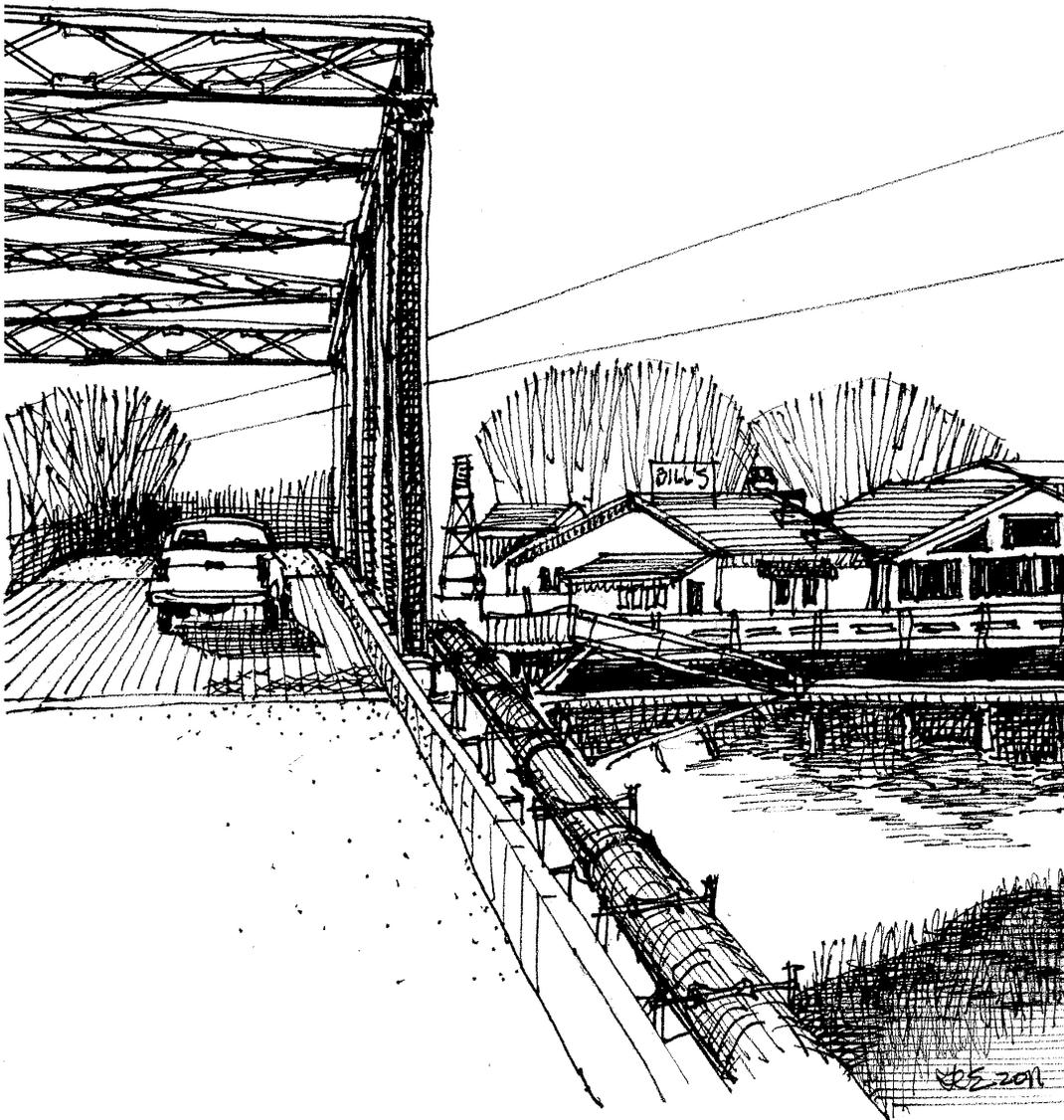
*Ensure adequate facilities and infrastructure to support growth and maintain quality of life*  
*Provide quality municipal services in a cost-effective manner*

# COMMUNITY CHARACTER AND SENSE OF PLACE

# 5

*Ensure that new development or redevelopment enhances small town character*

*Protect elements that contribute to community character*



Singing Bridge and Bills Seafood

While the elements of “community character” and “small town character” may be different for different people, Westbrook residents are united in their belief that Westbrook’s “character” should be protected.

The Plan suggests that community character includes those physical features (e.g., natural resources and patterns of development) that make Westbrook unique. To date, residents and local officials have been able to identify the following things that contribute to (or detract from) Westbrook’s character.

<b>Contribute to Westbrook’s Character</b>	• Farmland	• Historic buildings
	• Open Space	• Small businesses
	• Forested land	• Community events
	• Scenic roads	• Coastal resources
	• Scenic views	• Marinas and boating
	• Volunteers	

<b>Detract from Westbrook’s Character</b>	• Appearance of certain buildings and development sites
	• Strip development patterns with large parking lots in front of buildings

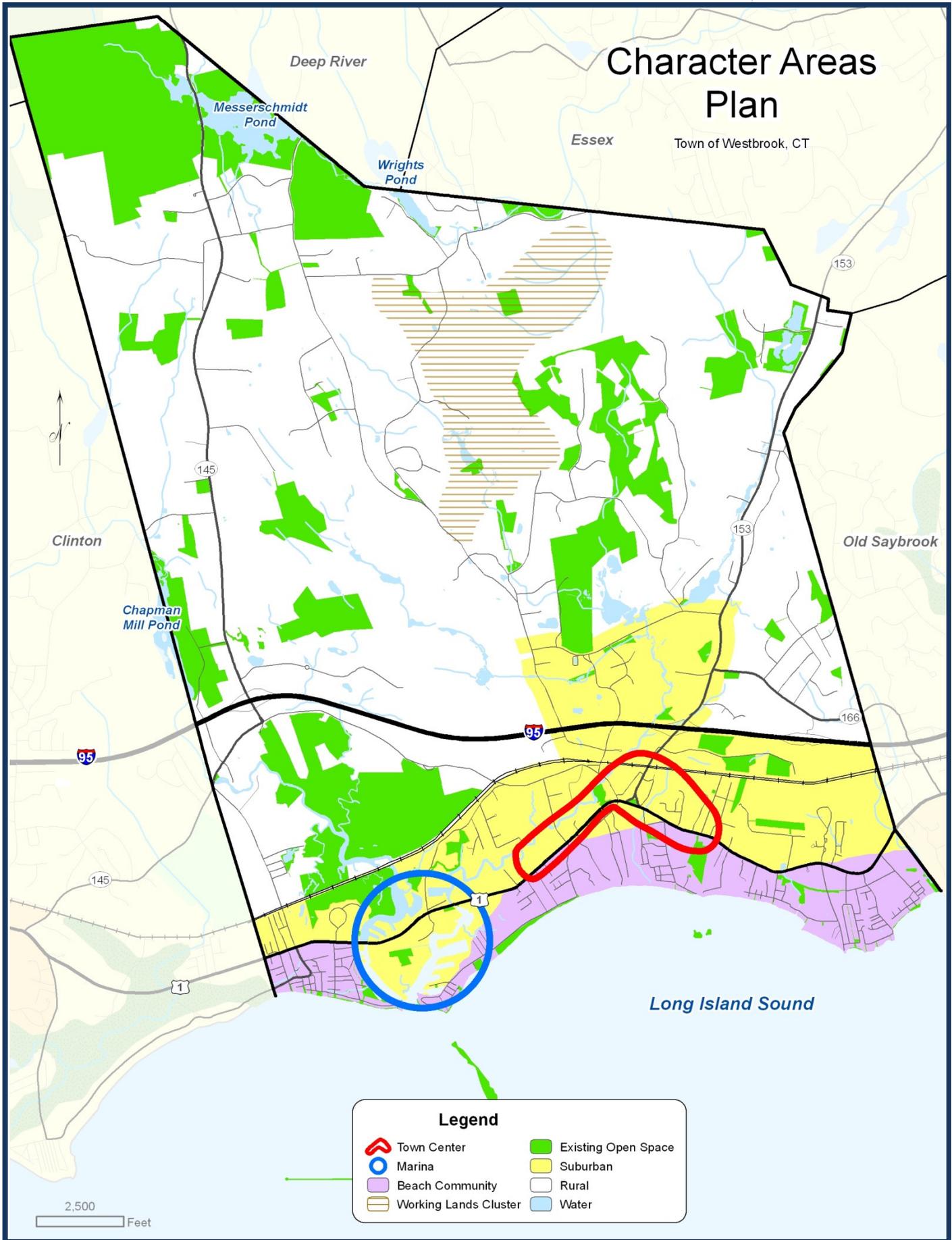
The perception of character is not uniform within Westbrook and can vary significantly from area to area. Westbrook can generally be divided into five Character Areas (see Character Areas Plan on the facing page):

- waterfront (marinas and restaurants);
- beach community area (higher density coastal community, its seasonal function lends to a resort feel);
- a New England village (Town Center);
- suburban residential development; and
- rural / forest (northern Westbrook).

No single strategy can protect the elements that contribute to Westbrook’s character or preserve the unique character of sections of Town. Rather, Westbrook will need a variety of strategies to preserve character including:

- sensitive site and building design;
- identification and protection of historic resources;
- protection of working lands and undeveloped land; and
- appropriate design objectives for the various parts of the Town.

Strategies related to preserving Westbrook’s waterfront were discussed in Chapter 3 and those related to residential development patterns are discussed in Chapter 8.



**Village District**

Section 8-2j of the Connecticut General Statutes allows a community to adopt zoning regulations which will give the Zoning Commission greater authority over the design aspects of an application.

The statutes require that:

- such a district only be established in an area with a distinctive character, landscape, or historic value; and
- that the Commission retain a “village district consultant” to provide advice and guidance on design issues.

**Village District Consultant**

Serves as the staff person responsible for reviewing design elements of projects within the Village District. As part of the application process the consultant submits a report for review by the Zoning Commission. The Zoning Commission is the final decision-making authority. The fee for the consultant is typically paid for by the applicant as part of the application fee. A design review board that includes properly credentialed members may be substituted for a paid consultant.

**Light Pollution**

Misdirected or misused light, generally resulting from an inappropriate application of exterior lighting products.

Light pollution can cause:

- glare;
- sky glow;
- light trespass; and
- waste of energy.

# Ensure Sensitive Site and Building Design

The appearance of sites and buildings are important elements of community character. If a new building or other development detracts from the community, the overall character of the community will surely suffer over time. Westbrook should not allow this to happen.

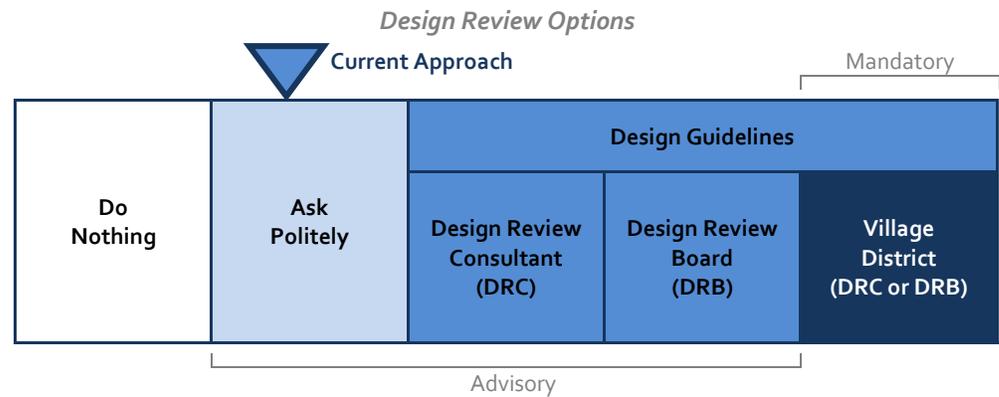
Westbrook should strengthen its design review process for sites and buildings. This includes addressing light pollution which can detract from community character.

**Strengthen the Design Review Process**

Westbrook currently evaluates site and building design on a case-by-case basis and often requires design modifications to more appropriately fit Westbrook’s character. The Town has also incorporated design standards into certain zones.

The diagram below illustrates the spectrum of options, from doing nothing to advisory approaches to mandatory approaches. Westbrook’s current approach is to ask politely. If the Town determines that the best option is to continue with an advisory approach, the current process should be strengthened. The Town should develop design objectives and guidelines that apply town-wide.

However, to ensure that design objectives and standards are not circumvented, the Town should consider moving toward a mandatory design review process. This is particularly important in certain areas of Westbrook, such as the Town Center. The Town could adopt a Village District zone (see sidebar) to best ensure the character of these areas is preserved (see page 106).



**Develop Lighting Standards**

Light pollution (see sidebar) detracts from the Town’s scenery and the overall rural ambiance. Currently, Westbrook addresses light pollution on a case-by-case basis when property is developed.

Communities have taken regulatory approaches to reducing light pollution. One way to accomplish this is to regulate lighting for new commercial and multi-family developments in the zoning regulations. Some communities have created brochures that encourage property owners to *voluntarily reduce* light pollution; replaced municipal street light fixtures with full-cut off fixtures; and eliminated unnecessary street lights.

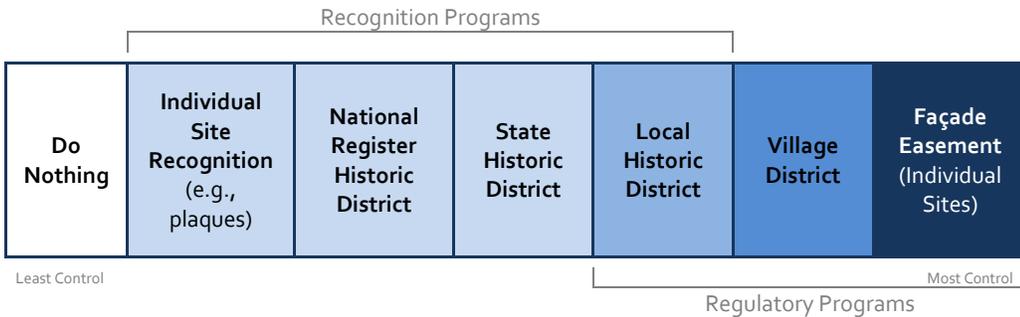
Westbrook should consider taking a more aggressive role in reducing light pollution.

# Recognize and Protect Historic and Cultural Resources

Westbrook should preserve its historic and significant buildings and sites to provide a sense of identity and connection to the past, preserve community character, and enhance the Town’s historical heritage. Archeological resources also provide insight into Westbrook’s and the state’s history.

Westbrook residents recognize the pressure to tear down historic structures rather than restore them. However, Westbrook’s historic structures are not protected. There are no regulations in place to prevent the alteration of the appearance of historic buildings, other than government-owned properties. The Town has created a historic resource inventory and has included identified sites in the Town GIS, but this information is limited and dated. An update is in progress.

### Historic Preservation and Recognition Programs



The following table provides an overview of existing and potential protection measures for recognized resources in Westbrook.

### Recognized Resources in Westbrook

	DESCRIPTION	RECOGNITION			REGULATORY	
		LOCAL PROGRAM	STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES (RHP)	NATIONAL RHP / NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT	NATIONAL HISTORIC LAND-MARK	LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT
Historic Districts	None		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Recognized Places	Lay-Pritchett House		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other Areas	Historic recognition program (plaques)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		
Potential National Historic Landmark	Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

In place; potential

### National and State Historic Recognition Programs and Designations

Programs that recognize areas with historical merit. These designations affect activities involving federal and/or state funding and may prevent unreasonable destruction of historic resources.

Westbrook does not have a national or state historic district.

### Local Historic District Designation

Designation that gives local historic district commissions the authority to regulate the construction and demolition of structures and the alteration of architectural features that are visible from a public way.

Westbrook does not have a local historic district.

### **National Register of Historic Places / District**

Listing on the national register of historic places / district is basically ceremonial - it entitles the owner to place a historic plaque on the property but has little effect on activities of private property owners. Properties and areas listed on the national register are recognized for their historic significance or as an example of an historic period in American history.

### **State Register of Historic Places**

Listings on the state register of historic places are recognized for their significance or as an example of an historic period in Connecticut history. Entries on the national register are also on the state register of historic places.

### **Demolition Delay Ordinance**

A tool to help municipalities preserve their community's historically and architecturally significant resources.

The State of Connecticut allows towns to impose a waiting period of up to 180 days before granting a demolition permit.

This waiting period can allow interested parties time to explore alternatives to demolition and provide "a window of opportunity for preservation."

An effective ordinance will enable communities to have a dialog about how historic buildings can continue to serve important and productive roles. This tool does not prevent redevelopment.

### **Support and Assist With National and State Recognition**

The Town should consider designating historic areas. Westbrook contains a number of areas that may be eligible for recognition as a National Register Historic District (NRHD) or Place (NRHP) or are otherwise considered locally-significant. The historic resource inventory can aid in developing an application for national recognition. The Town should support efforts to nominate Westbrook's historic resources.

### **Encourage "Sensitive Ownership" of Historic Properties**

The most effective means of preserving historic resources is ownership by people or organizations that are sensitive to the historic significance of the resource and are financially and emotionally committed to maintaining that resource. Sensitive ownership should be encouraged and supported.

Educational programs and technical assistance related to historic preservation can be effective tools to assist owners of historic resources. Additional tools, such as tax abatements, might be needed to encourage sensitive ownership.

### **Assist with the Establishment of a Local Historic District (If Desired)**

Local historic district designations (and "village district" zones) provide the highest level of protection for historic resources. A Local Historic District Commission regulates activities in local districts. The construction or demolition of buildings or structures or the alteration of external architectural features that are visible from a public way in these districts requires a "Certificate of Appropriateness."

Such districts can only be established by a 2/3<sup>rd</sup> vote of the affected property owners and adoption of a local ordinance. Westbrook should support efforts by residents to create a local historic district. The Town could identify eligible properties to initiate a discussion.

### **Consider Adopting a Demolition Delay Ordinance**

Westbrook does not have a mechanism that alerts the community when historic structures are threatened by demolition. A demolition delay ordinance (see sidebar) might be an appropriate mechanism to provide the community with the ability to request a property-owner to reconsider demolition. This tool will not prevent demolition, but gives the community an opportunity to have a dialog about possible preservation options.

### **Collect and Maintain Databases of Historic and Archeological Resources**

Westbrook should continue to maintain the GIS historic inventory database and update the inventory as new information becomes available. The Town should also identify properties that contain cultural, historic, archaeological and scenic sites and evaluate their preservation potential. In addition, the Town should develop an Archaeological Sensitivity Map with assistance from the state Archaeologist's Office and consider requiring archaeological surveys for new development in those areas.

# Recognize and Protect Working Lands

Working lands greatly contribute to the Westbrook's small town, New England character and contribute to an open landscape ("openness" – see sidebar). Working lands are now seen as a valuable resource for economic activity and job creation and provide a needed local source of food. Much of Westbrook's working lands are used for horses, horse riding and breeding farms, forestry operations (saw timber and firewood) and greenhouses.

Westbrook should preserve its working lands to:

- 🐾 preserve Westbrook's rural and agricultural heritage;
- 🐾 protect open space;
- 🐾 provide recreational opportunities (e.g., horseback riding);
- 🐾 ensure a source of fresh, locally-grown produce;
- 🐾 provide jobs and fiscal benefits; and
- 🐾 reduce sprawl.

Owners of working lands face a number of challenges including structural changes in agriculture, overall costs of working the land, fluctuating markets and advancing age of property owners. These challenges can make it more financially attractive for farmers to sell their land for development when they are ready to retire or even sooner. Also, new residents may not appreciate the value of farming or may not realize that Westbrook has "real farms". They may pressure the Town to restrict these operations.

Like other parts of Connecticut, Westbrook has lost working lands to development. Yet, 21st century trends in farming, smaller, specialty produce farms, growing demand for organic and locally-grown food and the emergence of a new generation of would-be farmers, offer opportunities to keep Westbrook's working lands in active use.

Westbrook should work to preserve its active farms and reactivate farmland. Strategies to pursue might include:

- 🐾 explore the viability of a local Farmers' Market;
- 🐾 encourage "Farm to Chef" programs at local restaurants; and
- 🐾 conduct a zoning audit to ensure zoning regulations are farm-friendly.

Equestrian uses are not always viewed as "working lands". Westbrook's equestrian uses contribute greatly to the Town's character and also to the economy. Like other working lands, the Town should continue to support equestrian uses and help minimize or resolve potential conflicts with neighboring uses. Best Management Practices to lessen environmental impacts of horses should also be encouraged and Westbrook might work with property owners to seek HEAP recognition (see sidebar) through the Horse Farm of Distinction program.

In cases where the owner of working lands can no longer continue operations, the Town might explore the purchase of development rights (see sidebar). The Town might focus its efforts in those areas that include "clusters" or "hubs" of working lands since they contribute to the overall Open Space Vision (see page 17).

## Working Lands

Lands that are managed for monetary value, (e.g., agriculture fields or timbered / forested lands). It is a more comprehensive categorization than farming.

## Openness

Land that provides a feeling of open space, but is neither protected or managed as open space.

## Purchase Development Rights (PDR)

Through a PDR program, a landowner still owns the land, but is compensated for relinquishing the right to develop it as real estate. Agriculture and limited other uses of the land continue.

For the public, PDR programs enable land conservation at a much-reduced expense, as the cost of PDR is less than outright purchase of land, and costs associated with subsequent management of the land remain the responsibility of the landowner.

## HEAP Recognition

HEAP (Horse Environmental Awareness Program) is a coalition of federal, state, and local agencies, organizations, and individuals interested in educating the equestrian community on Best Management Practices that can be established on horse farms to protect the environment.

### Local Scenic Road Criteria

State law enables towns to adopt a Scenic Road Ordinance. As part of the ordinance, at least 50 percent of the landowners with road frontage along the road must support the Scenic Road designation.

In addition, the road must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- unpaved;
- bordered by nature;
- traveled portion no more than 20 feet wide;
- offers scenic views;
- blends naturally into the terrain; and / or
- parallels or crosses brooks, streams, lakes or ponds

Designating the road as a Scenic Road can provide abutting property owners with an opportunity to specify what alterations or improvements are permitted and prohibited. The ordinance can also require abutter notification when road improvements are proposed.

### Great Streets

While there is no “Great Streets” program, Westbrook might also consider recognizing developed areas that contribute to overall community character.

Great Streets have character, are rich with beautiful buildings and trees, and are “place-based” (where pedestrians feel comfortable and desire to be there; distinct).

### State Scenic Highways

A potential state scenic highway must abut significant natural or cultural features such as agricultural land or historic buildings and structures (listed on the national or state register of historic places), or afford vistas of marshes, shoreline, forests with mature trees, or other notable natural or geologic features which set the highway apart from other state highways as being distinct.

## Recognize and Protect Scenic Roads and Vistas

Westbrook is a scenic community. An attractive shoreline and views of Long Island Sound provide a special ambiance that attracts visitors and convinces people to settle here. However, it is not always easy to preserve scenic resources. Many resources are on private property. And for those scenic resources located on public property, scenic preservation is not often a consideration when making improvements.

Two types of scenic resources in Westbrook are identified:

- ☛ scenic views and vistas; and
- ☛ scenic roads.

### Preserve Views and Vistas

Scenic views can be found in virtually all parts of Westbrook. These views can be impacted by development activities such as tree clearing on hills and hill tops and the construction of buildings that seem oversized for a site. The extent of clearing and building coverage can be limited to help to preserve scenic views.

### Consider Establishing a Scenic Roads Program

Most scenic views are observed from a public right-of-way. Scenic features along roads in Westbrook include stone walls, tree canopies, and river and shoreline views. To preserve these and other scenic features it is important to identify their location and encourage their preservation when development occurs or when roads are improved.

Westbrook has a number of local roads and streets that residents and visitors consider scenic. Communities can create a scenic road program by adopting a Local Scenic Road Ordinance. By designating Scenic Roads the community might minimize impacts when improvements are undertaken (see sidebar). Both aesthetic and safety objectives can be met with small adjustments to road design requirements. The Town has not designated any local scenic roads, but should consider doing so.

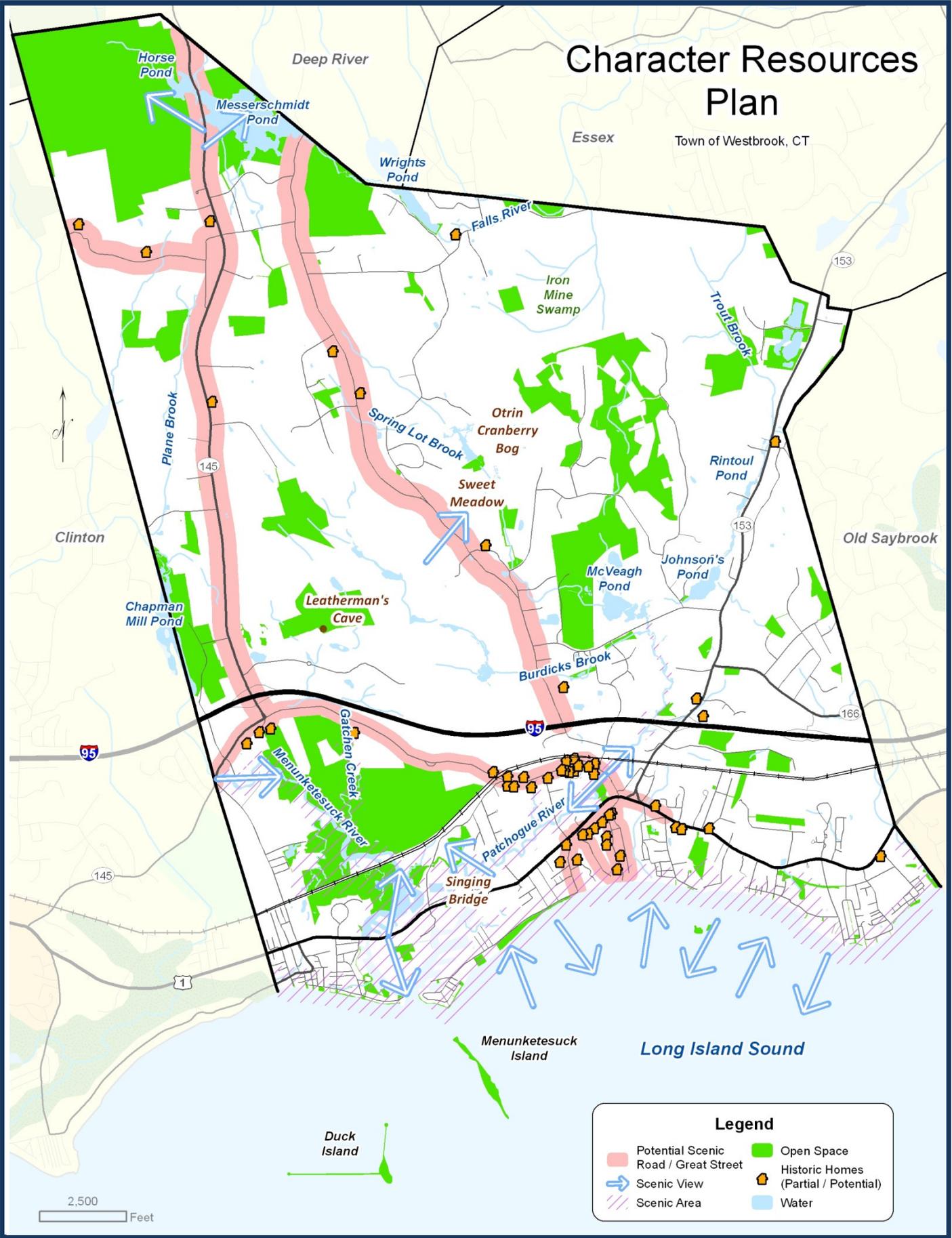
A “Great Streets” approach offers an alternative to the statutory Local Scenic Roads requirement. The concept is the same – the Town sets a policy that the preservation of scenic features or other character elements will be preserved when road work is undertaken. Possible roads are identified as “Scenic Road / Great Street” on the Character Resources Plan.

### Consider Requesting Scenic Road Status for Designated State-owned Roads

Westbrook’s state-owned roads are scenic as well. Route 1 in and around the Town Center and Route 145, Horse Hill Road, have scenic features that are worthy of recognition. The Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT) has developed a Scenic Road Program for state-owned roads. Westbrook should consider requesting that ConnDOT designate these roads as state scenic highways (see sidebar).

# Character Resources Plan

Essex  
Town of Westbrook, CT



2,500 Feet

Legend	
	Potential Scenic Road / Great Street
	Open Space
	Scenic View
	Historic Homes (Partial / Potential)
	Scenic Area
	Water

### Adopt-A-Spot

Westbrook's Adopt-A-Spot program encourages residents to volunteer to enhance community spaces through beautification and maintenance of these public areas.

## Enhance Public Spaces

Public spaces, particularly spaces owned and maintained by the Town, are important to the character of the community. These spaces convey the Town's image and can leave a lasting impression on residents, businesses and visitors.

### Enhance Areas that Create a "First Impression" of Westbrook

Most often, visitors obtain their first impressions of Westbrook from U.S. Route 1, Route 153 and Route 145 and through the marinas. The Town should reinforce the feeling among residents, employees, and visitors that they have entered a special place. Enhancements to these community entrances can be simple, such as the provision of signs and/or plantings. Enhancements could also involve more elaborate landscaping or public art.

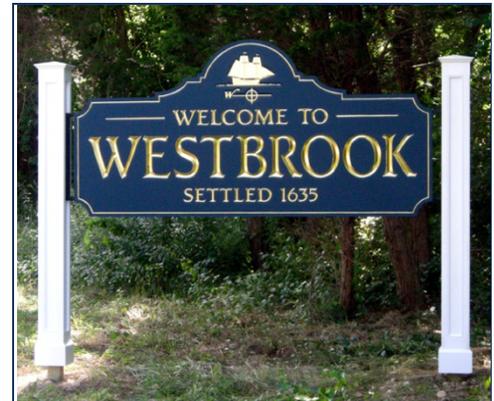
Other elements, such as streetscapes (see sidebar), should be addressed as well. Key areas for these enhancements are Routes 1 and 153, especially at points where people enter the Town. The Town also could identify a "memorable icon" or graphic to reinforce the overall image of the community.

Within the Town, the appearance of the entrances to destinations also forms a lasting impression. These special places include the Marina District, Town Center (see Chapters 7 and 9), public beaches and open space areas. These areas should be attractive and welcoming in order to instill pride in the community and create places that visitors want to come back to.

Westbrook's "Adopt-A-Spot" program (see sidebar) could help finance improvements and on-going maintenance in these areas. Westbrook should continue the Adopt-A-Spot program and evaluate ways to enhance this program.



Adopt-a-Spot Volunteers



Welcome Sign

## Enhance Streetscapes

Roads comprise 6 percent of the Town's land area but have a disproportionate impact on Town aesthetics since our vantage point is usually from a public road or right-of-way. Westbrook should pay particular attention to the following streetscape elements, which can affect the perception of a community or an area:

### *Streetscape Elements*

FEATURE	DESCRIPTION
<b>Sidewalks</b>	Special sidewalk details (e.g., stamped pavement, brick) can be added in areas with a high amount of pedestrian activity, to distinguish certain places, such as in the Town Center and to enhance public safety
<b>Street Lighting</b>	Pedestrian-scale and pedestrian-oriented lighting should be promoted in areas intended for pedestrians to improve safety and add to the ambience
<b>Street Trees</b>	Street trees should be encouraged since they add to the ambience, provide shade, reduce runoff, soften the urban environment, and can provide a sense of protection from the automobile when located between the sidewalk and road
<b>Street Furniture</b>	Street furniture (benches, fountains, clocks, bike racks and similar items) contribute to the identity of an area and should be provided where they will not obstruct sidewalks
<b>Awnings</b>	Awnings can shelter pedestrians, reduce glare, conserve energy and improve the appearance of building facades
<b>Utilities</b>	Underground utilities should be encouraged or required since overhead wires can be visually intrusive and detract from the character of an area
<b>Fences And Walls</b>	Stone walls contribute to Westbrook's character. Certain fences and walls can detract from the streetscape and ambience of an area if they are opaque, of incompatible materials (e.g., chain link), or too tall in a pedestrian-oriented area
<b>Property Maintenance</b>	Property maintenance (or lack of) and litter can affect community character and quality of life



Streetscape Elements



New Benches

## Create Stronger Connections to the Past

Westbrook can also enhance its public spaces by capitalizing on its rich history and historic assets. The Town could install plaques in public spaces that lend insight into nearby historic places or events. The Town could name new public roads after historically-significant elements (e.g., people, places or events). These strategies help connect residents and visitors to Westbrook.

## Streetscapes

Areas surrounding a street, which includes elements such as:

- trees;
- buildings;
- street furniture;
- green space; and
- decorative light fixtures.

## Streetscape Design

Streetscape improvements might also help Westbrook achieve other policy objectives through design. One opportunity involves incorporating low impact development techniques as part of the streetscape. Some communities have used tree box filters to manage stormwater while others have used porous materials in low traffic areas.

## Action Summary for Community Character and Sense of Place

### Ensure Sensitive Site and Building Design - Page 52

- 5.1 Strengthen the design review process by adopting design guidelines
- 5.2 Evaluate if mandatory design review should be required in certain areas
- 5.3 Develop lighting standards to minimize light pollution

### Recognize and Protect Historic and Cultural Resources - Page 53

- 5.4 Support and assist with designation of eligible properties / districts on the national register of historic places and state register of historic places
- 5.5 Encourage "sensitive ownership" of historic properties
- 5.6 Consider adopting tax abatements for historic buildings
- 5.7 Provide educational programs and technical assistance related to historic preservation
- 5.8 Support the creation of local historic districts where appropriate
- 5.9 Consider adopting ordinances to provide for demolition delay
- 5.10 Identify and map (use GIS) properties that contain cultural, historic, archaeological and scenic sites and evaluate their preservation potential
- 5.11 Develop an archaeological sensitivity map with assistance from state Archaeologist's Office and consider requiring archaeological surveys for new development in those areas

### Recognize and Protect Working Lands - Page 55

- 5.12 Preserve active farms
- 5.13 Preserve farmland soils
- 5.14 Explore the viability of a local farmers' market and encourage "farm to chef" programs at local restaurants
- 5.15 Conduct a zoning audit to ensure zoning regulations are farm-friendly
- 5.16 Support equestrian uses and activities
- 5.17 Encourage use of Best Management Practices through participation in HEAP

### Recognize and Protect Scenic Roads and Vistas- Page 56

- 5.18 Encourage preservation of vegetation on hills and hilltops
- 5.19 Preserve and restore stonewalls along roadways
- 5.20 Identify and protect scenic vistas along roadways, rivers and shoreline
- 5.21 Consider establishing a local scenic road program
- 5.22 Consider requesting scenic road status for designated state-owned roads

### Enhance Public Spaces - Page 58

- 5.23 Enhance areas that create a "first impression" of Westbrook
- 5.24 Increase the aesthetic appeal of the community through placement of public art and creative landscaping
- 5.25 Support beautification programs such as the "Adopt-A-Spot" program
- 5.26 Enhance existing streetscapes along Routes 1 and 153 especially at key entry points into Town
- 5.27 Create stronger connections to the past by installing plaques at sites and places that lend insight about Westbrook and naming new roads after relevant people/places

# FACILITIES AND SERVICES

# 6

*Ensure adequate facilities and infrastructure to support growth and maintain quality of life*

*Provide quality municipal services in a cost-effective manner*



Westbrook Public Library

### Areas of Concern

Natural resource constraints and environmental hazards:

- Inland and Coastal Wetlands;
- FEMA 100-year floodzone (see page 40); and
- FEMA SLOSH (see page 41).

## Plan For and Coordinate New Facility / Infrastructure Needs

Community facilities accommodate governmental functions (e.g., education, public works, public safety, recreation, and social services) and services or activities provided by the community. Community facilities, services and amenities contribute to the quality of life of residents, visitors and businesses.

A Plan of Conservation and Development is not intended to address day-to-day management of municipal departments or facilities, but rather to evaluate strategic long-term needs such as the adequacy of physical space and land to meet current and future community needs.

The following table summarizes issues regarding community facilities in Westbrook. Community facility locations are shown on the Community Facilities Plan.

*Westbrook's Community Facilities*

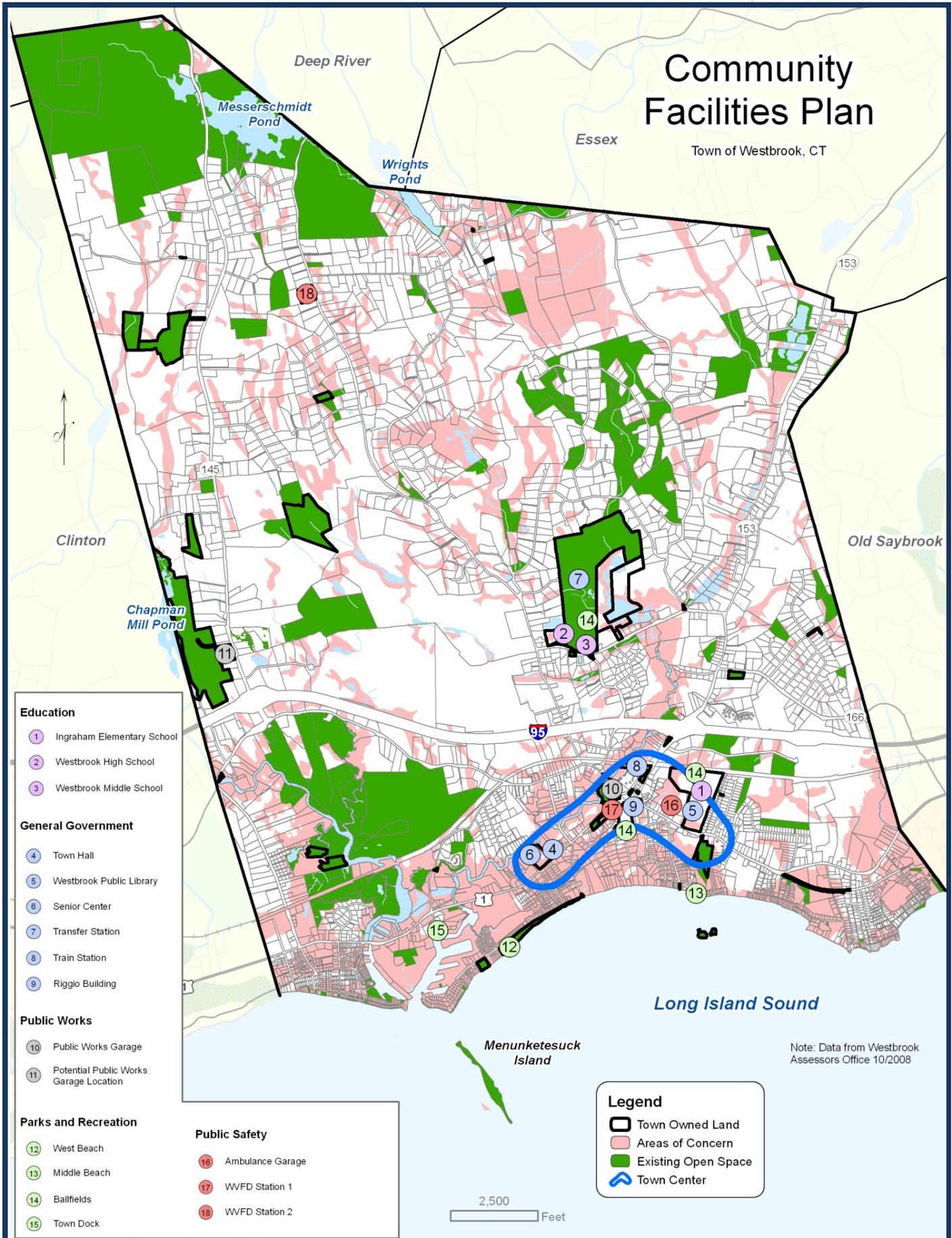
EXISTING FACILITIES	PRIMARY FUNCTION	IDENTIFIED ISSUES
Mulvey Municipal Center	General Government Administration	🦹 Ongoing maintenance
John Riggio Building		🦹 Space constraints in some departments
Police station	Emergency Services	🦹 Ongoing maintenance
2 Fire stations		🦹 Additional space at the main fire station
Ambulance Facility		
Highway Garage	Public Works	🦹 Ongoing maintenance 🦹 Additional space and garage bays (new facility planned)
Town beaches	Recreation	🦹 Ongoing maintenance
Ball fields		🦹 Community center
Facilities at schools and Mulvey Municipal Center		🦹 Replace the jetties at Town beaches
Senior Center	Community Services	🦹 Ongoing maintenance
Library		🦹 Finish interior space in library
High School	Schools	🦹 Ongoing maintenance
Middle School		🦹 Renovate the Elementary School
Elementary School		

### Evaluate Facility Locations and Develop Policies to Guide the Siting of New Facilities

The siting of new facilities (and in some cases the upgrade of existing facilities) should take certain locational factors into consideration. These factors can ensure that community facility locations enhance community character, reduce natural hazard risks and are consistent with the "green infrastructure" approach. "Areas of Concern" (see sidebar) are identified on the Community Facilities Plan map on the facing page.

# Community Facilities Plan

Town of Westbrook, CT



### Possible Community Facility Siting Factors

Town Center Area  
(see maps in Chapter 9)

Favorable Centralized Location:

- central to the entire Town; or
- central to a particular area or neighborhood

Other Favorable Factors

- convenient access;
- proximity to various transportation modes;
- neighborhood location;
- lack of environmental constraints; and / or
- lack of hazardous constraints (e.g., flood zone).

### Capital Replacement Planning

In 2007, with the assistance of the Capitol Region Economic Council, the Board of Education conducted a facilities audit for the Town's three schools.

At the same time, the Board of Selectmen conducted a similar study for four of the Town's municipal facilities.

The resulting reports identified areas for improvement and the need to establish reserve accounts for life-cycle replacements.

Many of Westbrook's community facilities are located in either the Town Center or in other centralized locations. These location decisions have reinforced a sense of place within the community. Westbrook should continue to make the Town Center a priority area.

However, as a community with extensive coastline and riparian areas, Westbrook is vulnerable to natural hazards (see Chapter 2 for details), that not only pose risks to residents and businesses but also to community facilities. As the Community Facilities Plan map indicates, a number of Westbrook's facilities are located in areas that might be vulnerable.

The Town should evaluate natural hazards, particularly flooding when it plans new facilities and should avoid Areas of Concern. Sea level rise could lead to future flooding in areas that do not currently flood. The potential impact of sea level rise should also be a consideration when upgrades to existing facilities are planned or new facilities are proposed.

Because public safety facilities must be able to operate during natural hazard event consideration should be given to locations that are less vulnerable. This same strategy should be pursued for those facilities that house sensitive populations, such as schools and senior facilities.

Of course, it is recognized that certain facilities may need to be located in coastal or sensitive areas to fulfill their purpose (e.g., beach-related facilities).

### Continue to Plan for Capital Needs

Westbrook uses a capital replacement planning process (see sidebar) to identify long-term needs and to plan for their financial impacts on the annual budget. Long-term capital planning is important, as it can offset large fluctuations in the budget and tax rate and it allows the community to anticipate and plan for capital projects. This practice should continue.

Westbrook has made numerous community facility improvements in the past ten years. As the Town plans for future facilities, it may be useful to distinguish between things which are critical to municipal operations versus things which are of lesser importance.

### Assess Office and Meeting Space Needs at Mulvey Municipal Center

Both amount (square footage) and function (type of space) are important considerations when planning for space needs.

The Mulvey Municipal Center appears to have adequate square footage to meet community needs through to the year 2020 if not beyond. However, in some cases, the space may not be well-configured to meet the functional needs of the departments. For example, some departments have an open floor plan, but require private office space to perform their duties. Over time, the Town should explore potential options to reconfigure space to better meet needs.

**Continue to Explore Opportunities to Share School and Government Facilities**

Few residents realize that the schools and the municipal government operate independently, each with their own administrative controls and scheduling commitments. To more efficiently share facilities, some communities have improved coordination and interaction between these two agencies.

For example, sometimes school facilities are owned and managed by the Town, but programmed by the Board of Education. This provides the Town with the comfort level that buildings are being properly maintained (or, if they are not, properly assigns accountability) and allows the Board of Education to focus on its mission of educating students. Also, facility sharing can reduce the need to build more facilities. Westbrook should evaluate whether this approach makes sense for the community.

**Assess the Need for a Community Center**

The Westbrook Parks and Recreation Department (WPR) is developing a proposal for a community center. If additional capacity is needed and cannot be provided through scheduling and coordination, then a new facility may be the right solution. A separate community center might provide the WPR with the opportunity to manage all programming within one space and to offer additional programs.

As envisioned by WPR, the facility would be based upon today's needs, but designed to allow for future expansion. Westbrook should consider whether to move forward with building a community center.

**Assess the Need for Fire Station Expansion**

The Westbrook Fire Department is a private not-for-profit organization that provides emergency services within the Town. The Department operates two fire stations: 18 South Main Street and 533 West Pond Meadow. The Fire Department has identified a need for expansion at the South Main Street Station.

The location is appropriate since finding a new site for a fire station can be challenging and expensive, and the current site has minimal impacts to neighboring properties. The Town should work with the Fire Department to address this need.

**Address Emergency Response Needs**

Westbrook relies on volunteers to provide emergency response (e.g., fire, ambulance). As the community has grown and changed, the demand for these emergency services has grown and finding volunteers has become challenging. Westbrook should continue to work with the volunteers to determine ways to expand and retain the volunteer pool.

The development of certain land uses (e.g., medical office and age-restricted housing) and the high traffic volume on Interstate 95 place more demand on emergency services. In addition, Westbrook residents now commute further for employment. This trend has two implications: it reduces the number of people available to respond during the day and it reduces the amount of time available for volunteering. Westbrook should continually assess this issue and evaluate whether paid personnel are needed, especially during the daytime hours.

Two additional factors influence emergency response in Westbrook – communication and navigation. The following chart identifies strategies to improve communications and improve the ability of emergency responders (and other public safety providers) to find and reach their destination.

*Emergency Response Issues*

COMMUNICATE	NAVIGATE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🦁 Town-wide communications – Certain areas of Town need better radio coverage. The Town should request that every new cell tower provide the top position for emergency communications at no cost to the Town.</li> <li>🦁 Inter-agency communications – Police, fire, public works and schools use different frequencies, which requires each vehicle to carry multiple radios in order to ensure communication across these agencies. This should be corrected. In addition, emergency response communication equipment should be upgraded when new advances in communication warrant it. Improving wireless coverage, in areas where it may be lacking, should be a priority.</li> <li>🦁 GIS Data – The Town’s geographic information system is an important resource for emergency responders and could be expanded to include information that first responders need to make tactical decisions when responding. For example, linking Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS), floor plans, building contact information, etc. to specific properties in Town, or similar types of information is important and can be done in a cooperative manner between all agencies involved.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🦁 Property identification – The ability to find addresses involves two distinct management issues:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A policy to ensure a uniform procedure for assigning house numbers on Town roads is in place; and</li> <li>○ Making sure each building has a legible number and that driveways serving multiple buildings are clearly marked.</li> </ul> </li> <li>🦁 Street naming – Street names should not be replicated. Even similar sounding road names can delay an emergency response.</li> <li>🦁 Driveway access – Driveways should be wide enough to enable the largest fire apparatus to navigate.</li> <li>🦁 Speed bumps – While speed bumps may appear to be an effective solution for traffic calming, they cause havoc for emergency response equipment and can delay the administration of emergency care, by slowing the rate of speed for the emergency responders and limiting when care can be provided (care cannot be provided when speed bumps are present).</li> <li>🦁 Enforcing on-street parking restrictions – Certain roads are too narrow to accommodate both traffic and on-street parking. This is especially an issue on roads located south of Route 1. Enforcement of existing “No Parking” areas is important. All roads should be evaluated to determine if the parking restrictions are appropriate.</li> </ul>

## Enhance Pedestrian and Bicycle Routes

Walking and bicycling are two important transportation options. Often, these types of facilities are a lower priority than roads and are provided as an afterthought, or deferred due to budget limitations. As a result, there are barriers to walking or biking in Westbrook.

Many communities have adopted a “Complete Streets” policy (see sidebar) to balance transportation funding and to show a commitment to pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Westbrook should consider adopting a Complete Streets policy to enhance the pedestrian and bicycle networks.

### Enhance the Pedestrian Network

Sidewalks are an important part of the transportation network, yet there are some parts of Westbrook where sidewalks do not exist. While Westbrook has been diligently requiring that new development provide sidewalks within the site and along road frontages, there are still some gaps in the sidewalk system. Westbrook should continue to require sidewalks in new developments.

Westbrook should update the sidewalk plan which can show how an overall sidewalk network can be accomplished. It may also highlight areas where sidewalks can be installed as part of roadway projects and areas where sidewalks may not be necessary or desirable as part of new developments. It might also evaluate the pedestrian needs of an aging population (e.g., ramps, crossing times) and whether educational and infrastructure enhancement programs such as the “Safe Routes to School” (see sidebar) are worth pursuing.

A key priority should be to close the sidewalk gaps in the Town Center area (see page 110), along other parts of Route 1, and in areas with high pedestrian traffic volume. Westbrook may want to seek funding to undertake these projects. Opportunities for non-motorized off-road trails should also be considered, especially in and around the Town Center and the train station. Such off-road improvements can also enhance the transportation network.

### Provide Bicycling Facilities

There is growing interest in providing more opportunities for bicyclists and Westbrook should consider how to address this. To accommodate bicyclists, a community can take steps to make roads feel safer for bicyclists and to ensure that bicyclists have a place to park their bikes when they reach their destination.

Fortunately, bicyclists can often be accommodated through simple road improvements. An initial approach may involve re-striping roads to provide a bicycle travel area at the side of the road. Like the rest of the road, the space for bicyclists should be maintained. Maintenance might include:

- 🛞 sweeping pavement edges and shoulders;
- 🛞 patching surfaces as smoothly as possible;
- 🛞 ensuring pavement overlay projects feather the new surface into the existing surface;
- 🛞 repairing potholes;
- 🛞 maintaining striping to distinguish road shoulder and auto lane;
- 🛞 repairing and maintaining crosswalk stripes and stop lines;
- 🛞 routinely cutting back vegetation; and
- 🛞 eliminating drainage grate and utility cover hazards.

### Complete Streets Policy

Designing transportation systems that provide safe access for all users, regardless of age or ability.

Complete streets need to work for drivers, transit users, pedestrians, and bicyclists, as well as for older people, children, and people with disabilities.

### Potential Sidewalk Standards

Sidewalks along Routes 1 and 153 should be provided on both sides. Wider sidewalks may be needed in areas where more pedestrian activity is anticipated, or to support seasonal outdoor dining.

Sidewalks along Town-owned roads should be located on one side of the street.

Five foot widths allow pedestrians to walk side by side and comfortably pass, and are easier to maintain in the winter because plows can be used. Sidewalks should be either integrated into curbs or separated by several feet to accommodate an area large enough for grass to thrive.

### Safe Routes to School

Safe Routes to School is a movement promoting walking and bicycling to school by supporting efforts to make it safe, convenient and fun for children to do so.

When routes are safe, walking or biking to and from school is an easy way to get the regular physical exercise that children need for a healthy lifestyle.

Safe Routes to School initiatives also help to ease traffic congestion and air pollution, improve community spirit and contribute to students' readiness to learn in school.

**Sharrows**

Street marking indicating that the bike lane and automobile travel lane are shared. The purpose of these arrows is to remind motorists that bicyclists frequently use the road and have a right to occupy the traveled way.

**Walk-able and Bicycle-able Attract Tourists**

Places where visitors and residents alike feel community pride and activity are increasingly likely to be strong economically.

**Safety Tips for Drivers Sharing the Road with Bicyclists**

- cyclists have a right to ride on the street. Drivers must exercise due care to avoid colliding with cyclists;
- on-street bike lanes are designed for the exclusive or preferential use by cyclists;
- look before you open your door. Don't rely only on your rearview mirrors — turn your head to look for bicyclists who may be alongside or approaching; make sure there is at least four feet between you and cyclists. Cyclists may have to maneuver unexpectedly to avoid road conditions that you can't see;
- don't tailgate, especially in bad weather; and
- lay off the horn. Cars are loud; cyclists can hear you coming. Don't honk at cyclists unless they are in immediate danger.

Public awareness of bicyclists and motorists should be an important part of the program. The Town can install signs along these main bicycle routes to encourage bicyclists to use these routes and to alert drivers to be aware of bicyclists.

Since bicyclists need a place to park their bikes when they reach their destination, zoning regulations should require that new commercial development provide bicycle racks for employees and patrons. Westbrook should also consider installing bicycle racks at municipal facilities.

Successful initiatives to create a bicycle-friendly community depend upon efforts by local bicycling advocates. Such a group is not apparent today in Westbrook. However, the Town could try to encourage the formation of a group.

Some communities have undertaken public campaigns to encourage people to bicycle or hold bicycling events. Westbrook should consider these types of events to promote bicycling and help activate interested residents in forming a bicycling advocacy group.

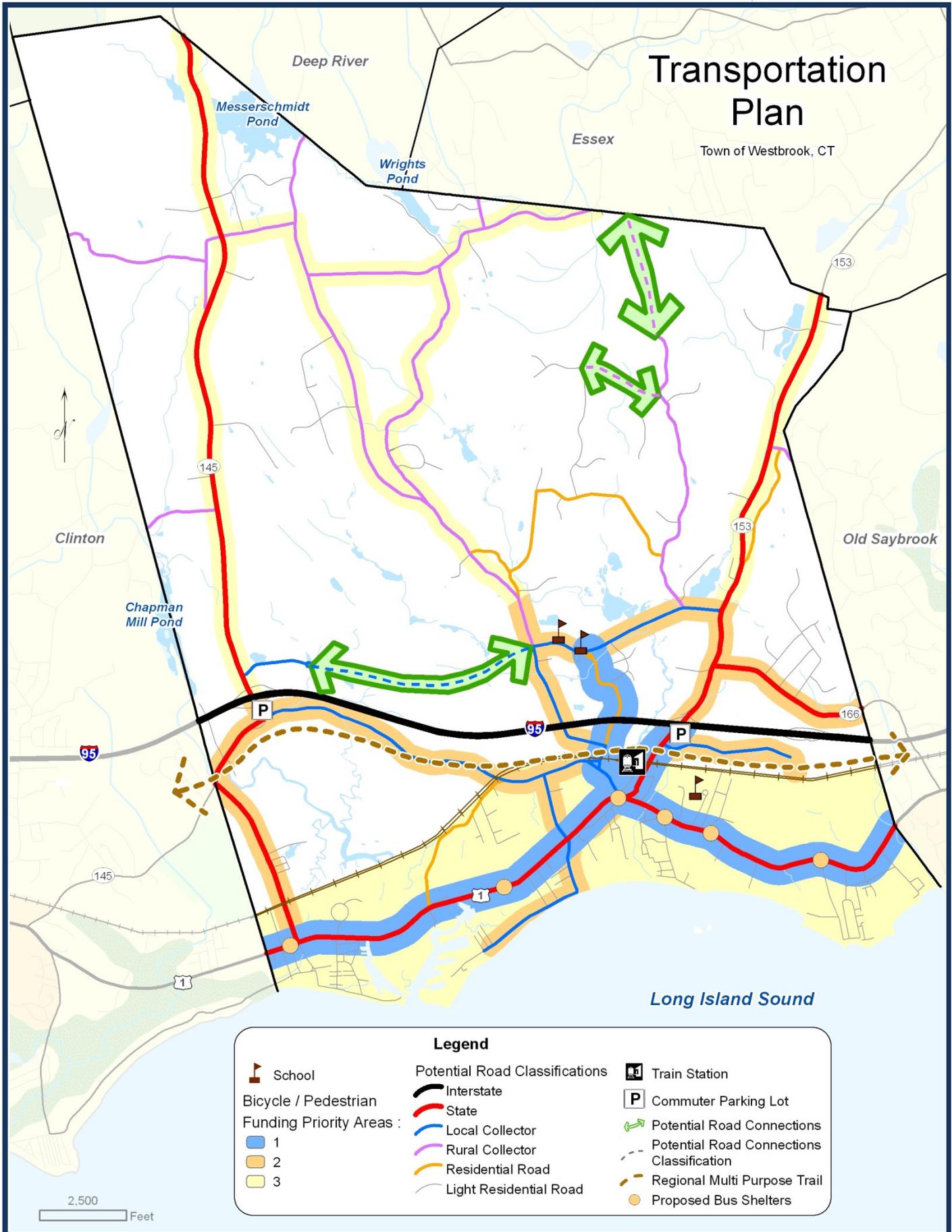
Recently, several shoreline communities have discussed the need for a regional off-road transportation system for pedestrians and bicyclists. Westbrook should work with regional partners to identify a route through Westbrook for a regional multi-purpose trail.

**Establish Funding Priority Areas for Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure**

Enhancing sidewalk and bicycle facilities is important. It will take time and money to implement these strategies. Westbrook should establish priority funding areas to ensure that limited resources are wisely spent. The following table recommends potential priority funding areas for sidewalk and bicycle improvements.

*Potential Pedestrian / Bicycle Priority Funding Areas (see map on facing page)*

FUNDING PRIORITY	GENERAL CRITERIA	TYPICAL IMPROVEMENTS	
		PEDESTRIANS	BICYCLES
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High volume of automobile traffic; and</li> <li>• High amount of pedestrian / bicycle traffic (existing or anticipated)</li> </ul>	Sidewalks on both sides of the street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On-road bike lanes / line;</li> <li>• Off-road bike paths;</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moderate traffic volumes (automobile / pedestrian / bicycle)</li> <li>• Proximity to community facilities</li> </ul>	Sidewalks on one side of the Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Sharrows"; and /or</li> <li>• "Share the Road" signs</li> </ul>
3 / Other Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lower traffic volumes</li> <li>• Proximity to community facilities</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Share the Road" signs and / or striping</li> </ul>



**LoCIP Funds**

A state program that distributes funds to municipalities to reimburse the cost of eligible local capital improvement projects (e.g., road, bridge or public building construction activities).

**Capital Improvement Planning**

A Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is a short-range plan that:

- identifies capital projects and equipment purchases;
- provides a planning schedule for these activities; and
- identifies options for funding the plan.

A CIP is usually prepared as part of the budget process.

*The chart to the right shows how a commitment to yearly maintenance of roads can offset the need for full replacement. Deferred maintenance begins to accumulate 10 years after construction.*

# Maintain Roads

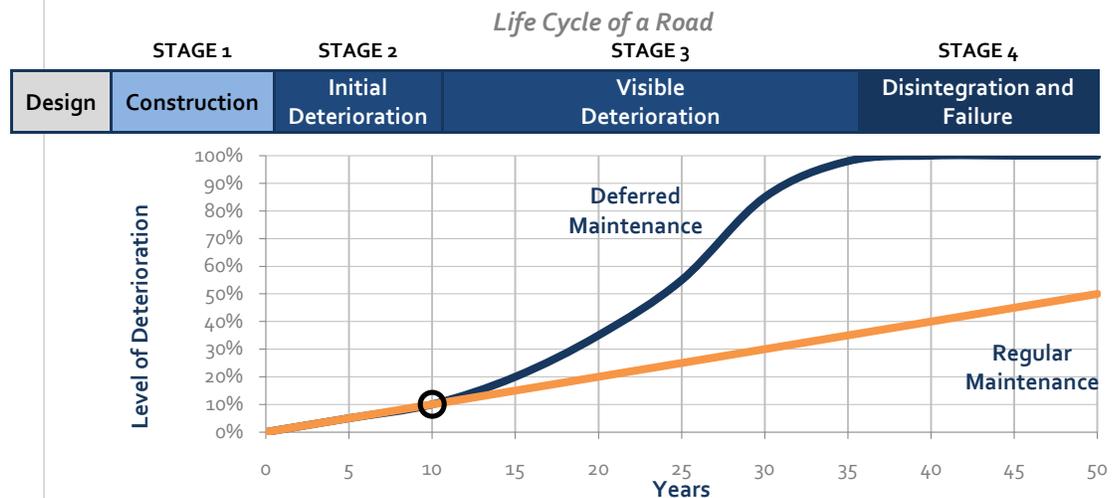
The Town’s road infrastructure serves the entire community. As such, road maintenance is an important part of this Plan.

Westbrook should have an ongoing road capital program that not only maintains the existing road system but also allows for the upgrade / reconstruction of existing roads to current Town standards. The many demands placed on roads make it imperative to upgrade and maintain this infrastructure for public safety. Poorly maintained roads have reduced capacity and delayed or deferred maintenance often leads to larger and more expensive repairs later. Preventative maintenance is ultimately less expensive in the long term scheme of infrastructure maintenance. However, many communities struggle with finding adequate funding for regular road maintenance.

The Town is responsible for maintaining 45.86 miles of the 62.73 miles of public-owned roads in Town. The Connecticut Department of Transportation maintains the rest. According to the Public Works Department, the current budget allocation allows the Town to maintain two to four miles per year, depending on the surfacing materials utilized. The goal should be to improve each road at least once every 15-20 years.

Pavement management systems can help a community ensure that it gets the most return for each dollar invested in maintenance. A pavement management system includes ongoing data collection, monitoring and analysis of road conditions. Computer programs allow the testing of scenarios to determine how to improve roads and increase their useful life in the most cost-effective manner.

Westbrook should continue to fund maintenance, seek additional funding sources (e.g., LoCIP – see sidebar), and determine if the development of a pavement management system would help ensure that maintenance funds are efficiently programmed.



# Manage and Improve Roads

To improve circulation, road capacity and safety, Westbrook should continue to manage land uses, improve access management, and carefully assess and plan for road expansions.

## Assess Roads and Align Zoning and Land Use Decisions to Road Capacity

Westbrook's current zoning pattern is based upon the ability of road infrastructure to support development. For example, all business zones are located on, or adjacent to state-owned roads, in the southern part of the Town. Meanwhile, the northern part of Town is zoned for rural residential uses because the road network is not capable of supporting intense development.

Westbrook should continue to assess roads and align zoning to the capacity of the roads to support the allowed land uses. Westbrook can then adjust local road functional classifications accordingly (see sidebar). To do so, the current process of assessing road impacts of future development should continue. Road standards should be developed for each of the local road classifications.

## Improve Access Management Along Route 1

Route 1 is a state-owned and managed road. The Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT) classifies Route 1 as a minor arterial meaning that it is intended to carry regional traffic and serve major activity centers. The state also relies on Route 1 to provide an alternative route when an incident occurs on I-95.

For Westbrook, Route 1 provides access to local businesses and to many neighborhoods. The use and appearance of the road greatly influences the character of the Town, particularly in the Town Center (see page 106). The Town should work with the state to ensure that improvements to Route 1 balance local and regional needs (see page 110). Fortunately, ConnDOT has become sensitive to character issues.

Access management (see sidebar) along Route 1 can improve road capacity, safety, and community character. Westbrook should develop a strategy to consolidate curb cuts when possible and interconnect private parking areas.

The Connecticut River Estuary Regional Planning Agency is conducting a regional corridor study for Route 1. The study will provide an opportunity to closely evaluate land-use, design and transportation improvements along the corridor and to balance state and local objectives. Westbrook should continue to participate in this project.

## Carefully Plan for Road Improvements

In cases where the community has determined that a road improvement is necessary, adequate engineering studies and cost-benefit analyses need to be conducted with consideration given to environmental and town character preservation. Intersections of roads are also areas where improvements may be needed to improve safety, or reduce unnecessary pavement width. Survey respondents indicated that certain intersections should be a higher priority for evaluation, including:

- 🌳 Route 153 and Norris Avenue;
- 🌳 Route 1 and Hammock Road;
- 🌳 Pond Meadow Road and Old Clinton Road; and
- 🌳 the evaluation of signalization timing at all signalized intersections.

**Potential Local Road Functional Classifications**  
(see Transportation Plan on page 69)

*Interstate Highway* – Limited-access roads used for regional transportation. Owned and maintained by the State of Connecticut.

*State Roads* – Other roads owned and maintained by the State of Connecticut

*Local Collectors* – Roads owned by the Town of Westbrook that collect traffic from neighborhood roads and connects with State Roads; may carry some regional traffic and serve activity centers.

*Rural Collectors* – Roads owned by the Town of Westbrook that collect a smaller amount of traffic from Residential Roads than Local Collectors. These roads also connect to Local Collectors and State Roads; generally serving residential areas. These roads have rural character features that should be preserved (e.g., stone walls, winding, narrow width, mature trees), or are located in rural areas.

*Residential Roads* – Roads owned by the Town of Westbrook, that primarily serve neighborhoods but may have some through traffic.

*Light Residential Roads* – all other public roads. These roads only serve the immediate neighborhood.

## Access Management

A tool that focuses on ways to improve traffic flow by reducing points of conflict, such as the number of driveways and left turns. Strategies often include sharing driveways and interconnecting parking lots.

## Encourage “Through Roads”

Road connectivity improves the ability of people to get around the community. Westbrook planners have long contemplated road connectivity as new roads were laid out and accessways were reserved for future connections.

Most new roads are built as part of subdivisions, in accordance with land use regulations. Subdivision roads are usually intended solely to provide access to the properties within the subdivision, rather than to improve the Town’s overall road network. Westbrook has had the foresight to require that land be reserved for future road connections and has required developers to make those connections when new development is proposed. This policy should continue. The creation of cul-de-sac roads that offer no possible future road connections should continue to be discouraged.

Providing additional east-west connections is important for Westbrook, particularly in the areas of Pequot Park Road and between Toby Hill Road and Halls Road. When new development is proposed, the Town should look for opportunities to create east-west connections while minimizing potential impacts to sensitive natural resources.

## Continue to Support Public Transit

Public transit involves trains and buses. It is an important transportation option for people who do not have access to an automobile, cannot drive, or prefer not to drive.

### Continue to Support Expansion of the Westbrook Train Station

Westbrook is fortunate to have a train station, which provides access to New Haven and New York City along the Shore Line East Commuter Rail. The ConnDOT has developed plans to upgrade the train station and provide additional parking. Some residents are concerned that this will create additional traffic coming from places outside of the community and contribute to congestion. Overall, Westbrook recognizes that the benefits of having a train station outweigh additional traffic that may be generated. The Town has been supportive of efforts to upgrade the station and should continue to support this project.

The train station is an important transportation link; it reduces residents' needs to utilize a motor vehicle to commute to work and positions the community towards a more sustainable future. Westbrook should also support efforts to make it easier to get to and from the train station without using a car by improving pedestrian and bicycle access to areas surrounding the station.

### Continue to Support the 9-Town Transit Service

Bus service in Westbrook is provided by the Estuary Transit District through the 9-Town Transit Service. This regional bus service primarily follows Route 1 from Madison to Old Saybrook and stops at Flat Rock Place (outlet shopping center).

In addition, residents south of Interstate 95 can call in a pick-up request 24 hours in advance, and the bus will deviate from the route to pick them up. The Transit District also provides "Transit on Call" and "Dial a Ride" services to residents within their service area.

Current bus service is an enhanced flag-down service in which riders flag the bus down along its route or wait for the bus at a designated stop. This approach provides flexibility for users to access the bus anywhere along a route. The District is now adding bus shelters along the routes. The Town should work with local businesses and transit providers to expand awareness of bus services and site new bus shelters, particularly in the Route 1 corridor.

Ultimately, public transit is most cost-effective when it is conducted by a larger, regional agency. Westbrook should continue to work with regional partners to find opportunities to enhance service within the Town in a cost-effective manner.

### Consider a Shuttle System

A shuttle system could be considered as an additional option for residents and visitors to get around within Westbrook. This service could be especially valuable for the marinas, as many of the people that visit these facilities do not have access to automobiles. A shuttle would allow these visitors to access other parts of the Town. The Town might discuss this concept with transit providers and marina operators and then develop a pilot shuttle program.

### Locations for Future Bus Shelters

(see Transportation Plan on Page 69)

Locations for future bus shelter locations include:

- at the intersection of South Main Street and Route 1;
- at the intersection of Route 1 and Salt Island Road
- at intersection of Route 1 and Westbrook Heights;
- at intersection of Route 1 and Seaford Road;
- Pilots Point Marina; and
- the intersection of Broadway and Route 1.

### Santa Rosa, California's Street Light Criteria:

The following are the criteria used to determine which street lights will remain on throughout the night:

- all safety lighting (lighting co-mounted with traffic signals);
- all lighting directly adjacent to or incorporated with pedestrian activated flashing beacons or mid-block crosswalks;
- lighting within high pedestrian zones, such as Downtown;
- one light, where one exists today, at all un-signalized intersections; and
- one light at key traffic safety locations where there has been a documented history of traffic safety issues.

### Partial Night Shutoff Option

A new voluntary program that offers commercial and municipal Connecticut Light and Power (CL&P) customers the option of installing programmable photo cells that would turn the street lights on at dusk and off at midnight.

## Reduce Long-Term Maintenance Costs of Infrastructure

Certain community infrastructure can become expensive, long-term maintenance obligations for a town, especially when they are not part of a community's overall capital plan. Westbrook should carefully evaluate requirements or requests for infrastructure improvements.

### Limit New Bridge Construction

Bridge maintenance can be one of the more expensive challenges for a community. They require special expertise to monitor and inspect, and they are more expensive to maintain (on a per square foot basis) than roads. Newer bridges were often built to benefit a particular development rather than the community as a whole.

Westbrook should carefully evaluate proposals for new bridges, especially when they will not provide a benefit or meet the need of the whole community. When new bridges are necessary, they should be built with materials that have lower maintenance costs. The Town should also continue to investigate state and federal bridge replacement programs to cover the repair and replacement costs for these facilities.

### Evaluate the Need for Street Lighting

Rising energy prices may warrant a look at street lights to determine ways to reduce operating costs. There may be opportunities to use a partial night shutoff option (see sidebar) or discontinue existing street lights where:

- the street lights are serving an unknown purpose; or
- the benefit of the light does not outweigh the cost of operation.

To begin this evaluation, the Town should inventory existing street lights and then determine what areas should be illuminated. For areas that require illumination, the needed levels and hours of illumination should be determined and whether illumination is needed at all times, or only during certain periods. Criteria developed by other communities can serve as a starting point (see sidebar).

This evaluation process should involve engineers, police, fire, and other community safety officers, as well as environmental groups. Westbrook might then use those standards to update its street light policy and determine if existing street lights should be altered or removed.

### Consider Reducing Required Road Widths for New Town Roads

In theory, road width, surface, geometry, and alignment should match anticipated traffic needs (access, volume and speed). But wider roads cost more to build and maintain, generate greater volumes of stormwater runoff, and can detract from community character. Building narrower roads (or decreasing the width of existing roads) is a traffic-calming technique. Wider roads can encourage people to drive faster while narrower roads can reduce travel speeds.

Westbrook may wish to modify its standards for low-traffic residential streets (reduce pavement width, eliminate curbing and use grass swales where appropriate) and consider modifications for other road classes also. Ultimately, design has to meet the road function and emergency response needs.

Westbrook should also explore whether the widths of any existing roads can be reduced to reduce stormwater runoff (removing pavement), to calm traffic, or to provide additional space for pedestrians and bicyclists (using line striping).

### **Find Creative Ways to Pay for Needed Stormwater Improvements**

As discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, stormwater runoff can carry pollutants to waterbodies and cause flooding problems. The federal government requires communities such as Westbrook, to address stormwater management through rules, regulations and reporting requirements. These requirements have placed a strain on financial and staff resources in many communities. Part of the challenge in managing stormwater is that most people do not perceive stormwater systems to be a “utility” in the same manner as water, sewer, or electricity. As a result, it can be more difficult to obtain support for funding the improvements that are, or will be, required.

Westbrook should explore creative ways to pay for these improvements, including non-local funding sources (e.g., state and federal grants). Some communities are investigating a stormwater fee program, which is similar to how other utilities are financed. Such a system can be designed to credit property-owners who properly manage their stormwater.

The Town should also educate the public about the importance of the stormwater management system.

## **Support Other Utilities**

Westbrook’s residents and businesses depend upon a number of other utilities on a daily basis. These include electric, gas, and communications. The Town should work with utility providers to encourage upgrades and extensions as needed.

### Underground Fire Cisterns

An underground water storage tank with an above grade fire connection. Cisterns can provide a reliable year-round water source for firefighting in areas where no piped water supply is available. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) has developed guidelines regarding the location and volumes for fire cisterns. Design and installation of these facilities needs to be coordinated with local fire officials.

### Dry Hydrant

A non-pressurized pipe system permanently installed in an existing lake, pond or stream that provides a suction supply of water to a fire department tank truck.

The installation of a non-pressurized pipe system into local water sources provides a ready means of supplying water to fire engines.

## Enhance Water Service

Westbrook's public water system is owned and operated by the Connecticut Water Company, a private company. The company has not indicated any near-term plans to construct new lines or expand the service area in Westbrook; however the Town often requires waterlines to be extended to serve new development.

### Address Water Service in Shoreline Areas

Well use in areas near the shoreline are of concern because of the density of development and septic systems. This area is labeled as a "High Priority" area for Public Water Supply on the Priority Areas for Public Water Supply map (see facing page). Well users in the shoreline area should be encouraged to test their water regularly. While the Town might consider taking a more active role in managing or tracking such testing, the best long term strategy would be the eventual conversion to a public water supply. New water lines should not encourage concentrated development in areas which are unsuitable for development, including developed and undeveloped beaches, barrier beaches and tidal wetlands.

### Continue to Address Water Service in Other Areas as Needed

The Town currently requires new development located within 1,500 feet of a water line to connect to the public water line. The Town should continue this approach and consider expanding this requirement to developments located within 3,000 feet of a public water line. These areas are shown as "Moderate Priority" on the Priority Areas for Public Water Supply map.

"Low Priority" areas are greater than 3,000 feet from public water supply lines and public water should only be required to be extended to address water quality or quantity issues.

### Continue to Require Water for Firefighting

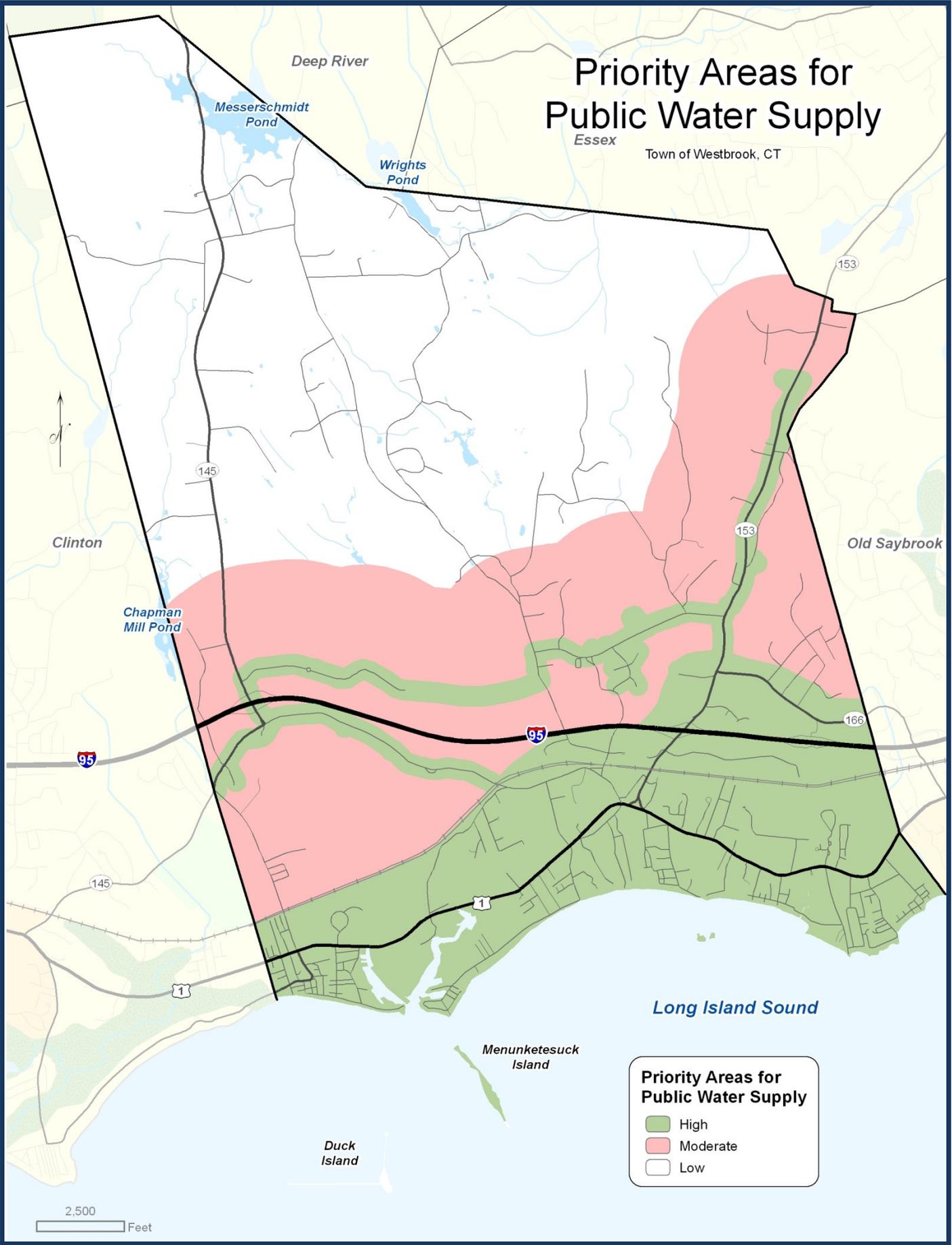
Much of Westbrook is not served by a public water supply. In these areas, it is critical to have adequate and accessible water sources for fighting fires.

Many communities require new residential developments to provide firefighting water supplies if located outside of the public water service area. Underground fire cisterns or dry hydrants can be used to meet this need. Westbrook should coordinate with the Connecticut Water Company and the Westbrook Fire Department to determine if and where, additional facilities are needed. Westbrook may wish to update Zoning and Subdivision Regulations to require the installation of these facilities. For both tools, maintenance responsibilities should be clearly defined.

Upgrades to existing water lines, particularly along the coast, can improve water pressure. This can help to better meet firefighting needs.

# Priority Areas for Public Water Supply

Essex  
Town of Westbrook, CT



**Priority Areas for Public Water Supply**

- High
- Moderate
- Low

## Wastewater Management Timeline

**1974** – Consent Order issued by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

**1985** – DEP orders the Town to develop a plan to abate septic pollution; Joint wastewater management study funded for Westbrook and Old Saybrook; Clinton later added

**1989** – Draft Tri-Town Wastewater Management Study finalized; Old Saybrook votes against the creation of a regional wastewater treatment facility

**1990** – Westbrook establishes a Water Pollution Control Commission (WPC) by Town Ordinance; DEP requires Old Saybrook to pursue an on-site wastewater disposal solution

**1997** – Additional Consent Order Issued

**2000** – Draft Wastewater Facilities Plan developed but not completed

**2000-2003** – Various solutions and disposal options investigated

**2003** – Draft On-Site Wastewater Management Plan released

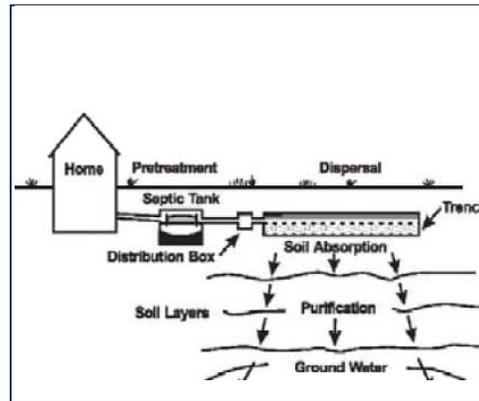
**2005** – Sewer Avoidance Plan adopted by the WPC

**2006** – Town Ordinance Regarding the Regulation Of On-Site Sewage Disposal Systems adopted

# Maintain and Improve Wastewater Management and Avoid Sewers

Westbrook depends on privately managed on-site septic systems for wastewater management. Each septic system owner is essentially a private utility. Improperly maintained or installed septic systems risk malfunction and when they malfunction important water resources (e.g., drinking water, coastal waters) can become polluted. Older systems may be inadequate and/or more prone to malfunction and eventual failure due to poor siting, construction, and/or maintenance or simply because of their age. Statewide, higher density neighborhoods, with older septic systems, have been identified as areas where other wastewater management solutions, such as sewers, may be required.

Westbrook has higher density neighborhoods with older septic systems and as a result areas in the community were identified as being high risk by the State of Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (CTDEP). In the 1970s, the CTDEP issued Westbrook a Consent Order to address wastewater issues. In 1974, the community began to investigate various approaches to wastewater management (see Wastewater Management Timeline sidebar).



Functioning Septic System



"Traditional" Sewage Treatment Facility

Since that time the Town has worked to find an appropriate strategy that will satisfy the CTDEP and the community's needs. When a regional centralized sewer utility was rejected by Old Saybrook residents in the late 1980s, Westbrook reevaluated the areas of concern and investigated a number of options including a centralized system located in Westbrook and multiple community systems.

As a result of these investigations, Westbrook determined that sewer avoidance was the most cost-effective strategy for the entire community. An Onsite Wastewater Management Plan (Sewer Avoidance Plan) was adopted in 2005.

Overall, Westbrook has pursued the following strategies for sewer avoidance:

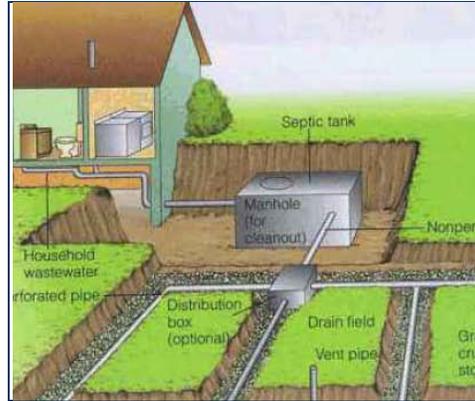
- ✿ properly maintain the systems that are in place;
- ✿ upgrade inadequate systems;
- ✿ prohibit new development if septic requirements cannot be met; and
- ✿ continue to work with state agencies to evaluate additional options including alternative treatment systems and small community systems.

### Ensure Systems In Place Are Properly Maintained

In 2006 Westbrook took a strong step to maintain the quality of existing septic systems in the community by adopting local regulations for on-site sewage disposal. This is Phase 1 of the Onsite Wastewater Management Plan. The Westbrook Ordinance requires septic system owners to pump out their septic system a minimum of once every five years, and requires cleaning companies to document compliance. Proper maintenance helps minimize the potential for existing systems to contribute to a pollution problem. The Ordinance also provides for a public education program to inform property owners of the proper operation and maintenance requirements of a septic system. These activities may expand the longevity of system components, protect the environment, and result in cost savings by avoiding premature system failures.



Maintenance of Septic System



Typical Septic System Design

### Upgrade inadequate systems and prohibit new development if septic requirements cannot be met

Westbrook's Wastewater Management Ordinance includes data collection requirements that will help determine how well systems are functioning and requires property owners to upgrade their septic systems prior to additions, winterization, and other types of new construction. In some instances the standards are higher than what the CT Public Health Code (statutory requirements of the CT Department of Public Health) requires. The Public Health Code provides a regulatory structure but may not address DEP requirements to protect specific sensitive environments.

The Onsite Wastewater Management Plan includes future components that will mandate upgrades to inadequate systems. These systems may appear to be functioning but are not able to renovate effluent to a level that fully protects the environment in accordance with current DEP standards.

### Continue to work with State agencies to evaluate additional options including alternative treatment systems and small community systems

Part of Westbrook's challenge is that multiple state agencies are involved and have slightly different approaches to septic management. Westbrook has chosen to work with these agencies in a cooperative way and this strategy has paid dividends through grants, positive changes to state policies and requirements, and good working relationships.

It is essential that Westbrook have a full-time Sanitarian with technical expertise and a good working relationship with state agencies, as well as additional WPCC staff, to properly enforce wastewater management requirements and continue this program.

### Failed System

On-site Sewage Disposal System that allows Sewage to discharge or flow from it into the interior of any building served or into any storm drain, stream, water body, gutter, street, roadway or public place, or if sewage discharges from said system to the surface or subsurface of any property or otherwise so as to create a nuisance or condition detrimental to health as determined by the Director of Health or as designated by the Public Health Code.

### Malfunctioning System or Malfunction

On-site Sewage Disposal System that exhibits a condition or conditions which, if not timely corrected will, in the judgment of the Director of Health, result in a Failed System. Substantial backflow from the Leaching System into the Septic Tank during a Septic Tank Pump-Out is an indication of a Malfunctioning System

### Inadequate Systems

- metal tanks;
- corroded or missing baffles;
- inadequate tank capacity;
- outdated cesspools;
- inadequate leaching capacity;
- improper use or overuse;
- lack of regular cleaning; or
- high seasonal water table or poor soils

### Conventional Septic (Subsurface Disposal) System

House sewer, and septic tank followed by a leaching system and any necessary pumps and siphons, and any groundwater control system on which the leaching system is dependent

### Community System / Cluster System

Sewerage system serving two or more residences in separate structures which is not connected to a municipal sewerage system; the structures may be on the same or separate properties

### Alternative Technology System (AT System)

Sewage treatment system serving one or more buildings that utilizes a method of treatment other than a subsurface sewage disposal system and that involves a discharge to the groundwaters of the state

### Wastewater Management Study Areas

Areas of concern, where Westbrook may need to help property-owners find solutions to wastewater management (see "Manage Wastewater" on the Water Resources Plan map on page 23).

### Decentralized Wastewater Management District

Area(s) of a municipality designated by the municipality through a municipal ordinance when an engineering report has determined that the existing subsurface sewage disposal systems may be detrimental to public health or the environment and that decentralized systems are required and such report is approved by DEP with concurring approval by DPH, after consultation with the local director of health

### Consider Wastewater Management Alternatives

Sewer Avoidance is currently the selected approach for Westbrook. Some residents have questioned whether sewer avoidance is the right policy, particularly if business development is being constrained (as some believe) by a lack of "sewers". Sewer avoidance does not leave Westbrook without options. It means that the community will work to eliminate the need for a centralized sewer system while exploring other management options.

One of the challenges with sewer avoidance is that not everyone understands the concepts and terminology used: centralized versus decentralized, what "sewer" really means, and so forth. Effective communication about sewer avoidance policy requires a description of the basic elements. The descriptions below may help to describe the different elements involved.

- ☛ **centralized solutions** – Sewage from each source is collected in buried pipes and then moves to a single treatment plant.
- ☛ **decentralized solutions** – Decentralized solutions treat and disperse wastewater as close as possible to its source, sometimes on the same site and sometimes on a nearby site. They disperse smaller volumes of treated sewage to the environment. In Connecticut, decentralized systems range from individual, onsite conventional septic systems to Alternative Technology Systems to community and cluster systems where a number of individual dwellings on the same or adjacent sites are served by a single system.

Regulation of on-site systems can also take a number of different approaches. These can range from the current approach to Town maintenance contracts with individual property owners to Town ownership and management of individual wastewater treatment systems.

Currently, the Town ensures that systems are sited, designed and constructed in compliance with prevailing rules; issues operating permits to individual system owners; educates property owners on system maintenance; and inventories and documents owner voluntary maintenance.

The Town could also develop a program to ensure that property owners maintain maintenance contracts with trained operators or could perform operation and maintenance activities on individual wastewater treatment systems. The Town could also own, operate, and manage the individual wastewater treatment systems. The cost of these ownership / management options could be applied town-wide through the general tax base, paid for by individual property assessments, or covered by a combination of these two options.

## Complete and Adopt a Wastewater Engineering Plan

Reasons cited by supporters of large scale public sewers or smaller, site sewer systems, include the ability to increase commercial development in the Town Center commercial areas as well as the desire of property owners to improve homes on small lots or those with inadequate soils for septic systems.

This type of development must be weighed against the cost to the Town of the necessary improvements. In 1999, the estimated cost of a sewer system serving the area south of the Post Road was \$43.5 million. In 2002, the cost for community systems to serve five small areas of Town was estimated at \$62 million. These costs would obviously be significantly higher in today's dollars.

There may be instances, however, where neighborhood systems are found to be appropriate to the needs of the community and may be economically feasible. It is highly possible that the ultimate answer for Westbrook will include a combination of approaches.

A Wastewater Engineering Plan will analyze sewage disposal options for the Town practically, environmentally, and financially. The community may determine that options other than the current approach are appropriate when it has been completed.

The Wastewater Engineering Plan should address:

- ☛ centralized option with surface discharge to the Connecticut River;
- ☛ centralized option contained within Westbrook;
- ☛ decentralized Alternative Technology systems;
- ☛ decentralized community systems;
- ☛ decentralized management – Decentralized Wastewater Management District; and
- ☛ conventional on-site systems.

## Why We Need to Treat Wastewater

Everyone generates wastewater. Typical residential water usage is from 75-100 gallons per person per day.

Wastewater contains pathogens (disease organisms), nutrients (e.g., nitrogen and phosphorus), solids, chemicals from cleaners, and even hazardous substances

Univ. of Minnesota Extension

## The Realities of On-Site Systems

On-site systems are here to stay since these systems provide basic sanitation especially in small and rural communities. They serve approximately 25 percent of the U.S. population and one-third of new development. However, the U.S. Census tells us that at least 10 percent of on-site systems fail and state agencies report that these failing systems are the third most common source of groundwater contamination

US EPA

## Ownership of the System

Homeowners have traditionally had the responsibility for owning and managing the individual on-site systems on their own property.

As more complex systems have been developed, management of these systems has become more complex as well. Today there is emphasis on managing systems to improve performance that also underscores the need for more accountability.

Univ. of Minnesota Extension

## Enhance Government Administration

While this plan is not intended to be used to manage day-to-day operations, there are some management activities that could assist with future planning activities.

### Inform and Involve Citizens in All Community Affairs

Westbrook strives to be an inclusive community and has a history of civic involvement and participation. Finding volunteers to participate in government activities can be a challenge. Westbrook should continue to develop communication tools to inform residents of community news and encourage a next generation of volunteers.

The Town newsletter is an important means of communication that should be continued. The Town should offer a digital version that can be emailed or accessed on the web. Additional outreach tools include the emerging social networking platforms (e.g., Twitter and Facebook). Westbrook might be able to capture a new audience of residents with these tools.

### Expand On-line Services

On-line services do more than provide information to residents. The internet can allow easy communication and interaction with government.

Additional on-line services might include:

- ✿ access to land records and maps;
- ✿ access to permit information from the land use agencies;
- ✿ online bill payment;
- ✿ access to mapping (GIS); and
- ✿ the ability to file and track complaints.

### Provide Adequate Training and Good Customer Service

Westbrook has traditionally relied on volunteers to manage many Town programs and activities. Regular training can help ensure that volunteers are up-to-date on local, state and federal laws. Westbrook should continue to provide training for volunteers.

Still, as Westbrook grows and changes, the need for the Town to maintain adequate, well-trained staff in areas that are identified as important to the community will grow. Instilling a philosophy of customer service is also important. Part of good customer service also includes having adequate staff to provide services.

### Document Local Knowledge Base

While Westbrook's reliance on volunteers serves the Town well, it has not always resulted in a documented knowledge base or archive of information. In the past, Westbrook has facilitated a transfer of knowledge through joint meetings with various public agencies to discuss general issues. This has been a good activity and should continue.

There are additional steps the Town can take. Westbrook should develop a program to collect and transfer institutional knowledge from volunteers to a database. The Town might organize this information online. Another tool to transfer knowledge is to prepare standardized procedures for each department. This would also help identify possible enhancements or efficiencies.

**Consider Document Management and Permit Tracking Systems**

Many of the Town's records rely on a paper filing system. However, technology offers ways to store, maintain, and retrieve data more efficiently. Document management tools, such as digital archiving and permit tracking, can improve government agency operations and cooperation, and can also provide additional information to residents and applicants. Westbrook should explore the establishment of document management tools.

**Review and Update Land Use Regulations on a Regular Basis**

Connecticut's land use regulatory environment is continually changing. Every year, new laws and court decisions impact how the use of land is regulated. Westbrook should continue to evaluate the land use regulations on a regular basis and make necessary changes.

**Maintain the Geographic Information System (GIS)**

Investments in GIS, a computerized mapping program, have expanded the Town's ability to access and analyze a wealth of community data. Westbrook should continue to regularly update and maintain its GIS, so that it remains relevant and functional.

**Improve Financial Controls and Accounting Procedures**

The Finance Department's primary customers are other Town departments. Improving controls and procedures in this agency will enhance how other departments function. Westbrook should evaluate technology programs designed to improve the financial controls and accounting procedures.

**Comply with Reporting Requirements in a Timely Manner**

Westbrook must comply with the reporting requirements of various state and federal agencies. These requirements can be for activities related to community development grants, land use permitting, or financial reports. Westbrook should continue to make reporting compliance an administrative priority to ensure that reports are accurate and submitted on-time.

**Keep Required Records in Accordance with the Secretary of State Retention Schedules**

Connecticut law establishes record-retention requirements for municipalities. Compliance with these requirements is important, but compliance requires funding and space to store the records. Fortunately, the state has established policies for some degree of electronic storage. Westbrook should explore the use of computerized archiving and digital data management to help meet records retention requirements in an efficient manner.

**Continue to Work Cooperatively With Neighboring Communities on Regional Issues**

Fiscal constraints encourage regional cooperation since regional approaches can achieve an economy of scale. The possibility of regional solutions should be part of the decision-making process when Westbrook contemplates how to deliver services to the community. Westbrook should continue to build relationships with its neighbors and explore regional solutions.

## Action Summary for Facilities and Services

**Plan For and Coordinate New Facility / Infrastructure Needs - Page 62**

- 6.1 Evaluate locations of existing facilities and develop policies to guide the siting of new facilities
- 6.2 Continue to plan for capital needs
- 6.3 Assess office and meeting space needs at Mulvey Municipal Center
- 6.4 Continue to explore opportunities to consolidate the maintenance of school and Town government facilities
- 6.5 Coordinate facility scheduling to fully utilize existing facilities
- 6.6 Assess the need for a community center
- 6.7 Assess the need for fire station expansion
- 6.8 Address communication and navigation needs of emergency management services
- 6.9 Continue to work with EMS volunteers to determine ways to expand and retain the volunteer pool
- 6.10 Assess the need for paid daytime personnel

**Enhance Pedestrian and Bicycle Routes - Page 67**

- 6.11 Consider adopting a complete streets policy
- 6.12 Continue to require installation of sidewalks for new development
- 6.13 Update the sidewalk plan
- 6.14 Evaluate the sidewalk needs of an aging population (e.g., ramps, crossing times)
- 6.15 Evaluate the sidewalk needs for school-aged children
- 6.16 Close sidewalk gaps along Route 1; Provide municipal funding
- 6.17 Identify and encourage ways to enhance the non-motorized off-road trail network
- 6.18 Identify priority areas for pedestrian and bicycle improvements
- 6.19 Undertake simple modifications to roads to accommodate bicyclists
- 6.20 Establish bicycle routes, with signage
- 6.21 Provide, or require, bicycle racks at businesses, municipal facilities, the train station, schools and multi-family residences
- 6.22 Support the creation of a bicycle advocacy group
- 6.23 Work with regional partners to develop a multi-purpose trail system

**Maintain Roads- Page 70**

- 6.24 Maintain roads to ensure that roads can be used to their full capacity
- 6.25 Consider creating a pavement management system
- 6.26 Seek additional funding sources for road maintenance

**Manage and Improve Roads - Page 71**

- 6.27 Assess roads and align zoning and land use decisions to road capacity
- 6.28 Improve access management along Route 1
- 6.29 Work with the state to ensure that any Route 1 improvements which might be proposed balance local and regional needs
- 6.30 Work regionally to develop solutions for Route 1
- 6.31 Carefully plan for road improvements

**Encourage "Through Roads"- Page 72**

- 6.32 Continue to require roads to interconnect as part of subdivisions and new development
- 6.33 Look for opportunities to create more east / west connectors that have minimal adverse impact on sensitive natural resources

**Continue to Support Public Transit - Page 73**

- 6.34 Support expansion of the train station
- 6.35 Support efforts to make it easier to get to and from the train station without using a car
- 6.36 Support expansion of bus routes and the installation of bus shelters
- 6.37 Work with transit providers to promote awareness of services and routes
- 6.38 Consider working with transit providers to develop a pilot shuttle program

**Reduce Long-Term Maintenance Costs of Infrastructure - Page 74**

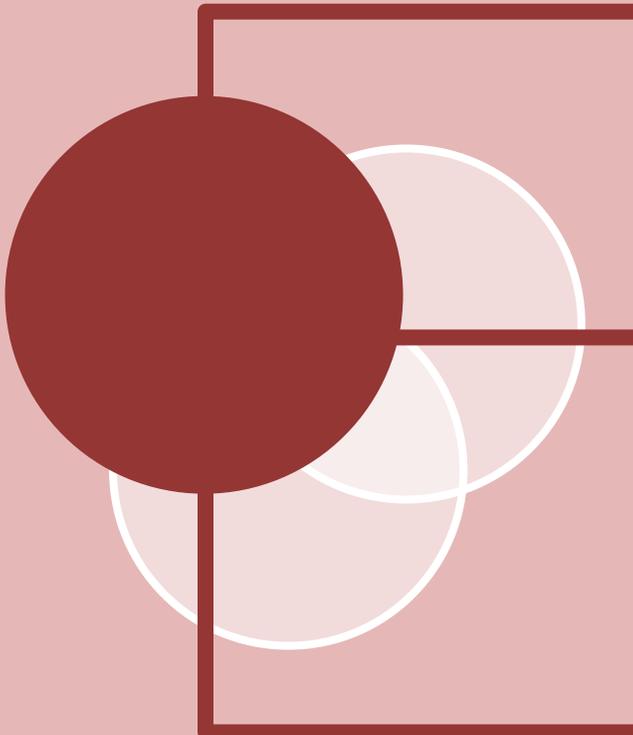
- 6.39 Limit new bridge construction
- 6.40 When new bridges are needed, use low maintenance materials
- 6.41 Evaluate street lighting needs and eliminate unnecessary lighting
- 6.42 Consider reducing required road widths
- 6.43 Explore creative ways to pay for maintenance and improvement of the stormwater management system

<b>Support Other Utilities - Page 75</b>	
6.44	Work with utility providers to extend and improve service as necessary
<b>Enhance Water Service - Page 76</b>	
6.45	Consider requiring well water users along the shore to test their water regularly
6.46	Encourage connection to public water in "high priority" areas
6.47	Seek to expand water service
6.48	Continue to address water service in other areas as needed
6.49	Require the installation of cisterns or dry hydrants for development that does not have access to a public water supply
6.50	Upgrade existing water lines in shoreline areas
<b>Maintain and Improve Wastewater Management and Avoid Sewers - Page 78</b>	
6.51	Avoid centralized sewers by implementing the Onsite Wastewater Management / Sewer Avoidance Plan
6.52	Continue to ensure that the septic systems in place are properly maintained
6.53	Upgrade inadequate septic systems
6.54	Prohibit new development if septic requirements cannot be met
6.55	Continue to work with state regulatory agencies to find meaningful wastewater solutions that do not require a centralized sewer system
6.56	Consider wastewater management alternatives
6.57	Complete and adopt a Wastewater Engineering Plan
<b>Enhance Government Administration - Page 82</b>	
6.58	Inform and involve citizens in all community affairs
6.59	Expand on-line services
6.60	Maintain adequate staffing
6.61	Provide / support commission and staff training
6.62	Document the local knowledge base
6.63	Implement document management and permit tracking systems
6.64	Review and update land use regulations on a regular basis
6.65	Maintain the Geographic Information System
6.66	Improve financial controls and accounting procedures
6.67	Comply with reporting requirements in a timely manner
6.68	Keep required records in accordance with Connecticut Secretary of State Retention Schedules
6.69	Continue to work cooperatively with neighboring communities on regional issues

# A STRONG ECONOMY

Westbrook's Goals for a Strong Economy Include:

CHAPTER



## Business Development

7

*Achieve a diverse and stable economy that is compatible with the Town's growth objectives*

## Housing Choice

8

*Provide for a diverse mix of housing choices in quality, well-designed neighborhoods, that accommodates the needs of the Town's residents*

## Town Center

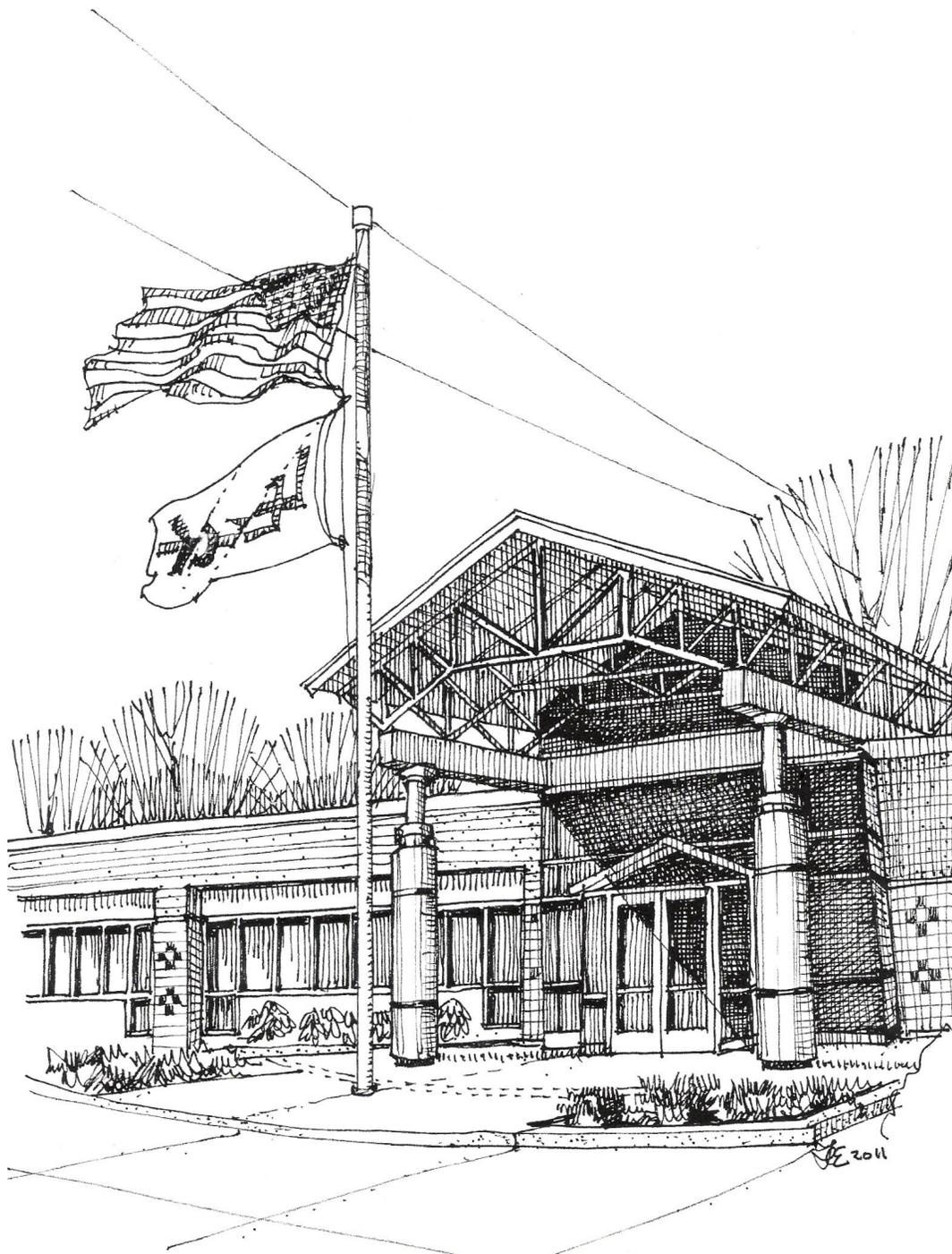
9

*Preserve the Town Center as the civic, social, residential and commercial core of the community*

# BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

# 7

*Achieve a diverse  
and stable economy  
that is compatible  
with the Town's  
growth objectives*



The Lee Company

**10 Steps to a Comprehensive Business Retention Program – National Main Street Model**

- know the market;
- create a market positioning statement and market strategies;
- identify key businesses;
- establish a business retention team;
- identify and offer needed business assistance;
- plan for effective business promotion;
- help businesses identify and develop opportunities for growth and expansion;
- learn to recognize early warning signals;
- plan for business transition; and
- support existing businesses personally.

Valecia Crisafulli, Main Street News, January 2003

**Commercial Agriculture**  
(depicted on Business Development Plan on the facing page)

Typically:

- facilities where farming is the primary income-generating activity (i.e., not a hobby);
- facilities where crops are intended for widespread distribution to wholesalers or retail outlets;
- facilities used for the production of wine, and/or
- facilities where animals are kept for commercial purposes (e.g., kennel, horse riding stables).

**Business Park**

An area of land where businesses (typically offices and light industry) are grouped together.

# Develop and Implement Strategies for Business Retention

Westbrook’s first economic development priority is to retain existing businesses. Westbrook recognizes that businesses that are here today contribute to our economy and community in a variety of ways and are an important part of the Town.

More growth typically comes from existing companies and it is both easier and less expensive to retain existing businesses than to attract new ones. The National Main Street Business Retention Program model (see sidebar), might be a useful approach.

Specific strategies include those that help to better market businesses, those that reduce regulatory barriers, and those that streamline the approval process. Westbrook might:

- list businesses on the Town website (with links);
- develop a sign program to guide people from the Route 1 to businesses that are “off the beaten path”;
- consider using financial incentives (i.e., tax abatements) for business expansions;
- create rules that make redevelopment easier than developing greenfields;
- allow businesses to receive permits by-right for certain activities;
- support commercial agriculture;
- reduce off-street parking requirements; and / or
- provide joint application review across all land use commissions.

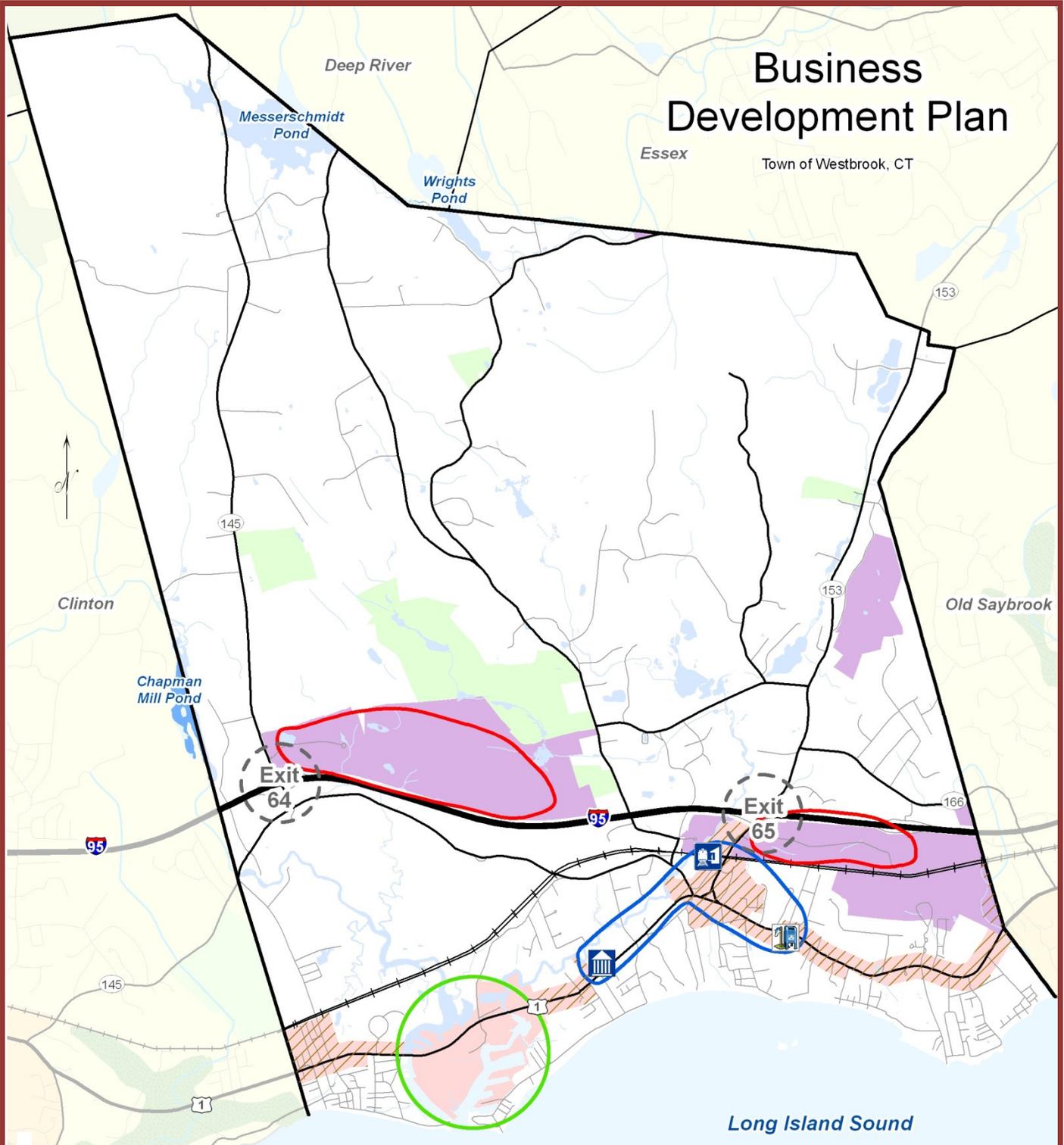
# Continue to Promote Business Development in Targeted Areas

This Plan supports business development in:

TOWN CENTER COMMERCIAL AREAS	REGIONAL BUSINESS AREAS	MARINA DISTRICT	OTHER BUSINESS AREAS
Keep it as the Town’s hub of activity and draw residents and visitors to the center (see Chapter 9)	Areas located with easy access to I-95 (Exits 64 and 65)	An important economic engine in Westbrook (see page 91)	Other existing business zones and uses

# Business Development Plan

Town of Westbrook, CT



**Legend**

<b>Landmarks</b>	<b>Areas</b>	<b>Underlying Elements</b>
Town Hall	Town Center	Commercial Areas
Train Station	Regional Business	Business Park
Post Office	Marina District	Residential Areas
		Mixed Use
		Commercial Agriculture

2,500 Feet

## Market Analysis

Westbrook may wish to undertake a market study of business opportunities.

Markets continually change and a local economic development strategy is most successful if it can anticipate and plan for these changes.

A market study may be a useful tool for this purpose. It can include:

- characteristics of the business district;
- description of the trade area;
- characteristics of existing and potential customers; and
- trends and future opportunities.

For example, a market study might reveal if the recently-built medical office building is indicative that the health care industry will present additional opportunities for the community.

# Encourage Quality Redevelopment and Development

The quality and appearance of development greatly affects the image and character of a community. In Westbrook, redevelopment can improve the aesthetics of a building and site and meet economic development goals. Any new development should continue to meet standards for high quality design.

To facilitate redevelopment, Westbrook should consider adopting regulatory tools that remove impediments to such redevelopment or that might make redevelopment a more attractive option. Tools might include flexible site design standards, reductions in parking requirements and setbacks, and increases in allowable height, building size and signage when design objectives are met. In addition, finding a way to streamline the approval process should also be a priority (e.g., conducting joint meetings with other commissions, expanding the number of activities allowed under administrative approvals, engaging in preliminary application discussions).

Redevelopment can sometimes be hindered by environmental contamination from previous uses or construction materials. Strategies to address possible site contamination are outlined on page 42.

As discussed in Chapter 5 (see page 52), the Town may wish to reconsider its approach to design guidelines by shifting from an advisory / guidance approach to an approach that requires that development meet set design standards. When such standards are clear and mandatory the developer can more easily meet Town expectations and have a more predictable outcome.



Medical Offices



Attractive Small Business

## Support the Marina District

The Town's marinas provide jobs and tax revenue, and are a vital part of the coastal tourism economy. During the planning process, the Steering Committee met with this business sector to identify potential issues that the Plan might address (see sidebar).

Issues related to coastal resources and dredging were discussed in Chapter 3.

### Reinvigorate the "Marina District"

Marina operators and adjacent businesses joined together to establish a "Marina District." This informal group of 48 businesses developed a unified ad campaign and installed signs at the District gateways. This group is presently inactive. Because the marinas are important, the Town and marina operators, along with other organizations, such as the Chamber of Commerce, should work to reestablish this group (or a task force) to build upon past efforts and address marina-related concerns.

The Town might also host occasional forums with marina owners to discuss new and emerging issues.

### Re-Evaluate Regulations Affecting Marinas

The zoning regulations should be reevaluated to ensure they are appropriate. Marinas are unique and have operational needs that are different from those of many other businesses, which is why Westbrook created the Commercial Boating District.

Current regulations require a Special Permit for some uses which are fundamental to a marina. This requirement has proven to be costly for marina operators due to the uncertainty of an approval of a Special Permit, additional submittal requirements, and the extended time-frame for such approvals. The Town should consider allowing additional uses to be permitted by-right if the uses are minor, accessory to the marina operation, and do not affect abutters.

Studies performed by Connecticut-based marinas have found that local parking requirements can exceed actual parking demand at their facilities. Westbrook should evaluate its parking requirements for marinas to be sure that enough, but not too much, parking is required. Some parking demand is seasonal and parking areas are used for other purposes (i.e., winter boat storage) in the off-season. Westbrook may want to exempt parking lot landscaping requirements in these areas.

The Commercial Boating District (CBD) allows single-family houses and perhaps this should be eliminated. The Zoning Commission may wish to consider amending the CBD boundary so that existing single family houses and / or neighborhoods within the CBD would be placed in a residential zone and then changing the Zoning Regulations to eliminate single-family residential uses in the CBD zone. It will be important to protect the character of the existing residential properties as part of this change. A special zone is appropriate.

### Marina Considerations

Marina owners and operators identified the following issues as things that Westbrook might work to improve:

- Special Permit requirements for uses in the Commercial Boating District need to be evaluated;
- interior parking lot landscaping requirements for marinas create a conflict for winter boat storage;
- marinas need to be able to service equipment and have flexibility to put up temporary structures;
- the marina district is not considered a jewel right now (aesthetics and how the community values this place);
- there is a perception that the marinas and boaters are "outsiders";
- Town character is important to boaters;
- Westbrook is considered the best port between New York City and Block Island;
- sidewalks are important – make Route 1 more comfortable for walking and biking;
- allow convenience stores and food sales by-right;
- there is an opportunity for a public / private partnership;
- it is important to keep the dialog open;
- events can showcase the marinas; and
- marketing programs are beneficial.

### Consider Additional Strategies

The Town might pursue other strategies to draw residents to the Marina District and improve the overall character of the area. Strategies include:

- ✿ improve sidewalks and crosswalks within the District;
- ✿ create stronger pedestrian connections between the District and Town Center;
- ✿ work with marinas to plan community events to showcase the marinas;
- ✿ work with marinas to provide shuttles, or loaner bicycles, to allow boaters to access other business areas in Town; and
- ✿ develop streetscape objectives to create a unified theme and appearance along Route 1.



Aerial View of the Marina District



View From US Route 1-

# Develop a Balanced Approach to Tourism

Tourism has always been an important part of Westbrook's economy. Many local businesses are dependent on a certain level of tourism in order to thrive. In addition to contributing to the tax base and providing jobs, tourism-related businesses provide amenities to residents that might not be available otherwise. Efforts to attract tourists must, however, be balanced with the need to preserve quality of life for residents.

Westbrook has an abundance of natural, historic and cultural resources in a maritime setting that will naturally attract visitors. In addition to the traditional beach and boating attractions, consideration should also be given to new opportunities created by ecotourism (see sidebar) and heritage tourism (see sidebar), which are considered among the fastest growing segments of travel throughout the world. Strategies to preserve natural resources, develop recreational opportunities and enhance the appearance of the community will support tourism.

## Develop a Directional Sign Program for Featured Places

Directional signs, often called wayfinding, guide and orient visitors and residents to specific places and help them find their way around Town. Wayfinding has two core elements:

- a navigation aid (e.g., signs to guide people to public parking and destinations); and
- information about local landmarks and attractions (interpretative wayfinding).

Navigation aids might be used to direct people to parking, the Town Hall and attractions. These aids would help visitors and newer residents, who might not be as familiar with the community.

Interpretative signs encourage visitors to stay longer and explore the unique elements of Westbrook. Character elements such as Scenic Roads and Great Streets can be included as part of the wayfinding system along with scenic views, historic sites, or natural areas.

The Town could provide the inventory of historic and cultural resources on-line, such as on Wikipedia. This is an inexpensive way to build an interpretative wayfinding system that is accessible to a mobile community. As more and more people convert to location aware technology (see sidebar) they will be able to access these resources when they come into the community.

## Continue to Collaborate with Others on Marketing Efforts

Westbrook is part of the Central Regional Tourism District and should continue to be included in regional marketing initiatives. Westbrook should look at opportunities for becoming part of a regional "itinerary tour". Westbrook should also work with the local Chamber of Commerce and other business organizations.

## Manage Impacts From Tourism

While tourism can provide positive effects, it must be managed so as not to negatively impact the quality of life for residents (e.g., traffic, crowd, noise, lights). Standards and regulations must have adequate provisions to ensure that neighborhoods are protected. Other uses such as outdoor dining and entertainment along the shoreline should be encouraged only where they will not adversely impact existing residential development.

When outdoor events are held by private organizations that draw large crowds, provisions should be made to minimize impacts. Some towns have adopted a Mass Gathering Ordinance to ensure that these events are properly managed. Westbrook might consider a similar measure.

## Ecotourism

Typically involves travel to destinations where flora, fauna, and cultural heritage are the primary attractions.

## Heritage Tourism

Traveling to areas to learn more about the cultural and historic aspects of a place.

## Location Aware Technology

An information service, accessible with mobile devices through the mobile network. It uses the geographic position of the mobile device to identify features that are around that device. There are over 6,000 location-based Smartphone applications.

These location aware applications can provide a user with services such as:

- identifying a location of a person or object, such as discovering the nearest banking cash machine.
- identifying places with historical and cultural significance (geo-awareness), and
- finding items hidden using Global Positioning Satellites (geo-caching), and
- other place-based data sets.

## Mass Gathering Ordinance

A mass gathering is an event that draws a large number of people. Often, mass gatherings require some level of management by public agencies (e.g., police, fire, public health, emergency services) to ensure safety. Some communities have adopted ordinances to manage this process to limit miscommunication among the various agencies that might be involved and to manage potential adverse impacts resulting from the gathering.

### Continue to Monitor Cottage Rentals

Cottage rentals are an important part of Westbrook's tourism economy. Rental properties and homeowners are intermixed in many areas and vacationers have different objectives that can conflict with people that live in the community year round. Vacationing cottage renters can sometimes cause disruption to adjoining seasonal and year-round property owners.

A guide about Westbrook and its local traditions may be a good way to orient guests about how the community functions. Westbrook should continue to monitor cottage rental and work to develop a balance between year-round residents and seasonal guests.

Occupancy limits and parking requirements might be considered. If established, these and noise ordinances should be strictly enforced.

## Action Summary for Business Development

### Develop and Implement Strategies for Business Retention - Page 88

7.1 Develop and implement strategies to retain existing businesses

### Continue to Promote Business Development in Targeted Areas - Page 88

7.2 Continue to promote business development in targeted areas

### Encourage Quality Redevelopment and Development - Page 90

7.3 Adopt regulatory tools to remove impediments to redevelopment

7.4 Find ways to streamline the approval process

7.5 Maintain high standards for development

### Support the Marina District - Page 91

7.6 Reinvigorate the "Marina District"

7.7 Hold forums to hear input from marina owners

7.8 Consider modifying parking landscaping requirements to accommodate winter boat storage

7.9 Rethink minimum parking requirements for marinas

7.10 Allow more uses "by-right"

7.11 Amend Zoning Regulations and update the CBD boundary; create a separate residential zone

7.12 Undertake additional physical improvements (e.g., sidewalks, crosswalks)

7.13 Plan community events at Marinas

7.14 Provide shuttles and loaner bicycles to allow boaters to patronize local businesses

7.15 Develop streetscape objectives to create a unified theme and appearance

### Develop a Balanced Approach to Tourism - Page 93

7.16 Promote Westbrook as an eco- and heritage tourism destination

7.17 Develop a directional signage system

7.18 Continue to collaborate with others on marketing efforts

7.19 Look at opportunities to become part of a regional "itinerary tour"

7.20 Manage the impacts from tourism

7.21 Consider adopting a Mass Gathering Ordinance

7.22 Continue to monitor cottage rentals

7.23 Consider evaluating occupancy limits and parking requirements

# HOUSING CHOICE

# 8

*Provide for a diverse mix of housing choices in quality, well-designed neighborhoods, that accommodates the needs of the Town's residents*



Hill Farm

## Protect Established Neighborhoods

Westbrook's residential neighborhoods contribute to the Town's character and attract new residents to the community. The existing development pattern is supported by roads and water infrastructure. This pattern should be maintained and existing neighborhoods should be protected. Zoning has been a useful tool for protecting existing neighborhoods. Overall, Westbrook should continue to use existing zoning tools to manage residential development throughout Town.

## Address Coastal Housing Issues

Westbrook may wish to address some emerging issues within coastal neighborhoods.

### **Continue to Regulate House Size / Proportion**

Many of the houses in the shoreline area were built during a time when houses were significantly smaller than today. Over time, people often wish to expand their home or, in some cases, demolish it and build anew.

Some of these proposals can be significantly larger than what exists in the neighborhood and be out of scale with surrounding development. The issue of house size and proportion is something Westbrook should monitor. Monitoring may include:

- ✿ determination of indicators to track (e.g., floor area); and
- ✿ annual review of the types of new housing built to determine what has been built.

Westbrook should also evaluate whether additional regulations are needed to protect existing neighborhoods from undesirable impacts.

### **Improve Regulations for Land Modifications**

Construction activity and regrading on smaller lots can impact neighboring properties since such activities occur very close to, if not at, the property lines. This has been an issue in Westbrook's coastal neighborhoods.

The Town should update its regulations to require a review of grading plans and stormwater management in these areas. This can allow potential issues to be identified and addressed before construction begins.

### **Manage the Expansion and Conversion of Seasonal Housing Units**

Westbrook has seen the expansion and conversion of seasonal housing units and will likely continue to see more. There are currently about 400 seasonal housing units along the coast in Westbrook, most of which are on small lots. Like all properties in Westbrook, these properties rely on on-site septic systems. While the septic systems on some properties are adequate for seasonal use, they may not be adequate for handling building expansions or year-round use.

Westbrook currently requires that prior to expansion or conversion of seasonal units to year-round dwellings that the system is upgraded to support the expansion or conversion. Westbrook should maintain these regulations, which are more stringent than the Public Health Code.

## Encourage Housing Diversity

In addition to providing places to live, a strong housing market is an economic driver. Housing construction creates jobs, supports local businesses and increases the local tax base. Maintaining Westbrook as a desirable place to live will retain property values and continue to feed the demand for new housing. It is important that the housing choices available meet the needs of those who would choose to live here.

### Recognize Changes in Housing Demand and Affordability Issues

Single family detached housing on large lots (1-2 acres) is the predominant type of housing being built in Westbrook. Demographic, social and economic trends suggest that there is a demand for other types of housing that are smaller, less expensive, easier to maintain, and close to services and transit options. The demand for rental housing is increasing as well. While Westbrook has some of these options, it will not likely meet future demand.

There are a number of housing types that can help meet existing or future needs of residents. These might include, apartments, smaller single family homes, shared housing, specialized housing for aging residents (e.g., assisted living), and other types of supportive housing for residents with special needs.

In an ideal situation, people who work in Westbrook would live in Westbrook. This would reduce carbon footprints and minimize commute times among other benefits. However, many people who work in Westbrook cannot afford to live here. This includes our children, volunteers and many teachers, municipal employees, and service workers among others. Young people just beginning their careers and older residents on fixed incomes face similar barriers.

In recognition of the affordability gap, the state has passed legislation that allows developers to supersede local zoning requirements if a Town does not have a minimum of 10 percent of their housing stock that is affordable to people earning 60 percent to 80 percent of Median Income (see Affordable Housing Threshold sidebar). According to the state criteria, only 5 percent of Westbrook's housing stock is considered affordable. Westbrook should make every effort to meet state goals or risk the possibility of housing development that is not consistent with Town character.

There are a number of tools that encourage the creation of new types of housing. Some tools allow the creation of new housing units in existing structures thereby minimizing impacts to natural resources and character. These tools include accessory apartments (which are built within existing single family houses) and redevelopment (as discussed earlier).

Mixed use development also could provide an opportunity to integrate new housing into areas where residents can walk for basic errands and access transit. Mixed use would be most appropriate in the Town Center commercial areas (see page 107) and along Route 1. Tools like the Neighborhood Commercial District (see sidebar) have already been successfully used for mixed use development in these areas.

The Turnpike Interchange District (TIC-65) might also provide an opportunity for mixed use development. This area has been zoned for traditional commercial-only development for several years and might become more attractive if additional development flexibility is allowed.

### Affordable Housing Threshold

In order to qualify as a recognized affordable unit under Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) Section 8-309, a dwelling must be:

- assisted housing (funded under a state or federal program);
- CHFA-financed housing (financed under a program for income-qualifying persons or families); or
- housing that is deed-restricted to be affordable to low- or moderate-income persons or families for at least 40 years.

8-309 does not apply when a community has 10 percent of its housing stock as recognized affordable housing.

Westbrook is not exempt from 8-309.

### Median Income

State law requires communities to use the Median Income for the Area, or the state, whichever is lower. In 2009 the Area Median Income was \$96,700 and the State Median Income was \$85,700.

### Neighborhood Commercial District (NCD)

Westbrook created the NCD zone to:

- allow a flexible mix of residential and commercial uses;
- promote development at a New England village-scale;
- create a streetscape that replicates the Town's traditional development pattern;
- limit traffic impacts from larger projects; and
- preserve the residential character of the area.

## Housing Trust Fund

Funds established by towns and states that dedicate sources of revenue to support affordable housing.

Trust funds are usually created by legislation or ordinance to receive ongoing deposits of public funding, making affordable housing independent of annual budget allocations.

These funds enable municipalities to create housing programs and sometimes housing units, and give developers a reliable funding source.

### HOUSING OPPORTUNITY AREA

In an attempt to determine where potential housing that would meet both local need and state goals might be located, the Town conducted an Affordable Housing Feasibility Study. Factors considered included:

- convenient access to transportation and transit;
- environmental constraints (e.g., wetlands and floodplains);
- compatibility with existing land use ;
- availability of water service;
- adequate road infrastructure; and / or
- ability to support on-site septic system.

The resulting areas are shown on the Residential Densities Plan (see facing page) as a "Housing Opportunity Area." It is envisioned that an overlay district could be created within this area where housing meeting specified design and affordability criteria could be considered. This option gives the Town maximum control.

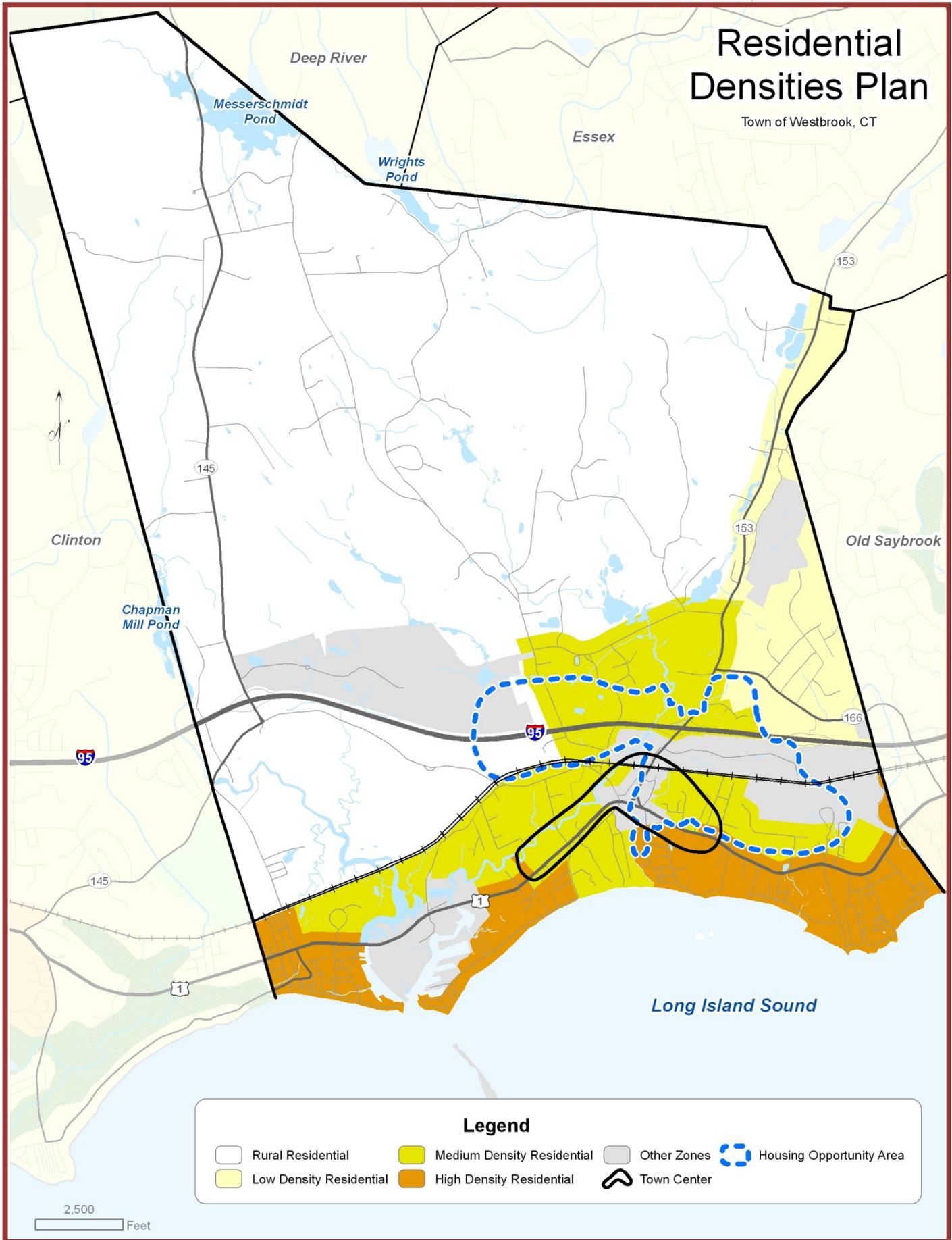
## Maintain Existing "Naturally Occurring" Affordable Housing

Westbrook's housing stock includes "naturally-occurring" affordable housing. These are market units that rent or sell at or below the price which would make them affordable to people earning the median income or less.

Since these units are not deed-restricted to affordable prices, they are not counted as "affordable housing" by the State of Connecticut. Although they may currently meet the need for more affordable housing the sales prices of these units are subject to market forces and can rise at any time.

One way for Westbrook to provide for more housing diversity would be to work with a non-profit organization to acquire these units, "convert" them to affordable units, and then sell or rent them at affordable prices. The units would thus provide an opportunity to create affordable housing, without increasing housing density. Grant programs, such as the Community Development Block Program, administered by the state, can be a source of funds to initiate such a program and rehabilitate and repair structures in need for improvement project.

A conversion program might operate like a revolving loan program, where money is used to purchase a house, a deed-restriction is placed on the property and then the house is sold to a qualified buyer. The funds from the sale are then returned to the revolving loan program. A Housing Trust Fund (see sidebar) can provide the funding source for this type of program. Westbrook might also provide information about other housing programs, such as those offered by the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA), to homebuyers and realtors, to increase the number of units that would be considered affordable by the State.



**Inclusionary Zoning**

A regulatory tool which requires developers to make a percentage of housing units in new residential developments available to low- and moderate-income households.

Often, in return, developers receive non-monetary compensation in the form of density bonuses, zoning variances, and / or expedited permits - that reduce construction costs.

By linking the production of affordable housing to private market development, inclusionary zoning expands the supply of affordable housing while dispersing affordable units throughout a community to broaden opportunity and foster mixed-income neighborhoods.

It also allows innovative communities to counter declining public-sector investment in affordable housing, create housing for their workforce, and enable low- and moderate-income families to benefit from community reinvestment.

**Consider Options to Encourage Housing Affordability**

Housing affordability is a continuing concern in Westbrook and other communities in Connecticut. Westbrook has relied on the market to provide affordable housing. Over the past 10 years market demand has been for larger, higher-priced houses and no new units of affordable housing units have been built. It has not been economically-viable for developers to build affordable units without some form of subsidy. As the following chart indicates, a market-based approach can be less reliable than a pro-active town approach. It might be desirable for Westbrook to consider another approach.

*Recognized Affordable Housing Policies and Programs*

MARKET-BASED ACTIVITIES				TOWN-INITIATED ACTIVITIES	
Privately-owned Units	CHFA Mortgages	Housing Vouchers <small>(i.e., Section 8)</small>	Privately-owned Development	Deed-Restricted Units	Public-owned Units / Development

*Less Reliable*

*More Reliable*

Zoning incentives, such as allowing additional density in exchange for affordable units, can spur the private-sector to further public policy objectives. These incentives can alleviate some of the market forces that otherwise prevent the creation of affordable units.

Other zoning tools the Town might employ to diversify its housing stock include allowing accessory apartments, adding duplexes as a permitted use in certain residential districts, modifying the language of the multi-family overlay district to be less burdensome, and/or adopting "Inclusionary Zoning" (see sidebar). This zoning technique could be tailored to Westbrook's specific needs. Westbrook could:

- ✿ require a percentage of new units in a residential development to be deed-restricted as affordable (typically between 10-25 percent of all proposed units);
- ✿ require a percentage of new units in certain areas, such as the Housing Opportunity Area, be deed-restricted as affordable;
- ✿ provide a density bonus for developments that have affordable units; and/or
- ✿ allow developers to pay a fee in lieu of affordable housing into a Housing Trust Fund if providing new affordable units cannot be achieved within the proposed development.

### **Work with Local Non-Profit Organizations to Create New Affordable Housing**

Westbrook could consider partnering with non-profit organizations, such as HOPE Partnership, who have successfully developed affordable housing projects with other municipalities, if the opportunity presents itself. By partnering in a proposed development, the Town can ensure that design objectives and local concerns are met. These organizations can also help to educate residents on the need for this type of housing.

### **Seek Opportunities to Provide Housing for Populations with Special Needs**

People are living longer and healthier lives. As indicated in Chapter 1, the older age group (age 55+) will continue to grow. Surveys indicate that:

- ☛ 80 percent of seniors want to “Age in Place;” and
- ☛ 20 percent of seniors will want other housing choices, such as assisted living.

As elderly residents become less independent, the need for and types of assistance increase. In addition, elderly residents often rely on fixed incomes and they may not have the ability to afford increasing property values and property taxes, potentially making them less willing to endorse public investments.

The Town could encourage new housing to meet accessibility and “visitability” objectives. Visitability involves creating home designs that are accessible to all. To accomplish this objective, Westbrook should evaluate zoning requirements for ramps and other structural features that may be required and simplify the permit requirements for these amenities.

### **Age in Place**

Enabling older residents to stay in their homes comfortably, safely and independently as they age, regardless of physical challenges.

## Actions Summary for Housing Choice

### Protect Established Neighborhoods - Page 96

8.1 Continue to use existing zoning tools to manage residential development throughout Town

### Address Coastal Housing Issues - Page 96

8.2 Monitor trends in house size and proportion

8.3 Consider adopting regulations to address size and proportion, if warranted

8.4 Improve regulations for land modifications

8.5 Manage the conversion of seasonal units to year-round units

### Encourage Housing Diversity - Page 97

8.6 Consider allowing additional types of housing

8.7 Develop locational criteria for new housing

8.8 Develop tools to encourage the creation of new types of housing

8.9 Promote mixed use development in appropriate areas

8.10 Consider converting "naturally-occurring affordable housing" units to protected affordable units

8.11 Provide information about other housing programs, such as CHFA, to homebuyers and realtors

8.12 Consider new approaches to encourage affordable housing, such as inclusionary zoning

8.13 Work with local non-profit organizations to create new affordable housing

8.14 Seek opportunities to provide housing for populations with special needs

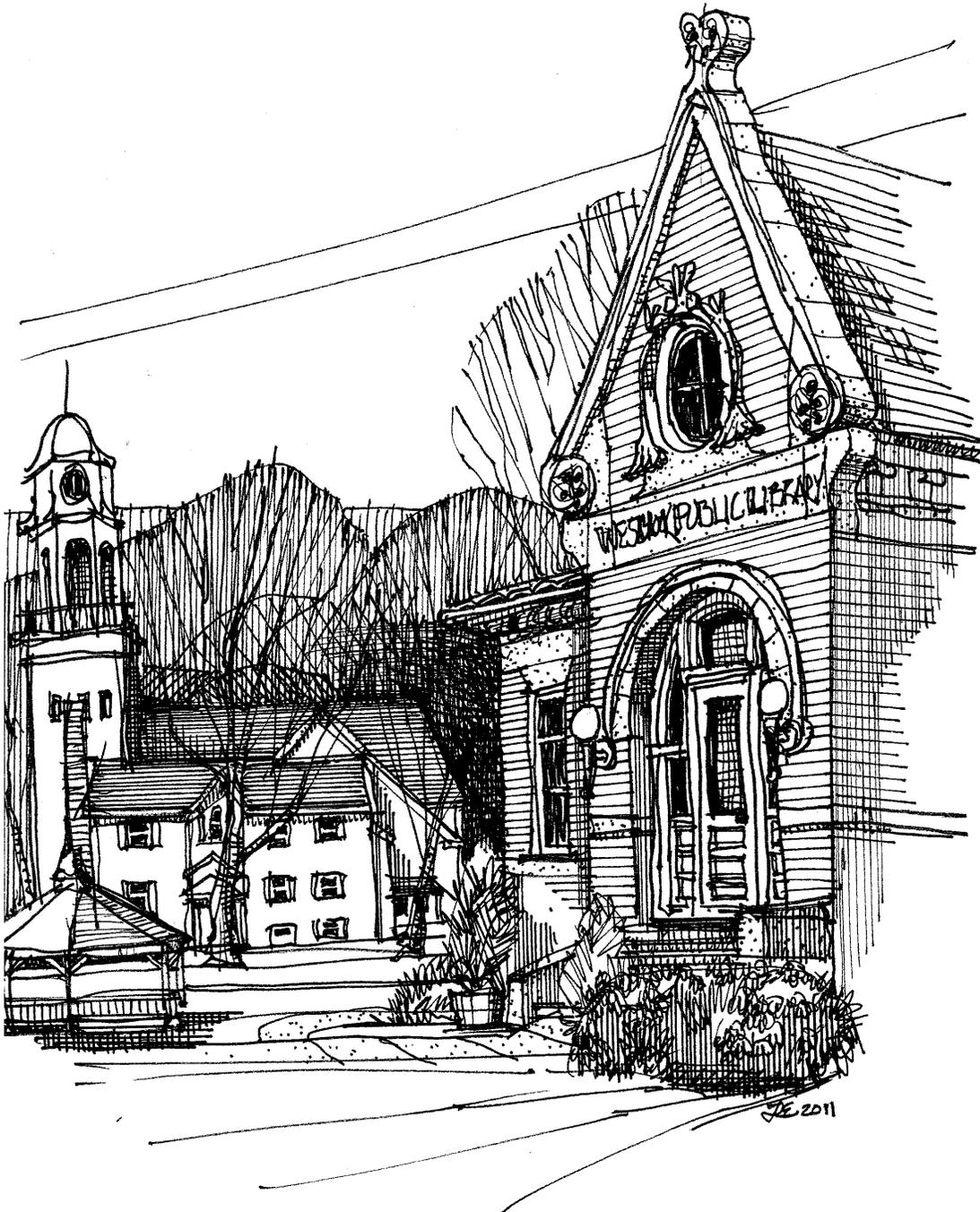
8.15 Develop and adopt active aging principles

8.16 Encourage accessibility standards

# TOWN CENTER

9

*Preserve the Town Center as the Civic, Social, Residential and Commercial Core of the Community*



Old Public Library, Town Green and First Congregational Church of Westbrook

**TOWN CENTER EXTENTS  
MAP LEGEND**

- Within the Town Center Limits can be found:
  - the Town Green and surrounding businesses;
  - the Mulvey Municipal Center;
  - Westbrook Library;
  - the Train Station;
  - Daisy Ingraham Elementary school; and
  - the Post Office.

**OTHER MAP FEATURES**  
Business Development Plan features (see page 89)

**Areas**

- Town Center
- Regional Business

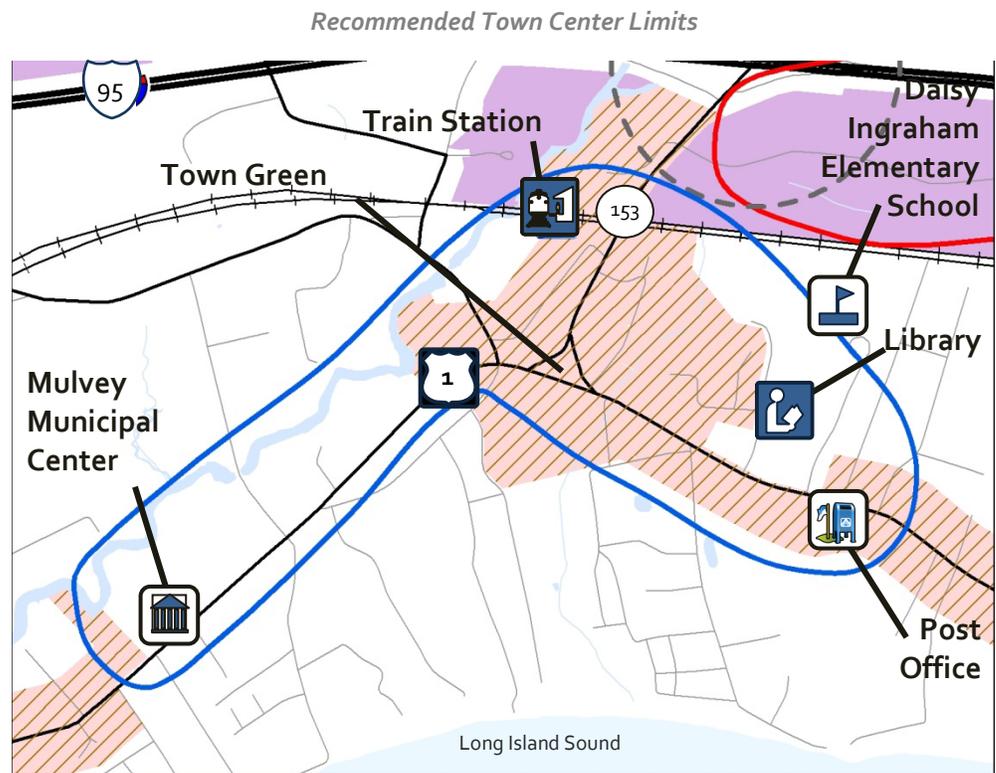
**Underlying Elements**

- Commercial Areas
- Business Park
- Residential Areas

Among Westbrook’s defining features is a traditional Town Center consisting of a cluster of businesses, residences, and civic and religious institutions surrounding a town green. The Town Center is a traditional New England village with quiet residential streets within walking distance to the central business area. The distinctive village character created by these two areas coexisting in close proximity, yet not intruding on each other, helps make Westbrook special and should be preserved. It is important to retain this distinction and protect the integrity of the existing residential neighborhoods. Efforts to restore the vitality of the Town Center should be sensitive to maintaining this balance.

There has not always been a common understanding of what area comprises Westbrook’s “Town Center.” The Town Center is a focal point of the community. For planning purposes, it is important to define the extent of the Town Center. With the re-location of the Town Hall and Post Office and a new and an improved train station on the horizon, it makes sense to have these landmarks serve as both the outer limits and gateways to the Town Center area.

Expanding the extents of the Town Center does not mean expanding the business area of the Town Center.



Within the Town Center it is important to manage the various activities, and objectives that coexist in this place.

- businesses will need to be supported so they can thrive;
- residences should be protected from adverse impacts related to business development; and
- community character should be showcased through the preservation of historic buildings, the enhancement of streetscapes and overall good design.

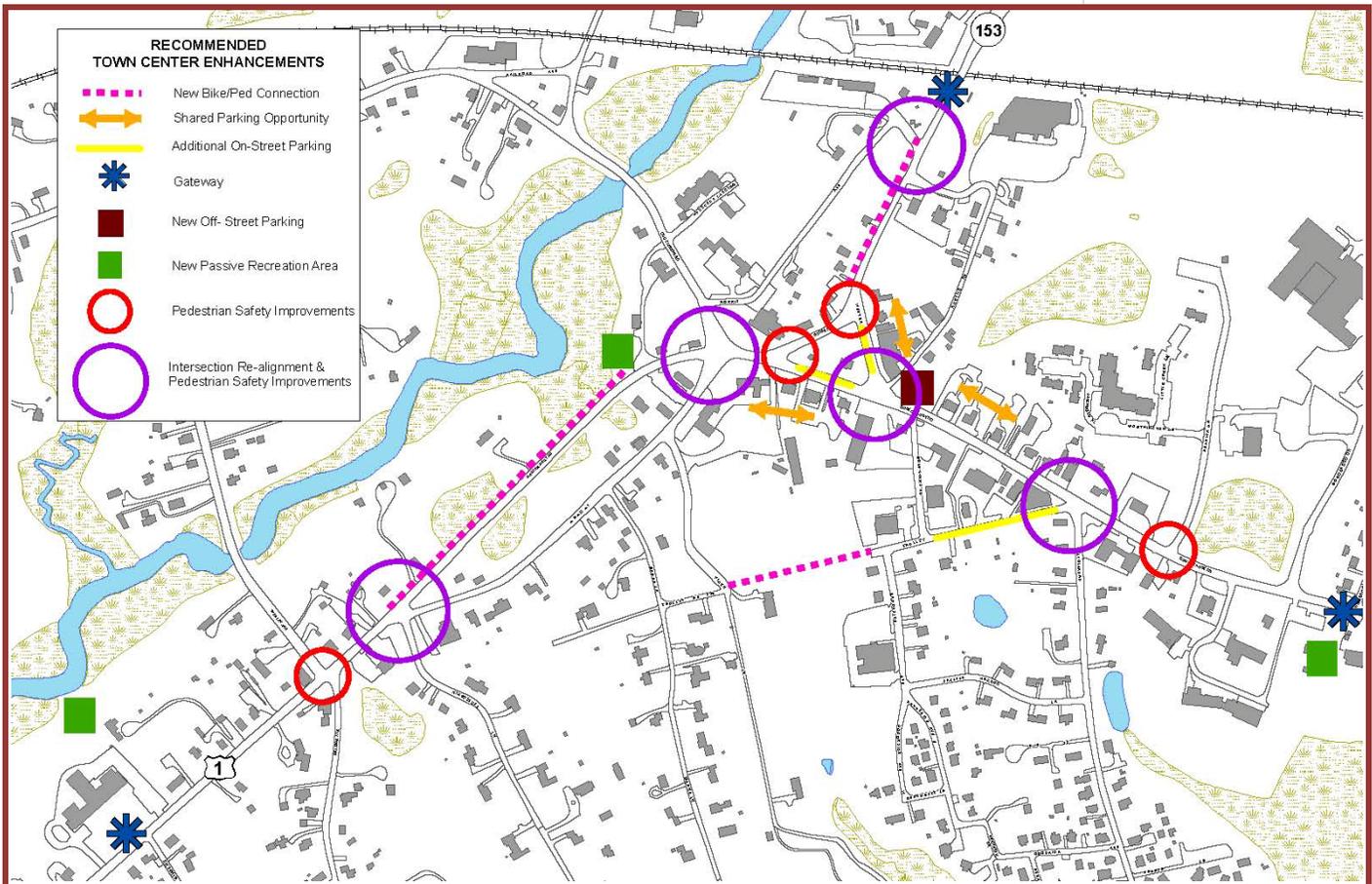
## Continue Master Planning Efforts

Efforts to develop a Master Plan for the Town Center area should continue and build upon previous public workshops. A comprehensive Town Center plan should include strategies to encourage good design; a land use plan; a market analysis to determine what kinds of retailing and other uses the district could support; design plans for public improvements; and policies for zoning amendments needed to implement the plan.

The ideas in this chapter should serve as a foundation for overall master planning in the Town Center. Additional public input should be a part of the master planning process. In particular, the Town might hold visioning sessions, visual preference surveys and / or design charrettes to determine a clear vision for the Town Center and to help identify desirable physical improvements.

Master planning should carefully evaluate the Town Center's gateways - the Train Station, the Mulvey Municipal Center and the Post Office. Westbrook should consider if additional gateway treatments, such as landscaping and signage, might be appropriate to help alert visitors to this special place.

Concept Plan



### Benefits of a Village District

Perhaps the greatest benefit of the village district zoning tool is that it enables towns to control design through the Zoning Commission. Design is an important consideration and this tool provides an opportunity to reinforce important village design elements.

## Ensure that Development is Appropriate

Westbrook has one Town Center – it is important to ensure that additional development is appropriate and enhances the center. Land uses that detract from the center should be avoided and new development should be designed to complement existing development. As noted earlier, how development occurs and what it looks like can be as important as what type of development occurs. Design will continue to play a critical role in the Town Center.

Some land uses will contribute positively to the Center. Civic uses, businesses, and mixed uses should be encouraged. Conversely, auto-related uses (e.g., drive-throughs, gas stations) can detract from the pedestrian environment and impact traffic flow. These types of uses, when considered appropriate for Westbrook, should be located outside of the Town Center.

The size, layout, and / or condition of existing buildings in the Town Center, may render them unusable for modern business needs. As a result, charming, historic buildings are torn down rather than reused and their replacements lack the character of the original building. When it is determined that the older building cannot be saved, they should be replaced with high quality buildings that meet specified design objectives.

In terms of design, residents expressed concern about the size and scale of new structures in the Center. Westbrook has identified the elements related to architectural form (below) and should consider new tools to enhance the development review process (see page 50 for additional discussion on design review). Other aesthetic-related strategies Westbrook might pursue include burying overhead wires and establishing a sign program.

Desirable architectural form in the Town Center includes:

- buildings with New England scale and mass (i.e., 2-3 stories) that create enclosure and define the public space of the street by holding a strong edge;
- traditional building proportions that relate to human scale;
- gabled roofs or other traditional rooflines that incorporate dormers and ornate cornices, large chimneys, etc.;
- residential-scale windows and doors / frequent door openings;
- mix of residential and commercial use (particularly with housing on the second story);
- use of natural construction materials that provide texture (preferably locally-sourced materials);
- buildings that provide “landmark value” to the street (e.g., towers, belfries, articulated silhouettes);
- unobtrusive parking with narrow curb cuts (i.e., located to the rear or side of buildings); and
- compact, high-density development and pedestrian-oriented streets.

One of the more effective tools to protect and enhance a town center character is the “village district” (see sidebar on page 52). The Village District Act enables zoning commissions to stringently control the design and appearance of development within villages - a power typically reserved for local historic district commissions. The Zoning Commission should consider establishing a village district within the Town Center limits.

The Village District Overlay might encompass the entire area within the Town Center Limits (see page 104), or it might be focused to a specific area within the Town Center. At a minimum, the Village District Overlay should be applied to the commercial areas within the Town Center.

# Attract New Development and Encourage Redevelopment

The charm of the Town Center makes this area an ideal location for tourist-oriented boutiques, restaurants and galleries. Businesses that serve the needs of the residents within walking distance should also be encouraged. A market analysis could be conducted to determine what types of businesses can be supported. Seasonal changes in demographics would need to be considered in the analysis. Once an appropriate mix of uses has been determined, the Zoning Regulations should be evaluated to determine whether permitted uses and zoning district boundaries are in line with the types of businesses the Town wants to attract.

Retail and service uses should be encouraged. Such uses can provide basic services, create a pedestrian-friendly ambience which does not exist in a lot of other places, and reduce the need to drive to suburban shopping destinations. Institutional uses such as churches and schools should be permitted within the Town Center. Not only can they draw their memberships from within the Town, they also attract regular visitors who support local businesses.

The size, layout, and / or condition of older buildings can render them unusable for modern needs. As a result, charming, historic buildings are torn down rather than reused and their replacements lack the character of the previous building. Westbrook should review its Zoning Regulations to ensure that they provide flexibility for the reuse of older buildings.

Ultimately, the Zoning Regulations should allow the types of business that Westbrook wants to attract. Westbrook should also evaluate whether current zoning designations (zoning districts) support the type of place that is envisioned, and whether properties are properly zoned. It is not this Plan's intent to move the commercial zones into established residential neighborhoods.

Other redevelopment strategies to consider include providing financial incentives, such as tax abatements and low-interest loans. To aid in revitalization efforts, Westbrook could become a member of the CT Main Street Program (see sidebar). The program is comprised of other communities that are working to revitalize their town centers and provides technical resources.

Wastewater management is an important consideration for new development and redevelopment in the Town Center. The Town's sewer avoidance program does not prevent property owners from working with the Westbrook Water Pollution Control Commission to address sewage disposal issues. The development of shared septic systems that are overseen and managed by a Town agency, or a similar approach, is one possible consideration.

## Expand Opportunities to Live In or Near Town Center

Opportunities to provide additional housing in proximity to the Town Center and Train Station should be explored in order to meet housing diversity objectives (see Housing Opportunity Area on page 99) and provide an increased customer base to Town Center businesses. The Zoning Regulations currently allow a single residential unit over a commercial use in the Commercial Town Center zoning district. This requirement should be updated to allow multiple housing units on the upper floor if septic and parking requirements can be met. The Town should also consider whether residential uses are appropriate on Flat Rock Place if wastewater management issues can be resolved.

## CT Main Street Center

The Connecticut Main Street Center is the state's leading resource for cities and towns seeking to comprehensively revitalize their "main street" districts (downtowns, villages and town centers).

The Connecticut Main Street Center uses a four step program, which is modeled on the National Main Street program:

- 1: Organization  
Building a framework for sensible, community-driven programming
- 2: Promotion  
Enhancing the image of Town Center
- 3: Design  
Improving the physical value and appeal of the Town Center
- 4: Economic Restructuring  
Increasing the economic value by encouraging diversity among current and new businesses suitable to the unique needs of a particular marketplace

## Shared Parking - An Economic Development Strategy?

Surface parking lots occupy a significant amount of land in areas zoned for business development. It is estimated that the average strip mall has at least 2 times more area for parking than buildings.

Requiring that land be set-aside for off-street parking reduces economic gain that might be achieved if this land were used for buildings. Shared parking reduces the oversupply of parking within an area by allowing less parking to be built.

### Benefits of Shared Parking

- reduces land devoted to parking, thereby allowing increased densities or providing space for common areas, walkways or other amenities;
- reduces maintenance costs for individual property owners;
- reduces curb cuts; and
- creates convenience for customers and visitors by making it easier to find parking and then eliminating the need for customers to park multiple times, or stress about parking rules.

## Address Parking Needs

Pedestrian-friendly town centers attract visitors. Since most visitors and business patrons arrive by car, there must be accommodation for vehicles. Policies for the Town Center must balance the needs of drivers with the character of the center. In terms of the amount of parking, retailers feel that there is not enough parking. Often parking “shortages” are a result of parking management, however, rather than an actual shortage in the number of spaces.

On-street parking spaces are available, but currently, most of the parking areas in the Town Center are privately-owned, privately-managed and only serve the uses on the particular property. These private parking lots comprise a large percentage of the land area in the Center yet only serve the parking needs of a small segment of visitors / patrons.

This parking arrangement creates a perceived lack of parking and requires patrons to park multiple times on one trip to the Town Center. Also, when parking is provided on a lot-by-lot basis in a town center, potential tax revenue is lost (see sidebar). Westbrook has a number of options to address this issue. In the short term, the Town could add parking spaces in the public right-of-way. On-street parking can also help calm traffic. If the bump-outs on the Town Green were removed, additional parking could be provided there as well.

Another approach is to amend zoning regulations to allow for shared parking. This approach helps to address parking issues and provide new growth opportunities. Three specific areas provide opportunities for shared parking in the Town Center:

- behind Westbrook Place;
- on the corner of Boston Post Road and Knothe Drive; and
- behind the Riggio Building (reconfiguration of existing parking lot).

Westbrook may have to take a more active role to address parking needs. This could entail new off-street municipal parking lots.



The vacant land on the corner of Boston Post Road and Knothe Drive (left) is perfectly situated to serve as a municipal parking lot in an area that is underserved by private off-street parking.

Westbrook is working to acquire this property and is developing plans to construct a public parking lot at this location

## Promote Activities that Attract Visitors to the Town Center

Community events (e.g., parades, community concerts) raise the Town's visibility as a special place and add to community spirit and character. Events draw visitors to the community, which benefits the local economy.

Westbrook should continue to support and publicize community events in the Town Center. Additional activities that could draw more people to the Center include a farmers market, additional festivals, walking tours, etc. Amenities for visitors (such as parking as discussed earlier), wayfinding signage and public restrooms can create a more welcoming environment.

The Connecticut Main Street Center helps communities promote their Town Centers (as discussed earlier). Their four step approach could be replicated in Westbrook; Westbrook should join the Main Street, or a similar program.



Festival on the Town Green



Parade

## Enhance the Route 1 Corridor

### Ensure that Route 1 Enhances the Town Center Character

Route 1 is the main road in the Town Center and it provides the central focus for many of the businesses and other activities in this area. Since the goal is for the Town Center to be a pedestrian-friendly area, it is important that Route 1 contribute to this overall ambience to the extent possible.

Route 1 also provides regional connectivity and serves as an alternate route when an incident occurs on Interstate 95. While the state may be reluctant to reduce Route 1's capacity, it may be possible to provide for minor modifications that would enhance the character of the Town Center and have little impact on capacity.

These modifications might include narrowing some areas, installing additional crosswalks, allowing on-street parking and planting trees along the roadway. Curb cut management is also important here (see page 71). Realignment of the Old Clinton Road / Boston Post Road intersection should be a top priority because the current wide intersection is a hindrance for pedestrians.

The Town should oppose any proposal which raises the possibility that Route 1 would be widened to four lanes. In any scenario, the Town will need to work closely with ConnDOT to meet both regional and local needs.

### Encourage Foot Traffic and Improve Pedestrian and Bicyclist Safety

Having safe walking areas that connect destinations is important to Westbrook residents. Historically, the primary focal point for pedestrian improvements (sidewalks, crosswalks) has been the Town Center area. Pedestrians should be able to safely walk along Route 1 and surrounding streets. In addition, they should be able to safely cross the street and parking lots.

Recommended pedestrian / bicycle improvements in the Town Center include:

- appropriate sized and placed sidewalks;
- safe, prominent and appropriately-located street crossings;
- narrow, well-marked driveway crossings;
- unified streetscape amenities, such as shade trees, seating areas, bicycle racks and pedestrian-scaled lighting;
- installation of "Share the Road" signage;
- bike lanes; and
- pedestrian-oriented business and wayfinding signs.

The first priority should be completing gaps in the existing Town Center sidewalk network, and making sure the existing sidewalks are Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant. Sidewalks and multi-purpose paths / trails that link community facilities, business areas and housing should be the next priority. Particular focal points for off-street paths could include links between the train station and residential neighborhoods and links that connect parking lots that could serve multiple businesses.

## Preserve Distinctive Trees

At one time trees lined many of the streets in the Town Center. But over time, the trees were eliminated because of road widening, aboveground utility conflicts, and natural causes. These trees were not replaced. Westbrook should preserve its existing trees and plant new trees, where feasible.

Public trees need to be carefully managed in town centers because they may block sightlines or may drop branches which can become a risk to travelers. Some communities have adopted tree plans that include an inventory of public trees, along with a plan to maintain (i.e., keeping trees healthy), and replace them. Westbrook should consider this approach.

When planting new trees, careful attention should be paid to selecting the most appropriate species and ensuring they are planted in appropriate locations.



A tree-lined Main Street; looking west from Town Green

Source: WJ Neidlinger



Looking west toward Town Green

## Action Summary for the Town Center

<b>Continue Master Planning Efforts - Page 105</b>	
9.1	Develop and adopt a Master Plan for the Town Center
<b>Ensure that Development is Appropriate - Page 106</b>	
9.2	See strategies related to Route 1 and Access Management on page 71
9.3	Encourage appropriate land uses and discourage or prohibit land uses that detract from the Town Center character and function
9.4	Adopt new tools to enhance design
9.5	Consider establishing a village district
9.6	Update Zoning Regulations to allow multiple housing units on the upper floor if parking and septic requirements can be met
<b>Attract New Development and Encourage Redevelopment- Page 107</b>	
9.7	Encourage new businesses in the Town Center
9.8	Maintain and encourage new civic uses in the Town Center
9.9	Consider redevelopment strategies (e.g., financial incentives)
9.10	Consider joining the CT Main Street Program or similar program
9.11	Update zoning to provide additional flexibility for redevelopment
9.12	Find and implement wastewater management approaches that will allow appropriate development and redevelopment
9.13	Expand opportunities to live in or near Town Center
9.14	Update zoning to encourage mixed uses in the Town Center
<b>Address Parking Needs - Page 108</b>	
9.15	Add parking spaces in the public right-of-way
9.16	Provide opportunities for shared parking, where feasible
9.17	Reconfigured the parking lot at the Riggio Building
9.18	Consider creating a public parking lot
9.19	Remove "bumpouts" from the Town Green
<b>Promote Activities that Attract Visitors to the Town Center - Page 109</b>	
9.20	Continue to support and publicize community events
9.21	Create an open market area (farmer's market)
9.22	Consider providing public restrooms
<b>Enhance the Route 1 Corridor - Page 110</b>	
9.23	Work with the state to determine physical improvements that could be undertaken on Route 1
9.24	Oppose any proposal to widen Route 1 to four lanes
9.25	Manage curb cuts
9.26	Undertake pedestrian and bicyclist improvements
9.27	Complete gaps in the existing sidewalk network
9.28	Ensure that all sidewalks and crosswalks are Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant
9.29	Develop off street paths between community facilities, residential neighborhoods and the train station
<b>Preserve Distinctive Trees - Page 111</b>	
9.30	Develop an public tree inventory
9.31	Create a plan to maintain and replace public trees; be careful to select appropriate tree species

# FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

# 10

*Become a more  
sustainable  
community*



Chittenden Hill Road

While the Future Land Use Plan looks very similar in appearance to a zoning map, it should not be construed as such.

The colored areas represent desired future land uses, which do not necessarily correspond to zoning classifications.

# Overview

The Future Land Use Plan is a reflection of the stated goals, objectives and recommendations of the Plan, as well as an integration of the preceding elements in the Plan. While the Plan reflects these goals, objectives and recommendations; it should be used in conjunction with the plan maps found in the chapters. It is important to note that the Plan is focused on the future – it does not imply that existing houses or businesses must “convert” to the future desired land use.

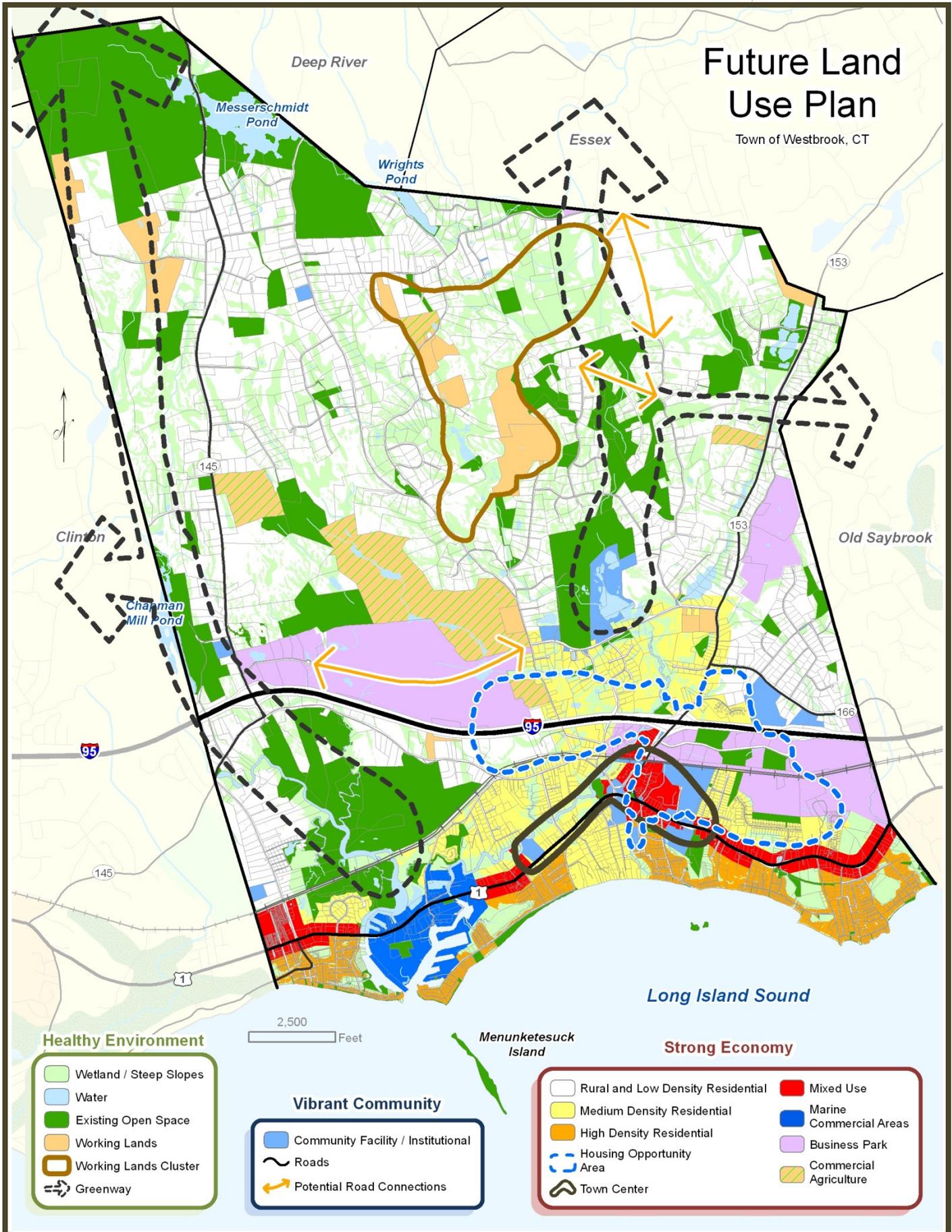
The Future Land Use Plan contains the following categories:

## MAP LEGEND

A Healthy Environment	<p><b>Green Infrastructure: Natural Resource Constraints</b> Areas where natural resource protection is a priority of the Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: #d9ead3; border: 1px solid #ccc; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Wetlands and Steep Slopes</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: #d9e1f2; border: 1px solid #ccc; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Water</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Green Infrastructure: Open Space Elements</b> Areas with existing open space, greenway trails and working lands</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: #5cb85c; border: 1px solid #ccc; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Existing Open Space</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; border-bottom: 2px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Greenways</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: #f1c40f; border: 1px solid #ccc; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Working Lands</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; border: 2px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Working Lands Cluster</li> </ul>

A Vibrant Community	<p><b>Community Facility / Institutional Uses</b> Existing or desired uses that will help meet community needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: #3498db; border: 1px solid #ccc; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Community Facility / Institutional</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Transportation Features</b> Existing and planned transportation features</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; border-bottom: 2px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Existing Roads</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; border-bottom: 2px dashed orange; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Potential Road Connections</li> </ul>

A Strong Economy	<p><b>Business Areas</b> Areas used or intended for mixed use residential, business or industrial uses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; border-bottom: 2px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Town Center</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: #e74c3c; border: 1px solid #ccc; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Mixed Use</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: #9b59b6; border: 1px solid #ccc; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Business Park</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: #3498db; border: 1px solid #ccc; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Marine Commercial Areas</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; background: repeating-linear-gradient(45deg, transparent, transparent 2px, #f1c40f 2px, #f1c40f 4px); border: 1px solid #ccc; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Commercial Agriculture</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Residential Areas</b> Areas used or intended for residential uses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: #fff; border: 1px solid #ccc; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Rural and Low Density Residential</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: #fff9c4; border: 1px solid #ccc; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Medium Density Residential</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: #f1c40f; border: 1px solid #ccc; margin-right: 5px;"></span> High Density Residential</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: #8e44ad; border: 1px solid #ccc; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Multi-Family Residential</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; border: 2px dashed blue; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Housing Opportunity Area</li> </ul>



## Plan Consistency

In accordance with CGS 8-23, the Future Land Use Plan was compared to state and regional plans and was found to be generally consistent with both the State of Connecticut's Conservation and Development Policies Plan and the Connecticut River Estuary Regional Plan of Conservation and Development.

All three plans:

- ☛ identify natural resources, open space, aquifers and historic areas for conservation; and
- ☛ identify desirable development areas.

Any inconsistencies can be generally attributed to:

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

### Consistency With Growth Principles of the State Conservation and Development Policies Plan, 2005-2010

Westbrook's Plan is consistent with the state Growth Principles as follows:

#### Principle 1

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

This Plan places a particular emphasis on redevelopment in Westbrook Town Center and the redevelopment of areas along major transportation routes to reinforce community structure. These strategies utilize existing physical infrastructure, and promotes the maintenance of infrastructure to support the desired development pattern.

#### Principle 2

Expand housing opportunities and design choices to accommodate a variety of household types and needs.

The Plan expresses a need for and provides strategies for diversifying housing choices to meet current and anticipated demographic and affordability needs. It also looks at ways to capitalize on the existing housing stock and to encourage appropriate new housing development in areas that reinforce the traditional development pattern.

## Principle 3

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

The Plan recommends future development, including mixed use development, primarily as infill and redevelopment in and around the Town Center and along major transportation corridors and nodes, including the train station.

## Principle 4

Conserve and restore the natural environment, cultural and historical resources, and traditional rural lands.

The Plan of Conservation and Development identifies strategies to:

- ✿ protect natural resources;
- ✿ preserve open space and working lands;
- ✿ protect historic resources; and
- ✿ protect and enhance community character.

These strategies will help conserve and restore Westbrook's natural environment, scenic, cultural and historical resources.

## Principle 5

Protect environmental assets critical to public health and safety.

The Plan provides strategies to conserve and preserve natural and coastal resources in order to protect public health and safety and for overall environmental protection. It also strongly emphasizes the need to protect drinking water sources and to make Westbrook a sustainable community.

## Principle 6

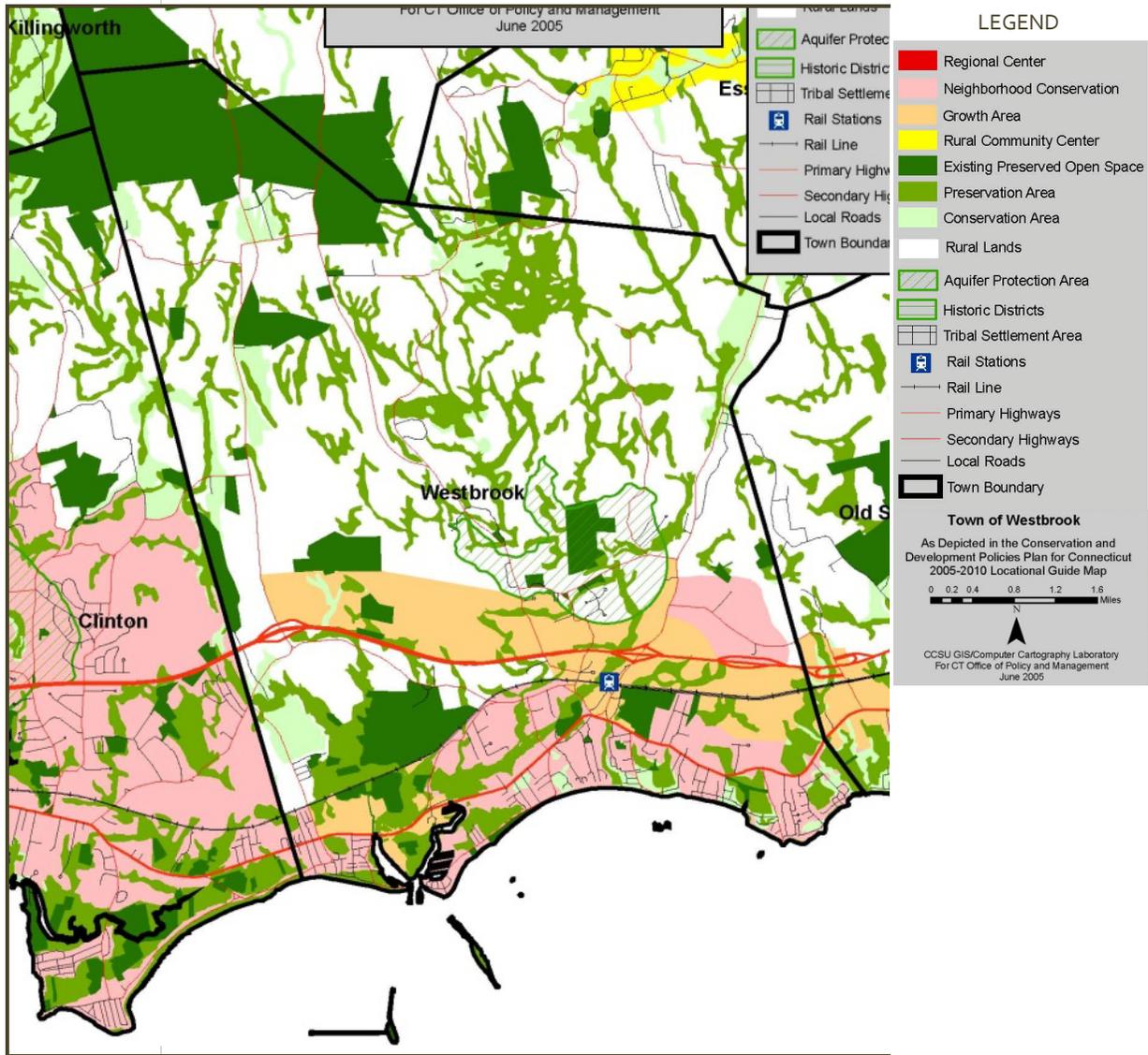
Integrate planning across all levels of government to address issues on a local, regional, and statewide basis.

The Plan of Conservation and Development is part of the process of integrating planning with other levels of government and with other agencies.

The Plan will be used to coordinate efforts with:

- ✿ adjacent communities;
- ✿ regional organizations; and
- ✿ state agencies.

### State of Connecticut – Conservation and Development Policies Plan (2005)



# PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

# 11



Spencer House (VISTA)

## Updating Tools

Westbrook might:

- hold annual public informational meetings to summarize the Plan recommendations and receive feedback from the community;
- hold workshop sessions for local boards, commissions and other interested persons to discuss Plan strategies and suggest alternative language;
- revise Plan sections as appropriate; and
- re-adopt the Plan whenever there are minor text or map changes, or when the Planning Commission wants to reaffirm the existing policies of the Plan.

## Overview

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

For Westbrook, the first step toward successful plan implementation is to create an implementation table, distinguish between policies and tasks, identify responsible entities, and develop priorities.

### Plan Implementation Committee

Some communities establish a Plan Implementation Committee (PIC) to oversee implementation of the Plan's recommendations. The Committee could assess the status of specific recommendations, establish new priorities, and suggest new implementation techniques. The Town's various boards and commissions should be represented on the PIC to help prioritize, coordinate, and refine implementation of the Plan.

### Use of the Plan

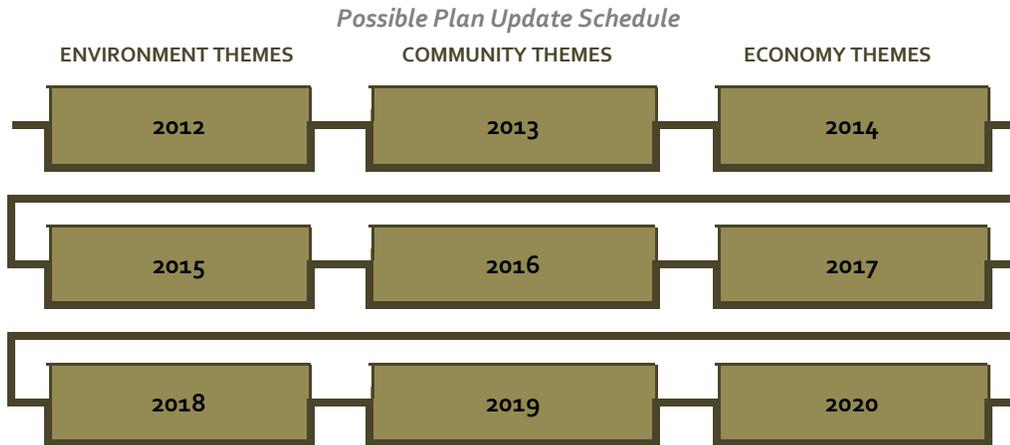
All land use proposals should be measured and evaluated in terms of the Plan and its elements. Using the Plan as a basis for land use decisions by the Planning Commission and the Zoning Commission will help accomplish the Plan's stated goals and objectives.

Proposals that are inconsistent with the Plan should be more thoroughly vetted by the land use agencies. Ultimately, the Plan is an advisory document and will not address every possible scenario that might arise.

# Annual Update Program

The Plan is not a static document that can only be amended every ten years. It can be difficult to anticipate change during a ten year time frame. If dramatic change alters a premise on which recommended strategies are based, or creates unanticipated issues, the land use commissions can make interim amendments to this Plan to address these changes. In doing so, the commissions and other agencies can be assured that their decisions are consistent with an up-to-date Plan of Conservation and Development.

If not, then Westbrook, with the assistance of the Plan Implementation Committee, could consider reviewing the Plan with the following schedule:



By following this schedule, each review and update extends the Plan's ten-year life, until a comprehensive update is needed.

## Policies and Tasks

The implementation tables identify both policies and tasks:

**Policies** are long-term guidelines that do not readily lend themselves to a specific schedule or measurement.

**Tasks** on the other hand, are specific actions that can typically be scheduled, completed, and evaluated.

## Plan Themes

### Environment:

- A Healthy Environment
- The Natural Environment
  - The Built Environment
  - The Coastal Environment

### Community:

- A Vibrant Community
- Community Character and Sense of Place
  - Community Facilities and Services

### Economy:

- A Strong Economy
- Business Development
  - Housing Choice
  - Town Center