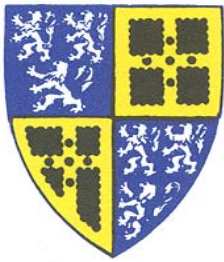


Plan of Conservation and Development



Old Saybrook, Connecticut



TOWN OF OLD SAYBROOK
Planning Commission

PLAN OF CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT

ADOPTED: September 17, 2003

EFFECTIVE: October 15, 2003

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Acknowledgments

The Old Saybrook Planning Commission thanks the many citizens, officials and land use agencies that participated in the update of this fundamental planning document – the Plan of Conservation & Development. As the Commission has always said, “growth is inevitable.” This Plan directs growth consistent with the unique character of Old Saybrook.

CITIZENS OF OLD SAYBROOK

A special thanks goes out to all of those concerned citizens who attended workshop meetings and expressed ideas to ensure that this Plan truly represents the growth that the citizens of Old Saybrook want in the next decade.

MUNICIPAL & LAND USE AGENCIES

In recognition for implementation of the 1990 Plan and participation in preparing the Plan, the Planning Commission specifically thanks the following Boards and Commissions: Architectural Review Board, Conservation Commission, Economic Development Commission, Harbor Management Commission, Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commission, Parks & Recreation Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, Zoning Commission, and the Water Pollution Control Authority.

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The Commission gratefully credits J.H. Torrance Downes for his contribution of personal sketches of Old Saybrook. Additionally, the photographs, contributed by Walter Harris and Robbie Marshall, capture the essence of our town.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Vision



It is the vision of the residents of Old Saybrook that future development will enhance the importance of our special geographic location and honor the historic connection to our unique natural resources.

Old Saybrook occupies a unique location in Connecticut, having New England’s major river – the Connecticut – flow past its shores into Long Island Sound. The river and “the Sound” dominate the history of Old Saybrook, as the third earliest-settled town in Connecticut, and shape the character of its present, as the sources of the town’s ecological, economic and aesthetic well-being.

In its early history, Old Saybrook was an intersection point and way station for water transportation routes connecting interior New England to the sea. Native canoes, sailing ships and steamboats were followed by railroads, trolleys and highways, as people traveled along the coast of the Sound and up the River. Yet, the expansive tidal marshes and shallow sandbar at the mouth of the River discouraged the urban development that occurred over time in many other American river estuaries. As a result, Old Saybrook’s natural resources remain largely unspoiled, and, just as the native peoples had come to the shore in the summer as part of their annual pattern of life, subsequent visitors come seasonally to enjoy the quality of life along the water.

In Old Saybrook, one can experience being between the water and land. The town is a continuum of habitats with rocky, wooded uplands merging into streams and swamps, flowing toward tidal marshes and open water. The woods are shaded, dark, and mysterious, contrasting with the open views and vistas across the marshes and a quality of light reflecting off the water. The town connects intensely with the rhythm of nature, passing of the seasons, flowing of the streams, with the ebb and flow of the tide. The presence of water provides a constant sense of motion and flow. These natural resources are highly visible and their presence creates an awareness of nature that pervades daily life. It is a diverse environment but not one of extremes. The hills are gentle, and grassy tidal marshes and sand – not open sea and crashing surf – often occupy the shore. There is a muted, subdued quality about this edge.

Variety characterizes Old Saybrook. The town’s natural coastal plain, river edge, and hilly uplands diversify with the seasonal beach communities and the village center along Main Street. The recent pattern of roadside commercial development and suburban subdivisions and the scattered, generally non-intrusive

VISION

industrial activity give our town an even broader outlook to the community. For the most part, institutionalized, homogenized franchise architecture or clutter development has not obliterated the small town's distinct character. Old Saybrook has a strong sense of community life. It is a place where people greet each other at the post office, the Town Hall, the stores, the concerts, the parades, and other community events. Year-round and seasonal residents and visitors often interact in a friendly manner. The physical setting and the modest scale of the town's development encourage this sense of community – the most valuable aspect of our town.

Future development in Old Saybrook must respect the past and present natural and manmade diversity of the town. Development activity must be non-intrusive and must be evocative of the town's history. We do not want to freeze the town in the past, but want to assure that future development enhances, rather than detracts from, the unique natural and historic setting. Change is inevitable and desirable, but it must be in keeping with the town's special character. All development must be at the human scale that is suitable for a small New England town. The style must be informal, casual, muted and subdued, like the natural environment around us – bringing out the gentle hills and the grassy marshes. Whenever possible, new development must be pedestrian-oriented to the greatest extent possible and reinforce the sense of community. Appropriate development will be modest in size, individual, but compatible in character and design with generous landscaping incorporating the natural features of the site. We will maintain or restore open views and vistas.

In the future, Old Saybrook can accommodate modest growth. We will encourage only future development that will not significantly change the town's character, that does not require

substantial new investment in infrastructure and services, and that reinforces the quality and pace of life that historically drew people to the shore. Old Saybrook aspires to stay a small, diverse New England town on the Connecticut shore. We need to ensure that the town includes a variety of housing types and opportunities for individuals and families, an adequate range of convenient retail and personal services for residents and visitors, and an abundant opportunity for all people to interact with the natural environment on a daily basis.

Over the next decade, the people of Old Saybrook should gain an increased appreciation for their special location and the natural resources that have been critical in the historic development. They will take steps to assure that development and redevelopment respects and increases this connection and heritage. This Plan of Conservation & Development identifies those steps.

Planning Process

Section 8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes states that the Planning Commission shall prepare, adopt, and amend a Plan of Conservation & Development for the municipality. Such plan is to show the Commission's recommendations for the most desirable use of land within the municipality for residential, commercial, industrial, conservation, and other purposes. The Commission may also recommend the most desirable density of population in the several parts of the municipality. The statutes go on to enumerate duties that the Commission shall undertake as a part of the plan and duties that they may undertake if they so choose. The statutes require the Commission to review the Plan of Conservation & Development (formerly called the Plan of Development) at least once every ten years.

THE REVIEW PROCESS

Beginning during the late summer of 1998, the Planning Commission has scheduled at least one meeting a month to hold workshops for reviewing and amending the Plan of Conservation & Development. Such workshops often included participation of members from municipal agencies including the Water Pollution Control Authority, the Economic Development Commission, the Conservation Commission, the Board of Selectmen and the Architectural Review Board, not to mention members of the public, this to gain input and suggestions from the agencies, groups and individuals who deal most closely with these various issues.

Because of an early request from the Water Pollution Control Authority and the Board of Selectmen, the Commission reviewed and adopted the Plan section on Sewage Disposal after holding a required public hearing on October 7, 1998. This method of adopting the Plan in parts is consistent with

Section 8-23 C.G.S., which states that the Commission "...*may adopt the plan of [conservation &] development by a single resolution or may, by successive resolutions, adopt parts of the plan...*"

It is the goal of the Planning Commission to review and amend the remaining sections of the Plan of Conservation & Development as a whole, a task that they have undertaken in a methodical and persistent manner.

PROCEDURAL CHANGES IN THE STATUTES

Where the state statutes were silent on what would happen in the event that the Commission did not review the Plan every ten years, as prescribed, Public Act 99-117, which became effective on January 1, 2000, requires that a municipality's chief elected official send a letter to the Commissioners of the Office of Policy and Management (OPM), the Department of

Economic and Community Development (DECD) and the Department of Transportation (DOT) giving reason for not completing the review. Further, until the Commission reviews the Plan, the head of a municipal agency requesting funding by the Connecticut Department of Economic & Community Development or the Connecticut Department of Transportation must include a copy of such a letter in each application until the plan is reviewed. For the Old Saybrook Planning Commission, the ten-year period elapsed June 20, 2000, because the existing Plan was adopted by the Commission on June 20, 1990. The Commission duly sent notice of its intention to update the Plan on a section-by-section basis and has continued to do so since then.

Changes since the 1990 Plan of Development



The Planning Commission adopted the current Plan of Development in June of 1990 after several years of on-going work. A great deal has happened in Old Saybrook during the ten years since then. The regional economy of southeastern Connecticut, of which Old Saybrook is part, has experienced significant changes, moving from heavy dependence on defense procurement toward an increased emphasis on tourism, and more recently, biotechnology. Connecticut opened the new Baldwin Bridge in May of 1993, reducing the occurrence of traffic congestion on I-95, and resulting in an increased use of the highway for through traffic to the north. Over the past ten years, the natural resources of the Connecticut River estuary have received renewed recognition of their unique characteristics. In some areas, the Town has made great strides in addressing 1990 Plan issues and, in other areas, much is left to accomplish. The following are some highlights.

A CHANGING ECONOMY

The economic base of southeastern Connecticut has shifted from its earlier heavy dependence on defense procurement to an increased emphasis on tourism and biotechnology. Federal recognition of the Pequot and Mohegan Indian tribes has led to construction of two large, continually expanding gaming casinos in Ledyard and Montville. These casinos combine their promotional efforts with other tourist attractions in southeastern Connecticut, including The Essex Steam Train and Riverboat rides on the Connecticut River and the Florence Griswold Museum in Old Lyme, to capitalize on the abundant natural, cultural and historic resources of the area. These efforts have been successful in increasing the amount of traffic passing

through the shoreline area on Interstate 95. Although it would be expected that the casino-related traffic would increase tourism in Old Saybrook, some feel that people in search of natural resources and related recreational opportunities account for a much greater percentage of the town's visitors. It is likely a combination of both; Old Saybrook's proximity to major transportation corridors has prompted new interest in developing hotels, conference centers, residential communities, and commercial retail opportunities, as well as other tourist-related facilities.

Shift in Nature of Commercial Retailing

During the 1990s, retailing has seen a shift from smaller stores and regional franchises to a proliferation of national and even international chains. During this time, we have become familiar with retail “discounters” that minimize cost to the consumer by dealing in size and volume. Although considered as a positive for consumers because of the retailer’s ability to sell at lower costs than most competitors, the quality of such merchandise and the impacts such businesses have on local communities has been widely debated. Those impacts include the character of such large businesses on Old Saybrook’s small town New England character from both aesthetic and traffic considerations. Other issues, which cannot be “regulated”, include the impacts of high volume/low cost marketing strategies on smaller “mom and pop” businesses. Old Saybrook and surrounding communities have not been exempt from pressures to develop such facilities.

Development of Outlet Malls in Neighboring Towns

With the construction of the two new casinos in Connecticut and the advent of “interchange development”, two Estuary towns constructed new factory outlet malls. These nearby malls impact Old Saybrook as local shopping center owners and managers try to lure larger and larger national retailers to Old Saybrook in an effort to compete for the shopper’s dollar. Mindful of the balance between retaining Old Saybrook’s small town New England character and the necessity to allow economic development opportunities to grow into the next decade, the Planning Commission encouraged the Economic Development Commission to

address that delicate balance, promoting commercial and retail development while not overwhelming the town with the negative impacts of such growth.

Changes in Main Street

During the decade since the adoption of the 1990 Plan, efforts to upgrade Main Street flourished. The design and construction of a brick median with granite curbs, old fashioned gas lights (since electrified), the construction of brick-like sidewalks, and the general “dressing up” of Main Street lead to a resurgence of pride in the town’s “village center”. In addition, the Old Saybrook Police Department continues to vigilantly oversee the issue of pedestrian safety along Main Street with notable success. Community events that continue to showcase the village center as the heart of Old Saybrook include the Chamber of Commerce’s Arts and Crafts Show, the Annual Chili Cook-off, the Memorial Day Parade, and the weekly summer concerts on the Town Green. Unfortunately, small businesses along Main Street, most notably “Patrick’s Country Store” continues to find successful retailing difficult in the climate of larger retailers elsewhere in town and in the region.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Old Saybrook embraced light industries as the kind of development that it should encourage. Major light industrial businesses, such as RR Donnelly and Fortune Plastics, prove to be valuable and stable taxpayers and employers of area residents. During the 1990s, development of an industrial park off Mill Rock Road West provided additional tax base and employment opportunities that have proven very valuable to the town. Opportunities for further light industrial developments exist in the Center Road area in the western part of town. Industrial

development in the form of a proliferation of communications towers occurred in Old Saybrook and the region in general, leading to the adoption of standards to regulate the location, height, and appearance for future towers. Telecommunication towers were a “hot” land use issue in recent years yet perhaps temporary as the technology requiring tall towers gives way to widespread satellite telecommunications.

POPULATION

The Connecticut Office of Policy and Management (OPM), “Connecticut: Population Projection 1995 – 2020”, dated September 1995, projects that Old Saybrook’s population of 9,540 in the year 2000 will be slightly less than the 1990 population of 9,552. OPM projections suggest that the town’s population will shrink to a level of 9,280 in the year 2010 and to 9,050 in the year 2020, the next to 10-year updates to the Plan of Conservation & Development. This decreasing trend may be a result of the combination of an aging population caused in part by its younger citizens moving away to find job opportunities and more affordable living conditions and housing.

Residential Development

A major relocation and expansion of Pfizer Central Research facilities in Groton and New London is attracting new pharmaceutical researchers to the area. As we head into the new millennium, New London and Middlesex Counties lead the state in building permits for new homes. In Old Saybrook, the building official has issued approximately 240 permits for new home construction throughout the decade of the 1990’s. If approximately 300 home sites are approved in the northern section of town, that subdivision alone will surpass the number of new home starts that have occurred since adoption of the 1990 Plan almost 10 years ago.

The 1992 “winterization” ordinance establishing standards, including the installation of code-compliant septic systems where failing or substandard systems exist, resolved an issue critical to the town’s sewer avoidance position.

Largely, the Town has not addressed the issue of attainable housing since the adoption of the 1990 Plan. As the housing market slowed in the late 1980s into the mid-1990s, the overall priority of affordable housing slipped further down the list when compared to the town’s sewer issues, the improvement of Saybrook Point, and the constant parade of commercial development applications.

Residential issues for the upcoming decade include the resolution of multi-family residential uses, including condominium development, apartment opportunities, and mixed residential/commercial opportunities in the Village Center along Main Street.

OPEN SPACES

As in many of the towns in the Estuary Region, open space and its positive impacts on the quality of life are an increasingly important issue in Old Saybrook. With the adoption of the 1994 Conservation Plan came an overall goal of establishing interconnecting open space greenways throughout the area north of the Interstate. Such open space would be “acquired” through outright purchase, procurement of conservation easements, or open space exaction through the subdivision process. Such plans culminated in the identification and purchase of the 315-acre “Gleason” property in and around Ingham Hill Road that the Town acquired with the assistance of a grant from the State of Connecticut. The Town will maintain the property as passive open space to interconnect existing Town Park areas and to further the Conservation Commission’s goal of establishing the

northern greenway belt. The Old Saybrook Land Trust revitalized during the late 1990s after several years of inactivity and spearheaded much of the efforts of recent open space acquisition.

Ecotourism and the Connecticut River as a Special Natural Area

Along with the economic shift away from defense to tourism, such accolades have resulted in a phenomenon known as “ecotourism” and a greater interest in the area because of the local, state and national publicity the lower river valley receives. Although most are not regulatory, the added recognition places the Town and other groups in a favorable position for grants and funding for projects ranging from environmental preservation to tourism. Such marks of distinction play a part in the proposal of a 300-lot subdivision with a Jack Nicklaus-designed golf course in the northern part of town. As Old Saybrook and the other towns of the region move into the next century, there will be a need for protecting against “loving our resources to death”.

During the past ten years, the Connecticut River and especially the lower river in the area of Old Saybrook, garnered many state, national, and international accolades and recognition for environmental issues.

CONTE FISH & WILDLIFE REFUGE

In 1991, the US Department of Interior’s Fish & Wildlife Service authorized the creation of the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge. The Refuge works in partnership with agencies and community organizations to conserve and restore the biological diversity of the fish, plant, bird, and mammal communities in the

Connecticut River watershed. The mission of the Fish & Wildlife Service is to conserve, protect, and enhance the nation's fish, wildlife, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of people.

“A LAST GREAT PLACE”

In 1993, The Nature Conservancy, an international nonprofit conservation organization, included the “Tidelands of the Connecticut River” among its Last Great Places campaign to protect entire ecosystems in the western hemisphere from environmental degradation. The overall mission of The Conservancy is to preserve the plants, animals and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on Earth by protecting the lands and the waters they need to survive. The Conservancy owns and manages the largest system of private nature sanctuaries in the world, and the Connecticut Chapter has protected more than 4,000 acres in the Tidelands region since 1960. The Nature Conservancy conducts marsh restoration programs in partnership with the state Department of Environmental Protection, and it has protected approximately 109 acres in Old Saybrook.

“WETLAND OF INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE”

In 1994, the International Convention on Wetlands designated the Connecticut River estuary and tidal wetlands complex for inclusion in the “Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance”. The Intergovernmental treaty, originally signed at Ramsar, Iran, in 1971, provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. In addition, the

wetlands of the lower river have been internationally recognized as a “Wetlands of International Importance with respect to Waterfowl”, one of only 15 such designations in the United States. The Convention's mission is the conservation and wise use of wetlands by national action and international cooperation as a means to achieving sustainable development throughout the world. There are presently 130 Contracting Parties to the Convention, with 1,107 wetland sites, totaling 87.2 million hectares, designated for inclusion in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance.

AMERICAN HERITAGE RIVER

In 1998, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency designated the Connecticut River as an American Heritage River under an initiative of President Clinton to protect and restore rivers and their adjacent communities. The American Heritage Rivers initiative has three objectives: natural resource and environmental protection, economic revitalization, and historic and cultural preservation. The Connecticut River Watershed Council (CRWC) serves as the Connecticut River Convener, and has worked since its founding in 1952 to attain a protected and vital river ecosystem where human activity is in balance with the preservation and enhancement of the region's natural, scenic, and community resources.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS

Following the adoption of the 1990 Plan, public transportation opportunities increased in Old Saybrook. AMTRAK implemented its Shoreline East rail service between New Haven and Old Saybrook in June 1990, the Estuary Transit District

created its “Shoreline Shuttle” “S” route in July 1996 running from Old Saybrook and Madison with a connection to New Haven, and AMTRAK completed its high-speed rail service along the New England corridor. Much of the public transportation relieves traffic congestion pressures on I-95 and reduces the amount of air pollution by reducing the number of cars on state roads. AMTRAK initiated improvements so that the train service could more efficiently compete with the airline industry.

A New Baldwin Bridge and Interstate 95

The most significant improvement to the regional transportation network during the past decade was the completion of the new Baldwin Bridge over the Connecticut River, opened in May 1993. The bridge alleviates the frequent traffic congestion at the old bridge (built in 1948) from the both east and west, particularly on summer weekends. For the most part, the new bridge has relieved bottleneck congestion on both the east and west sides of the river. From the standpoint of interstate traffic volumes, studies by the State Department of Transportation show that Average Daily Trips (ADT) in the Branford to Waterford corridor of I-95, including Old Saybrook, are approximately double the design capacity of the roadway. During the month of August, this number increases another 50%, over wintertime volumes leading to significant traffic congestion potential, especially in the case of accidents. Current levels of truck traffic within the same Branford to Waterford corridor are more than double the design capacity (CTDOT Southeastern Connecticut Corridor Study, January 1999).

Busy Interchanges

With the increased traffic and the economic interest in tourism along the shore, investors are seeking land for commercial development near highway interchanges between New Haven and the Rhode Island border. As part of the tourism boom of the 1990s, large new factory outlet malls located at interchanges in Clinton and Westbrook to the west. To the east, the Town of North Stonington successfully discouraged development of a large amusement park along Route 95 at Exit 92; while, in Waterford, national “big box” retailers have located stores at several exits. All along the interstate highways within the Estuary region and southeastern Connecticut, interest in interchange development, particularly for hotels and conference facilities, continues to be strong as the decade ends. With past applications for development of a national retailer near Exit 66 and a shopping center expansion behind the Old Saybrook Shopping Center nearer Exit 67, Old Saybrook has also experienced such interchange development pressures as well.

CAPITAL NEEDS

Old Saybrook “bit the bullet” in 1999, after years of low priority, to make substantial expenditures for the maintenance of town facilities, including the re-roofing of the Firehouse and the preservation and reconstruction of the Main Street School. With costs for a sewage disposal solution looming on the horizon, expansion of the Acton Library and improvements to Saybrook Point also, add to the fiscal burden shouldered by the town’s citizens. Likely issues in election campaigns over the next decade include sewage disposal, the Main Street School, and phases of the plan for Saybrook Point.

Redefinition of Sewer Issue

After years of opposition from residents of the Town of Old Saybrook, the plan to construct a combined tri-town sewer system, with a treatment plant and discharge to the Connecticut River in the vicinity of the Baldwin Bridge, the State Department of Environmental Protection will allow Old Saybrook to restudy their water pollution control options on their own. Old Saybrook is back to “square one” with the State and the sewer issue. As we approach the year 2000, the town’s Water Pollution Control Authority has submitted a recommendation to the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection for how the town should approach remediation of ground water contamination that may exist. The town recommendation outlines the use of larger “community” systems for specific areas that identified as having ground water contamination. In that the 1990 Plan recommended sewer avoidance in part, but referenced a willingness to construct sewers “where needed”, this updated plan goes on record stating that town policy is sewer avoidance on a town-wide basis. To underscore this policy, the Planning Commission decided to hold a public hearing and adopt the Sewage Disposal section of the Plan on October 7, 1998.

The Land Use Review Process

One of the most significant changes since 1990 is the decision to hire a professional town planner – a philosophy that recognizes that Old Saybrook must increase its sophistication with respect to its land use regulatory process. As the level and complexity of residential, commercial, and industrial development continue to increase into the next century, a more efficient and organized process is necessary to service the public properly and review development.

In addition, the Town reversed a previous consolidation of duties by separating into two departments its Building and Environmental Health so that a full-time Sanitarian may handle the ever-increasing workloads and new regulatory responsibilities. The Town reorganized the Town Hall land use offices to efficiently use the limited space opportunities.

Accomplishments since the 1990 Plan of Development



The Connecticut General Statutes mandate that the Plan of Conservation & Development, or the “Plan of Development” as it was known until recently, set out recommendations for land use agencies that will further the vision and direction of the Town’s planning body – the Planning Commission. One component of the Plan of Conservation & Development (the “Plan”) is the Municipal Improvements, Programs, and Standards, which leads to the revision of existing regulations and the adoption of new standards according to the Plan. Much the same as this Plan update, the land use recommendations of the 1990 Plan focused primarily on issues that impact the desirability of living in Old Saybrook. During the late 1980s, when the Planning Commission drafted the 1990 Plan, the area was under the influence of a dwindling residential market but expanding commercial and industrial influences. Consequently, many of the Goals, Policies, Programs, and Standards of the 1990 Plan reflect a concern over the loss of Old Saybrook’s small-town character.

RECOMMENDATIONS REVIEWED AND ADOPTED

The following regulation changes have been reviewed and adopted by the Zoning and Planning Commissions in Old Saybrook:

Architectural Review Board

In 1997, a local resident presented an idea for the passage of an ordinance to establish an Architectural Review Board, the duties of which would include overseeing the aesthetic design of development. The establishment of the board is consistent with the Economic Development policy of the

1990 Plan, which states that the Town should “...encourage quality design of commercial development sites with special regard for landscape and other site amenities...” (Page 18). More specifically, the Board formed in response to the 1990 Plan Program Recommendation, which states, in part, that the Town should consider the “...possible creation of a design review board...(Pg. 22)” for promoting compatible building design along Main Street. In addition, a number of the *Main Street – Town Center Program Recommendations* support the creation of the Architectural Review Board.

In addition to architectural review of construction materials,

ACCOMPLISHMENTS SINCE THE 1990 PLAN OF DEVELOPMENT

the ordinance included provisions for review of site amenities including landscaping. The Town Meeting passed and ordinance by an almost unanimous vote in 1997 following a yearlong effort to gain consensus from all Town agencies and groups that such a Board may affect. This review for design criteria, previously negotiated without any design standards by the Zoning Commission, is seen by many to be one of the most important initiatives in moving the Town forward to an environment where development will take on an aesthetic that is consistent with Old Saybrook's small-town, New England character.

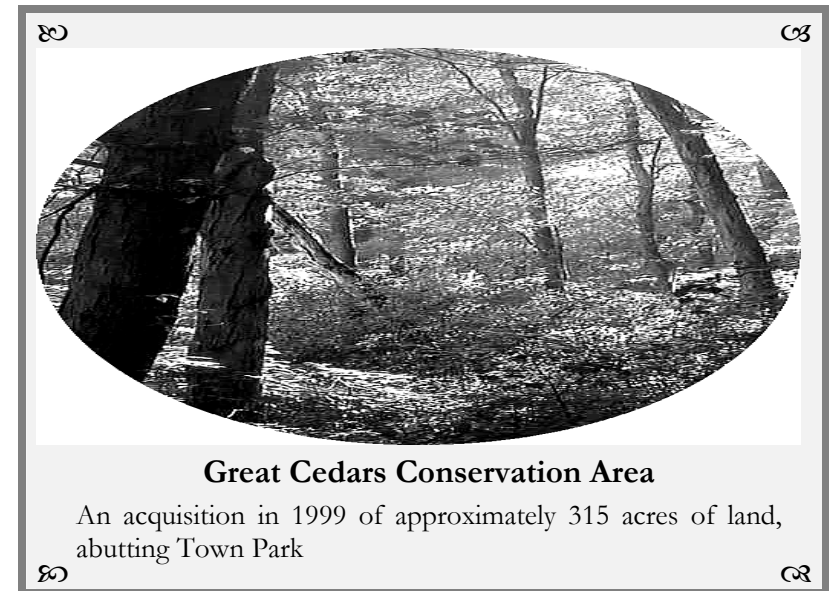
1994 Conservation Plan

After a period of relative inactivity, the Old Saybrook Conservation Commission completed the Old Saybrook Conservation Plan in 1994. A Program Recommendation of the 1990 Plan, states that the Town should "...inventory important natural resource areas and prepare a comprehensive plan of preservation and conservation." (Page 36). The 1994 Conservation Plan succeeded in establishing the concept of greenway belts in the northern area of Town. Consistent with previous conservation plans, the 1994 Conservation Plan also restated interest in an aggressive open space acquisition program and identified interest in several tracts of undeveloped land, including the "Gleason" property.

Great Cedars Conservation Area

Following years of discussion and acquisition recommendations, the Town purchased approximately 315 acres of open space land, known collectively as the "Gleason" property, for approximately two million dollars. The Town accomplished this with the assistance of a \$370,000 grant from the Connecticut Department of

Environmental Protection, and under the terms of the grant, the tract, dedicated in 1999 as the Great Cedars Conservation Area, is "passive" open space. The 1994 Conservation Plan identifies the Gleason property as one of particular conservation interest (Pg. 6). At the same time, the purchase was supported by the Open Space Program Recommendation which stated that the Town should "...expand the boundaries of Town Park off Schoolhouse Road where and when possible, to include important nearby natural areas and create new biking trails for education and recreational purposes...(Pg.37)". The Great Cedars Conservation Area abuts the Milton O. Clark Community Park, more commonly referred to as "Town Park," in such a way to greatly expand passive recreational opportunities.



Land Use and Environmental Health Departments

In 1999, Old Saybrook took the vital step of hiring a Town Planner to reorganize and oversee a new “Land Use Department” to take a proactive, rather than a reactive, stance in the face of the increasing development pressures facing the Town. Other changes included the creation of the Environmental Health Department and the hiring of a Sanitarian to separate the function from that of the Building Inspector. This change in staffing, along with the reorganization of the Environmental Health Department, is consistent with the 1990 Plan Administration Program Recommendation that encouraged the Town to “...continue to examine and address administrative staff and technical service needs to support activities of land use boards and commissions.... (Page 59)”.

Railroad Crossings at Spencer Plains, Schoolhouse, and Ingham Hill Roads

Following the adoption of the 1990 Plan, the DOT completed work on the railroad crossings on Old Saybrook’s three major north-south connector roads, Spencer Plains, Schoolhouse, and Ingham Hill Roads. This work, along with the Route 1 railroad crossing just south to the intersection of Route 1, Middlesex Turnpike, and Mill Rock Road East, completed upgrade of the four major railroad crossings in Old Saybrook. This work was consistent with the Program Recommendation that encouraged providing “...improved approaches, clearances and sight lines to all railroad grade crossings...” (Page 41). The remaining unimproved crossings are on Mill Rock Road East and Connolly Drive, roads that cross the sparsely used Valley Railroad track near the Old Saybrook Auto Mall.

Ordinance 62 Winterization of Existing Seasonal Dwellings

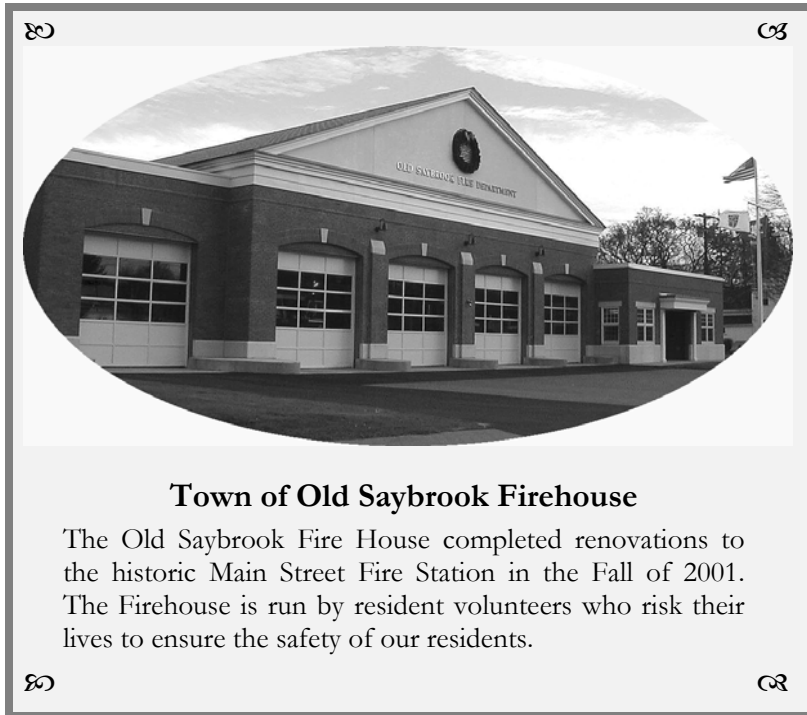
In an effort to enhance the sewer avoidance policies of Old Saybrook, the Town adopted a winterization ordinance in 1999 that increases the standards and criteria under which the conversion of seasonal dwellings to “year-round” use is measured. These standards focus, among other issues, on a property owner’s ability to install a code-compliant septic system on a lot. The Town will not allow conversion without installation of or modification to a code-compliant septic system. This initiative is consistent with the 1990 Plan Policy, which states that the Town should “...administer conversion of seasonal dwellings to year round occupancy in a cautious manner where difficulties with access, flood hazard and sewage disposal may be aggravated. (Pg. 14).”

Reuse and Adaptation of Town-Owned Buildings

Following the closing of the Main Street School, the Town convened a Facilities Committee to review the space needs of town government. At the same time, an application to the State Historic Commission resulted in the designation of the building as a “State Historic Structure.” The committee’s final report included a recommendation to renovate the school, rather than to demolish it and build a new facility on the same site. The Board of Selectmen recommended demolition of the structure despite the committee’s recommendation; the Town held a referendum that resulted in the voters voicing their desire to save the structure. Although the Town has not concluded the process, the status of saving the Main Street School structure for town use is consistent with the Public Facilities Policy to “...reuse, adapt, and expand existing town-owned buildings, where possible, in preference to developing completely new sites.... (Page 55)”. The

ACCOMPLISHMENTS SINCE THE 1990 PLAN OF DEVELOPMENT

Town has approved a bonding measure for approximately \$13 million to renovate the property and several others, including the Acton Library and the Main Street Fire Station. Additionally, the Town has undertaken the renovation of several other municipal buildings, including the Kirkland House and the Town Garage, since the 1990 Plan.



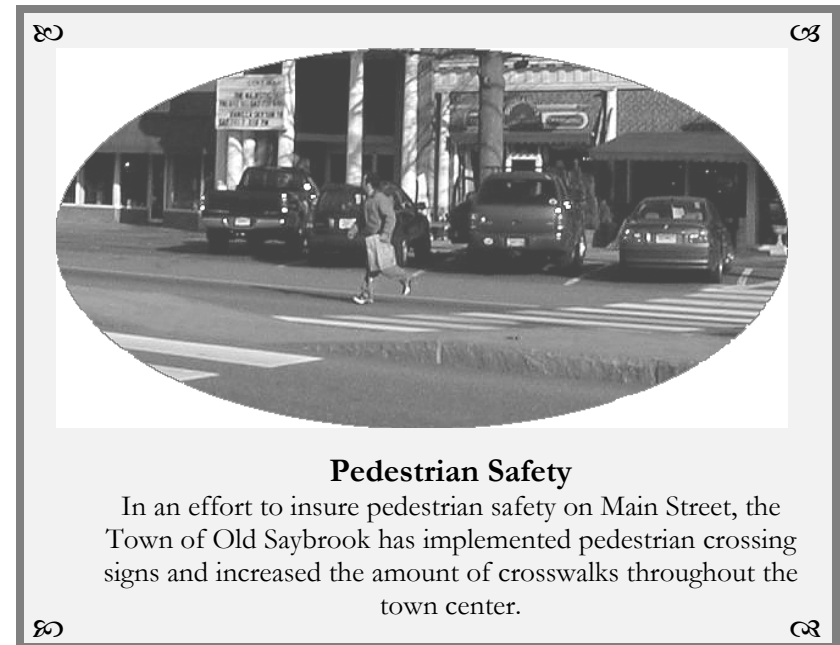
Addition to Acton Public Library

In a 1999 referendum vote, the Town chose to renovate and expand the Acton Public Library, adding additional first floor space and constructing a second story. This action was consistent with the Public Facility Program

Recommendation that encouraged the Town to “...*plan for renovations and expansion of the Acton Public Library....* (Page 56)”.

Pedestrian Safety on Main Street

During the 1990’s, the Town has aggressively pursued a pedestrian safety program for the Main Street area by refocusing efforts to slow traffic and mark crosswalk areas with pylon-style warning signs. This initiative, undertaken by the Old Saybrook Police Department, was consistent with a 1990 Plan Program Recommendation stating that the Town should “...*continue to explore measures to assure pedestrian safety in the Center, including visual definition of crosswalks, public education, and enforcement of pedestrian rights-of-way.* (Page 22)”.



Improvements on Bokum, Schoolhouse and Ingham Hill Roads

During the mid 1990's, the Town followed through with an effort to improve Schoolhouse Road by widening narrow stretches, straightening curves, and removing sight line obstructions. Although such an improvement plan would be consistent with the 1990 Plan Transportation Program Recommendation, which states that the Town should "...continue a program of safety improvements along Bokum, Ingham Hill and Schoolhouse Roads, removing sight line obstructions and easing curves and grades... (Pg. 41)", the plans were scaled back dramatically when local opposition made it clear that residents did not want to lose the character of their "country road". The resulting reduced improvements can be looked at as a successful implementation of the 1990 Plan Transportation Program Recommendation that encourages the Town to "...make every effort to undertake only those improvements to the Town's rural roads which are necessary to assure safety and relieve congestion, in order to retain the road's scenic character to the greatest extent possible.... (Page 42)".

Correction of Flooding Problem at the Elm Street Railroad Underpass

In 1999, the State of Connecticut made drainage improvements to the portion of Elm Street that passes under the railroad.

Revision of Old Saybrook Zoning Regulations

PARKING STANDARDS

As concerns increased over the impact of traffic congestion on the quality of life in Old Saybrook, the

Zoning Commission adopted new standards governing the amount of parking that would be required for different uses provided for in each zoning district. The Commission lowered parking requirements in some cases to reduce the amount of impervious parking surface that had to be built where it could be demonstrated that fewer cars were likely. These revisions were consistent with the 1990 Plan Program Recommendation that encouraged the Zoning Commission to "...revise the zoning requirements for parking in certain commercial districts to better reflect current standards, and provide incentives for shared use and multi-use patterns...". (Page 42). In addition, the Zoning Commission adopted regulations that provided for the "...connection of driveways between commercial parking areas on adjacent lots, or development of new connecting frontage roads, as a requirement for new commercial development..." (Page 42). The Zoning Commission also adopted a provision that allowed for the setting aside of up to 20% of required parking as landscaped area. This provision in particular allowed for the reduction of pavement until it was clear that the additional parking was necessary.

LANDSCAPING STANDARDS

Recognizing the positive impact of site amenities on the overall quality and appearance of development, the Zoning Commission adopted stronger standards for the amount and location of landscaping required for lots in commercial and industrial districts. These regulations fulfilled the 1990 Plan Policy to "...encourage quality design of commercial development sites with special regard for landscape and other site amenities..." (Page 18). These standards succeeded in breaking up "seas of asphalt" with landscaped islands and requiring landscaped and green

buffers in many areas of a developed lot. The added landscaping required by these regulations greatly improves the aesthetic values in development and increase consistency with Old Saybrook's small-town, New England character.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS TOWERS

Consistent with 1990 Plan recommendations to monitor land uses with consideration for current economic development trends, the Zoning Commission adopted standards for telecommunications towers, an increasing trend along major roads throughout the country. The new standards recognized that a municipality could not deny the installation of communications towers, but could take the initiative with respect to siting requirements, height minimization, safety issues, and aesthetics.

ASSISTED CARE LIVING

Although not initiated by the Town, the Zoning Commission adopted regulations in 1998 to allow assisted living within the industrial zoning district. Presented, in part, as an additional alternative housing type supported by the 1990 Plan, such housing allows apartment-type elderly housing that includes medical facilities, as well as dining, recreation, and meeting facilities.

COVERAGE STANDARDS AND SIZE LIMITATIONS

In early 1994, the Old Saybrook Zoning Commission followed through on a 1990 Plan recommendation to “establish more appropriate commercial and industrial

floor area limitations consistent with the existing roads and the potential for improved road capacity, in order to achieve a workable balance for the safety and convenience of the public....” (Page 18). The prevalent thinking was that 40% ground coverage and 80% floor area standards allowed for large commercial and industrial structures that would require excessive parking areas, paving and promoted the potential for congestion-causing traffic growth. The Zoning Commission tabled its proposal in the face of opposition from property owners who anticipated more intensive development of the commercial and industrial properties.

In 2002, the Commission looked at the existing patterns of land use throughout town to gauge conceptual models of appropriate scale and massing and, then, to derive the proposed quantitative limitations. The Commission researched the Assessor's records to get an idea of the footprint, gross floor area, and impervious surface for existing development in the subject zoning districts. The Commission wished to distinguish between the existing density of development and that from which the Town wishes to protect the public health, safety, convenience, and property values. The Commission intended that existing, conforming development may continue under the proposed figures, and it intended that “modern” large-format retail stores must adapt to the established character of Old Saybrook's four business districts; similarly, industrial or marine operations mitigate with additional acreage the impact created by vast roof and parking surfaces; and water-dependent uses will respect their proximity to Long Island Sound, especially within the Conservation Zone of the Connecticut River Gateway, by limiting their coverage of the land. The

Commission limited coverage and size to distribute the density and intensity of the physical and visual impacts that large development creates – traffic, stormwater runoff, and compatibility with the existing character of each district. Pursuant to its statutory mandate, the Commission designed the proposed regulations to “lessen congestion in the streets; to secure safety from fire, panic, flood, and other dangers; to promote health and the general welfare; to provide adequate light and air; to prevent the overcrowding of land; to avoid undue concentration of population and to facilitate the adequate provision for...public [improvements]. CGS 8-2(a). A principle of “smart growth” is the creation or preservation of a "sense of place," which results when design and development protect and incorporate the distinctive character of a community and the particular place in which it is located. Geography, natural features, climate, culture, historical resources, and ecology each contribute to the distinctive character of a region, as do the bulk of the structures within that place. The Commission improved the specificity of that which it already has the discretion through its General Standards to regulate (neighborhood character, lot size, conformance with Plan of Development, emergency services, access, circulation and parking, landscaping and screening, lighting, public health, natural and historic resources, etc.) and any Special Standards prescribed for any development permitted as a Special Exception. The Commission’s standards for *Building/ Structure Coverage* and *Gross Floor Area* acknowledge that there is a limit to the capacity of the town to accommodate development – physically and visually – and the Petition quantifies that on a district-by-district basis.

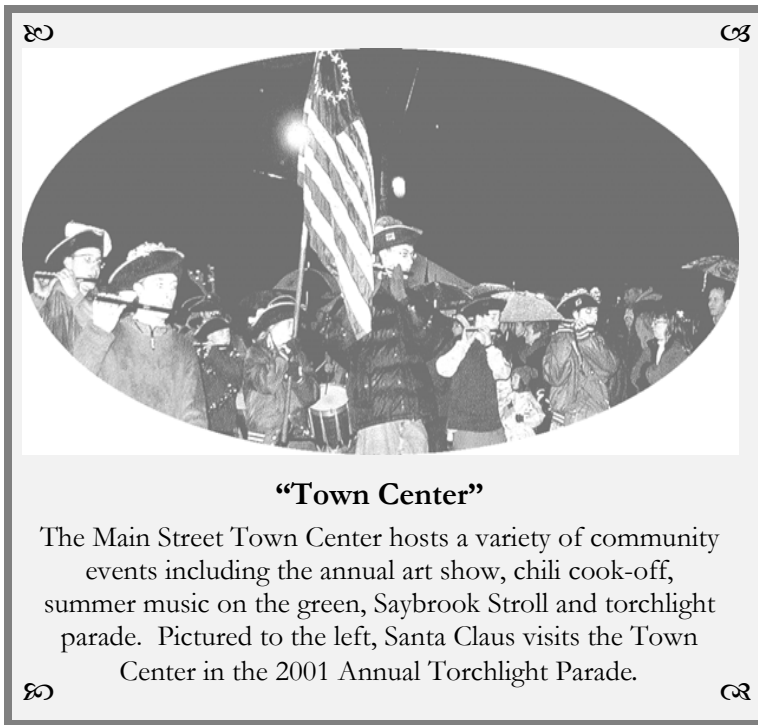
RECOMMENDATIONS REVIEWED BUT NOT YET ADOPTED

The Zoning Commission developed new regulations and began review of current regulations in keeping with the recommendations of the 1990 Plan. The following are the initiatives that the Town has undertaken but not adopted:

Revision of Old Saybrook Zoning Regulations

TOWN CENTER “VILLAGE DISTRICT” STANDARDS

In 1995, the Zoning Commission began the process of reviewing an amendment to the zoning regulations and zoning map that would have redefined Main Street and the village center as a “village district” based upon the pedestrian nature of the area. The Commission drafted the proposal in response to the 1990 Plan Program Recommendation, which states that the Town should “...consider creation of [a] special Town Center zoning district which would allow for appropriate mixed uses and establish design criteria in keeping with the center character (Pg. 22)”. Along with the district line modification, the regulations included incentives to establish more apartments over Main Street storefronts and offices (mixed use), providing standards to allow additional sidewalk café-style outdoor seating areas, and other pedestrian-related amenities, all in an attempt to enhance Main Street’s village setting. The mixed-use standard is consistent with the 1990 Plan Program Recommendation that encourages the Town to “...provide for creation of residential units on upper floors of commercial buildings in the Town Center... (Page 15)”. The Zoning Commission has not yet adopted a “village district.”



“Town Center”

The Main Street Town Center hosts a variety of community events including the annual art show, chili cook-off, summer music on the green, Saybrook Stroll and torchlight parade. Pictured to the left, Santa Claus visits the Town Center in the 2001 Annual Torchlight Parade.

SPECIAL PERMIT STANDARDS

In 1995, the Zoning Commission began the review of additional standards that would supplement the Special Exception section of the Zoning Regulations. These additional standards would be the criteria to review development on a site-by-site basis. The Zoning Commission tabled these standards.

RECOMMENDATIONS INITIATED

The Town has not addressed some recommendations adopted in the 1990 Plan due to lower priority status.

Saybrook Point Park and Pasbeshauke Pavilion

Following years of discussion and review by various groups and committees, an appointed ad-hoc committee concluded a plan for redevelopment of Saybrook Point. Although the Town as a whole did not adopt and implement the findings and recommendations of the report, the effort was consistent with the Public Facilities Program Recommendation, which stated that the Town should “...prepare, adopt, and implement a site development plan for Saybrook Point...” (Page 56). The Parks and Recreation Commission implemented some recommendations of the redevelopment plan in 2000, including renovation of the former restaurant building as the “Pasbeshauke Pavilion” and improvements to the parking and landscaping, as well as outbuildings for the miniature golf course.

SIGN STANDARDS

In 1996, the Zoning Commission initiated review of new sign regulations in an effort to strengthen the standards. Specifically, the Commission targeted internally lit signs as unnecessary and contributing to the aesthetic decay of Old Saybrook’s streetscape. The proposed regulations also included provisions to better regulate temporary signage, also thought to contribute to aesthetics inconsistent with the Town’s small-town, New England character. The Zoning Commission tabled adoption of new sign regulations.



Pasbeshauke Pavilion

Pasbeshauke Pavilion is a public meetinghouse located at Saybrook Point on the mouth of the Connecticut River. Pasbeshauke was the name given to the area by the Algonquin Nehantic Indians who formerly resided here. The English translation is “the place at the rivers mouth.”

Road and Drainage Standards

The Town adopted Road and Drainage Standards, criteria established for the purpose of consistent design of infrastructure in proposed development and part of the Subdivision Regulations, in the early 1970’s. As a result, 1990 Plan recommendations included the revision of those standards to “...provide more written guidance to developers on acceptable design approaches and long-term maintenance responsibilities for drainage structures...” (Page 34). The standards also address the construction of roads that “accepted” by the Town. In 1999, various representatives of Town government convened with the Town Engineer, the Fire

Marshal, the Town Planner, regional planning agency representatives and numerous other experts and officials to expedite the drafting and adoption of new standards. The Board of Selectmen intends to implement the standards at its earliest opportunity.

ADDITIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Over the past decade, the Town has addressed the following items that not specifically recommended by the 1990 Plan:

Reorganization and Revision of Old Saybrook Subdivision Regulations

Following the adoption of the 1990 Plan, the Old Saybrook Planning Commission undertook the reorganization of the Subdivision Regulations, using the opportunity to make additions and improve various standards and criteria. Of the improved standards, the strengthening of Section 5.8, Open Space, provides an opportunity for the Town to be more assertive with respect to open space preservation within subdivision development. This revision is consistent with several open space Goals, Policies, Municipal Improvements, Programs and Standards appearing in the Open Space chapter of the 1990 Plan and an important component in the preservation of Old Saybrook’s small-town, New England character.

Revision of Old Saybrook Zoning Regulations

STANDARDS FOR MINIMUM AREA OF BUILDABLE LAND (MABL)

In January of 1995, the Planning Commission adopted regulations that require that new lots meet seven

ACCOMPLISHMENTS SINCE THE 1990 PLAN OF DEVELOPMENT

standards to demonstrate that the lot is suitable for building. If such lots cannot meet all seven standards, the Planning Commission deems the lot inadequate for construction and requires combination with adjacent land or redesign so that all lots met the MABL standard. The Zoning Commission followed by adopting identical standards into the Zoning Regulations for the purpose of consistency. In the spring of 2000, the Planning Commission and the Zoning Commission each revised its regulations to reduce the number of test holes, and the Planning Commission clarified that the location of the test holes must be within the MABL.

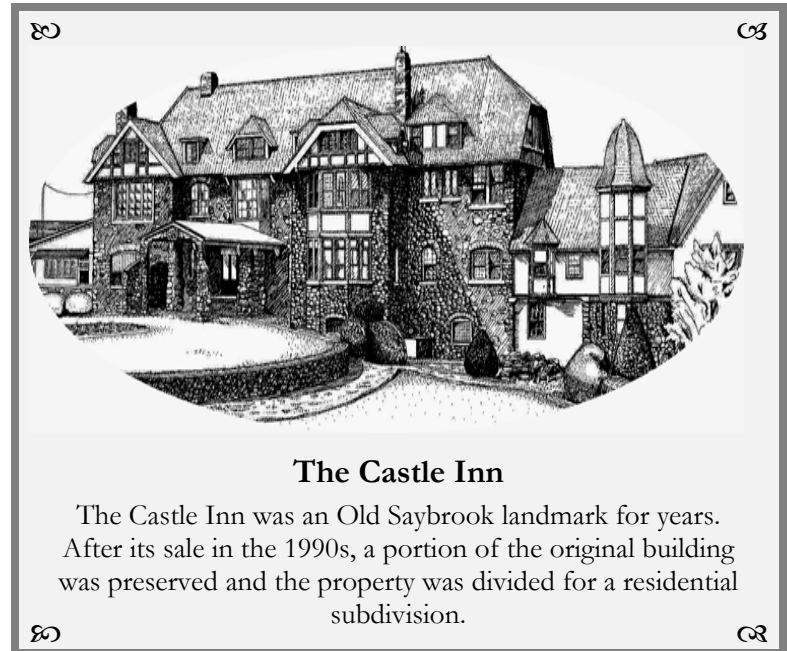
STANDARDS FOR LARGE STRUCTURES

In April of 1995, the Zoning Commission adopted standards that require a Special Permit for commercial or industrial structures that exceed specific footprints in each of the Commercial and Industrial Districts. This allowed the Zoning Commission to review larger applications on a site-by-site basis and provided an added level of discretion within the review process. Specifically, the Commission decided that the larger the structure with the corresponding increased amount of required parking, the more potential there was for the adverse impacts of traffic congestion.

PROHIBITION OF PLANNED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS (PRDs) AT CORNFIELD POINT

Following the petitioning of the Zoning Commission by a developer in 1999, a local preservation society submitted its own petition to exclude the development of condominiums in Cornfield Point. Although the developer submitted two petitions that successively

reduced the intensity of development allowed by the new regulations, the Zoning Commission adopted the exclusion petition. The Planning Commission recommended that the Zoning Commission consider similar exclusions in other areas of Old Saybrook where wastewater from such denser multi-family uses would be detrimental to the environment.



ADULT ENTERTAINMENT STANDARDS

Although not a result of any specific Goals, Policies, Municipal Improvements, Programs and Standards, the Zoning Commission adopted regulations to control the proliferation of adult entertainment establishments. Although minimal controls were available through Town

ordinances, zoning control enhances the Town's ability to direct such uses to areas the Town felt were appropriate.

TRAILER AND RECREATIONAL VEHICLE STANDARDS

Trailers and recreational vehicles have long been the subject of debate with respect to aesthetic issues and the preservation of character in Old Saybrook. In 1995, the Zoning Commission adopted standards that required that such vehicles be stored in areas that were not visible from town roads and created standards for screening with structures, landscaping or fencing.

The Plan of Conservation & Development

In its efforts to apply a comprehensive process of reviewing and updating the 1990 Plan, the Planning Commission invited numerous municipal agencies and the public to attend its meetings and offer input, including the Zoning Commission, the Water Pollution Control Authority, the Economic Development Commission, the Conservation Commission, the Old Saybrook Land Trust, and the Board of Selectmen. The Planning Commission will continue to invite other municipal agencies and the public to participate throughout the process pursuant to the *Administrative Program Recommendation* of the 1990 Plan, that encourages "...continuing public participation in the planning process...". (Page 59).

Town Image



The image, or character, of the Town of Old Saybrook is defined primarily by its rich and varied history. From Adrean Bloch's first exploration up the river to Lion Gardiner's settlement, Lady Fenwick, General Hart, Yale College and Anna James, this history bears witness in our town monuments, parks, historic sites, streets, town greens and wealth of significant architecture. Our town image, based upon its history, is complemented by its natural heritage; the Connecticut River, Long Island Sound, North and South Coves, beautiful tidal rivers, marshes, trees and woodlands. Moreover, this image extends to the modern convenience Old Saybrook offers to commuters and consumers in its location and amenities available to residents, summer residents, and tourists. It is the total of these aspects: historical heritage, natural beauty, a viable commercial center, and shoreline arts and culture that we reference in order to further define this image of Old Saybrook so that we may protect, enhance, and celebrate it. This composite is what many feel is Old Saybrook's "small town character", the character that we strive to maintain.

ISSUES FOR THE NEXT DECADE

A number of critical issues need immediate attentions if the town is to protect its image from the impact caused by lack of careful consideration. The erosion of our historic village center by inappropriate building can threaten to overwhelm the unique characteristics, which are important to residents and visitors alike. A positive example of commercial re-development is the new Saybrook Country Barn, designed to emulate an historic building, situated at the head of Main Street. Modifications taking place at Saybrook Point, where much of our town's history began, and home to historic sites and monuments, must be just as carefully undertaken. The Town has also earmarked for improvement the Town Green,

the Town Hall, Main Street School, top of Main Street, and town gateways. The Town must act judiciously to maintain and renovate these valuable resources.

Competition from regional malls and "factory outlets" near Old Saybrook requires strong efforts by Town officials to maintain and strengthen our economic vitality. The manner in which new or renovated commercial and industrial buildings and sites develop reflects the image desired. Our main thoroughfares have experienced an increase in traffic volume over time, now requiring analysis and possible reconfiguration. Our regulations need to withstand current development pressures, promoting a shift in

TOWN IMAGE

commercial activity toward tourism. None of this should be undertaken without due consideration for preserving and enhancing the town image.

As anyone who defines “*small town character*” or “*town image*” can attest, a town’s character and image can be described in many ways other than its architecture and sites. As revealed by the 1998 Questionnaire sponsored by the Conservation and Planning Commissions, Old Saybrook’s character and image decidedly is “*small town New England*”. It is its Main Street, its churches, its size, and its “*community feel*”. It is the beaches, the tidal marshes and creeks, the rivers, and Saybrook Point. It is The Castle at Cornfield Point and Johnny Ad’s. It is many things to many people. It is primarily the *aesthetics* that its residents describe when asked what they like about their town. People commonly express Old Saybrook’s small town character and town image as the reason its citizens came here in the first place. The majority of respondents to the questionnaire voiced a desire for future development to proceed in a manner consistent with small New England town character and image. Residents clearly indicated they want to be careful about how their town grows in the future.

In addition to historic places, culture encompasses embracing the arts, and continued community spirit, activities, and events.

Old Saybrook residents and visitors enjoy the summer concerts on the Town Green, art, garden, and craft shows, the Torchlight Parade, the Saybrook Stroll, sidewalk sales and outside tables, and many other events and activities. An example of a fine blend of history and art, is the Acton Library's creation, in conjunction with town historians and a tile artist, of a bas-relief tile mural depicting the history of Old Saybrook, for its new wing. Old Saybrook was voted number two in "Culture and Leisure" by Connecticut Magazine in 2001, illustrating that we are moving in the right direction. However, dedication to culture requires still further development of the arts. The Town image and quality of life in Old Saybrook would be greatly enhanced by the encouragement of artistic endeavors such as: live theater, art galleries, music and dance programs, art and pottery studios, and museums, as well as the promotion of our restaurants, cafes, Bed and Breakfasts, antique shops, library programs, book stores, trolley and river boats, Estuary Council for senior citizens, and Old Saybrook Artists' Association. A deeper commitment to the arts offers diverse experiences for residents, while drawing tourists and businesses to Town. One such recent example is the re-opening of the Main Street movie theater and the proprietor's plans to display local art and show classic movies while offering special features to children. These types of endeavors bring vitality, excitement, and commerce to Main Street and thus, the Town.

PLANNING FOR THE NEXT DECADE

Goals

- Focus attention on Old Saybrook’s historic past and cultural resources in order to build support for local historic preservation efforts.
- Strengthen commercial economic viability by incorporating structures designed to be in harmony with the town’s historic structures and sites.
- Enhance the Town image of Old Saybrook by supporting the development of the arts and continuing community traditions and activities.

Policies

- Encourage quality design of commercial, industrial, and municipal development sites with special regard for landscape and other site amenities, traffic safety and convenience, and functional and visual linkages with adjacent areas.
- Encourage dialogue between land use boards and commissions in order to promote recognition of the powerful impact that aesthetics has on the quality of life in Old Saybrook.
- Promote Old Saybrook as an attractive place to locate artistic and cultural endeavors such as music and dance programs, a Community Theater, art gallery, museum, or restaurant.

Municipal Improvements, Programs, and Standards

The Plan recommends implementation of the following actions with priorities, resources and responsibilities coordinated among the appropriate Town agencies, including the Architectural Review Board (ARB), Board of Selectmen (BOS), Conservation Commission (CC), Economic Development Commission (EDC), Harbor Management Commission (HMC), Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commission (IWWC), North Cove Historic District Commission (NCHDC), Planning Commission (PC), Parks & Recreation Commission (PRC), Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA), Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA), and Zoning Commission (ZC).

- TOWN CHARACTER INVENTORY.** Document in written and visual terms an authentic and unique town character via inventory of landmark buildings, historic structures, and areas.
- CONNECTICUT RIVER GATEWAY CONSERVATION.** Strengthen municipal standards to maintain the visual integrity of the Lower Connecticut River Gateway Conservation Zone.
- SPECIAL DESIGN DISTRICT STANDARDS.** Establish Special Design Districts for the varied commercial areas of Old Saybrook.
- HISTORICAL BUILDING REUSE INITIATIVE.** Enact an adaptive reuse program for historic buildings with incentives and assistance to complement or enhance a site.
- COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL DESIGN GUIDELINES.** Develop, and provide as a part of application materials, a series of design guidelines; emphasize pre-application meetings.
- HISTORICAL SITE DESIGN REGULATIONS.** Assure that development involving historic sites incorporates site design and landscaping features in keeping with the site’s history.
- OLD SAYBROOK ARTS INITIATIVE PROGRAM.** Bring more art-focused activities to town.
- TOWN HISTORY EDUCATION PROGRAM.** Acquaint children and residents with local history, museums, artifacts, architecture and their significance and preservation.
- MUNICIPAL ARTS & CULTURE FACILITY.** Identify facilities to house cultural endeavors.

	ARB	BOS	CC	EDC	HMC	IWWC	NCHDC	PC	PRC	WPCA	ZBA	ZC
<input type="checkbox"/> TOWN CHARACTER INVENTORY.	●	●					●	●				●
<input type="checkbox"/> CONNECTICUT RIVER GATEWAY CONSERVATION.	●							●				●
<input type="checkbox"/> SPECIAL DESIGN DISTRICT STANDARDS.	●											●
<input type="checkbox"/> HISTORICAL BUILDING REUSE INITIATIVE.		●		●				●				
<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL DESIGN GUIDELINES.	●		●	●				●				●
<input type="checkbox"/> HISTORICAL SITE DESIGN REGULATIONS.	●			●				●			●	●
<input type="checkbox"/> OLD SAYBROOK ARTS INITIATIVE PROGRAM.		●										
<input type="checkbox"/> TOWN HISTORY EDUCATION PROGRAM.		●	●	●			●	●				
<input type="checkbox"/> MUNICIPAL ARTS & CULTURE FACILITY.	●	●	●					●	●			

Economic Development



Old Saybrook has a mission to improve its tax base through development of diversified commercial and industrial sectors while maintaining its community character and strengthening its image and development capabilities.

ISSUES FOR THE NEXT DECADE

Economic Development provides retail and other services to the public, creates jobs, establishes a property tax base to support town services, and offers an opportunity for investment. Physical factors influencing the future economic development of the town include providing suitable land area for development, adequate roadway capacity to accommodate traffic generated, sensitive site planning and design criteria, an adequate water supply, non-polluting sewage disposal, and well-designed drainage facilities. Ample housing opportunities for the labor force and an education system, renown for its quality, which attracts high caliber people are also factors in economic development.

Reflected by the scope of its products and services, as well as investment in its jobs and tax base, Old Saybrook acknowledges its role as a commercial hub on the shoreline. There are businesses concentrated on the US Route 1 (Boston Post Road) and Main Street (a portion of Connecticut Route 154); nonetheless, the Town must consider how to encourage appropriate development and growth yet prevent an

overburdened infrastructure. There is a need for a coordinated economic strategy that combines the resources of its citizens, government, local and regional companies, and institutions to maintain and/or enhance the Town quality of life.

In 2002, the Economic Development Commission (EDC) finalized its Economic Development Strategies Plan, prepared by Mullin Associates, Incorporated. The Mullin Associates' Report observes that Old Saybrook is at the mercy of the market place unless it creates a strong Economic Development Corporation. There is much the Town can do to take advantage of these forces and to take concrete steps to insure that the best interests of the citizenry are being protected. If the Town takes no action on its economic future, it is likely that an increasingly high tax burden on the home owners, more traffic, disorderly encroachment of commercial activity in residential areas, increased strip development, and an inability to fund needed capital improvements will evolve. As a result, the Town will lose opportunities to create a diversified tax base and the Town's special character will erode.

The goal of this Plan is to enhance and diversify the Town's tax base while maintaining its character and quality of life. This Plan is updated to incorporate those "strategic assessments" into its Issues for the Next Decade and the "action agenda" into its Planning for the Next Decade so that the Town may proceed to implementation with the full authority and support of the Plan of Conservation & Development.

Organizational Restructuring

The structure of the existing Economic Development Commission as an advisory municipal Commission is appropriate for the short term; however, as the pace and scope of development increases, a corporate structure is more suitable. The Town recognizes that an appropriate structure would provide the necessary capacity for a mix of public/private/community representation and control. That recognition is based on the political and economic climates within the strategic target areas that complement existing capacity and institutions rather than duplicating or supplanting them.

An examination of the Town's development characteristics identifies strong political support for development, potentially strong industrial/commercial private sector support, and a strong, sometimes overtaxed staff. Overall weaknesses are lack of municipal financing for economic development projects and a weak public-private partnership.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR

The success and effectiveness of the Plan depends on the Town's ability to provide additional professional staff to help the EDC. The EDC needs to assume a proactive

role in initiating the actions recommended and to establish an ongoing and long-term monitoring of the various tasks. Working initially with the existing part time EDC Executive Director, the new Economic Development Coordinator will provide timely expertise with development issues and the responsibility for dealing with them on a day-to-day basis. An ideal candidate for the position of Coordinator would possess a general knowledge and understanding of:

- The real estate development process,
- The operation of business,
- Local, state, and federal government,
- Community and real estate management and marketing, and
- Urban planning principles.

The Coordinator needs to have an ability to work effectively with businesses, other employees, the public, and the media. The Town should pay for a full-time Coordinator for a period of three years, and after this period, the Town elevates the position to Director with the responsibility of raising a significant portion of his/her own salary from grants, projects or other funding sources.

DESIGNATED DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

The Mullin Associates' Report observes that Old Saybrook has a choice to make in terms of industrial development: it must decide whether to allow market

forces alone or selective intervention through public-private partnership to decide its future directions. The Town should begin to explore the community's support for its designation of the EDC as the Town's "development agency" on a project-by-project basis, under Chapter 114, Section 7-486 and Section 8-188, Connecticut City and Town Development Act. This will allow the EDC to work directly with State programs and to manage its funds. Such designation goes beyond the EDC's present powers and duties allowing it to take proactive positions on economic opportunities such that the town makes available and markets for development its land parcels, and provides financial assistance to quality businesses looking to locate in Old Saybrook.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Under the assumption that municipal funding is limited, the Town should next strongly consider that the best structural model for the long term is a not-for-profit, corporate organization to replace or to act as an adjunct to the Economic Development Commission. We are fortunate that there exists an "Old Saybrook Foundation" which could fulfill this role. The Town would have to designate the Old Saybrook Foundation as its next "development agency". The Economic Development Corporation structure provides the best of both public and private worlds; it complements existing strengths and provides the appropriate tools for the desired development outcomes. The Corporation receives public and private funding to build up financial assets for project financing, promotion, development incentives and operating expenses. It easily enters into land disposition agreements to "fast track" acquisition of

properties by negotiating in a timely manner or receiving donations of land in exchange for tax benefits. The Corporation presents a better posture to various private corporations with which it deals by avoiding some of the "red tape" and politicizing of development activities because business does not perceive the Corporation simply as "the government" – a very important aspect of Old Saybrook's development situation.

Business Areas & Sites

Given its proximity to I-95, Route 9, the railroad, and the Connecticut River, Old Saybrook has the land area, location, and access to continue to function as the economic hub of the region. Old Saybrook recognizes that continued development is important for the economic well being of the town and the residents have stated that they prefer future development that is consistent with the small-town character and the unique natural resources associated with the Connecticut River and Long Island Sound. The task is to define what is appropriate and consistent with the townspeople's image of Old Saybrook as a small New England town blessed with an abundance of natural resources and a unique Main Street setting not preserved in many Connecticut towns. The desired result is to allow for continued growth of commercial and industrial development in a manner that is consistent with this Plan's goals to provide services for its residents and surrounding areas while still maintaining a character and scale that is consistent with the town's image of itself. Such development includes corporate business parks, light manufacturing, high tech facilities, and retail establishments.

The Economic Development Commission has designated seven business areas in town.

- Central Commercial and Retail Complex
- Central Industrial Complex
- Auto Complex
- Western Complex
- North End Complex
- Marina District and Riverside Complex
- Saybrook Point Complex

The chart and map on the next pages have further descriptions.

Comparison of Tax Base and Tax Rates

According to Mullin Associates an economically sustainable community has approximately seventy percent (70%) of its tax income from residential property. Using the 2003 grand list Old Saybrook is about 85%. To reduce the tax burden on the residents, the Town needs to proactively promote and attract diverse, yet appropriate, commercial, and industrial development. The current and forecasted tax rates in Old Saybrook are very competitive with surrounding communities. Old Saybrook is well suited for light industry, office, research & development, and specialized retail activity, in summary Old Saybrook is an attractive community in which to locate.

PLANNING FOR THE NEXT DECADE

This plan establishes the Goals, Policies, Municipal Improvements, Programs, and Standards that will lead the town toward the type of development strategies that will result in the retention of all the attributes that brought many of its residents and visitors here in the first place.

Goals

- Diversified tax base in Old Saybrook.
- Employment choice for local residents.
- Sufficient and suitable land area for local services, shore resort, light industrial manufacturing/commercial distribution, and the regional service components of Old Saybrook's economic activity.
- A balance between commercial, retail, office, and light industrial development and the capacity of supporting public infrastructure and the integrity of the town's small-town character, natural resources and cultural heritage.
- An enhanced image of Old Saybrook as an important, successful, and enjoyable place for economic activity.
- An effective support system that can plan and implement action priorities and essential resources for achieving set objectives.
- Identification, targeting, and pursuit of opportunities in civic, industrial, and commercial sectors.
- Retention of existing business and replacement of those that move on In the Central Commercial and Retail Complex, Auto Complex, North End and Saybrook Point Areas
- Promotion of the availability of properties in the Central Industrial Complex including potential incentives for business use.
- Creation of a comprehensive development plan and town programs to harvest the opportunities available in the Marina District and Riverside Complex

Policies

- To reduce the tax burden on residents.
- To proactively promote and attract appropriate and diverse commercial and industrial development.
- To observe the following order of priorities in future economic development:
 - Services for residents including employment opportunities,
 - Promotion of coastal resort features and maritime commerce,
 - Reinforcement of community image, and
 - A balance between seasonal activity and jobs in manufacturing and commercial distribution.
- To promote the small-town character and unique natural resources of the town as a marketable economic commodity, providing an exceptional quality-of-life for residents and a quality experience for visitors.
- To encourage development of commercial and industrial sites that is consistent with Old Saybrook's small-town character with respect to scale, appearance, and design and with special regard for landscape and other site amenities, traffic safety and convenience, and functional and visual linkages with adjacent areas.
- To periodically review and maintain or revise existing commercial development area boundaries, avoiding intrusions on established residential, civic or environmentally sensitive areas.
- To review and monitor land uses recommended for various commercial areas with consideration for current economic development trends, shifts in industry status such as from manufacturing to office operations, conservation of locations for local retail services, and potential for mixed use development that includes housing diversity.
- To maintain the quality of services offered by the Town in meeting market demands for new public infrastructure and services, such as roadways, storm water drainage, and emergency services, by controlling pressures on existing infrastructure and services and requiring development to contribute to the cost of new improvements.
- To promote the Town's historical, cultural, and natural resources, marketing Old Saybrook as a year-round destination for visitors.

Municipal Improvements, Programs, and Standards

The Plan recommends implementation of the following actions with priorities, resources and responsibilities coordinated among the appropriate Town agencies, including the Architectural Review Board (ARB), Board of Selectmen (BOS), Conservation Commission (CC), Economic Development Commission (EDC), Harbor Management Commission (HMC), Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commission (IWWC), Historic District Commission (HDC), Planning Commission (PC), Parks & Recreation Commission (PRC), Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA), Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA), and Zoning Commission (ZC).

- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR.** Hire a full-time professional manager (and provide administrative support) to provide the special expertise needed to initiate and monitor Old Saybrook’s economic development strategies in a timely and professional way.
- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION.** Recognize the Old Saybrook Foundation, a not-for-profit 501(c) 4 corporation, as the Old Saybrook Economic Development Corporation which may receive public and private funding and donations of land and assemble the capital for project financing, promotion, and development incentives; designate the Old Saybrook Foundation as the Town’s designated development agency.
- DESIGNATED DEVELOPMENT AGENCY.** Sponsor enabling legislation whereby the Board of Selectmen designates the Old Saybrook Economic Development Corporation, successor to the current Economic Development Commission and empower it as Old Saybrook’s development agency.
- LAND ACQUISITION PROGRAM.** In concert with the Land Acquisition Committee enable the town to gain control of critical parcels via land trade or purchase and use market forces to contribute to the tax base by selling or leasing for appropriate development.

	ARB	BOS	CC	EDC	HMC	IWWC	NCHDC	PC	PRC	WPCA	ZBA	ZC
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		●		●				●				
		●	●	●				●	●	●		

Municipal Improvements, Programs, and Standards, continued

- ECONOMIC RESOURCES INVENTORY.** Create an up-to-date inventory of the commercial and industrial sites in Town with pertinent information on each site; identify abandoned or underutilized sites eligible for priority clean-up funding as “brownfields”.
- ECONOMIC RESOURCES MAP.** Delineate areas that are developed based on an avoidance of any areas of critical concern (environmental, cultural, safety).
- COMMUNITY MARKETING PROGRAM.** Create sophisticated marketing material and brochures showing the strengths of Old Saybrook and the region; highlights should include a market outlook, an analysis of workforce characteristics, an assessment of transportation networks, and an analysis of quality of life factors such as schools, recreation facilities, and housing availability.
- WEB PAGE.** Create a first class, marketing-oriented Economic Development Commission segment of the Old Saybrook web site to attract and retain business in town.
- ECONOMIC RESOURCES COMPENDIUM.** Develop a compendium of available resources for development. This should include financial as well as professional resources available to businesses and prospective clients.
- NON-RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT REDEFINITION.** Define the distinctive role of each non-residential zoning district, and modify the Zoning Purpose of each district to reinforce that role.
- COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE.** Coordinate efforts to revise the subdivision regulations, zoning regulations, and Town ordinances to address current economic development issues identified in the EDC Economic Development Strategies Plan; report on status of amendments at quarterly meetings of land use agencies.

ARB	BOS	CC	EDC	HMC	IWWC	HDC	PC	PRC	WPCA	ZBA	ZC
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Town Center



ISSUES FOR THE NEXT DECADE

Main Street, the center of Old Saybrook, has been and continues to be the single strongest focus of town activity – for shopping, services and community activities, all at a pedestrian scale. Since the adoption of the 1990 Plan, Main Street has a brick and granite median strip with antique-style light fixtures and brick-like sidewalks. Business owners have continued to upgrade and improve their building facades and have enhanced landscaping, all in recognition of the importance of Main Street to Old Saybrook. Concern exists, however, regarding the ability of the smaller “mom and pop” businesses to continue to compete with the larger franchises that have located on Route 1, Main Street, and the region within the last decade. Many residents prize Old Saybrook for its sense of community. The Town Center provides a place where chance meetings with neighbors and friends can occur. Scheduled community events allow people to share in community life. People need a reason to come to the Center. The continued vitality of the Center is critical to the perceived quality of life in Old Saybrook.

Expanded Residential Opportunities

As highlighted in the 1990 Plan and expanded upon in this updated Plan, an effort to enhance the town center by

allowing for residential use on upper floors of businesses continues to be an important goal that will strengthen one of Old Saybrook’s most important assets. To accomplish this goal, the Town will need to make efforts to ensure that sufficient sewage disposal facilities are available and that such residential expansion will not compromise the town’s sewer avoidance policies.

Congestion and Safety

As efforts to strengthen the town center move forward into the next decade, the Town will need to increase safety. Reducing traffic congestion and improving pedestrian safety is critical to the viability of village center commerce. The issue serves to increase the desirability of the town center from the point of view of both business owners and townspeople. Increased efforts to reduce congestion and improve safety will be especially crucial during the summer months when traffic congestion is most intense.

Town Center as a Separate Identity

An important function of Old Saybrook’s land use boards in the next decade will be to clearly define Old Saybrook’s

TOWN CENTER

“village center.” Recent legislation allows a town to define and protect a village center much in the same way that an historic district delineates and protects significant landmarks and neighborhoods. In the meantime, the efforts of the recently created Architectural Review Board will assist the town’s regulatory boards in guiding the aesthetics of future

development proposals in a way that will enhance the built environment of Main Street. These efforts include review of architectural design for signs and structures, guidance in site layout, lighting, landscaping, pedestrian access, and other amenities that will enhance the community’s sense of the village as a meeting place.

PLANNING FOR THE NEXT DECADE

Goals

- Continue to promote Main Street and the historic village center as the focus for community life in Old Saybrook.
- Maintain and enhance the economic viability of the village center retail stores and services.
- Continue to promote the aesthetic qualities that make the village center an attractive, pleasant place to visit, create a positive image of the community, and give a sense of community pride.

Policies

- Continue to encourage a balance of commercial, civic, and residential uses in the town center to maintain vitality and character.
- Provide adequate space in the village center area for the present and future conduct of local governmental business, including renovation of the former Main Street School as a new location for municipal uses and enhancement and expansion, where appropriate, of the current Town Hall for ancillary civic needs.
- Assure that new development is compatible with the existing character of the village center in terms of appropriate scale and style.

Municipal Improvements, Programs, and Standards

The Plan recommends implementation of the following actions with priorities, resources and responsibilities coordinated among the appropriate Town agencies, including the Architectural Review Board (ARB), Board of Selectmen (BOS), Conservation Commission (CC), Economic Development Commission (EDC), Harbor Management Commission (HMC), Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commission (IWWC), North Cove Historic District Commission (NCHDC), Planning Commission (PC), Parks & Recreation Commission (PRC), Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA), Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA), and Zoning Commission (ZC).

- TOWN CENTER DISTRICT.** Use a *village district* for aesthetic development of Main Street.

ARB	BOS	CC	EDC	HMC	IWWC	NCHDC	PC	PRC	WPCA	ZBA	ZC
●			●								●

Municipal Improvements, Programs, and Standards, continued

	ARB	BOS	CC	EDC	HMC	IWWC	NGHDC	PC	PRC	WPCA	ZBA	ZC
<input type="checkbox"/> TOWN CENTER BULK STANDARDS. Develop bulk and architectural design standards to guide development in the town center: parking at rear of buildings, enhanced landscaping and pedestrian-scale amenities including benches, outdoor cafés, and information kiosks.	●			●				●				●
<input type="checkbox"/> TOWN CENTER COMPATIBILITY STANDARDS. Continue the critical elements of land and structural design compatible with the existing character of the town center.	●			●								●
<input type="checkbox"/> TOWN CENTER PARKING FACILITIES. Establish additional public parking areas, including a municipal lot, and sharing of existing facilities.		●		●				●				●
<input type="checkbox"/> PEDESTRIAN SAFETY MEASURES. Continue to improve pedestrian safety, including visual definition of crosswalks, public education, and maintenance of sidewalks.		●		●								
<input type="checkbox"/> TOWN CENTER RESIDENCES. Allow creation of residential units on upper stories of commercial buildings within the restrictions of the Town’s sewer avoidance program.	●	●		●						●	●	●
<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY EVENTS PROGRAM. Continue municipal support for community events, including the provision of space, staffing, and supplementary funding.		●	●	●				●				
<input type="checkbox"/> TOWN CENTER REVITALIZATION RESOURCES. Continue to provide local government resources for revitalization efforts, including time and expertise.		●		●				●				
<input type="checkbox"/> ROUTE 1-TO-MAIN STREET CORRIDOR LINKAGE. Coordinate and promote linkage between the town center, the Old Saybrook Shopping Center, and the Route 1 corridor.	●	●		●				●				●
<input type="checkbox"/> REUSE/RENOVATION OF TOWN CENTER. Encourage reuse and appropriate renovation of existing buildings in keeping with the village character.	●	●		●								
<input type="checkbox"/> TOWN CENTER CAMPUS. Maintain the Town Green for public gatherings.		●		●								

Residential Development



ISSUES FOR THE NEXT DECADE

Following the residential development boom of the mid- and late 1980's, residential values, market demand, and development slowed in the decade of the 1990's. Total permits for new home construction dropped from a high of approximately 73 houses per year in the 1980s to a more modest level of approximately 27 houses per year in the 1990s. As the town moves forward into the first decade of the 21st century, issues facing Old Saybrook will potentially include the impacts of construction of a 300+ lot subdivision in the northern area of town, the infill of smaller five to ten lot subdivisions, and the winterization of seasonal homes in the beach areas fronting Long Island Sound. With the exception of the large subdivision, the most significant impact could come from the winterization of the many seasonal cottages as seen by summer traffic congestion on Route 1 and Main Street. As a result, Goals, Policies, Municipal Improvements, Programs and Standards are set forth to guide Old Saybrook through the next decade with an eye toward providing housing opportunities for all sectors of the market while protecting the town from excessive growth which could harm its "small town New England" character.

Other housing issues faced by Old Saybrook include the long-standing issue of affordability, whether or not younger residents

who have grown up in town will be able to afford housing here. In addition, there is more and more concern expressed with respect to the availability of sufficient housing opportunities for the elderly, such as affordable houses, rentals, and assisted living facilities. Although affordable housing has not been a "front-burner" issue for much of the 1990s, it continues to be a formidable problem in Old Saybrook and similar communities that strive to achieve a balance.

A recently failed effort to change zoning regulations which would have allowed condominiums on properties having historic structures indicates a potential change in policies regarding multi-family housing in Old Saybrook. In addition to the denial of this particular developer's petition, a separate and contemporaneous petition to ban condominiums from the Cornfield Point area succeeded. This flurry of petitions has raised the question of whether the town should consider a closer look at its condominium regulations in an effort to fine-tune regulations affecting this form of multi-family housing that remain essentially unchanged since their adoption in the 1970s.

Another multi-family housing issue has arisen with litigation over the town's ability to control forms of multi-family housing

by regulating ownership, something the courts have recently said is not permissible. Specifically, this addresses the town's current regulatory prohibition on rental housing in the form of apartment houses.

North of I-95

Issues facing Old Saybrook north of the Interstate depend on the manner in which the former Lyons property (a 1,000-acre parcel) develops, as well as the eventual build-out of any vacant land along Schoolhouse Road and the remainder of Ingham Hill Road.

SCHOOL POPULATION

The growth in student population and subsequent necessity for school expansion, is contingent upon the number of homes, the sizes of building lots, and the amount of open space allotted, as well as the possibility of municipal or private recreational facilities.

TRAFFIC CONCERNS

With a larger number of homes, it is reasonable to think that a 300+ lot subdivision will likely have a greater impact on local traffic, especially on weekends when the new residents will join existing residents in their weekend "errands" around town. As currently proposed, the majority of Saybrook-bound traffic will not make its way down Ingham Hill Road, but will likely travel down Schoolhouse and Bokum Roads, raising questions of adequacy of those two country roads to handle the increased traffic load. Within this respect, incremental build-out of Schoolhouse and Ingham Hill Road residential properties will likely have some, but not as

significant, an impact. If, through review, the 260+ subdivision lots are directly connected to Ingham Hill Road, a question is raised regarding Ingham Hill Road becoming a regional thoroughfare from the Bokum Center area of Westbrook directly into the heart of Old Saybrook. It is questionable whether Ingham Hill Road in its current condition could handle such traffic.

The lack of East West connector roads North of I-95 and the Amtrak line forces traffic to access Route 1 to the south to make any kind of cross town connection. This is inconvenient and adds to the traffic volume along Route 1.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

With increased population and development come the issues of water usage and quality, air quality, non-point source pollution, loss of vegetation, soil erosion, and more impervious surfaces.

South of I-95

The residential area south of the Interstate, encompasses mature locales that been long built out. Very few opportunities remain for subdivision development, although infill construction has continued at a slower pace as property owners split larger properties or sell off vacant lots. Although increases in traffic and population occur, the relatively small rate of increase will likely make these impacts insignificant in the next decade.

RECREATION

The relatively small size of the building lots found in the residential neighborhoods south of Interstate 95 provide

less opportunity for residents to partake in spontaneous outdoor recreation. Although the Town does provide most of its organized recreational activities in this area of town through the Parks & Recreation Department, there is a growing need for more space for active open space for recreational facilities, including neighborhood parks, sidewalks and bikeways, and access to the waterfront and its public beaches.

BEACH AREAS

In addition to the possible impact of the residential development in the northern section of town, the winterization of its beach areas has the potential for significant impacts to Old Saybrook. Recent estimates indicate that approximately sixty percent (60%) of beach area residents are seasonal, living in Old Saybrook during summer months only. Consequently, Old Saybrook's population expands almost threefold during the summer, putting pressure primarily on the town's road infrastructure. With the winterization of a significant percentage of seasonal cottages would come added pressures on town infrastructure including a potentially significant increase in school-aged children and added stress on the town's ability to handle the additional waste water. With respect to the town's efforts to avoid sewerage (see Water Resources section), the recent adoption of a town ordinance limiting winterization to only those properties where capable of code-compliant septic systems, is a positive step.

General Residential

MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING

Multi-family housing is an opportunity for more affordable housing in an area where housing prices have inflated. Such is the case in many shoreline communities including Old Saybrook. Of primary concern with multi-family housing in Old Saybrook is the issue of on-site sewage disposal, often the limiting factor to the physical ability to increase dwelling density on any given property. Despite this limitation and its impacts on the town's future, consideration of additional multi-family housing opportunities seems to be one solution to high housing costs.

NON-OWNERSHIP HOUSING

For years, opportunities for affordable rental housing options have been limited to accessory apartments, room rental in existing homes, and academic rentals. These limited rental options revolved around the concept that rentals would be maintained properly when the owner of the property lived on-site. This philosophy, of course, has ruled out other options that include conversion of homes into several apartments and mixed-use apartments located over storefronts and offices in the Village Center area, options that would greatly expand housing opportunities consistent with the 1990 Plan of Development. As stated previously, one main obstacle to overcome is the issue of adequate sewage disposal on properties serving multi-family dwellings. As a part of the Plan of Conservation & Development, the Planning Commission recommends that, where soil conditions allow, provision should be made for rental opportunities,

which will expand the rental housing market in Old Saybrook.

PLANNED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS AND CLUSTER HOUSING

Given the recent series of petitions regarding planned residential development (condominium ownership), it is time to re-examine current regulations and to determine the conditions under which planned residential development and condominium ownership is acceptable.

This position is consistent with the Commission's desire to provide for more affordable housing alternatives in the current housing climate. The primary concern of multi-family housing is the ability of any given property to handle the increased dwelling density and the increased waste disposal that would result. In addition, the town should seek to establish cluster subdivision regulations so as to preserve more open space within subdivisions while at the same time providing an incentive to developers to cut costs on subdivision infrastructure development.

PLANNING FOR THE NEXT DECADE

Goals

- Provide sufficient opportunity for creation of housing alternatives to the typical high-cost single-family house in order to:
 - Accommodate the elderly in a safe and convenient environment
 - Enable young persons to continue to both live and work in town
 - Create attainable housing for families at all income levels
 - Balance rates of development with existing capacity and planned expansion of public infrastructure and services.
 - Encourage design of new and renovated housing that is compatible with its surrounding neighborhood

Policies

- Promote additional multi-family opportunities that do not require owner residence including limited apartment facilities, home conversions, and non-ground floor apartments over Main Street businesses where soils can accommodate waste disposal.
- Continue to encourage creation of accessory apartments within larger single-family dwellings where single-family character and adequate parking and utilities and soil conditions permit.
- In the residential area north of I-95:
 - Assure that new residential development is fitted to the significant natural constraints of topography, variable soil conditions, and wetlands
 - Where land conditions are supportive, provide an opportunity for alternative forms of residential layout and buildings that best utilize individual site features.
 - Continue to seek solutions to access and internal circulation problems for the area as a whole.

Municipal Improvements, Programs, and Standards

The Plan recommends implementation of the following actions with priorities, resources and responsibilities coordinated among the appropriate Town agencies, including the Architectural Review Board (ARB), Board of Selectmen (BOS), Conservation Commission (CC), Economic Development Commission (EDC), Harbor Management Commission (HMC), Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commission (IWWC), North Cove Historic District Commission (NCHDC), Planning Commission (PC), Parks & Recreation Commission (PRC), Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA), Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA), and Zoning Commission (ZC).

- TOWN CENTER ACCESSORY RESIDENCES.** Develop regulations to allow for the establishment of residential units on non-first story floors in the Town Center (Central Business (B-1) District) where soil conditions allow.
- OPEN SPACE SUBDIVISIONS.** Review and update existing Open Space Subdivision standards and criteria to allow for and encourage alternative forms of residential layout and buildings where soil conditions will accommodate such density. Identify areas in which such alternatives may be workable due to soil type, topography, and access.
- SOILS-BASED RESIDENTIAL DENSITY.** Continue to base allowable residential densities on soil capacity and suitability for on-site sewage disposal systems, as part of a sewer avoidance program in all areas not currently scheduled for corrective sewer construction.
- MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENCE ANALYSIS.** Review and evaluate existing criteria for multi-family housing to determine whether additional multi-family units may be effective.
- AFFORDABLE AND ATTAINABLE HOUSING.** Encourage developers of residential projects that create diversity in housing type, size, and cost. In particular, support efforts of non-profit housing organizations to construct and operate housing for low- and moderate-income families in a manner that does not jeopardize the health and safety of residents, or conflict with public interests, the sewer density issue, or the zone.

	ARB	BOS	CC	EDC	HMC	IWWC	NCHDC	PC	PRC	WPCA	ZBA	ZC
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Municipal Improvements, Programs, and Standards, continued

- INCLUSIONARY ZONING REGULATIONS.** Consider adoption of inclusionary zoning regulations. Base support for housing on legal guarantees to remain “forever affordable.”
- TOWN CENTER RESIDENCES.** Create residential units on upper floors of commercial buildings in the Town Center and other suitable areas.
- TAX ABATEMENTS RENTERS.** Consider offering 10-, 15-, or 20-year property tax abatements tied to a predetermined index for rental rate increases.
- WINTERIZATION REGULATIONS.** Within the regulations, develop a permit process to assure that conversion of seasonal dwellings results in a net density consistent with overall community character and meets all current State Health Codes for waste disposal.
- EAST-WEST CIRCULATION STUDY.** Undertake a feasibility study of East-West connectors north of I-95 to provide alternative access to emergency vehicles, to alleviate Route 1 congestion and to provide links for neighborhood-to-neighborhood travel.
- INGHAM-TO-BOKUM CONNECTOR.** Seek access between Bokum and Ingham Hill roads.
- INTERAGENCY WATER QUALITY COMPACT.** Create a policy whereby the Zoning Board of Appeals refers any request for variance of the bulk standards of the Zoning Regulations that would affect a principal building/structure in the shoreline neighborhoods that have water pollution problems to the Water Pollution Control Authority for an advisory report.
- BEACH BULK STANDARDS.** Create and preserve appropriate architectural style that is obscured by the practice of maximizing structural volume to the limits of that permitted.
- WINTERIZATION UPDATE.** Revise Ordinance #62 to close “loopholes”.

	ARB	BOS	CC	EDC	HMC	IW/C	NCHDC	PC	PRC	WPCA	ZBA	ZC
<input type="checkbox"/> INCLUSIONARY ZONING REGULATIONS. Consider adoption of inclusionary zoning regulations. Base support for housing on legal guarantees to remain “forever affordable.”				●						●		●
<input type="checkbox"/> TOWN CENTER RESIDENCES. Create residential units on upper floors of commercial buildings in the Town Center and other suitable areas.				●						●		●
<input type="checkbox"/> TAX ABATEMENTS RENTERS. Consider offering 10-, 15-, or 20-year property tax abatements tied to a predetermined index for rental rate increases.		●		●				●				●
<input type="checkbox"/> WINTERIZATION REGULATIONS. Within the regulations, develop a permit process to assure that conversion of seasonal dwellings results in a net density consistent with overall community character and meets all current State Health Codes for waste disposal.	●									●	●	●
<input type="checkbox"/> EAST-WEST CIRCULATION STUDY. Undertake a feasibility study of East-West connectors north of I-95 to provide alternative access to emergency vehicles, to alleviate Route 1 congestion and to provide links for neighborhood-to-neighborhood travel.		●						●				
<input type="checkbox"/> INGHAM-TO-BOKUM CONNECTOR. Seek access between Bokum and Ingham Hill roads.		●						●				
<input type="checkbox"/> INTERAGENCY WATER QUALITY COMPACT. Create a policy whereby the Zoning Board of Appeals refers any request for variance of the bulk standards of the Zoning Regulations that would affect a principal building/structure in the shoreline neighborhoods that have water pollution problems to the Water Pollution Control Authority for an advisory report.										●	●	●
<input type="checkbox"/> BEACH BULK STANDARDS. Create and preserve appropriate architectural style that is obscured by the practice of maximizing structural volume to the limits of that permitted.	●										●	●
<input type="checkbox"/> WINTERIZATION UPDATE. Revise Ordinance #62 to close “loopholes”.		●								●	●	●

Conservation & Open Spaces

ISSUES FOR THE NEXT DECADE

Open space is most often thought of as land set aside for municipal uses, particularly passive and active recreation. However, the conservation and preservation of open space serves a handful of typical functions – ecosystem, aesthetics, economics, recreation, and public health and safety – for which the Town is always working to strengthen.

Natural areas are reserved for the purpose of protecting natural resources, including plants, animals and water. The maintenance of the quality of natural resources depends on abolishing the threats sometimes associated with development, such as pollution, invasive plant species, and detrimental human activities. All of these threats have the potential for destroying, fragmenting, and degrading wildlife habitat. Water, air, light, and noise pollution can alter a landscape and its inhabitants to favor nuisance species. Nuisance species often out-compete native flora and fauna for food and shelter and exchange species diversity with single species populations.

In Old Saybrook, a significant part of the character of the town is its natural resource base. Its forested upland ridge systems, its lakes, ponds and streams, its wetlands, both tidal and inland, and its connection to Long Island Sound and the Connecticut River not only characterize its historical and cultural development but also differentiate it from other shoreline towns. Conservation of



these open spaces has far broader implications than the protection of the habitat and wildlife that it supports; continued preservation of open space furthers the town’s overall goal of enhancing the New England small town character for which it is known. For instance, the prohibitions against “clear cutting” land within the Gateway Conservation Zone, which overlays the Connecticut River from ridgeline to ridgeline, meets the desire of Old Saybrook to preserve the traditional riverway scene.

In addition to enhancing the quality of air and water, there are real economic reasons to protect a community’s landscape. The costs of community services (roads, safety, schools, and infrastructure) associated with developing our open spaces are in many ways higher than the costs of leaving them undeveloped. It has been taken for granted that residential development brings tax dollars to a municipality. Recent studies suggest that such development can actually cost the town tax dollars in increased services, such as road maintenance, police and fire services, school facility expansion and other related costs. While one overall goal of this Plan of Conservation & Development is to provide housing for its citizens, balancing the impacts of residential development with the preservation of the town’s character and natural resources has become a priority to safeguard the features that keep people coming to town.

Recreation in open spaces increases the quality of our lives through the recreational benefits of leisure and exercise. The Town maintains playgrounds, playing fields, beaches and boat launches for active recreation throughout Old Saybrook, as well as parks, trails and scenic overlooks for passive recreation. Recreation in open spaces supports economic functions by promoting “eco-based tourism” and complementing its historical attractions. Additionally, visitors and residents alike learn the value of open space in its protection of ecosystems through the series of educational storyboards placed throughout the years at the parks, trails and scenic overlooks.

Open space is least often thought of in terms of its ability to protect the public health and safety, but the legal authority to do so coincidentally and most generously provides for the previous functions of open space. Regulations regarding building within the Flood Hazard Zones of the low-lying elevations of Old Saybrook not only act as a natural buffer preventing loss of life and property due to flooding but also preserves floodplain habitat for osprey and provides fields for the cultivation of salt hay. Other examples of public health-related regulations include the Aquifer Protection Zone, the purpose of which is to avoid degradation of the quality of groundwater used as a public water supply resource; the Coastal Management Zone, the purpose of which is to conserve soil, vegetation, water, fish, shellfish, wildlife and other coastal land and water resources; and the Connecticut River Gateway Conservation Zone, the purpose of which is to prevent deterioration of the natural or traditional riverway scene.

Open Space Acquisition

For almost thirty years, open space conservation and preservation policies and goals were a part of Old Saybrook’s overall planning strategies. Although these goals have been

articulated and pursued, it was not until 1999 that the town took a major step in the pursuit of these goals with the acquisition of the 320-acre parcel now known as the Great Cedars Conservation Area located in the area of Ingham Hill Road. The acquisition of this large parcel contributes to creating a greenway in Old Saybrook in the area north of the Interstate, a recommendation in the 1994 Old Saybrook Conservation Plan. The parcel, purchased in part with a grant from the CTDEP, provides passive recreational opportunities to Old Saybrook citizens while preserving important resources such as upland woods, ponds, streams and wetlands, as well as rare plant and animal species. Acquisition of the property was also important because of its connection to the existing town park facilities including Clark Community Park on Schoolhouse Road. Open space acquisition remains important to Old Saybrook as we look forward to attaining, if not exceeding, the State goal for Connecticut towns of 21% open space.

A Legacy of Conservation

In Old Saybrook, there is wide acceptance of a fundamental truth – conservation of open space significantly contributes to the overall preservation of the town’s character by tempering the impact of development. Conservation of open space was important to the goals of the 1969 Conservation Plan, 1970 Plan of Development, 1990 Plan of Development, 1994 Conservation Plan, and the 2003 Plan of Conservation & Open Space. Each of the conservation plans to date provided the Town with recommendations for conservation measures and activities with the principal focus being protection of Old Saybrook’s natural resource areas. This Plan of Conservation & Development continues Old Saybrook’s legacy of conservation as the long-range strategy

by which the Town institutes its intentions to strengthen the ecosystem, aesthetics, economics, recreation, and public health and safety through conservation of open spaces.

In 1969, the Conservation Plan recognized the critical importance of one of the town’s most important natural resources – approximately 1,335 acres of tidal marsh – and made recommendations for preservation of three types of open space. The three types of open space were tidal wetlands, streams, and specific resource areas with characteristics of particular conservation importance. At that time, statewide recognition of the importance of tidal wetlands resulted in the passage of the State’s Tidal Wetlands Act in 1969, later modified in 1971, which provides a considerable degree of protection for marshes today. In 1972, the State General Assembly passed Public Act 155, the Connecticut Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Act, which addressed many of the concerns identified in the 1969 Plan. This Act, in addition to underscoring the importance of tidal wetlands, streams, and watersheds, identified additional areas of conservation interest for the entire community. These areas were highlighted for their scenic value, recreation potential, and importance to the natural resource base. A recommendation was made to acquire additional open space in the beach areas to offset the high density of housing.

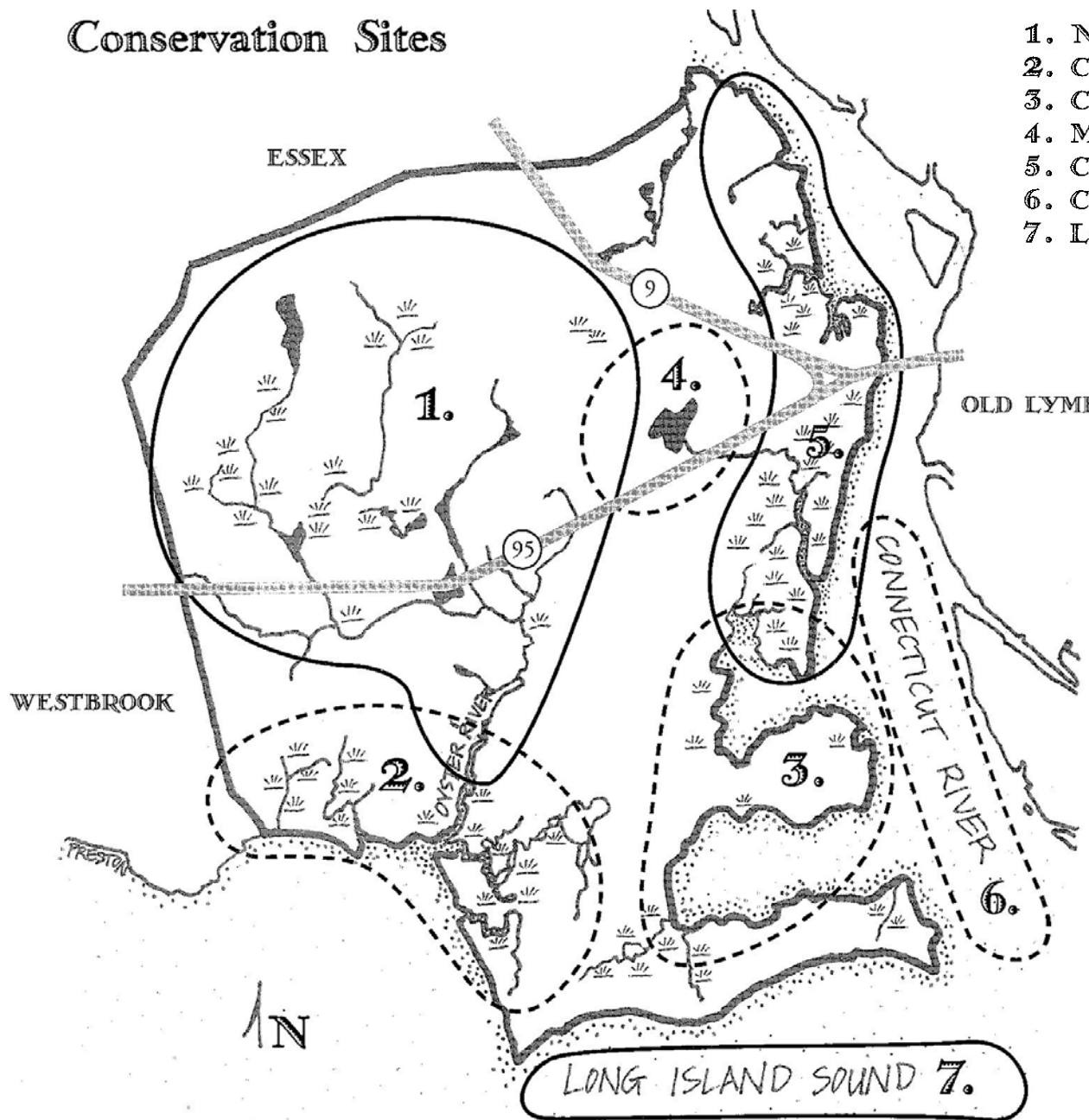
Since 1994, there have been many changes in Old Saybrook. Many goals of the Conservation Commission’s 1994 Conservation Plan have been achieved. Of the forty-one recommendations that the 1994 Conservation Commission developed for the future of the town, close to one half have been successfully implemented.

One of the goals that has been accomplished, is stated in the

plan as: “Create and maintain a map showing areas of special conservation interest within the town to assist the Planning and Zoning Commissions, the Zoning Board of Appeals, the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission and other town agencies and officials in making land use decisions which will best preserve the special qualities of such areas.” The Conservation Commission prepared this map in 2003 when it was working on achieving another goal from 1994 to “review and update the town’s conservation plan at intervals of no more than ten years.” The remainder of the goals of the 1994 Conservation Plan are embodied in the continuing activities of the Conservation Commission and expanded upon in the 2003 Plan of Conservation & Open Space.

The 2003 Plan pulled together the information and analysis necessary to define seven “conservation sites” – geographic areas (Figure entitled “Conservation Sites”) that contain critical, varied and extensive natural resources in Old Saybrook and for which the Town has specific goals supporting not only open spaces, but other conservation concerns, as well. This Plan also identified the existing or potential impact of various threats (Figure entitled “Assessment of Threats to Conservation Sites”) to their ecosystems. These areas consist of the northwest forested uplands and Oyster River; coastal salt marshes; coastal embayments; mature coastal hardwoods and aquifer wetlands, Connecticut River brackish tidal wetlands; Connecticut River estuary; and Long Island Sound. Each contributes to the town’s unique character. The last two areas, the Connecticut River Estuary and Long Island Sound, which Old Saybrook significantly embraces (“where the Connecticut River meets Long Island Sound”), have the additional distinction of having been identified nationally and internationally as worthy of protection.

Conservation Sites



- 1. Northwest Uplands and Oyster River
- 2. Coastal Salt Marshes
- 3. Coastal Embayments
- 4. Mature Coastal Hardwood/Aquifer Wetlands
- 5. Connecticut River Brackish Tidal Wetlands
- 6. Connecticut River Estuary
- 7. Long Island Sound

ASSESSMENT OF THREATS TO CONSERVATION SITES				
Conservation Site	Greatest Threats	Urgency	Priority	Sources
NORTHWEST UPLANDS AND OYSTER RIVER	Loss of habitat Alteration of habitat Fragmentation	High	High	Development (predominantly residential) Watershed hydrologic modification Roads, openings in forested canopies, dams
COASTAL SALT MARSHES	Invasive Species Loss of habitat Alteration of habitat	Low	Medium	Phragmites overtaking native salt marsh diversity Docks, shoreline hardening (bulkheads) impact or replace marsh Watershed hydrologic modifications; stormwater modifications as watershed develops
COASTAL EMBAYMENTS	Alteration of habitat Pollution Disturbance	Low	Medium	Phragmites replacing native salt marsh plant diversity in fringing marshes Nitrogen from non-point source pollution; origins include fertilizer, septic outflow from bordering development Wildlife habitat disturbance from water-based recreational activities
MATURE COASTAL HARDWOODS / AQUIFER WETLANDS	Loss of habitat Invasive Species	High	High	Development (residential and commercial) Increasing edge habitats; domestic pets
CONNECTICUT RIVER BRACKISH TIDAL WETLANDS	Invasive Species Alteration of habitat Pollution	Medium	Medium	Phragmites Docks, shoreline hardening Nitrogen and other toxins from bordering septic and stormwater
CONNECTICUT RIVER ESTUARY	Pollution Invasive Species Disturbance	Low	Medium	Nitrogen from non-point source pollution; origins include fertilizer, septic outflow from bordering development Predominantly phragmites; also mute swans Water-based recreational activities
LONG ISLAND SOUND	Pollution Disturbance	Medium	Medium	Nitrogen from land use; sewage, septic, landscaping Endocrine disrupters; pharmaceuticals from sewage that interfere with biological development of marine species

Conservation Sites

NORTHERN WOODLANDS & OYSTER RIVER WATERSHED

Located in the northwestern portion of Old Saybrook, these woodlands lie between the bordering residential developments along Westbrook Road in the town of Essex (to the north), Schoolhouse Road (to the west), Bokum Road (to the east) and following the main stem of the Oyster River (to the south) to its confluence with Long Island Sound.

The most rugged area of Old Saybrook, the northern woodlands, contain our highest elevations – rocky summits, many with vernal pools interspersed between – and our fresh waterbodies. Pequot Swamp is a vegetated marsh surrounded by ledge and upland; this area of town is interspersed with red maple, cedar swamps, and evergreens. Within the northern woodlands there exist natural and augmented bodies of inland waters, such as Crystal Lake, Goose Pond, Ingham Pond, Lake Rockview, and Chalker Mill Pond. The Northern Woodlands also contain the headwaters of the Oyster River – connecting cold springs, intermittent streams and narrow, winding brooks to Long Island Sound. This watershed is home to migratory fish species, including alewife and blueback herring, which travel thousands of miles from their life at sea to spawn in the upper reaches of the Oyster River. The Oyster River contains a complete suite of healthy tidal marshes, from salt to freshwater, that supports a great diversity of wildlife, including birds, fish, and shellfish.

COASTAL SALT MARSHES

Located in the south central portion of Old Saybrook, these salt

marshes lie between the commercial developments along the Boston Post Road and the residential developments bordering Long Island Sound, as well along the marsh north of Chalker Beach; along the coast including Hagar and Mud Creeks, the mouth of the Oyster River and the extensive marshes surrounding the Back River behind Great Hammock / Plum Bank Roads.

These are the small-scale salt and brackish tidal wetlands along our town’s southwestern coastline. They feed directly into Long Island Sound and are surrounded by multiple homes. Most are under stress from water quality degradation and invasive species, particularly where natural water exchange with the ocean has been blocked or reduced – there are opportunities here for restoration. Despite these pressures and the small size of these wetlands, they continue to harbor a surprising diversity of species, including egrets, herons, and osprey.

COASTAL EMBAYMENTS

Located in the southeast portion of Old Saybrook, these embayments of South Cove lie between Lynde Point and Saybrook Point; Beamon Creek and its marshes feed into South Cove; and North Cove lies between Saybrook Point and Ragged Rock Creek and the old railroad bed where it opens to the Connecticut river.

These protected coves – including North and South Cove and the inner marshes of Beamon Creek, are important migratory stopover sites for birds, as well as refuges for wintering ducks that seek protection from the rougher waters of Long Island Sound. Birders from across the state seek out these quiet coastal waters for the large rafts of wintering ducks and occasional rare bird

hidden among the others. Extensive mud flats at low tide provide access to important food – clams, worms, and crustaceans. These coves are popular fishing and crabbing spots, reflecting their abundance of life.

MATURE COASTAL HARDWOODS & AQUIFER

Located on either side of Middlesex Turnpike northeasterly from Bokum Road, these large tracts of intact woodland and swamp lie behind the commercial development of this corridor.

A large, although threatened, area of mature coastal hardwood forest – tall, straight-trunked trees and a noticeable absence of vegetation in the understory – make this woodland a unique place to observe what some of the original relatively undisturbed forests along our shoreline looked like. This area includes a large red maple swamp along the northern boundary of Route 154 that is in close proximity to our town’s aquifer.

CONNECTICUT RIVER BRACKISH TIDAL WETLANDS

Located along Old Saybrook’s coastline with the Connecticut River, these wetlands lie along Watrous Point in Essex, Turtle Creek, Ayers Point at Otter Cove, Hyde Point Creek, Ferry Point, and Ragged Rock, Little Rock, and Parsonage Creeks.

The salt concentration of these marshes varies seasonally depending on the influences of the Connecticut River (freshwater snow-melt in the spring) and Long Island Sound (higher concentrations in late summer, particularly in dry years). Consequently, the vegetation is transitional and represents a broad spectrum of tidal marsh plants. Ragged Rock Marsh is one of the largest brackish tidal marshes in the state; it harbors abundant wildlife,

including rare and elusive species such as rails or bitterns.

CONNECTICUT RIVER ESTUARY

Located at the river’s confluence with Long Island Sound, these estuarine waters of the Connecticut River extend along the entire eastern boundary of Old Saybrook northerly to the river’s furthest tidal influence somewhere north of Hartford.

International, national, state, and local designations proclaim the biological significance of this important river estuary – the place where this New England river meets Long Island Sound. Estuaries are among the most productive ecosystems on earth; harnessing and exporting the sun’s energy through myriad life forms – many of which end up on our dinner tables! The River is also an essential migratory pathway for fish and birds; in particular birds coming up the eastern coast will follow the River northward, relying on the abundance of fringing wetlands for fuel and rest.

LONG ISLAND SOUND

Located along the southern coast, coastal marshes, beaches, rocky bluffs, and dunes are part of the Long Island Sound ecosystem.

Designated in 1987 as an Estuary of National Significance, Long Island sound supports countless species of fish, birds, mammals and invertebrates, many of which are economically significant. Just offshore, Saybrook has important shellfish beds. Our town has small but good examples of beach/dune/tidal marsh habitats, from the outer reaches of Lynde Point to the cobble beaches and glacial boulders at Cornfield Point – a uniquely preserved piece of the state’s glacial history.

PLANNING FOR THE NEXT DECADE

Goals

- Development, conservation, supervision, and regulation of natural resources. C.G.S. 7-131a(a)
- Management, stewardship, and proper use of open areas. C.G.S. 7-131a(b)
- Maintenance, improvement, protection, limitation of the future use of open space land. C.G.S. 7-131b(a)
- Conservation of wildlife and natural resources. C.G.S. 7-131d(b)(1)
- Protection of land that includes or contributes a prime natural feature of the Town's landscape, including a shoreline, a river, its tributaries and watershed, an aquifer, mountainous territory, ridgelines, an island or coastal wetland, a significant littoral, estuarine, or aquatic site or other important geological feature. C.G.S. 7-131d(b)(2)
- Protection of habitat for native plant or animal species listed as threatened, endangered, or of special concern. C.G.S. 7-131d(b)(3)
- Enhancement and conservation of water quality of the Town's lakes, rivers, and coastal waters. C.G.S. 7-131d(b)(5)
- Development of corridors of open space in "greenways", which protect natural resources, preserve scenic landscapes and historical resources, offer opportunities for recreation or non-motorized transportation, connect existing protected areas, and provide access to the outdoors along a defining natural feature, a man-made corridor, or a highway, or around a village. C.G.S. 23-100.
- Acquisition of land for municipal purposes, including recreation, habitat protection, economic development, historical and cultural preservation, and the public health, safety, and welfare.
- Acquisition of not less than 11% of the town's land area held as open space land by the Town, water company, or nonprofit land conservation organizations. C.G.S. 23-8(b)
- Public education and outreach to the public and private enterprises concerning conservation of natural resources and open spaces.
- Implementation of an aggressive open space identification, acquisition and management program using outside funding sources to supplement town funds where feasible and appropriate, and in such a way so as to maximize the level of impact the Town will

have with respect to use of the acquired properties.

- Protection of important natural resources, including the Connecticut River and Long Island Sound, tidal and inland wetlands, streams, ponds and lakes, forested ridges and hills, as well as open fields and farms, from degradation due to inappropriate development.
- Maintenance of the diverse character of Old Saybrook by balancing new development with the preservation of scenic views, vistas, open green spaces and natural and cultural resources.

Policies

- To protect lands adjacent to and complementary to adjacent protected open space land. C.G.S. 7-131e(a)(A)
- To conserve open spaces in a manner that observes an equitable geographic distribution throughout the town. C.G.S. 7-131e. (a)(B)
- To consider proximity of a property to urban areas with growth and development pressures or to areas with open space deficiencies and underserved populations. C.G.S. 7-131e. (a)(C)
- To protect land particularly vulnerable to development incompatible with its natural resource values including the protection of a public water supply source. C.G.S. 7-131e. (a)(D)
- To seek consistency with the State’s Plan of Conservation & Development when applying for State funding. C.G.S. 7-131e. (a)(E)
- To give a high priority to multiple functions of conservation, such as water quality and supply protection, scenic preservation, and farmland preservation. C.G.S. 7-131e. (a)(F)
- To consider the extent to which the presence of already-constructed buildings or other manmade improvements diminish or overshadow the natural resource value of a proposed acquisition. C.G.S. 7-131e. (a)(G)
- To preserve forestlands and bodies of water, which naturally absorb significant amounts of carbon dioxide. C.G.S. 7-131e. (a)(H)
- To weigh criteria of purpose, proximity to properties with similar purposes or like-resources, and available funding in making any

decision to acquire land.

- To give priority to acquisition of land for active recreation, economic development, community facilities, or public health and safety.
 - To collaborate with or support other organizations in acquisition of land for passive recreation, conservation, or cultural and historical preservation.
 - To limit the Town's contribution of funds to purchases no greater than the highest appraised value of the property.
 - To limit commitments of refundable Town resources for joint acquisition to no greater than a year from the execution of and agreement to purchase.
 - To obtain title to any property for which the Town contributes funds towards the purchase price.
 - To enter into formal written agreements to purchase of land contingent upon standard due diligence research of clear title and physical conditions.
 - To avoid any appearance of conflict by forgoing offers to purchase land subject to action by the Town on any permit for development.
- To cooperate with and support private non-profit organizations dedicated to land preservation.
- To encourage applicants for subdivision of land to pay a fee to the Town or to pay a fee in lieu of any requirement to provide open spaces, parks and playgrounds if there is no place deemed proper by the pertinent Commission.
- To require developers to submit a land survey of land exacted for open space in conjunction with any subdivision of land, including wetlands boundaries and topography of the upland areas.
- To preserve ecologically viable habitat, meaning areas or environments in which an organism or biological population normally lives or occurs. C.G.S. §22a-41(c)

Municipal Improvements, Programs, and Standards

The Plan recommends implementation of the following actions with priorities, resources and responsibilities coordinated among the appropriate Town agencies, including the Architectural Review Board (ARB), Board of Selectmen (BOS), Conservation Commission (CC), Economic Development Commission (EDC), Harbor Management Commission (HMC), Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commission (IWWC), Historic District Commission (HDC), Planning Commission (PC), Parks & Recreation Commission (PRC), Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA), Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA), and Zoning Commission (ZC).

- PLAN OF CONSERVATION & OPEN SPACE.** Conduct research into the current land utilization of Old Saybrook. Maintain inventory of important natural and ecological resource areas delineated in the 2003 Plan of Conservation & Open Space. Continue to update local knowledge-based mapping of recreational resources and cultural resources, and as a part of on-going analysis of the overlapping functions of open spaces. C.G.S. 7-131a(b)
- GREENWAYS PLAN.** Plan, design, and implement a town-wide greenway that connects and provides access to existing open space areas. Create trailheads along a corridor of open spaces that provides recreation within an area of protected natural habitat – beginning at the Town Park extending from Crystal Lake along the Fishing Brook to Lake Rockview; following scenic Ingham Hill Road to Chalker’s Mill Pond and along the side of Prospect Hill (with a branch off to the scenic view from Jacob’s Peak) to Ingham Ponds; circling the hillsides to scenic views of Pequot Swamp Pond; continuing northerly around Pequot Swamp Pond to intersect with historic Ingham Hill Road and then southerly to Clark Memorial Park, completing the circuit. C.G.S. 7-131a(b)
- RECREATIONAL RESOURCES MAP.** Create a graphic inventory of open spaces offering opportunities for active and passive recreation.

ARB	BOS	CC	EDC	HMC	IWWC	HDC	PC	PRC	WPCA	ZBA	ZC
		●	●				●	●	●		●
		●			●		●	●			

Municipal Improvements, Programs, and Standards, continued

- MANAGEMENT PLANS FOR CONSERVATION SITES 1-7.** Analyze and plan for the different specific threats that exist for each of the Conservation Sites defined in the 2003 Plan of Conservation & Open Space.

 - o Create boundaries and a boundary map of the Conservation Sites
 - o Identify and locate key ecological attributes (vernal pools, ledge, wetlands, unique natural communities, etc.)
 - o Identify and prioritize key parcels of land for protection and adding to existing open spaces and greenway corridors, especially along streams
 - o Identify what measures of protection are needed (acquisition, easement, management, private stewardship, education)
 - o Identify stewardship needs: invasive species control, building or maintaining trails, outreach materials, resolve dumping issues, etc.

- Work collaboratively with the Land Acquisition Committee to implement protection.

- GREAT CEDARS AND OPEN SPACE STEWARDSHIP.** Supervise and manage municipally owned open space or park property upon delegation of such authority by the entity that has supervisory or management responsibilities for such space or property. Continue to investigate the natural resources within the Great Cedars Conservation Area and to create opportunities for stewardship and education. C.G.S. 7-131a. (b)

- FISHWAYS PLAN.** Plan, design, and implement a series of fishways to allow diadromous fish to migrate between fresh water and the sea. Continue to monitor migration of anadromous fish and catadromous eels through the fish ladder at Chalker’s Mill Pond; construct fish ladders at Ingham Hill Pond and Crystal Lake.

ARB	BOS	CC	EDC	HMC	IWVC	HDC	PC	PRC	WPCA	ZBA	ZC
		●									
		●						●			
		●									

Municipal Improvements, Programs, and Standards, continued

- LAND ACQUISITION INITIATIVE.** Assess all of Old Saybrook’s land needs, including land that should be acquired for open space protection, passive recreation, active recreation, and municipal facilities. In this regard, the Committee shall determine and recommend to the Board of Selectmen the desirability and feasibility of acquiring land, development rights, and conservation easements; prioritize properties for acquisition by the Town of Old Saybrook; and analyze properties for their present or future use.

- TOWN PARK EXPANSION.** Continue to expand the boundaries of Town Park properties where and when possible and appropriate, to include important nearby natural areas and to create new hiking trails for education and recreational purposes, as well as new active recreational opportunities where feasible.

- INDEX OF OPEN SPACES.** Continuously update the index of open spaces, publicly or privately owned, and expand the Index to include conservation and like easements. C.G.S. 7-131a(b)

- PUBLIC EDUCATION AND OUTREACH.** Provide information to the public and local commissions on the following subjects: vernal pools; aquatic invertebrates; notable trees; invasive plants; alternatives for landscaping; fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides; migratory birds; docks and their ecological impacts; phragmites control.

- NATURAL HISTORY TOUR.** Conduct an annual tour of the natural history of the town to orient municipal agencies, residents, and the public to the locations and relationships of Old Saybrook’s natural environment.

- WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN.** Formulate a watershed management plan. C.G.S. 7-131a(b)

- STORMWATER MANAGEMENT.** Address EPA Phase II Stormwater needs for the town of Old Saybrook. Partner with WPCA and other relevant commissions to implement.

ARB	BOS	CC	EDC	HMC	IWWC	HDC	PC	PRC	WPCA	ZBA	ZC
	●	●	●				●	●	●		
	●	●					●	●			
			●								
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			●								
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			●				●				●

Municipal Improvements, Programs, and Standards, continued

- ❑ **COASTAL AND RIVER VIEW PROTECTION.** Encourage development to enhance existing public vistas, especially across marshes, the Connecticut River and Long Island Sound. Discourage inappropriate development and tree removal practices that negatively affect the Connecticut River viewshed from land as well as from the river. Provide for scenic easements and height restrictions of new structures where appropriate.

- ❑ **LAND USE REGULATIONS.** Identify the information requirements of Old Saybrook Land Use commissions to incorporate conservation and natural resource protection into their decisions. Gather or create tools for Planning, Zoning, Harbor Management, and Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commissions and the WPCA. Recommend natural resource consideration in regulations.

- ❑ **SPECIAL EXCEPTIONS FOR OPEN SPACE SUBDIVISIONS.** Update the zoning regulations to require application of the Open Space Subdivision throughout the entire northern half of Old Saybrook as an alternative to conventional subdivisions throughout the town, to create incentives to its application, and to reduce barriers that have typically deterred developers from its use.

- ❑ **ADVISORY CONSERVATION REPORTS.** Make recommendations for conservation to municipal agencies regulating proposed land changes and development. C.G.S. 7-131a(b)

- ❑ **SMART GROWTH.** Make every effort to influence the design of proposed development to conserve land and resources by advocating natural vegetation and buffering of wetlands and watercourses, native landscaping and greenery, reduction of impervious surfaces (NEMO principles), pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly transportation systems, and against vehicular dependence.

	ARB	BOS	CC	EDC	HMC	IWWC	HDC	PC	PRC	WPCA	ZBA	ZC
COASTAL AND RIVER VIEW PROTECTION	●		●				●	●			●	●
LAND USE REGULATIONS		●	●		●	●	●	●		●	●	●
SPECIAL EXCEPTIONS FOR OPEN SPACE SUBDIVISIONS						●		●				●
ADVISORY CONSERVATION REPORTS											●	
SMART GROWTH	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

Cultural & Historical Resources



ISSUES FOR THE NEXT DECADE

Within this Plan's context of preserving and enhancing Old Saybrook's small town, New England character, cultural and historical resources occupy a primary role in the Goals, Policies, Programs, and Standards, which further this core concept. These valuable resources include the many cultural and historic landmarks in the town, the remaining open land that the town has begun to protect in perpetuity through acquisition and conservation easements, and the Architectural Review Board's stewardship of the overall aesthetic appearance of the town's future development. Stewardship of the town's cultural and historical resources and support of future cultural and artistic opportunities will go a long way toward protecting and enhancing what it is we love about Old Saybrook.

As in 1990, the core issue of the Plan of Conservation & Development is reflected in Old Saybrook's ongoing efforts to face the question of how to retain its small town, New England character, including its distinctive cultural and historic past and resources, while still managing to continue as a viable commercial center. Historic preservation is important to any town that wishes to provide an attractive and interesting place, in which its citizens may live, as well as attract tourists and businesses to support its economy. In the spirit of the 1990

Plan, Old Saybrook needs to continue to retain, restore, and readapt historic properties. This helps to define its character and enables the Town to pass on a source of community pride.

Cultural and Historic Sites

Old Saybrook was founded in 1635, one of the earliest settlements in Connecticut. The community has a wealth of historic buildings and cultural resources worthy of preservation. Since 1990, the increasingly important issue of character preservation has been elevated to priority status.

Recent initiatives have resulted from public debates over the preservation of the Main Street School and the concern over a private developer's demolition of The Castle at Cornfield Point and extensive development of the site. Town referendum and zone changes have protected both buildings and sites from complete transformation thus far. In 1997, the Old Saybrook Historic Society raised the funds to construct a new archive building on Main Street. These efforts attest to the recognition of these historical and cultural resources as being an important part of the fabric of the town.

DESIGNATIONS SINCE ADOPTION OF THE 1990 PLAN

The State and National Registries of Historic Sites have awarded designation to several properties since June of 1990. New properties include:

National Historic Register

Railroad Switching Station,
at Ft. Saybrook Monument Park May 1992

State Historic Register

Old Saybrook Main Street School June 1998
George W. Beach House, "The Castle"
at Cornfield Point March 1999

PLANNING FOR THE NEXT DECADE

Goals

- Preserve unique historical resources that help to focus attention on Old Saybrook's historic past.
- Sustain present commercial economic viability without detriment to the town's historic structures and small town New England character.
- Continue to promote the historical and cultural resources of the community and to build support for local historic preservation efforts.
- Maintain the flavor and character of the Town by monitoring development and encouraging developers to incorporate design features compatible with New England style architecture into their plans.

Policies

- Continue to encourage the preservation and registration of historic buildings in the commercial areas of town through adaptive reuse, rather than demolition or transfer of the structure.
- Encourage preservation of structures important to the character of the town by establishing a review procedure before demolition or removal of structures.
- Continue to assure that development activity involving historic sites incorporates design and landscaping features in keeping with the historic character of the site.
- Continue to provide Town support for promotion of its cultural history. Whenever possible, use historic sites for community events.
- Consider Town acquisition of private historic structures to prevent inappropriate alteration or demolition.
- Encourage property owners adjacent to sites important to the cultural history of Old Saybrook to develop in a manner that is complementary rather than detrimental to the character of the site.
- Encourage developers to build structures that are consistent with the small-town New England character and style of architecture.

- Initiate and support activities that educate the public on the importance of aesthetics, artifacts, local history, and culture, and their impact on quality of life in Old Saybrook, thereby cultivating pride and the desire to protect our historical and architectural heritage.

Municipal Improvements, Programs, and Standards

The Plan recommends implementation of the following actions with priorities, resources and responsibilities coordinated among the appropriate Town agencies, including the Architectural Review Board (ARB), Board of Selectmen (BOS), Conservation Commission (CC), Economic Development Commission (EDC), Harbor Management Commission (HMC), Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commission (IWWC), North Cove Historic District Commission (NCHDC), Planning Commission (PC), Parks & Recreation Commission (PRC), Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA), Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA), and Zoning Commission (ZC).

- DEMOLITION DELAY ORDINANCE.** Develop a demolition delay ordinance that would require review of proposed demolition of historic structures and structures important to the character of Old Saybrook.
- ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE PLANS.** Identify areas of potential archaeological significance and require a survey of historic and prehistoric resources as part of the development review process for such sites.
- HISTORIC SITE PLANS.** Develop standards to promote the preservation and enhancement of historic structures and structures important to the character of Old Saybrook. Standards should encourage site design which enhances the character of historic sites, including appropriate buffering, setbacks, scale, landscaping, location of parking and access, lighting and signage.
- HISTORIC VIEWSHED EASEMENTS.** Support easements in order to protect the view of historic sites and structures.
- COMPATIBILITY STANDARDS.** Develop standards for new construction in order to encourage more of an architectural blend and compatibility with existing style and character of the Town.

	ARB	BOS	CC	EDC	HMC	IWWC	NCHDC	PC	PRC	WPCA	ZBA	ZC
<input type="checkbox"/> DEMOLITION DELAY ORDINANCE.	●			●			●				●	●
<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE PLANS.	●		●					●				●
<input type="checkbox"/> HISTORIC SITE PLANS.	●			●			●					●
<input type="checkbox"/> HISTORIC VIEWSHED EASEMENTS.	●		●		●		●	●			●	●
<input type="checkbox"/> COMPATIBILITY STANDARDS.	●						●					●

Transportation



One of the reasons for Old Saybrook's historical position as a center for commercial activity is a transportation network dominated by the intersection of several major transportation systems – Interstate 95, Route 9, Route 1, the rail corridor, the Connecticut River, and Long Island Sound. These networks, particularly Interstate 95, play an important role in the desirability of Old Saybrook for all classes of development, including commercial, industrial, and residential.

ISSUES FOR THE NEXT DECADE

As the town continues to develop, traffic congestion increasingly occurs on its road system. In the past, Plan of Development policies called for the expansion of the roadways to accommodate the increase in traffic. As many residents will attest, the widening of roadways in Old Saybrook has not lessened the congestion. Increased development brings additional traffic to fill those widened roadways. Congestion has become particularly difficult on Main Street and Route 1 during summer months when the town's population almost triples. Heavy interstate traffic or accidents exacerbate this problem when hundreds of vehicles access Route 1 in an attempt to bypass interstate congestion.

One particular Program Recommendation from the 1990 Plan – to widen Route 1 to four lanes throughout the entire town -- illustrates a change in today's philosophy of transportation planning. Although widened to as many as five lanes in places,

Route 1 remains two lanes from the Oyster River to the Westbrook town line. Seemingly appropriate at that time, this recommendation runs counter to the overall policy of maintaining Old Saybrook's small town character. An alternative approach, supported by this updated Plan, would be to limit development to uses that will not create significant traffic increases that would necessitate such widening.

“Smart Growth” is a process that incorporates many principles and practices that can provide relief from gridlock on our transportation network. Some aspects of smart growth include: reinvestment and revitalization of inner suburbs, mixed-use development, preservation of open space, and investment in transportation systems that alleviate congestion and connect developed and developing places. Traffic congestion not only has a deleterious effect on moving people and goods, but makes it difficult for businesses to find workers within a reasonable

commuting distance. It also takes a toll on our air and water resources. Connecting new transportation investments to a smart growth pattern is essential to achieving long-term economic growth and sustainability and improved quality of life.

According to the information provided by the NEMO (Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials) Project, two-thirds of all impervious coverage is automobile-related. As a pilot town for the NEMO Project, Old Saybrook is committed to incorporating the principles of stormwater management into its Plan and to implement such as opportunities arise. The NEMO Project recommends the following policies:

Concerns about Non-Point Source Pollution

Old Saybrook should revise its subdivision and road standards so that “improvements” adequately accommodate the level of service necessary for the function – residential, commercial, industrial – and no more. Those standards are pavement type, sub-base specifications, road length and width, sidewalks, curbs, swales and street trees. Local roads can be narrow, designed to follow natural contours, and drain to swales rather than curbs. These features produce functional roads while promoting infiltration of stormwater runoff. Policies regarding sidewalks should limit their location to only where needed. Excessive setbacks of buildings to create front yards produce long impervious driveways and, therefore, increase stormwater runoff.

Old Saybrook should emphasize investment in mass transit, as well as alternative transportation, such as pedestrian and bike trails. Many parking standards are based on peak utilization periods, such as the week before

Christmas, and, consequently, many spaces are not utilized for most of the year. Parking utilization surveys would determine if present zoning requirements for parking are excessive. The benefits of landscaped and porous parking lots as natural filters and pleasant visual alternatives to seas of macadam and concrete should be promoted. In addition, reviews should be conducted on the water quality impact of local maintenance practices on roads and parking areas.

Utilizing NEMO principles, zoning regulations, traffic studies, and encouraging mass transit are not only important for quality of life, small town character, and environmental issues, but the economy of Old Saybrook and its increasing emphasis on tourism. Good traffic flow and enjoyable alternatives to the private automobile are necessary to encourage a growing source of interest in and revenue for Old Saybrook. Safe, attractive, and efficient walkways, bike paths, and waterways are important methods of transportation for those without access to private cars or who choose sightseeing and a slower paced mode of travel. To accomplish economic development goals and fully realize Old Saybrook's potential as a vital, prosperous attraction to visitors, a more comprehensive transportation plan for access to and transit between tourist areas must be developed.

The Connecticut Transportation Strategy Board (TSB) created five regional Transportation Investment Area (TIA) committees organized around the major transportation corridors within the State. The TIA committees were charged with preparing an Initial Corridor Plan for submission to the TSB by November 15, 2001. Old Saybrook land use agencies should refer to, understand, and support its principles and projects as issues and opportunities arise.

Road Systems

BOSTON POST ROAD (U.S. ROUTE 1)

In Old Saybrook, Route 1 exists as a four-lane road from the Middlesex Turnpike/Mill Rock Road East intersection through to Staples. It remains two lanes from the Mill Rock Road East intersection east, and from Staples, west. Within the last ten years, most Route 1 improvements have taken place in the area of the roadway between Main Street west to Lynde Street. Traffic volume on Route 1, even during winter months, can create a level of service at uncontrolled intersections that is poor to unacceptable.

MAIN STREET (CONNECTICUT ROUTE 154)

Main Street is the heart and epitome of Old Saybrook's character. It is unusual in that it exists as a four-lane roadway, including the brick median strip. Substantial space in the parking areas outside of the travel portion of the roadway provides sufficient area for vehicle maneuvering prior to merging into traffic, except for the area south of Maynard Road near St. John's Church. During summer months, the increased traffic volumes can cause significant congestion and potentially dangerous mixes of pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

Parking on Main Street

"Shared" parking exists on Main Street behind Walt's Market and Hallisey's Pharmacy in the area of Saybrook Cinema. With the construction of CVS in the old Malloy's structure, including a rear parking area, additional parking has been made

available in that area of Main Street. More is needed, however. On the West Side, the shallow nature of lots occupying Main Street, limit the amount of rear lot space available for parking as well. One shared lot that exists in an optimum location and is sufficiently large enough to accommodate general parking needs, is the North Cove Outfitters/Harbor Realty lot across from Huffman Koos Furniture. The large lot at Cinemas Plaza also can and does serve as a general lot for access to many Main Street businesses. In many areas, space limitations make it difficult to construct such parking areas, especially on the East Side of Main Street.

MIDDLESEX TURNPIKE (CONNECTICUT ROUTE 154)

From Mill Rock Road East north to Essex, Route 154 exists as a two-lane road. Properties located adjacent to Route 154 through this corridor are zoned as various classes of commercial including the Shopping Center designation in the Route 9 interchange area. Much of the traffic congestion on Route 154 seems to be confined to the stretch from the Route 9 interchange south to the center of Old Saybrook. Turns into and out of Obed Heights Road, the Town Transfer Station, Bokum Road, and Christy Heights can be difficult with lengthy delays.

INDUSTRIAL AREA CONNECTOR ROAD

With the development of the Mill Meadow Industrial Park, a connection has been made from Mill Rock Road through to Ingham Hill Road. The section of the connector that passes through the Industrial Park occupied by Pye & Hogan and others, however, remains private and is often in poor shape, although passable.

EAST/WEST CONNECTORS

Existing development patterns and rugged ridge-type topography with intervening wetland systems makes east west connections difficult. The reason Bokum, Schoolhouse, and Ingham Hill Roads tend to run south is that they follow those ridges. Low areas in between are occupied by wetland systems that are increasingly more difficult to cross with environmental concerns and efforts. In addition, the Valley Railroad ROW separates Bokum from areas to the west. As for connection of Ingham Hill to Schoolhouse, a significant north/south trending wetland system (including Cavanaugh Park off Schoolhouse) separates those areas north through to the property known as the "former Lyons Property." Wetland systems fragment much of the area between the two north-south roads thereby limiting connections from the east to the west. This connection although not the most convenient or efficient for a public route, could be considered for safety reasons and to advance neighborhood interaction.

The area north of the railroad and south of 1-95, linking Ingham Hill Road to Schoolhouse Road seems the most plausible choice to connect major north/south roadways in Old Saybrook in an attempt to bypass Route 1. The large undeveloped tract of land existing to the west nearer Schoolhouse Road is similar to Lookout Hill -with respect to development potential and size (approx. 28 acres). The eastern half, nearer Ingham Hill Road, however, is split into numerous smaller parcels, some developed with residences. There is a twenty-five foot (25') right-of-way off Ingham Hill immediately north of I95 that reaches

several thousand feet into the heart of the Beacon Hill area that would be the logical choice for a road, if available. This land is all zoned as AA-2 Residential.

NORTH/SOUTH CONNECTORS

In Old Saybrook, north-south connections exist via Route 154 to Essex, or Ingham Hill, Schoolhouse, Spencer Plains, or Bokum Roads. The latter four roads are rural country roads and provide connections to Route 1 from hundreds of existing residences and potential subdivision lots. The 1990 Plan and the updated Plan include goals and policies that limit improvements on those roads to safety: including sight lines, curves, and hills. The new Town Ordinance for the Designation of Scenic Roads was developed to accomplish this, thus preserving the character of the road. Effective February 2003, Ingham Hill Road was designated as a scenic road. An application to recognize Schoolhouse Road as a scenic road under the new ordinance is pending.

Country Road Improvements

In 1997, the town attempted to undertake an improvement program on Schoolhouse Road as recommended in the 1990 Plan of Development. When taken to a referendum vote, however, residents resoundingly voted down the item citing that improving the road by widening and straightening would ruin the character of the country road which was part of Old Saybrook's history. They feared improvements would lead to higher speeds and more danger to vehicular and pedestrian traffic, despite plans to include a sidewalk near the Town Park. If a connection is made to Ingham Hill Road, improvement issues will arise with respect to that country road as

well. Residents have demonstrated that they feel the same way about improving Ingham Hill and Bokum Road as they feel about improving Schoolhouse Road. Thus, it is appropriate to balance necessary improvements for safety reasons with the application of the Scenic Road Ordinance.

Elm Street Underpass

Although no direct work has been accomplished on the Elm Street underpass since the adoption of the 1990 Plan, a recent culvert replacement on Ingham Hill Road north of the railroad overpass has improved the flooding characteristics in the area of the underpass. The build-out of the Mill Meadow Industrial Park since the adoption of the 1990 Plan has allowed cut through traffic from Mill Rock Road East, thereby increasing the amount of traffic passing underneath the flood-prone overpass. The potential for significant residential development in the northern part of Town also presents the potential for significant future traffic increases through the area.

MAJOR INTERSECTIONS

The Route 1/Main Street intersection leads the list as the intersection that is most impacted by the ever-increasing volume of traffic. Discussions held between a recent developer, the Town, and the Connecticut Department of Transportation suggested that not much could be done to significantly improve the level of service at this intersection. Limitations on improvement include nonconforming and approved

structures located in close proximity to the rights-of-way and previous road expansion, which leave little room for further travel path expansion without taking it by eminent domain.

Most other intersections within the Route 1 corridor have been redesigned and reconstructed within the last ten years including Route 1/Elm Street, Route 1/Lynde Street, Route 1/Ingham Hill Road, Route 1/Schoolhouse Road, and Route 1/Spencer Plains Road. Traffic lights and/or turning lanes have also been added in front of developments such as Staples. Discussions between the Town, the Connecticut River Estuary Regional Planning Agency, and the Connecticut Department of Transportation were held concerning potential improvements to the Route 1/Stage Road intersection as well.

Public Transit

Efforts to improve public transit opportunities were enhanced within the last ten years with the replacement of the "S" Route bus from Old Saybrook to New Haven with the "Shoreline Shuttle". The replacement occurred because of increased regulation requiring better and more convenient service for the disabled. In its present form, a smaller van travels along Route 1 from Old Saybrook to Madison, making both scheduled and "flagged" stops in various locations along the route. At its terminus, in Madison, the Shuttle connects with a full size bus that completes the journey to New Haven. The Shoreline Shuttle runs both east and west and makes numerous trips every day with the exception of Sundays.

PLANNING FOR THE NEXT DECADE

Goals

- Development which will not significantly increase traffic congestion nor necessitate the widening of local roads, particularly Route 1 and Route 154.
- Increased level of service of intersections affected by nearby development.
- Improvements that reduce accident frequency and severity.
- Road and intersection design independent of development to accommodate traffic in a more efficient manner while increasing the level of service.
- Improved traffic circulation and safety for vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists throughout town, with special focus on Main Street and the entire Village Center, and the use of enforcement to optimize crosswalk safety.
- Transportation alternatives to the personal automobile including the Shoreline Shuttle, the Shoreline East, the Old Saybrook Trolley, bus transportation routes, and other less traditional methods of transportation.
- Municipal roads and parking areas that reflect the NEMO principles, such as reduced or limited impervious surfaces on municipal properties and roads to reduce the risk of degradation to water resources.

Policies

- To be familiar with and support the policies and projects of the Connecticut Transportation Strategy Board and Southeast Corridor Transportation Investment Area Committee
- To encourage developers to use NEMO techniques in their parking, driveway, and street plans.
- To improve traffic circulation in residential, commercial and industrial areas, and in areas accessing the Interstate 95 / Route 9 interchanges.
- To promote circulation management by limiting dead-end streets and connecting subdivisions where appropriate.

- To seek opportunities for east-west connector roads to alleviate traffic congestion on Route 1.
- To cooperate with private developers to share financial responsibility for upgrading state and local roads and nearby impacted intersections to accommodate development.
- To encourage developers to consider employing traffic calming strategies on neighborhood streets when pedestrian and driver safety is best served by slowing vehicular traffic.
- To promote stormwater management techniques that use the natural landscape when designing transportation projects.
- To encourage reliable public transportation from marine transient areas such as Saybrook Point and Ferry Point throughout peak tourist months to decrease traffic and promote economic development for our commercial areas.
- To pursue the orderly development of docks to maintain a clear flow of boating traffic and maintain the visual aesthetics along our waterways.
- To support regional transportation goals, including use of: commuter parking lots and commuter buses, vanpools, and other ridesharing programs.
- To promote pervious overflow parking alternatives for large developments that require increased parking yet utilize this parking mainly during holiday and tourist seasons (similar to Westfarms Mall over flow pervious parking.)
- To review State Highway projects to evaluate impact upon the Town and to identify opportunities for improvement in the local circulation system.

Municipal Improvements, Programs, and Standards

The Plan recommends implementation of the following actions with priorities, resources and responsibilities coordinated among the appropriate Town agencies, including the Architectural Review Board (ARB), Board of Selectmen (BOS), Conservation Commission (CC), Economic Development Commission (EDC), Harbor Management Commission (HMC), Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commission (IWWC), North Cove Historic District Commission (NCHDC), Planning Commission (PC), Parks & Recreation Commission (PRC), Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA), Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA), and Zoning Commission (ZC).

- TRANSPORTATION PLAN.** Initiate and implement a transportation plan for Old Saybrook.
- ROAD CONDITION INVENTORY.** Maintain an inventory of road conditions, identify road improvements needs, and categorize needs across town and over time.
- SCENIC ROAD DESIGNATIONS.** Use the Scenic Road Ordinance to maintain community character, control traffic, and create opportunities to limit impervious surfaces.
- RURAL ROAD UPGRADES.** Undertake only those improvements to the Town’s rural roads necessary to assure safety and relieve congestion to retain the roads’ scenic character.
- TRAFFIC CALMING.** Consider traffic calming strategies where appropriate and feasible on Town roads, in rural community centers, and historic and other special districts.
- INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS.** Improve traffic characteristics at key intersections and roadways, including but not limited to the Main Street/North Main Street and Route 1 intersection, the North Main Street/Stage Road area, the Route 1 area from Stage Road to Main Street, and the Route 166 and Route 1 intersection as the level of service deteriorates due to increased volume. Improvements include realignment, construction of left turn lanes, and installation of phased and timed lights.

	ARB	BOS	CC	EDC	HMC	IWWC	NCHDC	PC	PRC	WPCA	ZBA	ZC
<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION PLAN.		●						●				
<input type="checkbox"/> ROAD CONDITION INVENTORY.		●										
<input type="checkbox"/> SCENIC ROAD DESIGNATIONS.	●	●	●					●				
<input type="checkbox"/> RURAL ROAD UPGRADES.		●						●				
<input type="checkbox"/> TRAFFIC CALMING.		●							●			
<input type="checkbox"/> INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS.		●										●

Municipal Improvements, Programs, and Standards, continued

- FRONTAGE ROAD.** Develop a connector road within the area north of the railroad and south of 1-95, linking Ingham Hill Road to Schoolhouse Road, enabling access to economic development areas from the 1-95 ramp at Elm Street.

- CONNECTOR ROADS.** Create east-west connectors north of 1-95 between Spencer Plains Road and Schoolhouse Road to Ingham Hill Road to allow for better cross-town movement. Additional rights-of-way required should be obtained or established through either subdivision approval, or, where that is not possible, through Town acquisition.

- MILL MEADOW INDUSTRIAL PARKWAY.** Develop a public connector road through the industrial area between Elm Street and Mill Rock Road.

- ELM STREET UNDERPASS APPROACH.** Improve approaches to the Elm Street underpass as adjacent or nearby land is developed.

- ELM-INGHAM HILL INTERCHANGE.** Undertake a full interchange on Elm Street that would reduce widening demands and bring people to the central business district.

- TOWN CENTER PARKING PROGRAM.** Seek opportunities for shared off-street parking for Main Street; expand on-street parking areas on Main Street; introduce parking signs.

- PARA-TRANSIT PROGRAM.** Support Estuary Transit District services including para-transit services and the medical outpatient transportation program.

- TRAFFIC FORECASTING METHOD.** Expand the travel forecasting process to better reflect the dynamic relationship between land use and transportation projects.

ARB	BOS	CC	EDC	HMC	IWVC	NCHDC	PC	PRC	WPCA	ZBA	ZC
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	●						●				
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	●		●				●				
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Municipal Improvements, Programs, and Standards, continued

- TRANSPORTATION & LAND USE STUDY.** Change zoning requirements in high traffic areas to discourage traffic-producing development while encouraging industry consistent with the Economic Development goals and policies.
- RESIDENTIAL IMPERVIOUS SURFACE STANDARDS.** Review regulations for driveway length and materials and front yard setbacks to mitigate impacts of stormwater runoff.
- PARKING STANDARDS.** Determine whether zoning parking requirements are excessive.
- RAILWAY RIDERSHIP PROGRAM.** Increase the frequency of railroad service stops to Old Saybrook and extend Metro-North railroad service into Old Saybrook.
- PEDESTRIAN TRAIN-TO-SHOPPING LINK.** Connect train station to shopping center.
- STREETSCAPE ENHANCEMENT.** Recognize the value of streetscape, which provides an important visual perception for motorists traveling through town, and develop right-of-way improvement plans and incorporate them whenever an opportunity arises.
- LANDSCAPING PLAN STANDARDS.** Strengthen regulations for street trees and landscaping after a development, and require specifics in the original plans and application.
- SIDEWALK PLAN.** Review sidewalk regulations; plan to improve pedestrian safety.
- BICYCLE ROUTE PLAN.** Develop a town-wide bicycle route plan, implement it as the opportunity arises; require developers to install bicycle paths and racks where appropriate.
- PEDESTRIAN CROSSWALK PROGRAM.** Increase crosswalks on Route 1 and improve safety and convenience for pedestrians and bicycles.

	ARB	BOS	CC	EDC	HMC	IW/C	NGHDC	PC	PRC	WPCA	ZBA	ZC
<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION & LAND USE STUDY. Change zoning requirements in high traffic areas to discourage traffic-producing development while encouraging industry consistent with the Economic Development goals and policies.				●								●
<input type="checkbox"/> RESIDENTIAL IMPERVIOUS SURFACE STANDARDS. Review regulations for driveway length and materials and front yard setbacks to mitigate impacts of stormwater runoff.		●						●				●
<input type="checkbox"/> PARKING STANDARDS. Determine whether zoning parking requirements are excessive.				●								●
<input type="checkbox"/> RAILWAY RIDERSHIP PROGRAM. Increase the frequency of railroad service stops to Old Saybrook and extend Metro-North railroad service into Old Saybrook.		●						●				
<input type="checkbox"/> PEDESTRIAN TRAIN-TO-SHOPPING LINK. Connect train station to shopping center.	●	●		●				●				●
<input type="checkbox"/> STREETSCAPE ENHANCEMENT. Recognize the value of streetscape, which provides an important visual perception for motorists traveling through town, and develop right-of-way improvement plans and incorporate them whenever an opportunity arises.	●	●		●				●				
<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPING PLAN STANDARDS. Strengthen regulations for street trees and landscaping after a development, and require specifics in the original plans and application.	●	●	●					●				●
<input type="checkbox"/> SIDEWALK PLAN. Review sidewalk regulations; plan to improve pedestrian safety.		●	●					●	●			
<input type="checkbox"/> BICYCLE ROUTE PLAN. Develop a town-wide bicycle route plan, implement it as the opportunity arises; require developers to install bicycle paths and racks where appropriate.		●						●	●			
<input type="checkbox"/> PEDESTRIAN CROSSWALK PROGRAM. Increase crosswalks on Route 1 and improve safety and convenience for pedestrians and bicycles.	●	●		●							●	●

Water Resources



Old Saybrook is uniquely located where the Connecticut River reaches Long Island Sound after flowing south for a distance of four hundred ten (410) miles. The town's topography consists of hilly uplands in the north and western parts of town and a relatively flat coastal plain in the south and east. Rainfall collects into streams in the ravines of the northern hills, and the streams broaden into wider wetlands and streambelt systems as they move south and east. An extensive system of tidal marshes exists, in many places behind sandy barrier beaches, where the streams meet the Connecticut River and Long Island Sound.

ISSUES FOR THE NEXT DECADE

Old Saybrook consists of a number of diverse watershed areas. The town's largest drainage system is the Oyster River Watershed, which includes about six and one-half (6½) square miles – more than a third of the land area of the Town. Most of the surface runoff from the northern part of the watershed drains under the railroad just west of the Elm Street underpass. This low area is subject to flooding from both upstream runoff and from tidal flooding. Other drainage areas north of the railroad include a portion of the area along upper Schoolhouse Road, which drains to Trout Brook in Westbrook. An area along the northern boundary drains to the Mud River and South Cove in Essex. A smaller watershed drains through the Otter Cove area. The Obed Heights Reservoir drains to Ragged Rock Creek and into the Connecticut River. South of the railroad, several smaller creeks flow directly to the Sound.

Under the 1969 Connecticut Tidal Wetlands Act, the State regulates an extensive system of tidal wetlands – approximately 1,335 acres – along the shores of the town's rivers and the Sound. Tidal wetlands have many functions, most notably as the most biologically productive habitats in the world providing food and a home for a great diversity of marine plants and animals. The multination Ramsar Treaty designates the wetlands along the lower Connecticut River banks as *Wetlands of International Significance for Waterfowl Habitat*. Additionally, tidal wetlands serve as filters for silt and pollutants that would otherwise reach the waters of the rivers and the Sound. They absorb wave energy from coastal storms and help reduce flood damage. Lastly, Old Saybrook's tidal wetlands are an essential component of the scenic character of the town, defining neighborhoods and providing scenic views all along the coast.

Under authority created by the 1972 Inland Wetlands &

Watercourses Act, the town's Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commission regulates inland wetlands and watercourses. These freshwater wetlands exist throughout town along the upland streams and at the landward edges of tidal wetlands. Inland wetlands perform many of the same functions as tidal wetlands, including provision of habitat, water purification, and control of flooding and soil erosion. Although less visible than the tidal wetlands, inland wetlands add to the diversity and rural character of the town.

The 1990 Plan of Development includes discussions of the town's abundant water resources, including coastal resources, and addresses topics such as protection of groundwater and the drinking water supply, storm drainage, and sewage disposal. The 1994 Conservation Plan, prepared and adopted by the Old Saybrook Conservation Commission, discusses the town's water resources and includes recommendations for their protection. During the past decade, Old Saybrook paid a significant amount of attention to water quality issues. This Plan of Conservation & Development incorporates many of the recommendations from the two earlier documents but also includes substantial modifications to reflect the most modern findings in this field of study.

Old Saybrook is a part of a recent pilot educational program and associated website called "*Focus on the Coast*" through its partnership with the University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension System's NEMO (Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials) Project, the CT DEP's Office of Long Island Sound Programs, and The Nature Conservancy's Coastal Marine Program. This website provides an important statewide tool for coastal resource managers and local decision-makers. (See www.nemo.uconn.edu.) The Land Use Department hosts workshops and solicits liaisons from the

various commissions for on-going educational programs that result in initiatives to protect and improve the quality of Old Saybrook's water resources.

Coastal Management

Old Saybrook's shoreline is approximately sixteen (16.3) miles long, running along the Connecticut River, Long Island Sound, and their points and coves. Unlike the estuaries of many other large rivers, the area at the Connecticut River mouth never grew into a major city due to the constantly shifting shallow sandbar that characterizes the river entrance and limits the passage of large vessels. Although this natural feature limits development, the town's coastal location is the central factor in the town's land use patterns. Throughout the town's modern history, the Connecticut River mouth is both a strategic location for early waterborne transportation and shipping and a barrier to land-based travel. Until the State finally constructed permanent bridges for automobiles and trains from Old Saybrook to Old Lyme, major traffic along the eastern seaboard traveled inland, away from the coast. Access to the area for seasonal recreation now contributes to the seasonal swell in population of the densely settled beach communities and supports the local economy.

In 1978, the General Assembly adopted the Connecticut Coastal Management Act as part of a nationwide effort to protect and make wise use of coastal resources. Under the Act, the coastal boundary of Old Saybrook includes the portion of the Town within a continuous line delineated on the landward extent of the 100-year frequency coastal flood zone, or one thousand (1,000) feet inland from the landward edge of mean high water or tidal wetlands, whichever is farthest inland. Land within the coastal boundary covers about fifty-two percent (52%) of the area of the Town. Approximately, two-

thirds of Old Saybrook's homes are within in the coastal area.

In 1983, pursuant to this Act, the Old Saybrook Planning Commission prepared and adopted its Municipal Coastal Program (Development Program 4.13) for its coastal area. Identifying, evaluating, and planning for coastal resources, as the Coastal Management Act defines them, addresses the coastal area in a comprehensive manner. The Municipal Coastal Program includes an extensive discussion of coastal resources, issues, and recommendations in twenty (20) designated coastal areas. While this Plan of Conservation & Development does not reference those specific coastal areas, it does incorporate and update parts of the Municipal Coastal Program. This Plan builds upon those recommendations and information and events since 1983, however the 1983 MCP still stands as the source inventory and analysis on the various coastal areas in Old Saybrook since the MCP contains more in-depth information on coastal management.

The Planning Commission prepared and adopted the 1983 Municipal Coastal Program as Development Program 4.13, which identifies a series of issues that face the town within the coastal boundary area. The following is a brief summary and status of these issues that require on-going attention.

PROTECTION OF THE UNDEVELOPED SHOREFRONT

Tidal Wetlands Ecology

There is a deeper understanding of tidal wetlands and their importance due to laws regarding tidal wetlands now in effect for well over a decade. The

resulting standards for protection of tidal wetlands strengthen and supplement restoration programs, overseen by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection. Understanding the function of tidal wetlands with respect to flood management, water quality, and wildlife habitat bolsters protection efforts. Questions that exist regarding the role that ground water contamination may play in degradation of tidal marsh habitat spurs further investigation of the impacts of: stormwater discharge, sea level rise, the spread of the non-native, invasive, marsh grass "phragmites", wetland filling and "shoreline hardening", polluted runoff, and ground water contamination.

Beach Erosion

As noted above, the Town minimizes and prevents the impacts of beach erosion in the area of the two Town beaches – Town Beach and Harvey's Beach. Specifically, the CTDEP and the USCOAE permit the repair of beach groins that stabilize the beaches against severe erosion. The Town deposits sand to buffer landward areas from erosion and to provide recreational opportunities.

USE OF THE DEVELOPED SHOREFRONT

Public Access to the Water

This concept emphasizes the aesthetic qualities of the shore and the desire to make the waterfront available to as many people as possible as an amenity, often to mitigate non- water-dependent uses. Proposals include promotion of the wise use and development of Saybrook Point, improvement of pedestrian, bike,

vehicle, and fishing safety on the South Cove Causeway, and augmenting opportunities for use of Old Saybrook's coast and coastal waters. Recent reconstruction of the South Cove Causeway by the State DOT resolves many of the safety issues existing at the time of preparation of the Municipal Coastal Plan. Current efforts to increase public access include acquisition of access points through subdivision exaction and coastal site plan reviews. Other efforts include the inventory and reassertion of public access to town road endings and increasing public awareness of these locations.

Swimming Facilities at the Town Beach

A major policy in Municipal Coastal Management is the preference for water-dependent uses along the shoreline, consistent with the Coastal Management Act. Since 1983, efforts to augment opportunities for access to coast and coastal waters have been unsuccessful. The Town recently built new facilities at the Town Beach. Maintenance efforts include the recent reconstruction of the groins at both Town and Harvey's Beach to stabilize the beaches. The Town also conducts beach nourishment (addition of sand to the beach) at Town Beach. It is a high priority to preserve the dynamic form and integrity of the natural beach system.

Shellfishing

Because of cutbacks in State funding, local shellfish commissions and enforcement personnel are often unable to properly monitor

shellfish beds and assure health department standards. These cutbacks result in the closure of local beds, not because of health problems, but because the town is unable to carry out mandated monitoring and testing programs. Despite this, the Town opened Old Saybrook's shellfish beds again in a "conditionally approved area" in late autumn of 2001. The Shellfish Commission and Health Department installed the required demarcation signs and carry out other requirements that the Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Aquaculture impose. The State of Connecticut gave the green light to start the program because the Shellfish Commission firmly commits to water sampling and enforcement of the required regulations. At this time, North Cove, Oyster River wetlands, and the beach off Indiantown and Chalker Beach remain closed to shellfishing. The waters from Fenwick to Cornfield Point to Town Beach are in the conditional area, which the Town monitors for impacts such as rainfall.

Density of Development in the Coastal Area

There is new focus on the density and crowding in the beach areas, primarily due to the DEP's concerns about groundwater quality. The Water Pollution Control Authority is addressing these concerns, and the Town is considering other associated impacts of high-density development. These impacts include demands for services, overburdening of a limited road network (especially in the summer), quality of life issues, neighborhood and area aesthetics, and various forms of pollution, such as polluted runoff, exhaust, litter, and yard chemicals. Despite zoning regulations regarding

lot coverage, there is a considerable amount of build-out to maximum bulk capacity, which exacerbates some of the already troublesome impacts of high-density development. Moreover, garages, additions, and new houses that use most of the property contribute to a loss of the beach-cottage character, which residents coin as "squarification" of the shoreline. In 1992, the Town responded to the increase in conversion of seasonal dwelling by updating *An Ordinance Concerning the Winterization of Seasonal Dwellings*. This ordinance requires continual review, as do other regulations since further opportunity exists to protect the coastal areas and their enhancement.

Saybrook Point

Saybrook Point and all of its riverside properties are a center for public activity from fishing to bird watching. Other activities, including concerts, mini-golf, dining, Connecticut River and Long Island Sound boat excursions add to the ambiance and attraction of the site. Municipal Coastal Plan policies and proposals concentrate on preserving and enhancing the public's ability to access and enjoy this unique property while recognizing its limited potential for access expansion except where environmental conditions are favorable.

In 1989, the Town purchased property at Saybrook Point for public use and enjoyment. The Town completed the majority of the renovations and improvements to Saybrook Point, including landscaping, upgraded parking

lot, and conversion of the old *Sand Bar* restaurant to the new Pasbeshauke Pavilion public meeting place. An additional purchase of the Connecticut River Museum property next to the *Dock & Dine* restaurant completes the plan for Saybrook Point. Additional concepts include a municipal pier for transient docking, a fishing pier, and the possible location of the Cornfield Point lightship at a pier at the foot of College Street.

See **Saybrook Point Program** (formerly Development Program 4.14) for further details and recommendations.

Ferry Point

Ferry Point has huge potential for re-development as a vibrant and exciting destination for boaters, tourists, and residents alike by balancing water-dependent uses and multi-uses that support those water activities. Besides boating facilities, the addition of shops, restaurants, housing, entertainment, and public transportation to the town center would greatly enhance the enjoyment and economic growth of the area.

North and South Coves

Both North and South Coves are unique and important natural resources in the town. Old Saybrook has more shoreline than any other town in the state, in part because of the extensive shoreline created by the coves delineating Saybrook Point. These coves provide refuge for a wide array of wildlife species – breeding ducks in the summer and wintering ducks, concentrations of finfish

(including nursery areas important to protect young fish from predators), aquatic insects, and crustaceans (such as the much sought after blue crab), and turtles. These coves are of international significance as a part of the lower Connecticut River wetlands.

In 1996, the State Department of Transportation improved the usability and safety of the South Cove Causeway for pedestrians, bicycles, fishing, and vehicles through reconstruction of the causeway (a Municipal Coastal Program goal). In 1997, the State completed the walkway between the entrance to the Borough of Fenwick and the southern terminus of the causeway. Now, there is a continuous access way from the Borough of Fenwick up to the Town's property at Saybrook Point. The new causeway raises some environmental concerns about the enlarging and raising of the three bridges. Although never studied, there is some concern that the restrictive nature of the causeway restricts tidal flow into and circulation of waters within South Cove. The accumulation of silt may require further research to determine the necessary type and amount of maintenance and refreshment of the cove.

The Coast Guard designates North Cove as a "harbor of refuge" for use by passing boaters. Transient boaters cruising the Connecticut River or Long Island Sound may use the vacant moorings for a maximum of seventy-two (72)

hours. Currently, silt deposits within the cove make it unsuitable for deep draft vessels to use the moorings, however plans are underway to secure permits from the U.S. Corps of Engineers to begin dredging. The Town estimates completion before 2005. Currently, the Harbor Management Commission is testing core samples to proceed with offshore dumping, if suitable. Within North Cove, there is an area of underutilized waterfront property of interest – the former Town landfill. The Municipal Coastal Program suggests that this site may provide an opportunity for waterfront access.

Additional Coastal Issues

Harbor Management

The Harbor Management Commission recently completed Old Saybrook's first Harbor Management Plan, which details how the Town wishes to use and protect its coastal and riverfront properties. In addition to describing the harbor, the Plan sets forth goals for its management and policies for public health and safety, environmental quality, harbor administration and coordination, water use and navigation, waterfront development, access and land use. The Plan emphasizes increasing coordination with the rest of the Town's boards and commissions, as well as promoting awareness and understanding of harbor management concerns.

See **Harbor Management Plan** for further details and recommendations.

Economic Development

Old Saybrook's water resources are central to its economy in terms of its tourism. The Town is progressively beginning to make better use of its proximity to such resources by property purchases and renovations at Saybrook Point, upgrades to the causeway, and plans for North Cove, and eventual redevelopment of Ferry Point. Revitalization and redevelopment needs to take place to attract tourists while maintaining a balance between a healthy economy, protection of water resources and wildlife habitat, and traffic flow. The Town should increase public access without degrading water quality, destroying views, and impinging on residents and property rights. A good focal point for improvement is the marinas and docking areas to attract more transient boaters. A zoning review might suggest expanding uses to allow cabanas or "boatels," as well as other support facilities.

See **Economic Development** section of the Plan of Conservation & Development for further details and recommendations.

Water-Related Transportation

Presently, there are not sufficient transportation facilities to support or encourage an increase in water-borne tourism. Opportunities exist for a shuttle service to provide transportation to shops and restaurants, perhaps moped or bicycle rental shops, a ferry to Long Island, introduction of bikeways, bike racks, and

boardwalks, and a more reliable trolley schedule. The Amtrak railroad bridge is in need of renovation, as its occasional inconsistency affects river traffic and the success of cruises and charter boat operation. The NEMO guidelines should prevail upon the design of any new roadways or parking areas since typically sixty-five percent (65%) of impervious surfaces are transportation-related. The impact tends to occur in the sensitive areas along the banks and coasts.

See the **Transportation** section of the Plan of Conservation & Development for further details and recommendations.

Water Supply

The Connecticut Water Company (the "CWC") supplies drinking water in Old Saybrook by a central public water supply system. The CWC Guilford-Chester Division, a State-regulated public utility, provides service to the portion of town generally south of I-95 or the railroad, but also extends north to include Floral Park, Middlesex Turnpike to the area just south of Route 9, and the Spencer Plain Road area. Houses and buildings in the remainder of town, where most new residential development is occurring, rely on private, on-site wells.

The central water system in Old Saybrook is the eastern leg of an inverted "I" that takes water from a surface supply reservoir in Killingworth. Water feeds southerly to the Kelseytown distribution reservoir in Clinton and down to the Route 1 area, where transmission mains feed west to Guilford and east to Old Saybrook. Wells in several locations supplement the reservoir supply. Pumps raise water to the

Obed Heights storage tank (1.09 million gallons of useable storage volume) for reserve supply and water pressure at an approximate elevation of one hundred forty feet above mean sea level (140' AMSL). Apart from the transmission mains, which are ten to sixteen inches (10"-16") in diameter, the central water distribution lines consist of mains that are two to eight inches (2"-8") in diameter. An eight-inch (8") main is the standard for new installations today. Smaller lines occur primarily in the seasonal beach areas. The Bokum Road well pumps as needed between May and October. The CWC estimates a safe yield of 290,000 gallons per day. Presently, the CWC is seeking permits to expand the capacity of its Killingworth Reservoir by raising the dam height to increase the impoundment area. Expanding the reservoir will disturb existing inland wetlands created by the original construction of the present dam, and State and Federal permitting authorities have concerns about the adverse impact on those wetlands. If permits are not forthcoming, the governing entities will require the CWC to expand its water supply wells within the region.

In general, a central water supply system is a preferable means of potable water supply over individual wells in terms of reliable quantity and quality. The Town knows the source, and the CWC may treat as necessary to assure safe consumption. In addition, a public water supply system is more likely to meet fire protection requirements for sufficient supply and water pressure. Under state law, developers or property owners rather than the CWC pay for extension of water service to new areas. Town subdivision regulations now require the developer to connect to public water where water service is available. The 1990 Plan of Development recommends extension of

the public water system, wherever feasible. However, the availability of public water to previously undeveloped areas allows development at a higher density than that possible if separation distances of individual wells from individual septic systems are necessarily included in lot design. The presence of public water would also result in the importation of additional water into a particular area, with possible implications for groundwater levels. Like other manmade alterations to the natural systems of an area, the addition of public water has both benefits and consequences.

In 1985, with assistance from the CWC, the Old Saybrook Zoning Commission established an Aquifer Protection Zone to control land uses located above ground over identified large areas of subsurface water known as aquifers. In 1992, the State established the Aquifer Protection Area Program (C.G.S. 22a-354 et seq.) to identify critical water supply aquifers and protect them from pollution by managing land use. The State of Connecticut designates Aquifer Protection Areas around all wells in stratified drift used by water companies serving over one thousand (1,000) people. The Zoning Commission serves as the local aquifer protection commission, regulating activities within the protection areas that might contaminate groundwater. Water companies conduct detailed mapping of the zone of influence for their public water supply wells, and the State Department of Environmental Protection develops regulations to govern the program. The legislature extended the deadline for development of these state regulations several times amidst controversy over detailed management techniques. The program must necessarily address existing land uses as well as regulating new uses, and runs contrary to the Connecticut practice of "grandfathering" existing uses. The State will not require Towns to begin their program until state regulations are in place.

See *Planning for the Next Decade* in this **Water Resources** section for Goals, Policies, and Municipal Improvement, Programs & Standards pertaining to **Water Supply**.

Wastewater Management

Although water quality issues arise occasionally, groundwater quality improved slightly over the past five years of monitoring by the Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA). Old Saybrook, however, is under pressure from a lawsuit initiated by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), to implement a solution to the alleged ground water contamination existing in areas determined by DEP. The DEP favors a tri-town sewer plant, while the Town's philosophy of sewer avoidance requires alternatives to a Town-wide wastewater treatment facility emptying into the Connecticut River. The Town and the WPCA are working to meet DEP deadlines and to provide an in-depth implementation plan, which is currently under review by the DEP. Efforts made to improve ground water quality include a mandatory septic pump-out program, monitoring groundwater throughout town, mandating system repairs, requiring upgrading of inadequate systems, researching new technology, and providing informational meetings and workshops for residents. Discussion includes purchasing properties to decrease density in beach areas, placing community systems in those areas, and revision of Ordinance 62 regarding winterization of seasonal homes. The DEP is evaluating the town's proposal to build a wastewater treatment facility to serve Chalker Beach, Indian Town, and Saybrook Manor, create a wastewater management district for five other areas, update commercial systems, and develop a

grease trap ordinance for proper disposal in commercial areas.

The key is to avoid a solution that trades non-point source pollution (inadequate in-ground septic systems partially cause these conditions) for a single point source discharge that could lead to a single pollution source (i.e., a treatment plant to abate potential ground water pollution with a single point discharge, like into the Connecticut River). This thinking reflects Old Saybrook's commitment to sewer avoidance as well as to its responsibilities and development of initiatives as a NEMO Pilot Town.

In 1998, the Planning Commission amended its Plan of Conservation & Development to address these issues, and the following incorporates the amendment into this Plan:

BACKGROUND

For more than two decades, Old Saybrook studied and debated the subject of suspected water pollution problems in heavily built areas. The Town currently relies entirely on on-site subsurface septic systems for sewage waste disposal. In the mid-1970s, under order from the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Old Saybrook hired the engineering firm of Malcolm Pirnie Inc., in cooperation with other area towns, to examine alternative solutions. Subsequently, together with the Town of Westbrook, the Town hired the firm of Hayden/Wegman, Consulting Engineers, which completed the "Old Saybrook-Westbrook, Connecticut Joint Study of Wastewater Treatment - Alternatives" in August 1987. These studies concluded that there is no feasible localized solution to significant sewage problems in built-up areas of these two towns. A regional central sewer system was proposed to collect sewage from designated areas of the

towns of Clinton, Westbrook, and Old Saybrook for treatment at an Old Saybrook Plant and subsequent discharge into the Connecticut River. The State proposed a regional sewer authority to operate the system, and the three member towns would share the cost. The 1990 Plan of Development acknowledged the tri-town sewer system as a reality. Plan recommendations focused on limiting the scope of the system to avoid induced development because of sewerage, as well as taking sewer avoidance measures in those areas where not yet deemed necessary.

As the concept of the tri-town sewer system went forward, townspeople in Clinton and Westbrook voted to participate in the project, but Old Saybrook residents voted against Old Saybrook's involvement, citing the high cost, fear of secondary induced development, and potentially negative environmental impacts on the Connecticut River. Some criticized that there was inadequate documentation that a water pollution problem actually existed. The DEP successfully sued the Town for its failure to follow DEP's orders to abate pollution. In a Stipulated Judgment, the parties agreed to allow the Old Saybrook WPCA to submit for DEP approval for alternative solutions to a town-wide water treatment plant.

With engineering consultant Fuss and O'Neill, the Old Saybrook Water Pollution Control Authority is presently conducting additional water testing and examining alternatives to a centralized collection and treatment system. The WPCA prepared a report summarizing the results of groundwater testing and site evaluations throughout Old Saybrook. The report

identifies fifteen areas that the Town is evaluating and ranking relative to groundwater pollution risk.

Groundwater monitoring identifies ammonia, nitrate, and bacteria levels in some areas. The Authority is evaluating both on-site and off-site structural solutions for areas of concern.

At present, most development requires an individual on-site septic system that meets the Connecticut Public Health Code, as administered by the Town Sanitarian. The exception is larger systems receiving over two thousand (2,000) gallons per day of sewage effluent, which must meet the requirements of the Connecticut Department of Health. The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection is responsible for overseeing systems in excess of five thousand (5,000) gallons. Each site must have an adequately designed and appropriately sized septic system plus suitable reserve space for a one hundred percent (100%) replacement of the leaching area. The location and conditions for septic systems and wells must prevent contamination of groundwater. For successful operation, individual disposal systems are highly dependent upon soil characteristics, as well as proper system design, appropriate use, and maintenance. Generally, soils south of the Interstate 95 are highly permeable and rapidly accept sewage effluent. Some areas are excessively well drained or have ground water near the surface, and may not provide for adequate treatment before the effluent reaches groundwater, wetlands, marshes, and tidal inlets. Conditions north of the highway are highly variable – there are significant areas of rock outcrop, steep slopes, and other soil constraints that may limit development.

The DEP expresses concern about the long-term effects of

continued pollutant discharges in densely populated areas. The State defines an area as densely populated if it contains a group of more than twenty-five homes on lots less than one half-acre in size. The Department of Public Health (DPH) acknowledges that at these densities even a properly sited septic system constructed would likely degrade groundwater quality unless significant up-slope watershed areas contribute to the dilution factor. The DPH does not plan to revise the Public Health Code to consider this. Therefore, it is incumbent on the Town to adopt land use policies that incorporate a watershed approach to insure that development does not adversely affect groundwater supplies and coastal and inland water bodies. The Town should consider the use of newer technologies in environmentally sensitive areas that provide higher levels of effluent treatment than traditional leaching systems. The Town is responsible for oversight of advanced treatment systems.

The Water Pollution Control Authority is pursuing a two-pronged program to deal with sewage disposal. While the Authority is examining alternative solutions, it is also developing an aggressive sewer avoidance program. A sewer avoidance program requires that the Town carefully control densities, strongly enforce proper septic system design, and monitor installation, and teach individuals on how to properly maintain existing systems via active public education. By choosing to follow a sewer avoidance program, Old Saybrook can avoid the construction and operation costs of a large municipal sewer system. The sewer avoidance choice means that the Town cannot support intensive concentrations of development.

A major objection to the tri-town sewer plan is the proposal to discharge treated effluent to the Connecticut River. Since introduction of the tri-town plan, many organizations commended the lower Connecticut River for its beauty and significant natural resources – the Ramsar Treaty designated the Connecticut River Estuary as Wetlands of International Significance for Wildlife Habitat under the Ramsar Treaty; the Nature Conservancy named the Lower River as one of its Last Great Places; and the federal government established the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge along the shores of the Connecticut River from its source to its entry into Long Island Sound.

Many people within the region feel concern that the pressure for large-scale development, as evidenced by the large, new, outlet shopping malls permitted by the neighboring towns of Westbrook and Clinton, will conflict with the small-town character of our towns. Old Saybrook fears that a centralized sewer system with potential for excess capacity enables such growth to occur in areas and at a scale that would not be possible otherwise. The construction of public sewers has had that result in many locations because, while zoning techniques can control the type and size of development, the task of maintaining the small-town character is more difficult if sewage disposal is not reliant on soils.

See *Planning for the Next Decade* in this **Water Resources** section for Goals, Policies, and Municipal Improvements, Programs & Standards pertaining to **Sewage Disposal**.

Surface and Storm Water Management

The wetlands and watercourses system is the core of Old Saybrook's open space system. Consequently, the regulatory roles of the Inland Wetlands, Planning, and Zoning Commissions are paramount in maintaining this "green infrastructure". Additionally, the Conservation Commission has a critical role through its index of open spaces, functional inventory of natural resources, on-going study and analysis of the Town's natural systems, incorporation of its findings in the open space section of this plan, and in spearheading implementation of its Municipal Improvements, Programs & Standards.

Before the 1974 adoption of the Old Saybrook *Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Regulations*, filling and harmful construction practices destroyed hundreds of acres of inland wetlands and habitat. The protection of existing natural wetlands systems and habitat is an increasingly important issue. In 2002, the Town adopted *An Ordinance to Fine Violators of the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Regulations* as a disincentive to violations and as an effort to increase public awareness of inland wetlands, watercourses, and vernal pools. These efforts are successful, and efforts to update the *Official Wetlands & Watercourses Map* will further assist.

Rainfall not absorbed by vegetation or not absorbed into the ground runs downhill as stormwater runoff. The amount of water that runs off increases as land use changes from undeveloped woodlands to lawns, roofs, and pavement. Currently, the volume and velocity of stormwater runoff from development within the watersheds of Old Saybrook does not generate major problems downstream, although localized flooding may

occur due to undersized or unmaintained pipes or improperly located development. However, future development that brings increased impervious surfaces and associated drainage systems could affect not only flooding but also the overall quality of the natural landscape and water-dependent plant and animal species, especially in the Oyster River drainage basin.

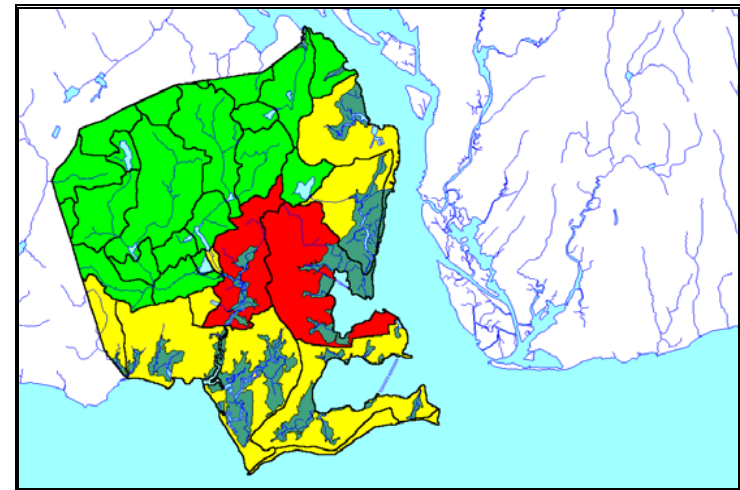
To understand the impacts of future development on Old Saybrook's water resources, the Town, in partnership with the NEMO project and the Connecticut River Estuary Regional Planning Agency (CRERPA), prepared an impervious surface buildout study. The 1997 zoning regulations and additional research conducted by the Center for Watershed Protection serve as the basis for the analysis. Figure 1 indicates that future growth will affect nearly all of the Town's watersheds. National research conducted over the last ten years indicates that a watershed that lies beneath more than ten percent (10%) impervious surfaces will soon realize negative impacts upon the water resources. These impacts can include flooding, sedimentation, erosion, and any of the typical pollutants found in nonpoint source (NPS) pollution. It is difficult to restore a watershed of twenty-five percent (25%) impervious coverage to predevelopment conditions due to the quantity of water moving through the system and the cost of restoration, which typically requires large structural designs.

Old Saybrook uses the impervious surface buildout analysis to focus its protection efforts. Watersheds that are shown as currently impacted are being assessed to determine the nature and extent of the impacts. Restoration efforts will successfully take a 'red' basin to 'yellow' and a 'yellow' basin to 'green.' Efforts might include reduction of imperviousness, disconnection of the stormwater collection / concentration / conveyance system, and restoration of impacted wetlands.

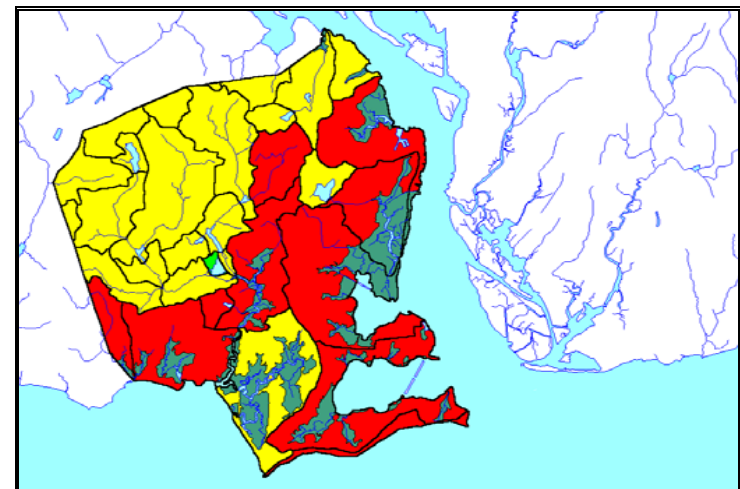
Planning and regulatory documents will incorporate various techniques, many of which are included in this Plan, to prevent future impacts as shown in Figure 1. In fact, Old Saybrook’s commitment to the NEMO Project’s Municipal Initiative will insure movement in this direction.

Recent federal clean water legislation places a new emphasis on controlling water pollution from nonpoint sources such as stormwater runoff. Stormwater can pick up and transport salt, oils, and other contaminants from impervious (solid, paved) surfaces such as roofs, driveways, and parking lots. The town’s regulations do not currently address the potential for nonpoint contamination from stormwater, but the Town is committed to achieving a limit of impervious surfaces to less than thirty percent (30%) at the recommendation of the NEMO program. Research indicates areas with more than thirty percent (30%) impervious surface are more likely to experience degraded water quality from stormwater runoff. Minimizing the amount of paved surface both reduces the amount of runoff and improves water quality. Controlling runoff is gaining priority as the consequences of inattention become more severe. Avoidance of future problems is far more efficient and less expensive than remediation.

See *Planning for the Next Decade* in this **Water Resources** section for Goals, Policies, and Municipal Improvements, Programs & Standards pertaining to **Stormwater**.



Estimated existing buildout levels of imperviousness. Green indicates 0 to 10% imperviousness, yellow indicates 10-25% imperviousness, and red indicates over 25% imperviousness.



Estimated future (based on 1997 zoning regulations) buildout levels of imperviousness.

Flood Management

Flooding issues remain largely the same as those the 1990 Plan of Development describes. Coastal storms continue to emphasize the vulnerability of the low-lying beach areas, especially to the west of Town, and the possibility of prohibiting the provision of emergency services during flood events.

Within the Town, flooding caused by upstream runoff is not generally a serious problem, with the exception of the Elm Street underpass and its immediate surrounding area. Some lands along the Connecticut River experience problems when that river is in flood due to heavy rainfall inland and to the north. Coastal flooding from high tides and storm surges pose a more widespread threat. The coastal flood hazard area includes much of the area south of the railroad, including Chalker Beach, areas along Great Hammock Road, much of Fenwick, and Saybrook Point. Storm events may flood roads and isolate dry areas.

There are many different kinds of flooding problems within the low-lying coastal areas and immediately along the Connecticut River. Flooding that cuts off access for emergency vehicles is potentially dangerous and possibly life-threatening, and could occur in locations such as Ingham Hill Road, the Elm Street underpass, Fenwick, much of Saybrook Point, Great Hammock Road and other beach areas. Less serious, but potentially costly, is flooding damage to structures within in the flood zone, including many of the beach areas, and the industrial area off Elm Street. Current regulations allow construction in a flood hazard area, if new construction meets Federal Emergency Management Agency standards. Over the past decade, people constructed new residential and commercial

structures in flood areas. Both the subdivision and the zoning regulations prohibit the creation of new lots in flood areas unless the lot includes some upland area that is not in the flood zone. The least serious form of flooding is yard flooding, which is primarily an inconvenience to property owners, unless such flooding also inundates septic systems or wells that could lead to health problems.

Although potential for serious flooding from stormwater runoff is limited, a significant increase in uncontrolled stormwater runoff, particularly in the Oyster River watershed, could worsen the present flooding problems in town. The 1971 and 1990 Plans of Development include a recommendation for a town drainage program, which the Town is implementing incrementally, to address the downstream impact of development. Another factor that could create additional flooding problems is the predicted rise in sea level because of global warming. A sea level rise of only a few feet is significant where much of the coastal plain, including part of the town center, an industrial area, and several of the beach associations exist, is less than ten feet (10') above sea level. An accompanying rise in groundwater could result in flooding of septic systems in several areas.

Land use agencies face several difficult issues with respect to adherence to the flood standards of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) despite resolving problems with decisions consistent with FEMA standards. FEMA, through the CT DEP, maintains that strict adherence to flood policies is integral to preserving the federally subsidized flood insurance program essential to many shoreline residents and communities. Deviation from those policies in the form of variances and waivers of zoning and subdivision regulations could lead to suspension from the subsidy program that would

prove financially devastating to those needing to secure mortgages in flood hazard areas and protect their homes. There is no other flood insurance available.

See *Planning for the Next Decade* in this **Water Resources** section for Goals, Policies, and Municipal Improvements, Programs & Standards pertaining to **Flooding**.

DAMS AND RETENTION BASINS

The State Department of Environmental Protection requires the registration of all dams. The DEP lists eleven dams in Old Saybrook in its dam inventory; of those listed, only six are formally registered. The storage capacity of most of the dams is small, and failure of those dams does not represent a serious threat to either life or property. Only three dams are of sufficient size to require regular monitoring. Obed Heights Reservoir, which once supplied water to the nearby railroad yards for its steam trains, has high hazard potential. The DEP lists Cranberry (Turnpike) Pond, located between 154, Route 9, and Monk Road, as having significant hazard potential that requires maintenance. And, Chalker Millpond, off Ingham Hill Road, has significant hazard potential.

See the **Public Utilities** section of the Plan of Conservation & Development for further details and recommendations.

PLANNING FOR THE NEXT DECADE – Coastal Management

Goals

- Preservation, conservation, and development of the Coast within Old Saybrook’s coastal boundary consistent with the Connecticut Coastal Management Act.
- Public awareness of Old Saybrook’s coast as its identity and defining character.
- Protection of water resources and groundwater quality.
- Prevention of destruction of valuable wetland systems and protection of native wetlands species and habitat.
- Public access to the shore.
- Increased opportunities for recreational boating at marinas and docking areas.
- Conservation, restoration, and wise use of the shorefront to minimize erosion.
- Avoidance of flood problems.
- Preservation of coastal views of the land and the water from public, semi-public, and private places.
- A revival of commercial shellfishing.
- Additional goals are set forth in the Municipal Coastal Program (Development Program 4.13) adopted by the Old Saybrook Planning Commission on January 24, 1983. That report is hereby made a part of this Plan of Conservation & Development.
- Consideration in the planning process of the potential impact of coastal flooding and erosion patterns on coastal development to minimize damage to and destruction of life and property and reduce the necessity of public expenditure to protect future development from such hazards.
- Coordination of the activities of municipal agencies to ensure that capital expenditures enhance development while affording maximum protection to natural coastal resources and processes in a manner consistent with the Plan of Conservation & Development.

- Maintenance and improvement of tidal and freshwater wetlands for their natural functions and social benefits.
- Preservation and enhancement of coastal resources in accordance with the State policies concerning environmental protection, inland wetlands & watercourses, water resources, water pollution control, parks and forests, and pollution, and flood control & beach erosion.

Policies

- To insure that the development, preservation, or use of the land and water resources of the coastal area proceeds in a manner consistent with the capability of the land and water resources to support the development, preservation or use, without significantly disrupting either the natural environment or sound economic growth.
- To give high priority and preference to uses and facilities that are dependent upon proximity to the water or the shorelands immediately adjacent to marine and tidal waters.
- To resolve conflicts between competing uses on the shorelands adjacent to tidal and marine waters by giving preference to uses that minimize adverse impacts on natural coastal resources while providing long term and stable economic benefits.
- To encourage access to the waters of Long Island Sound by expansion, development and effective utilization of state-owned recreational facilities within the coastal area that are consistent with sound resource conservation procedures and constitutionally protected rights of private property owners.
- To insure maximum protection of coastal resources while minimizing conflicts and disruption of economic development.
- To ensure that any restrictions or exclusions of “facilities and resources that are in the national interest” are made upon reasonable grounds, such as the facility of use may be sited outside the coastal boundary;
- To promote wise use, development, and conservation of coastal resources and the coastal area for the benefit of present and future generations.
- To provide suitable and sufficient beach and land support.
- To use developed shorefront for water-dependent uses.
- To promote “sensitive” public access; to include careful consideration of dock permitting and public access placement to protect

aquatic vegetation, shellfish, and wildlife areas from disturbance and high human traffic.

- To promote public health and safety and to minimize public and private losses due to flooding, in coastal flood hazard areas.
- To encourage developers to use new materials and techniques that protect rivers, wetlands, and Long Island Sound from nonpoint source pollution.
- To discourage homeowners and businesses from using herbicides and pesticides that may contaminate stormwater runoff.
- To encourage the removal of invasive wetland species such as phragmites and purple multi-flora through practices that protect native wetlands species,
- To encourage developers to landscape with native non-invasive plant species.
- To discourage the filling of tidal wetlands and watercourses.
- To celebrate the aesthetics of the coast and its contribution to the character of Old Saybrook.

Municipal Improvements, Programs, and Standards

The Plan recommends implementation of the following actions with priorities, resources and responsibilities coordinated among the appropriate Town agencies, including the Architectural Review Board (ARB), Board of Selectmen (BOS), Conservation Commission (CC), Economic Development Commission (EDC), Harbor Management Commission (HMC), Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commission (IWWC), North Cove Historic District Commission (NCHDC), Planning Commission (PC), Parks & Recreation Commission (PRC), Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA), Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA), and Zoning Commission (ZC).

- SAYBROOK POINT PROGRAM.** Complete the plan for all projects at Saybrook Point.
- MUNICIPAL COASTAL PROGRAM.** Update the 1983 Municipal Coastal Program.
- HARBOR MANAGEMENT PLAN.** Incorporate the Harbor Management Plan into the Plan.

ARB	BOS	CC	EDC	HMC	IWWC	NCHDC	PC	PRC	WPCA	ZBA	ZC
	●	●		●			●				
		●		●			●				
				●			●				

Municipal Improvements, Programs, and Standards, continued

- NORTH COVE PLAN.** Implement dredging the harbor and increase opportunities for appropriate waterfront access.
- SOUTH COVE PLAN.** Develop and initiate a plan for South Cove.
- FERRY POINT PLAN.** Develop and implement a plan to redevelop and revitalize Ferry Point.
- STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PLAN.** Develop and implement initiatives to protect and improve water quality using NEMO project principles.
- PARKING ALLOCATION STUDY.** Reduce the number of parking spaces and impervious surfaces that produce polluted runoff required by the Town regulations and ordinances.
- WETLANDS RESTORATION.** Inventory, analyze, and plan for restoration of tidal and freshwater wetlands.
- FISH AND SHELLFISH PROTECTION AND RESTORATION.** Study and implement plan for the protection, development, and restoration of fish, fishways, shellfish beds, and critical nursery areas, including continued water sampling and enforcement of regulations.
- BEACH ACCESS.** Identify and acquire properties to expand public beach and waterfront areas.
- BOATING AND PUBLIC ACCESS.** Identify, and encourage plans for more boat ramps, piers, public access areas, and other water-dependent uses.
- ALTERNATE TRANSPORTATION.** Inventory, analyze, and plan for additional bikeways, bike racks, and boardwalks, especially from the waterfronts to the town center.

	ARB	BOS	CC	EDC	HMC	IWWC	NGHDC	PC	PRC	WPCA	ZBA	ZC
<input type="checkbox"/> NORTH COVE PLAN.		●	●		●							
<input type="checkbox"/> SOUTH COVE PLAN.		●	●		●							
<input type="checkbox"/> FERRY POINT PLAN.	●	●		●				●				●
<input type="checkbox"/> STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PLAN.		●	●		●	●		●		●		●
<input type="checkbox"/> PARKING ALLOCATION STUDY.		●						●				●
<input type="checkbox"/> WETLANDS RESTORATION.			●		●	●				●		
<input type="checkbox"/> FISH AND SHELLFISH PROTECTION AND RESTORATION.			●							●		
<input type="checkbox"/> BEACH ACCESS.		●	●	●	●			●	●			
<input type="checkbox"/> BOATING AND PUBLIC ACCESS.		●	●	●	●			●	●			
<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERNATE TRANSPORTATION.		●	●	●	●			●	●			

Municipal Improvements, Programs, and Standards, continued

- SHORELINE TOURISM.** Attract ferry service to and from Long Island to generate tourism.
- TRANSIENT BOAT PATRONAGE PROGRAM.** Support the enhancement of marinas, docking areas, and support facilities to draw transient boaters and tourists to town.
- SEASONAL DWELLINGS.** Review/revise Ord. #62 Winterization of Seasonal Dwellings.
- ROAD ENDINGS PROGRAM.** Continue the comprehensive, multi-year approach to the research, study, planning, and improvement of the town’s road endings following consistent policies in its design to promote fair and equitable implementation.
- COVERAGE STANDARDS.** Revise zoning regulations to reduce density and lot coverage.
- COASTAL SETBACKS.** Develop setbacks from beaches, dunes, bluffs, escarpments, etc.
- COASTAL RESOURCE DATABASE.** Research coastal matters to improve the data upon which the Town makes decisions regarding coastal land and water use.
- FACILITIES AND RESOURCES OF NATIONAL INTEREST.** Provide adequate planning for “facilities and resources that are in the national interest”, including adequate protection of tidal wetlands and related estuarine resources; restoration and enhancement of Connecticut’s shellfish industry; restoration, preservation, and enhancement of the state’s recreational and commercial fisheries, including anadromous species; water pollution control measures and facilities; air pollution control measures and facilities; continued operation of existing federally-funded dredged and maintained navigation channels and basins; energy facilities ; improvements to the existing interstate rail, highway, and water-borne transportation system; provision of adequate state or federally-owned marine-related recreational facilities, including natural areas and wildlife sanctuaries; and essential maintenance and improvement of existing water-dependent military, navigational, resource management, and research facilities.

ARB	BOS	CC	EDC	HMC	IWWC	NGHDC	PC	PRC	WPCA	ZBA	ZC
	●		●	●							
	●		●	●				●			
	●								●	●	●
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PLANNING FOR THE NEXT DECADE – Water Supply

Goals

- Potable water for everyone.
- Maintenance of present and future clean water sources.
- Extension of community water to all areas south of Interstate 95.

Policies

- To extend central water system in appropriate locations.
- To protect drinking water quality of the high yield aquifer on Bokum and other locations where higher yield wells are possible.
- To protect ground water quality in areas where individual wells will continue to be the primary water source.
- To discourage community water where density is low.

Municipal Improvements, Programs, and Standards

- PUBLIC WATER EXPANSION.** Require through subdivision and zoning regulations installation of public water in designated water service areas.
- WATER QUALITY EDUCATION.** Improve public awareness of nonpoint pollution including sewage, household hazardous waste, pervious surfaces, water-safe gardening, and landscaping practices.
- AQUIFER PROTECTION REGULATIONS.** Develop aquifer protection requirements in accordance with state requirements.

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Municipal Improvements, Programs, and Standards, continued

- NONPOINT SOURCE POLLUTION MANAGEMENT.** Develop and implement initiatives with the NEMO project to minimize nonpoint pollution and protect and improve water quality.

ARB	BOS	CC	EDC	HMC	IWVC	NCHDC	PC	PRC	WPCA	ZBA	ZC
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PLANNING FOR THE NEXT DECADE – Wastewater Management

Goals

- Resolution of perceived water pollution problems in a manner that has the least adverse impact on unique natural resources, especially the Connecticut River and Long Island Sound.
- Assurance that any solutions to water pollution problems address existing development and will not encourage future development that is inappropriate and inconsistent with Old Saybrook’s small town character.

Policies

- To continue implementation and strengthen an aggressive sewer avoidance program, as the principal method of meeting sewage disposal requirements of the Town, to assure those areas not currently experiencing pollution from inadequate sewage disposal will not become future problem areas.
- To avoid installation of systems with excess capacity that might encourage secondary development that could not take place without off-site sewage disposal. Avoid intensification of existing development in those areas where community system solutions are unavoidable.

Municipal Improvements, Programs, and Standards

- WATER QUALITY CONTROL DISTRICT.** Identify areas that cannot be corrected with on-site solutions and develop an overlay zone that regulates activities that increase problems.

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Municipal Improvements, Programs, and Standards

- PUBLIC WATER EXPANSION.** Extend public water service to those remaining portions of high-density areas that still rely on individual wells.
- WATER POLLUTION CONTROL.** To avoid sewage disposal problems in the future, adequately fund and staff an aggressive sewer avoidance program that combines public education with enforceable regulations and oversight of public and individual septic system maintenance.
- DEMOLITION PROGRAM.** When no other neighborhood solution is available, consider a program for purchasing homes and seasonal cottages and demolishing the structures to reduce overall density and create locations for installation of community sewage disposal.
- WINTERIZATION PROGRAM.** Strictly limit or prohibit seasonal conversions in high-density areas where water pollution problems may exist.
- BEACH BULK STANDARDS.** Revise and enforce zoning regulations to reduce allowable density and limit expansion of uses in built up areas, to prevent the worsening of nutrient and other water pollution problems. Adopt lot coverages, floor area ratios, and other bulk standards that prohibit intensification of present uses.
- CONSUMPTIVE USE PROHIBITION.** Through zoning, identify and prohibit new high water consumptive uses in densely developed areas.
- WATER CONSERVATION SITE PLAN.** Encourage all development to include water conservation measures as part of overall site design.
- LIMITED INFRASTRUCTURE.** Do not extend or provide sewage disposal service to undeveloped lots that are subject to coastal flood hazards or include tidal and inland wetlands.

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Municipal Improvements, Programs, and Standards, continued

- COMMUNITY SEWAGE DISPOSAL.** Consider the use of on-site community sewage disposal systems when designing alternative forms of housing.

- WATER QUALITY LIBRARY.** Recognize that nitrogen reduction is an important goal of water pollution control. Develop a basic library of technical information and provide technical support on denitrification for Old Saybrook property owners.

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PLANNING FOR THE NEXT DECADE – Surface & Storm Water Management

Goals

- Management of stormwater runoff to maintain water quality.

- Protection and utilization of natural drainage systems, including wetlands and streambelts, to avoid the need for expensive manmade drainage controls and water quality renovation.

- Limitation of impervious surfaces to less than 30% thus reducing polluted runoff and improving water quality.

Policies

- To promote inland wetlands restoration and creation of man-made wetlands as mitigation for loss of existing or formerly-filled wetlands.

- To support wetland and vernal pool education programs.

- To require developers to use new techniques and natural systems that will reduce or eliminate existing flooding conditions and polluted runoff.

- To reduce present and minimize new impervious surfaces on municipal properties whenever the opportunity arises. Consider the use of porous alternatives and landscaped parking areas with green areas for infiltration.

- To require developers to incorporate landscaping and natural drainage design techniques that minimize impervious surfaces, enhance infiltration, and direct runoff to open areas such as: clustering, sunken islands, pocket parks, vegetative swales, and wet ponds.
- To require site plans for storm water management that use the best management practices to minimize nonpoint water pollution and expensive, long-term maintenance costs.

Municipal Improvements, Programs, and Standards

- DRAINAGE STRUCTURES.** Revise Town drainage standards to provide more guidance to developers on acceptable design approaches and long-term maintenance responsibilities for drainage structures.
- DRAINAGE STANDARDS.** Amend Subdivision, Zoning, and Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission Regulations to reference a common set of town standards in a consistent approach.
- SITE-SPECIFIC STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PLANS.** Develop and require a Stormwater Management Plan as part of the Subdivision Site Plan, submitted with each application. The applicant must show the Planning Commission that the proposed subdivision will have no adverse impact on drainage facilities and will protect or enhance the community's water resources from non-point source pollution.
- STORM DRAIN INVENTORY.** Create an inventory of existing storm drain outfalls to identify opportunities to retrofit roads and other municipal facilities for stormwater pollution reduction.
- STORMWATER MANAGEMENT FUND.** Through developer contributions, establish a town fund for long-term maintenance of town-owned drainage control structures.

	ARB	BOS	CC	EDC	HMC	IWWC	NCHDC	PC	PRC	WPCA	ZBA	ZC
<input type="checkbox"/> DRAINAGE STRUCTURES. Revise Town drainage standards to provide more guidance to developers on acceptable design approaches and long-term maintenance responsibilities for drainage structures.		●	●			●		●				●
<input type="checkbox"/> DRAINAGE STANDARDS. Amend Subdivision, Zoning, and Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission Regulations to reference a common set of town standards in a consistent approach.		●				●		●			●	●
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<input type="checkbox"/> STORMWATER MANAGEMENT FUND. Through developer contributions, establish a town fund for long-term maintenance of town-owned drainage control structures.		●							●	●	●	●

Municipal Improvements, Programs, and Standards

- COVERAGE STANDARDS.** Amend regulations to reduce impervious surface coverage to maintain water quality and avoid expensive corrective measures to mitigate flooding problems. Restrict overall impervious coverage to less than thirty percent (30%) town-wide.

- LIMIT FILLING OF LAND.** Prevent reduction of flood-carrying capacity of wetlands.

- NET BUILDABLE AREA.** Require subdivision applicants to perform an analysis of "net buildable area" to address site characteristics limiting suitability of on-site utilities.

- UPLAND REVIEW AREA.** Increase buffer; report findings to Planning/Zoning commissions.

- CONSERVATION BUFFERS.** Through zoning and subdivision regulations, require establishment and maintenance of natural buffer strips at least twenty-five feet (25') in width or greater along all salt marshes, streams and ponds within the town, with conservation easements in favor of the Town.

- WATERSHED PLANNING.** Conduct a Town-wide drainage study by watershed, beginning with the Oyster River watershed, to determine a coordinated drainage strategy, acknowledging the cumulative effect of development. Each watershed study should inventory the existing drainage network and determine potential maximum build-out of the watershed as a basis for future drainage improvements.

- CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS BUDGETING.** Include major drainage studies and improvements as part of the Town's capital improvements budget.

- ROAD REGULATIONS.** Complete the revision of road standards based on the function they will serve. As one of the major sources of impervious coverage, how roads are designed and where they are placed can greatly influence the quality of the Town's water resources.

	ARB	BOS	CC	EDC	HMC	IWVC	NGHDC	PC	PRC	WPCA	ZBA	ZC
<input type="checkbox"/> COVERAGE STANDARDS. Amend regulations to reduce impervious surface coverage to maintain water quality and avoid expensive corrective measures to mitigate flooding problems. Restrict overall impervious coverage to less than thirty percent (30%) town-wide.			●					●		●	●	●
<input type="checkbox"/> LIMIT FILLING OF LAND. Prevent reduction of flood-carrying capacity of wetlands.			●			●		●			●	●
<input type="checkbox"/> NET BUILDABLE AREA. Require subdivision applicants to perform an analysis of "net buildable area" to address site characteristics limiting suitability of on-site utilities.						●		●				●
<input type="checkbox"/> UPLAND REVIEW AREA. Increase buffer; report findings to Planning/Zoning commissions.						●		●				●
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PLANNING FOR THE NEXT DECADE – Flood Management

Goals

- Design stormwater drainage to allow for reasonable development while protecting development from the danger of increased flooding.
- Reduction or elimination of existing flooding problems wherever possible.

Policies

- To review all development to insure that water quality is maintained and that no flooding is created or increased, either within the development site itself, or downstream of the development.
- To identify and correct existing flooding problems, with priority to potential life threatening situations and inaccessibility by emergency vehicles. Drainage improvements should be included as part of the Town’s capital improvements budget.
- To minimize variances and waivers of zoning and subdivision regulations that could lead to suspension from the flood subsidy program that would prove financially devastating to those needing to secure mortgages in flood hazard areas and protect their homes.

Municipal Improvements, Programs, and Standards

- ELEVATION CERTIFICATES.** Maintain FEMA elevation certificates for all construction.
- MAP INFORMATION.** Publicize service for inquiries about properties’ FIRM zone.
- OUTREACH PROJECTS.** Send information about the flood hazard, flood insurance, and flood protection measures to flood prone residents or all residents of the community.
- HAZARD DISCLOSURE.** Encourage real estate agents to advise potential purchasers of flood prone property; or amend regulations to require a notice of flood hazard.

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Municipal Improvements, Programs, and Standards

- FLOOD PROTECTION LIBRARY.** Maintain library references on insurance/protection.
- FLOOD PROTECTION ASSISTANCE.** Give inquiring property owners technical advice on protecting their buildings from flooding, and publicize this service.
- ADDITIONAL FLOOD DATA.** Develop new flood elevations, floodway delineation, wave heights, or other regulatory flood hazard data for areas not mapped in detail by the flood insurance study; or base flood insurance on higher state or local standards.
- OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION.** Guarantee vacant floodplain as free from development.
- HIGHER REGULATORY STANDARDS.** Require freeboard; soil test or engineered foundations; compensatory storage; zone the floodplain for minimum lot sizes of one acre; regulate to protect sand dunes; or tailor to protect critical areas subject to flood hazards.
- FLOOD DATA MAINTENANCE.** Keep flood and property data on computer records; use better base maps; or maintain elevation reference marks.
- STORMWATER MANAGEMENT.** Regulate development throughout the watershed to ensure that post-development runoff is no worse than pre-development runoff.
- FLOOD PLAIN MANAGEMENT PLANNING.** Prepare, adopt, implement, and update a comprehensive plan using a standard planning process.
- ACQUISITION AND RELOCATION.** Acquire/relocate flood-prone buildings.
- RETROFITTING.** Document flood-proofed or elevated pre-FIRM buildings.

	ARB	BOS	CC	EDC	HMC	IWVC	NCHDC	PC	PRC	WPCA	ZBA	ZC
<input type="checkbox"/> FLOOD PROTECTION LIBRARY. Maintain library references on insurance/protection.		●										●
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<input type="checkbox"/> FLOOD PLAIN MANAGEMENT PLANNING. Prepare, adopt, implement, and update a comprehensive plan using a standard planning process.		●				●		●				
<input type="checkbox"/> ACQUISITION AND RELOCATION. Acquire/relocate flood-prone buildings.		●	●									
<input type="checkbox"/> RETROFITTING. Document flood-proofed or elevated pre-FIRM buildings.		●									●	●

Municipal Improvements, Programs, and Standards, continued

- DRAINAGE SYSTEM MAINTENANCE.** Inspect and maintain all channels/retention basins.
- FLOOD WARNING PROGRAM.** Provide early warnings to the public and have a detailed flood response plan keyed to flood crest prediction

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