

# WESTBROOK

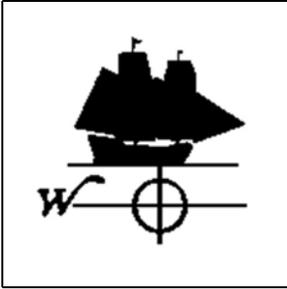
**2021-2031 Plan Of Conservation And Development**



## **TOWN OF WESTBROOK**

**Plan Update Committee / Planning Commission**

**Effective June 30, 2021**



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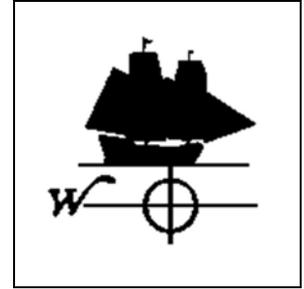


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# WELCOME!



June 2021

To Westbrook Residents,

The Planning Commission is proud to present the 2021-31 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) for Westbrook. This POCD replaces the current 2011 POCD.

This Plan was prepared over a twelve-month period by a POCD Update Committee made up of members of local boards, commissions, and other interested residents. As part of this process, the Update Committee reached out to all Westbrook residents through Town surveys, workshop meetings, and virtual meetings.

Upon receipt of a recommended POCD from the Update Committee, the Planning Commission reviewed and refined the Plan before scheduling a public hearing to consider adoption. Following the public hearing held on June 8, the Planning Commission adopted the POCD with an effective date of June 30, 2021.

The Planning Commission now looks forward to establishing a working group to help coordinate implementation of the POCD. It is envisioned that the working group will, over the next ten years, work with all Westbrook organizations and residents to help carry out the goals, policies, and action steps set forth in the POCD.

The Planning Commission is extremely thankful to all the residents and contributors who helped make this Plan a reality.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Ozols, Chair

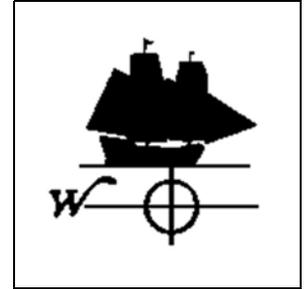
*Planning Commission*

Town of Westbrook

## POCD Context

- The POCD is aspirational in nature. It identifies what we can do to make Westbrook an even better place in the future.
- The POCD is an advisory document.
- The POCD does not dictate what any organization or entity must do. Instead, the POCD suggests policies, programs, and action steps that will help make Westbrook an even better place in the future (see additional discussion about policies, programs, and action steps on page 20):
  - Policies are guidelines to follow in order to achieve a specific goal. Policies provide guidance for decision making. Policies may not lend themselves to being considered “implemented” because they may be used multiple times over the years on different decisions being made.
  - On-going programs refers to new activities or to existing activities which are already in progress and should be continued. On-going programs may not lend themselves to being considered “implemented” because they will continue to be worked on over time.
  - Action steps are specific pro-active steps which are used to accomplish goals and strategies. Action steps do lend themselves to being considered “implemented” because they are typically discrete steps that can be initiated, monitored, and completed.
- Since some policies, programs, and/or action steps may have fiscal implications (costs, revenues, grants, etc.), the decision of when (or whether) to implement them will be based on circumstances at that time.

# 1. INTRODUCTION



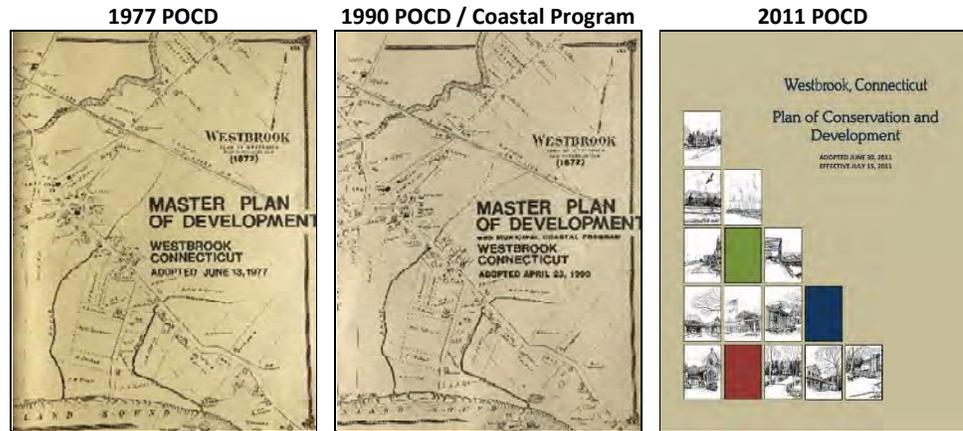
This document is the 2021-31 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) for Westbrook, Connecticut. The preparation of this document involved engaging with the community to establish a common vision for the future of Westbrook and then laying out strategies, policies, and action steps that will help attain that vision.

The strategies in the POCD are intended to reflect a consensus of what is considered desirable for Westbrook and its residents in the future.



## About POCDs

Westbrook prepared and adopted POCDs in the past to address community issues and opportunities and this POCD is being prepared for the same reasons.



This 2021-31 POCD was prepared by a Plan Update Committee (PUC) with assistance from Town Staff and a planning consultant. As per Section 8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes, the POCD is adopted by the Planning Commission. The process included the following elements:

1. Initial discussions among members of the PUC.
2. An on-line survey to help understand resident's concerns.
3. Independent research / investigation by a planning consultant.
4. Preparation of briefing booklets covering key POCD topics based on the 2011 POCD and independent research / investigation.
5. Listening sessions where Westbrook residents and members of local boards and commission discussed issues raised in the on-line survey and the briefing booklets in order to exchange ideas and reach consensus on preliminary planning strategies for Westbrook's future.
6. An on-line survey to get feedback on preliminary strategies.
7. Preparation of a first draft of a POCD.
8. Review / discussion of POCD first draft by the PUC.
9. Community input on revised POCD draft.
10. PUC refine and endorse POCD for Planning Commission review.
11. Planning Commission reviews and recommends proposed POCD.
12. Public hearing / adoption of POCD by the Planning Commission.

Public participation occurred throughout the planning process via on-line surveys and on-line "listening sessions" so that the POCD would reflect a consensus on Westbrook's vision for its future.

# Conditions & Trends

## History of Westbrook

The landform of the area we now know as Westbrook evolved over millions of years. Native Americans are believed to have inhabited this area for about the last 10,000 years and historic information suggests a Native American settlement was located in an area known as Pochoug, (an Indian word meaning “at the confluence of two rivers”) near what is now known as Pilot’s Point.

European discovery and exploration of North America in the early 1600s soon led to trade with Native Americans and establishment of trading posts and then permanent settlements at the mouth of the Connecticut River (called Saybrook). These settlers first used the area now known as Westbrook as hunting grounds and then as farm and pastureland with permanent settlement around 1648.

Subsistence farming, fishing, and marine trades (boat building, barrel-making, etc.) were the main activities. These were supplemented by a salt works, an oil factory, and other small businesses and industries.

In 1724, the residents successfully petitioned to have their own church rather than to have to travel back and forth to Saybrook every week for religious services. Then, in 1840, the Legislature granted permission for residents to establish a separate municipality which was named Westbrook.

With the arrival of rail service in 1852, Westbrook became more connected to other areas and became a resort destination for people wanting to spend summers along the shore. Westbrook also benefitted from the establishment of a trolley line in 1905 which ran from Old Saybrook westerly to Branford.

After the Second World War, the improvement of roads, availability of the automobile, and a trend toward suburban living increased the number of people who could live in Westbrook and work elsewhere. The completion of Interstate 95 in the late 1950s and Route 9 in the 1960s accelerated this growth.

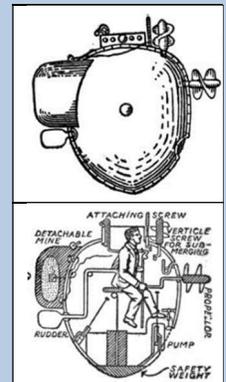
Over the years, Westbrook has grown into a diverse community as a result of:

- Coastal location and amenities,
- Overall character and quality of life,
- Rail and highway access,
- Availability of land for residential and business development,
- Proximity to employment centers,
- A housing stock that is less expensive than other shoreline towns, and
- Quality of education and other local services and amenities.

These attributes have the potential to support future housing and population growth in Westbrook.

### The Westbrook “Turtle”

Some may be surprised to learn that David Bushnell, a resident of a part of Saybrook (now Westbrook) invented a new weapon which forever changed the course of naval warfare. Bushnell invented the submersible boat (a “submarine”) which could, with a human operator, submerge, move, deploy an underwater mine, and return to the surface. Although several attempts to use the weapon against British ships during the Revolutionary War were not successful, the effectiveness of the weapon was quickly recognized, and development of the concept continued.



**Westbrook's Population**

1840	1,182
1850	1,202
1860	974
1870	987
1880	878
1890	874
1900	884
1910	951
1920	849
1930	1,037
1940	1,159
1950	1,549
1960	2,399
1970	3,820
1980	5,216
1990	5,414
2000	6,292
2010	6,938
2020	6,915
2030	7,060
2040	6,909

US Census to 2010. Projections from CT State Data Center.

**Summer Increase**

When seasonal effects are factored in, it has been estimated that Westbrook's population may double (or more than double) in the summer months.

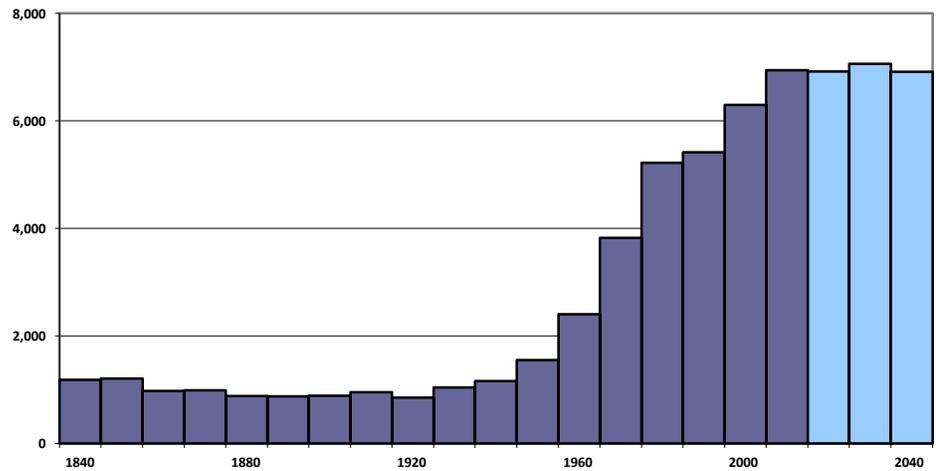
This increase is the result of occupancy:

- Of seasonal units (seasonal by regulation),
- Of year-round units (seasonal by choice),
- Of summer rentals,
- Of marina boats,
- At resort lodging, and
- By guests visiting year-round residents.

**People Of Westbrook**

The table and chart in the sidebar show population growth since the 1840 Census (when Westbrook was incorporated as a separate municipality) with population projections prepared by the Connecticut State Data Center (2017) to the year 2040. These population projections extrapolate past trends (birth rates, death rates, net migration) into the future. Overall, this data indicates that the overall number of year-round residents in Westbrook is expected to stay fairly stable for the next decade or two.

1870 – 2010 Population (with projections to 2040)



US Census to 2010. Projections from CT State Data Center.

While population size is important, the changing age composition of Westbrook may be the most significant demographic consideration. Overall, Westbrook is increasingly comprised of older residents (both existing residents aging in place and older people moving to Westbrook). The median age in Westbrook (half the population is younger and half are older) has been increasing since 1970.

**Westbrook's Median Age Over Time**

1960	31.6
1970	31.6
1980	35.3
1990	39.5
2000	41.5
2010	46.6
2020 (proj.)	50.4
2030 (proj.)	51.1
2040 (proj.)	50.7

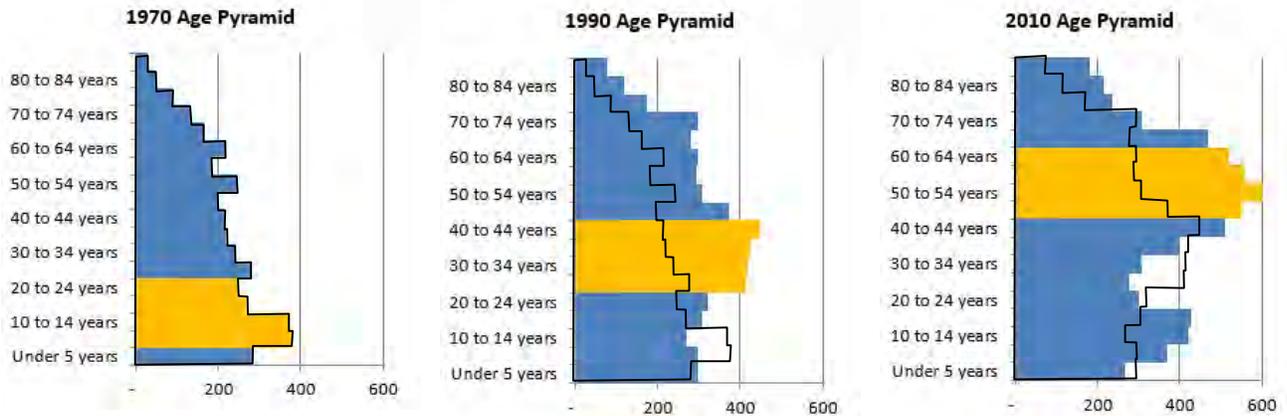
**Estimated 2018 Median Age**

Essex	54
Old Saybrook	51
<b>Westbrook</b>	<b>51</b>
Killingworth	48
Clinton	46
Deep River	46
<b>County</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>State</b>	<b>41</b>

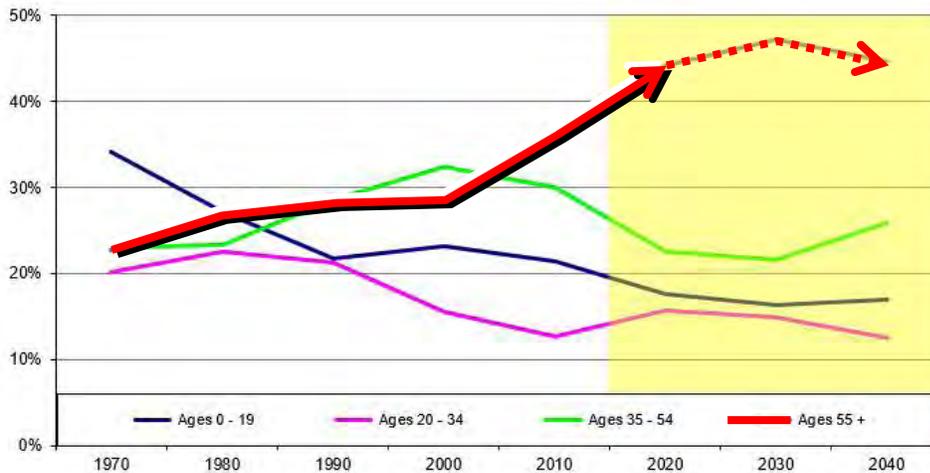
CERC, 20199

US Census to 2010. Projections from CT State Data Center.

The following age charts illustrate this. Each bar represents a 5-year age group and the width of the bar represents the number of people in that age group. People considered part of the “baby boom” (people born between about 1945 and 1965) are shown in orange. The black outlines show the age composition in the prior chart so that changes can be seen more readily. Colored areas to the right of the black line indicate more people in those age cohorts compared to the prior chart. White areas to the left of the black line indicate fewer people in those age cohorts compared to the prior chart.



If past trends continue, Westbrook’s population will trend older and this may have a number of implications for municipal services and facilities. When graphed as percentage of population, the increase in the share of older residents (red line representing people aged 55 and older ) is quite visible.



## Housing Units

	Units	Change
1960	766*	687*
1970	1,453	1,309
1980	2,762	469
1990	3,231	229
2000	3,460	477
2010	3,937	

US Census. \* = Households

## Percent Single Family

Old Saybrook	87%
Killingworth	84%
Clinton	80%
<b>Westbrook</b>	<b>79%</b>
Essex	75%
Deep River	75%
<b>County</b>	<b>71%</b>
<b>State</b>	<b>59%</b>

CERC, 2019

## Un-Occupied Units

- Units kept for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use,
- Units for sale or for rent, and
- Units otherwise not occupied.

	Units	Share
1960	n/a	-
1970	177	12%
1980	751	27%
1990	970	30%
2000	855	24%
2010	989	25%

US Census

## Average Household Size

Killingworth	2.64
<b>State</b>	<b>2.52</b>
Clinton	2.49
<b>County</b>	<b>2.39</b>
Old Saybrook	2.38
Deep River	2.37
<b>Westbrook</b>	<b>2.32</b>
Essex	2.27

US Census, 2010

## Housing In Westbrook

It is estimated that the 2020 Census will show that Westbrook has over 4,000 housing units. Some of the key housing conditions and trends include:

- Almost 80% of the housing units in Westbrook are owner-occupied.
- Almost 80% of all housing units are single-family detached homes.
- About 257 mobile manufactured home units (about 6.5%) in Westbrook.
- Housing growth has slowed to about 25 units/year from about 130 units/year in the 1970s.
- Over 800 housing units are kept for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use with about half restricted to seasonal use and the other half used that way by the owners.

In terms of occupied housing units, Westbrook has fewer residents per housing unit than the state average and most nearby communities. Average household size has been decreasing over time in Westbrook and elsewhere due to a variety of socio-economic factors (such as an aging population). What this means is that the same number of housing units contain fewer people and that more housing construction is needed if the population is to stay stable or increase.

## Average Household Size

1960	3.03
1970	2.99
1980	2.59
1990	2.39
2000	2.41
2010	2.32

US Census

Single-Family House



Multi-Family Homes



Beach Area House



Beachfront Neighborhood



According to CERC, the **median** sales price of housing (half of the houses sold for more and half sold for less) in Westbrook in 2017 was higher than for surrounding towns and higher than the State average. The adjacent chart shows the assessor’s estimate of market value of residential properties in Westbrook at the time of the last revaluation (2016).



Median Sales Price (2017)	
<b>Westbrook</b>	<b>\$378,900</b>
Old Saybrook	\$373,200
Killingworth	\$369,200
Essex	\$360,600
Clinton	\$288,000
<b>County</b>	<b>\$283,700</b>
Deep River	\$274,800
<b>State</b>	<b>\$270,100</b>

CERC, 2019

About 202 housing units in Westbrook (5.1% of the housing stock) meet the statutory definition of “affordable housing” as follows:

- 140 governmentally assisted units,
- 5 rental units where tenants receive rental assistance,
- 28 units with government-subsidized mortgages (CHFA, USDA), and
- 29 units subject to deed restrictions limiting the rental rate or sales price to a level considered affordable.

Note that “naturally-occurring” affordable housing (such as mobile manufactured homes) are not counted above since they are not deed restricted or assisted.

As provided in Section 8-30g of the Connecticut General Statutes, communities where **less than 10 percent** of the housing stock meets the above criteria are subject to the “affordable housing appeals procedure” where a qualifying affordable housing development may not need to comply with all of the zoning regulations.

Affordable Housing	
<b>State</b>	<b>11.3%</b>
<b>Westbrook</b>	<b>5.1%</b>
Essex	2.9%
Deep River	2.9%
Clinton	2.8%
Old Saybrook	2.5%
Killingworth	1.0%

CT Department of Housing, 2019

Using the data from HUD (2020) for southern Middlesex County, the “affordable housing” payment for a household at the 80% income level would be:

	<b>2-BR unit (3-person household)</b>	<b>3-BR unit (4-person household)</b>
Income Limit (80% of area median income)	\$80,640	\$89,600
Housing Budget (30% of income limit))	\$24,192	\$26,880
Monthly Gross Rent (including utility expenses)	\$2,016 / month	\$2,240 / month
Monthly Expenses	Deduct \$950 for utilities, taxes, and insurance	Deduct \$1,100 for utilities, taxes, and insurance
Approximate Sale Price (30-year mortgage at 3.5%)	Monthly mortgage payment of \$1,066	Monthly mortgage payment of \$1,140
With No Down Payment	\$237,500	\$254,000
With 20% Down Payment	\$297,000	\$317,500

HUD, CT-DOH, Zillow Mortgage Calculator

Percent Owner-Occupied	
Killingworth	95%
Old Saybrook	79%
Clinton	79%
Deep River	77%
<b>Westbrook</b>	<b>77%</b>
Essex	76%
<b>County</b>	<b>74%</b>
<b>State</b>	<b>67%</b>

CERC, 2019

<b>Jobs In Westbrook</b>	
1960	485
1970	710
1980	1,120
1990	2,600
2000	3,120
2010	3,591
<b>2018</b>	<b>3,738</b>

CT Labor Dept. , CERC

<b>Jobs In The Community</b>	
Old Saybrook	6,519
<b>Westbrook</b>	<b>3,738</b>
Essex	3,710
Clinton	4,244
Deep River	1,353
Killingworth	721

CERC, 2019

<b>Jobs / Housing Balance</b>	
Old Saybrook	1.17
Essex	1.08
<b>Westbrook</b>	<b>0.97</b>
Clinton	0.69
Deep River	0.65
Killingworth	0.28

CERC, 2019

## Economic Conditions in Westbrook

A local economy is important in terms of:

- Providing for jobs and income for people,
- Ensuring a range of goods and services is available, and
- Providing tax revenue to support local services.

According to the Connecticut Department of Labor, there were 3,738 jobs (annual average) located in Westbrook in 2018. The number of jobs in Westbrook has grown significantly since 1960. Although some data is suppressed from State reporting for business privacy, Westbrook's overall economy appears reliant on retail trade, accommodations/food, health care, manufacturing, and other services. More diversification in the local economy could help Westbrook weather any economic changes that affect these types of businesses.

While there are a number of jobs in Westbrook, the community still relies on the region for jobs:

<b>Where Residents Go To Work</b>	
<b>Westbrook</b>	<b>467</b>
Old Saybrook	293
Clinton	220
Essex	194
New Haven	163
Other Places	2,215
<b>Employed Residents</b>	<b>3,552</b>

<b>Where Local Workers Come From</b>	
Clinton	492
<b>Westbrook</b>	<b>467</b>
Old Saybrook	234
Madison	174
Deep River	142
Other Places	2,229
<b>Local Jobs</b>	<b>3,738</b>

CERC, 2019

**Local Employer**



**Goods And Services**



Median household income (half the households earn more and half the households earn less) is one way to gauge the potential size or strength of the local economy. Westbrook’s median income is higher than the median income for surrounding communities and is also higher than the State median.

While the median household income in Westbrook looks robust in comparison to some adjacent communities, there are a number of households who still struggle with economic issues. According to research by the United Way, about 36% of Westbrook’s year-round population falls into a category referred to as “ALICE” (an acronym for asset-limited, income constrained, employed). In other words, about one in three Westbrook residents – ***people who live here today*** – are highly likely to be struggling with the cost of living.

The value of taxable property in a municipality is important because it supports municipal budgets and services provided within the community. While the total value of the tax base is discussed in the fiscal section of this booklet, the percent of the real estate tax base that is comprised of businesses is an important consideration to many people since business uses typically provide revenue but do not demand as much in services. This revenue is then available to provide services that primarily benefit residents of the community.

As can be seen below (and from the data in the sidebar), Westbrook is above the statewide median in terms of percent business tax base.

**Median HH Income**

Killingworth	\$113,413
<b>Westbrook</b>	<b>\$95,583</b>
Essex	\$87,857
Clinton	\$76,509
Old Saybrook	\$74,185
<b>State</b>	<b>\$71,755</b>
Deep River	\$69,028

CERC, 2019

**Percent Business Tax Base**

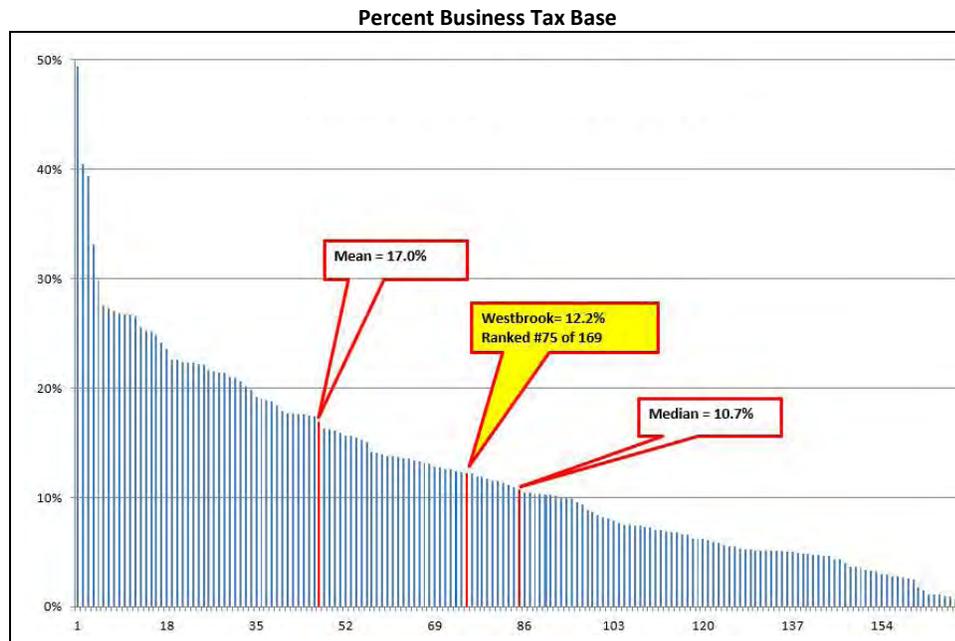
Essex	13.8%
Old Saybrook	13.4%
Clinton	12.7%
<b>Westbrook</b>	<b>12.4%</b>
Deep River	9.7%
Killingworth	2.9%

CERC, 2019

**Major Taxpayers**

- The Lee Co.
- Westbrook Outlet Stores
- Water’s Edge Resort
- SHM Pilot’s Point
- Connecticut Light & Power

CERC, 2019



**Definitions**

**Open Space** – Land which is preserved as open space, land which is expected to remain undeveloped, and land which is expected to remain committed for open space purposes. It does not include privately-owned land which is vacant or undeveloped.

**Committed / Developed**– Land that has buildings, structures, or improvements or is otherwise used for a particular economic or social purpose (such as residential, institutional, or open space).

**Vacant**– Land that is not developed or committed.

**Land With Additional Development Potential** – Land that may be capable of supporting additional development potential in the future. For example, a single-family home on a 10-acre parcel in a 1-acre zone might have 9 acres capable of supporting additional development.

**Land Use in Westbrook**

The overall land-use pattern in Westbrook consists of:

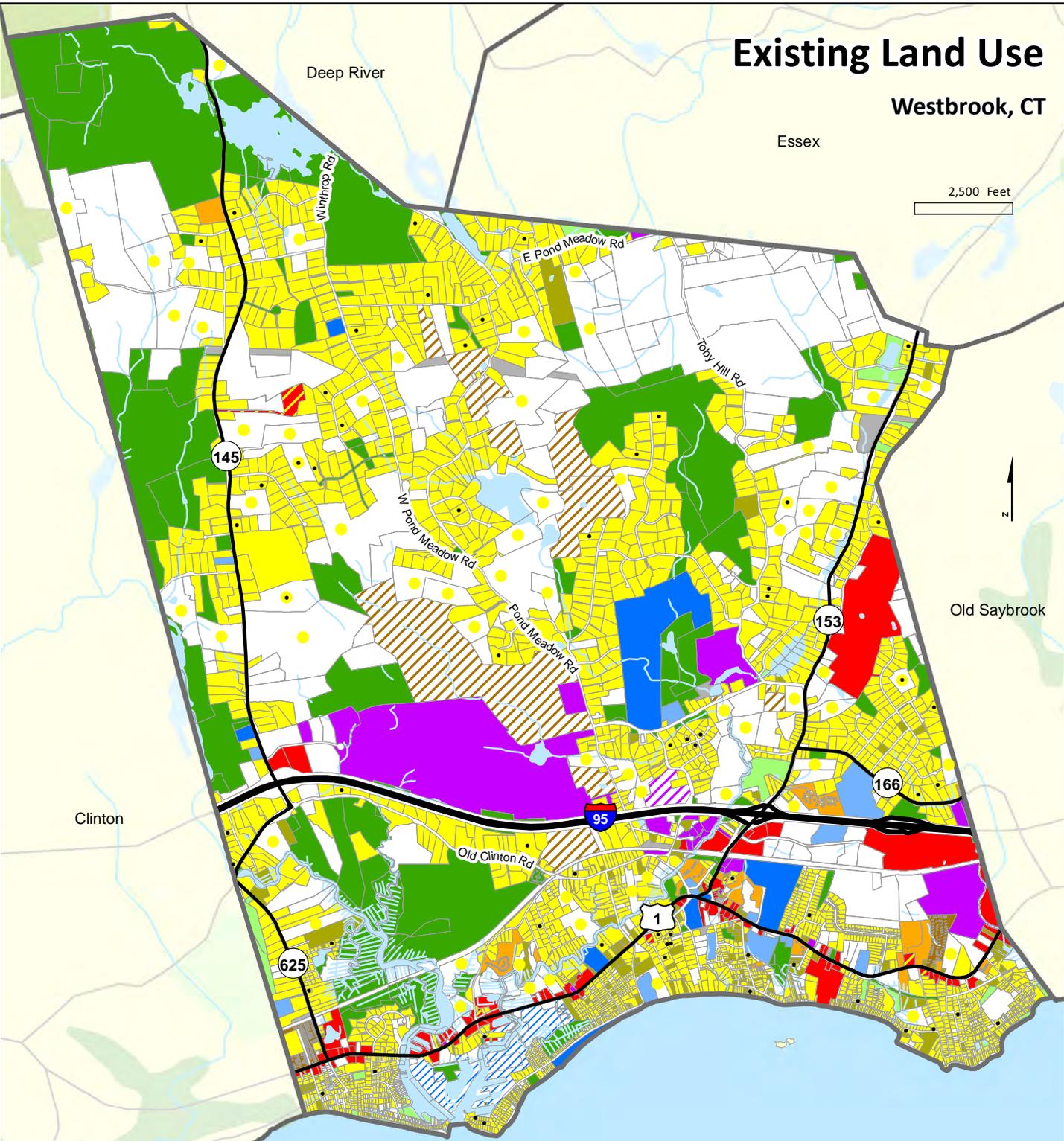
- Higher density residential uses (including seasonal cottages), marinas, and many businesses located south of Interstate 95, and
- Lower density residential development and some business enterprises north of Interstate 95.

		<b>Percent of Total Area</b>
<b>Residential</b>		<b>3,287      31%</b>
Single-Family Residential	3,041	
Multi-Family Residential	221	
Mobile Manufactured Home	25	
<b>Business</b>		<b>915      9%</b>
Business	349	
Mixed Use (business and Residential)	15	
Marine	83	
Industrial	453	
Extraction	16	
<b>Open Space</b>		<b>2,301      22%</b>
Dedicated Open Space	2,222	
Managed Open Space	79	
<b>Institutional</b>		<b>250      2%</b>
Community Facility	172	
Institutional	77	
<b>Other</b>		<b>931      9%</b>
Agriculture	422	
Utility / Transportation / Parking	42	
Road ROWs / Water	467	
<b>Committed / Developed Subtotal</b>		<b>7,684      73%</b>
Vacant / Land With Additional Development Potential		2,775      27%
<b>Total</b>		<b>10,459      100%</b>

Planimetrics and based on Assessor database. Totals may not add due to rounding

# Existing Land Use

Westbrook, CT



2,500 Feet



Residential	Open Space	Business / Industry	Institutional	Other
Single-Family Residential	Dedicated Open Space	Industrial	Community Facility	Agriculture
Single Family with Accessory Dwelling Unit	Managed Open Space	Business	Institutional	Transportation / Utilities
2-4 Family/Multi-House		Marine		Vacant Land
Multi-Family				
Mobile Home				

## Zoning In Westbrook

According to digital mapping of the community, about 87 percent of Westbrook is zoned for residential development. Approximately 10 percent of the community is zoned for business development (including resort, marina and industrial). About 3 percent allows mixed-uses or is conservation oriented.

		Percent of Total Area
<b>Residential</b>	<b>9,080</b>	<b>87%</b>
Rural Residential	7,027	
Low Density Residential (LDR)	509	
Medium Density Residential (MDR)	1,036	
High Density Residential (HDR / HDR-2)	488	
Planned Residential Development	15	
Incentive Housing	4	
Housing Opportunity	1	
<b>Business</b>	<b>1,019</b>	<b>10%</b>
Commercial Town Center	57	
Turnpike Interchange	124	
Commercial Boating	193	
Resort	20	
Light Industrial	466	
Industrial	159	
<b>Other</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>3%</b>
Neighborhood Commercial (residential and business)	240	
Coastal Conservation	120	
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,459</b>	<b>100%</b>

Planimetrics and based on Assessor database. Totals may not add due to rounding

**Residentially Zoned Area**



**Business-Zoned Area**



# Zoning

Westbrook, CT

Essex

2,500 Feet



Old Saybrook

Clinton



### Residential Districts

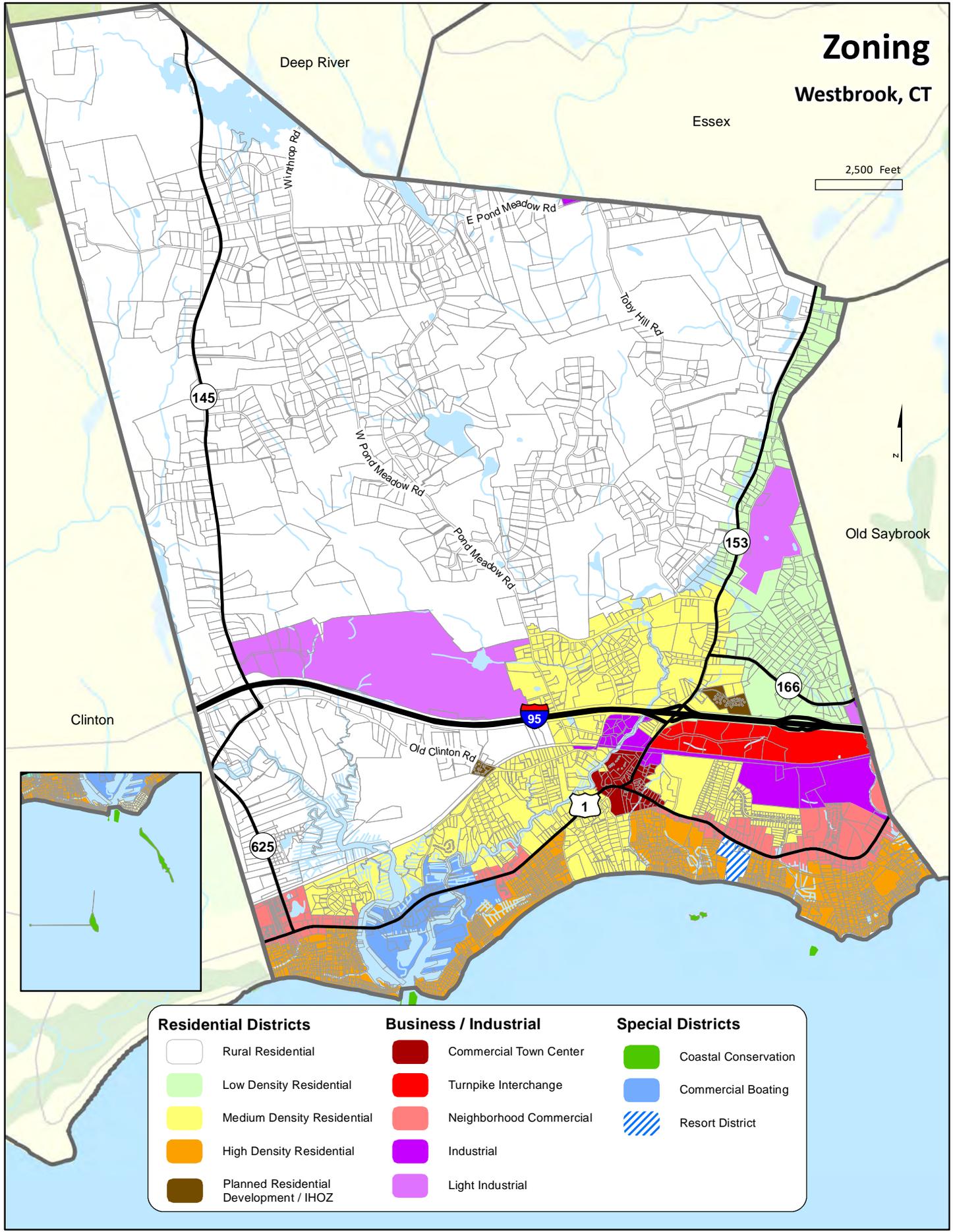
- Rural Residential
- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Planned Residential Development / IHOZ

### Business / Industrial

- Commercial Town Center
- Turnpike Interchange
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Industrial
- Light Industrial

### Special Districts

- Coastal Conservation
- Commercial Boating
- Resort District



## Fiscal Overview

Compared to nearby communities, Westbrook has a strong tax base as measured by the market value of all property in the community. As a result, Westbrook has a lower effective tax rate (taxes expressed relative to the estimated market value of all property in the community) than nearby communities.

	Equalized Net Grand List Per Capita
Old Saybrook	\$324,122
<b>Westbrook</b>	<b>\$253,385</b>
Essex	\$225,288
Clinton	\$167,906
Killingworth	\$159,148
Deep River	\$155,936
<b>State (est.)</b>	<b>\$150,926</b>

	Effective Tax Rate
<b>State (est.)</b>	<b>19.43</b>
Deep River	18.55
Killingworth	18.41
Clinton	17.62
Essex	15.19
<b>Westbrook</b>	<b>15.02</b>
Old Saybrook	12.93

2017 data reported by CERC, 2019

## Community Issues & Concerns

Early in the planning process, an on-line survey was conducted in order to learn about issues important to Westbrook residents. Overall, 166 people participated in the on-line survey:

- About 67% of participants were full-time residents and the rest were seasonal residents.
- About 62% of participants had lived in Westbrook for more than 15 years.
- About 73% of participants lived or owned property south of I-95.
- About half the participants learned about the survey from someone else who told them about it.

Significantly:

- About 67% of participants felt the quality of life in Westbrook was excellent or very good.
- The top factors which influenced people’s decision to come to Westbrook included:
  - To be near the shore.
  - Community ambience (character, reputation, feeling, etc.).
  - Housing type, value, etc. / affordability.

Participants in the on-line survey indicated they were proud of town services/ facilities, the sense of community / character, and the beaches / shoreline. Participants also indicated they were sorry about the Town Center, local business availability, things that detract from character, and services they wish Westbrook offered.

Things People Are Proud Of	Total
<b>Town Services / Facilities</b> (schools, beach, fire, library, etc.)	<b>117</b>
<b>Emotional Character / Ambience</b> (sense of community, people, etc.)	<b>101</b>
<b>Beaches, Shoreline</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>Physical Character</b> (open space, appearance, upkeep)	<b>42</b>
<b>Local Businesses</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Fiscal / Economic</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Special Facilities</b> (train, YMCA, Middlesex Health, etc.)	<b>18</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>37</b>

Things People Are Sorry About	Total
<b>Town Center / Downtown</b> (condition, vacancy, etc.)	<b>56</b>
<b>Local Businesses</b> (businesses lacking, vacancy, etc.)	<b>42</b>
<b>Physical Character</b> (blight, unattractive uses, etc.)	<b>36</b>
<b>Town Services / Facilities</b> (services lacking, desired)	<b>36</b>
<b>Social / Emotional Character</b> (negativity, disagreements, etc.)	<b>33</b>
<b>Fiscal / Economic</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Walkability / Bikeability</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>62</b>



### On-Line Surveys

Several on-line surveys were conducted as part of preparing this POCD.

The results from the first survey, which was conducted near the beginning of the planning process, are presented in this Section. That survey helped identify the issues residents were concerned about and set the stage for how the POCD is organized.

The second survey, which was used to get community feedback on specific strategies being considered, was conducted after the PUC listening sessions and before creating the first draft of the POCD. This survey had 196 participants. The results from the second survey are placed throughout the POCD where most relevant.

The above icon is used to help draw attention to the results of the second survey on specific strategies being considered.

## Identifying Priorities / Assessing Performance

When asked about which Town goals were important to them, participants identified protecting natural resources, addressing coastal issues, invigorating / enhancing the Town Center, and preserving open space as being more important than some other goals.

Participants were ***most satisfied*** about Town efforts at preserving open space, protecting natural resources, providing quality education, and having adequate utility services.

Participants were ***least satisfied*** about Town efforts at promoting pedestrian / bike options, invigorating / enhancing the Town Center, and addressing housing needs.

Support For Town Goals	Percent Very Important
Protecting Natural Resources	78%
Addressing Coastal Issues	74%
Invigorating / Enhancing Town Center	69%
Preserving Open Space	67%
Enhancing Community Character	64%
Having Adequate Utility Services	63%
Providing Quality Education	63%
Addressing Sustainability / Resiliency	61%
Promoting Business/Economic Dev.	60%
Promoting Pedestrian / Bike Options	54%
Guiding Residential Development	44%
Improving Community Services	38%
Improving Community Facilities	37%
Promoting Transit / Rail Options	31%
Addressing Housing Needs	24%
Addressing Vehicular Transportation	23%

Accomplishing Town Goals	Percent Excellent / Good
Preserving Open Space	78%
Protecting Natural Resources	76%
Providing Quality Education	62%
Having Adequate Utility Services	57%
Improving Community Services	53%
Promoting Transit / Rail Options	52%
Addressing Coastal Issues	51%
Improving Community Facilities	45%
Enhancing Community Character	41%
Guiding Residential Development	40%
Addressing Sustainability / Resiliency	36%
Promoting Business/Economic Dev.	34%
Addressing Vehicular Transportation	34%
Addressing Housing Needs	29%
Invigorating / Enhancing Town Center	28%
Promoting Pedestrian / Bike Options	19%

## Westbrook's Greatest Challenge Or Need

When asked about Westbrook's greatest challenge or need, participants perceive that Westbrook's greatest challenge is addressing sea level rise, coastal flooding, and climate change issues. Secondary issues included schools, managing growth, fiscal concerns, and supporting local businesses.

When asked what one thing they would want to have happen as a result of the POCD, it was clear that there is strong interest in improving and enhancing the Town Center. Support was also expressed for business/economic development, improving walkability and bikeability, and other things.

<b>Greatest Challenge Or Need</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Make One Thing Happen</b>	<b>#</b>
Sea Level Rise / Flooding	37	Improve / Enhance Town Center	31
Schools / Education	12	Improve / Enhance Local Business	13
Managing Growth	11	Improve Walkability / Bikeability	13
Fiscal / Economic	11	Upgrade Infrastructure	10
Local Businesses	10	Improve Town Services	10
Town Center / Downtown	9	Maintain / Improve Character	9
Character / Spirit	9	Improve Schools / Education	8
Housing	8	Address Sea Level / Flooding	8
Environment / Conservation	6	Address Issues In Coastal Areas	6
Demographics	6	Improve Community Events / Spirit	5
Infrastructure	6	Address Fiscal / Economic Issues	5
Traffic / Transportation	2	Address Seasonal Housing Issues	2
Other	3	Other (7)	7

## POCD Organization

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### Key Findings

Some of the key findings which influenced preparation of the POCD included:

<b>Lessons of History</b>	Westbrook is expected to continue to grow, although at a slower rate than in the past, due to its: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coastal location and other local amenities and services,</li> <li>• Overall character and quality of life, and</li> <li>• Rail and highway access to employment centers.</li> </ul>
<b>Aging Population</b>	Westbrook is expecting to experience a large increase in its age 65 and older population and this may affect the facilities people want and the services people need.
<b>Housing Diversity</b>	It is anticipated there will be a demand and a need for housing options due to the changing age composition of the community and the lack of housing affordable to service workers and other people Westbrook wants and needs (such as younger families with children).
<b>Seasonal Fluctuations</b>	It is estimated that Westbrook's population roughly doubles in the summertime due to the seasonal tourism / recreation focus with cottage rentals, resort occupancy, and a large number of marinas / boating facilities (along with dining and beach-related activities).
<b>Economic Diversity</b>	It would be beneficial for Westbrook to continue to diversify its economy in terms of more businesses and more sectors so that it does not become overly reliant on any one category.
<b>Land Use / Zoning</b>	There is land in Westbrook available for future development – both residential and business/industrial.
<b>Fiscal</b>	Fiscally, Westbrook is similar to surrounding communities and probably benefits from seasonal housing units that provide tax revenue and do not place year-round burdens on facilities and services.
<b>Community Strengths</b>	Residents indicated they felt the overall quality of life in Westbrook was good or excellent. Residents are proud of Town services and facilities and the overall character of the community.
<b>Residents' Concerns</b>	Residents expressed concerns about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate change and sea level rise,</li> <li>• The strength and vitality of the Town Center, and</li> <li>• Business vacancies and lack of businesses.</li> </ul>

## Plan Organization

Based on the community input from the on-line survey and discussion among the members of the Plan Update Committee, the 2021-31 POCD is organized around the following topics and themes:



### Key Initiatives

The highest priority strategies for Westbrook based on the survey results and the deliberations of the PUC.

*[Before participating in the second on-line survey], how would you rank [the following themes] in terms of importance for Westbrook over the next 10 to 20 years?*



### A Sustainable Community

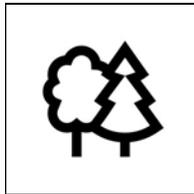
Strategies to help make Westbrook an even more sustainable and resilient community in the future.

<b>A Vibrant Economy</b>	38%
<b>A Healthy Environment</b>	32%
<b>A Sustainable Community</b>	22%
<b>A Solid Foundation</b>	9%



### A Vibrant Economy

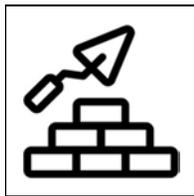
Strategies to help maintain and improve the local economy and local businesses.



### A Healthy Environment

Strategies to help preserve and protect important resources.

*Now, [after participating in the second on-line survey], how would you rank [the following themes] in terms of importance for Westbrook over the next 10 to 20 years?*



### A Solid Foundation

Strategies for community facilities, transportation (vehicle, pedestrian, bicycle, and transit), and utility infrastructure.

<b>A Vibrant Economy</b>	40%
<b>A Healthy Environment</b>	29%
<b>A Sustainable Community</b>	20%
<b>A Solid Foundation</b>	11%



### Implement The Plan

Tools to help guide implementation of the POCD.

**What Are Policies?**

Policies are position statements anticipated to continue over a long period of time. They are generally *reactive* in nature – they are used when a decision is to be made on a pending application, a budget request, a new Town policy, and so on. Policies can and should be used to evaluate and/or guide future actions.

Since policies are on-going, they typically do not lend themselves to being categorized as implemented (which implies something is finished) since they may still be relevant and of value when another issue arises in the future

**What Are Action Steps?**

Action steps are specific *pro-active* actions which can be taken to implement the POCD.

Action steps can be clearly defined and can be prioritized, scheduled, measured, monitored, completed, and evaluated.

Action steps can generally be considered implemented when the task is complete.

**Using This POCD**

Even though a POCD is an advisory document, this Westbrook POCD has been configured to facilitate use and promote implementation:

1. **Action Steps Specifically Called Out** – Action steps (described in the sidebar) have a separate table to highlight the *pro-active steps* that should be taken to implement the POCD.
2. **Policies Organized** – Policies (described in the sidebar) have been organized to facilitate their use in evaluating potential actions in terms of POCD consistency, such as:
  - Reviewing or considering a local policy initiative.
  - Reviewing land use applications.
  - Considering zoning amendments (text or map changes).
  - Preparing advisory reports to the Board of Selectmen regarding municipal improvements (as provided in CGS Section 8-24).
  - Preparing municipal input to state, regional, and local agencies.
  - Reviewing and commenting on the Capital Improvement Plan’s recommended project schedule.
3. **Leaders / Partners Identified** – Each policy and action step in the POCD has a leader (and may have one or more partners) identified. These are the entities most responsible for implementation of that policy or action step. Experience has shown that specifically identifying the responsible entity has a dramatic effect on implementation. A legend for acronyms used to identify leaders and partners is on the inside back cover.

**Policies And Action Steps**

POLICIES		LEADER	PARTNER
Establish a Coastal Vulnerability Framework			
1. Sign the process of evaluating the implications of sea level rise and increased coastal flooding.		Town	
2. Seek grants and technical assistance to help Westbrook address coastal vulnerability issues.			
3. Work with other entities (neighboring, regional, state, and federal) to address issues related to sea level rise and coastal vulnerability (including ways to encourage property owners to retreat from vulnerable locations).		EWVG	BOH
4. Cross-coordinate the Coastal Vulnerability Plan with the Westbrook Emergency Operations Plan and other relevant documents.		EWVG	EO
5. Advocate for disaster relief funding in the event of a major storm.		Town	

ACTION STEPS		LEADER	PARTNER
Establish a Coastal Vulnerability Framework			
1. Establish a coastal vulnerability working group.		BOH	
2. Establish a framework and/or program for addressing coastal vulnerability (where possible including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the nature / extent of the risk,</li> <li>• possible improvements to address the risk,</li> <li>• the anticipated useful life of any improvements,</li> <li>• "orders of magnitude" for the costs associated with different coastal vulnerability responses (based on sea level rise scenarios of 1, 3, and 6 feet),</li> <li>• cost-benefit analysis comparing the costs of improvements with the number of properties affected,</li> <li>• life-cycle costing, and,</li> <li>• other considerations</li> </ul>	EWVG		
6. Evaluate whether wastewater should impose stricter rules on development in coastal floodplain areas (wetland, building height, building design/topology, setbacks from tidal wetlands, water quality buffers, etc.).		BOH	EWVG
7. Prepare a conceptual capital improvement program to balance local capacity with regional / needs.		EWVG	BOH
8. Create a special Reserve Fund for coastal vulnerability.		BOH	
9. Prepare detailed maps showing areas subject to potential inundation in the future.		BOH	
10. Integrate the Coastal Vulnerability Plan into the Westbrook Emergency Operations Plan and other relevant documents.		EWVG	

## 2. KEY INITIATIVES



Based on community input from the on-line surveys and discussion among the members of the Plan Update Committee, the following topics emerged as the key initiatives Westbrook would like to implement as a result of this POCD:

- Establish a coastal resiliency framework,
- Strengthen and revitalize the town center, and
- Encourage housing diversity.

Those topics are grouped in this section.

### GOAL

***Implement the three main initiatives identified in the 2021-31 POCD ...***

Coastal Resiliency



Town Center



Housing Choice



Plan For  
**20"**  
Of Sea Level  
Rise In  
Connecticut  
By 2050

CIRCA, 2017

## Establish A Coastal Resiliency Framework

In the last decade or so, there has been growing realization in Connecticut that coastal communities need to figure out how they will address:

- The consequences of sea level rise, and
- The impacts of more frequent and more intense coastal storms.

In October 2017, the Connecticut Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation (CIRCA) released a recommendation that Connecticut communities *plan for* sea level rise of 20 inches (0.5 meters) between then and 2050. This was not a prediction, but it was a scenario of a possible situation that communities should be prepared to address if it were to occur.

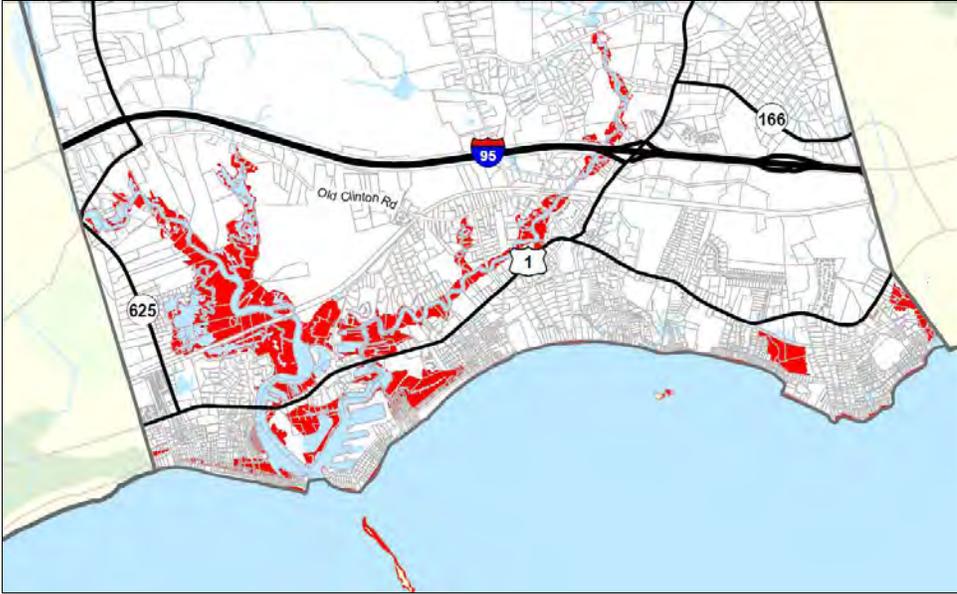
Planning for higher water levels takes on greater significance when the potential for more frequent and more intense coastal storms resulting from warmer temperatures is also considered.

The strategy to establish a coastal resiliency framework is an example of resilience planning and hazard mitigation which is also discussed in Chapter 3 of this POCD.

The Nature Conservancy has developed a "Coastal Resilience Tool" which allows people to look at different sea level rise and storm surge scenarios in order to better understand the dynamic coastline. That tool can be found here:

<https://coastalresilience.org/tools/>

**Scenario Of 24" Rise In Sea Level (Mean High Water)**  
(Red areas indicate areas inundated at mean high water if sea levels rise 24")  
(Does not include tidal fluctuations or storm surges)



Undertaking this sort of planning is important for a number of reasons including, but not limited to:

- Municipalities will need to figure out how they will adapt to higher water levels in terms of providing public goods and services in coastal areas and how they might need to respond to public emergencies,
- Neighborhood associations will need to evaluate what their roles might be given their unique circumstances, and
- Residents, businesses, and property owners will need to evaluate their own situations and decide how they wish to prepare or respond.

In an on-line survey conducted as part of preparing this POCD, 89 percent of participants felt that Westbrook should develop strategies for how to address the implications of possible sea level rise (such as eroding properties, flooded properties, roads under water, emergency access, malfunctioning septic systems, potential increases in groundwater elevations, etc.).



Westbrook does not really have a good inventory or assessment of potential coastal vulnerabilities and which of the following (or other) potential responses may be best in different situations:

**89% Agree - Westbrook should develop strategies for how to address the implications of possible sea level rise (such as eroding properties, flooded properties, roads under water, emergency access, malfunctioning septic systems, etc.).**

Do Nothing	Adaptation	Protection	Retreat
Current land uses / activities continue and people react to sea level rise / coastal storms when they happen.	Individual properties make modifications to continue existing land uses in anticipation of sea level rise / coastal storms.	Neighborhoods or areas are protected from sea level rise / coastal storms so that existing land uses can continue.	Land uses / activities are relocated from the coastal zone (before or after an event) with no effort to protect the land from the sea.

Strongly Agree	64%
Somewhat Agree	25%
No Opinion	6%
Somewhat Disagree	3%
Strongly Disagree	1%

Since the issue of understanding coastal resilience and how to address it is so important to Westbrook, the Town is planning on undertaking a “resiliency planning” project in the 2021-22 fiscal year. It is anticipated that this effort will:

- Inventory possible issues,
- Start to consider possible responses, and
- Decide how it might be able to address them.

Key resources for Westbrook to consider include:

- Communities across Connecticut which have created (and are updating) coastal resilience plans.
- The Connecticut Institute for Resilience & Climate Adaptation (CIRCA).
- The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection.
- The Nature Conservancy which has also been quite active in evaluating sea level rise and storm vulnerability.

Coastal Storm



Flooding From Tides And Sea Level Rise



## Resiliency Planning

Work items which the Coastal Resiliency Working Group might consider include:

- the nature / extent of the risk,
- possible improvements to address the risk,
- the anticipated useful life of any improvement,
- “orders of magnitude” for the costs associated with different coastal resiliency responses (based on sea level rise scenarios of 2, 4, and 6 feet),
- cost-benefit analysis comparing the costs of improvements with the number of properties affected,
- life-cycle costing, and
- other considerations.

In addition, the Coastal Resiliency Working Group may want to evaluate sea level rise scenarios and how it may affect Long Island Sound's coastal marshes, beaches, and coastal infrastructure. The CT-DEEP has a SLAMM computer model (“Sea Level Affecting Marshes Model”) which could be used for this purpose.

The POCD recommends that Westbrook establish a “coastal resilience working group” to begin evaluating the challenges and opportunities in Westbrook. While the size of the group should be carefully considered so that it does not become unworkable or unmanageable, represented parties might include:

- Town Organizations (Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance, Planning Commission, Zoning Commission, Conservation Commission, Harbor Management Commission, Park and Recreation Board, Emergency Services Department, Public Works Department, etc.).
- Private Property Owners – Residential.
- Private Property Owners – Business.
- Council of Beaches.

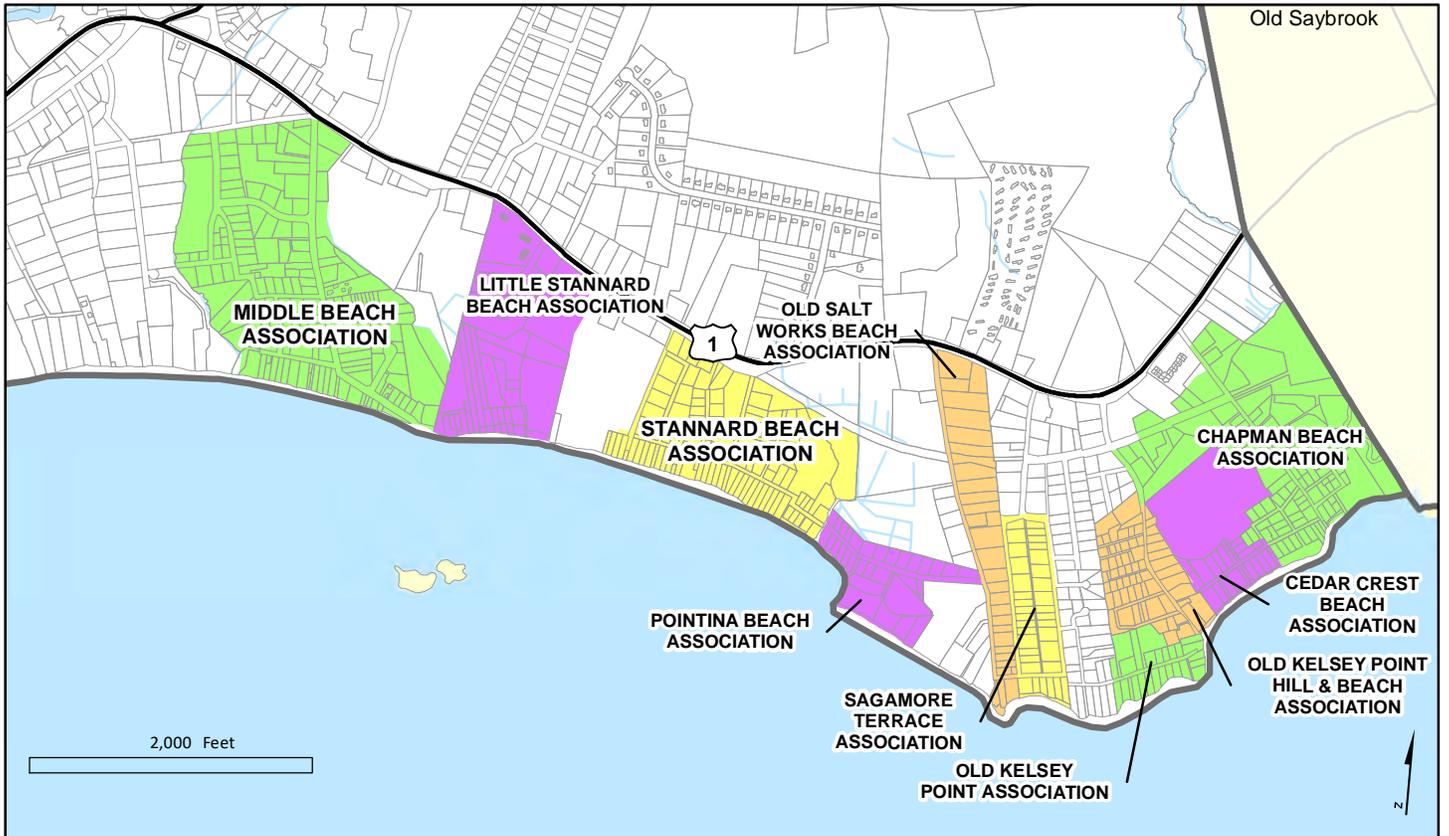
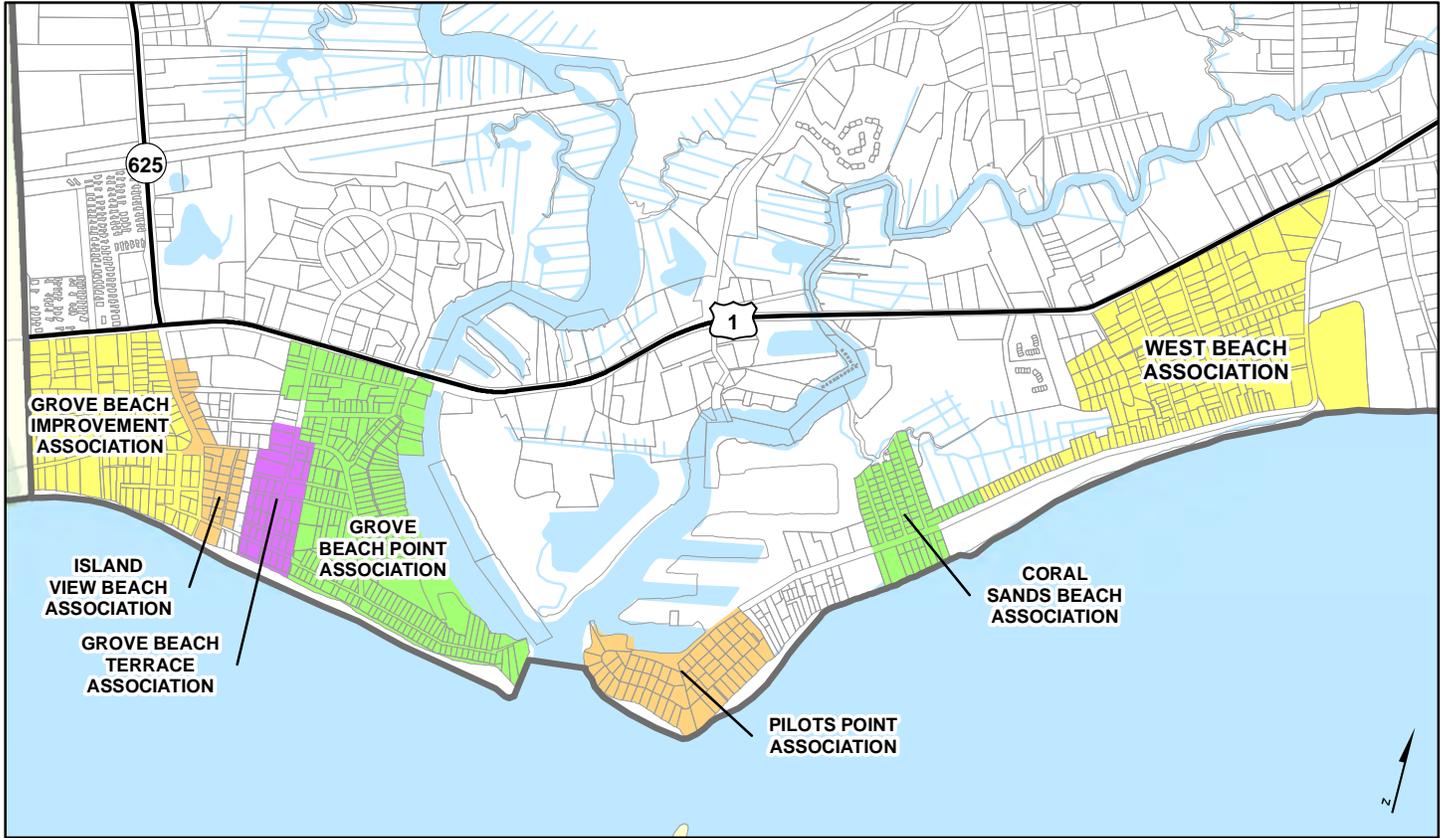
Most of the entities identified above are Town-related boards and commissions since Town policy and involvement could be an important part of addressing coastal resiliency. Private property owners will also need to be involved since some of the responsibility of addressing coastal resiliency will fall to them.

At the same time, there is also likely to be a role for the various beach area associations. Some roads and drainage systems in the shoreline areas are private but benefit nearby property owners. This may be the type of situation where neighborhood associations can step in to address issues related to coastal resiliency which will not be the Town’s responsibility and may affect multiple properties.

The Coastal Resiliency Working Group can:

- Evaluate the implications of sea level rise / increased coastal flooding.
- Seek grants and technical assistance.
- Work with other entities to address issues related to sea level rise and coastal resiliency.
- Cross-coordinate the Coastal Resiliency Plan with the Westbrook Emergency Operations Plan and other relevant documents.
- Ensure Westbrook receives disaster relief funding in the event of a major storm.
- Evaluate whether Westbrook should impose stricter rules on development in coastal floodplain areas.
- Prepare a conceptual capital improvement program to balance fiscal capacity with coastal issues / needs.
- Consider creating a special Reserve Fund for coastal resiliency.

The map on the facing page shows the various neighborhood associations which will likely be affected by climate change and sea level rise. The boundaries depicted on the map are conceptual only and may change based on more detailed investigation.



# Beach Associations

Westbrook, CT

## Possible Framework

### Individual Buildings / Properties

Property owners will likely be responsible for protection and repair of individual buildings and properties. Flood insurance or disaster relief funds *may* be available.

It is unlikely the Town will be in a position to address issues associated with individual buildings.

#### Possible Individual Activities

- Elevate buildings.
- Elevate / protect properties.
- Relocate.
- Upgrade on-site septic systems.

### Neighborhood Approaches

There may be “middle-ground” situations where a project may provide some neighborhood (but not town-wide) benefits and, in such situations, options may include:

- neighborhood associations undertaking such projects,
- the Town coordinating and administering an “assessment of benefits” approach,
- the Town facilitating establishment of a “special service district” for the benefit of the affected property owners,
- property owners (as a group) undertaking improvements privately.

#### Possible Neighborhood Activities

- “Living shorelines.”
- Seawalls / bulkheads / groins / breakwaters.
- Beach nourishment / dune restoration.
- Engineered banks / artificial reefs.

### Road And Utility Infrastructure

Infrastructure issues will likely need to be investigated on a location-by-location basis. A framework should be developed for:

- looking at action thresholds (number of properties affected, number of anticipated events, anticipated life of investment, cost-benefit, etc.) for different infrastructure items,
- estimating when (or if) that action threshold is likely to occur, and
- prioritizing improvements based on the action threshold.

In some situations, it simply may not make fiscal sense for all of the Town taxpayers (or for a utility provider) to undertake some infrastructure improvements in vulnerable areas.

#### Possible Infrastructure Activities

- Protect water supply.
- Protect power supply.
- Keep communications.
- Improve drainage.
- Raise access roads where practical.

### Retreat

Gradually retreat from vulnerable areas as circumstances dictate.

#### Possible Retreat Activities

- Undertake phased abandonment.
- Implement buyouts.
- Stop providing public services, such as when public costs exceed community benefits.
- Expand marsh capacity.
- Facilitate marsh migration.

POLICIES AND ON-GOING PROGRAMS Establish A Coastal Resiliency Framework			Legend On Inside Back Cover	
			Page	Leader
A.	Evaluate the implications of sea level rise and increased coastal flooding.	24	CRWG	Town
B.	Seek grants and technical assistance to help Westbrook address coastal resiliency issues.	24	CRWG	Town
C.	Work with other entities (neighborhood, regional, state, and federal) to address issues related to sea level rise and coastal resiliency (including ways to encourage property owners to retreat from vulnerable locations).	24	CRWG	BOS COB
D.	Cross-coordinate the Coastal Resiliency Plan with the Westbrook Emergency Operations Plan and other relevant documents.	24	CRWG	EM
E.	Ensure Westbrook receives disaster relief funding in the event of a major storm.	24	EM	

ACTION STEPS Establish A Coastal Resiliency Framework			Legend On Inside Back Cover	
			Page	Leader
1.	Establish a coastal resiliency working group.	<input type="checkbox"/> 24	BOS PC	
2.	Prepare a Coastal Resiliency Plan for addressing coastal resiliency issues.	<input type="checkbox"/> 24	CRWG	PC
3.	Evaluate whether Westbrook should impose stricter rules on development in coastal floodplain areas (freeboard, building height, building design/typology, setbacks from tidal wetlands, water quality buffers, etc.).	<input type="checkbox"/> 24	ZC	CRWG
4.	Prepare a conceptual capital improvement program to balance fiscal capacity with coastal issues / needs.	<input type="checkbox"/> 24	CRWG	BOF BOS
5.	Consider creating a special Reserve Fund for coastal resiliency.	<input type="checkbox"/> 24	BOF	
6.	Prepare detailed maps showing areas subject to potential inundation in the future.	<input type="checkbox"/> 24	EM	PC
7.	Integrate the Coastal Resiliency Plan into the Westbrook Emergency Operations Plan and other relevant documents.	<input type="checkbox"/> 24	CRWG	

### Overall Approach

The scope of the issues associated with sea level rise and storm damage are so extensive and expensive that it will be difficult for the Town of Westbrook or any other governmental organization to address them all.

While affected property owners (and neighborhood associations) will be key participants in addressing the consequences of sea level rise and coastal storms, they also need to have some indication how the Town will address these issues so they can plan accordingly.

Actions at all three levels (property owners, neighborhood associations, governments) will need to be coordinated to achieve the maximum result.

### POCD Coordination

Once the Coastal Resiliency Plan is completed, a decision can be made about how or whether to incorporate it in the POCD or “reference” it in the POCD.



***94% Agree - Westbrook should seek ways to invigorate the Town Center.***

Strongly Agree	75%
Somewhat Agree	19%
No Opinion	4%
Somewhat Disagree	0%
Strongly Disagree	2%

## **Strengthen And Revitalize The Town Center**

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The Town Center is the heart of Westbrook both in terms of its central location and historical / cultural importance. However, in the initial on-line survey as part of the 2021 POCD, participants expressed significant concern about the overall vitality and appearance of the Town Center.

Almost 70 percent of participants felt that invigorating / enhancing the Town Center was a community goal which was “very important”, but only 28 percent of respondents felt that Westbrook was doing a good job at accomplishing this goal. ***This was the highest discrepancy between importance and performance of all the topics mentioned in the survey.***

Then, in the same on-line survey, when asked what one thing they would like to see happen as a result of the POCD, the most common response was to improve and enhance the Town Center.

In the second on-line survey of strategies, 94 percent of participants agreed that Westbrook should seek ways to invigorate the Town Center.



When residents were asked in the on-line survey what they felt was needed for the Town Center (i.e., what would you do if you were in charge), the input was insightful:

Category	Suggestions Made By Residents / Concerns Expressed By Residents
<b>Uses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See discussion on next page</li> </ul>
<b>Appearance / Character</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make it more inviting.</li> <li>• Enhance beauty / historic charm; plant shade trees along the sidewalks.</li> <li>• Upgrade existing buildings to look more like a small New England coastal town.</li> <li>• Enhance the facade of businesses in the center.</li> <li>• Create a pedestrian friendly atmosphere.</li> <li>• Make it a destination.</li> <li>• Develop a unifying concept, i.e. the Arts.</li> <li>• Have a social scene that is attractive to younger people and families.</li> </ul>
<b>Parking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More parking.</li> <li>• Better parking.</li> <li>• Signage to show that there is public parking so non-residents can find it.</li> </ul>
<b>Wastewater</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get wastewater issue figured out.</li> <li>• Invest in community septic.</li> <li>• Create a shared septic system under the Town Green.</li> </ul>
<b>Offer Incentives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with the owners of the properties to help them develop the area.</li> <li>• Incentivize owners to reface/rebuild existing structures and expand parking.</li> <li>• Offer a robust front and rear Facade Improvement Program.</li> <li>• Tax abatement for investors with certain use types, restaurants, etc.</li> <li>• Offer incentives to business to relocate in the Town Center.</li> </ul>
<b>Connections</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draw people in by making it pedestrian and bike friendly.</li> <li>• Improve pedestrian access to the center from outside [neighborhoods].</li> <li>• Connect all the sidewalks and make it more walkable.</li> <li>• Make it a place where people want to go get a coffee and walk.</li> </ul>
<b>Events / Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a busy schedule of events such as music, fairs, education, fireworks, flea market, farmers markets, craft shows, food trucks etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Expand / Reconfigure The Town Center</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand it southward, add mixed use office and condo housing.</li> <li>• Move Ted Lane fields elsewhere and build a town square with additional commercial use buildings.</li> <li>• Move oil/gas businesses elsewhere and encourage restaurants to move in.</li> </ul>
<b>Other</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Join Connecticut Main Streets Program.</li> <li>• More benches.</li> <li>• Put seating on the green - Adirondack chairs, picnic tables, etc. to encourage people to hang out there.</li> </ul>

### Attract / Encourage New Uses And Development

A number of questions in the on-line survey asked participants about what uses they would like to see in the Town Center (and which they would use) and again, the input was insightful.

When asked what businesses they would use regularly if they were located in the Town Center, survey participants indicated the following:

Food / Hospitality		Goods Purchase		Food Purchase		Other	
Restaurant	68	Retail Store / Shop	53	Specialty Food (Meat, Cheese, Gourmet, Etc.)	32	Recreation / Fitness / Movie / Entertainment	4
Deli / Pizza	11	Clothing / Boutique	17	Grocery Store	18	Personal Service (Hair Stylist Laundromat. Florist)	3
Coffee / Starbucks	9	Hardware Store	15	Bakery / Bagel Shop	15		
Bar / Brewery / Wine	7	Gift Shop (esp. local)	11	Ice Cream	11		
Cafe / Pub	7	Bike Shop	4	Liquor / Wine	2	Gas Station / Convenience Store	2
Outdoor Dining	2	Pharmacy / Drug	4				
		Bank	3				
		Bookstore	1				
		Thrift / Consignment	2				
		Other	8				

A similar pattern of desired uses emerged when participants were asked what *other* businesses they would like to see in the Town Center:

Food / Hospitality		Goods Purchase		Food Purchase		Other	
Restaurant / Deli	15	Retail Store / Shop	18	Specialty Food (Meat, Cheese, Gourmet, Etc.)	13	Hair Salon / Barber	4
Coffee / Cafe	8	Specialty Shop (Toy, Book, Hobby)	17	Ice Cream	9	Flower Shop / Florist	4
Bar / Brewery / Wine	6	Gift Shop (esp. local)	14	Grocery Store	7	Art Gallery	4
		Hardware Store	7	Bakery	4	Anything That Brings People	3
		Clothing	5			Office Space	3
		Bike Shop / Rental	3			Gym	2
		Thrift / Consignment	1			Children's Museum	1
						Bowling Alley	1

It is somewhat ironic that some of the uses that survey participants indicated they would like to see in the Town Center have been there in the past but did not receive enough patronage (in many cases) to stay in business. Thus, one of the challenges for Westbrook will be to generate enough activities (a "critical mass") and enough economic activity for the Town Center to thrive.

The survey revealed that residents are not enamored with the idea of attracting just any use. Instead, it seems that residents are supportive of the strategy articulated in this POCD to try and “curate” the uses in the Town Center so that there is a critical mass of uses which enhance and support each other and contribute to the overall vitality of the Town Center:

- 65% of participants agreed it was important to only allow uses that generate pedestrian activity and invigorate the Town Center, and
- 54% of participants agreed it was important to discourage uses that do not generate much pedestrian activity and may not result in patronage of neighboring businesses.

	<u>Attract any use that will occupy space in the Town Center.</u>	<u>Only allow uses that generate pedestrian activity and invigorate the Town Center.</u>	<u>Discourage uses that do not generate much pedestrian activity and may not result in patronage of neighboring businesses.</u>
<b>Strongly Agree</b>	15%	<b>27%</b>	<b>19%</b>
<b>Somewhat Agree</b>	25%	<b>38%</b>	<b>35%</b>
<b>No Opinion</b>	9%	8%	17%
<b>Somewhat Disagree</b>	<b>34%</b>	22%	20%
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>17%</b>	5%	9%

The POCD recommends that the main way to revitalize the Town Center area will be to attract and encourage new uses and new development:

- New business uses that create an active streetscape (such as restaurants, and tourist-oriented boutiques and galleries),
- Mixed-use buildings (with residential units on upper floors) that provide housing for local workers and increase street activity,
- New civic uses, and
- Businesses that serve the needs of the community and the needs of residents within walking distance.

It is envisioned that the Town will need to guide these activities and may need to be an active participant in terms of working with property owners and offering incentives.

The results of the on-line survey agree with the findings and recommendations of the POCD:

- 78% percent of participants agreed that the POCD should recommend mixed-use buildings in the Town Center with residential units located above street-level business uses in order to increase the number of businesses and the number of people that might frequent them.
- 78% percent of participants agreed that Westbrook should offer redevelopment incentives (such as tax abatements and/or low-interest loans) to promote desired development in the Town Center.



**78% Agree - The POCD should recommend mixed-use buildings in the Town Center with residential units located above street-level business uses in order to increase the number of businesses and the number of people that might frequent them.**

<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>39%</b>
<b>Somewhat Agree</b>	<b>39%</b>
<b>No Opinion</b>	9%
<b>Somewhat Disagree</b>	7%
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	6%

**78% Agree - Westbrook should offer redevelopment incentives (such as tax abatements and/or low-interest loans) to promote desired development in the Town Center.**

<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>39%</b>
<b>Somewhat Agree</b>	<b>39%</b>
<b>No Opinion</b>	11%
<b>Somewhat Disagree</b>	8%
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	4%

## 1998 Town Center Goals

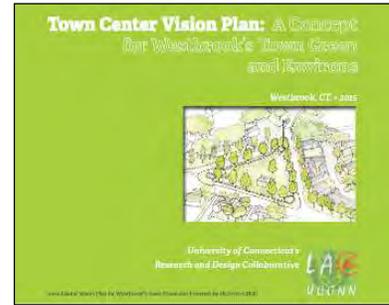
A Town Center Study was conducted in 1998 and the goals from that report are still relevant and consistent with current goals:

- Safe and effective traffic patterns for vehicles and pedestrians.
- Inviting pedestrian walkways and passages.
- Sufficient and convenient parking.
- Sewage disposal solutions.
- Aesthetic considerations that address landscaping and general streetscape.
- Architectural and design standards that maintain the unique character of the town center area.

## Implement Vision Plan Recommendations

In 2015, the Town Center Revitalization Committee and the Economic Development Commission (with the assistance of a team from the University of Connecticut) prepared a Town Center visioning report.

That 2015 Town Center Vision Plan, and any amendment thereto, is hereby incorporated *as a reference* in the 2021 POCD but not as a final plan since recommendations were later refined as a result of public feedback.



Still, the report demonstrates how the recommendations below can be achieved and what it might look like. The details of how the vision is implemented may vary (such as a form-based code based on a community-driven design process), but going forward, proposals for infrastructure improvements and private development should generally conform to the report.

The study found that there is potential for commercial and residential growth as well as a need for such in order to create a vibrant Town Center. Infrastructure improvements vital to realizing the full potential of the area and attracting private investment might include:

- A community septic system,
- Creation of shared parking connected by a series of internal driveways behind buildings, and
- Improved pedestrian access.

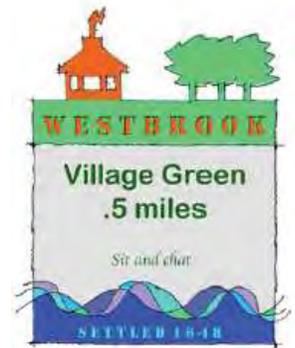
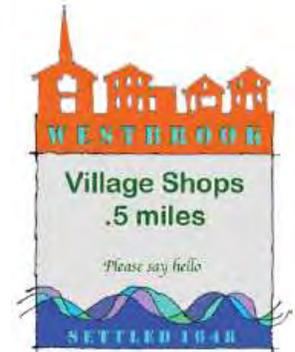


## Town Center Visioning Concepts

## Wayfinding Sign Examples

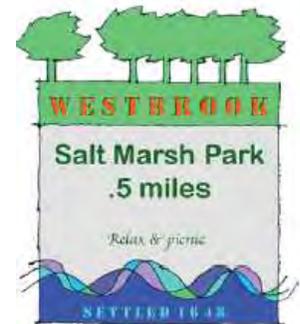
### Town Green Area

- Improve traffic / pedestrian circulation through creation of specific east-west and north-south access drives and shared parking areas behind buildings.
- Provide rear access to buildings on Westbrook Place.
- Abandon Boston Post Rd. entrance to Knothe Rd. ("J-hook") upon completion of access drives and shared access through bank property.
- Maximize leasable square footage through infill and re-development.
- Add upper story residential units over commercial space.
- Create a defined edge between sidewalks and the Green.
- Maximize the visual impact of corners of the Green.
- Consider installing decorative pavers on Essex Road to allow temporary closing of the road to create an extension of the Town Green for special events.
- If travel lanes on roads surrounding the Green can be narrowed narrow, consider re-utilizing excess roadway to widen sidewalks or create bike lanes.
- Where possible, narrow travel lane widths to allow on-street parking and bicycle lanes.
- Where possible, extend and expand sidewalks and install more crosswalks.
- Encourage the burying of overhead wires over the long term.



### Gateways / Wayfinding / Enhancements

- Using landscaping, public art, and/or signage, create unique and memorable "gateways" to the Town Center at Mulvey Municipal Center, at the railroad bridge on Essex Road and on Boston Post Road at Goodspeed Drive.
- Develop a coordinated system of wayfinding signage that highlights key destinations, creates a positive impression, and reinforces community identity.
- Create a Town Park for passive activities with views to the Patchogue River at the American Legion overlook area.
- Create a trailhead to Town Open Space (Wren Park).
- Expand the median and install plantings at the entrance to Flat Rock Place.
- Add bike lanes/sharrows along the entire length of Flat Rock Place by reducing lane width and the number of lanes.
- Seek to preserve existing trees and seek opportunities for trees to be planted along the roadway with appropriate species in appropriate locations.





## Maintain & Enhance Town Center Character

The POCD recognizes the importance of maintaining and enhancing the character of the Town Center area. This includes building and site design on private properties as well as the form and function of the public realm (including State and local roadways and pedestrian/bicycle improvements). Westbrook should continue to participate in the programs of the Connecticut Main Street Center in order to help maintain and enhance the Town Center.

***54% Disagree - If it would help invigorate the Town Center, Westbrook should consider allowing new buildings in the Town Center to be taller than 2.5 stories.***

The Town Center could be strengthened and enhanced by creating more of a critical mass of activity there. To Investigate this possibility further, Westbrook should look at possible ways to expand / reconfigure the Town Center by expanding south towards Trolley Road.

Strongly Agree	15%
Somewhat Agree	25%
No Opinion	7%
Somewhat Disagree	28%
Strongly Disagree	26%

The Vision Plan illustrated some possible new building designs and these were generally reflective of a New England community with buildings that were 2.0 to 2.5 stories tall. In the on-line survey, participants were not in favor of buildings in the Town Center being taller than 2.5 stories.

Illustrations From The Town Center Visioning Report



In order to maintain and enhance Town Center character, Westbrook should also work with property owners to improve the facades of buildings which will not be redeveloped in the short term.

The Vision Plan also contained some design guidelines which can help inform and guide the future design elements of Westbrook's Town Center.

**Possible Design Guidelines From The Town Center Visioning Report**



**Images Of Mixed-Use Pedestrian-Friendly Village-Type Areas**



**Village District**

The Plan recommends that Westbrook consider establishing a "village district" in this area of distinctive character, landscape, and historic value in order to ensure that new construction, substantial reconstruction, and rehabilitation of properties maintains and enhances the character of the area.

A "village district" is a special type of zoning district in Connecticut which allows a municipality to more closely regulate aesthetics of buildings and sites at the time of development.

Finding the right balance will be important. The overall goal is to attract development (not discourage it) but it is also important that buildings and site improvements fit into the desired overall character of the Town Center.

If a "village district" is established, the Zoning Commission will have the ability to closely manage the design and placement of buildings and other development elements within these areas.

Additional information regarding "village districts" may be found in Section 8-2j of the Connecticut General Statutes.



***79% Agree - The POCD should recommend looking at shared septic systems and other approaches to allow different types of businesses (such as restaurants), increase the amount of commercial space, and allow more dwelling units.***

Strongly Agree	48%
Somewhat Agree	31%
No Opinion	10%
Somewhat Disagree	6%
Strongly Disagree	5%

**Walk Radius**

The map on the facing page contains circles (centered on the Town Green) for a ¼-mile and a ½-mile walking radius.

A comfortable walking speed for people is about 3-4 miles per hour so a ¼-mile distance is what people can comfortably walk in about 5 minutes.

**Continue To Address Infrastructure Needs**

Participants in the on-line survey were aware that one of the impediments to development of the Town Center is septic capacity. Most sites were developed before the current Health Code / Zoning Regulations were adopted and the small lot sizes inhibit the ability of sites to meet current standards.

The overall vision for the Town Center will be difficult to realize if each site has to find a way to discharge wastewater on its own site. Further, this situation essentially precludes restaurants and some other uses that residents have indicated they want in the Town Center.

Preliminary wastewater analyses done in 2015 and 2019 looked at some possible shared septic system locations and the floor area that could be supported. To help inform planning for the future of the Town Center area, additional study is needed of:

- the physical capacity of the soil to assimilate waste, and
- the cost (overall and per property) of one or more shared systems with its projected cost-benefit for the town and property owners.

In the on-line survey, 79% percent of participants agreed that the POCD should recommend looking at shared septic systems and other approaches to allow different types of businesses (such as restaurants), increase the amount of commercial space, and allow more dwelling units. See page 96 for additional discussion regarding wastewater management strategies for the Town Center area (including the possibility of a wastewater management district to address septic needs and issues).

Parking, especially shared parking, is also important. The 2011 POCD recognized that parking is still required in pedestrian-friendly town centers since they need customers to thrive and many customers arrive in vehicles. People are more likely to visit a place (by car) if they feel there is a high likelihood of finding convenient parking. Westbrook added public parking spaces in the past decade to help support the Town Center and more parking and signage would help this effort.

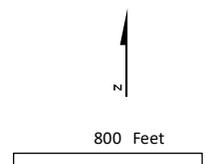
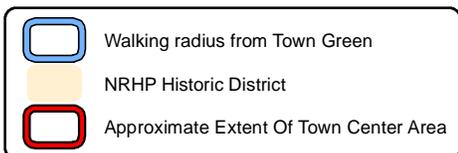
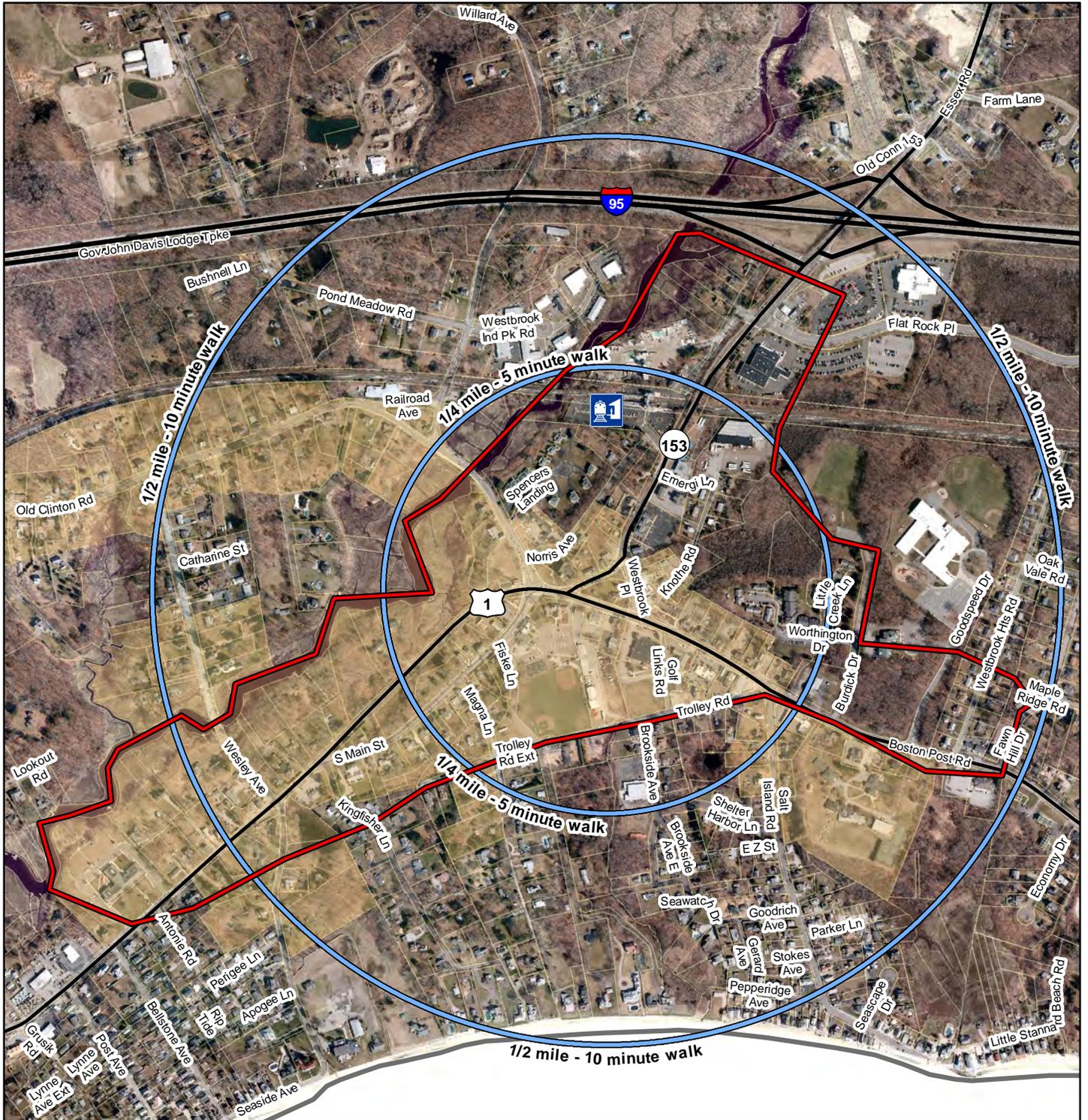
A mixed-use Town Center does not need as much parking as one might think since people typically park once and visit multiple destinations. In addition, the peak demand for parking spaces varies throughout the day (and the week) depending on the mix of uses and so parking supply can take advantage of this.

**Promote Events And Activities that Attract Visitors**

Events and activities in the Town Center area will help to attract people and this will help support the overall vitality of the Town Center area.

# Town Center

## Westbrook, CT



<b>POLICIES AND ON-GOING PROGRAMS</b> <b>Strengthen And Revitalize The Town Center</b>			<i>Legend On Inside Back Cover</i>	
			Page	Leader
A.	Continue to seek ways to invigorate the Town Center.	28	TCRC	EDC
B.	Encourage new buildings and uses in the Town Center that create an active streetscape and/or serve the needs of the community.	31	EDC	TCRC ZC
C.	Implement regulatory changes to help encourage appropriate development of the Town Center area.	31	ZC	TCRC
D.	Work with property owners to support appropriate development and redevelopment of the Town Center area.	31	TCRC	EDC
E.	Promote preservation grants, tax credits, and other programs that can help property owners redevelop and revitalize their property.	31	EDC	TCRC
F.	Be prepared to offer redevelopment incentives (such as tax abatements and low-interest loans) to promote desired development.	31	BOS	EDC
G.	Implement "vision plan" recommendations to help preserve and revitalize the Town Center.	32	TCRC	Town
H.	Seek ways to improve and enhance the character and appearance of the Town Center area.	34	TCRC	EDC
I.	Improve and enhance pedestrian and bicycle circulation to and within the Town Center.	34	TCRC	PC
J.	Maintain participation in the CT Main Street Program.	34	EDC	
K.	Seek to improve the parking in the Town Center (including signage directing people to available parking) while keeping the character of the Center.	36	TCRC	ZC BOS
L.	Continue to promote community events (e.g., farmer's market, community concerts, parades craft shows, fairs, food trucks, etc.) to draw people to the Town Center and add to community spirit and character.	36	TCRC	EDC COC

<b>ACTION STEPS</b> <b>Strengthen And Revitalize The Town Center</b>			<i>Legend On Inside Back Cover</i>	
			Page	Leader
1.	Implement wastewater management approaches (such as establishment of a community septic system) that will allow appropriate development and redevelopment in the Town Center.	<input type="checkbox"/> 36	WPCA	TCRC
2.	Develop shared parking plans such as at the rear of Westbrook Place and other areas.	<input type="checkbox"/> 36	EDC	TCRC
3.	Consider implementing a façade improvement program.	<input type="checkbox"/> 34	EDC	TCRC
4.	Investigate possible ways to expand / reconfigure the Town Center by expanding south towards Trolley Road.	<input type="checkbox"/> 34	TCRC	
5.	Consider establishment of a "village district"(and or establishing design guidelines) to help protect and enhance Town Center character.	<input type="checkbox"/> 35	ZC	TCRC

## Encourage Housing Diversity

As was noted earlier in the POCD, Westbrook’s age composition is changing, and the median age of the residents is trending older. Residents are aware of this and indicated in the community survey that they would like to do more to:

- Meet the housing needs of an aging population (including aging in place), and
- Attract more young people and families in order to support the schools, replenish the supply of volunteers, and maintain a stock of people willing and able to invigorate the community with new ideas.

Housing cost is the main issue affecting both of these goals. For households earning above-average incomes, they generally have the means (income, home equity, other assets) to be able to find housing that meets their needs. However, the situation is more challenging for households earning less than average incomes.

As mentioned on page 9, the United Way has coined the term “ALICE” (an acronym for asset-limited, income constrained, employed) to describe people who are highly likely to be struggling with the cost of living in general (about 36% of Westbrook’s year-round population). It is important to note that such households can also struggle with housing costs and/or housing options.

The POCD recommended that Westbrook establish an Affordable Housing Committee to help address housing issues in Westbrook and this Committee had started work by the time this POCD was adopted to help Westbrook create an “affordable housing plan” as required by State law.

**Coastal Neighborhood**



**Historic House**



**Apartment Building**



**Mobile Home**



**81% Agree ... The POCD should look at ways to address the housing needs of an aging population.**

Strongly Agree	47%
Somewhat Agree	34%
No Opinion	6%
Somewhat Disagree	9%
Strongly Disagree	5%

**83% Agree ... The POCD should recommend Westbrook find ways to help elderly residents who choose to “age-in-place” in their current homes.**

Strongly Agree	57%
Somewhat Agree	26%
No Opinion	9%
Somewhat Disagree	5%
Strongly Disagree	3%

**65% Agree - The POCD should recommend that Westbrook seek ways to help younger people and families find appropriate housing in Westbrook.**

Strongly Agree	33%
Somewhat Agree	32%
No Opinion	16%
Somewhat Disagree	10%
Strongly Disagree	9%



**67% Agree - The POCD should look at ways to address the housing needs of modest-income households including service workers.**

Strongly Agree	30%
Somewhat Agree	37%
No Opinion	13%
Somewhat Disagree	12%
Strongly Disagree	8%

**People Are Not Sure Whether - The POCD should look at ways to increase the number of housing units in Westbrook affordable to families earning \$60,000 per year or less.**

Strongly Agree	23%
Somewhat Agree	23%
No Opinion	17%
Somewhat Disagree	23%
Strongly Disagree	14%

**People Are Not Sure Whether- The POCD should recommend allowing more accessory apartments and two-family houses to accommodate modest income households and multi-generational households (separate unit for elderly parent or adult child).**

Strongly Agree	27%
Somewhat Agree	23%
No Opinion	15%
Somewhat Disagree	20%
Strongly Disagree	14%

While some housing in Westbrook is “naturally affordable” because it sells at or below affordable levels, there is not enough such housing to meet local needs.

But housing cost is not the only issue. Existing housing units may not be well configured to meet the housing needs of older persons, an especially difficult issue for those older households with limited incomes since they may not be able to afford the services or improvements they need. There is recognition of the issue of “academic housing” in Westbrook where homes are rented from Labor Day to Memorial Day to families who enroll their children in school only to have their lease be up before the school year has ended. Overall, the types of households which may be seeking other housing choices and options might include:

- Young adults (including people who grew up in Westbrook),
- Young families just venturing out on their own,
- People working at businesses and industries in Westbrook,
- Workers providing essential services to residents and businesses (home health aides, childcare workers, police, teachers, municipal employees, and service workers), and
- People who may have lived here their whole lives and now need or want smaller, easier to maintain, and/or less expensive housing so they can stay in Westbrook.

Westbrook sees itself as a single-family town but the POCD recognizes the need for more multi-family and other types of housing (such as two-family housing) like already exists in Westbrook. Accessory apartments can be a gentle way to provide additional units (including affordable units) into existing neighborhoods since they are often incorporated within an existing building.

In addition, as indicated on the bottom of page 7, Westbrook is subject to the Affordable Housing Appeals Procedure (CGS Section 8-30g) because less than 10 percent of the local housing stock meets State affordability criteria. As a result, certain housing developments dedicating at least 30 percent of the new housing units to affordable price levels may not need to strictly comply with local zoning regulations.

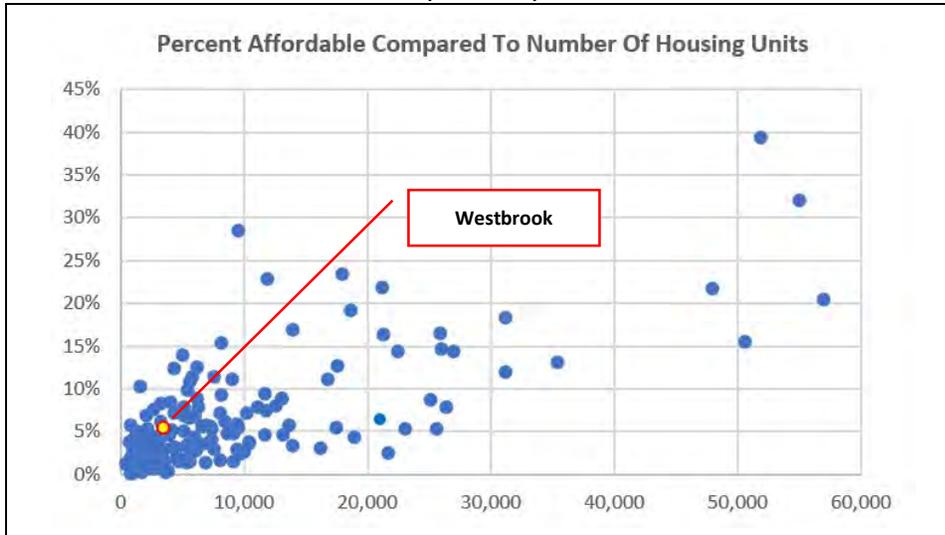
One strategy to help address the need for affordable housing is to consider “inclusionary zoning” approaches. This can include such things as:

- A requirement that a certain percentage of the units in a residential development (such as 10 percent, for example) be set aside for households of low or moderate incomes,
- A “fee-in-lieu of affordable housing” provision where funds are paid into a special housing fund instead of providing units within a development (or for fractional units that may result from a set-aside requirement),
- A Zoning Permit fee where funds are paid into a special housing fund as a percentage of any building permit fee, or
- Other provisions.

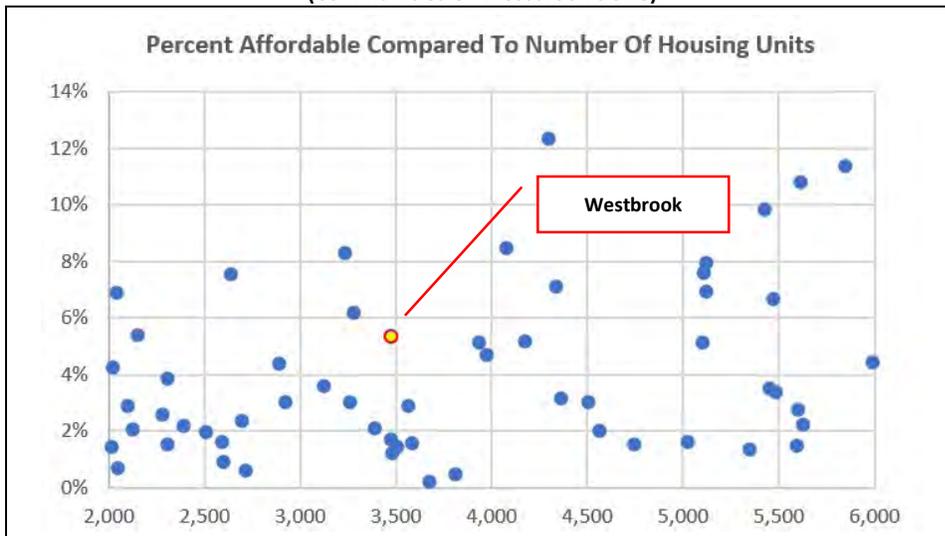
Westbrook does have some “naturally occurring” affordable housing (units which sell or rent at affordable price levels) although some such housing may have opportunities to improve the health, safety, and/or overall living conditions.

Westbrook can and should establish and enhance relationships with housing advocacy groups (such as Habitat for Humanity) in order to work effectively together to address housing needs.

**Comparison of Percent Affordable With Number of Housing Units (Statewide)**



**(Communities Of Westbrook's Size)**



**Affordability Comparison**

The following table compares affordable housing percentages for communities *with a similar number of housing units* to Westbrook:

<b>Similar Size</b>		
Canton	(4,339 units)	7.1%
Putnam		12.4%
Thompson		5.2%
Portland		8.5%
Litchfield		4.7%
<b>Westbrook</b>		<b>5.1%</b>
Redding		0.5%
Weston		0.2%
Woodstock		1.6%
Hebron		2.9%
Haddam	(3,504 units)	1.4%

DOH, 2019

The following table compares *number of housing units* for communities *with a similar* affordable housing percentages to Westbrook:

<b>Similar Percent Affordable</b>		
Greenwich	(5.4%)	25,631
Somers		3,479
Montville		7,407
Milford		23,074
Thompson		4,171
<b>Westbrook</b>		<b>3,937</b>
Coventry		5,099
Sprague		1,248
Watertown		9,096
Waterford		8,634
Simsbury	(4.7%)	9,123

DOH, 2019

The POCD recommends there be housing choices in Westbrook in order to:

- meet the needs of those who want to live here, and
- help meet the state goal that 10 percent of a community’s housing stock be subject to restrictions making it affordable to people earning 80 percent or less of area median income (Westbrook currently has 202 qualifying units and is at 5.1 % relative to the State goal).

<b>POLICIES AND ON-GOING PROGRAMS</b> <b>Encourage Housing Diversity</b>			<i>Legend On Inside Back Cover</i>	
			Page	Leader
A.	Seek ways to create affordable elderly housing units to meet local needs.	39	AHC	HA Town
B.	Seek ways to address the need for affordable family housing units (including “starter homes”) to meet local needs.	39	AHC	HA Town
C.	Continue local programs that help support elderly residents who choose to age in place.	40	SCSS	Town
D.	Consider adopting inclusionary zoning provisions so new housing helps Westbrook reach its housing goals (and not fall further behind).	40	ZC	AHC
E.	Seek opportunities to retain “naturally-occurring affordable housing” and, if possible, convert them to protected affordable units.	41	AHC	Town
F.	Establish / enhance relationships with housing advocacy groups (such as Habitat for Humanity).	41	AHC	Town

<b>ACTION STEPS</b> <b>Encourage Housing Diversity</b>			<i>Legend On Inside Back Cover</i>	
			Page	Leader
1.	Establish an Affordable Housing Committee to help address housing issues in Westbrook. <input type="checkbox"/>	39	BOS PC	
2.	Prepare an “Affordable Housing Plan”, as required by CGS Section 8-30j, by July 2022. <input type="checkbox"/>	39	AHC	
3.	Consider amending the Zoning Regulations to encourage more accessory apartments in areas which have the septic capacity to accommodate them. <input type="checkbox"/>	40	ZC	AHC
4.	Consider amending the Zoning Regulations to allow for two-family dwellings, three family dwellings, and other types of housing in appropriate locations. <input type="checkbox"/>	40	ZC	AHC
5.	Consider amending the Zoning Regulations to incorporate inclusionary zoning provisions. <input type="checkbox"/>	40	ZC	AHC
6.	Explore options to improve living conditions and address safety and sanitary issues at naturally occurring affordable housing sites in Westbrook. <input type="checkbox"/>	41	FRC	SCSS

### 3. A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY



For the purposes of the POCD, being “sustainable” refers to being able to maintain what Westbrook is today including the resources and programs which support the overall social, economic, and physical well-being of the community. Being sustainable also has a future-thinking component in terms of evaluating current actions intended to meet the needs of the present generation relative to whether they compromise the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

A corollary philosophy to being sustainable is being resilient – being able to withstand, respond to, and readily recover from sudden change or adversity as well as being able to adapt to long-term change.

#### GOAL

***Become a greener and even more resilient community ...***

**A Greener Community**



**A Resilient Community**





## Become A Greener Community

---

**91% Agree ... The POCD should promote efficiency and economy in energy use, water use, waste generation, etc. for Town-related projects in Westbrook.**

Strongly Agree	55%
Somewhat Agree	36%
No Opinion	5%
Somewhat Disagree	3%
Strongly Disagree	1%

**70% Agree ... The POCD should promote efficiency and economy in energy use, water use, waste generation, etc. on projects undertaken by private property owners.**

Strongly Agree	37%
Somewhat Agree	33%
No Opinion	17%
Somewhat Disagree	7%
Strongly Disagree	6%

In Connecticut and around the country, there is growing recognition of the importance of the overall concept of sustainability. In the on-line survey:

- 91 percent of participants agreed that the POCD should promote efficiency and economy in energy use, water use, waste generation, etc. for Town-related projects in Westbrook.
- 70 percent of participants agreed that the POCD should promote efficiency and economy in energy use, water use, waste generation, etc. on projects undertaken by private property owners.

The concept of sustainability can vary between people and organizations but the general concept generally includes, but is not limited to:

- Energy (generation, source, use, conservation, and energy efficiency),
- Water (use, conservation, and re-use of processed water),
- Waste (reduction, recycling, composting, and re-use),
- Re-use of sites and materials,
- Reducing / re-using / recycling resources, and
- Reduction in the use of hazardous materials.

It may be important as part of this effort to:

- Consider life-cycle costing, and
- Educate residents about sustainability concepts.

Since 2017, an organization called SustainableCT (<https://sustainablect.org/>) has identified a range of activities which communities can engage in to demonstrate sustainability. The organizational framework used by SustainableCT includes the following:

1. Reduce dependence on fossil fuels, underground metals, and minerals,
2. Reduce activities that negatively impact nature,
3. Meet human needs fairly and efficiently,
4. Reduce dependence on chemicals and unnatural substances, and
5. Promote activities that have multiple benefits to the community.

SustainableCT maintains a “master action list” which communities can use to guide and document sustainability efforts. As of 2020, about two-thirds of the communities in Connecticut were participating in this voluntary program and completing (and documenting) activities on the master action list to demonstrate their progress in this regard. Communities receive certification for completing actions listed on the master action list (which is updated over time).

Westbrook should identify (or create) an organization to implement sustainability initiatives in Westbrook (identified in the POCD as Sustainable Westbrook).

<b>POLICIES AND ON-GOING PROGRAMS</b>		<i>Legend On Inside Back Cover</i>	
<b>Become A Greener Community</b>		Leader	Partners
	Page		
A. Continue to encourage consideration of overall issues of sustainability in municipal decision making.	44	SW	AEC Town
B. Continue to incorporate “green practices” at municipal facilities (solar, wind, recycling, cleaning materials, etc.).	44	SC	AEC Town PW
C. Encourage residents and businesses to include sustainability considerations in their decision making.	44	SW	AEC Town
D. Promote waste reduction and recycling through education and public outreach.	44	BOS SW	PW
E. Seek to improve / expand recycling programs and public awareness.	44	BOS SW	PW
F. Continue to educate the community about sustainability concepts.	44	SW	AEC
G. Seek ways to help income-constrained / asset-limited households become more sustainable (and more resilient).	44	SW	AEC

<b>ACTION STEPS</b>		<i>Legend On Inside Back Cover</i>	
<b>Become A Greener Community</b>		Leader	Partners
	Page		
1. Identify (or create) an organization to implement sustainability initiatives in Westbrook.	44	BOS PC	
2. Investigate participating in the Sustainable CT program.	44	SW	
3. Modify the Zoning Regulations to specifically authorize solar panels and wind turbines as accessory uses in business zones.	44	ZC	

### Overall Sustainability





**82% Agree - Westbrook should develop strategies for how to address the impacts of climate change (severe rain events, drought, strong winds, ice storms, etc.).**

Strongly Agree	58%
Somewhat Agree	24%
No Opinion	5%
Somewhat Disagree	9%
Strongly Disagree	5%

The strategy to establish a coastal resiliency framework in the “Key Initiatives” section of the POCD is an example of resilience planning and hazard mitigation.

### Flooding Terminology

What many people refer to as a “100-year flood” is actually a flooding event which has a 1-percent chance of occurring in any year. Over the course of time, some locations have experienced two floods of this magnitude in the same year.

Likewise, what many people refer to as a “500-year flood” is actually a flooding event which has a 0.2-percent chance of occurring in any year.

## Become A More Resilient Community

For the POCD, resiliency relates to being able to absorb and/or recover from impactful events in an efficient and timely way. The concept of adapting to impactful events (and the need for it to be part of Westbrook’s thinking) was demonstrated during preparation of this POCD when the COVID-19 pandemic required the conversion from in-person meetings to on-line events.

Resiliency includes “hazard mitigation” - actions taken before impactful events to help reduce or eliminate long-term risks rather than just respond to such events after they occur. The elements of hazard mitigation (and being a resilient community) include identification, avoidance, mitigation, and response.

A Hazard Mitigation Plan completed for Westbrook in 2019 identified the major hazards likely to affect Westbrook (coastal flooding, inland flooding, sea level rise, severe wind, severe winter weather, etc.) and strategies to reduce or eliminate risk to human life and property. The 2019-2024 Westbrook Hazard Mitigation Plan, and amendments thereto, are hereby incorporated as a reference in the 2021 POCD.

The anticipated impacts of climate change (severe rain events, drought, strong winds, ice storms, sea level rise, an increase in the number and intensity of storm events, etc.) will certainly require Westbrook to be resilient. The on-line survey found that 82 percent of participants felt that Westbrook should develop strategies for how to address the impacts of climate change.

In terms of flooding hazards, it is important to note that Westbrook experiences inland flooding in addition to coastal flooding. While the community exposure is much greater in the coastal neighborhoods, the impacts to individual property owners are just as great in the inland areas.

For both types of flooding, it is imperative that Westbrook continue to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program so that property owners will be able to obtain flood insurance for their homes and/or businesses. Participating in the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) Community Rating System program could also result in lower flood insurance premiums for Westbrook property owners.

**Coastal Flooding**



**Inland Flooding**



# Floodplains

Westbrook, CT

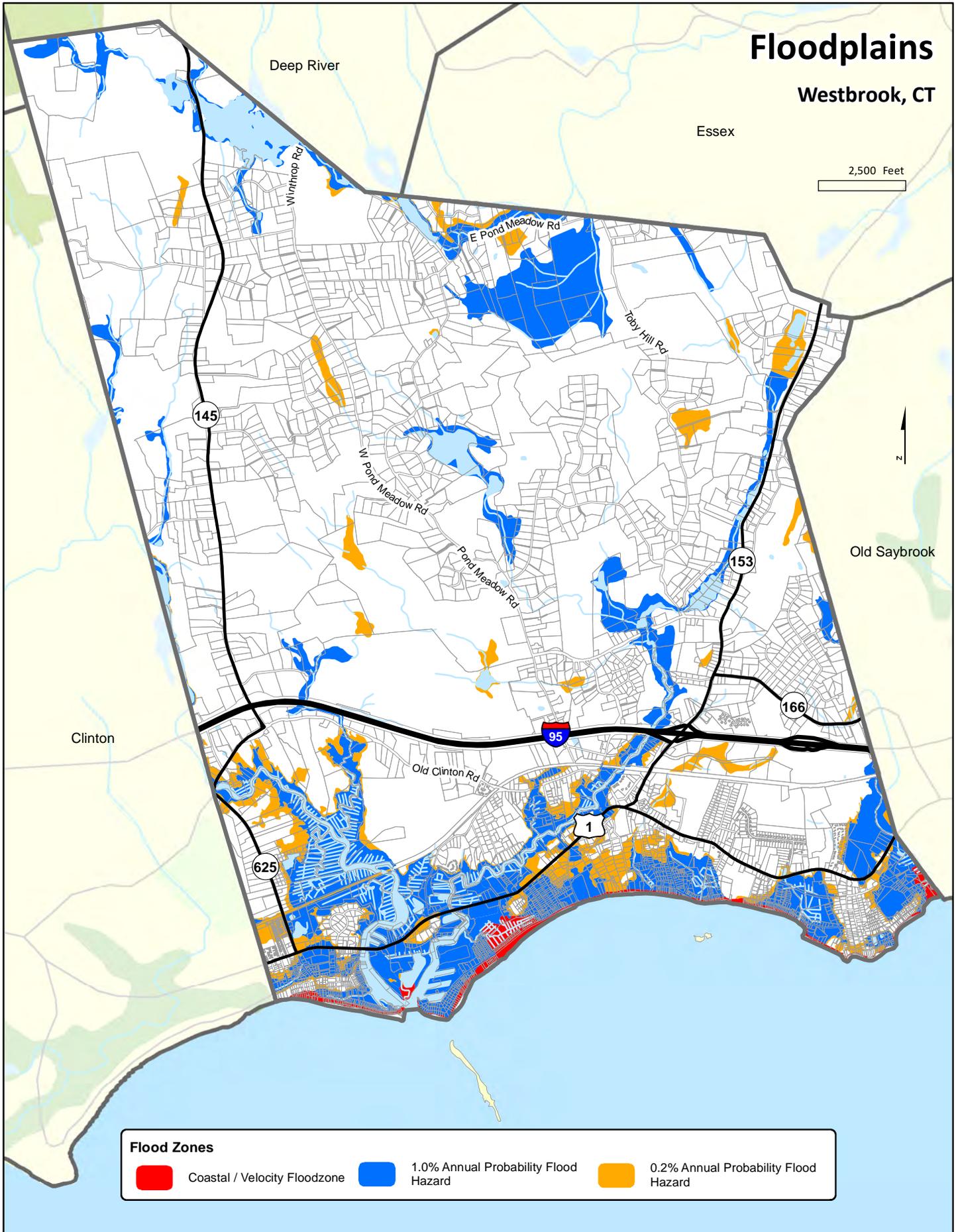
Essex

2,500 Feet



Old Saybrook

Clinton



## Flood Zones



Coastal / Velocity Floodzone



1.0% Annual Probability Flood Hazard



0.2% Annual Probability Flood Hazard

Resiliency issues related to flooding are also considered in the Hazard Mitigation Plan. Coastal communities around the nation are all facing similar issues and addressing them in ways that work for them:

- Evaluating risks for municipal facilities and properties.
- Continuing to minimize development (especially housing) in flood zones.
- Requiring construction in flood zones be built above projected flood levels.
- Requiring new construction in coastal flood zones address the potential impacts from waves that accompany flooding events (FEMA maps identify areas within the “Limit of Moderate Wave Action” (LiMWA) zone.
- Discouraging granting of variance requests (from local zoning regulations or from other regulations and ordinances) in flood-prone areas.

In order to be a more resilient community, Westbrook will:

- Continue to educate the public on the risks associated with natural hazards and what can be done to minimize these risks.
- Continue to ensure that new development or redevelopment in floodplains has minimal flood-related risks.
- Continue to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program so that flood insurance will be available to private property owners.
- Encourage (or require) owners to elevate their buildings within the parameters established by the National Flood Insurance Program.

<b>POLICIES AND ON-GOING PROGRAMS</b> <b>Become A More Resilient Community</b>		Page	<i>Legend On Inside Back Cover</i>	
			Leader	Partners
A.	Continue efforts to identify, avoid, reduce, mitigate, and recover from impactful events.	46	EM	Town
B.	Continue to update the Hazard Mitigation Plan every 5 years.	46	EM	Town
C.	Continue to prepare for impactful events in order to be ready to respond efficiently and effectively when they occur.	46	EM	Town
D.	Continue to educate the public on the risks associated with natural hazards and what can be done to minimize these risks.	48	EM	Town
E.	Continue to ensure that new development or redevelopment in floodplains has minimal flood-related risks.	48	ZC	
F.	Continue to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program so that flood insurance will be available to private property owners.	48	ZC	
G.	Encourage (or require) owners to elevate their buildings within the parameters established by the National Flood Insurance Program.	48	EM	ZC

<b>ACTION STEPS</b> <b>Become A More Resilient Community</b>		Page	<i>Legend On Inside Back Cover</i>	
			Leader	Partners
1.	Implement the Hazard Mitigation Plan, as amended. <input type="checkbox"/>	46	EM	ZC PC
2.	Consider participating in the FEMA Community Rating System program. <input type="checkbox"/>	46	ZC	EM

# 4. A VIBRANT ECONOMY



Overall, the economy of Westbrook and the region is focused on health care and social services, manufacturing, retail trade; tourism, boating, and accommodation / food services). Strengthening the local economy is an important goal of the POCD.

With the economic changes occurring as a result of on-line shopping and pandemic concerns, Westbrook will continue to seek ways to diversity its economy.

**GOAL**

*Achieve a diverse and stable economy that is compatible with Westbrook’s growth objectives ...*

Business Development



Marinas / Tourism



Hospitality



Resort





**95% Agree - Westbrook should continue to promote business and economic development.**

Strongly Agree	69%
Somewhat Agree	26%
No Opinion	4%
Somewhat Disagree	1%
Strongly Disagree	1%

**83% Agree - The POCD should recommend looking at ways to simplify the approval process for business and economic development.**

Strongly Agree	47%
Somewhat Agree	36%
No Opinion	15%
Somewhat Disagree	2%
Strongly Disagree	0%

### Development Assistance

Westbrook could help businesses expand and locate in the community by offering:

- Tax incentives,
- Tax-increment financing (where tax revenue from a new business might be used to fund public investments), and/or
- Assistance with “brownfield” remediation (where properties with environmental contamination are cleaned up and re-used).

## Promote Economic Development

Economic development is important to Westbrook. In the initial on-line survey, about 95 percent of residents felt that business/economic development was an important Town goal but only 35 percent felt the Town was doing a good job.

Historically, business uses (stores, offices, manufacturing, research, etc.) were the main focus of economic development efforts. However, in recent years, the focus has grown to include other uses which also:

- Provide jobs for residents of Westbrook and the region,
- Provide goods and services for residents, businesses, and visitors,
- Enhance the tax base, and/or
- Provide net tax revenue to support local services.

Under this framework, economic development can also include housing for “empty nesters” and senior citizens, assisted living facilities, and other uses that provide more in tax revenue than they require in municipal services.

The POCD recommends that Westbrook investigate the need for an economic development coordinator (local) or additional technical assistance (regional) or both. This would be an investment in the future economic growth of Westbrook which could pay significant dividends in the future.

POLICIES AND ON-GOING PROGRAMS Promote Economic Development		Page	Legend On Inside Back Cover	
			Leader	Partners
A.	Promote appropriate economic development in Westbrook, including housing and other uses that provide more in tax revenue than they require in municipal services.	50	EDC	Town
B.	Continue efforts to retain existing businesses.	50	EDC	Town
C.	Continue to seek ways to help existing businesses better market themselves.	50	EDC	Town
D.	Continue to support farming and agriculture as economic activities within Westbrook.	50	EDC	Town

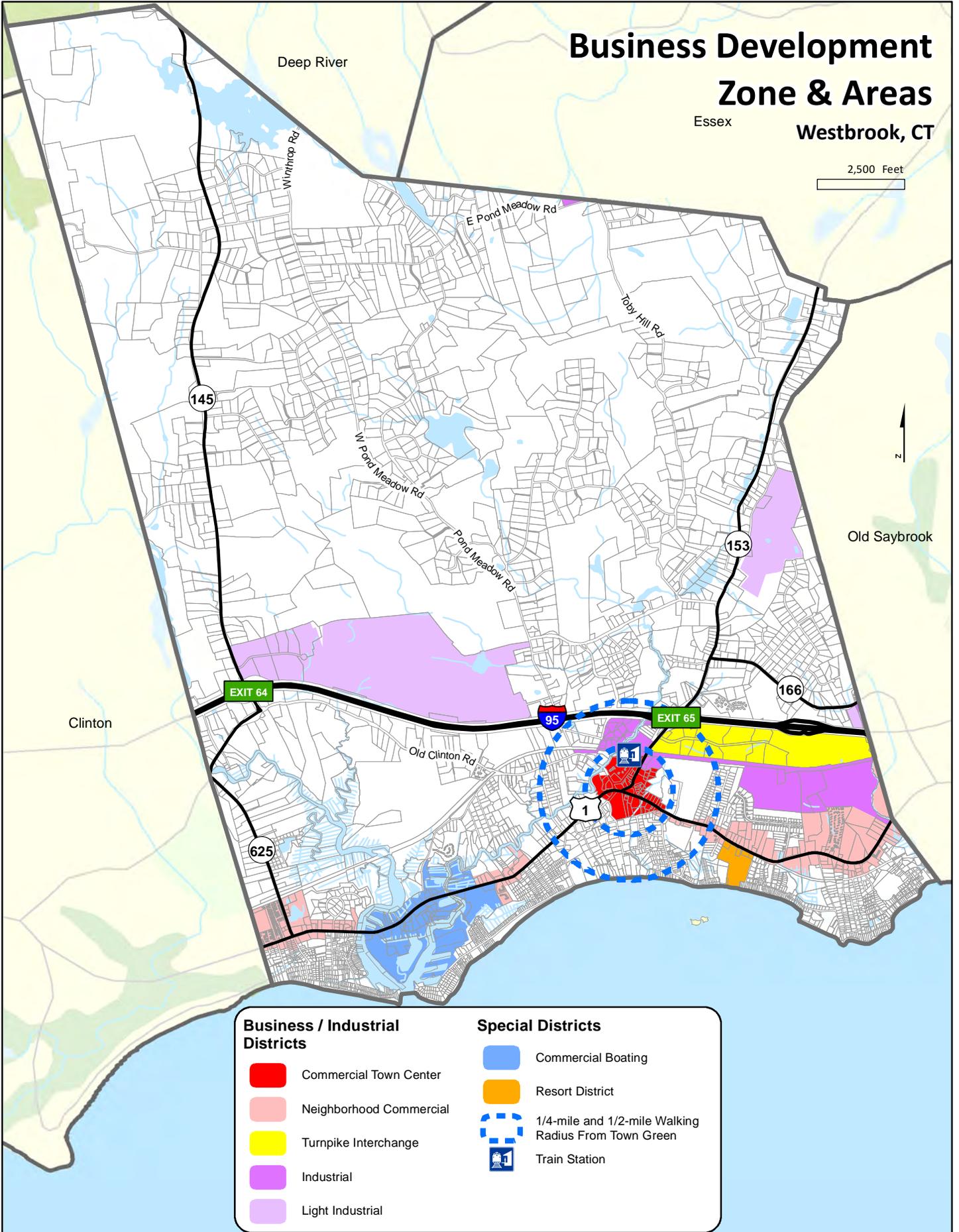
ACTION STEPS Promote Economic Development		Page	Legend On Inside Back Cover	
			Leader	Partners
1.	investigate the need for an economic development coordinator (local) or additional technical assistance (regional) or both as an investment in Westbrook’s economic future.	50	BOS	EDC
2.	Consider enacting financial incentives for attracting and retaining businesses (i.e., tax abatements).	50	EDC	BOS
3.	Investigate whether there are ways to simplify the approval process for business and economic development.	50	ZC	EDC
4.	Coordinate regular meetings with local businesses to see how the Town and businesses can work effectively together.	50	EDC	BOS COC

# Business Development Zone & Areas

Essex

Westbrook, CT

2,500 Feet





*95% Agree - The POCD should encourage development and redevelopment along Flat Rock Place (Westbrook Factory Stores) which would enhance the tax base.*

Strongly Agree	64%
Somewhat Agree	31%
No Opinion	5%
Somewhat Disagree	0%
Strongly Disagree	1%

## Guide Business Development In Target Areas

**Business and economic development in the Town Center continues to be a Town priority. Recommendations for this area are discussed separately in the Key Initiatives section of the POCD (see page 28).**

### Essex Road / Flat Rock Place (Exit 65 / Turnpike Interchange Commercial District)

The Flat Rock Place area includes Westbrook Factory Stores, the Middlesex Health Shoreline Medical Center, two car dealerships, a restaurant, and some currently undeveloped parcels. Additional economic development potential exists in this area. The POCD supports appropriate development (and redevelopment) of this area and recommends additional study be done of this area. Development in this area has the potential to support the Town Center area and benefit from the train station.

In the on-line survey, 95 percent of participants agreed that the POCD should continue to encourage development and redevelopment along Flat Rock Place (Westbrook Factory Stores) which would enhance the tax base.

One option to consider in the future may include whether it might be possible or desirable to connect Flat Rock Road (Outlet Mall) to Route 166 in Old Saybrook south of I-95.



**Westbrook Factory Stores**

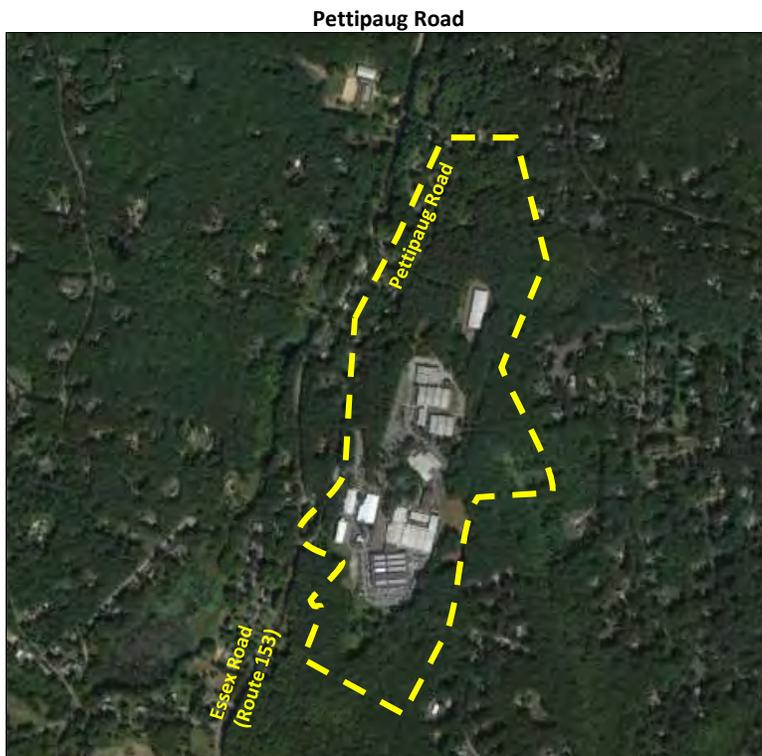
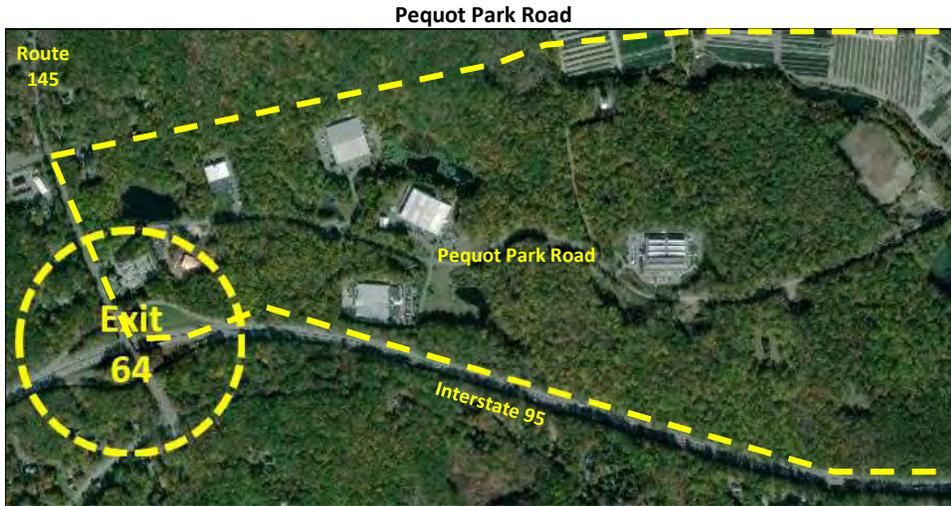


**Shoreline Clinic**



### Office / Technology / Industrial Areas (Light Industrial Zones)

The POCD also supports appropriate development (and redevelopment) along Pequot Park Road (near Route 145) and Pettipaug Road. These areas are more oriented towards office, technology, and industrial businesses. Care should be taken to ensure appropriate buffering and transitions which will help protect adjacent residential areas.





**82% Agree - The POCD should promote development of the marinas and nearby businesses along Route 1 as part of its business development strategy.**

Strongly Agree	45%
Somewhat Agree	37%
No Opinion	6%
Somewhat Disagree	7%
Strongly Disagree	4%

### Route 1 West / Marine District

Marinas and marine merchandise and services in the Westbrook Marine District provide jobs and tax revenue and are a vital part of the coastal tourism economy. There are over 2,000 boat slips in Westbrook and the users of these slips support a variety of other businesses— both boat-related and other types of businesses. Westbrook is recognized as having one of the largest recreational boating facilities in New England.

In the on-line survey, 82 percent of participants agreed that the POCD should promote development of the marinas and nearby businesses along Route 1 as part of its business development strategy.

Several studies have recommended strategies to recognize this area and capitalize on its strengths and assets. Some of the following concepts have been expressed and should be investigated:

#### Possible Route 1 West / Marine District Strategies

<b>Uses / Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage marina-related neighborhood-scale commercial infill development to provide services and amenities to support marine-related tourism.</li> <li>Find ways to attract more marina users to other businesses in Westbrook (sidewalks, bikeways, shuttle service, etc.).</li> </ul>
<b>Character</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a cohesive, aesthetically pleasing “sense of place” that highlights and brands the marine-related neighborhood.</li> <li>Consider branding as Marine District.</li> <li>Install “gateway” elements to bolster recognition of the Westbrook Marine District.</li> </ul>
<b>Pedestrians / Bicycles</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve pedestrian connections from marinas to Route 1 businesses.</li> <li>Develop a strong multimodal environment for walkers and bicyclists while prioritizing safety.</li> <li>Install crosswalks and pedestrian countdown signals.</li> </ul>
<b>Environment / Recreation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preserve and enhance the environmental resources along the shoreline.</li> <li>Seek potential locations for kayak/ canoe launches.</li> <li>Seek opportunities for park areas with views of water.</li> </ul>
<b>Other</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet regularly with marina owners to share ideas.</li> <li>Improve access to Town Dock,</li> </ul>

The POCD also supports the appropriate development (and redevelopment) of parcels along Route 1 West to the Clinton town line. Any development or redevelopment proposal needs to be sensitive to potential impacts on adjacent residential areas.

**Westbrook Marine District**



**Westbrook Marine District**



### Route 1 East / Waters Edge

There are several neighborhood commercial areas along Route 1 East between the Town Center and the Old Saybrook town line. The Water's Edge Resort & Spa – a popular Westbrook destination - is also located in this area.

The POCD supports the appropriate development (and redevelopment) of parcels along Route 1 East to the Old Saybrook town line. Any development or redevelopment proposal needs to be sensitive to potential impacts on adjacent residential areas.



Water's Edge Resort & Spa



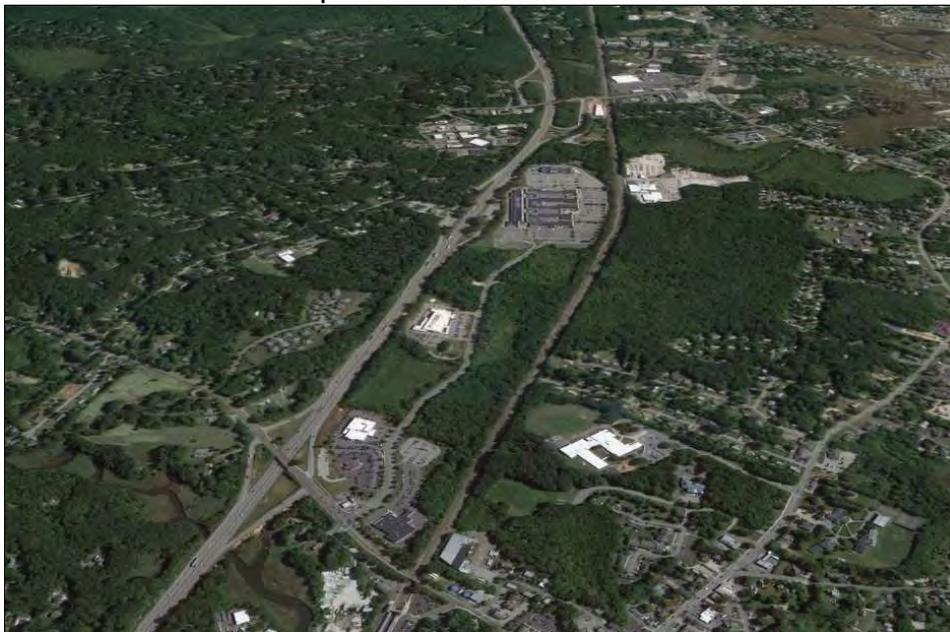
Water's Edge Resort & Spa



POLICIES AND ON-GOING PROGRAMS Guide Development In Target Areas			Legend On Inside Back Cover	
			Page	Leader
A.	Continue to support appropriate business and/or economic development (and redevelopment) in the Flat Rock Place area.	52	ZC	EDC
B.	Continue to support appropriate business and/or economic development (and redevelopment) along Pequot Park Road and Pettipaug Road.	53	ZC	EDC
C.	Continue to support appropriate business and/or economic development in the "Westbrook Marine District."	54	ZC	EDC
D.	Continue to support appropriate business and/or economic development along Route 1 West to the Clinton town line.	55	ZC	EDC
E.	Continue to support appropriate business and/or economic development along Route 1 East to the Old Saybrook town line.	56	ZC	EDC

ACTION STEPS Guide Development In Target Areas			Legend On Inside Back Cover	
			Page	Leader
1.	Explore ways to enhance the development and redevelopment options for the Flat Rock Place area.	52	EDC	PC ZC Town
2.	Investigate possible Route 1 West / Marine District strategies (as outlined on page 54 of the POCD).	54	EDC	PC ZC

Oblique Aerial Of The Flat Rock Place Area



### Home-Based Economy

During the time this POCD was being prepared, the COVID-19 pandemic caused a number of changes in people's lives and livelihoods. While some changes may be temporary, others may become more permanent.

More importantly, this experience may have highlighted how we need to be prepared and be resilient from an economic perspective.

This can and should include:

- Reviewing provisions in the Zoning Regulations to ensure that the home-based business regulations do not unnecessarily prevent people from working from home.
- Working to improve the capacity of the broadband system to facilitate working and schooling from home (see page 98 for strategies related to broadband), and
- Other strategies which will continue to emerge.



**75% Agree - The POCD should promote tourism as part of Westbrook's economic development strategy.**

Strongly Agree	35%
Somewhat Agree	40%
No Opinion	12%
Somewhat Disagree	8%
Strongly Disagree	5%

## Develop a Balanced Approach to Tourism

Tourism has been an important part of Westbrook’s economy for some time and many local businesses are dependent on a certain level of tourism in order to thrive. The POCD encourages tourism since it helps support a strong local economy and particularly eco-tourism (such as at Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge) and heritage tourism. In the on-line survey, 75 percent of participants agreed that the POCD should promote tourism as part of Westbrook's economic development strategy.

With regard to tourism, the POCD recommends that Westbrook:

- Continue to collaborate with business organizations on marketing.
- Consider hosting meetings to bring tourism-type businesses and organizations together to explore ways to promote common interests.
- Develop a wayfinding program (directional signs and informational signs) to help visitors them find their way around Town.

While there can be some negative effects from tourist-related *business activity* (traffic, parking, noise, etc.) on local residents and neighborhoods, the tourism businesses provide jobs, goods and services, and tax revenue that Westbrook might not otherwise get.

POLICIES AND ON-GOING PROGRAMS Develop a Balanced Approach to Tourism			Legend On Inside Back Cover	
			Page	Leader
A.	Continue to promote Westbrook as an eco-tourism and heritage tourism destination.	58	EDC	CRTD COC
B.	Continue to collaborate with others (such as the Central Regional Tourism District, the local Chamber of Commerce, and other business organizations) on marketing efforts.	58	EDC	CRTD COC
C.	Continue to seek ways to mitigate any negative impacts which might occur from tourism on the quality of life for residents (e.g., traffic, crowd, noise, lights, etc.) including impacts associated with outdoor dining and entertainment along the shoreline.	58	EDC	Town
D.	Seek ways to promote the Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge as an important asset (including hosting symbiotic events) while respecting its role as a wildlife refuge.	58	EDC	Town

ACTION STEPS Develop a Balanced Approach to Tourism			Legend On Inside Back Cover	
			Page	Leader
1.	Develop and install a wayfinding program (directional signs and informational signs) to orient visitors, help them find their way around Town, and provide interesting information.	58	EDC	Town
2.	Consider hosting a quarterly meeting to bring tourism-type businesses and organizations together to explore ways to promote common interests.	58	EDC	Town

# Guide Residential Development

**Encouraging housing diversity is an important part of this POCD. Recommendations for encouraging housing diversity are discussed separately in the Key Initiatives section of the POCD (pages 39).**

Most of the land area in Westbrook is zoned and used for residential purposes and the POCD intends for this to continue. With regard to future residential development, the POCD recommends continuing to manage residential development in the lower-density, medium-density, and higher-density patterns which have existed for decades with one notable exception.

As pointed out in the “Encourage Housing Diversity” section of the Key Initiatives chapter, Westbrook wants to encourage more housing diversity within the community where such growth will contribute to Westbrook’s overall vision. This diversity includes housing options for:

- An aging population (such as smaller units, newer units with modern amenities, developments with common services, lower cost housing options, rental units, units offering universal accessibility, etc.), and
- Low- and moderate-income persons and families (including rental apartments, starter homes lower cost housing options, etc.).

This change in focus from previous Plans of Conservation and Development is deliberate and is intended to enable and encourage housing options so that Westbrook’s housing portfolio can adapt to meet changing needs. The map on page 61 shows areas that are considered to have the potential for providing for housing opportunity. The POCD expressly understands that this might require something other than single-family development and supports alternative housing types and choices that could help meet housing needs, such as:

- Accessory apartments,
- Two-family houses,
- “Tiny homes”, and/or
- Cottage courts (with cottages intended for year-round occupancy).

**Single-Family Home**



**Multi-Family Home**



## **Accessory Apartment**

A separate rental unit (with its own kitchen) located within a single-family owner-occupied home or on the same lot.



## **Two-Family House**

A house divided either:

- vertically by a party wall (for two families living side by side), or
- horizontally (for two families living one above the other)



## **Tiny Home**

A residential unit typically between 100 and 400 square feet in area which may or may not be on a permanent foundation.



## **Cottage Court**

A group of small, detached structures arranged around a shared court visible from the street.





## Special Issues In Coastal Neighborhoods

With regard to housing located in coastal neighborhoods, there are several issues that may need to be addressed.

***76% Agree - Westbrook should do more to manage impacts from short-term renters in coastal neighborhoods (crowding, parking, waste, noise, etc.).***

Strongly Agree	42%
Somewhat Agree	34%
No Opinion	14%
Somewhat Disagree	9%
Strongly Disagree	2%

***81% Agree - Westbrook should be concerned about the impact of large residential buildings resulting from redevelopment in coastal neighborhoods.***

Strongly Agree	53%
Somewhat Agree	28%
No Opinion	7%
Somewhat Disagree	11%
Strongly Disagree	1%

**Building Bulk Resulting From Development / Redevelopment** - New construction and redevelopment in coastal neighborhoods is changing the character of these areas due to the establishment of larger houses, taller houses, and changes of grading and drainage. These types of changes are occurring due to owners seeking a standard of living consistent with increasing purchase prices and property values and the need to comply with septic requirements and flood proofing requirements. The challenge is that this development is happening in an area which is subject to increased risks from sea level rise and coastal storms. It also affects visual access within shoreline areas (see page 75).

**House Scale / Proportion Differences**



**Conversion To Year-Round Dwellings** - Conversion of existing seasonal homes to year-round dwellings is increasing the septic loading in areas which are already impacted by septic systems on small lots and/or with higher water tables. If all seasonal homes were to become year-round homes, it is very likely that there would be an impact on water quality in coastal neighborhoods.

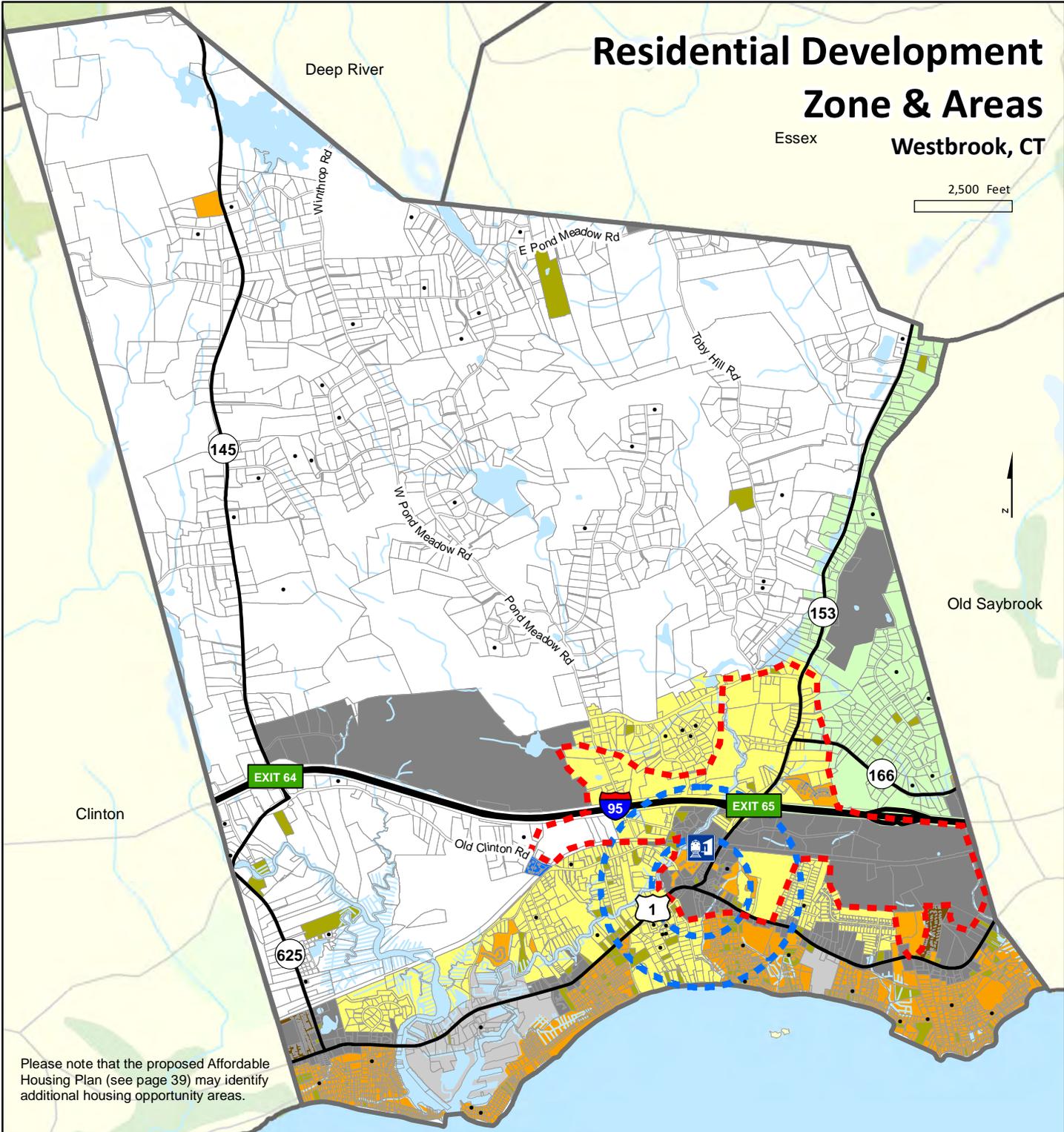
**Short-Term Rentals** - Impacts are also occurring with regard to cottage rentals and other forms of transient lodging including short-term rentals through AirBNB, VRBO, and other aggregators. In years past, shoreline rentals were handled in-person and there was a sense of responsibility by the lessor and the lessee. This balance appears to have shifted and now there can be callous disregard for the fact that some activities can have a significant negative effect on neighboring property and the neighborhood.

Westbrook should investigate approaches to addressing these issues.

# Residential Development Zone & Areas

Essex Westbrook, CT

2,500 Feet



Please note that the proposed Affordable Housing Plan (see page 39) may identify additional housing opportunity areas.

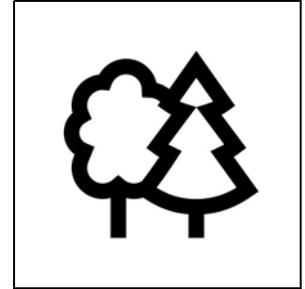
Residential Districts	Existing Residential Uses	Other Zones
Rural Residential	2-4 Family/Multi-House	Potential Housing Opportunity Area
Low Density Residential	Single Family with Accessory Dwelling Unit	1/4-mile and 1/2-mile Walking Radius From Town Green
Medium Density Residential	Multi-Family	Business Zones
High Density Residential	Mobile Home	Commercial Boating / Resort
Planned Residential Development / IHOZ		Train Station

See the Key Initiatives section of the POCD (pages 39-42) for additional recommendations related to encouraging housing diversity.

POLICIES AND ON-GOING PROGRAMS Guide Residential Development			Legend On Inside Back Cover	
			Page	Leader
A.	Continue to manage residential development throughout Town.	59	ZC	PC
B.	Encourage more housing choices and options to meet housing needs.	59	AHC	ZC
C.	Diversify Westbrook’s housing portfolio, when and where appropriate, in order to meet changing housing needs.	59	AHC	ZC
D.	Seek ways to assimilate housing diversity within the community.	59	AHC	ZC
E.	Continue to monitor the impacts from new construction on coastal neighborhoods (house size, scale, proportion, grading, drainage, etc.) and conversion of seasonal dwellings in order to proceed with regulation changes if it becomes warranted.	60	ZC	
F.	Maintain regulations to manage the expansion and/or conversion of seasonal units (about 400 in Westbrook) to year-round dwellings, particularly with regard to septic capacity.	60	ZC	
G.	Continue to monitor the impacts from short-term rentals on coastal neighborhoods in order to proceed with regulation changes if it becomes warranted.	60	ZC	Town COB

ACTION STEPS Guide Residential Development			Legend On Inside Back Cover	
			Page	Leader
1.	Amend the Zoning Regulations to enable additional housing choices and options.	<input type="checkbox"/> 59	ZC	AHC
2.	Explore creating opportunities for:	<input type="checkbox"/> 59	AHC	ZC
	a. Cottage courts (small cottages sharing communal space and facilities),			
	b. “Tiny homes” which could offer high-quality living and low resource utilization in a small footprint, and			
	c. Other creative housing concepts which could help meet housing needs (including providing for housing which is more affordable)			
3.	Consider adopting a program to manage short-term rentals in order to minimize impacts on neighboring properties and on year-round residents (especially in an era of COVID-19 and the need for contact tracing).	<input type="checkbox"/> 60	BOS ZC	

## 5. A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT



Westbrook’s natural features, preserved open spaces, and undeveloped areas collectively comprise the community’s “green infrastructure” system - an interconnected network of resources which supports native species, maintains natural ecological processes, sustains air and water resources, and contributes to environmental health and quality of life.

In addition, Westbrook is a coastal community with important coastal resources which contribute to the overall environmental health and quality of life.

All of these resources are complemented by cultural and other resources that contribute to overall community character and quality of life.

This section of the POCD focuses on preserving and protecting these resources.

### GOAL

***Preserve and protect resources and assets important to Westbrook’s environmental health and overall character and quality of life ...***

The Natural Environment



The Coastal Environment





**91% Agree - Westbrook should continue to protect natural resources (wetlands, aquifers, habitat, etc.) through regulation and/or acquisition.**

Strongly Agree	67%
Somewhat Agree	24%
No Opinion	4%
Somewhat Disagree	3%
Strongly Disagree	3%

## Preserve And Protect Natural Resources

Westbrook’s natural features, preserved open spaces, and undeveloped areas collectively comprise the community’s “green infrastructure” system - an interconnected network of resources which supports native species, maintains natural ecological processes, sustains air and water resources, and contributes to environmental health and quality of life. The POCD recommends Westbrook continue to strive to maintain the integrity of its “green infrastructure” for the benefit of current residents and future generations.

### Water-Related Resources / Assets

- Watercourses / waterbodies.
- Long Island Sound.
- Wetlands (tidal and inland wetlands).
- Flood zones (100-year and 500-year).
- Aquifers / groundwater recharge areas.

### Land-Related And Other Resources / Assets

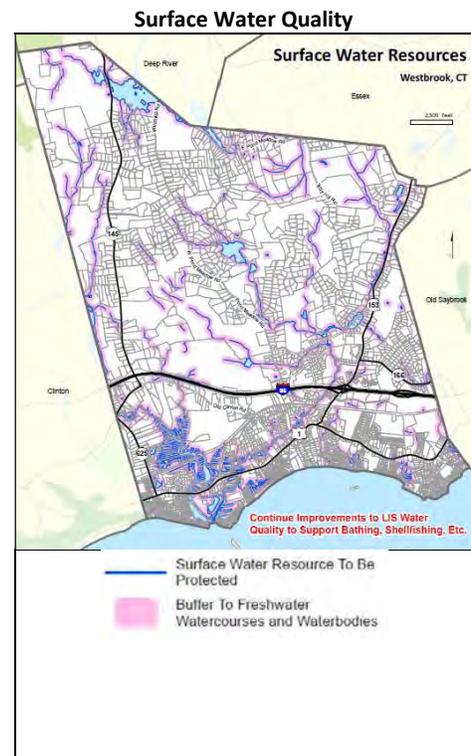
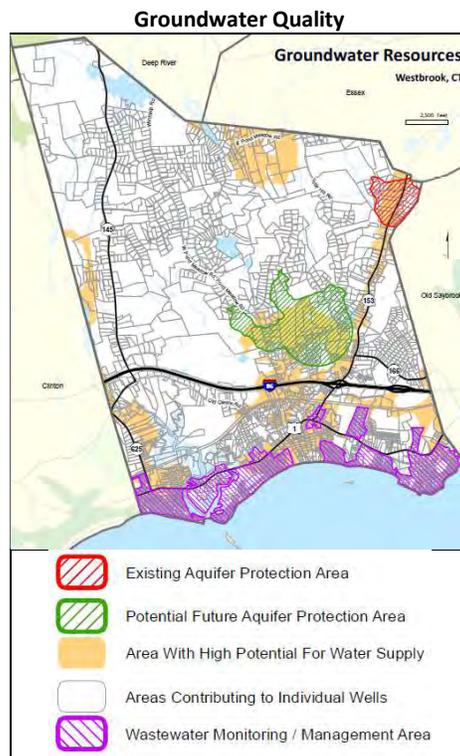
- Steep slopes (>20 percent grade).
- Unique or special habitat areas.
- Contiguous forest areas (>250 acres).

### Water Quality Approaches

Maintaining and improving water quality can include:

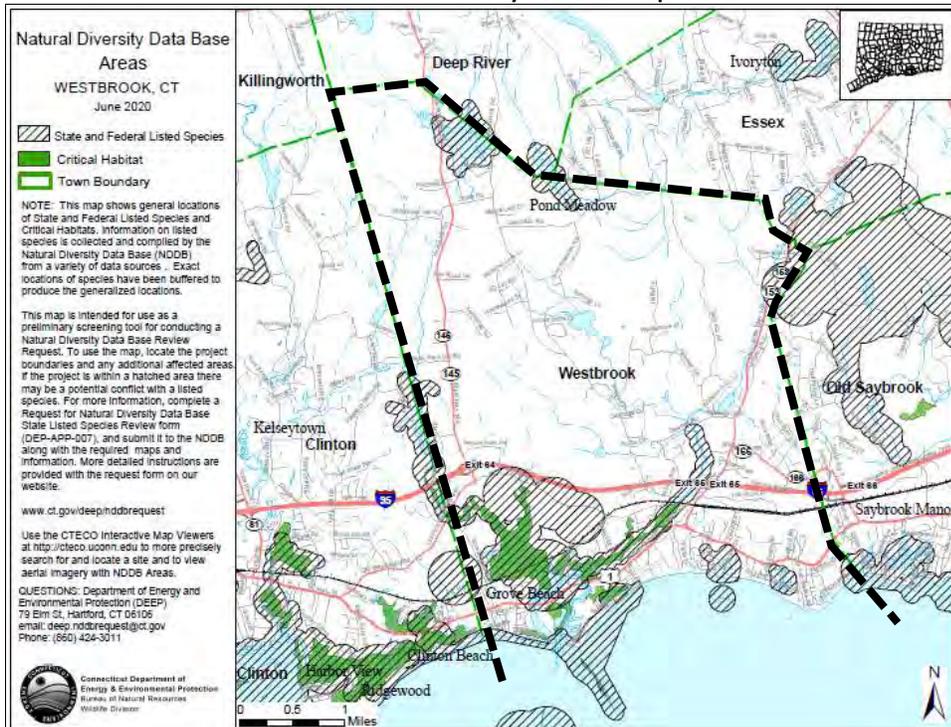
- Implementing “low impact development” (LID) approaches.
- Improving existing stormwater management systems.
- Regularly pumping out septic systems.
- Continuing boat “pump-outs” in marinas.
- Working with regional partners to address water quality protection on a watershed basis.

**Protect Water Resources** - Maintaining and improving water quality – both inland / coastal and surface / groundwater - are Westbrook’s highest natural resource priorities. Addressing overall water quality is important to coastal communities like Westbrook since salt water intrusion into wells and septic systems is a potential concern in shoreline areas and because stormwater runoff and nutrification (increase in nutrients in water) can result in beach closures, fishing and shellfishing restrictions, and other impacts.



**Preserve Habitat** - Plants and animals are important to the overall health of Westbrook’s environment – both inland and coastal – and the POCD recommends protecting habitat areas. For example, the offshore islands are important bird breeding / nesting sites and access should continue to be limited.

**DEEP Natural Diversity Database Map**



A regional “conservation priorities” map prepared by the Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments (River COG) working with area land trusts supports Westbrook’s overall green infrastructure vision.



**River COG / Land Trusts Conservation Priorities Map**



<b>POLICIES AND ON-GOING PROGRAMS</b> <b>Preserve And Protect Natural Resources</b>		<i>Legend On Inside Back Cover</i>		
		Page	Leader	Partners
A. <b>Overall</b> - Maintain the integrity of Westbrook's "green infrastructure" system of natural resources, open space, and other assets.	64	CC		
B. <b>Water</b> –				
1. Continue efforts to maintain and improve the quality of groundwater and surface water.	64	HD ZC	IWWC WPCA	
2. Continue to implement "low impact development" (LID) approaches to managing stormwater to protect water quality and infiltrate stormwater to help maintain base flow to streams.	64	ZC	PW IWWC	
3. Continue to monitor and improve stormwater management systems including inspections, maintenance, and public education.	64	PW	Town COB	
4. Continue to require septic tank pump-out / inspection every 5 years as required by the septic management ordinance (#18-36).	64	WPCA	HD	
5. Continue to promote boat "pump-outs" in marinas.	64	HD		
6. Continue to work with regional partners to address water quality protection on a watershed (regional) basis.	64	PC	HD	
C. <b>Habitat</b> -				
1. Continue to protect coastal habitat, especially shore bird nesting and breeding areas.	65	CC		
2. Limit activities near other important habitat areas such as areas on the DEEP Natural Diversity Database, vernal pools, and areas in and near wetlands, waterbodies and watercourses.	65	IWWC ZC	Town	
3. Seek to minimize the clearing and fragmentation of large forest areas.	65	ZC	CC	
4. Encourage restoration of habitat in degraded areas such as previously developed sites and salt marshes.	65	CC	ZC	
5. Continue encouraging the use of native plants in landscaping and discouraging the use of invasive plants.	65	ZC	PC	
6. Work with public health officials and DEEP to open shellfish beds.	65	SC	HD	

<b>ACTION STEPS</b> <b>Preserve And Protect Natural Resources</b>		<i>Legend On Inside Back Cover</i>		
		Page	Leader	Partners
1. Evaluate whether to finalize the aquifer protection area near McVeagh Road (still level B) so that it can be part of the State's aquifer protection program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	64	ZC	CC
2. Develop and distribute materials to educate property owners about septic system maintenance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	64	WPCA	COB
3. Develop and distribute materials to educate property owners about stormwater management, landscaping practices, and invasive species avoidance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	64	CC	Town
4. Investigate ways to monitor groundwater quality over time, especially in shoreline areas.	<input type="checkbox"/>	64	WPCA	HD

# Natural Resources

Westbrook, CT

Essex

2,500 Feet



Old Saybrook

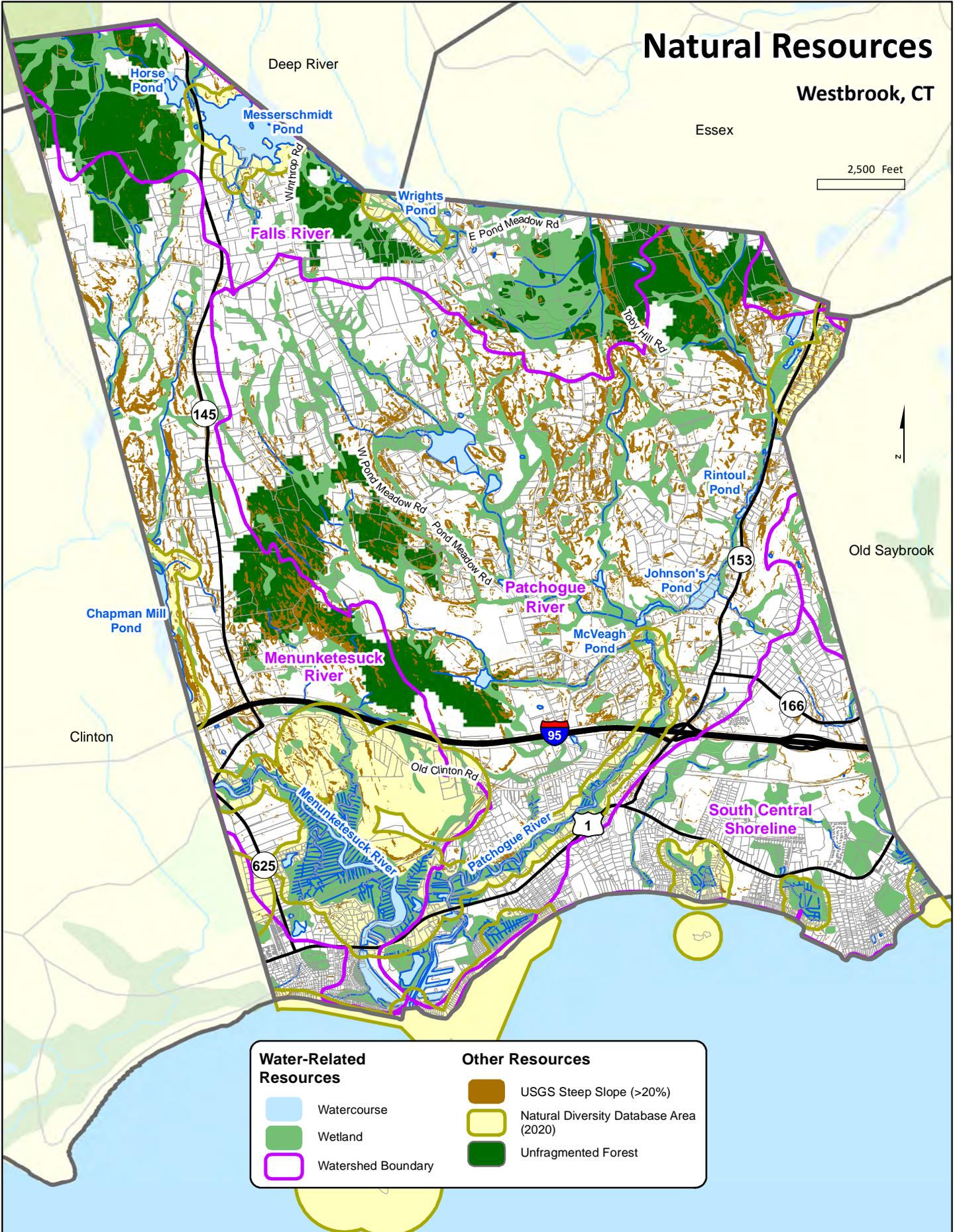
Clinton

## Water-Related Resources

-  Watercourse
-  Wetland
-  Watershed Boundary

## Other Resources

-  USGS Steep Slope (>20%)
-  Natural Diversity Database Area (2020)
-  Unfragmented Forest





## Continue to Preserve Open Space

---

**89% Agree - Westbrook should continue to preserve open space in the community.**

Strongly Agree	62%
Somewhat Agree	27%
No Opinion	6%
Somewhat Disagree	4%
Strongly Disagree	1%

**78% Agree - Westbrook should continue efforts to acquire and/or purchase open space.**

Strongly Agree	49%
Somewhat Agree	29%
No Opinion	12%
Somewhat Disagree	5%
Strongly Disagree	5%

The POCD defines “dedicated open space” as land that is preserved from development or which is owned by organizations whose mission is to preserve and conserve land in an undeveloped state, hopefully in perpetuity (town park, state forest, land trust, etc.). The POCD defines “managed open space” as land that is not preserved from development but that is currently being used for a conservation, recreation, or other purpose and may remain in an undeveloped state (golf course, water company land, cemetery, etc.).

Preservation of open space can serve five important purposes:

- Conservation of important natural resources,
- Protection of community character,
- Dedication of lands for parks and recreational uses,
- Fiscal and economic benefits, and
- Shaping of development patterns.

Open space can be preserved through:

- Acquisition by the Town of Westbrook, the State of Connecticut, the Westbrook Land Conservation Trust, or another conservation organization (purchase, donation, etc.),
- Set aside of land as part of a subdivision (or the payment of a fee-in-lieu of land set-aside) including increased open space set-aside as part of a conservation subdivision, or
- Conservation easements or other private restrictions (although a more comprehensive inventory is needed).

Open space adds considerably to the overall ambience and quality of life of Westbrook. Residents have supported open space preservation for some time and the Town has been active in preserving open space. In the survey results on page 16, 67 percent of residents felt that preserving open space was very important and 78 percent felt the Town was doing a good or excellent job of preserving open space.

The State of Connecticut has a goal of preserving 20% of the State’s land area as open space. RiverCOG is working on an open space planning effort with a similar aspirational approach. Due to the important and sensitive resources in Westbrook (and the opportunities to connect open space areas and greenways in this part of the State, Westbrook can aspire to increase the amount of open space in Westbrook (perhaps as high as 25-30%) to help support the State goal of 20% open space.

## Creating / Enhancing An Open Space System

Westbrook’s overall goal is not only to acquire and manage open space lands but to also establish an overall *open space system* of “greenways” and “blueways” that protect important resources and enhance the overall character and quality of life in the community:

- Greenways are land-based interconnections of open spaces for wildlife (no trails) and for walkers, cyclists, and equestrians (with trails).
- Blueways are water-based routes for canoeists and kayakers created by installing signs and creating maps (with launch points and points of interest).

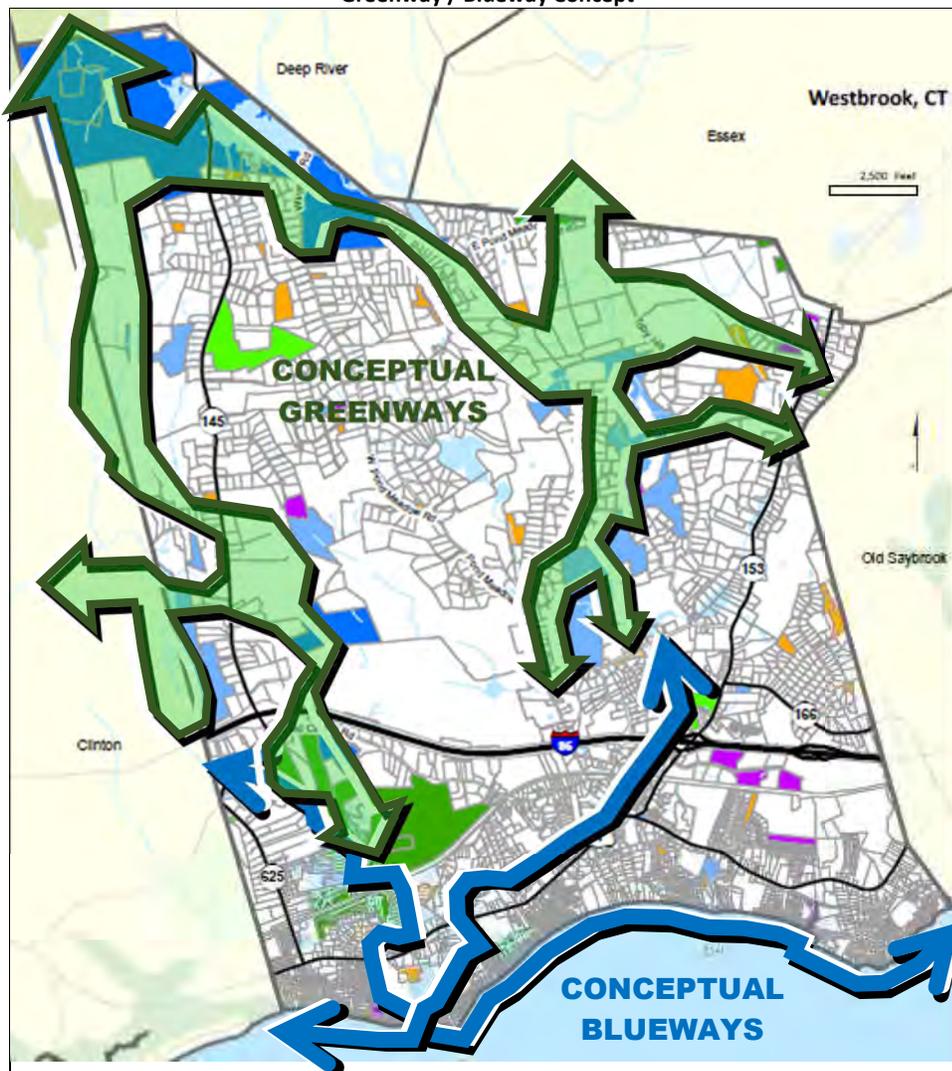
This open space system is shown on the map below. The Town continues to work towards improving and expanding this system.



**84% Agree** - Westbrook should continue to seek ways to interconnect open space lands with a greenway / trail system.

Strongly Agree	52%
Somewhat Agree	31%
No Opinion	11%
Somewhat Disagree	4%
Strongly Disagree	3%

Greenway / Blueway Concept



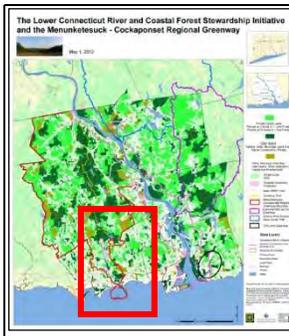
**72% Agree** - Westbrook should seek ways to promote the interconnected waterways which form a “blueway” system for small boats.

Strongly Agree	42%
Somewhat Agree	30%
No Opinion	20%
Somewhat Disagree	6%
Strongly Disagree	2%

**Regional Greenway**

Westbrook’s vision for an open space system is also consistent with regional efforts to interconnect open spaces.

As shown on the following maps, the southern portion of the Menunketesuck-Cockaponset Regional Greenway, which has been recognized as a greenway of State significance, is located in Westbrook.



POLICIES AND ON-GOING PROGRAMS Continue to Preserve Open Space		Page	Legend On Inside Back Cover	
			Leader	Partners
A.	Aspire to increase the amount of open space in Westbrook (perhaps as high as 25-30%) to help support the State goal of 20% open space.	68	CC FC	PRB WLCT DEEP
B.	Continue efforts to create an overall system of open space / greenways / trails.	68	CC FC	PRB WLCT DEEP
C.	Continue efforts to create an overall system of “blueways”.	68	CC	PRB
D.	Continue requiring open space set-aside at the time of development.	68	PC	
E.	Continue to encourage or require conservation subdivision design in order to preserve as much open space as possible at the time of development.	68	PC	ZC
F.	Use the “fee in lieu of open space” tool to obtain monies for future open space acquisitions where there is no desirable open space on the parcel being subdivided.	68	PC	
G.	Continue to maintain and enhance funding in the Open Space Preservation Fund (established in accordance with Section 9-171 of the Town ordinances).	68	BOS	BOF
H.	Continue to partner with other open space organizations such as the Westbrook Land Conservation Trust, The Nature Conservancy, the Trust for Public Land, the State of Connecticut, and similar organizations.	68	CC	WLCT DEEP

ACTION STEPS Continue to Preserve Open Space		Page	Legend On Inside Back Cover	
			Leader	Partners
1.	Prepare an inventory of conservation and open space easements.	68	CC	PC
2.	Update the Subdivision Regulations to better utilize the “fee in lieu of open space” tool.	68	PC	
3.	Through another bond issue, replenish the Open Space Fund which has been used to help Westbrook have funds on hand to preserve open space as opportunities arise.	68	CC	

**Greenway Trail**



**Blueway Trail**



# Open Space

Westbrook, CT

Deep River

Essex

2,500 Feet



Old Saybrook

Clinton

Information on this map was compiled by the Westbrook Conservation Commission and is subject to change as new open spaces are preserved.

This map does not show conservation easements which have been established in Westbrook.

## Dedicated Open Space

## Managed Open Space

 Land Trust

 Association

 State

 Cemetery

 Federal

 Golf

 Town

 Other Town

## Statutory Considerations

CGS 8-23(e)(2) states that:

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

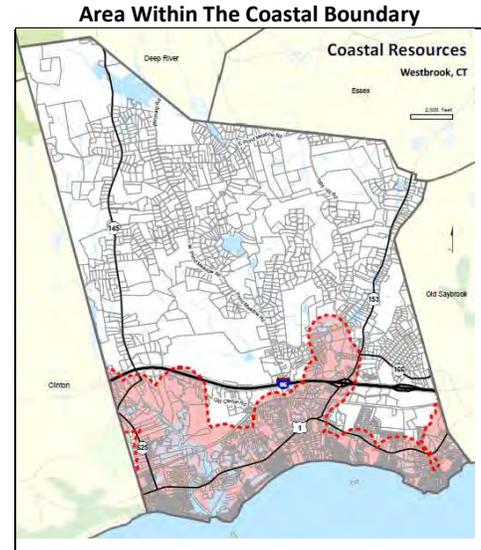
- *consistent with the municipal coastal program requirements of sections 22a-101 to 22a-104, inclusive,*
- *made with reasonable consideration for restoration and protection of the ecosystem and habitat of Long Island Sound, and*
- *designed to reduce hypoxia, pathogens, toxic contaminants and floatable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

## Manage Coastal Resources

Westbrook's coastal area (which by DEEP's definition generally extends inland 1,000 feet from the shore and tidally affected areas) contains about 2,565 acres or about 24 percent of the town's land area.

As a coastal community, Westbrook is responsible for implementing the Connecticut Coastal Management Act (CGS Sections 22a-90 et seq.) within the coastal area including:

- Protecting coastal resources.
- Coordinating with the State to find an appropriate balance for activities within the coastal area "without significantly disrupting either the natural environment or sound economic growth" (CGS Section 22a-92(1)).
- Implementing other coastal area management policies.



Westbrook contains a variety of coastal resources and the continued protection of these resources is important environmentally, economically, and socially:

- Beaches and dunes (Westbrook is distinctive along the Connecticut shoreline in that it has long continuous sections of beach and about 95% of Westbrook's shoreline consists of sand/gravel/dune beaches).
- Nearshore / offshore waters, tidal rivers / bays, tidal wetlands, and intertidal flats (including shellfish concentration areas and other marine-related habitat).
- Developed shoreline (including harbor areas) and other shorelands.
- Coastal flood hazard areas.

The related issues of coastal water quality and coastal habitat are addressed as part of the strategy to preserve and protect natural resources (pages 64-67).

The Long Island Sound "Blue Plan" and the Connecticut Harbor Management Association are potential resources to assist in managing coastal resources.

A Coastal Resources Management Plan was drafted for Westbrook in 2005 but was never completed. Still, that document contains useful information about coastal resources and issues and the POCD hereby incorporates it as a reference in the 2021 POCD.

## Continue To Manage Beach Stabilization

Westbrook has extensive beach / dune areas which present unique coastal management issues. Wave and wind action naturally move the particles which make up the beach areas (resulting in erosion in some areas with deposition in other areas). The beach areas in Westbrook are always changing.

Westbrook property owners, neighborhood associations, and the Town continue to seek ways to protect beach areas from beach erosion. At the same time, the Town is striving to work at a town-wide level to:

- Manage beach protection / replenishment efforts, and
- Manage the impacts of structures which accelerate erosion, reduce beach replenishment, and/or impact resources and nearby properties.

## Manage Water-Dependent Activities

Westbrook's coastal area also includes uses and activities that are important to the community and that require direct access to, or location in, marine or tidal waters and cannot be located inland. These are called "water dependent uses" and this can include marinas, recreational and commercial fishing, boating facilities, waterfront docks, boat-building facilities, water-based recreational uses, navigation aids and channels, and general public access.

A "water dependent use" is different than a "water-related use" which may benefit from proximity to the water or may offer activities that take advantage of being near the water but is not dependent on direct access (Water's Edge Inn and Resort, restaurants, marine sales/repair, beach shops, etc.).

The POCD recommends:

1. Supporting and promoting water-dependent uses.
2. Supporting and promoting water-related uses.
3. Requiring that space for water-dependent uses (which may include public access) be included as part of:
  - a. Any waterfront development (other than single-family houses), and
  - b. Any change from a water-dependent use to a non-water-dependent use.

## Beach Stabilization

---

Finding an appropriate balance between natural processes and human desires has been an on-going challenge in Westbrook and elsewhere:

- In the early 1980s, the Army Corps of Engineers pumped in sand for beach nourishment (only lasted about 10 years).
- The Capital Budget allocates money annually for maintaining the jetties at the Town Beach to protect publicly owned shoreline in this area.

## Maintain Navigable Waterways

Due to the number of boating facilities in Westbrook, navigable waterways are an important consideration in the POCD.

Westbrook adopted a Harbor Management Plan in 2014 and that document contains recommendations with regard to marine, commercial, recreational, and other uses in addition to other things. The 2014 Harbor Management Plan, and any amendment thereto, is hereby incorporated as a reference in the 2021 POCD.

### Harbor Management Plan



The success and sustainability of the marinas and the businesses connected with them depend on:

- Periodic maintenance dredging of the channels within the Patchogue and Menunketesuck Rivers (essentially a federal obligation).
- Maintenance of “harbor lines” on the Menunketesuck and Patchogue Rivers to prevent dock encroachment into navigational channels.
- Improvements to the breakwaters at the harbor entrance (especially the east-west Duck Island breakwater) to prevent future storm effects and address sea level rise (especially since Westbrook operates as a “harbor of refuge” during storm events for boaters in eastern Long Island Sound).

The POCD supports these projects including partnering with responsible parties and stakeholders in order to increase the potential of obtaining funding (from the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers or elsewhere).

Boating Access



Boating Access



## Maintain And Enhance Public Access

Preserving, maintaining, and enhancing coastal access is a key element of the coastal management program. There are different types of coastal access and, in Westbrook, this includes:

- **Visual Access** – Due to the importance of coastal views to community character, Westbrook will consider ways to protect, preserve and enhance visual access to (and from) Long Island Sound, its embayments and coastal resources in general. These efforts might include:
  - acquisition of view easements,
  - reservation of view easements as part of development, and/or
  - limitations on the height or placement of buildings, hedges, plantings, fences, and walls (see page 60).
  
- **Physical Access** - Westbrook will seek to improve physical access for people to the waters of Long Island Sound and associated embayments for swimming and other water-related activities since:
  - About 60% of the waterfront in Westbrook is privately owned,
  - About 25% is owned by private beach associations, and
  - Only about 15% is publicly owned.
  
- **Boating Access** - Westbrook will seek to improve water access and associated facilities for recreational boating (separated from swimming areas). This includes:
  - Protection of the harbor area (improving the breakwater).
  - Expansion / improvement of launching areas.
  - Maintenance dredging of channels.



**92% Agree** - Westbrook should continue to seek ways to preserve scenic views (visual access) to coastal areas.

Strongly Agree	66%
Somewhat Agree	26%
No Opinion	5%
Somewhat Disagree	3%
Strongly Disagree	1%

**72% Agree** - Westbrook should continue to seek ways to maintain and improve physical access to beaches and other coastal areas.

Strongly Agree	45%
Somewhat Agree	27%
No Opinion	6%
Somewhat Disagree	13%
Strongly Disagree	10%

**77% Agree** - Westbrook should continue to maintain and improve boating access including improving navigable waterways.

Strongly Agree	51%
Somewhat Agree	26%
No Opinion	19%
Somewhat Disagree	4%
Strongly Disagree	1%

Visual Access



Physical Access



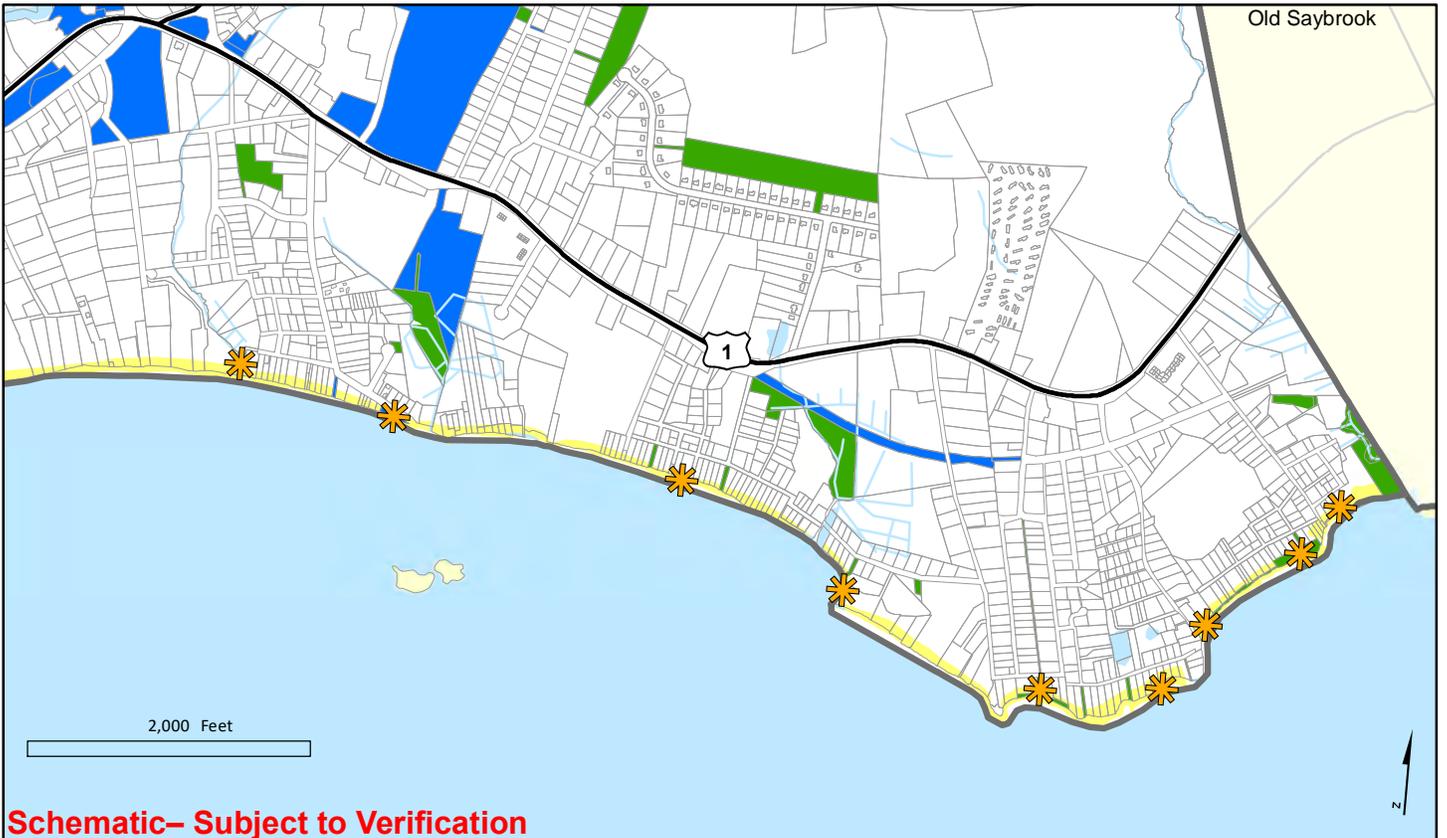
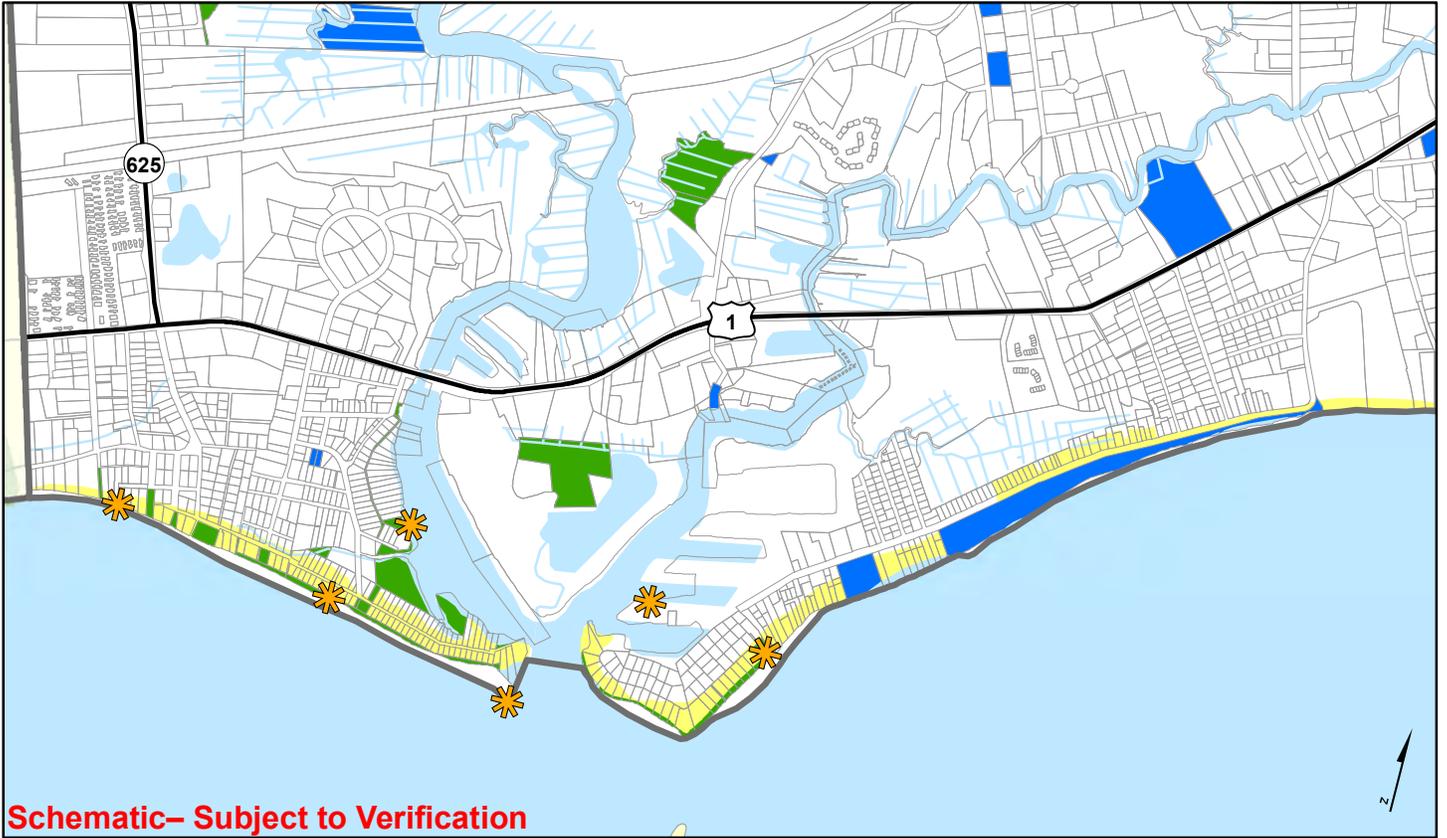
**Implementation**

When implementing recommendations to “Manage Coastal Resources”, considerations related to coastal resource management could include:

- Where the activity would take place;
- The specific details of the proposed activity;
- How the activity will be funded / implemented; and
- When the proposed activity would be implemented during the 10-year planning period.

POLICIES AND ON-GOING PROGRAMS Manage Coastal Resources			Legend On Inside Back Cover	
			Page	Leader
A.	Continue to manage coastal resources and areas in accordance with the Connecticut Coastal Management Act.	72	ZC	HMC DEEP
B.	Continue to seek an appropriate balance between natural coastal processes and protecting beach areas from erosion.	73	Town	COB DEEP
C.	Continue to support and promote water-dependent uses.	73	ZC	
D.	Maintain the jetties at the Town Beach and reinforce other Town-owned erosion control structures.	73	BOS	PW
E.	Continue to implement the Harbor Management Plan.	74	HMC	
F.	Support continued periodic maintenance dredging of the river channels and the harbor areas.	74	HMC	BOS
G.	Continue to enforce and maintain “harbor lines” in order to retain navigational channels.	74	HMC	DEEP
H.	Continue to advocate for maintenance of the breakwaters at the harbor entrance.	74	HMC	BOS
I.	Preserve, maintain, and enhance <u>visual access</u> to coastal resources from public roads and beaches such as a visual overlook of the Patchogue River marsh from the Town-owned American Legion property (“Chapman parcel”).	75	ZC PC	Town
J.	Seek improved <u>physical access</u> for people to the waters of Long Island Sound and associated embayments: 1. Identify, promote, and enforce existing public access points. 2. Establishing additional public access points. 3. Promote fishing and shell-fishing when, where and as appropriate.	75	ZC PC COB	Town
K.	Support improved <u>boating access</u> to the waters of Long Island Sound and associated embayments including, but not limited to; 1. Town Dock facilities (e.g., fishing, site access). 2. The Kirtland Landing boat ramp. 3. A fishing area / car-top boat launch at the Mulvey Municipal Center.	75	HMC	BOS DEEP

ACTION STEPS Manage Coastal Resources			Legend On Inside Back Cover	
			Page	Leader
1.	Advocate for immediate improvements to the east-west Duck Island breakwater. <input type="checkbox"/>	74	HMC	
2.	Consider modifying the Zoning Regulations to preserve / create visual access in shoreline neighborhoods. <input type="checkbox"/>	75	ZC	
3.	Provide handicapped access at Town Beach. <input type="checkbox"/>	75	BOS	PRB



-  Coastal Access Point
-  Open Space
-  Town Property / Open Space
-  Beach

# Coastal Access Points

Westbrook, CT



## Protect And Enhance Community Character

The “character” of Westbrook is often cited by residents as an important community asset. Westbrook wants to protect and enhance community character:

***96% Agree- Westbrook should continue to seek ways to maintain and improve community character.***

- 96 percent of participants in the on-line survey agreed that Westbrook should continue to seek ways to maintain and improve community character.
- 92 percent of participants in the on-line survey agreed that Westbrook should continue to support farms, forests, and other working lands.

Strongly Agree	66%
Somewhat Agree	30%
No Opinion	3%
Somewhat Disagree	0%
Strongly Disagree	0%

### Recognize and Protect Working Lands

The term “working lands” refers to farms, fields, timbered / forested lands, and other lands that are managed for monetary value. Working lands provide for economic activity and job creation and can provide a local source of food.

***92% Agree- Westbrook should continue to support farms, forests, and other working lands.***

In addition, though, these lands also contribute to Westbrook’s overall community character. Westbrook should continue to encourage and support local farms and farming and other working lands. This includes the PA-490 farmland assessment and forest land (25+ acres) assessment programs.

Strongly Agree	66%
Somewhat Agree	26%
No Opinion	6%
Somewhat Disagree	1%
Strongly Disagree	1%

### Seek To Retain Undeveloped Land

Undeveloped land also contributes to community character (and green infrastructure). However non-farm parcels and forested parcels less than 25 acres in size are not eligible for reduced assessment and such land can be forced into development if it becomes too expensive for the owner to retain.

Westbrook should investigate the “local option” component of the PA-490 use assessment program (called the “open space” component and codified at CGS Section 12-107). As required by statute, the POCD specifically supports the use of this program where private property owners receive a tax reduction for maintaining their property in an undeveloped state. The criteria for which property would be eligible would have to be determined and then approved at Town Meeting as part of establishing the program.

**Working Farm**



**Undeveloped Land**



**Protect Scenic Roads and Vistas**

Westbrook has many scenic resources which contribute to overall character and quality of life. Westbrook should continue to preserve, protect, and enhance:

- Scenic vistas, and
- Scenic roads (local and State).



Scenic Area



**91% Agree-** Westbrook should continue to seek ways to preserve scenic views from roads and public lands.

Strongly Agree	61%
Somewhat Agree	30%
No Opinion	5%
Somewhat Disagree	3%
Strongly Disagree	1%

**Protect Historic and Cultural Resources**

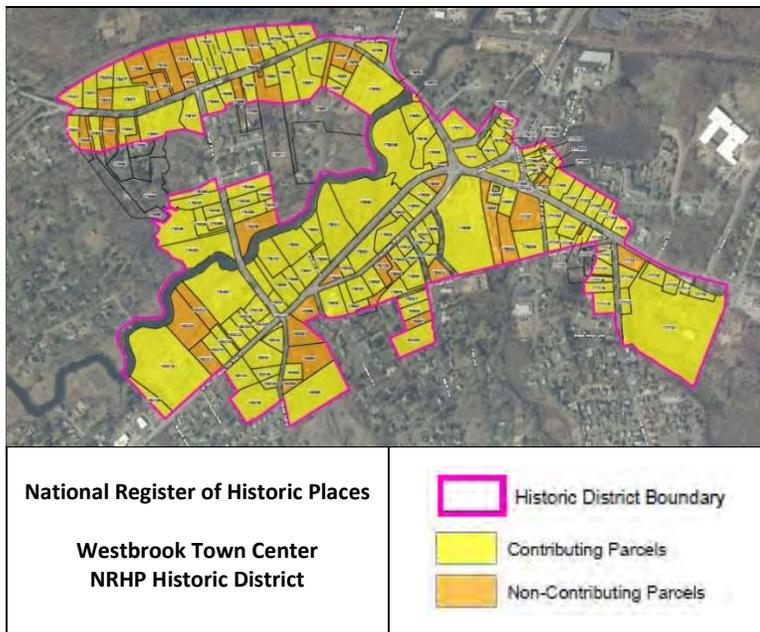
Westbrook has a number of historic structures which enhance community character. These structures have been preserved over the years by owners sensitive to their historic significance and financially and emotionally committed to maintaining them. The POCD supports the continued stewardship of these properties in a historically sensitive way. This might include allowing adaptive reuse of historic structures for new uses provided the historic structure is maintained.

The number of historic structures in the Town Center area resulted in the establishment of a district which is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This listing is basically for recognition and mostly affects activities involving federal and/or state funding. Westbrook has no local historic districts (which are regulatory in nature).

The POCD also supports the preservation of archeological resources.

**90% Agree-** Westbrook should continue to seek ways to preserve historic resources.

Strongly Agree	59%
Somewhat Agree	31%
No Opinion	7%
Somewhat Disagree	3%
Strongly Disagree	0%



Example of Westbrook Historic Plaque





***89% Agree- Westbrook should require attractive building and site design as part of new business and economic development in order to maintain and enhance the character of Westbrook.***

Strongly Agree	62%
Somewhat Agree	27%
No Opinion	7%
Somewhat Disagree	4%
Strongly Disagree	1%

### **Ensure Quality Site and Building Design**

The quality and appearance of new development – especially new business development - greatly affects the image and character of Westbrook. Every building that gets built affects the overall character of the community for decades (or longer) and Westbrook should continue to strive to get the best building and site designs possible. The long-term benefits to the Town from good design are considerable.

Building design and site design are important elements of community character and Westbrook intends to guide the design and construction of new development to maintain and enhance the overall character of the community. The 2018 update of the Zoning Regulations incorporated a variety of standards to guide building and site design in order to help guide potential applicants.

### **Enhance Public Spaces**

Public spaces, particularly spaces owned and maintained by the Town, are important to the character of the community. These spaces convey the Town’s image and can leave a lasting impression on residents, businesses, and visitors. Westbrook should continue to support beautification programs such as the “Adopt-A-Spot” program and continue efforts to enhance streetscapes by hiding overhead utilities.

Westbrook should also seek to maintain and enhance streetscapes with street trees, sidewalks, street lighting, street furniture, awnings, and fences / walls, where appropriate. Roadways have a disproportionate impact on people’s perception of community character even though roads only comprise about six percent of the Town’s land area.

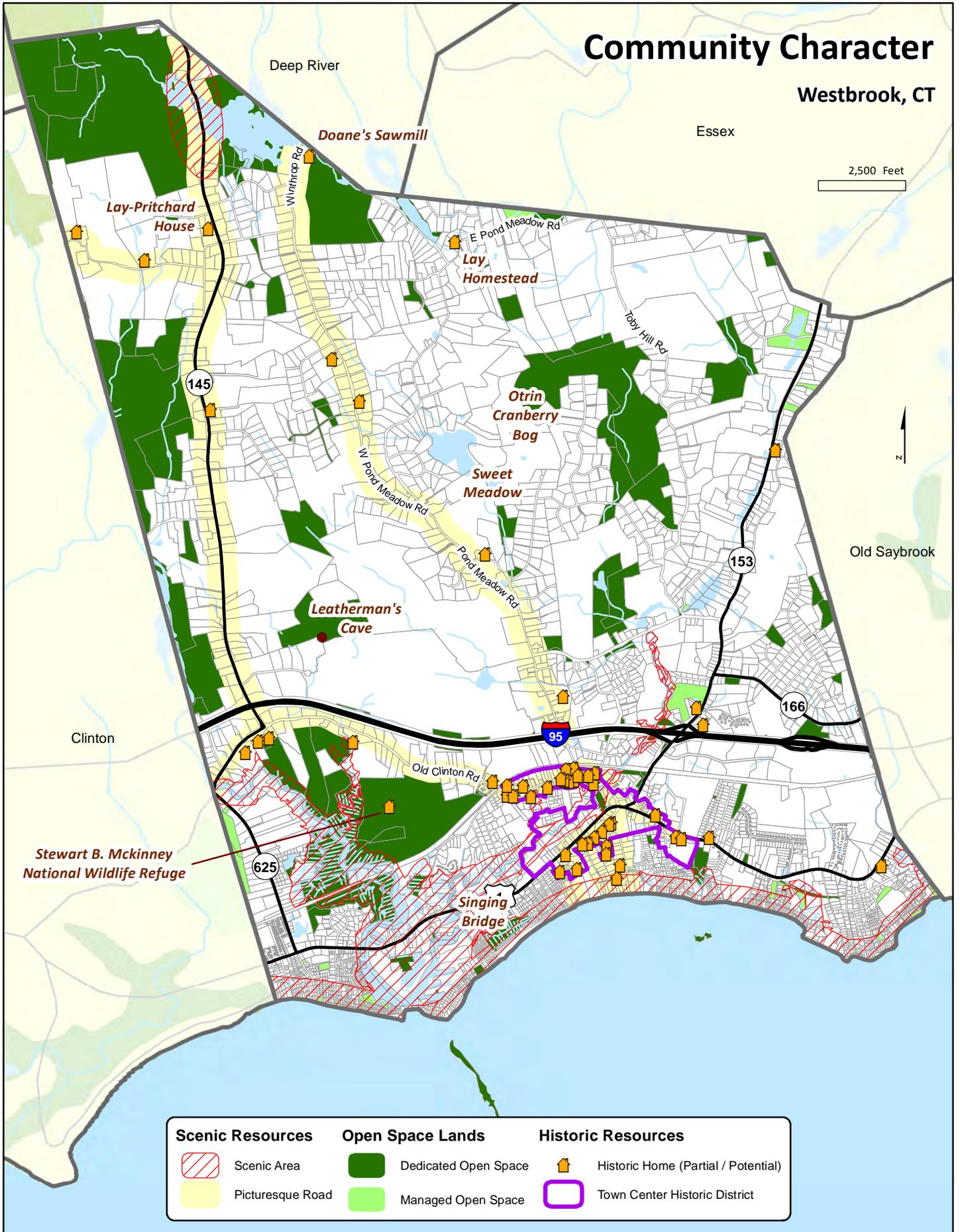
Over the past decade, several “gateways” into Westbrook have been improved with new signage and landscaping. Westbrook intends to maintain and enhance these gateways in order to promote and enhance community character.

**Gateway Signage**



# Community Character

Westbrook, CT

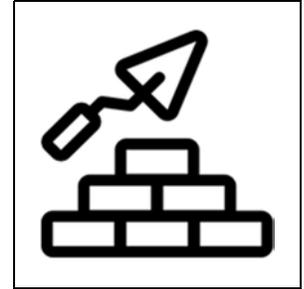


Scenic Resources	Open Space Lands	Historic Resources
Scenic Area	Dedicated Open Space	Historic Home (Partial / Potential)
Picturesque Road	Managed Open Space	Town Center Historic District

POLICIES AND ON-GOING PROGRAMS Protect And Enhance Community Character		Legend On Inside Back Cover	
		Page	Leader
A. <b>Overall</b> - Continue to protect and enhance community character.	78	Town	
B. <b>Working Lands</b> - Continue to encourage local farms and farming, and preservation / retention of forests and other working lands.	78	Town	
C. <b>Scenic Resources</b> -			
1. Continue to preserve, protect, and enhance scenic roads / vistas.	79	Town	
2. Continue to protect stone walls, including a local ordinance.	79	Town	
D. <b>Historic Resources</b> -			
3. Continue to support stewardship of historic properties in a historically sensitive way and continue programs (such as "historic plaques") which raise awareness of historic resources.	79	WHS	Town
4. Support nomination of historic resources to the National and State Registers of Historic Places.	79	PC	WHS
5. Support establishment of local historic districts.	79	PIC	WHS
6. Encourage preservation and/or documentation of archeological resources which may be found in Westbrook.	79	PC	WHS Town
7. Consider allowing adaptive reuse of historic structures if the historic character of the building is preserved.	79	ZC	
E. <b>Community Design</b> -			
1. Continue to have high design expectations for new development to maintain and enhance the overall character of Westbrook.	80	ZC	Town
2. Continue to use design guidelines in the Zoning Regulations to guide the design of new business development.	80	ZC	
F. <b>Streetscapes</b> -			
1. Continue to maintain and enhance community gateways and other public places in order to enhance community character.	80	EDC	Town
2. Continue to support beautification efforts such as the "Adopt-A-Spot" program and other programs.	80	EDC	Town

ACTION STEPS Protect And Enhance Community Character		Legend On Inside Back Cover	
		Page	Leader
1. Adopt a "local option" component of the PA-490 use assessment program to help maintain undeveloped property. <input type="checkbox"/>	78	BOS	
2. Establish a study committee to explore creation of a local historic district in the Town Center area. <input type="checkbox"/>	78	PIC	BOS
3. Develop an archaeological sensitivity map with assistance from the State Archaeologist's Office. <input type="checkbox"/>	79	PC	
4. Consider designating local scenic roads where scenic elements will be protected when road work is undertaken. <input type="checkbox"/>	79	PC	
5. Explore installing additional gateway and wayfinding signage. <input type="checkbox"/>	80	EDC	Town
6. Develop a plan for maintaining public trees. <input type="checkbox"/>	80	PIC	PW

## 6. A SOLID FOUNDATION



Westbrook's conservation and development goals are also supported by the services and facilities that Westbrook needs and wants:

- Community facilities and services,
- Transportation and circulation (vehicular, pedestrian, bicycle, transit), and
- Utility infrastructure.

This section of the POCD identifies policies and action steps with regard to these topics.

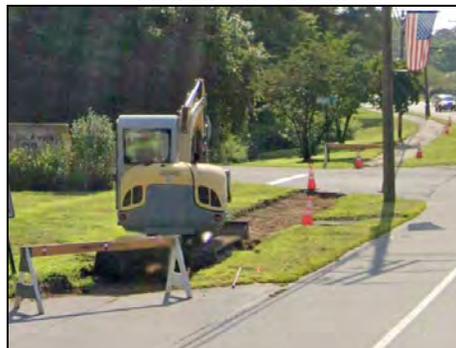
### GOAL

***Provide the facilities and services which are needed to support the overall vision for the future of Westbrook and the quality of life of its residents ...***

Community Facilities



Sidewalk Construction





## Plan For Community Facility And Service Needs

Community facilities are the places that are used to provide Town services. The adequacy of these facilities is important to maintaining the overall quality of life in Westbrook.

**88% Agree-** Westbrook should strive to maintain the municipal services and facilities it currently offers.

Strongly Agree	56%
Somewhat Agree	32%
No Opinion	9%
Somewhat Disagree	3%
Strongly Disagree	0%

**People are Not Sure Whether-** Westbrook should seek to increase the municipal services and facilities it currently provides.

Strongly Agree	24%
Somewhat Agree	28%
No Opinion	26%
Somewhat Disagree	15%
Strongly Disagree	7%

**64% Agree-** Westbrook should work towards establishing a community center for people of all ages.

Strongly Agree	31%
Somewhat Agree	33%
No Opinion	19%
Somewhat Disagree	8%
Strongly Disagree	9%

In the on-line survey, 88 percent of participants agreed that Westbrook should strive to maintain the municipal services and facilities it currently offers. When asked to identify Westbrook's most important community facility today, survey participants indicated the following:

Mostly Facility-Related	
Town Hall / Mulvey Building	33
Town Beach / Beaches	24
Library	13
Senior Center	6
Sidewalks / Green	3

Mostly Service-Related	
Schools / School system	3
Park and rec programs / facilities	3
Transfer Station	3
Fire department / Fire HQ	2
Police	2

When asked to identify Westbrook's most important community facility/service need, participants indicated the following (un-related responses omitted):

Facility / Service Need	
Police	13
Sidewalks / Bicycle lanes	11
Community / Senior / Youth Center	9
Sewer / Shared Septic	8
Safe roads (cars, pedestrians, bicycles)	8
Recreation facilities / programs	5

Facility / Service Need	
Fire Department	3
School system	3
Library	2
Public works	2
Transfer station, recycling, composting	2
Other	4

**Town Hall / Mulvey Building**



**Town Beach**

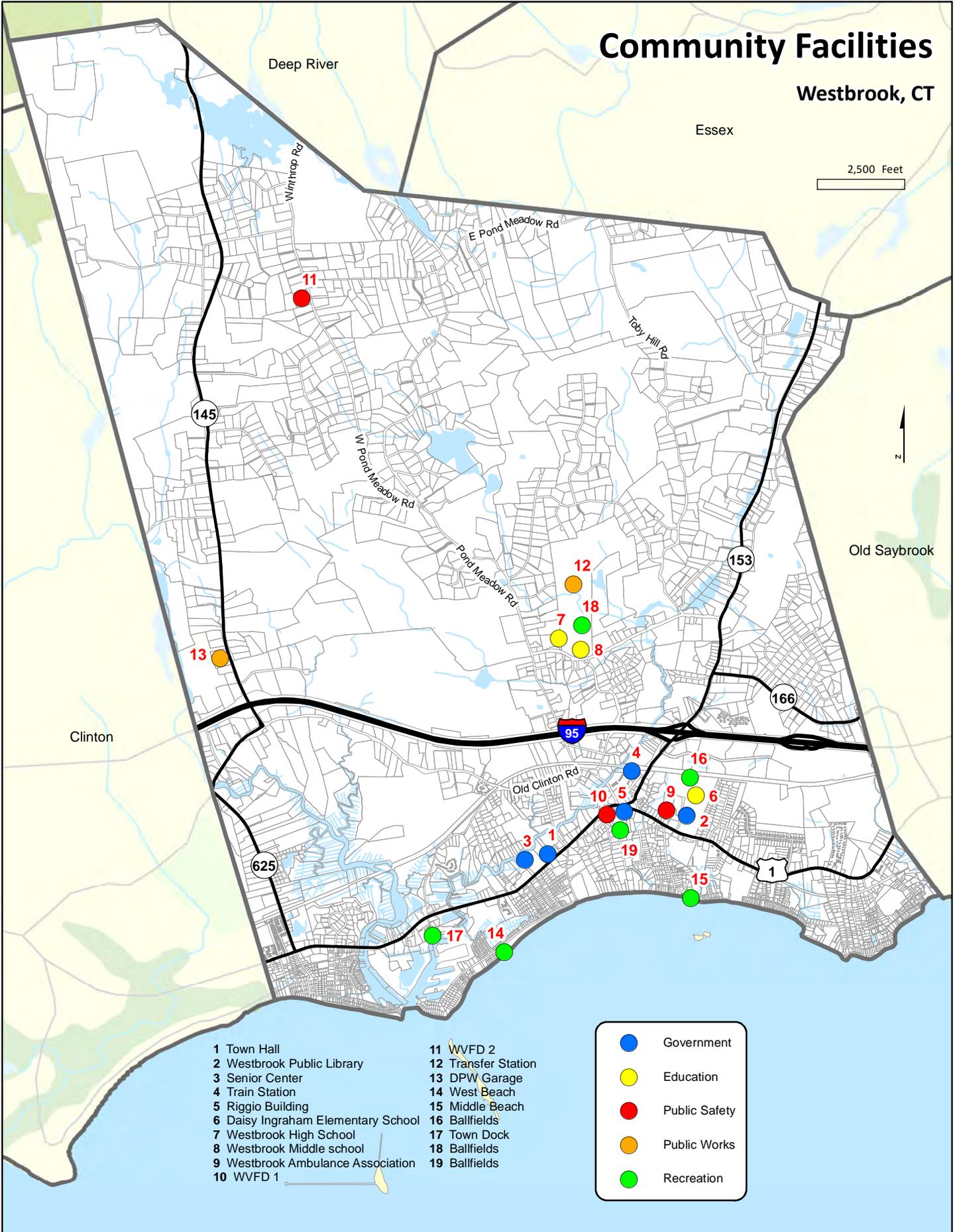


# Community Facilities

Westbrook, CT

Essex

2,500 Feet



- 1 Town Hall
- 2 Westbrook Public Library
- 3 Senior Center
- 4 Train Station
- 5 Riggio Building
- 6 Daisy Ingraham Elementary School
- 7 Westbrook High School
- 8 Westbrook Middle school
- 9 Westbrook Ambulance Association
- 10 WVFD 1
- 11 WVFD 2
- 12 Transfer Station
- 13 DPW Garage
- 14 West Beach
- 15 Middle Beach
- 16 Ballfields
- 17 Town Dock
- 18 Ballfields
- 19 Ballfields

<span style="color: blue;">●</span>	Government
<span style="color: yellow;">●</span>	Education
<span style="color: red;">●</span>	Public Safety
<span style="color: orange;">●</span>	Public Works
<span style="color: green;">●</span>	Recreation



**63% Agree- The Town should evaluate options for providing police services in Westbrook.**

Strongly Agree	36%
Somewhat Agree	27%
No Opinion	19%
Somewhat Disagree	11%
Strongly Disagree	7%

**People Are Not Sure Whether- The Town should evaluate whether to transition to paid fire staffing in the future.**

Strongly Agree	13%
Somewhat Agree	27%
No Opinion	28%
Somewhat Disagree	18%
Strongly Disagree	14%

In terms of community services and facilities, the Town continues to work on identifying long-term capital needs and managing their financial impacts on the annual budget. Near term issues include:

- Building and roof maintenance at Town buildings.
- Heating and cooling upgrades at Mulvey Municipal Center.
- Office / meeting space at Mulvey Municipal Center
- Sharing school and town facilities (including maintenance functions)
- Fire / emergency response needs (staffing, building adequacy).
- Whether to do more in terms of a Community Center.

Westbrook schools are anticipated to have enough capacity (i.e., quantity of space) to accommodate enrollments over the next 10 years or so based on Information from the School Superintendent and the Board of Education.

In the on-line survey, participants indicated:

- 63 percent of participants agree that the Town should evaluate options for providing police services in Westbrook.
- People are not sure whether the Town should evaluate whether to transition to paid fire staffing in the future.

The POCD recognizes that it is important for Westbrook to continue to seek ways to encourage more volunteers to participate in community activities and events (including local boards and commissions and public safety organizations). More and better public communication to make people aware of community needs might be a way to help address this situation.

A key recommendation of the POCD is to undertake a comprehensive community facility (buildings and property) inventory and assessment in order to prioritize future needs. A separate study of park and playground needs is also recommended. Having such an inventory and assessment will help the Town prioritize future needs and reconcile those needs with the financial capacity of the Town.

In the future, it may make sense for Westbrook to investigate regionalization of selected facilities and/or services to increase capacity / expertise, enhance services and/or reduce expenses.

**Fire Department**



**Police Department**



<b>POLICIES AND ON-GOING PROGRAMS</b> <b>Plan For Community Facility And Service Needs</b>		<i>Legend On Inside Back Cover</i>		
		Page	Leader Partners	
A.	Continue to plan for community facility needs.	84	BOS BOE	
B.	Continue to explore opportunities to consolidate the maintenance of school and Town government facilities.	86	BPS BOE	PW
C.	Coordinate facility scheduling (Town / School) to fully utilize existing facilities.	86	BOS BOE	Town
D.	Continue to work with public safety and other volunteers to determine ways to expand and retain the volunteer pool.	86	BOS	VFD EM
E.	Continue to seek ways to encourage more volunteers to participate in community activities and events (including local boards and commissions).	86	BOS	VFD Town
F.	Continue to seek ways to inform residents about community activities and events (including local boards and commissions).	86	BOS	Town
G.	Explore options for regionalization of selected facilities and/or services to enhance services and/or reduce expenses.	86	BOS	Town

<b>ACTION STEPS</b> <b>Plan For Community Facility And Service Needs</b>		<i>Legend On Inside Back Cover</i>		
		Page	Leader Partners	
1.	Undertake a comprehensive community facility inventory and assessment (buildings and property) in order to prioritize future needs. <input type="checkbox"/>	86	BOS BOE	Town
2.	Undertake an inventory and assessment of parks and playgrounds in order to develop a plan to address future needs. <input type="checkbox"/>	86	PRB	BOS
3.	Evaluate options for providing police services in Westbrook. <input type="checkbox"/>	86	BOS	TAPA
4.	Evaluate whether to transition to paid fire staffing in the future. <input type="checkbox"/>	86	BOS	VFD
5.	Assess the need for paid daytime emergency response personnel. <input type="checkbox"/>	86	BOS	VFD WAA
6.	Complete the evaluation of options for a community center. <input type="checkbox"/>	86	BOS	PRB
7.	Evaluate options for Emergency Services communications. <input type="checkbox"/>	86	EM BOS	

**High School / Middle School**



**Library**





## Address Transportation And Circulation

### Roadways And Vehicular Circulation

**92% Agree-** *Westbrook should continue to address safety issues which might occur on local roadways (vehicles, pedestrians, bicycles, etc.).*

Strongly Agree	59%
Somewhat Agree	33%
No Opinion	5%
Somewhat Disagree	2%
Strongly Disagree	1%

**76% Agree-** *Westbrook should investigate ways to slow traffic and calm traffic on local roads, where appropriate.*

Strongly Agree	43%
Somewhat Agree	33%
No Opinion	14%
Somewhat Disagree	5%
Strongly Disagree	4%

**Safety / Capacity** - The road system in Westbrook generally meets the transportation and circulation needs of the community today. Safety and capacity are key issues for consideration. In the on-line survey, 92 percent of participants agreed that Westbrook should continue to address safety issues which might occur on local roadways.

**Roadway Connections** - In the future, Westbrook might benefit from some additional east / west road connections to facilitate traffic circulation, reduce emergency response times, improve school bus and snowplow routes, and/or support economic development. Westbrook should look for opportunities to create road connections while minimizing adverse impact on natural resources.

**Pavement Management** - Maintaining road pavement in Westbrook efficiently and cost effectively will be an on-going issue. Although Westbrook budgets \$150,000 per year for a “paving program”, this may not be adequate based on the number of road-miles in Westbrook. Road pavement can deteriorate exponentially (and the cost can increase exponentially) if not managed well. The POCD recommends that Westbrook investigate establishing a pavement management system to help program road improvements in the most efficient and cost-effective way.

**Access Management** - Roadway capacity and safety are, among other things, affected by the number of intersections and driveways (access points) on a given section of road. The concept of “access management” refers to carefully managing the number and placement of driveways and curb cuts along major roadways (such as along Route 1), since such interruptions decrease the capacity of the roadway and introduce safety issues for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists due to turning movements.

The Zoning Regulations contain provisions related to access management and the POCD recommends maintaining and utilizing these provisions, especially along arterial roadways.

Route 1 Traffic



Shoreline Street



Traffic Calming - Shoreline neighborhoods in Westbrook generally contain higher density development served by narrow roads laid out long ago. Motorists sometimes travel at a higher rate of speed than is appropriate or comfortable, particularly in the busy summer months when there are more pedestrians and cyclists and children playing.

To address this, Westbrook may consider implementing “traffic calming” along certain streets as a way to slow traffic and manage it more effectively. In the on-line survey, 76 percent of participants agreed that Westbrook should investigate ways to slow traffic and calm traffic on local roads, where appropriate.

“Traffic Calming”

According to the Institute of Transportation Engineers, traffic calming is the “combination of mainly physical measures that reduce the negative effects of motor vehicle use, alter driver behavior and improve conditions for non-motorized street users. This can include:

- Reducing or eliminating cut-through traffic,
- Reducing or eliminating speeding,
- Reducing accident incidence, and/or
- Creating a safer environment for pedestrians and bicyclists.



**76% Agree-** Westbrook should investigate ways to slow traffic and calm traffic on local roads, where appropriate.

Strongly Agree	43%
Somewhat Agree	33%
No Opinion	14%
Somewhat Disagree	5%
Strongly Disagree	4%

### Sample Of Possible Traffic Calming Techniques



**Awareness** - A neighborhood meeting can raise awareness of the issue and involve residents in identifying possible approaches.



**Signage** – Signage informs motorists of reasonable speeds and/or behavior. Roads can be marked for “no trucks.”



**Speed Enforcement** – Enforcement of speed limits in neighborhoods can help slow traffic and help police focus their traffic calming efforts.



**Narrowing Travel Lanes** - Narrowing perceived travel lane width and/or actual travel lane width can calm traffic.



**Mini-Roundabouts** - A mini-roundabout at a street intersection requires vehicles to slow down and navigate around the island in an intersection.



**Speed Bump / Hump** – Temporary or permanent raised sections of roadway can deter speeding and cut-through traffic.

Complete Streets - The POCD recommends adoption of a “complete streets” policy by the Town. Such a policy typically states that the Town recognizes that roadway rights-of-way are opportunities to address the needs of all people (drivers, walkers, bikers, transit users, etc.) and that the Town will strive to address those needs as part of any roadway project.



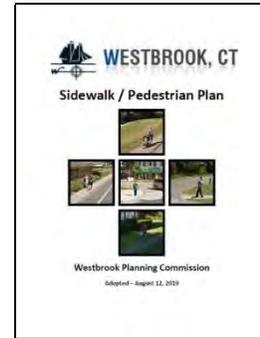
## Pedestrian Circulation

Sidewalks and pedestrian circulation are important to Westbrook residents. In the on-line POCD survey, 78 percent of participants agreed that Westbrook should continue efforts to expand and improve the sidewalk network.

**78% Agree-** Westbrook should continue efforts to expand and improve the sidewalk network.

Strongly Agree	53%
Somewhat Agree	25%
No Opinion	10%
Somewhat Disagree	8%
Strongly Disagree	5%

In 2019, Westbrook adopted a Sidewalk / Pedestrian Plan which laid out recommendations for expansions and improvement of the sidewalk system in the community. That Plan, and any amendment thereto, is hereby incorporated *as a reference* in the 2021 POCD. The Plan used on-line surveys and community meetings to get input and consensus on sidewalk priorities (see map below).



### Sidewalk Construction

The highest priority sidewalk segment (from the Town Center to the Train Station) received a grant and construction was underway in 2020.

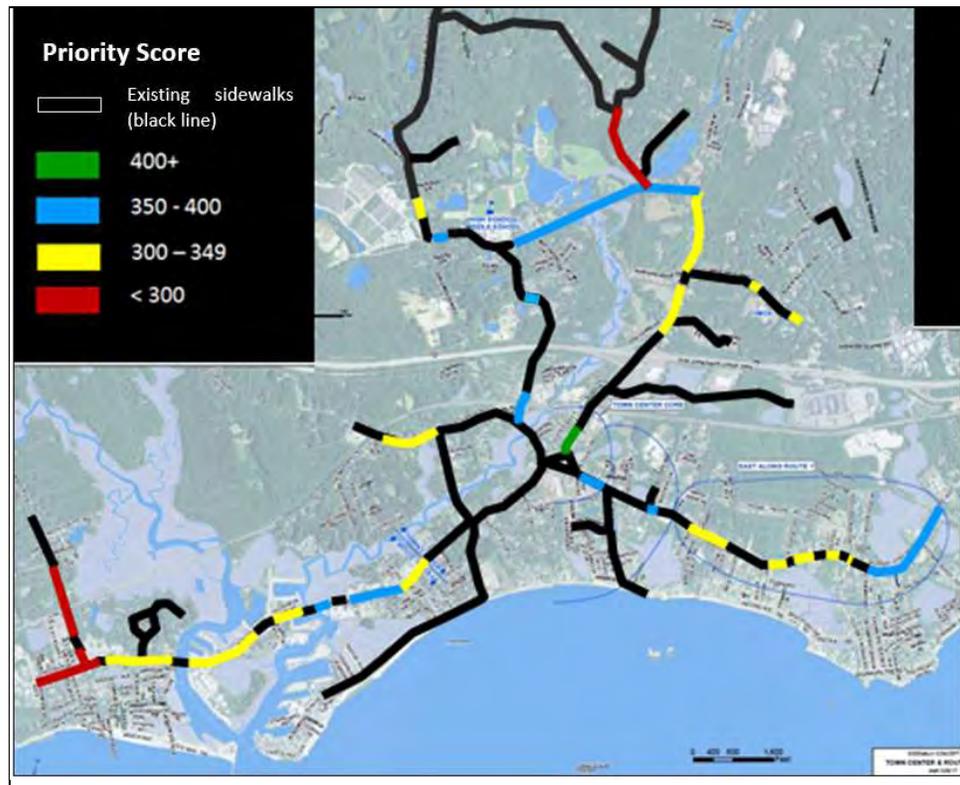
The Town's Capital Improvement Plan programs money annually for sidewalk construction, engineering and grant acquisition for the sidewalk improvement program.

### Greenway Trails

Another element of overall pedestrian circulation is the network of greenways and trails which are desired for Westbrook (as part of the greenway system contained in the Open Space chapter of the POCD):

- Menunketesuck Greenway trail construction, and
- Extension of Shoreline Greenway from Menunketesuck Greenway at Clinton town line to Old Saybrook.

Sidewalk Priorities Map in 2019 Sidewalk / Pedestrian Plan



## Bicycle Circulation

Interest in bicycle use has grown and Westbrook seeks to improve overall bicycle circulation in the community. In the on-line survey, 70 percent of participants agreed that Westbrook should investigate ways to improve roadways to accommodate bicycle riders.



**70% Agree** - Westbrook should investigate ways to improve the roadways to accommodate bicycle riders.

There are a couple of ways to help improve bicycle circulation:

- Develop an overall bicycle route plan within Westbrook.
- Use signage to inform people of the overall bicycle system.
- Work with CT-DOT to implement their policy of re-stripping State highways with 11' lane widths when repainting or improving State roads in Westbrook.
- Considering painting roadways / shoulders to identify their potential for bicycle use.
- Support the creation of a bicycle advocacy group.

Strongly Agree	42%
Somewhat Agree	28%
No Opinion	15%
Somewhat Disagree	9%
Strongly Disagree	6%

CT-DOT Bicycle Suitability Map For State Highways





**People Are Not Sure Whether - Westbrook should seek more frequent bus service by 9-Town Transit.**

Strongly Agree	17%
Somewhat Agree	23%
<b>No Opinion</b>	<b>45%</b>
Somewhat Disagree	9%
Strongly Disagree	7%

**56% Agree - Westbrook should seek more frequent train service by Shoreline East.**

Strongly Agree	21%
Somewhat Agree	35%
No Opinion	36%
Somewhat Disagree	7%
Strongly Disagree	1%

## Transit Services

Westbrook is fortunate to have:

- A train station with Shoreline East rail service that connects Westbrook to New London and points east (including Providence and Boston) and to New Haven and points west (including New York City).
- Transit routes served by 9-Town Transit.
- “Transit On Call” and “Dial-A-Ride” services for elderly and disabled residents.

These services are, at a minimum, an important marketing point and asset for the community. Perhaps more importantly, these services provide an important transportation option for people who do not have access to an automobile, could not drive, or preferred not to drive.

While participants in the on-line survey were not sure whether Westbrook should seek improved bus service by 9-Town Transit (frequency, routes, etc.), 56 percent did agree that Westbrook should seek more frequent train service by Shoreline East.

**Shoreline East**



**Westbrook Train Station**



**9-Town Transit**



**Example of Clinton’s Shuttle Service**

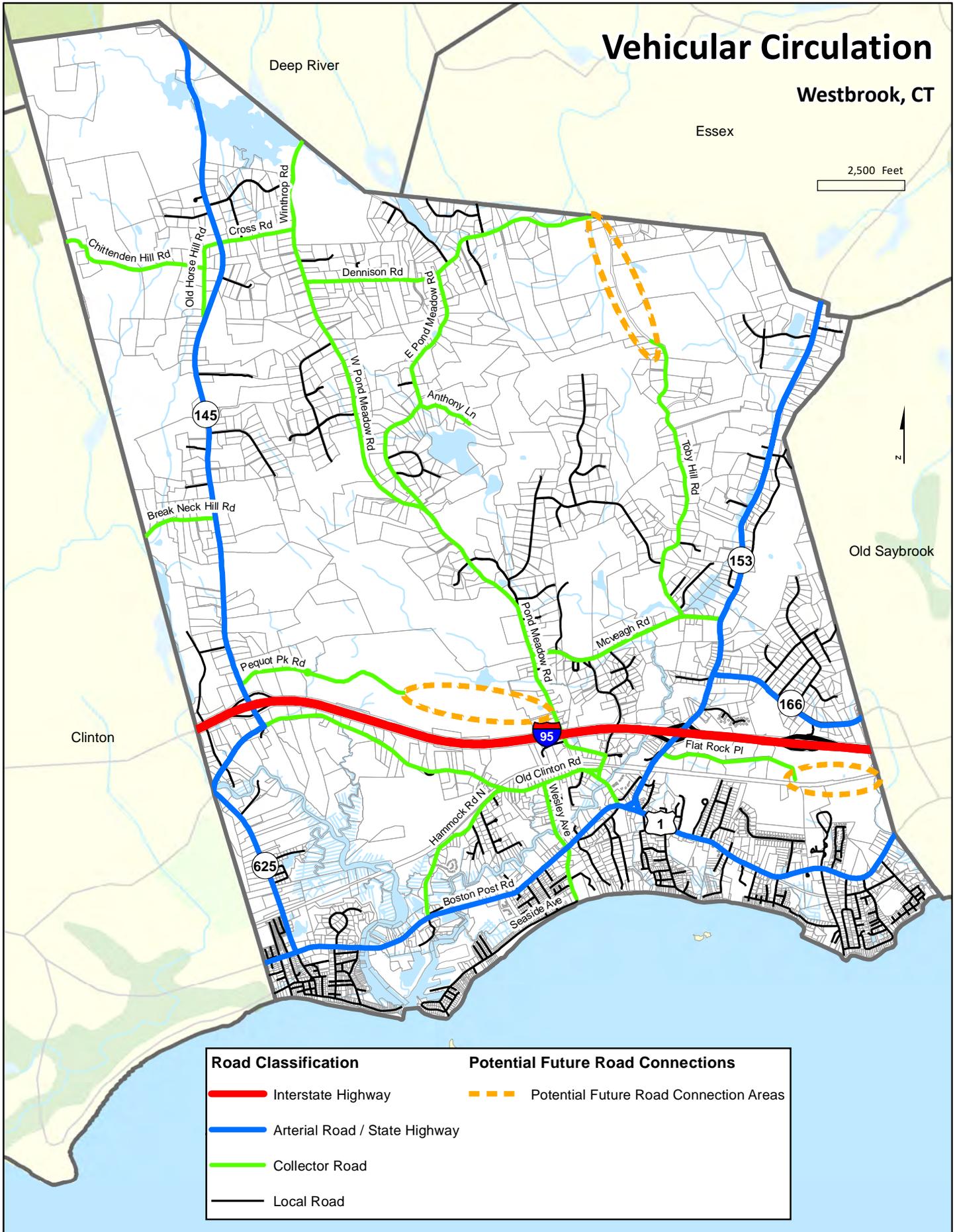


# Vehicular Circulation

Westbrook, CT

Essex

2,500 Feet



Road Classification	Potential Future Road Connections
Interstate Highway	Potential Future Road Connection Areas
Arterial Road / State Highway	
Collector Road	
Local Road	

POLICIES AND ON-GOING PROGRAMS Address Transportation And Circulation		Legend On Inside Back Cover	
		Page	Leader Partners
<b>A. Roadways -</b>			
1. Continue to address safety and capacity issues on local roads and State highways while balancing improvement needs with environmental and character impacts.	88	TAPA	RCOG DOT PW
2. Coordinate with the State Department of Transportation as early as possible on major roadway projects in Westbrook.	88	BOS TAPA	DOT PW
3. Striver to coordinate road and utility work so that pavement repair is minimized.	88	BOS TAPA	DOT PW
4. Look for opportunities to create more road connections while minimizing adverse impacts on natural resources.	88	PC	Town
5. Maintain roads and road pavement as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible.	88	PW	
6. Continue to utilize access management provisions in the Zoning Regulations, especially along arterial roadways.	88	ZC	
7. Consider implementing traffic calming measures, where appropriate.	89	TAPA	PC
<b>B. Pedestrians -</b>			
1. Continue to implement the Sidewalk / Pedestrian Plan.	90	PC	PW
2. Maintain and regularly update the Sidewalk / Pedestrian Plan to reflect both progress made and community needs and desires.	90	PC	
3. Continue to require installation of sidewalks for new development.	90	ZC PC	
4. Continue to seek grants for sidewalk construction.	90	PC	Town
5. Work with regional partners to create a regional multi-purpose trail system.	90	PC	RCOG
6. Seek to enhance the non-motorized off-road trail network.	90	Town	
<b>C. Bicycling -</b>			
1. Seek to make roads safer for bicyclists by sweeping shoulders, restriping roads, adding signage, and other simple modifications.	91	TAPA	DOT PW
2. Encourage, or require, the installation of bicycle racks at the train station, businesses, institutional uses, etc.	91	ZC	Town EDC
<b>D. Rail / Transit -</b>			
1. Continue to support maintenance and improvement of Shoreline East rail service for Westbrook.	92	BOS	Town RCOG DOT
2. Continue to support maintenance and improvement of 9-Town Transit Services including expansion of routes and installation of bus shelters.	92	BOS	Town RCOG ETD
3. Continue to support the "Transit on Call", and "Dial a Ride" services to Westbrook residents.	92	BOS	Town RCOG ETD

ACTION STEPS Address Transportation And Circulation		Page	Legend On Inside Back Cover	
			Leader	Partners
1. <b>Overall</b> - Adopt a complete streets policy where road rights-of-way will be considered for all transportation modes / users.	<input type="checkbox"/>	89	BOS	PC
2. <b>Roadways</b> -				
a. Create and fund a pavement management system.	<input type="checkbox"/>	88	BOS BOF	PW
b. Identify opportunities to narrow travel lanes on roads in Westbrook (striping, etc.).	<input type="checkbox"/>	88	TAPA	DOT PW
c. Review speed limits, parking limitations, and traffic calming on roads, especially in beach neighborhoods.	<input type="checkbox"/>	89	TAPA	
3. <b>Pedestrians</b> -				
a. Evaluate the need for crosswalk improvements in the Town Center area for safety and convenience.	<input type="checkbox"/>	90	TAPA	PW DOT
4. <b>Bicycling</b> -				
a. Establish bicycle routes, with signage.	<input type="checkbox"/>	91	PC	Town
b. Identify priority areas for bicycle improvements.	<input type="checkbox"/>	91	PC	Town
c. Establish and maintain bicycle / pedestrian lanes on local roads and State highways, where appropriate.	<input type="checkbox"/>	91	TAPA	PW DOT
d. Provide bicycle racks at Town facilities and schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>	91	BOS BOE	Town
5. <b>Transit</b> -				
a. Explore providing a transit shuttle within Westbrook during the summer months to connect key destinations (including marinas, the Town Center, the train station, and Westbrook Factory Stores).	<input type="checkbox"/>	92	EDC	ETD RCOG

## Improve Utility Infrastructure

### Water Supply

Public water supply is provided in the southern part of Westbrook (shoreline neighborhoods and other areas) by the Connecticut Water Service (CWS). Other areas of the community rely on on-site wells. Water quality for these water supply systems is good.

CWS has adequate water supply to meet the needs of its customers in its Shoreline System (Guilford, Madison, Clinton, Westbrook, and Old Saybrook). Westbrook's long-term goal is for CWS to expand its water supply service area north to meet the domestic and fire needs in these areas of the community as well.



## Manage Wastewater / Avoid Sewers

Properties in Westbrook rely on individual on-site septic systems for wastewater management. There is no public sewer system. While septic systems work well when properly installed and managed, they can also pose pollution / health risks if improperly installed or maintained.

***81% Agree - Westbrook should investigate a community septic system or other sewage disposal options to promote and support development of the Town Center.***

Strongly Agree	52%
Somewhat Agree	29%
No Opinion	10%
Somewhat Disagree	5%
Strongly Disagree	4%

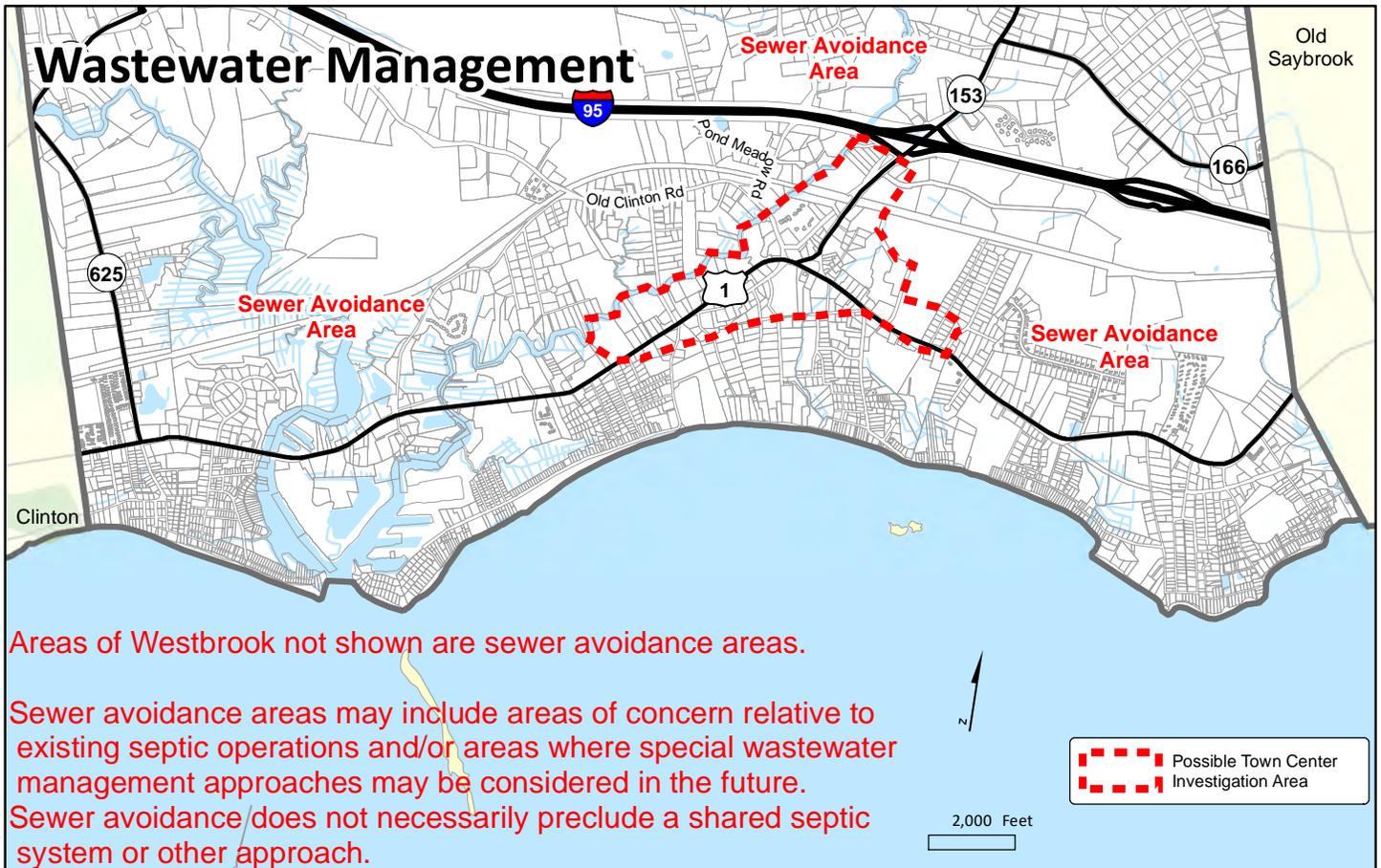
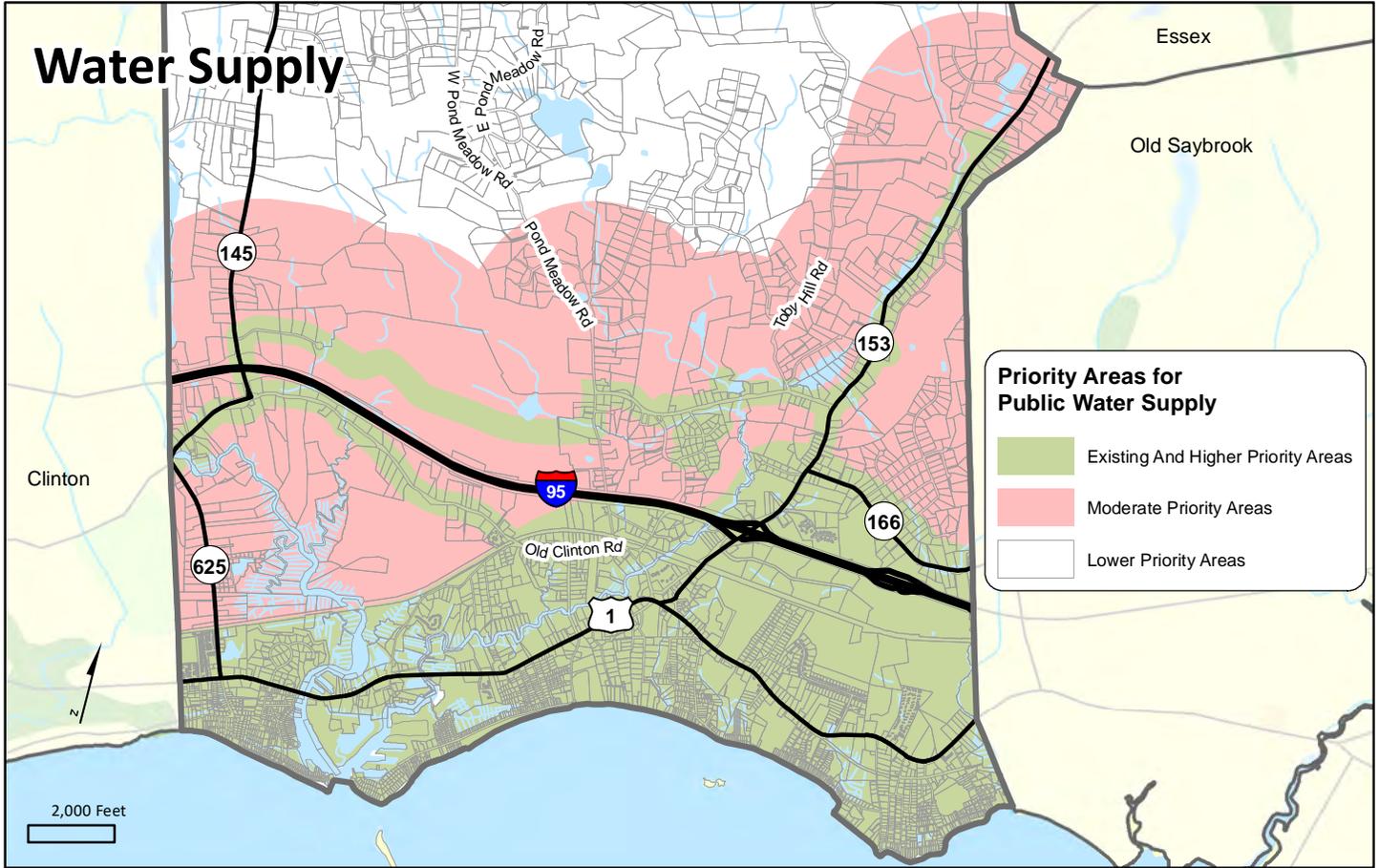
Although shoreline neighborhoods frequently contain well-draining soils, the relatively small lots, higher water tables, and periodic flooding can impact the ability of septic systems to fully renovate effluent onsite. Additionally, in many areas, the higher septic loading in summer months is accommodated only because of the rest period afforded by more limited winter occupancy. Redevelopment of coastal properties with larger structures and conversion of seasonal cottages to year-round residences result in new, more code-compliant septic systems but can also increase the overall septic loading in the neighborhood. Therefore, care needs to be taken as these areas are redeveloped.

***People Are Not Sure Whether - Westbrook should maintain its overall "sewer avoidance" philosophy which essentially requires that septic issues be addressed on each site in order to avoid the cost of sewers.***

Strongly Agree	27%
Somewhat Agree	18%
No Opinion	11%
Somewhat Disagree	21%
Strongly Disagree	22%

Several times over the years, Westbrook has looked at the installation of sewers and decided on a "sewer avoidance" policy. The Water Pollution Control Agency (WPCA) adopted an Onsite Wastewater Management Plan in 2005 predicated on the "sewer avoidance" approach because it was determined to be the most cost-effective strategy for the entire community and it addressed the fact that there was no available outfall location for a community wide system. This "sewer avoidance" approach included strategies for properly maintaining the systems that are in place, upgrading inadequate systems, and educating property owners in the proper care of their systems. This approach also supported the creation of Wastewater Management Districts throughout the town in order to better avoid more expensive, structural solutions.

While the "sewer avoidance" approach is likely to continue for the bulk of the town, the WPCA may look at the potential of one or more shared septic systems, utilizing either conventional or advanced treatment, for specific neighborhoods where they are appropriate to the needs of the community and are economically feasible or in the Town Center area (see page 36 for additional discussion about septic systems in the Town Center area). This approach in the Town Center would open up the opportunity for development and redevelopment (which residents indicate they favor). Given this, it is highly possible that the ultimate answer for Westbrook will include a combination of approaches, which is supported by the on-line survey, where participants were fairly evenly split about maintaining or revisiting the sewer avoidance policy.





**68% Agree - The POCD should recommend improvements to internet speed and capacity in Westbrook.**

Strongly Agree	45%
Somewhat Agree	23%
No Opinion	23%
Somewhat Disagree	7%
Strongly Disagree	2%

**60% Agree - The POCD should recommend improvements to wireless phone service in Westbrook.**

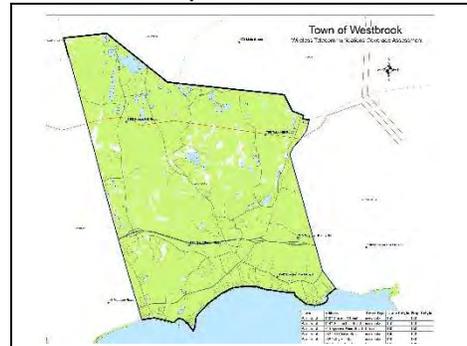
Strongly Agree	36%
Somewhat Agree	24%
No Opinion	28%
Somewhat Disagree	9%
Strongly Disagree	2%

## Other Utilities

Westbrook has electrical service (Eversource) town-wide and natural gas service (Southern Connecticut Gas) in the southern part of town. While cable communications infrastructure for cable TV and internet is available throughout Westbrook (Comcast and others), the speed and capacity of the system is becoming increasingly important to residents and businesses. The Town will continue to work with these utility providers to encourage utility upgrades and extensions as needed.

Wireless voice and data services (cell phone) are available throughout most of Westbrook. Since speed and capacity are becoming increasingly important, Westbrook will continue to encourage improvements by wireless communication providers in service area, speed, and capacity.

**Cellphone Service**



POLICIES AND ON-GOING PROGRAMS Improve Utility Infrastructure		Page	Legend On Inside Back Cover	
			Leader	Partners
A.	Continue efforts to maintain a safe and adequate water supply.	96	HD	Town
B.	Encourage the improvement and expansion of public water service.	96	BOS PC	Town
C.	Continue to maintain the overall sewer avoidance philosophy in most areas and implement the Onsite Wastewater Management Plan.	96	WPCA	
D.	Continue to enforce the septic management ordinance.	96	WPCA	HD
E.	Continue to monitor septic performance in shoreline areas.	96	WPCA	HD
F.	Encourage improvements to internet speed and capacity in Westbrook.	98	EDC	Town
G.	Encourage improvements to wireless phone service in Westbrook.	98	EDC	Town
H.	Continue to work with utility providers to encourage utility upgrades and extensions as needed.	98	EDC	Town

ACTION STEPS Improve Utility Infrastructure		Page	Legend On Inside Back Cover	
			Leader	Partners
1.	Investigate a community septic system or other sewage disposal options to promote and support development of the Town Center. <input type="checkbox"/>	96	WPCA	TCRC EDC

## 7. IMPLEMENT THE PLAN



Implementation is the most important part of the planning process. Even though the POCD is an advisory document, it is intended to:

- Provide a framework for consistent decision-making in Westbrook over the next decade, and
- Guide local boards and commissions in such efforts.

If strategies, policies, and action steps are identified but not implemented, the planning process will not have produced the changes desired by the community or addressed the issues discovered during the planning process.

Implementation will only occur with the diligent efforts of the residents and officials of the Town of Westbrook. The Plan will only be effective if it is understood and supported by the people of Westbrook, ***and implemented*** by residents, applicants, agencies, local boards and commissions, and individuals interested in the future of Westbrook.

While policies are generally somewhat passive since they are used to evaluate possible decisions, action steps within the POCD are pro-active and can be itemized, scheduled, managed, and completed. Action steps lend themselves to monitoring implementation and measuring progress. The POCD anticipates that over time, Westbrook will continue to identify and undertake new action steps to help implement the Plan.

This type of process (reviewing the POCD and adding new policies and action steps) will help the POCD be relevant over a long timeframe.

### GOAL

***Implement the POCD ...***

## Finishing Action Steps

Action steps are intended to be discrete tasks which can be identified, initiated, scheduled, managed, and completed.

## Using Policies

Implementation of the POCD can be facilitated by using the policies as a basis for decisions by:

- The Planning Commission (such as road connectivity, open space locations utility extension as part of a subdivision),
- The Zoning Commission (especially for Special Permit applications, zone change applications, or text change applications.
- The Board of Selectmen when preparing the operating budget and the capital budget.
- Other local boards, commissions, and agencies.

# Implement The POCD

## Establish A Formal Plan Implementation Process

Having a formal process to implement the POCD will help ensure it is influential in guiding future actions of the town. The POCD recommends that Westbrook establish a Plan Implementation Committee (PIC) made up of representatives of various Town boards and commissions in order to coordinate implementation of the POCD.

In addition, the Town should identify a staff person to assist the Plan Implementation Committee with the implementation process, including liaison and coordination with other Town departments and agencies.

The POCD implementation meeting(s) should occur regularly to review the implementation tables in the POCD and refine priorities based on local issues, funding opportunities, and/or other criteria.

## Use The Implementation Tables

The chapters of the POCD contain implementation tables which identify leaders and partners responsible for implementing POCD policies and action steps. Using these tables to guide municipal actions will help implement the POCD.

Leaders will be the main entity responsible for the policy or action step. Partners are other entities that will likely be involved with implementing the policy or action step.

## Prioritize Policies And Action Steps

There are many *action steps* in the POCD and some may have greater impact or be easier to accomplish than others. In addition, there can be situations where *policies* in a POCD can be seen as both encouraging and discouraging.

Prioritizing action steps and policies can address these situations. As a first step in POCD implementation, Westbrook should undertake an exercise to prioritize the policies and action steps. Since policies and action steps are used differently, they should probably be prioritized independently of each other.

The priorities should draw more attention to the policies and action steps which will have the greatest interest and impact and help address any situation where there may be a conflict.

Priorities Identified

	Priority	Leaders / Partners
	3.31	ECDC PZC
coordinate and within Fairfield	2.54	ECDC
of the Grand List commercial motor	2.31	ECDC PZC
	2.31	ECDC
ce the business	2.23	ECDC
	2.15	ECDC
rcial office space	1.54	ECDC

## Implement The POCD Through The Budget

Annual Operating Budget - The annual operating budget guides municipal spending and so it is an important indicator of municipal priorities. Westbrook should strive to incorporate POCD priorities into the annual operating budget and adequately fund them.

Capital Budget - Capital projects tend to be long-term investments in the future of a community. When these capital projects help accomplish recommendations in the POCD, the community benefits in a number of ways. Westbrook should strive to consider POCD recommendations in the preparation of the capital budget and prioritization of projects.

## Fiscal Considerations

As was stated earlier in the POCD, the decision of when (or whether) to implement policies, programs, and/or action steps will be based on fiscal and/or economic circumstances at that time.

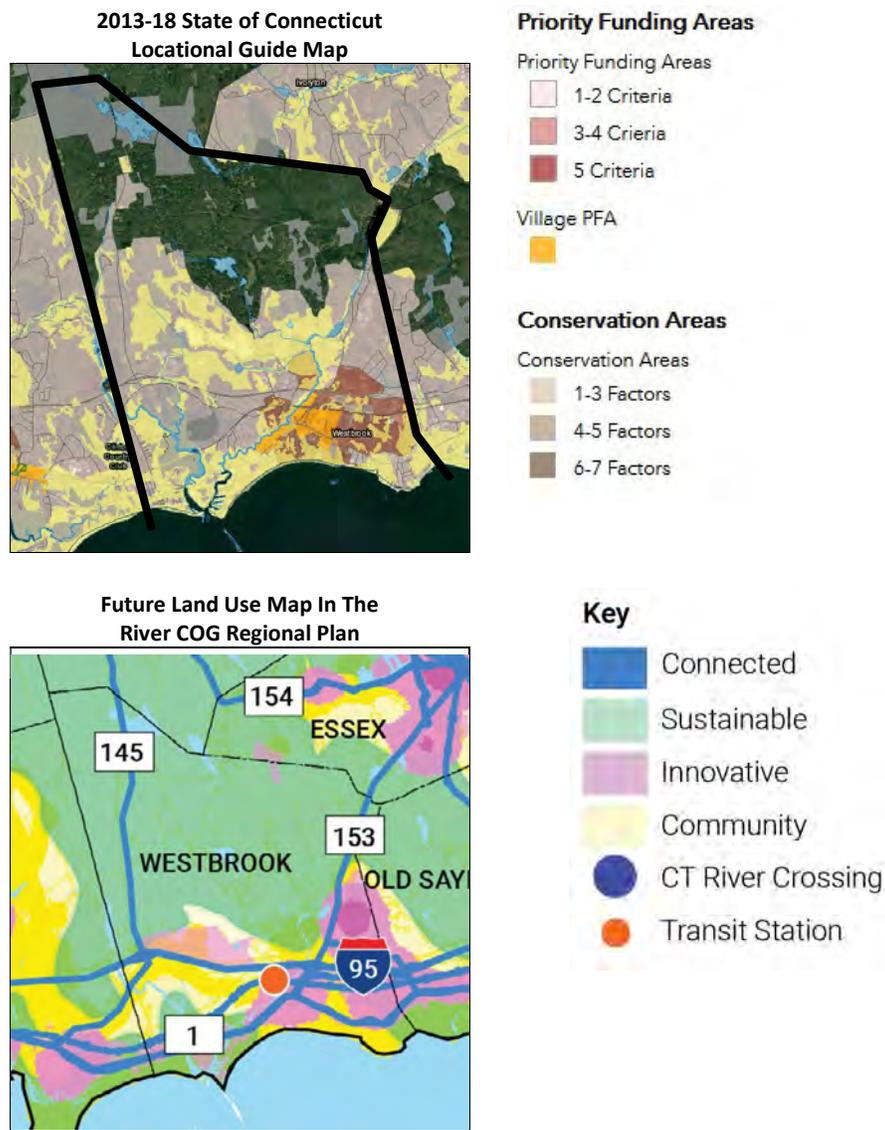
POLICIES AND ON-GOING PROGRAMS Implement The POCD		Page	Legend On Inside Back Cover	
			Leader	Partners
A.	Use the implementation tables in the POCD to implement the policies and action steps and guide municipal actions.	100	PIC	Town
B.	Monitor and amend POCD policies, as appropriate.	100	PC	PIC
C.	Continue to identify and undertake new action steps to help implement the Plan.	100	PC	PIC
D.	Fund POCD recommendations as part of the operating budget and the capital budget.	101	BOS	BOF

ACTION STEPS Implement The POCD		Page	Legend On Inside Back Cover	
			Leader	Partners
1.	Establish a Plan Implementation Committee to oversee and coordinate the POCD implementation process. <input type="checkbox"/>	100	PC	
2.	Identify a staff person to assist the Plan Implementation Committee with the implementation process, including liaison and coordination with other Town departments and agencies. <input type="checkbox"/>	100	PC	
3.	Prioritize policies and action steps in the POCD. <input type="checkbox"/>	100	PC	PIC

## Consistency With State and Regional Plans

In accordance with Section 8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes, the POCD was evaluated for consistency with the State Conservation and Development Policies Plan and the River COG Regional Plan of Conservation and Development.

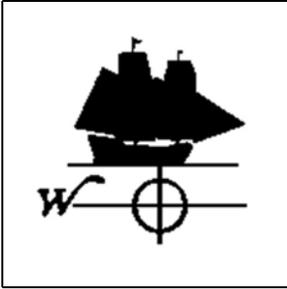
As part of this review, the Westbrook POCD was found to be consistent with the Locational Guide Map in the State Plan currently in effect (2013-18) and the Future Land Use Map in the Regional Plan. All three plans (local, regional, state) recognize the transportation infrastructure (roads, rail, transit) to support development in this area. The plans also recognize and support the strengthening and enhancement of the Town Center area.



## Consistency With State Growth Principles

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

Principle	Findings
<p>1. <b>Redevelop and revitalize regional centers and areas of mixed land uses with existing or planned physical infrastructure.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>CONSISTENT</b></p>	<p>The POCD encourages mixed use, pedestrian-friendly, transit-oriented development within the Westbrook Town Center area. Westbrook is not designated as a “regional center.”</p>
<p>2. <b>Expand housing opportunities and design choices to accommodate a variety of household types and needs.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>CONSISTENT</b></p>	<p>The POCD promotes strategies to help address the housing needs of an aging population and provide for housing options that are more affordable.</p>
<p>3. <b>Concentrate development around transportation nodes and along major transportation corridors to support the viability of transportation options and land reuse.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>CONSISTENT</b></p>	<p>The POCD recommends mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly, transit-oriented development within the Westbrook Town Center area.</p>
<p>4. <b>Conserve and restore the natural environment, cultural and historical resources, and traditional rural lands.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>CONSISTENT</b></p>	<p>The POCD contains specific strategies to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect natural resources,</li> <li>• Preserve open space,</li> <li>• Protect historic and scenic resources, and</li> <li>• Address climate change.</li> </ul>
<p>5. <b>Protect environmental assets critical to public health and safety.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>CONSISTENT</b></p>	<p>The POCD also contains recommendations to protect water quality (both surface and ground), preserve floodplain areas, minimize runoff, and other similar strategies.</p>
<p>6. <b>Integrate planning across all levels of government to address issues on a local, regional, and statewide basis.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>CONSISTENT</b></p>	<p>The POCD has been used, and will be used, to coordinate efforts with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adjacent communities,</li> <li>• Regional organizations, and</li> <li>• State agencies.</li> </ul>



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

*Special thanks to the residents, business owners, and property owners who participated in surveys, joined meetings, contributed to discussions, and helped create this POCD for Westbrook.*

## POCD Update Committee

Darlene Briggs	EDC / TCRC / COC
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James Crawford	EDC / TCRC / WEAI
Hiram Fuchs	BOS / TCRC
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Donald Izzo	EM
Tammy Niedzwiecki	PC
Marilyn Ozols	PC / TCRC
Eric Peterson	COB

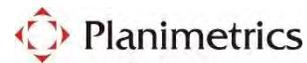
## Planning Commission

Marilyn Ozols, Chair  
William Neale, Vice Chair  
Phil Bassett, Secretary  
Tammy Niedzwiecki  
Eric Reeve  
  
Marie Farrell, Alternate  
Sheryl Becker, Alternate  
Richard Newberg, Alternate

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## Consultants



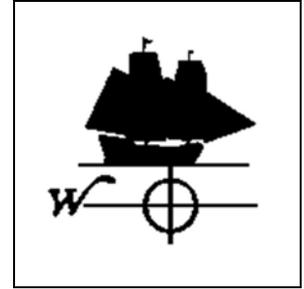
Glenn Chalder, AICP  
Project Manager



Michael Fazio  
GIS Mapping

# LEADERS & PARTNERS

*Listings in italics are non-Town entities.*



- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>AEC</b> Ad Hoc Energy Committee                          | <b>LIB</b> Library                                      |
| <b>AHC</b> Affordable Housing Committee ( <b>NEW</b> )      |   |
|   | <b>PC</b> Planning Commission                           |
| <b>BOE</b> Board of Education                               | <b>PD</b> Police Department                             |
| <b>BOF</b> Board of Finance                                 | <b>PIC</b> Plan Implementation Committee ( <b>NEW</b> ) |
| <b>BOS</b> Board of Selectmen                               | <b>PRB</b> Parks & Recreation Board                     |
|   | <b>PW</b> Public Works Department                       |
| <b>CC</b> Conservation Commission                           |   |
| <b>COB</b> <i>Council of Beaches</i>                        | <b>RCOG</b> <i>River Valley Council of Governments</i>  |
| <b>COC</b> <i>Chamber of Commerce</i>                       |   |
|   | <b>SC</b> Shellfish Commission                          |
| <b>CRTD</b> <i>Central Regional Tourism District</i>        | <b>SCSS</b> Senior Center / Social Services             |
|   | <b>SW</b> Sustainable Westbrook ( <b>NEW</b> )          |
| <b>CRWG</b> Coastal Resiliency Working Group                |   |
|   | <b>TAPA</b> Traffic Authority / Police Advisory Board   |
| <b>DEEP</b> <i>CT Dept. of Energy &amp; Env. Protection</i> | <b>TCRC</b> Town Center Revitalization Comm.            |
| <b>DOT</b> <i>CT Department of Transportation</i>           | <b>Town</b> Town Staff, Dep'ts, and Agencies            |
|   | <b>VFD</b> <i>Volunteer Fire Department</i>             |
| <b>EDC</b> Economic Development Commission                  |   |
| <b>EM</b> Emergency Management Services                     | <b>WAA</b> <i>Westbrook Ambulance Association</i>       |
|   | <b>WEAI</b> <i>Westbrook Economic Action Initiative</i> |
| <b>ETD</b> <i>Estuary Transit District</i>                  | <b>WHA</b> <i>Westbrook Housing Authority</i>           |
|   | <b>WHS</b> <i>Westbrook Historical Society</i>          |
| <b>FC</b> Forest Commission                                 |   |
| <b>FRC</b> <i>Fair Rent Commission</i>                      | <b>WLCT</b> <i>Westbrook Land Conservation Trust</i>    |
|   | <b>WPCA</b> Water Pollution Control Agency              |
| <b>HD</b> Health Department                                 |   |
| <b>HMC</b> Harbor Management Commission                     | <b>ZC</b> Zoning Commission                             |
|   |   |
| <b>IWWC</b> <i>Inl. Wetlands/Watercourses Comm.</i>         |   |



**WESTBROOK, CT**