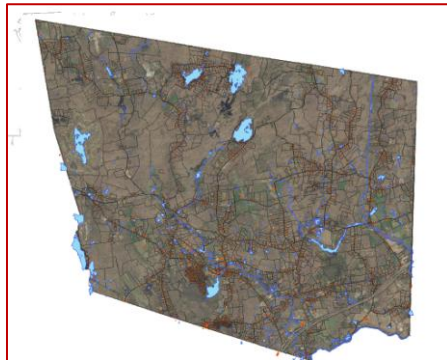


2013

North Stonington

Plan of Conservation and Development



ADOPTED BY THE NORTH STONINGTON PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

DECEMBER 12, 2013

Acknowledgments

The 2013 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) is the result of a collective effort by the Planning Commission and a Steering Committee created to facilitate public participation and assist the Town Planner in drafting the Plan. Consultants were hired to assist the Economic Development Commission and the North Stonington Affordable Housing Commission to write individual plans. The information gathered from their plans has been incorporated into the POCD.

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*A very special thanks to Ann Renehan (1926-2013) for her
guidance, vision, and wonderful drawings.*

2013 North Stonington Plan of Conservation and Development

Town of North Stonington

40 Main Street, North Stonington CT 06359

Certification of Adoption

This Plan was adopted at a regularly scheduled meeting of the North Stonington Planning and Zoning Commission on December 12, 2013 with an effective date of December 31, 2013

Lou Steinbrecher, Chairman

Joseph Siner, Secretary

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Connecticut General Statutes Chapter 126 Sections 8-23 – Full text

Appendix B: 2012 CERC Town Profile

Appendix C **PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION LANDS**

Appendix D: **TOWN OF NORTH STONINGTON, CT HOUSING PLAN (BOUND SEPARATELY)**

Appendix E: **NORTH STONINGTON, CT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN (BOUND SEPARATELY)**

Summarizations of the Informal Roundtable Discussions, Neighborhood Meetings, Visioning Session, and Community Survey are available on the Town of North Stonington website or in the Land Use Office.

1. Introduction

1.1 Plan Purpose and Authority

The 2013 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD or “Plan”) is North Stonington’s long-range Comprehensive Plan. The POCD Steering Committee, Planning and Zoning Commission and Town Planner developed the Plan with extensive input from residents, property owners, business owners, and other town boards and commissions. As closely as is practical, the POCD reflects community consensus on all aspects of future growth in town, articulates a clear vision, and serves to guide the future development of the town. The POCD recommended goals and objectives serve as the town’s strategic plan for the future and are in turn supported by the zoning and subdivision regulations, town ordinances, and actual land use decisions

The State of Connecticut¹ requires that towns prepare and adopt a plan of conservation and development and that it be amended a minimum of every ten years. The town’s previous POCD was adopted in 2003 and modified slightly in 2009. The penalty for not having a plan or for not updating the plan by the ten-year deadline includes ineligibility for discretionary state funding.

1.2 The Framework for Planning

The goals and objectives outlined in the North Stonington POCD are consistent with those of the Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments’ 2007 plan for the region. They also correspond to the following *Six Growth Management Principles* from the 2012 State Plan of Conservation and Development.

¹ See Appendix A for full text of Chapter 126, Section 8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes

- **Redevelop and Revitalize Regional Centers and Areas with Existing or Currently Planned Physical Infrastructure.**
- **Expand Housing Opportunities and Design Choices to Accommodate a Variety of Household Types and Needs.**
- **Concentrate Development Around Transportation Nodes and Along Major Transportation Corridors to Support the Viability of Transportation Options.**
- **Conserve and Restore the Natural Environment, Cultural and Historical Resources, and Traditional Rural Lands.**
- **Protect and Ensure the Integrity of Environmental Assets Critical to Public Health and Safety**
- **Promote Integrated Planning Across All Levels of Government to Address Issues on a Statewide, Regional and Local Basis.**

1.3 Goals and Objectives

The goal of North Stonington’s 2013 Plan is to create a relationship between preservation and development by translating the selected themes of *livability, sustainability, progress, and community* into specific objectives to move North Stonington into the future in a sustainable manner. Of equal importance is the recognition that strategic master planning followed by action on the part of the town is the only way to reach this goal.



Farm on Pendleton Hill Road

We define development as a process aimed at improving the social, economic, and environmental assets in our community. While the preservation of the natural environment is worthwhile in and of itself, the rural character it creates provides a sense of place that can be a framework to attract social and financial capital to the town. Preservation of community is of the highest importance as it allows people to connect and communicate in a meaningful way, and collectively make better decisions about the future.

When residents actively participate in the planning process, town supported development occurs. New options become available to ensure *livability, sustainability, and progress* - all while strengthening the town's greatest asset



– *community*.

As the economic climate continues to languish, the primary focus has been economic growth. Though successful economic development involves many aspects of community development, it does not always lead to a greater quality of life for all residents. The goals, objectives, and actions identified in the Plan attempt to create the right balance between economic development and preservation through an integrated strategy that enhances the local economy while simultaneously enhancing the social and environmental assets of the town.

The goals are organized into four primary categories.

- **Enhancing Community**
- **Growing the Economy**
- **Preserving the Environment and Rural Character**
- **Increasing Housing Choice and Affordability**

The associated objectives and actions will form the body of the POCD implementation or action plan to be followed over the next ten years.



Joint Economic Development and Housing Plan Workshop



2013 Visioning Session

The Economic Development Plan, Housing Plan (incorporated by reference) and the Plan of Conservation and Recreation Lands (Appendix C) each contain findings, goals, objectives and actions of their own which are summarized in their respective chapters of this POCD.

2. Creating a Vision

From the statements that emerged in a formal *Visioning Session*, it is clear that the central philosophy of the 2013 Plan does not differ dramatically from previous years' plans with the exception perhaps, of a new commitment to more proactive planning and decision making in order to progress and to grow the local economy. The challenge North Stonington and other communities face, is how to meet present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to do the same. Growth is slowly being recognized as an opportunity to implement the community vision, rather than a threat to the town's character. It presents an opportunity for residents to get involved in planning for the future of their town.

NORTH STONINGTON'S VISION FOR THE FUTURE

- ***EMBRACE AND BUILD ON WHO WE ARE – A SMALL, QUIET, FARMING COMMUNITY WITH VALUABLE NATURAL ASSETS.***
- ***BE PROACTIVE ABOUT BUSINESS GROWTH WHILE CAREFULLY MANAGING TYPE, LOCATION, AND APPEARANCE.***
- ***INVOLVE AND INFORM RESIDENTS IN MAKING DECISIONS AND SOLVING PROBLEMS.***
- ***STRENGTHEN OUR SENSE OF COMMUNITY.***

When North Stonington residents were asked to choose phrases that resonated with them with respect to the future of North Stonington, they selected the terms *Livability, Sustainability, Progress and Community.*



2013 Community Visioning Session

Livability: The vision for North Stonington is a safe, quiet, rural setting with a sense of community that is financially affordable. It will provide for open space initiatives, combined with development that is in scale and suitable to North Stonington's character. These developments should be self-funded or profitable enterprises so they will not become burdens to the taxpayers.

Sustainability: We envision becoming a confident, collaborative community by improving our infrastructure and increasing our tax base. We envision accomplishing this proactively by attracting business while maintaining our rural and historic character.

Progress: North Stonington will move forward and retain its character by creating a balance between community, environment, and business.

Community: North Stonington will be a place where our leadership is supportive of new ideas and innovations and our public is supportive of our leadership in moving forward with these ideas for the common good.

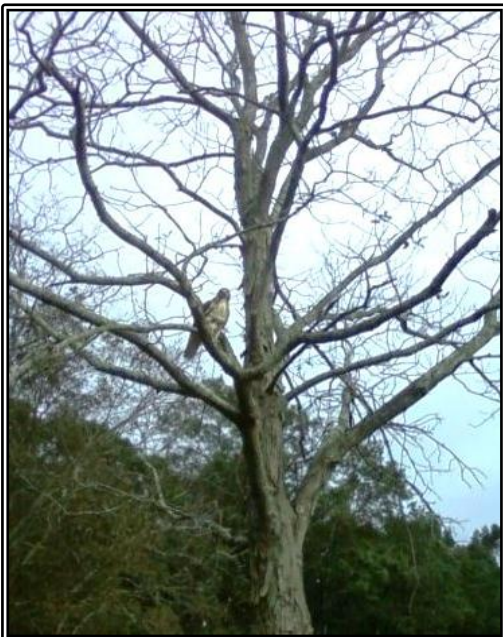
Mission Statement:

The Town of North Stonington will maintain its small-town character; continue to promote an exceptional quality of life in a safe, quiet, rural setting; and preserve property values and the quality of its neighborhoods by encouraging attractive landscaping and design, maintaining historic resources, preserving our pristine natural environment, and planning, maintaining and investing in infrastructure.

North Stonington will continue to provide effective and efficient services designed to protect the health, safety, and welfare of its residents; and actively encourage innovation, transparency, and responsiveness by all town employees, volunteers, and officials in the performance of their duties.

Much of North Stonington's charm is derived from its scenic beauty, recreational opportunities, strong rural character, abundant natural resources, farms, and forests. The town will preserve and enhance this environment by identifying and utilizing existing local resources and opportunities, building on community strengths, and addressing problems and new opportunities as they arise. This strategy will improve the economic and social conditions while preserving the overall environment and quality of life.

Finally, North Stonington is a community that strives to be sustainable while creating a new framework for progress. North Stonington's boards, commissions, and schools will make a commitment to engage in coordinated master planning so that coherent town goals can be achieved.



Red-tailed Hawk on Renehan Property in Clarks Falls



Solar Panels at Town Garage



Attractive stonewall and landscaping along Main Street

3. Public Participation

04/04/12

Planning Workshop with NS High School Civics Class with Jason Vincent of Planimetrics.

04/28/12

Housing and Economic Development Planning Workshop.

06/21/12

Joint meeting all boards and commissions to discuss possible sewers in North Stonington

10/17/12-11/17/12

Roundtable Discussions on Housing, Open Space, Rural Character, and Economic Development (8 meetings)

12/05/12- 02/25/13

Neighborhood Meetings (6 meetings)

12/20/12

Economic Development Plan completed and adopted by EDC

01/24/13

Housing Plan completed and adopted by NSAHC

02/14/13

Joint meeting all boards and commissions to hear presentation of EDC and Housing Plans (public meeting)

02/26/13

Surveys mailed – 3/15/13 closing date (430 collected)

02/27/13

Informal meeting with seniors at Senior Center luncheon

04/06/13

Visioning Session

04/11/13

Follow-up meeting with PZC, POCD SC, BOS and Planimetrics to refine vision and develop goals and objectives

04/22/13

Survey result summarization and discussion meeting

06/06/13-08/08/13

Goals and Objectives meetings

11/07/13-12/12/13

PUBLIC HEARINGS FOR ADOPTION

As part of the overall planning and visioning process, several formal and informal meetings were held over the course of two years. The POCD Steering Committee went to great lengths to provide residents opportunities for input into the POCD.

Initial meetings and workshops focused on housing and economic development as the Economic Development Commission and Affordable Housing Committee both drafted individual plans of their own (to later be incorporated into the POCD). In addition to the formal workshops and meetings, specific focus groups and other informal discussions were held with high school students, senior citizens, members of the business community and other stakeholders. Several joint boards and commissions meetings have been held to discuss topics such as land use, sewers, visioning, POCD goals and objectives, housing, and economic development.

The table to the left highlights the various opportunities for public input.

INFORMAL ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS

The POCD Steering Committee hosted a total of eight informal discussions with local residents on a variety of planning topics. The topics were Economic Development, Rural Character, Open Space, and Housing.

Approximately 86 residents participated in these meetings. A summarization of notes taken is available on the town website or in the Land Use Office.

NEIGHBORHOOD MEETINGS

The POCD Steering Committee held a series of six Neighborhood Meetings, each held in a meeting place within its own neighborhood with both town officials and residents taking part.

Recognizing the Village as its historic core, what took place was an acknowledgement of the beauty and importance of each of the town's surrounding widespread areas as well. Townspeople from many of the differing roadsides grappled with what to keep, what to protect, what to improve, and how to make good and future changes in their neighborhoods. Over and over, residents conveyed their intrinsic desire for quiet and privacy and yet to feel a part of the community itself.

The meetings were coordinated by POCD member, Madeline Jeffery, of North Stonington Citizens Land Alliance, with Juliet Leeming, Town Planner, participating in each meeting. Neighborhood leaders were: Bruce Fellman, Hilaire Cote, Robert Utter, Roy Kerlin, and John Olsen.

Approximately 135 residents attended the six meetings. A summarization of notes taken is available on the town website or in the Land Use Office.



Village Neighborhood



Clarks Falls Neighborhood

2013 TOWN-WIDE COMMUNITY SURVEY

The POCD Steering Committee and Town Planner developed a community survey that was sent to each mailing address in town and was available on line or in hard copy at various locations. 430 surveys were returned and many residents took the time to answer the open-ended questions in some detail. Based on the written comments received, there is a clear recognition that North Stonington is a special place. Residents expressed a deep desire to preserve what is good and special their town. There was also a clear recognition that some change is needed in order to sustain North Stonington as an affordable community especially given the harsh economic climate. Many feel that North Stonington can both retain its rural character and allow for a moderate increase in suitable commercial development. There are, however, many factors that complicate attainment of this desired balance.

A summarization of the survey results is available on the town website or in the Land Use Office.

VISIONING SESSION

Resident input culminated in a formal visioning session conducted by the Town Planner and POCD Steering Committee with help from consultants from Planimetrics consulting firm. Approximately 65 people attended the session. Participants were directed through a series of specific exercises designed to help them create an individual vision statement based on four themes identified: Livability, Sustainability, Progress and Community.

A summarization of notes taken is available on the town website or in the Land Use Office.



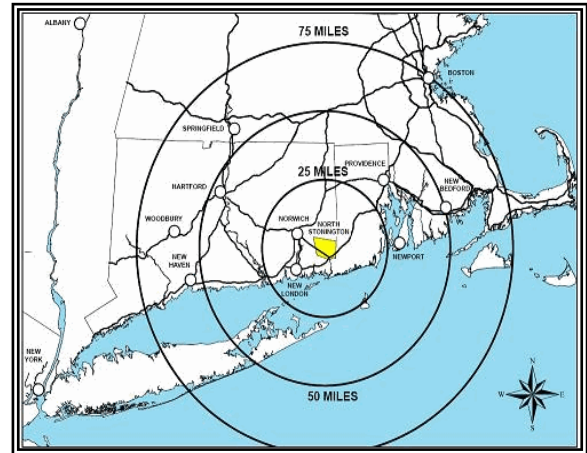
2013 Visioning Session

4. Planning Context and Opportunities

4.1 Physical Characteristics

North Stonington is approximately 56 square miles, making it one of the largest towns in Connecticut, but it has only slightly more than 5,000 residents. The land itself was sculpted by glaciers as evidenced in part by the many hills and valleys as well as the plentiful stones from which the town derives its name.

A significant percentage of the town is forested, and together with the abundant farmland and open space, provides wildlife habitat and contributes to the



Scenic Vista and Stonewall



tranquil beauty and rural character North Stonington is known for. The 55 miles of stone-walls are also evidence of an agricultural heritage that continues today. Scenic roads that once traversed the farmland to connect distant villages now connect scattered homes and residential subdivisions that have begun to replace farmland.

North Stonington has abundant water bodies including several small lakes, and a network of ponds, streams and wetlands. The Shunock River travels through the Village, and the Green Falls River flows through the southeastern part of town. The abundant water and regulated wetland soils, as well as ledge outcroppings, severe slopes, and flood plains form considerable constraints to development throughout the entire town. Areas most favorable for development often coincide with the areas of good agricultural soils and are found in the southeastern and south central parts of town.

4.2 Demographic Trends and their Planning Implications

North Stonington's population has grown over 6% in the last decade as compared to only a 2% growth between 1990 and 2000. This rate is slightly higher than the state and New London County's growth rates of 4.95% and 5.78% respectively. North Stonington's current population of 5,297 is projected to grow to only 5,505 (a 0.8% annual growth rate) by 2016 (2011 CERC estimates).

The growth may be attributable to the close proximity of regional jobs and local attributes that make North Stonington attractive to new households with children/families. The broader picture, however, reveals that North Stonington is an older and aging community. Census data show that 42 percent of North Stonington's 2010 population was 50 years of age or older, with another 30 percent between 25 and 49. In other words, 42 percent of the population is already of retirement age or approaching it.

An aging population will greatly affect future planning decisions related to housing and lifestyle needs, and could have fiscal consequences if there is a need for greater services despite a corresponding decrease in residential tax revenues.

While North Stonington's average household size used to be larger than the national average, trends show that the average size has shrunk from 3.42 to 2.58 persons. In addition, the number of single-person households has risen to 17% in 2010 from only 4% in 1980. Therefore, the common household image of a couple with children is no longer as common as it once was.

Census data also shows a significant loss of young adults between the ages of 20 and 34. The outmigration is often attributed *in part* to lack of employment and/or social

LIFESTYLE NEEDS				
Age Range	Needs/ Wants	1990 Share (4,884)	2010 Share (5,294)	2030 Share (5,067)
Infants 0-4	Childcare Pre-school Programs	7%	5%	4%
School Age 5 -19	School Facilities Recreation Programs/Facilities	23%	18%	13%
Young Adults 20-34	Rental Housing Starter Homes Recreation Opportunities/ Facilities Social and Cultural Destinations Employment	21%	12%	11%
Middle Age 35-54	Starter Homes/Trade-up Homes Family Programs Services for Infants and School Children	32%	33%	23%
Mature Adults 55-64	Smaller Homes/ Second Homes Recreation Programs and Facilities Low Maintenance Homes Social and Cultural Opportunities	10%	17%	15%
Retirement Age 65+	Assisted Housing/ Senior Housing Elderly programs/ Tax Relief Social and Cultural Opportunities Medical/Emergency Services	8%	15%	35%

Figure 1 - Source: 1980-2010 US Census; Projections by Planimetrics, Inc.

opportunities and lack of rental or housing that is affordable. North Stonington's housing stock is primarily single-family (93%) with very few rental units available.²

North Stonington's small population and slow growth rate impact the town's potential for commercial development. These "population deficiencies" (from the perspective of most retailers and personal service businesses or developers of retail/service complexes) are only somewhat offset by high traffic counts on I-95 and Route 2 since Casino traffic has not proved to be a viable market for most local business.

North Stonington's median age is 40 years old and its ethnic make-up predominantly white. The residential density is 98 persons per square mile which is much lower than that of other towns. North Stonington also enjoys a much lower poverty and unemployment rate and much higher median income than the state median income and when compared to other towns in the region. Education attainment levels for college and beyond are also slightly higher than regional and state levels, often translating into the availability of skilled workers. Though school enrollment is low (only 795 students attend in the district), the average achievement test scores for high school students are well above the state average.

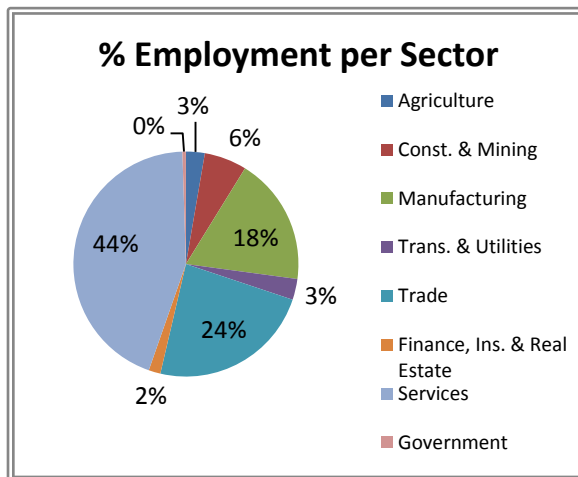


Figure 2 Source: 2012 CERC Demographic Analysis

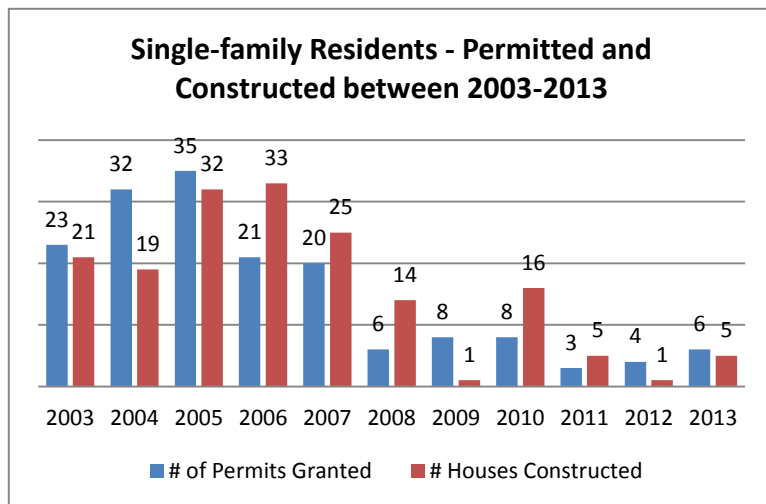
These demographic trends are not simply interesting facts about North Stonington, they are valuable pieces of information that must inform all of our decisions about service provision, facilities and infrastructure, housing type and location, and permitted land uses. Communities that ignore their changing demographic profile and continue to base decisions on preferred (but not actual) trends, or 20th Century land use policy, face the risk of being unable to respond to the fluctuating economy and accommodate the 21st Century needs of their residents.

4.4 2008 Recession and its Impact on North Stonington

The financial crisis that began in 2007 has impacted North Stonington and the Region in a variety of ways. Similar to most towns, North Stonington saw a slight rise in unemployment rates and in the number of foreclosures. The number of new homes being built dropped off sharply and coupled with a lack of any significant new commercial development, ultimately caused a decrease in the grand list. The town's economy has also been affected by regional issues. In recent years, a number of significant employers in the region, such as Pfizer, have downsized significantly. Revenues that went to affected towns from the once very profitable Casinos have decreased. The recession has also caused a decrease

² For further demographic information, please see the 2012 CERC Town Profile in Appendix B as well as the demographic profiles included in the recent Economic Development Action Plan and 2012 Housing Plan.

in the amount of state and federal funding for municipalities causing some budget constraints. North Stonington is certainly not unique in its financial hardships caused by the recession.



What the slow economy *has* given the town is time to update plans and revise regulations and to engage in planning to better prepare for new development when the economy recovers. On a positive note, despite the national economic downturn, North Stonington has actually seen considerable commercial activity in the last several years. Many vacant or underutilized sites have been renovated such as the new landscaping business and renovated warehouse in

Figure 3 - Source: NS Permit Tracking

the Village Commercial Zone; the renovations to offices and manufacturing complex at the Rotary; Buon Appetito (a renovated restaurant) opened in the former Dew Drop Inn property that had become an eyesore; Stonington Steel relocated to town from Stonington; Gourmet Galley expanded and located in a vacant building along Route 2; and several new businesses have opened in the Holly Green Plaza and Circle Park II commercial complex. In the Highway Commercial Zone at Exit 93, the truck stop and the small commercial building that houses the Subway Sandwich Shop were both renovated; Dodson's Boatyard expanded its boat storage facility; and the Mobil Station upgraded its facility to include a Dunkin Donuts. The town also boasts many new home occupations, and two new daycare facilities.



Renovated Properties near the Rotary (above) and at Exit 93 (below)



The town itself has invested in some of its facilities: most notably the recent renovation of the recreation area on Rocky Hollow Road; upgrades to the transfer station and town garage; and the upgrade of the electrical substation to increase capacity. Adding to town amenities is a new community garden on the Hewitt Farm and a privately owned Little League field. The Town also accepted 100 acres of donated land off of Wintechog Hill Road for possible housing development, open space/recreation, or a combination of both.

North Stonington is a resilient town and residents, commission members, volunteers and elected officials continue to work toward creating a sustainable future despite the obstacles presented by the challenging economy.

5. Land Use and Zoning

North Stonington contains 35,179 acres of land that is divided into the following categories of land uses. Please note that some parcels have many different uses associated with them. The acreage for this map was calculated based on the primary use of the *entire* parcel rather than by calculating the acreage attributed to each separate use on the parcel. The acreages attributed here for Open Space and Agriculture may differ from those shown in other charts within this plan as they may not be considered the primary uses of the parcel. The “Mixed Use Rural” and “Mixed Use Urban” categories were added to try and account for this occurrence of multiple uses per parcel. In addition, some parcels’ boundaries are currently being disputed, which accounts for some discrepancy in the total land area of North Stonington.

The primary existing land uses are residential at nearly 39% and Agricultural at 24%. Commercial and industrial uses only make up a small fraction of the overall land use. The low percentages attributed to commercial and industrial uses are slightly misleading in that for the purposes of recognizing *all* current economic activity in town, agricultural uses, mixed-uses, and some home occupations were identified. Approximately 83% of the **non-residential**/non-agricultural parcels are vacant or underutilized and only

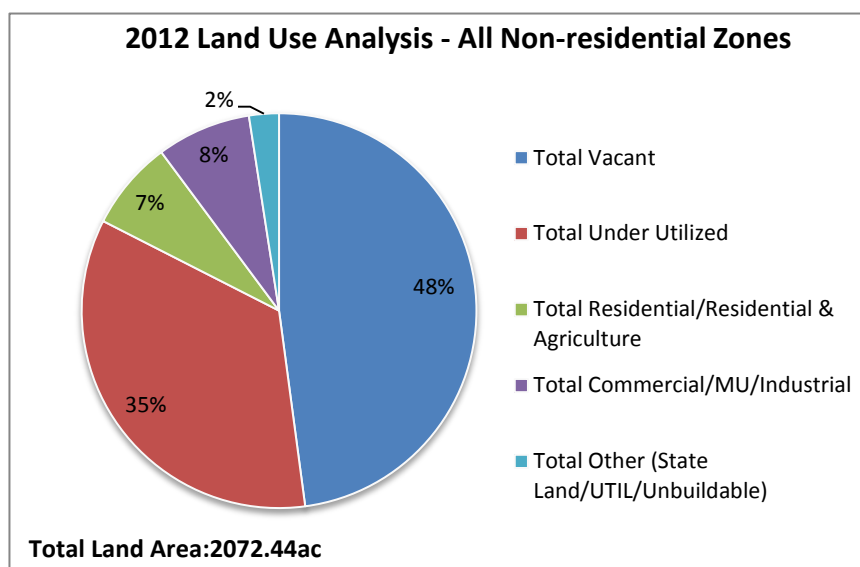


Figure 5 – Source: 2012 Assessor Data

8% are being used for actual commercial, industrial or mixed use (urban). North Stonington’s commercial and industrial zones are quite undeveloped compared to what is possible under current Zoning regulations, and could accommodate roughly 19 million additional square feet of development which, even with added sewer capacity, equates to a 30 to 40 year supply of land for development.

North Stonington’s growth has, and

will likely continue to be slow and small-scale. Efforts to stimulate growth in the commercial and industrial zones must include a re-evaluation of permitted land use and permitting requirements in order to give the town greater flexibility to respond to changing economic conditions and market demand.

5.1 Transportation and Land Use

North Stonington’s land use pattern has evolved around dominant features such as the Shunock River, and major roadways. The dominant pattern is large-lot residential development consistent with the

agricultural heritage; though some higher density post war housing was built in the 50's and 60's and concentrated in the southern portion of town adjacent to the commercial zones. This type of large-lot, low density development that is segregated from the commercial, institutional, and other land uses forces automobile dependence and greatly limits the potential for and effectiveness of public transportation. Southeast Area Transit (SEAT) currently schedules only two daily bus runs through North Stonington. The low density development and lack of public transportation has planning implications with respect to the mobility (access to goods and services) of seniors and people without access to or means of personal transportation. Despite the remoteness of the town, the town's Senior Center and the nearby Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center offer door-to-door, handicapped-accessible transportation to such things as doctor appointments, from Westerly to New London. These trips must be planned in advance, but once initiated, they become a regular part of many seniors' lives, helping many people to "age in place."

The currently existing land uses and associated acreages are as follows:

Land Use Categories	Acres	% Total	Land Use Categories	Acres	% Total
Low and Very Low Residential Density: Any parcel with density less than one unit per acre	6,138.1	17.5	Transportation, Communication and Utility (TCU): Highways, roads, public and semi-public facilities providing services such as transportation, communications, gas, electricity and water	1,045.0	3.0
Medium to High Density Residential: Any parcel with a density greater than one unit per acre	410.3	1.2	Institutional: Churches, schools, municipal facilities, non-profit organizations, governmental buildings	210.7	.60
Mixed Use Urban: Residential and commercial (i.e. daycare or kennel with associated SFR)	103.7	.29	Native American Tribal Reservation: Eastern Pequot Tribal Nation reservation land	204.3	.58
Mixed Use Rural: Combined residential and farm/forest designation on one parcel or combined commercial and agricultural use (i.e. the Winery)	6,781.6	19.3	Dedicated Open Space and Cemeteries: public or private (Does not include State Purchased Development Rights or Hewitt Farm)	2,313.8	6.6
Commercial: Retail, offices, commercial services, etc. (excludes industrial uses, active recreation, agriculture, and mixed use (MU))	150.1	.43	Active/passive Recreation: Public and private parks, State forests, playgrounds, golf courses, other outdoor facilities (Includes Hewitt Farm)	5,069.0	14.4
Industrial Intensive: Manufacturing, warehousing, storage areas	15.4	.04	Agriculture: Cropland, orchards, tree farms, vineyards, pastures, farm and forest only – no SFR. Includes State Purchased Development Rights	8,373.5	23.8
Industrial Extractive: Mining and sand and gravel operations	95.9	.27	Undeveloped: Vacant land. (Former gravel banks included here)	4,059.1	11.5

Figure 4 - Source: North Stonington GIS Data and 2012 Assessor Data



Current Land Use Map

Parcel Lines To
10/1/2012

Land Use

Developed Land

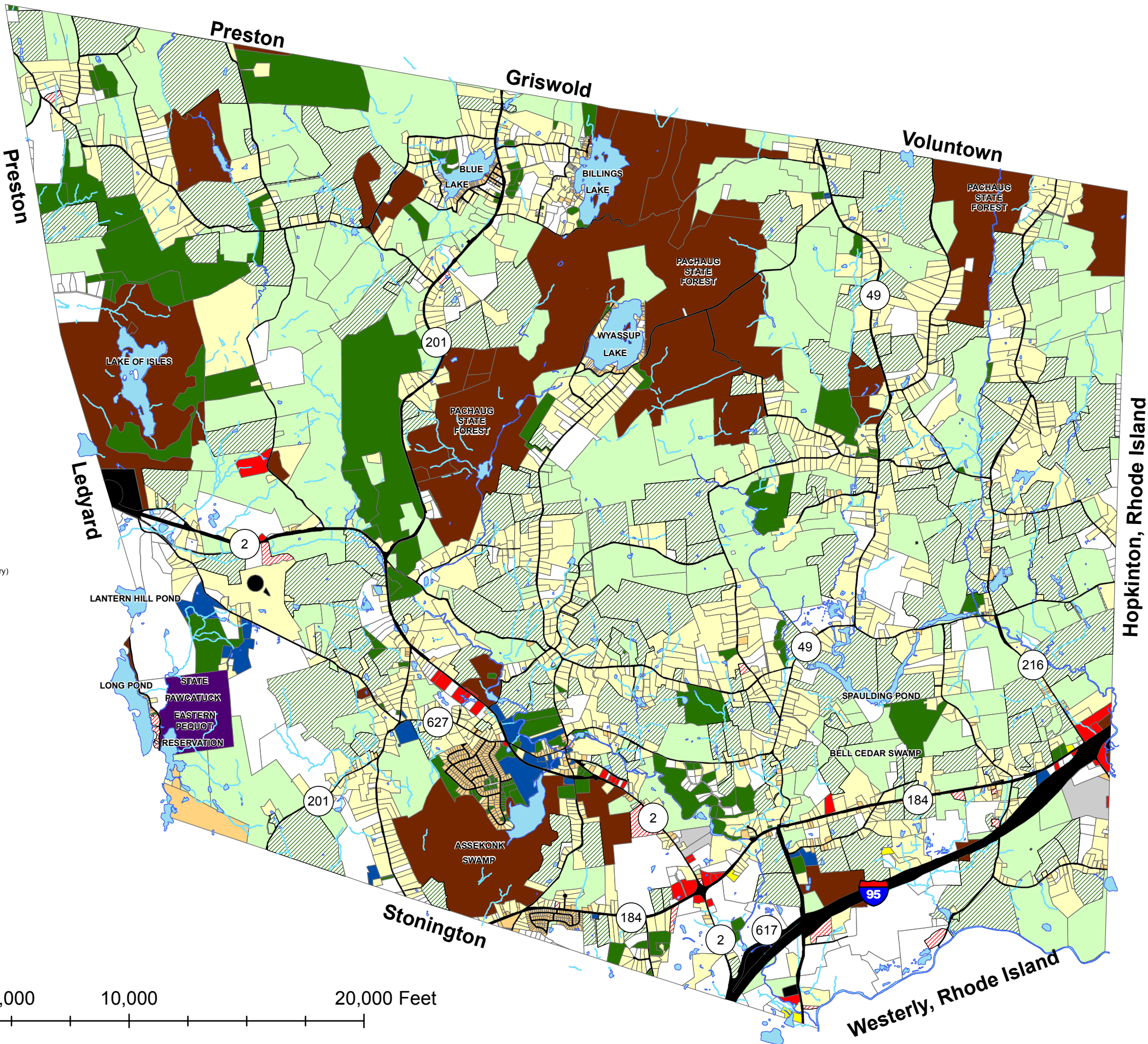
- Commercial
- Industrial Extractive
- Industrial Intensive
- Institutional
- Low and Very Low Residential Density
- Medium to High Density Residential
- Mixed Use Rural- Combined residential and farm/forest designation on one parcel or combined commercial and agricultural use (i.e. the Winery)
- Mixed Use Urban- Residential and commercial (i.e. daycare with associated SFR, commercial business with accessory residential unit)
- Transportation, Communication and Utility

Undeveloped Land

- Agriculture
- Dedicated Open Space
- Undeveloped

Other

- Active/Passive Recreation
- Native American Tribal Reservation
- Lakes, Rivers and Ponds



5.2 Land Use and Sustainability

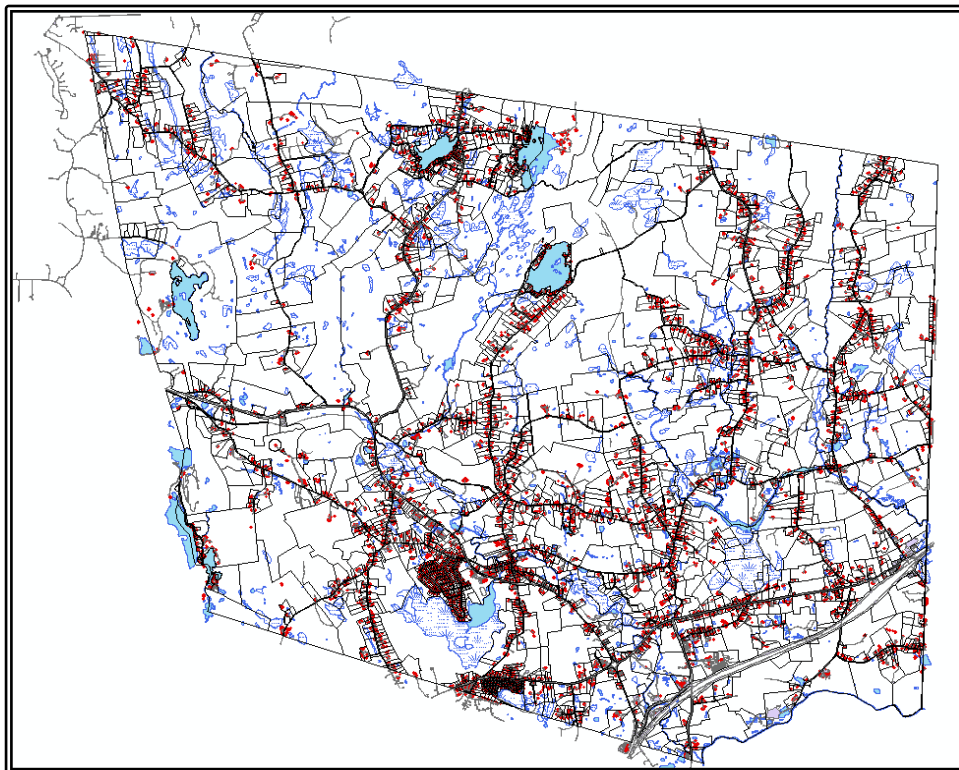
In order to better resolve conflicts between conservation efforts and economic development, as well as reduce the town's vulnerability to natural disasters, towns must adopt a long-term perspective with respect to sustainability. Municipalities manage land uses through both regulatory (zoning and wetlands



2010 Flood – Loss of the Bridge and Watermark Café

regulations, building codes) and non-regulatory measures (incentives, location of infrastructure, design guidelines) to achieve goals such as natural resource protection and hazard mitigation, and to avoid major fiscal problems that arise from unexpected costs associated with property damage caused by hurricanes, winter storms, and flooding.

Though North Stonington has regulations in place restricting development in wetlands, flood zones and areas with steep slopes, as well as strong stormwater management regulations, and the requirement for underground utilities in new developments, much of the early development was located within flood zones along the rivers. In 2010, along with many areas in town, the Historic Village was flooded and suffered the tragic loss of the double arched stone bridge as well as the popular Watermark Café. The cost to the town was estimated at \$563,000 an unanticipated expense in an already tight budget. The loss of the two community icons will be felt for decades to come.

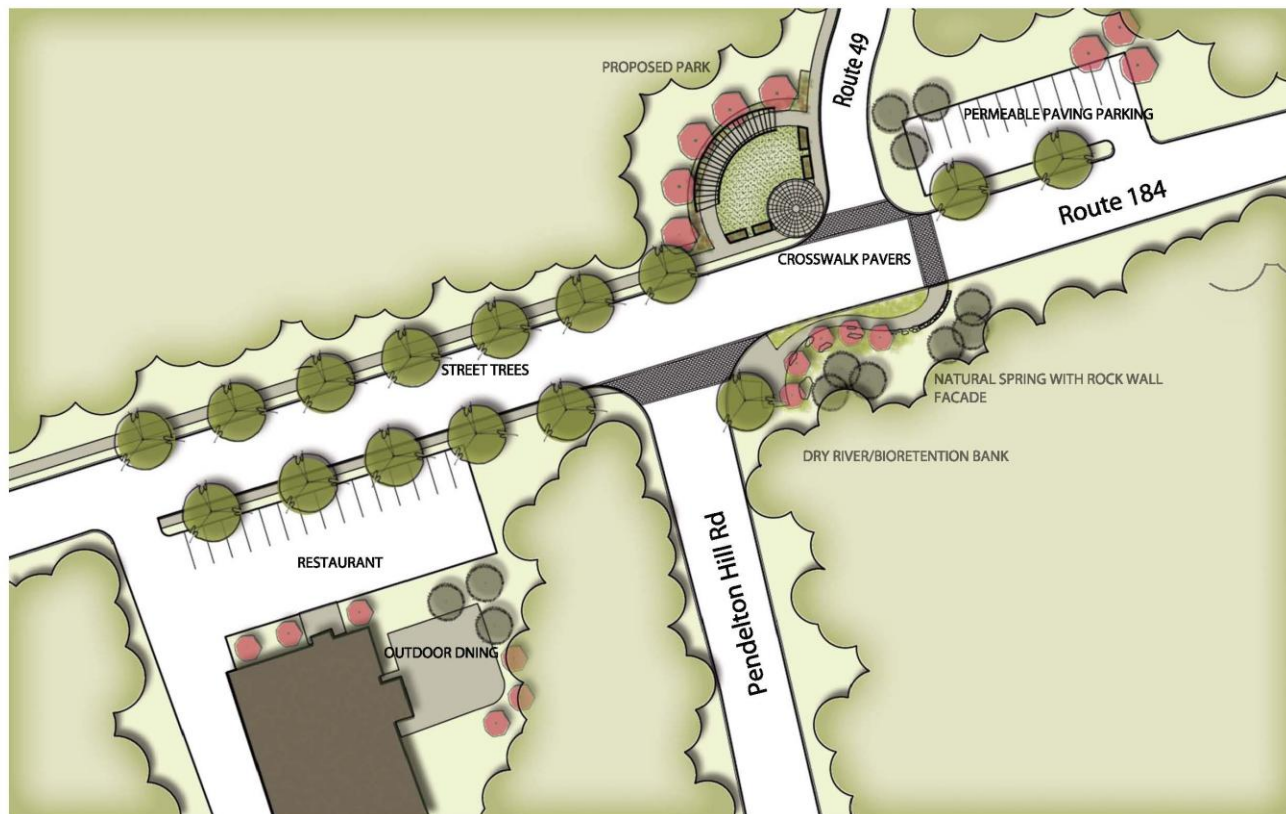


Current Settlement Pattern. Source North Stonington GIS

Sprawling post WWII development patterns in the region continue partly because of outdated zoning regulations (and land use theory) that actually perpetuate the problem. North Stonington is only “sprawling” in so far as it has a large land area, but has been fortunate in that Route 2 and 184 have remained relatively undeveloped with very few strip malls as is common along major routes in

surrounding towns. Public input gathered for the POCD indicated some support for sustainable land use such as adding mixed use in and around the existing non-residential zones, promoting redevelopment of

existing vacant buildings; providing a range of housing choices for all incomes and all stages of life; preserving open space, farmlands, and environmentally sensitive areas; as well as encouraging compatible development that would stimulate community pride and offer residents a high quality of life and a strong sense of place.



Rendering depicts conceptual planned improvements to (former) Gary's Restaurant site and intersection of Routes 49 and 184. Improvements include a small pocket park, and landscaped area and rock wall facade around the natural spring, and a small parking area. Crosswalk pavers would connect the restaurant, spring, park and parking area and would give the important intersection new life. This intersection marks the beginning of the scenic portion of Pendleton Hill Road and functions as one of the gateways to North Stonington from Exit 92. Rendering by Andrea Fossa, Landscape Architect.

North Stonington must not look at land use as simply something the Planning and Zoning Commission does to manage the development of land. It must instead recognize it as part of a more inclusive planning process whereby the *community* determines how to maintain itself as vibrant, resilient, and fiscally sound despite the uncertainties of the future. The task is to utilize what is available to create places where people will want to live and visit and where businesses will want to locate while preserving the assets that have helped the town remain unique.

The recommended changes to the zoning regulations include adding some flexibility in the permitted land uses. The added flexibility coupled with a more streamlined permitting process will hopefully allow for some needed creativity in order to meet the residents' desires for compatible, well-designed commercial uses and the expansion of existing successful businesses.

5.3 Zoning

Planning, Zoning, Conservation, and Development are all part of a complex system of land use. The aim of a land use system is to effectively and efficiently plan for the use of land and to regulate such use of land in a way that balances the social, economic, and environmental needs of the community. Ten zoning districts, four overlay areas, and one floating zone have been established as part of this land use process (See Map Pg. 19)

A land use consultant was hired to review the town's zoning regulations and zoning districts and provide recommendations with the end goal of creating regulations that would encourage investment in the community. The consultant found that the number of zoning districts was excessive for the size and general character of the community, and that based on the permitted uses, the commercial and industrial districts send mixed messages as to what kind of districts they are.

The Planning and Zoning Commission should create a speculative master plan for the Commercial Development, Office research, Village Commercial 1 and Industrial Zones that includes specifications and regulations to minimize impacts to Route 2, to pool water and sewer resources, and to treat the Shunock River as an amenity. These plans should also examine the need for infrastructure. Additional master plans should be created for the underutilized Highway Commercial and Commercial 2 Zones. The process would make it clear where the zones might be consolidated, what infrastructure is needed, and what kinds of businesses are desirable. It would then be possible to consider allowing businesses that conform /buy in to the plan to be allowed by right rather than by special permit.

The Commission should consider the addition of the following uses felt to be in keeping with the character of town while fulfilling an identified community need:

- **Senior Housing and Micro-assisted Living Facilities**
- **Incentive Housing Zones**
- **Conservation Subdivisions**
- **Mixed-Use (residential over commercial)**
- **Commercial Greenhouses**
- **(Carefully planned) Farm-worker Housing**
- **Small-Scale Multi-family Housing (3-5 Unit)**

Existing Zoning Districts:

High Density Residential (R-40)

Medium Density Residential (R-60)

Rural Residential

Preservation District (R-80)

Commercial District 1 (C1)

Commercial District 2 (C2)

(C separated into C1 & C2 2008)

Village Commercial District

(VC) *(Changed from HC 2008)*

Highway Commercial District (HC)

Commercial Development District (CD) *(2005)*

Office Research District (OR)

Overlay Areas:

Village Preservation Overlay Area

Aquifer Protection Overlay Area

Seasonal Use Overlay Area

Affordable Housing Overlay Area –Meadow Court *(2010)*

Floating Zones:

New England Village Special Design District *(2007)*

Nearly 95% of the total acreage of North Stonington is zoned for residential use leaving just under 6% for commercial and industrial uses. Select commercial and industrial uses including churches, daycares, kennels, bed and breakfast establishments, farming, golf courses, home occupations and excavation are permitted in residential zones.



Zoning Map

Approved
9/16/2010

Parcel Lines To
10/1/2009

Legend

- Town Line
- - - - - Utility Easement

Water Features

- Lakes and Ponds
- Streams

Zoning Key

- Zone Dimensions - Not Exact
- Measurement

Overlay Areas

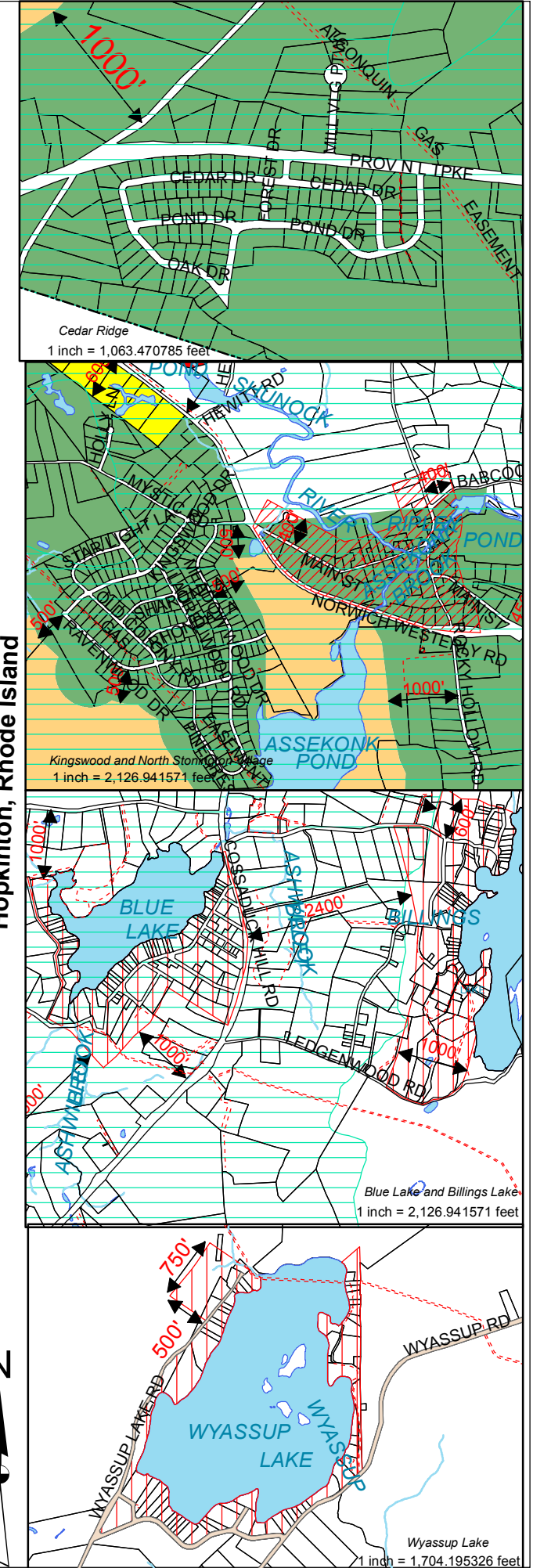
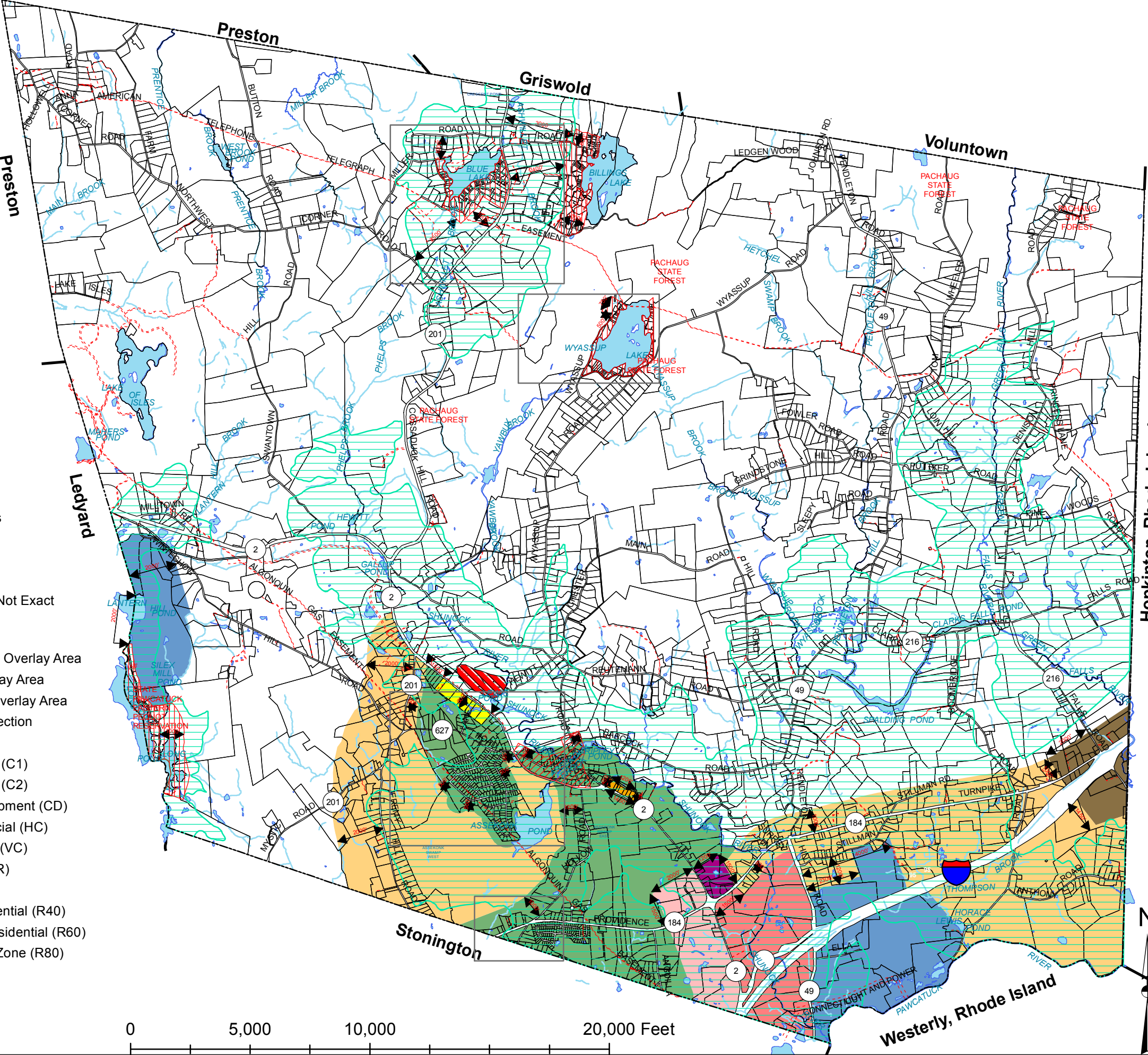
- Village Preservation Overlay Area
- Seasonal Use Overlay Area
- Aquifer Protection Overlay Area
- Level A Aquifer Protection

Zones

- Commercial Zone 1 (C1)
- Commercial Zone 2 (C2)
- Commercial Development (CD)
- Highway - Commercial (HC)
- Village Commercial (VC)
- Office/Research (OR)
- Industrial (I)
- High-Density Residential (R40)
- Medium-Density Residential (R60)
- Rural Preservation Zone (R80)

Notes

This map is prepared for the inventory of real property. It is not intended to be used for any other purpose. The information is provided for informational purposes only and is not a guarantee of accuracy. The information is provided for informational purposes only and is not a guarantee of accuracy. The information is provided for informational purposes only and is not a guarantee of accuracy.



Planning Opportunity Areas

The Exit 93 Interchange Area is essentially the gateway to Connecticut from Rhode Island. The access to and from I-95 is ideal and pre-existing signage allows great visibility to passing travelers. There are multiple vacant and underutilized sites that could be transformed into an area thriving with restaurants, hotels and attractive commercial development geared toward the passing travelers and tourists as well as for residents in the Clarks Falls area. This area is not in the aquifer protection overlay area, thus allowing for greater flexibility in types of permitted uses. This area's proximity to other area attractions and location along the I-95 corridor make it ideal for more creative hospitality uses and certain chain family-style restaurants. Direct access on and off the highway would reduce potential traffic impacts from the higher impact uses.



Former Bess Eaton Restaurant available for redevelopment

Former McDonald's site and adjacent vacant lot make 4 acre strip of developable land.



View from Rte. 184 looking toward Rhode Island.



The 2 acre site that housed the former 95 House Restaurant sits adjacent to 2 large vacant parcels totaling over 80 acres that could be developed individually or as a planned unit.

The former gas station at 270 Clarks Falls Rd. adjacent to the travel center is currently used only seasonally for retail sale of fireworks. Rendering (below-right) depicts site re-developed as a year-round farm store, with food vendors and outdoor eating area. The use would be geared toward residents as well as travelers getting off at Exit 93 for a rest and a bite to eat. Pervious pavers give the feel of a grassed area rather than a parking lot and would drastically reduce the amount of pervious cover on the undersized lot. Existing sign visible from I-95.

(Upper left to right): Hope Lake Lodge, NY Cracker-barrel restaurant. (Lower right): Barn converted to Country Inn



Before

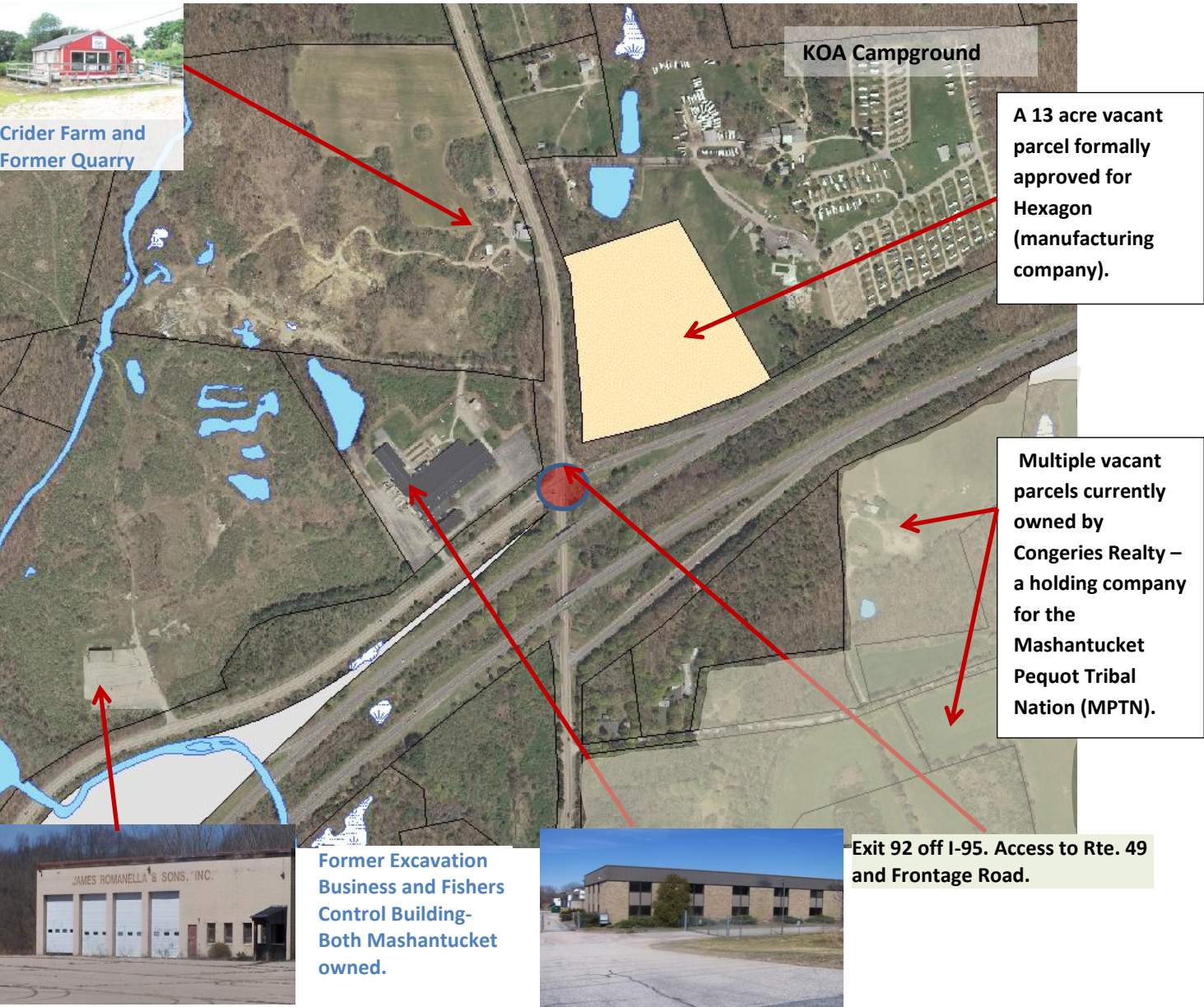


After

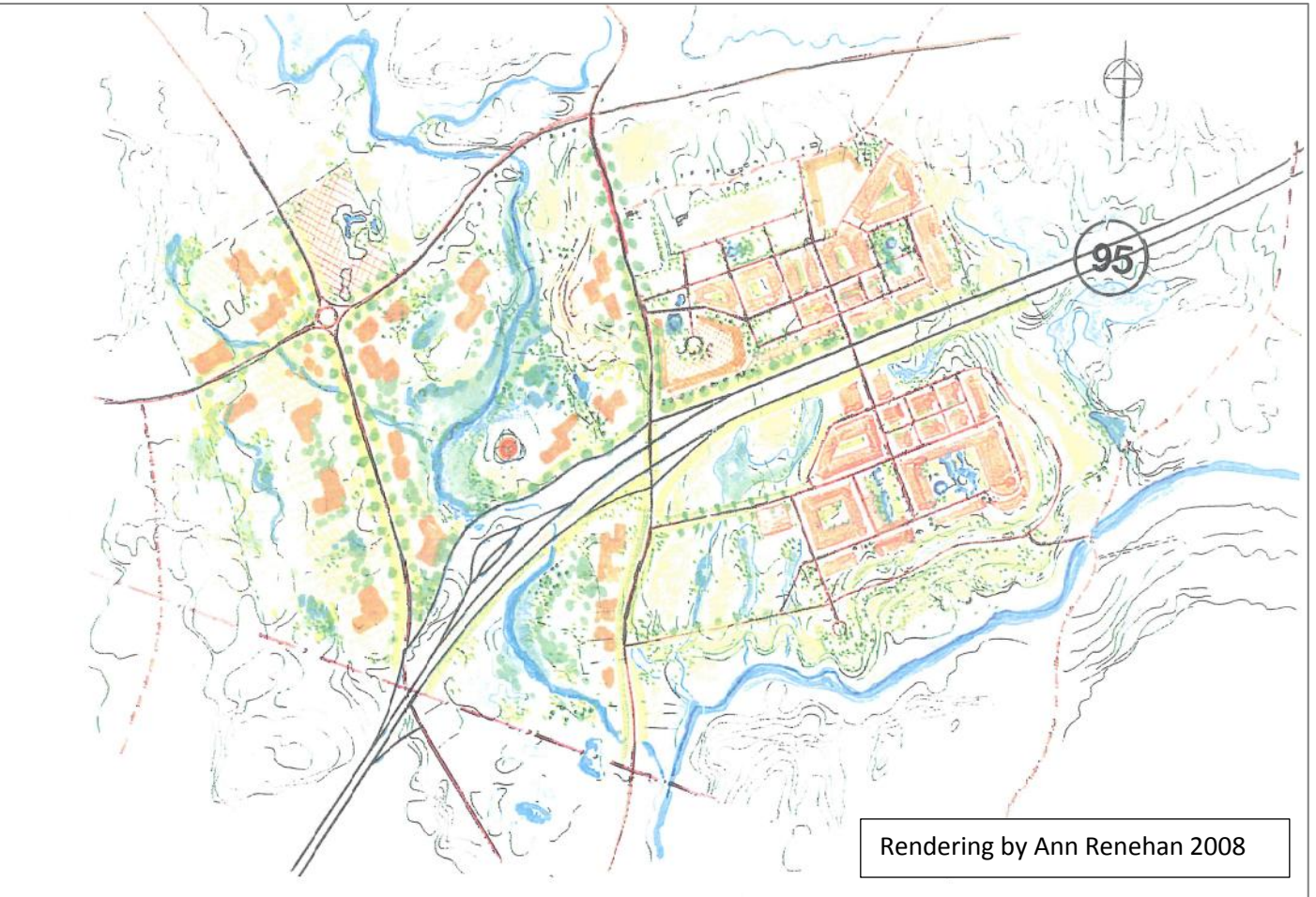
Rendering by Julia M. Leeming, Architect

Planning Opportunity Areas

The Exit 92 Interchange Area offers tremendous development and redevelopment opportunities. Route 49 forms the boundary line separating the Commercial Development Zone to the west from the Industrial Zone to the east. Future plans include upgrading the signage and landscaping at the interchange to give this gateway to North Stonington a more welcoming feel and to better direct travelers. The former Fisher Control and Romanella buildings have excellent access to the frontage road making them ideal locations for manufacturing, wholesale storage/distribution, and other uses that require easy access to the highway and where potential truck traffic would not impact the more rural roads. The entire area could be designed as a whole to incorporate mixed commercial and residential uses, and light manufacturing, while incorporating the Shunnock River as its prime amenity. The majority of available raw land for commercial and/or industrial development exists on the eastern side of Route 49 in the Industrial Zone. The vast majority of this land – over 400 acres- is owned by the Mashantucket Pequot tribal Nation and could be planned as a unit or with a specific cluster of related uses or industry in mind.



Future commercial development should highlight the Shunnock River as an amenity and could incorporate recreational uses into a master design. Photos : Retail shopping and recreation along river in Estes Park, Co (Left) ; bike trail bridge over the Farmington River in CT (Middle); and restaurants along the Pawcatuck River in Westerly RI (Right).



Desired characteristics in the Exit 92 commercial area include 2-3 story mixed use, office, restaurant or retail with traditional New England style architecture or context sensitive design. The Shunnock River should be highlighted as central amenity with recreational use incorporated into designs. Commercial areas should be connected via walking or biking trails as well as access roads.

Interest in clean energy technology might introduce the opportunity for light industrial use in the Industrial Zone. This area can accommodate several million square feet of new development but should protect the river as an important amenity.

Planning Opportunity Areas

The Commercial 2 Zone lies just outside of the historic village and resembles typical isolated “strip mall” development. There are several vacant and underutilized parcels within the zone and the architecture does not blend well with the nearby historic homes or New England style architecture. The former Chinese restaurant located on the parcel next to Green Onion Pizza was torn down in 2012 creating an opportunity to redesign the two abutting parcels as a whole. The rendering below depicts a more traditional village development with smaller detached buildings fronting a town green or courtyard– rather than the main road. As the courtyard in this instance is really a parking lot, pervious pavers could be used to give the feel of grass, rather than asphalt. The buildings to the left of Green Onion would be incorporated into the design as well creating a mini village that would become the gateway to the Historic Village just beyond. One of the three town-owned parcels that lie between Rte. 2 and Main Street across from the C2 Zone could also be incorporated into the design as a single retail establishment (i.e. antique store) and the open space at the intersection of Rte. 2 and Main Street formally landscaped as depicted in the aerial photo rendering to the right.



Aerial view of possible redevelopment of the western portion of the C2 Zone and town owned parcel to the southwest. Sidewalks would continue to the Village to link the two areas.



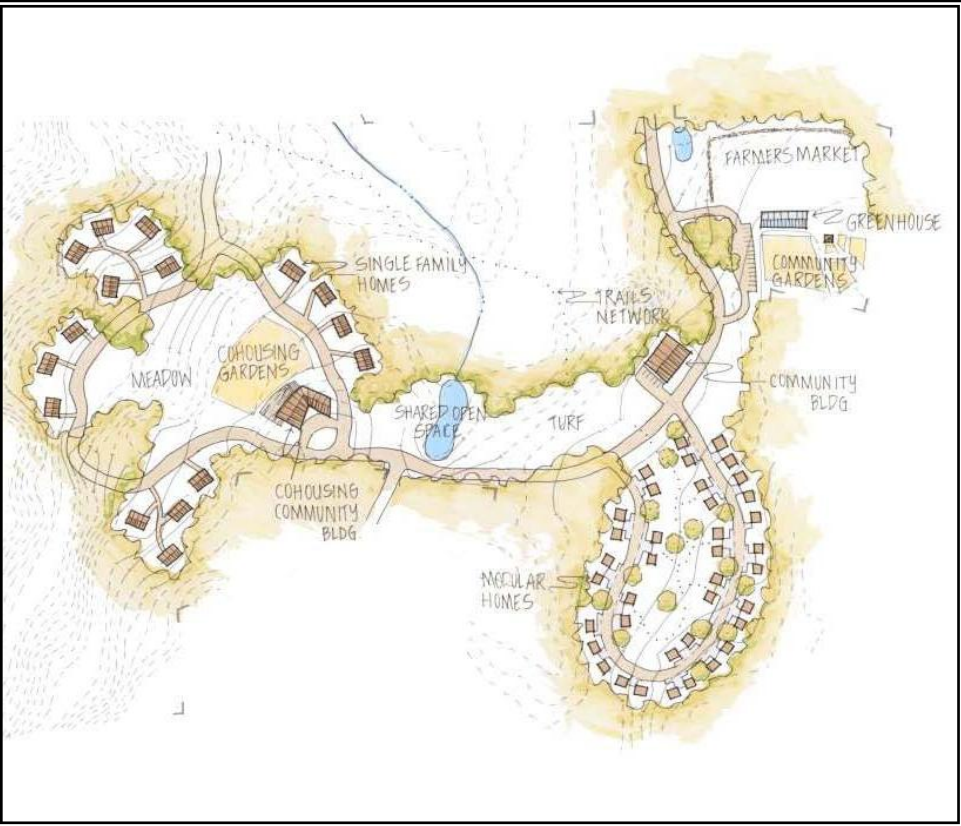
Rendering by Julia M. Leeming, Architect



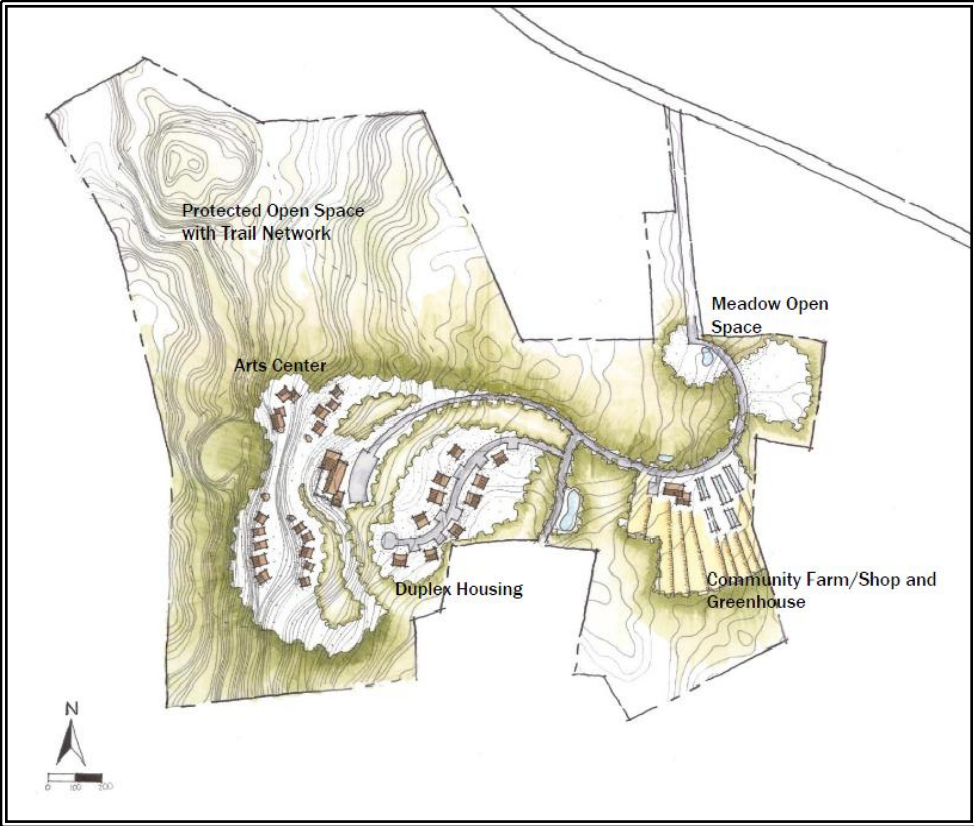
View of Green Onion and vacant lot that abuts the parking lot (above) Goodies Restaurant and vacant commercial space (Below Left) - in C2 Zone. Below Right: Example of small retail store – traditional New England architecture.



Planning Opportunity Areas



Wintechog Hill Parcel: The town recently acquired 108 acres off Wintechog Hill Road. Possible uses for the parcel include open space preservation and housing or a creative combination of both utilizing a conservation subdivision design. In 2012, the UCONN Landscape Architecture class was hired to develop possible concept plans for the parcel incorporating affordable housing, agricultural use, and the preservation of a significant amount of open space for passive recreation. Several creative designs were submitted including the one illustrated here. The NSAHC received a \$20,000 grant through the Housing for Economic Growth Program for pre-development costs associated with establishing incentive housing zones. This grant will be used to investigate the feasibility of wells and sewage disposal systems on this property. (Left) Nicole Seelbach -Student Concept 1: 16 single family units; 38 single story studio modular homes; community gardens, green house, and farmers market; and 82 acres of open space. (Right) Andrea Fossa - Student Concept 2: 20 duplex houses on 4 acres; 15 acres mixed use including arts center, community farm store and greenhouse; and 75 acres of open space.



Example of Mixed Use Development



Example of a 4-unit apartment building

Other housing and planning opportunity areas were identified in the 2012 Housing Plan, and include the existing Affordable Housing Overlay Area (Meadow Court) along Route 2 and locations within the commercial zones near the rotary and along the western end of Rte. 2 that may allow for the possibility of mixed use (residential above commercial) and small-scale multi-family units.



Mixed-use development downtown Essex, CT



Commercial development in Haddam, CT

6. Historic and Cultural Resources

North Stonington, incorporated in 1807, is a rural town whose character is most vividly seen in its active and historic farms; miles of stonewalls; buildings of architectural and historical distinction; scenic views and large tracts of forest. As early farmers began to harness the power of the Shunock River, the town became a prosperous mill town. This not only enhanced the town's strong agricultural heritage, but contributed to its many successful cottage industries and thriving mercantile center in the 19th Century.

It is the lasting presence of historic structures, roads and bridges intermingled with more modern elements that give North Stonington a sense of authenticity and place. Even though North Stonington undeniably complements the greater New England area it occupies, it has held fast to its own traditions and resisted often strong development pressure over the years. The former success of the historic mills and cottage industries despite the presence of nearby modern facilities, demonstrates the almost willful self-reliance of the residents - a trait that is still quite evident today.

Until the 17th Century, Native Americans were the only human residents. The white settlers who ultimately inhabited this region kept a number of the native names for the town's prominent geologic features including the Shunock Brook, Assekonk Swamp, Wintechog and Cossaduck Hills. Eventually, two reservations were allotted to the Pequots, one of which is located along Long Pond near Lantern Hill.

The first colonial settlers of what was then the larger town of Stonington were Ezekiel Main and Jeremiah Burch. Other prominent families included the Miners, Wheelers, Browns, Palmers, Hewitts, and Averys. In the early 19th Century, residents in the northern portion of the town of Stonington began to regard themselves as possessing a character separate from their southern counterparts (now Mystic, Pawcatuck, and Stonington) to which they were attached and so they officially separated to form their own town (North Stonington). North Stonington has roots in small-town entrepreneurship, philanthropy, and volunteerism which enabled it to thrive in the 19th Century and ultimately survive to the present with its character intact. Many of the industries were self-sustaining and the products were



(Above) Saw Mill Complex, Lower Dam on Shunock River, ca 1900 (connecticuthistory.org); (Below) North Stonington Village, ca 1907.



primarily for local consumption. Connectivity was also emphasized as evidenced by strong road networks and the old trolley line.

North Stonington has always had a substantial farm population with industrious core values. In 1808, 53% of the town's area was dedicated to farming. The town's agricultural wealth and successful mills contributed to its commercial success and growth. After the Civil War, the population began to decline as people began to migrate to cities and to the West. In the early 20th century the construction of the trolley line, and ultimately paved highways through town, led to rapid growth. North Stonington became a bedroom community for the postwar defense industry and military community of southeastern Connecticut. The town added 600 residents during the 1950's with the construction of Cedar Ridge, and another 1,800 with the construction of the Kingswood-Meadow Wood housing development in the 1960's.

6.1 Historic Resources

The residents of North Stonington cherish the town for its beauty, historic value, agricultural heritage and rural character. In 1983, the Village was added to the **National Register of Historic Places**. The Luther Palmer and John Randall homes are also on the list, though not located within the Village. There are many other historic structures, farms and areas located throughout town as depicted on the Character Resources Map on page 29.

North Stonington has approximately 123 **cemeteries**, scattered throughout the town, many of which are ancient. The town's Cemetery Committee uses an 'adopt a cemetery' program to outsource upkeep. The Old Plains Cemetery contains 307 graves and many rare examples of early stonecutter's art, which require special preservation efforts. The cemetery contains some of the earliest marked stones in town.

The **Historical Society's Steven Main Homestead** holds historic and genealogical records, a collection of art and artifacts, and is open to members for meetings and weekly luncheons. It is presided over by Anna Coit, a 105



Old Plains Cemetery



Steven Main Homestead



The Dye House



year old fountain of historic information and humorous anecdotes. Her writings for the monthly historical society newspaper are a much awaited part of many North Stonington residents' mail. The Historical Society has recently opened a **Dye House** with a respectable collection of items and information about North Stonington's early mill history. Their Dye House Day celebrates this part of the town's history and has become a well-attended annual event.

The historic **Green Gables Cottage** is located on the Hewitt Farm and was owned by North Stonington's artist and photographer, Fred Steward Greene. Greene used the cottage as an art school/studio and much of his art work is currently owned by the Historical Society. The cottage was also the site of the Little Red House Nursery School run by Ruth Penfield for 40 years, and was the first Montessori School in Southeastern Connecticut. Green Gables Cottage is owned by the town and may qualify for Historic Preservation Grants to stabilize, preserve and restore this historic and culturally significant building.

6.2 Cultural Resources



The Grange



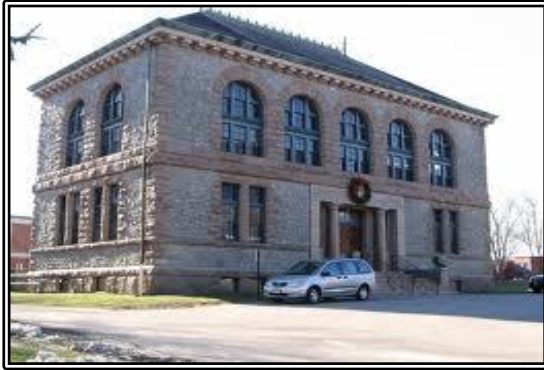
Hardware Store & Former Watermark Cafe - Village

repeatedly lamented the loss of this cultural resource and expressed keen interest in supporting a similar business in the abutting properties.

Since the flood, **Wheeler Library** has tried to fill the need for a community hub, and has presented a variety of programs for all ages. Built in 1900, it contains a period hall comprising the entire second floor, which functions both as the main floor of the collection, and an inviting location to hold events. Although the library is a private trust, its fund drives are always well supported by

The Grange was founded in the late 19th century to help farms that had been devastated by the Civil War. In the 20th century, the North Stonington Grange was the cultural center of town. Many residents still remember going to square dances there every weekend. The Grange's civic interests have broadened over the years, but it still hosts two of the largest cultural events in town: the Agricultural Fair and the Halloween Party/Cup Social. These and its bi-monthly meetings provide a much needed chance to rub elbows with fellow townspeople. In fact, every Grange meeting ends with a social hour around a bountiful refreshment table.

From Brown and Stone's General Store to the Watermark Cafe, **2 Wyassup Road** was always the gathering spot in town, where residents could hang out and catch up with their neighbors. It's destruction in the flood of 2010 was a cultural blow to the town and the village and it is sorely missed. During the visioning process residents



Wheeler Library

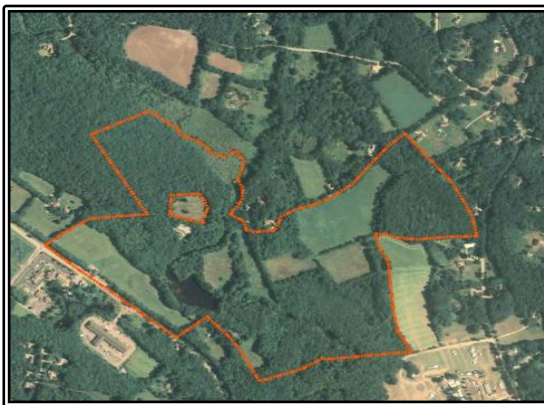
townspeople. Wheeler Library is located near the schools, encouraging use by students. Since 1990, the library has undergone renovations, which include the installation of an elevator, a meeting room, and new computer terminals. The Library is actively supported by a volunteer group: *Friends of the Wheeler Library* and receives donations from the town as well.

New to town is **The Wired Bean**, a coffee shop in Holly Green with Wi-Fi. Its owners, local residents, and other owners of businesses in Holly Green, are hopeful it will fill a much needed roll as a place for students to gather after school.



Holly Green Plaza

Hewitt Farm is 104 acres of forest, farm, and historic buildings purchased by the town. It contains walking, cross-country skiing, and canoe trails and a community garden, and provides a location for events that celebrate the rural environment, such as picnics and night sky watching. Interest has been shown in opening a farmers market, and working with the school to teach agriculture and science to students.



Aerial View of Hewitt Farm

The town has many **public trails and pathways** that were created throughout its milling, woodland harvesting, and farming history. The North Stonington Citizens Land Alliance and the Avalonia Land Conservancy also provide an abundance of recreational and open space. These connective and access features can provide future generations with many recreational opportunities to enjoy the natural, cultural, and historic resources of the town.

6.3 Summary

Continued efforts must be made to identify and protect pre-contact and historic structures, buildings and resources as well as archeological sites prior to site development. This may be accomplished proactively by updating and expanding the existing survey of historic and cultural sites, and creating a more detailed map that land use boards and commissions can consult prior to making decisions. These surveys should be updated periodically as significant resources are identified. Early detection of cultural and/or historic resources during a project's design phase would allow developers to incorporate the resource into the site design in a manner that preserves or protects its value. In cooperation with the Historical Society, the town must actively promote preservation through education, appropriate land use regulations, and listing significant homes and buildings on the National Register of Historic Places.

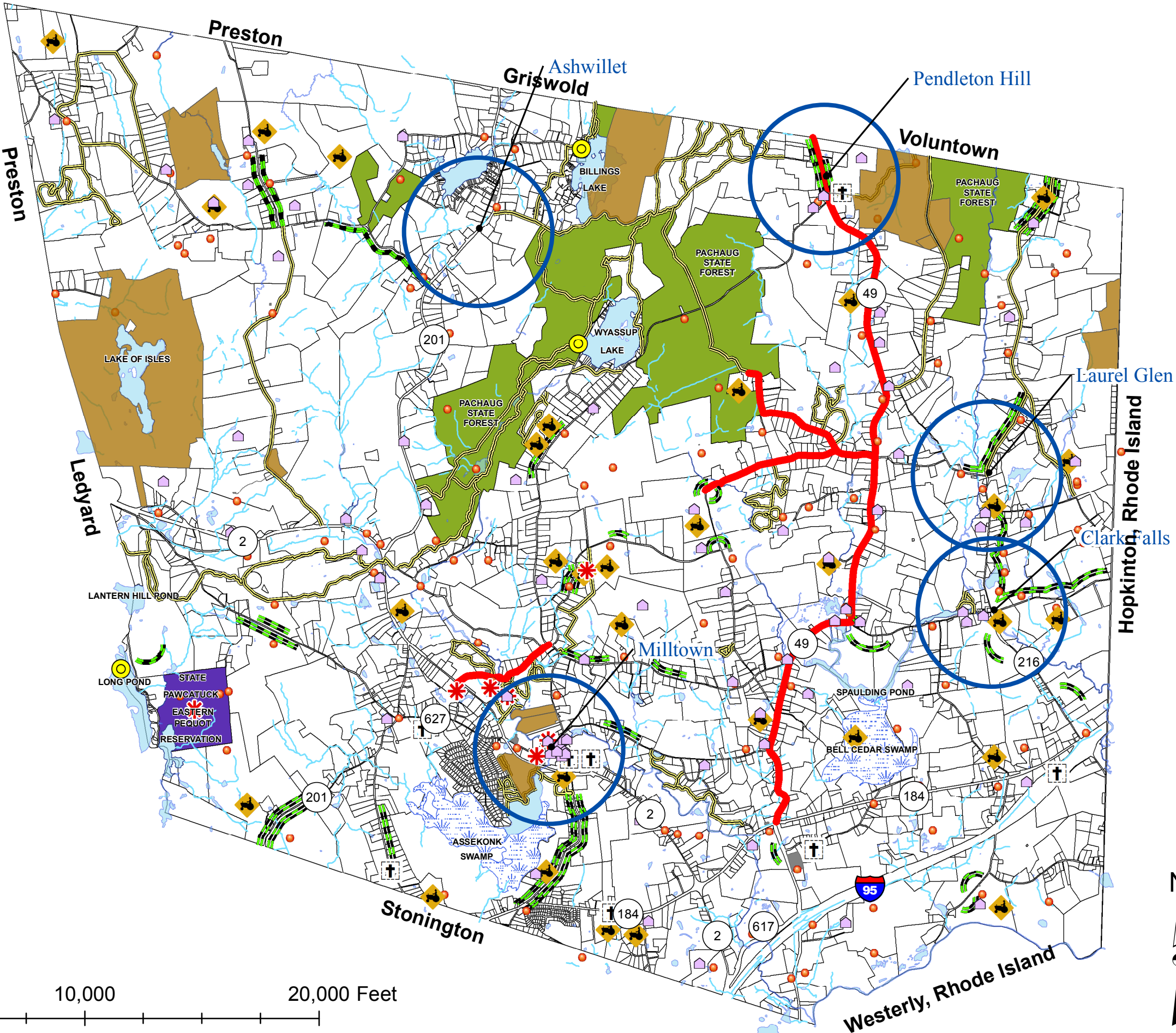


Character Resource Map

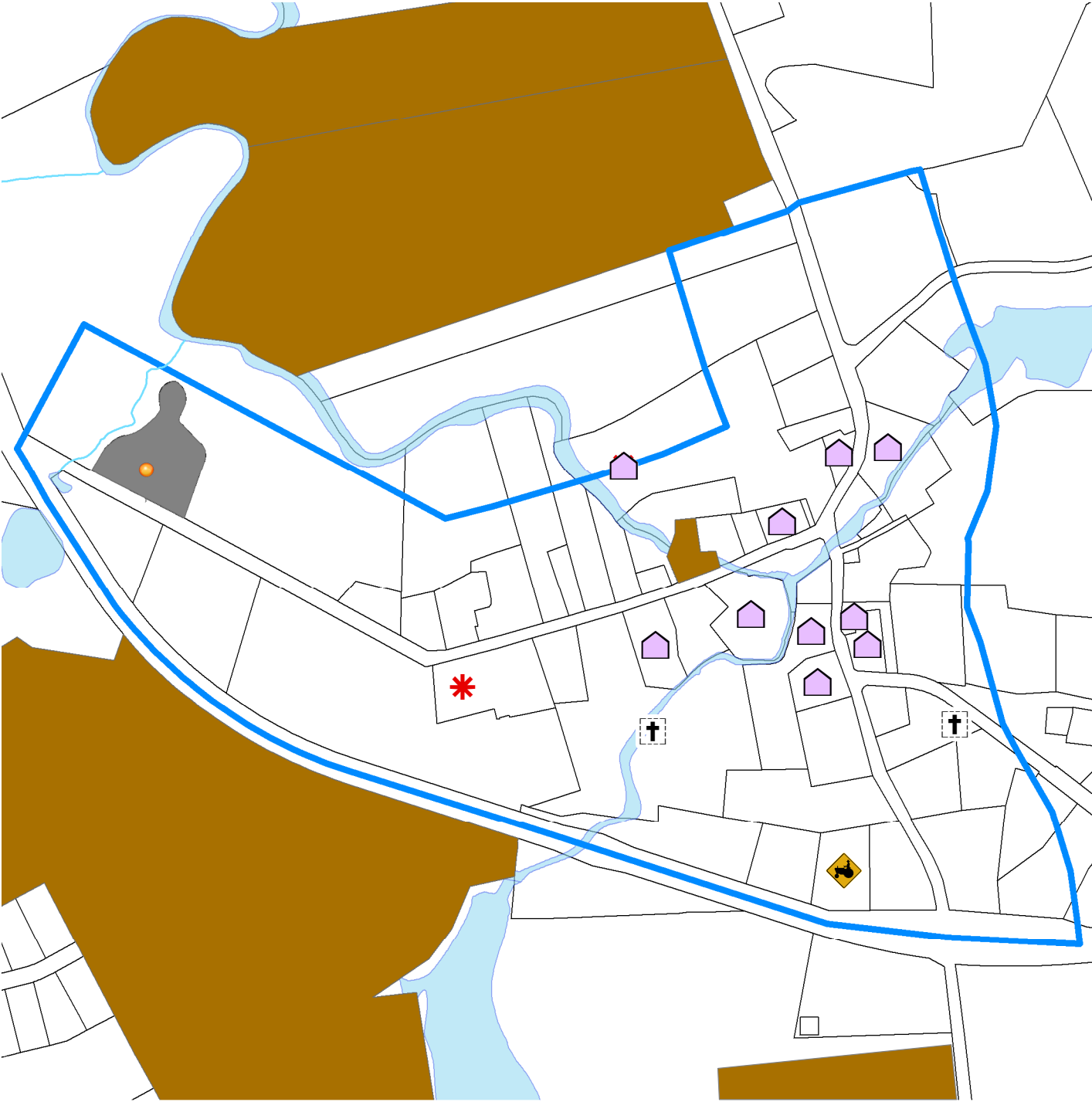
Parcel Lines To
10/1/2012

Character Resources

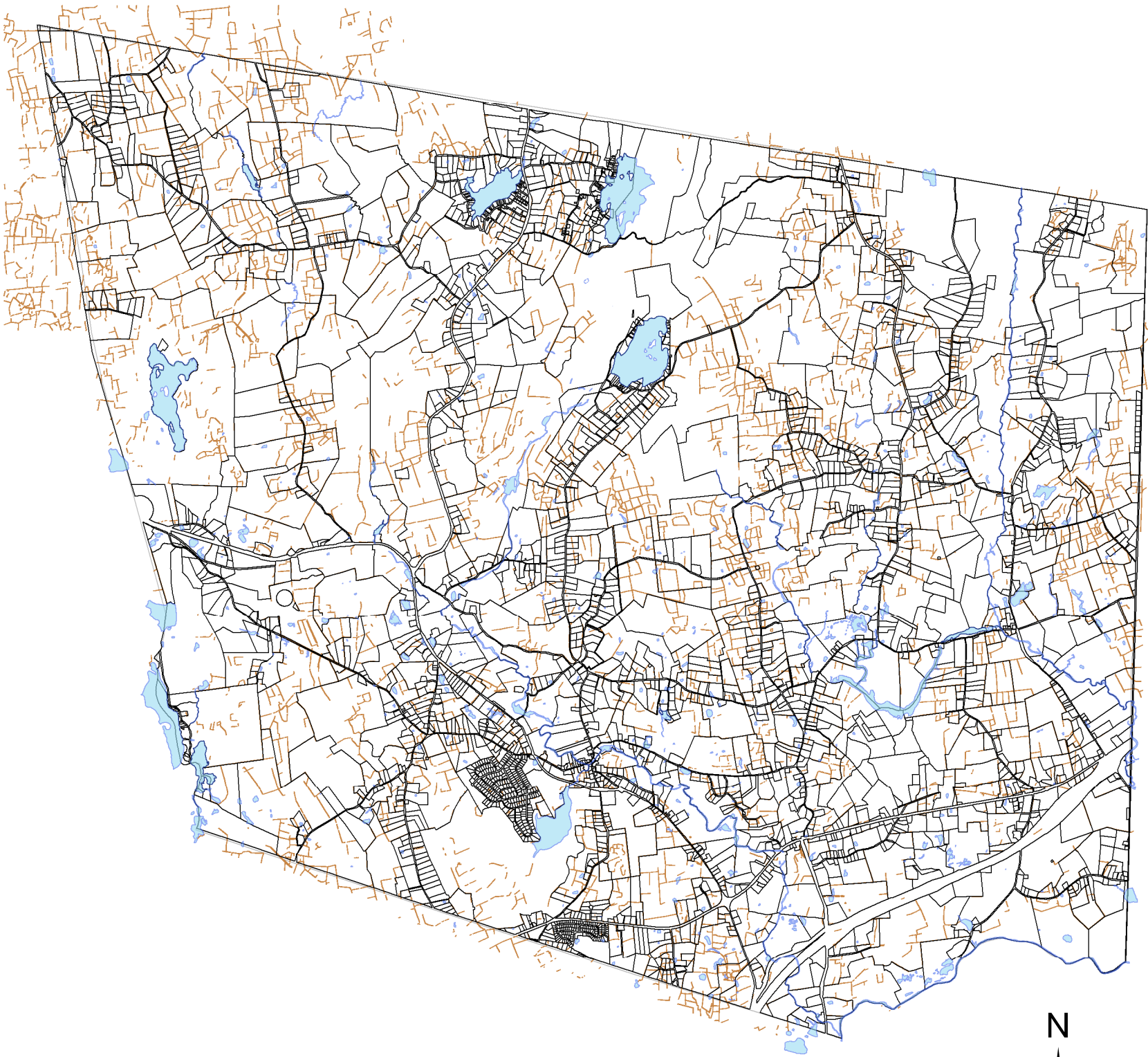
- Church
- Cultural Resources
- Historic Homes/Resources
- Cemetery
- Historic Villages
- Boat Launches
- Farm Locations
- Scenic Roads
- Scenic Views
- Town Identified Trails
- Hewitt Farm
- Reservation
- State Forest
- Parks and Recreation









North Stonington Village



Stonewalls



Character Resources

-  Parks and Recreation
-  Historic Homes/Resources
-  Village Protection Overlay Area
-  Cultural Resources
-  Cemetery
-  Church



7. Natural Resources and Rural Character

Conservation Vision

Conservation should be achieved through smart development choices, regulation enforcement, and thoughtful open space planning that protects and preserves natural and historic resources and our rural character. The presence of farms enhances sustainability and livability of the community by providing a quiet rural setting, economic opportunity, and healthy food choices. People define progress as moving toward a cleaner, healthier, protected environment, with opportunities to 'go green' and buy local.

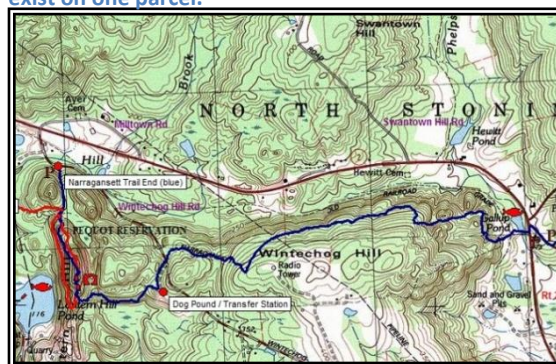
7.1 Natural Resources are not only essential for our survival, their presence or absence greatly affects our quality of life. From an economic standpoint, abundant natural resources such as raw land, clean water, and prime farm and forest land can be vital to a community's economic sustainability. For residents of North Stonington, the plentiful resources are an essential component to the preservation of the town's rural character.

Results of the 2012 Community Survey showed that nearly 87% of residents felt that it was important to preserve North Stonington's rural character. Nearly 77% stated that the dark skies and quiet rural feel were the reasons they moved here or have stayed here. Residents who attended the POCD's "Neighborhood Meetings" and other informal meetings and planning sessions all spoke of the great need to preserve natural resources not only for the sake of the town's character, but also for the sake of sustainability and progress.

The goals and strategies identified to help preserve natural resources and open space focus on enforcing current regulations pertaining to open space set asides and wetland regulations, as well as implementation of the goals set forth in the Plan of Conservation and Recreation Lands ³ drafted by the Conservation Commission.

Resource	Acreage	% Total Land Area
Aquifer Area	13,215	38%
Wetlands	5,276	15%
Flood Plain (A &AE)	2,769	8%
Water Bodies	1,041	3%
Steep Slopes	5,498	16%

Figure 6 - Source: North Stonington GIS Data
Note: For this chart, acreage was calculated for each resource layer separately though multiple resources may exist on one parcel.



Steep Slopes- Lantern Hill & Wintechog Hill



Lantern Hill Pond

³ PCRL document found in Appendix C.



**Environmental
Constraints**

**Slope >15%
Wetland Soils
Water Features**

Per CT DEEP GIS
Data 6/2013

Town GIS
Data 10/2012

Legend

Parcels - 2013

CT DEEP Data

Wetland Soils

Slope >15%

Water Features

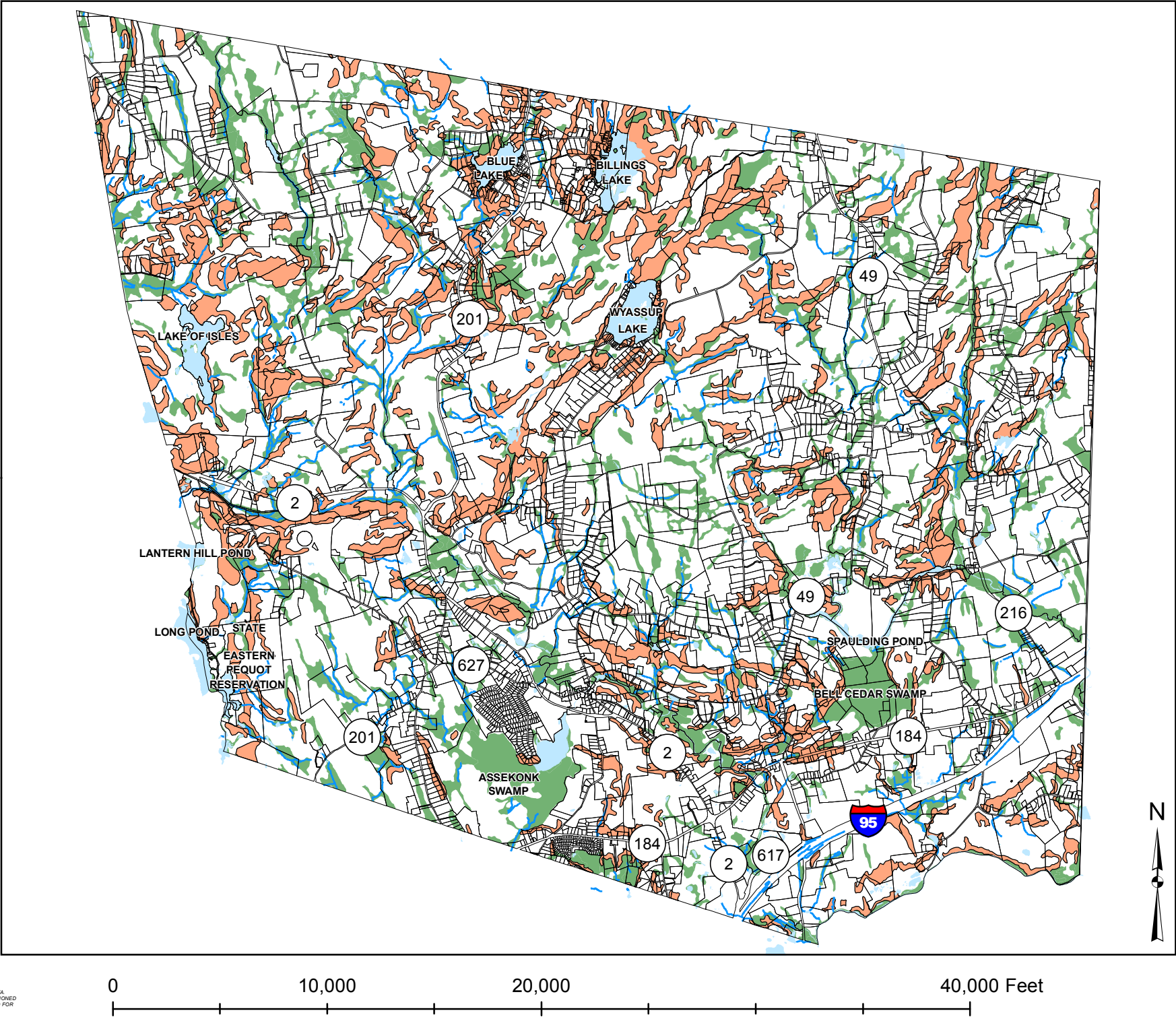
Lakes and Ponds

Streams

Map #: 1840 - R3
Map Date: 9/4/2013

Notes


THIS MAP IS PREPARED FOR THE INVENTORY OF REAL PROPERTY FOUND WITHIN THESE JURISDICTIONS AND IS COMPILED FROM RECORDED DEEDS, PLATS, AND OTHER PUBLIC RECORDS AND DATA. USERS OF THE MAP ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED THAT THE AFOREMENTIONED PUBLIC PRIMARY INFORMATION SOURCES SHOULD BE CONSULTED FOR VERIFICATION OF THE INFORMATION CONTAINED ON THIS MAP. THE TOWNS AND THE MAPPING COMPANIES ASSUME NO LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE INFORMATION CONTAINED ON THIS MAP. HORIZONTAL DATUM BASED ON THE CONNECTICUT STATE PLANE COORDINATE SYSTEM, NAD83







FEMA Flood Zones

Legend

 Parcels - 2013

Water Features

 Lakes and Ponds

 Streams

FEMA 06/01/2013

 0.2 PCT

 A

 AE

A - Areas with a 1% annual chance of flooding and a 26% chance of flooding over the life of a 30-year mortgage. Because detailed analyses are not performed for such areas; no depths or base flood elevations are shown within these zones.

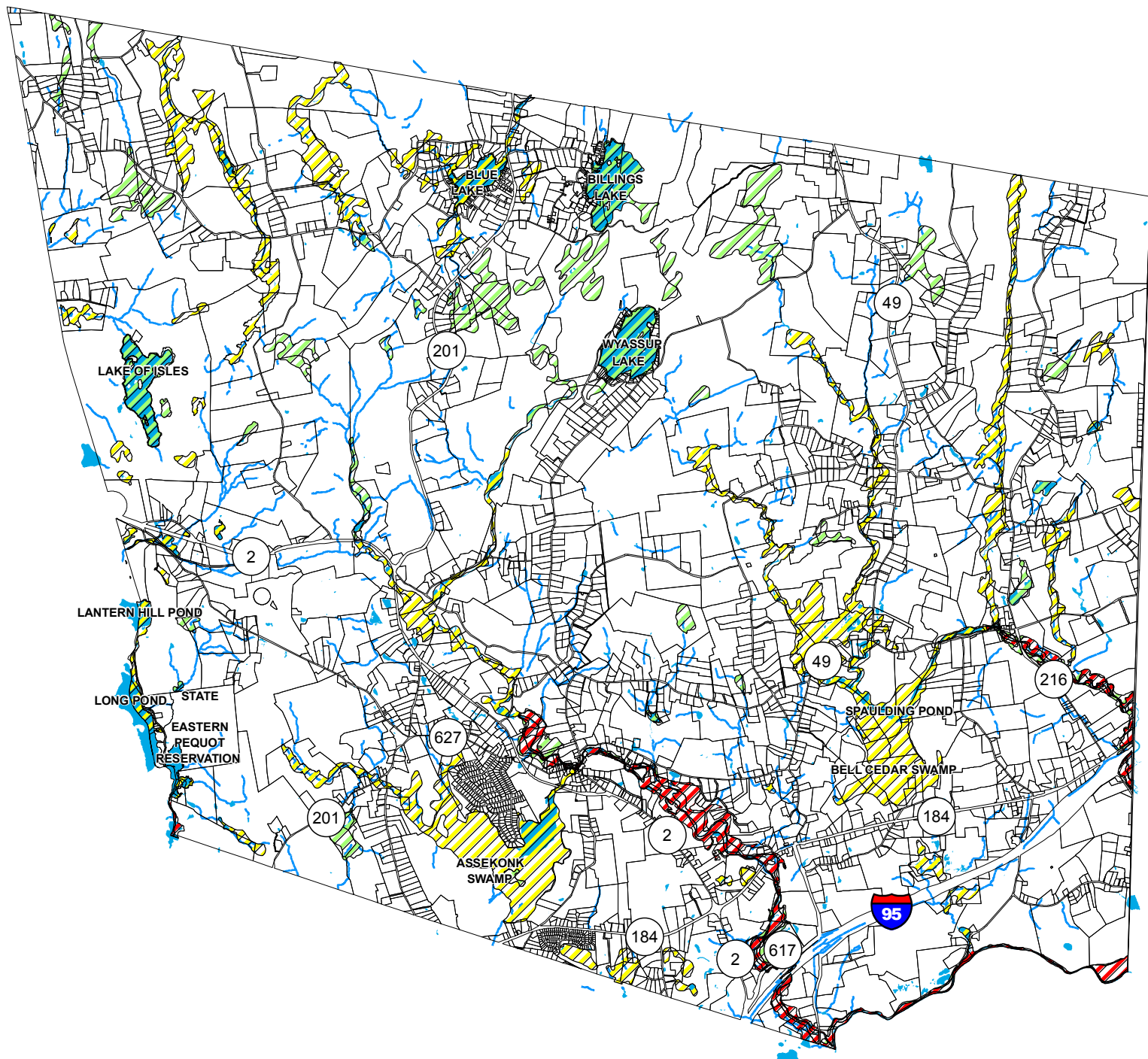
AE - The base floodplain where base flood elevations are provided

0.2 PCT - Corresponds to zone previously identified as 'X100'. Areas outside the 1-percent annual chance floodplain, areas of 1% annual chance sheet flow flooding where average depths are less than 1 foot, areas of 1% annual chance stream flooding where the contributing drainage area is less than 1 square mile, or areas protected from the 1% annual chance flood by levees. No Base Flood Elevations or depths are shown within this zone.

Map #: 1838 R4
Map Date: 9/4/2013

Notes

THIS MAP IS PREPARED FOR THE INVENTORY OF REAL PROPERTY FOUND WITHIN THESE JURISDICTIONS AND IS COMPILED FROM RECORDED DEEDS, PLATS, AND OTHER PUBLIC RECORDS AND DATA. USERS OF THE MAP ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED THAT THE AFOREMENTIONED PUBLIC PRIMARY INFORMATION SOURCES SHOULD BE CONSULTED FOR VERIFICATION OF THE INFORMATION CONTAINED ON THIS MAP. THE TOWNS AND THE MAPPING COMPANIES ASSUME NO LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE INFORMATION CONTAINED ON THIS MAP. HORIZONTAL DATUM BASED ON THE CONNECTICUT STATE PLANE COORDINATE SYSTEM, NAD83



0

10,000

20,000

40,000 Feet

Another key strategy is investing in certain infrastructure improvements in the southern area of town and/or allowing greater density in targeted growth areas in exchange for land preservation to specifically draw development *away* from the more rural parts of town thereby effectively preserving many valuable resources while also allowing the town to progress economically. One of the most effective strategies identified is that of developing a plan that identifies all desired areas for future conservation and demonstrating how these pieces fit into the overall conservation plan for the town. With such a document in place, planning can become much more deliberate.

7.2 Open Space

North Stonington has a tremendous amount of “undeveloped land” which is what primarily defines it as a rural town. In order for the town to plan for a future as a rural community, or even for an individual to understand the implications of a private land purchase, it is important to understand the potential uses of land and what kind of protection, if any, is placed on it.

All land in North Stonington is zoned for either commercial/industrial or residential development. Of the town’s total acreage of 35,179, only 3,023 acres - or less than ten percent of it - is protected as open space in perpetuity (via land trust holdings, deed restrictions, conservation easements, and 9 town-owned open space parcels). Some land in North Stonington is temporarily protected as Open Space (PA 490 farms and forests, State Forests), and some open land is not protected at all (vacant land, lots that have enough acreage to subdivide, farm and forest land not in PA 490). Temporarily protected and unprotected undeveloped lands are valuable as they give North Stonington the feel of a rural town in the present, but do not guarantee a rural future. Also included in this vacant and unprotected land or “perceived open space” category is approximately 7,000 acres of land currently unbuildable due to steep slopes, wet soils and/or location within a flood zone. Much of this acreage is accounted for on parcels that fall under one of the three open space categories identified in the chart below. Other unbuildable acreage may include areas located on residential or commercial properties, and though effectively protected by regulatory restrictions as open space, is not actually factored into the chart totals because it is not considered the principal use of the parcel.

Purposes of Open Space

- **Provides wildlife habitat.**
- **Protects natural resources including air and water quality.**
- **Protects and enhances rural character.**
- **Provides recreational opportunities.**
- **Good for the economy – attracts visitors, no tax burden (though property doesn’t generate taxes either and can cost tax dollars to properly maintain it – i.e. forest management).**



The goal of the Town is to determine the right balance between facilitating the development of raw land and preserving it as permanently protected Open Space – keeping in mind the different levels (or lack) of protection that exist on any given parcel, in the implications for the future. The following chart (and map on page 37) shows the different types of conservation and recreation lands as they exist in North Stonington today.

TYPE OF OPEN SPACE	EXAMPLES	Current Acreage
Protected Open Space ** These parcels are not necessarily protected in perpetuity, but for the purposes of this Plan, they are considered as such.	State-Owned Development Rights (or TDR)	462
	Conservation Easements/other Deed Restrictions and Required 15% Set-aside Open Space per Subdivision Regulations	1,614
	Land Owned by Avalonia Land Conservancy	479
	Land Owned by North Stonington Citizens Land Alliance	145
	Land Owned by The Nature Conservancy**	145
	Town-Owned Open Space Parcels (Including Hewitt Farm)	178
Total Protected Open Space		3,023
Temporarily Protected (perceived) Open Space	Farmland (PA 490 and 10 Mil)	5,473
	Forest (PA 490)	6,235
	Town Owned Parcels (Including Wintechog Hill Parcel)	151
	State Land (Includes State Parks/Forests) (Note: Acreage could also be included in Active/Passive Recreation Category below)	3,942
Total Temporarily Protected Open Space		15,801
Active and Passive Public Recreational Areas	Municipal Recreational Areas (Recreational Facility, School Fields)	58
	Private Recreational Facilities and Areas (Little League, Summer Camps)	1,315
	(Though not included here, please note that the 3,942 acres of State Land listed above could fall under this category as well)	
Total Active and Passive Public Recreational Areas		1,373

Figure 7 – Types of Open Space: Source Assessor and GIS Data



Open Space Map

Parcel Lines To
10/1/2012

Legend

— Town Identified Trails

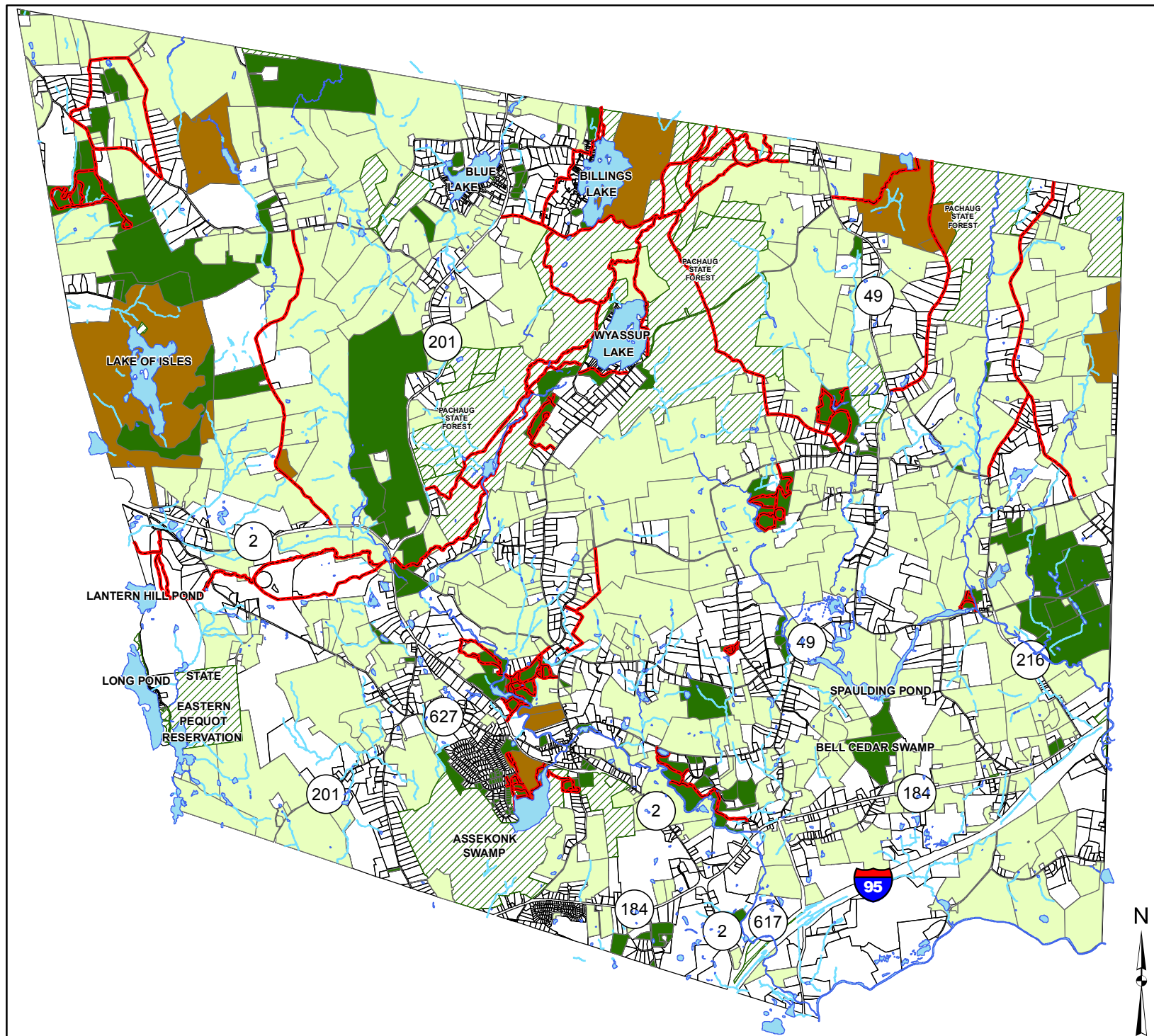
Open Space

Active and Passive
Recreational Areas

Protected Open Space

Purposeful/Perceived
Open Space

State Land (Includes
State Parks/State
Forests)



Notes

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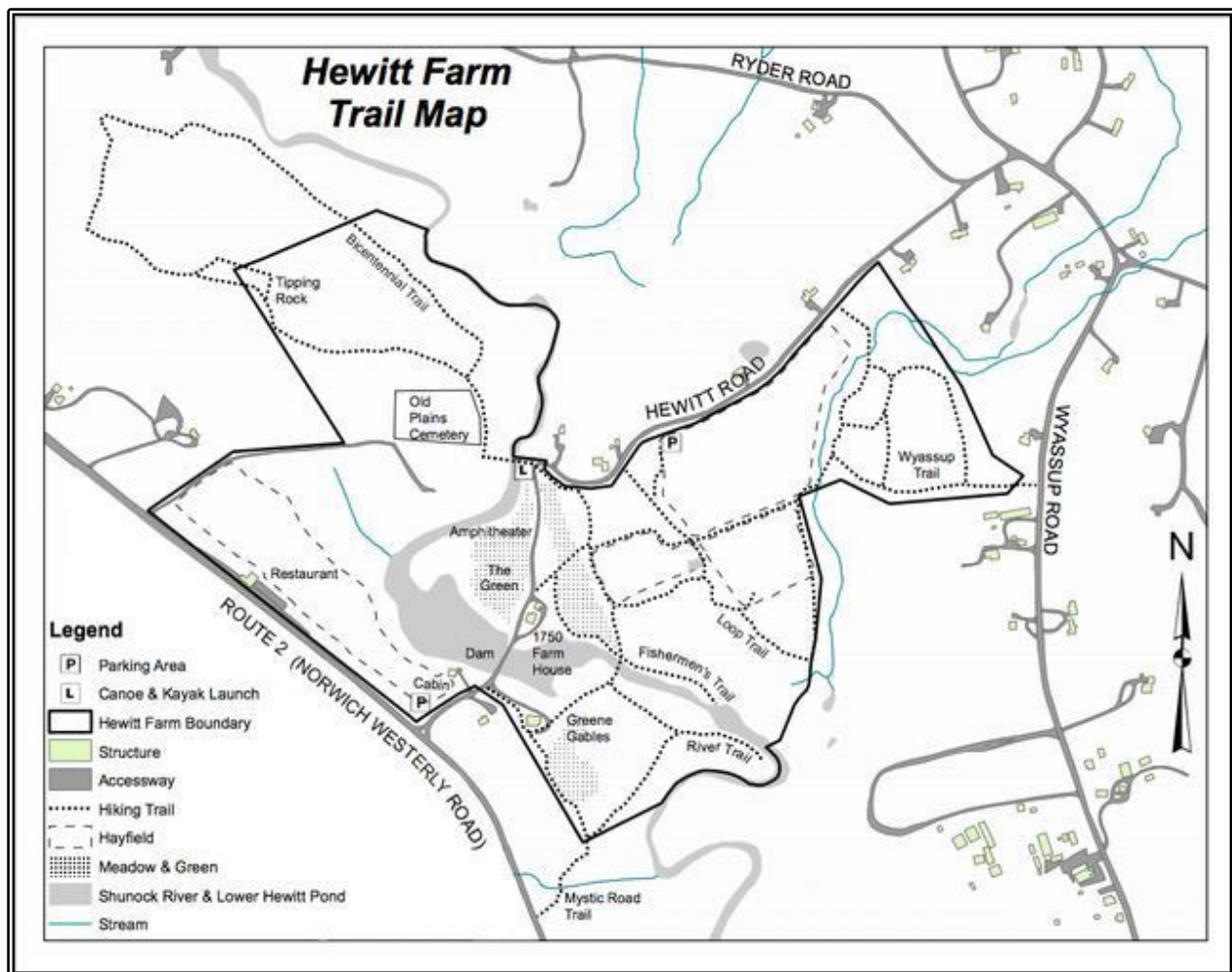
The results of the 2012 Community Survey identified two primary reasons residents want to preserve open space.

- **To protect natural resources like lakes, aquifers, scenic views, and habitats.**
- **To preserve our rural character and maintain our high quality of life and sense of place.**

When asked however, if they would be willing to vote for an increase in taxes to purchase and maintain Open Space, 73% of the 430 respondents said “no.”

The town is fortunate to have undeveloped areas of significant size that can substantially expand existing protected areas or help to provide a connective corridor for wildlife or recreation. The State of Connecticut’s goal is to preserve 21% of the land in the state as open space by the year 2023. This statewide goal can bring state help and financial support to a town that is proactive in acquiring conservation lands.

In August 2008, the townspeople voted to purchase the Hewitt Farm; North Stonington’s first purchase of open space land. The property includes extensive fields with rich farm soils, woods, wetlands, streams and the Shunock River running through it. The Hewitt Farm will be preserved in perpetuity for recreation and park purposes.



7.3 Agriculture

Probably the most defining rural characteristic of North Stonington is its surviving farms and the



Breaking Ground on Hewitt Road

remnants of past agricultural activity, such as stone walls, that continue to define the landscape. Preserving the town's existing farms and encouraging new farming activities have always been strong goals of the town. **North Stonington's farms are central to the community.** They provide good jobs for young people, food security, tax revenue with little demand on town services, wildlife habitats, and open space. They contribute to a high quality of life and provide local products year round. Despite various protective state programs, Connecticut still loses between 7,000-9,000 acres of farmland a year to development. Local support for farmland protection is strong. Residents in North

Stonington have sold development rights to 462 acres. In addition to development pressure threatening existing farmland, many find land costs in North Stonington too prohibitive to start a new farm. Rising

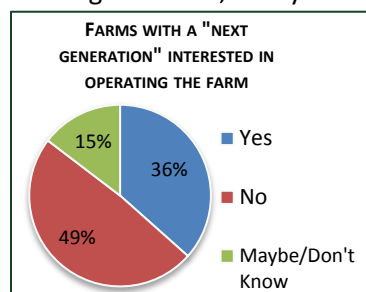


Figure 8 Source 2009 Farm Survey

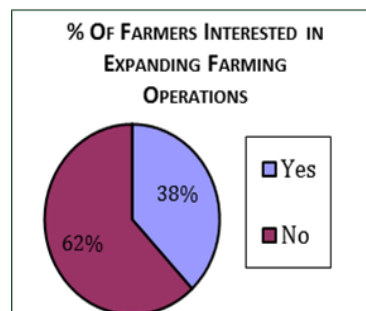


Figure 9 - Source 2009 Farm Survey

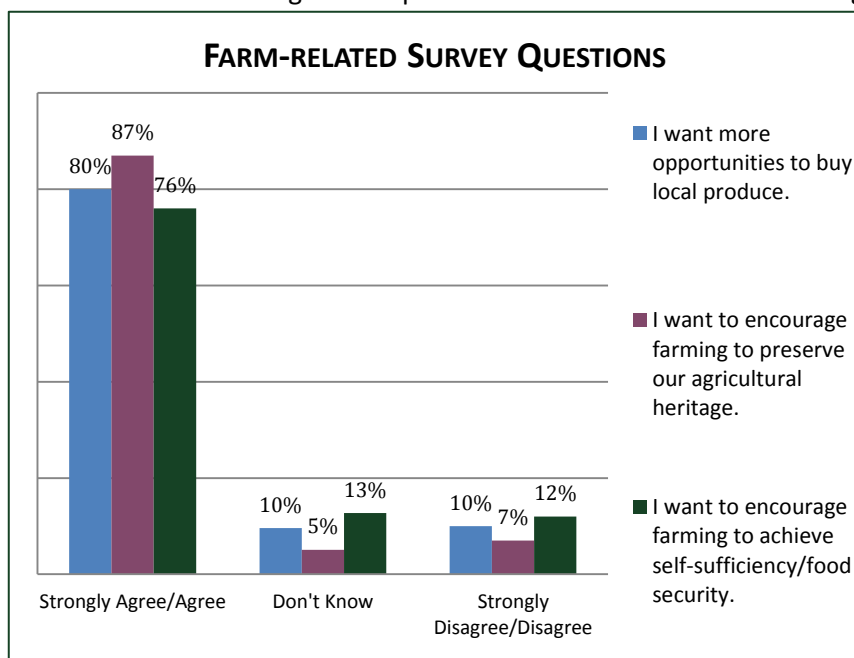


Figure 10 - Source 2013 Community Survey

taxes and fuel costs as well as increased problems with vandalism and "predatory wildlife" were problems identified by existing local farmers in a 2009 survey.

In December of 2007, under the leadership of one of the town's dairy farmers, North Stonington passed a Right-to-Farm Ordinance. Another ordinance, passed in June of 2007, provides tax exemptions for farm machinery and farm buildings. In 2009, the town adopted new regulations that clearly define

agriculture and include regulations concerning animals and fowl, “Best Management Practices” for the disposal and spreading of manure, and regulations concerning equine stables and equine enterprises.

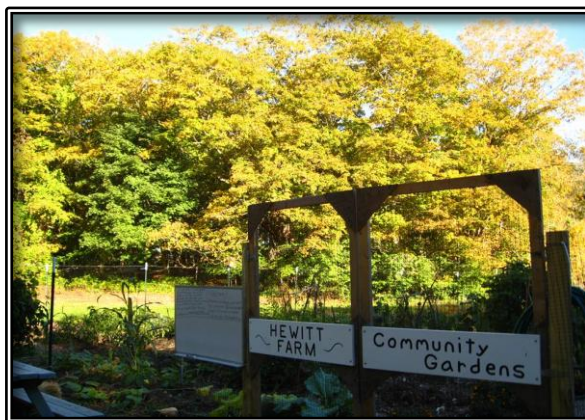
North Stonington is known for its large dairy farms, but other traditional farming includes turkey, sheep, and corn production. Many specialty farms (Christmas tree, rare pigs and chickens, llamas, honey) also operate as well as a winery.

The following are suggestions about ways North Stonington could continue to support new and existing agricultural operations.

- **Reintroduce school programs to teach agriculture and reconnect children with farms and farming.**
- **Enact supportive regulations that meet the needs of the farmers such as allowing well-planned farm worker housing, low-impact activities, and more opportunities to sell products (i.e., farm store, farmer’s markets, and farm stands).**
- **Support new state regulations that are less restrictive for selling locally grown or gathered wild food, and value added products.**
- **Continue to provide, and possibly increase, tax relief offered.**
- **Reclaim select forest land for farming.**
- **Encourage businesses that support farming (i.e., slaughterhouse, feed store, or granary).**
- **Encourage preservation of farmland (purchase and/or transfer of development rights).**

7.4 Food Security

In an emergency, Connecticut’s food supply reportedly will not last more than a day and a half. New London County was also cited as having one of the poorest levels of food security in the state. With its abundant water supply and prime farmland, North Stonington, however, is positioned to be a regional food and water resource of major importance. Large commercial development in abutting towns and



Hewitt Farm Community Gardens



Farm on Route 2



Local Christmas Tree Farm

potential large developments within the town raise the importance of good planning and implementation, not only to preserve the quality of life residents hold dear but also to protect valuable resources that will help ensure regional sustainability and security (with respect to food and water).



Farm and Forest Land Use with Farm Soils Overlay

Per Assessor Data 7/3/2013

Legend

- Dev. Rights Sold
- Farm
- Forest
- Mixed Forest and Farm

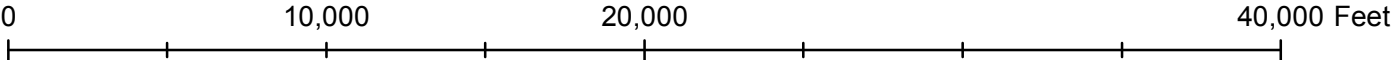
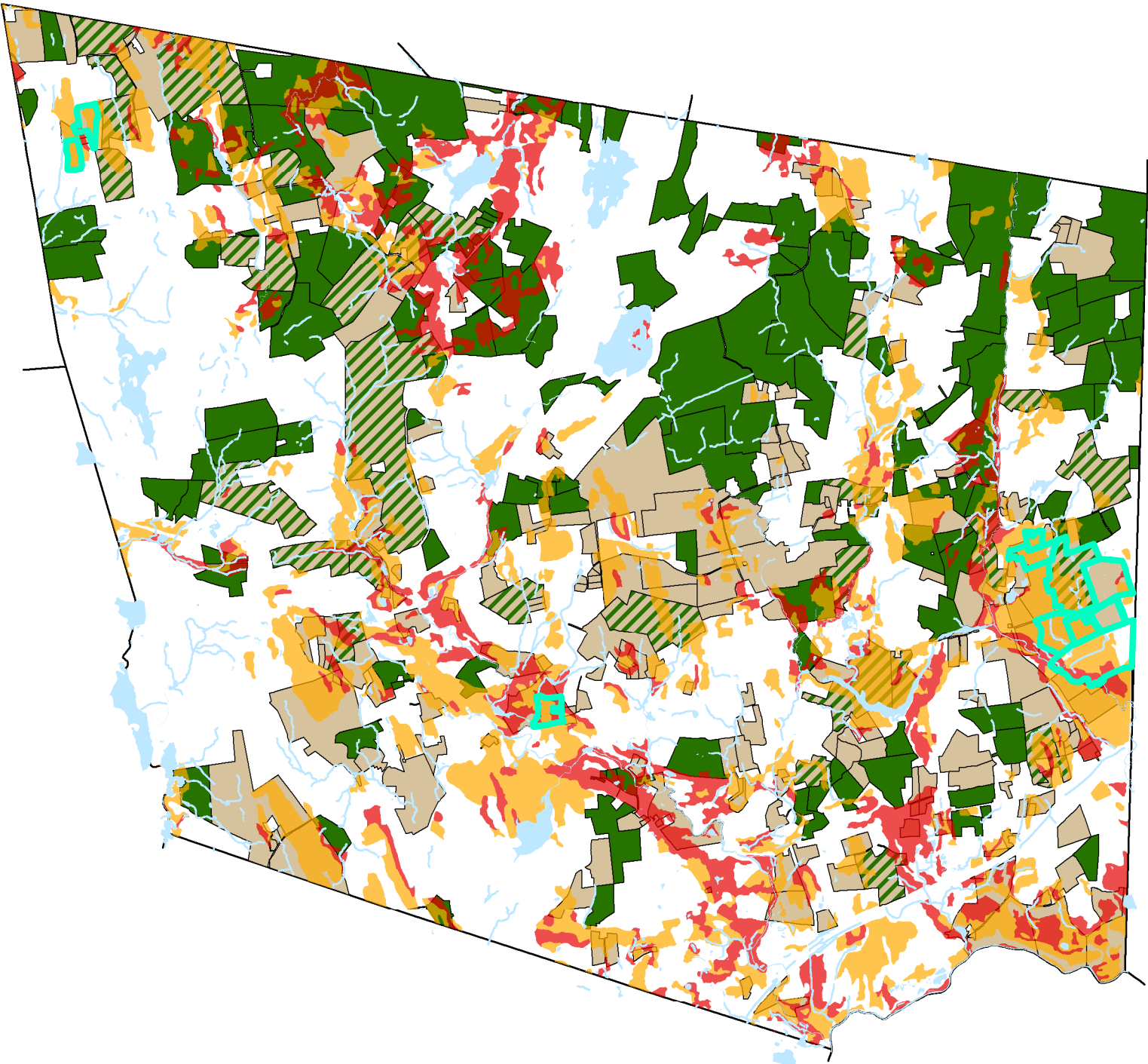
DEEP Identified Farm Soils 4/6/2011

- Prime Farmland Soils
- Statewide Important Farmland Soils

Map #: 1841 - R4
Map Date: 9/4/2013

Notes

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7.5 Water

North Stonington has abundant water bodies including small lakes, and an extensive network of ponds, streams, and wetlands. These water bodies provide significant quantity and quality of wildlife habitat. The town's primary drinking water source is a major stratified drift aquifer. The health and ecological functions of the town's water bodies are very critical aspects of the town's physical, economic, and cultural wellbeing.

The town's 5,276 acres of wetlands are spread through every region of the town and affect all major land use plans. Laws are enacted to protect wetland areas because their ecological function is critical to all life. Wetlands provide overflow areas during flooding, water retention areas during times of heavy precipitation, and water reserves during times of drought.



North Stonington has three lakes and three ponds with state-owned boat launches on five of them. Water flow through the lakes provides water to streams

discharging from them. Residential development is attracted to the lakes making them especially vulnerable to ecological damage from the effects of overdevelopment within their basins.

Eight water sub-basins are mostly or partly within the town boundaries with another four barely entering. The Shunock and Wyassup sub-basins are the largest and encompass more than 60% of the town's land area. The interconnectedness of the sub-basins underscores the need for protection by all towns that share water resources in the region. To that end, several municipalities in Southeastern Connecticut, including North Stonington, recently participated in a comprehensive, stake-holder involved, planning process that culminated in the production of a *Drinking Water Quality Management Plan*. The participants recognized the need for a coordinated effort among the water supplier, the watershed communities, and the end users, to develop a common understanding of the valuable water resources of the region and to implement strategies to effectively manage and protect them in order to achieve long-term preservation of safe and sustainable public drinking water supplies.



Billings Lake

In February 2009, the Town of North Stonington *Water Supply Plan* was adopted. The Plan gives an overview of the existing water systems that service the town followed by a review of the water utility structure and assets; water system performance; and historic data on population and water use. The




Sub-Regional and Local Water Basins

Per Current DEEP and GIS Data

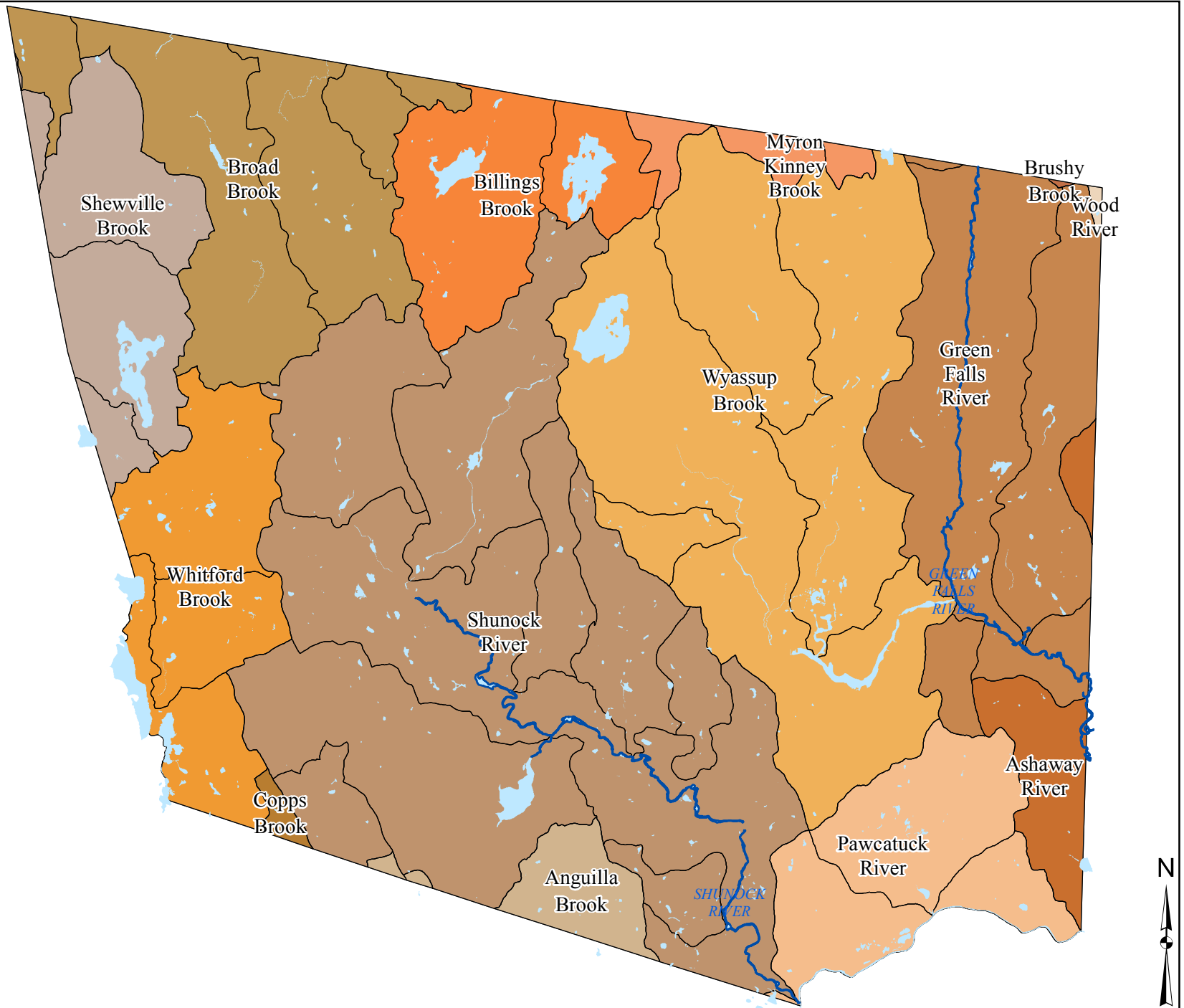
Legend

Water Features

 Lakes and Ponds

Sub-regional Basins

-  Anguilla Brook
-  Ashaway River
-  Billings Brook
-  Broad Brook
-  Brushy Brook
-  Copps Brook
-  Green Falls River
-  Myron Kinney Brook
-  Pawcatuck River
-  Shewville Brook
-  Shunock River
-  Whitford Brook
-  Wood River
-  Wyassup Brook



Map #: 1855R2
Map Date: 9/10/2013

Notes

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Plan examines existing land use and future service areas and concludes with an analysis of the town's future needs and potential alternative supply sources.

Major stratified drift aquifers are located under 38% of the town's total land area. Nearly three-quarters of the town's residential population is served by private on-site wells. The Pawcatuck groundwater hydrologic system is a federally designated sole-source aquifer due to its vital importance in supplying drinking water to the town and region for both present and future residential and economic development needs. It encompasses the Shunock, Wyassup, Pawcatuck, Ashaway and Green Falls sub-regional drainage basins. The aquifer is of major importance to local and regional water supply needs and plans for economic growth. The State of Connecticut legislature has given North Stonington the right to distribute water from this aquifer. In 2010, the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) delineated a "Level A" Aquifer Protection Area in an area just north of Route 2. State Statutes required North Stonington to form an Aquifer Protection Agency and to develop regulations to regulate land use activity within this new area. The Planning and Zoning Commission was established as this agency effective May 24, 2010.

7.6 Wildlife and Vegetation

The town's topography and low human population promotes wildlife habitat. The Connecticut DEEP monitors and records species diversity and the location of sensitive ecological communities within the town. *Critical Habitat and Natural Diversity* sites are areas of habitat that the state feels should receive special attention. Thirty-five biodiversity locations are identified in the town with several significant concentrations. Both aquatic and surface vegetation in those sensitive areas, as well sensitive fauna, should be adequately protected. Invasive aquatic wetland and upland species are gaining a foothold and the need for their management has been identified.

The Connecticut DEEP also inventories and manages the forest and wildlife resources at the Pachaug State Forest and the Assekunk Wildlife Management Area. The Fisheries Division is especially interested in North Stonington's cold-water fish population in the Shunock River, a state-designated and managed wild trout stream.



Blue Trail across Yawbux Brook



Billings Lake






Shunock River





Aquifer Protection Areas

Per
Current
North Stonington
Planning and Zoning
Map

Legend

-  Level A Aquifer Protection Area
-  Parcels - 2013
-  Aquifer Protection Zone - Town

Water Features

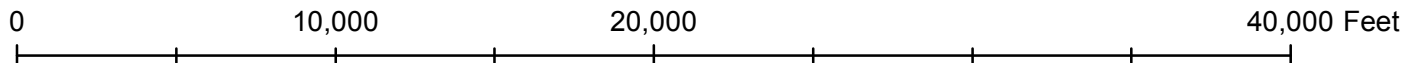
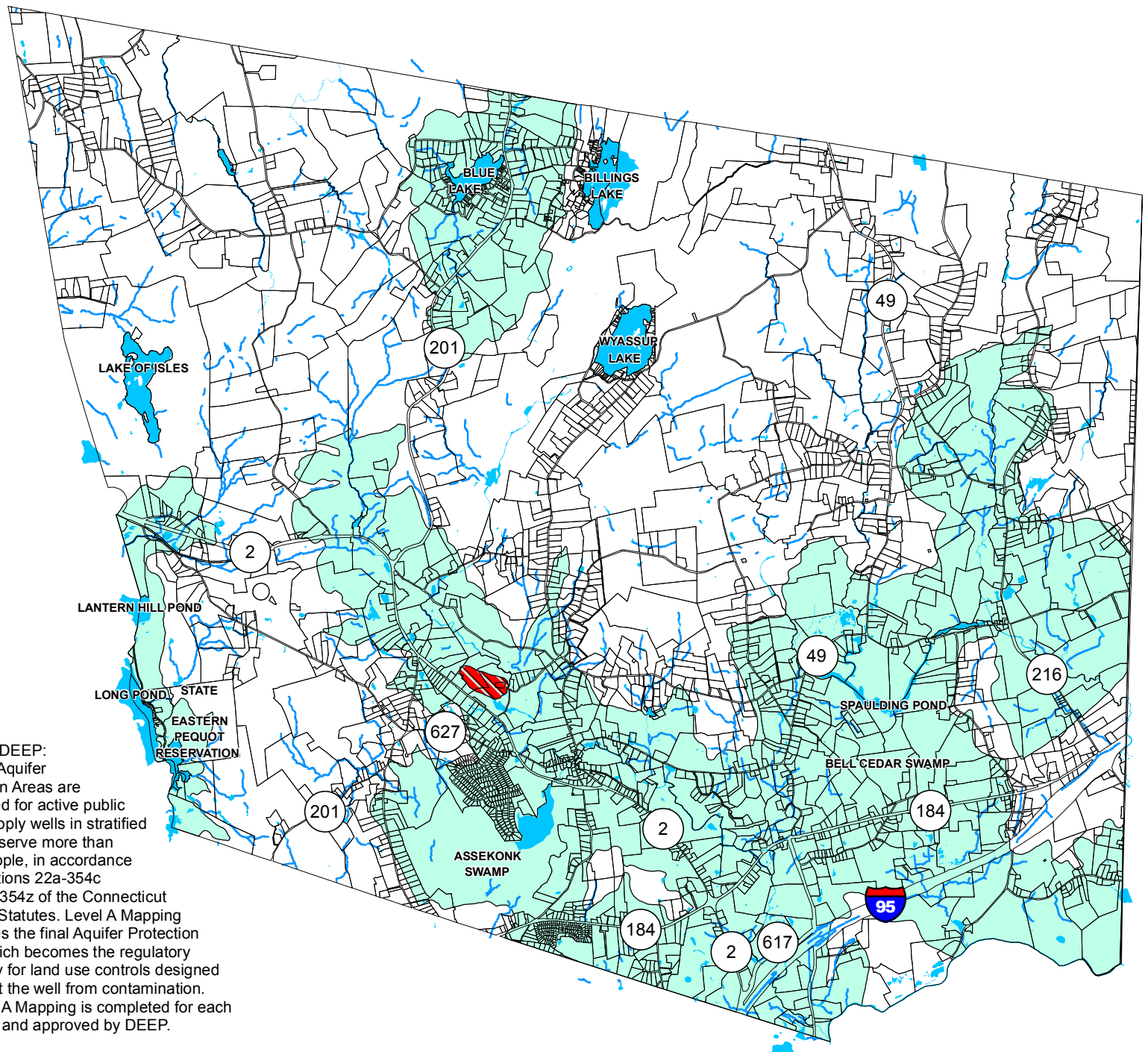
-  Lakes and Ponds
-  Streams

PER CT DEEP:
Level A Aquifer Protection Areas are delineated for active public water supply wells in stratified drift that serve more than 1000 people, in accordance with Sections 22a-354c and 22a-354z of the Connecticut General Statutes. Level A Mapping delineates the final Aquifer Protection Area, which becomes the regulatory boundary for land use controls designed to protect the well from contamination. As Level A Mapping is completed for each well field and approved by DEEP.

Map #: 1839 R3
Map Date: 9/4/2013

Notes

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DEEP Critical Habitat And Natural Diversity Areas

Per Current
DEEP GIS Data

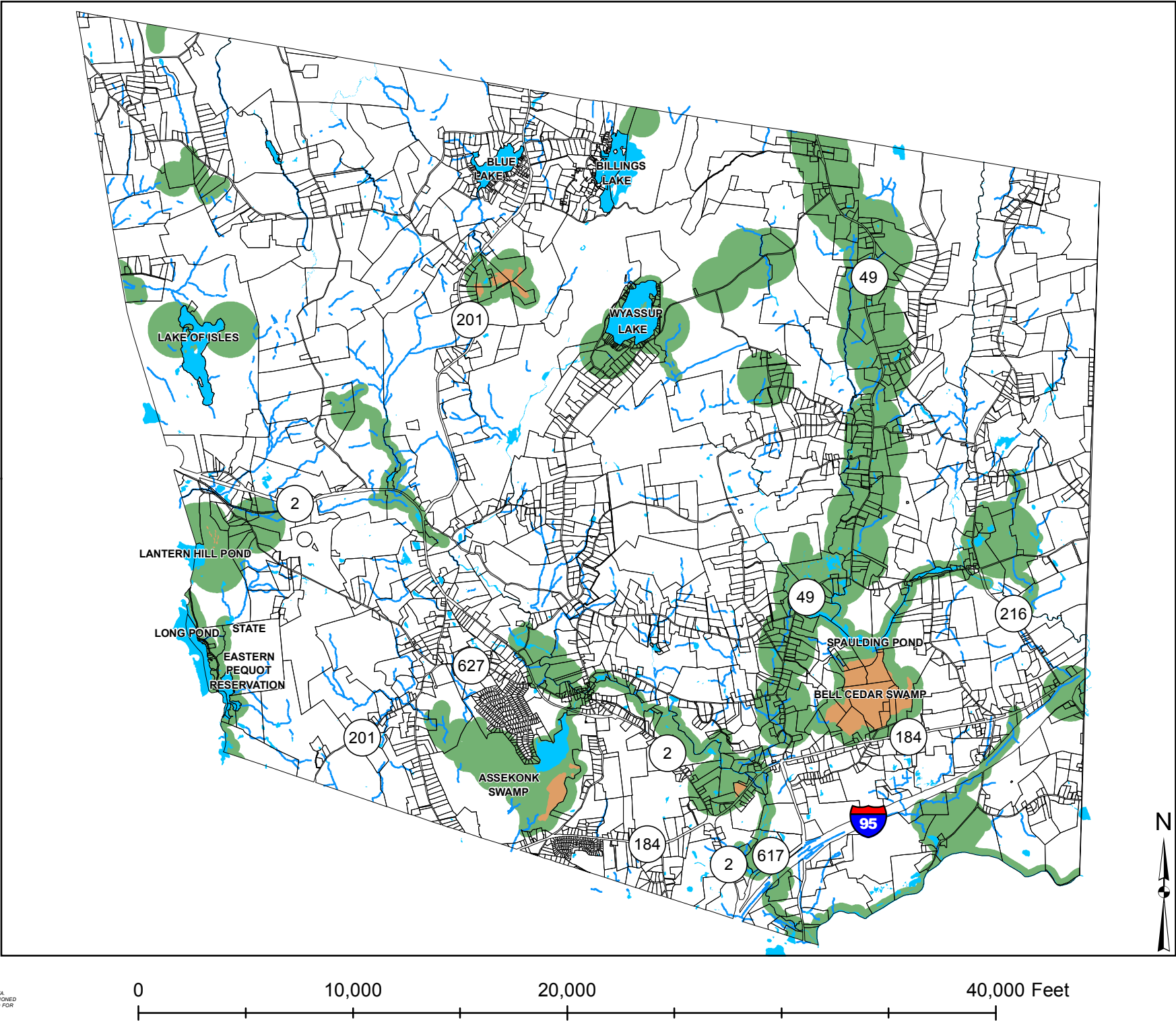
Legend

- Parcels - 2013
- Critical Habitat
- Natural Diversity
- Water Features**
- Lakes and Ponds
- Streams

Map #: 1842 - R3
Map Date: 9/4/2013

Notes

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Approximately 70% of the town is forested. Forest cover not only provides forest resources and habitat, it has also been directly connected to water quality. State forest and wildlife management areas in North Stonington provide the majority of protected vegetative cover within the town. Lands now classified as forest land for tax relief purposes provide some temporarily protected forest cover, although timber can be harvested.

Many land areas have multiple conservation and recreation attributes such as forest cover combined with biodiversity sites, significant water, historic and cultural features, and significant habitat for fish and wildlife. Conservation areas can also provide intangible amenities to residents, such as peace and quiet, dark night skies, and privacy.

7.7 Summary

Rural living is important to most residents, from the farmer who works land that has been in his family for generations, to the ex-urbanite who is embraced by the green landscape every time he steps out of his new house. It is available to the weekend fisherman pulling trout out of the river, the gardener with her hands in the soil, the hiker trekking through the woods, the star gazer viewing the nighttime sky, and the horseman enjoying the shade of a tree-lined road.



Though residents are dedicated to preserving a rural way of life, North Stonington's farms, natural, and historic resources have stayed relatively healthy through the years primarily due to North Stonington being a relatively undeveloped town, and less because there are regulations and strategies in place to protect, enhance, and utilize resources. Therefore, a proactive holistic approach to planning should include protection of these cornerstones of the town.

Fresh cut cornfield and scenic stonewalls near intersection of Chester Main and Hangman Hill Rd. (Above); Garden on property along Pinewoods Road (Below)

8. Economic Development

Development Vision

North Stonington should deliberately encourage and/or pursue specific kinds of commercial development and concentrate them along the I-95 corridor. Residents support development that will improve the tax base, but have limited impact on resources. Residents envision a town that encourages a greater variety of housing types including mixed-use, cluster subdivisions, affordable housing, and farm worker housing. All architecture and landscaping should be consistent with the character of town.

Economic development is a continually evolving, competitive process and discipline that occurs within the greater context of a regional and global economy. The global job market, e-commerce, and



Rendering of a Lifestyle Center

search for cost savings are changing the need for space. The vitality of traditional retail space is declining as is the number of new industrial facilities that once helped broaden the tax base with little impact on services. Municipalities must have an inventory of “ready-to-go” sites, an adequate skilled labor force, a friendly business climate, and must be aggressive in their incentive packages, and quick and efficient in their permitting in order to avoid elimination during a site-selection process. A community must be *committed* to increasing economic development, and this commitment must be reflected in

its POCD and subsequent zoning regulations.

Frequently, community hesitation to economic development is a reflection of a deserved dissatisfaction with negative consequences of older projects, a distrust of the land uses system, or a fear of losing control over the rate and type of change that may accompany this development. It is, therefore, helpful to view economic development as the business of attracting appropriate investment into the community. Investment can be in the form of time, effort, or money and includes investment in residential, commercial, institutional, and/or *any other* type of land use. Viewing economic development as an investment in the community rather than just commercial or industrial growth, makes it easier to understand its place in the land use system as a whole.

Conservation and development are equally important factors of sustainability and are both part of this same land use system. They should not be viewed as separate components with dissimilar needs, goals and outcomes. **“North Stonington must be committed to progress and be willing to make strategic investments in projects or community infrastructure necessary to support company expansions and locations, with the calculated expectation that this investment will reap the jobs, tax base and quality of life improvements the community desires.”** (2012 NS Economic Development Action Plan, Garnet Consulting Services). In other words, North Stonington must provide a solid framework for growth, be confident and collaborative as a community, and proactively plan for the type and rate of change

desired. If the town is intentional in how it regulates investment, it will not compromise its commitment to conservation or its small town, rural character.

8.1 Community Survey

When residents were asked in the recent survey what the most important issues facing North Stonington were, the overwhelming answers were high taxes and lack of commercial development. 71% of the respondents wanted more commercial development in order to lower their taxes. Residents also seemed to understand the necessity of investing in infrastructure to

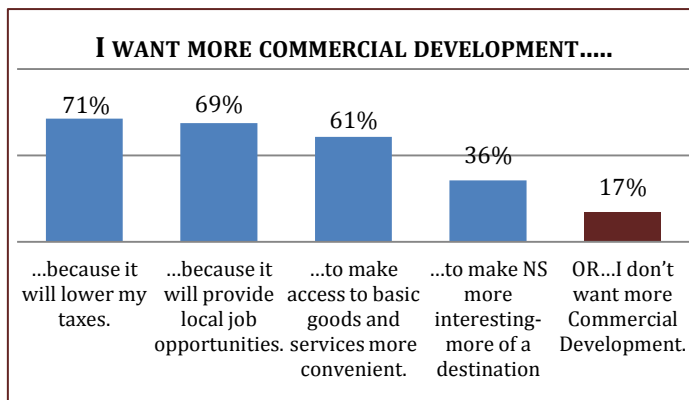


Figure 11 – Source: 2013 Community Survey

attract quality economic development and support the introduction of mixed-use development (residential units above commercial) in select areas. Based on all the public input gathered for the POCD, residents recognize the need to reduce the residential tax burden by supporting or facilitating development (or investment) in the non-residential zones, but added that the scale and appearance of any new development should be in keeping with the town's character.

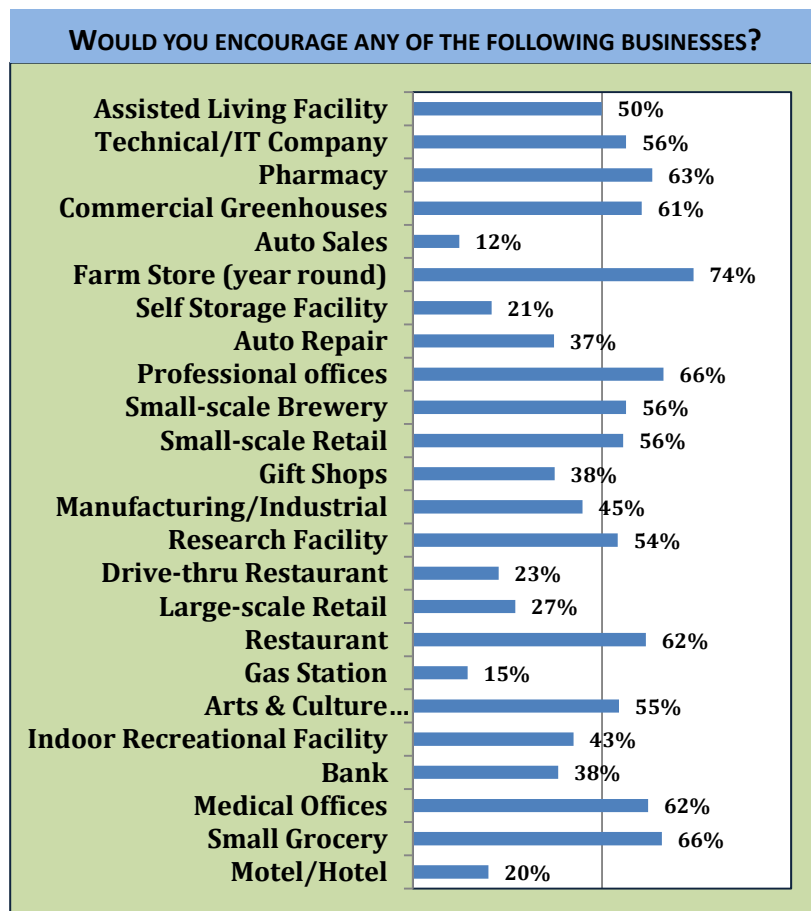


Figure 12 – Source: 2013 Community Survey



Senior Housing



Commercial Greenhouse



Farm Store

8.2 Demographic Changes

In the past decade, North Stonington's population only grew by 6.13% and experienced a shift in the distribution of age toward the 50 or older age group with noticeable declines in the primary workforce and younger groups. Thirty percent of the population is in the primary working age population of 25-49. In this same time frame, the 65 and older age group grew by 53% compared to only a 38% increase for New London County, and 46% increase for the State. Other demographic factors such as diversity, household size, and owner/renter occupancy all impact the type and likelihood of new development in town. Of particular importance are the high home values and lack of rental opportunities that effectively prevent younger people from remaining or moving into town, making it difficult to provide adequate emergency service volunteers and also decreasing our attractiveness to prospective businesses (as is further discussed in the Housing Chapter that follows).

Despite the presence of a highly skilled workforce, but consistent with regional employment changes, North Stonington's primary local employment opportunities are found within the accommodation and food service industries. Residents must therefore commute to neighboring towns to find higher paying jobs. North Stonington is however, in the enviable position of having a median household income that is well above that of the County and State, but a substantial part of the spending power associated with this income is lost because of the lack of retail or service opportunities within the town. Having more businesses in town would increase shopper convenience and help provide more commercial tax revenue for public facilities and services.

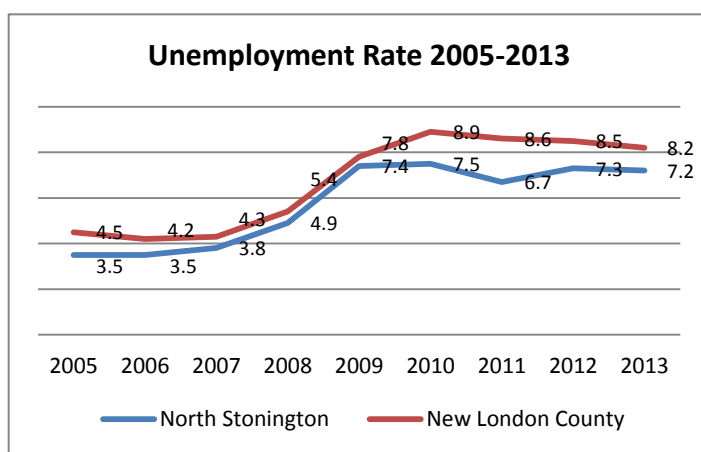


Figure 13 - Source US Census Data



Map identifying areas of restricted use in the Commercial and Industrial Zones near the Rotary

8.3 Existing Development

Representing just fewer than 6% of the town's 54.3 square miles, the town contains a total of 1,920.6 acres of land zoned for commercial and other non-residential uses. When development restrictions such as the presence of wetlands, steep slopes, required buffers, setbacks, and maximum lot coverage are factored in, the amount of developable acreage is reduced to 1,208.7 acres or just 3.5% of the town's total area. The following table gives a rough estimate of buildable acres per zone. For a more detailed discussion, please see the 2012 Economic Development Action Plan.

District	Total Acres	Buildable Acres	Existing Coverage (SF)	Maximum 25% Coverage (SF)	Existing % Coverage of	
					Total Acres	Buildable Acres
C1	32.8	23.1	116,468	357,192	8.14%	11.55%
C2	9.7	5.9	28,054	105,633	6.65%	10.89%
CD	433.8	259.5	179,236	4,724,082	0.95%	1.59%
HC	172.9	107.5	80,268	1,882,881	1.07%	1.71%
I (West)	323.0	163.8	10,514	3,517,470	0.07%	0.15%
I (East)	661.5	450.7	76,843	7,203,735	0.27%	0.39%
OR	251.0	172.8	106,298	2,733,390	0.97%	1.41%
VC	35.9	25.4	25,829	390,951	1.65%	2.33%
Totals	1920.6	1208.7	623,510	20,915,334	0.75%	1.18%

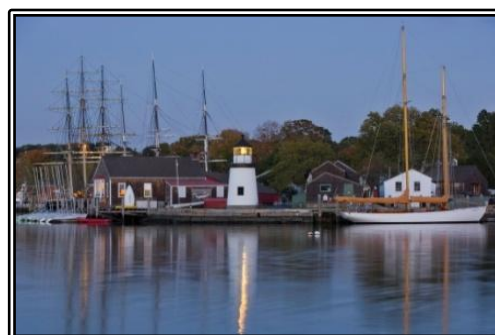
Figure 14 - Buildable Acres per Zone - Source: NS Assessor Data

8.4 Strengths and Weaknesses

As part of the process of writing the Economic Development Action Plan and this Plan of Conservation and Development, residents and town officials identified the town's primary strengths and weaknesses as a location for businesses.

Economic Strengths

- *Proximity to culture and urban-style amenities while offering a scenic rural community to live in.*
- *Proximity to I-95 (2 exits)*
- *Proximity to Boston, NYC, Providence, and Hartford*
- *Proximity to Long Island Sound*
- *Presence of cottage industries (with long history of entrepreneurialism and resiliency)*
- *Good schools and well-educated work force*
- *Large lots available*
- *Plentiful water resources*
- *Willingness to work toward achieving good balance of development and preservation of rural character*



Close proximity to Mystic Seaport Museum and Long Island Sound



Though weaknesses include a need for infrastructure and lack of shovel-ready sites, the vast amount of vacant and underutilized sites provide tremendous potential for new, well-planned, sustainable development in the majority of the commercial zones. The Planning and Zoning Commission with input from residents, stakeholders, and other boards and commissions has the opportunity to create detailed conceptual plans for the various commercial and industrial zones to determine what uses would work best, how to best utilize (or best preserve) any area amenities and resources, and to specify the desired scale and design of the desired development. Having a clear visionary plan for economic development would

make property owners more cooperative, create synergy between existing and new businesses, make technology more accessible, and venture capital more willing to support promising concepts. Planned, concentrated, economically paced development will bring social, cultural, and economic benefit to North Stonington while providing an opportunity to fulfill its conservation goals.

8.5 Summary

For North Stonington, adding to the town's Grand List to reduce the tax burden on residential tax payers is by far the dominant motivation for an enhanced economic development effort and far outweighs increasing employment opportunities (the town's unemployment rate is lower than the regional or state averages), or increasing availability of goods and services (town residents appear to be comfortable finding what they need in the nearby region). Therefore, the initiatives recommended in the 2012 Economic Development Action Plan and the strategies presented herein are aimed at the goal of making North Stonington more competitive and ready to attract business *investment* that will equate to a higher portion of local taxes being paid by businesses rather than homeowners.

Consistent with the mission and overall goals of the Economic Development Commission as well as the goals of the State Plan of Conservation and Development, North Stonington will strive to:

- *enhance its economic competitiveness and continue to create a positive business climate by working to increase developer confidence, flexibility in land use regulations, and greater predictability in the application process;*
- *expand upon its existing strengths and opportunities to provide a framework for success;*
- *be proactive, responsive and deliberate in all planning efforts to better prepare for and manage the rate, style, and amount of change;*
- *engage in careful planning that results in deliberate decisions with the help of an educated, professional staff and informed and committed resident volunteers; and*
- *maintain a diverse and vibrant community that is fiscally sustainable.*

Development will happen, therefore we must have tools in place to achieve our vision and control future growth. The town's primary tool to implement the goals of the POCD is its zoning regulations which must be designed to firmly assert the community's standards and requirements for development to ensure high quality architectural and landscape design that protects and maintains community character and adds value to the property.



A/Z Corporation on Rte. 2



Economic Activity Map

Per Assessor
Data 7/3/2013

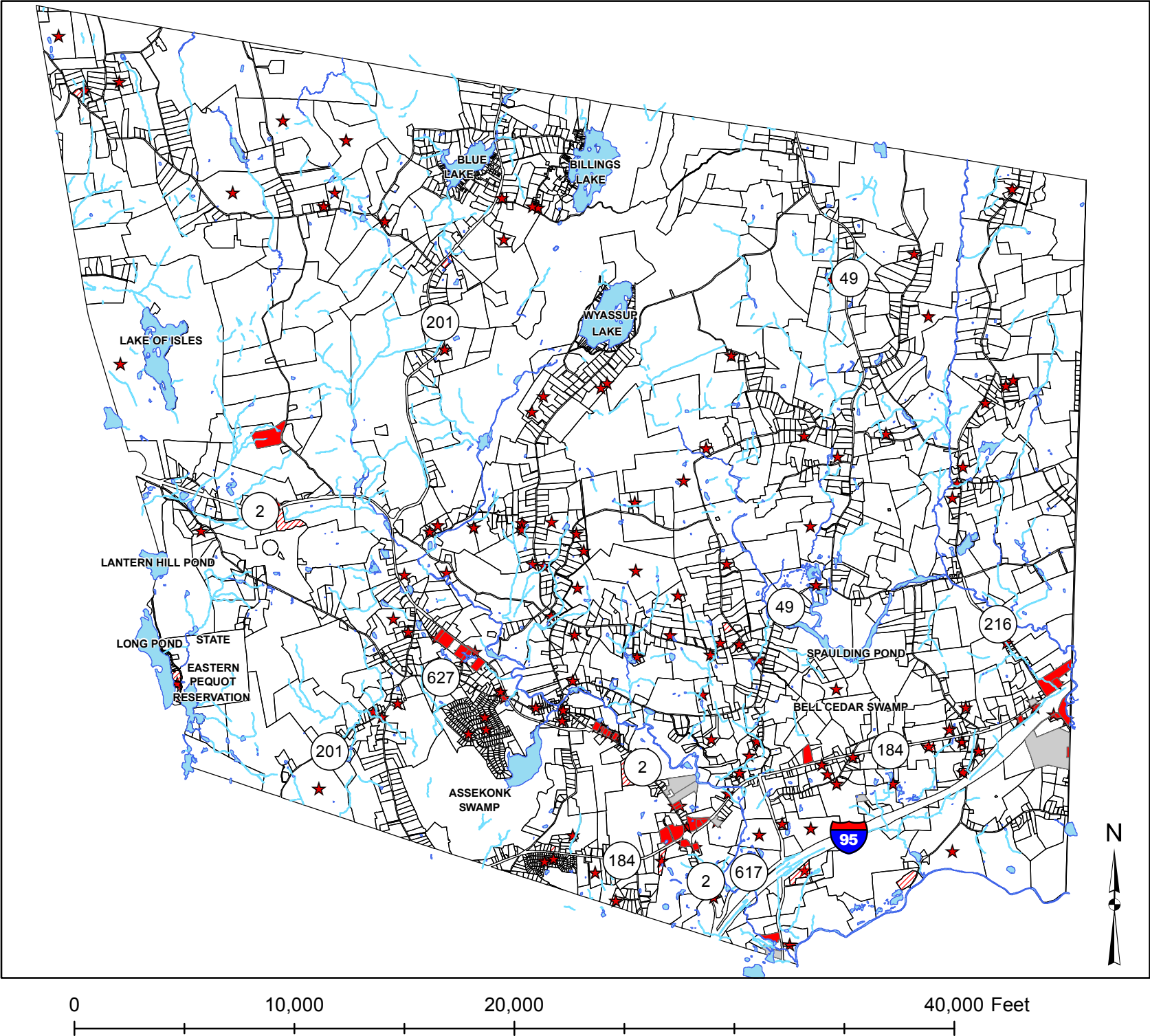
Land Use

-  Commercial
-  Industrial
-  Mixed Use Urban
-  Other

-Other Commercial Activity includes Farms, Home Occupations, Commercial Services and Recreational Facilities with Commercial component.

Notes

THIS MAP IS PREPARED FOR THE INVENTORY OF REAL PROPERTY FOUND WITHIN THESE JURISDICTIONS AND IS COMPILED FROM RECORDED DEEDS, PLATS, AND OTHER PUBLIC RECORDS AND DATA. USERS OF THE MAP ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED THAT THE AFOREMENTIONED PUBLIC PRIMARY INFORMATION SOURCES SHOULD BE CONSULTED FOR VERIFICATION OF THE INFORMATION CONTAINED ON THIS MAP. THE TOWNS AND THE MAPPING COMPANIES ASSUME NO LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE INFORMATION CONTAINED ON THIS MAP. HORIZONTAL DATUM BASED ON THE CONNECTICUT STATE PLANE COORDINATE SYSTEM, NAD83



9. Housing

Consistent with Connecticut's stated growth principle to "Expand Housing Opportunities and Design Choices to Accommodate a Variety of Household Types and Needs," North Stonington's vision as it relates to housing emphasizes the importance of housing for people of all ages and income levels. Residents also envision current and future housing patterns that will reflect the rural atmosphere, contribute to the small town spirit, and help further the Town's economic development goals. The following statements result from an analysis of current conditions and trends and community opinion.

- **Residents support the expansion of housing choices.**
- **There is a need for more housing choices. North Stonington is overinvested in single family houses, leaving few opportunities for those who need or desire other housing options (primarily for elderly citizens and younger residents).**
- **Housing prices grew at a much greater pace than income, creating a gap in what is affordable to new homebuyers.**
- **North Stonington severely lags in creating state-qualified affordable housing.**

9.1 Planning Context and Implications

Demographic trends not only indicate that Connecticut's population is aging, and household size shrinking, but also that an equally large number of young adults exists between the ages of 25 and 34 associated with the "millennial generation." These members outnumber the "baby boom" generation and have vastly different needs and desires, thus creating additional planning challenges for many communities who seek to provide for their aging residents while also attracting and retaining younger ones. Mobility is a new trend for younger people who will go to where the work is and where housing is affordable.

Change in Income Compared to Change in Sales Price, North Stonington			
	2000	2010	% Change 2000-2010
Town Median Household Income	\$61,733	\$75,162	22%
State Median Household Income	\$53,935	\$65,686	22%
Housing Value	\$159,400	\$241,000	51%
Median Sales Price SFH	\$166,000	\$220,950	33%

Figure 15 - Sources: US Census and The Warren Group.

In the past decade, the percentage change in housing value and median sales price has outpaced household income as indicated in Figure 15. The median sales price for a single-family house in North Stonington has further increased to \$263,000 in 2012. If income growth continues to lag behind growth in sales prices, it might become much more difficult for residents to remain in Town if they need to or chose to move into a new unit. Furthermore, an analysis of wages for jobs in North Stonington indicates that North Stonington's housing stock is not affordable to local workers; even in two-worker households.

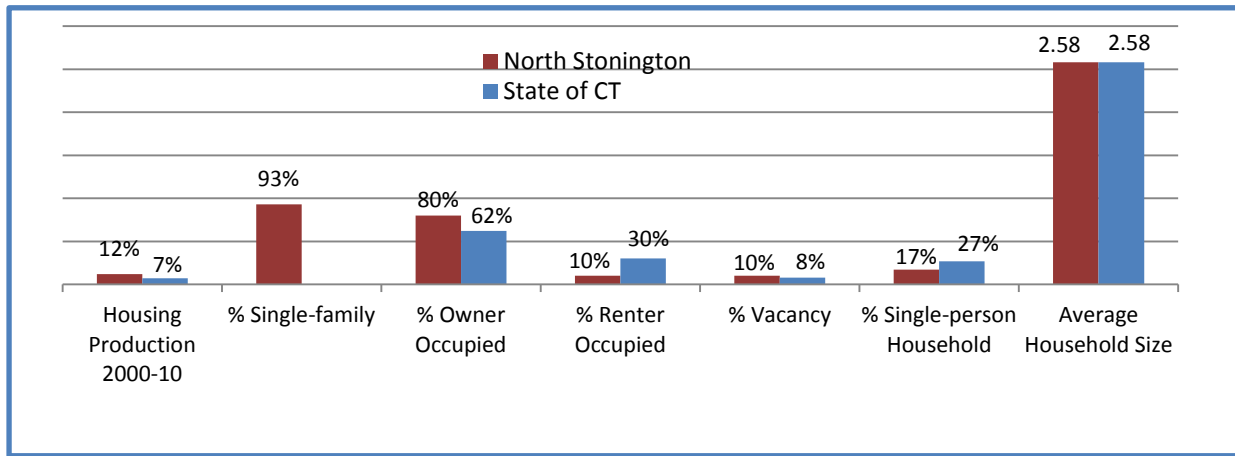


Figure 16 - Sources: US Census and The Warren Group

North Stonington's housing stock might be another reason for the migration of younger and older adults from town. 93% of the "housing portfolio" is comprised of single family housing units of which 80% are owner occupied, leaving few alternatives to owning a single family house in North Stonington – alternatives that might be important for young adults, empty nesters, and seniors. The housing stock is attractive to families, which may explain the continued in-migration of families with children.

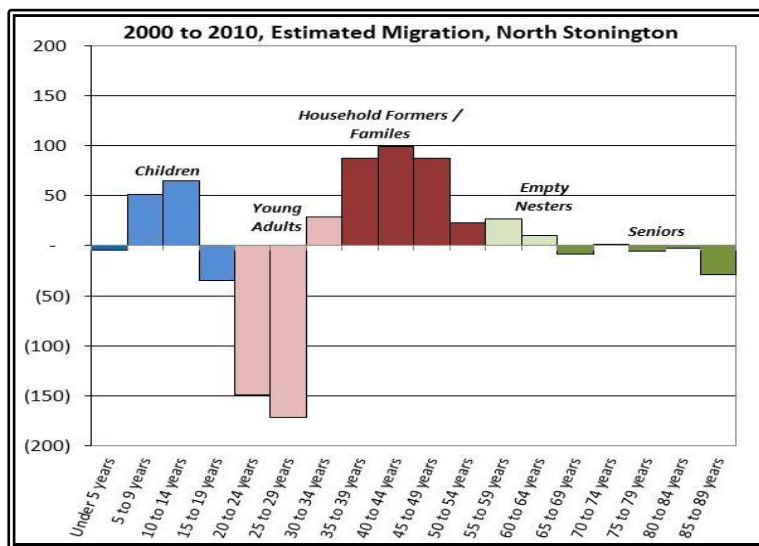


Figure 17 - Sources: US Census, CT Department of Public Health and Planimetrics.



Example of Multi-family Housing (above) and Single- family (below)



9.2 Housing and Economic Development

Comprising nearly 80% of the town's Grand List, housing is an important source of revenue for the town. The availability of workforce housing is also essential to sustain any future commercial growth as it has been shown to increase employment (and spending) by giving employers a competitive advantage because of their subsequent ability to attract and retain workers. **Encouraging workforce housing in or near the existing commercial and industrial zones would increase the town's attractiveness for new commercial growth.**

9.3 Affordable Housing

As a tool to expand housing choice, the state currently has a controversial law on its books that *requires* 10% of the existing housing in a town to be “affordable” (meaning a household earning less than 60-80% of the median income must spend no more than 30% of its income on total housing costs)⁴. Because of its history as a working-class town, North Stonington probably has a lot of units that would meet that criterion, however the state *also requires* that the home either be deed-restricted; bought with a VA or CHFA loan; or subsidized by the government (i.e. funded by HOME or Community Development Grant money) to be counted as “affordable.” If a municipality has less than the required 10%, a developer can propose a housing project without following local zoning regulations such as dimensional requirements, setbacks, buffers, density or building character/design. A town has very few ways to legally deny such an application and towns are rarely successful in defeating this type of development. Currently, North Stonington only has 18 qualified units – or less than 1% of the required 10%. Because of our very low percentage, North Stonington is extremely vulnerable to state-mandated development (as are many rural towns).

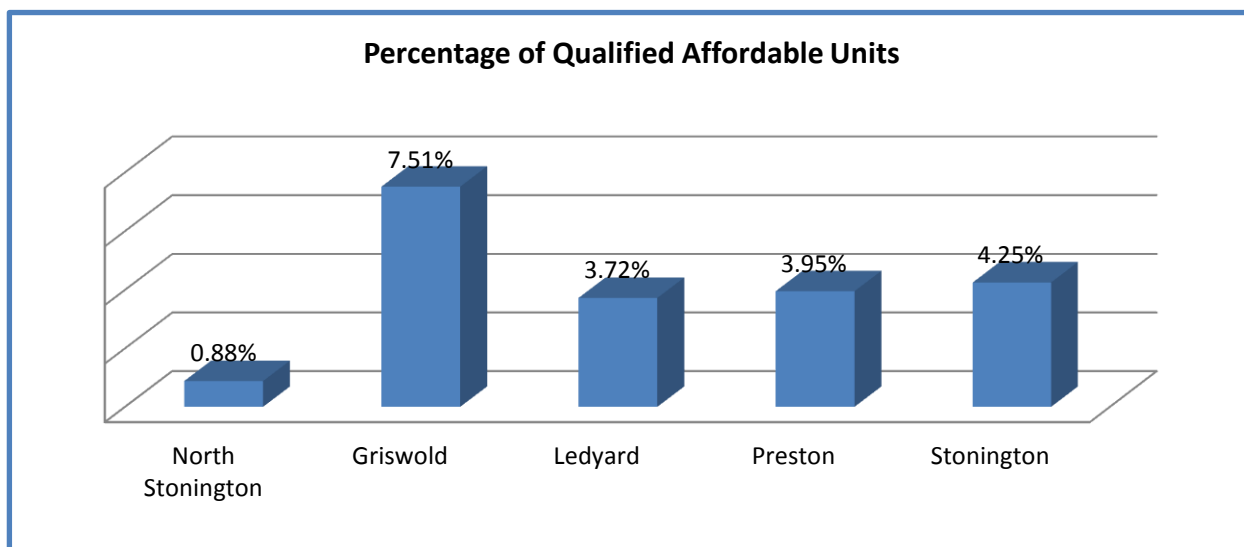


Figure 18 – Sources: CT Department of Community and Economic Development and US Census.

Low Income	A household that earns up to 50% of the median income
Moderate Income	A household that earns up to 80% of the median income
Workforce Housing	A household that earns up to 120% of the median income

With 80% of North Stonington residents owning their own homes, the town is clearly affordable. The units however, do not count in the eyes of the state because they are not deed restricted or subsidized.

⁴ See Connecticut General Statutes Chapter 126, Section 8-30g; “affordable” (in quotations) means that it is qualified affordable per 8-30g (i.e. deed restricted) rather than simply available a certain price point and therefore naturally affordable (no quotations) to many people in town.

Rural communities typically have limited access to utilities, transportation, and an employment center thus complicating the development of certain types of housing that could raise their percentages, but there are other alternatives to explore such as smaller multi-family units, senior housing, a community designed housing project that is consistent with community character and values, or creating an incentive program to deed restrict existing units. (See the 2012 Housing Plan for a more detailed discussion on housing strategies.)

In an effort to expand housing choice and increase the town's percentage of qualified affordable units, the North Stonington Affordable Housing Committee recently applied for and was awarded a State Housing Grant to develop an incentive housing zone which would allow for residential and mixed-use developments with a minimum of 20% qualified affordable units. In addition, the Planning and Zoning Commission recently approved an 18-unit subdivision which contained six qualified affordable units. An 84-unit affordable housing project along Route 2 (Meadow Court) received initial local and state approvals, and now is before the Water Pollution Control Authority for their approval. If they receive final approval from the Planning and Zoning Commission, and the units are built, the town would have enough "affordable" units to qualify it for a four-year moratorium from state-mandated (8-30g) housing developments.

Another point that was emphasized during the public input meetings was that affordable housing simply means housing available in a price range whereby the total housing costs are less than 30% of a person's income. Many teachers, firemen, EMTs, town-employees, and hospitality workers would qualify for this type of housing. Another misconception is that all people who qualify for affordable housing require additional services or a larger investment in transportation than the town can afford. The fact is that not all people who qualify for affordable housing require transportation services or other public assistance. Most teachers, firemen, town hall employees, and even seniors drive and are fully functioning members of the community. Having qualified affordable units in town will not necessarily mean a drain on town resources to provide services.

I want to see an increase in the amount and type of housing....	
...so my elderly parents/grandparents don't have to leave town when they retire.	35.10%
...so my kids can live here when they get out of school.	29.40%
... so we have more kids in our schools.	19.80%
... to make NS a more vibrant community.	36.60%
... so our teachers, firemen, and service employees (etc.) can live in town.	41.40%
OR...We have enough Housing choice and quantity in town.	39.30%

Figure 19 - Source: 2013 Community Survey

Affordable – When a household pays no more than 30% of annual household income for the mortgage, insurance and taxes, it is considered affordable.

Qualified Affordable Housing – A housing unit that complies with CGS 8-30g and therefore counted toward the Town's 10% affordable housing requirement.



9.4 Livability and Sustainability through Expanded Housing Choice

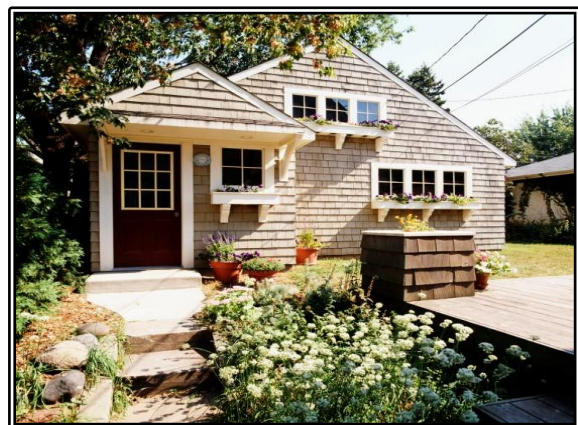
The whole issue of “housing” and “housing choice” is intertwined with many other planning issues such as economic development, vibrancy and quality of life. Vibrant, livable communities are those that recognize the need for housing opportunities and lifestyle amenities for all demographics. North Stonington must be proactive in order to expand housing choice to meet the needs of a changing demographic and market in a manner that not only protects the character and quality of life, but actually supports and promotes its community values. For North Stonington, it is not so much that residents are opposed to expanding housing choice; it is more an issue of design, scale, and location. Survey results showed little to no support for large multi-family units, but there was support for smaller 3-5 unit buildings as well as larger senior housing facilities provided they were well designed and attractively landscaped or screened. Other means identified to expand housing choice identified were: the introduction of mixed use development in select areas; home conversions; farm worker housing; and conservation subdivisions. Though one third of North Stonington residents live in the higher density Kingswood-Meadow Wood and Cedar Ridge developments, there was little support for allowing this type of development to be built in the future.



Example of mixed-use (residential above commercial)



Example of small-scale multifamily unit



Example of a smaller, customized house

9.5 Maintain Overall Densities While Allowing Additional Housing Opportunities

Residential growth trends, as informed by changing markets and demographics, include more rental units, smaller more customized houses, multi-generational designs, and an array of choices for seniors. Rural communities such as North Stonington may not be in favor of a more urbanized suburbia that can accommodate the needs of people of all ages, ethnicity, and income, but planning limited areas that *are* suitable for new and innovative residential development can effectively draw inappropriate development away from rural areas and resources that contribute to our character. Planned focused growth allows the town to attract and retain younger residents, ensuring a more vibrant, sustainable community in the future.

9.6 Summary

Consistent with the principles identified in the *2012 Housing Plan* (and included below), North Stonington's housing strategies will concentrate on:

- building its capacity to implement housing initiatives;
- maintaining overall densities while still allowing additional housing opportunities;
- striving to maximize the potential of existing housing units to meet housing needs;
- pursuing community-initiated housing projects; and
- encouraging the private sector to create housing choices.

New Housing opportunities should:

1. Enhance our community:

- Reflect our rural character.
- Provide for a mix of ages and income levels with opportunities for families, our work force, young adults, and seniors.
- Support and promote our agricultural and small-town values.

2. Be well-planned:

- Be of a type, size, and style that is appropriate in our community.
- Give deference to small-scale projects.
- Be of high quality design.
- Be supported by on-site water and septic systems.

3. Be located in appropriate places:

- Areas for village-style housing might work in certain areas along the western end of Route 2, certain areas along 184, and near I-95. Mixed use development could work in these same areas.



Example of age-restricted housing - Rosenthal Gardens, Branford. By NeighborWorks.



Example of a Conservation subdivision located in North Kingstown, RI (North Kingstown Green).

10. Community Facilities and Infrastructure

Infrastructure

Residents visualize a town that provides for social and recreational opportunities through the addition of parks or new facilities, and by more efficient use, or repurposing, of existing facilities. Residents envision the provision of infrastructure, the creative use of alternative energy, and expanded transportation options as a way to attract businesses. Residents feel the current roads should be maintained with better accommodation for pedestrians and cyclists.

10.1 Town Government

The Town of North Stonington operates under a Board of Selectmen, town meeting form of government. The town meeting is the legislative body for the town. All town board and commission meetings are open to the public. Most town facilities are located in or near the Village. Recent upgrades to the town hall include the installation of solar panels. Future plans include cosmetic improvements to the Old and New Town Halls.

Typical Calendar of Board and Commission Meetings

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 1	Hewitt Farm Committee (Every other Monday @ 3pm Town Hall)	Board of Selectmen Recreation (6:15pm) (NS Probate Court)	Board of Finance (7:30pm) (Town Hall or Wheeler Gymnasium Music Room)	Planning & Zoning Commission	
Week 2		Board of Selectmen	Board of Finance (7:30pm) (Town Hall or Wheeler Gymnasium Music Room) Inland Wetlands Commission Board of Ed (7:30) Wheeler Gymnasium Music Room	Planning & Zoning Commission	
Week 3	Hewitt Farm Committee (Every other Monday @ 3pm Town Hall)	Board of Selectmen Zoning Board of Appeals (Senior Center)	Board of Finance (7:30pm) (Town Hall or Wheeler Gymnasium Music Room)	Economic Development Commission (6:00pm) Juvenile Review Board (2pm @ The Grange)	
Week 4		Board of Selectmen	Board of Finance (7:30pm) (Town Hall or Wheeler Gymnasium Music Room) Board of Ed (7:30pm) Wheeler Gymnasium Music Room	Conservation Commission (6:00pm) Affordable Housing Commission (6:00pm Wheeler HS Media Room)	

All meetings are held at 7:00 PM, in the New Town Hall conference room unless otherwise noted. Check Town website at www.northstoningtonct.org for times and locations of all meetings.

10.2 Facilities and Services

With the exception of emergency services and the need for a dog pound, the existing community facilities are operating effectively and services are considered adequate to meet the needs of residents at this time. According to the town survey (and supported by other public input), a slight majority was willing to vote for funding for emergency services, infrastructure, and the schools. With respect to land acquisition, the selectmen feel that the town owns sufficient land to meet future community needs, but must be diligent in its search for opportunities to acquire land or vacant space to satisfy future needs. The largest capital improvement projects for the next ten years include renovations to the schools and the construction of a new emergency services facility that will consolidate fire and ambulance services in one building. This leaves a tremendous opportunity to create a cohesive master plan for a municipal "campus" that would include the old firehouse and the existing recreation facility in an integrated whole. This



area along Rocky Hollow and Route 2 is just outside the historic district so its design should mesh with the character of the village with

respect to setbacks, design, landscaping, and location of parking lots. As the gateway to the village, it should also reflect the pride we take in our town, our volunteers, and the people who work for us.

Master planning would not only allow for greater flexibility and creativity on individual sites, but would give the town the opportunity to create a design that reflects our commitment to *carefully* plan for the future needs of residents rather than react piecemeal as needs arise and end up with a disjointed, unworkable, or retrofitted feel to the area. A well-thought

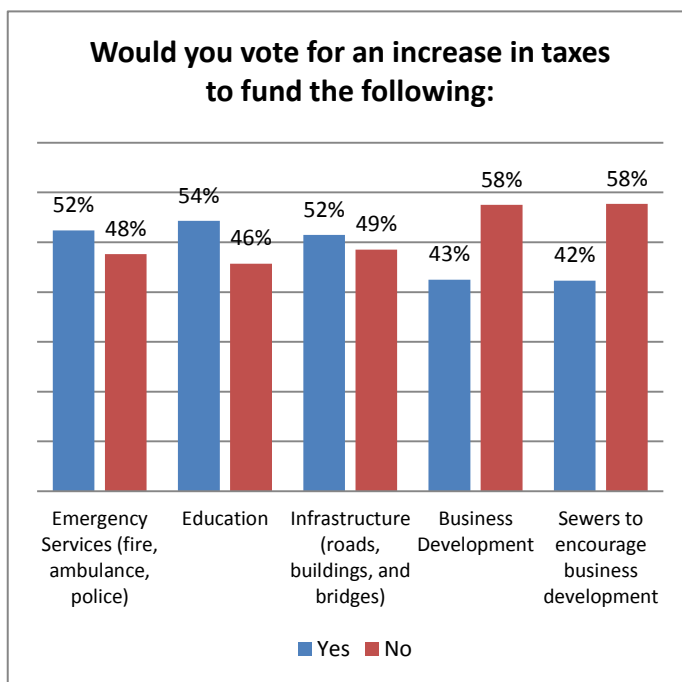


Figure 20 - Source: 2013 Community Survey

out master plan would allow us to build as needed and when funds become available, but end up with a unified whole that looks right and works well.

10.3 Emergency Services

The North Stonington Volunteer Fire Company, founded in 1945, operates one station in the Village and provides fire protection for the entire town. It responds to accidents that occur on I-95, and provides and receives mutual aid to neighboring communities on an as-needed basis. Currently, 48 volunteer fire personnel serve the town.

Recent issues identified with the existing space in both the ambulance and firehouse facilities have prompted a proposal to combine the two facilities in a new building to be located on the eight acre parcel located at the corner of Rocky Hollow Road and Route 2 across from the existing firehouse. The benefits of constructing a new facility include:

The benefits of constructing a new facility include:

- **increased safety;**
- **reduction in response time by allowing volunteers to spend time and be at the station;**
- **financial savings by combining the ambulance and firehouse into one facility; and**
- **greater emergency operations center capabilities (better communications with all units under one roof).**

use. With respect the ambulance facility, the existing deed restriction dictates that it be reserved for public use. The Boy Scouts have expressed interest in using the facility.



Resident State Troopers provide police protection with offices located in the Old Town Hall. Three troopers work day and evening shifts. Personnel from the Montville Barracks are called in on an as-needed basis to provide around-the-clock coverage. Residents raised many concerns about speeding and growing crime rate in town during the public meetings and in their written survey responses, and questioned the need for more troopers.

The North Stonington Ambulance Association located on Mains Crossing, provides emergency response throughout town. A core paid crew



provides services 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. The Association is supplemented by volunteers who work ambulance

shifts on the first crew, as first responders, or can form a second ambulance crew when needed.

10.4 Town Facilities

The Town Garage is located on Wyassup Road. The Public Works Department is responsible for maintaining the road system and for general maintenance of town facilities and public areas. During the past 10 years the facility has been updated to include solar panels, new office space, updated stormwater drainage systems, and a new truck wash station. A new sand and salt shed was constructed at the Town Garage with a covered area used to protect many of the town trucks from constant exposure to the elements.

The Transfer Station located on Wintechog Hill Road provides solid waste disposal. Its "Swap Shed," built as an Eagle Scout project, provides a "re-use" opportunity for residents. North

Stonington's recycling program has reduced input into the landfill by an impressive 65%. The transfer station now utilizes a trash compactor; greatly increasing the overall efficiency and capacity of the facility. Other upgrades include improvements to the drainage system and the installation of solar panels. Long-range plans include the completion of the weighing scales.

The North Stonington Senior Center is located in the Holly Green complex. The building has a kitchen and large multipurpose room used by seniors during the day and for town functions in the evening. The center has just over 150 members and provides activities for approximately 60 seniors on a regular basis,



including Wednesday luncheons and planned trips. The center is run by a director with the help of several volunteers who supplement the transportation services provided by the Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center (PNC). Currently North Stonington only uses their senior bus for planned recreational outings, and not to transport seniors to appointments or for grocery shopping trips, but hopes to secure funding in the future to expand its own transportation service apart from the PNC. The director assists senior residents in navigating the various state assistance program applications (i.e., insurance, food stamps, and heating assistance), and hosts informational seminars on a regular basis to educate seniors on a variety of topics ranging from Medicare programs to how to avoid falls. With an aging

population, the town should be planning for the possible expansion of the Senior Center to accommodate this growing demographic.

The Recreation Department administers recreational and educational programs and activities to benefit the residents of the community. The **North Stonington Recreation Area** is located on Rocky Hollow Road within walking distance of the schools. Facilities include lighted tennis and basketball courts, a baseball field, and soccer field. There is a



Volleyball Courts at Rocky Hollow Recreational Facility

playground and a “Rec Shack” with rest rooms. Renovations to the Recreation Area were completed 2012. The following infrastructure improvements were made:

- replaced/reconstructed the existing tennis courts;
- replaced/reconstructed the existing basketball courts;
- constructed a new volleyball court – also used as ice-skating rink in the winter;
- replaced and expanded the existing water line and electrical services to the site; and
- constructed stormwater collection and pretreatment facilities.

A very popular and well-organized Little League program uses both the Recreation Area field and a baseball field located on property owned

by the Grange. The town hopes to create additional athletic fields on the school campus in the future. Future goals to expand the Recreation Area include the acquisition of the state owned 15-acre area adjacent to the nine acres the town leases for its current recreation area. The site connects with the school recreational fields and facilities by way of a footbridge across Assekonk Pond.

10.5 Schools

There are three public schools: **North Stonington Elementary School**, **Wheeler Middle School**, and **Wheeler High School**. They are located close to the Village in a campus



NS Elementary, Middle and High School Campus

setting. The campus is bisected by Route 2 with an underground pedestrian tunnel connecting the two sides. The **North Stonington Christian Academy** and the **Cornerstone Baptist Academy**, operated by the Second and (former) Third Baptist Churches respectively, are both private schools located in town. As of August 2013, 739 students were enrolled in North Stonington’s three public schools: Pre-K (17); K-5 (337); 6-8 (149); and 9-12(236). The following chart is taken from the 2013-2014 budget and shows past, current and projected enrollment.

Enrollment as of 10/1	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15 Projected	2015-16 Projected	2016-17 Projected	2017-18 Projected
Elementary School (PreK – 5)	371	384	385	378	387	387	383	385
Middle School (6-8)	201	181	176	154	189	187	192	199
High School (9-12)	224	216	203	218	213	212	209	208
Sub-total - In District	796	781	764	750	779	786	784	792
Vocational Agriculture (VoAg)	11	19	14	12	11	6	6	6
Private/RESC Special Education	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Magnet Schools	8	9	13	15	17	17	11	11
Technical Schools	17	19	15	9	6	5	5	5
Sub-total - Out of District	36	47	42	36	34	28	22	22
Total In & Out of District	832	828	806	786	813	814	806	814

Several studies have been conducted over the past ten years to determine the current and future needs of the schools. The Ad Hoc School Committee was formed in 2008 for the purpose investigating the school buildings in terms of their current physical status as well as their ability to support current and future student needs. The *2011 Feasibility Study* conducted by Quisenberry Arcari Architects, LLC, presented several options for possible improvements for each school to be completed in stages. For the elementary school, all options recommended the addition of a gym/multipurpose room and moving all general classes such as art, computer lab, and music to the first floor. One option recommended that the sixth grade be moved back to the elementary school as this would increase the state reimbursement rate for any work done here. Recommendations for the middle and high school included a new larger cafeteria to reduce the number of lunch periods needed, remodeling the current cafeteria for classrooms, and to tear down the old middle school. All recommendations were presented to the Board of Selectman, the Board of Finance and the Board of Education. Ultimately, the Board of Education will present their recommendation for town approval via referendum.

The study also discussed the potential costs and savings associated with closing the High School, though the residents ultimately voted to keep the school open. The Superintendent of Schools and Board of Education members made a number of changes to the education specifications from the original feasibility study, and the architects will again review the plan with the new specifications which will be voted on by the residents in 2014. The concerns of the high school facility were clearly documented in the *New England Association Schools and Colleges (NEASC) 2004 Decennial Report* which is available for review.

In 2013, the **Informed Citizens of North Stonington (ICONS)** group organized a *Community Conversation* about North Stonington Schools and their place in the community. A number of ideas were discussed that would be beneficial to the school department and district. Overall, participants felt that the schools were a source of pride for the community. The small class size and low student teacher ratio, quality of students, and quality of the community were the main positive attributes identified. The other major themes that emerged focused more on areas of needed improvement and can basically be grouped into the following categories:

communication, awareness, and participation; coordinated interaction between school community and community resources; budget clarification, prioritization (distinguishing needs from desires), and funding options. Participants all stressed the need for new creative approaches to all issues identified.

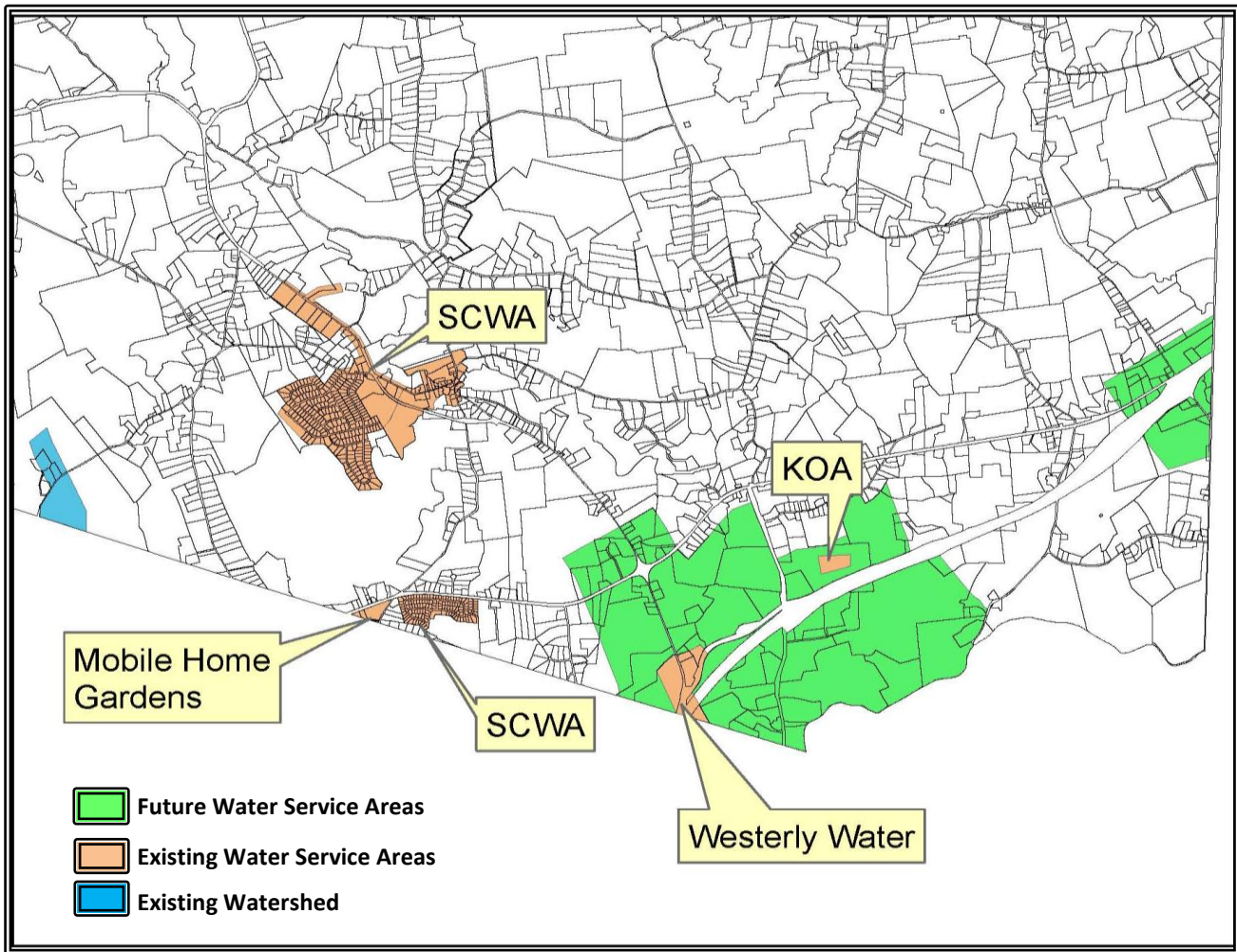
With respect to improving communications, a quarterly newsletter is being developed which will be mailed to all town residents. In addition,

the chair of the Board of Education and the superintendent plan to develop a cooperative effort between the district and town in terms of financing the administration of an adult education program for residents in the district. This cooperative effort should extend further to include discussing short and long term plans for the schools, so that they can be coordinated into, and harmonious with, town wide municipal plans.

10.6 Water Infrastructure

North Stonington is fortunate to have an abundance of surface and groundwater resources, and protecting the quality of ground water continues to be a high priority for the town. The monitoring, management, and distribution of this resource involves private entities, local, state and federal agencies, and non-profit organizations. In some instances, the supply and management of the system crosses town and state boundaries. The vast majority of residential and commercial development is served by private wells. Public drinking water supply services in town are limited. Both the Town of Westerly Water Department and the Southeastern Connecticut Water Authority (SCWA), which provide limited service in North Stonington, possess the capability to expand into and serve development along the Route 2 corridor. The mobile home park and KOA Campground both operate their own

community wells to provide water service. There is no public drinking water from a surface water supply. In 2002, the town was declared an exclusive service provider of water systems. In 2008, an *Exclusive Service Area Water Plan* was completed and which examined the town's existing land use and future service areas. The plan concluded with an analysis of the town's future needs and potential alternative supply sources and confirmed North Stonington's tremendous water resources - more than adequate to meet future demand. The current withdrawal permit could be altered in the future to allow us to increase our demand for the purposes of exporting water. Five rivers and associated watersheds located partially or entirely within North Stonington have been identified to have the potential for potable water supply and are federally recognized as important.



10.7 Sewer Infrastructure

While sewer avoidance in the non-residential zones remains a goal of the town, there is growing recognition of the need for this type of infrastructure if the town hopes to be more competitive in the future and grow its economy. When residents were asked in the 2012 Community Survey whether they would encourage development in the non-residential zones even if it meant introducing sewers to the area, 52% said they would versus 31% who did not agree. Ultimately it will be up to the residents whether or not they want to fund the installation of any infrastructure (water, sewer,

gas etc.), but the town is being proactive in its approach by securing the funding for all the necessary studies that will enable developers and residents to make informed decisions about future infrastructure improvement projects. Currently, no municipal sewer infrastructure exists and there is no inter-municipal agreement with any abutting municipality or entity. Disposal of sanitary waste is by private septic system on all but a very few properties. The Hilltop Inn and Bellissimo Grande Hotel on Route 2 currently operate package treatment plants to handle their waste and two properties near the border with the Town of Stonington tie

into Stonington's wastewater treatment facility under private agreements. Discussions continue to take place between the Towns of Stonington



Package Treatment Plan at Bellisimo Grande Hotel

and North Stonington regarding a municipal sewer service agreement. In 1994, the North Stonington Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) established a sewer service district in the southern part of town and several studies have been conducted to explore the feasibility of other sanitary waste disposal options for future commercial development. Most recently, the town has secured funding to conduct a formal sewer study that would clearly identify the potential flows and cost of construction as well as the potential modifications needed at the Stonington Plant to accommodate an increase in flow.

10.8 Transportation

According to the Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments, transportation and congestion are major issues for the entire southeastern Connecticut region. Interstate 95 and the four state highways that traverse North Stonington provide connections to and between other towns in the region. I-95, the primary East Coast limited-access highway, has two interchanges (Exits 92 and 93) in North Stonington. Route 2, a state highway that bisects the town from east to west, is a principal access route to Rhode Island beaches, and is an advertised route to Foxwoods Resort Casino. This results in a six-mile trip through North Stonington along its main thoroughfare. Exit 93, almost at the Rhode Island border, provides access to Routes 216 and 184, and to commercial establishments located at this end of the town.

Route 184 from Exit 93 is also used as a "short cut" to Foxwoods. Since 1992, Foxwoods has had a significant impact on traffic in the region. It contributes to an average of 19,000 vehicles

per day on Route 2 in North Stonington. Route 2 has clearly borne the brunt of the increased traffic, but there is also a noticeable increase in volumes on local roads as people seek alternative routes.

Route 2 is constructed to arterial standards between Norwich and Cossaduck Hill Road (Route 201) in North Stonington. South of the Stonington-North Stonington town line, Route 2 has been widened to four lanes. North Stonington residents continue to oppose this type of roadway "improvement." Future development could heighten the desire of the Connecticut Department of Transportation to realign and widen its roads. Residents of the town are acutely aware of the impacts this would have on their quality of life. The town is resolved to do what it can to keep Route 2 a two-lane road that is both safe and scenic.

Rail, Bus, and Air Transportation Services

Passenger rail service is provided along Long Island Sound by **AMTRAK**, with stops in New London, Mystic and Westerly, historically as part of the Northeast Corridor service between

Boston and Washington, DC. Beginning August 17, 2013, the corridor was extended to include stops as far south as Norfolk, VA and to connect the Northeast and the Mid-Atlantic. In addition, **Shoreline East Service** is slowly expanding and can now be accessed in New London as well as in Old Saybrook with its final destination being Grand Central Station in New York City. The fare

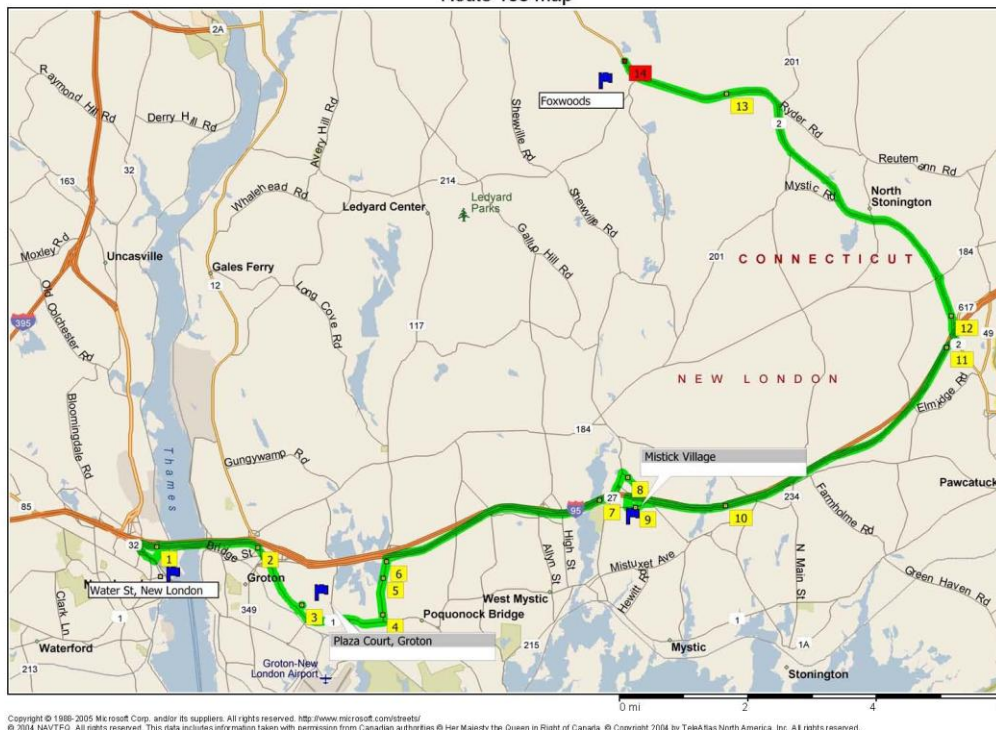


for seniors (especially from Old Saybrook) is minimal, making travel to New York City very inexpensive.

Southeast Area Transit (SEAT) provides local bus service in the region. Only one route passes through North Stonington on a daily basis making two stops along Route 2. There is potential for an expansion of transit services in the future that may include possibility of a *Demand-Response-Van* service rather than an additional fixed bus route.

Primary air service is provided at T.F. Greene Airport in Warwick, and Bradley airport in Hartford (33 and 60 miles away respectively). Groton and Westerly also have small airports nearby to service area residents and visitors.

Route 108 map





Community Facilities Map

Parcel Lines To
10/1/2012

- Cell Towers
- Road Classification**
- PRIVATE
- STATE
- TOWN
- Existing Sewer District
- Water Distribution**
- Projected Water Areas
- Water Distribution Areas
- Facilities**
- +

Education
- +

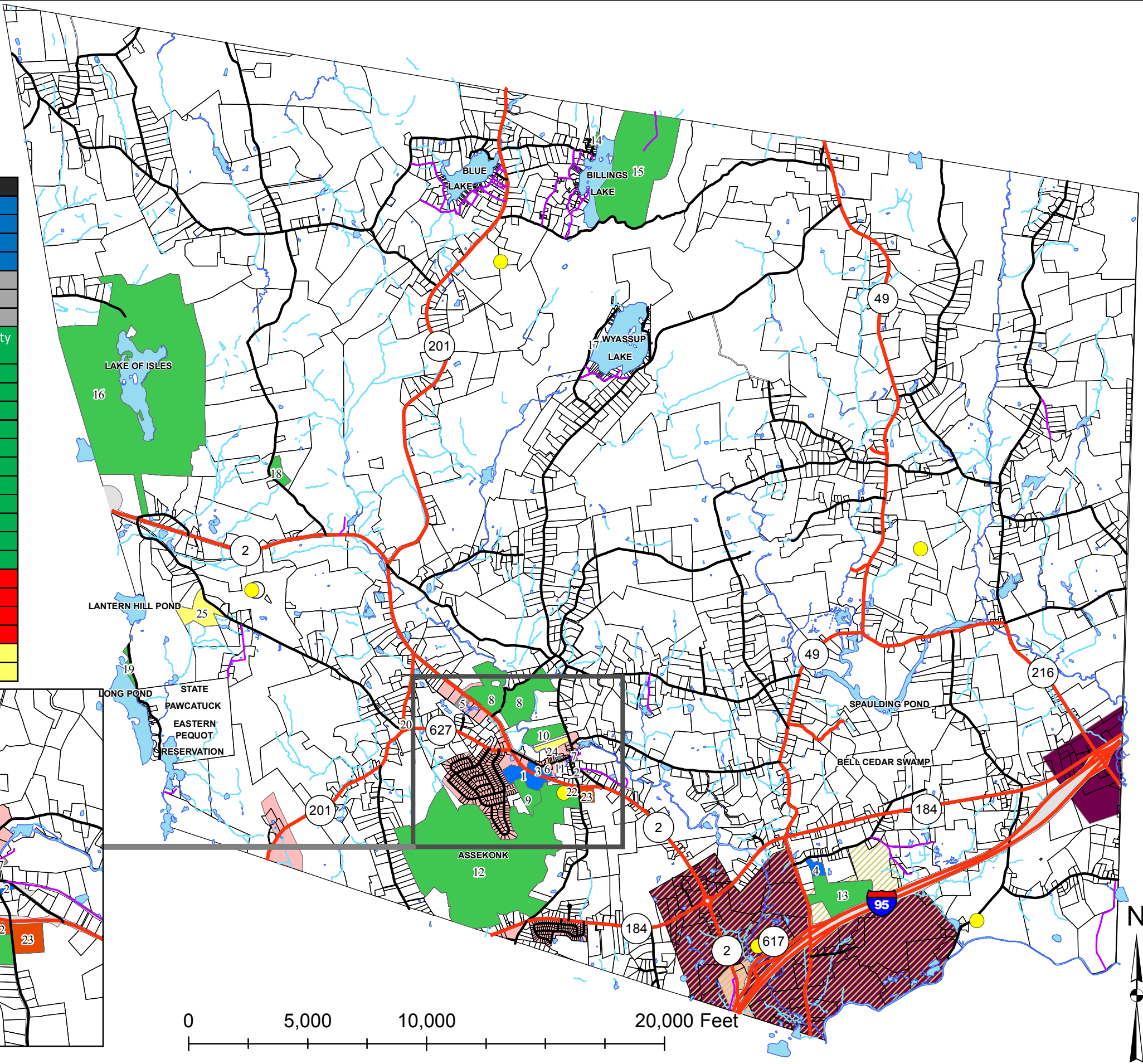
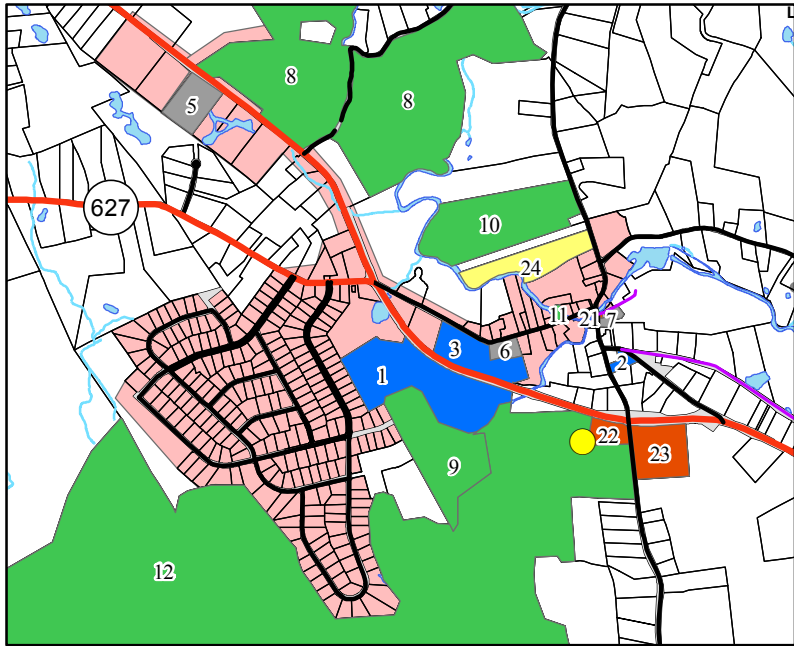
General
- +

Parks and Recreation
- +

Public Safety
- +

Public Works

Number	Name
1	Wheeler Elementary School
2	Cornerstone Baptist Academy
3	Wheeler Middle School/High School
4	NS Christian Academy
5	Senior Center
6	Wheeler Library
7	Town Hall Complex
8	Hewitt Property - Trails and Community Gardens
9	School Athletic Fields
10	Grange Ball Fields and Fair Grounds
11	Town Green
12	Rocky Hollow Recreational Facility
13	Kampgrounds of America
14	Billings Lake Boat Launch
15	Camp Wightman
16	Lake of Isles Golf Course
17	Wyassup Lake Boat Launch
18	Little League Fields
19	Long Pond Boat Launch
20	NS Ambulance Assoc.
21	Resident State Troopers
22	NS Fire Company
23	Proposed New EMS Facility
24	Town Garage
25	Transfer Station



11. Goals and Objectives

North Stonington's 2013 Plan of Conservation and Development requires the town to take charge of its future with renewed intensity. In order to achieve sustainability – protecting the things we cherish about our town while keeping it affordable – we must solicit the businesses we want for the town, define North Stonington's aesthetic in landscaping and architecture so that it can be followed, and have a cohesive plan for protecting our natural resources and farms. Our plans must result in actions such as the adoption of better regulations, solicitation of appropriate development, acquisition of conservation lands, and intelligent use and preservation of natural resources. These can only be achieved by a meaningful dialogue between informed town leaders and an energized and active populace.

While the Plan of Conservation and Development is produced by the Planning and Zoning Commission, it states the intention and commitment of the town as a whole. The following goals and objectives then, are for everyone: leaders and volunteers, boards and commissions, tax payers and residents. Each corresponds to one of the themes, or core values, identified in the *Visioning Session*.

I. Build vitality and enhance the assets and abilities of the town and maintain our strong sense of community.

Rationale: A community that is self-reliant and participatory, efficiently using local and outside resources, has a higher level of volunteer service, and is a community that is able to turn plans into action.

Core Value: Community

Objectives and Strategies:

A. Help residents connect.

1. Work to increase civic, cultural, and educational opportunities and capitalize on existing natural and recreational assets.
 - a. Work with the schools to improve volunteer programs and to develop after-school programs and/or internships that connect students with the environment and with town government and other organizations.
 - b. Create an Arts and Cultural program that utilizes the Hewitt Farm, Fairgrounds, and other appropriate properties for concert series, guided hikes, an artist in residence program, and agricultural events (in addition to the Fair).

- a. *Support the Grange, Wheeler Library, the Historical Society, the Garden Club and other local organizations by holding membership drives and attend events.*

2. Create community gathering areas and revitalize the Village.

- a. *Consider tax incentives to businesses who will locate in the village (i.e., hardware store location and former law office).*
- b. *Develop or identify a possible location for a community center to provide all residents with a meeting and recreation place.*



Depiction of the possible re-development of the former law office and hardware store in the Historic Village. In addition to possible tax incentives to locate a business in the Village center, simple façade improvements, the addition of sidewalks and crosswalks and the introduction of street furniture are possible investments that could be made to give new life to the area. Both buildings offer mixed-use opportunities and would provide a much sought after gathering place for residents and visitors. Rendering by Julia M. Leeming, Architect

3. Promote greater mobility.

- *Properly mark existing trails and link more trails to the village area.*
- *Address the issue of speeding on the roads.*
- *Encourage or require bike and footpaths in all new subdivisions.*

B. Use the internet more effectively to communicate local views and board and commission activity.

1. Publish e-newsletter that provides monthly progress reports from each board and commission.
2. Use social media to better communicate with residents.
3. Make websites more user-friendly and informative.

C. Provide creative and consistent ways for residents to participate in local government and the planning process.

1. Expand the leadership base.
2. Proactively encourage residents to become involved in the town on commissions and committees and to attend meetings.
3. Support and encourage volunteerism.
4. The town must reciprocate and share the leadership role by empowering its existing boards, committees, and commissions and giving them the resources and support needed to pursue their stated goals.
5. Consider internship programs with the high school so that students can become a pool of committed and knowledgeable citizens that can hold office in the future.



II. Diversify and Grow the Local Economy

Rationale: In order for North Stonington to compete in the current economy, and still retain its character, it must be specific and deliberate in its planning efforts. North Stonington must attract appropriate commercial development in order to diversify the tax base, stabilize the tax rate, and reduce the burden on homeowners.

Core Value: Progress

Objectives and Strategies

A. Work to create a positive, competitive business climate by increasing developer confidence, flexibility in land use regulations, clarity in design standards, and greater predictability in the application process.

1. Invite developers and architects to participate in regular meetings to discuss ways to improve the permitting process.
2. Consolidate the Commercial Development, Office Research, and Village Commercial Zones into one unified Economic Development Zone and review/update permitted uses. Evaluate all zones and permitted uses to determine land uses that are more compatible with the town's vision.
3. Create flexible zoning regulations that reflect a clear vision for our commercial and industrial zones and streamline application process to increase developer confidence and predictability. Regulations should allow for broader interpretations and not attempt to define everything but they should be reflective of clear master plans and aesthetic concepts that define and guide the

developer to a final project that is both successful for the developer and sustainable for the town.

4. Actively and deliberately communicate plans and achievements via e-newsletter, North Stonington Bulletin Board, social media, and/or traditional press.

B. Expand upon North Stonington's existing strengths and opportunities to provide a framework for success.

1. Sustain economic development through green energy technology and agriculture.
 - a. *Encourage and permit green energy facilities (research and development or actual production facilities) and other self-funding commercial and/or industrial uses.*
 - b. *Promote agricultural businesses and supportive industries that are vital to the local and regional economy.*
2. Invest in infrastructure necessary to support business growth.
3. Accentuate and promote the positive attributes of North Stonington that would make it appealing for a business to locate here (i.e. natural resources, good schools, educated workforce etc.).
4. Pursue place-based economic development.

C. Be proactive, responsive and deliberate in all planning efforts to better prepare for and manage the rate, style, and amount of change.

1. Ensure that the built and natural environments reflect the heritage of North Stonington.
 - *Create speculative master plans or concept plans for the Highway Commercial and Commercial 2 Zone and the zones around the rotary. Include specifications and regulations to minimize traffic impacts, address infrastructure needs and availability, and treat the Shunock River as an amenity.*
 - *Adopt clear and specific design guidelines and architectural standards to better inform future development and/or consider forming a Design Review Committee to advise the Planning and Zoning Commission.*
 - *Hold workshops and charettes, and utilize student resources to develop site specific plans for select parcels (i.e. Wintechog Hill, conservation subdivision).*
2. Complete the *Sewer Study* to determine the exact cost/benefit associated with extending sewers into the CD and/or I Zone. Continue investigating the feasibility and cost of a possible sewer connection with Stonington. Tie this, and other municipal decisions, to thoughtful master planning of the commercial zones by the Planning and Zoning Commission.
3. Study and plan new and innovative ways of bringing small businesses to designated commercial and industrial areas. Identify existing properties that can be readily renovated or rehabilitated for such uses.
4. Hold joint meetings of boards and commissions to discuss ways to improve our response to economic development opportunities, and to be more deliberate and less reactive in our approach to planning.
5. Implement the 2012 Economic Development Action Plan through Economic Development Commission funding, actively inviting greater public participation and involvement, greater

accountability of Commission members to attend and participate, and by completing tasks identified in the Implementation Plan.

D. Engage in careful planning with the help of an educated, professional staff and informed and committed resident volunteers.

1. Provide ongoing support for planning staff by utilizing interns and consultants when necessary.
2. Consider hiring an economic development specialist.
3. Utilize visual planning aides and software to determine and better conceptualize potential development possibilities (to more effectively manage change).
4. Hold regular informal neighborhood meetings and/or planning workshops on a variety of planning topics relevant to North Stonington.
5. Actively commit to adopted vision and goals. Keep POCD “alive” through implementation and monitoring.

E. Support a diverse community and general fiscal sustainability.

1. Attract young adults back to the community and help retain our senior residents.
 - *Expand housing choice to include small-scale multifamily units, senior housing, and micro-assisted living facilities in select areas.*
 - *Create more work and volunteer opportunities.*
 - *Promote the positive attributes of North Stonington that make it appealing to locate or remain here.*
2. Host more community events.



Annual Garden Club Plant Sale



"A Country Store Sale" event at the Wheeler Library

3. Establish an *Incentive Housing Zone* and partner with non-profit developers to create a neighborhood of starter homes and/or workforce housing.
4. Fully support the schools. Improve communication and cooperation between school administration and Board of Education, and town departments and commissions.
5. Ensure greater fiscal responsibility within all town departments by increasing transparency, resident participation and access to the process, and communication.

III. Promote, protect and enhance the natural resources, historical, architectural, and agricultural heritage of North Stonington as a fundamental part of the town's identity, tradition, quality of life, and prosperity.

Rationale: North Stonington has consistently had a strong identity and real capacity for growth, but has not been articulate and specific about protecting its rural or unique character in a way that will actually help guide land use decisions and ensure the type of progress that will protect its identity and tradition. Clear regulations and strategies along with a holistic approach to planning that considers conservation, development, heritage, and community as one interactive system will ensure our continued prosperity.

Core Value: Sustainability

Objectives and Strategies:

A. Ensure that all new development will be of appropriate scale and design relative to its location.

1. Develop design guidelines that are clear yet flexible to ensure good (suitable) design but allow for creative alternate designs. Design guidelines or architectural standards should clearly reflect the desired "look" for North Stonington (in keeping with its rural character).
2. Master Plan specific areas with the help of consultants or planning students to develop a clear concept or visions for the specific areas that include desired uses and design and considers all impacts to the natural resources.

B. Limit (number or location) or prohibit uses that will contribute to an excessive increase in traffic, road widening, light pollution and/or noise pollution.

1. Revise zoning regulations and specifically prohibit undesired uses or limit to designated areas.
2. Consider adopting a realistic – i.e., enforceable - noise ordinance.
3. Review and revise regulations pertaining to light pollution.
4. Encourage participation at Board of Selectman meetings so that concerns related to traffic, roads, speeding, and crime etc. can be heard and addressed by the appropriate person or entity.

C. Invest in the necessary planning and land purchase, and enact appropriate regulations to ensure the preservation and protection of North Stonington's valuable natural resources and open space.

1. Establish an overall goal for the amount of open space to be permanently protected.
2. Identify existing and potential wildlife or green corridors on a map and encourage preservation and purchase of open space parcels within. Concentrate on connecting corridors by utilizing all types of open space and learn how they can work together to create these corridors.

3. Continue to prevent urban sprawl through effective zoning regulations and master planning.
4. Encourage and facilitate the private purchase of open space (by land trusts or other similar organizations).
5. Promote purchase/transfer of development rights and permanent conservation easements.
6. Continue to preserve farmlands and forests (under PA 490, 10 mil or permanently).
7. Continue to support fee-in-lieu of provision in subdivision regulations to create and maintain a funding source to be used to purchase desired parcels (consistent with the Plan of Conservation and Recreation Lands) and to facilitate acceptance of only meaningful set-aside areas (rather than random bits of open space).
8. Enforce wetlands regulations.
9. Actively support goals, objectives and actions identified by the Conservation Commission in the Plan of Conservation and Recreation Lands (PCRL).
10. Invest in necessary planning and infrastructure improvements, and enact appropriate regulations to ensure the preservation and protection of North Stonington's lakes and waterways.

D. Engage in proactive planning to ensure that all future plans consider the need to preserve North Stonington's character, and clearly identify smart development choices.

1. Increase awareness about littering, pollution, and blight.
2. Enforce/maintain existing regulations concerning setbacks, buffers and lot size. Create a Future Land Use Map as well as a Future Conservation Plan Map and revise zoning regulations to support these plans.
3. Identify and protect cemeteries, pre-contact and historic sites, and archeological remains prior to site disturbance. Keep inventories of historic, cultural and archeological resources/sites current and in a format that is most useful to land use boards and commissions.
4. Encourage creative adaptation and reuse of historic structures.
5. Promote North Stonington as an active agricultural community and protect existing farms and encourage/support new farming operations.
 - *Expand allowable principal and accessory agricultural uses and re-introduce agricultural related school programs (during or after school).*
 - *Consider farm-to school program or student run farmer's market.*
 - *Encourage succession plans and the transfer of development rights to protect farms.*
 - *Develop a farm and forest preservation plan.*



Brian Banker Plowing Community Gardens

IV. Expand housing choice to accommodate the needs of residents of all ages and incomes.

Rationale: The development of a variety of new housing types and designs would make the town more attractive to prospective new businesses by providing workforce housing, and would give young people and seniors an affordable in-town option.

Core Value: *Livability*

Objectives and Strategies

A. Align North Stonington's housing policies with state requirements.

1. Maintain Rural Residential Preservation Zone (R-80) as low density by allowing new housing type and design in designated *Housing Opportunity Zones* (outside the R-80 Zone) as informed by changing market demands and demographic trends.
2. Educate potential homebuyers about assistance programs.
3. Provide incentives to secure affordability through deed restrictions (i.e. tax abatement, housing rehabilitation program).

B. Maintain overall densities while allowing additional housing opportunities.

1. Adopt conservation subdivision regulations, small-scale multi-family unit, senior housing, and mixed use zone regulations.
2. Encourage more accessory apartments and rental opportunities including possible well-planned farm-worker housing.

C. Maximize the potential of existing housing units to meet housing needs.

1. Allow conversion of single-family home into micro-assisted living facility/residential care homes.
2. Convert “naturally occurring” affordable housing into qualified affordable units.
3. Evaluate if tax delinquent properties can be repurposed as qualified affordable units.

D. Encourage the private sector to create housing choices.

1. Facilitate the creation of senior housing and micro-assisted living facilities.
2. Consider requiring qualified affordable units to be provided in some or all new housing developments.
3. Actively work with potential developers to create “friendly 8-30g” developments in a desired location so as to raise our percentage of qualified units and avoid inappropriately scaled or undesired housing development in unsuitable locations (i.e., Gardencourt).



Example of a micro-assisted living facility - Marbridge Rest Home - Photo from www.carch.net.



Example of mixed-use building

12.Future Land Use Plan

It has been said that the best way to predict the future is to create it yourself.⁵ Communities with a clear vision for the future will be more successful than communities that do not plan for the inevitable change caused by advances in technology, the economy, changing demographics, and market trends. The *Future Land Use Plan* is the visual representation of the town's stated goals, objectives and recommended actions. It illustrates the location of select existing areas of conservation and recreation lands, desired areas/parcels for future preservation should they become available; planning opportunity areas; suggested changes to zone boundaries; and future land uses. Vacant and underutilized parcels within the commercial and industrial zones have also been identified. The most significant change depicted is a proposed consolidation of the Commercial Development, Office Research, and Village Commercial Zones which includes the incorporation of approximately ten residentially zoned parcels into the new *Economic Development Zone*. All desired future changes are simply that: desired. As the town moves forward to implement the POCD through future master planning and/or changes to the zoning and subdivision regulations, the public will have ample opportunity to participate in the planning process and decide which objectives or recommendations should be implemented and how. As new areas are identified, or existing planning opportunity areas clarified through master planning, formal revisions to the POCD and/or Future Land Use Map will be presented to the town and incorporated as appropriate. **The Future Land Use Map contains the following categories:**

Conservation	Open Space and Recreational Areas	Areas of existing open space and recreational areas.
		Proposed additions to existing greenway/wildlife corridors and recreational areas.
		More detailed <i>Conservation and Recreation Lands</i> maps are included in the 2013 Plan of Conservation and Recreation Lands (Appendix C).
Development	Community Facilities/Institutional	Future municipal facilities.
		Recreational facilities and opportunities.
	Commercial/Industrial Development	Areas where development is encouraged in ways that will enhance the overall community structure and character (Planning Opportunity Areas).
		Commercial opportunity sites (vacant and underutilized parcels).
	Residential	Possible Incentive Housing Zone and existing Affordable Housing Overlay Area (Meadowcourt).
		Areas intended for possible future mixed-use and multi-family residential development (Select Planning Opportunity Areas)(NEV-SDD Floating Zone).
	Infrastructure	Existing sewer district.

⁵ Attributed to Abraham Lincoln.



Future Land Use Map

Opportunity Areas

- Planning Opportunity Areas
- Future Municipal Facilities
- Under Utilized Parcels
- Vacant Parcels
- Affordable Housing Overlay Area (Meadowcourt)
- Possible Incentive Housing Zone
- Desired Areas for Future Preservation - (See pg. 13 in PCRL)

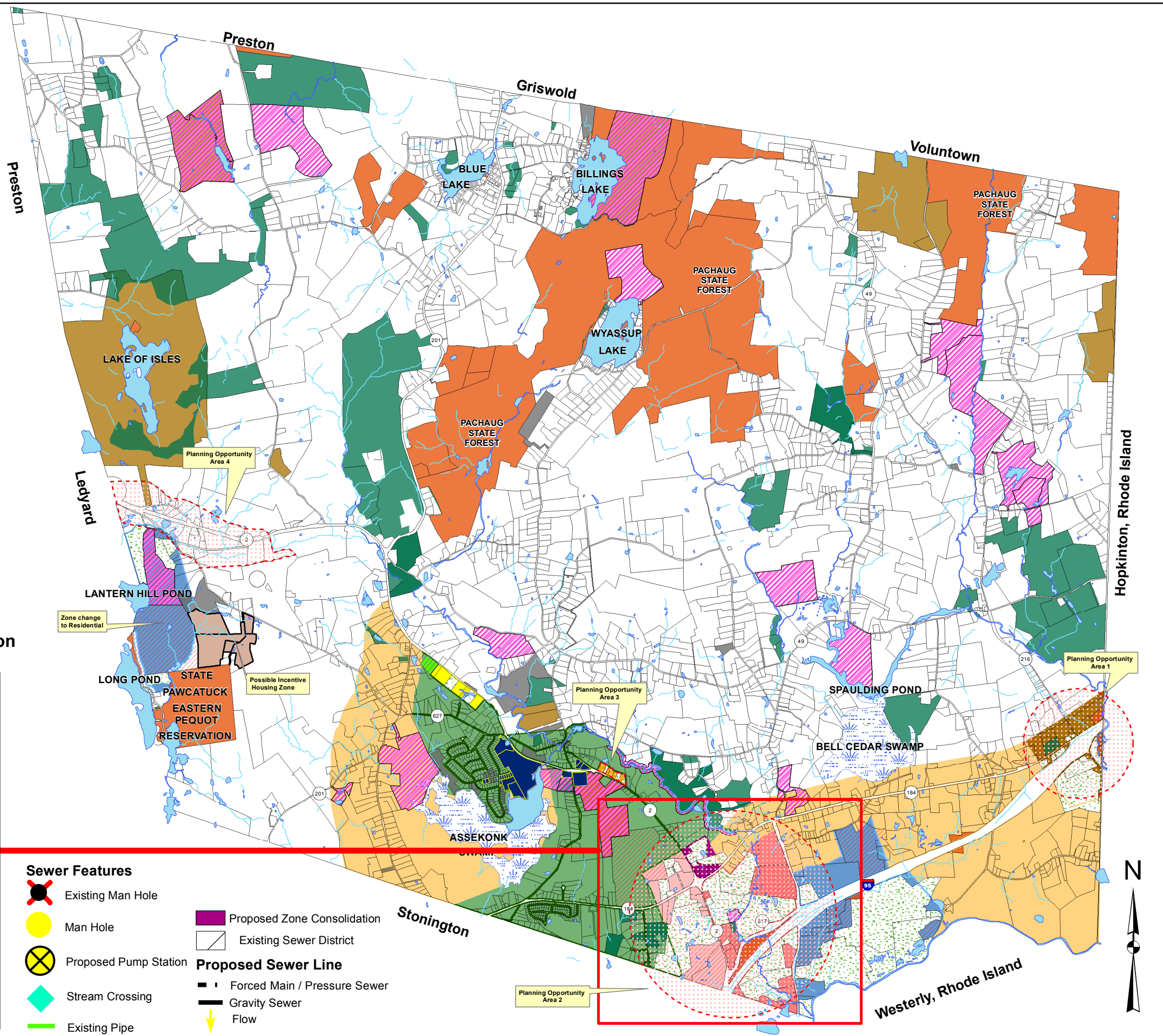
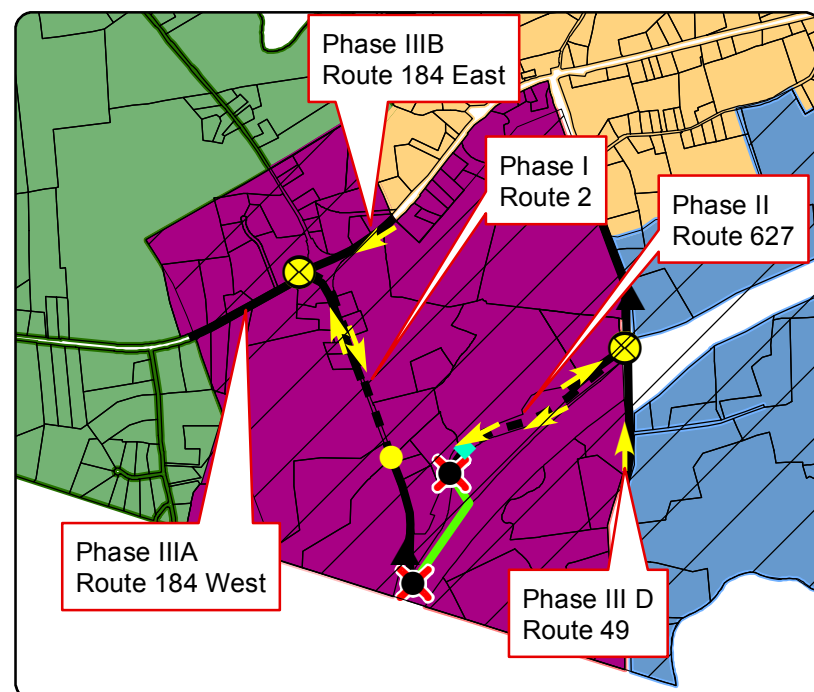
Zones

- Commercial Zone 1 (C1)
- Commercial Zone 2 (C2)
- Commercial Development (CD)
- Highway Commercial (HC)
- Village Commercial (VC)
- Office Research (OR)
- Industrial (I)
- High-Density Residential (R40)
- Medium-Density Residential (R60)
- Rural Preservation Zone (R80)

Conservation & Recreation Land

- Protected Open Space
- Active and Passive Recreational Areas
- State of Connecticut
- Town of North Stonington

Existing Sewer District & Proposed Zone Consolidation



Sewer Features

- Existing Man Hole
- Man Hole
- Proposed Pump Station
- Stream Crossing
- Existing Pipe

- Proposed Zone Consolidation
- Existing Sewer District
- Proposed Sewer Line
 - Forced Main / Pressure Sewer
 - Gravity Sewer
 - Flow



**Planning
Opportunity
Areas**

Parcel Lines To
10/1/2012

Legend

Natural Features

- Streams
- Lakes / Ponds
- Swamps

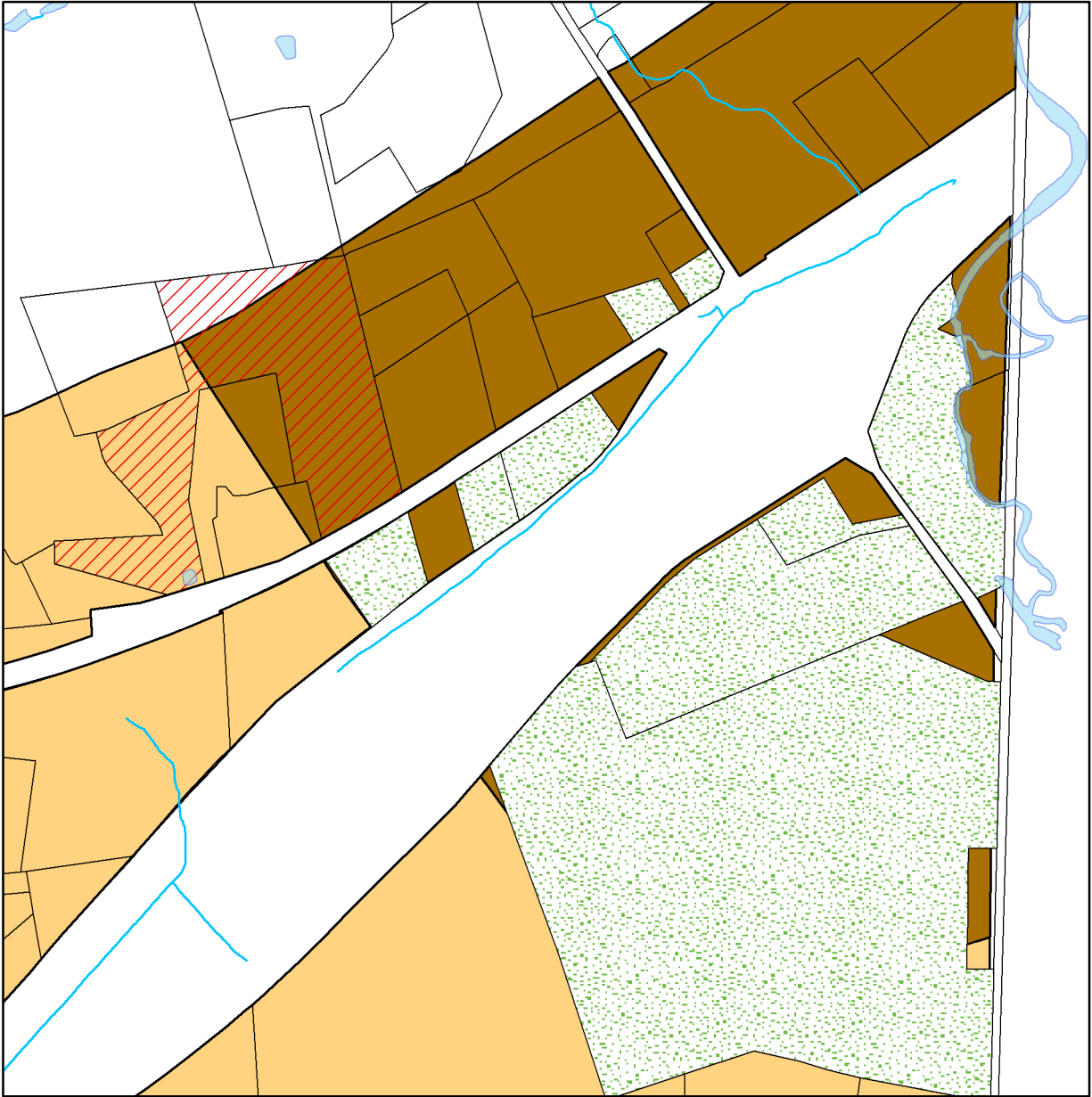
Opportunity Areas

- Under Utilized
- Vacant

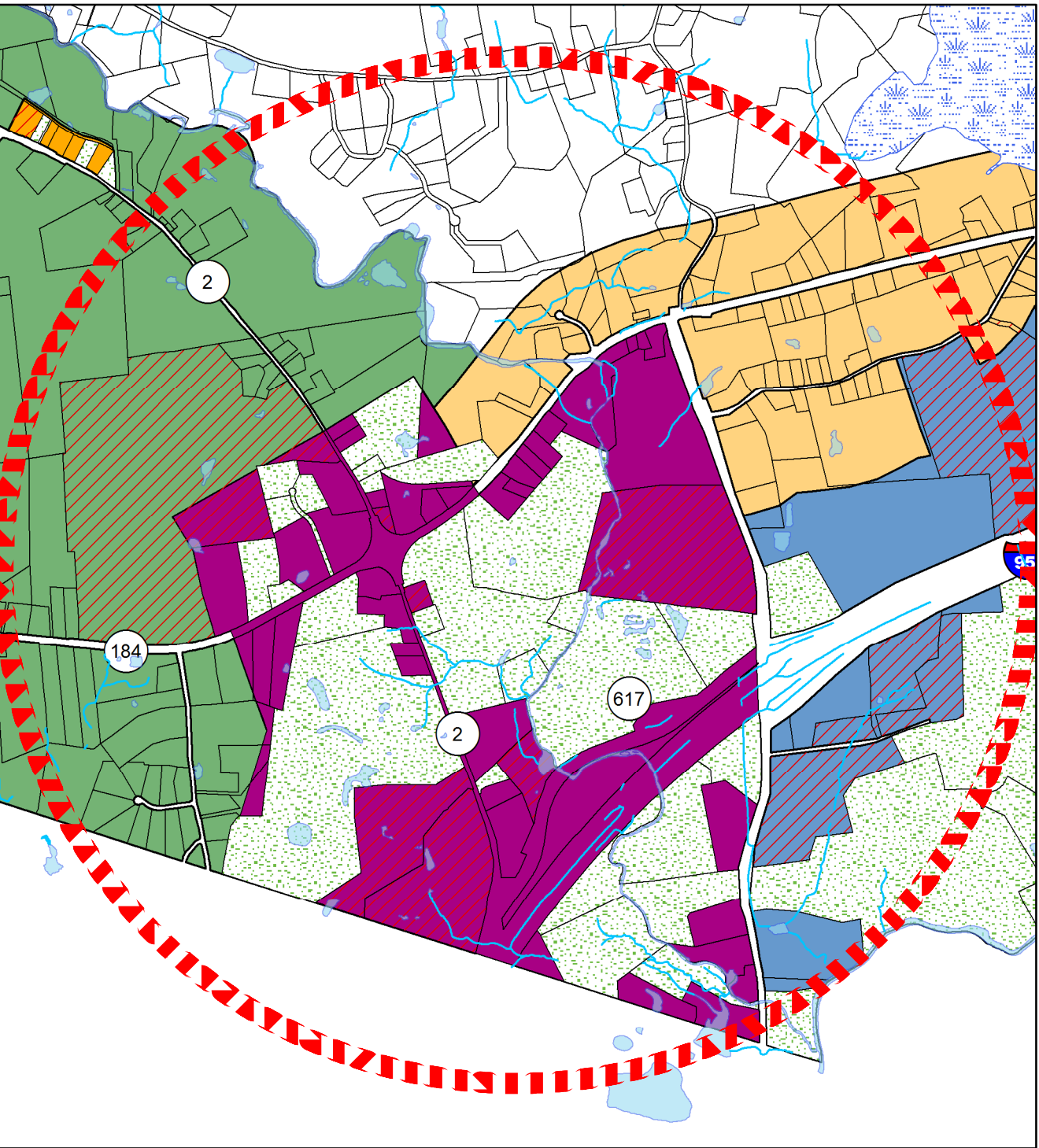
Zones

- Commercial Zone 1 (C1)
- Commercial Zone 2 (C2)
- Commercial Development (CD)
- Highway Commercial (HC)
- Village Commercial (VC)
- Office Research (OR)
- Industrial (I)
- High-Density Residential (R40)
- Medium-Density Residential (R60)
- Rural Preservation Zone (R80)

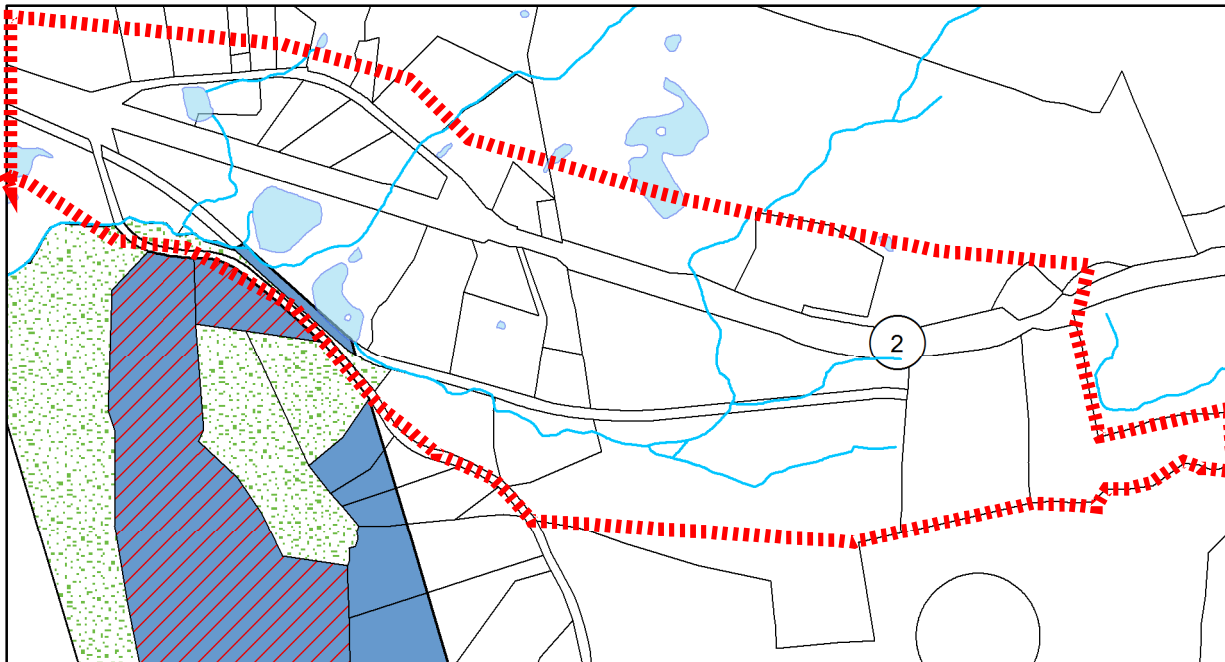
Planning Opportunity Area #1



Planning Opportunity Area #2



Planning Opportunity Area #4



Planning Opportunity Area #3



13. Implementation and Evaluation

The Plan of Conservation and Development is only effective to the degree to which it is understood, accepted, and utilized by the residents, town officials, volunteers, and staff. The POCD is intended to be a living document. The Plan must be adaptable enough to respond to changes in its underlying assumptions, and to changes in the social, economic, and technological structure of the town and region. It should be reviewed from time to time to be sure those assumptions are still viable, and amended if necessary.

Although the Planning and Zoning Commission is required by statute to create a Plan of Conservation and Development for the town, it has no real legal power to ensure that the plan is implemented. The POCD is an advisory document. The adoption of the POCD is therefore the beginning of a continual process of implementation that is carried out by making changes to and enforcing the existing regulations and town ordinances; identifying necessary capital improvements; making changes to administrative and permitting procedures; and creating master plans. **Most importantly, the implementation of the Plan relies on the willingness of townspeople and elected officials to work diligently to realize the stated goals.**

Implementation of a Plan typically occurs in two main phases.

1. **High priority recommendations that are critical to the implementation of the POCD.**
2. **Recommendations to be implemented over time because they may require additional study, coordination with or implementation by others, or involve the commitment of significant financial resources.**

After the adoption of the POCD, the Planning and Zoning Commission will develop a separate *Action Plan* to accompany the Plan. This Action Plan will identify the high priority recommendations, long range actions, and ongoing actions; designate a responsible agency; and determine a time-frame for completion. The Planning and Zoning Commission will evaluate the progress of the Plan by holding an annual POCD review meeting to evaluate progress on tasks identified in the Action Plan. Other evaluation techniques may include submitting regular updates on the town's progress on the various websites and bulletin boards as well as submitting updates to the town-related newsletters.

In conclusion, the goal of North Stonington's 2013 POCD is to create a sustainable relationship between preservation and development. Short sightedness and inaction on the part of citizens, elected officials and other stake holders will be costly in the long term with respect to creating the kind of environment residents desire, preserving our quality of life, and ensuring the economic viability of North Stonington. North Stonington must be committed to progress and be willing to make strategic investments in projects or community infrastructure necessary to support this progress. North Stonington must also commit to good land use planning by being reactive when reviewing applications, proactive by engaging in more master planning and design control, and integrative when formulating plans and projects. The POCD provides a strong framework for this, thereby making its implementation and continual evaluation vital to a sustainable and livable North Stonington.

Appendix A

Chapter 126, Section 8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes

Sec. 8-23. Preparation, amendment or adoption of plan of conservation and development. (a)(1) At least once every ten years, the commission shall prepare or amend and shall adopt a plan of conservation and development for the municipality. Following adoption, the commission shall regularly review and maintain such plan. The commission may adopt such geographical, functional or other amendments to the plan or parts of the plan, in accordance with the provisions of this section, as it deems necessary. The commission may, at any time, prepare, amend and adopt plans for the redevelopment and improvement of districts or neighborhoods which, in its judgment, contain special problems or opportunities or show a trend toward lower land values.

(2) If a plan is not amended decennially, the chief elected official of the municipality shall submit a letter to the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management and the Commissioners of Transportation, Environmental Protection and Economic and Community Development that explains why such plan was not amended. A copy of such letter shall be included in each application by the municipality for discretionary state funding submitted to any state agency.

(3) Notwithstanding any provision of subdivisions (1) and (2) of this subsection, no commission shall be obligated to prepare or amend a plan of conservation and development for such municipality from July 1, 2010, to June 30, 2013, inclusive.

(b) On and after the first day of July following the adoption of the state Conservation and Development Policies Plan 2013-2018, in accordance with section 16a-30, a municipality that fails to comply with the requirements of subdivisions (1) and (2) of subsection (a) of this section shall be ineligible for discretionary state funding unless such prohibition is expressly waived by the secretary, except that any municipality that does not prepare or amend a plan of conservation and development pursuant to subdivision (3) of subsection (a) of this section shall continue to be eligible for discretionary state funding unless such municipality fails to comply with the requirements of said subdivisions (1) and (2) on or after July 1, 2014.

(c) In the preparation of such plan, the commission may appoint one or more special committees to develop and make recommendations for the plan. The membership of any special committee may include: Residents of the municipality and representatives of local boards dealing with zoning, inland wetlands, conservation, recreation, education, public works, finance, redevelopment, general government and other municipal functions. In performing its duties under this section, the commission or any special committee may accept information from any source or solicit input from any organization or individual. The commission or any special committee may hold public informational meetings or organize other activities to inform residents about the process of preparing the plan.

(d) In preparing such plan, the commission or any special committee shall consider the following: (1) The community development action plan of the municipality, if any, (2) the need for affordable housing, (3) the need for protection of existing and potential public surface and ground drinking water supplies,

(4) the use of cluster development and other development patterns to the extent consistent with soil types, terrain and infrastructure capacity within the municipality, (5) the state plan of conservation and development adopted pursuant to chapter 297, (6) the regional plan of conservation and development adopted pursuant to section 8-35a, (7) physical, social, economic and governmental conditions and trends, (8) the needs of the municipality including, but not limited to, human resources, education, health, housing, recreation, social services, public utilities, public protection, transportation and circulation and cultural and interpersonal communications, (9) the objectives of energy-efficient patterns of development, the use of solar and other renewable forms of energy and energy conservation, and (10) protection and preservation of agriculture.

(e) (1) Such plan of conservation and development shall (A) be a statement of policies, goals and standards for the physical and economic development of the municipality, (B) provide for a system of principal thoroughfares, parkways, bridges, streets, sidewalks, multipurpose trails and other public ways as appropriate, (C) be designed to promote, with the greatest efficiency and economy, the coordinated development of the municipality and the general welfare and prosperity of its people and identify areas where it is feasible and prudent (i) to have compact, transit accessible, pedestrian-oriented mixed use development patterns and land reuse, and (ii) to promote such development patterns and land reuse, (D) recommend the most desirable use of land within the municipality for residential, recreational, commercial, industrial, conservation and other purposes and include a map showing such proposed land uses, (E) recommend the most desirable density of population in the several parts of the municipality, (F) note any inconsistencies with the following growth management principles: (i) Redevelopment and revitalization of commercial centers and areas of mixed land uses with existing or planned physical infrastructure; (ii) expansion of housing opportunities and design choices to accommodate a variety of household types and needs; (iii) concentration of development around transportation nodes and along major transportation corridors to support the viability of transportation options and land reuse; (iv) conservation and restoration of the natural environment, cultural and historical resources and existing farmlands; (v) protection of environmental assets critical to public health and safety; and (vi) integration of planning across all levels of government to address issues on a local, regional and state-wide basis, (G) make provision for the development of housing opportunities, including opportunities for multifamily dwellings, consistent with soil types, terrain and infrastructure capacity, for all residents of the municipality and the planning region in which the municipality is located, as designated by the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management under section 16a-4a, (H) promote housing choice and economic diversity in housing, including housing for both low and moderate income households, and encourage the development of housing which will meet the housing needs identified in the housing plan prepared pursuant to section 8-37t and in the housing component and the other components of the state plan of conservation and development prepared pursuant to chapter 297. In preparing such plan the commission shall consider focusing development and revitalization in areas with existing or planned physical infrastructure.

(2) For any municipality that is contiguous to Long Island Sound, such plan shall be (A) consistent with the municipal coastal program requirements of sections 22a-101 to 22a-104, inclusive, (B) made with reasonable consideration for restoration and protection of the ecosystem and habitat of Long

Island Sound, and (C) designed to reduce hypoxia, pathogens, toxic contaminants and floatable debris in Long Island Sound.

(f) Such plan may show the commission's and any special committee's recommendation for (1) conservation and preservation of traprock and other ridgelines, (2) airports, parks, playgrounds and other public grounds, (3) the general location, relocation and improvement of schools and other public buildings, (4) the general location and extent of public utilities and terminals, whether publicly or privately owned, for water, sewerage, light, power, transit and other purposes, (5) the extent and location of public housing projects, (6) programs for the implementation of the plan, including (A) a schedule, (B) a budget for public capital projects, (C) a program for enactment and enforcement of zoning and subdivision controls, building and housing codes and safety regulations, (D) plans for implementation of affordable housing, (E) plans for open space acquisition and greenways protection and development, and (F) plans for corridor management areas along limited access highways or rail lines, designated under section 16a-27, (7) proposed priority funding areas, and (8) any other recommendations as will, in the commission's or any special committee's judgment, be beneficial to the municipality. The plan may include any necessary and related maps, explanatory material, photographs, charts or other pertinent data and information relative to the past, present and future trends of the municipality.

(g) (1) A plan of conservation and development or any part thereof or amendment thereto prepared by the commission or any special committee shall be reviewed, and may be amended, by the commission prior to scheduling at least one public hearing on adoption.

(2) At least sixty-five days prior to the public hearing on adoption, the commission shall submit a copy of such plan or part thereof or amendment thereto for review and comment to the legislative body or, in the case of a municipality for which the legislative body of the municipality is a town meeting or representative town meeting, to the board of selectmen. The legislative body or board of selectmen, as the case may be, may hold one or more public hearings on the plan and shall endorse or reject such entire plan or part thereof or amendment and may submit comments and recommended changes to the commission. The commission may render a decision on the plan without the report of such body or board.

(3) At least thirty-five days prior to the public hearing on adoption, the commission shall post the plan on the Internet web site of the municipality, if any.

(4) At least sixty-five days prior to the public hearing on adoption, the commission shall submit a copy of such plan or part thereof or amendment thereto to the regional planning agency for review and comment. The regional planning agency shall submit an advisory report along with its comments to the commission at or before the hearing. Such comments shall include a finding on the consistency of the plan with (A) the regional plan of conservation and development, adopted under section 8-35a, (B) the state plan of conservation and development, adopted pursuant to chapter 297, and (C) the plans of conservation and development of other municipalities in the area of operation of the regional planning agency. The commission may render a decision on the plan without the report of the regional planning agency.

(5) At least thirty-five days prior to the public hearing on adoption, the commission shall file in the office of the town clerk a copy of such plan or part thereof or amendment thereto but, in the case of a district commission, such commission shall file such information in the offices of both the district clerk and the town clerk.

(6) The commission shall cause to be published in a newspaper having a general circulation in the municipality, at least twice at intervals of not less than two days, the first not more than fifteen days, or less than ten days, and the last not less than two days prior to the date of each such hearing, notice of the time and place of any such public hearing. Such notice shall make reference to the filing of such draft plan in the office of the town clerk, or both the district clerk and the town clerk, as the case may be.

(h) (1) After completion of the public hearing, the commission may revise the plan and may adopt the plan or any part thereof or amendment thereto by a single resolution or may, by successive resolutions, adopt parts of the plan and amendments thereto.

(2) Any plan, section of a plan or recommendation in the plan that is not endorsed in the report of the legislative body or, in the case of a municipality for which the legislative body is a town meeting or representative town meeting, by the board of selectmen, of the municipality may only be adopted by the commission by a vote of not less than two-thirds of all the members of the commission.

(3) Upon adoption by the commission, any plan or part thereof or amendment thereto shall become effective at a time established by the commission, provided notice thereof shall be published in a newspaper having a general circulation in the municipality prior to such effective date.

(4) Not more than thirty days after adoption, any plan or part thereof or amendment thereto shall be posted on the Internet web site of the municipality, if any, and shall be filed in the office of the town clerk, except that, if it is a district plan or amendment, it shall be filed in the offices of both the district and town clerks.

(5) Not more than sixty days after adoption of the plan, the commission shall submit a copy of the plan to the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management and shall include with such copy a description of any inconsistency between the plan adopted by the commission and the state plan of conservation and development and the reasons therefor.

(i) Any owner or tenant, or authorized agent of such owner or tenant, of real property or buildings thereon located in the municipality may submit a proposal to the commission requesting a change to the plan of conservation and development. Such proposal shall be submitted in writing and on a form prescribed by the commission. Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a) of section 8-7d, the commission shall review and may approve, modify and approve or reject the proposal in accordance with the provisions of subsection (g) of this section.

North Stonington

Connecticut



Government

Government Form: Selectman-Town Meeting				Annual Debt Service (2010)	\$1,225,758
				As % of Expenditures	6.9%
Total Revenue (2010)	\$18,473,700	Total Expenditures (2010)	\$17,679,149	Eq. Net Grand List (2008)	\$845,341,288
Tax Revenue	\$12,461,260	Education	\$11,909,344	Per Capita	\$164,144
Non-tax Revenue	\$6,012,440	Other	\$5,769,805	As % of State Average	99%
Intergovernmental	\$5,581,009	Total Indebtness (2010)	\$2,970,000	Date of Last Revaluation (2009)	2005
Per Capita Tax (2010)	\$2,447	As % of Expenditures	16.8%	Moody's Bond Rating (2009)	A3
As % of State Average	98.7%	Per Capita	\$583	Actual Mill Rate (2010)	19.94
				Equalized Mill Rate (2010)	14.71
				% of Grand List Com/Ind (2007)	10.1%
				As % of State Average	26.2%

Housing/Real Estate

<i>Housing Stock (2009)</i>	<i>Town</i>	<i>County</i>	<i>State</i>	Owner Occupied Dwellings (2009)	1,748	64,162	812,964
Existing Units (total)	2,238	117,950	1,452,007	As % Total Dwellings	76%	55%	57%
% Single Unit	93.2%	69.2%	64.8%	Subsidize Housing (2008)	10	12,075	149,355
New Permits Auth. (2009)	10	427	3,786	<i>Distribution of House Sales (2009)</i>	<i>Town</i>	<i>County</i>	<i>State</i>
As % Existing Units	0.45%	0.36%	0.26%	Number of Sales			
Demolitions (2009)		46	1,219	Less than \$100,000	3	55	346
House Sales (2009)	19	1,204	14,696	\$100,000-\$199,999	5	277	3,539
Median Price	\$241,000	\$250,000	\$265,000	\$200,000-\$299,999	5	479	4,847
Built Pre 1950 share (2000)	23.0%	32.7%	31.5%	\$300,000-\$399,999	5	204	2,510
				\$400,000 or More	1	189	3,454

Labor Force

<i>Place of Residence (2011)</i>	<i>Town</i>	<i>County</i>	<i>State</i>	<i>Commuters (2000)</i>			
Labor Force	3,275	151,676	1,918,145	Commuters into Town from:	Town Residents Commuting to:		
Employed	3,056	138,558	1,749,489	North Stonington	424	Groton	571
Unemployed	219	13,118	170,828	Stonington	195	North Stonington	424
Unemployment Rate	6.7%	8.6%	8.9%	Westerly, RI	163	Stonington	408
<i>Place of Work (2011)</i>				Norwich	83	New London	208
# of Units	105	6,888	103,381	Groton	77	Ledyard	186
Total Employment	1,392	88,797	1,612,373	Hopkinton, RI	71	Westerly, RI	155
2000-'11 Growth AAGR	0.1%	-2.9%	-0.3%	New London	52	Waterford	101
Mfg Employment	18	14,247	166,279	Ledyard	52	Montville	98
				Richmond, RI	44	Norwich	98
				Waterford	38	East Lyme	48

Other Information

<i>Banks (2007)</i>	<i>Town</i>	<i>State</i>	<i>Residential Utilities</i>				
	1	1,029	Electric Provider				
<i>Crime Rate (2009)</i>			Connecticut Light & Power				
Per 100,000 Residents	78	298	(800) 286-2000				
			Gas Provider				
			Yankee Gas Company				
			(800) 989-0900				
			Water Provider				
			Aquarion Water Company				
			(800) 732-9678				
			Cable Provider				
			Comcast/Groton-Thames Valley Communicat				
			860-445-8116				
<i>Library (2010)</i>	<i>Town</i>		<i>Distance to Major Cities</i>	<i>Miles</i>			
Total Volumes	25,466		Hartford	46			
Circulation Per Capita	10.3		Boston	74			
			New York City	122			
			Providence	34			