

NEW CANAAN

2014 Plan of Conservation & Development



STRATEGIC ELEMENT

New Canaan Planning & Zoning Commission



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Acknowledgements

The cover photograph, taken by Peter Hanson of New Canaan, was awarded First Prize in a Photography Contest conducted during the time this Plan was being prepared.



June 2014

To New Canaan Residents,

This document is the 2014 Plan of Conservation and Development for New Canaan. After the final public hearing on June 3, it was revised to reflect additional input and adopted by the Planning and Zoning Commission on June 24. The effective date is August 1, 2014.

Prepared over a 16-month period, the Plan reflects input from New Canaan residents and organizations and discussions among the members of the Planning and Zoning Commission about desirable future strategies for the future of our community.

This Plan of Conservation and Development (called the strategic element) has a companion part which is called the implementation element. While the strategic element identifies “big picture” strategies for the future, the implementation element identifies more specific policies and tasks intended to help implement the overall strategies.

The Planning and Zoning Commission looks forward to your continued support and input as we implement the Plan. Thank you for your interest.

Sincerely,

Laszlo Papp, Chair
Planning and Zoning Commission

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INTRODUCTION

1

Overview

This Plan of Conservation and Development is a strategic plan for the physical development of New Canaan. It is an advisory document which is intended to guide local actions and to provide a framework for consistent decision-making with regard to conservation and development activities over the next decade or so.

This Plan has been prepared to help guide New Canaan's future conservation and development ...

Since a Plan of Conservation and Development helps guide local actions toward outcomes considered beneficial for the community and/or desired by residents, there are few documents that have a greater potential long term influence on the physical characteristics of New Canaan.

New Canaan has a history of preparing plans for the entire community and on different topics. Each plan has strived to enhance the community and the lives of its residents. It is in that spirit that this Plan of Conservation and Development has been prepared.



Advisory Documents

The Strategic Element of the Plan of Conservation and Development is an advisory document intended to guide the future physical development of New Canaan. The same holds true for the Implementation Element.

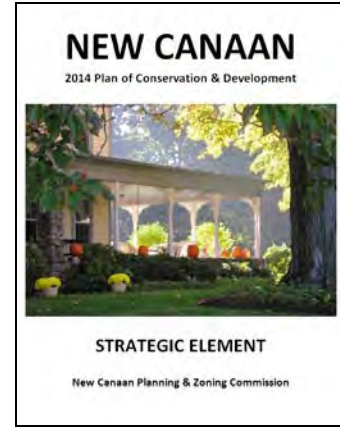
While the Implementation Element may recommend specific tasks or actions, it is also advisory. During the anticipated lifespan of this Plan, the Planning and Zoning Commission and other Town agencies may decide to implement (or not implement) specific recommendations as the needs and circumstances of the Town dictate.

Organization Of This Plan

This Plan differs somewhat from prior plans in that it has been configured in a way which is intended to facilitate implementation. To help accomplish this, the Plan of Conservation and Development has been configured as a two-part document.

This part - the “Strategic Element” - is a statement of strategic directions considered integral to the vitality, livability, and quality of life in the community. It is “big picture” and strategic in nature so that New Canaan residents will use it to discuss and refine the major directions of the community.

It is envisioned that the Strategic Element will be occasionally reviewed to ensure that the strategic directions are appropriate for addressing the issues facing the community.



The other part –the “Implementation Element” – identifies tasks to accomplish the strategies. It identifies the task to be completed, the entity responsible for completing it, and the anticipated timeframe for completion. It is envisioned that this element will be regularly updated as tasks are completed and new tasks identified.



The Plan recommends that the Implementation Element be maintained and administered by a Plan Implementation Committee. The Committee would regularly review the Implementation Element to ensure that the work program and tasks for the coming year (and beyond) reflect fiscal and operational capabilities.

While the Strategic Element of the Plan will be updated less frequently than the Implementation Element, the Strategic Element should evolve as the needs of the community change. As new issues come to light, the community should strive to update the Strategic Element by evaluating alternative approaches and selecting the best overall strategy for New Canaan. The fact that a topic or issue is not addressed in the Strategic Element should not prevent it from being considered at some time in the future.

Preparation Of This Plan

The process used to prepare this Plan is illustrated by the adjacent flowchart.

Since this Plan is an update of the 2003 Plan of Conservation & Development, the inventory phase included a review of the recommendations in the 2003 Plan, a discussion with the Planning and Zoning Commission, a number of interviews with local officials and other interested persons, an independent analysis of issues and trends in New Canaan and elsewhere, and a public meeting to generate input from residents. An evaluation of demographic changes and other trends was also undertaken.

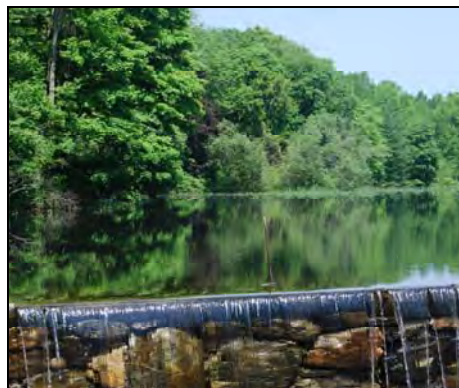
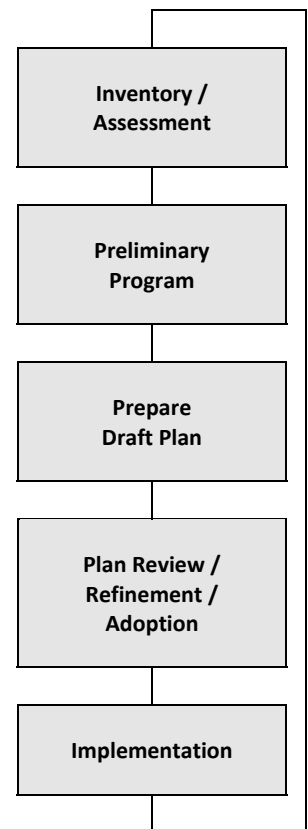
From this work, a preliminary planning program was prepared for review by the Planning and Zoning Commission. The preliminary planning program outlined possible strategies so that the Commission could provide feedback and guidance. Following some modifications to the preliminary program, a draft Plan was prepared for discussion.

The Planning and Zoning Commission reviewed the draft Plan and discussed alternative policies and desirable future outcomes. Additional input was obtained throughout the process by public meetings and community workshops that generated input and discussion.

The final phase, "Implementation", takes place after the Plan is adopted and the various recommendations are put into action and evaluated. The Planning and Zoning Commission has both the statutory responsibility to adopt the Plan and the lead role in overseeing the Plan's implementation.

However, implementation will only occur with the diligent efforts of the residents and officials of the Town of New Canaan. As a result, responsibility for implementation rests with all boards, agencies, and individuals in New Canaan.

The Planning Process



Statutory Reference

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

Selected Other Planning Studies

Over the years, New Canaan has completed a number of planning studies to help guide growth and change in the community:

- Long-Range Planning Committee (2012)
- Downtown Market Demand Study (2011)
- Incentive Housing Study (2011)
- Community Survey (2010)
- Senior Housing Study (2010)
- Downtown Planning Study (2006)
- Parking Study Update (2002)
- Open Space Study Group (2001)
- Traffic Study (1999)
- Long-Range Planning Task Force (1998)
- Parking Study (1997)
- Historic / Architecture Survey (1987)
- Plan of Development (1986)
- Traffic Study (1983)
- Business District Development Plan (1972)
- Traffic and Access - Central Business Area (1968)
- Plan of Development (1967)
- Business District Study (1958)
- Plan of Development (1954)

After the final public hearing on June 3, 2014, the Plan was adopted at the June 24, 2014 meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission with an effective date of August 1, 2014.

EXCERPTS FROM CONNECTICUT GENERAL STATUTES
SECTION 8-23 - PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The Plan shall:

- be a statement of policies, goals and standards for the physical and economic development of the municipality ..
- show the commission's recommendation for the most desirable use of land within the municipality ... and for the most desirable density of population
- 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.

The Plan may:

- show the commission's recommendation for a system of principal thoroughfares, parkways, bridges, streets and other public ways; for airports, parks, playgrounds and other public grounds; for general location, relocation and improvement of public buildings; for the general location and extent of public utilities and terminals, whether publicly or privately owned for water, sewerage, light, power, transit and other purposes; and for the extent and location of public housing projects.
- include recommended programs for the implementation of the plan ...
- (include) such other recommendations ... in the plan as will ... be beneficial to the municipality.



KEY ISSUES

2

Overview

The following overall philosophy, which emerged as the foundation for the 2003 Plan of Conservation & Development, is still considered to be relevant to this Plan:

Promote an appropriate balance of conservation and development in order to enhance community character and improve the overall quality of life.

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

Abraham Lincoln

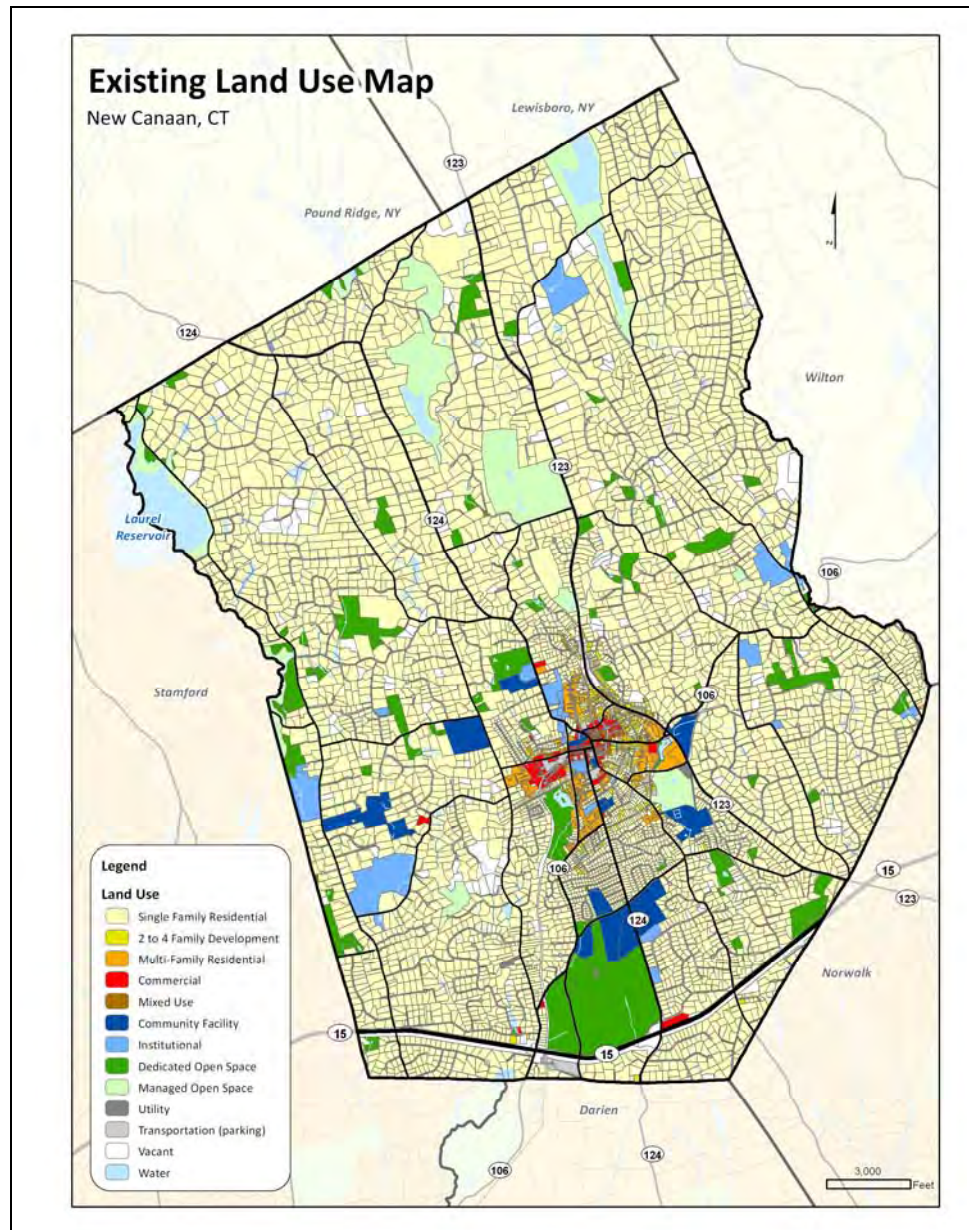


New Canaan Is Mostly Developed ...

A land use analysis of New Canaan revealed that about 97 percent of the land in the community has been developed or committed to different land uses. Most of the land in New Canaan is used for residential homes.

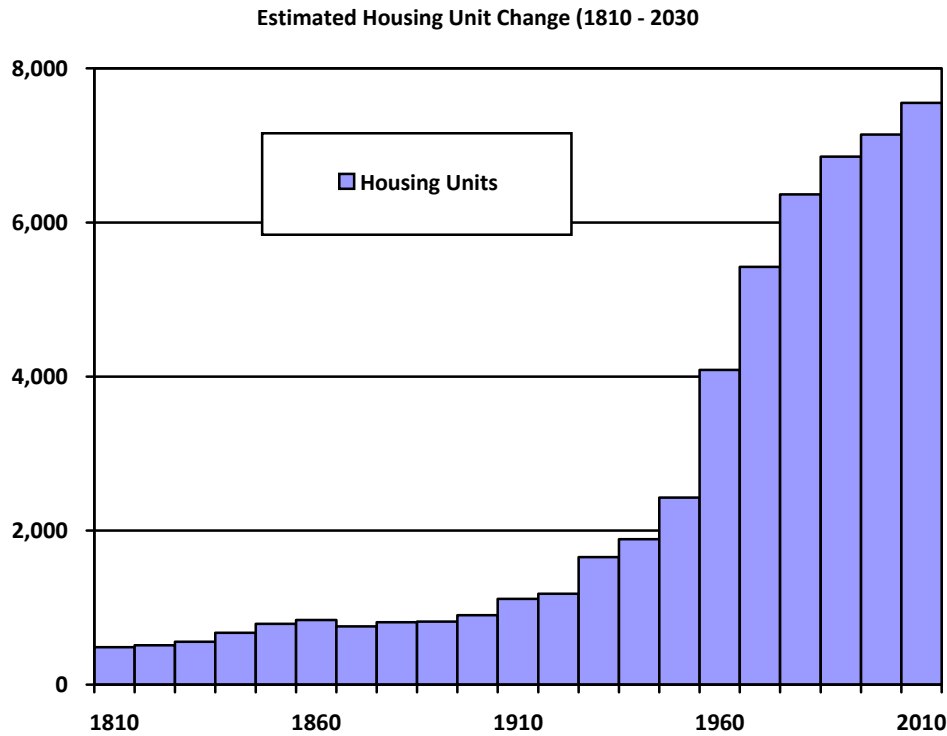
Since almost all of the land in New Canaan has been developed or committed, growth and change in the future is most likely to occur as a result of:

- changes in occupancy of existing housing units, and
- from redevelopment of existing property rather than from development of major new subdivisions or projects.



Housing Growth Is Slowing ...

With most of the land area in New Canaan being developed or committed, the number of housing units which can be built in the community is nearing a theoretical limit based on local land use regulations, natural resource constraints, and other factors. The following chart reveals a flattening “growth curve” which typically occurs as a growth threshold is neared.



Housing Unit Data

Although exact data on the number of housing units in New Canaan in the 1800s is not available, it is possible to estimate the number of units.

Year	Housing Units
1810	485
1820	512
1830	555
1840	672
1850	789
1860	840
1870	757
1880	811
1890	819
1900	900
1910	1,112
1920	1,181
1930	1,655
1940	1,887
1950	2,427
1960	4,084
1970	5,421
1980	6,365
1990	6,856
2000	7,141
2010	7,551

1960-2010 from US Census.
1810-1950 estimated from information on typical household sizes at that time.

Census data reveals that housing in New Canaan (our housing “portfolio”) is focused primarily on single-family detached housing. Since this type of housing was the preferred housing choice in the 1950s and 1960s when New Canaan was growing rapidly, it is understandable that single-family housing became the predominant form of housing in the community.

Population Data

Year	Population
1810	1,599
1820	1,689
1830	1,830
1840	2,217
1850	2,600
1860	2,771
1870	2,497
1880	2,673
1890	2,701
1900	2,968
1910	3,667
1920	3,895
1930	5,456
1940	6,221
1950	8,001
1960	13,466
1970	17,451
1980	17,931
1990	17,864
2000	19,395
2010	19,798

2020	<i>19,300</i>	<i>19,660</i>
2030	<i>18,800</i>	<i>19,520</i>

1900 – 2000 Census, Projections in italics.

Low projections by Planimetrics based on continuing the age-specific migration rates from 2000 to 2010.

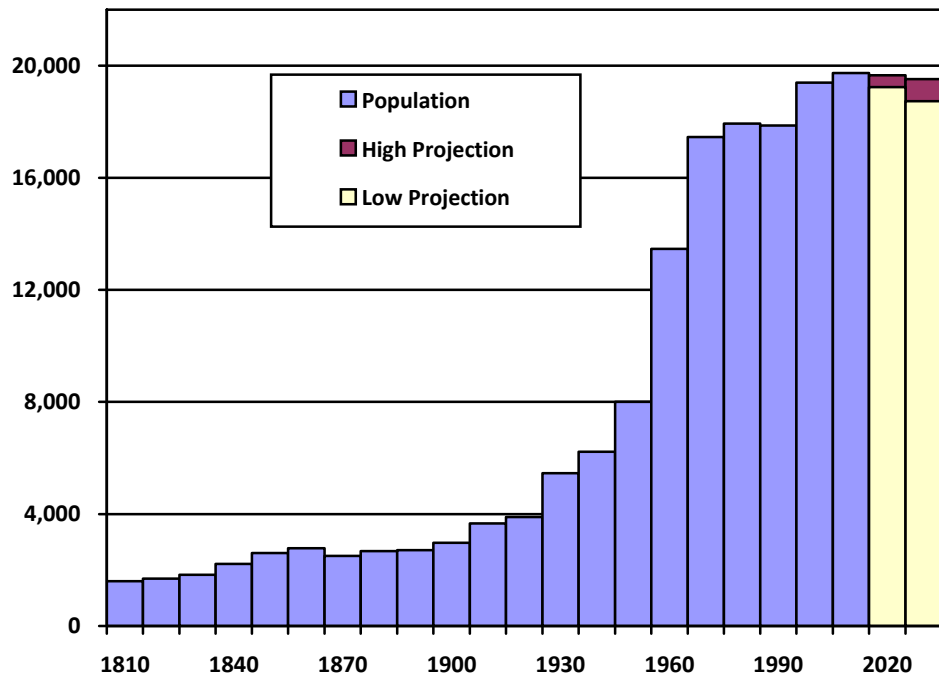
High projections from the Connecticut State Data Center.

Population Growth Has Slowed ...

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, New Canaan had a population of 19,798 people in the year 2010. This represents an increase of 343 people (2 percent) from the 2000 Census. In comparison, the population of Connecticut grew by almost 5 percent during this same period. If recent migration patterns continue, New Canaan’s population may experience a slight decrease in the future as school children graduate and some households get smaller.

It is interesting to note that New Canaan added over 400 units of housing from 2000 to 2010 but the population only grew by 343 people.

Population Change (1810 - 2030)



Sidewalk Sale Day



New Canaan Advertiser

Selectmen’s Meeting



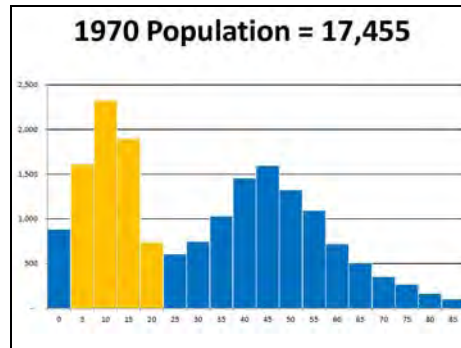
New Canaan News On-line

Age Composition Is Changing ...

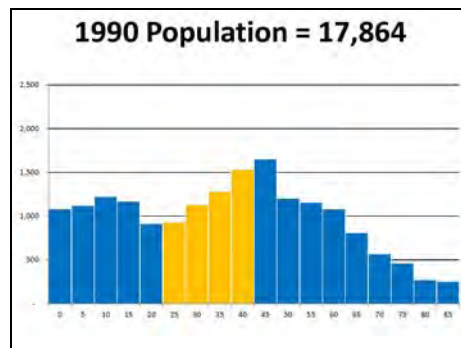
The age composition of New Canaan has been changing over time and changes are expected to continue in the future. This has the potential to influence the demand for certain services in the community and to change New Canaan's approach to issues in the community.

To help illustrate this point, the following charts illustrate the number of residents in 5-year age groups in different Census years.

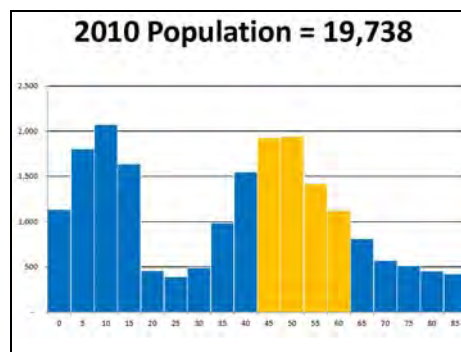
In 1970, New Canaan's age composition was dominated by younger age groups (the "baby boom"). People considered part of the "baby boom" were aged 5 to 25 in 1970.



Twenty years later, in 1990, New Canaan had many fewer children but had a number of young adults (roughly corresponding to the "baby boomers" – now aged 24 to 45).



In 2010, the number of children had increased again as a result of the "baby boomers" having had children (the "baby boom echo"). In addition, there was significant growth in the older age groups as the baby boomers aged and as people lived longer.



In the future, the age composition of New Canaan is expected to continue to be strongly influenced by longer life expectancies. Some population projections estimate that about 40% of New Canaan's population in the year 2025 could be over the age of 55 and about 20 percent could be over the age of 65.

Population Dynamics Are Key To Our Future ...

Population change in a community occurs in two ways:

- Natural increase (births minus deaths), and
- Net migration (move-in minus move-out).

The table below reveals that New Canaan has tended to experience natural increase (more births than deaths) except for the 1970s. The number of births and deaths in a community tends to be driven by its age composition (ages for forming families, women of child-bearing age, age of person, etc.). This helps explain the large number of births in the 1960s (the “baby boom”) and the 1990s (the “baby boom echo”).

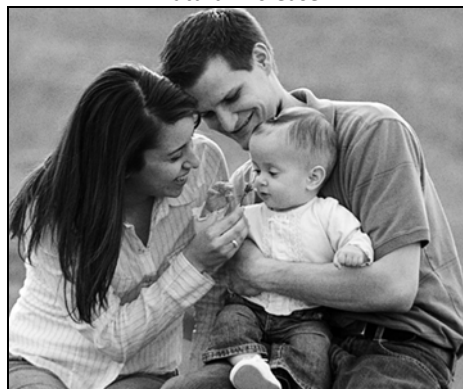
Components of Population Change (1960 to 2010)

	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s
Total Change (from US Census)	3,985	480	(67)	1,531	343
Change Due To Natural Increase (Births – Deaths)	670	(15)	154	1,247	850
Births	1,811	1,193	1,474	2,455	1,952
Deaths	1,141	1,208	1,320	1,208	1,102
Change Due To Net In-Migration (Move-In Minus Move-Out)	3,315	495	(221)	284	(507)

US Census, Connecticut Health Department reports

Thus, the key variable in overall population change in New Canaan appears to be net migration. In the period from 2000 to 2010, more people moved out of New Canaan than moved in. This pattern is simply a reflection of the overall age composition of the community.

Natural Increase



Net Migration



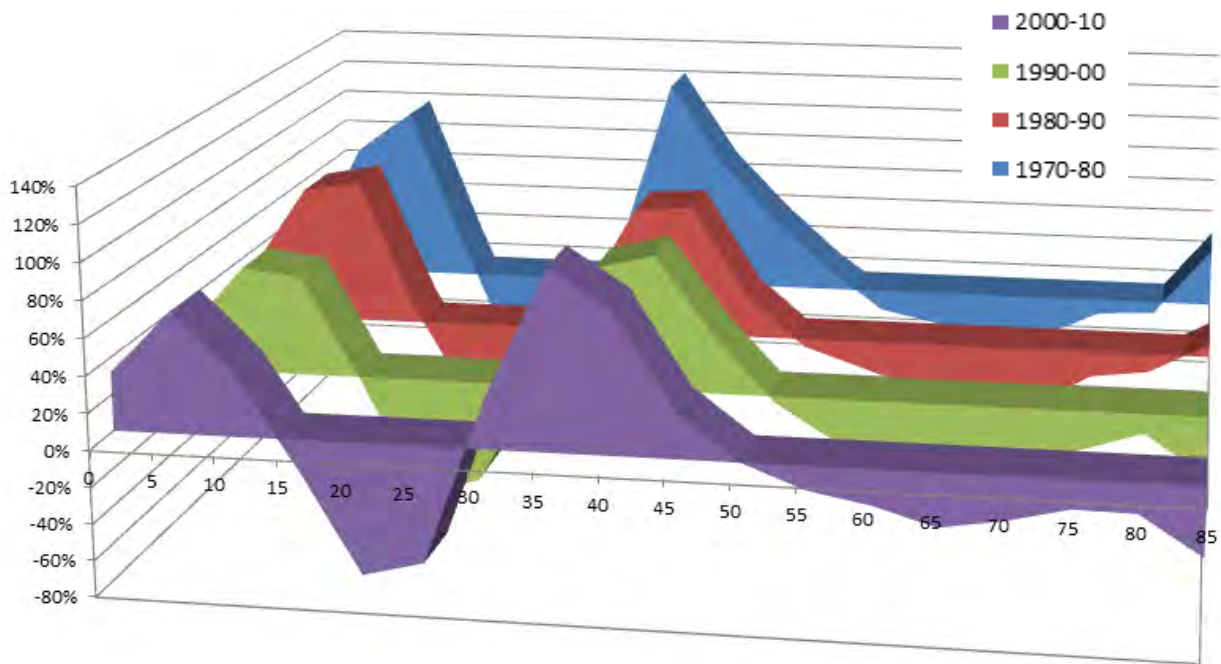
While migration can be driven by economic considerations, the pattern over the past four decades in New Canaan seems to be driven by age as well. Since 1970, New Canaan’s migration patterns have been dominated by:

- Net in-migration of younger families (ages 30-55), often with school-age children (ages 0-20),
- Net out-migration of young adults (ages 20 to 30), and
- Net out-migration of older persons (ages 55+).

The fact that these trends have been consistent for forty-plus years suggests it is part of an underlying dynamic which is likely to persist.

Migration Rates and Patterns By Age Group (1970 to 2010)

(Percent of people in a 5-year age group compared to the number of people who were 10 years younger a decade earlier - adjusted for births and deaths in the interim)
 (i.e. – people aged 30-35 in 2010 compared to the number of people aged 20-25 in 2000)



In the next few decades, New Canaan will experience a “tug-of-war” between several trends:

- Modest net housing growth,
- The “baby boom” generation (people born between 1946 and 1964) reaching the age groups that have historically had net out-migration,
- Existing residents generally living longer and occupying housing units with only one or two people, and
- The “baby boom echo” generation (people born between about 1978 and 1996) having children themselves and reaching the age groups that have historically moved into New Canaan.

Plan Themes

Based on issues and strategies which arose during preparation of the Plan, the following themes were selected as a way to organize Plan recommendations:

**PRESERVE &
ENHANCE
COMMUNITY
CHARACTER**

- Protect Physical Character
 - Preserve And Enhance Open Space
 - Preserve Historic Resources
 - Promote Community Involvement
-

**NURTURE
DOWNTOWN**

- Maintain And Enhance The Character Of Downtown
 - Rationalize Parking
 - Guide Development And Redevelopment
 - Support Downtown
 - Address Other Downtown Issues
-

**ENHANCE
LIVABILITY**

- Provide Appropriate Facilities and Services
 - Protect Residential Neighborhoods
 - Provide For A Diverse Housing Portfolio
 - Enhance The Walking Environment
 - Enhance Bicycle Circulation
 - Enhance Wireless Communications
 - Enhance Energy Services
 - Support Transit
 - Address Other Livability Issues
-

**ACHIEVE
SUSTAINABILITY
AND RESILIENCY**

- Maintain Environmental Health
 - Promote Sustainability
 - Promote Resiliency
 - Address Other Sustainability Issues
-

PRESERVE & ENHANCE COMMUNITY CHARACTER

3

Overview

For many years, New Canaan residents have consistently indicated that preserving and enhancing community character is important to them. In the 2010 community survey, maintaining community character was identified as one of the most important issues or challenges facing the community.

As a result, this Plan specifically identifies preserving and enhancing community character as a priority issue for consideration and action. The intent of this Plan is not to change the character of New Canaan but to preserve it. Residents clearly want to preserve what they love and cherish about New Canaan.

Residents are aware that growth and change affect all communities. New Canaan is not looking for growth for the sake of growth. Rather, New Canaan seeks to guide growth and change in ways that accommodate community needs and ways that maintain and enhance character.

It is important to note that this interest in preserving and enhancing community character has economic implications in addition to emotional implications. The overall perception of community character and quality of life in New Canaan helps support property values as well. For this reason, the overall concept of community character can be extended to the educational system, town services, the overall appearance and function of the downtown, and the relationships between different land uses.

Preserving and enhancing community character is important to New Canaan residents ...

Scenic Road



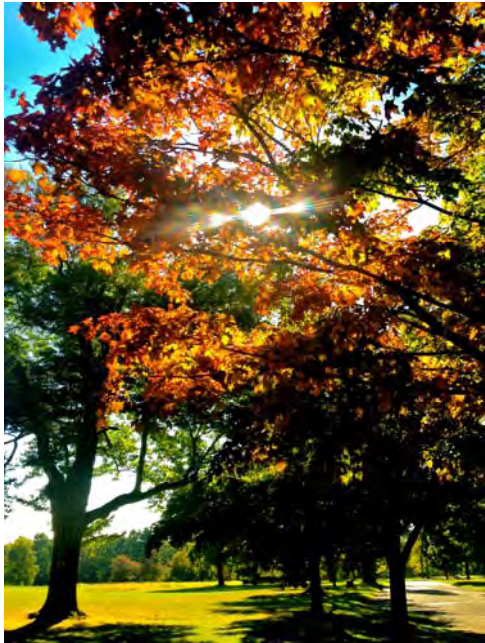
Town Center



As this Plan was being prepared, the Town of New Canaan ran a photo contest. Potential entrants were asked to submit images that celebrate life in New Canaan and things that make our community special. Images could show anything from natural beauty, history, landscapes, wildlife, events, celebrations, facilities, businesses, architecture or people living, working, shopping or playing in Town.

Some of the images submitted are presented on these pages in order to help illustrate the types of things people feel contribute to the overall character of New Canaan.





“Openness”

The influence of “openness” on the overall character of the community has been recognized for some time.

Examples of things which contribute to the overall feeling of “openness” include:

- Large lot zoning in outlying areas of the community,
- Preserved open spaces and parks
- Other low intensity uses
- Scenic views
- Mature trees

Large Lot Zoning

Large lot zoning in outlying areas of New Canaan contributes significantly to the overall character of the community.

Protect Physical Character

A. Preserve and Enhance Physical Character

The physical character and appearance of New Canaan has been a significant factor in attracting people to New Canaan over the years. There are many things which contribute to the overall perception of New Canaan’s character, including the following:

- An overall sense of “openness” which results from large lot zoning, mature trees and attractive landscaping
- Attractive homes and neighborhoods
- A village center which is vibrant, attractive, compact, and walkable
- Historic buildings
- Architectural diversity
- Community facilities
- Convenient rail service
- Scenic views and scenic features
- Lack of light pollution
- Lack of noise pollution

The Town should continue to:

- recognize the importance of community character to residents and visitors,
- identify resources which contribute to community character, and
- identify tools to protect character resources.



Scenic Resources Map

New Canaan, CT

Lewisboro, NY

Pound Ridge, NY





Wilton

Stamford

Norwalk

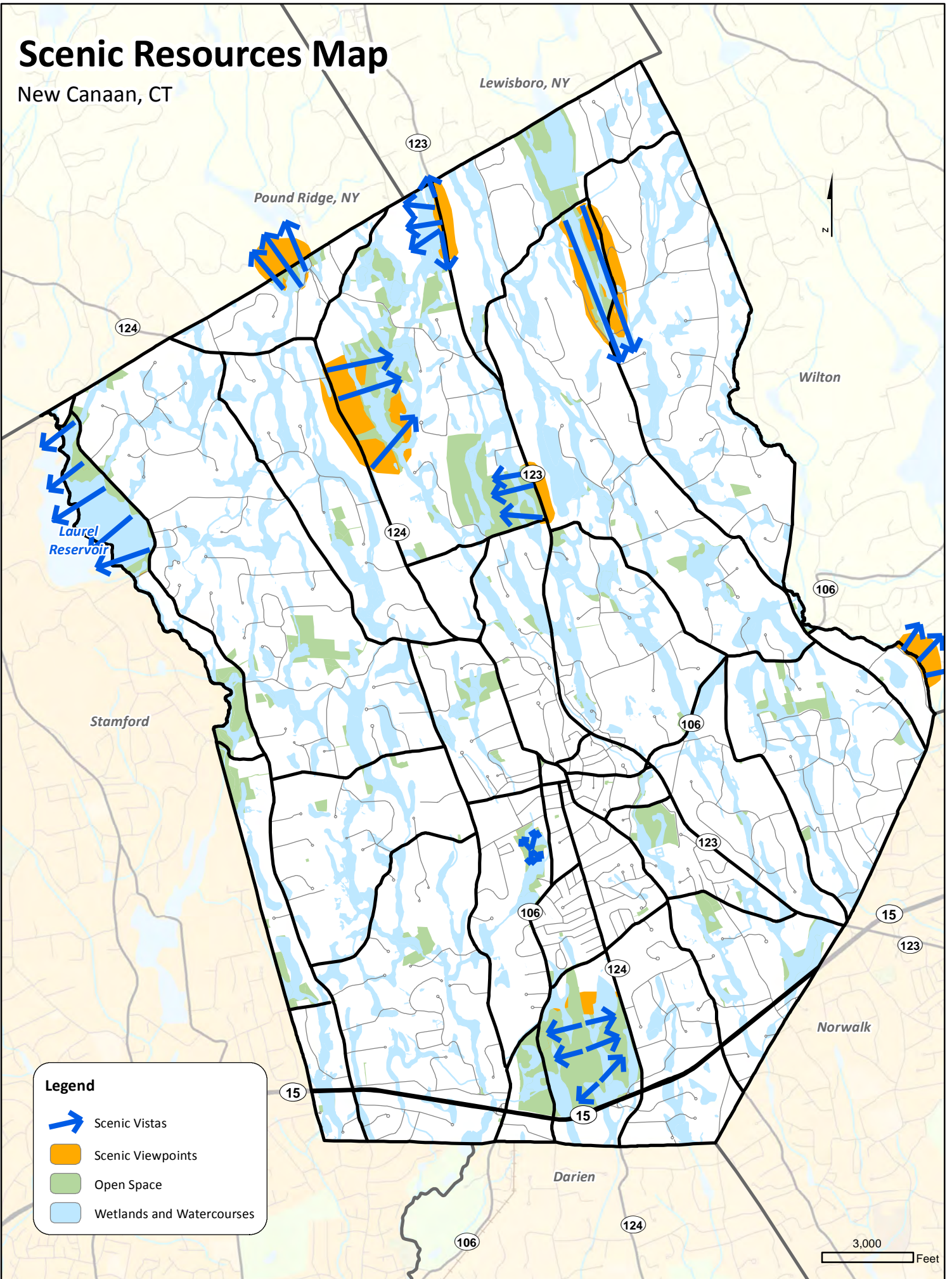
Darien

Legend

-  Scenic Vistas
-  Scenic Viewpoints
-  Open Space
-  Wetlands and Watercourses



3,000 Feet



Open Space Definitions

This Plan recognizes there are different types of open space.

Type	Description
Dedicated Open Space	Land preserved in perpetuity as open space, mostly with public access.
Managed Open Space	Land set aside for some other purpose (such as watershed protection) but that provides some open space value. Public use may not be allowed.
Perceived Open Space	Land which contributes to the overall sense of openness in New Canaan because it is undeveloped or part of a large property

These categories were outlined in the 2003 Plan of Conservation and Development and have since been used in the 2004 Town-Wide Open Space Study and subsequent open space mapping undertaken by the Conservation Commission.

Preserve And Enhance Open Space

Open space, especially when it is accessible to and usable to people, contributes to community character and the overall quality of life of residents. Open space preservation and enhancement has long been an important issue for New Canaan residents (for example, see the 2003 Plan of Conservation and Development).

A. Continue To Preserve Open Space

New Canaan should continue to preserve open space when opportunities present themselves, especially when adjacent to existing open space lands. To help support open space preservation, New Canaan should consider pursuing open space grants (such as from the State of Connecticut) and partnering with other organizations (such as The Nature Conservancy).

Open space preservation should also occur during the subdivision process, either in terms of dedication of land or through acceptance of a “fee-in-lieu-of-open space” payment (as per Section 3.04 of the Subdivision Regulations). In the case of accepting a fee payment, the funds collected through this program can be used to obtain meaningful open space elsewhere in the community.

In addition, New Canaan should continue to celebrate and encourage the spirit of philanthropy which has helped promote open space preservation in New Canaan over the years.

B. Increase Public Access To Open Space

In addition to adding to the open space inventory, New Canaan should maintain and improve, as appropriate, the open spaces it already has and seek to provide more opportunities for public access and connectivity.

The New Canaan Land Trust has been working to expand and maintain trails on its land holdings and these efforts should be supported. Comparable efforts on Town-owned land should be undertaken. Efforts should also be devoted to increasing public access on other properties such as lands owned by:

- First Norwalk Taxing District (watershed lands)
- Second Norwalk Taxing District (watershed lands)
- Aquarion (watershed lands)
- State of Connecticut

Over the long term, having some sort of greenway/ trail network in as many areas of New Canaan as possible will enhance the open spaces that have been preserved and enhance the overall character and quality of life in the community. Making residents aware of the open space opportunities that do exist is an important part of this overall strategy.

Open Space Map

New Canaan, CT

Lewisboro, NY

Pound Ridge, NY









Wilton

Stamford

Norwalk

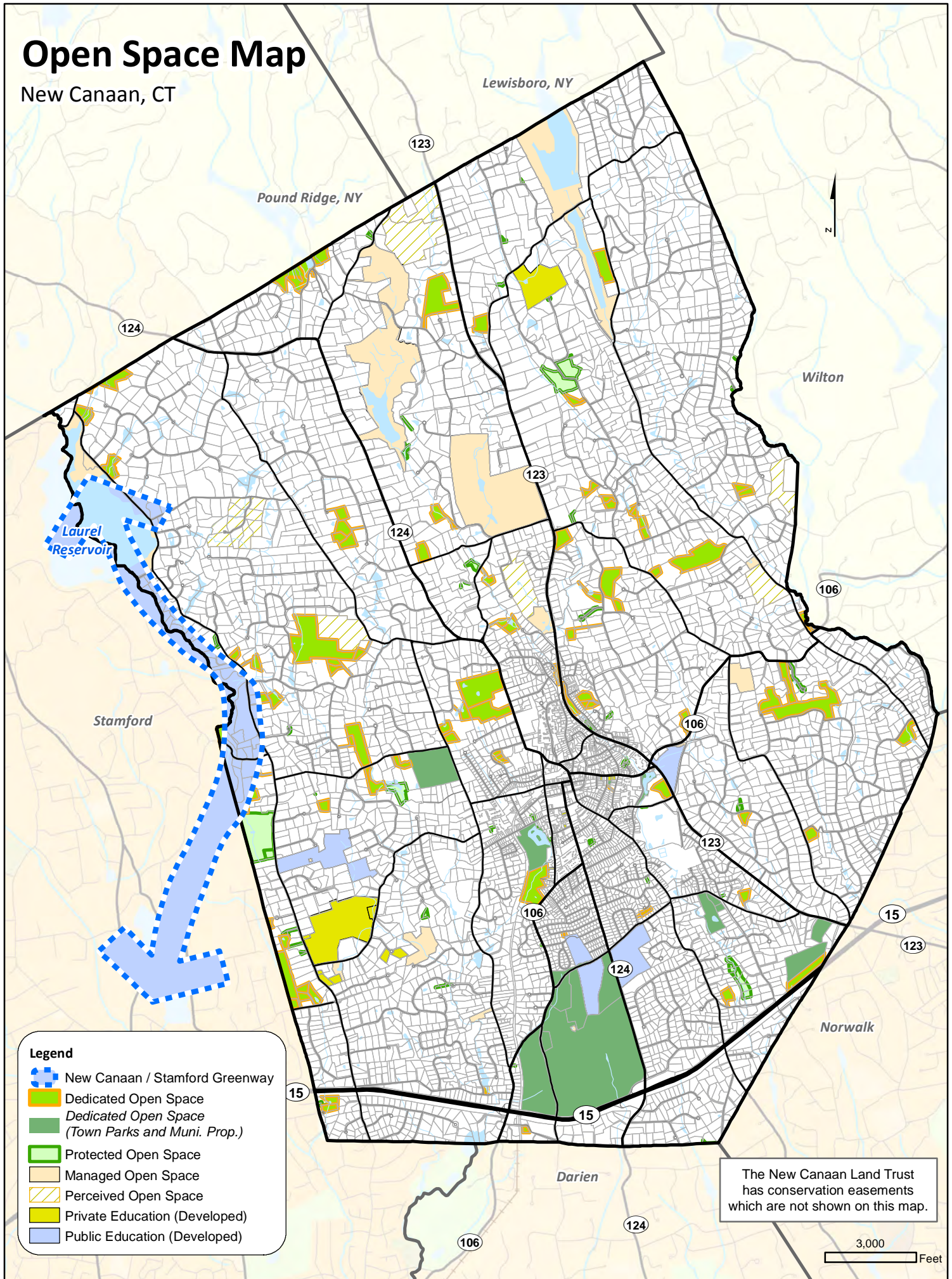
Darien

Legend

-  New Canaan / Stamford Greenway
-  Dedicated Open Space
-  Dedicated Open Space (Town Parks and Muni. Prop.)
-  Protected Open Space
-  Managed Open Space
-  Perceived Open Space
-  Private Education (Developed)
-  Public Education (Developed)

The New Canaan Land Trust has conservation easements which are not shown on this map.

3,000 Feet



CASE STUDY

Land Trust & Trails

In the last few years, the New Canaan Land Trust has become more active in terms of improving the visibility of, and accessibility to, the open spaces which currently exist in the community.

This provides a number of community benefits in terms of community character and quality of life. It also increases the awareness of the Land Trust and their accomplishments.

One project involves establishing and maintaining trails on property located on Valley Road. This land is adjacent to a reservoir of the Norwalk First Taxing District and the trails connect to pathways in the area. A small pull-off area provides parking for just a few cars.

Programs such as this enhance the open spaces in the community, provide walking opportunities for recreation or passive enjoyment, and enhance the overall ambience of New Canaan.

New Canaan Land Trust (Valley Road at Benedict Hill Road and Colonial Road)

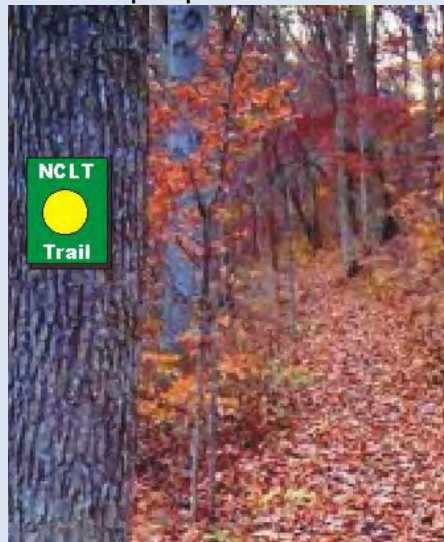


When parcels of open space are interconnected into a cohesive overall system, a system of “greenbelts”, the value of the open space to residents and the impact on community character grows exponentially.

As part of improving the overall open space and trail system in New Canaan, efforts could be devoted to:

- Establishing an open space “marker” of some sort to identify open spaces and trails which are open for public use, and
- Establishing an on-line trail guide to inform residents of where trails and open spaces are located in the community.

Open Space “Marker”



Walking Trail



Sample Trail Guidebook



Historic District

The local historic district in New Canaan was the third local historic district established in Connecticut.

The Historic District Commission oversees activities proposed within the District in order to “ensure that architectural changes are made with respect and consideration for the historic character of the property and the community as a whole.”

Preserve Historic Resources

A. Encourage Preservation Of Historic Resources

Historic buildings and sites contribute to the overall sense of character in New Canaan and the preservation of these resources will be encouraged. Due to significant work that has been done over the years by the New Canaan Historical Society and the New Canaan Preservation Alliance, good information is available about the historic resources in the community.

The Planning and Zoning Commission has adopted regulations to support the preservation of historic resources in town (see Case Study below). This regulation and other local efforts have helped protect and preserve the commonly visualized resources such as historic homes and buildings – and it has also helped protect “modern houses” and the barns still standing which remind us of our agricultural heritage.

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

Residence



“Modern House”



Downtown Buildings



CASE STUDY

Preservation Of Historic Structures

To encourage the preservation of structures contributing to community character, the Planning and Zoning Commission adopted Section 7.7 of the Zoning Regulations.

This Section of the Regulations allows the Commission, by Special Permit, to modify a dimensional standard if so doing would help preserve the structure. This might include allowing greater lot coverage (to allow new home construction, perhaps) if the historic home or barn is preserved. The standards for eligible properties and the limitations are specified in this section of the regulations.

Historic Resources Map

New Canaan, CT

Lewisboro, NY

Pound Ridge, NY

Wilton

Laurel Reservoir

Stamford

106

123

124

124

123

123

106

106

123

15

123

Norwalk

Darien

106

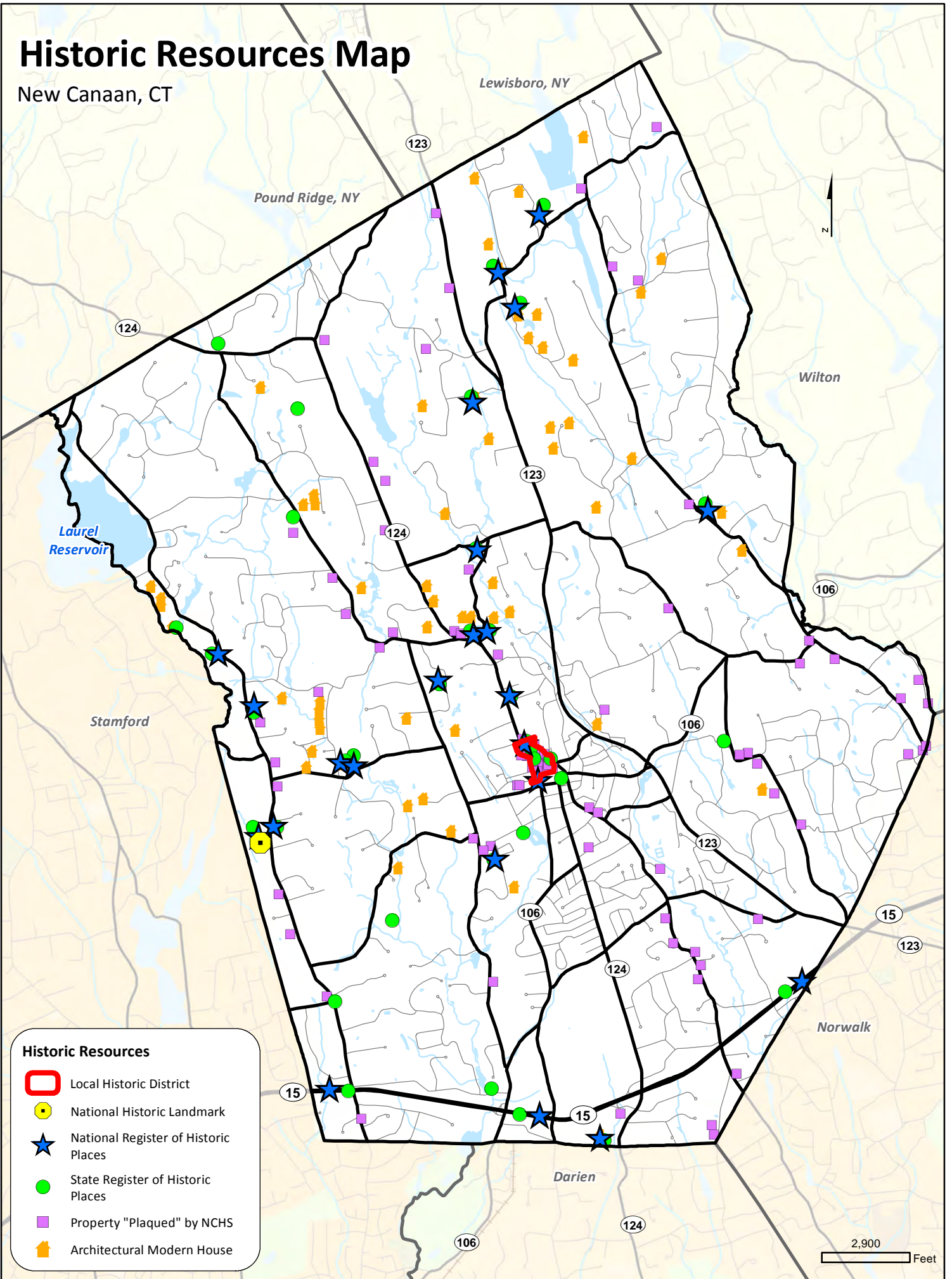
124

2,900

Feet

Historic Resources

-  Local Historic District
-  National Historic Landmark
-  National Register of Historic Places
-  State Register of Historic Places
-  Property "Plaqued" by NCHS
-  Architectural Modern House



CASE STUDY

Barns

The character of New Canaan has been formed in great part by its agricultural and colonial history. The many beautiful barns that still remain, which were essential to the early families who settled here, are an important contributor to the overall character of the community.

New Canaan should continue to try and preserve barns since:

- They contribute to the character of New Canaan.
- They help highlight our history and help give younger generations a sense of our past.
- They remind us of how their ancestors lived and thrived without the modern conveniences so many take for granted.

Efforts to protect barns should continue.

New Canaan Barn



New Canaan Barn



B. Support Historic Preservation Efforts

New Canaan is also prepared to support historic preservation efforts by others.

New Canaan adopted a demolition delay ordinance which requires a waiting period before an identified historic structure can be demolished. While it does not prevent demolition, it does allow for discussion of ways to preserve the structure or document its historic significance. This ordinance and the procedures should be reviewed to ensure the desired outcomes are being achieved.

Over the years, the Historical Society has been quite active in identifying historic properties. The New Canaan Preservation Alliance has more recently joined in these efforts. Efforts which help increase the visibility of historic resources also help encourage their preservation. These efforts should be continued.

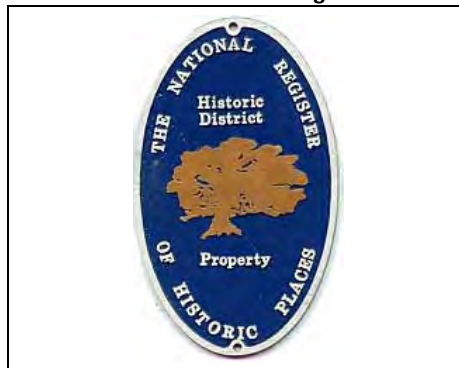
While listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) is largely ceremonial, it does increase the recognition of an area's historic relevance and encourages preservation. For income producing properties, it also allows for tax credits for renovations undertaken in accordance with federal guidelines. These efforts should also be supported.

Where endorsed by the property owners affected, New Canaan established a "local historic district" to help protect historic resources. This approach requires a "certificate of appropriateness" from a local Historic District Commission for many exterior modifications to a building or other structure.

Local Historic Recognition



National Historic Recognition



CASE STUDY

“Modern Houses”

New Canaan contains a significant concentration of “modern houses” – acclaimed and award-winning houses built between 1947 and 1968 – designed by a group of famous architects.

These houses were built in New Canaan because:

- of New Canaan’s proximity to New York City (where many of the architects worked),
- the availability of modestly-priced land (often with dramatic topographic or other features), and
- the interest of these architects in living near each other and exploring architectural innovations.

According to knowledgeable sources, New Canaan has arguably one of the most important concentrations of Modern Movement residential architecture in the country. It is interesting that, on a national (and international) scale, attention is paid to architectural gems such as Frank Lloyd Wright’s “Fallingwater” as an outstanding example of dramatic design and architectural innovation, while the significant concentration of “Modern” houses in New Canaan goes relatively unnoticed.

An inventory by the New Canaan Historical Society found that almost 100 “Modern” houses had been built in New Canaan but that only about 85 remain. People come to New Canaan to see the “Modern” houses and reflect on their role in architecture and design.

Philip Johnson’s Glass House



Lee / Mori / Kuma House



Philip Johnson's "Glass House" (perhaps the best known of the "moderns") was named a National Historic Landmark in 1997. The property is owned and managed by the National Trust For Historic Preservation and they offer tours to the general public on a reservation basis (<http://philipjohnsonglasshouse.org/>).

Six other modern houses appear on the State Register of Historic Places. Of them, two were designed by Philip Johnson; one each by Marcel Breuer, Eliot Noyes, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Landis Gores.

Threat And Solution

Around the turn of the century, the "modern houses" in New Canaan were threatened. A very hot real estate market created a situation where people wanted to purchase the modern houses in order to raze the structure and build a new house. At the same time, restrictive zoning rules on allowable coverage created a situation where the "modern houses" were penalized.

Recognizing this, the Zoning Regulations were modified to provide a special permitting process which provided regulatory benefits if the "modern house" was preserved. It is believed that this regulatory approach has helped preserve some of these unique structures.

Landis Gores Pavilion



Modern House



Promote Community Involvement

A. Promote Community Events

While there are few things that a municipality can do to affect the quality of life of each individual resident, a municipality can promote and sponsor activities that enhance the overall sense of community spirit and pride:

- Unique events (parades, fairs, and concerts)
- Volunteer organizations
- Philanthropic efforts undertaken by residents
- Establishing and attaining shared visions and goals
- Discussion of community issues and priorities
- Positive recognition of local activities and events

New Canaan is fortunate to have a strong sense of community pride and community spirit. Local organizations should continue to encourage activities that contribute to community spirit and pride since these activities will contribute to the overall quality of life of New Canaan residents.

B. Promote Community Philanthropy

It is important to recognize that New Canaan residents have demonstrated a strong sense of philanthropy over the years and these efforts have resulted in a number of community amenities and assets.

The New Canaan Community Foundation (NCCF) is a case in point. Established in 1977, the NCCF is devoted to promoting community philanthropy and improving the quality of life for area residents. Since its founding, the organization has made over \$8 million in grants for many non-profit organizations in New Canaan and scholarships for students. The organization is funded by charitable donations from generous residents.

Some of the Amenities Funded Through NCCF and Local Philanthropy



NURTURE DOWNTOWN

4

Overview

New Canaan’s downtown is a special place. New Canaan residents and visitors recognize the strong “sense of place” which exists in the downtown and which is unique. Residents want to preserve and enhance the overall image and character of the downtown and ensure it remains the “heart and soul” of New Canaan.

The Plan specifically calls for improved maintenance and enhancement of the Town Center in New Canaan because of the important role that it plays in community character and community spirit.

Still, there are improvements and enhancements which can and should be made to improve downtown.

New Canaan’s downtown is recognized as one of the most attractive places in the region ...

Forest Street



South Avenue



Character Elements

A number of studies over the years have identified the following elements as contributing to (or detracting from) the overall character of downtown:

- Buildings
- Signage
- Sidewalks
- Lighting
- Parking
- Street furniture
- Plantings
- Pedestrian linkages
- Crosswalks
- Pavement
- Curbs
- Traffic circulation
- Utilities
- Garbage / Litter
- Weeds
- Litter
- Vacant buildings

Over the years, New Canaan residents have indicated that they wanted more of the following types of things in the downtown:

- More streets like Elm Street
- Attractive streetlights
- People living in the downtown
- Mixed use buildings
- Medical space / office
- Cleaning of common areas / trash pickup
- Control of delivery vehicles
- Pocket parks and green spaces

Maintain And Enhance The Character Of Downtown

Maintaining and enhancing the unique quality and character of downtown is an important element of this Plan. New Canaan is widely recognized as having an attractive and charming downtown area. This overall impression needs to be maintained and enhanced for the downtown to be as successful as it can be.

New Canaan designated its downtown zoning districts as “village districts” in 2005 and this designation helps give the Planning and Zoning Commission the tools to maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the downtown area. The village district designations should be continued.

Elm Street



Elm Street



Main Street



Sidewalk Sale



New Canaan News Online

CASE STUDY

Downtown Strategic Plan

Due to funding constraints, the 2003 Plan of Conservation and Development did not contain an evaluation of downtown issues. Instead, that Plan acknowledged recommendations from the 1984 Downtown Study and recommended that a more detailed study be undertaken.

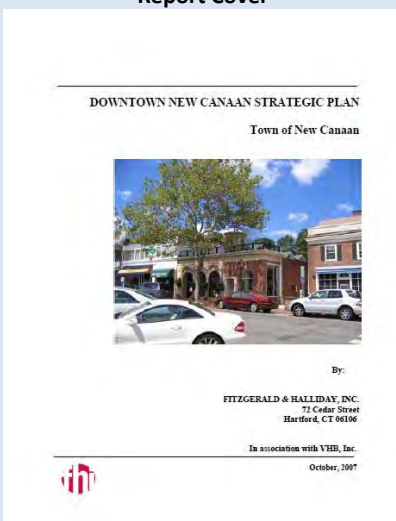
In 2007, a Downtown Planning Study was prepared for the Town by Fitzgerald and Halliday. The key issues to be evaluated included the overall development potential in the downtown, the estimated parking surplus or deficit, and the relevance of the zoning regulations for the downtown area. The final report is available on the Town website.

The study estimated there was about 900,000 square feet of floor area in the downtown and that the zoning regulations at that time might allow for construction of an additional 160,000 square feet. Overall, a parking deficit was found both in the downtown and at the train station.

Key strategies from the plan included:

- Sustain and enhance downtown character/aesthetics
- Maximize efficient use of existing parking supply and expand the parking supply to meet long-term demand
- Improve vehicle loading options
- Improve pedestrian access and amenities
- Enhance traffic operations

Report Cover



Recommended Immediate Action Items

Immediate Action Plan

This listing includes those high priority activities that can be initiated in the coming year and which have low capital investment costs.

Action Item	Primary Responsibility	Note
Strengthen Village District Design Criteria	P&Z Commission	Zoning amendment
All Building Size Limits to Zoning	P&Z Commission	Zoning amendment
Conduct Market Demand Study	Town of New Canaan	Start process by developing and RFP and setting aside funds in upcoming budget year
Add Parking Aesthetics to Zoning	P&Z Commission	Zoning amendment
Relocate Municipal Employee Parking	Town of New Canaan	These actions can be implemented in phases and should be accompanied by incentives
Relocate Retail/Commercial Employee Parking	Chamber of Commerce	
Review Parking Fee Structure	Parking Bureau	Current ongoing program
Relocate Joint Asset Structure	Parking Bureau	
Adopt Fee and Lots of Parking-Zoning	P&Z Commission	Zoning amendment
Create Additional Loading Zones	Parking Bureau	Initiate consensus building process to identify locations
Adopt Loading Time Restrictions	Parking Bureau	Will require signage
Enhance Wayfinding	Town of New Canaan	
Eliminate Some Parking at Intersections	Town of New Canaan	Involves restriping roadway and signage

Downtown New Canaan Strategic Plan
October 23, 2007 page 49

Need For A Parking Review

New Canaan has studied parking many times over the years and a common thought is that another parking study is not needed.

However, past parking studies have generally looked simply at the supply and utilization of parking spaces (the number of spaces available and occupied). This is not what the POCD recommends.

The POCD recommends that New Canaan look at the dynamics of parking in the downtown:

- In order to provide for a more efficient parking system
- The opportunity to provide more parking to better support existing businesses and/or support additional development in the future,
- Support pedestrian activity
- The ability to capture commuter parking revenue from residents of nearby communities

Of course, the following realities are understood:

- Most people in New Canaan do not seem to be in favor of paid parking on Main or Elm,
- Meters (used in the past) and machines (used at present) may not be appropriate for Main or Elm, and
- New technologies may not yet be at a stage for implementation and acceptance by the public.

Rationalize Parking

A. Undertake A Comprehensive Parking Review

The most desired and attractive spaces in the downtown are available for free (and end up being used by employees and long term parkers) while the spaces which may be less desired (due to location, appearance, or other factors) involve monthly permits or user charges (daily or hourly). People who want to make a purchase at a local shop or who want to complete a quick errand end up circling the block or parking further away because parking is not available.

Quite a bit of research has gone into parking dynamics in recent years (*"The High Cost Of Free Parking"* by Donald Shoup is a good example) and it would make sense for New Canaan to investigate its approach to parking to ensure it is satisfying local needs. New Canaan should undertake a parking review for the downtown area.

The goals of such a review might be to:

- Use the spaces we have most efficiently
- Provide convenient parking for customers of downtown businesses
- Provide cost-efficient spaces for downtown workers
- Provide parking for special events
- Support the downtown
- Provide parking for commuters

The review should evaluate how parking is provided and priced and how this might be improved. Studies in other areas have shown that pricing parking to result in a five percent vacancy rate maximizes revenue while ensuring that users will be confident they can find parking when they want it. While metering on Elm Street might be one approach, there are a number of technologies available to address parking issues and New Canaan should be at the forefront of how to use these strategies to make downtown successful.

Funds from the parking system (or any net increase in parking revenue) could be used to help support streetscape improvements and other programs which would support the downtown area and businesses.

The review can also look at how to provide "way-finding" to parking areas so that visitors to New Canaan will be able to easily find parking areas which are conveniently located relative to their destination.

The review can also look at ways to incentivize employee parking at the Locust Street lot and the School Street lot in order to free up parking in other areas.

B. Expand Parking

New Canaan should seek opportunities to expand parking in the downtown area. An adequate supply of parking will be an important asset in terms of supporting the uses we already have in the downtown area, the demand for parking by shoppers, workers and commuters, and the type of downtown we want to have in the future.

Locust Avenue

The need for more parking has already been recognized. With the renovation of Town Hall, a number of parking spaces are going to be lost at that site. The Town decided to add a parking deck at the Locust Avenue parking lot to expand the number of spaces, which primarily serves downtown workers, by about 100 spaces. Since some spaces are available for hourly users and since all spaces are available for no charge on weekends and evenings, this project will help support a number of activities in the eastern part of downtown (shops, restaurants, Town Hall, downtown workers, downtown residents, special events, etc.).

Locust Avenue Parking Structure



Long Range Planning Committee Report / BfJ Planning

Observation

People complain about [parking], but nobody does anything about it ...

Paraphrase of
Charles Dudley Warner

Parking Tidbits

In the 2011-12 fiscal year, over \$1.1 million was deposited in the Town's "General Fund" (the main account the Town uses to fund local services) as a result of parking revenues.

An additional \$157,000 was deposited into the Town's "Railroad Fund". This reflects revenue raised from the meters at the State-owned parking lots adjacent to the train station. If revenue collected exceeds maintenance expenses, half of the net income is sent to the State of Connecticut.

Over the years, the Town has also collected about \$450,000 from a "fee-in-lieu-of-parking" regulation which is intended to help fund the construction of additional public parking facilities in and near the downtown area. Approximately \$200,000 of this was appropriated for improvements to the Locust Street lot.

Approach

Due to high utilization of the parking areas near the train station, care and sensitivity should be taken to ensure that existing commuters will be accommodated as best as possible during any parking expansion.

While parking expansion may result in short-term difficulties for some people, the fact that parking spaces will be available at the train stations for more New Canaan commuters will be a major enhancement. This will further acknowledge that New Canaan is a commuter-friendly town and recognize the crucial role that such commuters play in the local economy.

In addition, such parking could support additional development that could benefit all New Canaan residents and businesses.

Train Station

Expanding parking at the train station could also help New Canaan accomplish other objectives. More spaces at the station would make more spaces available for New Canaan residents (who might no longer need to park at Talmadge Hill or Richmond Hill or elsewhere). The construction of a parking structure of some type would allow parking to be sheltered from the weather. Overnight parking might be permissible. Such a project would help support activities in the western part of downtown.

Providing spaces in a garage at the train station might present an opportunity to incorporate parking currently provided in the State of Connecticut lots (on Elm Street and Pine Street) and allow these properties to become available for new buildings and uses in the downtown area. The consolidation of parking in the most convenient location (the former lumberyard location immediately adjacent to the tracks and the station) might allow other lots to be used for other local objectives.

The additional parking can help support downtown residential uses. The additional parking could also help support an active streetscape by allowing some sites to be devoted to buildings with the parking off-site.

Parking at the Locust Avenue lot and at the Train Station lot should meet community needs for the foreseeable future. Should additional parking supply be desirable in the future, studies could be undertaken of the feasibility of a parking facility at other sites.

Train Station And Parking Areas



Possible Train Station Parking Structure



Observation

Parking is a key issue for downtown merchants and businesses. We should not be afraid to look at the overall parking situation and learn from the experience of others ...

Comment from a Public Meeting

Train Station “Gateway”

A “gateway” is a recognizable location where a person would become aware that they had entered a different place. The concept of a “gateway” is very important in community design and “place-making”.

The area around the train station is an example of a gateway for people arriving by train.

At the present time, this area may not be presenting the best image of New Canaan. For example, the sidewalks on Park Street should be all brick, the service alleys (and garbage bins) should be shielded, and planting should be added to enhance the area and mask the retaining wall.

Through efforts such as these the concept of “place” and “character” will be positively impacted in New Canaan’s downtown.

Guide Development And Redevelopment

A. Orient Development Activities Towards Pedestrians

New Canaan has an attractive and inviting pedestrian environment in the Retail A and Retail B zones and in most others areas of the downtown as well.

Maintaining and enhancing the pedestrian-friendly nature in all areas of the downtown is a key strategy of the Plan. There are two key ways that this can happen:

- Providing for a convenient, attractive, and safe network of sidewalks, crosswalks, and other pedestrian connections, and
- Maintaining inviting and interesting uses of buildings adjacent to the street.

As discussed in a number of reports and studies, there are some missing mid-block links in the sidewalk system and some opportunities to strengthen pedestrian connections to and from parking areas which should be implemented (such as acquiring easements for these pedestrian connections) as opportunities present themselves:

- Sidewalk along the Town Hall driveway to Main Street
- Connection from Park Street lot to Elm Street (two locations)
- Mid-block connection from Main Street to Forest Street
- Mid-block connection from Elm Street towards Cherry Street

Sidewalks within the downtown should be wide and be constructed of high quality materials. Brick is recommended (and could be required) in the key areas. Widening sidewalks and extending the brick sidewalks is encouraged.

Enhancing the pedestrian environment through the use of attractive lighting (both building lighting and sidewalk fixtures), street trees, benches, and other amenities is strongly encouraged.

In terms of the uses of buildings abutting sidewalks, New Canaan has regulations which encourage active uses (or prohibit uses which do not promote window shopping or pedestrian interest) at the street level. These regulations should be maintained and strengthened, as appropriate.

Since it can be a challenge to maintain the right balance between the amount of parking (to meet demand) and the location of parking (for convenience) while maintaining a pedestrian-friendly streetscape, New Canaan may wish to consider some sort of transit service if it will help maintain an appropriate balance.

B. Extend and Enhance The Pedestrian-Friendliness

Within the downtown, the areas which are the most pedestrian-friendly are:

- Elm Street between Main Street and Park Street
- Main Street between Locust Avenue and Morse Court
- Forest Street between East Avenue and Locust Avenue

The elements of these areas which support their pedestrian-friendly nature include:

- Brick sidewalks
- On-street parking (since it provides a sense of convenience to visitors and protection from traffic)
- Active and inviting uses adjacent to the sidewalk
- Appropriately scaled buildings adjacent to the sidewalk
- Attractive and inviting lighting
- Pedestrian amenities (benches, etc.)
- Street trees and other landscaping
- Parking areas which are visually shielded or buffered
- Minimal interruptions to the pedestrian experience

Over time, New Canaan should investigate extending these pedestrian-friendly characteristics to other streets including, but not necessarily limited to:

- Elm Street west of Park Street
- Pine Street west of Park Street
- Park Street between Elm Street and Pine Street

Street Segment Which Is More Pedestrian-Friendly



Street Segment Which Is Less Pedestrian-Friendly



An Active Street-Front

While most of the streets in downtown New Canaan are amazingly attractive and inviting and pedestrian-friendly, some streets are not.

Part of the reason for this is the location of surface parking lots or buildings set back from the street and the sidewalk. It is surprising to realize that some of the most visible, attractive, and valuable real estate in all of New Canaan is devoted to parking.

New Canaan should look at the redevelopment of some areas in order to promote an active street-front and shield parking areas.

Pedestrian Through-Cuts

Mid-block pedestrian connections are an important part of a pedestrian-friendly area and an active pedestrian system. Without such connections, the walking distances around blocks can discourage walking.

New Canaan should encourage (or require) mid-block connections where they may be necessary or desirable. Some communities have a requirement that there be a pedestrian connection every 250 feet.

Design Contests

New Canaan should regularly explore alternative ideas for keeping downtown an attractive and engaging place.

One approach might be to request submissions of ideas for downtown (or sponsor a design contest) where ideas might be proposed.

While the community would be under no obligation to implement any of the ideas proposed, such an exercise would open people's eyes to new potentials and it might even result in some ideas strongly supported by residents.

Such an undertaking could be directed towards everyone or targeted to invite submissions from different groups:

- Local students
- Architecture schools
- Design professionals
- New Canaan residents

C. Promote Appropriate Development

There is interest in additional development in and near the downtown area for a number of different purposes:

- Housing, particularly for "empty nesters" and senior citizens,
- Entertainment and cultural facilities,
- Municipal facilities and community amenities,
- Retail and restaurant space, and
- Office space, including medical offices.

Provided this development occurs in ways that enhance the downtown, it will continue the evolutionary process that has made the downtown an important part of the fabric of the community for hundreds of years.

The most appropriate types of development for the downtown area will be appropriately scaled and designed to fit into the existing fabric of the downtown area. Building design and scale is especially important. A strong relationship to the street and pedestrian traffic in terms of uses and activities will be key.

Multi-story, moderate density, mixed-use development (generally with residential and/or office uses on upper floors combined with retail shops or other active uses at street level) would reflect the pattern of much of the existing development in the downtown. The fact that the downtown is within an easy walk of the train station allows it to easily support this pattern of development (even with reduced amounts of parking).

Various studies have found that this type of development can have a number of community benefits as well:

- It can help support changing lifestyles of a number of population segments (including younger people, older people, people who prefer not to drive, and those who don't own cars) who wish to live in a mixed use environment where a number of services and activities are available within walking distance.
- It helps strengthen downtowns since more people living in and near the area helps to support the businesses and other activities (restaurants, food-related stores, markets, boutiques, theaters, etc.) through the day and evening and it also has a secondary benefit in that these uses and activities are also available to other residents of the community and the region.
- It can help address the desire to diversify our housing portfolio in a way that extends and expands the kind of development we already have and appreciate.
- It can help support economic development (and the overall tax base) since the existence of a variety of uses near the train station can increase the desirability of the entire area

D. Continue To Review Zoning Regulations For Downtown

To help ensure that the appropriate guidance and direction is given to development in the downtown, the Commission should continue to regularly review the regulations for the downtown area.

This should include a review of the uses and dimensional requirements in each of the districts to ensure they are meeting community needs and expectations. It might also include an evaluation of “form-based codes” and other tools or techniques to help ensure the appropriate future development of the downtown area.

It could also include a review of the zoning district boundaries.

Regulation Revisions

Over the past decade or so, the Planning and Zoning Commission has regularly reviewed and, as appropriate, amended the Zoning Regulations to help guide development and redevelopment in the downtown area.

For example, in 2005, the Commission designated the downtown zones as “village districts” which allow the Commission to have greater review and approval authority over aesthetic issues and building design in the downtown area. In 2008, the Commission evaluated whether banks were appropriate uses in some business areas in terms of promoting an active streetscape. In 2011, the Commission adopted some changes for the Retail B zone to provide flexibility for redevelopment for mixed use properties.

Darien Buildings



Wilton Building



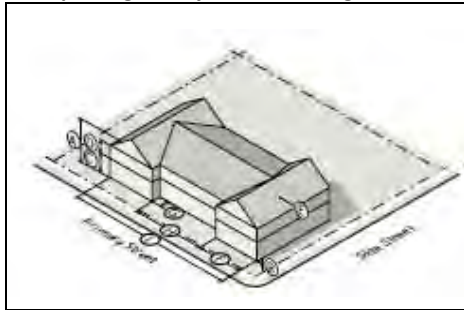
Greenwich Buildings



Litchfield Buildings

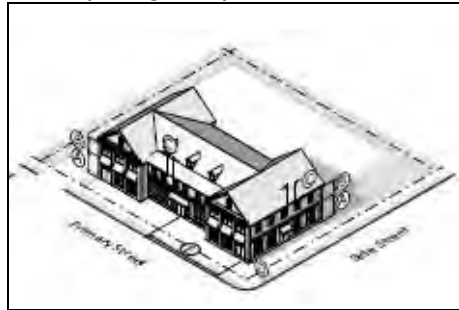


Sample Regulatory Metrics – Height & Mass



Malta, NY Form-Based Code

Sample Regulatory Metrics - Activation



Malta, NY Form-Based Code

Overall Purposes

Overall, the POCD recognizes the following purposes and intents:

1. Encourage a mix of moderate density development in and near the downtown area.
2. Emphasize mixed use, pedestrian oriented development.
3. Create a pedestrian-friendly environment to encourage walking, bicycling and transit use.
4. Create a neighborhood identity that promotes pedestrian activity, human interactions, safety and livability.
5. Encourage building reuse and infill to create appropriate densities.
6. Provide a range of housing options for people of different income levels and at different stages of life.
7. Take advantage of the fact that most areas are within easy walking distance of the train station.

Possible Strategies And Options For Downtown

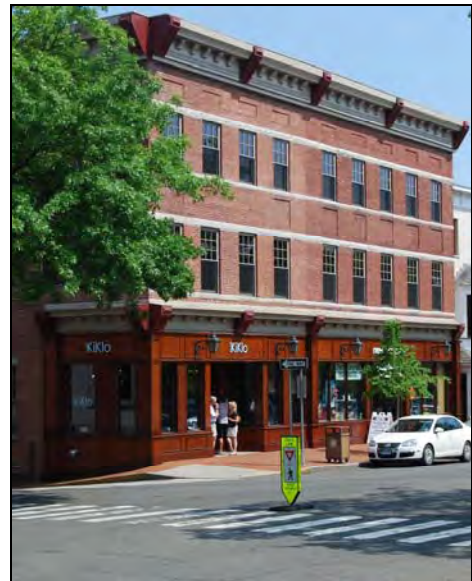
Mixed Uses / Density

1. Consider encouraging or requiring mixed uses (residential and business in the same building) in appropriate areas.
2. Consider allowing or requiring increased density to promote desired development patterns (mixed use buildings, housing, etc.) and help support New Canaan's downtown:
 - o Consider a minimum floor-area-ratio (FAR) requirement.
 - o Consider a minimum building height standard.
 - o Consider increasing the FAR limitation by Special Permit.
 - o Consider increasing the building height limitation by Special Permit (i.e. - allow building heights above 30 feet and/or 2.5 stories in certain zones).
3. Consider implementing a cap on the floor area of stores in other zones in the downtown core (in addition to the RA zone) to support small-scale businesses (or regulate by Special Permit or other approach).
4. Consider creating a new zoning district on the west side of the business district to effectively guide the development and redevelopment of this area (mixed use, walkability, streetscape, etc.) since several properties are among the largest within the business district.
5. Evaluate the appropriate zoning for the Cross Street / Vitti Street area.

Forest Street



Main Street



Streetscape

6. Review permitted uses (including those permitted by Site Plan Approval and/or Special Permit) and development patterns to ensure that a pedestrian orientation is maintained.
7. Consider requiring active ground floor uses in more areas.
8. Consider modifying setback standards (build-to-line, etc.) to allow buildings to be located closer to the street and/or sidewalk and promote an attractive and pedestrian-friendly streetscape.
9. Prohibit or discourage parking in front of buildings (i.e. – between the building and the sidewalk) in order to maintain an active streetscape.

Housing

10. Provide for additional housing opportunities in and near the downtown area including:
 - o Multi-family housing.
 - o Multi-family senior-friendly housing.
 - o Mixed use rental housing for younger persons and families.
11. For residential units in some zones, consider allowing modification of the following *by Special Permit*:
 - o The limitation on floor area.
 - o The limitation on number of bedrooms.

Parking

12. Consider allowing decked or tiered parking structures in several zones *by Special Permit* to minimize land area utilized for surface parking.
13. Consider modifying parking standards:
 - o For office uses within walking distance of the train station.
 - o For mixed use buildings when the peak parking demands of the uses do not coincide.
 - o For multi-family uses within walking distance of the train station.

Much of what New Canaan already has and seeks to enhance is often referred to in other areas as “transit oriented development.”

Our vision is not specifically for development that supports transit or is oriented towards transit.

Rather, our vision is for development that meets the needs of our community. The fact that it is, and will be, supported by transit is an added bonus.

Cross & Vitti Streets

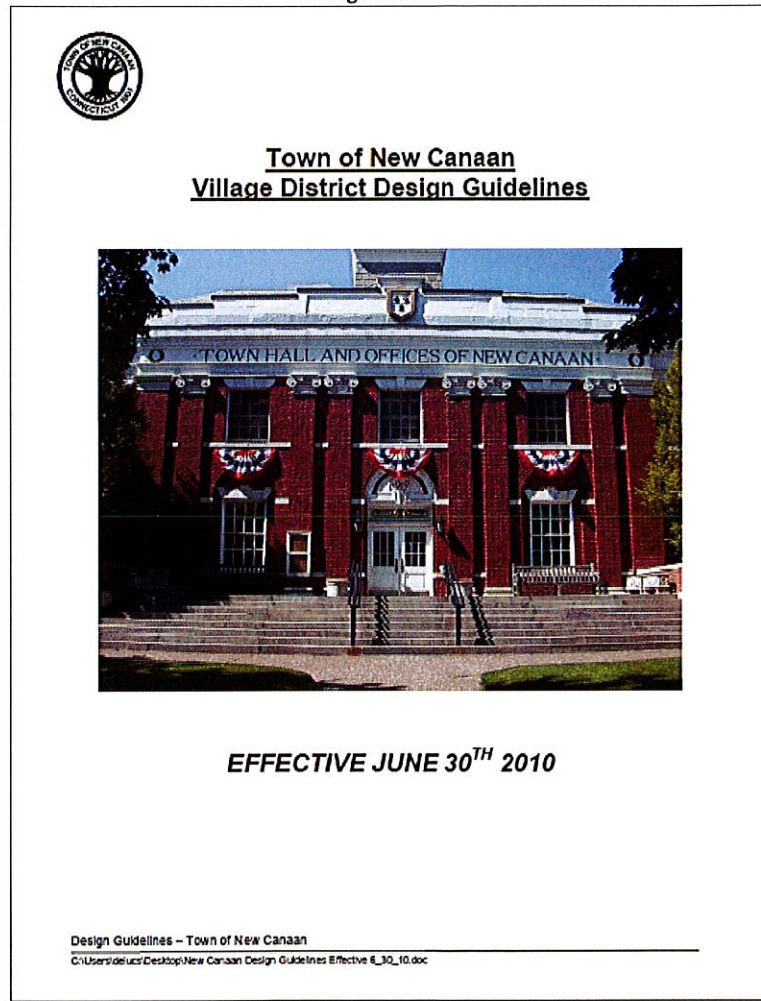
Following the recommendation of the POCD, suggesting a zoning review, the Commission authorized a study of the business zones of the Cross and Vitti Streets area. After a series of Commission meetings and public hearings, a conceptual Master Plan (the Plan) of that area was completed in December of 2015. Over time, the Commission will consider changes to the zoning regulations in order to potentially implement certain recommendations of the Plan. The Commission reserves the right to accept, reject, or alter any of the recommendations. In addition, the Commission may consider incorporation of the design recommendations of the Plan into the Village District Design Guidelines. With the incorporation of this amendment into the POCD, the Commission will refer to the Plan in its evaluation of applications in the Cross and Vitti Streets area. Further, the Commission will ask applicants to consider the elements of the Plan when submitting applications. (Added 4/1/16)

E. Supplement Village District Review

New Canaan adopted “*Village District Design Guidelines*” in 2010 to help guide activities in the downtown area. These guidelines should be reviewed and supplemented over time to ensure that the level and quality of design and construction in the downtown area is exceptional.

In accordance with the requirements of Section 8-2j of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Commission should consider retaining a “village district consultant” to supplement the design review work currently being undertaken.

Design Guidelines



CASE STUDY

Commercial Market Study

In 2012, BFJ Planning prepared a “Commercial Market Study” for New Canaan to evaluate the overall composition of the uses in the downtown area, the issues affecting downtown today and in the future, and how to strengthen the downtown. The final report is available on the Town website.

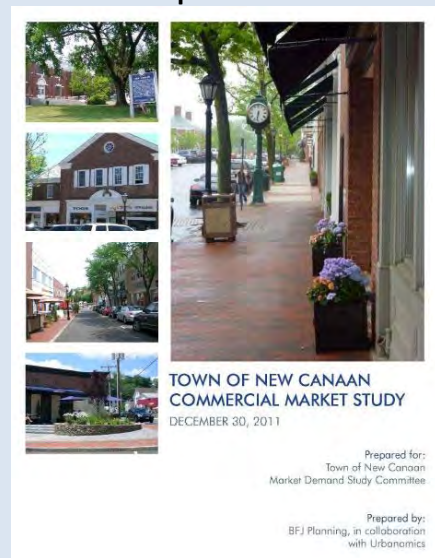
Overall, the study found the following:

- While there were some specific uses that could be attracted to downtown, there was a fairly good balance between real estate supply and demand
- The character of downtown is an attraction and should be maintained
- New Canaan could do more to market its unique brand of small-town New England charm

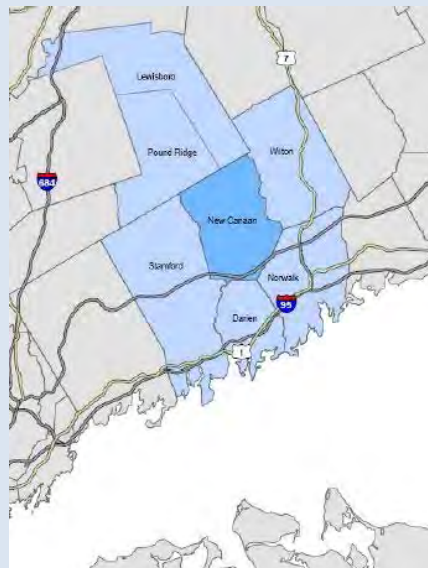
Major recommendations included the following:

- Seek to attract identified “opportunity uses”
- Increase parking capacity and improve parking management
- Promote downtown through technology and special events
- Capitalize on marketing opportunities with other local venues
- Make streetscape and quality of life improvements
- Create a Downtown Improvement Council or similar entity

Report Cover



Identified Market Area



Possible Concepts For Downtown (West)

Consider rezoning the Park Street lot to Business A

Consider providing opportunities for mixed-use development near the train station

Consider converting the State parking lot to development sites

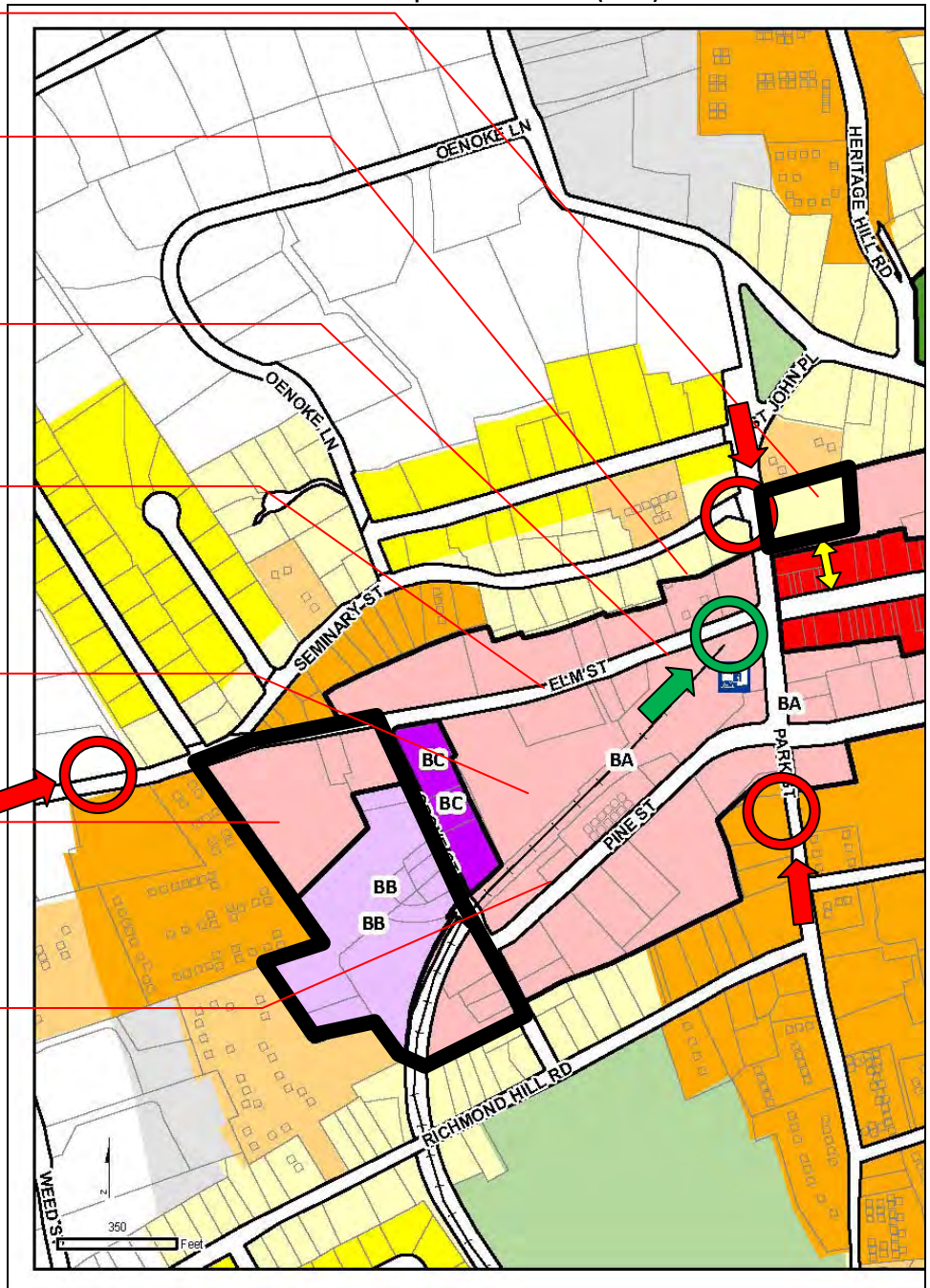
Investigate the potential to extend the pedestrian-friendly environment westward along Elm Street


Consider building a parking structure at the train station


Consider establishing appropriate zoning in this area to guide any future development which may occur

Strive to create a more pedestrian-friendly experience on Pine Street

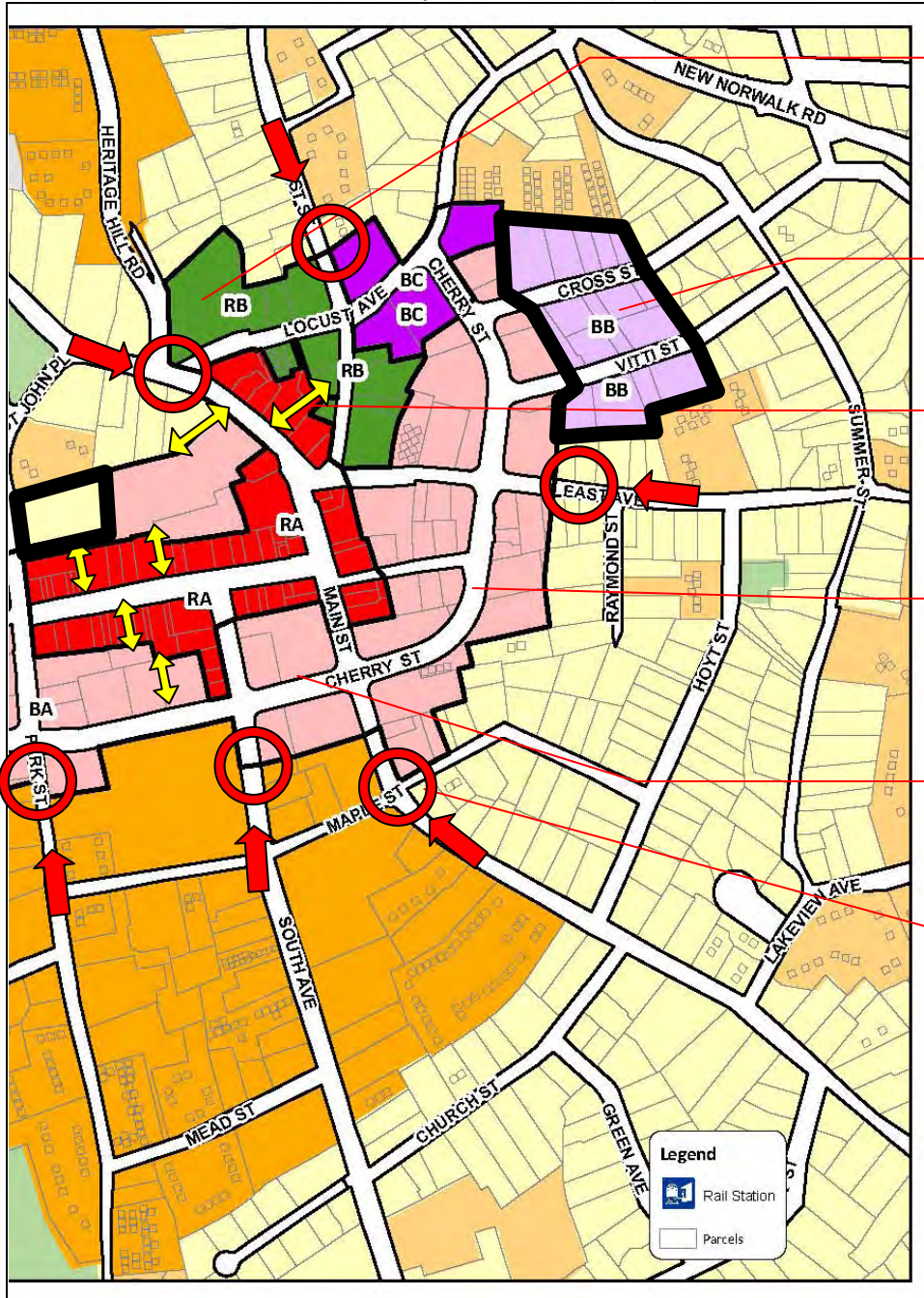
Preserve a post office presence in the downtown



 Main Vehicular Gateway


 Train Station Gateway

Possible Concepts For Downtown (East)



Build the parking structure at the Locust Avenue lot

Evaluate the most appropriate zoning for the Cross / Vitti Street area

Enhance pedestrian connections from parking lots to shopping areas (typical) 

Investigate designating Cherry Street between Main Street and East Avenue as CT Route 106

Investigate opportunities to enhance the pedestrian-friendliness of Cherry Street

Enhance gateways to the downtown (typical):

- Improvements
- Signage
- Maintenance

Support Downtown

A. Designate A Coordinating Organization

The downtown is so important in New Canaan that it needs to have an organization with the tools and resources to support it and produce positive results.

In recent years, the New Canaan Chamber of Commerce has been a very effective organization for helping local businesses and promoting downtown. The Chamber has done some extremely creative programs and events to help support downtown, their members and the community:

- The “iBlast” program (I buy local and shop in town) as a way to reward loyal shoppers
- The “pop-up park” established downtown on summer weekends with outside entertainment and activities and a removable fountain

These efforts should be encouraged to continue. Town Staff do not have the time or experience to advocate effectively for downtown merchants and businesses and the Chamber can do this.

Alternatively, a Downtown Improvement Committee or other organization could be established, even as a public/private partnership, to ensure that downtown continues to get the attention it needs.

Whichever approach is implemented, the designated organization should be encouraged to participate in the Connecticut Main Street Center and similar programs where technical assistance is available to support local efforts.

Chamber Of Commerce



Pop-Up Park



B. Consider Appointing A Downtown “Captain”

Maintenance of the downtown area is a key element in its overall attractiveness. At the present time, the overall responsibility for maintaining downtown areas is somewhat diffuse. New Canaan would benefit from a more direct responsibility / accountability approach.

New Canaan should consider appointing a person or organization as the “Downtown Captain” responsible for coordinating overall maintenance of the downtown area and responding to issues that may arise. Having a specific person identified with downtown maintenance will elevate the overall importance of this function and help businesses and property owners and others coordinate efforts.

This person would be responsible for scheduling maintenance activities (trash barrel pickup, sidewalk cleaning, street sweeping, litter pickup, weeding, etc.) and coordinating public and private efforts to address these issues. It would not necessarily be this person’s responsibility to do the work, but it would be this person’s responsibility to see that the work is done. People will know who the “Downtown Captain” is and this will help ensure that downtown gets the attention it deserves.

C. Consider Establishing A Business Improvement District

Downtown needs to have tools to implement strategies which will benefit the downtown area. This can include outside maintenance and other strategies.

One tool available to do this is a “business improvement district” (known in Connecticut as a “special services district”). A business improvement district (BID) is a private organization which provides services to improve the area for everyone. BID programs are often oriented towards common marketing efforts, supporting special events which benefit all businesses, and making outdoor public spaces as clean, safe, and as attractive as possible to residents and visitors.

Such organizations, which are made up of local businesses and property owners, can decide to establish a mechanism to generate revenue to support the downtown area. If the businesses and property owners resolve to do this as provided in Section 7-339m of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Town can establish a procedure to collect this revenue on behalf of the BID and place the funds in a special fund for the benefit of the district.

If the property owners were to participate in this way (or even if they do not), it might make sense for the Town to match the funds raised by dedicating some of the parking revenue to downtown activities.

Downtown Needs

During the process of preparing this Plan, a number of people commented that the Town does not do a good job maintaining the public parts of the downtown.

In fact, some local businesses and property owners have “stepped up” because the Town has not always been reliable in meeting all of its responsibilities.

Downtown Maintenance

Maintenance of the downtown area is critical to its overall appearance and attractiveness. However, sometimes things fall through the cracks because there is not a person or organization responsible for the issue.

Some of the maintenance topics which have been identified as issues in the past include:

- Litter
- Weeds
- Gum on sidewalks
- Overflowing public garbage bins
- Private garbage bags and containers placed in plain view (including on the sidewalk itself)

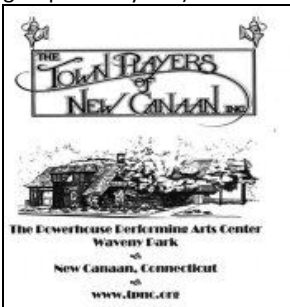
Entertainment

While more entertainment options will enhance the downtown and the community, New Canaan has several entertainment activities at the present time:

Playhouse (movie theater)



Town Players (a theater group for 67 years)



D. Consider Establishing An Entertainment Venue

New Canaan should investigate and pursue ways to expand the entertainment focus and opportunities in the downtown area. Some communities have found that live performance venues can add an additional attraction to the downtown area. The Ridgefield Playhouse is an example of a performance venue that attracts people for live performances. Since New Canaan is on a rail line connecting to Stamford and New York City, it could attract people from a wide area to New Canaan for shopping, dining, and a live performance.

Such a goal might be accomplished by renovating the Playhouse or by establishing a new entertainment facility.

The Playhouse on Elm Street dates to 1923. It was privately operated for many years as a one-screen movie theater and was later adapted into a two-screen movie theater. The Playhouse was purchased by the Town in 2007. The theaters now are operated by Bow Tie Cinemas. A movie theater is a great “anchor” for the downtown area and it helps to attract people in the evenings and on weekends. This use should be maintained since it helps support the vibrancy and vitality of the downtown. However, it might be possible (and desirable) for the Town to consider additional options in the future. The theater could show films most evenings of the month but there might be one or two nights per month (or more) where live performances could be scheduled. Since the renovation of the facility into a live performance space may be expensive, it would make sense to study the feasibility of this adaptation and possible ways to fund it (donations, fund-raising, naming rights, etc.).

Alternatively, it may make sense for New Canaan to support or coordinate the establishment of a dedicated entertainment venue at another site in the downtown area.

Ridgefield Playhouse
Ridgefield, CT



Infinity Hall
Norfolk, CT



E. Maintain “Anchor” Uses In The Downtown

Some of the uses in the downtown area are so important at attracting traffic to the downtown that we need to be sure we do everything we can to maintain their presence there:

- Town Hall
- Post Office
- Theater
- Food Stores
- Library

Town Hall



Post Office



F. Continue Special Events In The Downtown

The Chamber of Commerce does a good job scheduling special events in the downtown area (see sidebar). The “pop-up park” created by the Chamber is an exceptional event that has proven very popular.

These activities are important to attracting residents and visitors and should be continued. In addition, opportunities to expand the number of events or extend their time period, especially for the “pop-up park”, should be pursued (more hours, more days, more weeks, etc.).

As indicated in the Commercial Market Study, opportunities to integrate special events in the downtown with other activities in New Canaan (such as those held by the Nature Center, the “Glass House”, and other organizations) should also be pursued.

Pop-Up Park



New Canaan News Online

Pop-Up Park



New Canaan Chamber of Commerce

Special Events

Some of the events which have been scheduled for the downtown area include:

- The “pop-up park” on weekends during the summer months
- The Village Fair / Sidewalk Sale
- The Restaurant Week / Taste of the Town
- The Halloween Parade
- The Holiday Stroll

Address Other Downtown Issues

There are a number of other issues which have been identified in prior studies and should be addressed in the downtown area:

1. **Garbage / Litter** – Management of garbage has been identified as one of the things that most affects people’s perception of downtown. New Canaan should identify a solution to this situation since litter and overflowing garbage bins detract from the downtown as much as businesses placing their garbage on the curb for pickup at the end of their business day –at the same time as people are arriving for dinner.
2. **Loading Zones** – There are issues with trucks making deliveries on downtown streets where the trucks simply block the travel lanes and/or parking spaces. New Canaan should work with delivery companies and businesses to establish specific loading zones (and defined hours, if necessary) for delivery trucks and enforce them.
3. **Bicycle Provisions** – New Canaan should consider how to make provisions for bicycles in the downtown area. This can include bicycle lockers at the train station and providing places to lock bicycles elsewhere in the downtown.
4. **Car Sharing Program** – New Canaan may wish to consider how to make special provision in the downtown for car sharing operations (such as Zipcar) to help support residents and visitors.
5. **Car Charging Station** – Over time, New Canaan may wish to consider how to make more provision in the downtown for charging stations for electric cars to help support residents and visitors (to supplement the station currently available in the Morse Court parking lot).
6. **Screening of Service Areas** - New Canaan may wish to consider how to best screen areas used for utility equipment, garbage dumpsters, propane tanks, deliveries, and similar purposes.
7. **Traffic Circulation** - Traffic circulation in the downtown area has always been of keen interest to New Canaan residents. At one time, a recommendation was made to consider instituting a clockwise traffic flow pattern on Cherry, Pine, and Elm Streets in order to minimize conflicting turning movements and make traffic operations more efficient. A recommendation was also made to renumber Cherry Street between Main Street and East Avenue as Route 106 to make it easier for trucks and other traffic. These ideas may have some merit and New Canaan should continue to study traffic circulation patterns in the downtown area to promote the best overall downtown experience.

ENHANCE LIVABILITY

5

Overview

Livability of a community is the result of the factors that add up to its quality of life—including the built and natural environments, economic prosperity, social stability and equity, educational opportunity, and cultural, entertainment and recreation possibilities.

New Canaan has many of these factors and future efforts will be devoted to sustaining and enhancing them. While 93 percent of respondents to the 2010 community survey indicated they were either satisfied or very satisfied with living in New Canaan, we cannot take this for granted and must continue efforts to enhance livability of our community.

The livability of a community is the result of the factors that add up its quality of life ...

Excellent Facilities



Housing Options



Mobility / Accessibility



Desired Services



Provide Appropriate Facilities and Services

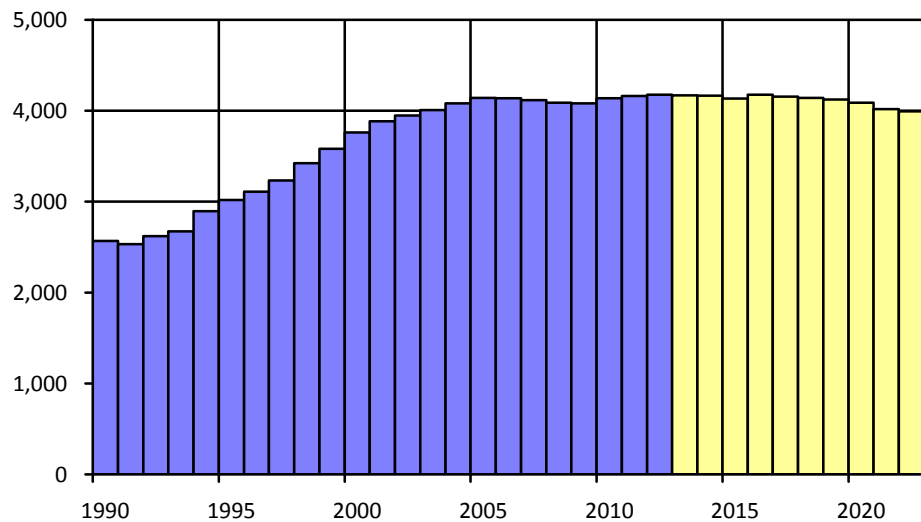
A. Maintain Excellence In Education Programs And Facilities

New Canaan is widely recognized for the excellence of its school system. Since the school system is important to the quality of life of residents and the underlying residential real estate market, this excellence should be maintained.

While demographic trends have resulted in decreasing enrollments in many communities in recent years (economic conditions, fewer families of child-bearing age, etc.), New Canaan’s enrollments have held steady and even grown especially in the elementary grades. Managing this enrollment has been a focus for the school system given the capacity constraints at the existing facilities and projections which had led to expectations of an enrollment decrease.

While recent projections show an enrollment decline through to 2022, it is anticipated that demographic trends (economic growth, births to “baby boom echo” parents, etc.) could result in enrollment increases in New Canaan after that time which may challenge the capacity of the existing facilities. How this will play out in New Canaan (if older residents choose to remain in their current homes, etc.) will determine whether or when additional school capacity will be needed.

Total School Enrollments (Grades K-12)



CASE STUDY

School Excellence

In a recent independent study of the nation's school districts, New Canaan ranked:

- No. 1 in Connecticut,
- No. 2 in the nation among communities with an average home price of \$800,000 or more,

New Canaan was also recognized for characteristics that contribute to the academic environment, including that over half the population has at least a college degree.

"Best Cities to Live and Learn,"
GreatSchools.org in conjunction
with Forbes magazine

New Canaan High School



Saxe Middle School



South Elementary School



West Elementary School



B. Maintain Excellence In Community Facilities And Services

Community facilities include governmental and other buildings (such as the Library) which provide services and functions to all residents. Such services contribute significantly to community character and quality of life.

New Canaan recently had a Long Range Planning Task Force evaluate municipal facilities in order to prioritize community needs. The recommendations from that report included renovation of Town Hall, expansion of parking at the Locust Street lot, and other recommendations. New Canaan has used similar approaches in the past in order to evaluate and prioritize facility needs. The Plan of Conservation & Development supports this type of overall planning process which evaluates and prioritizes facility needs.

New Canaan enjoys excellent public safety services (police, fire, emergency response) and the quality of these services should be maintained.

Since local parks and recreation facilities are an important part of the overall character and quality of life in New Canaan, these facilities should continue to be maintained to a high standard. In addition, a master “parks plan” should be undertaken during the planning period in order to provide a clearer definition of use areas (active, passive, natural, etc.). The wonderful parks and recreation areas in New Canaan provide opportunities for active and passive recreation and contribute to the overall quality of life in the community.

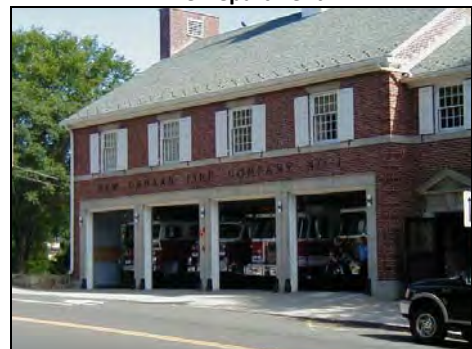
While the library is not a Town-owned facility, it also contributes to the overall quality of life in the community. In addition to its traditional role, the New Canaan library also hosts many other activities that contribute to lifelong learning, cultural enrichment, and information exchange. The expansion of the building and/or parking areas is being considered and should be supported.

Since there are a number of organizations presently involved in maintenance of Town facilities (sometimes with overlapping jurisdictions), it may make sense to investigate ways to consolidate maintenance of municipal facilities (including education facilities) in order to achieve the best results in the most cost effective way.

Town Hall



Fire Department



Community Facilities Map

New Canaan, CT

Lewisboro, NY

Pound Ridge, NY

Wilton

106

Laurel Reservoir

General

- 1 Town Hall
- 1a Town Hall Annex
- 1b Temporary Town Hall (police station)

Education

- 2 New Canaan High School
- 3 Saxe Middle School
- 4 West Elementary School
- 5 South Elementary School
- 6 East Elementary School

Recreation and Parks

- 7 Nature Center
- 8 Irwin Park
- 9 Mead Park
- 10 Waveny Park
- 11 Kiwanis Park
- 12 Ed Dixon Memorial Park
- 13 Mill Pond Park

Public Safety

- 14 Police / Ambulance
- 15 Fire Station

Other

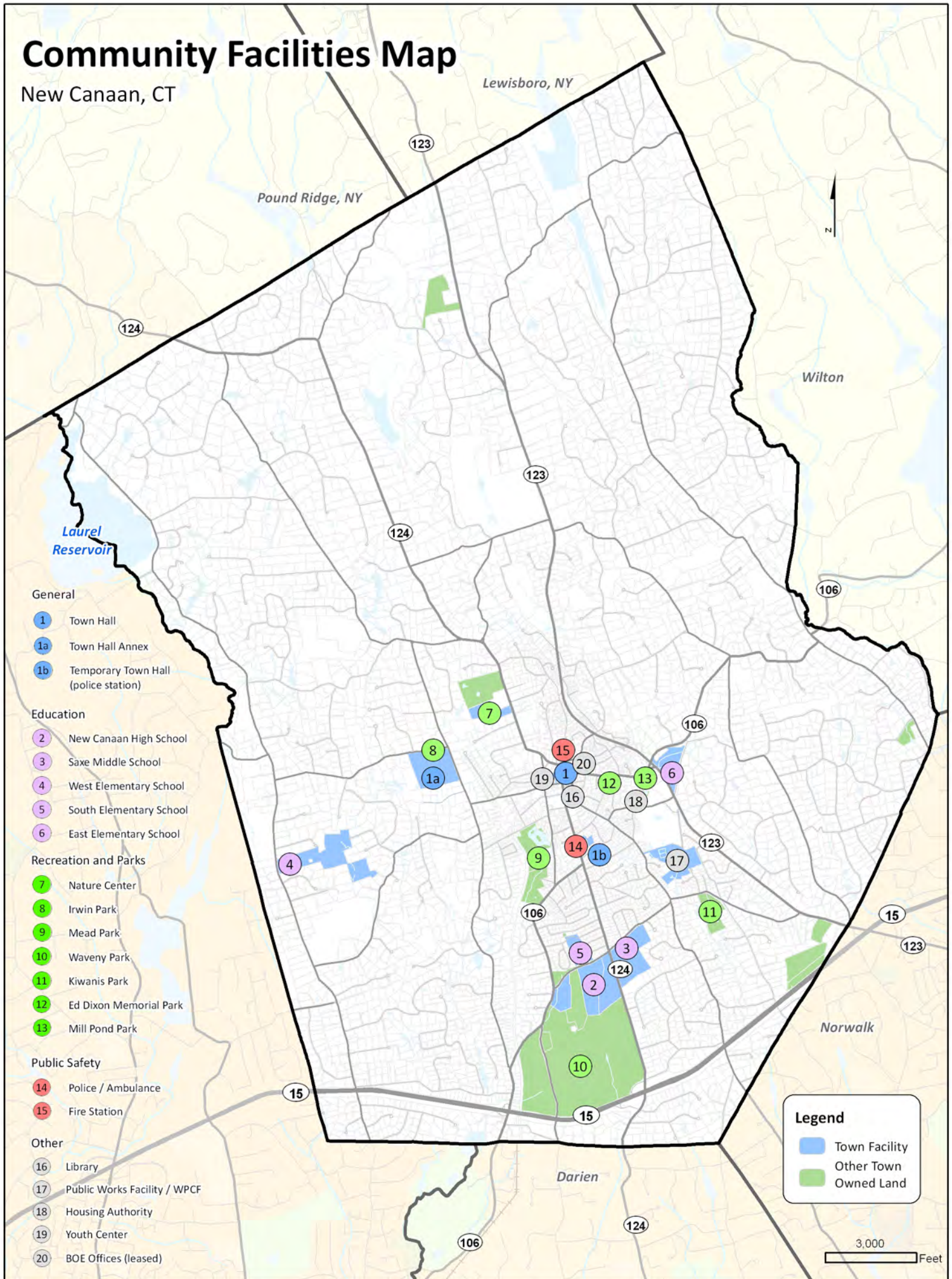
- 16 Library
- 17 Public Works Facility / WPCF
- 18 Housing Authority
- 19 Youth Center
- 20 BOE Offices (leased)

Legend

- Town Facility
- Other Town Owned Land

3,000

Feet



Protect Residential Neighborhoods

A. Monitor Residential Regulations

Within the past decade, New Canaan adopted a number of changes to the zoning regulations to address housing teardowns and new construction which had become “out-of-scale” with the neighborhoods in which they were located. At the present time, it appears that housing built under the new rules is more in character and scale with the neighborhoods and that no additional changes are warranted at this time. Should this change, the Planning and Zoning Commission should revisit this issue.

B. Ensure Institutional Uses Are Appropriately Scaled

On the other hand, some changes may be warranted to the regulations to ensure that some of the institutional and other uses currently allowed in residential zones (such as those identified in Section 3.2.C of the Zoning Regulations) have an appropriate scale and intensity for their location.

There is no doubt that institutional and other uses currently allowed in residential zones are community assets and they help enhance the overall quality of life. The challenge is to find an appropriate balance so that such uses fit into the community and the neighborhood.

At the present time, institutional and other uses currently allowed in residential zones are allowed in residential districts by granting of a Special Permit by the Commission. Since there are no additional standards or provisions related to most of these uses, they are subject to the same dimensional standards as have been established for residential uses within the zoning district.

New Canaan Country School



New Canaan YMCA



Residential Densities Map

New Canaan, CT

Lewisboro, NY

Pound Ridge, NY

Wilton

Laurel Reservoir

Stamford

106

106

123

15

123

Norwalk

Darien

106

124

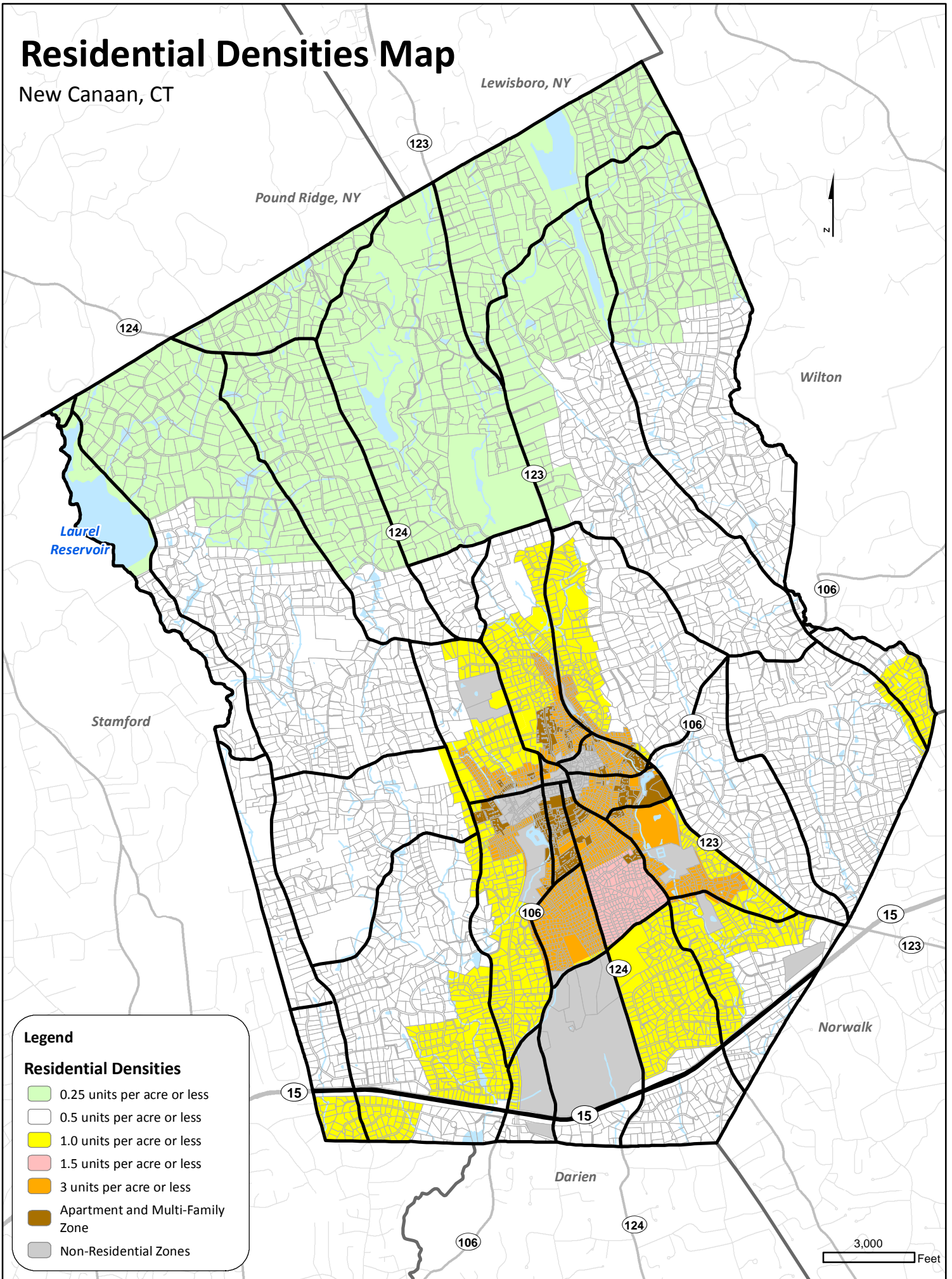
3,000

Feet

Legend

Residential Densities

- 0.25 units per acre or less
- 0.5 units per acre or less
- 1.0 units per acre or less
- 1.5 units per acre or less
- 3 units per acre or less
- Apartment and Multi-Family Zone
- Non-Residential Zones



The Special Permit criteria in the Zoning Regulations (Section 8.2.B.4) do cover some key areas for the Commission to consider in terms of ensuring compatibility with the proposed activity in the proposed location:

- Suitable location for use
- Appropriate improvements
- Suitable transportation conditions
- Adequate public utilities and services
- Environmental protection and conservation
- Long term viability
- Plan of Conservation and Development

However, the Special Permit criteria do not contain any specific standards. Overall then, the regulations allow a variety of uses to be proposed but place the Commission (and the neighborhood) in a reactive role.

As part of any application for establishment of such uses (or expansion of existing uses), the Planning and Zoning Commission should seek to minimize and/or manage the encroachment or impact of institutional and other uses currently allowed in residential zones on neighboring residential properties (noise, lighting, traffic, drainage, etc.).

The Commission (and the neighborhoods) might benefit from a different approach where there are better tools in the regulatory toolbox.

Enhanced Special Permit Criteria

In this approach, the existing Special Permit criteria (Section 8.2.B.4 in the Zoning Regulations) would be enhanced with more criteria and/or more specific criteria to be considered.

While this does not solve the issue of a well-funded applicant populating the public record with complementary reports, it would give the Commission more information to consider as part of the application. However, it might be more expensive for applicants to prepare information to address these considerations and more expensive for abutters to respond appropriately. The Commission would essentially remain in a reactive role and review the information submitted to it.

The Commission could hire experts to provide testimony on an application (at the applicant's expense) in circumstances where it feels it is warranted.

While this approach may be better than what the Commission currently has, it does not seem to go far enough to address the main issues the Commission and the neighborhoods are facing.

More Rigorous Standards For Special Permit Uses

In this approach, the provisions in Section 3.2.C of the Zoning Regulations would be amended to add specific standards and thresholds for particular uses. For example:

- Institutional and other uses currently allowed in residential zones might be required to be located on collector or arterial roadways.
- A larger minimum lot area might be required (to ensure that adequate area was available for buffering, etc.).
- A lower building coverage limitation might be established (to ensure that the size of buildings and facilities, often much bigger than residential homes, would be manageable in a residential neighborhood).
- Larger setbacks for buildings, parking lots, and recreational facilities might be required (to ensure that larger buildings or facilities are well separated from adjacent residential uses).
- A lower maximum height limit or a floor area ratio limit (to ensure that overall building bulk is not out of character with the setting).
- Greater landscape buffer requirements, such as 50 -100 feet around the perimeter of the property.
- Limitations on lighting or noise and/or hours of operation.

These standards might vary depending on the use. For example, the setback for a lower impact use might be less than those for a higher impact use.

The Commission could consider inserting the phrase “unless modified by the Commission ...” to these standards so that flexibility could be available, if appropriate, or in certain specified situations while establishing an expectation of the appropriate standard in most situations.

This approach would seem to put the Commission in a more proactive role where it establishes minimum expectations for an application but retains the flexibility to modify that expectation based on unique circumstances. Of course, any such modification would occur as part of the application process where the neighborhood could comment on whether they felt an exception was appropriate.

In this approach, institutional and other uses currently allowed in residential zones would then have to look at potential property acquisitions and building expansions in terms of the new standards and how to make their overall facility more conforming over time. At the same time, it would seem to swing the “balance of power” back towards the Commission and the neighborhood.

Establish An Institutional Zone

In this approach, the Commission would establish an “Institutional” zone where institutional and other uses currently allowed in residential zones (or uses above a certain size) would be permitted by Special Permit. This new zoning district would have standards similar to the previous discussion. The Commission could retain some flexibility to modify the standards, if appropriate.

As a corollary to this approach, the institutional and other uses currently allowed in residential zones (or uses above a certain size) would no longer be permitted in the residential districts. Existing uses or uses above the size threshold would become non-conforming. If these uses wanted to expand or wanted to become conforming, they could apply for a rezoning to the new “Institutional” zone.

This approach also seems to put the Commission in a more proactive role and established standards for institutional and other uses currently allowed in residential zones (or uses above a certain size) to comply with. In this approach, institutional and other uses currently allowed in residential zones expanding their boundaries would have to apply for a zone change for the new property before it could be added into their campus.

St. Marks Episcopal Church



Planned Development District

Another approach might be what is known as a “planned development district”. In this approach, a new zoning district would be created, known as a “PDD” where the requirements for the zone would be the actual site plan being reviewed by the Commission. Since the Commission has considerable discretion when it acts in a legislative capacity (such as for zone changes and regulation changes), reviewing and approving the actual site plan is much more definitive than reviewing words or numbers.

Again, a corollary to this approach would be that institutional and other uses currently allowed in residential zones (or such uses above a certain size) would no longer be permitted in the residential districts. Existing uses or uses above the size threshold would become non-conforming. If these uses wanted to expand or wanted to become conforming, they could apply for a rezoning to the new “PDD” zone. If institutional or other uses currently allowed in residential zones want to expand in the future, they will need to come back to the Commission with a request to modify the PDD zone as applied to their property. Essentially, this is a new zone change request.

This approach gives the Commission the maximum amount of discretion in reviewing such uses. The Plan only recommends consideration of the Planned Development District approach for managing institutional and other uses currently allowed in residential zones.

Development Districts

A number of communities around Connecticut have reported they have adopted “planned development districts” (sometimes called “special development districts” or by other names):

- West Hartford
- Stonington
- Mansfield
- Southbury
- Windsor
- Branford
- Ridgefield
- Simsbury
- New Haven
- Stamford

St. Lukes School



CASE STUDY

Planned Development District

PDD regulations for New Canaan *might* be configured as follows:

Planned Development District.

1. Purposes.

This section of the Regulations is intended to:

- enable the development of specific areas in accordance with an overall master plan for such area;
- encourage a mixture of compatible uses and structures to create a sustainable and attractive environment;
- be flexible in order to allow for innovative design techniques, accommodate unique uses and encourage creative approaches to development issues; and/or
- result in a development that demonstrates a high regard for design and that is compatible with the historic, cultural and geographic qualities of New Canaan.

2. Basic Parameters

- a. Persons submitting an application to establish a Planned Development District hereunder are strongly encouraged to arrange for preliminary meetings with the Planning and Zoning Commission prior to submitting an application for a Planned Development District.
- b. Prior to submitting a formal application to the Planning and Zoning Commission, persons preparing an application to establish a Planned Development District hereunder are strongly encouraged to arrange for preliminary meetings with the neighborhood.
- c. A Planned Development District may only be established by approval of:
 1. A master plan in accordance with Section 3 following,
 2. A Text Amendment application, processed in accordance with Section xxx, codifying the approved master plan as part of this Section of the Regulations, and
 3. A Zone Change application, processed in accordance with Section xxxx, locating the approved master plan on the official Zoning Map.
- d. The location and general objectives of the Planned Development District shall be in general accordance with the Plan of Conservation and Development.
- e. The Commission may require the applicant to pay the cost of reasonable consulting fees for peer review of the technical aspects of the application.
- f. The Commission may refer an application to other agencies, boards or commissions of the municipality for comment.

CASE STUDY (continued)

3. Master Plan Requirements

A master plan of the proposed development shall be submitted to the Commission for approval and such master plan shall include the following:

- a. **Name of Planned Development District** – A name identifying the proposed Planned Development District.
- b. **Purpose Statement** – A general statement regarding the intent of the proposed Planned Development District.
- c. **Proposed Uses** – A statement identifying the specific uses proposed within the Planned Development District and whether such uses will be subsequently permitted by:
 1. Zoning Permit approval,
 2. Site Plan approval, or
 3. Special Permit approval.
- d. **General Development Plans** – One or more sheets depicting the proposed schematic design of the site including:
 1. The identification and general location of proposed uses;
 2. Existing and proposed building footprints;
 3. Proposed public and private streets, sidewalks and/or pedestrian walkways, rights-of-way, and parking areas;
 4. A landscaping plan, including the location of proposed buffers;
 5. Information regarding the provision of water, sewer, drainage, and other utilities; and
 6. The location of public and/or private open space or conservation areas.
- e. **Schematic Architectural Drawings** – One or more sheets illustrating the schematic design of the proposed buildings and structures, which may include:
 1. Schematic floor plans;
 2. Architectural elevations of all buildings, and/or
 3. Photographs of buildings similar to the proposed buildings.
- f. **Data Table** – Information regarding the proposed development including:
 1. Lot area and lot frontage;
 2. Building setbacks, yards, and/or building separations;
 3. Building coverage;
 4. Impervious coverage;
 5. Proposed floor area by proposed use;
 6. Parking spaces.
- g. **Additional Documentation** – Depending on the nature and/or intensity of the proposed Planned Development District, the following documentation may also be required by the Commission:
 1. A traffic study estimating the potential traffic generation and the capacity of streets within and neighboring the district to accommodate the projected traffic;
 2. A report regarding the adequacy of proposed utility services;
 3. A statement on how the proposed development complies with the Plan of Conservation and Development; and
 4. Any additional information as may be required by Section xxxx of these Regulations.

CASE STUDY (continued)

4. Decision Process

- a. While the establishment of a Planned Development District is a legislative decision rather than a Special Permit, the Commission may use the criteria in Section xxxx of these Regulations when reviewing an application to establish a Planned Development District.
- b. Following the close of the public hearing(s), the Commission shall first approve, modify and approve, or deny the master plan.
- c. If the Commission denies the master plan, they shall also deny the Text Amendment application and the Zone Change application.
- d. If the Commission approves or modifies and approves the master plan, the Commission may approve the Text Amendment application and the effect of such approval of the Text Amendment application shall be to include the following in Section xxxx of these Regulations provided that the approved master plan has been signed by the Chair of the Commission and filed on the New Canaan land records:

Name of Planned Development District.

- a. Purpose of Planned Development District.
- b. Permitted uses - as approved by the Commission and shown on the approved master plan filed on the New Canaan land records on *(insert date here)*.
- c. Development layout and design - as shown on general development plans titled *(insert name here which must include the name of the design district)* as revised through *(insert date here)* and filed on the New Canaan land records on *(insert date here)*.
- d. Architectural design - as shown on schematic architectural plans titled *(insert name here which must include the name of the design district)* as revised through *(insert date here)* and filed on the New Canaan land records on *(insert date here)*.
- e. Other provisions or limitations – *(if any, such as the affordability plan)* as revised through *(insert date here)* and filed on the New Canaan land records on *(insert date here)*.
- f. Effective date - *(insert date here – the date filed on the New Canaan land records)*.

CASE STUDY (continued)

- e. If the Commission approves the Text Amendment application, the approved master plan and accompanying material shall, within xxxxxxx (xxxx) days of the Commission's action unless some other period of time is authorized, be submitted to the Commission for signature by the Chair.
- f. Once signed by the Chair of the Commission, the approved master plan shall be filed on the New Canaan land records within xxxxxxx (xxxx) days of the Chairman's signature and the Text Amendment and the Zone Change shall not be effective until such filing on the land records.
- g. If the Commission approves or modifies and approves the master plan, the Commission may approve the Zone Change application and the effect of approval of the Zone Change application shall be to rezone the property to the name of the Planned Development District provided the approved master plan and accompanying material shall have been signed by the Chair of the Commission and filed on the land records:

5. Following Approval

- a. Development within a Planned Development District shall only be as authorized by the approved master plan.
- b. Development within a Planned Development District shall conform to the approved master plan.
- c. Any modification of an approved master plan that, in the opinion of the Commission, does not substantially alter the character of the approved master plan may be approved by Site Plan approval in accordance with Section xxxx of these Regulations.
- d. Any modification of an approved master plan which substantially alters the character of the approved master plan shall be processed as a Text Amendment application, processed in accordance with Section xxxx, codifying the revised master plan as part of this Section of the Regulations.

6. Approved Planned Development Districts

(to be added at a later date)

Housing Market Changes

Due to the growing number of older households and the changing housing choices of young and old alike, there is greater interest in smaller housing units, more densely located, in and near town centers for both convenience and affordability.

If New Canaan can find ways to respond to this market trend, it will be able to diversify its housing stock to meet the needs of its residents and expand its tax base.

There can be little doubt that the net out-migration seen in certain age groups in New Canaan (see page 11) is a reflection of insufficient housing accommodations for young professionals and an aging population.

Provide For A Diverse Housing Portfolio

A. Increase Housing In And Near Downtown

As the age composition of New Canaan has changed, interest has been expressed in providing additional housing choices in and near downtown. This is a reflection of the growing realization that housing in such a location will meet the needs of a number of households, help support the downtown, and provide a number of other community benefits.

Higher density, multi-family development is already permitted in and near the downtown in the Apartment district, the B Residence district, and the Business zones (Business A, B, and C). Two-family development is permitted in the B Residence district.

Areas such as these (near downtown and serviced by public water and public sewer) are the best sites for higher density development since it will help to promote development of a vibrant downtown with a variety of land uses and help meet local housing needs. Residential uses in mixed-use buildings in the Town Center area also contribute to the overall ambience and character of the Town Center area and should continue to be allowed.

Multi-family (and/or higher density) developments should be discouraged in other areas unless there is some significant community benefit that will result.

Multi-Family On Heritage Hill Road



Multi-Family On South Avenue



B. Provide Housing Choices For An Older Population

New Canaan should seek ways to provide an array of housing types to accommodate the changing age composition within the community.

Within society as a whole, more and more people are expected to live longer and, as people age, their housing needs or desires may change. For example, an elderly couple may prefer to move from a larger home on a good-sized lot to a smaller home or a condominium within walking distance of downtown. Alternatively, a New Canaan family may wish to provide an independent living unit (sometimes referred to as an “accessory apartment”) on their property for their parents. Or, an elderly homeowner may wish to create an accessory apartment for themselves or for a caretaker.

New Canaan’s Commission on Health and Human Services has undertaken a number of innovative programs related to addressing the needs of older residents and these efforts should continue to be encouraged and supported.

In terms of the housing needs and desires of an aging population, New Canaan should:

- Continue to provide or facilitate assistance (dial-a-ride, meals-on-wheels, senior activities, and home health services)
- Continue to provide property tax relief for elderly residents.
- Continue to allow accessory units in some or all zones.
- Continue to allow multi-family developments in and near the downtown.
- Allow congregate, assisted living, or life-care facilities as a Special Permit use.
- Consider providing or allowing development of subsidized elderly housing units.

CASE STUDY

“Senior Friendly” Housing

Significant interest has been expressed in finding ways to provide for “senior-friendly” housing in and near the downtown. The Plan supports this concept.

Such housing could offer one-floor units in a multi-story building served by an elevator or some other configuration. Units might be modest in size, limited to no more than 2 bedrooms, and offer universal accessibility for long-term comfort and convenience. The overall goal is to promote a variety of housing types, styles, and prices to meet a variety of present and future housing needs.

C. Provide For Workforce Housing

Housing in New Canaan is highly desirable and expensive and, as a result, is not affordable to some of the people that work in the community (teachers, police, fire, etc.) or experience unplanned life changes (illness, divorce, job loss, retirement, etc.). Often, the children of New Canaan residents cannot afford to live independently in the community.

New Canaan should seek to provide for a diversity of housing types, opportunities, choice, and costs consistent with community conditions and constraints. Opportunities to encourage the development of less expensive housing should be explored.

New Canaan has been working on this for some time and has made considerable progress in some areas.

Income Restricted Housing

The New Canaan Housing Authority manages 56 units of income-restricted housing on Millport Avenue and has been working to renovate and expand the number of units at this location. In the last decade, several older buildings were removed and replaced with newer and more efficient buildings containing more housing units. In addition, two adjacent properties were recently purchased in order to support construction of additional units. These efforts should be continued.

There are also 60 units of income-restricted housing at “Canaan Parish” located on Lakeview Avenue. Opportunities to renovate and expand the number of units at this development should be explored.

Millport Housing



Canaan Parish



Housing Trust Fund

At the time this Plan was being prepared, New Canaan was believed to be the only community in Connecticut to have taken advantage of Section 8-2i of the Connecticut General Statutes and established a fee collected from any new building construction or renovation in any zone in order to support a housing trust fund. This provision is codified in section 7.6 of the New Canaan Zoning Regulation.

Since being established, the housing trust fund has collected over \$2,500,000 and distributed over \$900,000. The moneys in the housing trust fund are available to be used for constructing, rehabilitating or repairing housing affordable to persons and families of low and moderate income.

Incentive Housing Overlay Zone

One of the recommendations from the Incentive Housing Overlay Zone study undertaken in 2011 was to consider adopting a new zoning regulation (a housing overlay zone) which could allow higher densities on sites in exchange for affordable housing units as part of any development (or redevelopment) on that site. This type of approach could be considered as a tool to help create mixed income housing and units which are affordable to persons and families of modest means.

Other Approaches

New Canaan should also consider other approaches to providing housing opportunities to people earning modest incomes. Since unrestricted housing will always be priced above what people earning modest incomes can afford, some sort of “price-limited” housing units could be required as part of market rate housing developments and such developments could be given a density bonus for providing affordable units. The affordable units could be priced at levels making them reasonably priced to people earning some percentage of the area median income.

In addition, housing opportunities that can be provided with the assistance of non-profit agencies or state and federal grants or subsidies should also be explored.

D. Seek Solutions Which Do Not Invoke CGS 8-30g

Section 8-30g of the Connecticut General Statutes provides a process whereby certain housing developments can be proposed without regard to local zoning rules. New Canaan would prefer to address housing needs in ways compatible with the community. New Canaan is almost eligible for an exemption from CGS 8-30g (see sidebar) and should seek to accomplish and maintain this status.

CGS 8-30g Moratorium

Section 8-30g of the Connecticut General Statutes provides an opportunity for a housing developer to bypass local zoning regulations when at least 30 percent of the units meet affordability criteria.

New Canaan would prefer that affordable housing built in the community be as compliant as possible with local regulations and as compatible as possible with local regulations and settings.

New Canaan can be exempt from the provisions of CGS 8-30g for a period of four years if it accumulates a total of approximately 151 housing unit equivalency points (defined in the statutes). New Canaan had accumulated about 133.5 points at the time this Plan was being drafted and should continue to pursue a moratorium.

Then efforts can be devoted to becoming eligible for additional moratoria in the future.

“Complete Streets”

According to Smart Growth America, “complete street” are defined as:

Complete Streets are streets for everyone. They are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities.

Complete Streets make it easy to cross the street, walk to shops, and bicycle to work. They allow buses to run on time and make it safe for people to walk to and from train stations.

The State of Connecticut adopted PA 09-154 which encourages “complete streets” thinking and approaches to roadway projects in Connecticut.

New Haven recently adopted a City-wide complete streets policy in order to ensure that roadways (and roadway improvements) make accommodations for all users.

A “complete streets” policy or philosophy would be a valuable approach for New Canaan to consider, especially for the higher density parts of the community.

Enhance The Walking Environment

A. Expand The Sidewalk Network In And Near Downtown

New Canaan has a good sidewalk network in much of the downtown area. While there are sidewalks on some streets in the adjacent residential zones, there are gaps in the sidewalk network which can make it more challenging for people to walk to the downtown, parks, train station, etc.

The livability of the downtown, the adjacent residential areas, and the entire community will be enhanced by having a cohesive and expansive pedestrian network in areas where they provide pedestrian mobility and accessibility to desired destinations. In addition to building and maintaining sidewalks, this will also include efforts aimed towards acquiring easements, where needed, to preserve pedestrian accessibility in mid-block areas in the downtown.

As part of a “complete streets” policy, New Canaan should continue to expand the sidewalk network, either as part of road paving projects or as independent sidewalk installations. The recommended hierarchy for sidewalk installations is as follows:

- Within business areas (on both sides of the street)
- On major streets within one-half mile of the train station to allow commuters to walk safely to and from the station (on one or both sides of the street)
- As connecting links between the main sidewalks which extend from the downtown and train station

The width of the sidewalk should be determined by the anticipated usage and the field conditions. Wider sidewalks are recommended in business areas in order to enhance the overall pedestrian environment and experience. Sidewalks connecting to the downtown and train station are expected to get the most usage and a width of five feet is recommended (four foot minimum).

Sidewalks For Shoppers



New Canaan News Online

Sidewalks For Commuters



New Canaan News Online

CASE STUDY

Sidewalks

In recent years, New Canaan residents have expressed more interest in walking for exercise, recreation, and as a means of getting to their destination. This strong interest resulted in several accomplishments.

First, as part of road widening and paving project, the Town proposed and built a sidewalk along Main Street extending southerly from Oak Street to Farm Road. The construction of this sidewalk in 2012 helped support a pedestrian loop which extends down South Avenue from the downtown, across Farm Road/Fieldcrest Road to Main Street and back to the downtown. This link strengthens walking opportunities for residents of this area and, in fact, residents of other parts of New Canaan will drive downtown to walk in this area.

Second, the sidewalk ordinance was revised to indicate that the Town was assuming maintenance responsibility for sidewalks in residential areas (property owners in downtown remain responsible for the sidewalk in front of their property). This ordinance revision removed some concerns about extending sidewalks to other areas and enhances the ability of the Town to extend sidewalks where desired.

Walkers on South Avenue



Main Street Sidewalk Construction



New Canaan Advertiser

Regional Connections

The Southwest Regional Planning Agency has prepared a plan which identifies ways to promote bicycle and pedestrian use throughout the region.

This Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan can also be an important resource for New Canaan.

B. Correlate Sidewalk Materials To Function And Area

Over time, it makes sense for New Canaan to reinforce the overall hierarchy of sidewalks by requiring the use of surface materials appropriate for the character of different areas:

- Brick – within the Retail A and Retail B zones, and
- Concrete – within the other Business zones and along major arterial roads leading to the downtown or train station, and elsewhere

Asphalt sidewalks may be considered in low duty areas but are not preferred.



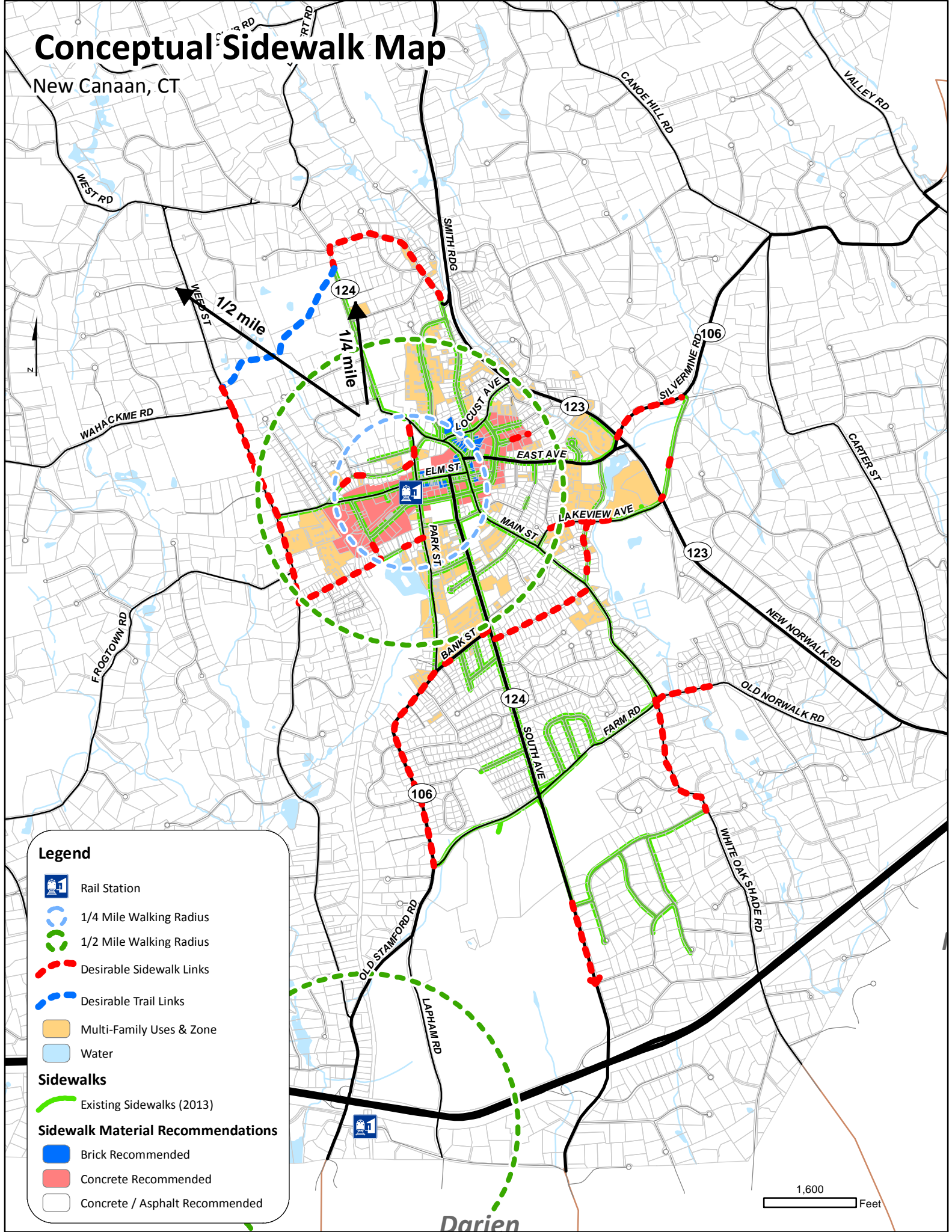
C. Support Establishment Of Trails

In general, sidewalks will not be a major priority in outlying areas of New Canaan where the density is much lower (such as the One-Acre, Two-Acre, and Four-Acre residential zones) unless such sidewalks will enhance public safety (such as near a school) or provide other benefits. On the other hand, trails should be promoted within dedicated open spaces in these areas (see pages 18-21 for more information).

Trails (or special purpose sidewalks) might also be appropriate for connecting New Canaan’s sidewalk network and downtown area to the proposed greenway trail along the Merritt Parkway. Although this greenway trail may not come to fruition for some time, having a connection from that trail to New Canaan’s downtown area could be advantageous.

Conceptual Sidewalk Map

New Canaan, CT



Legend

- Rail Station
- 1/4 Mile Walking Radius
- 1/2 Mile Walking Radius
- Desirable Sidewalk Links
- Desirable Trail Links
- Multi-Family Uses & Zone
- Water

Sidewalks

- Existing Sidewalks (2013)

Sidewalk Material Recommendations

- Brick Recommended
- Concrete Recommended
- Concrete / Asphalt Recommended

1,600 Feet

Darien

Enhance Bicycle Circulation



Green Circle
Most Suitable Route



Blue Square
Suitable Route



Black Diamond
More Challenging Route

A. Categorize And Identify Bicycle Routes

In recent years, there has also been increased interest among New Canaan residents in bicycle usage for recreation, occasional errands, and for commuting.

The Connecticut Department of Transportation created a statewide database which classifies state highways by potential suitability for bicycle usage (see the map on the facing page). That classification system considers traffic speed and the width of the roadway shoulder area to suggest potential suitability.

New Canaan should enlist a committee comprised of local cyclists to look at local streets and establish a comparable system of bicycle routes in New Canaan, coded by potential suitability. Much as is done for ski slopes, this categorization would be of use to residents and to recreational riders who might be inclined to visit New Canaan and cycle.

These symbols could be placed on the posts supporting traffic signs, appropriate pavement markings could be added (such as lane marking or symbols), and the routes could be summarized on a map available on-line. This approach would also support the establishment of “complete streets” in New Canaan.

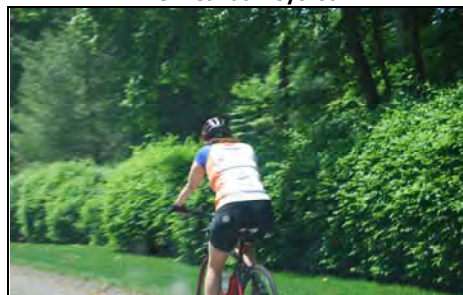
B. Become Recognized As A Bicycle-Friendly Community

An organization called League of American Bicyclists evaluates and designates communities that apply for bicycle-friendliness. In Connecticut, Simsbury (bronze) and South Windsor (bronze) have been so designated. New Canaan should consider applying for this designation.

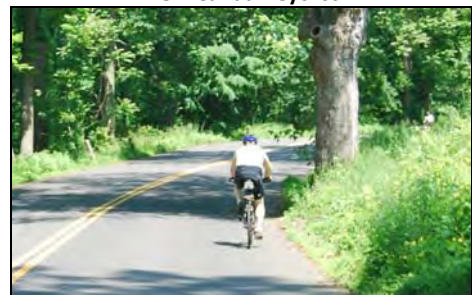
Bicycle-Friendly Designation



New Canaan Cyclist



New Canaan Cyclist



Bicycle Plan

New Canaan, CT

Lewisboro, NY

Pound Ridge, NY

Wilton

Laurel Reservoir






Stamford

Norwalk

Darien

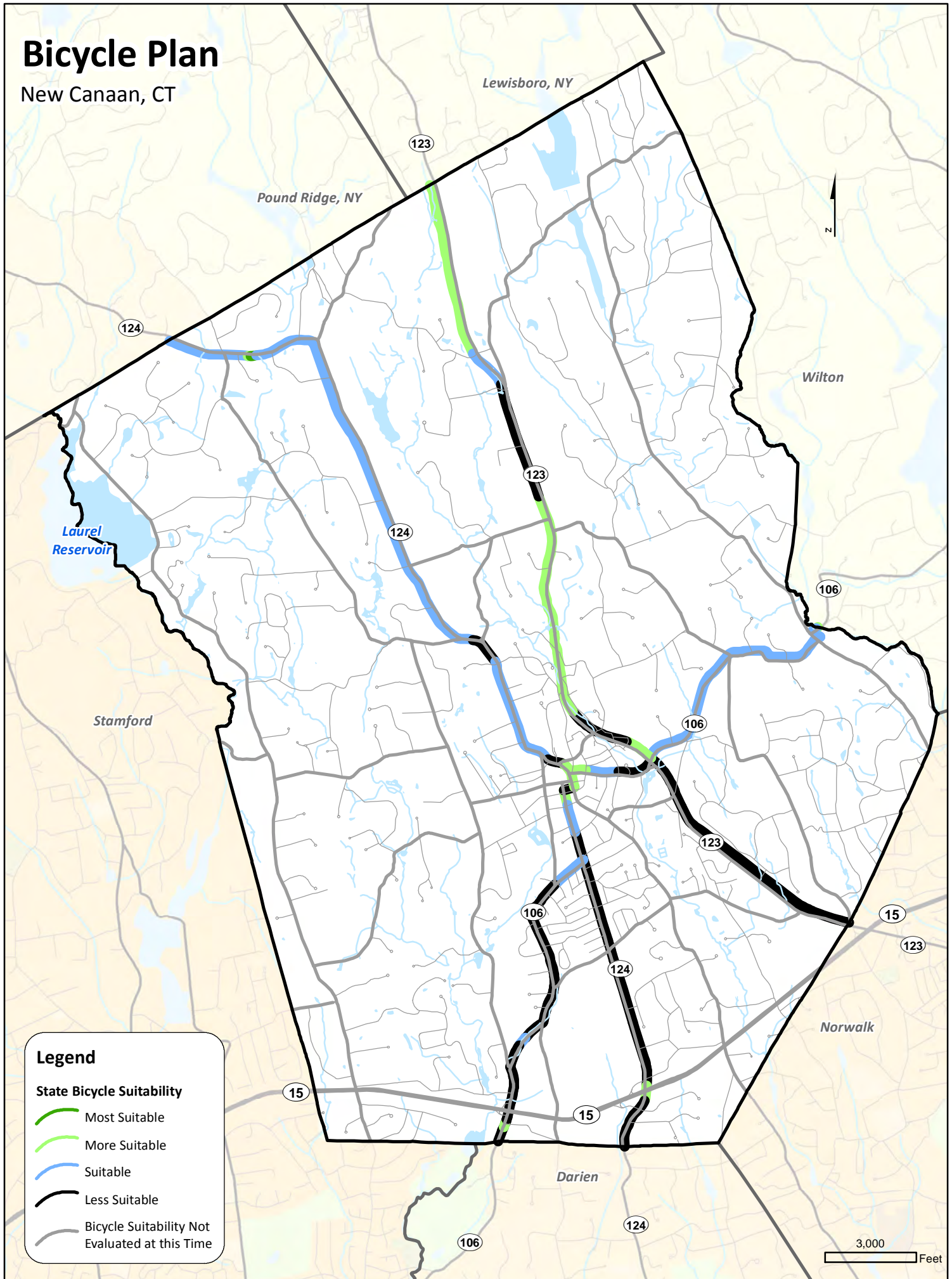
Legend

State Bicycle Suitability

-  Most Suitable
-  More Suitable
-  Suitable
-  Less Suitable
-  Bicycle Suitability Not Evaluated at this Time



3,000 Feet



Coverage Map

The map on the facing page is an illustration of the types of issues which can affect wireless coverage. It is not a map of actual cellular coverage which can vary based on service provider, terrain, and other factors.

Should accurate information become available, that information should supersede the map on the facing page.

Enhance Wireless Communications

A. Enhance Wireless Coverage For Residents And Visitors

New Canaan needs to enhance the wireless communications coverage in the community and do it in ways which are available, effective, and discrete.

People are increasingly using smart phones and other wireless devices for basic communications. Statistics show a strong trend towards people foregoing “land lines” (a wired connection to a physical location) and relying exclusively on wireless devices. Adults are typically providing their children with smart phones for safety and security.

But this transformation in communications requires wireless service. Most people are familiar with the situation where a call gets “dropped.” Typically just an inconvenience, it can be a serious issue if it involves a parent trying to reach their child or if it is the only means of communication for people who are lost, in danger, or requesting emergency assistance.

While New Canaan has reasonably good wireless coverage in the southern areas of the community, there are areas in the northern parts of New Canaan where wireless service is simply not available. In the past few years, there are reported instances where people were unable to summon emergency assistance when needed as a result of car accidents or fire. Today, and in the future, better wireless coverage is needed.

The lack of service in large parts of the community needs to be addressed. It is ironic that New Canaan residents enjoy excellent cell phone coverage in other communities while being unable to experience the same service here. The Utilities Commission is investigating potential approaches which should be available, effective, and discrete.

B. Enhance Public Safety Communications

At the present time, public safety communications (police, fire, ambulance, etc.) can be challenging in the northern parts of the community due to topography and the distance from existing antennas. The Plan recommends that public safety communications be improved.

Conceptual Telecommunication Plan

New Canaan, CT

Lewisboro, NY

Pound Ridge, NY

Wilton

Laurel Reservoir

Cellular Communication Priority Area

Terrain from LiDAR

Value



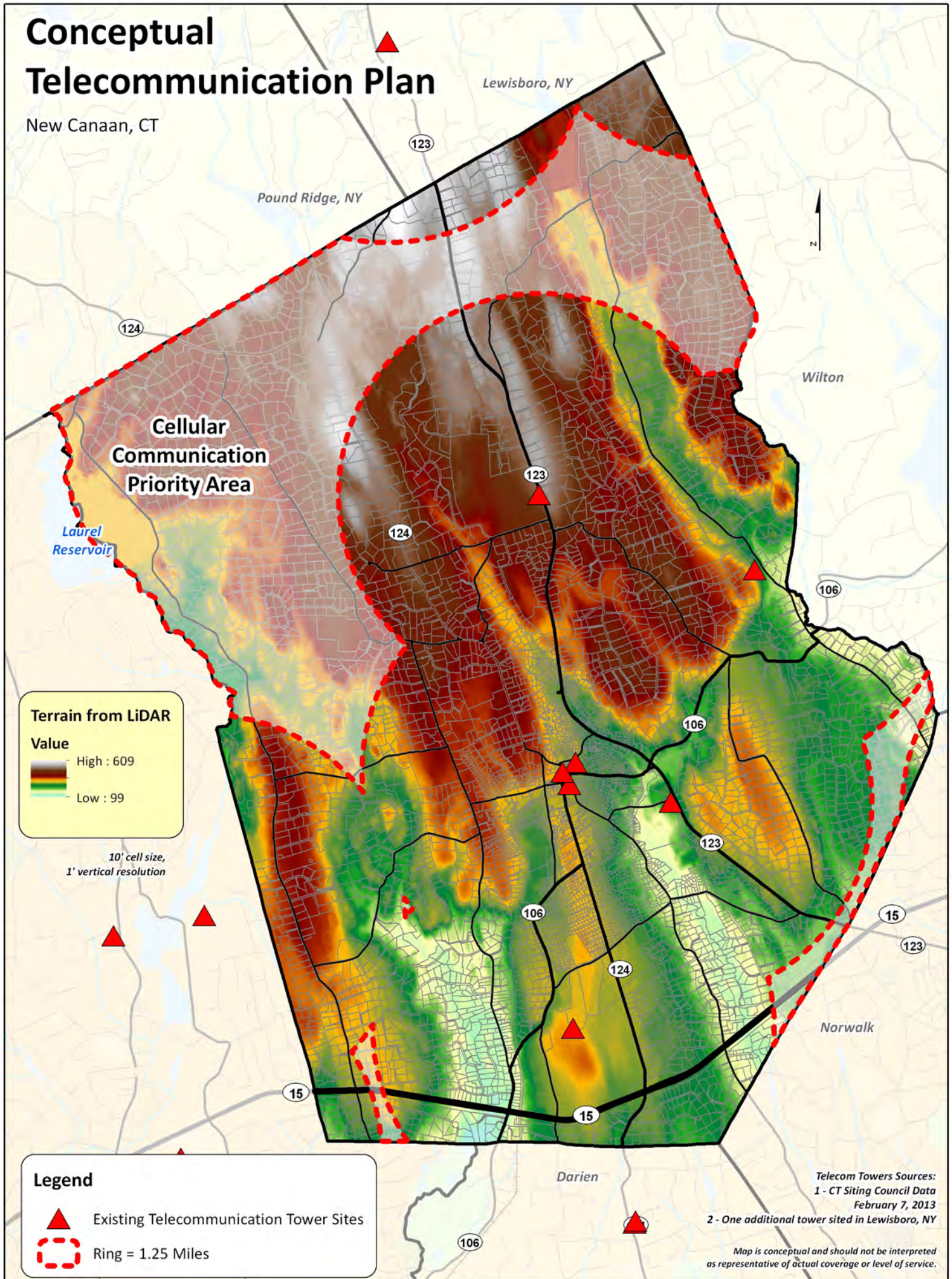
10' cell size,
1' vertical resolution

Legend

- Existing Telecommunication Tower Sites
- Ring = 1.25 Miles

Telecom Towers Sources:
1 - CT Siting Council Data
February 7, 2013
2 - One additional tower sited in Lewisboro, NY

Map is conceptual and should not be interpreted as representative of actual coverage or level of service.



Enhance Energy Services

A. Extend Natural Gas Service

Natural gas is an energy source which is projected to be an affordable alternative in the future as a result of the discovery of new domestic sources. Although natural gas service is presently only provided by Yankee Gas Company to a small area of southwest New Canaan (near Ponus Ridge Road and Running Brook Lane), it is a major strategy of the Plan to extend natural gas service to key areas.

At this time, the Plan recommends that natural gas be extended to serve the downtown and some of the key facilities in the community (New Canaan High School, Saxe Middle School, South Elementary School, the YMCA, and Waveny Care Center). Since the High School is the emergency shelter for New Canaan, this extension will serve multiple purposes. The Utilities Commission estimates the Town could save up to \$250,000 per year on energy costs just for its facilities.

In terms of the downtown area, extending natural gas service to downtown will provide an alternative energy source for local buildings and help support many of the businesses there. The extension of natural gas may also increase public safety by eliminating above ground propane tanks currently in use by some restaurants and other uses.

The Plan also recommends that local gas franchise holders (Yankee Gas and/or Connecticut Natural Gas) undertake the extension of natural gas within the residential neighborhoods adjacent to the downtown. It is estimated that homeowners in these areas could save 25%-50% off their annual heating costs and the density of homes is likely to support the gas company investment in extending the gas lines.

Energy Plan

New Canaan, CT

Lewisboro, NY

Pound Ridge, NY

Wilton

Laurel Reservoir

Stamford

106

106

123

15

123

Norwalk

Darien


106


124


3,000


Feet


Legend


 Phase 1
Extend Natural Gas Service


 Phase 2
Key Facilities
connect to Natural Gas

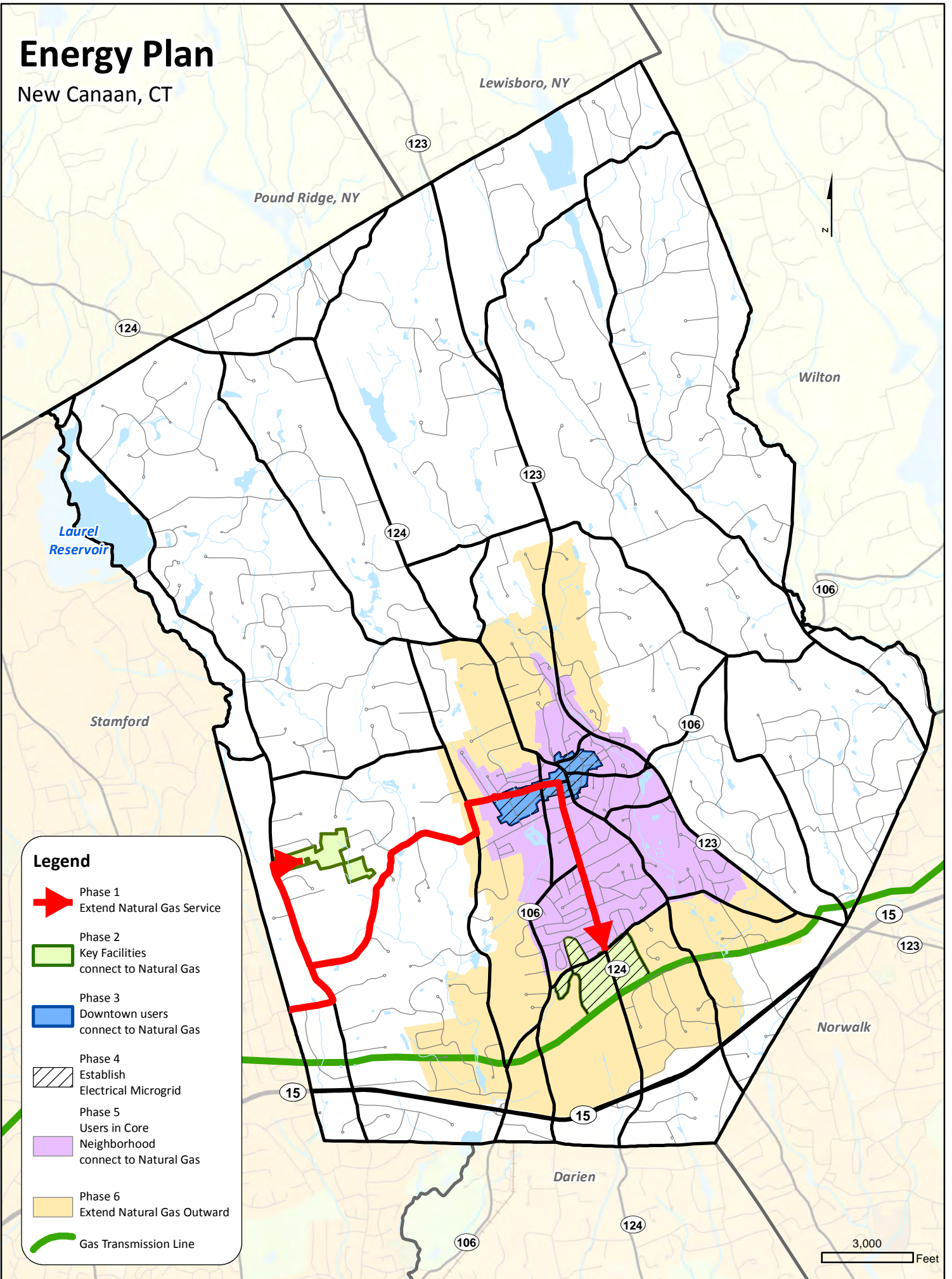
 Phase 3
Downtown users
connect to Natural Gas

 Phase 4
Establish
Electrical Microgrid

 Phase 5
Users in Core
Neighborhood
connect to Natural Gas

 Phase 6
Extend Natural Gas Outward

 Gas Transmission Line



B. Enhance Electrical Service Reliability

Recent severe storm events have raised awareness about electrical service reliability. In the last few years, some residents of New Canaan have lost power for up to a week or more on multiple occasions.

Electrical service in New Canaan is provided by Connecticut Light & Power (CLP). While CLP has made numerous system improvements over the years (interconnecting circuits, redesigning circuits, new transformers, and installation of new wiring to improve circuit performance), there is little that can be done about the impact of severe storms except for more aggressive tree trimming.

Finding the right balance for tree trimming is something the Town should continue to work on with CLP.

Over the years, interest has been expressed in placing wired utilities underground. However, this can be expensive and has not been undertaken. New Canaan should continue to seek ways that wired utilities can be placed underground over the long term to enhance utility reliability. Placing utilities underground would also contribute to overall community character as well as help maintain and improve scenic views.

Electrical Service Interruption



New Canaan News Online

Electrical Service Interruption



New Canaan News Online

C. Consider Establishing A Microgrid

A “microgrid” is a small independent electrical system which serves one or more users in a defined area. Since it generates its own electricity, it can operate independently of the larger electrical grid and any issues it may have (such as service interruptions). It can also be connected to the larger electrical grid for back-up or if it is designed to supply power back to the larger electrical system. Microgrid generation resources can include fuel cells, wind, solar, or other energy sources.

New Canaan should consider establishing one or more microgrids for key facilities such as the high school / emergency shelter (and other schools in the vicinity), the police station, the fire station, the sewage treatment plant, elderly care facilities, and some of the key private businesses in the downtown area (food suppliers, gasoline stations, etc.). The connected users could save money by receiving power from the microgrid while also increasing the reliability of this service.

In 2012, the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection established a pilot program to provide grants and loans to municipalities and other users for developing microgrids. Although New Canaan did not participate in this program, it may be possible to apply some of the lessons learned to establishing a local microgrid in the future.

Fuel Cell



Microgrid Pioneers

In 2013, the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protections awarded grants to the following communities for establishing microgrids.

The following applicants received funding in Phase 1 and may provide useful benchmarks for New Canaan in the future:

- Bridgeport (2 projects)
- Glastonbury - Celtic Energy
- Groton – Submarine Base
- Hamden (2 projects)
- Hartford - CT Transit
- Hartford (2 projects)
- Middletown - Wesleyan
- Southington (Woodard & Curran)
- Stratford - Sikorsky
- South Windsor - CT Studios
- Storrs - UCONN Depot Campus -
- Trumbull
- West Hartford - University of Hartford
- Windham
- Windsor - Great Pond (ABB)
- Woodbridge

The following applicants received conditional funding in Phase 1 but still may provide useful benchmarks:

- Ansonia - Greenpoint Energy
- Fairfield (Public Safety)
- New London
- Norwich - Backus Hospital
- Simsbury
- Southbury
- Stamford
- Windham - Hospital

Support Transit

A. Seek Improvements To The Metro-North Branch Line

New Canaan is served by a branch line as part of the Metro-North commuter rail system. From the New Canaan station (in the Town Center) and the Talmadge Hill Station (just south of the Merritt Parkway), service is provided to Stamford and New York's Grand Central Station.

At the present time, service is limited on the New Canaan branch line because it is a single-track line. Adding a second track or dedicated pass-by areas would allow service on the branch line to be increased. New Canaan should advocate for improvements to the branch line to increase service.

B. Maintain The "Get About" Service

New Canaan has the "Get About" service to provide dial-a-ride services for its senior citizens and special needs residents. In the future, there may be an increase in ridership as a result of an aging population that may require an increase in equipment or service.

Alternatively, this service could also be expanded to provide dial-a-ride services to youths and other residents at other times of day.

C. Consider Other Transit Services

At some time in the future, New Canaan may wish to consider supporting the establishment of scheduled bus transit service to Norwalk or Stamford. In addition, it may make sense at some time in the future to consider some sort of transit service to connect downtown businesses to parking lots and outlying residential areas.

Address Other Livability Issues

There are several other livability issues which should also be addressed:

1. **Road Maintenance** – In the 2010 community survey, road maintenance and road conditions were identified as important issues by survey respondents. New Canaan should be sure to address these issues.
2. **Communication** - The Town website should be maintained and improved as a source for important local information. In addition, opportunities for e-commerce with Town programs and activities should be enhanced.

ACHIEVE SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCY

6

Overview

For the purposes of this Plan, “sustainability” refers to the philosophy of encouraging activities that allow present generations to meet their needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. The term “resiliency” refers to the community’s ability to readily recover from sudden changes or adversity.

Much of New Canaan was built during a time when it was assumed that resources to support growth and development patterns were unconstrained and that major changes were unlikely to occur and that the environment would support such growth. While this still may be the case, it seems prudent to evaluate alternative scenarios and the possible implications of those scenarios. If we are to enhance the character and quality of life for present and future generations, being a sustainable and resilient community – able to adapt to possible future changes – may be especially important.

Moving towards more sustainable and resilient practices will help New Canaan in the future ...

Sustainability



Resilience



Maintain Environmental Health

A. Protect Natural Resources

Conservation of natural resources in New Canaan is important in terms of preserving environmental functions, protecting community character, and enhancing the quality of life for residents.

Natural resource conservation priorities in New Canaan will be based on:

- the value or function of the natural resource if preserved,
- the sensitivity of the resource to development, and/or
- the degree of constraint to development.

This philosophy ensures that important resources and functions are preserved and appropriate areas are identified for development at appropriate densities.

B. Protect Water Resources and Water Quality

The most important natural resources in New Canaan are water related. All of the local rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, water supply reservoirs, wetlands, swamps, marshes, vernal pools, and aquifers influence and contribute to the overall quality of the local and the regional ecosystem.

Protecting groundwater quality and quantity is an important objective of the Plan since most areas of New Canaan rely on wells for domestic water supply.

New Canaan should continue to educate residents about sources of water pollution and ways to reduce contamination from fertilizer, road salt, agricultural chemicals and discharges from improperly operating septic systems.

Land Resources



Water Resources



Natural Resources Map

New Canaan, CT

Lewisboro, NY

Pound Ridge, NY

Wilton

Laurel Reservoir

Stamford

Norwalk

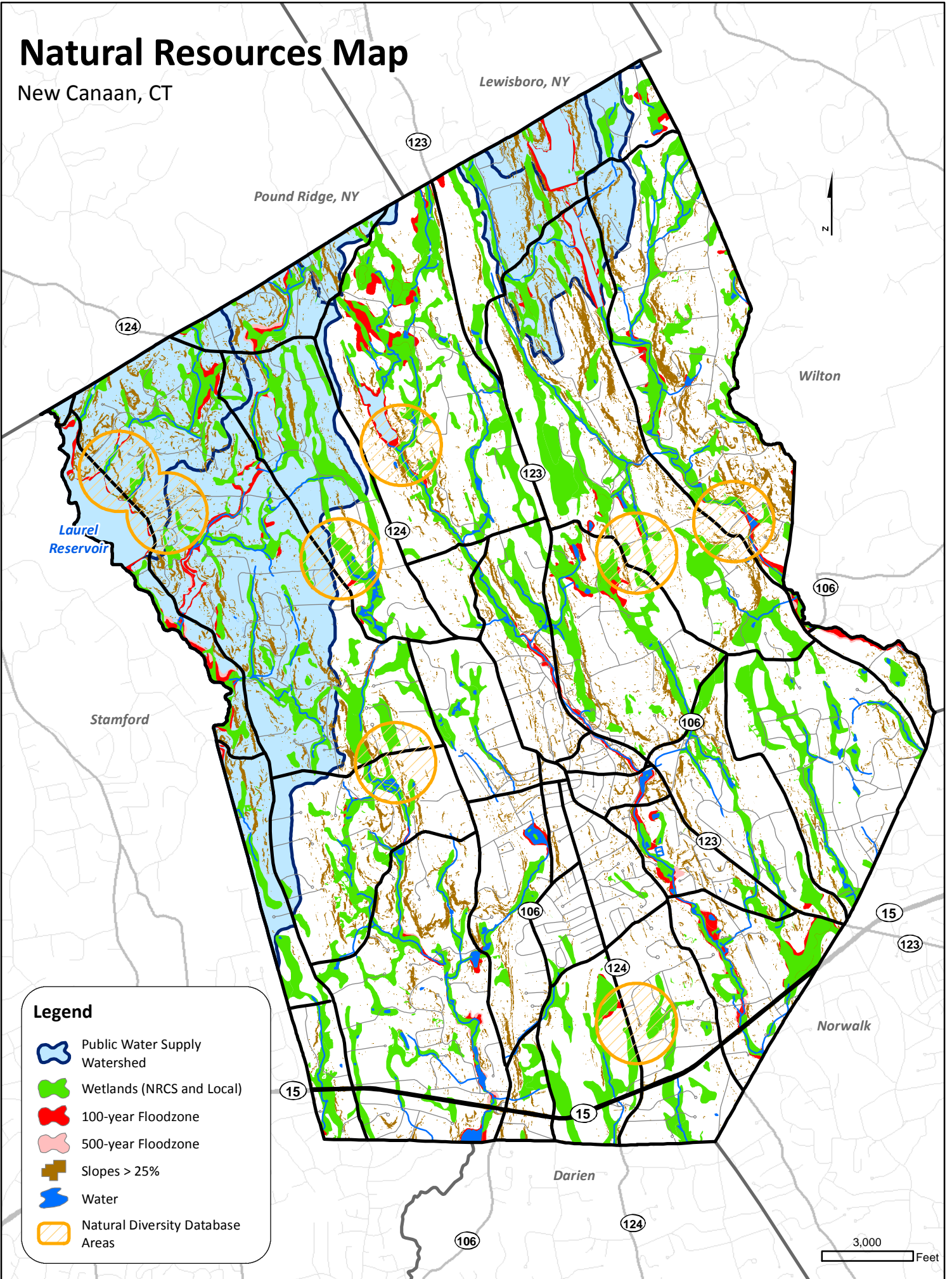
Darien

Legend

-  Public Water Supply Watershed
-  Wetlands (NRCS and Local)
-  100-year Floodzone
-  500-year Floodzone
-  Slopes > 25%
-  Water
-  Natural Diversity Database Areas



3,000 Feet



C. Implement “Low Impact Development” Approaches

New Canaan should consider adopting regulations that promote groundwater recharge and water quality improvements. While this type of approach is called “Low Impact Development” (LID), it really refers to drainage strategies.

This is an important consideration for several reasons:

- The main issue associated with new development in New Canaan is typically drainage and increased runoff onto adjacent properties,
- Many of the drainage facilities in New Canaan are inadequate to handle this runoff since they were installed many years ago before some of the larger homes (and increased runoff) found today,
- The Town simply does not have the funds to be able to receive and accommodate all the runoff residents might choose to discharge,
- Water quality impacts from increased coverage and other domestic activities (fertilizer, etc.) are typically not treated by current drainage systems, and
- It is more equitable and more sustainable that property owners accommodate increased runoff on their own properties.

D. Address Other Important Environmental Issues

The Town should work with applicants and property owners to ensure that important resources are protected. The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT-DEEP) maintains a Natural Diversity Database identifying the general locations of rare and endangered species, species of special concern, unique habitats, and other valuable resources (such as unique natural areas or significant scenic resources).

New Canaan has other issues related to wildlife that are unique. The Town continues to address issues associated with deer, deer ticks, geese, and other animals.

While unique and ornamental plant species can be attractive, they can also disrupt the natural ecology of the New Canaan area. The Plan recommends the use of native species of plants in landscape design and discourages the use of non-native or invasive species.

While mature trees are recognized to be an important element of New Canaan’s character, they can also cause damage to power lines in severe storm events or if not maintained. New Canaan should strive to find an appropriate balance between protecting tree canopies and providing for State and utility pruning which may be necessary for electrical reliability.

Promote Sustainability

A. Promote Energy Conservation / Sustainability

Energy availability and cost are likely to be more significant issues in New Canaan in the future. This has financial implications for all residents – whether for leading their daily lives or for supporting functions provided by the Town.

The Town should prepare and implement a Sustainability Plan. This could be prepared by the Conservation Commission or a Sustainability / Energy Task Force which could evaluate alternative approaches (space heating, electrical consumption, electrical generation, vehicles) and make recommendations to reduce energy usage, increase reliability, and save money.

Some of the key issues for the sustainability / energy task force to consider include:

- Prepare an energy conservation action plan to reduce operating costs, reduce lifecycle costs, and lower the carbon footprint of the Town / school buildings.
- Review municipal facilities for energy conservation opportunities (lighting, controls, equipment, building envelope, etc.).
- Investigate opportunities for energy generation (solar, wind, fuel cell, etc.) as a way to lower energy costs and enhance resiliency.
- Identify ways to involve the community in implementing energy conservation practices.
- Initiate transition to renewable energy for town vehicles (natural gas, electric, biofuels, and hybrids).

**Residential
Solar Installation**



**Rooftop Solar Installation
(Karl Chevrolet)**



B. Promote Water Conservation

The United States has one of the highest rates of personal water consumption in the world (100 gallons of water per person per day for domestic purposes). Simple changes to some everyday activities can reduce most people's domestic water use by 10% or more. New Canaan should encourage water conservation especially since many areas of the community rely on groundwater for domestic use.

C. Promote Waste Reduction / Recycling

The overall waste stream and recycling is another potential area for investigation and education in New Canaan. Reducing the waste stream and promoting recycling should be promoted.

D. Educate Residents About Sustainability Concepts

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

Water Conservation



Single Stream Recycling



Electric Vehicle



Promote Resiliency

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

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

New Canaan should continue to review and improve hazard mitigation plans for recurring events, such as flooding. For example, the Five Mile River Watershed Based Plan suggested New Canaan continue to seek opportunities to mitigate flooding in the watershed. This is a good example of a hazard mitigation approach which seeks to mitigate events before they occur.

New Canaan should also continue to review and improve emergency preparedness plans (single events) in order to be able to respond to these events in the future. For example, New Canaan is already looking at ways to provide for uninterrupted heat and electricity for the emergency shelter at the High School. This is a good example of preparing for unknown events before they occur so that the community can respond in a timely and appropriate manner with the appropriate tools and resources.

This can also include protecting electrical lines by placing them underground as opportunities present themselves. This should also include establishing “smart grids” to identify the location of circuit interruptions and other problems as soon as possible.

Address Other Sustainability Issues

There are also some other issues which should be addressed in the future:

1. **Conservation Commission** – Review the charge of the Conservation Commission to ensure they are in a position to promote a broad range of conservation and sustainability initiatives (including energy initiatives).
2. **Water Service Area** – New Canaan should explore opportunities to expand the water supply service area. In addition to addressing the domestic and fire protection needs of residents, it will also help to ensure an adequate water supply in the event of power loss during and after storm events.
3. **Sewer Capacity** – To help manage sewer capacity, New Canaan should consider adopting a sewer limit line and/or a sewage allocation scheme. Since sewage capacity is a constrained resource (there is only so much treated effluent that can be discharged), it will be important to ensure that it is allocated and used appropriately to meet community objectives.
4. **Solid Waste Disposal** – New Canaan should continue to maintain adequate arrangements for disposal of solid waste, bulky waste, and recycled materials.
5. **Roadway Management** – There are no major issues with the roadway system in New Canaan. New Canaan should continue to manage the roadway system to meet the daily needs of the community. Since roadway maintenance is an expensive item, New Canaan should continue its pavement management approach to road maintenance in order to minimize the present value of future road maintenance costs.

CONSISTENCY WITH OTHER PLANS

7

Overview

The recommendations of each of the preceding chapters can be combined to present an overall Future Land Use Map for New Canaan. The Future Land Use Map is a reflection of the stated goals, objectives, and recommendations of the Plan as well as an integration of the preceding elements of the Plan of Conservation & Development.

In essence, the Future Land Use Map is a statement of what the New Canaan of the future should look like.

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

Conservation



Development



Future Land Use Map

The map on the facing page is the future land use map for New Canaan.

As required by statute, it shows "... the commission's recommendation for the most desirable use of land within the municipality for residential, recreational, commercial, industrial and other purposes and for the most desirable density of population in the ... parts of the municipality."

Descriptions Of Future Land Use Categories

Residential

Lowest Density	Areas where residential densities will generally be less than one unit per four acres.
Low Density	Areas where residential densities will generally be less than one unit per two acres.
Medium Density	Areas where residential densities will generally be one unit per acre or higher.
Higher Density	Areas presently used for multi-family development.

Other Categories

Downtown	The area generally identified as New Canaan's downtown.
Community Facility / Institutional Use	Areas containing existing community facilities (schools, library, Town Hall, etc.) and institutional uses (churches, New Canaan Country Club, etc.).
Existing Open Space	Areas that are currently preserved or used for open space purposes.
Natural Resource Protection Areas	Wetland, watercourse, steep slope, floodplain, public watershed water supply, and other resource areas where development will be balanced with protecting these important resources.

Overall, the Future Land Use Plan depicts a land use pattern very similar to the current zoning configuration of New Canaan. Zoning initiatives which may not be illustrated at this scale include changes in and near the downtown area (see Chapter 4), changes to promote diversification of our housing portfolio, and regulation / map changes to help manage institutional uses in the community.

Future Land Use Plan

New Canaan, CT

Lewisboro, NY

Pound Ridge, NY

Wilton

Laurel Reservoir

Stamford

15

123

Norwalk

Darien

3,000 Feet

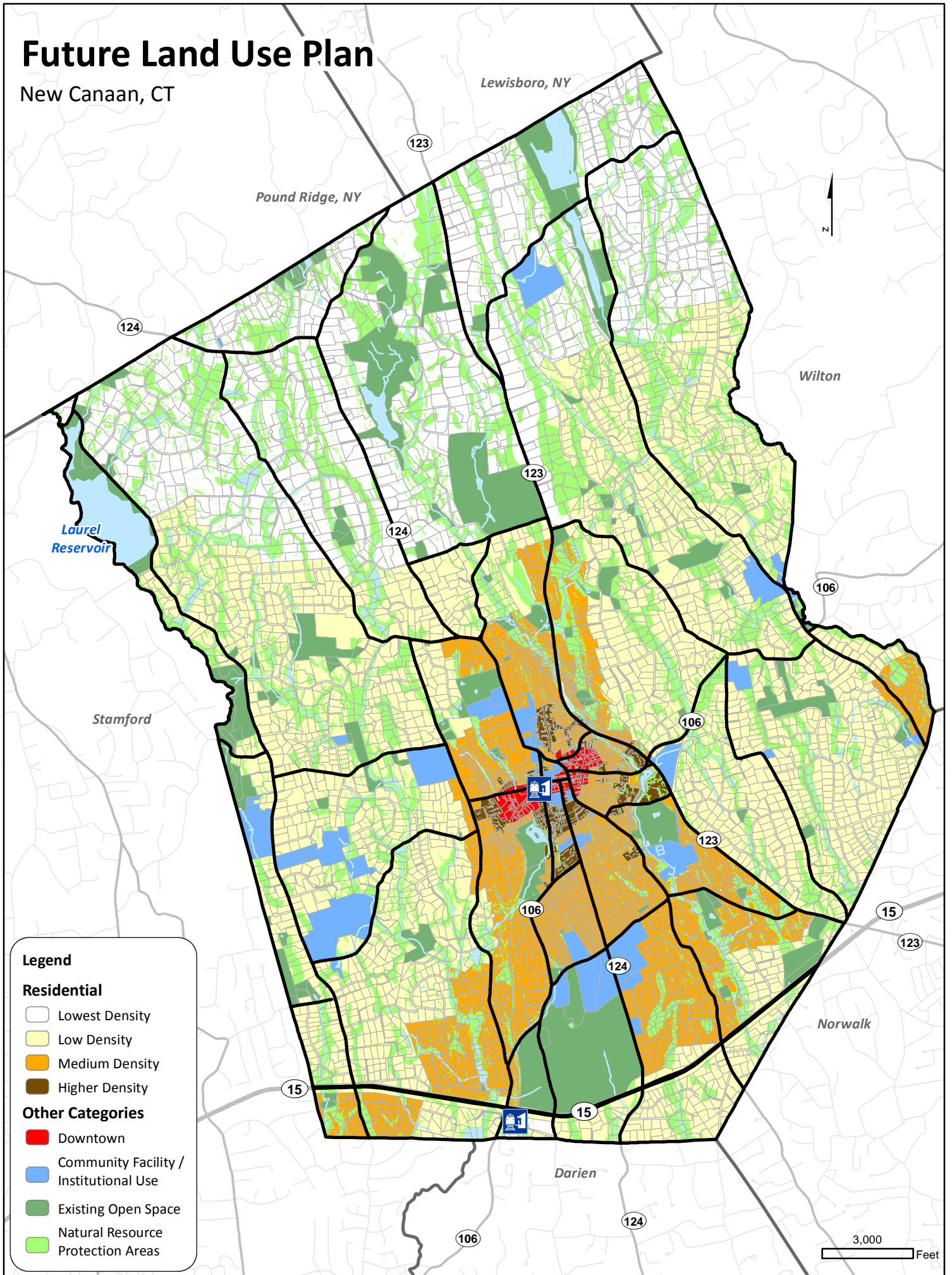
Legend

Residential




- Lowest Density
- Low Density
- Medium Density
- Higher Density

Other Categories

- Downtown
- Community Facility / Institutional Use
- Existing Open Space
- Natural Resource Protection Areas



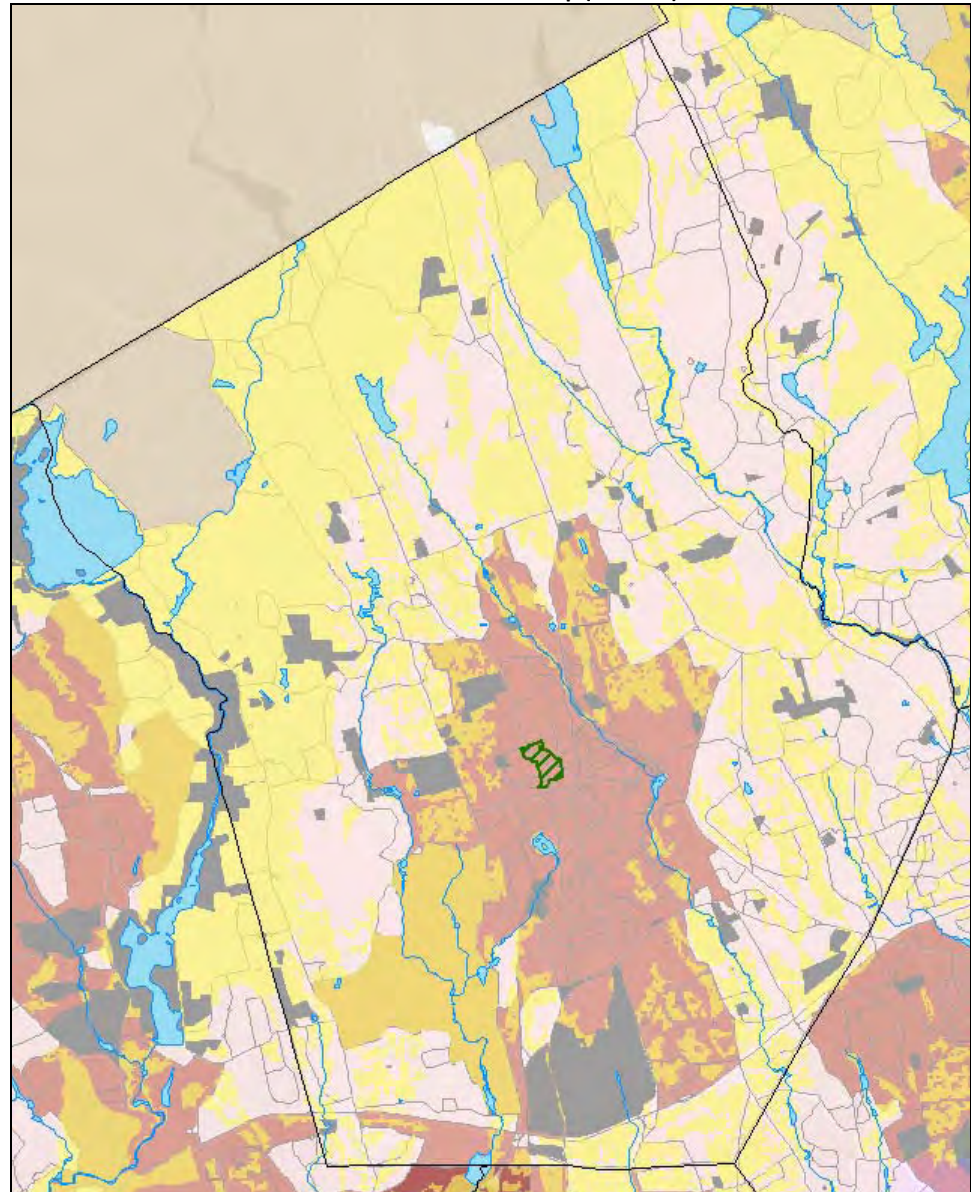
State Plan Categories

-  Municipal Boundaries
-  Busway Stations
-  Rail Stations
-  Ferry
-  Sea Ports
-  Rail Lines
-  Ferry Service
- Airports**
-  Commercial Service
-  General Aviation
-  Reliever
- Primary Highways**
-  Interstate
-  U.S. Route
-  State Route
-  Regional Centers
-  Water
-  Protected Lands
-  Local Historic Districts
-  Village Priority Funding Area
-  Balanced Priority Funding Area
-  Undesignated Lands
- Priority Funding Areas**
-  1-2 Criteria
-  3-4 Criteria
-  5 Criteria
- Conservation Areas**
-  1-3 Conservation Factors
-  4-5 Conservation Factors
-  6-7 Conservation Factors

Plan Consistency

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

State Locational Guide Map (2013-18)



Connecticut Conservation and Development Plan – State Growth Principles

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

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

Regional Plan Categories

Regional Plan Of Conservation and Development

In addition, this Plan was compared with the 2006-15 Regional Plan of Conservation and Development prepared by the Southwestern Regional Planning Agency and found to be generally consistent with that Plan.

-  Neighborhood Conservation
-  Regional Center
-  Rural Community Center
-  Existing Preserved Open Space
-  Preservation Area
-  Conservation Area
-  Rural Land
-  Aquifer Protection Area
-  Historic District
-  Municipal Boundary
-  Primary Highway
-  Secondary Highway
-  Local Road
-  Railroad
-  Rail Station

Regional Locational Guide Map



CONCLUSION

8

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

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

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

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

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

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

Implementing this Plan of Conservation & Development will help New Canaan confront the challenges of the future ...



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Residents of New Canaan and the

Planning and Zoning Commission

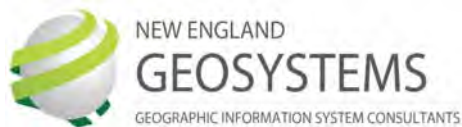
Laszlo Papp	Chair
Jean Grzelecki	Secretary
Elizabeth DeLuca	
John H. Goodwin	
Dan Radman	
David Scannell	
Tony M. Shizari	
Kent Turner	
Dick Ward	
Michael Crofton	Alternate
John Flinn	Alternate
Roger Rothballer	(to February 2014)

Steven Kleppin, AICP	Town Planner / Senior Enforcement Officer
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Technical and Administrative Assistance Provided By:



Glenn Chalder, AICP	President
Leonard Desson, GISP	GIS Mapping (to Fall 2013)



Matt Longyear	GIS Mapping (From Fall 2013)
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NOTES & COMMENTS



Amendment 4/1/16 for sidebar regarding Cross & Vitti Streets study.

A series of horizontal dashed lines for taking notes.

