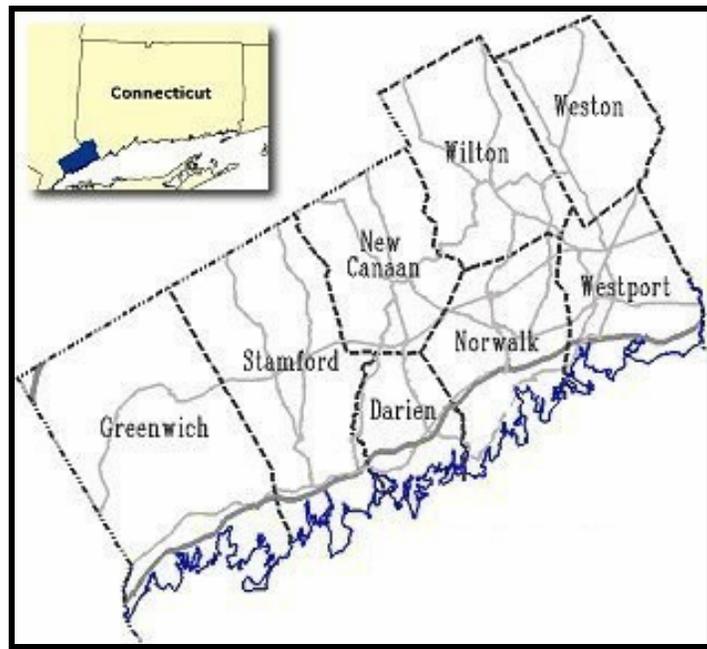


APPENDIX A5
REGIONAL ISSUES



Telecommunications. In the past several years, telecommunications antennas and towers have become prolific, as cellular phone use and the number of personal communication systems have increased exponentially. Sufficient antennas need to be placed throughout any region to provide seamless coverage, the Federal Communication Act of 1996 requires each community to process applications for antennas and towers in accordance with State and Federal regulations. Communities on a regional basis should cooperate to provide the most efficient and least impacting placement of these utilities. The Connecticut Siting Council has jurisdiction over most types of new towers, and in the past, they have required, or strongly recommended that the developers of proposed towers obtain local approvals before seeking State permits.

Darien has strongly encouraged antenna placement in existing towers such as within church steeples or other inconspicuous locations throughout the community, flagpoles at country club properties, or antennas on top of existing tall buildings. Co-location, the process of multiple carriers sharing a single tower or facility location, is strongly encouraged as well. Because building heights in Darien are not as tall as those of neighboring Stamford and Norwalk, it may be more cost effective and aesthetically pleasing to have antennas on the larger buildings in those communities rather than large towers constructed in Darien. Telecommunications companies should continue to use ingenuity in providing aesthetically pleasing yet essential services to the Darien community. Section 950 of the Darien Zoning Regulations, adopted in 1999, regulates Wireless Telecommunications.

Housing. Housing is a regional issue that affects all of the local communities. More information on housing is included in the Housing Chapter of this Plan (Chapter 6).

Environmental Issues

Long Island Sound. The region contains many miles of shoreline, 16.5 miles of which are within Darien. There are a number of environmental issues that have regional importance. One of these is the protection and enhancement of Long Island Sound. Some people consider Long Island Sound to be this region's greatest resource. It is incumbent upon all of the regional communities to preserve and protect that resource. The Town should continue to work with SWRPA, the adjacent communities, the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), and other groups interested in preserving, protecting and enhancing Long Island Sound.

Aquifer Protection. Aquifer protection has significant impacts to the Region and Town, and as noted within the Environmental Resources Chapter of this Plan. Residences with well water have tapped into one of several underground water sources located throughout our community. Much of the public water supplied to Darien residents and businesses comes from out-of-Town and out-of-region aquifers and reservoirs. Just as it is important for those communities to protect their ground water and surface water resources, it is critical that Darien take actions to protect the Rewak Well, and Noroton River aquifers as discussed in the Environmental Resources Chapter. The State has passed legislation mandating local aquifer protection programs, but the implementation of those requirements has been delayed for a variety of reasons. Most likely, the protection program in Darien would take the form of prohibiting certain commercial uses (that are high risks to cause ground water pollution) from being within designated aquifer recharge areas, and to require water company review of other proposed development within those areas. Special criteria for development within the recharge areas (such as underground fuel storage tanks) would lessen the likelihood of accidental contamination of the aquifers. The possible development of aquifer

protection ordinances in Darien and the surrounding communities should be strongly encouraged, even before it is mandated by State Statute. **Chapter 3, Environmental Resources**, also refers to environmental issues. **Exhibit A3-1 in the Environmental Resources Appendix** shows Aquifer Resources within Darien, and **Exhibit A3-5 in the same Appendix** shows Watersheds within Darien.

Flooding and Storm Water Quality. As development and re-development of property continues, the proper management of storm water runoff is an increasingly important problem. At the local level, the changes in the amount of impervious area (roofs, parking lots, streets, etc) results in a dramatic increase in the rate and speed of runoff compared to pre-development site conditions. This can result in neighboring properties being inundated with more water than ever before. On a larger scale, or watershed basis, more development will result in much larger volumes of storm water flow reaching the lower portions of watersheds much more quickly. These concentrated flows result in more land being temporarily flooded and the flood levels being higher. This is critical to Darien because the community is at the bottom of the watershed areas of the Noroton River, Goodwives River and the Five Mile River.

Darien and other communities within or neighboring the watersheds that are partially or entirely within Darien, should institute programs to require small-scale storm water detention systems, where appropriate, be installed for every project and that neighborhood detention systems be encouraged for existing developments. These systems are designed to delay (or temporarily detain) the surge of storm water runoff. The water would not necessarily be permanently retained. It would be released at a predetermined rate to correspond to the pre-development site conditions. In that way, the downstream areas would not be inundated with any more water at any given time and the potential for flood damage would be greatly reduced or eliminated.

Storm water detention areas can also serve an important function with respect to water quality. As the water is temporarily stored on site, eroded soil particles and contaminants will have an opportunity to settle out. If vegetated detention areas are utilized, many of the biodegradable contaminants can be processed out. Natural wetlands should not be used as the primary storm water detention areas because these areas are fragile and can be unexpectedly altered due to the greater influx of water and pollutants and the extended storage time of the water. Areas adjacent to wetlands are more suitable for this function. Whether structural systems (like underground galleries) or vegetated systems (like artificially created wetlands) are used, continued monitoring and maintenance will be necessary.

Fresh Water for Drinking and Recreation. Storm water management systems and designs to protect groundwater aquifers and to minimize flooding can and should also serve to protect the surface waters for drinking supplies and for recreation uses. While Darien does not have any reservoirs or large publicly accessible freshwater recreation areas, other communities in the region do have such facilities. Darien residents should be reminded of the importance of those water bodies and should support local, regional and State efforts to provide protection and preservation whenever and wherever possible.

Air Quality. Much of the air pollution evident in the region is from our dependence on motor vehicles for personal and commercial transportation. Automobiles and trucks traveling on Interstate Route I-95, or stuck in jams, are a major source of the air pollution. State officials from the Department of Transportation and Department of Environmental Protection are trying to

address these issues on a Statewide and regional basis. SWRPA and the communities along the I-95 corridor must work together to develop and implement reasonable solutions to these concerns.

The other source of pollution in our air is from emissions originating in States to our west. The predominant winds from the west carry these particulate and chemical pollutants to our region and seriously impact our air quality. Darien residents need to work with and lobby our State and Federal Legislators to deal with these emission problems.

Traffic & Transportation Issues

Rail. Train service through Darien is primarily for commuter service into and out of New York City (interstate service). There are two stations that service the community; the Darien Station in the downtown area at the intersection of the Boston Post Road and West Avenue, and the second station at Noroton Heights – located on the south side of Heights Road between Noroton Avenue and Hollow Tree Ridge Road. The Darien Station was renovated in 2001 and made handicapped accessible.



the Darien Train Station

To a lesser extent, the local railroad stations are for intrastate service (by persons taking the trains to Darien, and local residents taking trains from Darien to other locations in the region). Amtrak trains travel through Darien, but do not stop here; Stamford is the closest stop for Amtrak service. Increased usage of rail services and the stations should continue to be encouraged. Certain improvements to the facilities (especially the Noroton Heights station) should be studied and implemented where needed, appropriate, and cost-effective. Such improvements may include: better lighting; better security; landscaping; smoother and expanded sidewalks in the areas around the stations; improved taxi service and local bus service to work sites; and securing long term agreements to keep existing parking areas as they are.

A single, commercial railroad siding in Darien is used by Rings End Lumber Company on West Avenue.

I-95. The interstate highway system, and in particular, Route I-95 has profoundly impacted the development of Darien and the region in the latter half of the 20th century. It will likely continue to be both a source of problems and a valuable resource for the foreseeable future. Approximately 134,000 vehicles per day use this six lane, limited access roadway through Darien each weekday. It provides interstate access for both commerce and personal use. It also is heavily used by commuters both into and out of the region.

Consistency with SWRPA Regional Plan. The SWRPA Regional Plan, entitled, the Fourth Plan of Conservation & Development, 2005-2015, is in draft form as of November 10, 2005.

The Plan's guiding principle is centrality—which is the planning alternative to sprawl. Other basic goals of this plan are: encouraging municipal land use planning; preserving open space; improving public transportation; providing for energy needs; encouraging housing alternatives; encourage preservation of historic structures; fostering cooperation for emergencies; planning for an aging and diverse population; protecting quality of life; and maintaining a strong business climate.

Consistency with State Plan. The State Plan entitled, “Conservation and Development Policies Plan for Connecticut 2004-2009” was approved in 2005. That Plan contains six basic Growth Management Principles, which serve as the basis for the various chapters within the plan. All of those Principles are consistent with this Plan.

Growth Management Principle #1

Redevelop and Revitalize Regional Centers and Areas with Existing or Currently Planned Physical Infrastructure

Growth Management Principle #2

Expand Housing Opportunities and Design Choices to Accommodate a Variety of Household Types and Needs

Growth Management Principle #3

Concentrate Development Around Transportation Nodes and Along Major Transportation Corridors to Support the Viability of Transportation Options

Growth Management Principle #4

Conserve and Restore the Natural Environment, Cultural and Historical Resources, and Traditional Rural Lands

Growth Management Principle #5

Protect and Ensure the Integrity of Environmental Assets Critical to Public Health and Safety

Growth Management Principle #6

Promote Integrated Planning Across All Levels of Government to Address Issues on a Statewide, Regional and Local Basis