

An aerial photograph of a scenic lake area. In the foreground, a wooden dock extends into the water with a white boat moored at it. The shoreline is lush with green trees and grass. In the middle ground, a stone bridge with three arches spans across the lake. Several houses are visible along the banks, surrounded by dense foliage. The background shows a vast expanse of green trees under a clear blue sky.

DARIEN

2016 Plan of Conservation and Development

**FIRST DRAFT – For PZC Review
November 2015**

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WELCOME!

November 2015

To the Planning and Zoning Commission,

This document is the FIRST DRAFT of the proposed 2016 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) for Darien. The strategies outlined in the POCD are intended to guide conservation, development, and infrastructure activities in Darien in the future.

The strategies, which were developed over the past year or so, reflect discussions among the members of the Commission and input from Darien residents, other boards and agencies, Town Staff, and independent review and analysis.

It is envisioned that this FIRST DRAFT will be reviewed and refined by the Commission prior to scheduling a public information meeting (tentatively scheduled for February 2016). Following that meeting, it is envisioned that the Planning and Zoning Commission will further review and refine the Plan before considering it for adoption.

I look forward to continuing to work with you during this process.

Sincerely,

Glenn Chalder, AICP
Planimetrics

Town Plan Vision Statement

The Town Plan serves as a flexible blueprint for the continuing development of our community. It identifies enhancements and additions to our infrastructure and provides the basis for maintenance of our existing resources.

- *Darien continues to be primarily a New England style, single-family dwelling community.*
- *The Town Plan must balance growth and development with preservation and protection of the existing ecosystem on which our future depends, i.e. open space, the Long Island Sound, coastal habitat, our streams, ponds and wetlands.*
- *Downtown and traditional neighborhood commercial centers or corridors, through scale, character and density should create a strong sense of place for living, shopping and dining and add to the vitality of our community.*
- *Multi-modal transportation and pedestrian-friendly streetscape should be complimentary to the character of our town.*
- *Total citizen involvement, including our elected, appointed and volunteer groups, are critical to effective planning and successful implementation.*

The town must adopt and implement high quality public policies promoting long-term growth, development and infrastructure improvements. Thoughtful, dynamic leadership continues to be necessary to ensure our community implements the blueprint provided by this Town Plan.

Darien Board of Selectmen (2014)

PLANNING CONTEXT



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

A glossary of some terms and acronyms used in the POCD is located at the end of the document.

INTRODUCTION

1

Overview

A Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) is a document whose purpose is to establish a common vision for the future of a community. The recommendations of the Plan are intended to reflect an overall consensus of what is considered desirable for Darien and its residents in the future.

It is important to note that the Plan of Conservation and Development is primarily an advisory document. It is intended to guide local boards and commissions and to provide a framework for consistent decision-making with regard to conservation and development activities in Darien over the next decade or so.

Once the vision is established, the next step is implementation. The POCD identifies policies and action steps that will help attain the overall vision.

While the statutory responsibility to adopt the Plan rests with the Planning and Zoning Commission, implementation will only occur with the diligent efforts of the residents and officials of the Town of Darien. The Plan will only be effective if it is understood and supported by the people of Darien, and implemented by local boards and commissions.

“If you don’t know where you’re going, you’ll wind up somewhere else.”

Yogi Berra,
Baseball Legend
Renowned Punster

Conservation Strategies



Development Strategies



Infrastructure Strategies



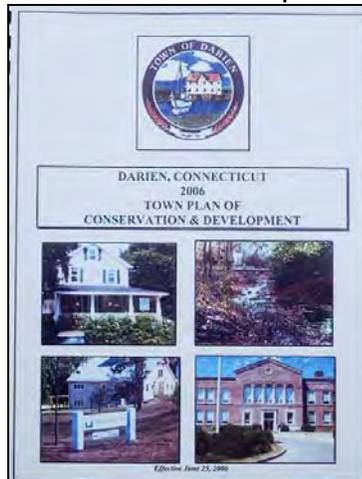
Prior Darien Plans

Darien has a history of preparing and adopting Plans of Conservation and Development (also called Town Plans, Master Plans, or Plans of Development) and these plans have:

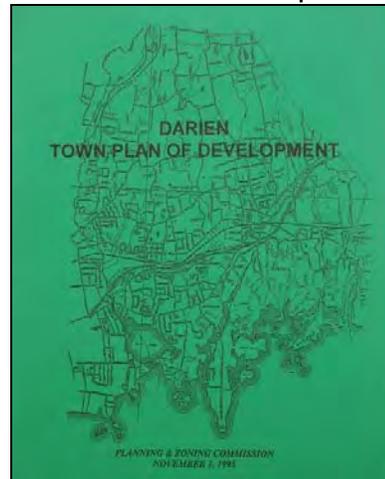
- influenced the current development patterns and land use regulations and in Darien, and
- helped guide the overall conservation and development of the community.

Thus, it can be seen that Darien has prepared, adopted, and amended Plans to address the appropriate conservation and development of the community. It is in that spirit that this POCD has been prepared.

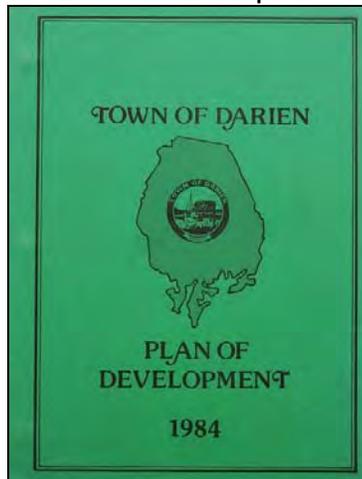
2006 Town Plan of Conservation and Development



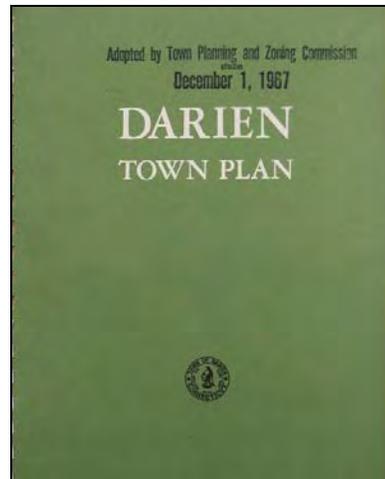
1995 Town Plan of Development



1984 Plan of Development



1967 Town Plan



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

The Commission shall:

- prepare, adopt and amend a plan of conservation and development ...
- review the plan of conservation and development at least once every ten years ...
- adopt such amendments to the plan or parts of the plan ... as the commission deems necessary to update the plan.

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 for residential, recreational, commercial, industrial and other purposes and for the most desirable density of population in the ... parts of the municipality.
- 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.
- be made with reasonable consideration for restoration and protection of the ecosystem and habitat of Long Island Sound ...
- make provision for the development of housing opportunities, including opportunities for multifamily dwellings consistent with soil types, terrain and infrastructure capacity, for all residents of the municipality and the planning region ...
- promote housing choice and economic diversity in housing, including housing for both low and moderate income households, and encourage the development of housing which will meet the housing needs ...
- take into account the state plan of conservation and development ... and note any inconsistencies it may have with said state plan.
- consider the use of cluster development to the extent consistent with soil types, terrain, and infrastructure capacity.

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.

Using The Plan

Most chapters of the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) contain strategies, policies, and action steps. As used in the POCD:

- A “strategy” is a long-term goal or course of action for Darien.
- A “policy” is a principle or course of action intended to help implement the strategy (a policy is an on-going activity which does not generally have an end date).
- An “action step” is a recommended task that helps implement the strategy (a task has an end date or specific result).

Over the 10-year timeframe of this POCD, it is envisioned that these strategies, policies, and action steps will be used to review land use applications, develop work programs for local departments and agencies, and guide spending and investment decisions.

POCD TERMINOLOGY

Strategy (Goal) →

Policy →

Action Step →

A. Protect Water Quality			
Policies	Leader	Partners	
1. Continue to protect water quality.	CC	PZC	IWC
2. Implement “low impact development” practices to help manage water quality and water quantity issues.	PZC		
Action Steps			
3. Educate design professionals and homeowners about LID tools and techniques.	CC		
4. Conduct public education about protecting water quality (including reducing fertilizer, herbicide and pesticide use).	CC		
5. Consider adopting a “septic management ordinance” which requires pumping of septic tanks and inspection of septic fields on a regular basis.	BOS	RTM	CC

In the strategy tables in the POCD, each policy and action step identifies a “leader” and may identify one or more “partners.” The “leader” is the entity considered most likely to bear responsibility for implementing the policy or completing the action step. Partners are other entities likely to be involved in implementation.

A legend for “leaders” and “partners” can be found on the inside back cover.

CONDITIONS & TRENDS

2

Overview

This section of the POCD provides a general overview of conditions and trends affecting Darien at the time the POCD was being prepared.

History of Darien

The landscape of the area we now know as Darien evolved over millions of years as a result of massive geologic forces. The advance and retreat of glaciers and fluctuations in climate and sea levels created a rocky coastline abutting a coastal sound. While there is no written record of their early habitation, Native Americans are believed to have lived in this area about 10,000 years ago.

European Settlement

Europeans “discovered” this part of New England in 1614 when Dutch explorer Adriaen Block sailed into what we now call Long Island Sound. For the next 20 years or so, the Dutch and English competed for trade with Native Americans and to establish settlements. The British settled in Plymouth (Massachusetts) in 1620 and the Dutch settled in New Amsterdam (New York) in 1624. Dutch and British trade with Native Americans eventually led to settlement of inland areas along the Connecticut River after 1634.

After the Pequot War of 1637, European settlement began to extend to other areas of what we now know as Connecticut. By 1642, Europeans had “purchased” land from Native Americans in what is now called Stamford and settlement began in this area. After 1674, the Dutch settlements to the west were consolidated under British rule (New Amsterdam was renamed New York).

As population grew, more land was needed for subsistence farming and settlers moved outwards from Stamford. It was not uncommon at that time for settlers to establish small settlements where they could help and protect each other. From the coves along the shore, residents would travel to fields and other areas to tend crops or raise livestock or fish.

“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,
American President**

Formation Of A Parish

Life was difficult for early settlers in this area and it was made more challenging by the customs of the time where settlers would travel every week to a “meetinghouse” for religious services regardless of season or weather.

By about 1737, the population of this area had grown to the point where the residents felt they could support their own parish and no longer have to travel to Stamford for religious services. Permission was granted by the church and this new parish was called Middlesex. The first meetinghouse was later built at the corner of Brookside Road and the Boston Post Road.

As population grew and as concerns over safety diminished, settlers moved further out to create their own homesteads. Sawmills, blacksmith shops, and other communal amenities were established along brooks and streams to support the growing economy of this area.

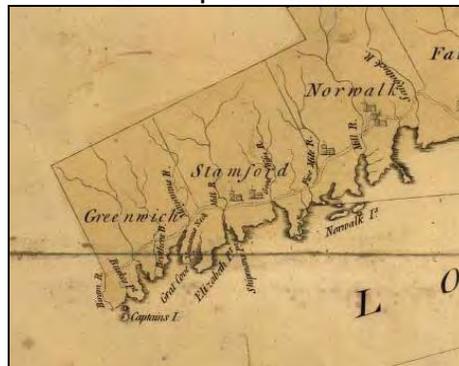
Establishment Of A Town

Eventually, the population in the Middlesex parish grew to the point where people no longer wished to travel to Stamford for militia training or for town meetings. A petition was undertaken to create their own municipality and, in 1820, residents received permission from the General Assembly to establish a separate municipality. According to the 1820 Census, there were 1,126 residents.

Reportedly the name Darien came as the result of a compromise. A number of residents lobbied to have the new town named after them but there was no consensus. The name Darien is thought to come from a place in Panama which may have been suggested by a local resident.

At this time, the economy of this area was still dominated by subsistence agriculture although there were some emerging mills and early stores.

1766 Map of Connecticut



Re-Enactment Of Colonial Agriculture



Arrival Of The Railroad

With the industrial revolution, Darien began to change. This change was not because of the establishment of new business and industry but with the introduction of steam trains and the establishment of a rail line from New York to New Haven (completed by 1849).

At first a great convenience for residents and an easy way to export agricultural produce to New York City, it soon had the effect of enticing in-migration to Darien.

Residents of New York City were attracted to Darien because of its beautiful shoreline, rural character, and short travel distance from the city. While people had travelled here before by carriage or by boat, Darien became more popular when it was accessible by rail. After the Civil War, the town became one of the many resorts where New Yorkers built luxurious, grand summer homes. The population of Darien doubled between 1850 and 1900.

Spread Of The Automobile

After the turn of the century, the advent of the automobile and paved roadways supported the continued growth of Darien. The opening of the Merritt Parkway between Greenwich and Norwalk in 1938 was a key event during this era. Between 1920 and 1940, Darien's population doubled again.

Following World War II, Darien experienced the same surge of growth that affected other communities in the region. A cultural trend toward suburban living and the flexibility offered by the automobile supported the development of Darien. Former farms were subdivided and developed and population doubled again between 1940 and 1960. Construction of Interstate 95 in the 1950s encouraged the suburban development of residential areas and Darien was no different.

By 1970, Darien had grown to be a community of over 20,000 people and the overall pattern of the community became established.

While the amount of land available for new development is limited, there continues to be considerable interest in Darien due to its location, character, amenities, and the quality of life it offers its residents. As a result, there is the potential for redevelopment in the community as existing buildings are updated, expanded, or replaced and as new uses replace existing uses.

Regional Role

Darien actually serves two regional roles:

- a residential suburb within the New York City metropolitan region with over 7,000 housing units and more than 20,000 residents.
- an employment center with more jobs (7,679 jobs) in 2012 than housing units (7,022 units).

Overall, Darien is a diverse and balanced community.

Darien's Population

1820	1,126
1830	1,212
1840	1,080
1850	1,454
1860	1,705
1870	1,808
1880	1,949
1890	2,276
1900	3,116
1910	3,946
1920	4,184
1930	6,951
1940	9,222
1950	11,767
1960	18,437
1970	20,366
1980	18,892
1990	18,196
2000	19,607
2010	20,732

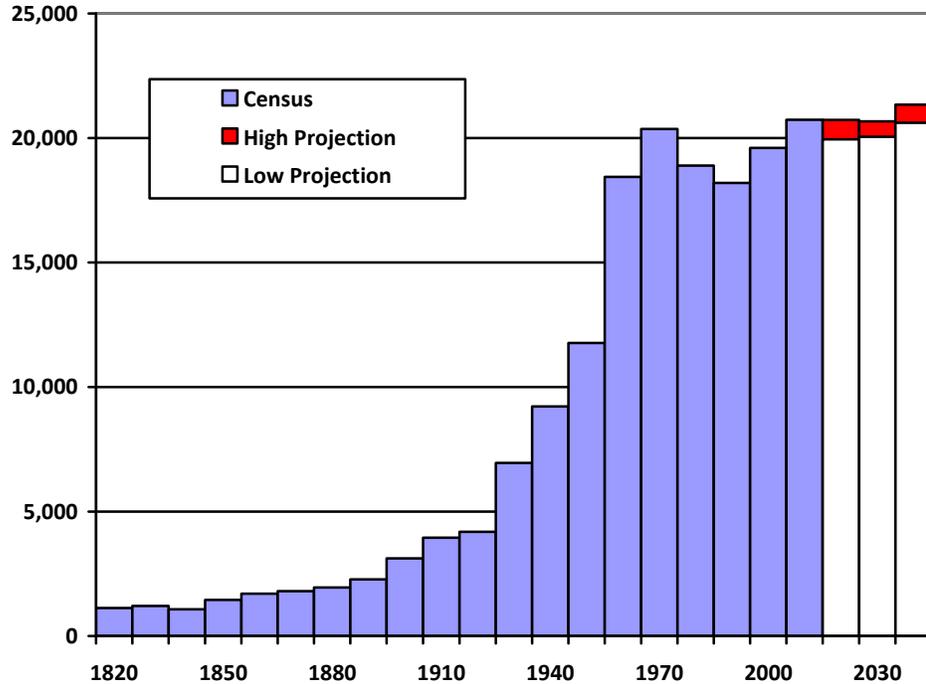
2020	<i>19,952</i>	<i>20,727</i>
2030	<i>20,048</i>	<i>20,670</i>
2040	<i>20,610</i>	<i>21,341</i>

US Census data for 1820 to 2010. Projections are in italics. Projections are based on cohort survival models from the Connecticut State Data Center and from Planimetrics.

People Of Darien / Demographics

According to the Census, Darien had a year 2010 population of 20,732 persons. This represents an increase of 1,125 persons from the 19,607 persons reported in the 2000 Census. The chart shows Darien population growth since the 1820 Census with a range of population projections to the year 2040.

Darien's Population (1820 – 2040)



United States Census / Connecticut State Data Center / Planimetrics

From 1950 to 1970, *net in-migration* was the main driver of population change in Darien. From 1970 to 1990, *net out-migration* was the main driver of population change since there were fewer births during this period. Since 1990, growth has been a result of "*natural increase*" outpacing net out-migration.

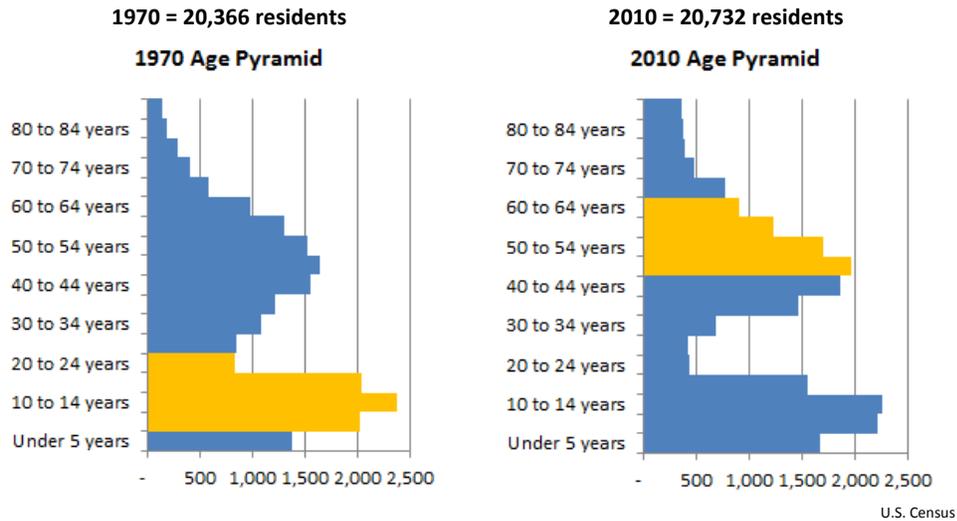
Components of Population Change

	1950s	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s
Total Change	+6,670	+1,929	(1,474)	(696)	+1,411	+1,125
Change Due To Natural Increase	+1,622	+922	+107	+697	+2,182	+1,821
Births	2,790	2,211	1,497	2,058	3,399	3,000
Deaths	1,168	1,289	1,390	1,361	1,217	1,179
Change Due To Net Migration	+5,048	+1,007	(1,581)	(1,393)	(771)	(696)

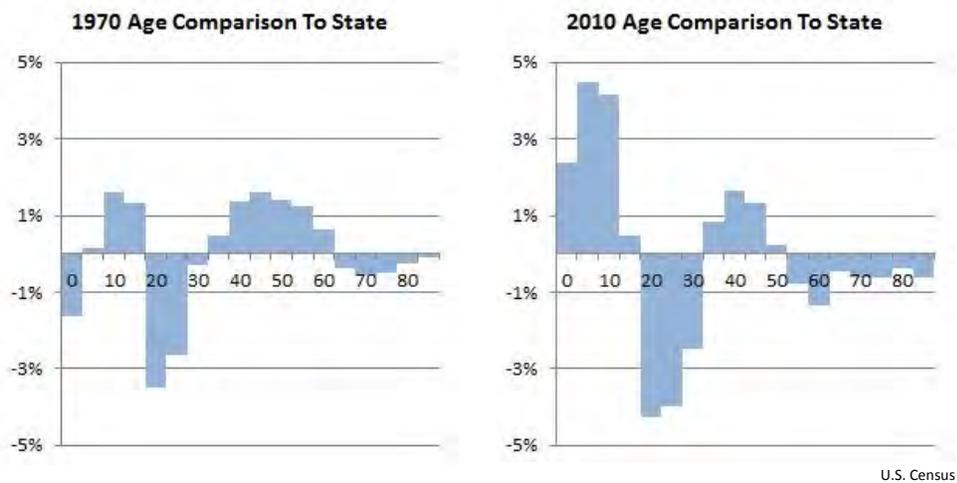
US Census, Connecticut Health Department reports,

Age Composition

The age composition of Darien changes over time due to the net effect of births, deaths, net migration, and natural aging. Much of the change in the age composition between 1970 and 2010 is attributable to people in the “baby boom” (people born between about 1945 and about 1965) shown in orange below.



As shown in the following charts, Darien has generally had a larger share of the population in the younger age groups (0-19 years) and in young families (ages 35 – 55) compared to Connecticut as a whole. In 2010, the percentage of the population age 0-19 was about 11 percentage points *higher* in Darien than in Connecticut. At the other end of the age spectrum, the percentage of the population age 55+ was about 6 percentage points *lower* in Darien than in Connecticut.



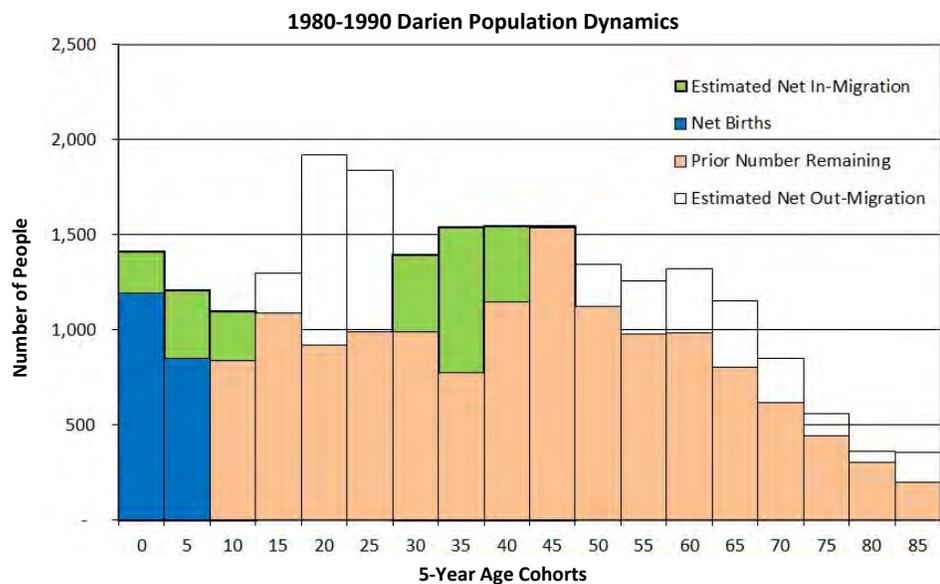
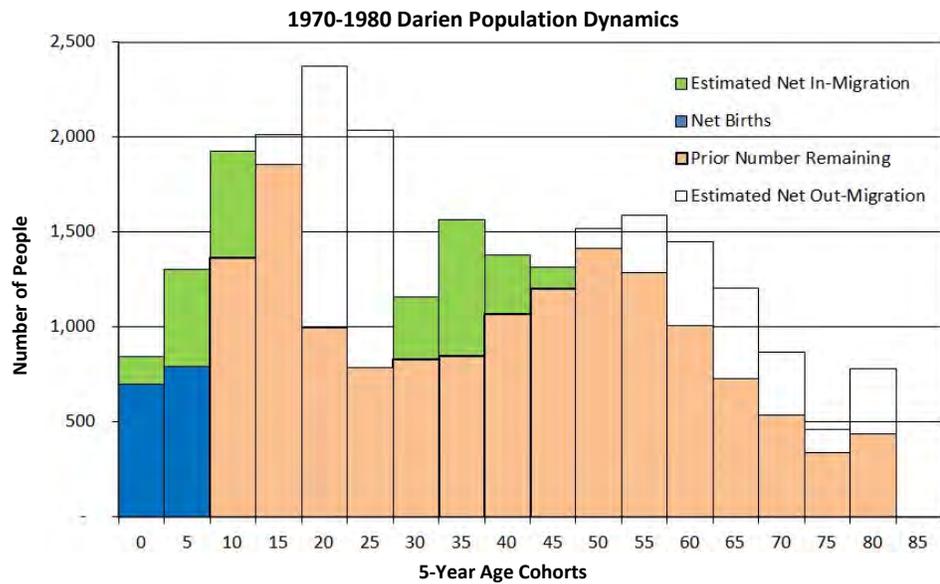
Legend

In the “population dynamics” charts, the height of the colored column represents the number of people in each 5-year age cohort at the end of the decade. The colored portions of the columns represent where those people came from (or went to) during the decade.

-  The blue portion of the columns represents the number of children born in Darien during the decade
-  The peach portion of the columns represents the number of people who lived in Darien at the beginning of the decade and are estimated to be here at then of the decade
-  The green portion of the columns represents the net number of people in that age cohort who moved into Darien during the decade
-  The white portion of the columns represents the net number of people in that age cohort who moved out of Darien during the decade

By comparing the number of people in one age group in the Census to the number of people 10 years younger in the prior Census (10 years earlier), the dynamics of migration by age group in Darien can be evaluated.

Between 1970 and 1980, as shown in the chart below, the green portions of the columns indicates there was net in-migration of younger families (parents aged 30-49 with children aged 0-19). There was net out-migration of young adults (ages 15-29) as people went off to college or moved elsewhere. There was also net out-migration of mature adults (ages 50+) once their children were grown or their interests changed. A similar pattern occurred in the 1980s.

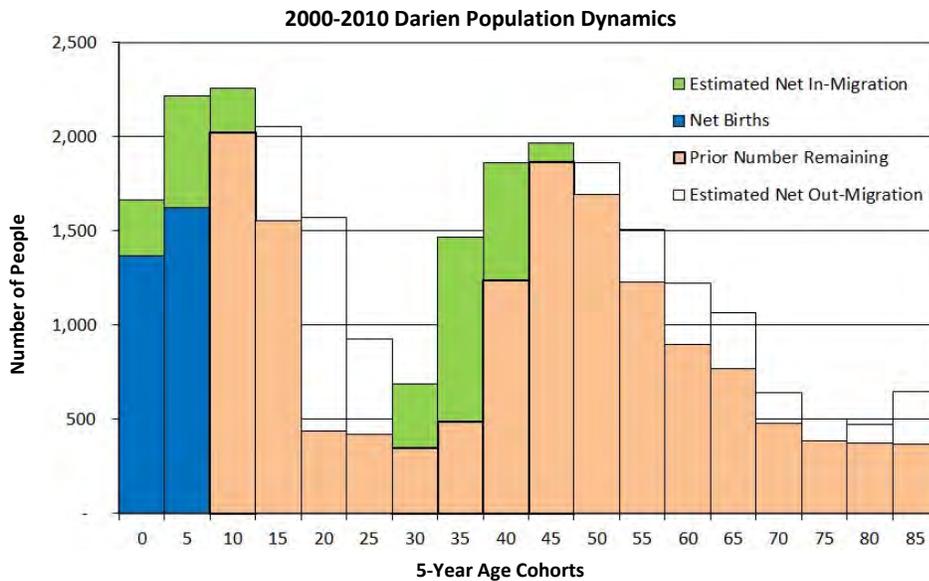
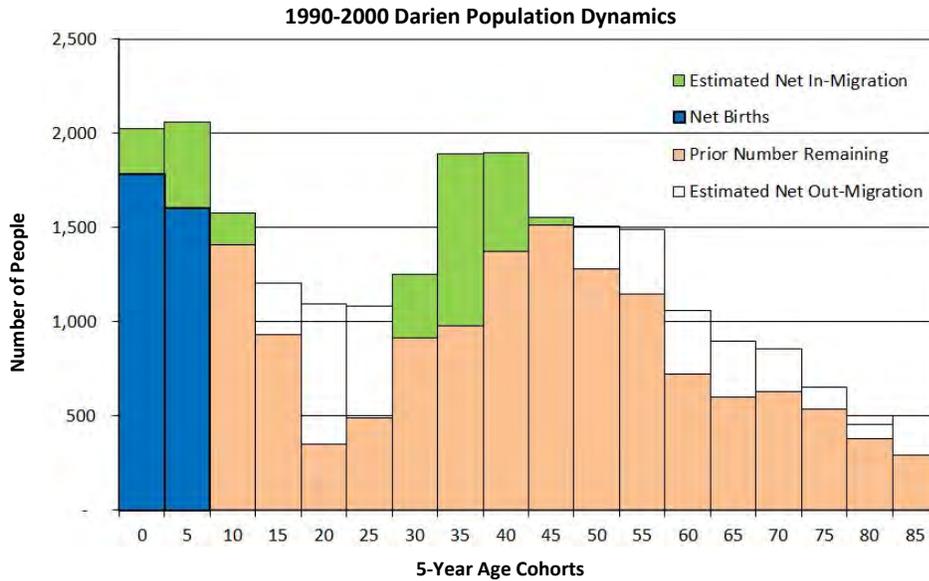


After 1990, as shown in the charts below, the number of births increased significantly (blue columns) and Darien continued to attract younger families with school-age children. More young adults and “empty nesters” (mature adults whose children have left home) continued to move out of Darien than moved in during these decades.

Relevant Materials

Additional information on population projections can be found from:

- the Connecticut State Data Center which updates population projections for the state and each municipality as new information becomes available (generally every 5 years or so), and
- school enrollment projections for Darien (such as those prepared for the Board of Education by Milone and MacBroom) which can be updated annually.



Enrollment Ratio

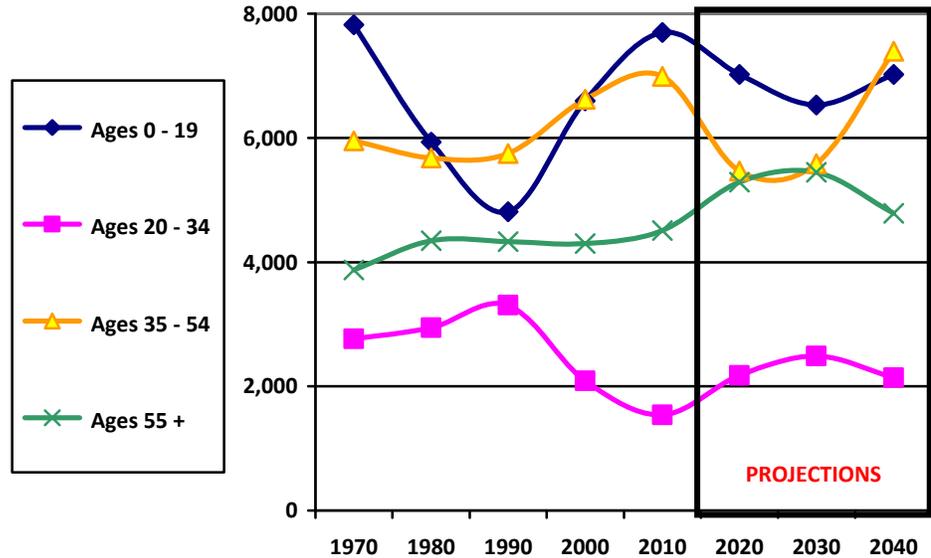
The following table lists the school enrollment ratio (public school enrollment as a percent of total population). The data is from 2010 in order to be able to compare enrollments to the population in a Census year.

Top 10 Towns	Ratio
1. Weston	25%
2. Wilton	24%
3. Darien	23%
4. Ridgefield	22%
5. New Fairfield	22%
6. Westport	22%
7. Tolland	21%
8. Simsbury	21%
9. New Canaan	21%
10. Granby	20%
Other Communities	
23. Brookfield	18%
29. Fairfield	17%
36. Farmington	16%
41. W. Hartford	16%
64. Greenwich	14%
93. Norwalk	13%
101. Stamford	12%

Computed by Planimetrics based on data from the U.S. Census and the Connecticut Department of Education

The following chart looks at Darien’s historic and projected population composition for the period from 1970 to 2040. A changing age composition can result in a changing demand for municipal services and an interest in other housing types. Of course, it must be remembered that these are projections and variations can occur, especially further into the future.

Darien’s Age Composition (1970-2010 with projections to 2040)



Age Composition Projections By Planimetrics

A significant characteristic of Darien is the predominance of young families (ages 35 to 54) with children ages 0 to 19. This trend is projected to continue assuming past patterns continue.

However, it is important to note that Darien is different from other communities in significant ways:

- Other communities are experiencing an increase in the number of residents age 55 and older - reflecting the aging of the “baby boomers” (people born between about 1945 and 1965). These people are choosing to “age in place” in their communities. Since Darien has had a pattern of net out-migration in these age groups (i.e. – more people in these age groups are moving out of Darien than are moving in to Darien), the experience locally may be much more modest.
- Other communities are experiencing a decrease in the number of residents age 0-19 (school age population) while Darien is attracting families with children in these age groups. As a result, the school enrollment ratio (public school enrollment as a percent of total population) is among the highest in Connecticut. In 2010, Darien’s enrollment ratio (23%) was almost 50 percent high than the State average of 16 percent (see sidebar).

Population and Household Growth

While many communities are experiencing an increase in the number of smaller households, Darien is experiencing the opposite. Since 1990, the number of larger households has been increasing and the number of smaller households has been decreasing. It is unclear whether this trend will continue or whether Darien will start to experience the trends affecting other communities.

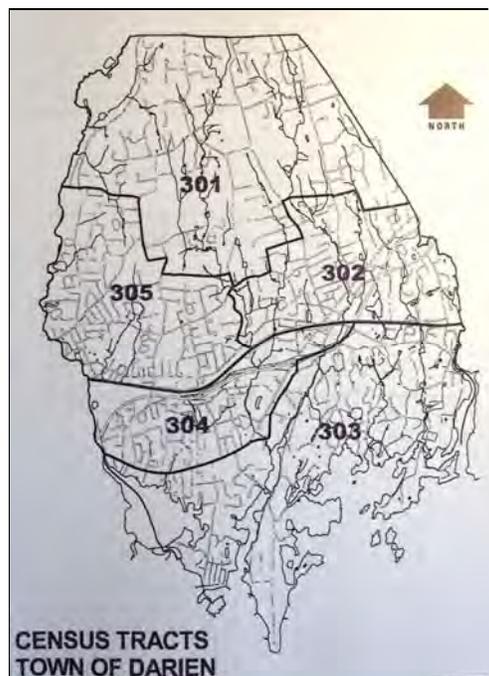
Household Size	1980	1990	2000	2010
1-2 people	2,688	3,150	3,073	2,801
3-4 people	2,539	2,502	2,500	2,633
5+ people	956	747	1,019	1,264
Total	6,183	6,399	6,592	6,698
Average Household Size	3.04	2.85	3.00	3.09

U.S. Census

Location of Growth

All Census tracts in Darien grew in population between 2000 and 2010. The most robust growth was in tracts 304 and 305.

While some of this growth can be explained by new construction (such as the Avalon Bay development in the early 2000s in tract 304), most change occurs within existing housing units (smaller households being replaced by larger households). As evidence of the impact of changes in existing housing units, almost all tracts in Darien showed a population decrease between 1970 and 1990 despite an increase in the number of housing units town-wide.



Census Tract	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
301	2,992	3,094	2,983	3,451	3,502
302	3,229	2,992	2,994	3,378	3,442
303	4,278	3,962	3,859	4,057	4,156
304	3,785	3,315	3,177	3,392	3,958
305	6,042	5,190	5,022	5,329	5,674

U.S. Census

Housing Units

1960	5,087
1970	5,952
1980	6,340
1990	6,653
2000	6,792
2010	7,074

US Census. Data for 1980 to 2010 reflects number of units. Due to data availability, data for 1960 and 1970 reflects number of households.

Housing In Darien

According to the U.S. Census, Darien had about 7,074 housing units in 2010. Over the last two decades, Darien has been adding an average of about 20 housing units per year. This growth rate is a reflection of the fact that there is little undeveloped land in Darien so net housing growth occurs primarily through redevelopment of existing properties.

The housing stock in Darien consists primarily of single-family detached homes. As a result, the vast majority of homes in Darien (85%) are owner-occupied. About 7 percent of the residential units in Darien were multi-family units according to the 2010 Census (although this does not reflect the development of “Kensett” or the redevelopment of “The Heights At Darien” since that time.

Housing Tenure

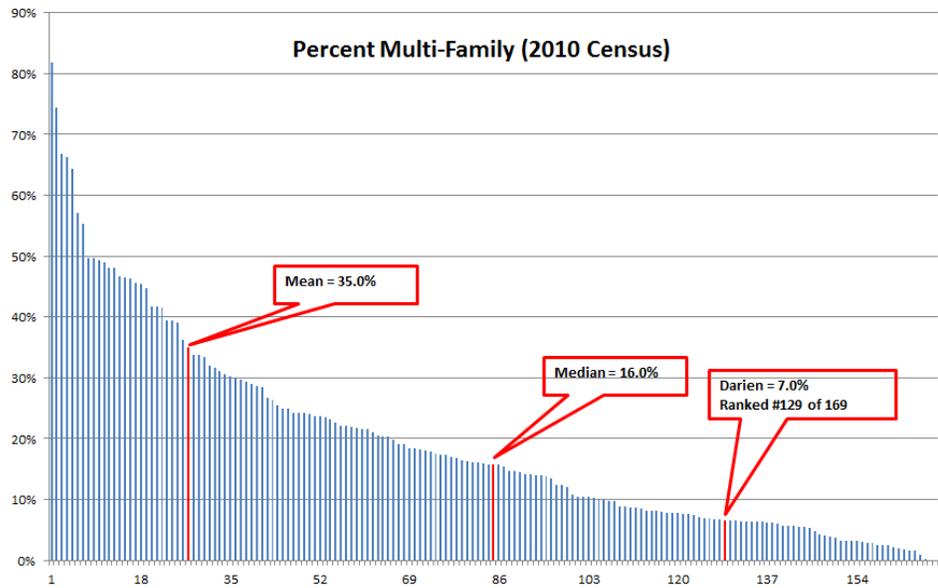
	Darien	State
Owner	85%	68%
Renter	15%	32%

2010 Census

Percent Multi-Family

Darien	7%
Westport	8%
Wilton	9%
New Canaan	16%
Greenwich	29%
State	35%
Norwalk	47%
Stamford	55%

2010 Census



As noted earlier, it is interesting that Darien has a different housing occupancy pattern compared to most other communities in Connecticut. Darien has fewer small households (generally younger households, “empty nesters”, and older residents) and more large households than other communities.

Affordable Housing

About 2.6 percent of the housing units in Darien are considered “affordable housing” (assisted housing, financed by Connecticut Housing Finance Authority mortgages, or sale price restricted by deed). Since less than ten percent of the housing units in Darien meet the State definition of affordable housing, Darien is subject to the State’s Affordable Housing Appeals Procedure (codified as Section 8-30g of the Connecticut General Statutes).

The Town has been working on increasing the number of affordable housing units in ways and locations appropriate for the community. Darien received a four-year moratorium with regard to CGS 8-30g in 2010 due to the number of affordable housing units created in Darien. The Town recently applied for a second moratorium based on the construction of additional units.



Housing Occupancy

	Darien	State
1-2 people	42%	60%
3-4 people	39%	31%
5+ people	19%	9%
Mean	3.09	2.52

2010 Census

Median Sale Price (2011)

Greenwich	\$1,550,000
New Canaan	\$1,413,750
Darien	\$1,225,000
Westport	\$1,025,500
Wilton	\$786,000
Weston	\$784,500
Stamford	\$560,500
Norwalk	\$424,750

CERC, 2014

Affordable Housing

Stamford	16.2%
Norwalk	11.8%
Connecticut	11.3%
Greenwich	4.8%
Wilton	3.9%
Darien	3.4%
Westport	3.0%
New Canaan	2.7%
Weston	0.0%

CT Department of Housing (2014)

Jobs In Darien	
1960	3,735
1970	5,798
1980	8,120
1990	8,490
2000	7,820
2010	7,207

CT Labor Dept.

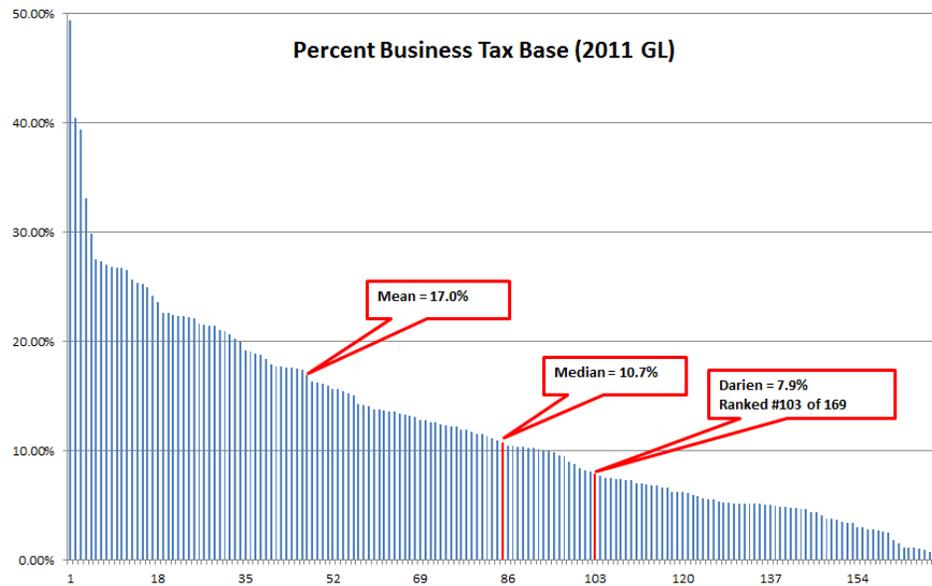
Jobs	
Stamford	75,096
Norwalk	44,463
Greenwich	34,719
Westport	15,420
Wilton	11,717
Darien	7,814
New Canaan	6,368
Weston	1,262

CERC, 2014)

Economic Conditions in Darien

While Darien is not a major employment center, there are many jobs in the community. Darien benefits from its location within the New York City metropolitan area in terms of access to jobs and the availability of goods and services for residents. Overall, Darien has more jobs than housing units and this supports the local economy.

Since Darien is predominantly a residential community, the Grand List (the value of taxable property) is heavily influenced by the value of residential real estate. According to data from the Connecticut Economic Resource Center, the business component of the tax base is about 7.9 percent. It is important to Darien to maintain a strong tax base with a solid business component.



Retail Plaza



Office Building



Land Use In Darien

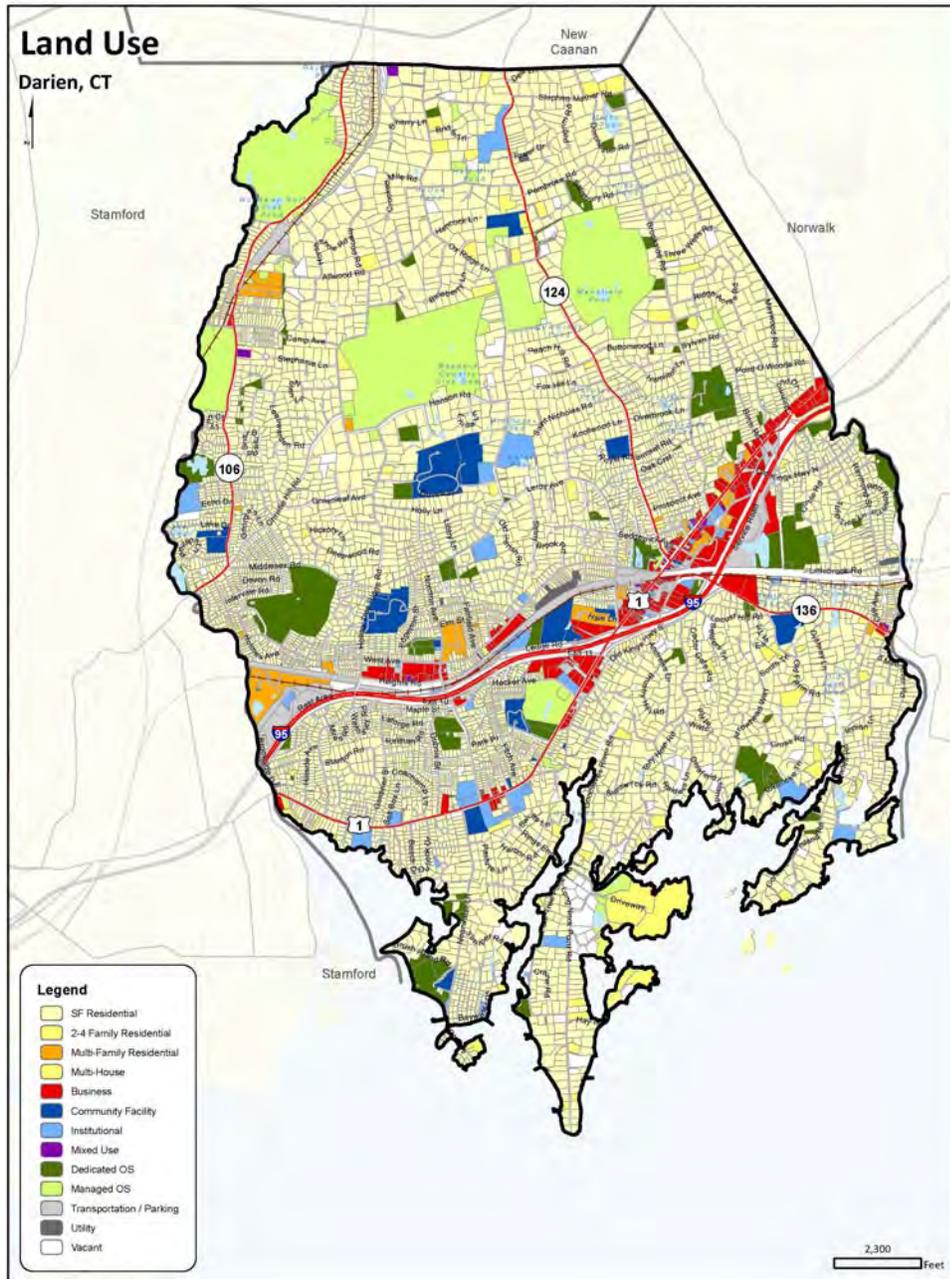
Darien contains approximately 8,236 acres of land. In 2014, about 97 percent of this area was occupied by residential, commercial, or institutional uses or was dedicated to a specific purpose such as public land or protected open space. The remaining land was uncommitted to a specific use.

Land Use Tabulation

Based on Assessor records for 2014, properties in Darien were categorized as follows:

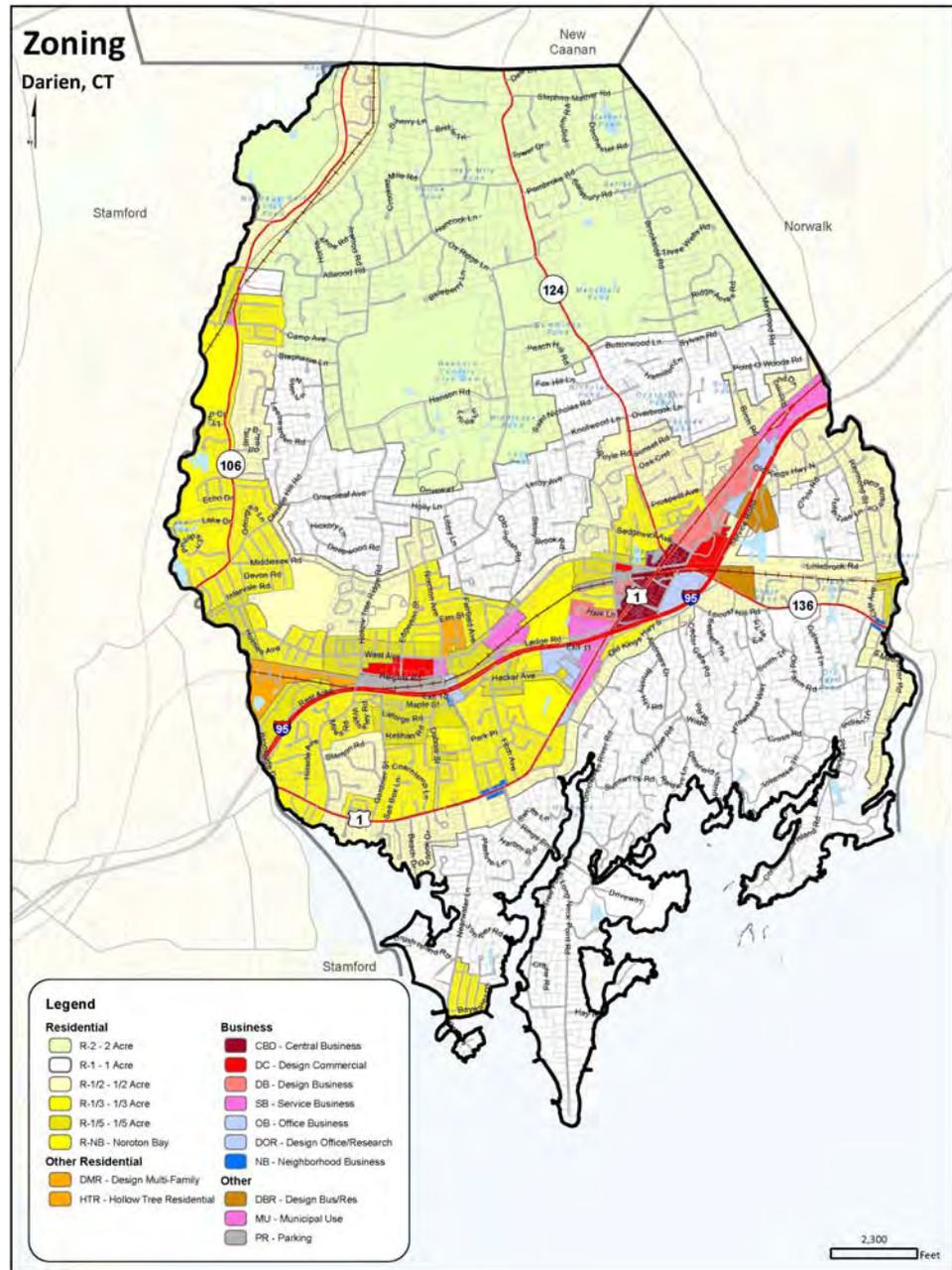
	Percent of Area
Residential	65%
Business	2%
Open Space	10%
Town Facility / Institutional	5%
Road / Rail / Parking / Water	15%
Developed / Committed	97%
Vacant	3%
Total	100%

Planimetrics based on 2014 Assessor database.



Zoning In Darien

As of 2014, about 95 percent of Darien is zoned for residential use, about 4 percent is zoned for business use, and the remaining land is zoned for parking or municipal use.



PLANNING ISSUES

3

Overview

This section summarizes issues and concerns which were identified as part of the POCD update. These issues and concerns were identified through:

- a discussion of issues with the Planning and Zoning Commission,
- input from the Board of Selectmen,
- responses to a survey of Town department heads,
- field trips around Darien,
- interviews with key officials and stakeholders,
- responses to an on-line survey, and
- a community meeting devoted to hearing from Darien residents.

Based on the results of these exercises, it was felt that the POCD should be organized around three main thematic elements:

- **Conservation-Related Strategies** - Things Darien wants to protect or preserve in the future.
- **Development-Related Strategies** - How Darien wants to guide future growth and change.
- **Infrastructure-Related Strategies** - Facilities Darien wants to support the overall vision.

“There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about.”

Margaret Wheatley
Writer

Locations of “Prouds”



Community Meeting Input

In October 2014, a community workshop meeting was held at the Town Hall to get input from Darien residents. Approximately 50 people attended the meeting and participated in the following exercises:

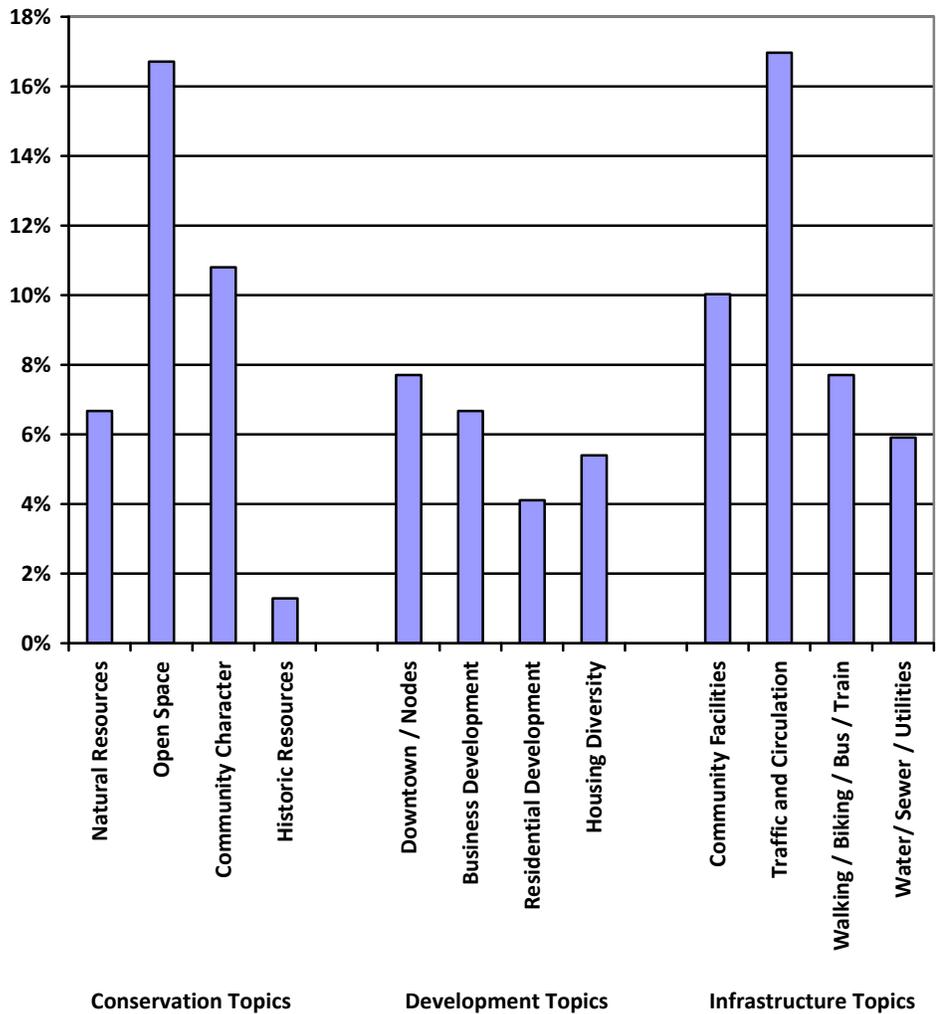
- placing a blue dot on a map showing where they lived,
- identifying things in Darien they were “proud” of,
- identifying things in Darien they were “sorry” about,
- allocating planning points among topics typically considered in a POCD (see chart below), and
- participating in an open discussion of the topics that received the most planning points.

The potential planning priorities identified were traffic and circulation, open space, community character, community facilities, and downtown/nodes.

Locations of “Sorries”



Potential Planning Priorities

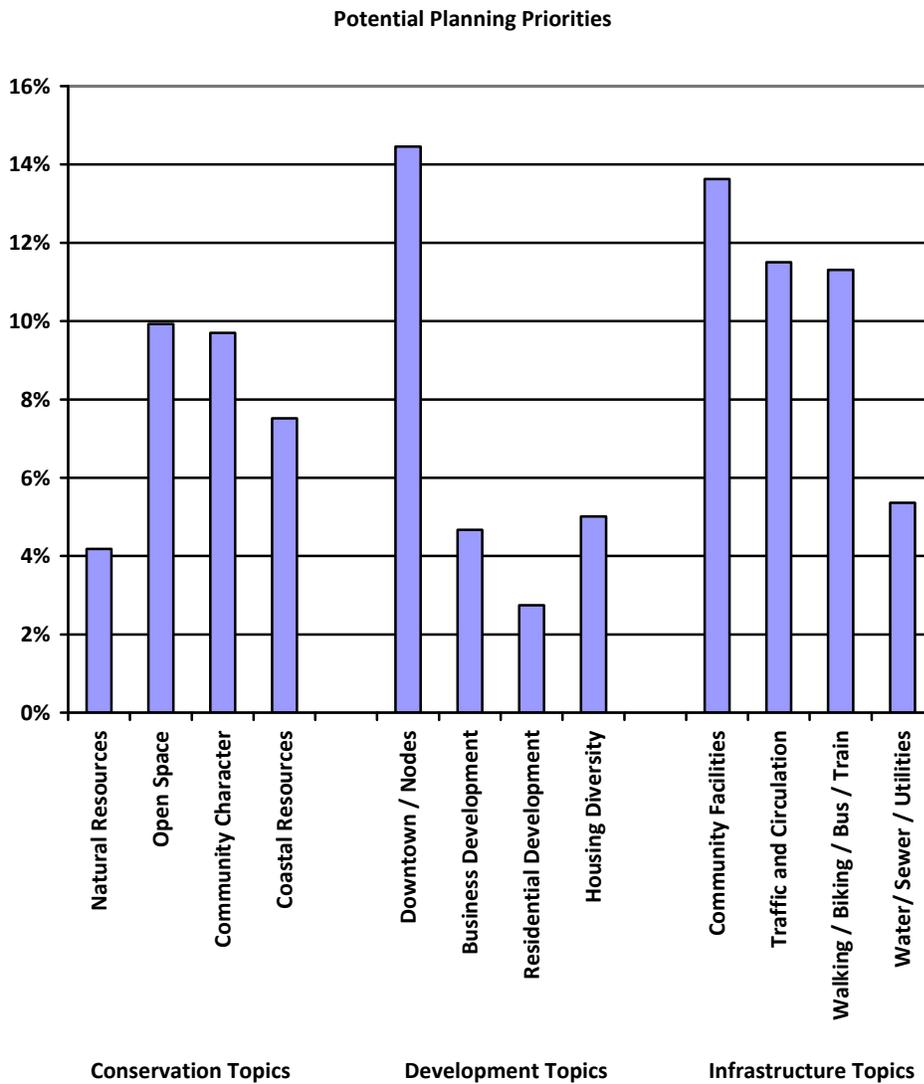


On-Line Survey Input

An on-line survey was also conducted to get input from Darien residents. The questions were similar to the exercises conducted at the public meeting. Approximately 850 people participated in the survey. The availability of the survey was publicized as follows:

- press releases,
- handouts at the train stations, and
- handouts at the library.

The potential planning priorities identified were downtown/nodes, community facilities, traffic and circulation, walking/biking/bus/train, and open space.



Community Input

In an introductory meeting, participants indicated that preservation of open space was important to them.

In an on-line survey, participants indicated that open space and community character were important to them.

Conservation-Related Strategies

From the introductory exercises, the following conservation issues were identified as being important:

<p>Maintain and Enhance Community Character</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Darien needs to preserve / enhance the things that make the community special <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coastline / beaches ○ Schools ○ Main-line rail service to New York City • The challenge is to maintain character while growth occurs • Darien should retain a predominantly single family character
<p>Preserve Open Space</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The open space Darien has contributes to community character • Darien needs to be proactive if it wants to preserve open space • Darien should consider buying any property that could be preserved as open space
<p>Protect Natural Resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Runoff, storm drainage, and water quality are issues in Darien • Darien needs to continue educating residents about the value of environmental protection
<p>Manage Coastal Resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coastal areas make Darien unique and these areas need to be preserved and enhanced • Darien needs to prepare for the possibility of sea level rise • Darien should find ways to increase public access to Long Island Sound
<p>Promote Sustainability and Resiliency</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Darien should seek ways to be “greener” and be more sustainable in the future • Darien should continue to find ways to be resilient with regard to storm events, sea level rise, and other threats

Development-Related Strategies

The following development issues were identified as being important during the introductory exercises:

<p>Maintain and Enhance Downtown</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Downtown has a lot to do with character also • Downtown needs to be inviting • Encouraging and supporting the appropriate development and redevelopment of downtown is important • Recent revitalization has been successful but there is still more to do • Must remain vigilant over architecture/signage • Parking and traffic are seen as issues • Pedestrian crosswalks and connections are key
<p>Transform Noroton Heights</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging and supporting the appropriate development and redevelopment of Noroton Heights is important • Need to consider Noroton Heights as similar to downtown • Signage/pedestrian access are also important
<p>Manage Residential Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building coverage / bulk is becoming a concern, especially in small lot areas • Maybe it is time to revisit coverage and height regulations • Darien should continue to provide for housing diversity / choices that fit within the fabric of the community • Darien should anticipate how to accommodate the housing needs of an aging population
<p>Guide Business / Economic Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Darien should review all commercial Zoning Regulations

Community Meeting

In an on-line survey, participants indicated that downtown Darien and Noroton Heights were important to them.

Community Meeting

In an introductory meeting, participants indicated they were extremely proud of the community facilities in Darien:

- Schools
- Beaches
- Parks
- Library

In an introductory meeting, participants indicated that traffic and circulation were important topics to them.

In an on-line survey, participants indicated the following topics were important to them.

- Community Facilities
- Traffic and Circulation
- Walking / Biking / Bus / Train

Infrastructure-Related Strategies

The following infrastructure issues were identified as being important during the introductory exercises:

<p>Address Community Facility Needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Darien needs to continue to invest in community facilities and keep facilities up-to-date (schools, Town Hall, Public Works, etc.) • Darien needs to make efficient use of the facilities, buildings, and spaces it has • There are capacity issues at some elementary schools and this has resulted in the use of portable classrooms
<p>Maintain and Enhance Vehicular Transportation Systems</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic is a problem particularly at <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rush hour ○ School arrival and dismissal times ○ When there is a problem on I-95 • Can the small number of choke points be addressed?
<p>Maintain and Enhance Pedestrian / Bicycle Transportation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build and maintain safe sidewalks and biking lanes wherever possible. • Darien needs a plan or a vision for a pedestrian network for the entire town • Same for a bicycle network
<p>Manage Utility Infrastructure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drainage and stormwater management issues are important • Expanding natural gas lines would be beneficial