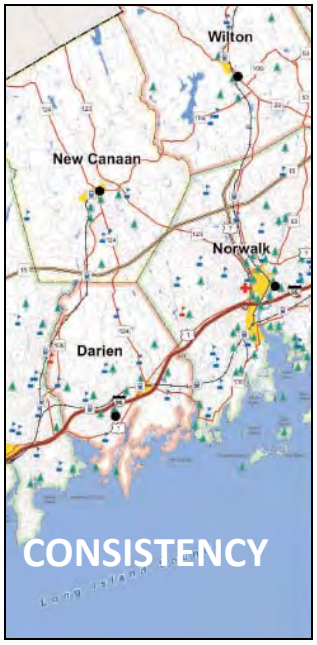
CONCLUSION

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN


Wilton
New Canaan
Norwalk
Darien
CONSISTENCY

POLICY AREAS

IMPLEMENTATION

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

16

Overview

The recommendations of the POCD can be combined to present an overall Future Land Use Plan for Darien. The Future Land Use Plan is a reflection of the stated goals, policies, and recommendations of the POCD as well as an integration of the preceding elements of the POCD. In essence, the Future Land Use Plan is a statement of what the Darien of tomorrow should look like.

Residential

Business

Community Uses

Open Space

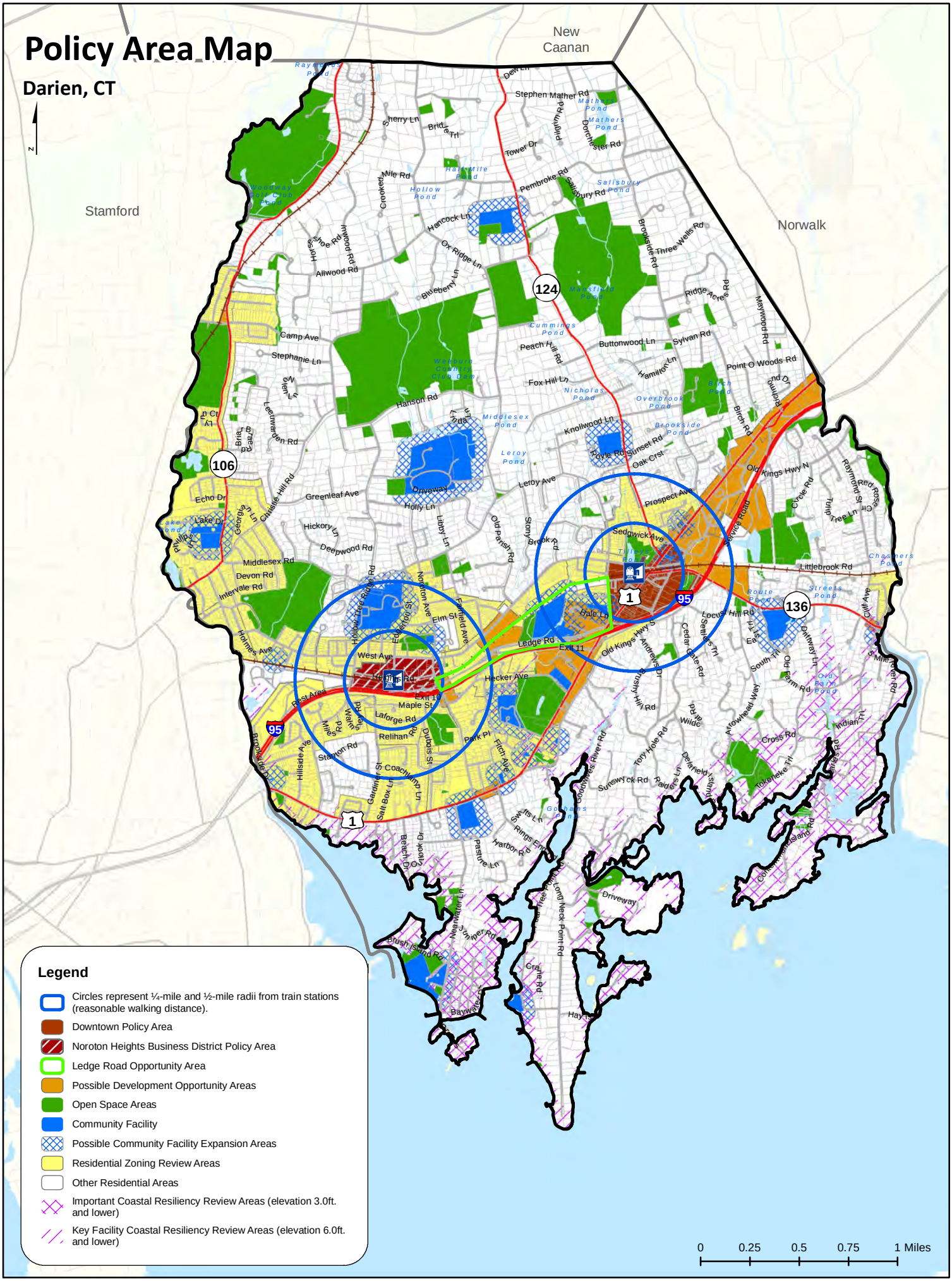
Policy Area Map

The following table describes the major categories reflected on the Policy Area map on the facing page:

Policy Areas	Policy Summary
Downtown Policy Area / Noroton Heights Business District Policy Area	The areas where pedestrian-oriented, mixed use, village-type development and redevelopment will be encouraged to create and maintain a strong sense of place. It is envisioned that the overall intensity of development in downtown Darien will be higher than that of the Noroton Heights business district or other areas. Development regulations (building height, floor-area-ratio, parking requirements, etc.) will be reviewed and refined to ensure that future development contributes to this overall vision. Character of development is of the utmost importance.
Ledge Road Opportunity Area	The area along Ledge Road which might be suitable for a variety of future uses since it is separated from other areas by the railroad tracks and Interstate 95 and is well-served by I-95 ramps.
Possible Development Opportunity Areas	Areas currently zoned for business which should be retained for economic development and/or used to help meet the housing needs of the community. The regulations for these areas (and the number and location of zoning districts) should be reviewed and refined to ensure they will encourage the most appropriate development.
Possible TOD Opportunity Areas	Areas within ½ mile of the train stations in Downtown Darien and Noroton Heights where transit oriented development might be appropriate.
Community Facility	Existing municipal facilities which will be maintained and enhanced in order to meet community needs.
Possible Community Facility Expansion Areas	Land areas adjacent to existing community facilities which should be evaluated for acquisition should they become available.
Residential Zoning Review Areas	Higher density residential areas where zoning regulations for coverage, bulk and height should be reviewed to ensure appropriate future development. In addition, the location of zoning districts and the location of zoning district boundaries should be reviewed to see if properties can be placed in one zone (rather than split zones) and in a zoning district most similar to their actual lot size.
Other Residential Areas	Other residentially zoned areas where the overall goal is to protect the integrity and character of the residential neighborhoods.
Important Coastal Resiliency Review Areas	Areas with very low elevations relative to sea level (0-3 feet elevation) where the implications of storm surge, climate change, and/or sea level rise may become more important in the future in terms of public facilities and private development.
Key Facility Coastal Resiliency Review Areas	Areas with low elevations relative to sea level (3-6 feet elevation) where the implications of storm surge, climate change, and/or sea level rise on roadways, sewer pump stations, and other public facilities may become more important in the future.

Policy Area Map

Darien, CT



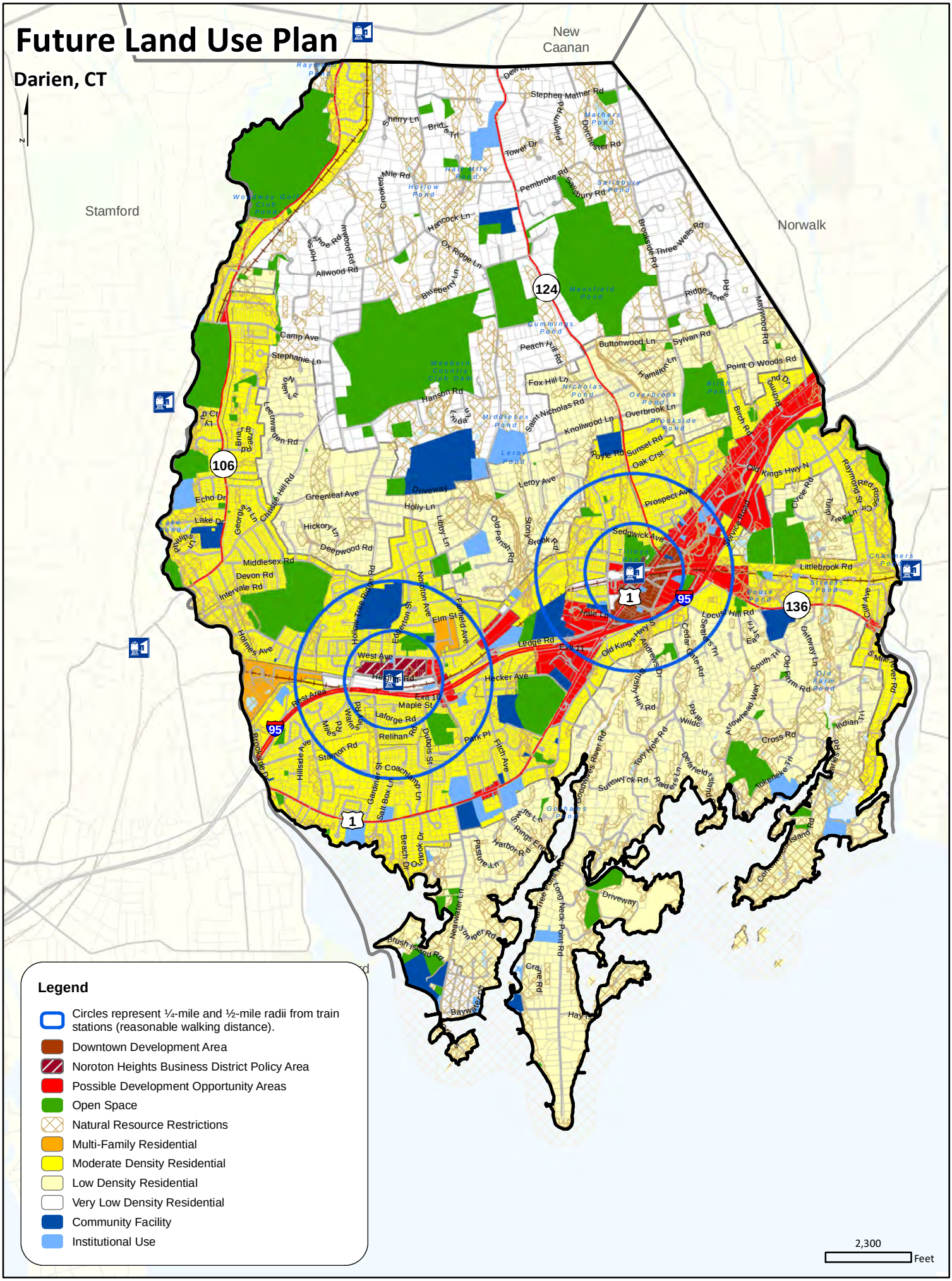
Future Land Use Plan

The following table describes the major categories reflected on the Future Land Use Plan map on the facing page:

Conservation Areas	Description
Open Space	Properties considered open space today and intended to remain as "dedicated open space" or "managed open space"
Natural Resource Restrictions	Areas with significant environmental constraints (wetlands, watercourses, steep slopes, flood-plains, etc.)
Focus Areas	
Downtown Development Area	The main community focal point intended for continued development as a pedestrian-oriented, mixed use, village-type area with a strong sense of place.
Noroton Heights Development Area	The area near the Noroton Heights train station intended for transformation into pedestrian-oriented, mixed use, village-type area with a strong sense of place.
Possible TOD Opportunity Areas	Areas within ½ mile of the train stations in Downtown Darien and Noroton Heights where transit oriented development might be appropriate.
Other Development Areas	
Development Areas	Areas that have been (and are intended to be) developed with retail, personal service, office, and similar business uses as appropriate to each location and that may be used to help meet the housing needs of the community.
Residential Areas	
Very Low Density Residential	Areas where existing development patterns, soil types, terrain, and infrastructure capacity are generally suitable for residential development at densities of 0.5 units per acre or less.
Low Density Residential	Areas where existing development patterns, soil types, terrain, and infrastructure capacity are generally suitable for residential development at densities of 1.0 units per acre or less.
Moderate Density Residential	Areas where existing development patterns, soil and infrastructure capacity are generally suitable for residential development at densities greater than 1.0 units per acre.
Multi-Family Residential	Areas with existing multi-family development or areas zoned for such.
Other Areas	
Community Facility / Institutional Use	Areas that have been developed or are intended to develop with community facilities and/or institutional uses.

Future Land Use Plan

Darien, CT



Legend

- Circles represent ¼-mile and ½-mile radii from train stations (reasonable walking distance).
- Downtown Development Area
- Noroton Heights Business District Policy Area
- Possible Development Opportunity Areas
- Open Space
- Natural Resource Restrictions
- Multi-Family Residential
- Moderate Density Residential
- Low Density Residential
- Very Low Density Residential
- Community Facility
- Institutional Use

2,300 Feet

State Plan Categories

- 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 Critera
- 5 Criteria

Conservation Areas

- 1-3 Conservation Factors
- 4-5 Conservation Factors
- 6-7 Conservation Factors

- Municipal Boundaries
- Busway Stations
- Rail Stations
- Ferry
- Sea Ports
- Rail Lines
- Ferry Service

Airports

- Commercial Service
- General Aviation
- Reliever

Primary Highways

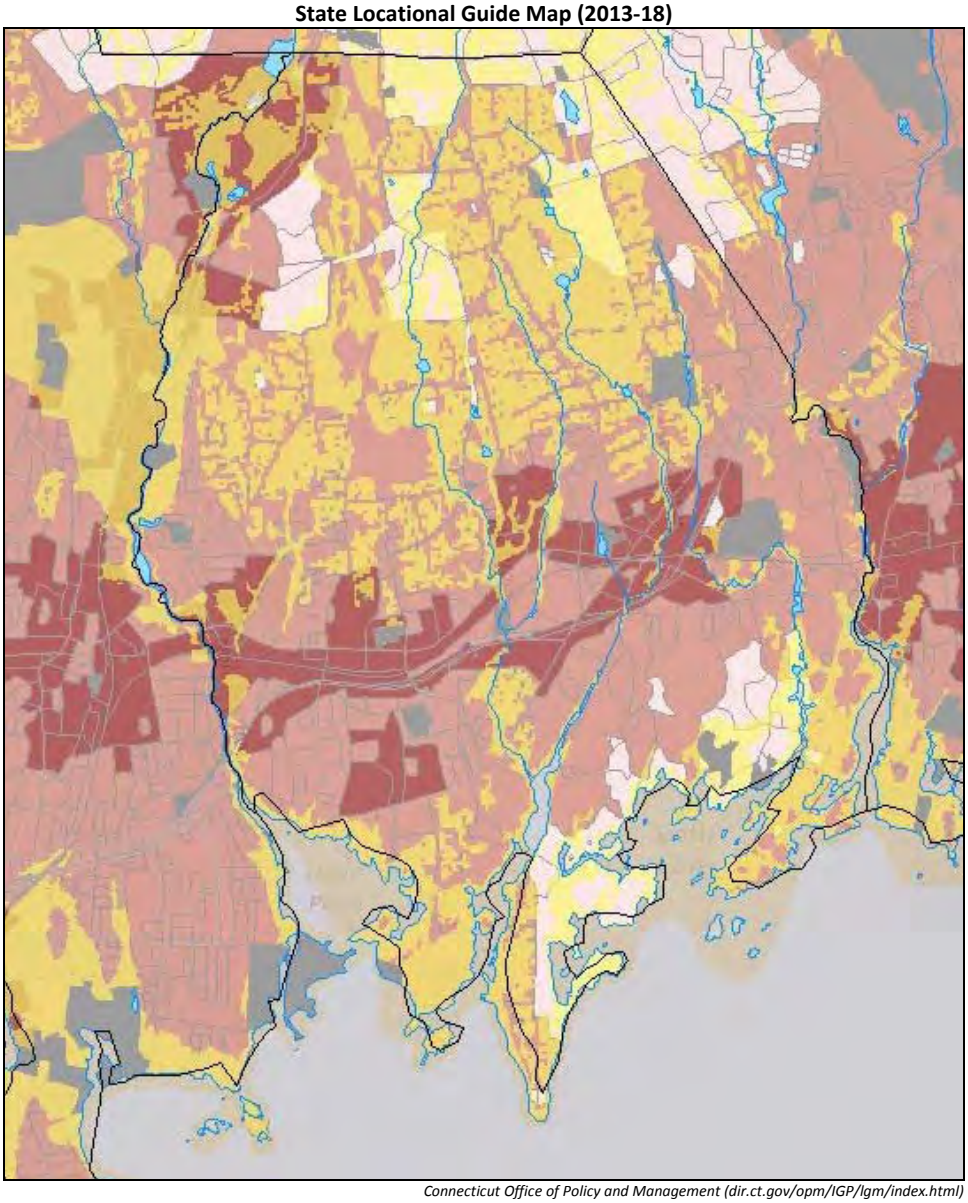
- Interstate
- U.S. Route
- State Route

Plan Consistency

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

There are no areas in Darien designated as "Village Priority Funding Areas." As part of the update of the State Conservation and Development Policies Plan in 2017 or so, Darien will consider seeking to get the downtown area and the Noroton Heights business district designated as "Village Priority Funding Areas" in order to support potential state and federal funding and/or grants.

State Locational Guide Map (2013-18)



Connecticut Office of Policy and Management (dir.ct.gov/opm/IGP/lgm/index.html)

Connecticut Conservation and Development Plan – State Growth Management Principles

In accordance with CGS Section 8-23, the POCD has been evaluated for consistency with statewide growth management principles and found to be generally consistent with those principles.

Principle 1 – Redevelop and revitalize regional centers and areas of mixed-land uses with existing or planned physical infrastructure.	**FINDING – Consistent** Darien is encouraging appropriate development of downtown and the Noroton Heights business district with mixed land uses and existing infrastructure.
Principle 2 – Expand housing opportunities and design choices to accommodate a variety of household types and needs.	**FINDING – Consistent** Darien has been actively working to diversify its housing portfolio and address recognized housing needs – housing that is more affordable and housing for an aging population.
Principle 3 – Concentrate development around transportation nodes and along major transportation corridors to support the viability of transportation options and land reuse.	**FINDING – Consistent** Darien is encouraging appropriate development of downtown and the Noroton Heights business district served by existing rail stations, bus routes, and highway interchanges.
Principle 4 – Conserve and restore the natural environment, cultural and historical resources, and traditional rural lands.	**FINDING – Consistent** The POCD identifies the importance of protecting important community resources such as the natural environment, open spaces, coastal resources, and historic resources.
Principle 5 – Protect environmental assets critical to public health and safety.	**FINDING – Consistent** The POCD contains recommendations to protect environmental assets critical to public health and safety. In particular, the POCD stresses the importance of protecting water quality.
Principle 6 – Integrate planning across all levels of government to address issues on a local, regional, and statewide basis.	**FINDING – Consistent** The POCD is part of the process of integrating planning with other levels of government and with other agencies. The POCD will be used to coordinate efforts with: • adjacent communities, • regional organizations, and • state agencies.

Regional Plan Categories

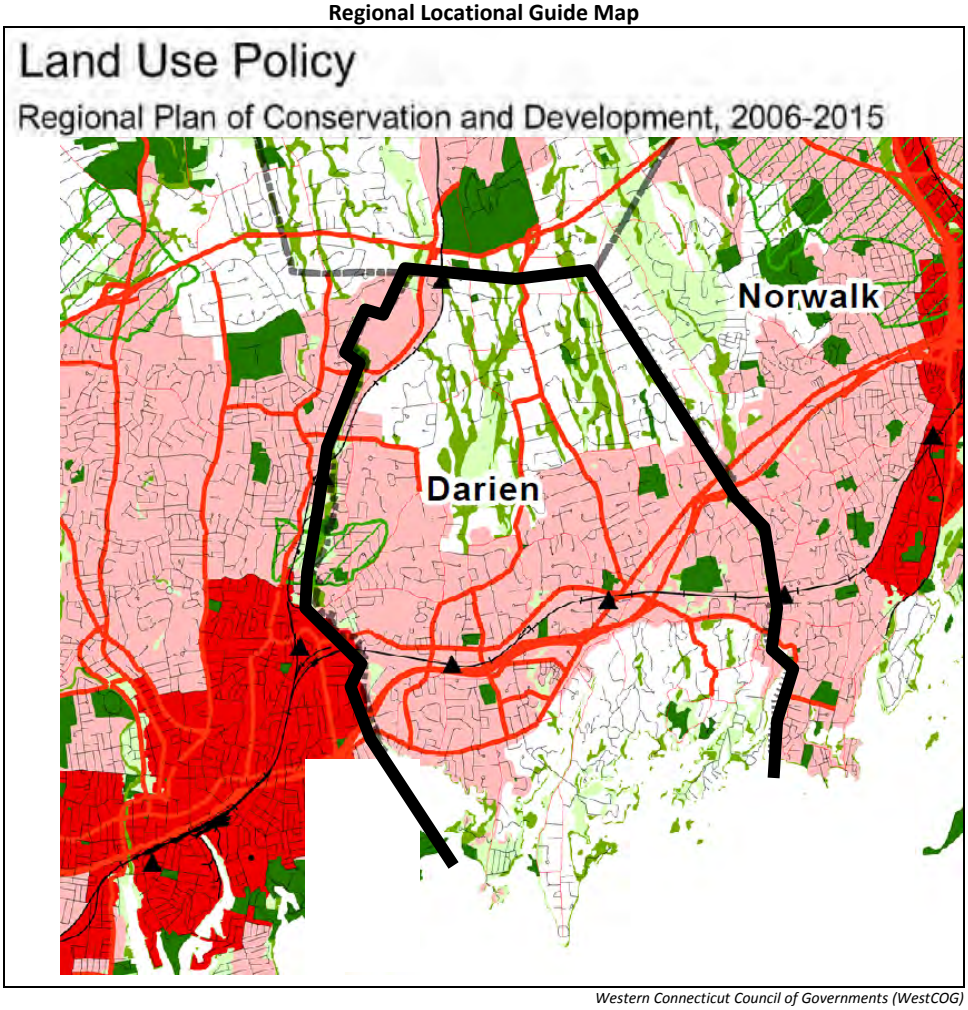
- Neighborhood Conservation
- Regional Center
- Rural Community Center
- Existing Preserved Open Space
- Preservation Area
- Conservation Area
- Rural Land
- Aquifer Protection Area
- Historic District
- Municipal Boundary
- Primary Highway
- Secondary Highway
- Local Road
- Railroad
- Rail Station

Regional Plan Of Conservation and Development

State statutes require that a municipal POCD be compared with the regional plan. However, the State legislature consolidated and realigned the regional planning organizations in 2014 and WestCOG, the successor agency to the Southwestern Regional Planning Agency (SWRPA), has not yet adopted a new regional plan.

The most recent regional plan which incorporates Darien is the Regional Plan of Conservation and Development adopted by SWRPA in February of 2006. This POCD was compared with Regional Plan and found to be generally consistent with it.

Regional Locational Guide Map



Western Connecticut Council of Governments (WestCOG)

IMPLEMENTATION 17

Overview

Implementation of recommendations is a key part of the planning process. In fact, it may be the most important part of the planning process. If strategies to make Darien a better place are identified but not acted upon, the planning process will not have produced the changes desired by the community or realized the full potential of what the community could and should be.

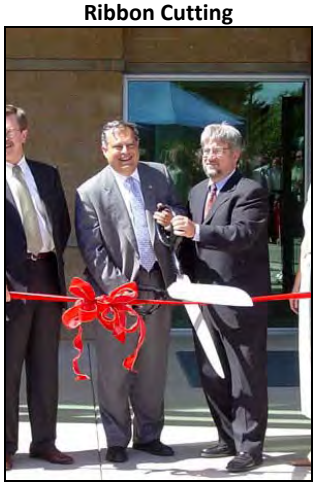
The whole purpose of the planning process is not to produce a plan but to identify positive changes that should be undertaken in Darien in order to:

- meet community needs,
- preserve community character, and
- enhance the overall quality of life.

Implementation Committee

Groundbreaking

Ribbon Cutting



Implementation Committee

Some communities have found that a Plan Implementation Committee (PIC) can be effective at coordinating implementation of the Plan.

The PIC includes representatives of various Town boards and commissions. The PIC meets quarterly to discuss ways to facilitate or accelerate POCD implementation, assess the status of specific recommendations, evaluate the priorities, and even suggest new implementation techniques.

Darien may wish to consider establishing a Plan Implementation Committee to coordinate implementation of the Plan.

Implement The Plan

The POCD contains two types of recommendations:

- **Policies** – Policies are intended to guide local actions and be on-going strategies of the Town of Darien. Policies are not discrete activities and do not lend themselves to measurement or recognition as being complete.

- **Action Steps** – Action steps are discrete activities which can be undertaken to accomplish POCD recommendations and policies. These can be measured and recognized as being complete. Over time, it is envisioned that additional tasks will be identified by the Town of Darien to help implement recommended policies.

It is intended that the POCD be a working document used to implement policies and complete tasks. It should be understood that implementation of the POCD will be a gradual and continual process. While some recommendations should (and will) be carried out in a relatively short period of time, others may be long-term in nature. Further, since some recommendations will involve additional study or a commitment of fiscal resources, their implementation will take place over several years or occur in stages.

Many of the policy recommendations in the POCD will be implemented by the Planning and Zoning Commission through zoning amendments, application reviews, and other means. Some policy recommendations will require the cooperation of other local boards and commissions such as the Board of Selectmen and/or the Representative Town meeting. However, if the POCD is to be successfully realized, the policy recommendations must serve as a guide to all residents, applicants, agencies, and individuals interested in the orderly growth of Darien.

Many sections of the POCD also identify specific tasks or actions which can be itemized, scheduled, managed and completed. Tasks and actions lend themselves to monitoring implementation and measuring progress although they may not be more important than a strategy or a policy. It is hoped that, over time, Darien will continue to identify and undertake new tasks and actions to help implement the Plan.

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

Implement The Plan		
Policies	**Leader**	**Partners**
1. Implement the POCD.	*PIC*	Town
2. Regularly review POCD strategies, policies and tasks to ensure they are relevant to community needs.	*PIC*	
3. Coordinate implementation efforts with adjacent municipalities and regional planning agencies.	*PIC*	Town
4. Use the POCD to guide: • Granting of special permits, • zoning map or text changes, and • statutory referrals from the Board of Selectmen (CGS 8-24) regarding municipal improvements.	PZC	
5. Encourage the Board of Selectmen and other Town agencies to use the POCD to: • guide decisions on the Operating Budget, • guide decisions on the Capital Budget, and • guide preparation of the long-term Capital Improvements Program.	*PIC*	
Action Steps		
6. Establish a Plan Implementation Committee made up of representatives of various boards to prioritize, coordinate, and refine implementation of the Plan.	Town	PZC
7. Update Zoning Regulations to implement strategies, policies, and action steps in the POCD.	PZC	
8. Update Subdivision Regulations to implement strategies, policies, and action steps in the POCD.	PZC	
9. Seek to have downtown Darien and the Noroton Heights business district designated as Village Priority Funding Areas on the Locational Guide Map in the State Conservation and Development Policies Plan.	Town	

18 CONCLUSION

Overview

The POCD has been prepared to meet the challenges that will confront the Town of Darien in the future. The POCD is intended to serve as a guide to be followed in order to enhance the Town's quality of life, the overall economy, and community character.

The POCD is also intended to be flexible enough to allow adjustments that achieve specific goals and objectives while maintaining the integrity of the long-term goals of the community. Still, the most important step of the planning process is implementation of the Plan's strategies, policies, and action steps.

During the next few years, some of the goals will be achieved, some circumstances will undoubtedly change, and some conditions may arise that will suggest that it is time to reconsider some of the POCD strategies, policies, and action steps. Such situations are to be expected. 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 Darien.

APPENDIX

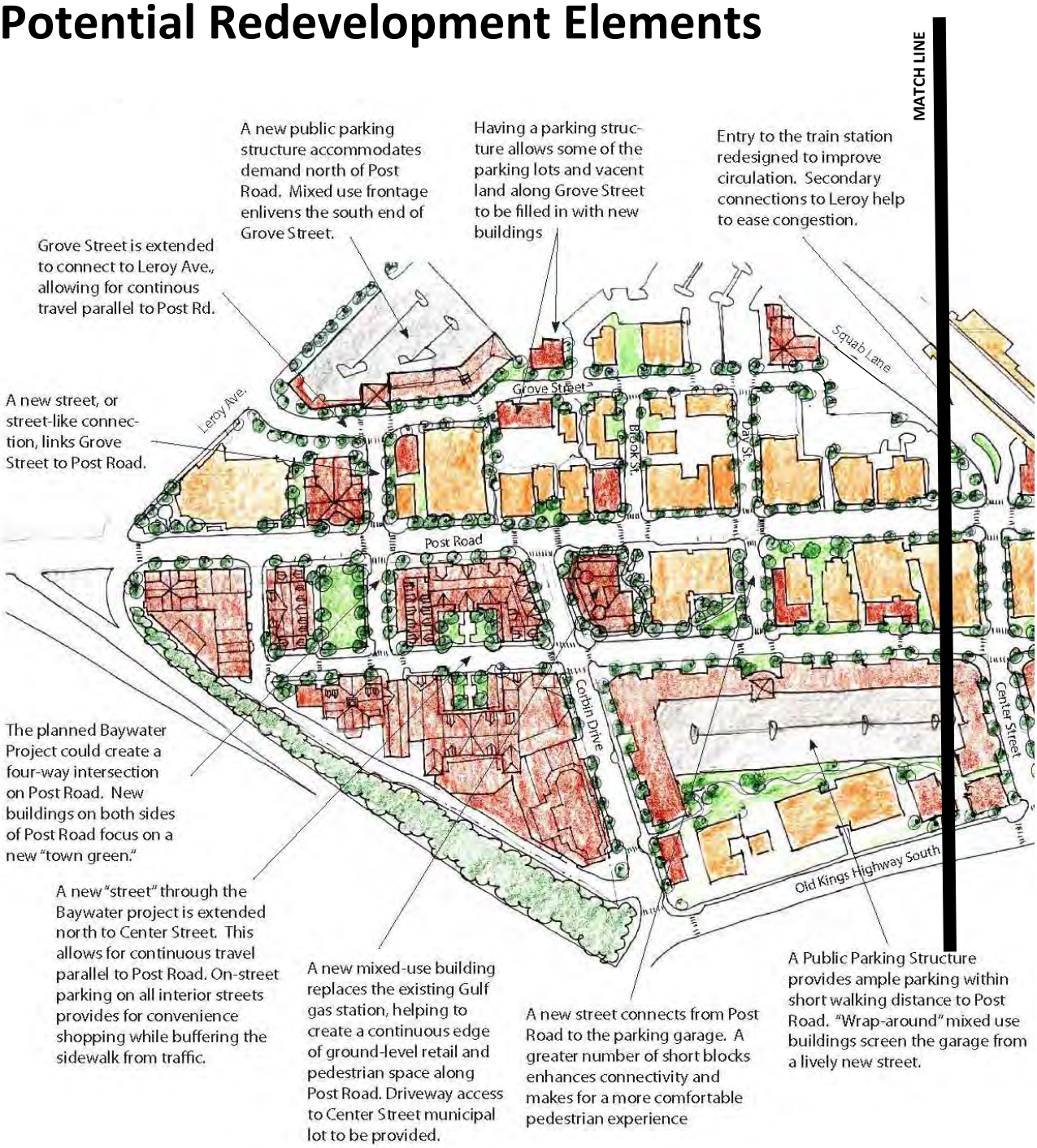
Caveat

The appendix contains illustrations prepared during the POCD process to explore the possible implications of different ideas.

These illustrations are not placed "in-line" in the POCD for a reason. These drawings are conceptual and are only intended to be illustrative of alternative concepts.

The drawings do not reflect the policy desires of the Planning and Zoning Commission and should not be construed as such.

Downtown Darien
Potential Redevelopment Elements



NOTE: This drawing is only intended to be illustrative of alternative concepts for downtown Darien. This drawing does not reflect the policy desires of the Planning and Zoning Commission and should not be construed as such.

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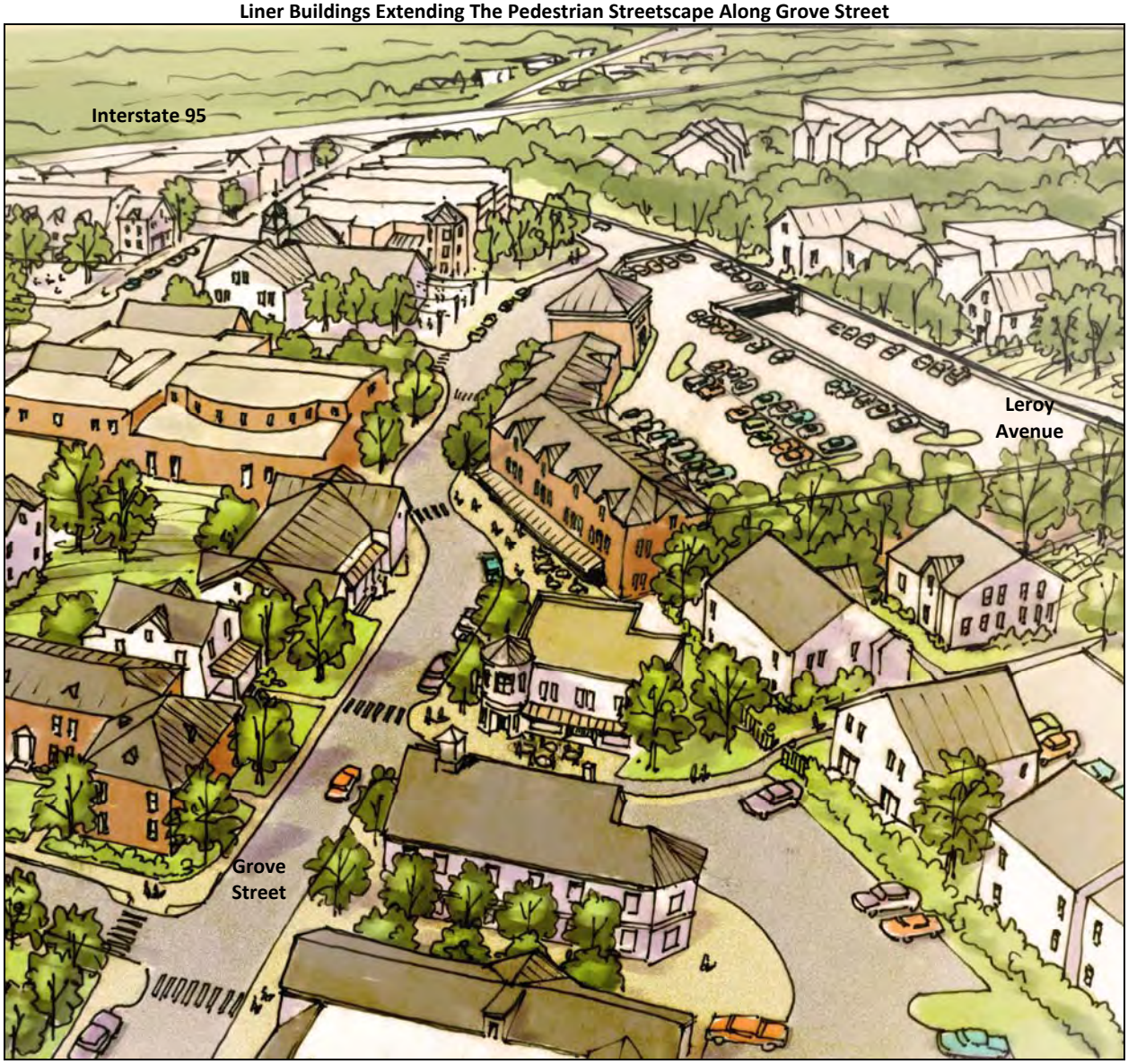
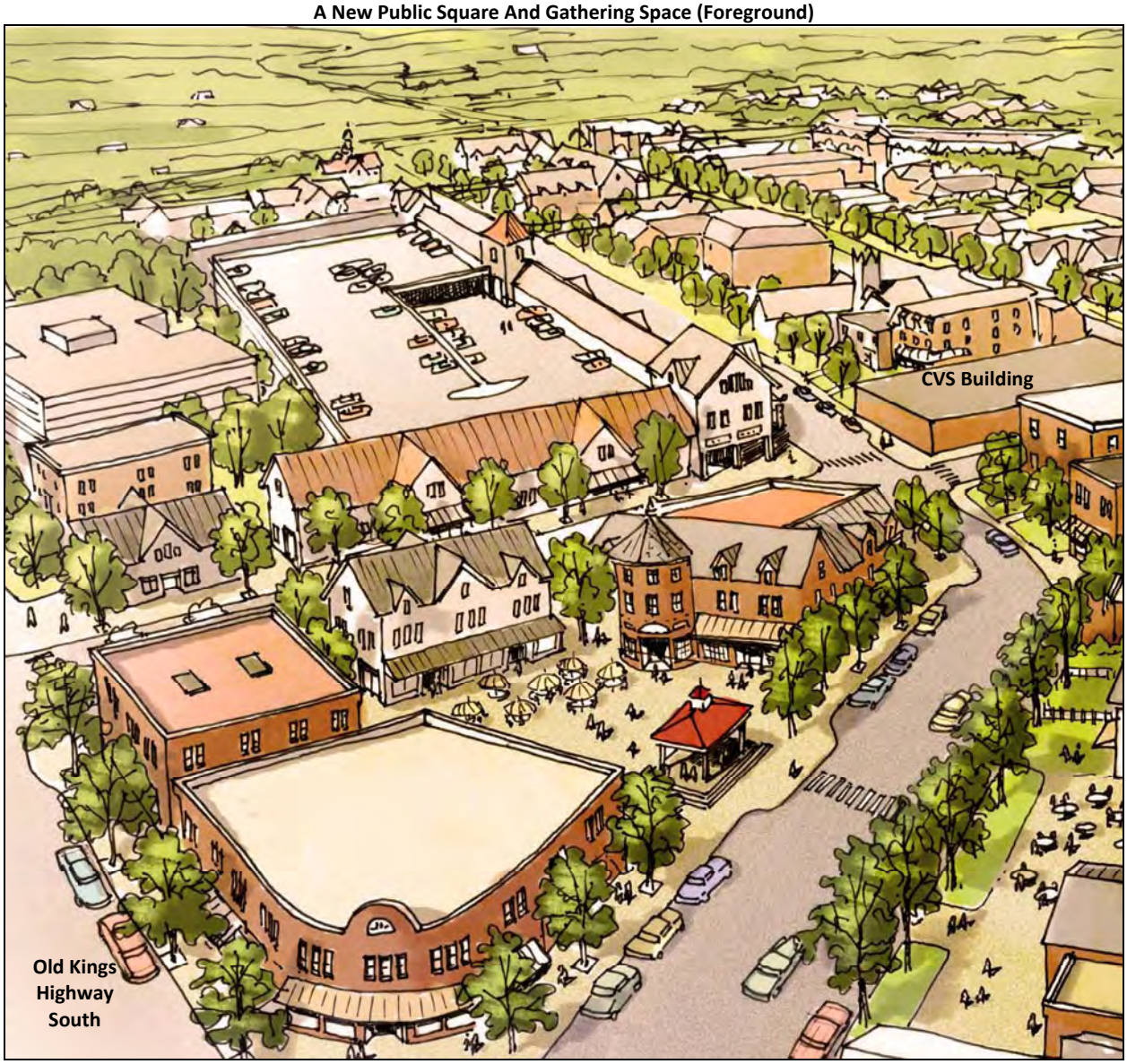
LOOKING WEST FROM ABOVE DARIEN TRAIN STATION
Possible Extension Of Grove Street To Leroy Avenue
With A Parking Structure Tucked Into The Hillside And
Liner Buildings Extending The Pedestrian Streetscape Along Grove Street



Dodson and Flinker, 2015

NOTE: This drawing is only intended to be illustrative of alternative concepts for downtown Darien. This drawing does not reflect the policy desires of the Planning and Zoning Commission and should not be construed as such.

LOOKING WEST FROM ABOVE TOKENEKE ROAD
Possible Additional of Buildings On Center Street Parking Area
With A Parking Structure And Liner Buildings (Background) Served By A New Street Parallel To Route 1 And A New Public Square And Gathering Space (Foreground)



Dodson and Flinker, 2015

NOTE: This drawing is only intended to be illustrative of alternative concepts for downtown Darien. This drawing does not reflect the policy desires of the Planning and Zoning Commission and should not be construed as such.

Noroton Heights Business Area Potential Redevelopment Elements

NOTE: **This drawing is only intended to be illustrative of alternative concepts for the Noroton Heights business district. This drawing does not reflect the policy desires of the Planning and Zoning Commission and should not be construed as such.**

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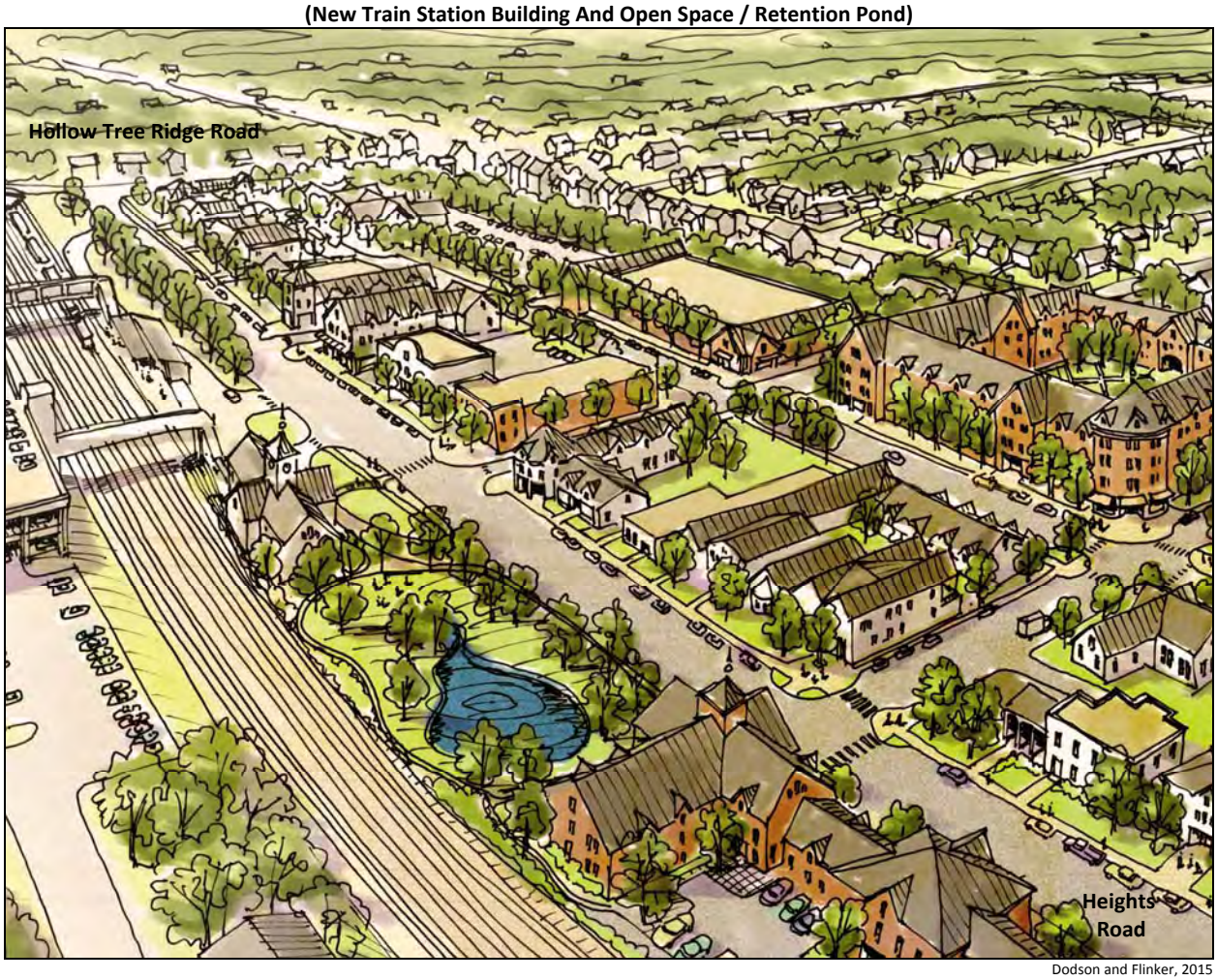
LOOKING NORTHWEST FROM ABOVE NOROTON AVENUE AT LEDGE ROAD
Possible Development Concept For The Noroton Heights Business Area
With A Parking Structure South Of The Railroad Tracks And
New Buildings Arranged Around Internal "Streets"
To Create A Village-Type Pattern
(New Train Station Building And Open Space / Retention Pond)



Dodson and Flinker, 2015

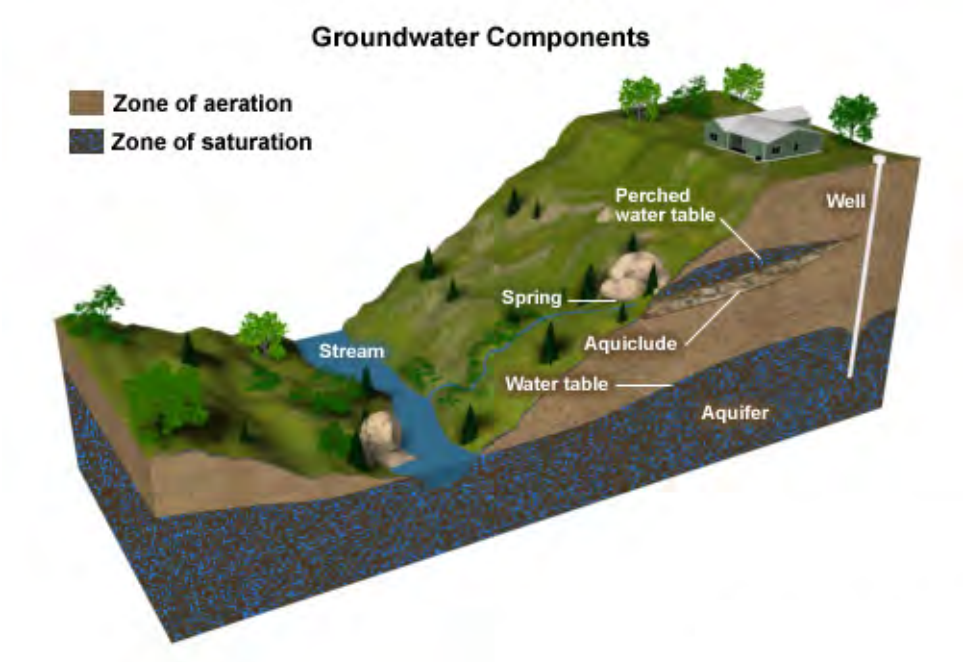
NOTE: This drawing is only intended to be illustrative of alternative concepts for the Noroton Heights business district. This drawing does not reflect the policy desires of the Planning and Zoning Commission and should not be construed as such.

GLOSSARY

Access Management: Managing access to developed land (shared driveways, curb cuts, property connections, etc.) while preserving the flow of traffic on the surrounding road system.

ADT: Average daily trips.

Aquifer: A geologic formation, group of formations, or part of a formation that contains sufficient saturated, permeable materials to yield significant quantities of water to wells and springs. (CGS Section 22a-354h[6])



Aquifer Protection Area (APA): An area delineated by a water utility company encompassing the groundwater recharge area for an active public drinking water supply well or for well fields serving more the 1,000 people that are set in stratified drift deposits.

Arterial Road: A roadway carrying large traffic volumes specifically for mobility, with limited or restricted service to local development.

CERC: Connecticut Economic Resource Center

CGS: Connecticut General Statutes

Collector Road: A street whose function is equally divided between mobility and access, linking local streets to arterials.

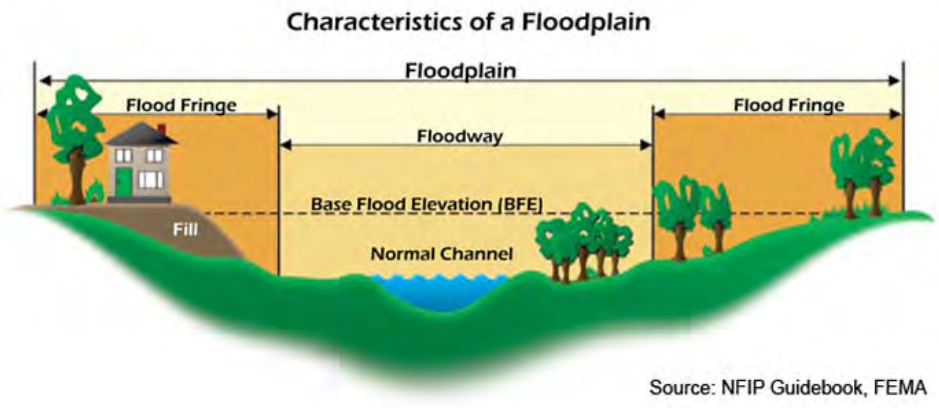
CT-DEEP: Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection

CT-DOT: Connecticut Department of Transportation

FEMA: Federal Emergency Management Agency

Floodplain: An area land susceptible to being partially or completely inundated by water from any source.

Floodplain Zone: An area which has had a statistical probability of flooding calculated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), typically expressed as a recurrence interval (i.e. – a 100-year floodplain is an area with a 1 percent chance of being flooded in any given year).



Geographic Information System (GIS): A combination of computer software, hardware and data used to create maps and analyze and present data.

Impervious: A surface (such as a road, driveway, parking lot, outdoor patio, or building footprint) or other barrier to infiltration of water into the ground.

Invasive Species: Non-native plant or animals that exhibit an aggressive growth habit and can out-compete and displace native species.

Local Street: A street whose primary function is to provide access to a residence, business or other abutting property.

NDDB: The Natural Diversity Database maintained by CT-DEEP.

Point Sources: Fixed sources of pollution (such as an wastewater outlet pipe).

POCD: Plan of Conservation and Development.

PZC: The Darien Planning and Zoning Commission.

Watercourses: Rivers, streams, brooks, waterways, lakes, ponds, marshes, swamps, bogs and all other bodies of water.

WestCOG: The Western Connecticut Council of Governments – the regional planning agency that includes Darien.

Wetlands: Land, including submerged land, which consists of any of the soil types designated as poorly drained, very poorly drained, alluvial and flood plain by the National Cooperative Soils Survey, as it may be amended from time to time, of the Soil Conservation Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Planning & Zoning Commission / Staff

Susan Cameron	*Chairman*
Stephen P. Olvany	*Vice-Chairman*
Eric Voigt	*Secretary*
Kevin Cunningham	
Richard DiDonna	
John R. Sini, Jr.	
Jeremy Ginsberg, AICP	*Planning & Zoning Director*
David Keating	*Asst. Director/Zoning Enforcement Officer*
Bonnie Syat	*Recording Secretary*
Nancy Sarner	*GIS Assistance*

Board Of Selectmen

Jayme J. Stevenson	*First Selectman*
Kip Koons	
Susan J. Marks	
Rob Richards	
Marc Thorne	

Town Officials

Kathleen Clarke Buch	*Town Administrator (from September 2015)*
Karl Kilduff	*Town Administrator (to July 2015)*
Edward L. Gentile Jr., P.E.	*Director of Public Works*
Dr. Dan Brenner	*Superintendent of Schools*
Anthony Homicki, CCMA II	*Assessor*
Milagros (Mili) Millan-Garcia	*Deputy Assessor*

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Alfredo Herrera GIS Manager	NEW ENGLAND GEOSYSTEMS GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM CONSULTANTS
Peter Flinker, ASLA (Downtown and Noroton Heights)	DODSON & FLINKER Landscape Architecture and Planning
Ted Brovitz, AICP (Downtown and Noroton Heights)	BROVITZ Community Planning & Design

Designations For Leaders And Partners In The Policies / Action Steps Tables

AHID	At Home In Darien	**MNRR**	Metro-North Railroad
ARB	Architectural Review Board		
		P53	Post 53 EMS
BC	Beautification Committee	**PAC**	Pedestrian Inf. Advisory Comm.
BOE	Board of Education	***PC***	*Parking Commission **(NEW)***
BOS	Board of Selectmen	**PD**	Police Department
		PIC	*Plan Implementation Comm. **(NEW)***
CC	*Conservation Commission **(NEW)***	**PRC**	Park and Recreation Commission
CT-DOT	CT Department of Transportation	**PW**	Public Works
CTT	Connecticut Transit	**PZC**	Planning and Zoning Commission
CW	Advisory Comm. on Coastal Waters		
		RTM	Representative Town Meeting
DCA	Darien Community Association		
DHA	Darien Housing Authority	**SC**	Sewer Commission
DLT	Darien Land Trust	***SETF***	*Sust. Energy Task Force **(NEW)***
		Staff	Town of Darien Staff
EPC	Environmental Protection Comm.		
		TC	Darien Tree Conservancy
FEB	Flood and Erosion Control Board	**TCF**	The Community Foundation
HD	Health Department	**Town**	Town agencies and departments (with general direction by BOS)
HS	Historical Society		
		TV79	Government Access Television
IWC	*Inland Wetlands Comm. **(NEW)***	**TW**	Tree Warden
LIB	Darien Library	**VFD**	Volunteer Fire Departments
LTA	Darien Legal Traffic Authority		
		ZBA	Zoning Board of Appeals

In the above table and throughout the document, entities which do not yet exist are highlighted in italic text.

TOWN OF DARIEN

FOUNDED 1751