

# ENHANCE DOWNTOWN AND OTHER PLACES

# 8

## Overview

Southington contains several places which are deserving of special attention as part of the POCD:

- Downtown Southington,
- Plantsville,
- Queen Street,
- West Street, and
- Marion and Milldale.

**Downtown**



**Plantsville**



**Queen Street**



**West Street**



## Continue To Strengthen Downtown

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Downtown Southington is going through a renaissance.

In years gone by, downtown Southington was the central focal point in the community and an integral part of the daily lives of Southington residents. Much of this had to do with the fact that people lived and worked in and near the downtown and this was where the business, civic, social, and cultural activities took place.

However, following World War II, the transition to an automobile-based culture and shopping preferences diverted the attention of shoppers to retail shopping centers and away from downtown areas. As people moved to locations in Southington where they needed to drive to everything, the locational advantages once enjoyed by downtown were eroded.

Now, changing demographics, changing lifestyles, and consumer spending patterns are contributing to greater interest in downtown areas and the resurgence of downtown Southington. The Plan recommends that efforts to create a vibrant downtown be encouraged and supported.

For a number of years, the Town and the Chamber of Commerce have been working together to guide and manage development in downtown Southington. This has included the “Renaissance Program” whereby streetscape improvements (curbs, pavers, trees, decorative lights, crosswalks, etc.) have been made and private development and redevelopment has been encouraged.

Progress has been made over the past decade or so and the next ten years could prove to be pivotal in the long term efforts to strengthen downtown.

**Town Hall**

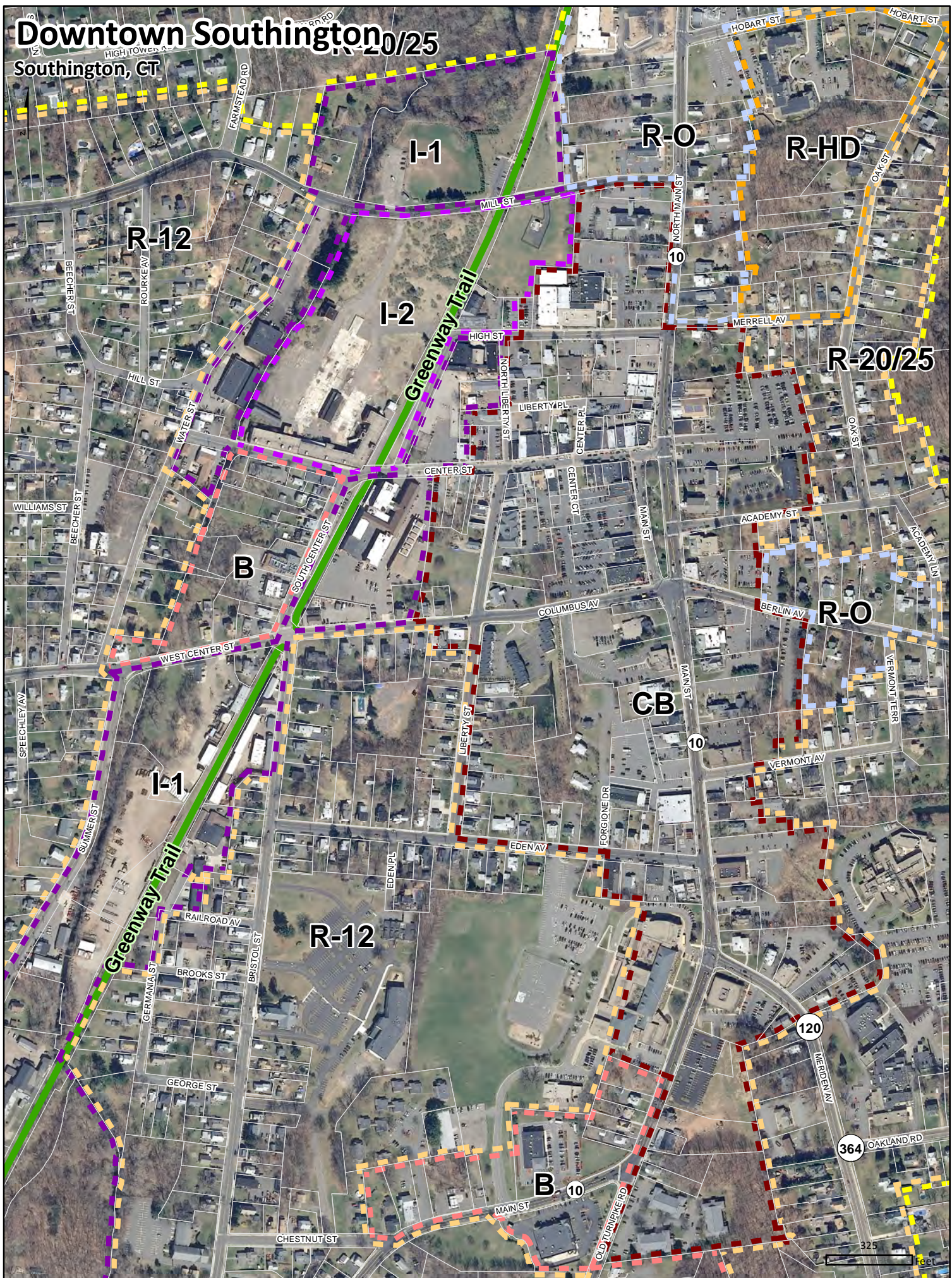


**Arts Center**





## Southington, CT





## Prepare A Downtown Plan

There is no shared overall vision for downtown Southington at the present time. A number of different people, groups, organizations have ideas about what the downtown could be but these are not publicized or shared. The 2006 POCD did not contain a vision for the downtown area so the most recent analysis dates from the 1980s or so.

Most Southington residents take downtown for granted without realizing what it could be. Other communities around Connecticut have undertaken an analysis of their downtown area and have initiated projects and programs to:

- Create an area with a palpable “sense of place”,
- Coordinate uses and activities,
- Encourage business property owners to upgrade / renovate properties and streetscapes, and
- Enhance the overall ambience and experience for residents, workers, and visitors.

Southington can, and should, do the same.

**Downtown In Its Heyday**



**Downtown Today**

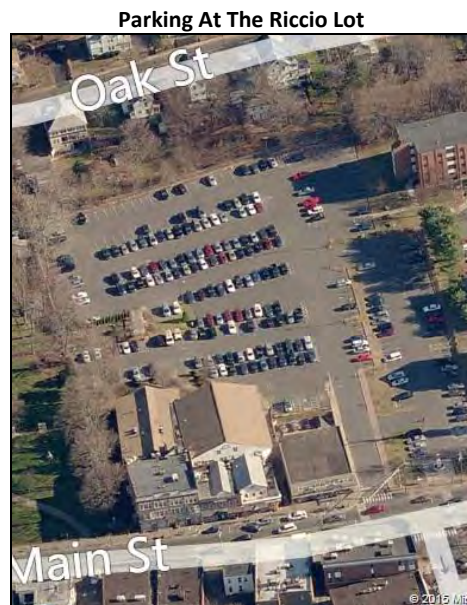


The POCD recommends that Southington undertake a planning study for the downtown area in order to focus on the unique issues which face downtown areas and to create a community-wide vision for the downtown area. Some of the issues which should be addressed include:

- the hierarchy of streets and appropriate dimensions,
- the location and design of sidewalks and pedestrian connections
- design parameters for new and renovated buildings,
- organizing and coordinating traffic flows,
- the parking needs for a mixed use downtown area along with”
  - location and design of on-street parking,
  - location and design of shared off-street parking,
- programming of events,
- public investments to support and encourage private investments in the downtown.

It should also include analyzing the appropriateness of some of Southington’s Zoning Regulations for a downtown area. This includes regulations which:

- require buildings be pushed away from the sidewalk (ZR 7A-00)
- allow a 4-story building / 55’ building height (ZR 7A-00)
- allow “high rise” structures by special permit but don’t define what that is (ZR 4-01.2.C)
- allow drive-through windows
- allow any use on 4+ acres (or 60+ spaces) by Special Permit? (ZR 4-01.2.E)



## **Parking Study**

In 2013, Weston and Sampson studied parking in Downtown Southington.

That study reported that there was a demand for 574 parking spaces and that 544 parking spaces were available (447 in municipal parking lots and 97 on-street spaces).

Some observations included:

- Riccio lot
  - Conflicts with Branford Hall students
  - Exceeding time limits
  - Could reconfigure to pick up 26 spaces
- Center Street lot
  - Challenged by Bank of America drive-through
  - Could reconfigure to pick up spaces
  - Could construct a garage
- Center / Liberty lot
  - Entrance should be 2-way
  - Could reconfigure to pick up 33 spaces

## Special Services Districts

A number of communities have found that an on-going relationship between the public sector and the private sector helps to ensure the long-term success of downtown. The Connecticut General Statutes (Section § 7-339m) authorize a community to establish a "special services district" (SSD) to improve, maintain and promote the downtown if it wishes.

At least 13 Connecticut communities have established SSDs and use them for downtowns and other special areas to provide services such as business promotion (i.e., marketing), common area maintenance or parking. A special services district (also known as a "business improvement district") cannot be established without the approval of a majority of the property owners.

Typically comprised of downtown property owners and merchants, local officials and other civic leaders, these organizations involve themselves in such activities as business attraction and retention efforts, promotion and marketing, crime prevention and security, sponsorship of special events and activities, and beautification and streetscape improvement programs. In addition, they often act as the official liaison between downtown businesses and the local government.

The study of Southington's downtown should be conducted as a "charrette" type process (discussed below).

### CASE STUDY

## A "Charrette"

A charrette (sometimes called a design charrette) is an intense period of design or planning activity which typically involves broad community participation in devising strategies and solutions.

Charrettes often involve multiple small groups preparing graphics and illustrations of concepts for an area which are then shared with the larger group. The work product of each group is usually different because of the different participants and this offers a way to consider alternatives and identify common features. The concepts and ideas are then discussed among the larger group and then combined into an overall vision for the area.

Charrettes serve as a way of quickly generating a design solution while integrating the aptitudes and interests of a diverse group of people. The charrette process works well because it promotes joint ownership of solutions and attempts to defuse typical confrontational attitudes between stakeholders.

Charrettes tend to involve small groups, however the residents participating may not represent all the residents nor have the moral authority to represent them. Residents who do participate get early input into the planning process. For developers and municipal officials charrettes achieve community involvement, may satisfy consultation criteria, with the objective of avoiding costly legal battles. Other uses of the term "charrette" occur within an academic or professional setting, whereas urban planners invite the general public to their planning charrettes. Thus most people (unless they happen to be design students) encounter the term "charrette" in an urban-planning context.

Working Groups



Design Concepts



## CASE STUDY

### Village District

In Connecticut, a “village district” is a special type of zoning district where aesthetic controls are authorized because of the distinctive character, landscape or historic value within the designated area. The purpose of establishing a “village district” would be to ensure that new development is compatible with the existing and/or planned character of the area.

To be established, the village district must:

- be specifically identified in the POCD of the municipality, and
- be established and administered in accordance with the procedures specified in the enabling legislation (CGS Section 8-2j).

Once the village district is designated, the following activities may be regulated within the district:

- the design and placement of buildings,
- the maintenance of public views,
- the design, paving materials and placement of public roadways, and
- other elements that the commission deems appropriate to maintain and protect the character of the village district.

Any application for new construction and substantial reconstruction within the village district and in view from public roadways must be subject to review and recommendation by a village district consultant who shall be:

- an architect or architectural firm,
- a landscape architect,
- a third-party AICP planner, or
- an architectural review board whose membership includes one or more of the above designated professions.

**Downtown**



**Downtown**



## Village Districts

A number of Connecticut municipalities have established “village district” zoning to help protect community character and guide design. A partial list is presented below:

- Bethel
- Brooklyn
- Farmington
- Kent
- New Canaan
- Ridgefield
- Norfolk
- Tolland
- Waterford
- Wilton



## Continue To Strengthen Downtown

### Policies

1. Maintain downtown as the civic, social, and cultural center of Southington.
2. Continue the economic improvement of downtown by encouraging existing uses to invest, attracting new uses, and promoting revitalization.
3. Encourage infill development compatible with existing scale, architectural style and historic heritage.
4. Continue the physical improvement of downtown by enhancing the streetscape.
5. Continue to program special events in downtown to attract residents of Southington and the region.
6. Continue to work with the Chamber of Commerce and others to support and enhance the downtown.
7. Entice people to explore the parts of downtown Southington off Route 10 and the greenway trail.

See page 129 for information on preliminary priorities and the entities involved in implementation.

### CASE STUDY

## Enhancing Public Spaces

Over the years, the Town of Southington has worked to enhance the streetscape in the downtown area through the installation of improvements such as granite curbs, sidewalk pavers, street lamps, trees, and street furniture such as benches. This type of consistent streetscape treatment attracts and invites people to visit the downtown area and explore different areas. This program has become known as “the Renaissance program.”

The Renaissance program should continue.

Improvements At The Green



Improvements On Center Street





Action Steps
8. Use a “charrette-type” process to prepare a master plan for downtown.
9. Establish a village district in downtown Southington as authorized by CGS Section 8-2j.
10. Explore programs and incentives to assist property owners (residential as well as commercial) in targeted areas with property maintenance, code compliance, façade improvements, etc. to upgrade the existing building stock.
11. Join the Connecticut Main Street Program.
12. Seek ways to provide for public restrooms in the downtown.
13. Establish a “pop-up park” during weekends in the summer months to help bring people to downtown.

See page 129 for information on preliminary priorities and the entities involved in implementation.

## CASE STUDY

### Encouraging Private Development

Private development and redevelopment are key to the downtown area as well. Development helps attract people to the downtown area and help make it a vibrant place. One example is Geno’s Grille – a new restaurant at a key location. Another is the proposed redevelopment of a former metal forging site (a “brownfield”) into a mixed-used community to be called Greenway Commons. The proposed development includes over 250 residences, 22,500 square feet of retail, a 6 acre public park and a restored original pump house which will be converted into artist’s exhibit space.

Geno’s Grille



Greenway Commons



## Follow-Up Strategies

Once the overall vision for downtown Southington has been established through a “charrette” type process, some follow-up activities should include:

- Enhancing the parking system in downtown by:
  - reorganizing the parking areas to create a more efficient and navigable layout and a more attractive user experience,
  - installing identification and directional signage,
  - better maintenance of parking areas.
- Developing a “capital improvement program” (a list of priority streets and schedule) to extend the downtown “renaissance” program.
- Considering the desirability of creating a business improvement district (BID) in the downtown to support maintenance, development and marketing/promotion of the district.
- Developing an appropriate “branding” of downtown, augmented by events and programs, such as the Apple Festival, to draw residents and visitors throughout the year.

## Possible Concepts

The recommended study for Plantsville should consider the following possible strategies:

1. Limit the “Central Business” zone to the area around the intersection of West Main Street and South Main Street (possibly rezoning other CB areas to the “Business” zone).
2. Replacing the Industrial zoning and uses along West Main Street with the CB zone in order to enhance this area.
3. Seeking ways to install more public parking in this area in order to support area businesses and usage of the greenway trail.
4. Investigate removing some of the on-street parking in order to widen the sidewalks and enhance the overall ambience and pedestrian environment in this area (street trees, lamp posts, outdoor dining, and similar enhancements).

## Continue To Strengthen Plantsville

Plantsville is a village in Southington which evolved around the industrial “plants” located there. Since Plantsville exhibits a distinctive character, landscape, and historic value which are important to the community, this area should be considered for:

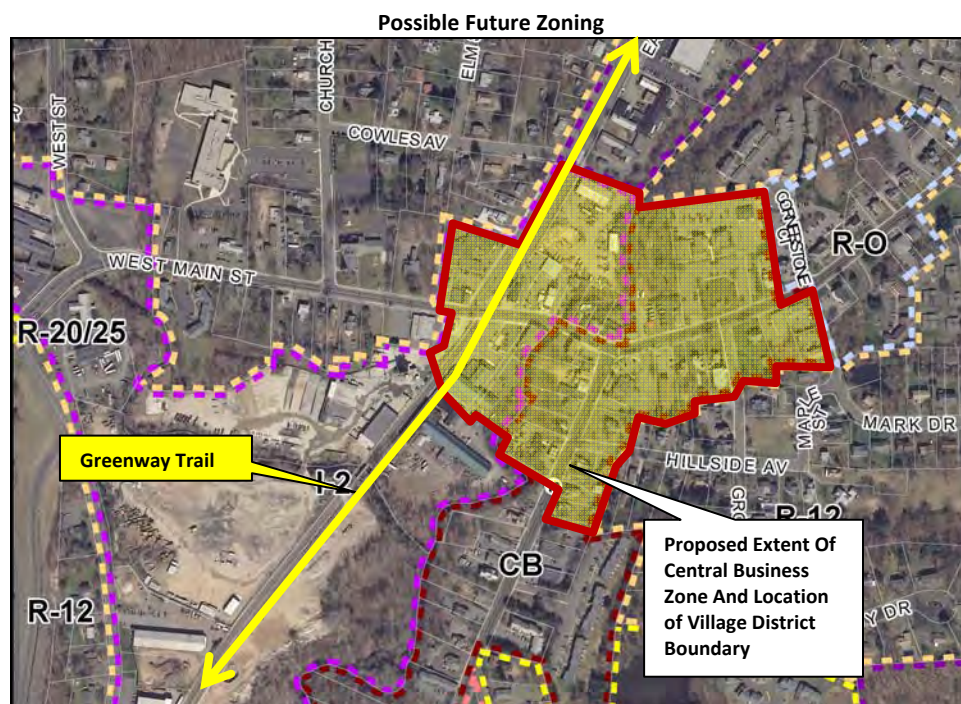
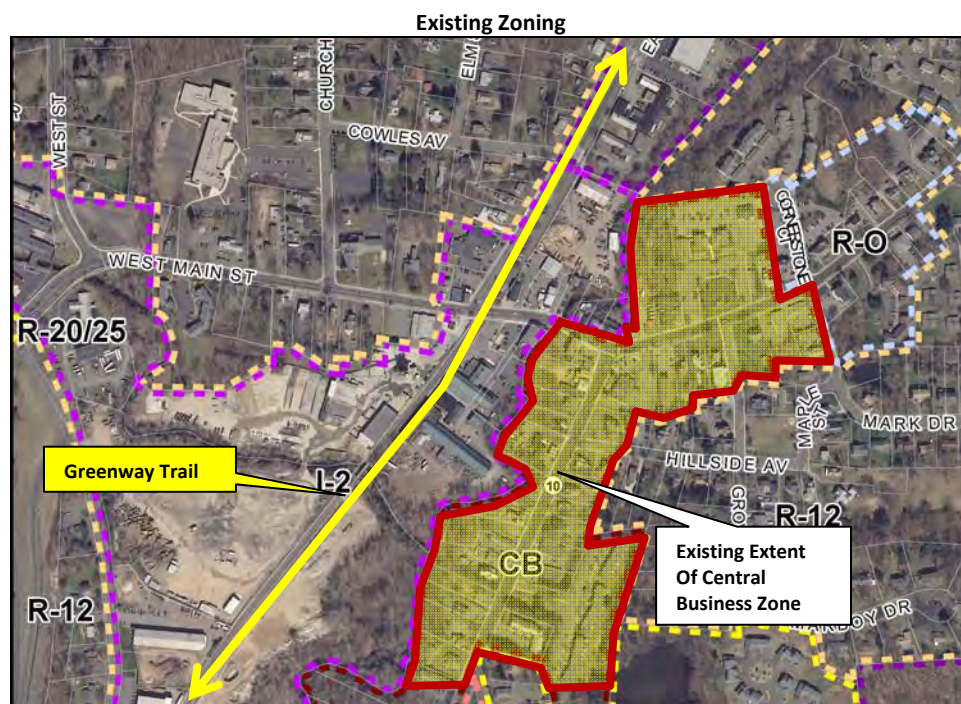
- a special study (like a “charrette” as described on page 52) to involve residents business owners and property owners in creating a tangible vision of what Plantsville can and should be, and
- establishment of a “village district” (as described on page 53).

Overall, the Plan recommends that the historic character and “sense of place” in Plantsville be retained and enhanced in the future as new buildings are added and existing buildings are renovated.

Continue To Strengthen Plantsville
Policies
1. Maintain and enhance the role of Plantsville as a village within Southington.
2. Continue the physical improvement of Plantsville by enhancing the streetscape and other elements of the “public realm”.
3. Encourage infill development compatible with existing scale, architectural style and historic heritage character.
4. Continue to work with the Village of Plantsville Association, the Chamber of Commerce and others to support and enhance Plantsville.
Action Steps
5. Undertake a special study of Plantsville “charrette-type” process for Plantsville.
6. Establish a village district in Plantsville as authorized by CGS Section 8-2j.
7. Implement a “renaissance” approach in Plantsville for improving the streetscape.

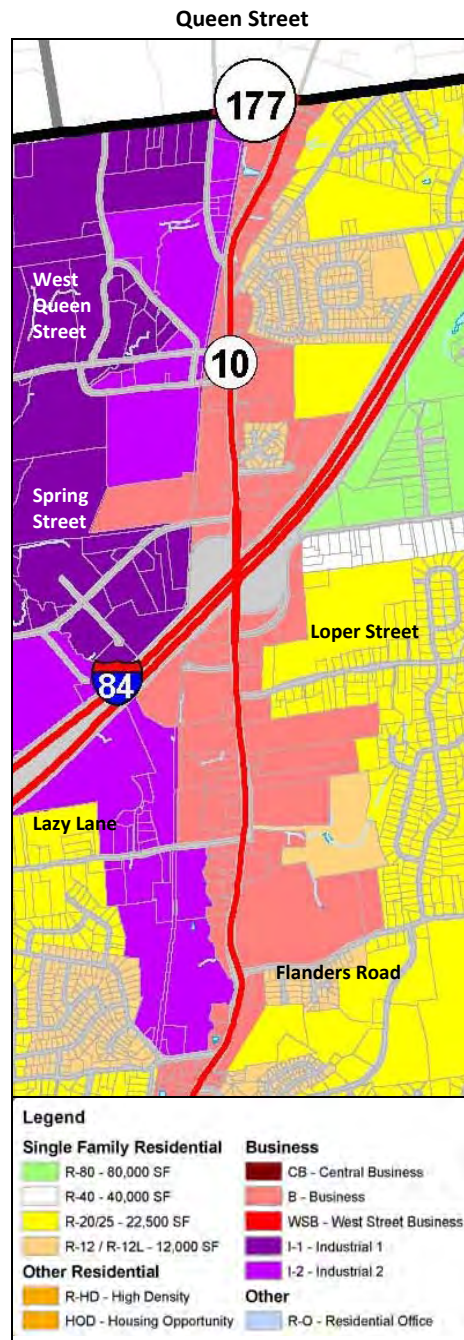
See page 130 for information on preliminary priorities and the entities involved in implementation.





## Address Queen Street

Queen Street in Southington is that section of Route 10 which is north of Flanders Road (where Stop and Shop is located) and extends all the way to the Plainville Town Line. Queen Street is served by Exit 32 on Interstate 84.



This section of roadway is heavily travelled with average daily traffic (ADT) reflecting the number of vehicles per day as follows:

- 12,000 ADT at the Plainville Town Line,
- 25,000 ADT just south of West Queen Street
- 31,000 ADT at the I-84 interchange,
- 24,000 ADT at Loper Street, and
- 19,000 ADT just south of Flanders Road.

During the planning period, the main goals for Queen Street are to:

- Encourage adaptive reuse of existing buildings and sites,
- Enhance the design of buildings and sites through a design review process, and
- Enhance the function of the roadway through access management and spot roadway improvements.

Southington residents have made several observations about this section of roadway:

- The overall traffic flow, congestion, and safety on this section of roadway is problematic, and
- The appearance of this section of the roadway (building design, driveways, parking lots, landscaping, maintenance, etc.) does not reflect people's desire for Southington.



Southington should undertake a special study of the Queen Street portion of the Route 10 corridor in order to identify and address these issues. The study should look at:

- Access management recommendations to preserve the traffic capacity of Route 10 as much as possible and provide for turning lanes in appropriate places,
- Improving traffic safety in the corridor,
- Specific ways and locations to interconnect properties for vehicles and pedestrians,
- Opportunities to provide sidewalks and pedestrian trails,
- Opportunities to enhance transit service in the corridor,
- Buffers / transitions to adjacent residential areas,
- Design guidelines in the corridor for buildings, landscaping, parking lots, drainage,
- Revisiting the parking standards to see if it might be possible to reduce or eliminate an impediment to the re-use and/or redevelopment of existing properties, and
- Ways to promote the appropriate development and redevelopment of properties in the corridor.

**Example Of Multiple Curb Cuts And Congestion (Queen Street)**



## **Access Management**

Access management refers to strategies to maintain roadway capacity (and reduce congestion) by controlling and sharing driveway. This is particularly relevant on major roadways and in commercial areas where turning movements are greatest.

Access management has been used on a number of roadways around Connecticut and would seem to have direct applicability to commercial roadways in Southington.

While Section 9-09 of the Zoning Regulations provides general access management considerations, a specific analysis of Queen Street may identify specific locations for shared driveways, interconnections on a more global basis than site-by-site as applications come in.

Address Queen Street
<b>Policies</b>
1. Promote the appropriate development and redevelopment of Queen Street.
<b>Action Steps</b>
2. Undertake a special study of the Queen Street portion of the Route 10 corridor.

See page 131 for information on preliminary priorities and the entities involved in implementation.

## West Street Corridor Study

The recommendations of the West Street Sub-Committee (based on the 2011 West Street Corridor Study) are hereby incorporated as part of the Plan of Conservation and Development.

Some of the zoning districts recommended for consideration in the original 2011 West Street Corridor Study included:

- Interchange Commercial (IC) zone
- West Street Business (WSB) zone
- Business Overlay (BO) zone
- Industrial Overlay (IO) zone

Some of the recommendations in the 2011 West Street Corridor Study have been modified by the West Street Sub-Committee.

## Implement West Street Recommendations

West Street (Route 229) is a major north-south traffic route in Southington which extends north from Exit 31 of Interstate 84 to ESPN World Headquarters and Lake Compounce, two major destinations in Bristol.

With the assistance of Milone and MacBroom, Southington recently completed a land use study of the West Street corridor. The study is intended to foster economic development in the corridor while protecting quality of life, encouraging good design, and minimizing traffic impacts.

Key recommendations from the study included:

- Create an Interchange Commercial (IC) zone for business nearest Interstate 84 to encourage and allow some higher intensity business uses
- Create other zoning designations (see sidebar) to allow for business or industrial uses along the roadway while respecting and protecting the residential uses in and near the corridor
- Incorporate design guidelines for development in the corridor
- Implement access management in the corridor

Character Of A Portion Of West Street



### Implement West Street Recommendations

#### Policies

1. Promote the appropriate development and redevelopment of West Street.

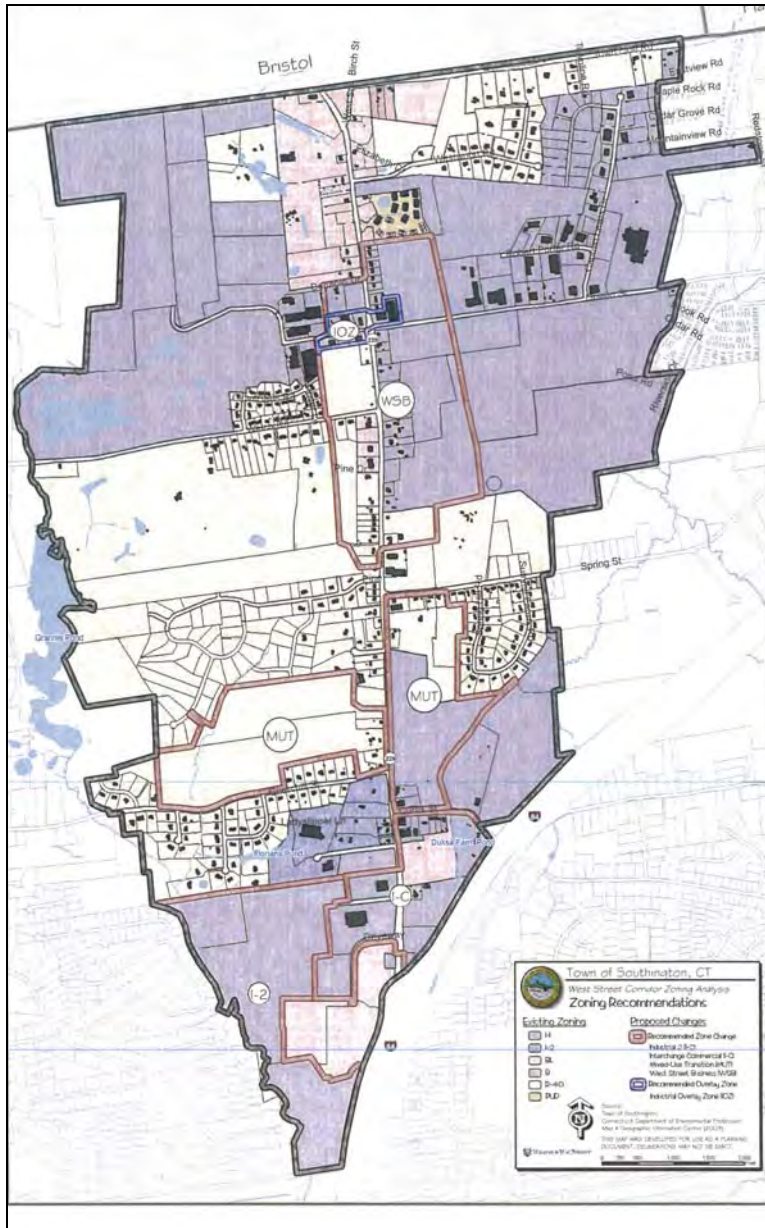
#### Action Steps

2. Implement the recommendations of the West Street Steering Committee.

See page 131 for information on preliminary priorities and the entities involved in implementation.



## West Street Recommendations



Note – Some of the recommendations from the original 2011 West Street Corridor Study have been modified by the West Street Subcommittee.

## Route 322

Meriden / Waterbury Turnpike (Route 322) is a major east-west traffic route near the Cheshire town line which extends from Wolcott to Meriden. Much of this corridor is zoned for business development and has evolved over the years with some larger developments such as the TA Southington Travel Center (truck stop), the Southington 12 movie theater, a Home Depot (all near exit 28 of Interstate 84) and a number of smaller uses elsewhere along the roadway.

The character of this area may change in the future as a result of proposed reconfiguration of the Route 10 / Route 322 intersection (currently a Route 10 “fly-over” of Route 322 with a combination of road/ramp access connections) and possible development within Cheshire around the Route 10 / Interstate 691 interchange.

While the current zoning of this area may be appropriate, it may make sense for Southington to undertake a corridor study of Route 322 at some time during the planning period. The study would evaluate the various opportunities and constraints in the corridor resulting from the intersection reconfiguration and changing traffic patterns and develop an overall approach for addressing these issues.

## Maintain Marion And Milldale

Marion and Milldale are historic areas of Southington.

Marion, which is located in the southwest corner of Southington, was first settled around 1739. It became a “crossroads” over the years since it was located on a north-south route between Bristol and New Haven and an east-west route between Waterbury and Hartford. During the Revolutionary War, Marion was twice used as an encampment by French forces assisting in the war for American independence. Marion was served by a trolley line to Waterbury in the early part of the 1900s. Today, the area has a historic district and its own post office and postal code. Significantly, it is also the home of the Southington Community Theater, a non-profit community groups which presents theater productions.

Milldale, located in the south-central part of Southington, was an early industrial location where water power was available. This area has its own post office and postal code.



### Maintain Marion And Milldale

#### Policies

1. Maintain Marion as a historic settlement in Southington.
2. Enhance Milldale as a historic settlement in Southington.

#### Action Steps

3. Undertake a special study of the Route 322 corridor to evaluate land use and transportation strategies.

See page 131 for information on preliminary priorities and the entities involved in implementation.

# PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

# 9

## Overview

Economic development in Southington provides three key benefits to the community:

- Jobs for residents of the community and the region,
- Goods and services for residents of the community and the region, and
- A strong tax base which helps support community services.

Southington is fortunate to have a strong local economy and seeks to maintain and enhance this strength.

**Downtown**



**Aqua Turf Conference / Events Facility**



**Yarde Metals**



**CT On-Line Computer Center**





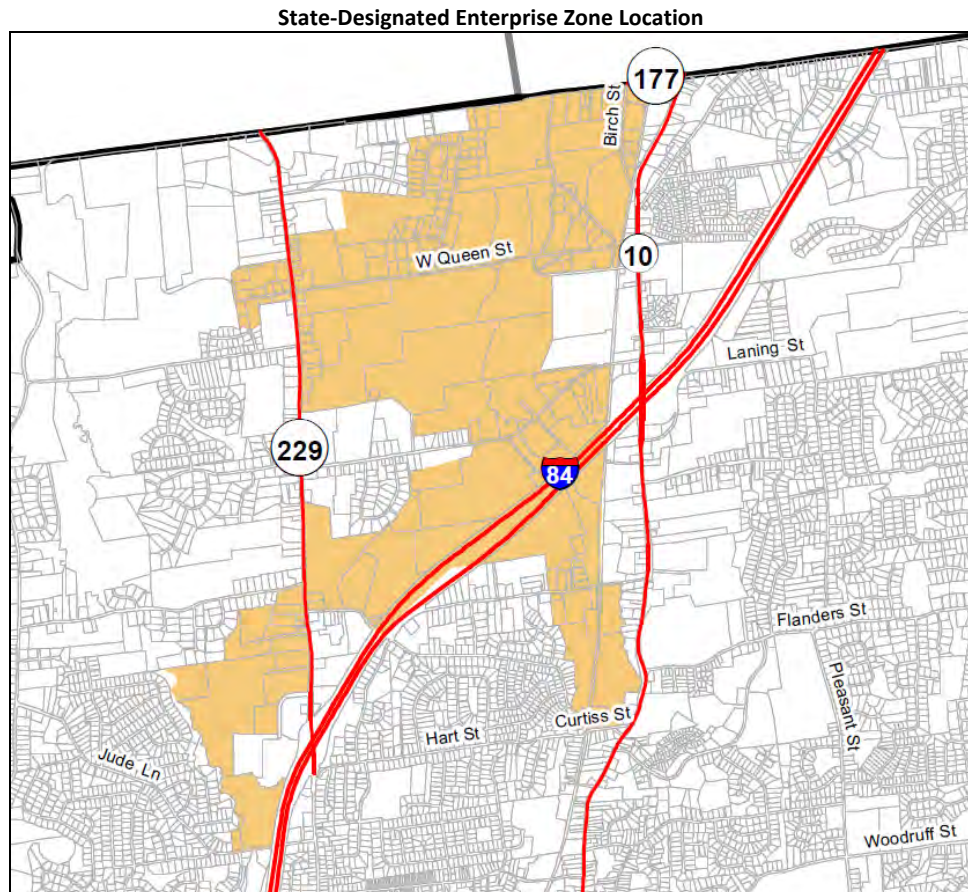
## Encourage Economic Development

Southington has an excellent regional location, a number of areas zoned for business/industrial development, and benefits from having several major interstate interchanges within the town:

- The Queen Street interchange (Exit 32 of I-84),
- The West Street/Route 229 interchange (Exit 31 of I-84),
- The Plantsville interchange (Exit 30 of I-84),
- A partial interchange providing access to Route 10 (Exit 29 of I-84),
- The Meriden-Waterbury Turnpike exit (Exit 28 of I-84), and
- Exit 4 of Interstate 691 which connects to Meriden

In addition, Southington has full-time economic development staff and a number of agencies and organizations working together to promote economic development. Southington helps existing and prospective businesses accomplish their development objectives, including:

- Maintaining a database of available land and currently underutilized building space in all sections of town, and
- offering tax incentives for manufacturing uses located within the enterprise zone (see map below).



## Encourage Economic Development

### Policies

1. Continue to encourage economic development to provide jobs, provide goods and services, and enhance the tax base.
2. Continue to be known as a “business-friendly” community.
3. Continue to work with the Chamber of Commerce and other organizations to promote economic growth in Southington.

### Action Steps

4. Investigate the desirability of offering additional tax incentives to attract additional business development.

See page 132 for information on preliminary priorities and the entities involved in implementation.

**Hospitality Business**



**Leisure / Recreation Business**



**Distribution Business**



**Retail**



## Industrial Zoning

Some possible changes to industrial zoning could include the following:

- Reducing the minimum lot size requirement (where appropriate) to remove an impediment to industrial development.
- Merging the I-1 and I-2 zones together and allowing certain uses by Special Permit.
- Allowing outside storage by Special Permit in certain situations (shielding, percent of site, etc.).

## Guide Business And Industrial Development

Southington seeks to guide business development and industrial development to appropriate locations and to maintain standards to ensure appropriate development.

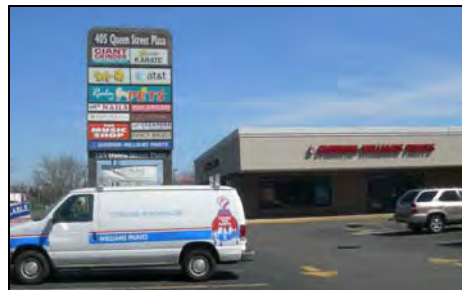
General strategies for business development include the following:

- Make the best and most efficient use of the areas zoned for business development.
- Discourage or minimize the further linear extension of retail development along major roadways and focus on redeveloping existing areas.
- Encourage redevelopment/reuse of existing buildings and sites.
- Enhance the design of buildings and sites through a design review process or other means.
- Enhance the function of the roadway through access management and spot roadway improvements.

Southington has a number of areas zoned for industrial uses. General strategies for industrial development include the following:

- Make the best and most efficient use of the areas zoned for industrial development.
- Encourage redevelopment/reuse of existing buildings and sites.
- Promote the appropriate design of buildings and sites.

Local Plaza



Local Plaza



Local Business (Industrial Area)



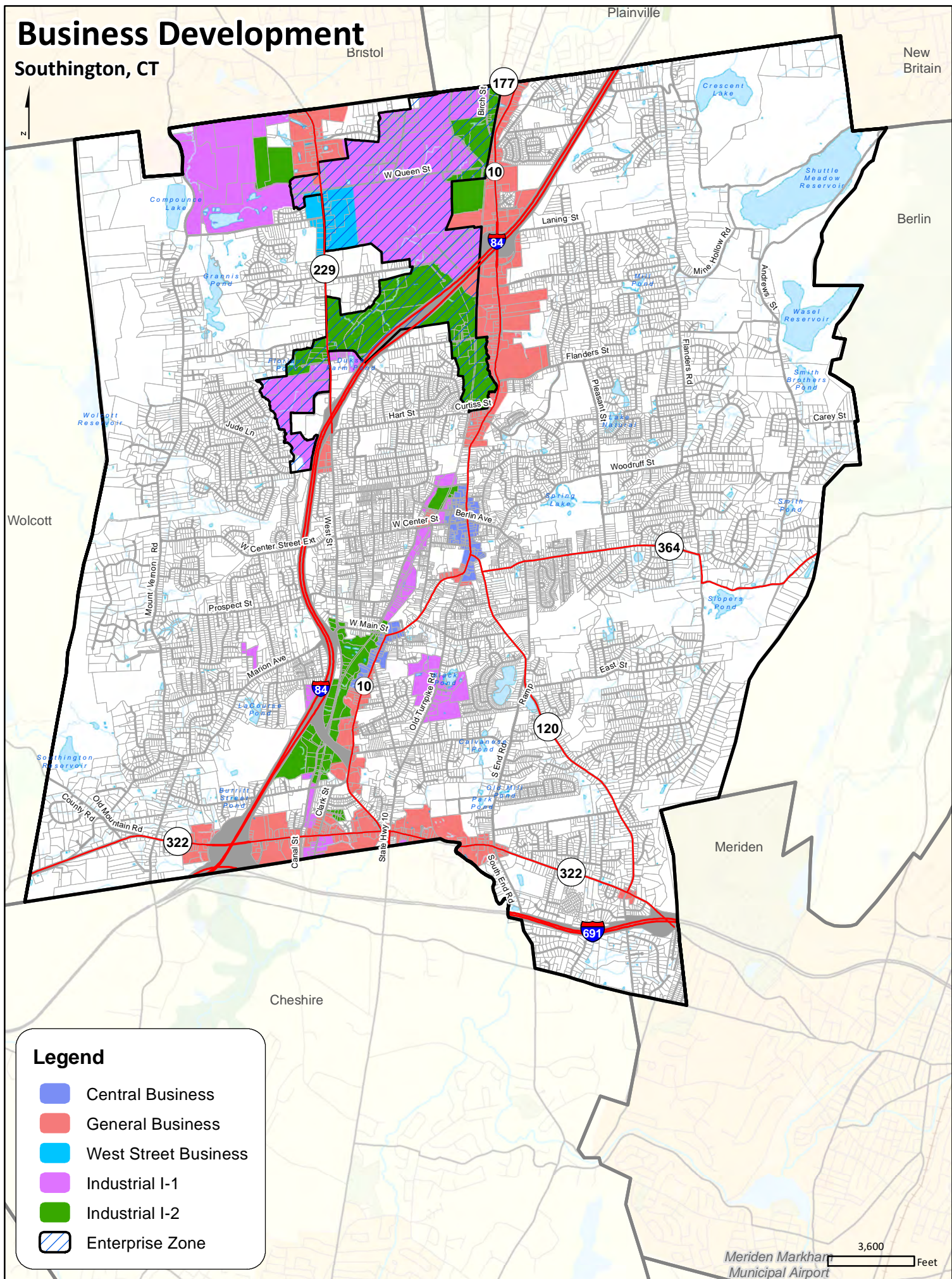
Local Business (Aquaturf)





# Business Development

Southington, CT



## Legend

- Central Business
- General Business
- West Street Business
- Industrial I-1
- Industrial I-2
- Enterprise Zone

Meriden Markham  
Municipal Airport

3,600

Feet

To encourage appropriate business and industrial development in the future, Southington should review the parking requirements in the zoning regulations since many businesses in Southington appear to have much more parking than is needed (this may be related to the areas property owners devoted to parking rather than the parking requirements) particularly with regard to:

- Parking standards for retail uses (generally 4 spaces / 1,000 SF but 5 spaces / 1,000 SF if above 200,000 SF of floor area)
- Parking standards for office uses (rate seems low and is based on net square footage rather than gross square footage)
- Restaurant uses (rate seems high and is based on public floor area which can change over time)
- Allowing for a reduction in the number of parking spaces installed (or paved) due to shared use, offsetting peaks, or other provisions.
- Requiring permeable pavement for a certain percentage of required spaces and for all spaces installed in excess of the minimum required.

Many communities around the State have been revisiting “blue laws” in the zoning regulations which limit or restrict liquor sales and service and relying instead on State regulations. Southington may wish to consider doing the same.

<b>Guide Business And Industrial Development</b>	
<b>Policies</b>	
1.	Guide business development and industrial development to appropriate locations.
2.	Maintain standards to ensure appropriate business and industrial development.
3.	Make the best and most efficient use of the areas zoned for business and industrial development.
4.	Encourage redevelopment/reuse of existing buildings and sites.
5.	Promote the appropriate design of buildings and sites.
<b>Action Steps</b>	
6.	Evaluate the location and extent of industrial-zoned areas to ensure that they are appropriately located and configured.
7.	Review the parking requirements in the zoning regulations.
8.	Review the liquor sales restrictions in the zoning regulations.

See page 133 for information on preliminary priorities and the entities involved in implementation.



# PROMOTE REDEVELOPMENT

# 10

## Overview

There are some sites in Southington which may be underutilized at the present time because of environmental or regulatory factors related to historic activities at those sites.

Southington seeks to encourage the reuse and redevelopment of these sites as much as possible provided such endeavors are consistent with the overall character of the area where they are located.

Former Under-Utilized Property



Proposed Redevelopment As Greenway Commons





## **Encourage Redevelopment Of Under-Utilized Sites**

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Some underutilized sites may be characterized as “brownfields” - sites where redevelopment / reuse may be complicated by the potential presence of a hazardous substance or contaminant. A current inventory of these sites may be found on various State and/or Federal registries.

Concerns over environmental issues at brownfield sites can cause such sites to fall into disrepair or be abandoned and this then detract from community appearance and neighborhood stability. Reuse and/or redevelopment of these sites may be challenging due to difficulties in obtaining financing, unknown remediation costs, and/or concern over assuming liability.

Southington will continue to encourage the reuse and redevelopment of these sites as much as possible provided such endeavors are consistent with the overall character of the area where they are located.

State and federal programs are available to provide funding assistance to help clean up these sites and return them to productive use. A key element of these programs may be that the public funding assistance for clean-up flow through the local municipality. For this reason, Southington will continue to familiarize itself with brownfield assistance programs in order to help prospective purchasers return these properties to productive uses.

There are provisions in the zoning regulations to address the unique circumstances of redeveloping pre-1957 industrial buildings (possible “brownfield” sites) in several zoning districts. These regulations should be maintained and enhanced.

In addition, Section 18 of the Zoning Regulations lays out a process for establishing a Redevelopment Overlay District (ROD) and enabling development of such areas with a flexible approach. This section of the regulations should be maintained and enhanced.

Section 18 of the Zoning Regulations requires that ROD areas be identified in the Plan of Conservation and Development and the POCD so designates the sites illustrated on the following pages as sites eligible for ROD designation.

**Possible Southington Center Sites**



**Aerial Photograph**



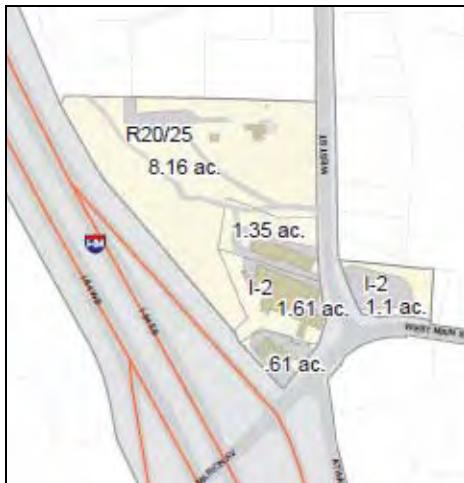
**Possible Plantsville Center Sites**



**Aerial Photograph**



**Possible West Street Sites**



**Aerial Photograph**



The ROD provisions in the Zoning Regulations should be reviewed to ensure that a **comprehensive** approach to the redevelopment of under-utilized and/or potentially contaminated areas is encouraged. The ROD provisions should not be used to isolate individual parcels, segregate contaminated areas, or avoid clean-up of contaminated areas. The residential density allowed should be reviewed since it may be too dense for some neighborhoods. As part of this review, it may become apparent the different ROD zones should be considered in different areas.

Encourage Redevelopment Of Under-Utilized Sites	
Policies	
1.	Continue to help owners and/or prospective purchasers return vacant, underutilized or potentially contaminated properties to productive uses that also yield positive benefits to the Town.
2.	Utilize the ROD zone to help reclaim underutilized properties and encourage private investment.
3.	Ensure that development proposals using the ROD regulation are appropriate in terms of use, scale and intensity for their location.
Action Steps	
4.	Review the ROD provisions in the Zoning Regulations (Section 18) as recommended in the POCD.

See page 134 for information on preliminary priorities and the entities involved in implementation.



# GUIDE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

# 11

## Overview

Southington is a residential community and most of the land is zoned and used for residential purposes. Residential growth is expected to continue due to Southington's convenient location, range of housing choices, a well-regarded school system, and quality of life.

Even though Southington appears mostly developed, there is additional residential development potential and guiding and managing activities in residential districts is a key element of the Plan.

**Historic Style**



**Contemporary Style**



**Multi-Family Development**



**Multi-Family Development**



## Quality Of Life

Southington has been recognized for its high quality of life for some time. Consider the following:

*During World War II the War Department chose Southington as one of two U.S. Towns they called "Microcosms of America."*

*Pamphlets featuring photographs of the Town and its residents going about their daily routines were dropped from supply planes over Europe to boost Allied morale.*

## Protect Existing Residential Neighborhoods

Although Southington is not fully developed, the single-family residential character of the community has clearly been established. Southington's zoning approach should continue to recognize the prevailing development pattern of:

- Predominantly single-family development
- Higher densities in and near downtown Southington and Plantsville, and
- A reduction in density as distance from these centers increase.

Since residential neighborhoods are a key part of the community, the Plan recommends that Southington carefully review any proposal for a non-residential use in a residential zone and maintain appropriate buffers to multi-family, institutional, commercial, industrial, and any other non-residential uses.

Protect Existing Residential Neighborhoods
Policies
1. Maintain the basic organizational pattern of higher densities in and near downtown Southington and Plantsville, and a reduction in density as distance from these centers increase.
2. Continue to protect the integrity of existing residential neighborhoods.
3. Carefully review any proposal for a non-residential use in a residential zone.
4. Maintain appropriate buffers between residential neighborhoods and multi-family, institutional, commercial, industrial, and any other non-residential uses.
Action Steps
5. Review the buffer requirements between business / industrial uses and residential zones and/or uses (width, plant materials, berming, fencing, etc.) to ensure an effective buffer will be in place.

See page 135 for information on preliminary priorities and the entities involved in implementation.

## CASE STUDY

### Cost Of Community Services

In 2007, Town staff evaluated municipal costs and revenues associated with different types of residential development in Southington. This study was undertaken at the direction of the Town Council in order to evaluate the fiscal impact from residential development at different densities.

At that time, the study concluded that:

- R-12 single family subdivisions show a negative revenue differential regardless of the age of the development;
- R20/25 single family subdivisions show a negative revenue differential, although the newer development almost breaks even with regard to fiscal impact on the town.
- Newer condominium units break even or provide a slight positive revenue stream while older condominiums have a negative revenue differential.
- Apartment complexes show a negative revenue differential.

## Regulation Clean-Up

There are three lot area and other provisions in the Subdivision Regulations which should probably be relocated to the Zoning Regulations:

- SR 3-06,
- SR 3-17 and
- SR 3-18)

In addition, it may make sense to change the zoning designation of R-20/25 areas that do not have public water and public sewer to R-40 rather than have a different lot area standard in the subdivision regulations. (SR 3-06).

Cape Cod Style



Historic Style



Colonial Style



Neo-Traditional Style





## Guide Multi-Family Development

While multi-family development is an important way to provide housing choices to many people, the location of such housing should be guided so that it also contributes to making a strong community:

- Areas in and near downtown Southington and Plantsville where a higher density of housing can be accommodated and will help support these community centers,
- Where such housing can help promote adaptive re-use of older mill buildings,
- Areas served by public water and public sewer,
- Areas adequately served by the roadway system, and
- Areas where pedestrian connections can be made to downtown Southington and Plantsville and other community amenities.

Guide Multi-Family Development
Policies
1. Guided multi-family development to locations where it meets the criteria listed in the POCD.
2. Promote good design of multi-family developments by including them in the design review process.
Action Steps
3. Modify the zoning regulations to require that multi-family developments be included in the design review process.

See page 135 for information on preliminary priorities and the entities involved in implementation.

Multi-Family Development

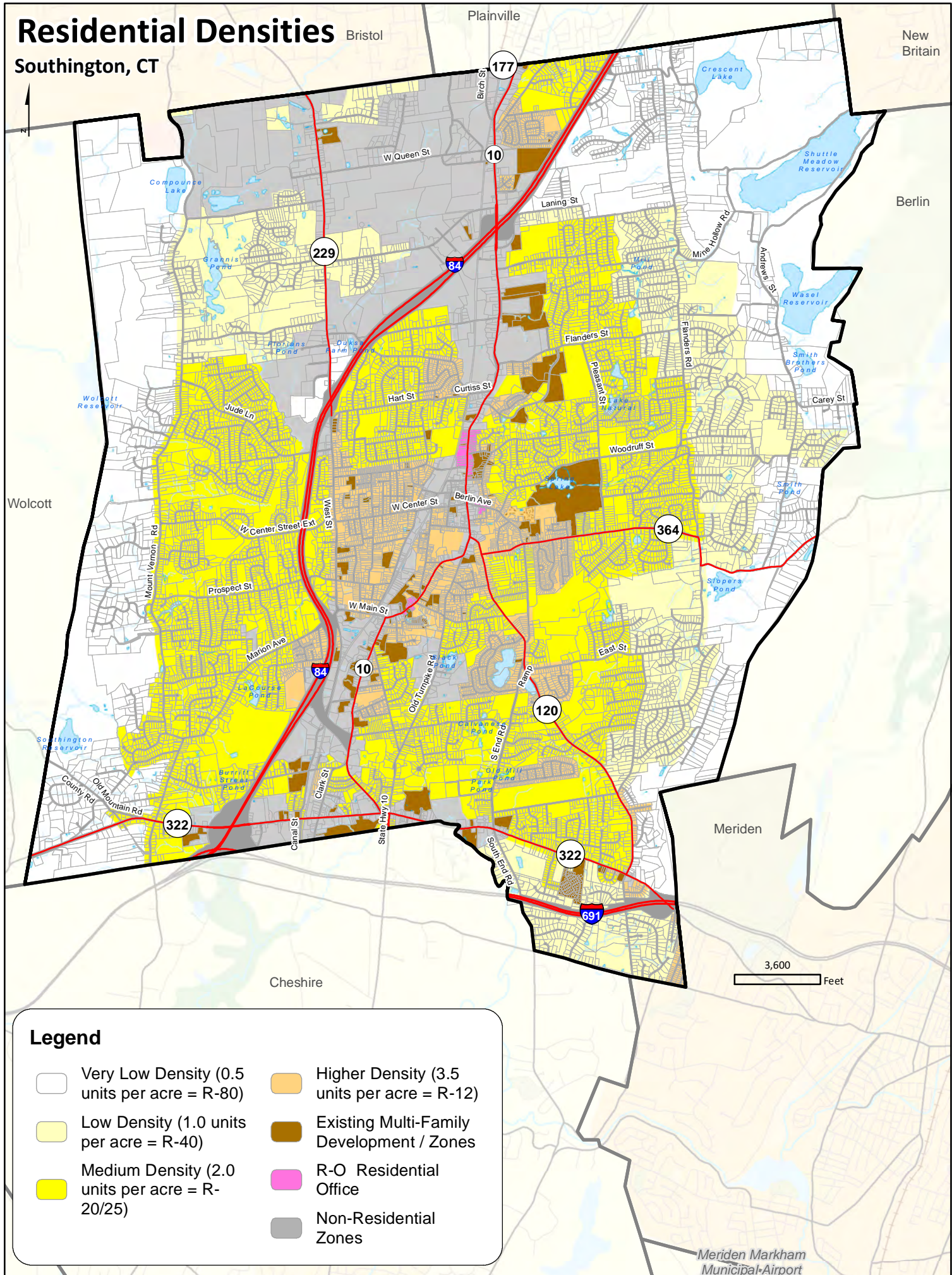


Multi-Family Development



# Residential Densities

Southington, CT



## Affordable Housing Stock

According to the State's Affordable Housing Appeals program, about 997 Southington housing units meet the State definition of "affordable" housing:

Governmentally Assisted Units	609
Tenant Rental Assistance	42
CHFA/USDA Mortgages	295
Deed Restricted Units	51
Total Assisted Units	997

Southington has a number of "naturally occurring" affordable housing units (units that sell or rent at affordable prices but are not deed-restricted) but these units are not considered in the State tabulation.

## Address Future Housing Needs

### Housing For An Aging Population

Population projections indicate that Southington, like many other communities, will experience a marked rise in the number of older residents in the future. Since housing needs can change as people get older for health, economic, or lifestyle reasons, having a range of housing option can help ensure that residents will always be able to live in Southington if they so choose.

The table on the facing page summarizes some possible housing needs and policy options for consideration.

### Housing That Is More Affordable

Southington has a diverse range of housing at the present time and this diversity should continue to be encouraged in order to help:

- Address the housing needs of an aging population.
- Provide housing choices for existing residents so that they do not have to move elsewhere if their circumstances change.
- Offer more housing choices for younger people.
- Offer more housing choices for single people.
- Offer more housing choices for moderate income people who work the area.

There may also be some legal and practical reasons why Southington might want to maintain a diverse housing portfolio. Without a diverse housing stock, Southington is subject to the "affordable housing appeals procedure."

In 1989, Connecticut adopted the "Affordable Housing Appeals Procedure" (codified as Section 8-30g of the Connecticut General Statutes) which affects any municipality where less than ten percent of the housing stock is considered affordable (as defined in the statute). As of 2014, about 5.7 percent of the housing stock in Southington (997 out of 17,447 units) met the State criteria and so Southington is subject to the statute.

CGS Section 8-13m enables a community to adopt an "Incentive Housing Zone" (IHZ) to help guide the establishment of mixed-income developments where at least 20 percent of the units are set aside for moderate income households (earning 80 percent or less of the area median income). The Department of Housing has been offering technical assistance grants for communities to evaluate the IHZ program within their community and Southington should consider applying for such a grant when they become available.



### Possible Policy Options For Addressing The Housing Needs Of An Aging Population

	Housing Options	Current Status	Possible Policy Options
Remain In Current Home	1. Remain in current home with no use of Town services.	No restrictions	Publicize availability of Town services for those who need or want them.
	2. Remain in current home with use of local senior programs.	No restrictions	Maintain/enhance services for senior citizens (meals-on-wheels, dial-a-ride, etc.).
	3. Remain in current home with elderly tax relief.	No restrictions	Maintain/enhance elderly tax relief programs.
	4. Remain in current home and modify to meet needs.	Zoning regulations require setbacks and limit coverage and this could inhibit modifications to address changing needs.	<b>Consider allowing modifications to homes to accommodate renovations for an aging population (handicapped ramps, caregiver services, first floor additions, energy efficiency, etc.)</b>
Accessory Apartment	5. Move in with family in their home or <u>accessory unit</u> .	Accessory units for parent permitted by Special Permit	Continue current policies
	6. Remain in home with <u>accessory unit</u> for caregiver, and/or income.	Permitted by Special Permit only in R-40 and R-80 zone and limited to parent or grandparent	<b>Consider allowing accessory units for other occupancies (i.e. – son / daughter / caregiver / caretaker, etc.)</b>
Move To Alternate Housing Type	7. Move to a market rate condominium or rental housing.	Units exist in Southington	Continue current policies
	8. Move to an age-restricted market-rate housing development.	Units exist in Southington	Continue current policies
	9. Move to income-limited elderly housing development.	Have existing units (with extensive waiting period)	<b>Consider ways of providing for more units to meet present and future community needs</b>
Move To Institutional Facility	10. Move to <u>institutional facility</u> providing some services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• congregate / assisted living</li> <li>• nursing / convalescent home</li> </ul>	Permitted by Special Permit only in R-40 and R-80 zone	<b>Consider allowing such facilities in other zones as well</b>

**Accessory Apartment**



**Independent Living**



## Incentive Housing Overlay

The Incentive Housing Zone (IHZ) program includes the following:

- Incentives to municipalities for creating Incentive Housing Zones in eligible locations, such as, near transit facilities, an area of concentrated development or an area because of existing, planned or proposed infrastructure that is suitable for development as an IHZ.
- The incentive payments are only available for an incentive housing development developed in a state-approved IHZ.

A state-approved IHZ must meet the following standards:

- The IHZ must be established as an overlay zone.
- The zone shall be consistent with the State Plan of Conservation and Development and be located in an eligible location.
- Regulations of the zone shall permit, ***as of right***, incentive housing development.
- Zone must comply with ***minimum*** allowable density requirements.
- Minimum densities shall be subject only to site plan or subdivision procedures, and shall not be subject to special permit or special exception procedures, requirements or standards

Address Future Housing Needs	
Policies	
1.	Maintain a diverse housing stock.
2.	Continue to consider ways to address the housing needs of an aging population.
3.	Consider ways to provide housing opportunities consistent with soil types, terrain, and infrastructure capacity.
Action Steps	
4.	Consider modifying accessory apartment regulations to help meet the housing needs of an aging population (i.e. – allow an elderly occupant to rent to a caregiver or caretaker).
5.	Consider modifying the accessory apartment regulations to require that such units be deed-restricted to rent at affordable prices (see CGS 8-30g (k)).
6.	Consider modifying the Housing Opportunity District (HOD) provisions to allow such housing on sites less than 30 acres and to allow single-family detached units.
7.	Consider applying a technical assistance grant to evaluate the desirability of implementing the IHZ program within Southington.

See page 136 for information on preliminary priorities and the entities involved in implementation.