

# 4



## THE VISION

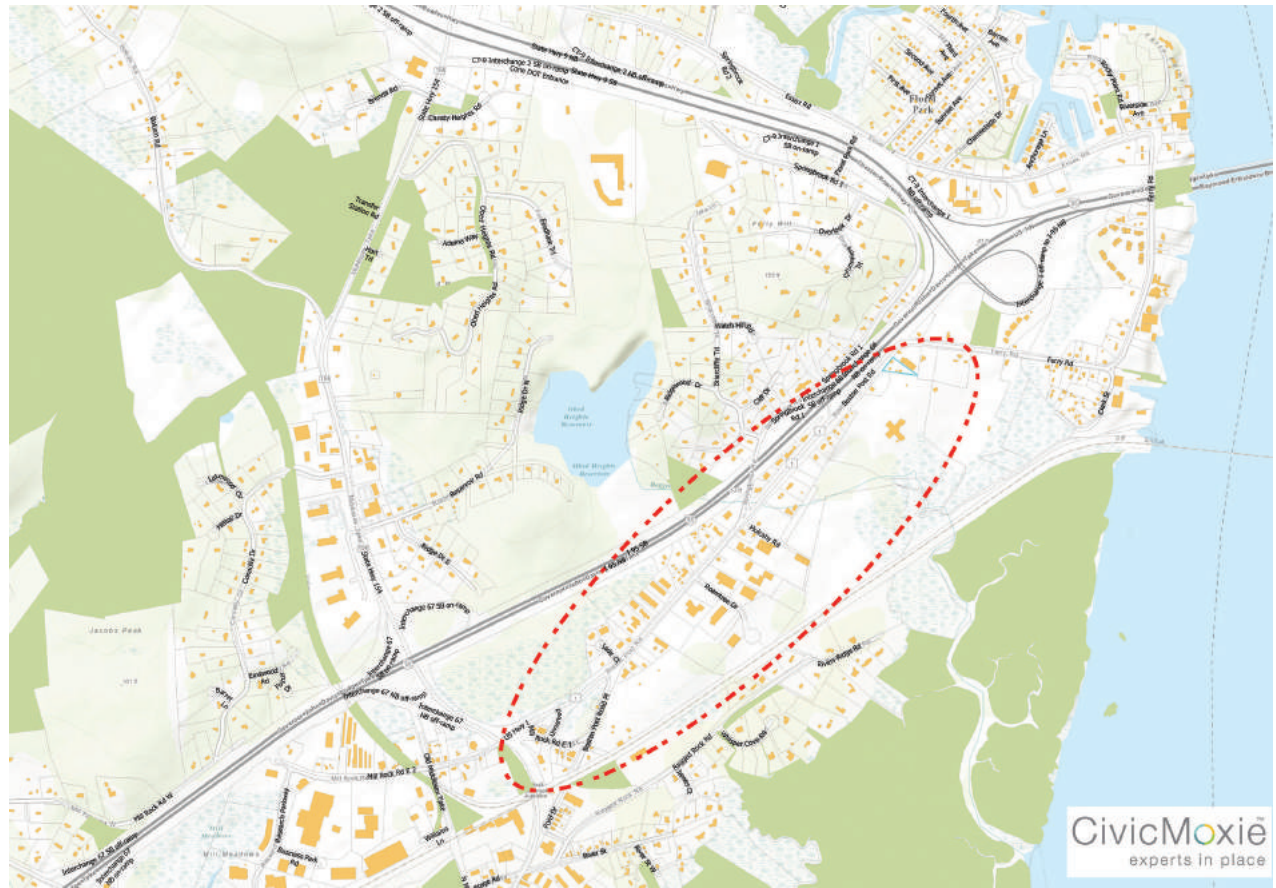


*Kloter Farms in Ellington, Connecticut is an example of experiential retail that includes home and yard furnishings and design services, food and refreshments, as well as activities and events for the family that has become a destination draw. Source: Kloter Farms*



## Mariner's Way – A Place of Discovery + Action

Old Saybrook's charm lies in its small-town character, human-scaled commercial center, and water front location on both the Connecticut River and Long Island Sound. The vision for Mariner's Way, the Route 1 corridor between Route 154 and Ferry Point, is a celebration of all that makes the town special. As a corridor without significant amenities, no pedestrian facilities, and a number of properties that are vacant or underutilized, Mariner's Way offers an opportunity for the Town to be proactive regarding the characteristics, uses, and amenities it wishes to attract to this important gateway and connector; as a major entrance to the town from I-95 and as the main road linking downtown to Ferry Point, what happens with redevelopment here is important. The length of the corridor and its underdeveloped state offer an extraordinary opportunity to eschew typical strip mall and auto-dependent uses in favor of a cohesive vision that fits the overall character and goals of the Town.



### MARINER'S WAY FOCUS AREA

*As an important gateway from I-95 and as the link between downtown and Ferry Point and the Connecticut River, Mariner's Way offers opportunities for the Town to encourage unique development and enhanced community amenities.*





Ferry Point seems far removed from the Town Center; Mariner's Way can link in-town assets and waterfront assets at either end of this corridor for the benefit of all.

## The Vision

The vision for Mariner's Way is a unique recreational, shopping, living, and business destination that reflects Old Saybrook's waterfront location, its rich assortment of natural amenities, and long-term economic development goals

The Vision for the Mariner's Way of the future...

- **A strong and positive gateway** reflective of the character and nature of the town.
- **A connector between the Connecticut River and Town Center** that accommodates vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians and offers residents and visitors a pleasant pathway for recreation and utility.
- **Unique uses and destinations of high value** capturing visitor trade and necessary services and amenities for residents.
- **A competitive edge for economic development** with net positive impact on the tax base.
- **Mixed-uses in Transit-Oriented Development** at the western end of the corridor to take advantage of its proximity to the train station and diversify housing offerings.
- **Recreation opportunities and the marine theme** to support existing businesses and grow new ones that take full advantage of the town's waterfront location and natural resources.

Four components achieve this vision of a future Mariner's Way:

- #1. A themed corridor that focuses on unique development opportunities for distinct concept areas;
- #2. Enhanced connectivity and associated amenities;
- #3. Support for publicly and privately-sponsored activities and programming; and
- #4. Support for and improvements to existing businesses.

Each of these vision components provide a cohesive and holistic strategy rooted in market realities and is realistic regarding the resources available. These four aspects of the vision are presented in detail below.

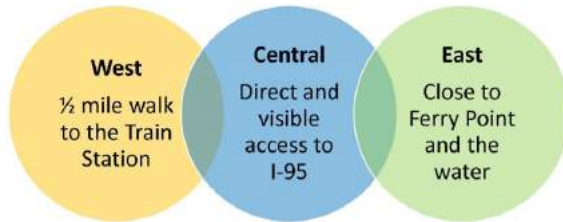
## #1: A themed corridor that focuses on unique development opportunities for distinct concept areas

*What if the Mariner's Way corridor was like no other in the region? If this 1.1-mile long strip of roadway, small businesses, and vacant and underutilized properties were transformed? If vacant sites boasted new businesses and development that served residents and drew visitors to enjoy the unique qualities of the town? And if all of this supported existing businesses and an increased tax base?*

The themes and focus areas of the Mariner's Way vision are a vehicle to support a unique character for the corridor while allowing the Town to carve out a market niche that is unoccupied in the region. The Mariner's Way corridor is just over a mile long and yet it exhibits distinctly different characteristics along its length. The vision identifies three themed areas to focus development and suggests zoning strategies and other tools to achieve the Plan's goals along the length of the corridor. The goal is to ensure that expectations meet physical and market realities and that redevelopment is incentivized in the best possible way to achieve the Town's goals.

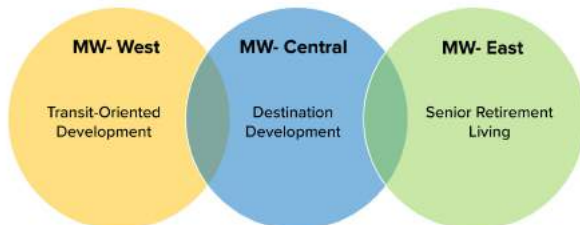


## Concept Areas



As outlined in **Section 3: Opportunities**, the different ownership patterns and property configurations/sizes, as well as general corridor conditions, lend themselves to a vision approach that is tailored to unique aspects of Mariner's Way. Varied conditions along the corridor have led to the identification of three major redevelopment areas:

- **MW-West:** High-density mixed-use Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) living with complementary retail, dining, and amenities;
- **MW-Central:** Destination Development with accessory dining, retail, recreation, sport and marine activities;
- **MW-East:** Senior and retirement living with associated amenities and services.



## KEY AREAS

Three themed areas provide the core for the vision of Mariner's Way and help direct strategies and policies appropriate to their redevelopment.

## Mariner's Way - West (MW-West)

MW-West, located at the intersection of Route 1 and Route 154 and adjacent to Saybrook Junction, supports the vision for Mariner's Way with a concept for high-density mixed-use TOD living and complementary retail, dining and amenities.

### MW-West Concept

Empty Nesters, Millennials, and others would be attracted to live in multi-family apartment buildings here at MW-West because of easy access to the train and connections to the natural assets of the town, as well as Town Center. Pathways and wetland areas here are incorporated into environmentally conscious development that celebrates the natural characteristics of the site with a shared-use path along Route 1 for walking and biking to downtown, Ferry Point, and beyond on weekends. Complementary ground floor retail and commercial spaces boast dining as well as amenities such as a health club and yoga studio. A public trail on the southern portion of the development is available for use through an easement agreement with the Town and provides an alternative to the roadway shared-use path, with plantings, benches, picnic spots, and nature trail signage provided in conjunction with a nature center, operated by a nonprofit like the Connecticut Audubon Society.



### MW-WEST CONNECTIONS CONCEPT

This plan recommends TOD at MW-West for five reasons:

- The location adjacent to Saybrook Junction train station builds on the success of recent housing in the area and supports existing businesses.
- The elevation change of the Route 154 roadway over the rail line means a higher density and building height blends well without overwhelming the character of the corridor.
- The larger residential development provides daily foot traffic for a vibrant place through viable complementary retail and restaurant uses.
- TOD is desirable to Millennials and Empty Nesters and can attract residents who may be looking to downsize within the community. This site is one of the town's better opportunities to take advantage of train station proximity and diversify housing options in the town.
- This key area is adjacent to a 15-acre industrial parcel that may, over time, offer additional TOD potential to complement proposed development as part of this *Mariner's Way Discovery + Action Plan (MW-DAP)*.

*Examples of higher density housing in other rural/suburban communities (The Pointe at Dorset Crossing in Simsbury, CT on the top, and Brookside in Concord, MA on the bottom)*

*Sources: [www.avaloncommunities.com/and](http://www.avaloncommunities.com/and) and [www.brookside-squareconcord.com/concord-ma-apartments/brookside-square/photos/](http://www.brookside-squareconcord.com/concord-ma-apartments/brookside-square/photos/)*



## Property Information and Key Attributes

As covered in the previous chapter, two key attributes of MW-West are its multiple property ownership and small parcels. Eleven parcels here, hosting residential, auto-related, and retail uses, are ½ acre or less in size. One additional parcel is 1.5 acres. Wetlands and natural areas provide both potential amenities and development challenges. Together, the area attributes and parcel characteristics indicate that TOD on this site can't be phased but will require pre-assembly of almost all of these parcels, therefore MW-West is a longer-term goal for the vision in this Plan. The adjacent large parcel industrial use may be seen as a near-term negative influence on the site but could provide longer-term TOD expansion possibilities, eventually strengthening the mix of residential density and retail/amenities at MW-West.

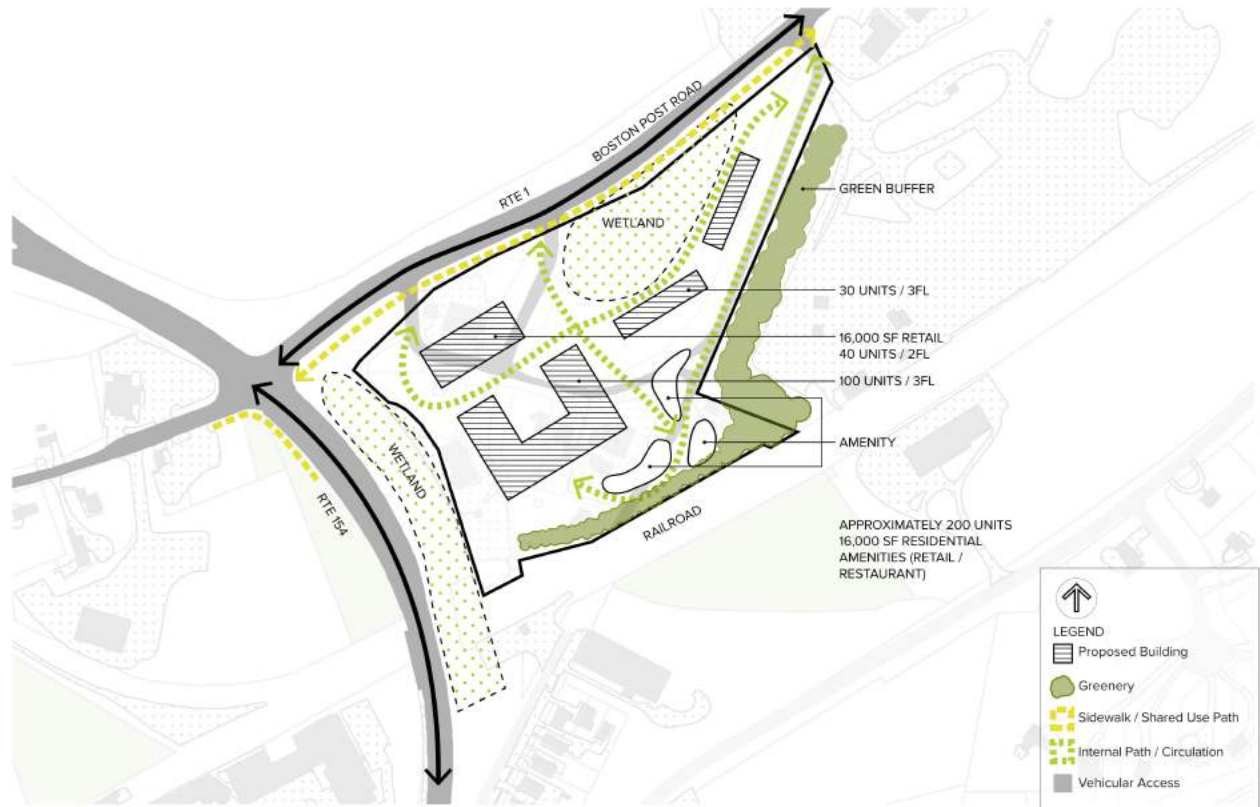
## Program and Design

For MW-West to achieve a TOD program, it is important to note that the commercial space recommended here is linked to the residential density of MW-West and would not be developed as stand-alone retail or dining.

- 170 – 200 units of housing – 1 and 2-bedroom;
- 16,000 SF of residential amenities – dining, retail, health club, etc.;
- Nature trail and on-site ponds and wetlands; and
- Connections to roadway shared-use bike and pedestrian path.

### The program and design of MW-West fit with the vision for the Plan by:

- Creating an anchor at the western end of Mariner's Way and providing potential foot traffic for other destinations along the corridor;
- Providing housing options for Empty Nesters who wish to downsize and stay in the community;
- Providing attractive housing options for Millennials, which, when coupled with recreation pathways and other amenities, strengthens the appeal of the town and diversifies its demographics;
- Supporting existing Town Center businesses by strengthening walking and bike connections and adding residents to the overall year-round demand for goods and services; and



### MW-WEST CONCEPT PLAN

*Higher density housing with associated retail can serve not only apartment or condo residents but also provide amenities for all of Old Saybrook residents. Dining, retail, and health/recreation uses here are supported by these additional housing units and the density of residents around the train station and offer a destination along the Mariner's Way shared-use pathway.*

- Linking the shared-use path and nature trail segments to natural assets such as wetlands and future view corridors along the length of Mariner's Way and the Connecticut River.

### Phasing and Timing

There is a mis-match between when redevelopment of MW-West filling the market demand for more housing will fit into the perceived timeline for transformation of the corridor; the number and variety of property owners in MW-West makes this vision a longer-term goal. During the planning process, the consultant team held a property owner focus group and found mixed-reaction to new development here. Of the businesses

and residences, some property owners were receptive to considering relocation but others in this area were not interested in the idea of selling. For this reason, implementation of the MW-West concept is considered a longer-term goal as the variety of property owners – residents in single family houses, small businesses, and restaurants – will make the parcel assembly here a time-consuming endeavor.

In **Section 5: Action**, the MW-DAP offers tools to create incentives to property owners to collaborate on parcel assembly so that financial benefits of land use changes and changes in allowed density consistent with the vision accrue in part, to them, instead of solely to developers.



## Mariner's Way - Central (MW-Central)

MW-Central, visibly concentrated between the access and exit points for I-95, supports the vision for Mariner's Way with a concept for Destination Development with accessory dining, retail, recreation, sport and marine activities.

### MW-Central Concept

It's all about location. The development, land uses, and activities in MW-Central offer unique opportunities for visitors and residents. A Connecticut Food and Wine Center offers a showcase of regional and state farms, vineyards, breweries, and food businesses. In addition to the retail store, there is a small visitor center and an educational facility that offers short-term and longer-term classes and programs on cooking, small batch libations, and an ocean twist on the farm-to-table movement. Partnerships with local businesses include stay packages at hotels and inns and discount dining at restaurants. A bike rental and sale shop is located on the south side of the corridor adjacent to the shared-use path and nature trail. Recreation and sports retail is located here and an adventure course/zipline destination weaves throughout the southern edge of a few properties, adjacent to the nature trail. Restaurants with outdoor eating areas are dotted around the trail and the Food and Wine Center. The Connecticut Audubon Society has a visitor center here where its Eco Travel and Roger Tory Peterson Estuary Center operations share space with other businesses. In some of the deeper parcels, marine uses can thrive. Interconnected sites make visits to multiple destinations safe and easy.

The *MW-DAP* recommends Destination Development at MW-Central for three reasons:

- The high visibility and convenient access from I-95 make this location ideal for a regional destination and visitor attraction, providing a gateway to other businesses and visitor destinations in town which can support all local businesses and a healthy Town Center and visitor economy;



### MW-WEST CONNECTIONS CONCEPT

*Its high visibility for visitors between I-95 exits, as well as larger parcels, make MW-Central ripe for near-term action.*

- There is room enough for thriving businesses to remain and benefit from the near-term action of probable redevelopment; and
- Parcels to the south of the corridor are large enough to accommodate a range of development options and many of them are under one-ownership. Potential development tools can provide a thoughtful, cohesive approach to redevelopment of Mariner's Way while allowing existing smaller businesses on the corridor to remain and thrive. Smaller parcel owners to the north side of the road are interested in collaborations for site assembly, making themed uses and complementary development easier and providing the opportunity for a range of scales for redevelopment more impactful for the town.

### Property Information and Key Attributes

Owners of properties on the north side of MW-Central are interested in redevelopment. They have expressed a desire to discuss combining parcels to get larger development sites or to participate in business and development recruitment efforts made by the Town. To have ready and willing property owners on board on this northern side of the corridor offers a significant opportunity for near-term positive change.

A number of properties on the southern side of the corridor are vacant and underdeveloped brownfields (meaning these properties have environmental issues in the buildings and the soil) that present their own redevelopment challenges but also offer a chance to recruit unique uses that could have a significant positive impact on the image of the corridor and the Town's tax base.



## Program and Design

For MW-Central to achieve a program of Destination Development, it is important to cluster complementary recreational and visitor destinations to create density and visibility. The concept relies on marketing a critical mass of Destination Development to create a competitive edge for the town outside the boundaries of the traditional office/retail market analysis. This concept provides a mix of offerings including a food and wine visitor center with an educational component, local food outlets and restaurants highlighting local agriculture, aquaculture, and associated recreation that ties to the shared-use path and off-road trail. The concept could be a regional destination that sets the corridor apart. A successful destination would also support restaurants and associated retail that build on the theme of food, nature, libations, and education.

There are two possibilities for the location of a destination center in the central area of Mariner's Way and these are explored below. Each has some variation of the showcase/visitor center for Connecticut wineries, breweries, restaurants, farms and complementary program elements, such as:

- Culinary Center
- Cooking Classes, wine tasting/beer making, microbrewing classes
- Commercial kitchen
- Professional or Adult Continuing Education and similar uses
- Culinary Incubator (commercial kitchen rental for



*Micro breweries with outdoor dining and farm-to-table restaurants and programming can support a unique destination theme on Mariner's Way.*  
Source: [blackshirtbrewingco.blogspot.com](http://blackshirtbrewingco.blogspot.com)

- food entrepreneurs)
- Farm-to-table restaurant
- Fine Crafts – classes and groups (glassblowing, woodworking, jewelry making, etc.)
- Gifts (tourism/gift shop)
- Link to UCONN, New Haven University or other area colleges

Additional uses here would build on this destination center and could include recreational and sports retail. Two possibilities include Orvis or REI, both of which combine traditional retail with classes and tours exploring the outdoors and focused on skills such as boating, hiking, fishing, and biking. These tours would support the goal of creating a regional or state-wide outdoors visitor and experience destination on Mariner's Way.



*Outdoor outfitters such as Orvis and REI offer classes and tours in addition to traditional retail.*  
Source: [fclbuilders.com/showcase/retail-and-commercial/rei-schaumburg/](http://fclbuilders.com/showcase/retail-and-commercial/rei-schaumburg/)

Other uses to keep in mind include marine/ maritime uses including boats, small watercraft sales, fishing (tours and equipment), classes and licensing services, maritime education, and combined adult/youth education combined with nature education. There is potential to link some of these to area schools and colleges.

An adventure course and/or zip line venue also could build on the recreation theme here in the middle of the corridor.



*A Tree Top Walkway, similar to the Wild Center Sky Walk, could provide access to birds-eye views of the Connecticut River and tidal marshes with passive recreational opportunities for nature observers.*  
Source: [www.wildcenter.org](http://www.wildcenter.org)



*Monkey Trunks in Saco Maine is an example of an zipline/ adventure course that may be a future use that would come after key destinations are in place.*  
Source: [panaramio.com](http://panaramio.com), Bryan Kiechle

In addition, over time, there may be a market for additional hospitality options in the town at or near this location.



*Recreation Classes at Institute of Culinary Education in New York City are an example of the offerings that could be provided on Mariner's Way. Food tourism and the interest increase in healthy cooking and local food are trends that Old Saybrook can serve well.*  
Source: <https://www.ice.edu/about-us/school-of-recreational-cooking>

## CASE STUDY

### New York Wine & Culinary Center – Canandaigua, NY

The New York Wine & Culinary Center is a non-profit that has been open for over a decade, and that is a place to educate and engage people on local food and drink. This venture began with the goal of bringing tourists to the Finger Lakes region to partake in “culinary tourism” and it provides access to all of the attractions it was founded upon – locally produced food, wine, and beer. The concept was brought to life through the partnership of corporations, Constellation Brands and Wegmans Food Markets, academic institutions like Rochester Institute of Technology, and the non-profit New York Wine and Grape Foundation. Located in upstate New York in the Finger Lakes region, not only is the center surrounded with native beauty but it also has access to a robust amount of local resources – vineyards, locally grown fruits and vegetables, and various microbreweries.



*Cooking classes at the Wine and Culinary Center in Canandaigua, NY. Source: [www.leisuregrouptravel.com/canandaigua-a-taste-of-the-finger-lakes/](http://www.leisuregrouptravel.com/canandaigua-a-taste-of-the-finger-lakes/)*

#### Sources:

<https://www.nywcc.com>

[http://www.ftimes.com/news/business/constellation-donates-to-ny-wine-culinary-center/article\\_e1df27ce-a98a-11e5-930d-13c914e66bc3.html](http://www.ftimes.com/news/business/constellation-donates-to-ny-wine-culinary-center/article_e1df27ce-a98a-11e5-930d-13c914e66bc3.html)

[http://www.ftimes.com/news/win-win-for-geneva-all-projects-to-share-part-of/article\\_d585c9de-5428-11e7-b586-07a4e90274ea.html](http://www.ftimes.com/news/win-win-for-geneva-all-projects-to-share-part-of/article_d585c9de-5428-11e7-b586-07a4e90274ea.html)

<https://wishesndishes.com/new-york-wine-culinary-center/>

<http://www.latimes.com/travel/la-tr-ny-finger-lakes-20171001-story.html>

[http://www.ftimes.com/news/a-conversation-with-john-berndt-general-manager-of-the-new/article\\_3806ceea-78e3-11e6-9d73-3776f5d91702.html](http://www.ftimes.com/news/a-conversation-with-john-berndt-general-manager-of-the-new/article_3806ceea-78e3-11e6-9d73-3776f5d91702.html)

The Center initially aimed at attracting visitors from around the world to visit upstate New York and experience “New York agriculture and viticulture.” The Center offers classes, tastings and festivals, and a bistro and boutique. In 2016, new management adjusted the offerings, with a focus on 30% of its efforts on programming and classes, 30% on developing and educating local industry, and 30% on medical related health and teaching.

As a non-profit organization, funding has come from many different sources. In June of 2017, the New York Governor announced that the Finger Lakes Region will be receiving a \$10 million grant to revitalize the region. Though this funding cannot be directly attributed to the New York Wine & Culinary Center, the Governor also announced that in partnership with the Center an additional \$5 million would be invested into converting a Visitors Center into the Finger Lakes Welcome Center. This partnership will further the Center’s goal of attracting people from around the world to upstate New York and supporting local businesses.

The Center has contributed to the region in ways that go beyond its initial motivation. The region now attracts entrepreneurial efforts like the Twisted Rail Brewery that was funded by a Downtown Revitalization Grant, creating an ecosystem of breweries, vineyards, and culinary offerings to increase its visitor opportunities.



*Source: [www.tripadvisor.com/LocationPhotoDirectLink-g47405-d1067408-i107797449-New\\_York\\_Wine\\_Culinary\\_Center-Canandaigua\\_Finger\\_Lakes\\_New\\_York.html](http://www.tripadvisor.com/LocationPhotoDirectLink-g47405-d1067408-i107797449-New_York_Wine_Culinary_Center-Canandaigua_Finger_Lakes_New_York.html)*



*The private dining area at the Wine and Culinary Center. Source: [www.lecesseconstruction.com/page/portfolio/commercial/newyorkwineandculinarycenter](http://www.lecesseconstruction.com/page/portfolio/commercial/newyorkwineandculinarycenter)*



### MW-Central Concept 1 – South Side of Route 1

The larger parcels and concentrated property ownership on the south side of Route 1 lend themselves to a packaged development where either the property owners, through collaboration and coordination with the Town, actively recruit and assemble use and businesses/developers, or, sells parcels to an entrepreneur/developer team that will pursue this concept. Options for a packaged development option are shown here in Concept 1.



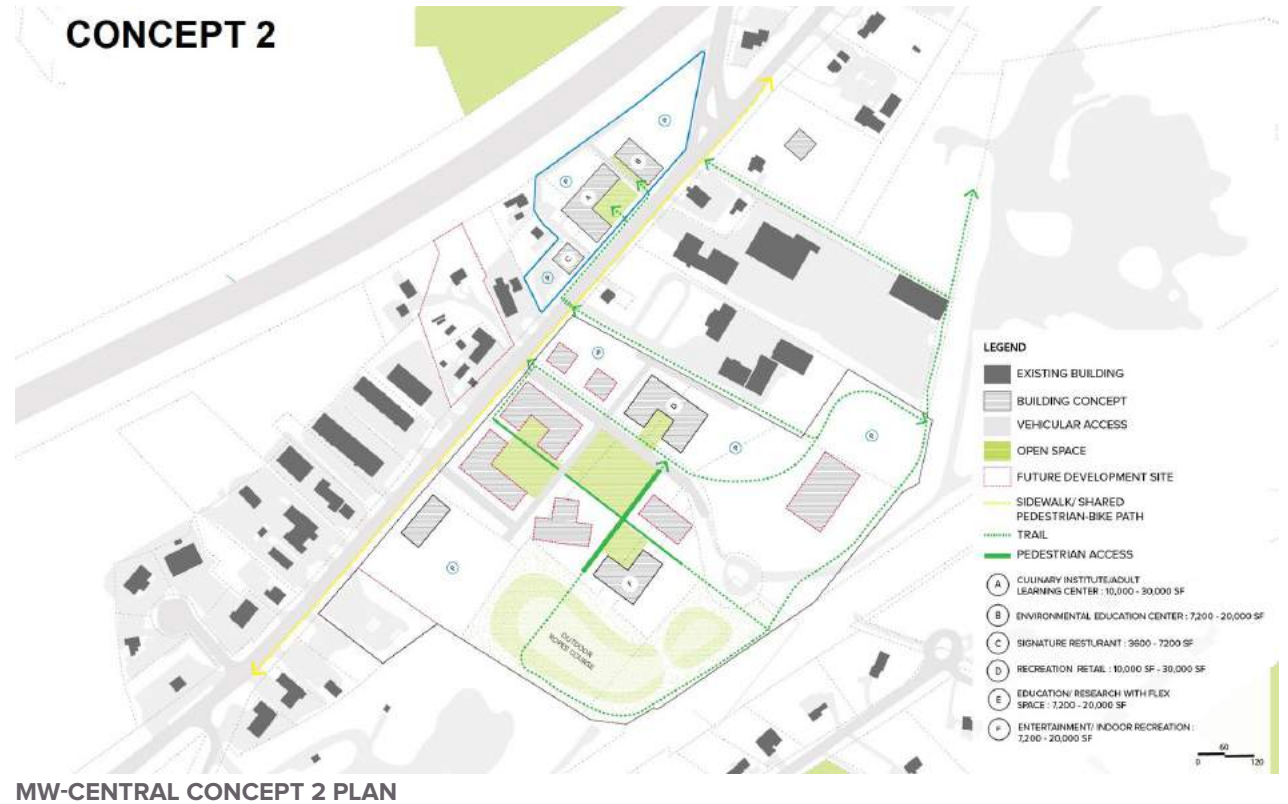
MW-CENTRAL CONCEPT 1 PLAN



Rendering of potential view on south side of Route 1.

## MW-Central Concept 2 – North Side of Route 1

The north side of the corridor is home to some businesses and property owners who are interested in exploring potential redevelopment options within the framework of the plan. Here, the smaller parcel sizes would necessitate parcel assembly and some degree of owner cooperation. A food and wine center concept on this side of Mariner's Way would be a smaller endeavor than the packaged full development presented in Concept 1 and would allow development in a smaller, step-by-step process with the center coming first and then associated retail, recreation, and larger dining venues complementing a visitor center on the south side of the corridor.



**The program and design of MW-Central fit with the vision for the Plan by:**

- Increasing visitors to the town to support existing businesses;
- Developing visitor recreation and educational uses providing more foot traffic along the shared-use path and proposed nature trail;
- Connecting a variety of facilities and amenities along the length of the shared-use path creating interesting interim destinations between Town Center and Ferry Point;
- Sharing the responsibilities and investment across multiple partners including the Town of Old Saybrook, private entrepreneurs, RiverCOG, regional farms, wineries and breweries, local food and dining entrepreneurs, and colleges or universities; and
- Improving properties along the corridor to increase their contribution to the Town's commercial tax base.

**Phasing and Timing**

With local entrepreneurs exploring the viability of a state food and wine center in Old Saybrook and willing property owners, this portion of the corridor is ripe for near-term development. During this planning process, potential collaborators on a food and wine center were gathered to discuss the concept with continued conversations anticipated. At the same time, willing property owners on the north side of Route 1 are quite interested in exploring redevelopment options.

Other possibilities that are ripe include discussions with the Connecticut Audubon Society about locating its Eco Travel and/or Roger Tory Peterson Estuary Center here. Focus on nature in the built environment could be a unique take on the traditional nature center and is appropriate for Mariner's Way, particularly with the possibility of nature trails and the existence of a shared-use path to connect to Ferry Point and the Connecticut River. **Section 5: Action** outlines next steps.





## Mariner's Way - East (MW-East)

This portion of Mariner's Way connects to Ferry Point and has spectacular views of the water.

### MW-East Concept

Life-long residents of Old Saybrook live here at Gladeview, able to downsize and simplify their lives while staying connected with the community and continuing to be a vital part of civic life. Apartment and condominium living centers around amenities such as an indoor pool, walking paths that connect to the water and downtown, and a community clubhouse. Adding to the appeal of this community is the continuum of care offered by the renovated and modernized Gladeview Rehabilitation and Health Care Center on the site. The living community here has programming and educational offerings that are open to the general public and also collaborates with the Food and Wine Center to offer senior classes and Road Scholar programs for seniors around the world.

The *MW-DAP* recommends high-end senior living development in MW-East for four reasons:

- The Gladeview property is approximately 22 acres and offers spectacular views of the Connecticut River. The qualities of the site offer many positive attributes for higher-end residential development.
- The demographics of Old Saybrook show over 40% of the town's population is over 55 years old. Seniors will be looking for downsizing options and a continuum of care as they age.
- The average household income within a 10-minute drive of Mariner's Way is \$104,000. The combined older and wealthier population of the town provides a robust market for luxury senior housing.
- Existing trails on the property boundary to the south could link to an off-road trail along Mariner's Way, providing a strong link to water views and nature/open space that provide an amenity for all residents and a strong connection to Ferry Point.



**MW-EAST CONNECTIONS CONCEPT**

Founded as ElderHostel in 1975, the rebranding of this international adult educational travel organization in 2010 to Road Scholar reflects the active lifestyle and market power of today's seniors. Today, Road Scholar offers 5,500 learning adventures, serving more than 100,000 participants annually.

Generally, for the over 50 traveler and life-long learner, Road Scholar partners with local educational and learning opportunities around the world and could be a vital component of the *Mariner's Way Plan* that extends the visitor season and provides offerings for local residents.

Source: <https://www.roadscholar.org/>



## Property Information and Key Attributes

To the east, past the exit for I-95, the corridor becomes more residential and the Gladeview property, offering a spectacular view of the Connecticut River, tidal marshes, and Long Island Sound sits on the south side of Mariner's Way. This large parcel transitions to smaller single-family residential parcels to the east with a large industrial use parcel to the west and south.

## Program and Design

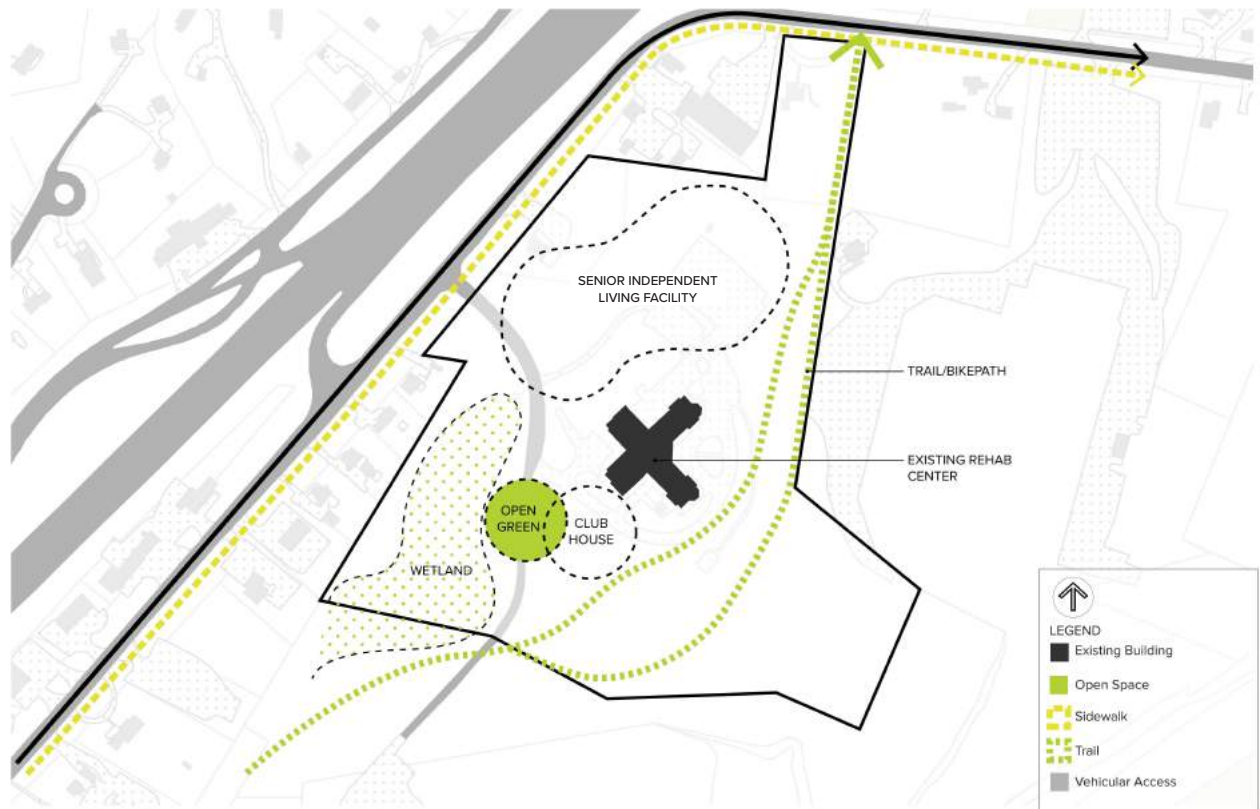
The older demographic of the town provides an opportunity to think about amenity-rich retirement living opportunities at Gladeview and in other areas at Ferry Point. With a strong connection via a shared-use path and possible off-road trails through the Gladeview property, a density of senior living units with complementary uses here could create a strong anchor for the corridor and an activity node that helps make a connection to Ferry Point and the Connecticut River.

### The program and design of MW-East fit with the vision for the Plan by:

- Providing senior living options for the aging demographic in the town;
- Increasing density at the east end of Mariner's Way to create an activity anchor and potential larger market for the corridor businesses;
- Allowing opportunities for public access easements for a nature trail on the southern edge of the property; and
- Adding senior programming and spaces that could be complementary to any destination uses in the central portion of the corridor for adult education and possible Roads Scholar programs.

## Phasing and Timing

Gladeview is a privately-owned property and rehabilitation/health care business. The property owner participated in discussions during the planning process and outreach efforts. It is important to note, however, that these suggestions are offered for



### MW-EAST CONCEPT PLAN

consideration for this site with the understanding that the owners have full control over redevelopment decisions. While this Plan can offer recommendations for incentives for the desired development and public amenities, decisions will ultimately be up to the property owners. Redevelopment of the Gladeview property could support the organization's existing mission while offering higher-end senior housing with amenities on other portions of the site.



## #2: Enhanced connectivity and associated amenities

*What if it were easy to hop on a bike and travel from the Saybrook Point Inn to Ferry Point? If a sunny Saturday in May found residents and visitors walking along a shared-use path to enjoy dining opportunities or socialize with friends? If clear signage and pedestrian amenities such as benches, water fountains, and nature trail signs provided a great family outing and made the town's natural assets highly accessible?*

Mariner's Way is the corridor that connects Ferry Point and the Connecticut River with the core of Old Saybrook and serves as a main gateway to the town from I-95. This vision creates a multi-modal connector and destination and recommends the associated amenities to ensure that the character of Mariner's Way fits with the character and goals of Old Saybrook. Recommendations for streetscape improvements, prepared by Freeman Companies, part of the CivicMoxie team, are provided below. These recommendations improve roadway conditions, create a shared-use path for cyclists and pedestrians, provide overall design standards and a unified image, and outline a cohesive wayfinding framework. Components of the vision offered here include:

- Overall streetscape and shared-use path plan;
- Nature trail;
- Streetscape amenities including wayfinding; and
- Design standards.



*With a lack of sidewalks, no clearly marked bike lanes, and auto-oriented uses set back from the right-of-way, Mariner's Way is not a welcoming connector and destination, nor does it reflect the character of the town.*



## Overall streetscape and shared-use plan

As an integral part of the Town's efforts to revitalize Mariner's Way, these proposed streetscape improvements will enhance pedestrian and bicycle circulation while improving general connectivity and physical conditions between Town Center and the Connecticut River. Coordinated streetscape improvements will also support the overall goal to transform Mariner's Way into a destination and gateway to recreation and natural assets of the Connecticut River.

The streetscape plan for Mariner's Way was split into three separate types due to distinctly different existing conditions along the length of the roadway, and two of the types involved more than one possible concept:

- Type A/MW-West: nearest the Old Saybrook Train Station, two concepts;
- Type B/MW-Central: central part of the corridor, three concepts;
- Type C/MW-East: nearest Ferry Road, one concept.

The Mariner's Way BAR Advisory Committee selected one concept for each roadway type for the purpose of having the consultant team prepare conceptual construction cost estimates. The selected concepts are the ones presented here.



### STREETSCAPE SECTIONS BY PHYSICAL CHARACTER

*There are three conditions along the length of Mariner's Way; streetscape improvements have been categorized according to the characteristics of Route 1 in these segments. Source: Freeman Companies*



## Type A/ MW-West

This section of roadway is nearest to the Old Saybrook Train Station.

Existing opportunities and constraints:

- Wide roadway pavement (56' +/-);
- Wide Right-Of-Way (ROW) (121' +/- minimum);
- No pedestrian or bicycle facilities;
- Very few driveway openings; and
- Forms gateway to Mariner's Way.

The proposed streetscape improvements for this section of Mariner's Way include a boulevard with bicycle sharrows and a pedestrian walk. The proposed changes include:

- Landscaped median with columnar trees;
- Sharrows for bicycles, walks for pedestrians;
- Overall roadway width increased 2' to accommodate median;
- Pedestrian scale ornamental lights;
- Street trees on south side of roadway;
- Gateway landscaping and signage; and
- Decorative crosswalks.

Benefits of this proposed plan include:

- Aesthetic improvement with landscaped median;
- Reduced impervious pavement;
- Sharrows make motorists aware of bicyclists on the road;
- Maintains two travel lanes in both directions; and
- Pedestrians separated from road by lawn and street trees.

Potential negative factors:

- Increased overall roadway width.



**TYPE A/MW-WEST STREETSCAPE EXISTING CONDITIONS**

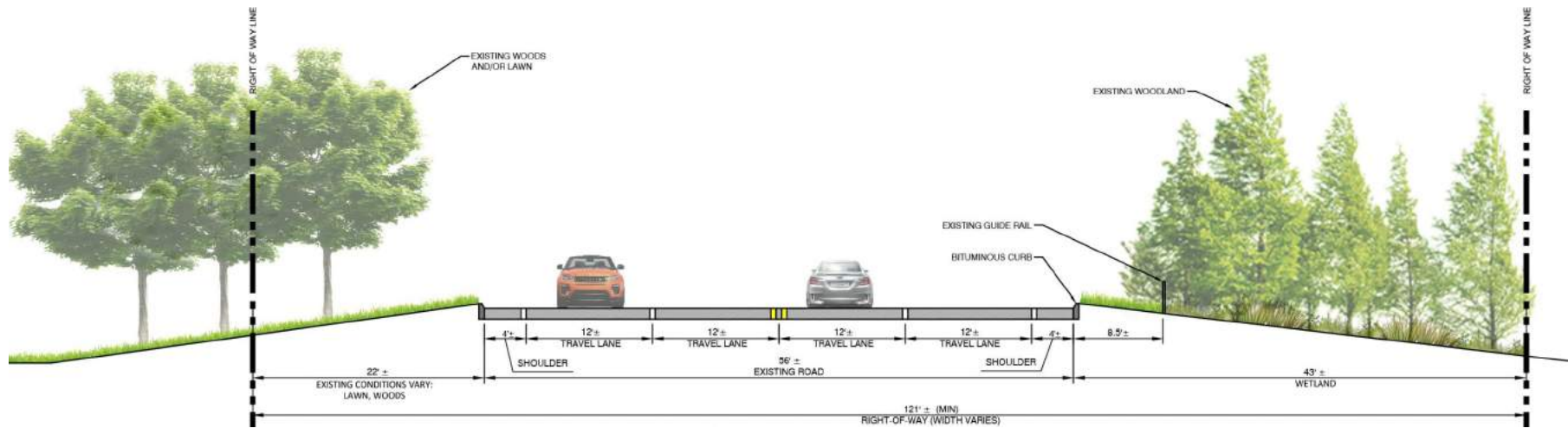
Source: Freeman Companies



**TYPE A/MW-WEST PROPOSED STREETSCAPE AND ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS**

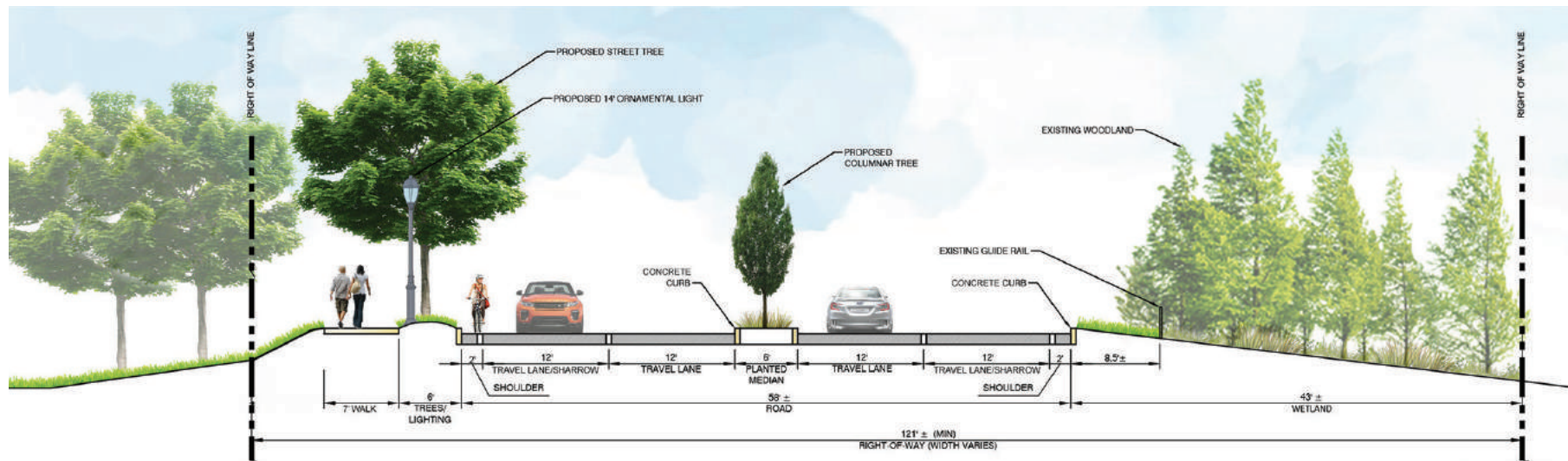
Boulevard with bicycle sharrows and separate pedestrian sidewalk. Source: Freeman Companies





### TYPE A/MW-WEST EXISTING STREETSCAPE SECTION

Source: Freeman Companies



### TYPE A/MW-WEST PROPOSED STREETSCAPE SECTION

Boulevard with bicycle sharrows and separate pedestrian sidewalk. Source: Freeman Companies

## Type B/ MW-Central

This portion of the streetscape improvements is located in the middle section of the corridor.

Existing opportunities and constraints:

- Multiple driveway entrances to single properties;
- Very wide driveway entrances;
- Wide roadway pavement (36' +/-);
- No pedestrian or bicycle facilities;
- Existing shoulders have inconsistent width;
- Front yard parking; and
- Business displays within front yard and/or ROW.

The proposed streetscape improvements for this section of Mariner's Way include on-road bicycle lanes and a pedestrian walk. The proposed changes include:

- Pavement width increased 4' to accommodate shoulder and bicycle lanes on both sides, which permit left turn bypass;
- Pedestrian sidewalk;
- Street trees on south side;
- Pedestrian scale ornamental lights;
- Minimize width of driveway aprons;
- Ornamental trees on north side (due to overhead utilities); and
- Consider combining curb cuts (see Appendix G).

Benefits of this proposed plan include:

- Dedicated bicycle lanes in both directions;
- Separation of cyclists and pedestrians;
- Ability to bypass vehicles making left hand turn; and
- Standard sized sidewalk separated from road.

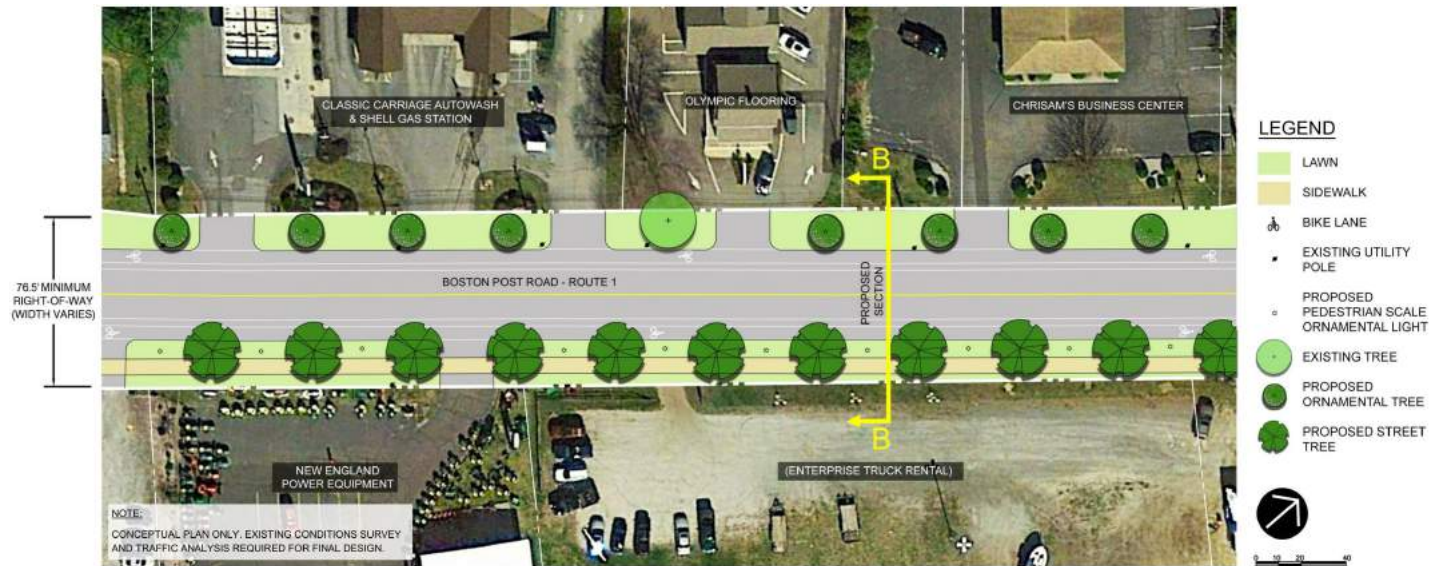
Potential negative factors:

- Increased pavement width.



**TYPE B/MW-CENTRAL STREETSCAPE EXISTING CONDITIONS**

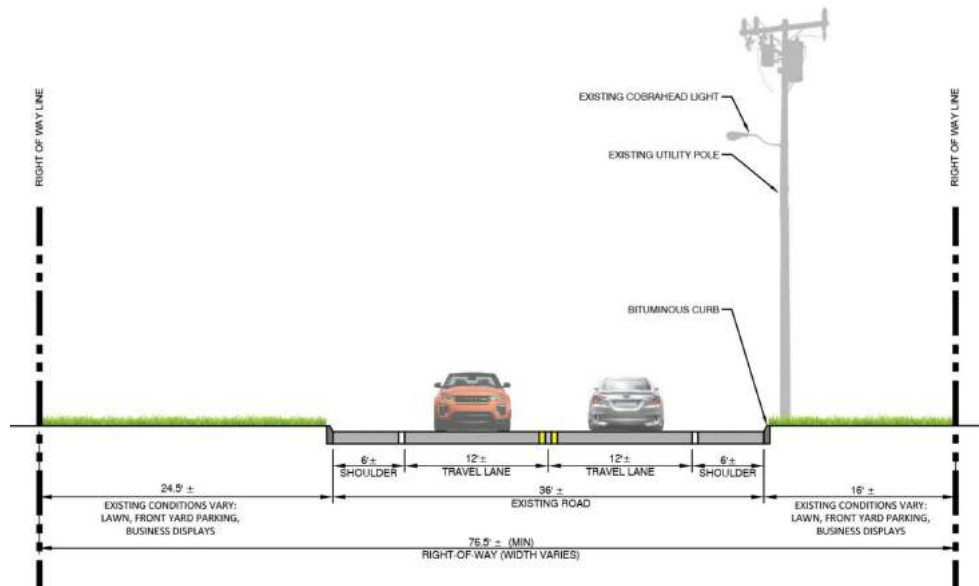
Source: Freeman Companies



**TYPE B/MW-CENTRAL PROPOSED STREETSCAPE AND ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS.**

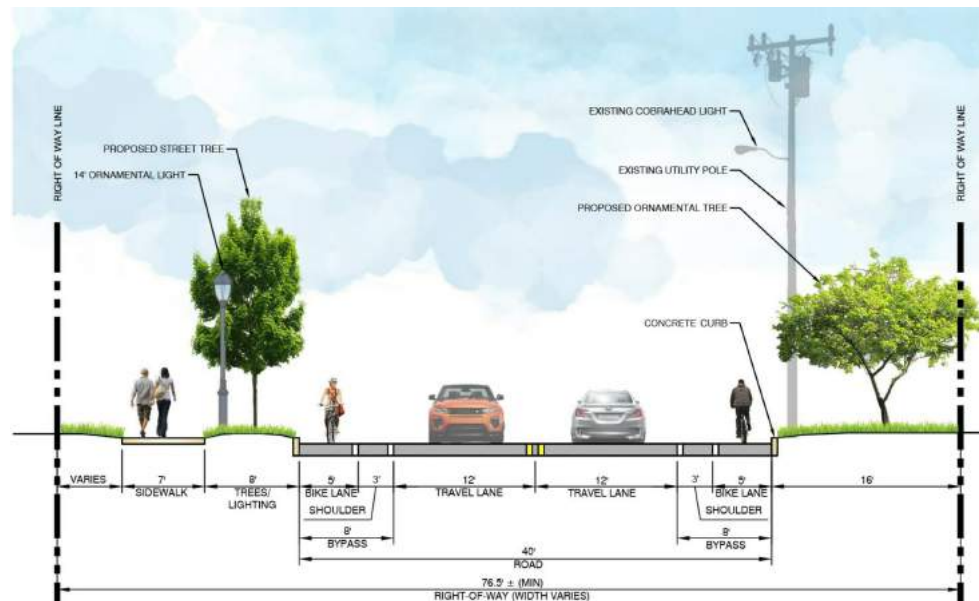
On-road bicycle lanes in each direction and pedestrian sidewalk on south side. Source: Freeman Companies





### TYPE B/MW-CENTRAL EXISTING STREETSCAPE SECTION

Source: Freeman Companies



### TYPE B/MW-CENTRAL PROPOSED STREETSCAPE SECTION

On-road bicycle lanes in each direction and pedestrian sidewalk on south side.

Source: Freeman Companies

## Type C/ MW-East

This section of the roadway is nearest Ferry Point.

Existing opportunities and constraints:

- No pedestrian or bicycle facilities;
- Narrower pavement – more residential feel;
- Wide driveway openings; and
- Proximity to highway sound barrier.

The proposed streetscape improvements for this section of Mariner's Way include on-road bicycle lanes and a pedestrian walk. The proposed changes include:

- Road diet – pavement width reduced by 8' (no shoulder);
- Pedestrian sidewalk;
- Sharrows on both sides; and
- Proposed ornamental and evergreen trees on north side of existing road to enhance vegetation in front of sound barrier.

Benefits of this proposed plan include:

- Road diet;
- Sharrows;
- Separated cyclists and pedestrians; and
- Standard size sidewalk separated from road.

Potential negative factors:

- No dedicated bicycle lanes.



**TYPE C/MW-EAST STREETSCAPE EXISTING CONDITIONS**

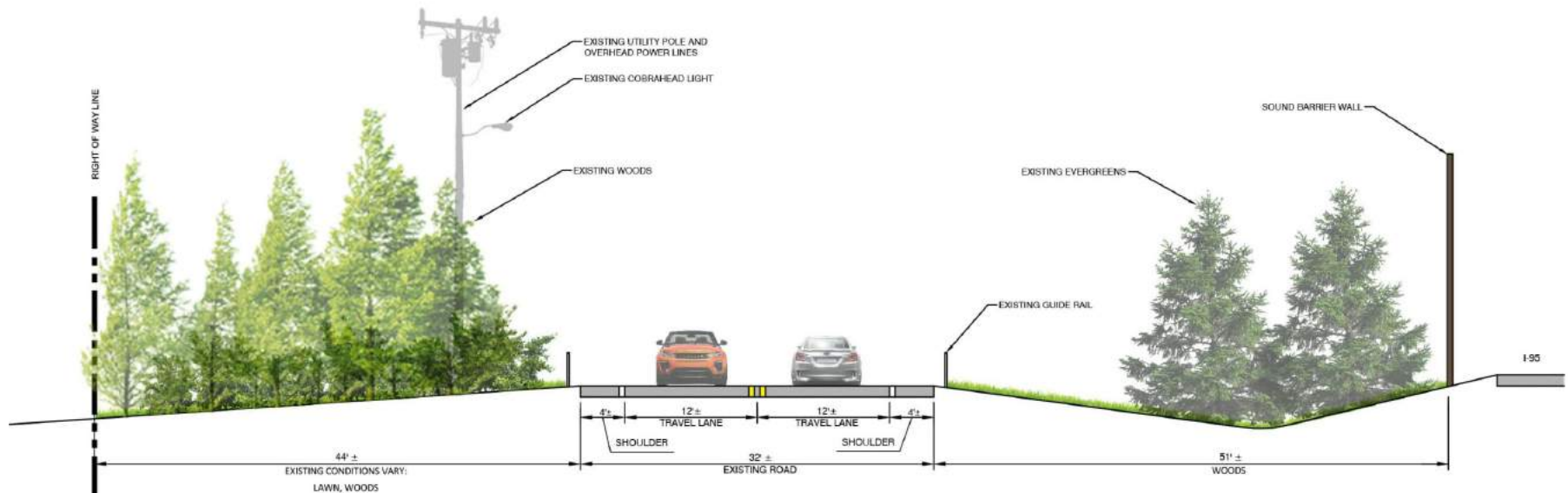
Source: Freeman Companies



**TYPE C/MW-EAST PROPOSED STREETSCAPE AND ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS.**

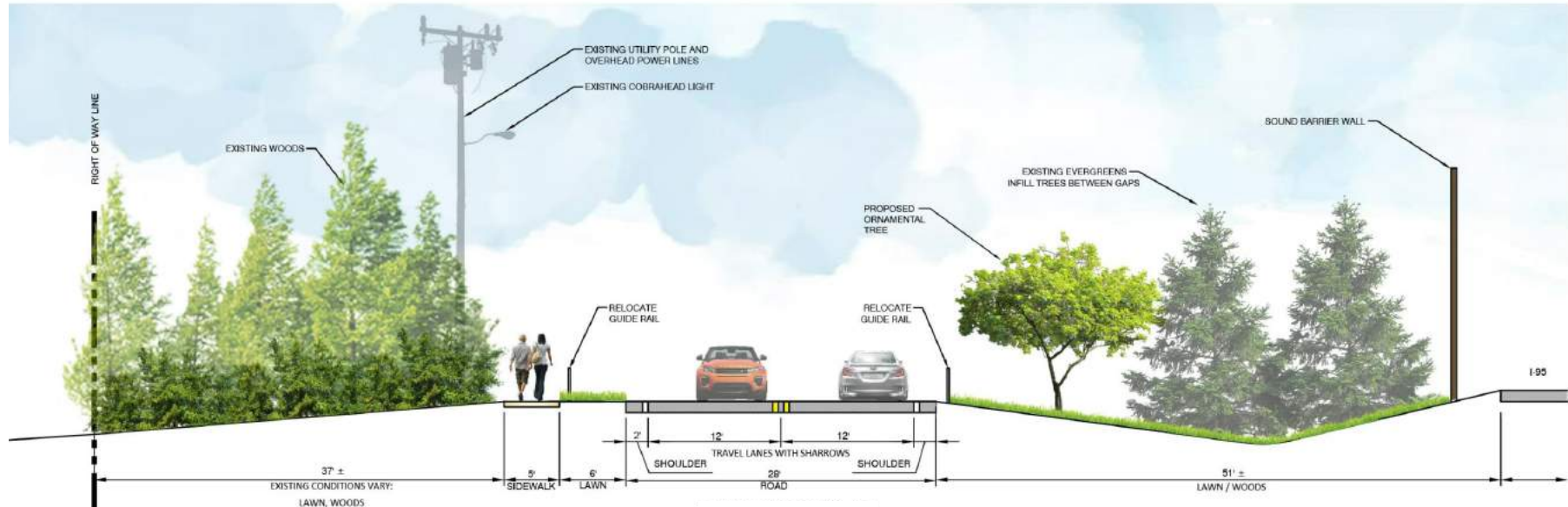
Sharrows on both sides and pedestrian sidewalk on south side. Source: Freeman Companies





### TYPE C/MW-EAST EXISTING STREETSCAPE SECTION

Source: Freeman Companies



### TYPE C/MW-EAST PROPOSED STREETSCAPE SECTION

Sharrows on both sides and pedestrian sidewalk on south side. Source: Freeman Companies

## Nature Trail

The streetscape improvements illustrated above use the existing Route 1 Right-Of-Way (ROW) on the southern side of the road to accommodate a shared-use path. An additional off-road nature trail is suggested for select private properties to provide views to natural areas, and create an accessible and user-friendly circulation network that encourages recreational use and enhances the image of the corridor as a connector and destination for the Connecticut River and town offerings.

While the streetscape and shared-use path improvements in the public ROW can be constructed as a package, the proposed nature trail is located on private property and it is envisioned that segments will be developed over time as individual property owners agree to public use easements and/or when property changes ownership.

It is recommended that the Town develop guidelines and policies for the Nature Trail. There are many different possible models for public trails on private property; the Trust for Public Land is a resource for trail planning and can offer information on liability insurance, easements, maintenance, and cost.



Source: [www.tripadvisor.com/LocationPhotoDirectLink-g34060-d138300-i31722847-Winterthur\\_Museum\\_Garden\\_Library-Winterthur\\_Delaware.html](http://www.tripadvisor.com/LocationPhotoDirectLink-g34060-d138300-i31722847-Winterthur_Museum_Garden_Library-Winterthur_Delaware.html)



Source: [www.berlinresort.net/walking-path/](http://www.berlinresort.net/walking-path/)

## Streetscape amenities including wayfinding

Potential streetscape furnishings, plant palette choices, and examples of wayfinding signage are provided here to offer guidance for additional Mariner's Way improvements that can enhance facilities for pedestrians and cyclists and provide a cohesive image. All of these improvements support existing corridor businesses and aid in the recruitment of new uses to Mariner's Way. Amenities include:

- Crosswalk paving;
- Benches, trash cans, charging stations, and bike racks;
- Lighting;
- Plantings and trees; and
- Signage – wayfinding and interpretive natural areas signage.

## Crosswalk paving

Crosswalks along Mariner's Way can be unique additions that enhance the character of the corridor and reinforce the Mariner's Way theme. In addition to concrete pavers, crosswalks can be painted to reflect themes. Competitions to design the templates can be a method to involve the larger town population in improvements and make the corridor "everyone's" Mariner's Way.



Crosswalk markings can be whimsical and also reinforce the Mariner's Way theme with stenciled patterns and imagery that connects to the Connecticut River and waterfront. Here is an example of a "creative crosswalk."  
Source: [www.pinterest.com](http://www.pinterest.com)



## Benches, trash cans, charging stations, and bike racks

The goal for Mariner's Way is to have destinations scattered along the length of the corridor, inviting visitors and residents. Benches for pedestrians, bike racks for cyclists, and solar charging stations should be placed at regular intervals at existing businesses along the corridor and at destination businesses, such as restaurants, educational facilities, or other retail opportunities. As new development occurs along Mariner's Way, property owners/developers or business owners could be required to add these amenities, which should be standardized for a cohesive image.



Bike racks on Mariner's Way should support the theme of the corridor and can have a nautical flair or incorporate the Mariner's Way logo, in the style of the examples shown here. Coupled with themed crosswalks, these branded amenities begin to raise the visibility of the corridor and add some fun for visitors and residents.

Source: <https://yovenice.com/2015/05/29/new-bike-racks-installed-on-ocean-front-walk/> and <https://www.pinterest.com/avadream/bike-racks/>

In addition to bike racks, benches and trash cans can carry the theme of Mariner's Way.



Benches and trash cans along the corridor can support the theme of Mariner's Way. Examples here show how these elements can be customized, often by artists, to create unique streetscape elements.  
Source: <https://segd.org/central-park-trash-and-recycling-receptacles>

## Planting Trees

A conceptual plant palette for Mariner's Way is presented below.



Conceptual plant palette for Mariner's Way.  
Source: Freeman Companies

## Lighting

Pedestrian scale ornamental lighting on the corridor should be installed along the shared-use path. Newer models that incorporate solar charging would be an appropriate solution for Mariner's Way and could tie into the destination theme of the central corridor regarding nature and marine education.



These solar-powered lights could be an energy-efficient and appropriate solution to shared-use pathway lighting on Mariner's Way.  
Source: <http://www.greenshine-solar.com/solar-park-lighting.html>

## Signage – wayfinding and interpretive natural areas signage

Creating one strong image of the corridor will help create an identity for Mariner's Way and enable the roadway to truly be a connector to everything the town has to offer, both here, and in other Old Saybrook locations.



*The Mariner's Way logo should be used in all wayfinding and incorporated into other streetscape elements and marketing materials to ensure there is a consistent brand image for the corridor.*

Cohesive signage and a fresh logo will make it easier to navigate the corridor as well as ensure that Mariner's Way offers strong connections for visitors to support existing retail on Main Street and coastal recreation.



*Concepts for signage on Mariner's Way.*



## Design standards

Current corridor land uses and site design follow a dated model of auto-dependent land uses, large parking areas in front of buildings at the street, and a lack of sidewalks, signage, and landscaping. The vision for the corridor is one of a cohesive place that exhibits a unified and compelling identity. This is accomplished through a variety of tools including allowed land uses, a unified streetscape, and comprehensive wayfinding plan. In addition, design standards that are incorporated into zoning and other regulatory requirements can provide guidance to developers and property owners and ensure there is a consistent treatment of property in the corridor:

- Building patterns
  - The goal is for a more finely grained environment that more closely mimics the traditional New England town. As such, large footprint buildings with blank walls should not be allowed. Maximum size footprints should be established.
  - Sidewalks, landscaping, and pathways should be required internally to create good connectivity and encourage pedestrian activity.
  - Parking should be placed on the periphery of development sites, where possible, to create a sense of “place,” emphasizing public space and connectedness, not large expanses of asphalt.
- Setbacks from the street
  - Buildings should be no more than 25' from the public ROW.
  - Parking should be located at the side or rear of buildings, where possible.
  - For parcels on the south side of the corridor, parking areas should be coordinated with the nature trail placement to ensure that the trail is activated by adjacent ground floor uses where possible. Adjacent retail, dining, or other commercial space can help bring visibility to the trail and encourage public activity.

## CASE STUDY

### Mashpee Common – Cape Cod, MA

As the first retrofit of a strip shopping center, which was not unlike some of the larger vacant parcels on Mariner’s Way, Mashpee Commons, located on Cape Cod, is an excellent example of the building patterns and site circulation goals for Mariner’s Way.

Mashpee Commons, located in the Town of Mashpee on Cape Cod, was the nation’s first retrofit of a strip shopping center into a mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly town center. Built in the 1960s, Mashpee Commons was originally a strip commercial center with a large asphalt parking lot in front. Then, in 1986, the shopping center began its transformation into a development reminiscent of a traditional New England downtown. The original strip center had a few stores, a restaurant, and a theater. Today, Mashpee Commons not only has more than one hundred shops and restaurants, as well as a cinema, but also a library, church, post office, senior center, offices, and variety of housing units. The architecture reflects vernacular architecture of Cape Cod.

Source: <http://buildabetterburb.org/mashpee-commons/>

It should be noted that the desire is not for Mariner’s Way to mimic Old Saybrook Town Center, nor for it to host the exact uses at Mashpee Commons. Rather, this case is an illustration of how a change in the building patterns and circulation of a development site can transform perception and help support redevelopment and a new image.



*The aerial photograph of Mashpee Commons shows the smaller footprint buildings and internal site sidewalks that give this shopping area a more human scale. Ample landscaping and the placement of parking on the perimeter of the parcel contribute to a sense of “place” that has made this redeveloped shopping center a favorite for residents and visitors alike. The photo under shows the original strip shopping center.*

Source: <http://buildabetterburb.org/mashpee-commons/> and <https://www.cnu.org/what-we-do/build-great-places/mashpee-commons>

- Landscaping
  - Required trees, landscaping and buffers at parking, ground cover around buildings, and other landscaping requirements should be articulated clearly as part of design standards and zoning.
- Façade treatment
  - Buildings in the corridor should be at least 60% glass on the public-facing facades including Mariner's Way, and main entrances, where appropriate.
  - Long, blank walls along public facing areas should be prohibited.
- Nature trail placement and design
  - For properties that participate in providing a public-use nature trail on the south side of Mariner's Way, design guidelines should be developed to ensure that there is a cohesive design to the trail and that all public amenities are consistent.
- Signage
  - In addition to overall wayfinding, business signage should be regulated for consistency with the overall brand of Mariner's Way. This could include a requirement that the Mariner's Way logo be incorporated into site signage, that all signs be made of a particular material, and that back lit signs be forbidden on the corridor.

### #3: Support for activities and programming

*What if a major festival extended the shoulder season for tourism, supporting existing businesses during slower times? If programs offered seniors ongoing adult education opportunities and events on the corridor were coupled with programs and offerings throughout the town at small businesses, hotels, and cultural venues?*

Activities, festivals, and other events that support the success of Mariner's Way as a destination are encouraged and can be located in the corridor as well as sites throughout the town. Food and wine festivals, brewery showcases, and farmer days can all support destination uses while supporting existing businesses and the visitor economy throughout the town.

Unlike bricks and mortar projects which can take years to get shovel into the ground, events and activities can be planned in less time and can have the flexibility to meet exact needs. Specific goals for supporting activities, programming, and festivals on the Mariner's Way include:

- Creating a new image for the corridor to assist recruitment of businesses and development;
- Enabling near-term change while bricks and mortar projects are planned;
- Supporting existing businesses throughout the town by attracting more foot traffic and raising the visibility of Old Saybrook;
- Extending the tourist season through the time of festivals and events to support businesses; and
- Testing collaborations and identifying businesses, non-profits, and ideas that may be included in longer-term bricks and mortar enterprises.

There has already been interest by a number of parties for the concept of a food, wine, and beer theme to the central part of the corridor. Local business people, regional businesses, and RiverCOG are all working on ideas that are complementary and could combine to create a density of uses and interests to provide a visitor destination that is unique in Connecticut.

These potential collaborators could test the waters, so to speak, by exploring the hosting of a festival in town that would utilize some of the space along Mariner's Way as well as venues throughout the town, to exhibit and showcase local restaurants, farms, food education, wineries, and micro breweries. The event could start small and grow over time, building visibility and an image that will support any future plans for a food and wine/brewery education and visitor center. Recommended partners include the Chamber of Commerce and local and regional restaurants, cultural organizations, and business groups.



## CASE STUDY

### Savannah Food & Wine Festival – Savannah, GA

The Savannah Food & Wine Festival occurs in November of each year and was designed, in part, to boost the local economy in the slower tourist months. Savannah's festival is organized by a local non-profit that advocates for the visitor economy. The festival also raises money for charitable causes. The Georgia Department of Economic Development reported that in its first year, the festival attracted \$5.2 million of direct spending to the local economy.

This case is an illustration of how an event scheduled to not compete with other activities during the heavier tourist season can support the local businesses and community by extending the visitor economy.

Source: <https://www.tourismleadershipcouncil.com/events/savannah-food-and-wine-fest>



*The Savannah Food & Wine Festival provides support for the local economy during the slower tourist month of November.*

Source: [https://www.facebook.com/pg/SavannahFoodandWineFestival/photos/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/SavannahFoodandWineFestival/photos/?ref=page_internal)

## #4: Support for, and improvements to, existing businesses

*What if the scale of new development and associated shared-use pathways and a nature trail brought increased foot traffic and more customers to existing businesses? If the plan vision provided opportunities for existing property owners to work separately and together to sell or redevelopment their parcels, or explore new business ideas? If support for façade improvements and wayfinding enhancements increased curb appeal and helped all businesses on the corridor?*

This MW-DAP is committed to supporting existing businesses on the corridor. The recommended land uses and physical improvements are intended to be complementary to existing uses and to provide increased foot traffic and amenities that support a larger market of customers and enhanced image for businesses. Specifically, strategies for supporting existing businesses include:

- Recommending finely grained development rather than large footprint and big box uses with large parking areas;
- Instituting streetscape improvements to enhance the image of the corridor and businesses and encourage walkability and biking;
- Encouraging the establishment of a nature trail through private property easements on the southern edge of properties on the south side of Mariner's Way which will increase visibility for businesses;
- Providing excellent wayfinding to help visitors locate businesses and attractions; and
- Encouraging land uses that support recreation including marine/maritime uses and education.

## Conclusion

The vision presented in this report is based on a realistic understanding of the market forces at work and the availability of resources. The goals and recommendations of the Plan are proactive and focused on near-term and longer-term transformation of the corridor. Rather than wait for development proposals and the uncertainty that results from trying to assess what fits into a longer-range vision for the town and best fits the goals for the future, this Plan offers a strong vision that puts the Town in control of its future on Mariner's Way. Through public outreach, clear goals were identified for this corridor and a proactive approach offers the best chance for the Town to ensure it is not "settling" for the first proposal offered for redevelopment. Rather, this proactive approach supports careful and intentional decision. The next section of the plan, **Section 5: Action**, outlines strategies and tools, and responsibilities to guide the Town as it moves forward with implementation.



5



**ACTION**

## Introduction

This *Mariner's Way Discovery + Action Plan (MW-DAP)* is a vision with recommendations for the Mariner's Way corridor based on an 18-month study of the area, including market conditions and trends, community feedback, an assessment of resources, and tools for redevelopment. The action steps outlined here move the plan forward through the framework of four basic tools:

- **Economic Development Recruitment/Branding/Marketing**  
This plan provides the data and materials for use by the Town to recruit businesses and to craft a proactive approach to attracting the types of uses and activities desired for the corridor. Non-profits, arts and cultural organizations, and businesses can use the information to do their own research and determine how Mariner's Way and the goals of their initiatives are mutually beneficial.
- **Zoning Modification**  
Towns and cities are most successful in enabling positive change when zoning is proactive. Zoning for what is wanted is a constructive way to attract the types of developers and land uses that the Town wants. The zoning tools described in this plan ensure that development in the corridor meets the expectations of all involved in the *MW-DAP*.
- **Public Investments**  
Sometimes even small public investments can send big positive signals to businesses and investors. This plan outlines places where the Town can take the lead, showing that Mariner's Way is worthy of long-term private and public investment. The tools outlined here aren't all about money. Sometimes investment comes in the form of time, technical assistance, marketing materials, and other things that demonstrate the Town's commitment to a place or goal.
- **Placemaking**  
Placemaking is a planning term for populating a place with people and authentic activities and ensuring that public spaces are well designed and

enjoyable. Before any construction of bricks and mortar projects, activities and programs can set the tone for change, bring additional foot traffic to an area, and raise visibility. In the case of Mariner's Way, placemaking can support a new image for the corridor and new businesses that may locate here.

Together, these four tools provide a powerful means for change and identify the most realistic strategies providing the greatest return on investment from all parties involved. This section outlines key recommendations in the report, as well as what party would be responsible, and a time-frame for action. The Town of Old Saybrook, like all municipalities, has limited resources. The successful implementation of the strategies outlined in this study will depend on the collaboration of many parties—private, public, and non-profit. In addition, prioritization of action items is a must. The implementation table that follows highlights important first steps and identifies the resources necessary to move from planning to action.

### KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS FOR TABLES:

- *BAR AC* = Nine-member Brownfields Area-wide Revitalization (BAR) Planning Advisory Committee, consisting of Old Saybrook residents with a variety of backgrounds who also serve on other Town committees
- *EcD* = Economic Development staff
- *EDC* = Economic Development Commission
- *Finance* = Finance Department
- *LU* = Planning and Zoning staff
- *Nav Group* = Navigation Group, group of local and regional representatives of business and development, nonprofits, and institutions brought together during the planning process to advise on current market demands and climate, and community needs relevant to Mariner's Way
- *PC* = Planning Commission
- *ZC* = Zoning Commission
- *PW* = Public Works Department
- *DOT* = Connecticut Department of Transportation

## Economic Development Recruitment/Branding/Marketing

The action recommendations listed below focus on maintaining the momentum of this planning process through communication, collaboration, and active outreach. Priorities for action include recruitment of new uses and businesses, branding the corridor as Mariner's Way with an associated marketing campaign, and serving existing businesses on the corridor. These actions focus on three groups of stakeholders and the following priorities for each:

- **Existing businesses and property owners:** keeping these stakeholders actively informed ensures that they are aware of property improvement opportunities will ensure they understand the full benefits of proposed amenities (a nature trail, new signage, etc.) to attract customers and enhance value, that they are aware of any changes in the corridor (regulatory, physical, events, etc.), and that they understand the intended benefits.
- **Town and regional business people, civic leaders, and others:** involving others who might offer expertise or knowledge about trends or regional initiatives and who can offer connections to others and will provide valuable insight to the Town and support efforts to recruit new businesses and uses.
- **Potential businesses, developers, non-profit organizations, and visitors:** actively engaging potential users and businesses for the corridor requires outreach. A proactive approach is needed to identify and recruit new uses and visitors to Mariner's Way.



## Economic Development Recruitment/Branding/Marketing

What/Task	Who	Timing
<b>1: Formalize and reconvene the Navigation Group</b> with members who can test development concepts and provide guidance to the Economic Development Department. Members could include the BAR AC. Ideally the group would meet monthly to work on near-term priorities (recruiting destination uses on the corridor) to keep momentum going, and then switch to a semi-annual meeting schedule in 6-9 months.	EcD, BAR AC, EDC, Nav Group	Immediate and ongoing. Priorities are: 1. Reconvene group at plan completion and review goals, get suggestions for moving forward. 2. Formalize group and create overall mission statement and meeting schedule. 3. Add/change membership to ensure visitor economy, arts and culture, and development/land use trends are well-represented.
<b>2: Conduct information sessions about the Plan for property owners</b> and business owners along Mariner's Way to inform them of the branding and marketing effort and to discuss key goals of the Plan and possible next steps and to encourage organization of a businesses group or association.	Nav Group, BAR AC, EDC, PC, Property Owners, Business Owners, with assistance from EcD and LU	Immediate and ongoing. Priorities are: 1. Create a landing site on the Town economic development web page for Mariner's Way information- vision, goals, updates on progress, etc. 2. Invite Property and Business Owners by email/phone to an information session about the core <i>MW-DAP</i> goals + principles and potential beneficial actions to gain support and interest for inclusion in open house tours of the corridor.
<b>3: Provide technical assistance to corridor businesses and property owners:</b> property improvement grants, parcel assembly, redevelopment opportunities, marketing assistance.	EcD, EDC, BAR AC, LU, Property Owners, Business Owners, Chamber of Commerce, Developers	Immediate and ongoing. Priorities are: 1. Include a listing of existing businesses on the web page for Mariner's Way (and update regularly).
<b>4: Market and recruit businesses, institutions, and developers:</b> use Navigation Group to identify new opportunities, link with state and regional tourism initiatives, meet with technology sectors, join industry associations for networking, utilize the state site finder database, make introductions between potential businesses/developers and property owners, conduct open house sessions/tours along the corridor, meet with interested parties to make the "pitch."	EcD, Nav Group, BAR AC, EDC	Immediate and ongoing. Priorities are: 1. Create a landing site on the Town economic development web page for Mariner's Way information- vision, goals, updates on progress, etc. 2. Conduct open house tours of the corridor.
<b>5. Conduct similar outreach to non-profit and cultural institutions and organizations</b> as #4.	EcD, EDC, BAR AC, Nav Group, Nonprofit and Arts and Cultural organization leaders	Immediate and ongoing. Same priorities as above.
<b>6: Create marketing materials</b> using the new Mariner's Way logo and color palette to brand new outreach materials both in print and online so people start to recognize the area as a unique destination. Build the brand. Develop a low-cost window display for businesses.	EcD, BAR AC, Chamber of Commerce, Business and Civic leaders/ groups	Immediate and ongoing.

## Zoning Modification

The action recommendations listed below focus on creating a clear and welcoming regulatory environment for desired uses, development, and businesses on Mariner's Way. Priorities for action include the investigation and use of zoning and regulatory tools that can:

- **Create a straightforward path to allow** the desired uses and density as outlined in this plan that are currently not allowed along the corridor.
- **Incentivize land parcel assembly**, particularly in the western end of the corridor.
- **Provide density bonuses** as incentive to achieve plan goals, based on parcel size and the amount and type of public benefits provided.
- **Ensure the acceptance** of desirable development that fits the goals of the plan.

Clear and straightforward zoning sends a strong message that the Town knows what it wants and is eager for the right type of businesses and uses to meet the goals of the *MW-DAP*. There are currently seven zoning categories for properties adjacent to Route 1 East along Mariner's Way:

- A – Residence
- AA-1 – Residence
- AA-2 – Residence
- B-3 – Restricted Business
- B-4 – Gateway Business
- I-1 – Industrial
- MI – Marine Industrial

Some of these categories were defined when the economy and development patterns were different than they are today. In addition, the corridor was never seen as a unified place with one vision and a cohesive concept but rather as a road with varied land uses that developed over time. Today however, the *MW-DAP* provides a cohesive vision. While different parts of the corridor exhibit varied characteristics and this plan has identified specific goals for each, zoning that recognizes the unified vision of the corridor is needed.

The purpose of any zoning changes should be to encourage and allow desirable development

and redevelopment that contributes to a positive transformation of Mariner's Way over an extended period of time. With the many private property owners in the corridor, change will depend on many factors outside of the Town's control, including the local and regional real estate market and the overall economy. However, through zoning, the Town has the ability to achieve one vision for the corridor, while also encouraging unique goals for each segment of the corridor. The Town should also consider specific zoning tools to help stimulate revitalization.

The Town of Old Saybrook has very detailed zoning regulations that are regularly updated to address current and pending issues. The table on the next page, unlike the other Action Tables, eschews specific recommendations and instead, presents different tools that Land Use staff and the Zoning Commission can consider in collaboration with Economic Development staff to determine the best methods to attract and stimulate the types of development the community wants to see on the corridor. With a savvy and proactive application of zoning tools, the Town has the power to take the lead in incentivizing positive change on Mariner's Way.



## Zoning Modification Tools

Zoning Tool	Positives	Negatives/Things to think about	Comments/Example
<b>1. One or more Overlay Zones</b> An overlay zone maintains the existing underlying zoning while also allowing additional uses and modified bulk standards. Specific parameters can be put in place to encourage parcel assembly, where appropriate, to allow for greater density in areas where it is desired for future development.	This tool can incentivize parcel assembly by current property owners of small parcels; if owners cooperate and combine their parcels for sale, they can take advantage of the higher allowed density for the new, larger parcel, giving them the benefit of increased property value when they sell their parcels for redevelopment.	<p>The corridor has an overall vision with specific recommended uses for the west, central, and east sections. The Town may want to consider having separate overlay conditions for each of these parts of the corridor.</p> <p>Since the West Area is more likely to be residential with complementary commercial uses, and since it also consists of mostly small parcels with many owners, an overlay that allows tiered or graduated density for larger parcels might have a lower threshold of parcel size than in the Central Area where larger parcels might lead the Town to consider different/higher or more complex thresholds for being able to utilize the overlay.</p>	<p>Example: If there was a MW West Overlay, requirements for increasing allowed density and height could be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a minimum site size of 2.0 acres;</li> <li>• a coordinated publicly accessible internal nature trail;</li> <li>• public access to natural site amenities such as ponds or wetlands;</li> <li>• connection to adjacent trails and integration into new MW streetscape;</li> <li>• mixed use development with X% affordable/work force units (determined by the Town) or other community space.</li> </ul>
<b>2. Planned Development District</b> The concept of the Planned Development District (PDD) is somewhat similar to the Town's Planned Residential Development Zone except the intent is to create more flexibility for the property owners, developers, and Town in considering and reviewing typically larger multi-use development projects.	<p>Larger lot size thresholds and other requirements could be set to allow additional development flexibility that would benefit the greater Old Saybrook community.</p> <p>Along with parcel-size requirements, other key components of PDDs are usually the requirement of public or community benefits, which may come in the form of affordable housing, new trails and green space, indoor community space, or other site specific and timely benefits that the Town would control. There would still be a set of allowed uses and overall bulk standards that may include internal and external infrastructure improvements. Similar to the Overlay, the text could be written to define when and how a development could achieve a variety of special allowances, possibly on a "tiered" basis with activation points set by the Town.</p>	<p>Similar to the Overlay Zone, there may be distinguishable differences for what the Town might want the PDD to specify or allow depending on location and existing parcel sizes – possibly leading to more than one PDD distinction.</p>	<p>Example: A PDD could facilitate the development of a multi-use project that includes a non-traditional mix of uses, such as a nature center, a boutique recreational retailer, a microbrewery, and artist live/work space.</p> <p>The uses could be developed in a series of several buildings of different heights and massing, with one or two holding the street edge at a 25' setback, that is centered around a shared and publicly accessible open green space for food tasting events.</p> <p>This project could be required to include new landscaping to complement the streetscape, a shared parking program, and a nature trail that allows public access to previously unreachable wetlands for birding, and shared classroom space for summer marine camp programs, adult education, and visitor classes.</p>



## Zoning Modification Tools

Zoning Tool	Positives	Negatives/Things to think about	Comments/Example
<b>3. Modifying or adding a new zoning district</b>	This method could address the issue of additional uses that are currently not allowed along the corridor.	Due to the different land use recommendations for different sections of the corridor, desirable uses are different for the west, central, and east sections; the building typology for the large range of uses would be difficult to standardize in a single new district.  There would also be less flexibility for the Town to incentivize developers and property owners to add amenities and public benefits which are a key component of the plan.	
<b>4. To address housing demand:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inclusionary Zoning or Housing policy or program</li> <li>Linkage programs</li> </ul>	Develop additional housing units for the town.	This tool does not address the integrated vision that requires a mix of uses and incentives for public benefits such as nature trails, open space, etc., that is key to success.	Exploring policies that can be enacted and managed through the Town should be considered to encourage desired housing stock diversity.
<b>5. Review zoning</b> as it pertains to placemaking. (See Placemaking/ Programming Events & Activities)	This identifies conflicts between desired and allowed activities, outdoor dining, public assembly, and other uses that can activate the corridor.		Food trucks and outdoor events could be allowed with specified restrictions on a temporary basis while longer-term zoning changes are considered.
<b>6. Assess Pedestrian Node</b> (as recommended in 2014 <i>Mariner's Way Plan</i> , expand from the eastern portion of the corridor to Ferry Point).	Mariner's Way is meant as a gateway to the Connecticut River and as such, the streetwall and connectivity features that are proposed for the eastern portion of the corridor should extend to Ferry Point.		Reassess expanding the Pedestrian Node from the eastern part of the corridor to Ferry Point. Coordination with MW streetscape improvements will improve overall connectivity from the Route 154 intersection and Town Center.
<b>7. Study rezoning far eastern edge of the study area</b> (as recommended in 2014 <i>Mariner's Way Plan</i> ).	The eastern end of Mariner's Way leads to Ferry Point and waterfront land that is a key asset for town residents and visitors alike. Rezoning efforts can ensure that land uses create a strong anchor at the water and make the best use of prime waterfront parcels.		Reexamine potential benefits of rezoning the far eastern edge of the study area that are currently I-1 and B-4 to B-3 to reflect the transition from commercial/industrial to residential.



## Public Investment to Stimulate Revitalization

The action recommendations listed below focus on all the ways that the Town can invest in the revitalization of Mariner's Way. "Investment" comes in many forms beyond financial support. The actions outlined in the zoning section above, are one form of investment, whereby the Town uses its regulatory powers to shape revitalization. Other financial and non-financial investment strategies exist as well, and together they form a powerful toolbox at the Town's disposal:

- **Financial** investment in the form of ownership, support for infrastructure projects, improvement grants, wayfinding projects, etc.
- **Incentives** – public amenities such as a nature trail on private land, access to wetlands, birding towers, and publicly accessible open space could be provided by the private marketplace in exchange for increased allowable density, streamlined permitting, and other development bonuses.
- **Informational and technical assistance** – by providing technical assistance (how to pursue a property redevelopment, what improvement grants are available, what are the uses in demand in the current market, etc.) to property owners and businesses, the Town has the ability to align public and private actions toward a desired outcome for the benefit of all.
- **Marketing** – active marketing of the Mariner's Way vision and ongoing recruitment of desired development, businesses, and uses sends a powerful message that the Town is "invested" in Mariner's Way success. This message is its own incentive for private owners to make improvements and to collaborate on goals.

Priorities for action should focus on securing state and federal grant monies for streetscape/wayfinding improvements and brownfield mitigation, working with property owners to educate them about proposed regulatory changes and how it will affect them, and structuring a framework for private participation in the creation of a nature trail. In addition, the study of using Tax Increment Finance (TIF) tools to create a TIF district along Mariner's Way should be an immediate priority.

Below, are recommendations for Town investment that are not covered in the zoning and recruitment, branding, and marketing sections. Since the Town itself does not own property along Mariner's Way, and Route 1 is a state road, the Town can focus on changing the visual nature and development (beyond zoning) through collaboration with the property owners and State.

Priority Action Recommendations:

- **Work with private land owners to assist them in understanding zoning** and to help them take advantage of any incentives available.
- **Create an easement program for a privately-owned but publicly-accessible nature trail** on Mariner's Way and address property owner concerns such as liability, maintenance costs, shared amenities, and construction costs.
- **Study potential benefits of instituting a Tax Increment Finance (TIF) District** along Mariner's Way as a financing mechanism for public realm improvements.
- **Evaluate Town's interest in future brownfields assessment and mitigation grants.**



## Public Investments to Stimulate Revitalization

What/Task	Who	Timing
<b>1. Apply for grants for streetscape improvements</b> to Mariner's Way. Use the streetscape package provided as part of this study to move forward with next steps.	PC, PW, LU	Immediate and ongoing.
<b>2. Request BAR Advisory Committee to continue to</b> advise on wayfinding, public use, nature trail design and agreements, and design oversight. The Committee, et al, could be expanded or reconfigured with additional representation. It would advise planning and economic development on signage, nature trail amenities, streetscape furniture, and other public amenities.	EcD, BAR AC, LU	Immediate: formation, mission statement, and initial meetings;  Ongoing: quarterly meetings unless needed more or less frequently.
<b>3. Hire a wayfinding consultant</b> to transform the Mariner's Way logo/ brand and signage recommendations into a signage plan that includes wayfinding, interpretive signage for nature areas, and visitor destination signage. Work to integrate into town-wide wayfinding.	Led by EcD, members to include: some corridor property owners, members of town boards and commissions, the Audubon Society, arts and cultural orgs, and hospitality stakeholders. Possibly also Chamber of Commerce, Business and Civic leaders/ groups, state reps	Mid-term: 6-12 months
<b>4. Coordinate proposed shared-use pathway with regional biking and walking trails.</b> Reach out to regional groups, ensure path is on biking maps and walking route maps.	LU, PC	Immediate: inform regional organizations of plans and determine how needs or any market assessments may inform improvements.  When improvements are funded – coordinate with organizations to ensure MW is on walking and biking maps.
<b>5. Determine what streetscape amenities are appropriate for the corridor.</b> Create a design “package” that guides grant writing and fund raising. Determine what amenities, such as benches, bike racks, and solar charging stations might be provided through private redevelopment, grants, or fundraising.	LU with EcD, BAR AC, Architectural Review Board, Property Owners, Business Owners	Mid-term: 6-12 months
<b>6. Create a framework and policies for a nature trail</b> on private property along MW. Considerations would be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ownership and easement structure;</li><li>• Liability assumptions (State of CT umbrella coverage or other);</li><li>• Maintenance;</li><li>• Public amenities; and</li><li>• Incentives for private owners to participate.</li></ul>	EcD, EDC, Finance, Property Owners, Elected officials, Parks and Recreation, Trust for Public Lands, Elected Officials	Mid- to Long-term



## Public Investments to Stimulate Revitalization

What/Task	Who	Timing
<b>7. Investigate the creation of a Tax Increment Finance District.</b>	EcD, EDC, LU, Finance, Property Owners, Elected Officials	Immediate to Mid-term
<b>8. Brownfields Remediation.</b> Create a policy outlining the circumstances under which the Town will apply for public Brownfields remediation funds	EcD, EDC, LU, Finance, Property Owners	Ongoing
<b>9. Infrastructure.</b> Conduct further discussions regarding sewage collection and treatment as pertaining to attracting development.	LU, Water Pollution Control Authority, Board of Selectmen, EDC	Mid- to Long-term
<b>10. Support a Demonstration Project.</b> With a willing property owner, the Town could support a demonstration project or idea competition. The program could include a limited scale development with live-work/incubator space with public space + nature trail connections.	EcD, BAR AC, EDC, LU, Property owners	
<b>11. Curb cut consolidation.</b> Begin conversations with property owners to evaluate and discuss the recommendations found in the Appendix G diagram regarding where consolidating or narrowing curb cuts could benefit property owners and those visiting the corridor.	LU, PW, ZC, Property Owners, Business Owners, DOT	Mid-term: In preparation for implementation of streetscape improvements and eventual decisions needed for schematic design.

## Placemaking/ Programming Events & Activities

Bricks and mortar improvements in the form of streetscape improvements, new uses, and redevelopment take time. Meanwhile, changing the image of Mariner's Way from a pass-through to a destination will require a reason for people to stop. While development of destination uses can take time, event programming and one-time activities can occur on vacant land, underutilized properties, in existing spaces, or in paved parking lots. These activities and programming, referred to as placemaking in this plan, can begin in the near term with collaboration between property owners, businesses, and the Town. Drawing local residents and regional consumers to Mariner's Way through seasonal, temporary, or regular events to be organized by property owners, local and regional businesses, and civic, nonprofit, and arts groups can start to change people's perception of Mariner's Way and increase foot traffic and potential customers for businesses.

Priorities for action recommendations should focus on supporting longer term improvements and redevelopment by emphasizing people-centered activities that:

- **Showcase local arts and cultural organizations.**
- **Ensure zoning and permitting support events, outdoor dining, and entertainment.**
- **Partner with the local hospitality industry** to benefit hotels, restaurants, and other visitor attractions.
- **Look toward off-peak activities to extend the visitor season.**

## Placemaking/ Programming Events & Activities

What/Task	Who	Timing
<b>1. Review zoning</b> to identify roadblocks for permitting events, activities, and festivals on the corridor. Barriers to outdoor eating and drinking, music, and public gathering, as well as food truck regulations should be identified and recommendations made for possible near-term "fixes" as longer-term zoning changes are considered.	LU, EcD, EDC, ZC	Immediate to Mid-term
<b>2. Streamline permitting for public events and festivals</b> to ensure "one stop shopping" for public assembly, alcohol, music, and public safety permits.	LU, EcD, Town permitting entities (Public Safety, Public Health, etc.)	Mid-term
<b>3. Convene a meeting with all potential collaborators to explore the role of Mariner's Way in accommodating town needs.</b> The goal is to identify ways that the corridor can host events that are complementary to or unique in character from other events in the Town Center and elsewhere. The meeting would brainstorm partnerships, responsibilities for creating work plans, and possible pioneering sponsors. A Food and Wine/Beer Festival would be an ideal initial event that could support the future vision for the central portion of the corridor and help extend the visitor season in town.	EcD, Nav Group, BAR AC, Chamber of Commerce, Business and Civic leaders/ groups, institutions, nonprofit and arts community	Immediate to Mid-term
<b>4. Create a business plan for a Food and Wine/Beer Festival</b> (if confirmed in Task 3 above) in town. Identify space(s) on the corridor and throughout the town that could host events and activities. Develop a marketing plan for the event or activity, including target audience and communication strategy, and pursue funding. Consider themes, i.e., specialty foods, complementary to events elsewhere in Old Saybrook, outdoor recreation – summer and winter, etc.	Led by Hospitality Stakeholders (Hotel and Restaurant Owners) in town with support from Business and Civic leaders/ groups, EcD, RiverCOG, Chamber of Commerce, and non-profit Arts groups. Look beyond the town to the region for partners and sponsors	Immediate: Investigate idea  Mid- to Long-term: implementation
<b>5. Investigate a public art plan</b> and identify locations on the corridor for temporary art placement. Existing spaces such as restaurants, front yards, Right-of-Ways, and vacant lots could be used for temporary art and lighting installations to make temporary improvements to the corridor and increase visibility. Installations could range from the hanging of visual art in restaurants to a themed call for proposals for new outdoor installations (use recycled metals, public school art show, etc.).	Arts and cultural organizations (local and regional), Chamber of Commerce, EcD, EDC	Mid-term





Source: <http://valleynewsnow.com/2015/05/ct-river-museum-offers-boat-building-workshop-in-july-register-by-june-12/>

### Available Resources

It should be noted that there are many items in this Action Plan that are assigned to Town staff, particularly Economic Development and Land Use. This task usually falls to public sector staff, which creates additional demands on resources and can affect implementation schedules and timing, particularly for near-term priority projects but also for longer-term initiatives that are high priority and require sustained attention. A careful review of the resources available and a shifting of responsibilities may be necessary to ensure that goals and expectations are realistic. In addition, all of the items requiring private citizen input will need a leader or organizer such as EDC to ensure efforts to move forward are coordinated.

