



TOWN OF OLD SAYBROOK

Land Use Department

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Town Initiatives to Provide for Fair or Affordable Housing

Old Saybrook provides for fair or affordable housing both proactively through planned municipal improvements, programs and standards, as well as reactively by land use regulations that guide market investment.

The Town implements the following actions with priorities, resources and responsibilities coordinated among the appropriate Town agencies, including: the Aquifer Protection Agency (APA), Architectural Review Board (ARB), Board of Selectmen (BOS), Conservation Commission (CC), Economic Development Commission (EDC), Harbor Management Commission (HMC), Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commission (IWWC), Historic District Commission (HDC), Planning Commission (PC), Parks & Recreation Commission (PRC), Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA), Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA), and Zoning Commission (ZC).

Goals

- Provide sufficient opportunity for creation of housing alternatives to the typical high-cost single-family house in order to:
 - Accommodate the elderly in a safe and convenient environment
 - Enable young persons to continue to both live and work in town
 - Create attainable housing for families at all income levels
 - Balance rates of development with existing capacity and planned expansion of public infrastructure and services.
 - Encourage design of new and renovated housing that is compatible with its surrounding neighborhood.
- Coordinated “transit-enhanced development” within the existing historic town centers of the towns.
- Housing in above every building in the town center.

Policies

- To promote additional multi-family opportunities, including limited apartment facilities, home conversions, and non-ground floor apartments over Main Street businesses where soils can accommodate waste disposal.
- To continue to encourage creation of accessory apartments within larger single-family dwellings where single-family character and adequate parking and utilities and soil conditions permit.
- In the residential area north of I-95:
 - To assure that new residential development is fitted to the significant natural constraints of topography, variable soil conditions, and wetlands
 - To provide an opportunity for alternative forms of residential layout and buildings that best utilize individual site features where land conditions are supportive
 - To continue to seek solutions to access and internal circulation problems for the area as a whole.

Municipal Improvements, Programs, and Standards

- ✓ **ASSISTED CARE LIVING.** Although not initiated by the Town, the Zoning Commission adopted regulations in 1998 to allow assisted living within the industrial zoning district. Presented, in part, as an additional alternative housing type supported by the 1990 Plan, such housing allows apartment-type elderly housing that includes medical facilities, as well as dining, recreation, and meeting facilities.
- ✓ **OPEN SPACE SUBDIVISIONS.** The Town successfully collaborated with a large-scale developer to review and update that existing Open Space Subdivision standards and criteria to allow for and encourage alternative forms of residential layout and buildings where soil conditions will accommodate such density. The result are smaller lots sizes on shorter roads with less road and stormwater infrastructure and more proximate recreational opportunities allowing both the developer to benefit from reduced constructions costs, the Town to benefit from lesser maintenance of infrastructure, and the home-buyer to benefit from a lesser initial cost and lesser long-time tax burden.
- ✓ **SOILS-BASED RESIDENTIAL DENSITY.** The Town continues to base allowable residential densities on soil capacity and suitability for on-site sewage disposal systems, as part of a sewer avoidance program intended to remove the need for costly construction and on-going maintenance and administration of a sewer plant.

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- ✓ **AFFORDABLE HOUSING.** The Town's administration and permitting authorities encourage developers of residential projects to create diversity in housing type, size, and cost. In particular, the Zoning Commission has recently supported the efforts of a local non-profit housing organization to construct and operate housing for low- and moderate-income families in a manner that does not jeopardize the health and safety of residents, or conflict with public interests, the sewer density issue, or the zone (2 of 5 units at "College Point"). Similarly, the Commission recently came to agreement with a developer to increase the number of previously-approved units deed restricted at below-market rates to come into compliance with increased State-mandated percentages (53 of 186 units at "Saybrook Commons"). Most recently, the Town provided land (lease) and a grant for pre-development costs (design and permitting) to a local non-profit housing organization to construct a mixed-use development of which 100% of the units are affordable (16 units of affordable housing at "Ferry Crossing").
 - ✓ **ATTAINABLE HOUSING.** During the 1980s, a committee of the Board of Selectmen studied the phenomenon of a lack of housing attainable to certain income levels; among the recommendations adopted was the acknowledgement that apartments accessory to existing residences and the renting of rooms provide an alternative to single-family ownership in established residential neighborhoods. Among those accessory apartments that already existed, the Town has permitted 43 new apartments since 1985. The Town also allows the renting of rooms up to three people in a dwelling unit.
 - ✓ **CONDOMINIUM OWNERSHIP.** As another alternative to a home on a single lot, the Town also permits single-family, two-family, and townhouses in condominium ownership in many of its residence districts. Common ownership of lands and neighborhood amenities takes the burden of improvement and maintenance off the individual.
 - ✓ **INCENTIVE HOUSING OVERLAY ZONE.** The Town is currently conducting an analysis of "developable land" as defined by the Incentive Housing Zone legislation adopted by the Connecticut general Assembly in 2007. The impetus of this statute is to encourage communities to review their land use regulations to evaluate existing density criteria for workforce housing to determine whether additional units may be effective in meeting the State's goals to create housing for economic growth.
 - ☐ **TRANSIT-ENHANCED DEVELOPMENT OVERLAY ZONE.** The Town's recently-adopted Sidewalk Plan echoes the recommendations of the Region's Transportation Plan by prescribing creation of an overlay zone that "incentivizes" uses, collaborative site planning and shared infrastructure, and density to support transit; those uses include retail, restaurants, residences, coffee houses, offices, and general merchandise.

The Town will investigate collaboration with property owners near the train station to optimize the potential of their sites individually by providing connections for pedestrians between properties and easements for shared commuter parking.

- ✓ **TOWN CENTER APARTMENTS.** The Zoning Commission adopted a regulation in 2012 to allow the creation of regulations to allow for the establishment of residential units on non-first story floors in the Town Center (Central Business (B-1) District where soil conditions allow.
- ✓ **MIXED-USE NEIGHBORHOODS.** The Town revised the Zoning Regulations to permit mixed-use development, including residences above retail shopping, in commercial settings, such as Central Business B-1 District, Restricted Business B-3 District, and Marine Commercial MC District, and to require appropriate infrastructure and amenities for pedestrians.