
Town Center



ISSUES FOR THE NEXT DECADE

Main Street, the center of Old Saybrook, has been and continues to be the single strongest focus of town activity – for shopping, services and community activities, all at a pedestrian scale. Since the adoption of the 1990 Plan, Main Street has a brick and granite median strip with antique-style light fixtures and brick-like sidewalks. Business owners have continued to upgrade and improve their building facades and have enhanced landscaping, all in recognition of the importance of Main Street to Old Saybrook. Concern exists, however, regarding the ability of the smaller “mom and pop” businesses to continue to compete with the larger franchises that have located on Route 1, Main Street, and the region within the last decade. Many residents prize Old Saybrook for its sense of community. The Town Center provides a place where chance meetings with neighbors and friends can occur. Scheduled community events allow people to share in community life. People need a reason to come to the Center. The continued vitality of the Center is critical to the perceived quality of life in Old Saybrook.

Expanded Residential Opportunities

As highlighted in the 1990 Plan and expanded upon in this updated Plan, an effort to enhance the town center by

allowing for residential use on upper floors of businesses continues to be an important goal that will strengthen one of Old Saybrook’s most important assets. To accomplish this goal, the Town will need to make efforts to ensure that sufficient sewage disposal facilities are available and that such residential expansion will not compromise the town’s sewer avoidance policies.

Congestion and Safety

As efforts to strengthen the town center move forward into the next decade, the Town will need to increase safety. Reducing traffic congestion and improving pedestrian safety is critical to the viability of village center commerce. The issue serves to increase the desirability of the town center from the point of view of both business owners and townspeople. Increased efforts to reduce congestion and improve safety will be especially crucial during the summer months when traffic congestion is most intense.

Town Center as a Separate Identity

An important function of Old Saybrook’s land use boards in the next decade will be to clearly define Old Saybrook’s

“village center.” Recent legislation allows a town to define and protect a village center much in the same way that an historic district delineates and protects significant landmarks and neighborhoods. In the meantime, the efforts of the recently created Architectural Review Board will assist the town’s regulatory boards in guiding the aesthetics of future

development proposals in a way that will enhance the built environment of Main Street. These efforts include review of architectural design for signs and structures, guidance in site layout, lighting, landscaping, pedestrian access, and other amenities that will enhance the community’s sense of the village as a meeting place.

PLANNING FOR THE NEXT DECADE

Goals

- Continue to promote Main Street and the historic village center as the focus for community life in Old Saybrook.
- Maintain and enhance the economic viability of the village center retail stores and services.
- Continue to promote the aesthetic qualities that make the village center an attractive, pleasant place to visit, create a positive image of the community, and give a sense of community pride.

Policies

- Continue to encourage a balance of commercial, civic, and residential uses in the town center to maintain vitality and character.
- Provide adequate space in the village center area for the present and future conduct of local governmental business, including renovation of the former Main Street School as a new location for municipal uses and enhancement and expansion, where appropriate, of the current Town Hall for ancillary civic needs.
- Assure that new development is compatible with the existing character of the village center in terms of appropriate scale and style.

Municipal Improvements, Programs, and Standards

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

- TOWN CENTER DISTRICT.** Use a *village district* for aesthetic development of Main Street.

ARB	BOS	CC	EDC	HMC	IWWC	NCHDC	PC	PRC	WPCA	ZBA	ZC
●			●								●

Municipal Improvements, Programs, and Standards, continued

	ARB	BOS	CC	EDC	HMC	IWWC	NGHDC	PC	PRC	WPCA	ZBA	ZC
<input type="checkbox"/> TOWN CENTER BULK STANDARDS. Develop bulk and architectural design standards to guide development in the town center: parking at rear of buildings, enhanced landscaping and pedestrian-scale amenities including benches, outdoor cafés, and information kiosks.	●			●				●				●
<input type="checkbox"/> TOWN CENTER COMPATIBILITY STANDARDS. Continue the critical elements of land and structural design compatible with the existing character of the town center.	●			●								●
<input type="checkbox"/> TOWN CENTER PARKING FACILITIES. Establish additional public parking areas, including a municipal lot, and sharing of existing facilities.		●		●				●				●
<input type="checkbox"/> PEDESTRIAN SAFETY MEASURES. Continue to improve pedestrian safety, including visual definition of crosswalks, public education, and maintenance of sidewalks.		●		●								
<input type="checkbox"/> TOWN CENTER RESIDENCES. Allow creation of residential units on upper stories of commercial buildings within the restrictions of the Town’s sewer avoidance program.	●	●		●						●	●	●
<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY EVENTS PROGRAM. Continue municipal support for community events, including the provision of space, staffing, and supplementary funding.		●	●	●				●				
<input type="checkbox"/> TOWN CENTER REVITALIZATION RESOURCES. Continue to provide local government resources for revitalization efforts, including time and expertise.		●		●				●				
<input type="checkbox"/> ROUTE 1-TO-MAIN STREET CORRIDOR LINKAGE. Coordinate and promote linkage between the town center, the Old Saybrook Shopping Center, and the Route 1 corridor.	●	●		●				●				●
<input type="checkbox"/> REUSE/RENOVATION OF TOWN CENTER. Encourage reuse and appropriate renovation of existing buildings in keeping with the village character.	●	●		●								
<input type="checkbox"/> TOWN CENTER CAMPUS. Maintain the Town Green for public gatherings.		●		●								