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Milford 2032

City of Milford Plan of Conservation and Development

July 26, 2023 DRAFT

City of Milford, Connecticut

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Welcome

This Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) establishes a vision for Milford's physical form, economic and social health, and quality of life. That vision provides a foundation for policy and funding decisions and informs the City's zoning regulations, which protect the health, safety, and welfare of the people of Milford.

The strategies used to manage the change in land uses and resource protection shape the community's character and can greatly affect the lives of residents and property owners long into the future. As such, the POCD can also help guide decision-makers when they consider regulations and policy changes that w ill affect future City growth. All the City's Boards and Commissions should consider the POCD as a resource when enacting policies shaping the community.

This plan meets Connecticut General Statutes which require that a municipal plan of conservation and development be updated every ten years. It is also consistent with both the State Plan of Conservation and Development and the South Central Region: Plan of Conservation and Development 2018-2028.

Table of Contents

The POCD is organized into the following "elements" below. At the end of each element is a set of goals and corresponding recommendations.

Open Space & Recreation

Introduction

As a fully developed first ring suburb with concentrated urban neighborhoods, open spaces are important to maintaining the balance necessary for the City's high quality of life. Information for this element was gathered through meetings with the Mayor's Open Space Advisory Committee, the Conservation Commission, the Environmental Concerns Coalition, and the Recreation Department.

This section:

1. Identifies the City's strengths in its current open space corridors.
2. Outlines areas of potential expansion or acquisition as ways of improving these corridors.
3. Provides a framework for better management of these properties.

This Element largely addresses two types of open space:

1. Passive Open Space. This includes maintained open spaces such as the Green, duck ponds with limited programming, and natural sites that allow passive activities such as hiking trails, including the City's many public beaches and tidal marshland areas.
2. Active Recreation: Programmed parks that include facilities such as ball fields, basketball, and tennis courts.

Discussion of farmland preservation and the potential expansion of the City's community garden program can be found in the Agriculture Element. Beaches, shoreline protection, and coastal access

can be found in the element on the Long Island Sound.

Existing Conditions

Passive Recreation

The City has a wide variety of passive open spaces that make up a network of green spaces that residents cherish. Passive open space can be generally organized into the categories identified in Figure 1. This network of open spaces is owned by a variety of private, town, state, and federal entities as illustrated in Figure 2 on page 4.

Over the past 20 years, the City of Milford has been successful in purchasing many open space properties that protect natural resources and expand existing open space properties including:

- Solomon Woods
- Former Regional Water Authority site on Burnt Plains Road
- Oronoque Road parcel adjacent to River Crest Farm

The City has placed a high priority on the conservation of sites containing resources that are unique to Milford or significant or fragile natural environments that require additional protection.

These open space properties provide habitat to a range of species. The State's Natural Diversity Database (Figure 3 of page 5) indicates approximate locations of endangered, threatened, and special concern species and significant natural communities. The general locations of species and natural communities depicted on the maps are based on data collected over the years by the Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP) staff, scientists, conservation groups, and landowners. The maps are intended to be a pre-screening tool to identify potential impacts to state-listed species and to identify areas of potential conservation concern. The DEEP updates the maps periodically (every 6 months or so) and new information is continually being added to the database.

The City also has 125 park parcels equaling approximately 1,318 acres or 11.38% of Milford's land

Figure 1: Classification of Open Space Properties

Type	Description	Properties
Perceived Open Space	Land is currently free from development, but not restricted from future development. No public use.	Vacant properties that are both publicly and privately held, but not deed restricted.
Naturalized Open Space	Preserved in perpetuity by deed restriction or other mechanisms such as approval by the Planning Zoning Board as required open space. In Milford, public use of these areas is usually allowed, but may not be accessible.	Wilcox Park, Wheeler Wildlife Area/Audubon Coastal Center, Mondo Ponds, Red Root Natural Park, Milford Land Conservation Trust properties, Solomon Property, Heritage Sound berm, open space dedications as part of subdivisions, and conservation easements.
Managed Public Open Spaces (Publicly held)	Maintained lands presently used for public purposes.	Town Green/Arboretum, Fowler Field, portions of Eisenhower Park, Upper and Lower Duckponds/ Wepawaug River. Also includes coastal properties such as Walnut Beach, Silver Sands State Park, and other coastal access points. Non-programmed City Parks.
Managed Open Space (Privately Held)	Land actively managed that leaves the land open, but not specifically protected from future development.	Private golf courses, cemeteries, and utility company land.

Figure 2: Open Space Ownership

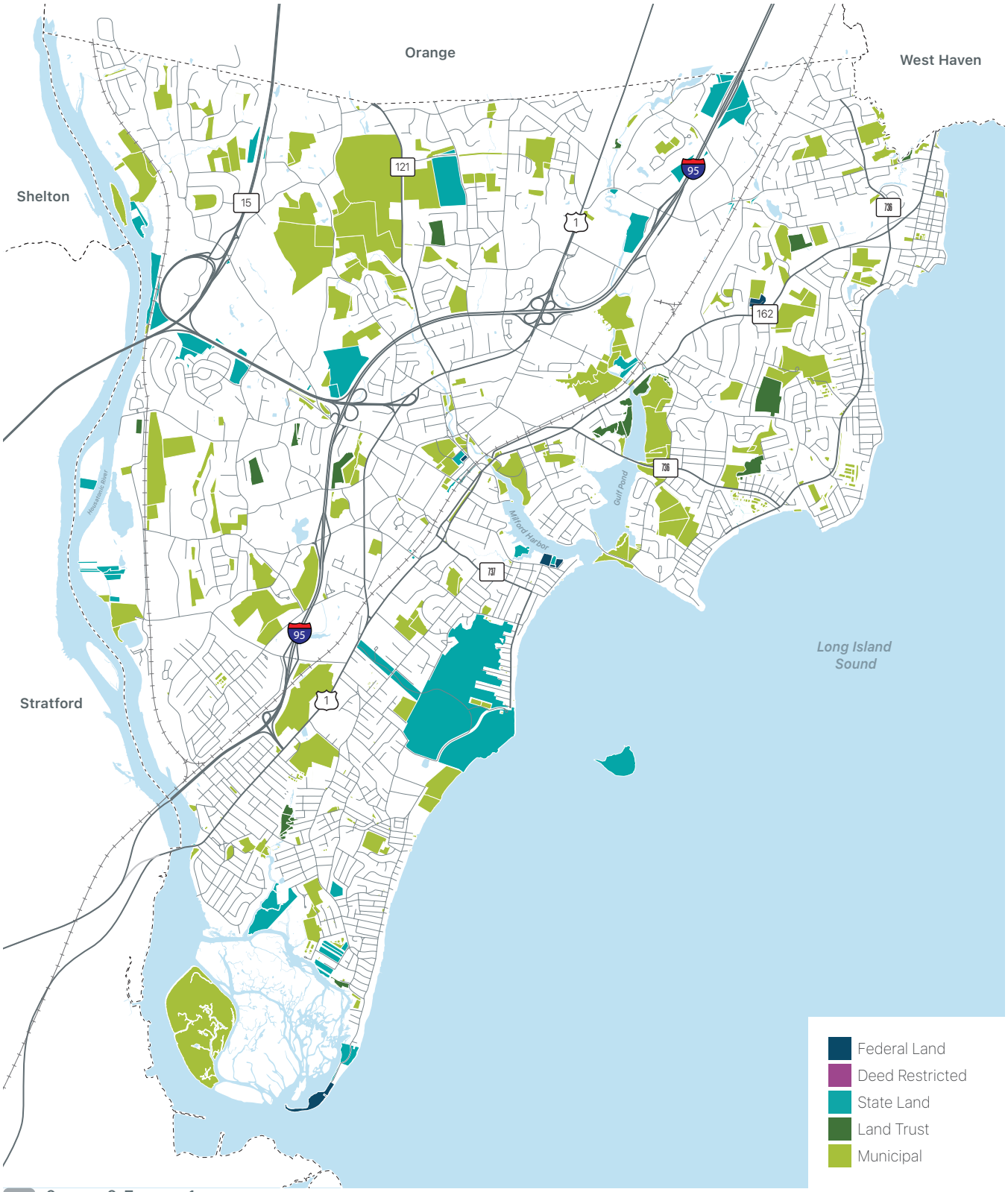

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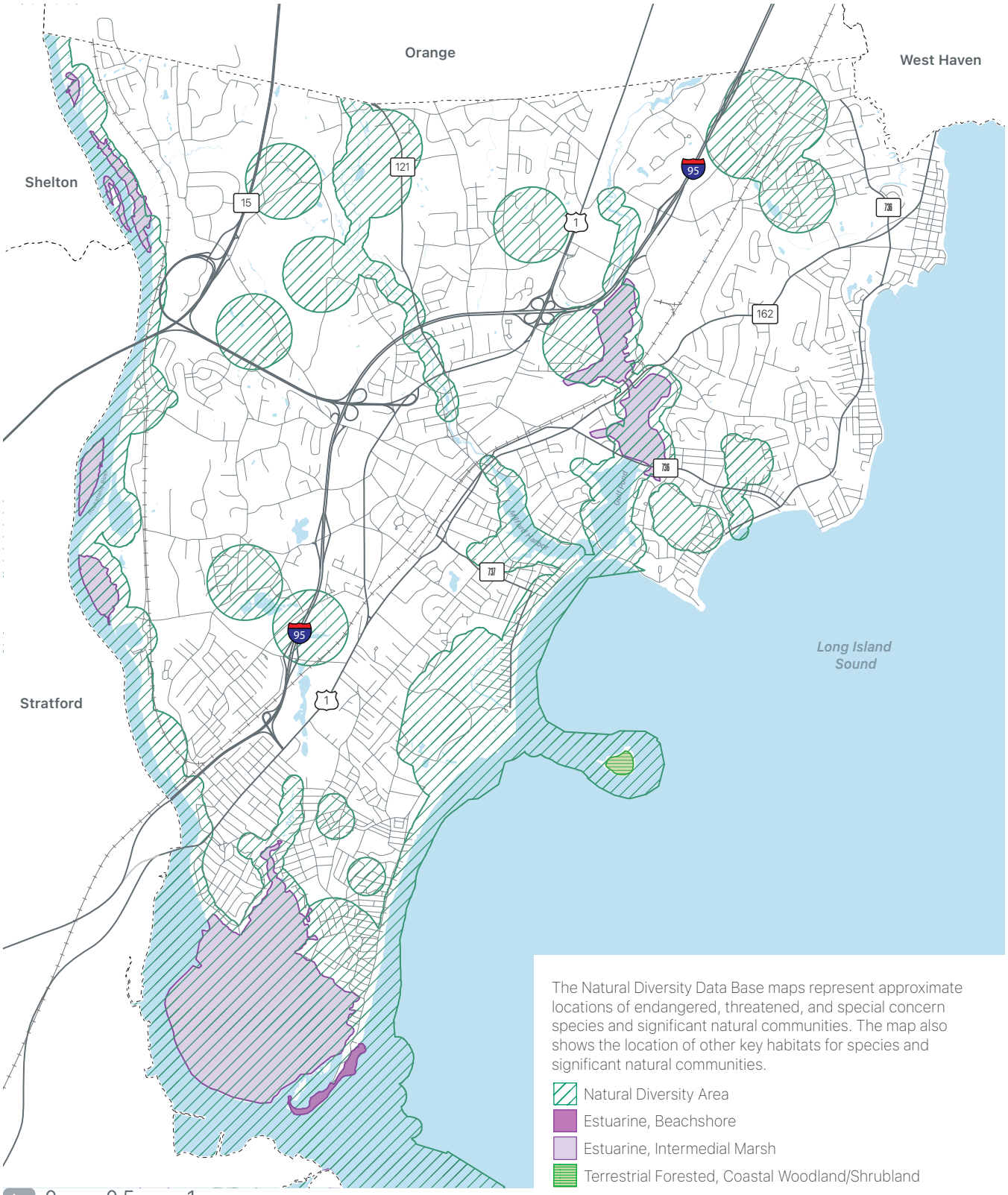
Figure 3: Milford Natural Diversity Map



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area. Figure 4 on page 7 illustrates the location and the diversity of active recreation options available to Milford's residents.

Greenways and Greenbelts

As Milford is a coastal community at the base of several watersheds, the City's greenways are defined by waterways. Greenbelts are defined as the entire preserved corridor left in its natural state for habitat preservation and greenways are paths or connected access points that provide public access which can be located within these corridors. Where possible, greenways should be identified within the greenbelt areas to provide better passive recreation oversight and so that Milford's citizens can experience these unique natural environments.

Nine greenways and greenbelts were targeted in the City's last three plans (1973, 2002, 2012) for preservation and conservation, as illustrated on Figure 5 on page 8. This plan consolidates those nine areas into seven. These areas continue to have lasting importance as greenway corridors and should be the focus of preservation efforts. Where possible, the City should prioritize acquiring properties within these seven designated greenbelt/greenway areas. The City should also locate public access points to the greenways.

Wepawaug River and Watershed Corridor

The City's centrally located river system extends from the Orange Border and drains into Milford Harbor. Several important sections are already preserved through municipal purchase and ownership including Solomon Woods and Eisenhower Park.

Housatonic River Corridor/Lower Turkey Hill Brook Greenbelt

The Housatonic River defines the City's westerly border, but there are limited public access points to this water body and land along the river is predominantly privately held. The mouth of the river is protected as part of the Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge designated by Congress in 1972. This area is currently managed by collaboration between the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the State DEEP, and the Audubon Coastal Center and is a primary area of concern for the endangered piping plover. The next access point is the Housatonic River Overlook Park in Devon which has a wonderful view of the 1920s Washington Bridge, followed by the State boat ramp under I-95 (Moses Wheeler Bridge), the City fishing area and boat launch at Caswell Street, and finally a river overlook in the Great River Golf Course that was required as part of their Coastal Site Plan review. Through the Sikorsky Bridge replacement project, the State incorporated a pedestrian and bike path over the Housatonic River along Route 15, which has limited parking on the Milford side. The Lower Turkey Hill Brook greenbelt identified in the prior two plans has been extensively subdivided with a few wetland parcels donated and deed-restricted, but no additional land is available for preservation or purchase. As such, this section is now incorporated with the Housatonic River Greenbelt.

Beaver Brook Corridor

This corridor starts with the open space area at Lexington Green and traverses several neighborhoods through City and private open spaces leading to the Mondo Pond area behind JFK Elementary School and includes the privately-owned, but deed-restricted Beaver Brook trails off West Avenue that were recently damaged by fire. The Boardwalk was reconstructed after the fire, ensuring that the public can continue to enjoy this unique natural environment. The Beaver Brook watershed continues to the former Regional Water Authority Reservoir adjacent to Jonathan Law High School (north and south of Bridgeport Avenue/Route 1) and extends through the Devon neighborhood into Long Island Sound.

Long Island Sound Beachfront/Tidal Marshland Protection

The shorefront starts at the border of West Haven and continues to and up the Housatonic river to the border with the Town of Orange. The 2012 POCD recommends purchasing properties to protect scenic view areas with fishing access.

Figure 4: City Recreation Facilities

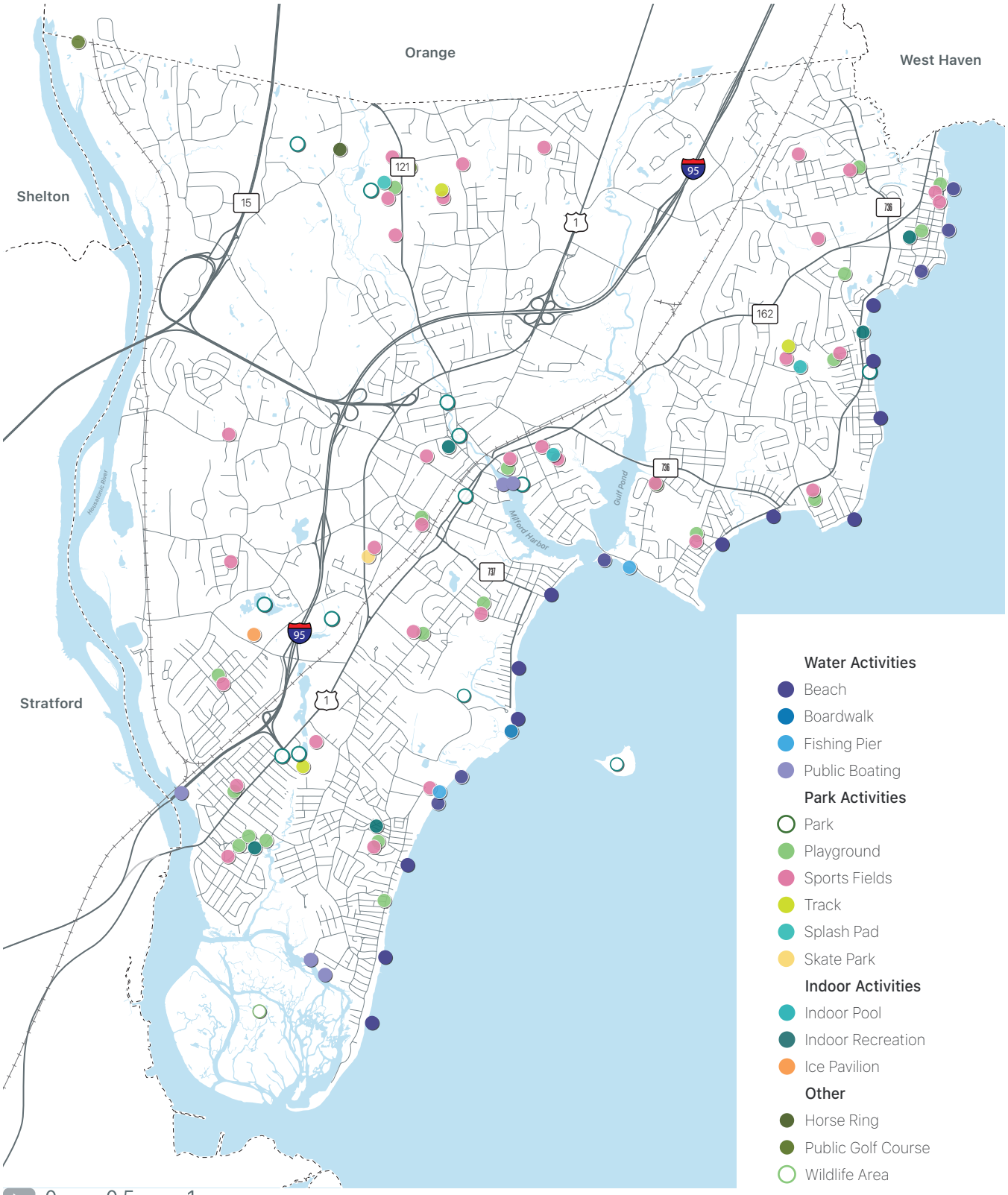

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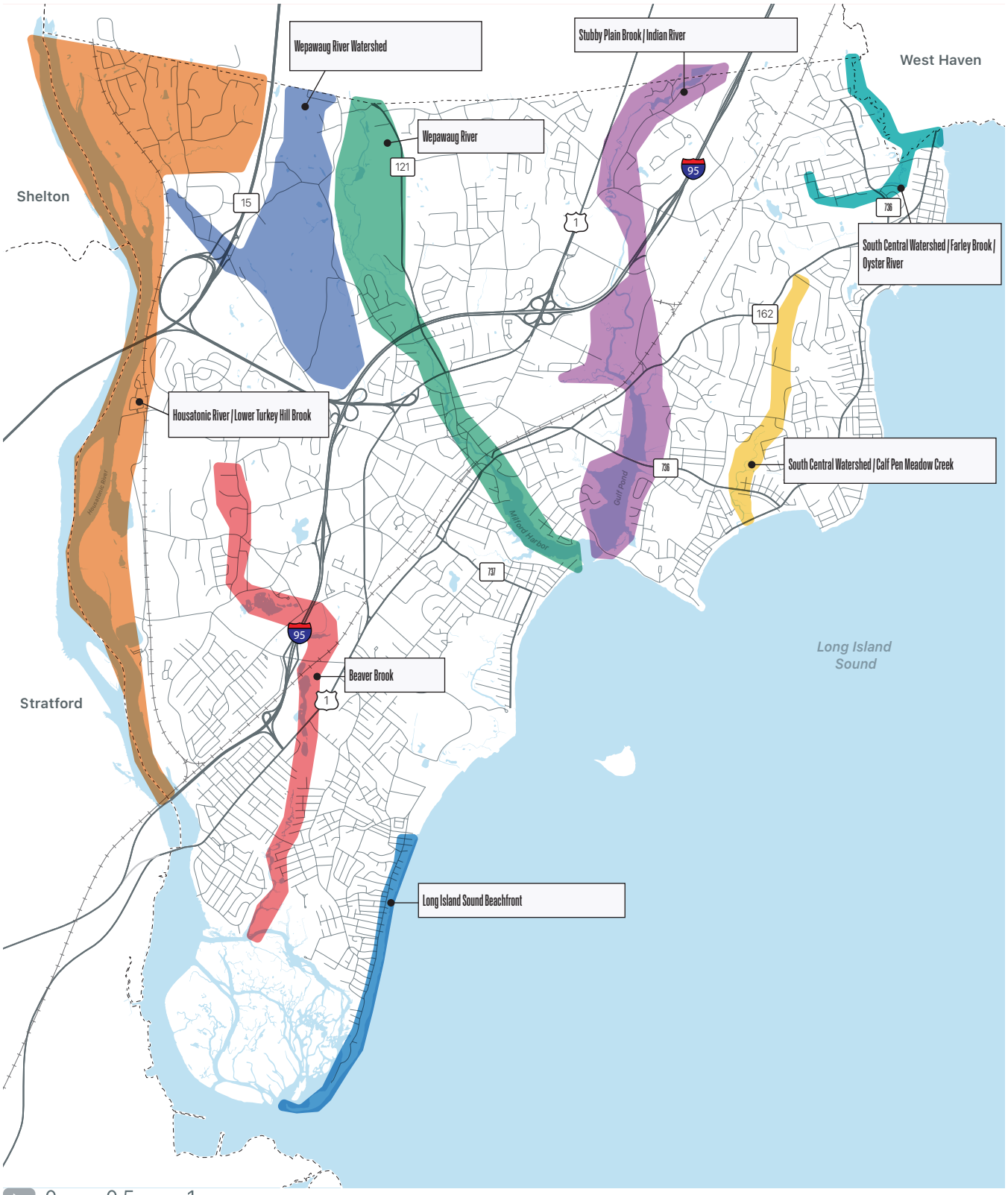
Figure 5: Greenways and Green Corridors

See "Greenways and Greenbelts" on page 6 for discussion of these corridors.



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Stubby Plain Brook/Indian River Corridor

The Indian River begins near the border with Orange and continues south parallel to the Boston Post Road until it drains into Gulf Pond. Along the way, the Clark Pond fish ladder allows alewife populations to breed upstream and the entire corridor serves as an important bird habitat corridor with several Osprey platforms in place in the tidal marshland areas. Two public access points have been added to the Indian River greenbelt: a public access walkway behind the Milford Crossing shopping Center and a conservation easement to the rear of an Old Gate Lane property. In 2011, Yale interns from the School of Forestry and Environmental Studies studied the Indian River Corridor. They recommended better maintenance of the Milford Crossing Trail and that the City identify a connection through other private properties that lead to the Clark fish ladder. Their analysis showed that much of this corridor is privately owned (and used for residential and commercial purposes) and that conservation easements might be a prudent approach to securing the connection. As most of the southerly portion of the corridor is tidal wetlands, pedestrian access to a greenway would be difficult.

Calf Pen Meadow Creek Corridor

Starting at the open space area at Settlers Ridge, the Calf Pen Meadow Creek corridor extends westerly to its outfall at the tidal marshlands on Melba Street to Long Island Sound. It winds behind both Foran High School and Calf Pen Meadow Elementary School. As indicated in the prior POCD, the adjacent education facilities could be good access points. The area is ideal for the preservation of vista and habitat protection only and public access should continue to be limited.

Oyster River and Farley Brook Corridor

These corridors are characterized by tidal marshlands, however, the headwaters for this system start in Bethany. There are significant water quality issues for these marshlands that will be addressed by the pending sewer infrastructure expansion. A scenic vista may be possible if parcels can be connected between New Haven Avenue and Anderson Avenue, which was the prior trolley right of way. Utilizing state funds and partnering with West Haven, a phragmites control project has reintroduced native species.

Coastal Access

As a coastal community, access to the Long Island Sound is critical. Figure 6 on page 10 illustrates existing coastal access points. Although these access points exist on paper, they are not always easily identified or easy to find.

Eisenhower Park

Eisenhower Park, the City's largest recreation property, is 333 acres with natural features and habitat, with passive and active recreation. It is adjacent to the Solomon Woods area (100 acres). Both properties were the subject of the Eisenhower Park Master Plan in 2007. The plan has resulted in incremental improvements to the park over the last decade. The Park Plan (p. 74-75) includes the following goals:

- Improved pedestrian connectivity and circulation between all Park areas
- The ability of the park to provide day-long, four-season, and family-oriented activities
- Bring back prior activities such as Day Camp venues
- Improve existing restrooms and other facilities
- Enhance and protect the naturalized forest, wetland, and watercourse areas of the Park
- Provide a hierarchy of trails/trail network
- Restrict unauthorized and destructive vehicle access
- Provide an efficient network of paths to support Park maintenance, security, and operations.
- Create new facilities to meet City-wide recreation needs
- Overall aesthetic improvements and entrance enhancements to better organize the Park's uses

Figure 6: Coastal Access Points

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- Propose appropriate recreational amenities that support desirable activities that could generate revenue for Park operations for a future self-supporting park
- Establish areas for safe and quiet enjoyment of the Park

The Bodie's Place playground in Eisenhower Park was opened in May 2011 and was constructed with public and private dollars including local fundraising efforts by the Milford Rotary, community organizations, schools, and other charitable donations. The accessible playground can be enjoyed by all children.

It should be a high priority to institute the recommendations of the Eisenhower Park Master Plan to make Park improvements in Phases as funding allows. The Park can and should be the City's premier Park property and as outlined in the plan, has the potential to be revenue-generating for the Recreation Department. Currently, the property is being slowly improved to live up to its potential.

Since the 2012 POCD update, parking lots have been added on the perimeter along North Street. These lots can handle the parking needs of the Park and the municipal golf course across the street. Pickleball courts have been added and the dog park was expanded and renovated. Recreation Department staff have identified dredging the Eisenhower pond and creating an outdoor amphitheater as two desirable goals for the coming years.

Background on Acquiring Property for Open Spaces

In purchasing prior open space properties, the City has relied heavily on the State DEEP Open Space Grant program. The program has specific criteria for land that may be purchased as part of the program that generally aligns with Milford's goals. To be eligible for purchase through this program, land must meet one of the following criteria:

1. Valuable for recreation, forestry, fishing, conservation of wildlife or natural resources.
2. A prime natural feature of the state's landscape.
3. Habitat for native plant or animal species listed as threatened, endangered, or of special concern.
4. A relatively undisturbed, outstanding example of an uncommon native ecological community.
5. Important for enhancing and conserving water quality.
6. Valuable for preserving local agricultural heritage.
7. Eligible to be classified as class I or class II watershed land.

The City has also prioritized properties that meet one of the following criteria:

1. Areas adjacent to City-owned, State or Milford Conservation Land Trust open space properties.
2. Areas adjacent to other open space parcels that could provide connected passive recreation opportunities.
3. Areas within the 100-year floodplain or the floodway.
4. Areas within the seven greenbelts/greenways identified in the POCD.

The City should continue to utilize these criteria along with the goals and strategies in the recommendations section of this element to guide acquisition decisions.

Open Space & Recreation Recommendations

Goal: Protect Existing Open Spaces

1. Update the zoning map to designate all existing open spaces as such. This should be done regardless of ownership (e.g., Town vs State). Mixed City-owned properties such as Fowler Field, need to have their naturalized portions shown as Open Space to ensure their protection and to better identify future open space linkages and areas to target for acquisition.

Goal: Expand the amount of open space to meet the increasing demands for active and passive recreation and preservation of critical environmental features.

1. Continue to apply for the DEEP Open Space grant program and other grant programs if properties become available that meets the State or Local criteria as identified in this section.
2. Continue to utilize the Open Space fund to purchase properties. The Open Space fund's revenues are generated through the Planning & Zoning Board's subdivision approval process. Developers have the option of paying into the Open Space fund in lieu of providing physical open space as part of a subdivision development.
3. Explore the utilization of Public Act 490 to provide open space tax credit as a means of preservation of open space, especially along the seven (7) designated greenbelt/greenway areas. This would require the City to adopt an Open Space Assessment Ordinance which stipulates the qualification criteria for the open space classification in that municipality.

Goal: Maintain and expand, where appropriate, the seven designated greenbelt/greenway areas.

1. Acquire properties when they become available to support the seven greenbelts/greenway areas.
2. Expand the Wepawaug River and Watershed Corridor to provide additional floodway/ floodplain protection. This may include additional conservation easements or purchases of property to expand the area that is protected.
3. Acquire property along Long Island Sound Beachfront/Tidal Marshland Protection area to protect against floods and sea level rise.
4. Prioritize greenbelt protection of the Stubby Plain Brook/Indian River Corridor given its sensitive environmental features.

Goal: Improve visitors' ability to access and enjoy existing open space assets.

1. Expand the number of public access points to greenways and beaches.
2. Better access to open spaces through improved wayfinding signage.
3. Develop a property management, maintenance, and restoration plan for open spaces.

Coastal Resources & Long Island Sound

Introduction

Milford is first and foremost a coastal community. It is bordered by 17 miles of shoreline: the second longest shoreline of a city or town in the State of Connecticut. The City's development patterns are shaped by its historic prominence as a summer beach community. Milford's watersheds all drain directly into Long Island Sound and many of the City's most densely developed neighborhoods are directly adjacent to the shore and tidal marshlands. Some neighborhoods are located in filled historic tidal marshlands.

As a result, flooding is a high risk for the community at the shoreline and along river corridors. The interface of urban neighborhoods and waterbodies also means that the City has to work to improve Long Island Sound's water quality as well as maintain its ecosystem and it aquaculture industry. This requires aggressive work at the local level and with the City's partners at the regional level.

Flood Hazards

Milford is surrounded and intersected by waterbodies. It is bordered on the south and southeast by Long Island Sound and on the west by the mouth of the Housatonic River. It is centrally bisected north to south by the Wepawaug River; easterly bisected by the Calf Pen Creek and Farley Brook/Oyster River systems; and westerly bisected by the Beaver Brook system.

As a result of its geography and topography, there is a strong potential for flooding in some areas of the City. Hurricanes and coastal storms can and have caused severe coastal flooding as well as flooding along the Wepawaug River. Milford's shoreline juts into Long Island Sound making it even more vulnerable.

Flooding is the most common type of disaster that occurs in Milford. Milford's most significant development occurred in the early 1900s when it rose to prominence as an affordable summer beach cottage community for New York families who would take the train and then the trolley out to the shore. In

the 1950s, in conjunction with the post-war housing boom, many of the summer cottages - which were modest homes located on small plots of land along the coastal areas of Milford - were converted to year-round homes. This has resulted in some of the City's highest density residential neighborhoods being the most vulnerable to storm event flooding. These neighborhoods either front directly on Long Island Sound, are adjacent to tidal marshlands for the waterbodies that drain into the Long Island Sound, or in in-filled development areas that were formerly tidal marshlands. The tidal marshland adjacent sites are often at extremely low elevations where flooding occurs even with regular seasonal storms and can also occur as regularly as the monthly lunar high tide.

As a flood-prone community, the City participates in the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). Figure 9 on page 15 identifies the City's flood hazard areas.

Milford is subject to two different types of flooding. High Velocity (VE) Flood Zones have significant wave and wind action. The impact that such storms can have on the community is illustrated in Figure 7 (Melba Street). In Special Flood Hazard (AE) Zones, Milford is susceptible to still-rising flood water as shown on Merwin Avenue in Figure 7.

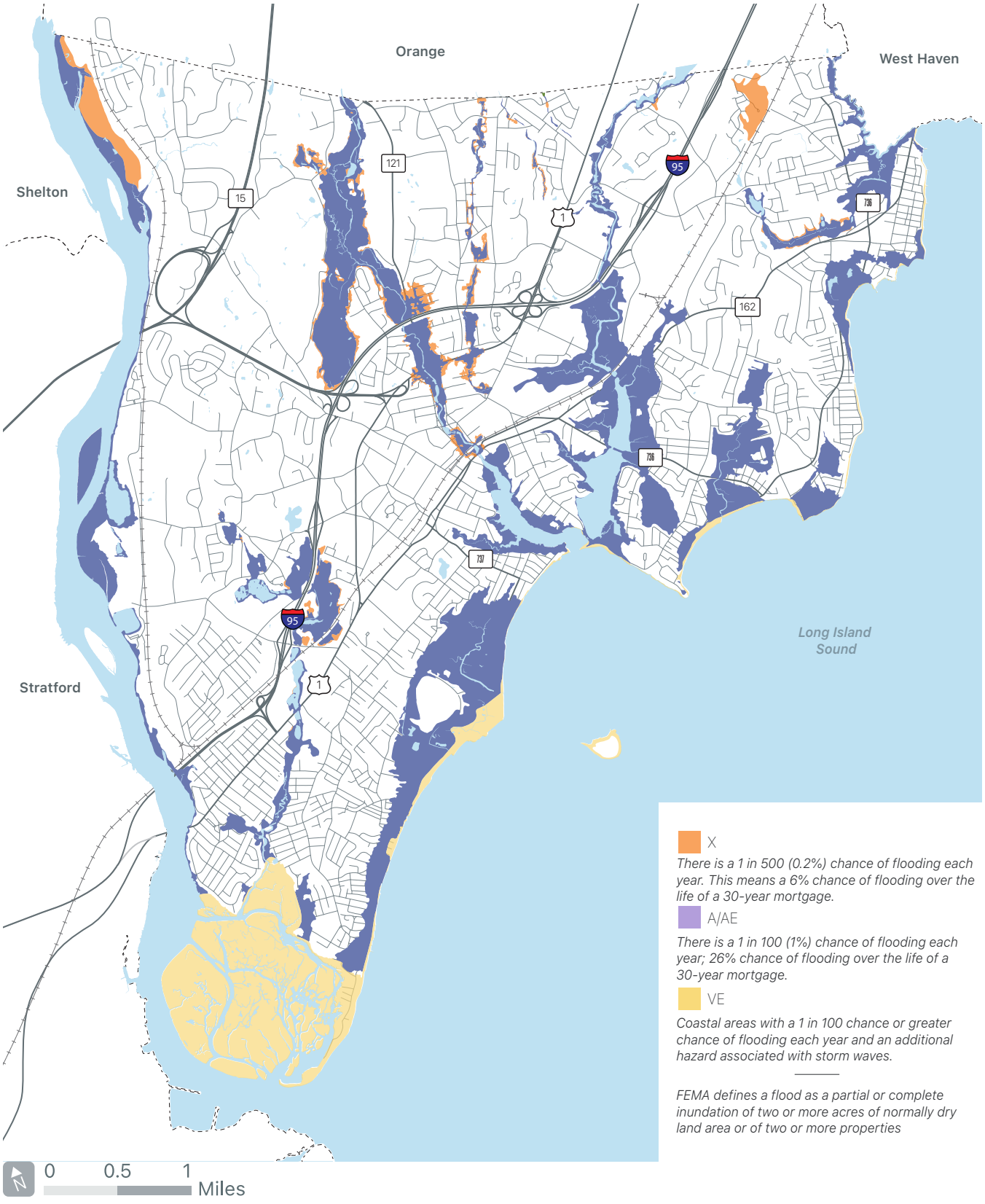
Inland, several of the City's rivers have identified floodways within their channels, characterized by dangerous rushing water and debris when subject to flooding conditions, with floodplains that extend out from the floodway once the flood waters exceed the identified channel areas. The Wepawaug River, in particular, which runs through the center of the City, is vulnerable to springtime flooding and can divide the City into two sections when this flooding occurs.

As required by the NFIP, the City mandates Flood Hazard Reduction requirements on new construction and substantial repair/improvement of existing structures to prevent future flood damage. There are, however, almost 3,800 structures that remain susceptible to serious damage as a result of coastal flooding, some of which experience repetitive property damage.

Figure 7: Illustration of Flood Hazards in Milford

Flooding along Melba Street (left) and Merwin Avenue (right) in Milford. Both photographs were taken during the Tropical Storm Irene flood event that occurred on August 28, 2011 during which over 500 (mostly residential) structures were damaged. Source: City of Milford

Figure 9: Flood Hazard Areas



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Source: FEMA National Flood Hazard Layer, 2022

Sea Level Rise

Public Act 12-101 (An Act concerning the Coastal Management Act and Shoreline Flood and Erosion Control Structures) adopted by the State Legislature and effective October 1, 2012, places a new focus on sea level rise in the State of Connecticut.

Increased sea levels are expected to result in more flooding and increased height of storm surges for coastal cities such as Milford. In addition, because some of the shoreline construction is at extremely low elevations adjacent to tidal marshlands, these lands may be lost as a result of sea level rise.

Figure 10 on page 17 illustrates one potential scenario for sea level rise in Milford. The imagery is based on the CT Coastal Sea Level Rise Digital Elevation Model published by the State of Connecticut's Department of Energy & Environmental Protection. It depicts the potential extent and depth of inundation based on an approximate value of Average Monthly Maximum Water should water rise 12 inches. An increase of 12 inches by 2050 is consistent with current predictions for the US northeast coastline (2022 Sea Level Rise Technical Report published by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in concert with FEMA, USGS, NASA and others).

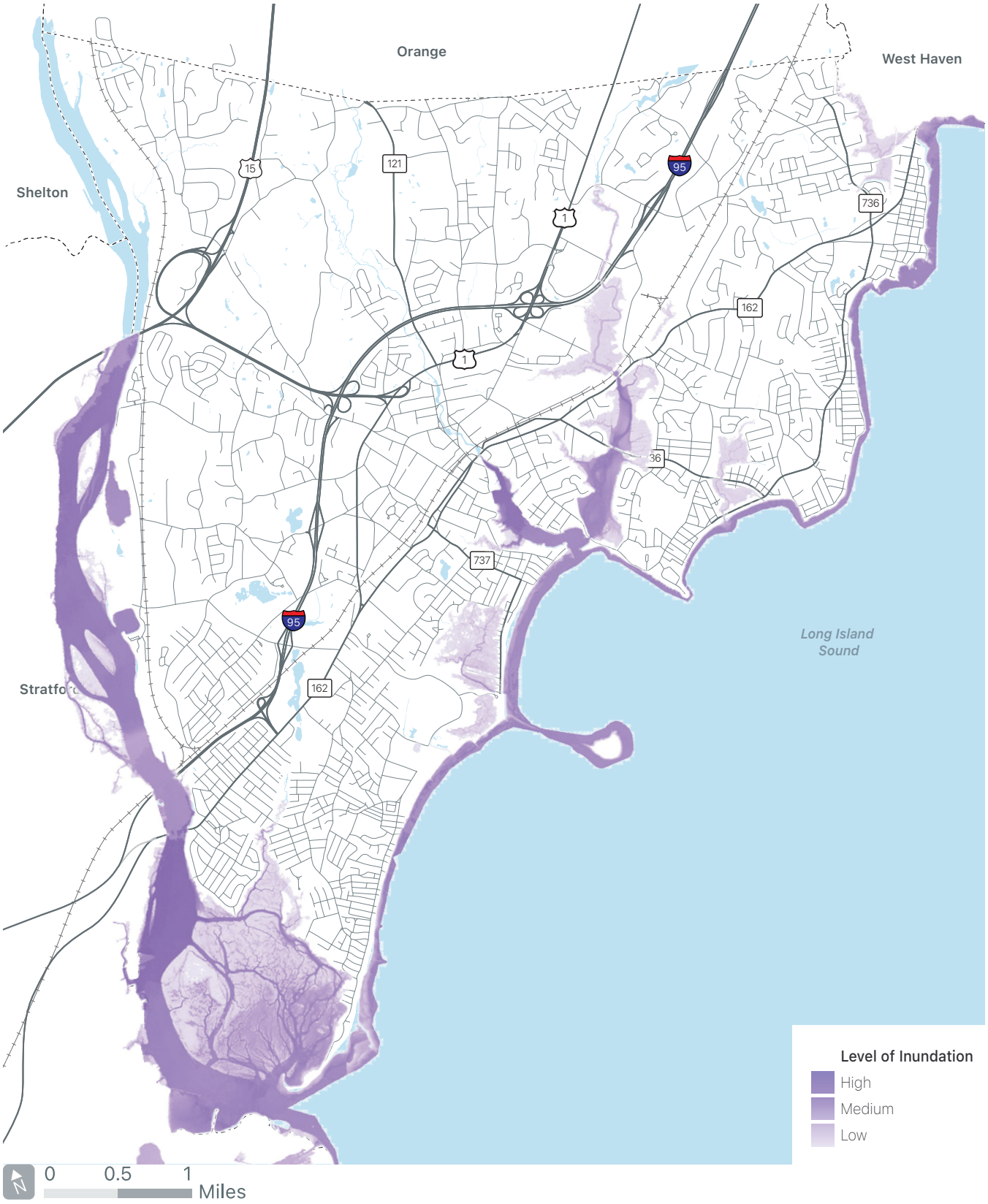
The model illustrates that low-lying areas already experience regular tidal flooding at higher tides of the month and year. Some properties and public right of ways may be inaccessible should these trends continue. While the model provides only an estimate of inundation area, its inland progression suggests that Milford should begin examining its entire shoreline with sea level rise impacts in mind and start planning for climate change and sea level rise.

Water Quality

Surface waters are important resources that support numerous uses, including water supply, recreation, fishing, shellfish fishing and sustaining aquatic life. In order to protect and restore these uses, we need acceptable environmental conditions (physical, chemical, and biological) to be present within surface waters. The City is currently utilizing the following strategies to maintain and improve water quality:

- Undertaking Inland Wetlands Agency review of development projects to ensure that inland wetlands and watercourses are protected.
- Reviewing projects per current Stormwater Management requirements to ensure that new and adaptively reused development sites integrate stormwater quality measures.
- Requiring Low Impact Design (LID) Stormwater Management Practices where practicable for new projects and adaptive reuse of existing development sites.
- Maintaining existing public stormwater infrastructure per State Stormwater Management requirements.
- Adding sewer infill projects where water quality issues are identified and where sewer infrastructure is available– i.e. near the Oyster River.
- Reducing the Canada geese population near the upper and lower Duck Ponds of the Wepawaug River, in particular, and other identified waterways as necessary, in order to reduce E.coli bacteria levels in local waterways before it reaches the Long Island Sound.
- Adding Green Infrastructure retrofits where possible in both public and private projects to decrease the demands on the current storm drain system and to allow for better stormwater management through more naturalized groundwater percolation and recharge.
- Promoting organic lawn-care practices to reduce high nitrogen run-off into the City's storm drain systems that lead to the Long Island Sound.
- Dredging existing waterbodies where over-silting/deposition has become problematic to improve the quality of these waterbodies and to ensure that they maintain their habitat value.

Figure 10: Impact of Sea Level Rise (12 inches)



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Coastal Management Act Consistency

State Statute requires that for "any municipality contiguous to Long Island Sound, such plan [of Conservation and Development] shall be A) consistent with the municipal coastal program requirements of the Coastal Management Act sections 22a-101 to 22a-104, B) make reasonable consideration for restoration and protection of ecosystem of Long Island Sound, and C) designed to reduce hypoxia, toxic contaminants and floatable debris in Long Island Sound."

22a-101b(1) requires municipalities to identify and describe immediate and long-term major coastal related issues and problems. Those issues are identified below.

Statutory Requirement	Milford Conditions
Erosion	Milford is subject to annual beach erosion in several places along the shoreline. However, beach restoration/remediation occurs most frequently in the following areas where joint ownership/oversight is available: Bayview Beach (private), Laurel Beach (private), Gulf Beach (Milford), and Woodmont Beach (Milford & Borough of Woodmont). Along Cedar Beach, Wildemere Beach, Silver Beach and along western Walnut Beach – coordination among multiple private property owners for beach restoration is difficult. Bluff erosion occurs as a result of significant storm events along Point Lookout, Pelham Street, and limited properties in the Morningside neighborhood.
Flooding	Flooding is a serious and repetitive issue for Milford (see section below).
Recreational Facilities	Active: Milford Landing, Housatonic Overlook Park, Fishing Piers at Gulf Beach and Walnut Beach, public beaches at most public ROW endings plus the additional life-guarded beach areas Anchor Beach, Gulf Beach, Hawley Avenue Beach, and Walnut Beach. Boardwalk that connects Silver Sands State Park and Walnut Beach. Protected Habitat: Audubon Coastal Center (private non-profit), Wheeler Wildlife Sanctuary (State/Federal), Silver Sands State Park (State), Charles Island Bird Sanctuary (State). CAM Act added through project review: canoe launch on Deerwood Avenue, viewing area at Great River Golf Course overlooking the Housatonic River, Platt Street Beach access point, walking path on Indian River (Milford Crossing), a conservation easement on Indian River (Old Gate Lane).
Utilization of Port Facilities	Public: Milford Harbor – Public Boat launch at the end of Shipyard Lane, Lisman Landing/US Coast Guard Building on Helwig Street, Public Dock at the end of High Street/Helwig Street used since colonial times for the general public and commercial shellfish industry, and NOAA Research Facility. Housatonic River - small craft launch and fishing area at Caswell Street and State Boat launch at Moses Wheeler Bridge. Private: Milford Harbor - Boating business area along the east shore (Spencer's Marina, Briarpatch); along the west shore Milford Yacht Club. Housatonic River, Housatonic Yacht Club.
Municipal boards & commissions who enforce Coastal Program	Planning & Zoning Board, Harbor Commission, Flood Erosion Control Board Municipal agencies consult with the DEEP's Office of Long Island Sound Programs (OSLIP)

Statutory Requirement	Milford Conditions
Character and distribution of coastal resources	Excluding the City's westerly border along the mouth of the Housatonic River which is predominantly private and partially industrial, 2.5 miles of the land along Long Island Sound is in public ownership while 7.2 miles is private property. The City's shoreline varies from sandy beaches to bluffs and escarpments to armored shoreline with embankments and seawalls. Tidal marshlands are prevalent in several areas: in the mouth of the Housatonic, Milford Point, Beaver Brook, Silver Sands State Park, Gulf Ponds, Calf Pen Creek, Melba Street, Indian River, and the Oyster River.
Capacity and limitations to support development	Milford is an old, established community with pre-established neighborhoods, street network, and both public sewer and water supply along most of its shoreline. The limited areas along the shore that do not have public sewers are either targeted for infill sewer projects (Grove Street near the Oyster River) or are at elevations too low to accommodate sewer infrastructure (Smith's Point Road). The City's two sewer treatment plants are located along the Housatonic River.
Types and methods of development compatible with the wise use, protection, and enhancement of such resources.	Through the Coastal Site Plan Application review process, projects are thoroughly reviewed for appropriateness given their coastal location and proposed use and in compliance with Flood Hazard Mitigation construction standards as dictated by the City's Zoning Regulations.
Nature and pattern of existing development	Along Housatonic River: Active Recreation (Golf Course), Detached Single-Family Residential, Industrial, Public Utility, and Boating Business Milford Point to Milford Harbor: Predominantly high density detached residential with limited commercial and two significant public beach areas (Walnut and Silver Sands) Milford Harbor: Predominantly Boating business with a Federal research facility, public access areas and Fowler Field, and limited residential. Inland commercial at the center Gulf Pond: Residential with public access at Gulf Beach Point Lookout to Woodmont: Residential
Need for public services	Housatonic River access is limited, passive access to the Milford Harbor could be improved with a reconfiguration of Fowler Field for more non-programmed public park space.

Coastal Resources & Long Island Sound Recommendations

Goal: Improve Long Island Sound water quality by addressing the waterways that drain into the Long Island Sound.

1. Continue implementation of strategies identified in the Water Quality section of this element.

Goal: Plan for and address the impact of existing flood hazards and new areas impacted by sea level rise.

1. Create a Resiliency Plan that will:

    a. Be developed in close coordination with the community, especially those that are most likely to be impacted by sea level rise.

    b. Identify the area most likely to be impacted by sea level rise. The Plan should consider potential impacts including flood frequency and duration, marsh migration, habitat loss, social and economic impacts, saltwater intrusion, bank and bluff failure, and coastal erosion.

    c. Create a framework for where the City's public investments should be made to protect critical infrastructure and areas of particular importance to the community. Examples include the City’s wastewater treatment facility or public utilities as well as key historic or cultural heritage areas central to the identity of the City.

    d. Identify land use policy solutions, including changes to zoning, to reduce incentives for private investment in areas likely to be impacted by sea level rise.

    e. Identify areas where residents and businesses should be encouraged to relocate away from hazardous areas that are likely to place life and property in jeopardy.

2. Pursue fuding for resiliancy projects, especially for the protection of Milford's wastewater treatment facilites.

3. Aquire properties, where appropriate and in coordination with the above recommended plan, to mitigate the impacts of seal level rise and flooding.

Agriculture

Introduction

The City of Milford was founded as an agricultural settlement that split off from the original New Haven colony in 1669. The area was largely agricultural until the completion of the Wilbur Cross Parkway in the late 1940s and Interstate 95 in the mid-1950s. These transportation improvements secured Milford's place as a first ring suburb leading to rapid subdivision and new single-family home construction.

Railway access to the burgeoning financial and other employment markets in lower Fairfield County and the greater metropolitan New York area led to more growth. The result was the conversion of the last significant farm tracts in the 1980s through the early 2000s.

Today, very little land in the City is dedicated to farming (Figure 12 on page 22) despite the presence of prime agricultural soils (Figure 13 on page 23). Milford's remaining farms are located predominantly in the northern area of the City. Milford's farm activity includes regional serving bedding flower nurseries, three horse stables, small farms that provide farm stands and/or Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) subscription programs, a goat keeper, and a beekeeper.

The farms that remain provide a unique reminder of Milford's agricultural heritage. The most successful of these have visible farm stands and loyal neighborhood followings. Protecting these farms remains a priority for preserving a portion of Milford's history and ensuring a small, yet valuable local food supply.

Figure 12: Farms in Milford

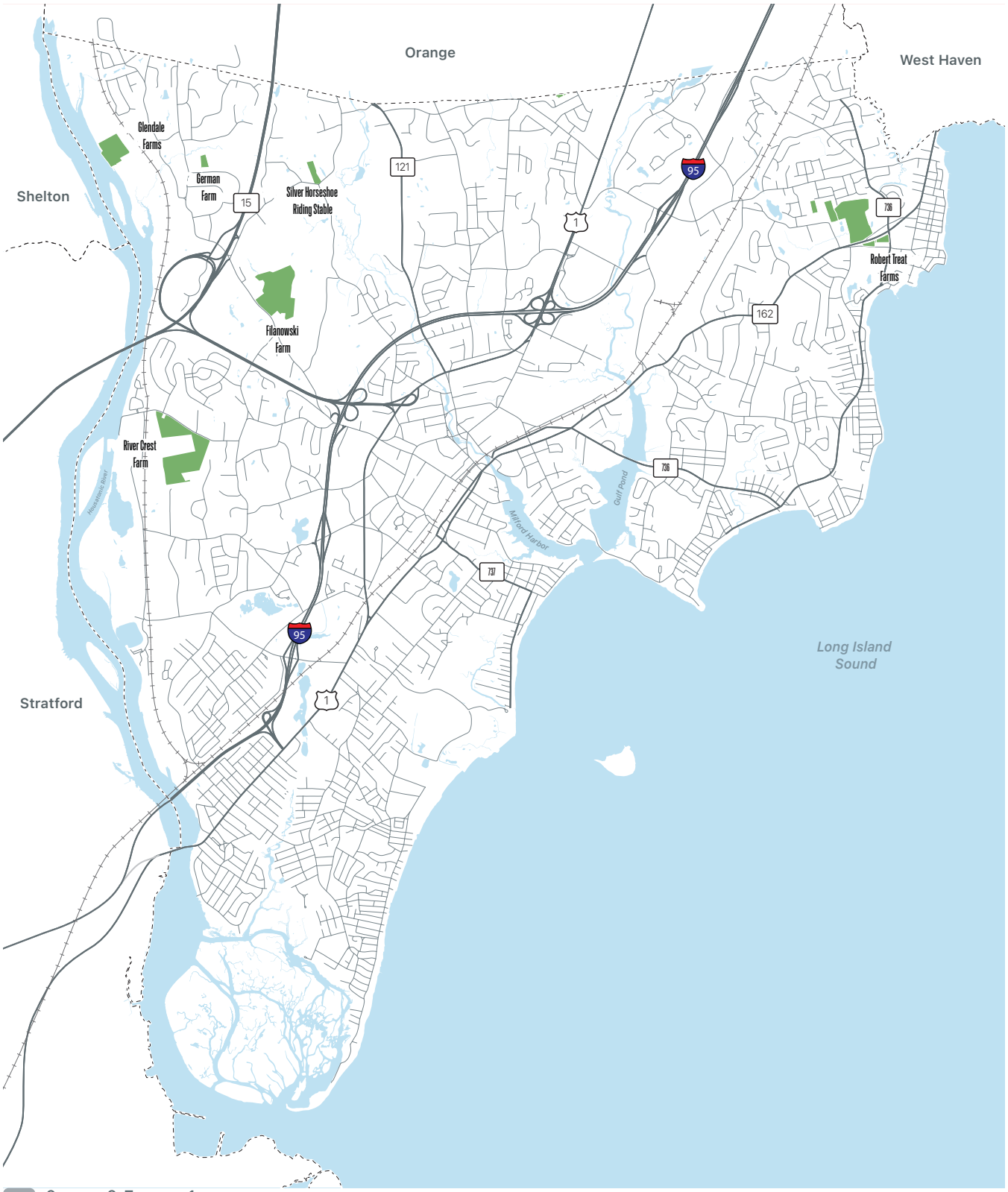

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Figure 13: Agricultural Resources Map

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Farming in Milford

Farm and Agricultural Land Preservation

In 1963, the Connecticut state legislature passed Public Act 490 (PA 490). PA 490 provides for four major types of land use classification: farmland, forest land, open space, and maritime heritage land. Land classified under PA 490 as farm, forest, open space, or maritime heritage is assessed based on the current "use value" of the land rather than what its zoning designation might translate to in terms of market value. The public tax expenditures for farm land is lower than many other uses because they utilize fewer public services on a square foot basis. The City currently has 33 properties and 285 acres designated under this program as shown on Figure 14 and Figure 15.

Micro Farms

An interest in organic and local food supply has created increased interest in urban agriculture, or farming done in more urban areas. Milford supports this activity by allowing farms in the City's single family residential zoning districts. Farms must be located on at least a three-acre parcel. The designation as a farm allows for the use of Farm equipment whereas smaller hobby farms under three acres would have limited use of large farm equipment. Hobby farming or personal use vegetable gardens on single family residential lots without use of "farm equipment" has no minimum lot size limitation in the City of Milford. In addition, residents in any single-family residential zone can keep up to either 5 or 10, hens depending on the zone in which they are located.

Community Gardens

A relationship between food production and farming history can materialize in several different ways. Community gardens improve provides a catalyst for neighborhood and community development, stimulate social interaction, beautify neighborhoods, and create an opportunity for recreation, exercise, therapy, and education, among other benefits.

Milford's community garden is centrally located on North Street on a portion of Eisenhower Park which hosts 152 plots. The garden has been a great success and there is an opportunity to expand Milford's community garden program particularly in the City's most densely developed neighborhoods, which could benefit from the additional green space area.

Figure 14: Land in PA 490

Location	Acres
0 Mayflower Pl	3.1
0 Overlook Dr	1.8
0 Meadowside Rd	0.7
291 Plains Rd	3.2
204 Chapel St	3.7
0 New Haven Ave	0.1
1339 New Haven Ave	1.8
64 Chapel St	1.5
0 Dunbar Rd	30.3
0 North St	4.1
0 Brewster Rd	4.9
79 Brewster Rd	7.9
0 Franklin Rd	1.9
534 Oronoque Rd	54.6
684 Oronoque Rd	0.7
364 Orange Ave	3.7
240 Fresh Meadow Ln	7.9
381 Wheelers Farms Rd	22.4
0 Wheelers Farms Rd	6.5
0 Woodruff Rd	0.2
1022 West River St	12.2
101 Red Root Ln	4
762 Wheelers Farms Rd	25
18 Herbert St	20.5
20 Herbert St	4.8
0 Lavery Ln	2.5
30 Lavery Ln	0.7
0 Herbert St	7.8
223 Herbert St	20
268 Herbert St	7.4
304 Fresh Meadow Ln	7.9
282 Fresh Meadow Ln	7.9
72 Monroe St	3.4
TOTAL	**285.0**

Figure 15: Farmland Preservation Properties (PA-490)

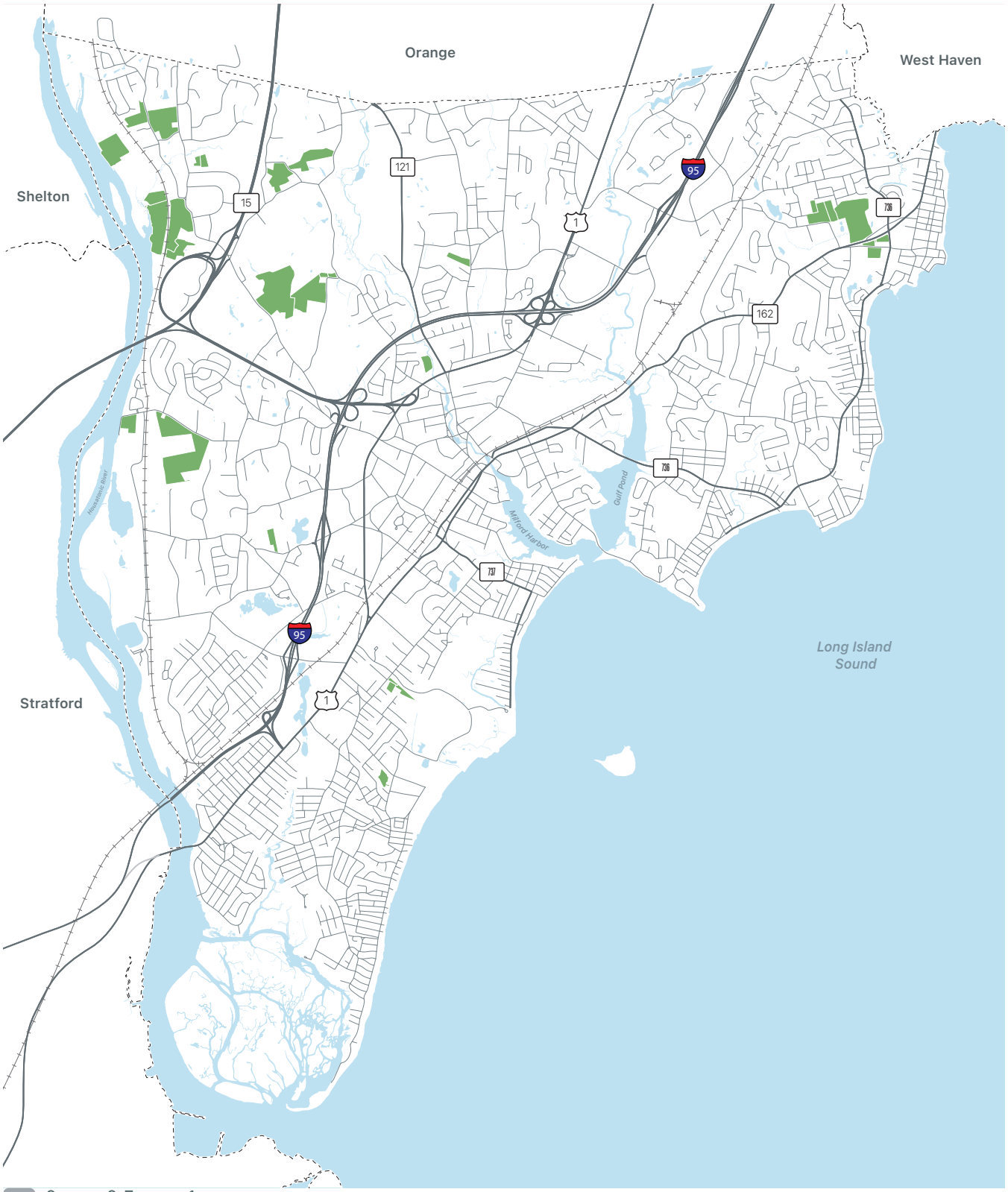

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Figure 16: Potential Community Garden Locations

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Agriculture Recommendations

Goal: Protect remaining farms to preserve a portion of Milford's history and ensure a small, yet valuable local food supply.

1. Continue to participate in PA-490.
2. Work with community partners to do outreach to property owners who may benefit from the tax credit.

Goal: Promote and expand the creation of community gardens.

1. Explore the creation of community gardens on underutilized areas of Edgemont Park, and the Anderson Avenue Park.
2. Explore the feasibility, and demand for, community gardens at the locations identified in Figure 16 on page 26 based on accessibility, water supply, availability of land, and community interest.
3. Where property may be acquired in the high-density neighborhoods, the City should work with the communities in those areas to determine the demand for community gardens.
4. Explore the planting of fruit trees on select publicly owned lands.
5. Coordinate with Milford Schools to involve students in conservation efforts and identify locations for community gardens.

Source: Metro Star Apartments

Housing

Introduction

As one of the principal land uses in the community, housing and housing-related issues affect all residents. Land zoned for residential uses makes up nearly half of the land area of Milford.

Housing development in a community impacts quality of life in myriad ways, including: increased demand for community services and resulting fiscal impacts; increased traffic and perceived congestion in the street network; loss of open space and impact on the natural environment; increased economic activity in the area of retail sales and services; increased involvement in community activities; and perception of community change.

A major dividing line between residential areas is Route 1/Route 162, and the I-95 corridor. The area south of the corridor contains older, established neighborhoods with smaller lots resulting in higher density, as seen in the shoreline areas where many neighborhoods were originally developed as summer home communities. The area north of the corridor is the more recently developed area with larger lots and lower density.

Demographic Profile

Milford is home to approximately 52,000 residents, a population that has remained mostly steady since 1970 (Figure 22). Since 2011, Milford has seen a net decrease of 424 residents, a population change of -1%.

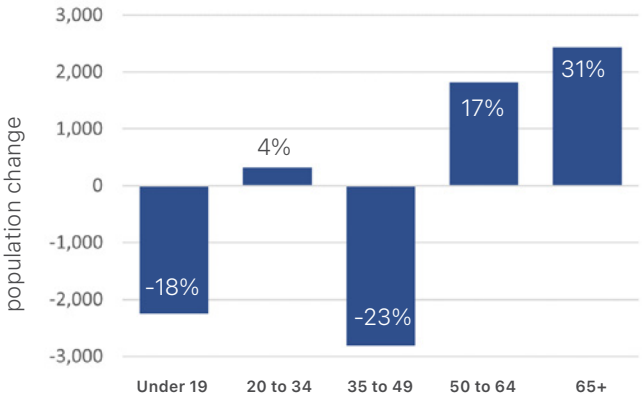
The age cohorts that decreased most sharply include youth under 14 and adults ages 35 to 49. In contrast, the population of adults aged 65 to 74 increased significantly. (Figure 17) Historically, older adults tend to be on fixed incomes and have less flexibility in their spending and expenses, which could mean higher demand for smaller and more affordable housing units in coming years.

These demographic changes have had big impacts on the size and character of Milford's households. As illustrated in Figure 18, there has been a modest decrease in the number of family households and an increase in non-family households. There have also been significant increases in households with 3 or fewer people and declines in larger households. This is consistent with trends for communities that are seeing an influx of younger millennials and older adults and a decrease in middle-aged residents.

As a result of these trends, household size has decreased considerably in the past decade, while the Town has added more housing stock (Figure 19).

Figure 17: Change in Age Cohorts 2011 - 2021

percentages indicate change in population over 10-year period



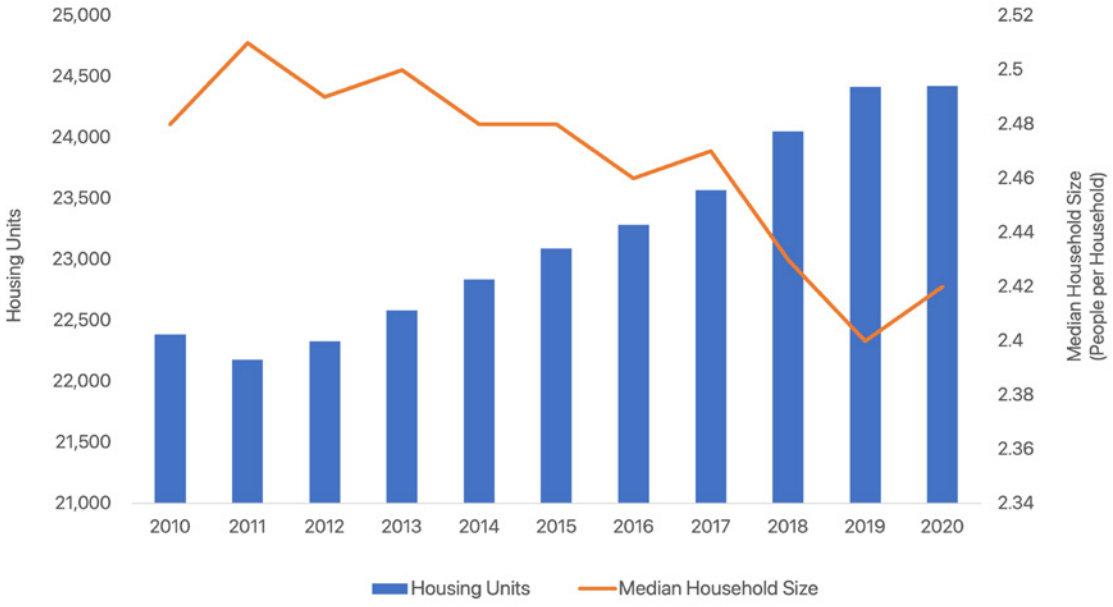
Source: American Community Survey

Figure 18: Household Type & Size 2010-2021

Type	2010	2021	Change
Family	13,806	13,535	-2%
Non-Family	7,012	7,775	11%
Size	**2010**	**2021**	**Change**
1-person	5,939	6,680	12%
2-person	6,715	7,203	7%
3-person	3,480	3,710	7%
4-person	3,093	2,305	-25%
5-person	950	945	-1%
6-person	381	366	-4%
7-person+	260	101	-61%

Source: US Census; American Community Survey

Figure 19: Household Size & Housing Units 2010-2020



Source: American Community Survey

Housing Profile

Housing Types

The City has a relatively diverse housing stock, with a mix of single-family units, small multi-family (often called "missing middle" housing) and larger multi-family developments. While much of Milford's residential areas are occupied by single-family homes, approximately 1 in 4 dwelling units in the City are in a multi-family structure. (Figure 20)

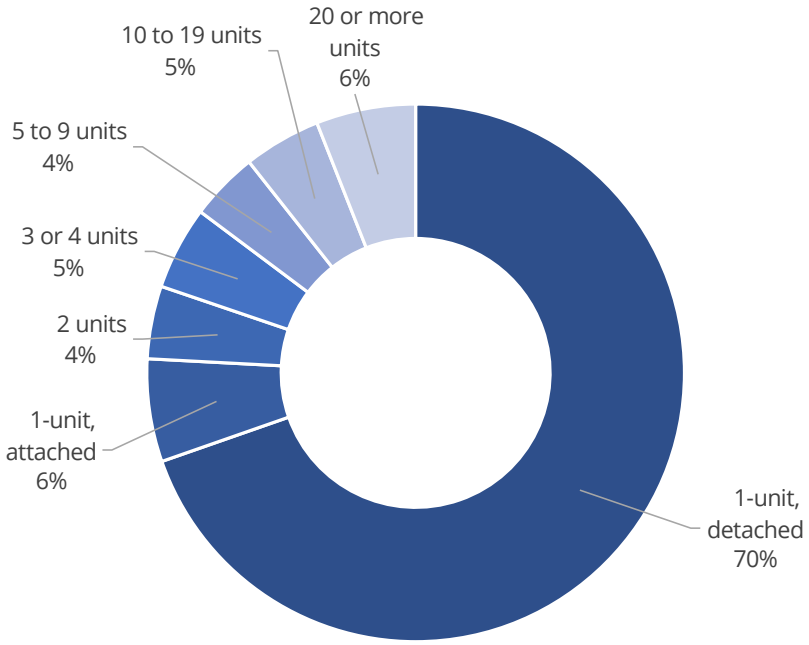
Of the multi-family housing options, those with 20 or more units are most prevalent, with a 25% share of the total multi-family structures. However, these 20+ unit structures have also experienced the biggest decline in new construction, while structures with 5 to 19 units have experienced the most growth.

The City's multi-family housing is relatively well suited to meet the needs of the City's smaller household sizes. 78% of all units in multi-family structures are either 1-, 2- or 3-bedroom units. However, the City's large increase in 1-person households (Figure 18 on page 29) may mean that there is more demand for studios and 1-bedroom units than there is supply. This may be offset slightly by an increased demand for home offices as a result of increased work-from-home jobs.

Occupancy and Tenure

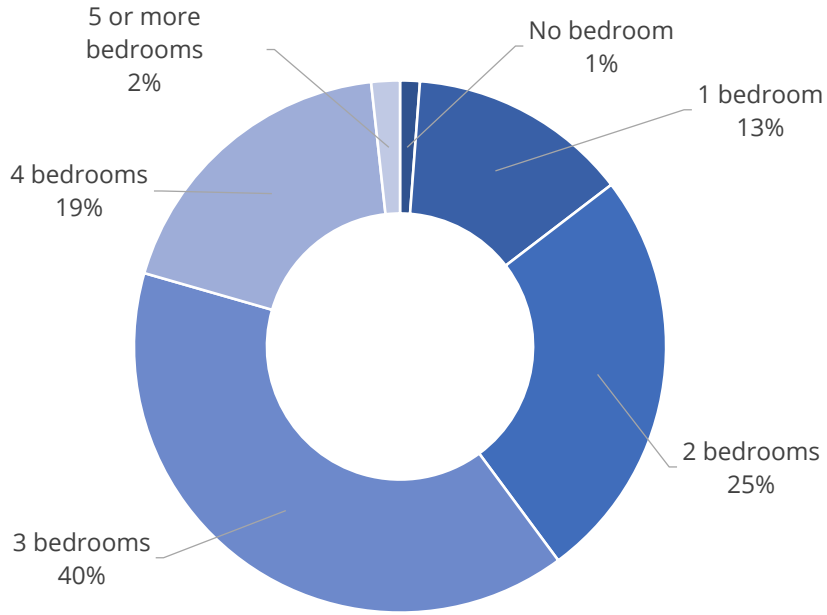
Of the total housing units, 91% were occupied as of 2021, while the other 9% remain vacant. Owner-occupied units make up 69% of the housing stock. The number of renters has been increasing steadily in the past ten years, with a 9% increase since 2011.

Figure 20: Unit in Structures, 2021



Source: American Community Survey

Figure 21: Bedrooms per Unit, 2021



Source: American Community Survey

Permits and Construction

The housing stock experienced a net gain of approximately 2,000 units since 2010, translating to a 5% increase over the past decade. Figure 22 shows the number of housing permits issued over a twenty-year period. During that time, the City has seen a precipitous drop in the construction of single-family housing. The number of multi-family units constructed has remained stable, with the exception of a drop after the 2008 housing crisis. This is consistent with demographic trends that have shown increases in the number of younger and older households.

Value

Median home values have not yet recovered from the decline in housing value after the 2008 housing crisis. Figure 23 shows median home values in Milford compared to the total housing stock from 2010 to 2020. However, the City experienced year-over-year increases in the number of housing units built and the market began recovering in 2017. The continued strong growth in both construction and housing prices indicates that demand has been strong in the City.

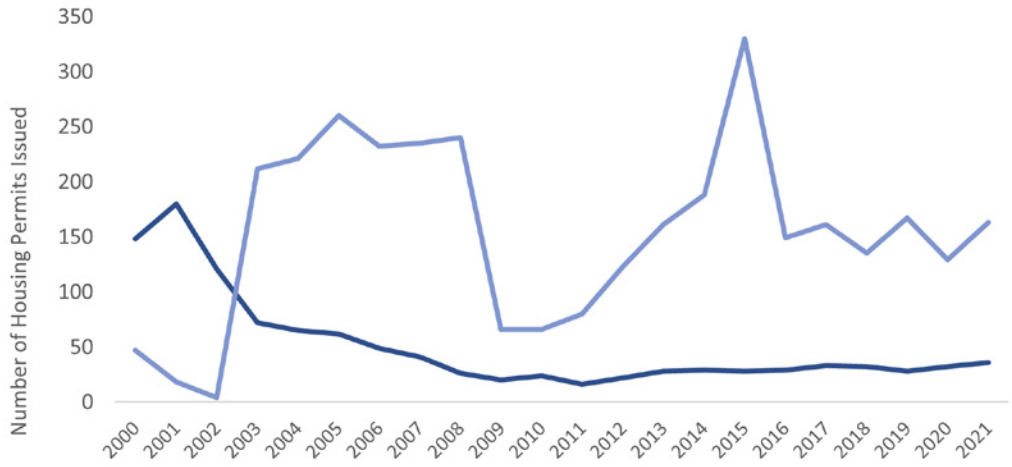


Figure 22: Permits by Housing Type (2000 - 2021)

Source: State of Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development

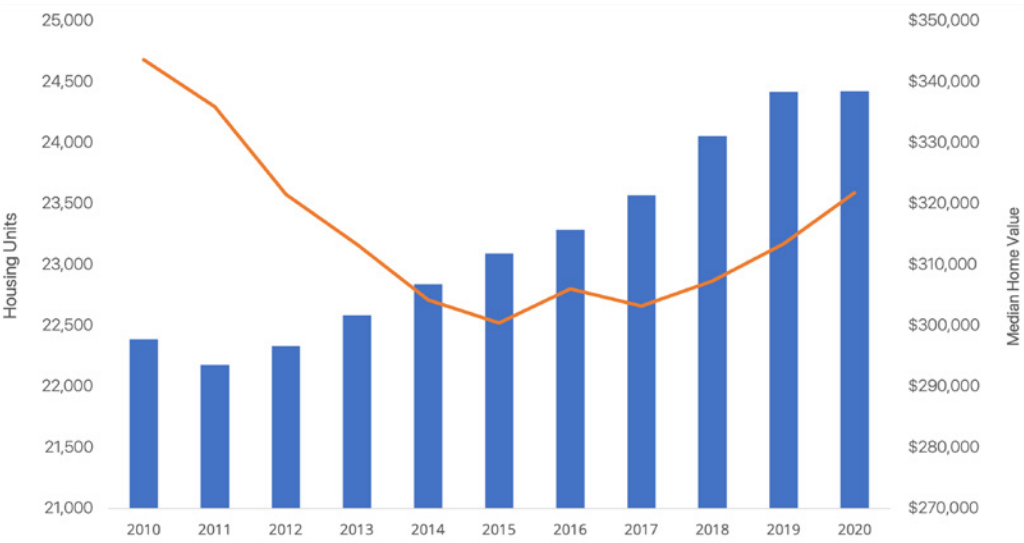


Figure 23: Housing Unit Permits (2000 - 2020)

Source: American Community Survey

Housing Affordability

The issue of housing affordability remains a pressing concern in Milford, sparking extensive discussions and debates. Per Statute 8-30g, at least 10% of a municipality's housing stock must be affordable or they are subject to the affordable appeals program. Such units include those receiving government assistance for construction or rehabilitation, housing occupied by persons receiving rental assistance, homes financed by the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority and/or Farmers Home Administration mortgages, or deed-restricted properties. In the 2021 computation, Milford's percentage of affordable housing is at 1,213 units, or 5.26%. This is down from 6.08% in 2011.

This makes clear that although Milford is experiencing growth in its housing market, affordable housing is not being produced at the same rate. Nonetheless, it is ultimately unlikely that Milford will be able to build its way into 10% affordability. Just over 60% of the housing units built over the past 10 years would have to have been affordable for the City to have reached 10% affordability.

The City of Milford publishes its Five-Year Consolidated Plan that is designed to assess its affordable housing and community development needs while focusing funding from the formula block grant programs (e.g., Community Development Block Grant Program and HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) Program). The Five-Year Plan identifies the following priority housing needs:

1. Improving the quality of the existing housing stock in the City and increasing the supply of decent, safe, and accessible housing for low- and moderate-income persons and families of all ages.
2. Housing and operational support to assist youth and adults experiencing homelessness and persons who are at risk of becoming homeless.
3. Housing and facilities that benefit seniors, persons with disabilities, victims of domestic violence, persons with alcohol/drug dependency, persons with development disabilities and persons with other special needs.

The City has also published the Milford Affordable Housing Plan (2022). That plan identifies a series of strategies and actions to advance the following goals:

1. Preserve and maintain the city's existing affordable housing stock.
2. Continue addressing housing gaps by focusing on areas of affordable rental and ownership housing, supportive senior housing, housing for younger residents, and housing options that could support municipal employees and those who want to both live and work in Milford.
3. Increase the diversity of residents in Milford by ensuring availability of housing with a mix of housing types at a variety of price points.
4. Provide housing options that support seniors who would like to remain in Milford.
5. Explore and encourage housing strategies that support the qualification of existing housing units as eligible affordable housing as defined by 8-30g.
6. Use housing as a tool to continue to support younger family households and new millennial residents by providing a wider range of places to live and bringing more residents to the area to support local businesses.
7. Promote resident education, communication, and discussion about implementing the affordable housing plan.

To advance these goals, the plan recommends four strategies:

1. Cross-cutting strategies serve multiple affordable housing needs and often involve multiple action types. They seek to encourage production of new affordable units, preserve existing affordable units, create affordable ownership opportunities, and expand housing types.
2. Supply-based strategies seek to encourage the production of more affordable units whether that means developing new affordable units or working to deed restrict existing units.
3. Homeownership strategies aim to assist low- and moderate-income households in becoming homeowners as well as supporting existing homeowners to maintain their homes.

4. Preservation and maintenance strategies aim to prevent subsidized and naturally occurring affordable units from being converted into market rate units. It also aims to improve the quality of existing affordable units to serve the needs of residents.

Transit-Oriented Development

The State Plan of Conservation and Development encourages the City to concentrate development around transportation nodes and along major transportation corridors to support the viability of transportation options. Milford is fortunate to have a high-demand Metro-North train station and existing land use patterns that currently support this growth management principle with the potential to expand on it.

Over the years, many TODs have been constructed within ½ mile of the station including the projects at Broad Street, West Main Street, One New Haven Avenue, and Cherry Street. This housing provides much needed housing diversity for young professionals, seniors down-sizing from larger homes, and couples without children. There is a high demand for this housing type and they experience very low vacancy rates.

Future Housing Projections

Milford's single-family housing districts are largely developed and residents have expressed a desire to preserve them as they are. As demographic trends increase pressure for more multi-family development, the City should expect more applications for infill development and higher density development in the City's Corridor Zones and in Milford Center.

The City's corridor and non-residential zones have the advantage of providing high-quality automotive transportation access to regional jobs and amenities. Some of these areas include parcels that present opportunities for more multi-family housing. For example, the underutilized office parks on Bic Drive and Sub Way and near the intersection of Wheelers Farms Road and Wilbur Cross Parkway could present an opportunity for new multifamily development.

However, they also tend to lack some of the infrastructure needed to support residential development. This may include access to parks and open spaces, sidewalks, and safe bicycle infrastructure. As these areas develop, it will be increasingly important to view the corridors as mixed-use areas that must support both regional commercial needs and local housing growth.

Multi-Family Zoning

Currently, all corridor zones permit residential multi-family development as a Special Use. The ordinance requires projects to meet a variety of different requirements, depending on the zone, which include limits on:

- number of bedrooms per unit
- ratio of bedrooms to property size
- minimum living area
- minimum lot size (greater than base zoning)
- building coverage (greater than base zoning)
- lot coverage (greater than base zoning)

Some zones also only permit multi-family buildings where they would be developed in accordance with 8-30g affordable housing standards.

Where residential is permitted as part of mixed-use development, residential is often limited to a percentage of the floor area of the building, which limits the number of units that can be built.

This approach to zoning for multi-family development is highly restrictive and, in the case of minimum unit size requirements, now prohibited by the state as the result of PA 21-29.

Moreover, these standards also treat all multi-family buildings the same, whether they are four or four hundred unit buildings. The result is that Milford's zoning regulations restrict the development of context sensitive projects that meet the needs of existing and future residents.

Housing Recommendations

GOAL: Support the construction of a diversity of multi-family housing to meet the changing needs of residents while protecting the character of single-family districts.

1. Undertake a comprehensive review of all multi-family standards across all corridor and commercial zones and identify areas where zoning unnecessarily restricts multi-family development. This should include examining areas where multi-family and mixed-use development should be permitted at greater density to support the goals of this POCD.
2. Explore introducing standards for different multi-family developments tailored to the number of units in the building or size of the project. The set of permitted uses in each corridor zone should be updated accordingly.
3. Investigate the adoption of a Master Plan Overlay Zone (MPOZ) that favors redevelopment into mixed use and higher density residential.
4. Explore updates to the zoning of the Connecticut Post Mall that would enable the area to evolve into a true mixed-use center that accommodates residential uses. The Town should explore the application of the MPOZ (above) at the mall.
5. Explore allowing residential uses in the CDD-3 and/or rezoning some of the CDD-3 area as MCDD. In that rezoning process, the City should explore requiring affordable housing as a condition of being permitted to develop residential uses.
6. Explore using hybrid form-based regulations in corridor zones to encourage multi-family development that is context-sensitive and consistent with the character of Milford.
7. Undertake a more detailed analysis of existing and projected housing development in all corridor zones to determine where improvements to city infrastructure would support safe access to parks and open spaces, safe routes to schools, and active transportation options.
8. The City should consider undertaking a Transit-Oriented Development Plan to identify how zoning could be amended to support growth near transit while still maintaining the overall character of the community. The plan should examine all transit facilities (including bus)

GOAL: Promote decent, safe, accessible and stable housing environments for low- and moderate-income households of all ages.

1. Implement the recommendations of Milford's Affordable Housing Plan.
2. Review the zoning ordinance to increase the supply of affordable housing options for low- and moderate-income households, specifically privately owned affordable elderly housing units.
3. Improve the staffing and level of zoning enforcement to encourage the improvement of residential properties.
4. Examine expanding the use of inclusionary zoning requirements above current levels for projects over 10 units and leverage the Affordable Housing Plan.

Hearst Connecticut Media

Historic Preservation

Introduction

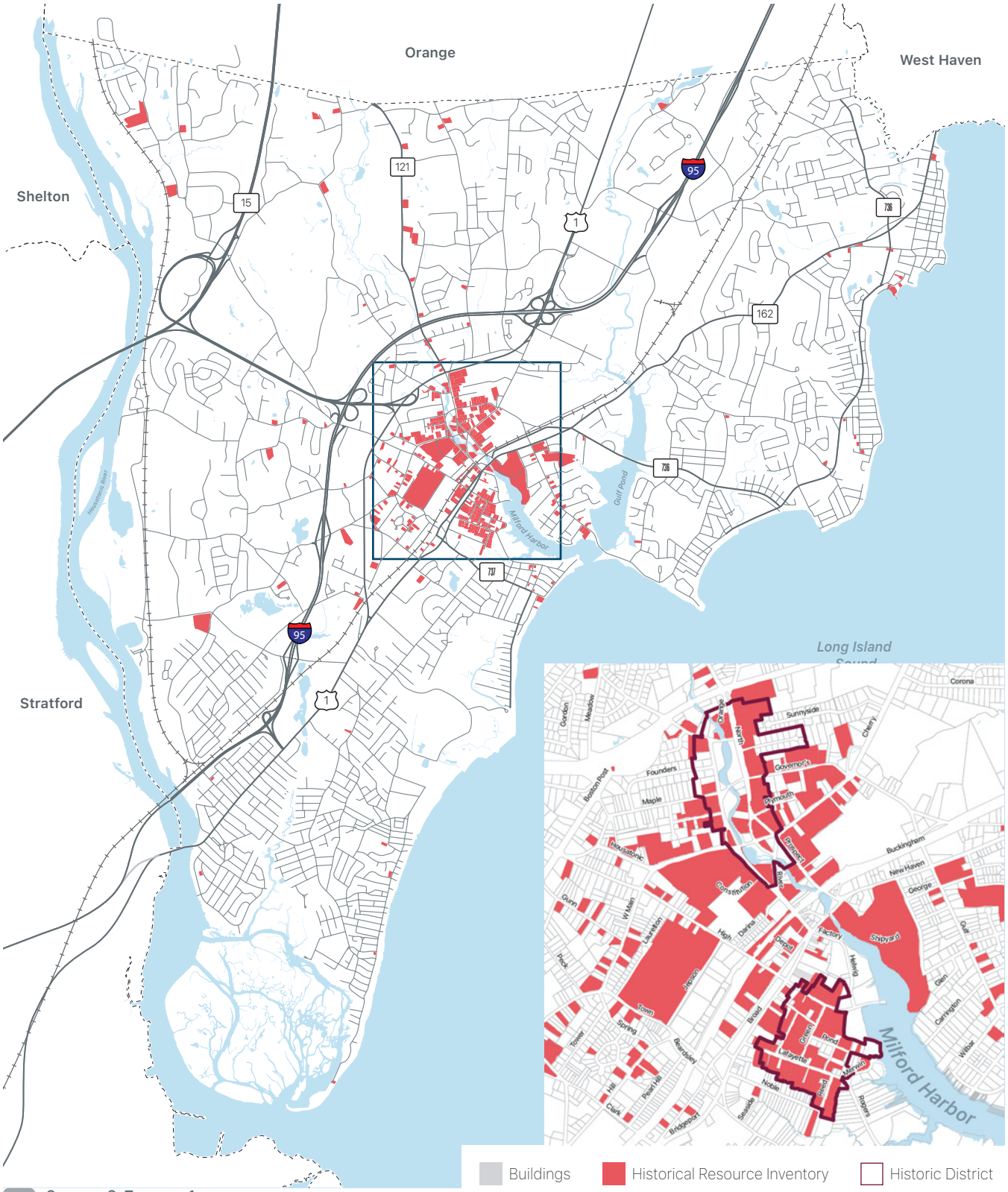
Settled in 1639, Milford has been active in preserving both its architectural and cultural past. Through a grant from the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation, the "Historic and Architectural Resources Survey of Milford" was completed in 2006. The Resources Survey identified 412 sites of historic, architectural, or cultural significance to the City which includes properties such as the Downs House which was owned by a local "minuteman" who fought during the Revolutionary War. Those sites are identified in Figure 25 on page 36.

The two historic districts are controled through two boards: Historic District #1 Commission and the Milford Historic District No. 2 South of the Greenand. In 2015, the City adopted Article XXI - Historic Preservation which established the Historic Preservation Commission. A property owner wishing to make certain changes to a historic property that is not in one of Milford's two historic districts must first obtain an applicaiton for a certifciat of Appropriates (COA) from the Historic Preservation Commission.

In 2002, the Board of Aldermen also adopted a Demolition Delay Ordinance. It was revised in 2010. The Ordinance requires the City Historian to examine any structure that is 75 years or older prior to the issuance of a demolition permit to prevent the loss of historically significant properties.

In the City's Historic Center, design standards have been incorporated into the Milford Center Design District's (MCDD) Zoning Regulations standards to ensure better contextual compatibility of new construction with existing structures.

Figure 25: Historical Resource Inventory



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Historic Preservation Recommendations

GOAL: Protect and preserve historic assets in the City of Milford.

1. Promote continuing education in support of Milford's historic heritage to ensure that future generations value preservation efforts.
2. Where appropriate, create additional historic districts or expand existing districts, where there are concentrations of architecturally significant buildings.
3. Encourage owners of historically or architecturally significant properties to create deed restrictions that guarantee the preservation of their properties or structures.
4. Incorporate design standards for all historic districts into the zoning regulations to ensure better contextual compatibility of new construction with existing structures.
5. Encourage the use of plaques and historical markers to indicate historical buildings and sites.

Discover Milford (discovermilfordct.com)

Commercial Corridors

Introduction

Originally commercial development in Milford was located around the harbor in Milford Center and along the shoreline. The construction of Route 1 (Boston Post Road) attracted development inland and established an east-west orientation to the City's commercial corridors. The trend continued with the construction of I-95 in the 1950s, which led to new retail areas north of I-95 and a concentration of automobile dealerships with a regional market draw. The balance of the Route 1 corridor and Route 162 (New Haven Avenue) developed with a mix of uses generally serving the local Milford market. Convenience goods and services tended to be located in free-standing establishments or strip centers.

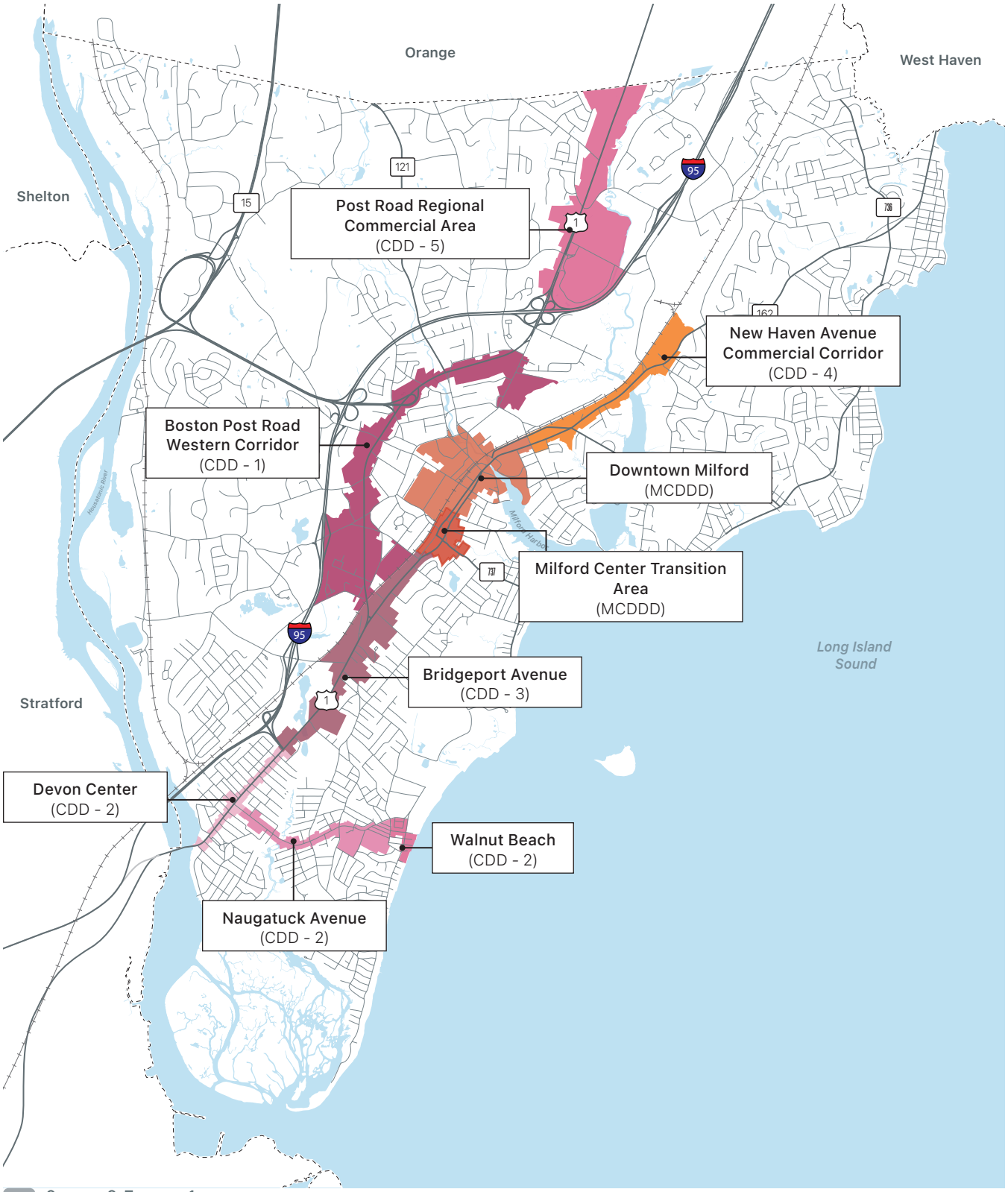
Milford has two major retail and commercial centers, Milford Center and Devon Center. There are also two smaller centers: Naugatuck Avenue at Walnut Beach and Woodmont Center.

Today, these commercial areas are a common destination for residents across town to look for retail goods, services, and employment. This results in significant traffic on local streets leading to the corridor, as well as continued pressure for development within the corridor.

Recent development has most commonly been in the form of additional retail and service establishments. This includes large-scale projects, such as the Milford Market Place and Milford Hospital Medical Offices, and smaller-scale in-fill new construction or renovation of existing establishments. Medical offices, restaurants and regional retailers are the newest uses coming to the Route 1 and Route 162 corridors over the past decade.

For planning purposes, the City's business corridors have been segmented into ten areas as illustrated in Figure 26 on page 39.

Figure 26: Map of Commercial Corridors



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Devon Center (Corridor Design District - 2)

Background

The Devon Center portion extends from the Milford/ Stratford town line along Bridgeport Avenue to the I-95, Exit 34 interchange, as illustrated in Figure 27. As a commercial center developed before the proliferation of the automobile, the Bridgeport Avenue right-of-way in this section is narrow and most of the commercial buildings are sited on small lots with little or no off-street parking. The lots fronting Bridgeport Avenue are also narrow with limited setback, catering to pedestrian-scale development, and services to support the adjacent residential areas.

Because the Devon Center commercial area is of a walkable scale, it is not necessary to provide off-street parking on every site. Shared public parking in a central or near central location could also meet the parking needs of business establishments.

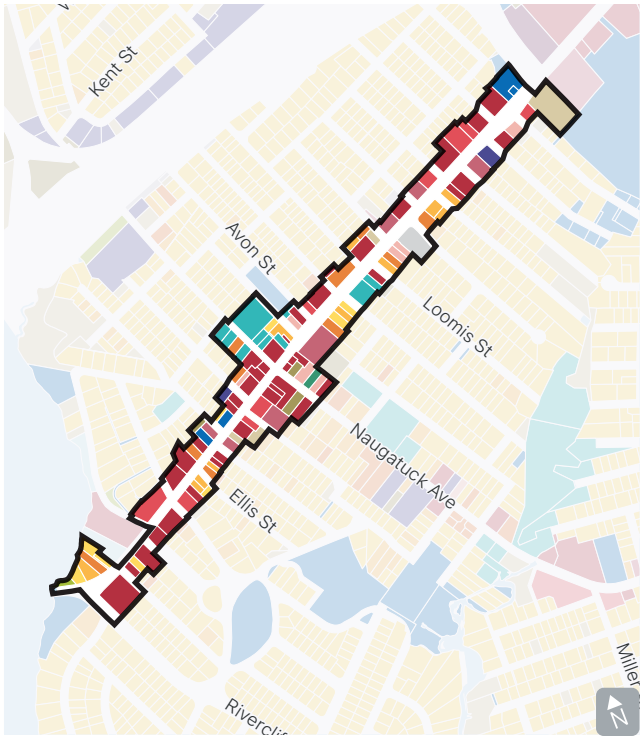
Vision`

Devon Center will continue to provide retail that serves the immediate surrounding neighborhoods. The area will continue to serve niche markets through the attraction of unique goods or services. Over time, limited infill residential development will be built in edge areas and on sites capable of accommodating multiple family developments at a density compatible with the existing neighborhood. These developments will not only expand the customer base for local merchants but would also provide an alternative to small-scale strip commercial development with potentially marginal consumer draw.

Recommendations to advance the vision:

1. The City should develop streetscape design standards that improve the overall appearance of the corridor and encourage development that is in keeping with the scale of the surrounding uses.
2. Continued implementation and maintenance of the streetscape improvement plan developed for Devon Center is a high priority in addition to continued façade improvements in this corridor.

Figure 27: Devon Center Land Use



- Single Family
- Multifamily
- Apartment/Condominium
- Retail Sales/Service (General)
- Restaurant/Tavern
- Automotive Sales/Service
- Bank
- Business Office
- Hotel/Motel
- Manufacturing/Industrial
- Municipal/Education Facilities
- Public Park
- Vacant Land
- Institutions and Cemeteries
- Misc Unclassified

Naugatuck Avenue (Corridor Design District - 2)

Background

Naugatuck Avenue forms a north-south corridor, running between Devon, the Walnut Beach Redevelopment Area, and the shoreline (Figure 28). Residential properties comprise a significant portion of the properties along the corridor, although there are a limited number of commercial uses along Naugatuck Avenue. Most are convenience commercial, small office uses or automotive-related uses. There is no design consistency along Naugatuck Avenue.

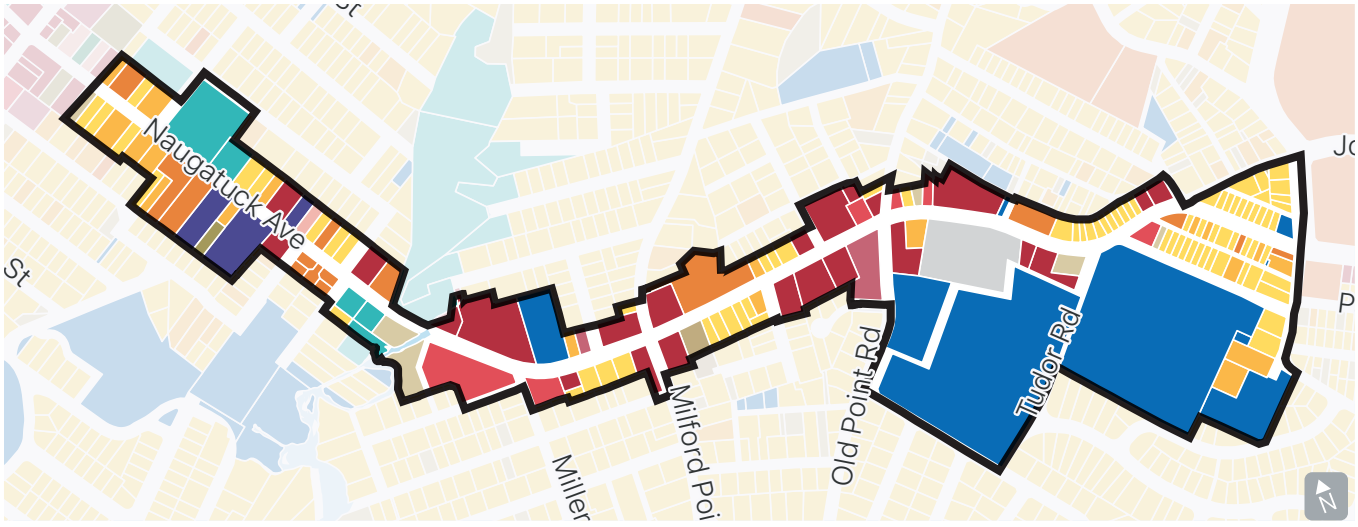
Vision

Over time, clusters of commercial nodes will develop at key intersections along the corridor. These nodes will help to establish a sense of place and aesthetically unify the corridor. At the same time, residential development will occur largely on infill on underutilized sites. The new residential development will bring more life to the corridor and provides support for commercial establishments. These private sector investments will be complemented by continued public sector streetscape improvements.

Recommendations to advance the vision:

1. The City should work with residents and property owners to explore amending zoning to permit additional multifamily housing uses to replace vacant commercial properties.
2. The City should continue investing in streetscape improvements.
3. The City should develop design standards for the corridor that establish:
   a. Appropriate requirements for screening of automotive uses.
   b. Design elements that will unify the area and establish a distinctive character and appearance.
   c. Standards to ensure infill development is in keeping with its surroundings.

Figure 28: Naugatuck Avenue Land Use



Walnut Beach Business District (Corridor Design District - 2)

Background

The Walnut Beach business district is concentrated around the intersection of Naugatuck Ave and Broadway. Buildings are built to the property line in a traditional town center style. Businesses are largely serviced by on-street parking. The northern corner underwent redevelopment that included the construction of more street-fronting retail and adjacent residential development.

With the proliferation of commercial establishments along Route 1, there is little need for major retail or commercial development in the Walnut Beach area.

Vision

Walnut Beach will continue to be a locally serving retail district that also benefits from the visitors that are attracted to the nearby beach. Over time, additional retail, including more grocery and convenience shopping, will be built in the area. These retail amenities will help support the high concentration of multi-family unity in the area.

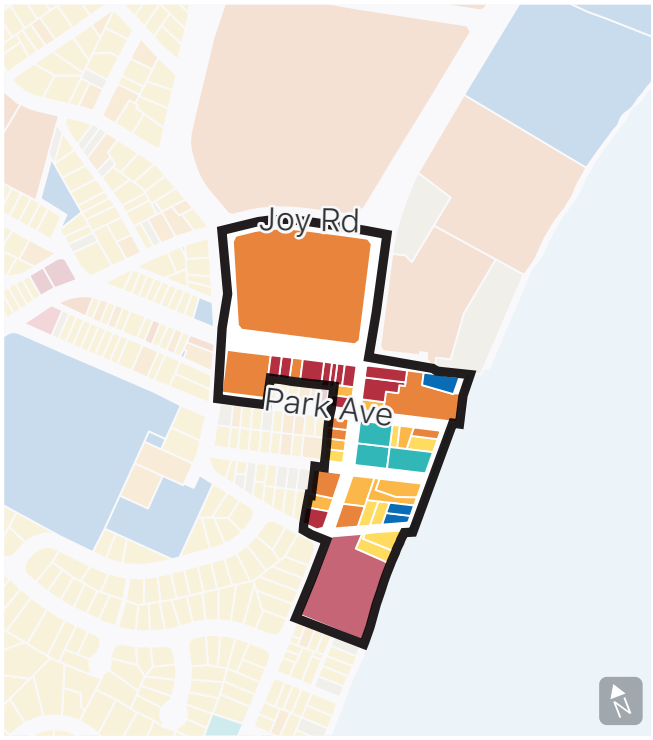
The location near Walnut Beach offers an opportunity for small-scale commercial enterprises to capitalize on seasonal visitor traffic. The area will see an increase in restaurants, boutiques, and galleries which capitalize on the location. When this takes hold, the City will work with residents and businesses to support the location of artist-oriented businesses and housing.

Because many elderly households occupy surrounding housing, a special emphasis will be placed on keeping the area accessible to people of all abilities.

Recommendations to advance the vision:

1. The City should examine providing on-street bicycle infrastructure to support multi-modal access to and from the area.
2. The City should improve wayfinding to reinforce the connection between the beach and the commercial center.
3. The City should improve the pedestrian connection between the commercial zone and the public Walnut Beach.

Figure 29: Walnut Beach Area Land Use



- Single Family
- Multifamily
- Apartment/Condominium
- Retail Sales/Service (General)
- Restaurant/Tavern
- Automotive Sales/Service
- Bank
- Business Office
- Hotel/Motel
- Manufacturing/Industrial
- Municipal/Education Facilities
- Public Park
- Vacant Land
- Insitutions and Cemeteries

Bridgeport Avenue Corridor (Corridor Design District - 3)

Background

The Bridgeport Avenue Corridor is dominated by automotive dealership businesses that serve a regional market. Interspersed within the corridor are auto-oriented commercial establishments like fast food restaurants and pharmacies.

This segment of Route 1 has a disorderly, unattractive, and chaotic appearance that are the result of:

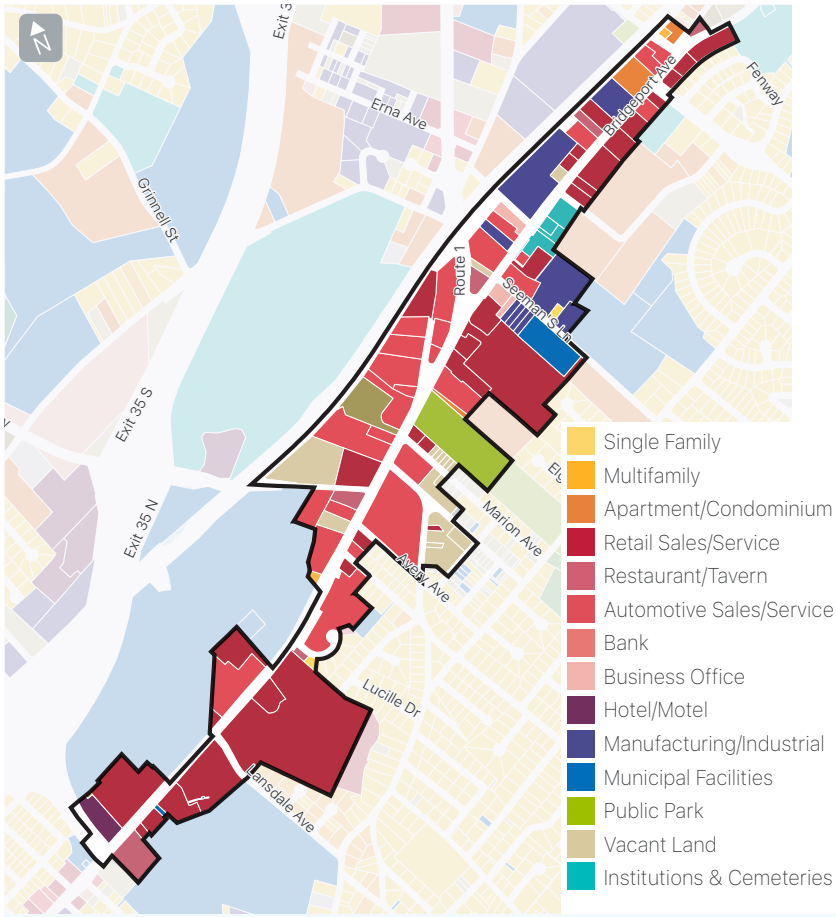
- Inconsistent shape, size, and location of signage
- Inconsistent setbacks
- Limited buffering.

This portion of the Route 1 corridor is adjacent to Milford Reservoir, a significant natural resource and an area of environmental concern because of the presence of adjacent wetlands.

Vision

The area will continue to be a regional commercial center. Over time, improvements will be made to the visual character of the street, creating a more attractive and inviting environment. The City will continue to protect the adjacent reservoirs, adjacent wetlands, and associated watercourses.

Figure 30: Bridgeport Avenue Corridor Land Use



Recommendations to advance the vision:

1. The City should develop design standards for the corridor that would address signage, front yard landscaping standards, setbacks, and buffering.
2. The City should develop a corridor-wide access management plan to reduce the number of curb cuts and improve safety. The plan should be revisited and revised pending major new development or redevelopment activity.
3. The City should develop and implement design guidelines that incorporate these elements into site planning for new development and methods to encourage such improvements throughout the entire corridor. Access management is also key to commercial corridor success.
4. During the review of development applications, the City should continue to ensure that the natural resources in the area are sufficiently protected.

Boston Post Road Western Corridor (Corridor Design District - 1)

Background

This segment of the Post Road extends from the intersection with Bridgeport Avenue on the west to the intersection with Cherry Street to the east as illustrated in Figure 31 on page 45. This portion of Route 1 has no specific or unique identity. At the eastern end of the segment, in proximity to Connecticut Post Mall, there are some highway-related uses including older motels, restaurants and gas stations. At the center portion of this corridor area is the on the off-ramp system for the Milford Parkway connector to Route 15, the Merritt/Wilbur Cross Parkway, which further supports some auto-related uses. Since the adoption of the last POCD, there have been two notable additions to this area: the Big Y World Class Market and the Dan Perkins Subaru dealership.

The balance of this corridor segment contains a mixture of uses ranging from community facilities such as the Milford Police Department and Public Works Department Complex to restaurants and smaller convenience/service establishments. Although this corridor contains some destination uses (including Colonial Toyota and Aldi's Market), they do not represent a unified presence.

Vision

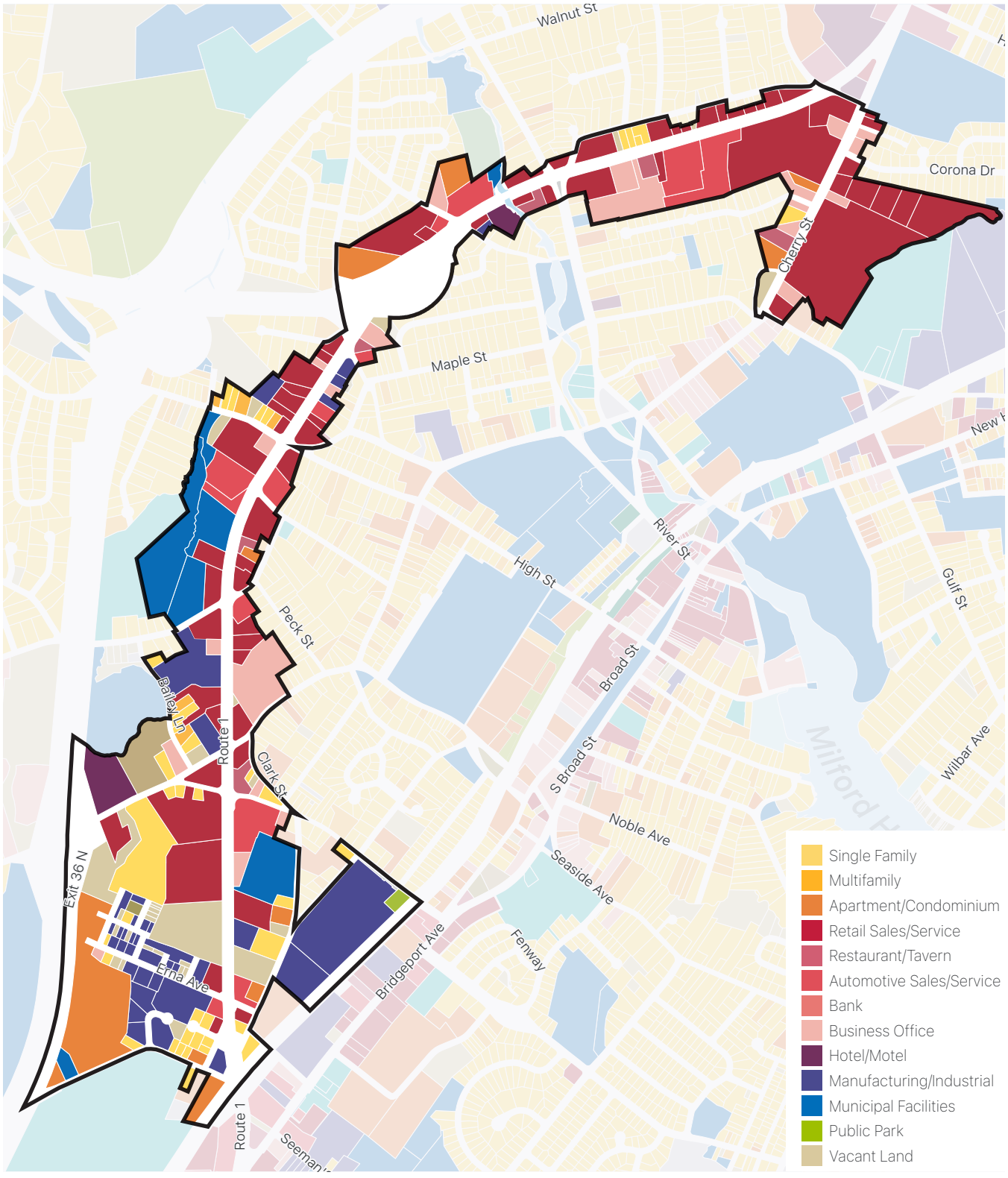
This Boston Post Road Western Corridor will continue to serve as a regional commercial destination and key transportation corridor. As such, the area will continue to attract a mix of commercial and residential users who take advantage of the area's transportation assets.

Because of the high-quality vehicular access to both I-95 and Route 15 and access to mass transportation, the corridor will see an increase in the number of multi-family housing projects that provide alternatives to the City's predominately single-family neighborhoods.

Recommendations to advance the vision:

1. The City should re-examine the conditional standards placed on multi-family residential development in the area to ensure there are no unnecessary obstacles to promoting the goals established in the Housing Element of this plan. Standards that should be examined include: the minimum lot size, maximum building coverage, maximum lot coverage standards, and unit-to-land ratios.
2. The City should work with the State to identify safety improvements along the corridor. Left-hand turns in areas without signalization are also problematic along the entire Route 1 corridor as are the number of curb cuts.

Figure 31: Boston Post Road Western Corridor Land Use



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Post Road Regional Commercial Area (Corridor Design District – 5 and Shopping Center Design District)

Background

The easternmost segment of the Route 1 corridor north of I-95 and abutting Orange (see Figure 32) is clearly established as a regional commercial area. The Connecticut Post Mall and numerous national retailers make this area a destination within the region. The direct access to I-95 at interchange 39 enhances this regional position. In addition, significant retail development along Route 1 in the Town of Orange to the east of Milford further supports this area's regional market position.

In addition to issues with traffic and congestion, the area has an unattractive appearance. Because of its regional draw, this commercial area defines the City's image to many visitors to Milford. The recent development of Milford Market Place has been welcomed as a change to this perception.

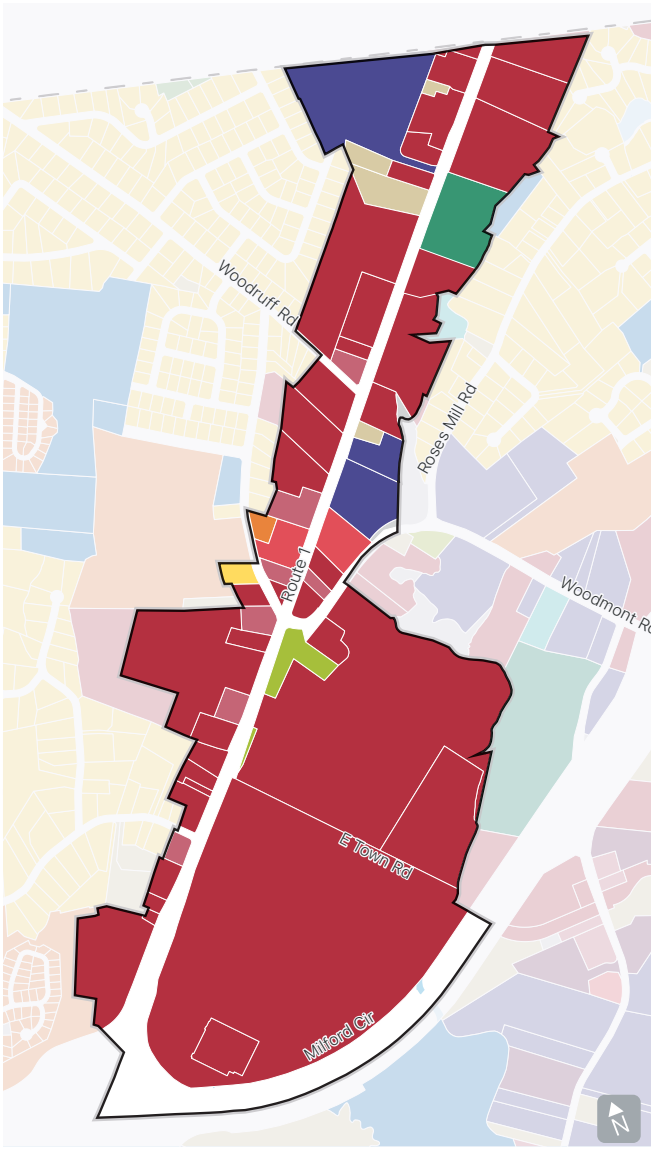
Vision

The area will continue to grow and commercial development remains largely regionally focused. An increasingly diverse mix of goods, services and amenities will contribute to the market draw. Investments in better and more complete pedestrian infrastructure wll help make the area more accessible.

Recommendations

1. The City should support the creation of sidewalks throughout the corridor.

Figure 32: Post Road Regional Commercial Area Land Use



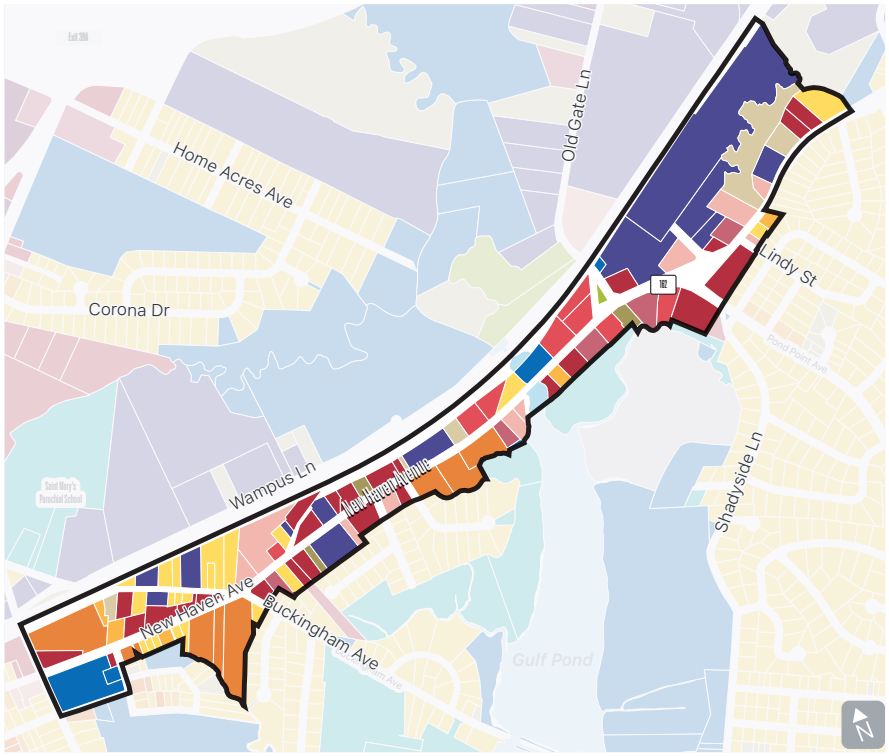
New Haven Avenue Commercial Corridor (Corridor Design District – 4)

Background

The New Haven Avenue Commercial Corridor extends from just east of Milford Center at Gulf Street to the more industrial areas at the intersection of Pepe's Farm Road, as illustrated in Figure 33. This area serves a gateway into Downtown and contains a mixture of uses including office, automotive repair, restaurants, commercial strip development, industrial and residential. The corridor is defined as a fairly narrow strip of land located between the existing railroad line and the shore. The narrow frontage in this area and the constraints presented by the railroad and the natural shoreline features limit the extent of development which can occur on individual parcels along the corridor.

Within the corridor there is a significant natural resource area at the Indian River outlet into Gulf Pond. There are currently several automotive repair and industrial uses in the vicinity of this important natural resource area.

Figure 33: New Haven Avenue Corridor Land Use



Downtown Milford Commercial Core (Milford Center Design Development District)

Background

Downtown Milford is the heart of Milford. It's home to restaurants, shops, the Milford Green, Milford Harbor, the Metro North Train Station, and a growing residential community. A year-round dynamic walkable downtown the area exemplifies traditional Transit Oriented Development (TOD).

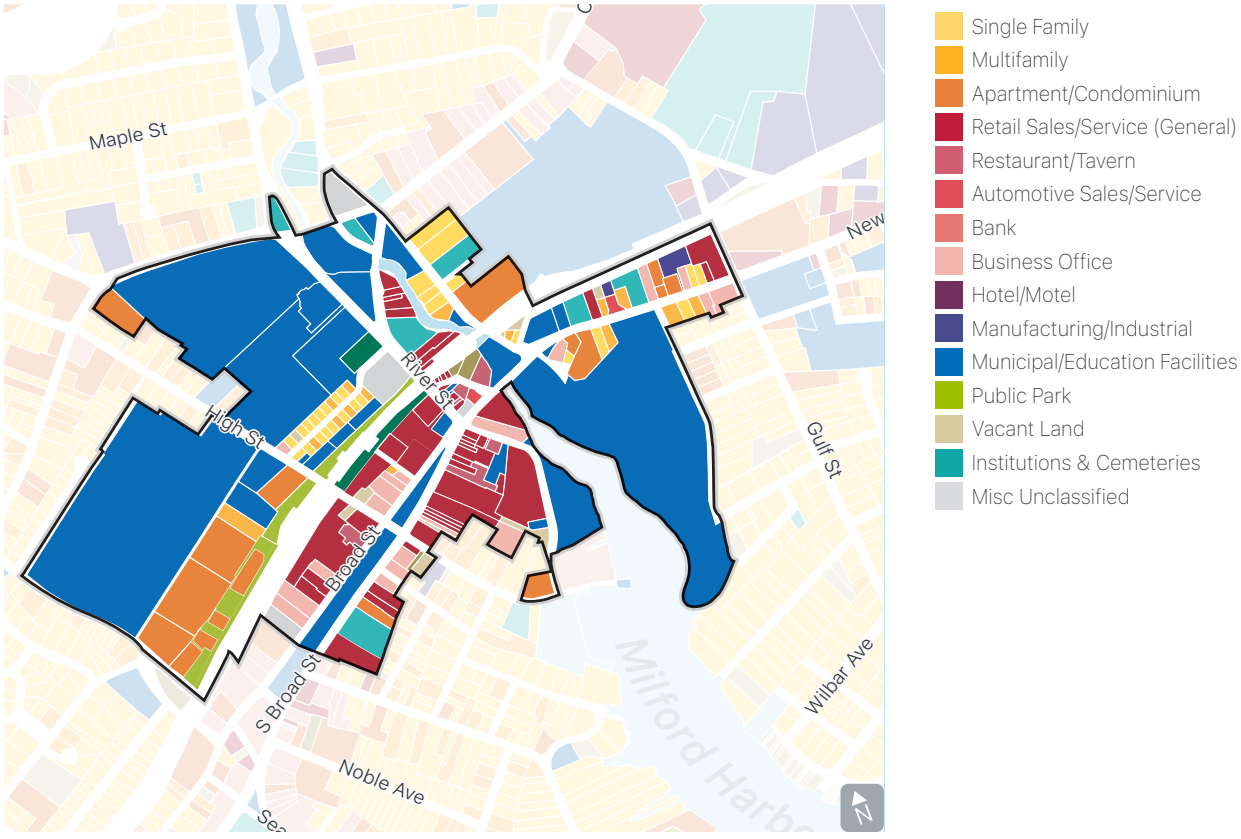
Vision

Downtown Milford will continue to be the heart of the community. New development and public realm improvements will strengthen and complement the current scale and character of the Downtown.

Recommendations to advance the vision:

1. The City should advance the recommendations identified in the Milford Downtown Plan.
2. The City should invest in wayfinding signage to guide visitors to points of interest such as the harbor and off-street parking opportunities, and present Milford's unique "brand" or Marketable identity. The signage should be harmonious in design with the streetscape improvements made downtown over the last decade. Signage should be designed at differing scales depending on its purpose and location, for example signs to be read from passing vehicles will be different from signage designed for pedestrians.
3. The City should undertake a parking study to understand patterns in the vicinity of Broad, River, Factory Lane, and Daniel streets. The goal should be to ensure the most efficient use of the public spaces for facilitating vehicle movements while enhancing the pedestrian experience by improving safety and

Figure 34: Downtown Milford Land Use



Milford Center Transition Area (Milford Center Design Development District)

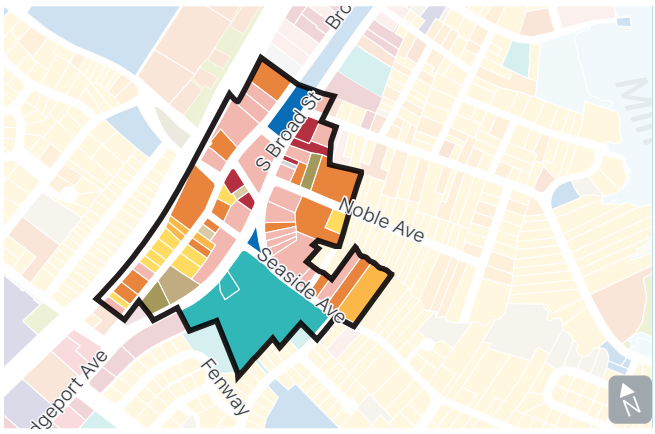
Background

Bridgeport Avenue splits at the intersection of Routes 1 and 162, as illustrated in Figure 35. At this point, Bridgeport Avenue continues eastward as Route 162 toward Milford Center. This stretch of Bridgeport Avenue serves as a gateway to Milford Center.

The corridor has a mixture of auto-oriented retail, legacy industrial uses, small strip commercial centers and offices. The area is also home to Milford Hospital, which is a key destination. Adaptive reuse and redevelopment of existing parcels have taken place, including the expansion of Bridges and the redevelopment of Bridgeport Steel into Show Motion. In addition, the area has seen an increase in demand for medical office space and support services for the hospital.

The public realm is highly inconsistent. Some blocks have continuous sidewalks bordered by landscaped lawns and verges. Other blocks (and segments of blocks) lack sidewalks, have little to no landscaping, and/or have parking that backs out directly onto Bridgeport Avenue.

Figure 35: Milford Center Transition Area Land Use



- Single Family
- Multifamily
- Apartment/Condominium
- Retail Sales/Service (General)
- Restaurant/Tavern
- Automotive Sales/Service
- Bank
- Business Office
- Hotel/Motel
- Manufacturing/Industrial
- Municipal/Education Facilities
- Public Park
- Vacant Land
- Institutions & Cemeteries
- Misc Unclassified

Vision

The City will support efforts to transition this stretch of Bridgeport Avenue into an attractive gateway to Milford Center. As properties redevelop, the sidewalk network and the roadway verge will be planted. Front yards will increasingly be landscaped and property owners have coordinated access easements to facilitate easy access to side and rear yard parking. The intersections of Bridgeport Avenue and Route 1, and the Clark St, Golden Hill Street, and Bridgeport Avenue will be redesigned to improve safety and make them more attractive.

Recommendations to advance the vision:

1. The City should update minimum yard standards for this section of the MCDD to establish a more consistent streetscape. The current requirement (no greater than the average front yard as measured at 100 feet in either direction) will not address the inconsistency along the corridor are better suited to the Commercial Core subdistrict.
2. The City should establish specific front yard design standards for this more auto-oriented section of the MCDD that include landscaping standards and prohibit front yard parking. The current standards are more suited to the Commercial Core subdistrict where properties are (and should be) built to the property line.
3. The City should develop a corridor-wide access management plan to reduce the number of curb cuts and improve safety.
4. The City should study improvements to the intersections of Bridgeport Avenue and Route 1 and the Clark St, Golden Hill Street, and Bridgeport Avenue. Improvements should focus on safety and establishing more attractive gateways into Milford Center.

Tony Cenicola/The New York Times

Transportation & Circulation

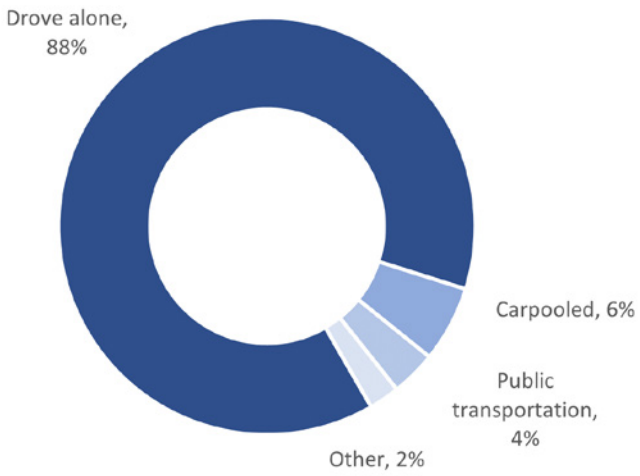
Introduction

Milford can be reached by highway, parkway or rail from the greater New York Metro Area and New England states. Regionally, the City's ample bus connectivity contributes to the success of its role as a regionally serving commercial center by providing needed transit flexibility to the City's retail and service sector employee base. Locally, Milford has an extensive established roadway network.

Milford's full-time population expanded rapidly in conjunction with the post-war housing boom of the 1950s. Consistent with the neighborhood and street design of the era, much of the City is suburban scaled with an auto-oriented road network that does little to address sharing the road with bicycles and pedestrians.

The Census estimates that approximately 82% percent of residents drove to work alone in 2016-2020, and 5.4 percent carpooled. Among those who commuted to work, it took them an average of 26.6 minutes to get to work.

Figure 37: Means of Transportation to Work



Source: American Community Survey

Automotive Access

Milford has a robust network of federal, state, county and local roads, as illustrated in Figure 39 on page 52. Milford is easily accessible from both I-95 and the Wilbur Cross Parkway. These highways are directly connected to each other by the Milford Parkway Connector. There are eight highway exits along I-95 with both major employers and multiple service facility opportunities available for those traveling through or to the City.

The Wilbur Cross Parkway (Route 15) is limited to passenger vehicles and has two exits, Wheelers Farm Road and Wolf Harbor Road, that provide access to several corporate office parks. As the Parkway area is otherwise predominantly residential, there are no services provided in proximity to the off-ramps.

The Milford Parkway Connector exit provides direct access to both I-95 and the north and southbound Route 1 (Boston Post Road) business corridor. It should be noted that the Wilbur Cross (as it transitions to the Merritt Parkway) has a bike/pedestrian trail that starts in Milford and travels over the Sikorsky Bridge into Stratford. The I-95 Moses Wheeler Bridge that extends over the Housatonic River is currently being replaced with staging occurring off of Naugatuck Avenue in Milford. These highway networks are otherwise firmly established with no additional expansions or upgrades anticipated within the City of Milford.

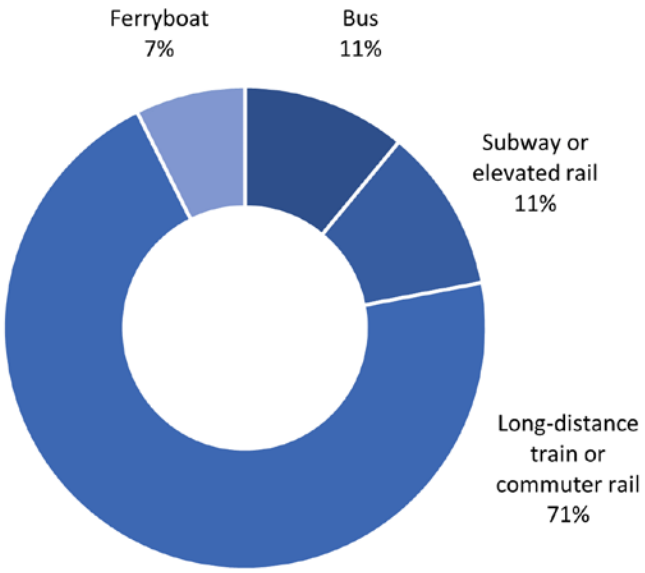
Milford's road network is anchored west to east by U.S. Route 1. It starts out as Bridgeport Avenue at the Stratford border and transitions to the Boston Post Road prior to the City's center through to the Orange border. Route 1 is the City's preeminent commercial corridor and divides the densely developed shoreline to the south and the more suburban residential north. It changes in character from mixed-use local Main Street to a heavily automotive-oriented regional commercial corridor with its speed limit changing accordingly. Its land use is discussed in more detail in the commercial corridor sections.

Rail and Bus Access

The heart of Milford's transit network is the train station located within its historic City Center. The station is part of the Metro-North railway corridor that provides east-west and north-south access by easily connecting to both the Amtrak, Shoreline East, and Hartford network in New Haven.

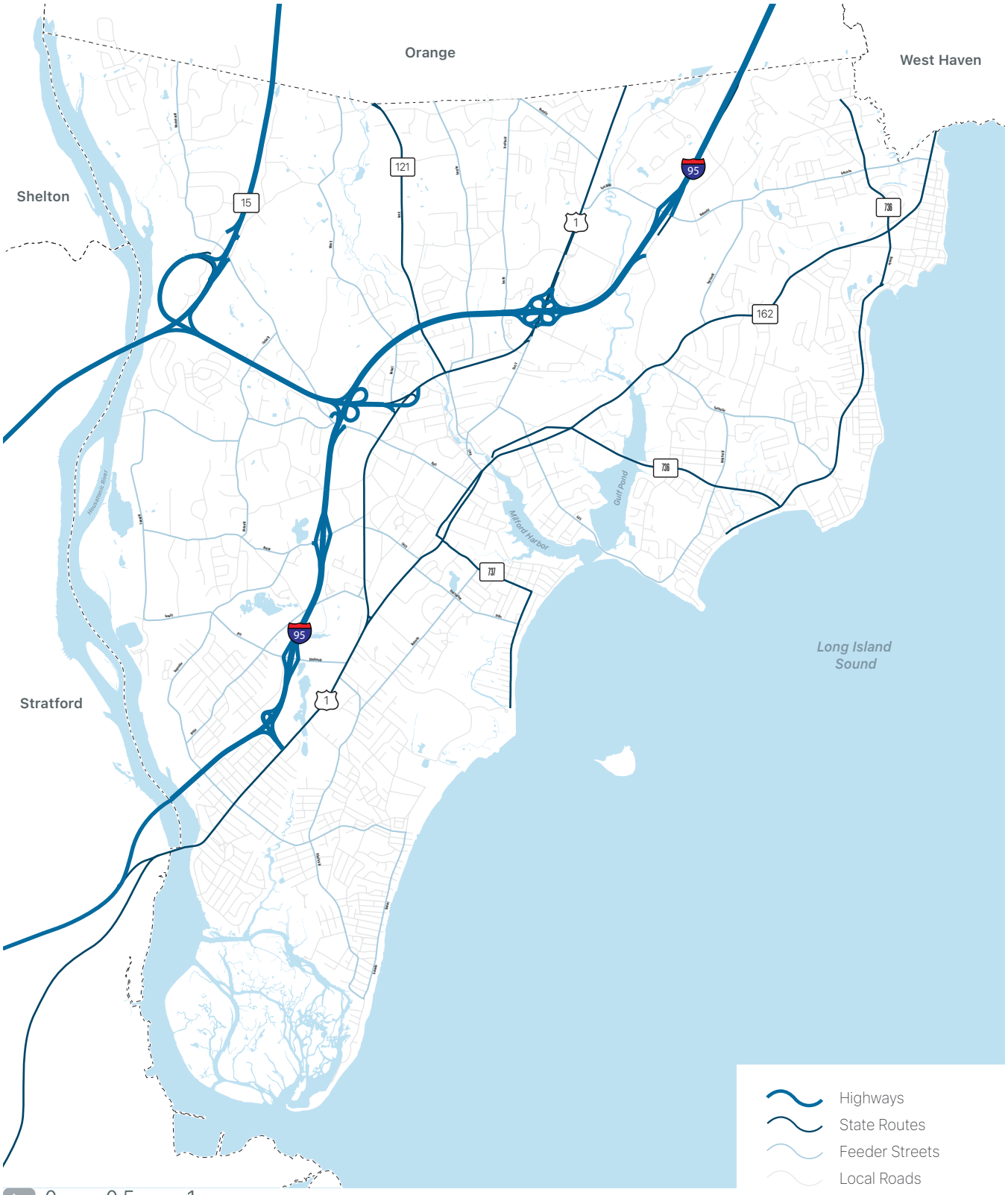
For the small percentage of Milford residents who took public transportation to work, the majority of them took the train. (Figure 38) This is consistent with the strong demand for resident permits for the municipal parking lots near the station. More park-and-ride facilities may increase opportunities for residents to take the train to work rather than drive along.

Figure 38: Milford Transit District Ridership



Source: National Transit Database

Figure 39: Highway and Roadway Network



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The Milford Transit District provides bus service along three distinct routes as shown in Figure 42 on page 54. In addition, Milford is serviced by Route 1 which connects to the regional Coastal Link service to Norwalk. The Connecticut Post Mall is a significant transit destination. An estimated 40% of its employee base relies on local and regional bus service.

The breakdown of commuters who take public transportation to work indicates that this bus network largely serves to support workers who are coming to Milford to work, and the non-community needs of residents.

As illustrated in Figure 40, there has been a steady drop in rides that predated the pandemic but which accelerated in 2020. Like many communities, the City saw a spike in the number of workers who reported working from home but there was already a steady rise in this figure leading up to 2020. (Figure 41) The City should expect some workers to continue to work from home at least part-time.

Active Mobility

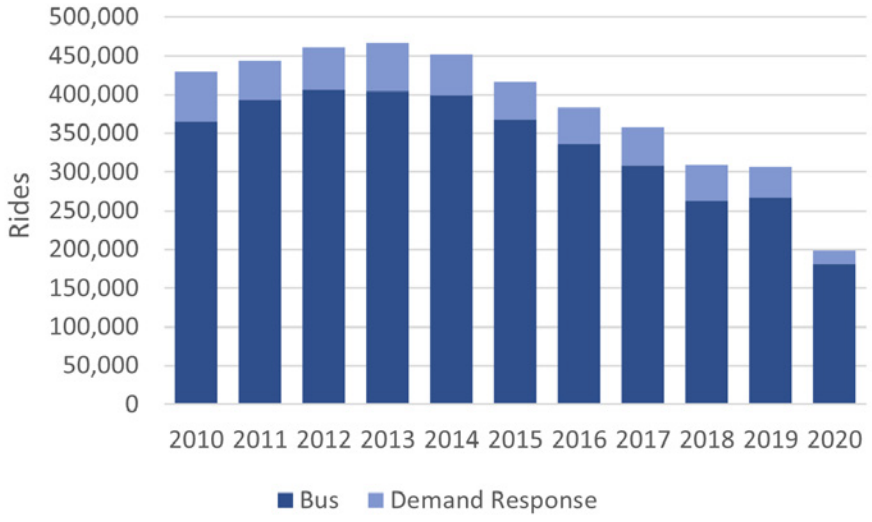
Milford is a compact community. At 23 square miles, most areas of the City are located within two and a half miles of Milford Center. This equates to an approximate 10- to 15-minute travel time by bicycle and an approximate 35- to 40-minute walk.

Despite the geographic proximity of residents to the City's services and amenities, many people face barriers to walking and biking. This includes a lack of infrastructure, poor maintenance of existing infrastructure (especially sidewalks), and unsafe conditions because streets were principally designed to support traffic throughput.

In Milford, the neighborhoods developed in the 1920s have the best sidewalk infrastructure, the 1950s neighborhoods are mixed, and the most recent subdivisions in north Milford (Lexington Green, Milford Hunt, River Highlands, and Great River) all lack sidewalk infrastructure. The lack of sidewalks on the former farm roads presents safety problems for walkers and bikers.

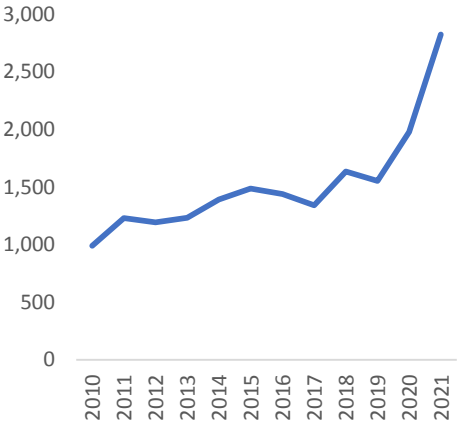
The poor conditions for pedestrians and cyclists have the greatest impact on the City's most vulnerable residents: children and the elderly, people with disabilities, and those without access to a private automobile.

Figure 40: Milford Transit District Ridership



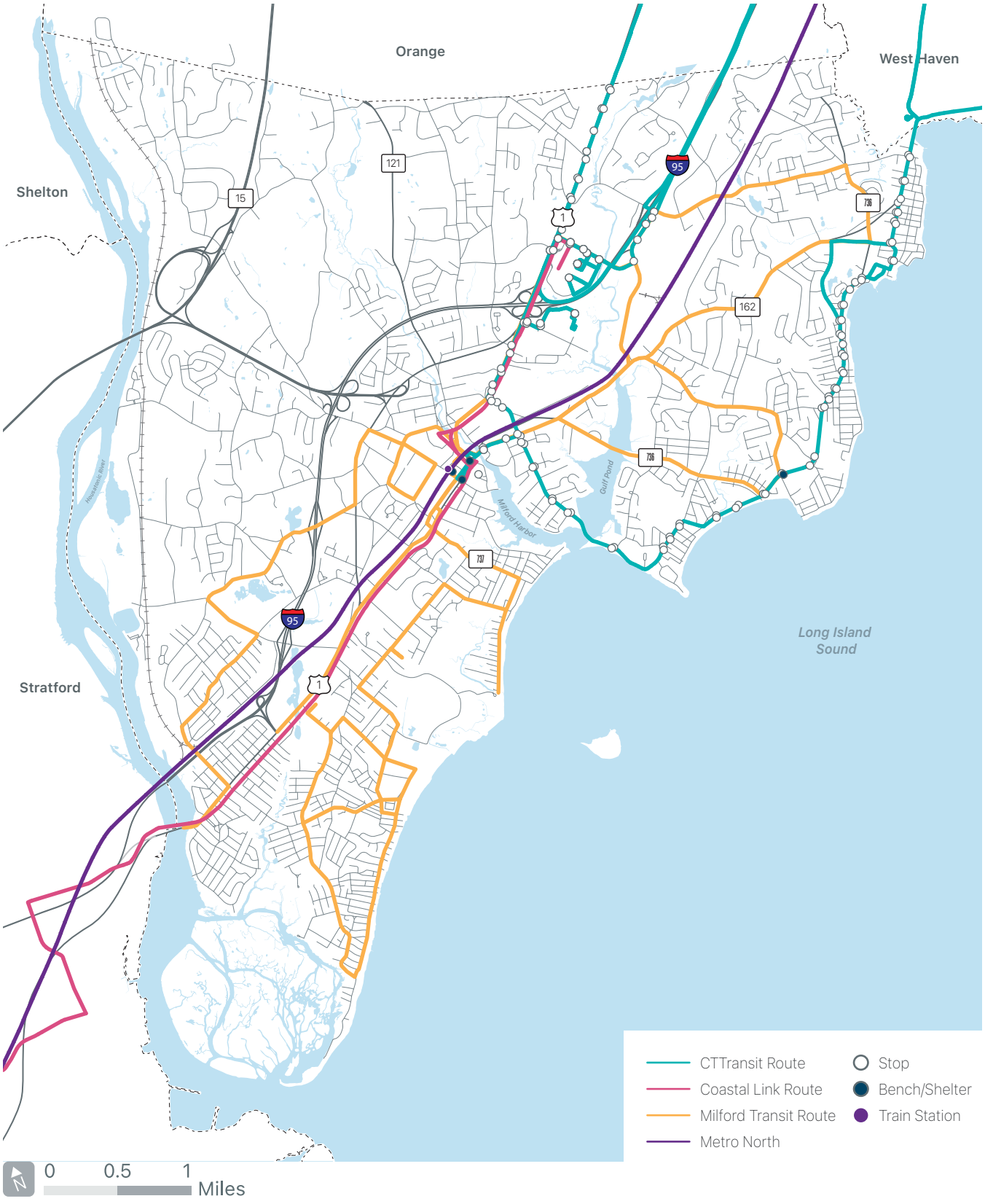
Source: National Transit Database

Figure 41: Workers over 16 who reported working from Home



Source: US Census

Figure 42: Public Transit



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The poor active mobility network also costs taxpayers money. According to the Milford Board of Education 2022-2023 Budget, the City spends approximately $4.5 million to bus students to school.

Milford is not unique in the State (or the country) in confronting these issues. Other Connecticut municipalities (i.e., New Haven and Bridgeport) have developed robust "complete street" programs to improve conditions for all road users. Municipalities across the country have demonstrated that thoughtful implementation of improvements can result in substantial changes over time.

Safety

As part of this POCD, a crash analysis was conducted to identify areas of particular concern for further investigation. Figure 43 on page 56 shows a heat map of all crash types across the City. The map indicates interstate exits are areas of high concentration of crashes. Some caution is advised in reading this data, as these locations are likely over-reported because they are easily identifiable landmarks.

Figure 44 on page 57 identifies the location of crashes that produced serious injury or deaths. While all crashes should be avoided, those creating the most harm are of highest priority. Figure 45 on page 58 shows the location of crashes that involved pedestrians and bicyclists.

Combined, these maps indicate several areas of concern:

- **Old Gate Lane / I-95**: Identified on Figure 43 this area contains a mixture of industrial and large commercial facilities. There are also two truck stops that line Old Gate Lane. As a result, the area likely has a mixture of drivers and vehicles that make navigating the area safely difficult. Figure 44 and Figure 45 show that there is also a concentration of high injury crashes and those involving pedestrians.
- **Route 1 North:** Identified on Figure 44, along Route 1 / Boston Post Road there are concentrations of crashes just north and south of Exit 39 on I-95. To the north is Connecticut Post Mall, which may produce a large number of crashes simply due to the high volume of regional traffic generated. To the south, there is a concentration of crashes near the intersection of Cherry Street and Route 1. Although there have been no fatalities in this area, there have been a number of crashes that involved pedestrians.
- **Route 1 South**: Identified on Figure 44, this area has seen 3 fatal crashes over a 5 year period. The reason for the crashes and the high number of fatalities is not immediately clear. There is not a high concentration of other types of crashes in this area nor is there a particular concentration of pedestrian or bicycle crashes.
- **Milford Center**: Identified on Figure 45, Milford Center has seen a number of pedestrian-related crashes. The high volume of pedestrian activity in the area is likely one reason for this volume. The lower speeds through this area are also likely the reason why crashes have largely included only minor injuries.
- **Devon Center**: Identified on Figure 45, Devon Center is an area where land use around Route 1 transitions from being largely auto-oriented commercial to being more residential and small scale commercial. The concentration of pedestrian and bicycle crashes in this area, along with some serious injury crashes, elevates the importance of further investigation.

Figure 43: Crashes in Milford (2017 - 2021)

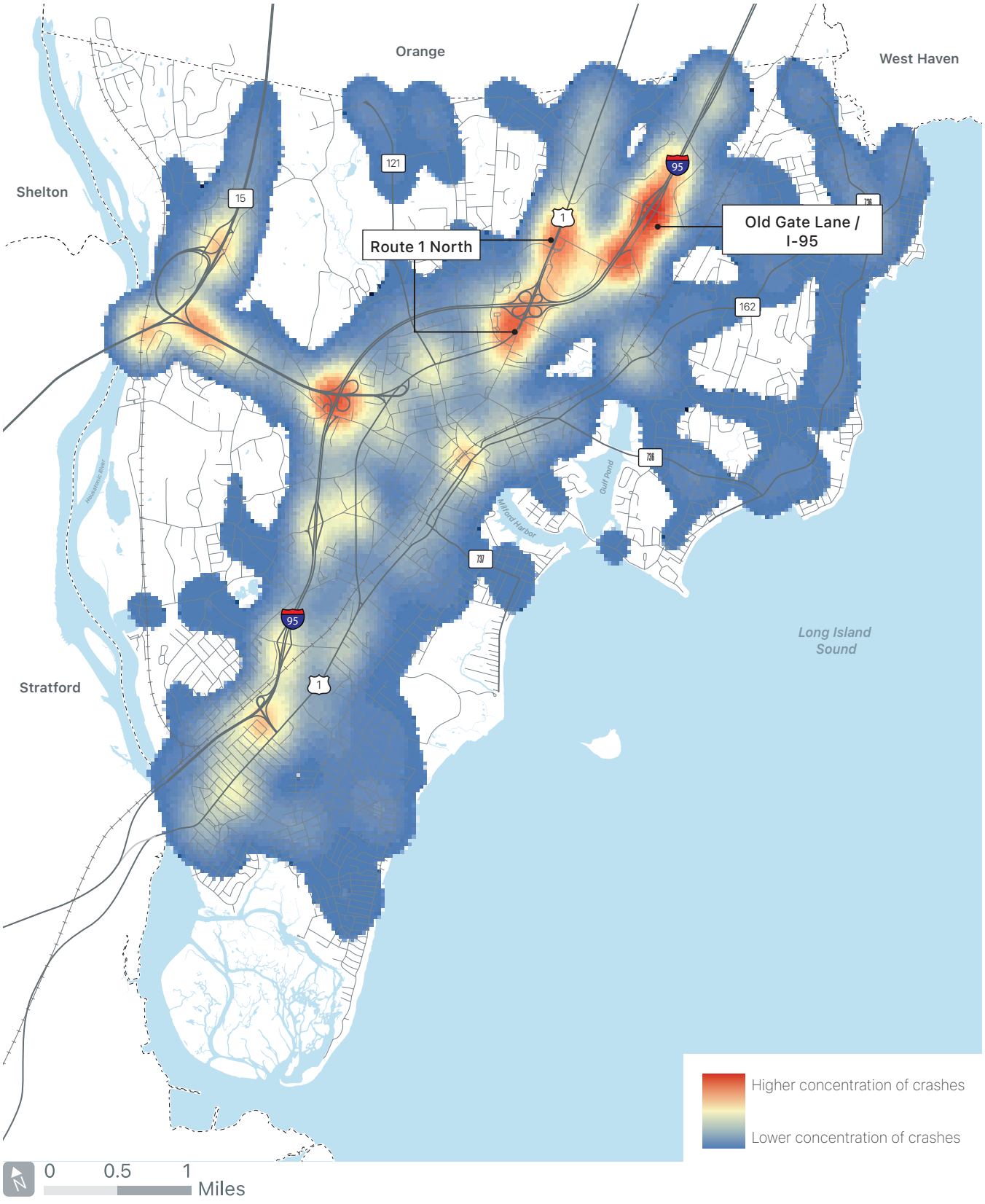

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Figure 44: Serious Crashes and Fatalities (2017 - 2021)

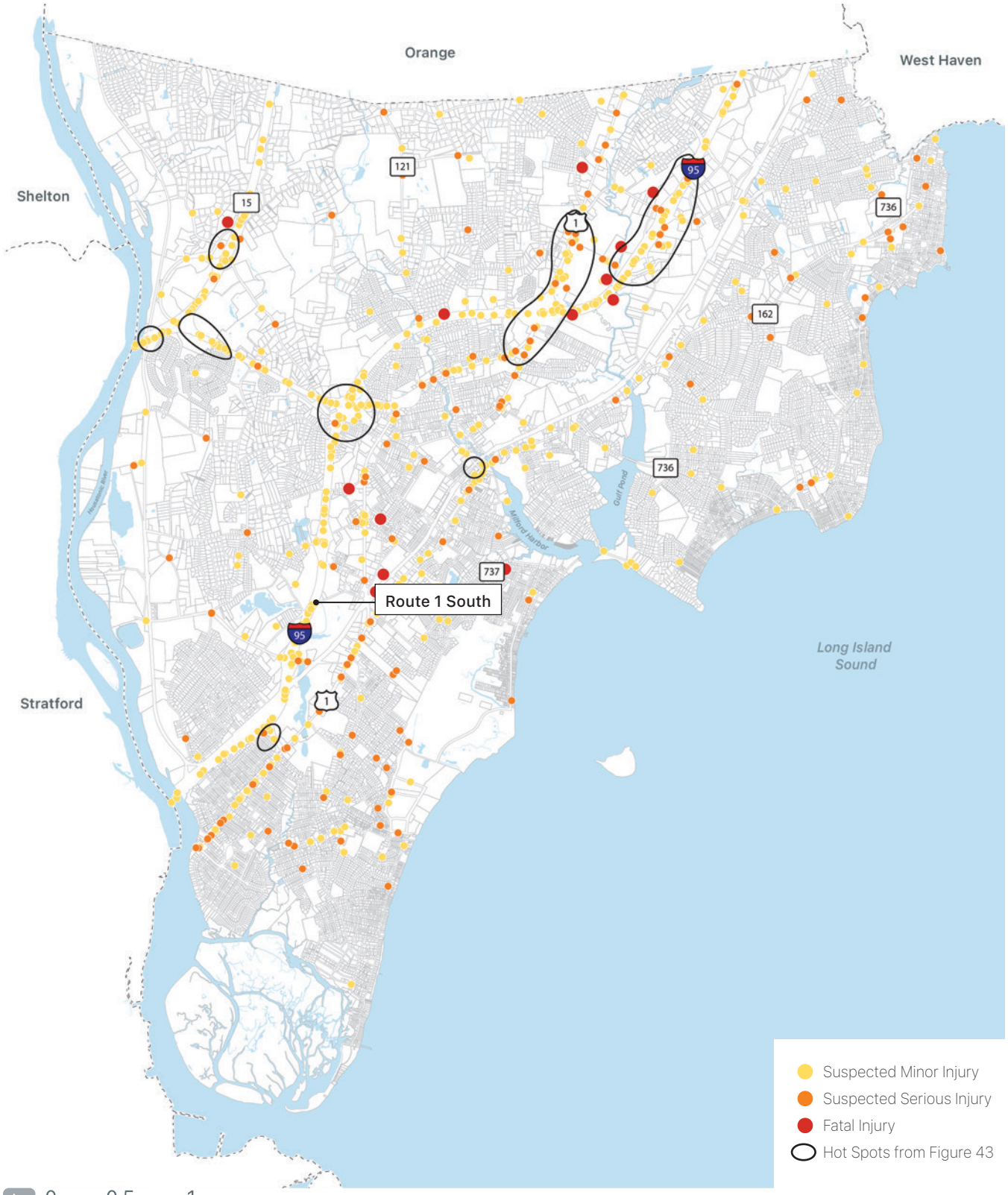

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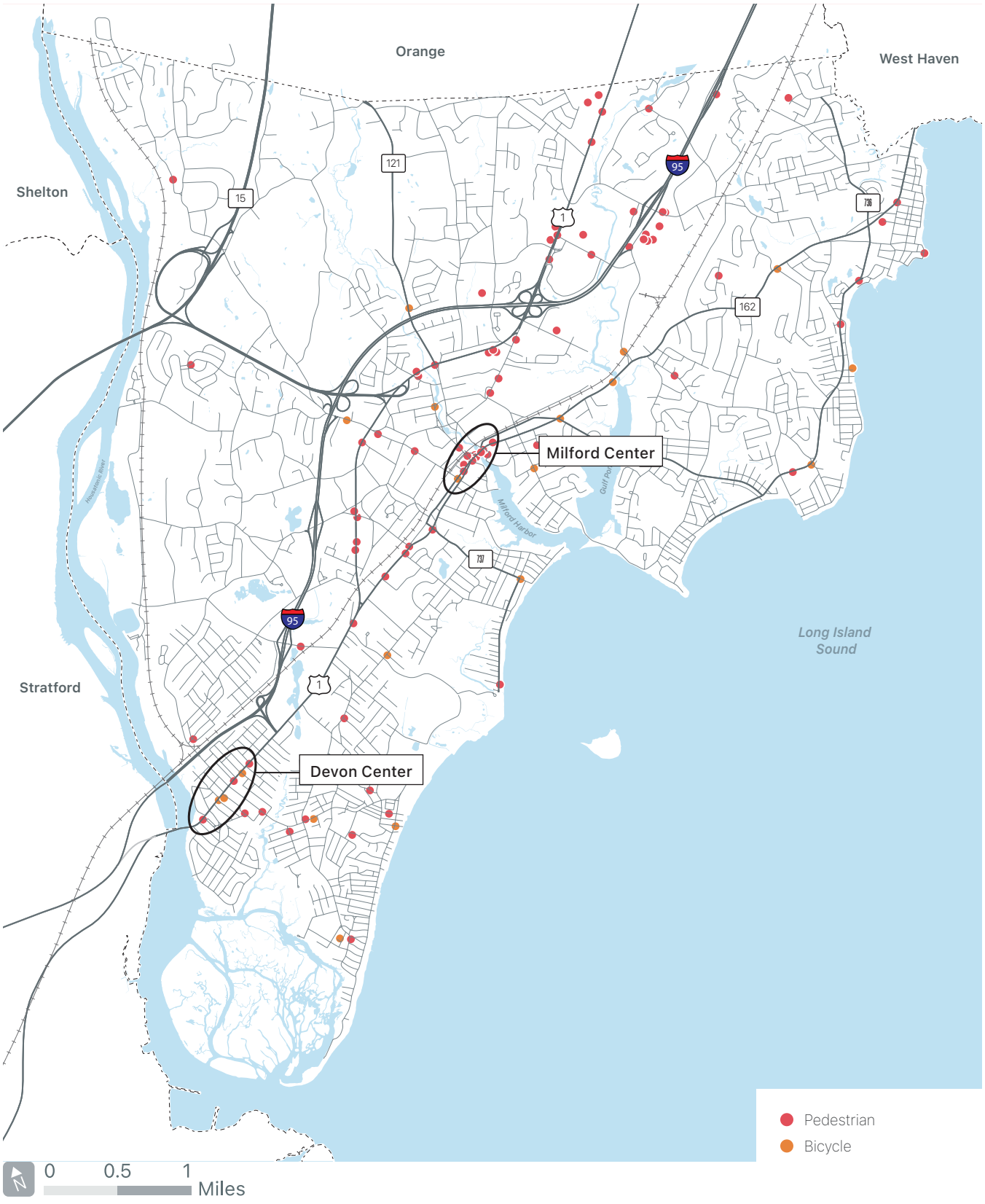
Figure 45: Pedestrian & Bicycle Crashes in Milford (2017 - 2021)



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Transportation & Circulation Recommendations

GOAL: Create a safe and comfortable multi-modal street network that supports users of all ages and abilities.

1. The City should consider developing a complete streets ordinance and design guide to facilitate implementation. Typically, the ordinance establishes a complete streets committee, the process for regular reporting on progress towards complete streets, and the appropriate guide(s) that should be followed when designing streets. The complete streets design guide would be specific to the City and identify the vision for each street as well as the typical cross section. The design guide can also identify pedestrian, bicycle, transit, automotive, and micro-mobility infrastructure improvements needed to support a multi-modal network. The design guide will often reference national design manuals (e.g., National Association of Transportation Officials and Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices) for specific design standards. The design guide should focus on:
   a. Expanding the sidewalk network to provide better connectivity between older Milford and the more newly developed sections.
   b. Expanding bicycle infrastructure to provide connectivity across town to schools, jobs, and housing with a focus on the bicycle routes that were developed by the Milford Ped Committee for the 2022 POCD (see Figure 46).
   c. Improving the deliniation of bike lanes and wayfinding signage.
   d. Conducting education/outreach to promote any new bike/ped infrastructure and rules for sharing the road.

2. The City should develop a traffic calming plan that would reducing cut-through' vehicular traffic flow that affects neighborhood identity, environment and safety. Recommended solutions should be incorporated into the design guide recommended above.

3. The City should conduct an audit of its zoning and subdivision regulations to identify areas where complete streets can be supported through redevelopment. Among other topics, this should:
   a. Address bicycle parking facilities.
   b. Ensure that car charging requirements are consistent with State statutes.
   c. Revise required parking requirements to account for modern utilization and consistency with best practices.
   d. Require sidewalks along right of ways and the inclusion of complete-streets supportive infrastructure such as bike lockers, interior sidewalks, and employee changing areas.

4. The City should consider developing a safe routes to school (SRTS) plan. The plan should identify ways to make it safer and more comfortable for children to walk and bike to school using the "five Es" of SRTS plans: engineering, education, enforcement, encouragement, and evaluation.

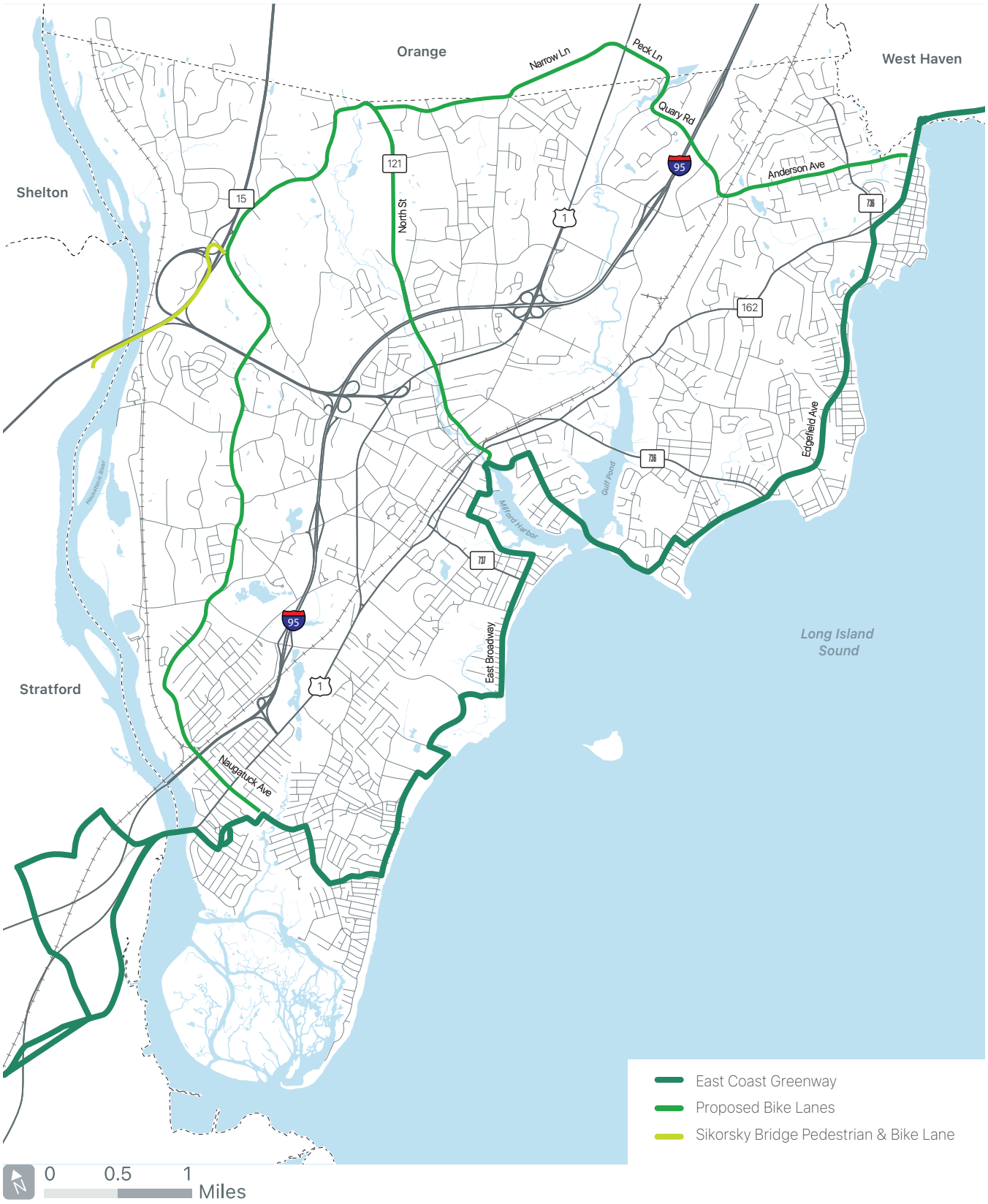
5. Prioritize the placement of transit shelters at key destinations along the City's transit routes.

6. The City should work closely with the Connecticut Department of Transportation on planning studies to make the state roadway network safer for all road uses. This should include a focus on better ways of introducing multimodal and pedestrian crossings as well as bicicyle infrastructure along state routes.
   a. Coordinate with CTDOT to study the intersection of Orange Ave & North St to examine the viability of a roundabout to improve safety and traffic flow.
   b. Ientify State roadways scheduled for improvement and coordinate with the State to add bike/ped improvements.

GOAL: Prioritize roadway improvements in areas of high crashes and injuries.

1. The City should undertake safety audits at the five areas identified in the Safety section of this Element to identify the major issues that have led to higher concentrations of crashes, injuries and fatalities.

Figure 46: Bicycle Facilities



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Public Facilities & Infrastructure

Introduction

Milford is a mature city that provides comprehensive city services, including:

- A full K-12 education system.
- Broad Public Works functions such as 90% sewer coverage area with wastewater treatment facilities.
- Separated stormwater management infrastructure.
- Household waste disposal and recycling service.
- Road and public building repair and maintenance.
- Full-time Fire and Police Departments.
- An extensive Parks, Beach, and Open Space portfolio of properties with diversified activities programmed by the Recreation Department.
- A Health Department that not only ensures the City's many restaurants are safe for residents and visitors, but also oversees the general health and well-being of the population.
- Animal Control Department with a full-time animal shelter that also provides services to the Town of Orange.
- A Land Use Department that reviews the development of the City's commercial and residential structures as well as instituting the City's floodplain management requirements.
- General financial, legal and other administrative government functions.

Education Facilities

As with most Connecticut municipalities, the highest percentage of Milford's budget is spent on education. The City recognizes that a high-quality education system is crucial to a municipality's quality of life. In 2020, an estimated 17.6 percent of the population was under 18.

The City's public school infrastructure consists of 8 elementary schools, 3 middle schools, 2 high schools, and an alternative high school as illustrated in Figure 47 on page 63. Many of the school buildings were constructed during the post-war housing boom of the 1950s and reflected population growth areas within the community at that time. The 1990-2000s housing construction period occurred in the northern area of Milford with larger lot sizes and clustered developments, but no new schools were built in these neighborhoods, resulting in fairly high transportation costs for the district as they transport students from these neighborhoods to schools located in the southern, older neighborhoods of the City.

A more detailed discussion of providing safe active mobility routes to school is discussed in the Transportation and Circulation Element. The school district undertakes its own long-range planning to better program its facility needs based on demographic projections for the student population. Milford, like many Connecticut municipalities, is anticipated to have a continued decrease in student-aged population in the next 10 years. This ultimately may lead to a decrease in the number of school facilities or additional reconfiguration of existing facilities as needed.

Government Buildings

The City's administrative government functions are divided among several locations. Milford Center is primarily the City's civic center with the City Hall, Parsons Government Center, Main Fire House/Station 1 (for Emergency Operations and Fire Marshal Services), the Health Department, the Marina, and the Public Library all near one another. Parsons houses most City services, the Milford Public Schools administrative offices, and also some State and county services such as Veteran's Affairs office, Probate Judge for Orange and Milford, the Rape Crisis Center, and Jobs Assistance programs, among other programs.

A County Courthouse and a US Post Office branch are on West River Street near City Hall. Public Works, the Transit District, the Animal Control Department and Shelter, and the two Wastewater Treatment Facilities are located in outlying areas relative to the specific space and location needs of their services.

Woodmont, as a borough within the City of Milford, has its Borough Headquarters on Kings Highway. Woodmont also has a volunteer Library and the Fannie Beach Community Center for community programming.

Arts Buildings and Cultural Activities

Milford has two distinct cultural centers located in two of its oldest neighborhoods.

Milford Center is one of the oldest town centers in the State of Connecticut. It has a rich history with one of the state's longest town greens. The Green is used year-round and anchors the City's Festivals, Arts & Crafts Fairs, and Parades, including the Annual Oyster Festival which attracts approximately 50,000 people a year.

Figure 47: Schools

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The Milford Fine Arts Center hosts art exhibits, performances, and other events. The Parsons Government Center Auditorium is utilized for many cultural events including annual performances of the Nutcracker, local symphonies, and other musical performances. Parsons also houses the William Meddick Permanent Art Collection and its education wing has annual student art shows for the elementary, middle, and high schools. The City Hall auditorium is also used as a performance space in addition to its government and civic programming. At Fowler Field, Milford Library provides year-round cultural programming and the Fowler Field Pavilion provides a popular summer concert series free to the public. A recently added amenity is the installation of free Wi-Fi (wireless internet service) for the Downtown area adjacent to the Green.

The Milford Environmental Concerns Coalition publishes a Milford Favorite Walks book with maps and descriptions for the center's markers, memorials and plaques and gives a tour of the Center's historic homes, sites, cemeteries, and churches.

The Walnut Beach Association has been developing an Arts District in the Walnut Beach Center area for the last 15+ years. Since 1998, the Walnut Beach Association has been holding an Annual Arts Festival in August. Events are held at Walnut Beach, on the Viscount Drive green space area, and along East Broadway adjacent to the beach. Festivities include an annual student art competition. The Arts District contains two important properties: The Firehouse Gallery and the Stowe Farm Arts Center. In 2000, the City of Milford and the Fire Arts Council agreed to convert the former Fire Station #3 into the Fire House Gallery. The Gallery features artist residence living, studio space, classroom and workshop, a gallery exhibiting 2- & 3- dimensional artwork, and a gift shop offering hand-crafted gifts, cards, and prints.

Sewer Infrastructure and Capacity

Approximately 90% of Milford's housing units and commercial properties are on public sewer with the exception of residential areas north of the Wilbur Cross Parkway adjacent to the Town of Orange. Figure 48 identifies the location of the City's sewer infrastructure.

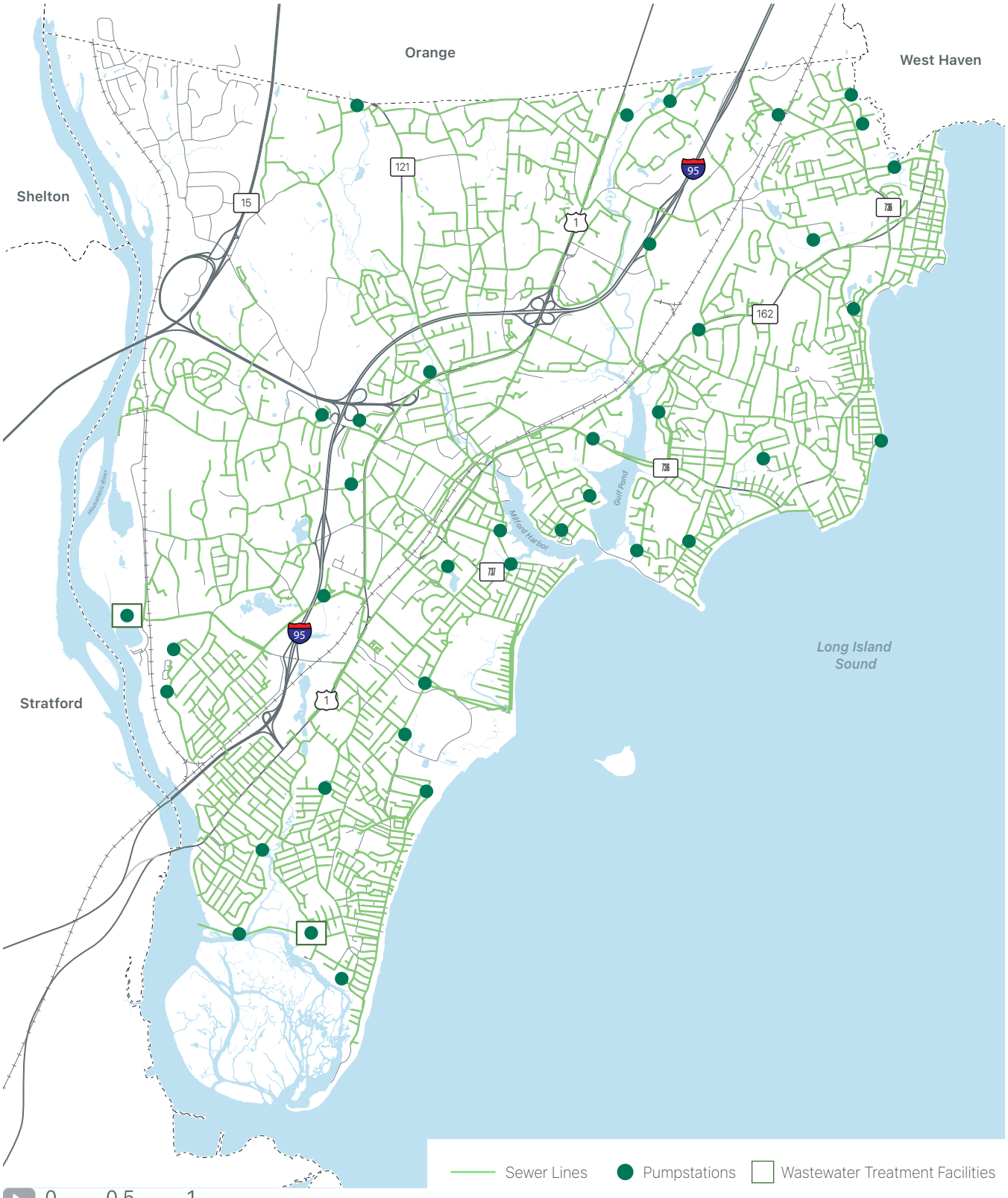
The City has two wastewater treatment facilities that are located on the Housatonic River and discharge into that water body. Both plants were upgraded in 2006-2008 to update their processing systems and to increase capacity. The City has 40 pump stations located throughout the City with 260 miles of sewer lines that feed into the Housatonic and Beaver Brook Treatment facilities. The Housatonic Plant has capacity for 8.3 million gallons per day (mgd) and the smaller Beaver Brook Plant can process 3.1 mgd. The Beaver Brook Plant operates at capacity and Housatonic Plant currently processes approximately 7 mgd.

The City has aging sewer infrastructure, particularly in older sections of the City, that needs to be evaluated to ensure it is of adequate size and capacity to address proposed economic development for an area. For example, the Walnut Beach area is currently underutilized, but its land use goals support reintroducing additional commercial development such as restaurants.

Water Supply

Milford's public water supply is provided by the Regional Water Authority (RWA). Due to the City's location at the bottom of the watershed and its high-density residential and commercial neighborhoods, there are no protected watershed lands within the City. In addition, the RWA has sold most of its properties, including the Beaver Brook Reservoir, to the City and other private property owners for development. RWA water tower reserves are located both on West Avenue and Ford Street. Although a limited number of private homes located in the northern area of the City are still on private well systems, Milford has no State Identified Aquifer Protection areas or active drinking water supply sources.

Figure 48: Sewer Service



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Stormwater Management

The City has a separate stormwater system with catch basins, curbing, and largely untreated outfalls into adjacent wetlands and waterbodies. In storm conditions in the summer, stormwater that runs off of asphalt areas is at higher ambient temperatures than the waterbodies they drain into. The increase in temperature can have detrimental effects on the flora and fauna of the watershed.

Sustainability

Introduction

From a land use perspective, sustainability defines a movement to encourage compact development patterns and infrastructure that can be sustained over time. Sustainable land use is cost efficient because it has lower maintenance costs and provides access for all users via foot, bike, or automobile. This can best be visualized through village-scale development where people have ample access to centrally located goods and services and where the common housing form is closer to these needs with either smaller lot sizes or more vertically dense housing options.

In Milford, there is a good foundation for a series of sustainable neighborhoods particularly where these neighborhoods were established in the pre-automobile era. These include Devon, Walnut Beach, Milford Center, Pond Point Avenue, New Haven Avenue/Chapel Street, and even smaller subsections of neighborhoods where small convenience stores are located at key intersections. Sustainability also means managing land use growth better and smarter. The recent infill Transit-Oriented Development that has occurred near the train station is a great example of smart growth and sustainable development. It has diversified housing stock and allowed young professionals and downsizing seniors to continue to call Milford home.

From an economic development perspective, walkable communities are also desirable shopping and dining destinations. Milford and Devon Center both have extensive sidewalk networks that connect their commercial businesses to their residential neighbors. The Milford Marketplace Shopping Center on the Boston Post Road is, in part, successful because it replicates a desirable walkable downtown even though most patrons drive to get there. The provision of a grocery store and a diverse mix of businesses (hair salons, restaurants, shopping, etc.) connected by pedestrian infrastructure near residential neighborhoods may result in Milford Marketplace becoming its own commercial node, supporting the residential neighborhoods directly north of Boston Post Road.

State Smart Growth Policies

In the State Plan of Conservation and Development, many of the Growth Management Principles (GMP) direct cities to more sustainable development policies including revitalizing existing centers supported by public infrastructure (GMP #1) and concentrating development around transit nodes and along transportation corridors through the identification of Transit-Oriented Developments and identifying brownfield sites that may be reused (GMP #3).

Public Act 9-230 is the State policy that defines the principles of Smart Growth. The policy promotes:

- redevelopment of existing infrastructure and fallow property resources (brownfield sites, adaptive reuse of historic buildings),
- multi-modal transportation choice to provide alternatives to the automobile,
- housing diversity located near centers and transit to accommodate a variety of household types and incomes,
- mixed-use development near centers and transit, and
- conservation of existing open spaces and natural resources including water resources, farmland, and historic properties.

The recommendations in this POCD are consistent with these Smart Growth goals and policies identified by the State.

Milford's Clean Energy Roadmap

Locally, sustainability also means adopting energy-efficient strategies to reduce overall energy consumption. This concept is both wise for the environment and wise for the municipal budget, as there are cost savings in investing in more efficient systems and in taking advantage of ambient energy sources such as capturing solar energy for power generation. In 2009, the City's Clean Energy Task Force published Milford's Clean Energy Roadmap – a comprehensive energy plan that provides recommendations to the Mayor's Office and the Board of Alderman to move the City forward in achieving its primary clean energy goal of 20% clean energy by 2050.

The City's success at adaptively reusing its existing properties (i.e. the Milford High School conversion to Parsons Government Center, many former schools as community buildings) is also one of its greatest challenges in regard to energy consumption. Many of Milford's civic and community buildings are relatively old with equally old, non-efficient heat and energy-producing plants.

Top 3 public electricity users:

1. Public Schools (BOE)
2. Wastewater Treatment Plants and Pump Stations
3. Municipal Buildings, Facilities, and Public Lighting

Milford's Energy Plan

The Milford Energy Advisory Board (EAB) wrote the Milford Energy Plan to provide guidance to the Mayor and Board of Aldermen. That plan establishes a goal of eliminating all net carbon emissions in Milford by 2050. The plan focuses on addressing emissions in residential, commercial, industrial, and municipal activities. Among other strategies, the plan recommends:

- Increasing the use of solar panels for power
- Using electric vehicles, where possible
- Increasing energy efficiency
- Weatherizing homes and businesses
- Eliminating fossil fuel use in heating and cooking
- Promoting transit-oriented development
- Supporting programs to remove carbon from the air (tree planting, etc.)

Sustainability Recommendations

GOAL: The City will meet its needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. The City will maintain a healthy natural a vibrant social environment.

1. Review and update the Milford's Clean Energy Roadmap.
2. Evaluate opportunities to create incentives and accommodations for hybrid vehicles, motorcycles, scooters, mopeds, and bicycles.
3. Create bike paths and pedestrian walkways to discourage the unnecessary use of vehicles, consistent with the recommendations in the Transportation and Circulation Element.
4. Review zoning regulations to ensure that there are no obstacles for the private implementation of green building techniques and the location of reasonable renewable energy solutions on private property.
5. Develop a plan for the expansion of the tree canopy that would include encourage the planting of trees on city properties and alone roadways as a way to decrease pollution, decrease blacktop heating, and increase aesthetics of the town.

Goal: Eliminate all net carbon emissions in Milford by 2050.

1. Review zoning regulations to identify areas where the code inhibits efforts to reduce net carbon emissions.
2. Promote installation of electric charging stations (both public and private)
3. Implement “Complete Streets” efforts as recommended in "GOAL: Create a safe and comfortable multi-modal street network that supports users of all ages and abilities." on page 59

Land Use & Zoning

Introduction

The City maintains a diverse industrial and manufacturing sector, which has historically been located within close proximity to the interstate highway system, rail lines, Route 1, and the Housatonic River. Figure 49 on page 71 illustrates the distribution of current land uses across the City.

Historically, the retail, medical, and civic land uses have been located in Downtown Milford, but they have spread and intensified along the Boston Post Road (Route 1) corridor. Medical uses such as walk-in clinics and offices adjunct to hospital systems are proliferating.

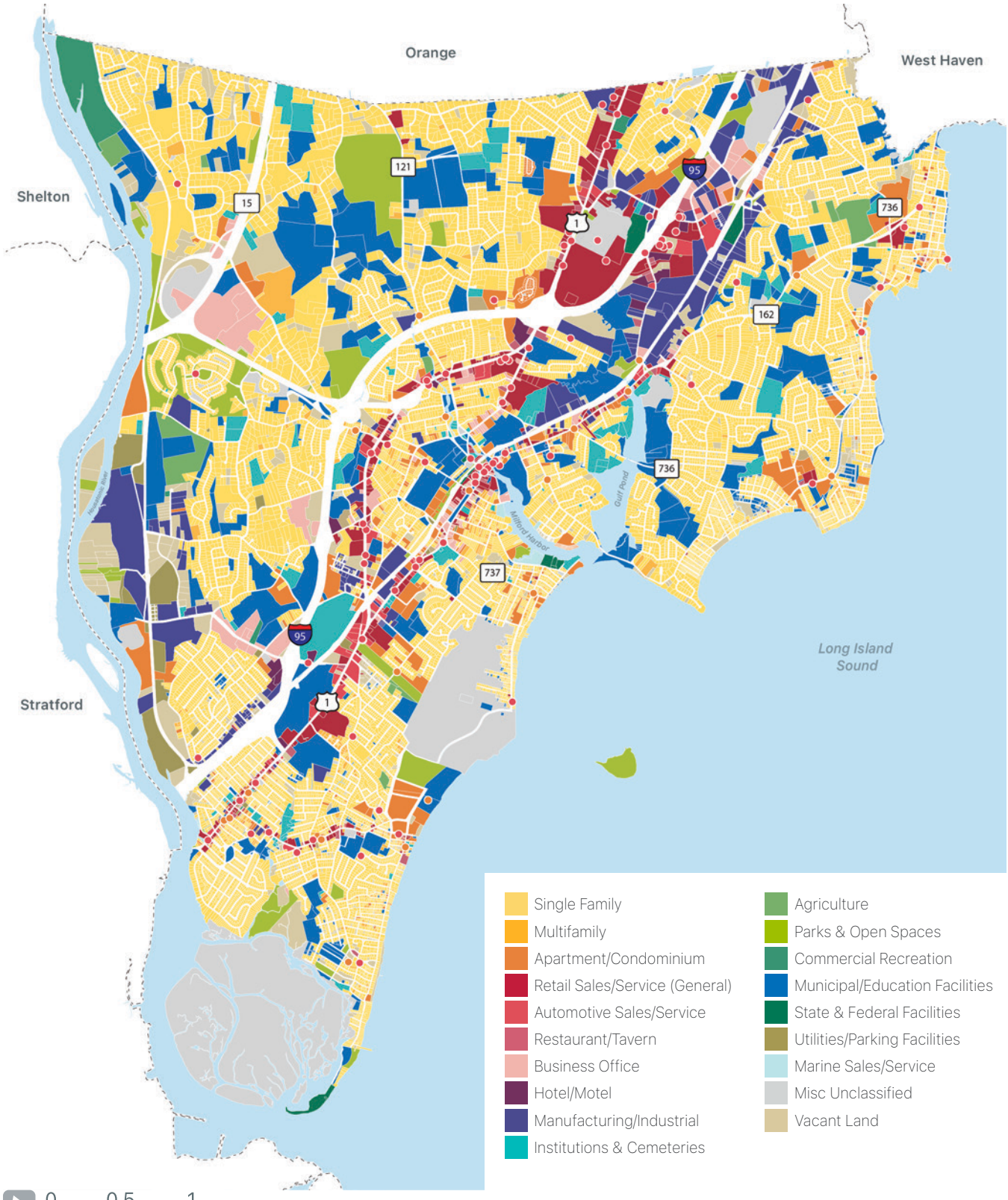
To the West, along the Housatonic River, utility generation and distribution facilities serving the region can be found. The Housatonic Design District (HDD) area was designated for the development of self-storage warehousing which has become a popular land use in the commercial corridors. To the East, a mixture of retail, industrial, and manufacturing can be found in the areas between the Boston Post Road and the vicinity of I-95.

New retail and service sector businesses have been established and intensified along the Boston Post Road and in the center of Milford, changing the road's character over the last decade. Consumers have shifted their buying habits from brick-and-mortar stores to online purchasing. Certain types of in-person buying experiences, mainly in the automotive sector and retail grocery sectors, have been successful. The result has been the growth and expansion of automotive dealerships, continuing Milford's role as a regional destination for these consumer goods and services.

The majority of the southern portion of the City is made up of older housing stock on smaller parcels within close proximity to Long Island Sound. Housing in this area is denser and more urban-like. The Northern portion of the City is comprised of more recent housing stock on larger parcels. It is less dense and has a more suburban feel.

While the City's population has remained relatively stable over the last 50 years, the expansion and construction of new and more diverse housing stock has continued. This has provided new housing

Figure 49: Existing Land Use Map



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choices as family sizes have decreased. Current market demand is for apartments of all rental ranges; however, the City has seen the construction of predominantly higher-end market-rate rental properties.

Downtown continues to see a shift from commercial to residential development. This is because property owners are leveraging the proximity to the train station and downtown businesses.

Opportunities for recreation can be found in extensive network of parks and open spaces, as well as City and State beaches.

Future Land Use

Figure 50 on page 7373 provides a generalized summary of the proposed future land use in the City. The other elements of this POCD provide a more detailed discussion of how various districts and areas in the community should evolve. Nonetheless, a brief summary of the desired future land uses may be helpful to some readers.

Residential

It is the intent of the Plan of Conservation and Development to allow for the continued development of single-family housing in the currently existing "R" districts (R-5, 7.5, R-10, R-12.5, R-18, R-30 and RA). Efforts in these districts should balance the need to promote and preserve the commonly found single-family home character while expanding housing choice and providing alternatives to single-family ownership. Permitting accessory dwelling units is an example of how these areas can evolve while maintaining their overall character.

The trend toward smaller households, and the desire to protect single-family zones, will continue to result in demand for more multi-family residential development. Much of this will occur in the City's commercial corridor and nodes and those areas will start to transition into mixed-use districts.

The City will update regulations on an as-needed basis to address changes in housing and community brought about by the COVID-19 Pandemic and other demographic changes that result in changes to housing demand.

Mixed Use

The City's commercial activity will continue to be located along its major transportation corridors and in Milford Center. The City will also explore ways the Connecticut Post Mall could accommodate residential uses that would transition the area to a mixed-use center. The City will support redevelopment in local areas and ensure residents in nearby neighborhoods have access to key services.

The City will support more mixed-use and multi-family housing in these areas. The City will establish standards, and work with applicants, to ensure residents have a safe and comfortable environment in which to access the Town's core services and amenities.

Commercial

The City will maintain a limited number of commercial only areas. These areas will largely be regional commercial centers that act as major shopping destinations for residents.

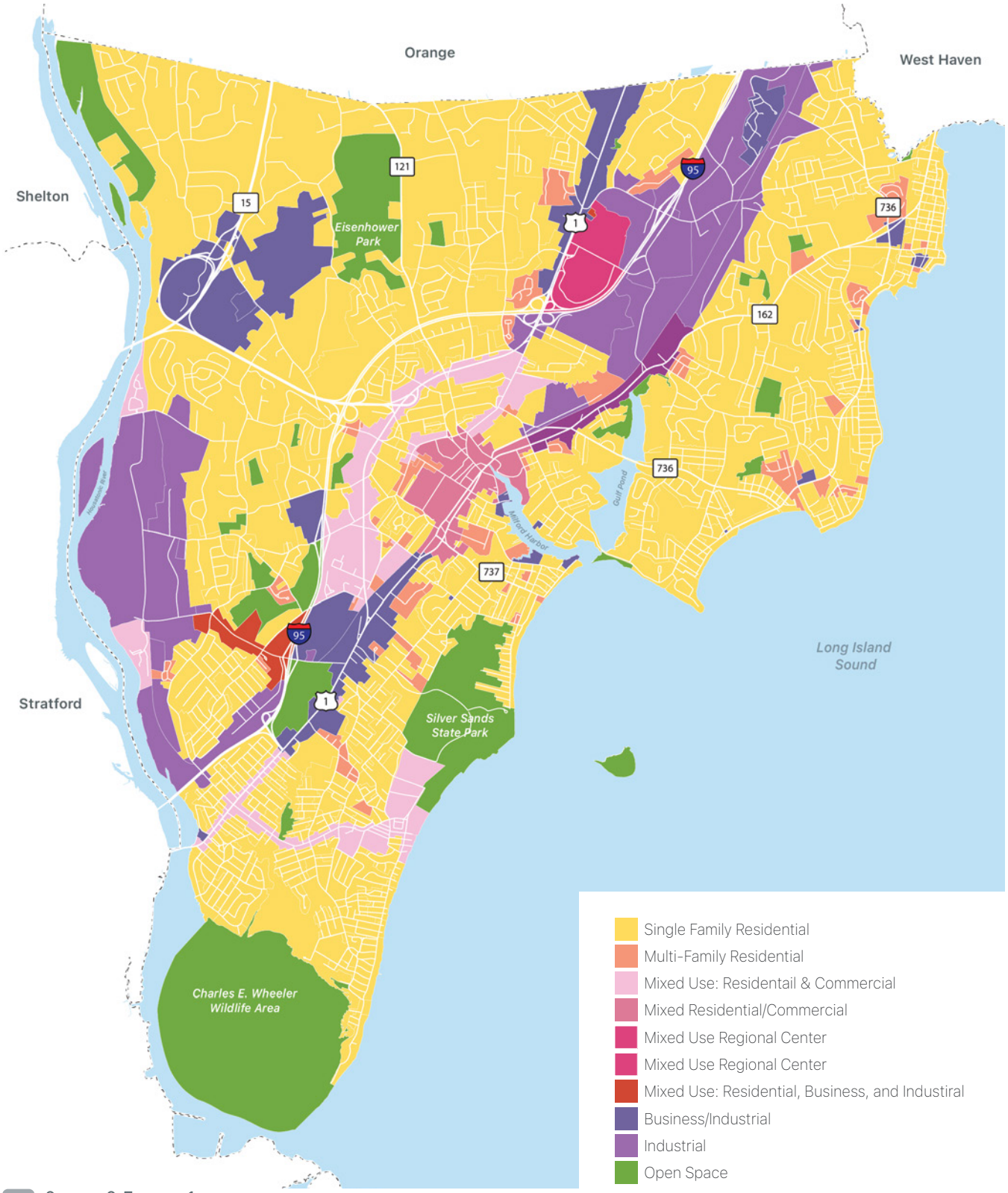
Industrial

Industrial areas will continue to feel pressure from abutting land uses such as commercial and residential, which often have higher market value. However, the City will work to protect these area since they are vital to the functioning of the City, generally provide good municipal tax revenue while needing minimal City services, and often house uses that are unsuitable for location elsewhere.

Business Industrial

The Business Industrial areas contain a mixture of uses that support Milford's economy and provide important contributions to the City's tax base. In addition to supporting well-established industries, the areas are also an excellent place for new or innovative businesses to incubate. The City will continue to support these activities in the areas. Going forward, it is important that the standards in these areas evolve in response to changing market demands and that adequate protections are in place to maintain the character of these areas.

Figure 50: Future Land Use Map



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Open Space

The City's open spaces will provide a mixture of active and passive recreation opportunities. Some spaces will be set aside to protect the natural environment.

Zoning

The City's zoning ordinance is 397 pages long, cumbersome, repetitive, and not very user friendly. The ordinance is formatted in a manner that is largely outdated compared to Milford's neighboring communities. Among other issues, the ordinance:

- Largely consists of text that makes it difficult to navigate.
- Lacks tables that would support a better understanding of what is permitted in various zones.
- Substantially lacks diagrams and illustrations to help users understand the regulations.

These issues can make it difficult to interpret the ordinance, which costs the City and applicants time and money. As an example, Diagram 5 in Appendix A (Milford Center Design Development District) does a poor job of clearly distinguishing what properties fall within each district. An applicant would most likely need an interpretation from the Zoning office just to understand what standards might apply to their project.

There are also sections of the regulations that are inconstant with State regulations. For example, the regulations currently has minimum habitable space requirements, which was prohibited in PA 21-29.

Land Use & Zoning Recommendations

GOAL: Maintain a clear and easy-to-use system of land use regulations that reflects the goals and objectives of the community.

1. Undertake an effort to modernize the zoning ordinance. The effort would include improving the formatting to make it easier to use, identifying any issues where standards conflict with one another or State standards, and add key illustrations to help users understand complicated concepts. The update should:
   a. Eliminating duplication.
   b. Reorganize sections.
   c. Improve naming and defining of uses.
   d. Utilizing tables for use and dimensional requirements.
   e. Review use by district, create consistency in terminology, and evaluate permitted versus conditional uses.
   f. Reduce reliance on conditional uses where it does not substantially advance the goals and objectives of this POCD.

2. Undertake a comprehensive update of the zoning ordinance to incorporate the recommendations across this plan. As part of this update, the City should:
   a. Prioritize updates to sections that conflict with State regulations.
   b. Review the permitting process to ensure that it is swift, simple, and certain and does not unnecessarily discourage investment.
   c. Review the regulations for resturants, drive-throughts, and alocohol services to ensure it is consistently defined throughout the code.

3. Develop design standards for a variety of corridors and commercial centers. The City should consider a comprehensive review of existing design standards and where they are applied. A consistent location, format, and approach to design standards across the City would improve implementation.

4. In the next year or two, undertake a more detailed study of the impacts of COVID-19 on housing and transportation choice. Within the next year, it is anticipated that people's patterns will settle and the City will have a better understanding of the long-standing impacts on the community. This effort should focus on what zoning changes are necessary to support residents' new habits.

5. For newly created lots, eliminate Wetlands, Watercourses, and steep slopes from the lot calculations so that only buildable land contributes to the minimum lot calculations.

6. Hire a consultant to support in the implementation of zoning changes and to conduct individual studies of zones, districts, and/or areas as needs arise.

Consistency with State Plan

The recommendations of this plan were compared for consistency with Conservation & Development Policies: the Plan for Connecticut (2018–2023), the current draft state plan of conservation and development. The 2013–2018 plan provides a benchmark for municipal plans of development going forward. It is organized around six growth-management principles. Municipalities must consider these principles as they update their plans of conservation and development. The policies and strategies which comprise this Plan are complementary to the growth principles established by the State. Details regarding how the two plans align are detailed in the following table.

Consistency with State Plan	
Growth Management Principle	**Milford POCD**
Redevelop and revitalize regional centers and areas with existing or currently planned physical Infrastructure.	This POCD encourages redevelopment in the City's major commercial centers that already have substantial investments in infrastructure. See the Commercial Corridors Element for more details.
Expand housing opportunities and design choices to accommodate a variety of household types and needs.	This POCD encourages updates to zoning that would provide more opportunities for diverse housing types to be built. The recommendations for zoning updates can be found in the Housing Element. Various subsections of the Commercial Corridors Element identify the opportunity to build more multi-family housing in these areas.

Concentrate development around transportation nodes and along major transportation corridors to support the viability of transportation options.	This plan supports transportation-focused development in several areas. The City's commercial corridors are identified as the primary locations for both commercial and residential growth. The Plan also calls for continued investments that would support transit-oriented development in Milford Center.
Conserve and restore the natural environment, cultural and historical resources, and traditional rural lands.	This plan discusses the restoration and conservation of the natural environment in the Open Spaces Element. Recommendations largely focus on conserving and building upon the City's existing system of green corridors. The Historic Preservation Element includes recommendations on how to protect the City's historic resources.
Protect and ensure the integrity of environmental assets critical to public health and safety.	The Open Space and Long Island Sound Elements both have detailed recommendation on how the Milford could better protect the environment in the City.
Promote integrated planning across all levels of government to address issues on a statewide, regional and local basis.	This POCD was written taking into consideration the State's plan. The City has identified the need to work in close coordination with a variety of government entities to implement the plan's recommendations.

Milford 2032

City of Milford Plan of
Conservation and Development