

# Town of Waterford Plan of Preservation, Conservation and Development

Committee Meeting #5

March 14th, 2023

# Agenda



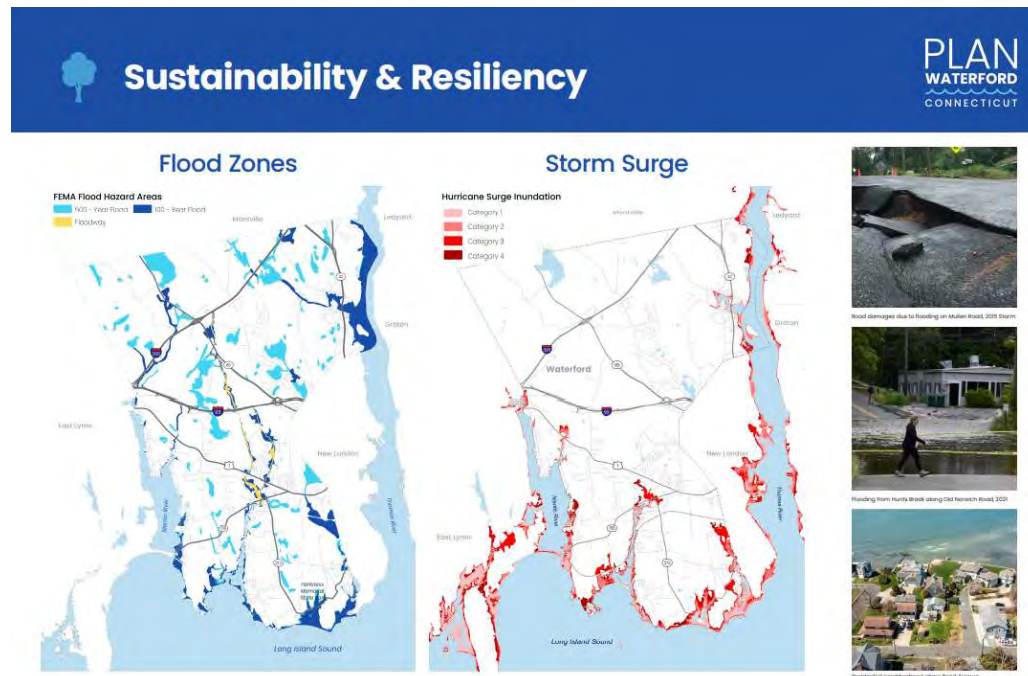
1. Stakeholder Meeting Summaries
2. Online survey and interactive mapping findings
3. Sneak peek at sample Plan layouts
4. Vision and Goals Discussion
5. Next Steps

# Stakeholder Meeting Summaries



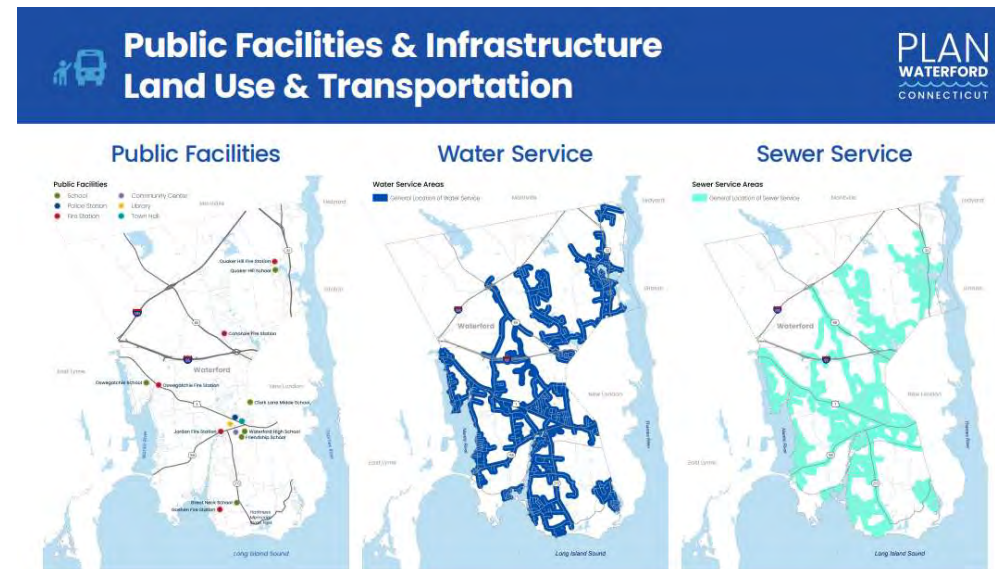
# Sustainability and Resiliency

- Need to anticipate and plan for Climate Change
- Many homes in coastal areas are vulnerable to flooding
- Lots of impermeable pavement—better drainage needed
- Consider green infrastructure, capture water and prepare for drought
- Consider solar, geothermal, heat pumps for Town buildings and facilities
- Town should provide information about green technologies, grants



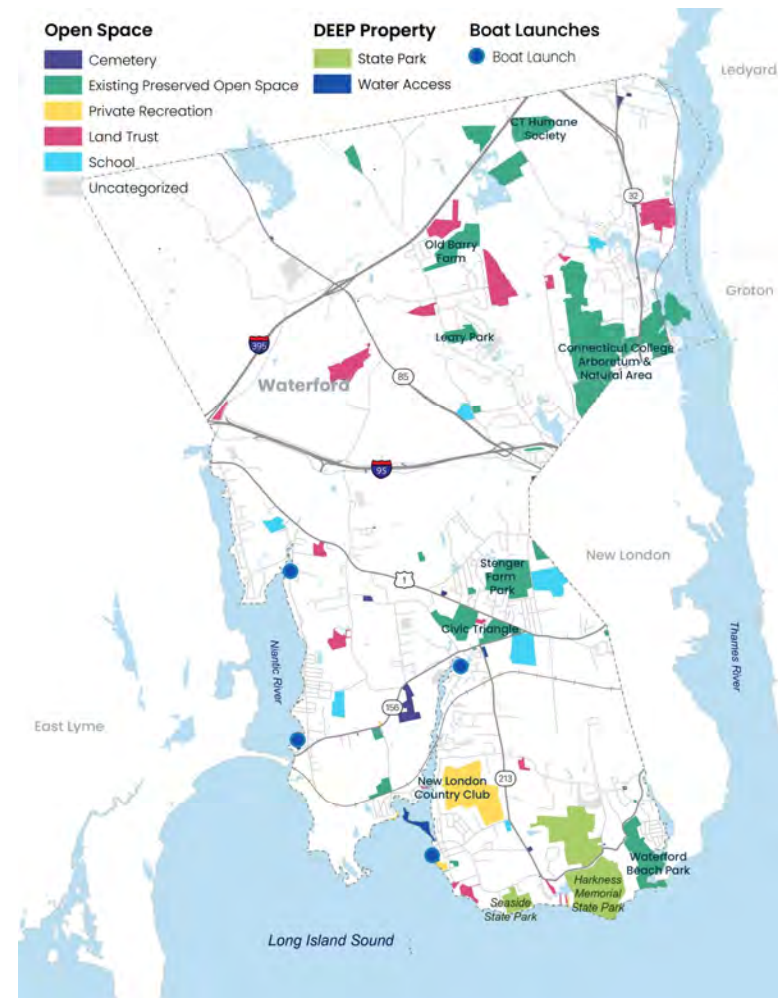
# Public Facilities, Infrastructure, Land Use and Transportation

- Funding for maintenance and additional staff is always a challenge
- Town facilities need upgrades, need a facilities maintenance plan
- Internet needed at some Town facilities like the beach, for electronic payments, etc.
- Much of the Town has sidewalks, these are maintained by Public Works, can be challenging to keep up
- Tree trimming on town roads can be challenging
- Education on recycling is needed – 25% rejection rate



# Open Space, Environment, and Conservation

- No line item in the budget for open space maintenance and acquisition
- Conservation Commission is only advisory
- Adaptive reuse of existing properties preferred over development of greenfields
- Need to balance development/usage of the waterfront with preservation
- Discussion about shell fishing opportunities
- Healthy forests= healthy waterways and coastal areas, symbiotic relationships
- Land Trust could use more volunteers
- Good diversity of plant species in Waterford
- Need to educate residents on the importance of native plants and ecosystem corridors



# Housing and Community Services

- Need for senior and affordable/workforce housing
  - In locations where residents have access to goods and services, transit
- Crystal Mall as mixed/use residential opportunity
- Challenging to meet 10% affordability threshold when new developments are not required to have a specific number of affordable units
- Waterford is a desirable location, but when people face eviction, they are never able to be placed back in the community
- School enrollment has been declining, down about 6% - 20 kids a year
- ADA improvements needed at the Library, but size of library space is adequate
- Should consider job training programs in schools that would support local employers



# Economic Development

- Business owners felt that Waterford has been very supportive to their business
- Town needs more social media interaction with businesses, a list of the businesses would help
- Move forward with Civic Triangle recommendations
- Aesthetics of businesses are important
- Mago Point – location suitable for village type improvements
- Need regulations for home occupations
- Childcare is a regionwide need, what regulations are in place for daycare occupations
- Mixed use development needed – adapt reuse of existing properties





# Cultural and Historic Resources

- Many grants available, Waterford should consider hiring a grant writer to tap into funding sources
- Considering hiring a historical consultant when making changes to Town owned properties
- Need more education/ awareness of Waterford's historic resources
- Capitalize more on the different villages – each have unique feel
- Historical Society working to get elementary students engaged
- Social media/website presence needed
- Some opposition to living in historic district – worries residents



# Online Survey and Map Updates

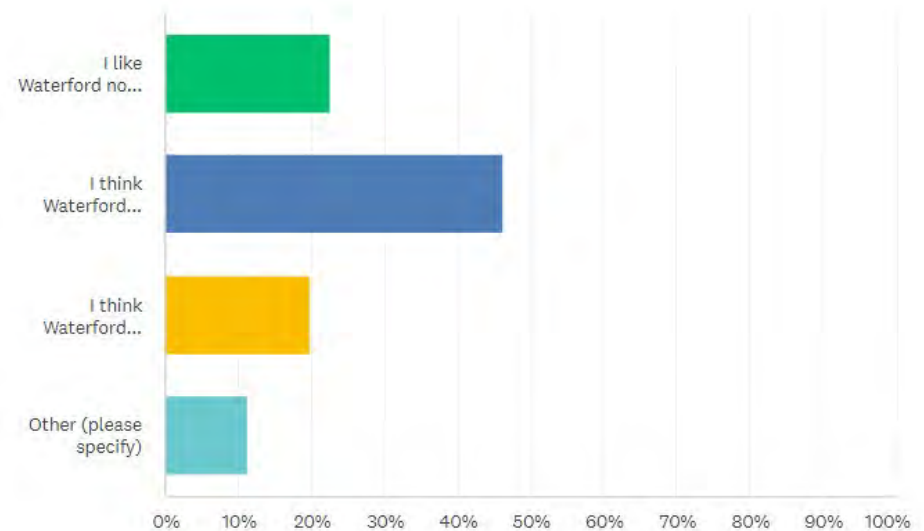


# Online Survey Highlights

- Please select the statement that best represents your thoughts about Waterford

| ANSWER CHOICES  | RESPONSES           |
|---|---------------------|
| ▼ I like Waterford now, keep it like it is                                | 22.58% 42           |
| ▼ I think Waterford should continue to grow and change, but incrementally | 46.24% 86           |
| ▼ I think Waterford should be open for significant growth and change      | 19.89% 37           |
| ▼ Other (please specify)  | Responses 11.29% 21 |

- *I think Waterford should have a long term plan for sustainable growth. Primary focus should not be keeping taxes as low as possible. Promoting business growth should not be first priority.*
- *Too much development has occurred in last 20 years*
- *Repurpose existing structures like the mall*
- *Improvement of facilities but with respect for the natural environment*
- *Be smart about growth! Build to enhance our Town and respect our Heritage*



# Online Survey Highlights

## How would you change or improve Waterford?

- Continue the accessibility measures at Waterford properties The economic climate and buildings in town – Crystal Mall, etc need outside thinking for drawing more people to the area. Update buildings and properties!
- Need quality retail, not just commercial for the sake of filling a vacant building. Need and economic strategy.
- I would like to see additional access and expansion of natural gas.
- I feel that the folks that have run this town over the 17 years that I have been here have done a great job.
- Sell airport property to expand the tax base. So much potential (eg, minor league baseball stadium, outlet shopping center, Business such as Amazon, etc) with easy access to I95
- More sports recreation for adults (for both sexes) and for young children. Improvement of Sidewalk placement. Trimming of trees along roadsides.
- More quality dining options such as a steak house and new attractions to the civic triangle and Mago point areas. Less discount store and more quality/high end retail stores.
- It would be great to have a boardwalk similar to East Lyme that could run from Seaside to Harkness. Could lead to new businesses.
- It would be nice to create a downtown area with the civic triangle. Something that is walkable and can have shops and restaurants to go along with the parks. It's a mish mosh of random businesses and civil buildings.

# Online Survey Highlights

In an ideal world, what would Waterford be like in the future??

- Growing, repurposing of empty buildings, continued safe neighborhoods and quality schools.
- Just the way it has been. I feel the folks that have been planning for the town have done a great job.
- The amount of restaurants and businesses would grow exceptionally in this area. Taxes would be less for people so they could afford to do more and support local events and businesses.
- A vibrant commercial area on route 85, entertainment options like the speedbowl hosting concerts or flea markets, more waterford beach events, great schools, and a road built between old Colchester and vauxhall st. Low taxes, good schools, and good property values.
- Waterford would be a more racially and ethnically diverse town and would have more options for affordable housing (preferably at 80% median income, but also at 50 and 30%). Individuals should have more choices in heating and electricity, and the Crystal Mall should be redeveloped-- perhaps as mixed use.
- Continued mix of retail access and convenience, yet retaining the small town feel with parks and shoreline access.

# Online Survey Highlights

What would you like to see in the Interstate 95 and Frontage Road area?

- Be open to expansion and roadway improvements.
- More sidewalks/ bikeways
- Nothing, unless there is a potential development of the airport.
- Medical facilities seem to be a good fit. Commercial business that need access to 95 without traveling through town. Reopen an on ramp on 95 north from Parkway South - further down and away the senior development.
- Businesses. Being next to the highway, the town roads won't get overcrowded.
- Improved traffic patterns that make it clear how to access the businesses on either side of the highway.
- I'd be happy to see it developed. I'd be happiest to see either something that brings good jobs to the area or housing.
- This is one area in town where economic development and business growth would be appropriate.
- I feel like this may be a good place for affordable housing, but housing that is actually affordable, not the 1700 dollars for 700sf that it is now.

# Online Survey Highlights

What would you like to see in the Civic Triangle area?

- Additional active and passive recreational opportunities trails and educational pieces on the value of the Town and its resources.
- More of a center of town/Main Street feel. Shops, galleries, cafes, restaurants
- More vibrant - events, especially outdoor ones (bands, dancing, parades, etc). "Walkability." More shops and food options, outdoor dining spaces.
- Mixed use. Pedestrian / Bike friendly. Connection to history. Village like.
- Community garden. Flower garden. Outdoor space - not buildings.
- Larger senior center and community center, More independent shops( cafe, etc. )
- A coffee shop run by the town. I'm confident with the right grant writer and attention Nevins cottage would be the perfect location. I would love to see it staffed by local high school students and those in our adult special needs programs.
- More walkable!

# Online Survey Highlights

What would you like to see along the Route 85 corridor and northward?

- I would be open to additional business growth, additional alternatives to big box retailers.
- Indoor gyms/play spaces. Businesses that need quick/easy access to highways. I am not so sure about the current trend toward high density housing in that corridor - the access to stores is nice, but public transport, traffic, and access to open space and play space for families is limited.
- Mixed uses but Rte 85 needs an overhaul. There are no trees, sidewalks, and it's, quite frankly, a mess.
- A large open space area along Clam Lane behind Sonalyst protecting Stony Brook.
- Speed bowl gone. This would be a prime location for housing if it is deemed necessary
- Commercial and industrial development
- All housing should include affordable options. All retails should be walkable.



# Online Survey Highlights

What would you like to see in the Seaside area of Waterford?

- Preserve historic buildings if they can be saved. Keep one beach for public dog water access.
- Luxury condos. It's a great area that can generate significant tax revenue with high end condos that are fitting for that area.
- More sidewalks on route 2 walking towards Harkness on Great Neck Road!
- Preservation of the buildings but used for a purpose that would improve the property. The historical nature and the location are too valuable to let fall apart.
- Seaside should be a resort with public access to the beach.
- Development of Seaside while maintaining some public access to the coast/property.
- Seaside should be utilized by state or sold to a developer who will fix up the buildings (as possible) and preserve public access to the water.
- Designated space on the beach for watersports (kiteboarding, wing riding, and windsurfing that need a little bit of non-beachgoer space to safely operate).
- Historical preservation for this site, acknowledge the past and history of this building/location while opening this area to the public for visits and educational perspectives.
- High end hotel with year-round restaurant.
- A regional beach (local towns work together to create admission criteria for residents).

# Online Survey Highlights

What would you like to see in the Crystal Mall area of Waterford?

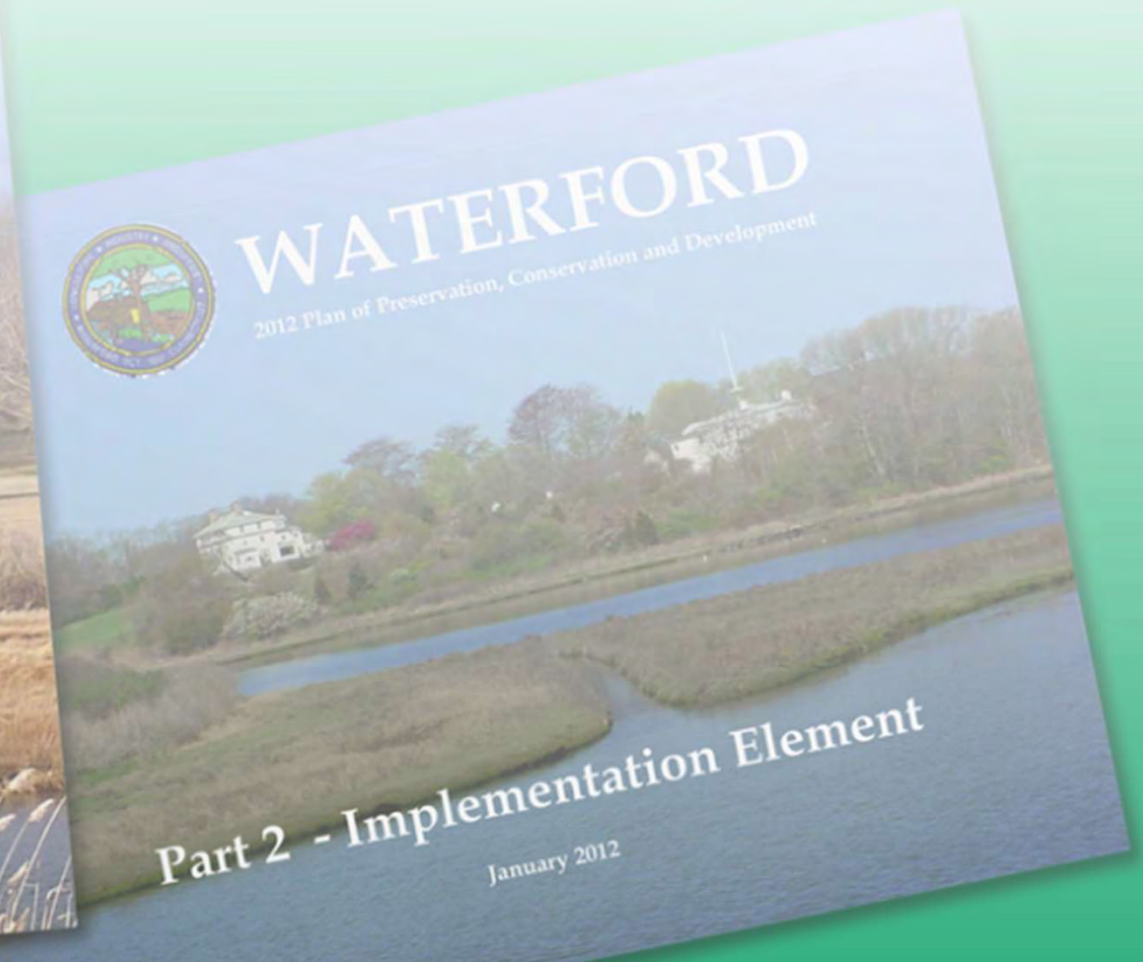
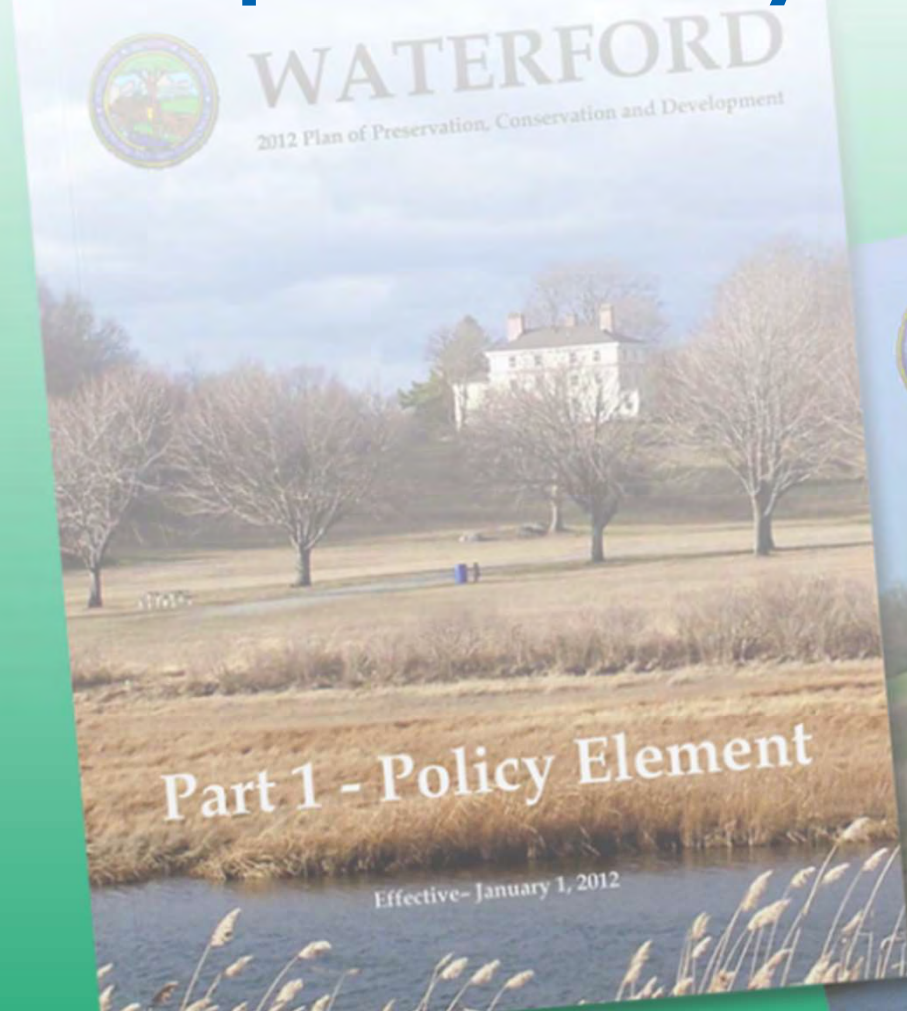
- Be open to creative solutions for this area. Look at growing areas down south or in the Midwest or similar places in the northeast that have found new uses for large malls.
- Improvements. The parking lot has a lot of terrible pot holes. There's barely any shops in there as well.
- Mixed use would be ideal, though some sort of distribution center would offer employment opportunities.
- A return to retail space if at all possible. We now need to travel to West Hartford to Westfarms to enjoy the mall shopping experience. Stores continue to open there and fully occupied.
- Crystal Mall should be turned into a village with apartments, condos, small shops and a grocery store (preferably Whole Foods).
- Push for low income housing (and/or senior) here with services (medical, grocery) on site.
- I'd like to see a revived Mall. But if not, park space? Athletic complex?

# Online Survey Highlights

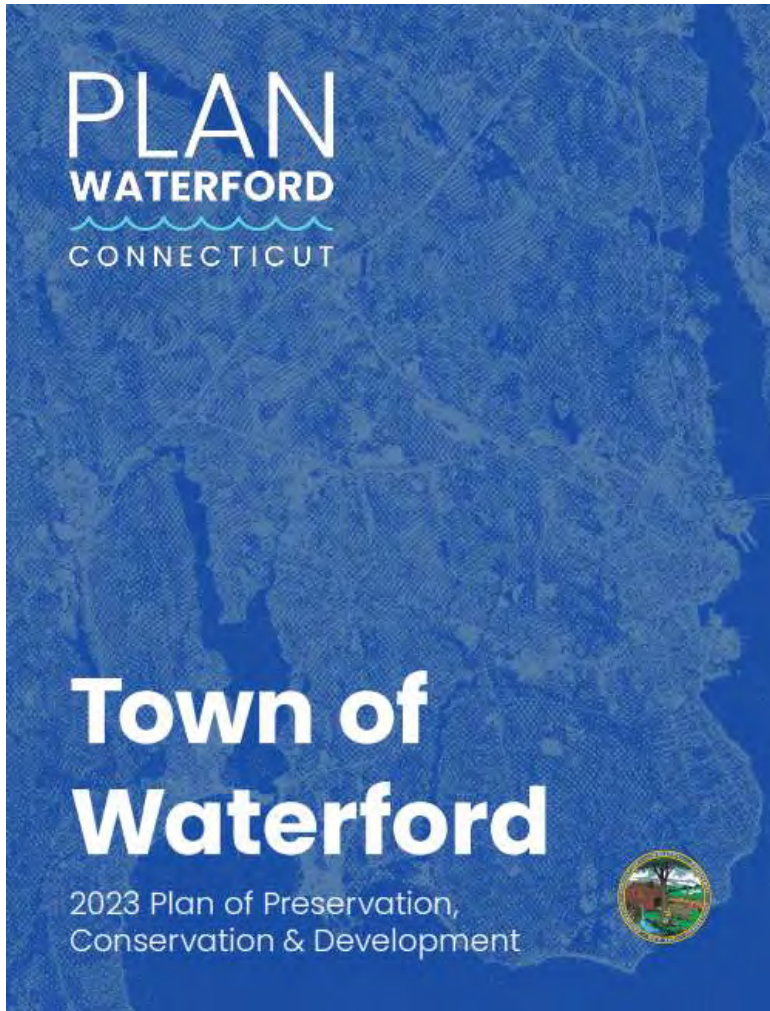
What would you like to see in Boston Post Road and Mago Point area of Waterford?

- I would love to see the ideas/renderings that were presented in the 2016 Mago Point Design Guidelines, plan be brought to life. Realizing the low lying nature of the area makes that a lot easier said than done but something that is walkable and could compete or compliment the Niantic downtown just over the bridge.
- It's a gorgeous area that needs more things to do, such as more restaurants or fishing related businesses.
- Would love to see the Mago point area an attraction to people with restaurants and potentially a boardwalk. Need to give those that visit Niantic a reason to cross the bridge. This one should be a priority
- Tourist things. Especially in Mago Point.
- Mago point has languished for decades- I am amazed a developer has not come in and bought property for higher end condominiums and marina. Look to Niantic revitalization ... it is working there
- Seafood restaurants. A "wharf-like space" with artisan shops and seaside type things, a boardwalk, historical things around the ocean (whaling history, etc.)

# Sample Plan Layouts



# Portrait Version



# Portrait Version



# Portrait Version

## Preserve

### Open Space

#### Goal

Preserve and protect Waterford's open space and environmental resources while expanding and maintaining the Town's portfolio of conservation properties and open space areas.

This Plan defines "dedicated open space" as land that is owned by entities or otherwise restricted in some way where such land is likely to be preserved or dedicated as open space, hopefully in perpetuity (town park, state forest, land trust, etc.). The terms "managed open space" is used to refer to lands owned by entities or used in a way where it serves some open space function but it may not be preserved in perpetuity, may not allow for public access or use, or has another purpose (golf courses, water company lands, cemeteries, hunting clubs, some utility lands, etc.).

Preservation of open space can serve five important purposes:

- Protection of community character.
- Preservation of lands for parks and recreational uses.
- Conservation of important natural resources.
- Fiscal and economic benefits, and
- Shaping of development patterns.

Approximately 3,230 acres of land (15% of the land area) in Waterford can be categorized as open space since it has some measure of

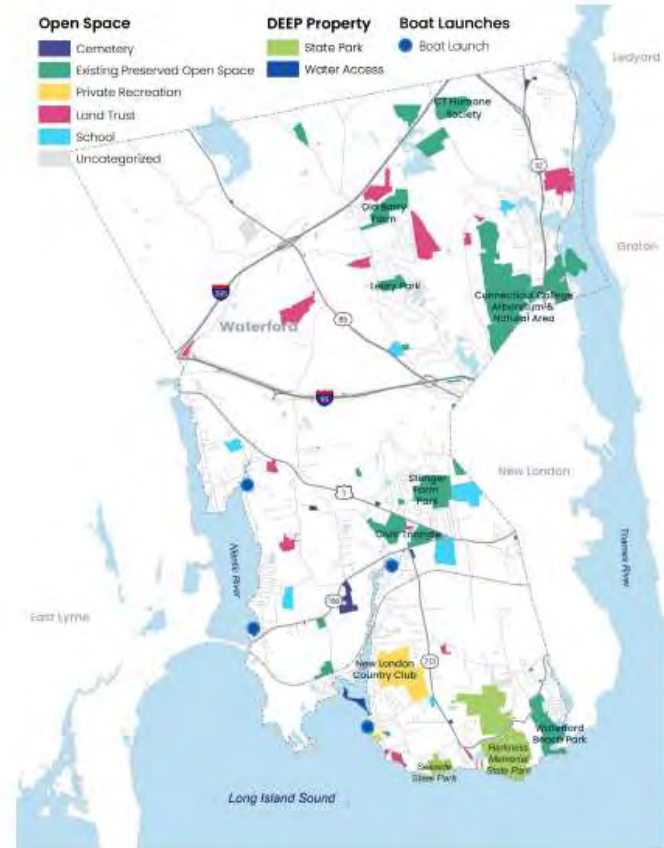
protection from future development through ownership, easement, or compatible use. Some of these areas (Harkness Arboretum, etc.) are the most treasured places in Waterford and make a significant contribution to the overall character of the community. Other areas help protect natural resources or scenic resources or provide recreation opportunities.

However, not all the land that is perceived as open space in Waterford is in fact preserved as open space. Most people tend to perceive "open space" as including all vacant land. In other words, they think "open space" is any land that is not built upon. However, much of that land is in private ownership and subject to future development. One of the reasons that neighbors oppose new developments is over the loss of what they perceive to be open space.


There is little doubt that open space adds considerably to the overall ambience and quality of life of the community. Waterford should seek to continue to acquire and manage open space lands for the benefit of the Town and its population. Otherwise, open lands and familiar landscapes will continue to change as the development of the Town continues and opportunities to acquire these lands will be lost.

In the telephone survey, 58% of participants want the Town to acquire more land for parks and open space. However, residents were less willing to support increased taxes to fund open space preservation.

Waterford residents are more strongly in favor of efforts to establish a trail system for pedestrians and bicycles. Overall, 79 percent of participants want the Town to devote efforts to establish a trail system.



# Landscape Version



**PLAN**  
**WATERFORD**  
CONNECTICUT

**Town of**  
**Waterford**

2023 Plan of Preservation, Conservation & Development



**PLAN**  
**WATERFORD**  
CONNECTICUT



# Landscape Version



# Landscape Version

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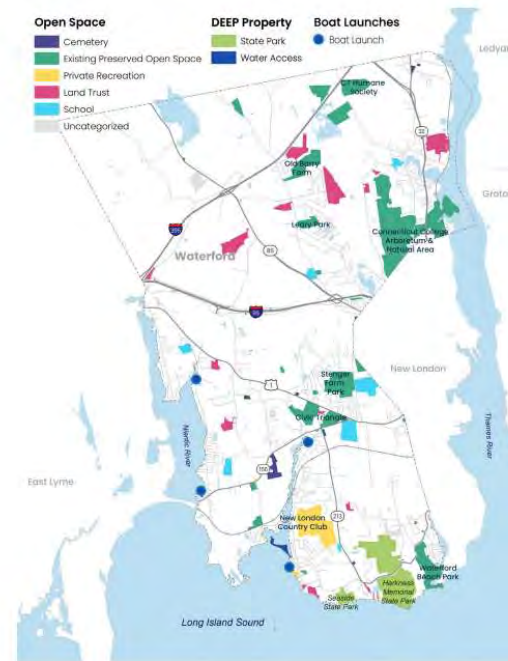
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*Platinum Beach*

# Vision and Goals Discussion



# DRAFT Vision Statement

*Waterford is a beautiful coastal and riverfront community that its residents hold in high regard due to its stunning natural surroundings and convenient access to the neighboring region. As a regional shopping hub, Waterford boasts a thriving economy that strikes a delicate balance between commercial and residential development and preserving natural resources. The town is home to a diverse community, encompassing people of all ages, and prides itself on supporting and investing in high-quality education, arts and culture, and other amenities that enhance residents' lives and draw new people to the area.*

*Waterford offers a wide range of housing options that accommodate residents throughout all stages of their lives. It is a welcoming community that embraces both new residents and families that have resided in Waterford for multiple generations. Overall, Waterford is a vibrant and inclusive town that values its natural beauty and works hard to create an environment that promotes prosperity and an excellent quality of life for all.*

## **DRAFT Housing Goal**

Encourage a diversity of housing options to meet the needs of current and future residents while maintaining and enriching Waterford's existing neighborhoods.

# **DRAFT Community Services Goal**

Provide services to residents, property owners, business owners, workers, and visitors that meet evolving community needs.

# **DRAFT Public Facilities and Infrastructure Goal**

Provide high quality facilities and infrastructure that are both fiscally and environmentally sustainable.

## **DRAFT Land Use Goal**

Preserve the Town of Waterford as a balanced community, maintaining and promoting neighborhood quality and open space in conjunction with thoughtful growth and development.



## **DRAFT Transportation Goal**

Improve and expand transportation options to support multimodal connectivity within the Town and to the region.

# **DRAFT Economic Development Goal**

Foster a vibrant economy that provides residents with access to goods, services, and employment opportunities while diversifying the Town's property tax base.

# **DRAFT Open Space, Environmental Resources and Conservation Goal**

Preserve and protect Waterford's open space and environmental resources while expanding and maintaining the Town's portfolio of conservation properties and open space areas.

# **DRAFT Sustainability and Resiliency Goal**

Ensure that Waterford is a sustainable, thriving, and resilient community that benefits from and supports clean energy, preserves and cares for its ecosystems, and prepares for coastal changes.

# **DRAFT Cultural and Historic Resources Goal**

Preserve, protect, and promote Waterford's cultural and historic resources in perpetuity.

# Project Schedule and Next Steps



# Project Schedule and Next Steps

- Topic Based Discussions with PZ from March to May—create schedule for these and invite the public to participate
- Public Workshop – April or May?

*march* 2023

| SUN | MON | TUE  | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|-----|-----|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|
|     |     |  | 1   | 2   | 3   | 4   |
| 5   | 6   | 7  | 8   | 9   | 10  | 11  |
| 12  | 13  | 14   | 15  | 16  | 17  | 18  |
| 19  | 20  | 21   | 22  | 23  | 24  | 25  |
| 26  | 27  |  28 | 29  | 30  | 31  |     |

Questions





**Thank you!**