DOWNTOWN Westport Master Plan

TOWN OF WESTPORT, CONNECTICUT

Final Report | June 4, 2015

Photo by Larry Untermeyer. Used with permission.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Downtown Westport Master Plan was funded by the Town of Westport. The planning process was led by the First Selectman's office and a Downtown Steering Committee comprised of neighborhood residents, members of the Town's professional staff, elected officials, and community-based organizations.

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Beechwood Arts
Celebrate Westport
Democratic Town Committee
Democratic Women of Westport
Earthplace
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Selectman's Maintenance Study Committee
Westport Arts Center
Westport Board of Education
Westport Cinema Initiative
Westport Community Gardens
Westport Country Playhouse
Westport Department of Parks & Recreation
Westport Downtown Merchants Association
Westport Garden Club
Westport Historical Society
Westport Library
Westport Little League Baseball
Westport Republican Town Committee
Westport Rotary Club
Westport Senior Center
Westport Sunrise Rotary
Westport Transit District
Westport-Weston Chamber of Commerce
Y's Men of Westport/Weston

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INDEX OF RECOMMENDATIONS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

Over the course of several decades, Downtown Westport has transitioned from a local civic and commercial town center into a destination that attracts visitors from across the region for its small town character, picturesque riverfront, upscale restaurants, and high-end boutiques. The purpose of the *Downtown Westport Master Plan* is to serve as a guide for future public and private investments in Downtown, and to ensure that Downtown Westport remains a vibrant and successful place, while reflecting the goals and aspirations of its residents.

This Plan raises several critical questions:

- **How much more can Downtown handle?**
- **Where should the Town begin to reinvest in its infrastructure?**
- **How should investments be coordinated and managed?**
- **What values and goals should guide these investments?**

This Plan examines and addresses the following aspects of Downtown:

- **Character & Design**: visual character/form, architectural design
- **Land Use & Development**: zoning, redevelopment, preservation
- **Open Space**: parks, plazas, recreation, river access
- **Public Works**: utilities, drainage
- **Streetscapes**: sidewalks, benches, trees, lights, art
- **Traffic & Parking**: cars, bikes, pedestrians, safety, transit, signs/wayfinding

This Plan builds on the goals and objectives for Downtown in the Town's *2007 Plan of Conservation and Development* (POCD) and subsequent Downtown planning efforts. The final *Downtown Westport Master Plan* is intended to be adopted as an amendment to the POCD.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

The Downtown Steering Committee (DSC) selected a consultant team (led by The RBA Group) to prepare this Plan. The team's first steps were to: review ongoing investments and prior studies and plans; conduct a market assessment of Downtown; and undertake a study of Downtown traffic and parking.

The DSC launched the YOUR DOWNTOWN campaign to engage residents in the planning process. The campaign involved reaching out to residents through multiple methods, including Web, e-mail, social media, traditional press, and posters. Many Westport civic, social, and recreational organizations helped promote the planning process and its events to their constituencies, which was invaluable for informing residents about key planning events. The YOUR DOWNTOWN campaign included the following core elements:

- Downtown Westport Master Plan Website
- Downtown Survey for Residents
- Downtown Visioning Workshops
- Ongoing communications through e-newsletters and social media, including Facebook and Twitter
- YOUR DOWNTOWN Charrette
- YOUR DOWNTOWN Open House

This Plan was guided by the results of this multi-faceted civic engagement process that reached thousands of Westporters.

DOWNTOWN VALUES

Through the public outreach process, several shared values regarding Downtown became clear:

Maintain a "Small Town" Character

The Downtown Survey for Residents included the question: "What actions are the most important to consider for the future of Downtown?" Ranked most important among all the options was to "**maintain the 'small town' character of Downtown**." While Downtown Westport continues to have a small footprint, it is "filling in" from within, testing the limits of this New England small town Downtown.

A Downtown for Westporters

Downtown Westport draws people from throughout the region, yet, for residents, it is their one-and-only Downtown. There is a heightened sense of competition between Downtown commercial interests and residents. Residents also feel that the public realm can be reclaimed through the reconfiguration of open spaces, surface parking, and roadways.

Fiscally- and Environmentally-Responsible Implementation

Recommended public improvement projects and programmatic initiatives should be implemented in a fiscally-responsible manner. In addition, environmental sustainability should be considered in the implementation of all projects and initiatives.

PLANNING DIRECTIVES

These values led to the formulation of six planning directives, which have, in turn, shaped the elements of the Plan:

A Reclaim and enhance riverfront access, views, and walkways.

B Improve streetscape and landscape attractiveness.

C Enhance and activate public open spaces.

D Enhance pedestrian connections, walkways, and bike paths.

E Enhance connections between key Downtown destinations.

F Improve traffic flow and parking management.

YOUR DOWNTOWN

PLACES: Streetscapes & Public Spaces

Westport's open space network consists of streetscapes, parks, plazas, trails, and alleys through which people travel or sit and enjoy. Residents communicated the need to connect and complete, rather than to grow, Downtown. The plan recommends improving pedestrian connections within Downtown and between Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods. The plan also recommends ways to reveal and reconnect with the Saugatuck River by making it more prominent, accessible, and a part of Downtown life.

MOBILITY: Traffic & Circulation

Downtown should better balance the needs of cars and pedestrians, while also providing accommodations to bicyclists. The Plan recommends ways to improve overall walkability, make intersections safer, and reduce automobile traffic by creating conditions that promote walking over driving. Also, linking Downtown into public transit would provide alternative means for employees and visitors to reach Downtown.

PARKING: Capacity & Management

Recognizing that Downtown parking is often near capacity, the Plan recommends a range of strategies for improving the supply and accessibility of parking. These involve changes to parking rules, techniques to reduce parking demand, combining and co-managing certain parking lots, and considering longer-term strategies to increase the supply of parking in ways that are consistent with Westport's "small town" character.

WATER: Stormwater & Flood Protection

Downtown is prone to flooding from both regular rain events and major storms. Rather than invest significant capital to construct sea walls and pumping stations, the Plan recommends low-impact development (LID) techniques, which can be implemented through some of the projects recommended within this Plan.

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Phasing

The Plan presents an array of management strategies and public investment recommendations to reinvest in and elevate the public realm and enhance the quality-of-life in Downtown. Each strategy/recommendation is categorized into one of three phases, described below. As the plan is being implemented, they can be recategorized if necessary.

SHORT-TERM: High-priority projects that the Town should initiate within the next two years.

MID-TERM: Projects that should be initiated or completed within the next 2-5 years.

LONG-TERM: Projects and possibilities that should or could be initiated after at least 5 years have passed. Some of these are creative ideas and/or complex endeavors whose need and impacts should be assessed as the projects in the two prior stages come into place.

Each of these phases include public investments that should be coordinated with anticipated private development projects.

Funding & Responsibility

Implementing the recommended projects will require prudent phasing, well-considered financing strategies, and mutually beneficial intergovernmental and public-private partnerships. Careful attention to and coordination of maintenance and operations will ensure that investments continue to generate the desired outcomes for residents and other stakeholders. There will be public capital improvements, civic and non-profit initiatives, and private investment that help achieve the public purpose of the Plan. The Plan recommends ways to fund projects to be consistent with one of the core planning values: fiscally-responsible implementation.

Design Guidance

The Plan provides general design guidance for and examples of street furnishings, lighting, pavements treatments, and other landscape elements for streetscape and public realm projects. The Plan also presents examples of mobility enhancements such as crosswalks and wayfinding signs and features a section on low-impact development (LID).

The intersection at Main Street & Elm Street, which this Plan recommends redesigning

LIST OF STRATEGIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

A citation system is utilized to organize the strategies and recommendations of the *Downtown Westport Master Plan*.

- The letters P, M, PK, and W correspond to the categories described on the previous page: Places, Mobility, Parking, and Water.
- The list is ordered by number within each category according to the sequence that each might start being implemented (e.g., P1, P2, P3).
- Strategies coded with same color are linked, which means that they must be implemented together or that one must be implemented before the next can be started.

Timing	Category	#	Project
Short	Management	G1	Create Entity/Position to Manage Plan Implementation
Short	Management	G2	Coordinate & Manage Maintenance of Downtown
Short	Places	P1	Implement Planned Main Street Streetscape Improvements
Short	Places	P2	Improve & Complete the Sidewalk Network throughout Downtown
Short	Places	P3	Redesign Church Lane into a "Shared Street"
Short	Places	P4	Support Improvements to Toquet Hall
Short	Places	P5	Restore and Revitalize Elm Street
Short	Places	P6	Coordinate with and Integrate Redevelopment of the West Side Riverfront
Short	Places	P7	Build a Pedestrian Bridge Crossing the Saugatuck
Short	Places	P8	Create a Westport Arts & Culture Heritage "Trail"
Short	Mobility	M1	Improve Pedestrian Safety at Post Road Crossings
Short	Mobility	M2	Improve Ped. & Vehicular Safety at Post Rd Intersections thru Traffic Signal Modifications
Short	Mobility	M3	Improve Traffic Movements at the Route 1/33 Intersection
Short	Mobility	M4	Redesign Myrtle Avenue Intersections
Short	Mobility	M5	Improve the Wayfinding System for Motorists
Short	Mobility	M6	Develop Directional & Informational Signs for Pedestrians
Short	Mobility	M7	Support Initiatives to Access & Connect Downtown through Public Transit
Short	Mobility	M8	Provide Amenities for Public Transit Passengers
Short	Mobility	M9	Provide Bicycle Parking in Downtown
Short	Mobility	M10	Create a Town-Wide Bicycle Plan
Short	Mobility	M11	Redesign the Main Street/Elm Street Intersection
Short	Parking	PK1	Change Parking from 1-Hour to 2-Hour Maximum in Downtown
Short	Parking	PK2	Combine and Co-Manage Public & Private Parking Lots (Elm/Baldwin with Avery)
Short	Parking	PK3	Combine and Co-Manage Public & Private Parking Lots (Gillespie Ctr. w/Old Town Hall)
Short	Parking	PK4	Relocate Long-Term Parking to South of Post Road
Short	Parking	PK5	Implement Seasonal Valet Parking
Short	Water	W1	Coordinate Flood Prevention Efforts with Neighboring Upstream Towns
Short	Water	W2	Continue to Implement Low Impact Development Techniques
Short	Water	W3	Replace Existing Culverts and Pipes
Short	Water	W4	Conduct Flood Audits of Downtown Commercial Properties
Short	Water	W5	Control Building Development in Downtown's Flood Hazard Zone

Timing	Category	#	Project
Mid	Places	P9	Coordinate with and Integrate the Library Transformation Project
Mid	Places	P10	Transform Parker Harding Plaza
Mid	Places	P11	Reinvent Jesup Green
Mid	Places	P12	Provide Public Restrooms (either on Jesup or Parker Harding)
Mid	Places	P13	Redesign Taylor Place into a "Shared Street"
Mid	Places	P14	Coordinate with and Integrate the Relocation of the Westport Arts Center
Mid	Places	P15	Coordinate with and Integrate the Westport Cinema Initiative
Mid	Places	P16	Create/Improve Pedestrian Passageways
Mid	Places	P17	Implement/Install Standard Streetscape Elements throughout Downtown
Mid	Mobility	M12	Create a New Street: Library Lane
Mid	Mobility	M13	Build a Bridge to Connect to the Imperial Avenue Parking Lot
Mid	Mobility	M14	Redesign Jesup Road
Mid	Mobility	M15	Evaluate Implementing a Real-Time Parking Information System
Mid	Parking	PK6	Improve the Appearance & Safety of the Imperial Avenue Lot
Mid	Parking	PK7	Evaluate a Fee-Based System to Manage Parking in Certain Locations
Mid	Parking	PK8	Evaluate the Need for Structured Parking at Baldwin/Elm Lots
Long	Places	P18	Place a Café on Green
Long	Places	P19	Construct a Downtown Landing
Long	Places	P20	Create a Barge Restaurant
Long	Places	P21	Extend the Westside Riverwalk
Long	Parking	PK9	Evaluate the Need for Structured Parking on Police Station Lot or Gillespie Ctr./Old Town Hall Lot
Long	Water	W6	Evaluate Strategies to Combat Tidal Events/Sea Level Rise


M1
M4
M4
M1
M1
M4
P3
PK2
P5
M1
M2
P1
M11
M1
M2
P7
P6
M3

SHORT TERM

The **Downtown Westport Master Plan** recommends short-term changes and improvements that will make the Downtown more of the community centered, walkable, "small town" place residents want their Downtown to be. Changes that residents look forward to include:

Improved **parking management and access to parking**.

Safer **walking connections** across Post Road and Myrtle Ave.

Church Lane, redesigned as a flexible **"shared street"** that can host outdoor dining and seasonal events.

A pedestrian bridge crossing the river to the West side that re-centers Downtown on its beautiful river.

P1 **Main Street Streetscape** of brick sidewalks, new stone curbs, columnar street trees, decorative light poles with banners and hanging flower baskets. Future improvements should include benches, trash and recycling receptacles, and bike racks.

P2 **Complete Sidewalk Network** Sidewalks extending from Downtown to neighborhoods north of Downtown so that nearby residents are more likely to walk Downtown.

P3 **Church Lane as a "Shared Street,"** where the walking and driving surface is at the same level, designed with bollards, lighting, art, and plantings that make for a new kind of Downtown space adjacent to Bedford Square.

P5 **Restore Elm Street** The gap in Elm Street is resolved with potential new buildings (with driveway connections to the Baldwin lot) to join the relocated Kemper-Gunn House on the north side.

P6 **West Side Redevelopment** replaces a vacant office building with an ensemble of three mixed-use buildings along the riverfront.

P7 **A Pedestrian Bridge** that would connect the east and west banks, providing beautiful views and enhancing pedestrian circulation.

M1/ M2 **Post Road Crossing Improvements** Making for safer, less intimidating pedestrian crossings across Post Road. Includes a pedestrian crossing signal phase for the Post Road/Parker Harding Plaza intersection and new signals/ masts at Bay Avenue.

M3 **An Improved Route 1/33 Intersection**, which will ease the bottleneck that occurs at peak travel times.

M4 **Myrtle Ave Intersections** Reduced turn radii, curb extensions, high visibility crosswalks, and improved pavement markings and signage will improve pedestrian safety and inform drivers to watch for pedestrians.

M11 **Main/Elm Street Intersection** reconfigured with tight turn radii to improve safety for pedestrians crossing. Will result in a small plaza with benches, trees, and an information kiosk in the heart of the Downtown shopping district.

PK2 **Co-manage/merge the Baldwin and Avery Parking Lots** for a more efficient and attractive Downtown parking experience.


PK8
P17
P17
M12
M14
P9
P13
P16
P11
P10

MID-TERM

Acknowledging the limits of municipal resources, the **Downtown Westport Master Plan** anticipates that projects will be phased incrementally so that Downtown becomes more **connected**—along both banks of the riverfront and across Post Road to the south. Throughout the planning process, Westporters emphasized initiatives that "complete" and "connect" rather than "grow" Downtown, including:

P9 **The Library Transformation Project** will "transform" not only the physical form of the Library building, but also enhance Downtown connectivity and the enjoyment of the river.

P10 **Transform Parker Harding Plaza** An idea whose time has come: a proper park/promenade along the river.

P11 **Reinvent Jesup Green** A more active and greener Jesup Green, with family-friendly amenities like a playground and a place to launch small boats.

P13 **Taylor Place "Shared Street"** A project that will transform this small street into a welcoming, attractive shared space that improves the connection between Main Street and Jesup Green.

P14 **Westport Arts Center** in the core downtown. Two possibilities include within the restoration of Elm Street (P5) or along Library Lane (M12).

P15 **The Westport Cinema Initiative** aims to bring a three-screen theater to Main Street, broadening evening offerings in Downtown.

P16 **New Passageway** Though Main Street parallels the river, it is a very long block with few connections to the river. The second passage could also be a lively little pedestrian street; a counterpoint to the quiet gallery-like passage at the south end of Main.

P17 **Install Standard Streetscape** elements: brick sidewalks to match those that already exist on Main Street, new stone curbs, columnar street trees, decorative light poles with banners and hanging flower baskets.

M12 **Library Lane** a new street providing parking and a more formal approach to the Library and Levitt Pavilion, which will make the land more attractive to new community uses. It will access the proposed vehicular bridge over Dead Man's Brook to the Imperial Avenue parking lot.

M13 **Library Lane Bridge** The planned Library Lane is extended to bridge over Dead Man's Brook, connecting to the Imperial Avenue Lot.

M14 **Redesigning Jesup Road** will make for more a accommodating crossing at Taylor Place. When complete, it will include a substantial number of new public parking spaces.

PK6 **Imperial Ave Lot Improvements** Once complete, the Imperial Avenue lot will be experienced as an integral part of Downtown and a logical place for long-term parking. It can host an expanded list of special events, including the Farmers Market.

PK8 **Evaluate the Need for Structured Parking** at the Baldwin/Elm Lots.


P22
P22
P18
P20
P19
P21

LONG-TERM

After 5 years, the Town should consider additional project possibilities. Some of these are creative ideas and/or complex endeavors whose need and impacts should be assessed as the projects in the prior stages come into place. Some of these projects are contingent on other initiatives, such as the possibility of dredging the Saugatuck River.

P18 **Café on Green** A small kiosk/structure to serve users of Jesup Green.

P19 **Construct a Downtown Landing** A place to put small boats and kayaks during high-tide or to just enjoy the water.

P20 **Barge Restaurant** Should the dredging of the Saugatuck River proceed, this could connect people to the river in an even more tangible way.

P21 **Extend the West Side Riverwalk** across Post Road and down to Riverside Park.

P22 **Evaluate the Need for Structured Parking** Locations may include: Police Station Lot, Gillespie Center/Old Town Hall Lot.

THE ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

An illustrative plan is a graphical overview of a comprehensive plan, in part or fully implemented, for the future physical environment of a place. The graphic below is the illustrative plan representation for the *Downtown Westport Master Plan*. Chapter 2. Your Downtown: The Downtown Plan includes detailed, annotated close-ups of sections of this illustrative plan that accompany descriptions of specific strategies and recommendations.

Figure 1: Map of the Town of Westport with Downtown highlighted

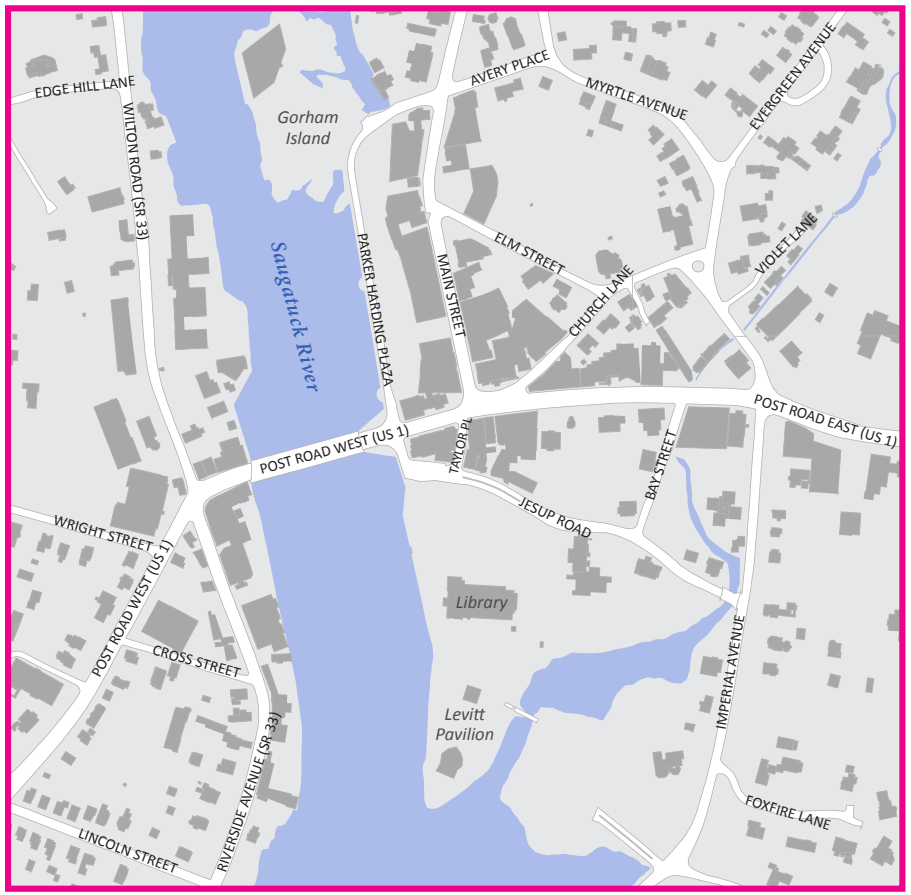

Figure 2: Map of the Downtown Westport Master Plan study area

1. STARTING POINTS

A. WHY A DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN?

Over the course of several decades, Downtown Westport (see Figure 1 and Figure 2) has transitioned from a local civic and commercial town center into a destination that attracts visitors from across the region for its small town character, picturesque riverfront, upscale restaurants, and high-end boutiques. While lovely, what once might have felt like an intimate village that served residents' daily needs and where neighbors came together now feels and functions—to some people—like an outdoor "shopping mall." Rising rents and the growth of online shopping have led to the closure of many small and locally-owned businesses. They have been replaced by prominent luxury retailers that are staples in big city downtowns and suburban shopping malls—but here they are in Downtown Westport. Meanwhile, public institutions have gradually relocated away from Downtown, starting with Town Hall in 1979, located now at the edge of Downtown and, most recently, the Post Office and the YMCA.

Among long-time residents who have witnessed these changes, there is a sense that the "small town" feel of Downtown Westport might be irrevocably lost. Yet, Downtown is clearly not lacking in vitality. The streets and parking areas in Downtown are often full and sidewalks bustle with people of all ages during the daytime (see Figure 3 and Figure 4 on page 2). This vitality will grow as Downtown continues to evolve as a result of recent institutional and private investments. For example, Levitt Pavilion, an outdoor performance venue, was recently redesigned and reconstructed, and the Westport Library is planning a transformative $25+ million expansion. Real estate developments such as Bedford Square and the proposed project on the former "Save the Children" site on the west side will add even more vitality to Downtown—including a new live-in population, which will change the dynamics of the area.

As a result of these changes, the public infrastructure of Downtown is almost at capacity. Downtown's streets and parking areas have limits to the volume of cars they can accommodate. Intersections are often congested and crossings can be unsafe for pedestrians. The threat of flooding worries local business and property owners.

This raises several critical questions:

- **How much more can Downtown handle?**
- **Where should the Town begin to reinvest in its infrastructure?**
- **How should investments be coordinated and managed?**
- **What values and goals should guide these investments?**

With all of these transformations taking place, the Town needs a plan that resolves long-standing challenges, identifies and prioritizes public investments to complement and support these changes, and, ultimately, enhances the quality-of-life for Westporters. In 2013, the Town, under the direction of the First Selectman, convened a Downtown Steering Committee (DSC) to lead the process of initiating a big-picture conversation about the future of Downtown. This process culminated in the formulation of the *Downtown Westport Master Plan.*

The Village District Study

While the Downtown Westport Master Plan process was underway, the Town also launched the Village District Study. The goals of this study were to:

- Identify historic and architecturally significant resources in Westport Center important to defining the overall character of the area.
- Establish planning and design standards to guide development consistent with the historic and present day character of the village district area.
- Adopt new planning and zoning regulations that will streamline the permit process.

The final report is available from the Historic District Commission Office section of the Town's website at www.westportct.gov

See Section F. Prior Plans for more details on the Village District Study

Figure 3: The Parker Harding Lot

Figure 4: Main Street on a Saturday

B. PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The purpose of the *Downtown Westport Master Plan* is to serve as a guide for future public and private investments in Downtown. Its overarching purpose is to ensure that Downtown Westport remains a vibrant and successful place that both residents and visitors can access and enjoy for its diverse entertainment, dining, shopping, civic and open space amenities, and a place in which a variety of businesses can thrive. At the same time, the Plan respects Westport's small town character and historical heritage.

This Plan builds on the goals and objectives for Downtown in the Town's *2007 Plan of Conservation and Development* (POCD) and subsequent Downtown planning efforts. The preparation of a master plan for Downtown is specifically recommended in the POCD, and the final *Downtown Westport Master Plan* is intended to be adopted as an amendment to the POCD.

The Plan examines and addresses the following aspects of Downtown:

- **Character & Design**: visual character/form, architectural design
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- **Public Works**: utilities, drainage
- **Streetscapes**: sidewalks, benches, trees, lights, art
- **Traffic & Parking**: cars, bikes, pedestrians, safety, transit, signs/wayfinding

C. THE PUBLIC REALM: PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

What is the "Public Realm"?

The "public realm" represents all outdoor public areas that people are free to use. This includes sidewalks, streets, alleys, public parking areas, plazas, parks, and trails. The public realm is part of our everyday lives. It is where and through which we move, encounter, meet, and transact business. It represents the places we travel through and the spaces we enjoy for recreation or social interaction. The public realm shapes the image of places in our minds, creates a sense of character, and supports economic, civic, and social life.

Past: Evolution of the Public Realm in Downtown Westport

The public realm in Downtown Westport evolved gradually over the past 150 years within the framework of its primary streets: State Street (now Post Road) and Main Street. In the 19th century, Downtown was smaller; Parker Harding Plaza did not exist, nor did Jesup Road, Jesup Green, or the land on which Levitt Pavilion sits. Westport's core public institutions such as Town Hall and the Library were in different locations and smaller buildings (see Figure 5 and Figure 6).

Westport also had an entirely different economy, one that was centered around the shipping of onions and other raw materials to New York City and ports beyond. The sides of buildings facing Main Street supported some walk-in commerce, but the riverfront was the interface where the action took place—where the backs of buildings met ships to make exchanges.

The public realm supported Westport's industrial economy by accommodating horse carriages and, in the following century, trucks, cars, and trolleys. Then, in the 1900s, the electrification of the New York/New Haven train line and construction of the Merritt Parkway and I-95 significantly improved access to the Town, which accelerated Westport's transition from an agro-industrial crossroads into a residential community. As the residential population of the Town climbed, Downtown changed from an industrial economy to a service-oriented economy that supported new residents and their growing families. Artists and writers from

Figure 5: Aerial photograph of Downtown from 1949, before Parker Harding Plaza and Levitt Pavilion were built on reclaimed land.

New York City were drawn to Westport, and Downtown commerce began to reflect the presence of Westport's more creative-minded residents, leading to a sense of Westport as an "artist colony." During the first half of the 20th century, Downtown Westport continued to take shape. Jesup Green was created in 1949, followed by Jesup Road. By the 1950s, the growth and development of the Town made clear the need to rethink the public realm in Downtown to support these changes.

One of the most transformative public realm projects was the reclamation of the Saugatuck riverfront in the 1950s to create Parker Harding Plaza. This transformation created much-needed parking for a growing and increasingly popular Downtown shopping district and provided a new riverfront promenade for people to enjoy.

Figure 6: Sanborn Fire Insurance Company map from 1910 and images of Westport

Present: The Downtown Public Realm Today

In the past 50 years since the reclamation project, the economy and character of Downtown Westport has changed once again, building by building. And it is continuing to change as new developments are planned and constructed. What was once a relatively quiet downtown of independent businesses and community institutions serving local residents has transitioned into a regional shopping destination—a high-end outdoor mall, as some say. As a "mall," it is a competitive force in the regional retail market. While shopping malls and centers are typically owned and managed by a single entity, Downtown Westport is an amalgamation of individual property owners who have made similar tenanting decisions to capitalize on market and demographic trends. As rents have risen, national chain stores selling high-end luxury products and services have replaced most of the small and/or locally-owned establishments. Vehicular traffic has grown considerably, along with the need for adequate and accessible parking. Pedestrians of all ages fill the sidewalks and streets on busy days.

Downtown is not only a destination for shopping and dining—it also is a civic and cultural center. The Westport Library, which serves as an educational, community, and social center is located in Downtown. Jesup Green, a passive open space, is adjacent to the Library. An outdoor performance venue, Levitt Pavilion, is located behind the Library. Lining the east side of the Saugatuck riverfront, starting from behind the Levitt Pavilion, is a path that continues along Parker Harding Plaza, where seating areas are available for people to enjoy views of the river and of the west side of Downtown. The Post Road Bridge itself is a grand public realm feature, offering beautiful views of the river and Downtown. The decorative light fixtures and flags create a welcoming gateway into the Downtown core. Christ and Holy Trinity Church, which recently underwent a major expansion and has plans for a second phase, is also located in Downtown.

However, many Westport residents feel that the arrangement, quality, and programming of the public realm in Downtown has the potential to be much more remarkable. The river, especially, can be a much more prominent and accessible feature in Downtown.

Future: Downtown Westport Tomorrow

The Town recognizes that it is time to plan not only for ongoing and impending changes in Downtown, but also for the next decade and longer.

The next section, Section D. Infrastructure Investments, reviews recent and planned infrastructure investments in Downtown.

Section E. The Downtown Economy summarizes the results of a Downtown market assessment, which included a comparative look at Westport and other downtown business districts in the region.

Section F. Prior Plans and Studies describes previous planning efforts involving Downtown and how the *Downtown Westport Master Plan* builds on their stated objectives and recommendations.

Section G. Public Outreach recaps the community engagement process and outcomes, which led to the identification of three important values, described in Section H. Downtown Values, that guided the development of strategies and recommendations.

The directives identified in Section I. Planning Directives represent core objectives that the community aspires to achieve through the implementation of the *Downtown Westport Master Plan*.

D. INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS

Before the launch of the master planning process, the Town had been planning and undertaking several significant infrastructure investments in Downtown:

Main Street Investment Program

Through a CT Main Street Grant of almost $500,000, the Town is installing new decorative light poles with energy efficient lights, granite curbs, tree grates, and new or reconstructed sidewalks on portions of Main Street, Elm Street, and Myrtle Avenue. The materials utilized will maintain the historic character and aesthetic charm of Downtown. Prior to this effort, the Town had planted new trees along Main Street, which were donated by a local commercial nursery. RBA provided guidance on the planting of these new trees and worked with the Village District Study consultant to recommend types of light fixtures and an overall lighting layout to ensure that the streetscape has a consistent appearance.

Parker-Harding Plaza

The Town has applied for a CT Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP) Grant for up to $425,000 for infrastructure improvements to Parker Harding Plaza, which would include curbs, lighting, fencing, and flood gates. These improvements should be coordinated with the recommendations detailed in this Plan.

Dredging the Saugatuck River

The Town is investigating, along with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), the dredging of the Saugatuck River to make it navigable for water traffic. CT Department of Transportation's (CTDOT) 2014-2018 *Transportation Capital Infrastructure Program* identifies $1,500,000 for harbor dredging in Westport from the harbor to the Post Road Bridge, which might be funded by general obligation bonds.

Forecasting & Budgeting for Capital Projects

CTDOT's 2015 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) does not list any transportation-related projects that are located in Downtown Westport.

While the Town of Westport has a five-year capital forecast which identifies funding sources (bonded vs. capital non-recurring projects) and lists the justification for certain projects, it does not have a projected capital program that allocates specific funding to individual projects or a separate capital budget (broken out by Town Department for each fiscal year). Instead, capital expenses are included under each Town Department in the RTM's Overall Budget. No specific capital projects were listed for Downtown in the Town's RTM FY 2014-2015 Overall Budget.

To better plan for capital needs, the Town needs to develop a long range (5- to 10-year) capital plan that assesses the infrastructure needs of each department, and also prepare an annual capital budget by department that lists specific infrastructure projects and their estimated costs.

Streets, Intersections & Sidewalks

Post Road Pavement Management

The Westport Department of Public Works (DPW) has a pavement management system, a comprehensive inventory of pavement conditions of local streets, that it uses to prioritize road maintenance and repairs. In the RTM FY 2014-2015 Overall budget, $1.9 million was allocated for repaving, street markings, sign replacement, and maintenance of parking lots, sidewalks, and traffic signals. While DPW reports that the pavement management system works well, a broader challenge is coordinating with private utilities companies, which often dig into local roadways as they upgrade infrastructure.

CTDOT is responsible for the operation and curb-to-curb maintenance of US Route 1 (Post Road) and State Route 33 (Riverside Avenue). DPW is responsible for all other roadways.

Town Aid Program

CTDOT's Town Aid Road Program allocated $382,031 to the Town in FY 2013-2014 for the construction, reconstruction, improvement, and/or maintenance of highways, bridges, or structures incidental to highways and bridges. This also includes snow plowing; sanding icy pavements; trimming and removing trees; installing, replacing, and maintaining traffic signs, signals, and markings; traffic control and vehicular safety programs; traffic and parking planning/administration; other purposes and programs related to highways, traffic and parking; and for providing and operating essential public transportation services and related facilities.

Sidewalks

All "business use" sidewalks in Downtown (i.e., any sidewalk abutting a public street where business uses are permitted under the Planning and Zoning Regulations of the Town) are maintained in accordance with Town standards by the owner of the adjoining property, while "residential use" sidewalks are maintained by the DPW.

Traffic Signals

CTDOT is responsible for all of the traffic signals in Downtown except for those located at the intersection of Main Street and Avery Place and Main Street and Myrtle Avenue. Those signals are maintained by DPW. The Town has allocated $20,000, which is part of DPW's roadway maintenance budget in the RTM FY 2014-2015 Overall Budget, to conduct traffic signal design studies at the intersections of Main Street and Avery Place and Main Street and Myrtle Avenue.

Public Landscapes & Parking Lots

Within Downtown, the public landscape consists of the following Town parks:

- Veterans Green (located between Myrtle Ave and Main Street)
- St. John/Myrtle Avenue Park (at St. John's Place and Myrtle Avenue)
- Jesup Green (at Jesup Road and Taylor Place)
- Library Riverwalk & Garden (at Jesup Rd. and Taylor Pl. - see Figure 7)
- Levitt Pavilion for the Performing Arts (at Jesup Green and Bernhard Plaza) and Extended Riverwalk

The other significant public landscape in Downtown is the Riverwalk along Parker Harding Plaza. While not officially a Town park, the Riverwalk is part of the Parker Harding Plaza parcel, which is owned by the Town and maintained by the Town's Parks and Recreation Department, with some assistance from local merchants. The Westport Downtown Merchants Association (WDMA) maintains two recently-added plantings that are located at the eastern end of the Post Road Bridge along both sides of the roadway just before the Parker Harding Plaza/Jesup Road intersection.

Downtown also has several open spaces that are owned by private or institutional entities, including Old Library Corner and the plaza of the Church of the Holy Trinity. The Bedford Square project will include open space.

Parks and Recreation Department

The Town's Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for maintaining all Town parks and collecting municipal trash in Downtown. In the RTM FY 2014-2015 Overall Budget, almost $450,000 was allocated for parks maintenance for the entire Town, which includes grounds maintenance, tree and shrub maintenance, ornamental tree planning and maintenance, and the maintenance and replacement of all park fixtures (e.g. grills, signage, etc.). Parks maintenance and development includes the budget for all Town maintenance vehicles. Parks maintenance and athletic fields maintenance function as a single division and share resources to meet departmental priorities. There is no dedicated budget for Parks and Recreation staff assigned to Downtown.

Parking Lots

There are a total of nine off-street public parking lots in Downtown, all of which are maintained by the DPW. In FY 2014-2015, $70,000 of DPW's roadway maintenance budget (of the RTM Overall Budget) was allocated toward parking lot maintenance, which includes replacing and/or installing signs. While DPW maintains the lots, the Traffic Authority (i.e., the Board of Selectman) is responsible for parking regulations. However, there is no long-term parking plan, and the Authority usually responds to requests for changes in time limits on a case-by-case basis from business owners and residents. The Westport Police Department is responsible for enforcement in these lots and of all on-street parking spaces in the Town.

Figure 7: The Library Riverwalk

E. THE DOWNTOWN ECONOMY

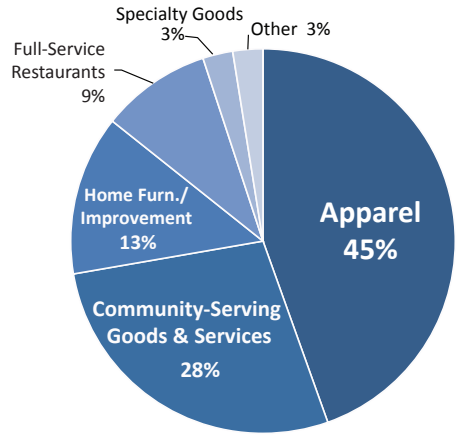
One of the initial tasks of the planning process was to examine demographic trends and the nature of the existing Downtown retail market through a market assessment. The assessment included interviews with several Downtown merchants and a comparative analysis of similar downtowns in Connecticut and the Northeast, including New Canaan, Greenwich, and Princeton, NJ. See Appendix A to read the full market assessment report.

Retail Supply

To identify and characterize the currently available shopping opportunities in Downtown Westport, an inventory was conducted of all retail business establishments operating in the market study area (i.e., the area generally bound by Parker Harding Plaza, Jesup Road, Imperial Avenue, Myrtle Avenue, and Avery Place). As of August 2014, there were 119 retail businesses, including: 33 stores providing community-serving goods and services, 11 full-service restaurants, 53 apparel stores, 16 home furnishings and improvements stores, three specialty goods stores, and three other retailers (see Figure 8 and Figure 10). Apparel stores make up 45% of all retail business in Downtown. The 119 operating retail businesses in Downtown Westport occupy approximately 269,000 sq. ft. of building space.

The 53 apparel stores consist of the following quantities and subtypes of apparel stores: 19 women's clothing, 13 family clothing, 9 jewelry, 7 shoes, 5 other clothing stores, 1 men's clothing. The 33 community-serving retailers include: 10 limited-service restaurants, 10 hair salons/nail salons/spa, 5 cosmetics, beauty supply, perfume stores, 3 specialty food stores (meat, bakery, other), 2 optical stores, and one of each of the following categories: bakeries, laundry/dry cleaning, and nursery & garden center.

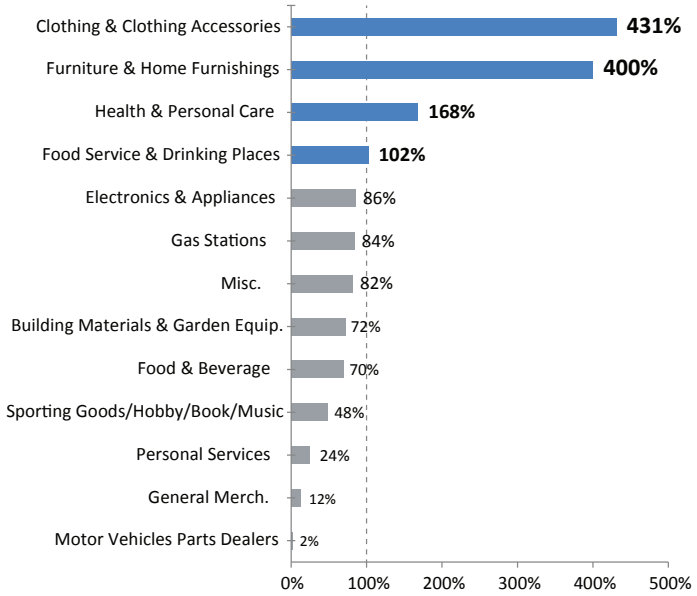
Figure 8: Piechart showing the composition of Downtown retailers by business category



Retail Demand

It is estimated that Westport retailers currently generate $531 million in annual sales, representing 112% of the total demand from Town residents. A demand figure greater than 100% indicates the retail offerings more than adequately meet retail demand from local residents (see Figure 9).

Figure 9: Retail supply as percentage of demand in Westport (2014)



Downtown has a large "oversupply" of certain types of stores with respect to demand from residents. The annual sales of Westport retailers exceeds the demand of Town residents in two major subcategories: clothing/clothing accessory stores and furniture/home furnishings stores, which represent 431% and 400% of the retail demand of Town residents, respectively. At the same time, retailers are drawing a significant amount of spending from out-of-town customers.

Key Points

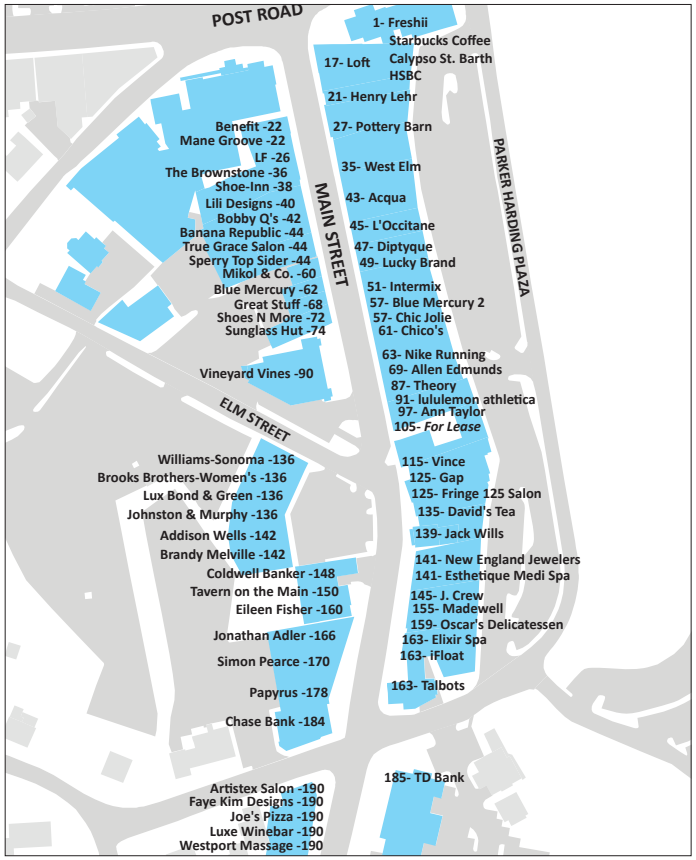
The market assessment revealed the following key points:

- Of the approximately 120 retailers in Downtown Westport, 50% are apparel-related (which includes jewelry stores).
- In some retail categories, especially clothing/clothing accessories and furniture/home furnishings, customer spending is driven by visitors from outside of Westport.
- Interviews of Downtown merchants revealed that many of their customers come from Fairfield, Wilton, Weston, and other nearby communities.
- There is latent demand from Town residents for sporting goods, specialty foods, hobby, toys and games, office supplies, stationery and gifts (see Figure 9). Based on the demographics and spending patterns of Town residents, this demand could, theoretically, translate into 78,000 sq. ft. of new retail space.
- While residents want additional community-serving offerings in Downtown, it is difficult for these types of businesses to generate adequate sales to afford the rents of Downtown properties.
- Downtown merchants share residents' desires to improve all-season appearance, programming, and parking.
- In comparing Westport's Downtown with other downtowns, in Westport a much higher percentage of retail expenditures of residents is staying within the Town as compared with residents of other towns.
- In terms of competition, Westport could be considered more of a retail attraction/destination than New Canaan, drawing customers from a wider radius. New Canaan is "leaking" significant amount of retail expenditures, which means that New Canaan residents are spending money outside of their town.
- Additional residential development is not necessary to support the existing clothing/clothing accessories, furniture, and home furnishing stores that are located Downtown. However, it might help diversify the retail mix and encourage more restaurants and eating/drinking establishments to open up in Downtown, which could help increase nighttime vitality.

The Market Assessment and the Master Plan

The character and operation of Downtown is impacted by the types of establishments present. The gradual change of its commercial base from community-serving enterprises to high-end retail stores has led to the popularity of Downtown as a destination for visitors from throughout the region. During the planning process, this information was shared with residents to provide a general economic picture of Downtown Westport. The market study assessment findings underscore the importance of devising strategies and recommendations in the Plan for solving traffic, parking, and pedestrian circulation challenges to accommodate Downtown customers. The information gathered in the market assessment also could be utilized to concentrate business recruitment efforts in certain under-served categories and to track changes over time in the commercial mix.

Figure 10: Businesses along Main Street in August 2014



F. PRIOR PLANS & STUDIES

The following are the summaries of the key findings and recommendations from prior plans and studies.

2001 Downtown Plan of Westport

The Town's Planning and Zoning Commission (P&Z) sponsored this study of Downtown Westport to address the Town's purchase of Baron's South along with the intent of some of the major institutions to relocate or expand in the area. Following an analysis of existing land use and transportation conditions in Downtown coupled with stakeholder interviews and a public workshop session, the following assets and needs were identified:

Assets included: small-scale, New England character, riverfront/water views, quality and variety of institutions, green spaces around Downtown (especially Jesup Green), historic character/architecture, land use mix, quality/strength of retail.

Needs included: improved additional parking/structured parking, increased utilization of riverfront/river, improved pedestrian connections within downtown area, improvements to signage/wayfinding, traffic calming (esp. at Church Lane/ Post Road), improvements to Jesup Green, and improvements to the Parker-Harding Lot.

The final product of the study, which was never formally adopted by P&Z, included a conceptual master plan illustrating proposed new sites for a number of the major institutions and community facilities that should be retained within Downtown. It also included recommendations concerning improvements and revisions to Winslow Park, Barons South and Jesup Green, and proposals for improvements for parking, road access and pedestrian connections.

2007 Concept Plan to Improve Downtown Parking Facilities

The goal of this feasibility study, sponsored by the Westport Downtown Merchants Association (WDMA), was to assess the existing conditions of several areas of the downtown and provide recommendations for several parking-related redevelopment improvements. It was the intent that the recommendations be implemented by a public/private partnership most likely through the State of CT's Municipal Improvement Project (MIP-824) process.

The scope of this study was focused on the preparation of a master plan for improvements to the existing Parker Harding Parking Plaza, Main Street business area and streetscape, and the existing Elm Street/Avery Place/Christ & Holy Trinity Church (CHTC) parking lots. It also included recommendations for accessibility to/ from parking lots, together with site amenities and sustainable design features.

Design recommendations included improved signs and gateways treatments, improved pedestrian connections, improved and expanded parking (with the development of a deck over the Elm, Avery and CHTC parking lots), expanded handicapped accessibility to/from parking lots, and the introduction of site amenities and sustainable design features. It also recommended metered parking to be considered for select areas in Downtown.

2007 Master Plan for Jesup Green and Baron's South

This plan, undertaken for the Town, evaluated the existing Baron's South and Jesup Green properties and Winslow Park, leading to the following recommendations:

- Housing was proposed for Baron's South as it would result in a less intensive development. It would be developed to accommodate the existing slopes and topography. It would also avoid clear-cutting of trees and result in fewer traffic concerns than more intensive developments.
- Jesup Green should be developed as a cultural arts area incorporating the work being completed at the Westport Library and Levitt Pavilion. The police and emergency services building should be relocated. Mixed use type development should be planned that connects to a river park and downtown.
- Imperial Avenue Lot was determined to have limitations for development. The intersection with Imperial Avenue is below the 100-year flood elevation.
- Winslow Park should not be considered for development, but rather maintained for a future municipal purpose.

2007 Plan of Conservation and Development

Connecticut municipalities are required to update their Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) every 10 years. Westport's 2007 POCD is structured around agreed-to principles that organize land use policy at the municipal level. Those principles were distilled to nine basic themes: preserve critical environmental areas; preserve open space and natural beauty; protect and manage residential

neighborhoods; create a range of housing opportunities and choices; maintain distinctive centers with a strong sense of place; provide a variety of transportation choices; address community facility needs; address infrastructure needs; and promote sustainable initiatives.

The overall goals of the plan for Downtown were to:

- Create a dynamic, attractive, centrally focused yet expansive downtown area with varied points of interest for community life.
- Encourage the creation and execution of an overall, comprehensive conceptual design and plan (i.e., the Downtown Westport Master Plan) that integrates and coordinates the extended physical elements already in the Center.

In terms of recommendations, the plan called for:

- Making the pedestrian the "lead player" in planning for the downtown.
- Establishing a "village district" to guide the design of buildings and sites.
- Encouraging evening and outdoor activities.
- Consider addition or conversion of 3rd floors for residential, restaurants, art galleries, etc. consistent with the scale and style of the area.
- Limiting the overall size of any single retail space.
- Encouraging the development of major community and cultural facilities.
- Developing a coordinated design policy for paving, planting, lighting, and signage for Westport Center, including the commercial districts along the west bank of the Saugatuck River.
- Conducting a study of traffic/parking for the entire downtown area.
- Enhancing the "natural" aesthetics of Downtown.

2010 Town Plan Implementation Committee (PIC) - Downtown Plan Subcommittee Recommendations

This included a proposal that envisioned a planned transformation of Downtown into a diverse, pedestrian-oriented community which contained mixed-use development on the Parker-Harding lot, rezoning to promote more apartments and small residential spaces, and the creation of public green spaces and a river walk.

The Downtown Plan Subcommittee of the PIC outlined broad recommendations that focused on the following areas:

- Creating a Westport Town Center.
- Riverfront Enhancements. Build on the unique visual aesthetics and physical assets of Westport, especially around improved access to the river.
- Parking and Pedestrians. Reconfigure Downtown parking and street parameters, promote some space turnover, and promote pedestrian circulation rather than favoring automobile traffic.
- Vitality and Nightlife. Encourage the development of restaurants, galleries, public events and activities that would expand the use of Downtown at those times.
- Aesthetics and Character. Preserve Downtown's special charm and small town scale.
- Agency of Change. Consider adopting a new zoning district or overlay zone in Downtown which is a "village district."

2012 Bicycle & Pedestrian Safety Corridors Study

This report examined pedestrian and bicycle safety deficiencies in the seven high priority corridors identified by South Western Regional Planning Agency (SWRPA) in the *South Western Region Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan* (as well as one additional corridor) and recommended well-established engineering countermeasures to address the issues identified. In Westport, the corridors analyzed were US 1 (Post Road) from Riverside Avenue to Compo Road; and US 1 (Post Road) from Maple Avenue to Bulkley Avenue.

Post Road from Riverside Avenue to Compo Road

- Redesign the traffic signal at the Riverside Avenue intersection to provide an exclusive pedestrian phase. A curb extension for the crosswalk over the north leg of US 1 combined with a smaller curb radius for the right turn from Riverside Avenue onto northbound US 1 would also improve safety conditions for pedestrians.
- Redesign the Main Street/Taylor Place/Church Lane intersection in the heart of Downtown to give higher priority to pedestrians.

- Install curb extensions at intersections in Downtown where there is adjacent on-street parking.
- Consider applying "sharrows" (i.e., markings that make motorists aware of bicyclists potentially traveling on the roadway) and bicycle signage in the Downtown portion of the corridor to improve safety conditions for cyclists.
- Improve pedestrian accommodations at signalized intersections, particularly at Riverside Avenue, Main Street/Church Lane, and Myrtle Ave/Imperial Ave.
- As a short-term improvement, work with property owners to add planter boxes, bollards, curb stops, or other markers to provide a greater level of pedestrian comfort by defining the space for pedestrians and guiding vehicles to correct driveway locations.

Post Road from Maple Avenue to Bulkley Avenue

- Eliminate areas of continuous driveway access and consolidate driveway access where possible reduce the number of conflict areas with pedestrians.
- To the extent possible given the existing access configuration, complete the pedestrian network by installing sidewalks where they are currently missing.
- Consider redesigning the intersection at Bulkley Avenue to make it more pedestrian-friendly.
- Conduct analysis to investigate whether this corridor, along with adjacent sections, can be reconfigured to provide two through lanes, two bike lanes, and a raised median (i.e., a "road diet").
- Develop an access management plan for this corridor.

2012 Westport Center Historic Resources Inventory

The Westport Historic District Commission (HDC) sponsored this survey to establish, maintain, and update an inventory of historic resources in Westport and to establish a context for evaluating these resources. Individual property owners can use the information to make informed decisions about their historic properties. The survey led to the following key recommendations:

- Establish a Village District.
- Expand the business center/historic district.
- Revise zoning regulations.
- Streamline the approvals process.
- Address design issues for historic building, streetscapes, and landscapes.
- Consider national historic registrations for specific sites (e.g. Imperial Avenue Historic District, Westport YMCA, etc.).

2014 Westport Village District Study

The Westport Historic District Commission completed a study that considers whether the establishment of a Village District under the Connecticut General Statutes is appropriate for some or all of Downtown Westport. The study recommends changes to the Town's zoning regulations that would create a Village District and also recommends design principles and standards that would be appropriate for new construction and substantial reconstruction within the Village District. The introduction of Village District zoning is designed to protect the existing historic buildings and development patterns (see Figure 11) while encouraging continued investment in the economic vitality of Downtown. It would also eliminate the need for several variances. Specific recommendations of the study include:

- Create an overlay district to establish design principles and standards and a design review process for certain actions within the new Village District. An overlay district is recommended for the following reasons:
  - There are seven existing zoning districts in the Village District study area. There are differences in allowable uses and dimensional standards among these districts.
  - An overlay would apply to all districts within the recommended Village District Boundary without changing the underlying zoning of each district.
  - The existing regulatory requirements, in particular, the standards for Floor Area Ratio (FAR), restrict the likelihood of significant change to the built environment in the Village District study area.
- Identify changes to existing zoning that would work together with the recommended Village District Overlay, to address some concerns about existing non-conforming dimensional requirements and the relevance to design standards and guidelines to certain types of alterations.

Figure 11: The Village District Study analyzed various design elements, including building elements, which are summarized in this montage.

- Provide design standards for existing building elements, site elements, the natural environment, and parking lots.
- Establish a final Village District boundary.

RBA coordinated its efforts with The Cecil Group, the consultant that is leading the Village District Study. Figure 12 highlights the study area boundary of the *Downtown Westport Master Plan* as it relates to the 2007 POCD and the recommended Village District boundary.

2014 Westport Bus Service Operations & Needs Study

This study, conducted by SWRPA (now called the Western CT Council of Governments - WestCOG), assessed operations and examined alternatives for expanded service for Westport bus services. Recommendations from this study included:

- Extend Westport Commuter Route service span (in terms of hours of operation).
- Introduce a daytime connection between the Saugatuck rail station and Downtown.
- Introduce, if previous changes are successful, a daytime Town circulator.
- Westport should provide funding to the Norwalk Transit District (NTD) to support marketing through additional staff or marketing consulting services.

The final draft of study can be downloaded from www.swrpa.org

Relationship of Prior Plans & Studies to the Downtown Westport Master Plan

The *Downtown Westport Master Plan* incorporates certain themes, concepts, and strategies that are represented in these prior plans and studies. It also introduces new ideas and strategies that have not been expressed in prior efforts. This Plan advances the prior efforts by recommending a definitive array of public improvement strategies, organizing them by priority, and providing a detailed framework for implementation. Furthermore, the strategies are reinforced by studies of the Downtown market and of traffic, transportation, and parking conditions. Some of the themes, concepts, and strategies produced in these prior plans that are continuing to be advanced in the Master Plan include:

- Improve signage and wayfinding.
- Improve pedestrian connections.
- Introduce traffic calming treatments.
- Improve Jesup Green and Parker Harding Plaza.
- Improve and expand parking.
- Establish design guidelines.
- Revise zoning regulations.
- Expand transit services and amenities.
- Add bicycle facilities to Downtown.

Figure 12: Aerial photograph of Downtown and environs overlaid with the boundaries of various planning efforts involving Downtown

G. PUBLIC OUTREACH

The Downtown Steering Committee (DSC) launched the YOUR DOWNTOWN campaign to energize residents to take part in the planning process. The campaign involved various ways of reaching out to people, including Web, e-mail, social media, traditional press, and posters. Many Westport civic and recreational organizations helped promote the planning process and its events to their constituencies, which was invaluable for informing residents about key planning events. The YOUR DOWNTOWN campaign also integrated work undertaken by other groups within Westport, specifically the *Merchant's Survey* by the WDMA and the *Downtown Needs Study* by the Youth Commission. The Town of Westport posted video recordings of several key events to its Website. The following summarizes the core elements of the YOUR DOWNTOWN campaign:

Downtown Steering Committee

The planning process was led by the First Selectman's office and committee (the DSC) comprised of neighborhood residents, members of the Town's professional staff, elected officials, and community-based organizations. The precursor of the DSC was the Downtown 2020 Committee.

Downtown Westport Master Plan Website

The project website, hosted at www.downtownwestportct.com, went live in April 2014 and has kept Westporters abreast of project events and provided access to drawings, documents, meeting summaries, videos, and real-time reports from the September Charrette events (see Figure 13). The Ideas page on the website captured residents ideas and observations about Downtown Westport. Residents were also able to comment on ideas posted by others.

Downtown Survey for Residents

The online survey was open from mid-May to mid-July 2014. More than 3,100 residents responded to the survey, which represents 17% of the adult population of Westport. The high participation rate demonstrates the importance of Downtown in the lives of residents and overall civic interest. The WDMA and the Youth

Figure 13: The Downtown Westport Master Plan website

Figure 14: The first Downtown Visioning Workshop, held at Bedford Middle School


DOWNTOWN Westport Master Plan

TOWN OF WESTPORT, CONNECTICUT

E-Update #9: Sept 18, 2014

Your Downtown Charrette

1. Get Ready for the Your Downtown Charrette! Stay Updated on Twitter.

The Your Downtown Charrette is just days away! Join your neighbors, the Downtown Steering Committee, and the consultant team during the weekend of September 20-21, 2014. Visit the Charrette page of the Downtown Westport Master Plan Website for more information, including a Your Downtown Charrette FAQ and detailed schedule of events and activities.

Follow the Downtown Westport Master Plan on Twitter to receive updates about the Your Downtown Charrette before and during the events. If you do not use Twitter, we will also post updates on the Website's Updates page.

2. Picture This!

Figure 15: An example of an "E-Update" sent to thousands of Westporters to keep them updated on the planning process

Figure 16: The second Downtown Visioning Workshop, held at the Westport Library

Commission also provided their own independently-conducted surveys. The DMA interviewed 134 merchant members about their customers and their employees' commuting and parking practices, while gauging interest in transportation alternatives. The Westport Youth Commission surveyed more than 150 high school students about their aspirations for Downtown.

The Westport Library created an exhibit showing residents' opinions about Downtown from the survey and visioning workshops. Titled "Thinking about Westport's Future Downtown," the exhibit was located in the first-floor Riverwalk Hallway and on the staircase leading up to the main floor. The panels featured residents' responses to open-ended parts of questions, which were summarized and illustrated through "word clouds," which highlight the most frequently used words expressed by residents about Downtown.

While the survey was not intended to be "scientific," the results can be considered statistically significant. Since the adult population of Westport, according to the 2010 U.S. Census, is 19,000, the sample size needed to gauge statistical validity is 2,312 responses. The YOUR DOWNTOWN Survey received 3,104 responses by adult residents.

The YOUR DOWNTOWN Survey Results Guide is available on the project website and in Appendix B.

Ongoing Communications: E-News & Social Media

The survey asked residents to provide their e-mail addresses if they would like to receive updates about the planning process. The list grew to more than 1,000 residents. E-newsletters were sent to the distribution list in advance of key planning events and to draw attention to website updates and other important news in Downtown (see Figure 15). Facebook and Twitter were also utilized to capture people who use social media.

From the YOUR DOWNTOWN Survey Results Guide

Purpose

- Provide an easy means for reaching as many Westport residents as possible.
- Understand how residents use Downtown.
- Gauge what residents think are the most important values, priorities, and actions for the future of Downtown.
- Provide a framework, based on residents' responses, for making future decisions within the Downtown Westport Master Plan process.

2

Key Points from the Results

- Downtown is often an important part of Westport residents' day-to-day lives.
- Residents are very invested in the future of Downtown.
- Maintaining the "small town" character of Downtown is a core value that residents want the future of Downtown to embody.
- Westport residents recognize a critical opportunity to engage with the riverfront and the river as part of Downtown life.

30

Key Points from the Results

- Walkability, traffic congestion, and parking problems are interrelated and critical to address for improving Downtown.

From the Downtown Visioning Workshop Results Presentation

From the Westport Youth Commission Survey Results Presentation

Westport Youth Commission

Downtown Development Committee

What Are We Advocating For?

- Movie Theater
- Late Night Café
- Cheaper Teen-Friendly Food
- Food Trucks
- Community Garden
- Streetlights, Music, & Recycling Bins
- Student ID Discounts

From the DMA Survey Results Presentation

July 21 2014

1600

= number of employees (est)

actual from 91 surveys = 1143

"Shuttle a good idea but needs to go much later than 6:17 as employees leave 7-9:00"

"More parking for employees"

"we have to park in the lot which is only two hours limited and have to move all the time"

"Solve the parking issue!!!"

"More Parking!"

"No ticketing for Westport employees!"

Parking

"Build a parking garage!"

"I have to get here at 9:15 to get parking."

"In Winter Baldwin lot is very dark"

"Our clients can spend two hours in the store then get a $25 ticket."

"Tough for a small store/emp can't leave/close store to move car. Get tickets."

I look for yellow spots in Baldwin, but never available after 10:00"

"Could there be a sticker system for employees?"

"This town is not employee friendly;
a)the commute
b)the parking
c) the restaurants."

"need more nightlife, restaurants, cinema"

"Make Main St. a pedestrian fare"

Thoughts

...Innovation; Collaboration; Openness to create something from nothing"

"Add cool stores that attract a younger clientele."

Downtown Visioning Workshops

In June 2014, the Town conducted two highly visual and interactive workshops. The exercises were designed to encourage residents to discuss topics and share opinions with each other. Participants were asked to describe preferences and choices about what is appropriate for Downtown, what might make it more successful and vibrant, and how it can better serve residents of all ages. The interactive part of the workshop, "Downtown 101: Streets, Buildings, Places" guided participants through a roundtable exercise during which they worked with images of various possibilities for Downtown and then rated their importance or appropriateness for the future.

Approximately 125 residents participated in the June 7 Downtown Visioning Workshop. Approximately 60 residents participated in Downtown Visioning "x2" Workshop on June 30 at the Westport Library (see Figure 16 on page 17).

A summary presentation of the workshop results is available on the project website and in Appendix C.

YOUR DOWNTOWN Charrette

The YOUR DOWNTOWN Charrette took place on Saturday and Sunday, September 20-21, 2014 at Town Hall. A team of planners, engineers, architects, landscape architects, and economists worked with residents and other stakeholders to analyze ideas, sketch concepts, and to start considering the prioritization of specific projects. The charrette consisted of the following series of activities, which were designed to provide participants with opportunities to share observations, to document possibilities, and test various ideas and alternatives.

On the Web

The publications excerpted on this page are also available from the "Products" section of the website, along with the Downtown Westport Market Assessment, minutes of the DSC meetings, and links to streaming video of various charrette events.

www.downtownwestportct.com

- **Walking Tour.** The first activity of the charrette was a guided walking tour of Downtown (see Figure 17 on page 20). Three groups, each led by members of the design team and the Downtown Steering Committee, visited 16 locations to share observations and ideas. Tour participants observed the varied character of streets and buildings, the range of the retail offerings, and the walking connections between buildings. They discussed ways to make the river and the riverfront more prominent and accessible.
- **"Picture This" Open Studio Exhibit** was an evolving exhibit. Participants on the walking tour e-mailed images with captions back to Town Hall for printing and affixing to the exhibit.
- **"Make Your Mark" Open Studio Exhibit** (see Figure 18 on page 20) consisted of large maps of Downtown Westport, post-it notes, and pens and markers. Participants were asked to "make their mark" by writing comments or ideas on post-it notes and placing them on the map at the appropriate location.
- **Open Studio Workstation: Downtown Parking Clinic** started with a detailed look at the Downtown parking experience and an analysis of parking utilization, which initiated a lively discussion managing parking supply and spreading out peak demand (see Figure 19 on page 21). Participants developed specific suggestions to "reduce, reuse, and recycle" Downtown's 1,889 parking spaces and evaluated possibilities for providing additional spaces.
- **Open Studio Workstation: Anything Downtown** was a weekend-long discussion on the future of Downtown. Participants shared details about upcoming developments, voiced concerns, mapped areas of concern and opportunity, and ranked priorities among prospective public investments.
- **Open Studio Workstation: Streets, Parks, and Open Spaces** focused on Downtown streets and public spaces. Sketches documented the changing profile of the riverfront, possibilities for Main Street, outdoor dining, "shared streets," and Jesup Green.
- **Saturday Afternoon Panel Discussion** presented an overview of the first day's activities, followed by a facilitated panel discussion with experts from various disciplines and the Town's Director of Planning & Zoning.

- **Sunday Closing Presentation** summarized the weekend's proceedings showing a safer walking environment, a more active riverfront, new opportunities for outdoor dining, and several logical strategies aimed at improving parking. An overview summarizing possible phasing and funding scenarios was followed by discussion and comments from the audience.
- **Next Steps Discussions** involved reconciling funding, staging, and responsibilities for implementation of specific projects, including the level of investment and maintenance required. The consultants then provided the draft results to the Downtown Steering Committee.

YOUR DOWNTOWN Open House

More than 130 people stopped by the YOUR DOWNTOWN Open House on February 10, 2015 in the Library's McManus Room. The Open House was designed for people to drop in at any point during a four-hour period to view a series of exhibits describing key projects that are part of the draft *Downtown Westport Master Plan*. Professionals from RBA and members of the DSC were on hand to answer questions about the exhibits and the draft *Downtown Westport Master Plan*. At two points during the Open House, RBA staff presented a summary of the draft Plan and then took questions and comments from residents and stakeholders in attendance. Many of the public comments focused on the need to further ensure adequate supply and access to parking and to examine assumptions about how far people are willing to walk from a parking space (for example, at the Imperial Avenue Lot) to their destinations. Several people spoke in support of a play area for children on Jesup Green and presented a petition to the Town signed by several hundred residents in support of this idea.

To read public comments from the Open House in greater detail, see Appendix E.

Public Comments on Draft Plan

A draft of the *Downtown Westport Master Plan* was posted on the website for residents and other stakeholders to read and provide comments. The nearly twenty residents who provided comments were generally supportive of the plan; some were enthusiastic. Several people commented on the advantages or disadvantages of specific projects and provided additional ideas on projects that excited them.

To read public comments in greater detail, see Appendix E.

Figure 17: The charrette began with a walking tour of Downtown, starting at Town Hall

Figure 18: The "Make Your Mark" Open Studio Exhibit

Figure 19: The Downtown Parking Clinic

Figure 20: The YOUR DOWNTOWN Open House

from the "Ideas" Page of the Downtown Westport Master Plan Website

"I like how Church Lane has been developed with the careful preservation of buildings in mind. I like the idea of the new Levitt Pavilion, and I hope that the present 'mall' style of shops on Main Street will not overcome and swallow up the sense of a smaller town with its own unique offerings. The Saugatuck River is our best asset. Here is my dream: I would like to see a true bike path that to a greater extent would follow the river, maybe beginning on Main and Canal Streets - insulated from the roadway by a swath of the natural woodlands and marshes ... perhaps following the river on either the Riverside Avenue or Imperial Avenue sides of the river and continuing at least to the Village of Saugatuck, possibly to Longshore Drive via the shoreline. Safety, beauty and a path open to all–that is my vision!"

H. DOWNTOWN VALUES

Through the public outreach process, which culminated in the YOUR DOWNTOWN Charrette, several shared values regarding Downtown became clear.

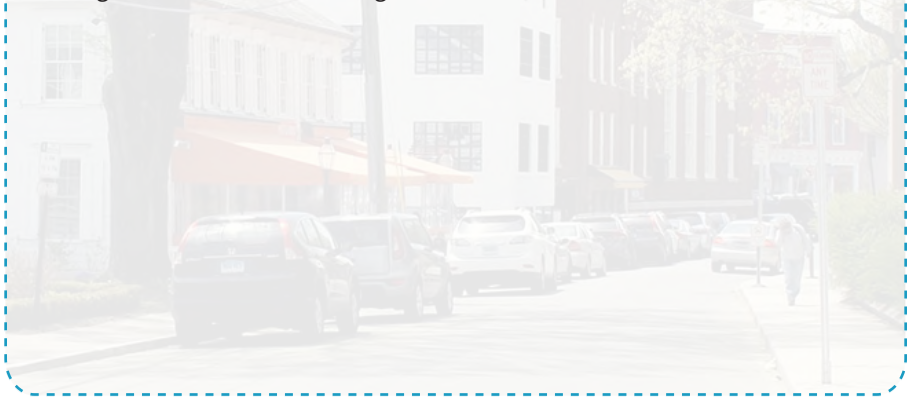
❶ Maintain a "Small Town" Character

The Downtown Survey for Residents included the question: "What actions are the most important to consider for the future of Downtown?" Ranked most important among all the options was "**maintain the 'small town' character of Downtown**." Cross tabulations revealed that this sentiment was consistent among different age groups and lengths of residence in Westport.

While it's not necessary to come up with a precise definition of "small town," most people would agree that scale is a critical attribute. Small towns are compact, walkable from end-to-end with calm, safe streets, comfortable sidewalks, green and furnished streetscapes, and low-rise buildings with handsome, interesting, and/or historic architecture.

The character of economic activity is another attribute of a small town. While most small towns nowadays have several recognizable brand-name enterprises, the majority of them consist of small- and locally-owned stores, restaurants, and professional service providers.

While Downtown Westport is a compact place, it is "filling in" from within, testing the limits of this New England small town Downtown.



❷ A Downtown for Westporters

Downtown Westport draws people from throughout the region, yet, for residents, it is their one-and-only Downtown. There is a heightened sense of competition between Downtown commercial interests and residents. The transition of Main Street from a traditional community-serving center to a high-end shopping destination is generally not what residents envision for Downtown. While residents might take advantage of the consumer and dining offerings of their Downtown, they report that the existing business mix does not satisfy their more day-to-day needs.

Younger residents desire more activities and gathering places, with teenagers seeking more activities during afternoon and evening hours—and at affordable price points.

> Reconnect with the River and the Outdoor Environment

Residents sense that the public realm can be reclaimed. Open spaces and surface parking areas can be reconfigured to be more attractive and prominent and with better views of and access to the Saugatuck River. Residents also look forward to more engagement with the outdoor environment through sidewalk cafés, al fresco dining and family-friendly outdoor activities.

> A Downtown for Pedestrians

Residents also hope to take back Downtown's streets—from cars. The Town needs to tame Downtown's streets and crossings to be safer for pedestrians—and bicyclists, to the extent possible. Better pedestrian connections from residential areas to Downtown, safer crossings, and bicycle facilities also might reduce traffic congestion and improve parking.

❸ Fiscally- and Environmentally-Responsible Implementation

Among the Town, DSC, and many residents, there is agreement that recommended public improvement projects and programmatic initiatives should be implemented in a fiscally responsible manner—in phases that minimize disruption to Downtown operations and that are cost-effective. Pinpointed investments in certain areas might impact the scale of future investments needed. The values of improved and expanded open spaces and walkability intrinsically have the potential to improve the environment. In addition, environmental sustainability factors should be considered in the implementation of projects and initiatives.

This Plan provides implementation guidance, including recommendations for staging and financing public investments over the next 5+ years and suggestions for partnerships for funding and maintaining those investments.

I. PLANNING DIRECTIVES

Six planning directives were derived from the stakeholder and public outreach process. Each directive corresponds to a diagram on this page.

A Reclaim and enhance riverfront access, views, and walkways.

B Improve streetscape and landscape attractiveness.

C Enhance and activate public open spaces.

D Enhance pedestrian connections, walkways, and bike paths.

E Enhance connections between key downtown destinations.

F Improve traffic flow and parking management.

PLACES
See Section 2A

MOBILITY
See Section 2B

PARKING
See Section 2C

J. CHANGE HAPPENS

Beginning in 2015, and continuing over the next several years, parts of Downtown will be "under construction." The noise, dust, and changes in the normal traffic flow might be disruptive at times. The work to repurpose the former YMCA and expand the Westport Library will be taking place at the center of the Downtown experience for Westport residents and visitors. The change that these two projects will bring to Downtown was an important catalyst for this Plan. The Town, together with its residents, needed to look ahead to understand, plan, prioritize and "right-size" impacts and future changes on the horizon.

During the planning process, the Town began implementing several Downtown beautification and management initiatives, including:

- **Main Street Improvements**. A CT State Main Street Investment Fund grant will result in a refreshed Main Street with brick sidewalks, new granite curbs, columnar street trees, and decorative light poles with banners and hanging flower baskets. Future improvements should include benches, trash and recycling receptacles, and bicycle racks.
- **Parking Management**. Parking regulations were recently revised along Main Street and in Parker Harding Plaza to allow 2-hour parking (an increase from 1-hour). This change was evaluated for three months and through the peak winter holiday shopping season. The change was prompted by the Downtown Merchants Association, which had observed that a 1-hour limit was too short for customers to complete their time in Downtown. The Town is working with CTDOT to expand this change to parking along Post Road.

Throughout the planning process, Westporters emphasized that future changes should "complete" rather than "grow" the downtown. Change will be phased-in over time as resources become available and as opportunities present themselves to implement projects in complementary ways.

photo by Tony Masiello via Flickr (Creative Commons BY-NC-ND 2.0)

2. YOUR DOWNTOWN: THE DOWNTOWN PLAN

INTRODUCTION

This section describes the core recommendations of the *Downtown Westport Master Plan*. They are organized into one of four categories:

- **PLACES**. Projects that improve existing public spaces or create new public spaces in Downtown.
- **MOBILITY**. Projects that enhance the circulation and safety of pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists throughout Downtown.
- **PARKING**. Projects that improve management, access to, and the supply of parking in Downtown.
- **WATER**. Strategies to reduce stormwater runoff and flood hazards. Projects within the three categories above can incorporate techniques, technologies, and materials that contribute to the goals of this category.

Within each of these categories, recommendations are organized in the approximate sequence in which they should be implemented.

Implementing Projects & Possibilities in Phases

The *Downtown Westport Master Plan* brings detailed technical information to the big-picture consideration of design, traffic, parking, infrastructure and cost implications of public realm improvements and future development. The planning process identified shared values and priorities that should guide decisions about future Downtown capital projects and private development. The planning horizon reaches farther out into the future than the next several budget cycles, and there are limits to municipal resources. Therefore, the Plan distinguishes short-term actions from actions that fulfill agreed-upon priorities, but that are better implemented over a longer time frame. Some actions present the opportunity to share costs of needed infrastructure improvements with private initiatives or public entities.

The implementation timeline arranges proposed projects and possibilities into three temporal categories: **Short-Term**, **Mid-Term**, and **Long-Term**.

- **SHORT-TERM**. The Plan recommends changes and improvements to be initiated **within the next 2 years**. Many of these projects involve improving mobility and safety in Downtown for all modes of transportation. The impact of completed short-term projects should be carefully observed to determine if patterns of pedestrian and vehicular movement change to such a degree that they alter the nature, feasibility, sequence, or rationale of projects that start in subsequent stages.
- **MID-TERM**. Mid-term projects should be initiated **within the next 2 to 5 years**. This stage includes several key projects to improve and expand open spaces in Downtown, such as the redesign of Jesup Green. It also includes several additional capital-intensive projects to improve mobility and parking in Downtown, such as the design of a new street and bridge that would create a more direct connection for motorists and pedestrians to the Imperial Avenue Lot.
- **LONG-TERM**. The Plan presents several longer-term possibilities, some of which are capital-intensive, that were proposed and evaluated during the planning process. These longer-term possibilities, such as the creation of a Downtown Landing, should be considered, if the circumstances justify, **at least 5 years from now**.

The sequence of projects presented in this Plan is not definitive; it can be arranged and rearranged over time. It is also important to note that some of the projects recommended are interrelated; one must be implemented in order for the another one to be initiated (see the List of Strategies & Recommendations in the Executive Summary).

The next page will explain how to navigate the strategies and recommendations in this Plan.

THE ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

An illustrative plan is a graphical depiction of a comprehensive plan, in part or fully implemented, for the future physical environment of a place. Figure 21 is the illustrative plan representation for the *Downtown Westport Master Plan*.

Figure 21: The Illustrative Plan of the Downtown Westport Master Plan

Illustrative Plan Sections

The illustrative plan is divided into 10 sections, each of which visually depicts a specific project or series of projects. In the following pages, each section is enlarged to show more visual and written details than what is shown on the Illustrative Plan. Each section is assigned a number (see Figure 22).

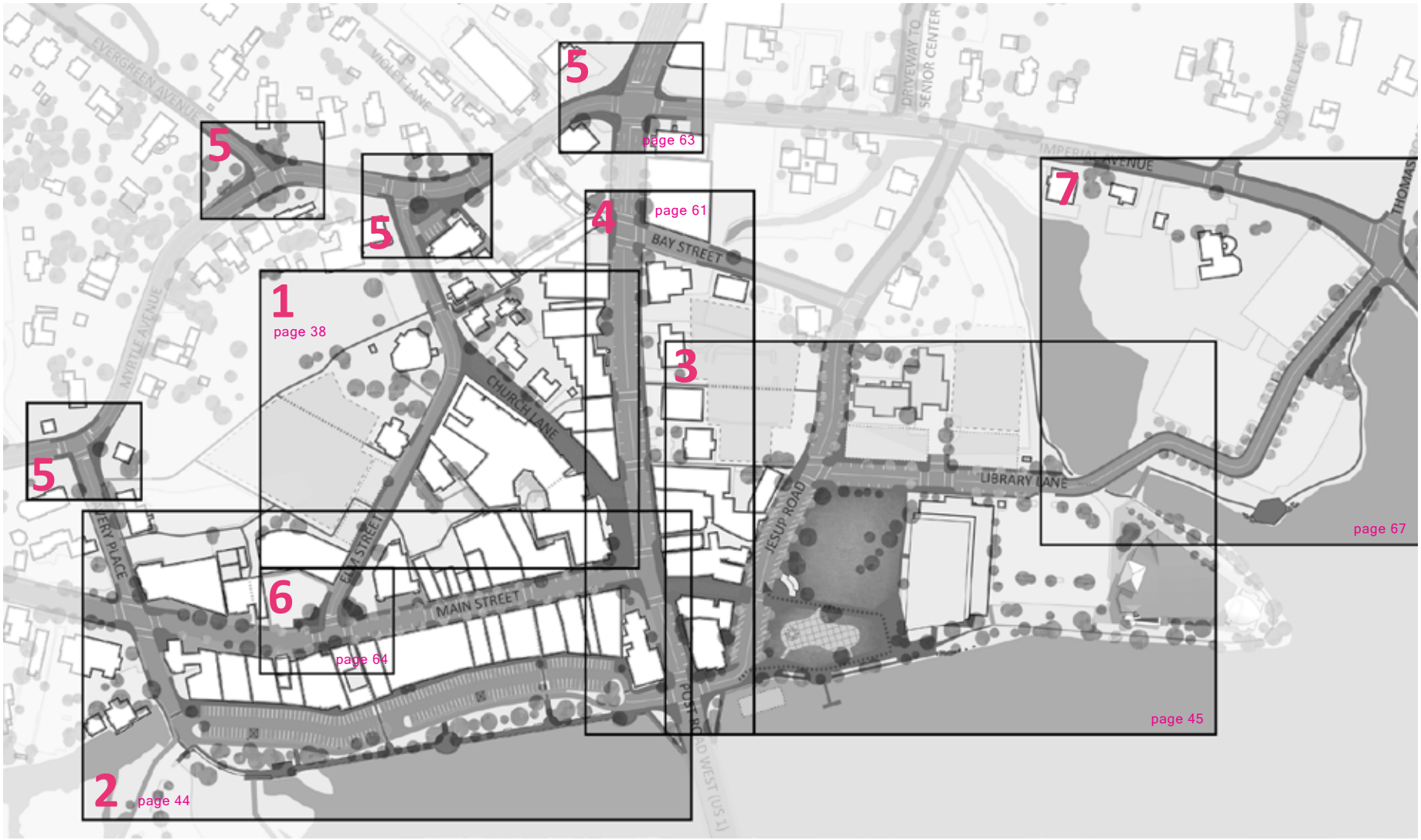


Figure 22: Sections of the Illustrative Plan. Each number corresponds to a more detailed plan for a specific section of the Illustrative Plan.

NAVIGATING THE STRATEGIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

The strategies and recommendations of this Plan are organized into four principal categories. The flowchart illustrates how these sections are organized. Renderings and photo simulations accompany some of the strategies and recommendations. These are intended only to serve as initial concepts.

START HERE

Category

PLACES
MOBILITY
PARKING
WATER

Subsections

Existing Conditions & Analysis
Key Goals & Objectives
Strategies & Recommendations → *Project Type*

Places
Mobility
PK Parking
Water

Project Code

ex.
P3, M4

Illustrative Plan Section Number

A. PLACES: STREETSCAPES & PUBLIC SPACES

Existing Conditions & Analysis

Streetscapes

Westport's open space network consists of streetscapes, parks, plazas, trails, and sidewalks. These are all places through which people move or sit and enjoy freely. Streetscapes are at the interface of the public and private realm, where the facades of buildings meet public sidewalks along streets such as Main Street. This no-setback condition creates a sense of enclosure that makes for a walkable environment. There are places along Main Street, such as in front of Tavern on Main, where buildings are set back from the sidewalk line (Figure 23), which creates interesting interstitial spaces. Along Post Road, many buildings are set much farther back, which creates a chasm between the front doors and public sidewalks, thus creating a less pedestrian-friendly environment.

There should be a continuous network of sidewalks that are sufficiently wide and intact so people can walk safely. The main issues with some of Downtown's streetscapes are sidewalks that are narrow or in poor condition and the lack of sidewalks along some streets. Sidewalks generally end at the point where commercial land uses transition into residential uses. Sidewalks also are missing in critical locations. For example, there are no sidewalks along the south side of Elm Street—right in the heart of Downtown—nor are there any sidewalks on the east side of Main Street north of Avery Place and along Evergreen Avenue. Sidewalks are intermittent on Myrtle Avenue. South of Post Road, sidewalks are missing along sections of Jesup Road and Bay Street.

The Town is currently investing in streetscape improvements along Main Street that will feature pavers, granite curbing, and trees. The Town is also installing new pedestrian-scale streetlights along Main Street to improve the illumination of sidewalks. Until now, highway-style cobra-headed lights, which are intended to light the roadway, were the only source of light—except for light that spills onto the sidewalks from building-mounted fixtures and through windows.

The types of materials and colors used on streetscapes, such as the red brick on Main Street's sidewalks, are important because they contribute to Downtown's sense of place. Materials and colors should generally be consistent and carried over into new streetscape investments, although there can be variation to create certain effects and impressions. A more detailed discussion of material and colors is included in Chapter 4. Downtown Design Guidance.

Goals & Objectives

- ★ **Reconnect Downtown** by improving connections within Downtown and between Downtown and surrounding neighborhoods.
- ★ **Reveal and Reconnect with the River** by making the river and riverfront more prominent, accessible, and more a part of Downtown life.

Figure 23: A section of Main Street where buildings are set back from the sidewalk, creating more open space

Public Spaces

Downtown's primary public open spaces—Parker Harding Plaza, the Library and Levitt Pavilion riverwalks, and Jesup Green—are geared toward views of the Saugatuck River. They are generally narrow due to the presence of parking areas and driveways, which poses a barrier to walkers. Residents recognize that these open spaces and adjacent parking areas/driveways can be redesigned to create larger and more accessible open spaces along the river.

Parker Harding Plaza—named after Emerson Parker, chairman of the Saugatuck River Reclamation Committee and former member of the Board of Selectmen, and Evan Harding, the landscape architect who designed the project—was developed

in the 1950s at the urging of property owners to provide much needed parking for Downtown Westport. Fill from the construction of I-95 was used to expand the land behind the buildings along Main Street. Today, Parker Harding Plaza is still an essential parking resource for Downtown patrons, accommodating up to 215 cars. The edge of the plaza is a narrow open space comprised of a tree-lined esplanade. At two locations, the plaza's bulkhead extends farther into the river, which creates space for seating areas and landscape treatments.

Jesup Green is Westport's town green, a type of public space characteristic of many traditional New England towns. However, Jesup Green did not exist until the 1940s, when the Town acquired several acres of land near Westport's old Town Hall that originally belonged to Ebenezer Jesup. The Westport Library and Taylor Municipal Parking Lot were constructed several decades later on this property. Today, Jesup Green is a passive open space with an expansive, sloping lawn occupied by several large trees, a flag pole, and a sculpture. The Taylor Municipal Parking Lot separates the lawn from the riverfront walkway.

The riverwalk that starts at Parker Harding Plaza is part of a continuous riverfront walkway that runs alongside Jesup Green and past the Library and its outdoor seating area and garden. The reconstruction of the Levitt Pavilion included the extension of this riverwalk all the way around the "peninsula," which was constructed on a former landfill. The walkway ends at a pedestrian bridge that connects to the Imperial Avenue Lot.

Other Spaces

Part of Downtown's charm are the many "nooks and crannies" and passageways within and between buildings that, taken together, create an enjoyable experience of walking along the street. Mid-block along Main Street, a pedestrian passageway connects Parker Harding Plaza and Main Street. A recently-installed light and art project has improved the appearance and comfort of walking through this passageway (see Figure 25 on page 33). Along the east side of Main Street between the buildings that contain Vineyard Vines and Sunglass Hut is another pedestrian alley, which connects Main Street to the parking lot along the south side of Elm Street. A third, more narrow pedestrian passageway is located between two buildings along Post Road that connects to Church Lane. None of these pedestrian passages has any signs indicating these short-cuts.

Figure 24: The riverfront walkway along the edge of Parker Harding Plaza

from the "Ideas" Page of the Downtown Westport Master Plan Website

"We've lived here for over 15 years and, until last weekend, we never walked over to the west side of the Saugatuck River. Impressed by the park-like setting and eager to support a pedestrian walkway away from the Post Road, I suggest looking into Shelburne Falls, MA for inspiration. Years ago, this depressed former artist community created a walking Bridge of Flowers that not only attracts people from all over to stroll, but also has encouraged small cafés and galleries on both sides of the bridge. I also suggest supporting the artist/small business community of Westport and CT by maybe allowing small permanent kiosks (think of Grand Central's setup in December but not as many and year round!) focusing on hand made by CT artists including not only paintings and sculpture, but also jewelry, fiber, clay and wood artist. This would encourage a totally different setting and vibe to the west side of the river that would contrast and hopefully compliment the 'mall like' feeling of Main Street giving people reason to shop and stroll on both sides."

Streets

While the street network in Downtown is comprised of only a handful of relatively narrow streets (see Section B – Mobility: Traffic & Circulation for more detail), key Downtown destinations (e.g. Library, Town Hall, Main Street shops/restaurants, Parker Harding Plaza) are well-connected and can be readily-accessed from outside Downtown. The exception is the area located south of Jesup Road, which contains no streets. This area is comprised primarily of the parking lots of the Library and Police Station, and, of course, the Imperial Avenue Lot.

Figure 25: Images of the various nooks and passageways along Main Street, including one connecting Post Road and Church Lane (bottom right)

P1: Implement Planned Main Street Streetscape Improvements

The Town will be implementing streetscape improvements on Main Street between Post Road and Elm Street (see Figure 26). In addition, as part of the Bedford Square project, streetscape improvements will be implemented on Church Lane between Elm Street and Post Road and on the north side of Post Road between Church Lane and Main Street (see Figure 27). Both of these streetscape projects should utilize the same materials and furnishings. Examples of materials and furnishings are provided in Chapter 4. Downtown Design Guidance.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Figure 26: Existing streetscape elements on Main St

P2: Improve & Complete the Sidewalk Network

This project involves creating a complete Downtown sidewalk network by improving existing sidewalks where they are inadequate or need repair and constructing sidewalks where they do not exist (see Figure 28). Beyond the Downtown core, some sidewalks should be extended to connect to and facilitate safe pedestrian access to nearby residential neighborhoods. By creating these connections, residents living close to Downtown can choose to walk safely to Downtown instead of driving. Improving and completing the sidewalk network also will require creating proper corners with ADA compliant-curb ramps that lead directly into crosswalks. Figure 29 shows a completed pedestrian sidewalk network.

Figure 27: Church Lane lacks streetscape amenities, but the north side will see improvements when the Bedford Square Project is completed

Figure 28: A mother and child walk on top of the mulch-covered berm along Elm Street

Figure 29: This illustration highlights the future pedestrian network of sidewalks, shared streets, passageways, and crossing enhancements

P3: Redesign Church Lane into a "Shared Street"

P13: Redesign Taylor Place into a "Shared Street"

SEE ILLUS. PLAN SECTIONS 1 page 38 3 page 45

Also called "shared space," a shared street is an approach to designing streets that minimizes demarcations between vehicle traffic and pedestrians, often by removing features such as curbs, road surface markings, traffic signs, and regulations. Shared streets are typically designed on narrower streets in town and city centers. One of the main purposes of creating a shared street is to create flexible spaces that pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles can use together safely. Shared streets can be regulated to allow or prohibit certain kinds of traffic at specific times. They can be programmed temporarily to host community events such as a farmers market or an arts festival or to allow restaurants to place tables and chairs outside during certain hours.

Typical Design Details of Shared Streets

On a typical street, pedestrians and vehicles are separated, with pedestrians restricted to traveling on sidewalks and vehicles traveling on the roadway, which is separated from sidewalks by elevated curbs, at a much faster speed. Curbs demarcate the separation between pedestrian and vehicular space. On shared streets, such formal separation typically does not exist; the street is on one consistent plane. The vehicular speed limit is lowered to a slow speed. The redesign can take many forms and the cost to implement can vary depending on how much of the street is reconstructed, the type of materials selected, and the extent to which drainage and other utilities are affected. On-street parking can be delineated by pavement treatments and/or placement of objects such as trees, bollards and/or blocks of stone. Figure 32 on page 37 shows several examples of shared streets from the United States and Europe.

Shared Streets in Downtown Westport

Shared streets would greatly enhance the experience of walking through Downtown Westport and offer opportunities for more engagement with the outdoors, whether through strolling, dining, or special events. The two projects featured on these pages involve the redesign of Church Street and Taylor Place into shared streets (see Figure 30 and Figure 31). The relatively narrow widths, low traffic volumes, and slower traffic speeds of these streets make them well-suited for conversion into shared streets—while also providing parking and an adequate level of service within the context of the broader roadway network. It is important to note that even if Taylor Place were completely closed to traffic, re-routed traffic volumes would not cause any adverse operations along the alternate routes and intersections. It could, actually, result in improved capacity and operations along Post Road. The signal phasing would be converted from a three-phase to a two-phase signal, with a pedestrian-actuated phase to allow crossing of Post Road.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Figure 30: Church Lane

Figure 31: Taylor Place

EXAMPLES OF SHARED STREETS

Cambridge, MA

Batavia, IL

Brighton, England

Madrid, Spain

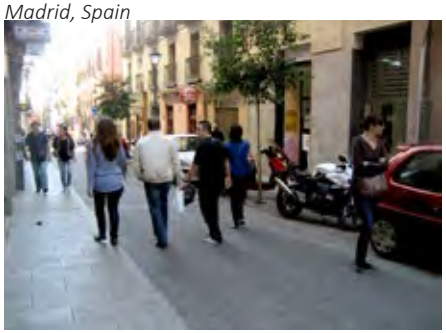


Figure 32: Examples of "shared streets"

PHOTO SIMULATION

Figure 33: This photo simulation depicts a concept for redesigning Church Lane as a shared street

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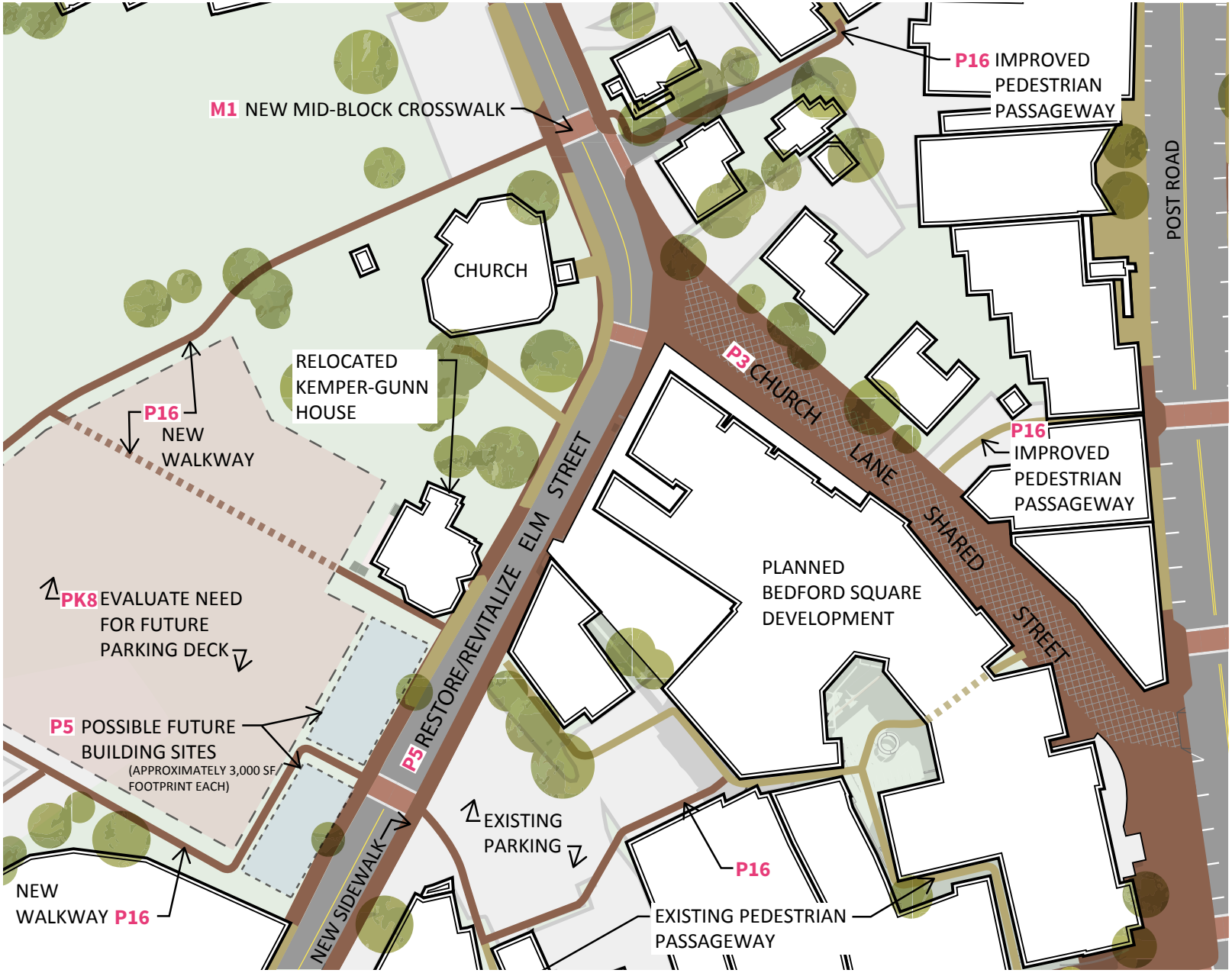


Figure 34: Illustrative Plan Section #1

P4: Support Improvements to Toquet Hall

Toquet Hall is an important destination for teens in Downtown, where they can initiate and participate in social, cultural, recreational, and educational activities. Providing and expanding youth programs in Downtown was one of the aspirations expressed by residents during the study. The Town should support the non-profit Toquet Hall Teen Center and possibly provide assistance for renovating or improving the facility (see Figure 35). For example, the facility needs soundproofing because several businesses are housed in the building and teens are often involved in music programs. This action would expand the possible range of hours of activities during which teens can participate.

P5: Restore and Revitalize Elm Street

Until the late 1960s, houses on large lots lined both sides of Elm Street from Main Street to the church on Church Lane (see Figure 6 in Chapter 1. Starting Points). The Town acquired properties from 13 separate property owners and demolished several houses to make way for what would be called the Elm Street Parking Plaza (now known as the Baldwin Lot). As a result, most of the north side is lined with driveways and parking lots that serve Downtown visitors and employees (see Figure 36). While this is a critical parking resource, the current form of Elm Street presents a gap in this part of Downtown. The Kemper-Gunn House being relocated to Elm Street (see Figure 37) begins to re-establish a sense of enclosure along this street, which creates a comfortable environment for pedestrians.

"Restoring and revitalizing" Elm Street means filling in this gap carefully with buildings (approx. 3,000 sf each) of the appropriate design and scale for Downtown Westport and installing a proper streetscape that links seamlessly with Main Street (see Figure 38 on page 40). Parking, which would be accessed through driveway connections to the surface lots, and could be expanded in the future through the creation of a deck (see PK8), would be hidden from view behind the buildings. Elm Street would become a more economically and socially productive place, as well as an important parking resource.

This project presents an important opportunity to restore a semblance of a place for Westporters—one that reflects the best qualities of Westport and the people of Westport. This is possible because the Town owns key parcels along Elm Street. Through careful zoning and implementation of public-private partnerships, the Town can shape Elm Street into the community-serving place that Main Street used to be, while also balancing the desire to maintain "small town character." The Town can negotiate terms and design outcomes with developers through a request for proposal process. This process could include the Town offering a long-term lease for the property, the proceeds of which could be dedicated toward funding Downtown public improvements.

EXISTING CONDITION

Figure 35: Toquet Hall is in the second floor of the red building in the picture above

SEE ILLUS. PLAN SECTIONS 1 page 38 2 page 44

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Figure 36: Looking west on Elm Street

Figure 37: The Kemper-Gunn House relocated to Elm

SKETCH RENDERING

Figure 38: Sketch depicting potential future development (two-stories) along the north side of Elm Street

P6: Coordinate with and Integrate Redevelopment of the West Side Riverfront

This Plan supports the redevelopment of the former "Save the Children" with mixed-use development, which will add vitality to the west side of Downtown. The developer's concept (see Figure 39) shows the construction of three buildings on the site that would each house 40 1- to 3-bedroom residential units and underground parking. The buildings will have green roofs. The concept also shows an extended boardwalk, and the developer is also proposing to build a potential pedestrian bridge (P7) over the Saugatuck River to connect to the east side of Downtown. In addition, the developer is proposing to relocate and repurpose the existing historic building currently located at 1 Wilton Road. This will allow an additional left turn lane to be created in the southbound direction on Wilton Road (see M3), which would improve traffic flow at the intersection of Post Road (US 1) and Route 33.

CONCEPT PLAN

Figure 39: Developer's concept plan for the former "Save the Children" site

P7: Build a Pedestrian Bridge Crossing the Saugatuck

The boardwalk in the marshes at Gorham Island should be extended across the Saugatuck River and a pedestrian bridge built that connects over the river to the west side, where the former Save the Children site will be redeveloped (see P6). The developer of this site is proposing to include a pedestrian bridge as part of the project. The pedestrian bridge would provide a quiet, car-free alternative to crossing the Post Road Bridge. The convenience of being able to walk across the river also could help reduce traffic congestion by encouraging people to walk across to either side of Downtown instead of driving. The bridge itself could serve as a focal point in Downtown through the quality of its design or adornment with plantings, furnishings, and public art. See Figure 40 and Chapter 4. Downtown Design Guidance for more examples of pedestrian bridges.

SEE ILLUS. PLAN SECTION 2
page 44

EXAMPLES

Figure 40: A pedestrian bridge crossing over a river

P8: Create a Westport Arts & Culture Heritage "Trail"

The Town should create an interactive experience "trail" throughout Downtown that highlights the arts and cultural heritage of Westport. This experience can include wayfinding elements, historic markers, and conveniences such as kiosks and mobile phone charging stations. Kiosks could provide information and features public art designed by local artists (see Figure 41). These types of "trails" have been formed by many other towns to help create an enhanced sense of place and history, while also promoting their respective unique qualities. The Town should work with the CT Department of Economic and Community Development – Office of Culture and Tourism to structure and fund the project through its Arts Catalyze Placemaking program. This program provides grants that invest in the state's arts-based cultural activities and infrastructure in ways that will advance the attractiveness and competitiveness of Connecticut cities, towns, and villages as meaningful communities in which to live, work, learn and play.

Figure 41: Public art reflecting agricultural heritage

P9: Coordinate with and Integrate the Library Transformation Project

The Library Transformation Project, which is supported by both public and private funds, will renovate and expand the existing library facility in order to meet demand, especially during special events and programs. This iniative will enlarge the auditorium and redesign the entrance. More important, the building is designed to be a civic hub and go-to destination for Westporters of all ages. The concept (see Figure 42) not only addresses practical issues of access and operation, but also opens up the building to the riverfront. As this project will enhance Downtown connectivity, activities, and the enjoyment of the river, this Plan supports the concept. The project supports one of the main values expressed by residents during the public outreach process, which was to provide for more activities for residents, especially children and teenagers. The design of the Library building should be coordinated with the reinvention of Jesup Green (P11) and its expansion should be evaluated together with present and planned accommodations for parking.

SEE ILLUS. PLAN SECTION 1
page 38

CONCEPT RENDERING

Figure 42: Rendering of the Library's expansion

P10: Transform Parker Harding Plaza

Parker Harding Plaza, today, is essentially a parking lot with a narrow riverfront walkway lined with flowering trees and several seating areas (see Figure 43 and Figure 44). The whole plaza should be redesigned to feature a beautiful, continuous riverfront esplanade. At the same time, the parking area would need to be reconfigured to improve pedestrian and vehicular mobility through the plaza, while maintaining as many parking stalls as possible. The redesigned plaza would include a green infrastructure treatments to help reduce stormwater runoff.

Illustrative Plan Section #2 and the accompanying axonometric (i.e., bird's eye) model and photo simulations (see Figure 45, Figure 46, and Figure 47 on page 43) illustrate how the existing 4-foot walking path would be widened to create an uninterrupted, spacious 10-foot wide esplanade with benches, lights, trees, and a new decorative railing. The expanded green area, which would separate the walkway from the driveway, would be wide enough to host additional features such as a water feature, kiosk, concession, public restroom, and/or a public art installation. The layout of the parking lot is simplified, with two rows of parking stalls behind the buildings on Main Street. A roadway would still be provided to facilitate traffic circulation in the southbound direction. The sidewalks behind the Main Street buildings would be reconstructed to be continuous and adorned with streetscape furnishings and bicycle racks, and wayfinding signs. These improvements would encourage people to stroll along the Parker Harding Plaza side of the Main Street businesses and enter through their rear entrances. This could help alleviate pedestrian congestion on Main Street sidewalks during busy times.

Overall, this concept would increase the open green area of the plaza from 2,000 sf to more than 20,000 sf. The expansion, of course, does not come without an impact on the number of parking spaces. Parker Harding Plaza currently has 215 parking spaces. The concept plan shows 188 spaces. The impact of this loss of parking and how it can be handled is discussed in greater detail in Section C. Parking: Capacity and Management.

SEE ILLUS. PLAN SECTION 2
page 44

EXISTING CONDITIONS

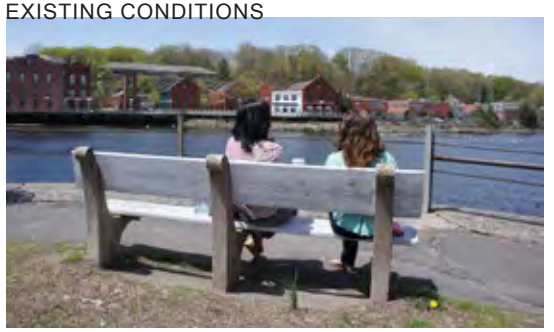


Figure 43: Enjoying the view from Parker Harding Plaza

Figure 44: Looking west across the parking lot in Parker Harding Plaza

Figure 45: Model depicting a redesigned Parker Harding Plaza

PHOTO SIMULATION

Figure 46: Photo simulation depicting a view of the riverwalk of the redesigned Parker Harding Plaza

PHOTO SIMULATION

Figure 47: Photo simulation depicting another view of the redesigned riverwalk along Parker Harding Plaza

2

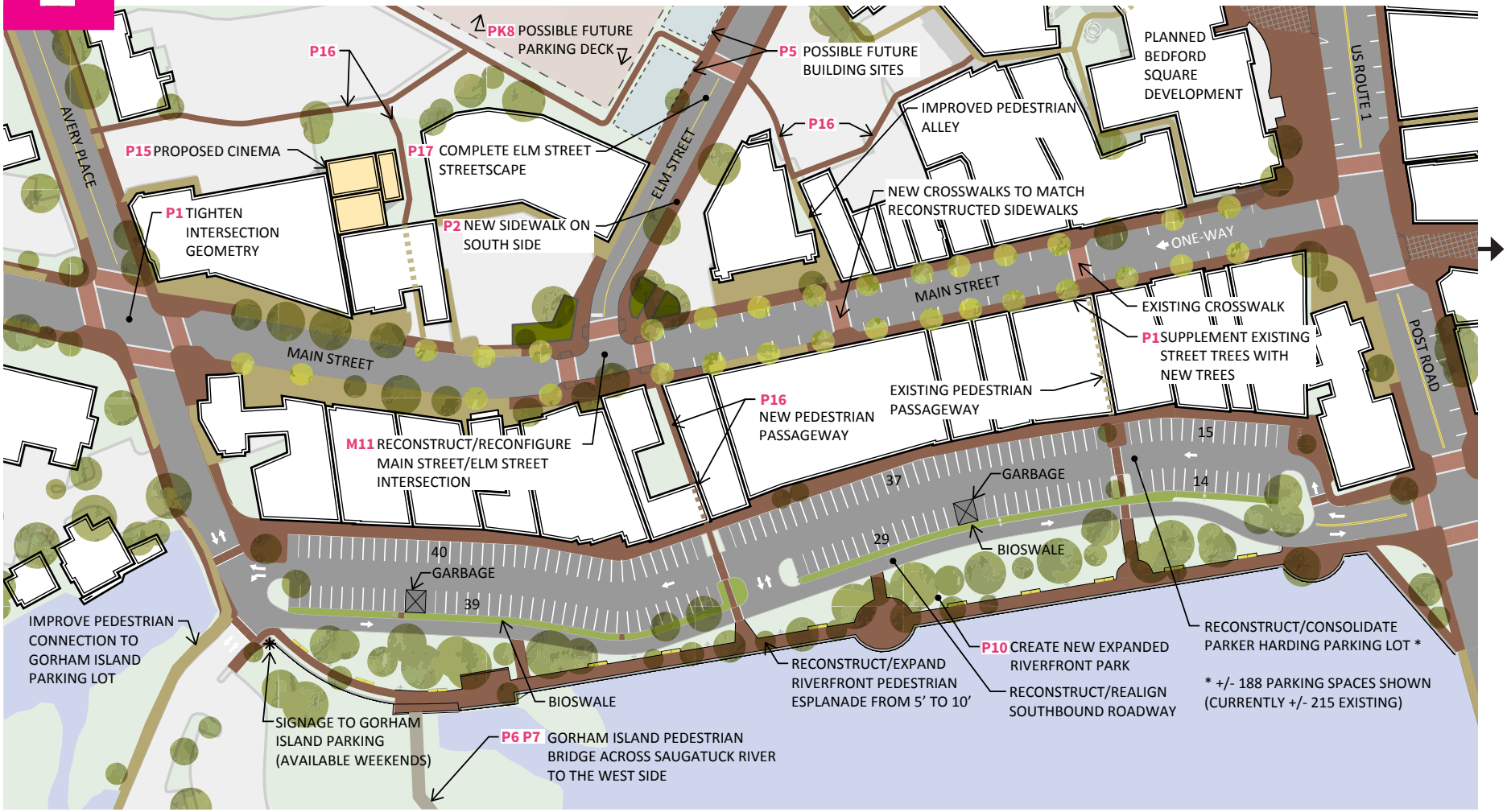


Figure 48: Illustrative Plan Section #2

Figure 49: Illustrative Plan Section #3

P11: Reinvent Jesup Green

SEE ILLUS. PLAN SECTION 3
page 45

Despite being located next to the Library, Jesup Green is underutilized; it is separated from the river and the riverfront path by a parking lot (see Figure 49). The Town should invest in the transformation of Jesup Green into Westport's premiere public open space, to be enjoyed by people of all ages.

Design Details

The redesign concept for Jesup Green (see Illustrative Plan Section #3 and Figure 52 on page 47) extends the "green" up to the riverside, terminating at an esplanade. A circular path that leads to the theater entrance serves both as a pedestrian walkway and as a route that can be temporarily closed or controlled for trucks to make deliveries to the Library. The space encircled by the walkway contains a play area for children. It could also include other active elements such as a sustainably-designed food kiosk or café concession, benches and other site furnishings, public art, decorative lighting, an informal amphitheater or performance space, additional trees, planting beds, horticultural displays, and a public restroom. The riverfront walkway would be a continuation of the improved riverfront esplanade along the edge of a redesigned Parker Harding Plaza (P10). In the future, the Town could construct a dock extending out from the esplanade (see P19).

The 77 parking spaces in the Taylor Municipal Lot would be reallocated as angled parking along a redesigned Jesup Road (M14) and as 22 on-street spaces along the new street Library Lane (M12). An earlier version of the concept (see Figure 51 on page 47) shows an alternative in which approximately 20 parking spaces are placed in front of the Library. This is a potential option, should the reallocated spaces prove insufficient or too far for Library patrons. The trade-off of adding these parking spaces is a smaller Jesup Green with less space for incorporating active park elements.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Figure 50: The riverwalk along Jesup Green (right, top). The Library parking lot (right, middle). A view of Jesup Green looking toward the river (below)

Figure 51: Sketch developed during the YOUR DOWNTOWN charrette depicts an alternative concept for reinventing Jesup Green that includes parking proximate to the Library

PHOTO SIMULATION

Figure 52: A photo simulation depicting the concept for the reinvention of Jesup Green

P12: Provide Public Restrooms

The need for public restroom facilities in Downtown was brought up several times during the planning process. The Town should investigate an appropriate site in Downtown, such as Jesup Green or Parker-Harding Plaza (or perhaps both), for providing a well-maintained, eco-friendly bathroom system. Restroom facilities in parks often utilize composting toilet systems and are designed to fit into the surrounding environment (see Figure 53).

EXAMPLE

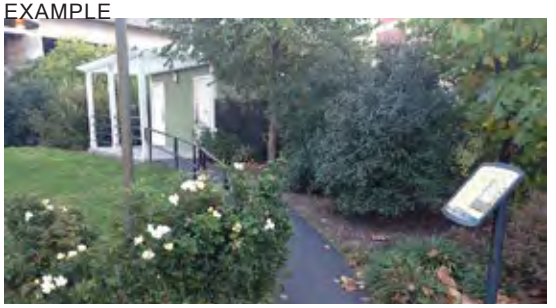


Figure 53: An example of a public restroom facility in a park setting

P14: Coordinate with and Integrate the Relocation of the Westport Arts Center

The Westport Arts Center (WAC) is currently housed in a slim 3,500-square-foot building on the edge of the west side of Downtown, along Riverside Avenue (see Figure 54). WAC officials are looking at several locations for creating a larger space, including the former Save the Children site on the west side of Downtown. The new WAC facility would be privately funded. WAC has secured commitments of more than $3 million for development and construction. The new WAC, which is anticipated to be 7,000 to 10,000 sf, will include two galleries, an auditorium, studio space, a gift shop, and a café. The Town should work with WAC to explore sites in a more central Downtown location, which would help diversify the mix of activities in Downtown for residents of all ages. Other potential sites for the new WAC could include Elm Street (see P5) or the east side of the proposed Library Lane (see M12). Either of these locations presents an opportunity for a mutually-beneficial partnership between WAC and the Town.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Figure 54: The Westport Arts Center, currently located on Riverside Avenue

P15: Coordinate with and Integrate the Westport Cinema Initiative

SEE ILLUS. PLAN SECTION 2
page 44

The Westport Cinema Initiative is a non-profit organization that aims to create a theater venue in Downtown in the undeveloped parcel behind Tavern on Main. The Westport Cinema Initiative has a lease agreement with the property owner and is raising $4.5 million needed for building costs and one year of operational expenses. The plans call for three theaters, including two with stadium-style seating (125 and 75 seats) and a third, smaller theater on a second floor that could seat 50 people (see Figure 55). While parking could be tight during weekend matinées, when utilization in Downtown is already heavy, parking would not be an issue in the evenings when overall parking utilization decreases. The impact on parking would need to be studied in more detail after the Westport Cinema Initiative submits plans to P&Z. This Plan supports the Westport Cinema Initiative as it would expand activities for residents of all ages, which was one of the themes expressed by many residents during the planning process.

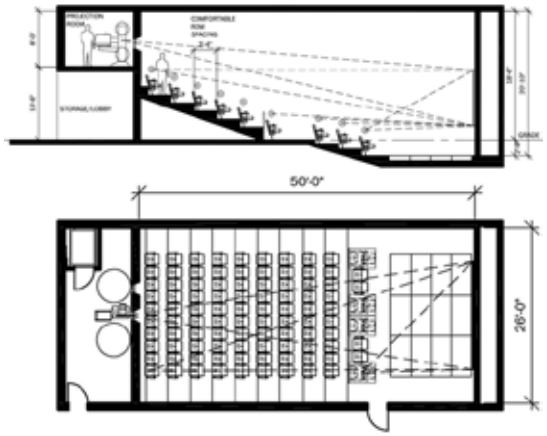


Figure 55: Westport Cinema Initiative building plans

P16: Create/Improve Pedestrian Passageways

SEE ILLUS. PLAN SEC. 1 2 3 4
page 38 page 44 page 45 page 61

The Town should create new pedestrian passageways in Downtown and maximize, to the extent possible, the liveliness and comfort of those that already exist (see Figure 25 on page 33)

Along Main Street, near the intersection with Elm Street, a pedestrian alley already exists, but it does not cut directly through to Parker Harding Plaza on the other side (see Illustrative Plan Section #2 and Figure 56). The Town should consider purchasing the property at the end of this alley to extend the passageway to Parker Harding Plaza.

The Town should also make safety improvements to existing passageways and extend them where necessary in order to create a complete pedestrian connection. For example, Illustrative Plan Section #2 shows the existing passageway between two buildings on the east side of Main Street extended to create a complete route to Elm Street. Illustrative Plan Section #4 highlights an existing passageway between two buildings along the north side of Post Road that connects Post Road to Church Lane. This narrow passageway should be improved to provide a safer and more comfortable pedestrian connection.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

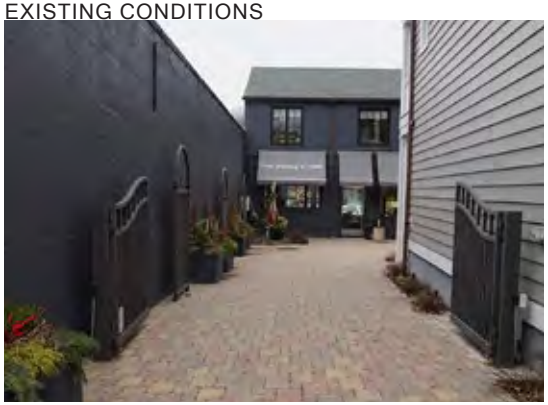


Figure 56: An alley along Main Street

P17: Implement/Install Standard Streetscape Elements throughout Downtown

As the Main Street streetscape (see P1) and Bedford Square development (which includes streetscape improvements) move forward, the Town should also coordinate and implement streetscape improvements on other streets in Downtown, including: Main Street from Elm Street up to Kings Highway; Elm Street; Church Lane; Avery Place; the Parker Harding Plaza bypass roadway from Avery Place to Post Road; the balance of Post Road from SR 33 (Wilton Road) east, across the Post Road Bridge all the way to Imperial Avenue; the reconstructed Jesup Road; and Taylor Place. Guidance on materials and furnishings are provided in Chapter 4. Downtown Design Guidance.

EXAMPLE

Figure 57: The Town's standard streetlight

P18: Place a Café on Green

This project involves designing and constructing a small structure on Jesup Green or Parker Harding Plaza that could house a concession stand offering light meals, beverages, and desserts. The concession stand could be leased and operated by an existing Westport establishment. The architecture and scale of the structure should be carefully-considered so that it complements its surroundings but does not overshadow the public space in which it is located (see Figure 58). Building this type of structure would require zoning changes and approvals.

SEE ILLUS. PLAN SECTION 3 page 45

EXAMPLES

Figure 58: An example of a concessionaire in a park

P19: Construct a Downtown Landing

SEE ILLUS. PLAN SECTION 3 page 45

There used to be a public dock in Downtown along the Saugatuck River (steps down to the river where the dock used to be located can still be seen). This project involves constructing a new dock to host small boats. The dock would be located south of the Post Road Bridge along the shoreline on the west side of the peninsula of land south of the Post Road Bridge and above the outlet of Dead Man's Brook, where the proposed expanded Jesup Green Park is, as well as the Library and Levitt Pavilion. If the boat landing dock is installed, this pedestrian walkway should be widened and improved to facilitate access to the dock from Jesup Road. Building such a dock is contingent upon dredging the river, which the Town is already investigating with the Army Corps of Engineers.

EXAMPLES

Figure 59: An example of a small dock

P20: Create a Barge Restaurant

This possible project involves developing a barge restaurant (see example in Figure 60) located south of the Saugatuck River Bridge, which would serve as a potential economic generator—through leasing revenues and property taxes—for the Town. The construction of a barge restaurant would require the dredging of the river along with appropriate permits being filed by the selected developer to CT DEEP. The Town is currently investigating the possibility of dredging the Saugatuck River.

Figure 60: A barge restaurant in Bristol, England

P21: Extend the Westside Riverwalk

This project possibility involves the riverwalk that currently exists north of the Saugatuck River Bridge in front of Bar Taco (see Figure 61). This path should be extended across Post Road to Riverside Park to provide for a longer recreational path along the river. Given that the land is private property, easements would need to be secured. However, according to the Town's zoning regulations, public waterfront access is required as part of any coastal site plan review for any special permit use or sites located in non-residential zones adjacent to the Saugatuck River. P&Z may waive the regulation for public waterfront access during the course of a public hearing, if requested by an applicant.

EXISTING CONDITION

Figure 61: The boardwalk along the riverside of the west side of Downtown

Places: Phasing & Implementation

The table below lists **Places** strategies and their staging over the next 5+ years. Strategies are expected to be initiated in a particular stage, but they may not be fully implemented during that stage. Some projects may start in the short-term (i.e., within the next two years), but may not be completed until three or four years later. In addition, the proposed sequencing of strategies is not fixed. The timing and selection of strategies may change depending on the Town's ability to: build partnerships and finalize agreements, coordinate with relevant agencies, secure approvals and permits, and access financing and other funding sources. Another factor that might impact the timing of strategies is the need to minimize disruption to Downtown operations, traffic circulation, and parking.

Timing	Category	#	Project
Short	Places	P1	Implement Planned Main Street Streetscape Improvements
Short	Places	P2	Improve & Complete the Sidewalk Network throughout Downtown
Short	Places	P3	Redesign Church Lane into a "Shared Street"
Short	Places	P4	Support Improvements to Toquet Hall
Short	Places	P5	Restore and Revitalize Elm Street
Short	Places	P6	Coordinate with and Integrate Redevelopment of the West Side Riverfront
Short	Places	P7	Build a Pedestrian Bridge Crossing the Saugatuck
Short	Places	P8	Create a Westport Arts & Culture Heritage "Trail"
Mid	Places	P9	Coordinate with and Integrate the Library Transformation Project
Mid	Places	P10	Transform Parker Harding Plaza
Mid	Places	P11	Reinvent Jesup Green
Mid	Places	P12	Provide Public Restrooms (either on Jesup or Parker Harding)
Mid	Places	P13	Redesign Taylor Place into a "Shared Street"
Mid	Places	P14	Coordinate with and Integrate the Relocation of the Westport Arts Center
Mid	Places	P15	Coordinate with and Integrate the Westport Cinema Initiative
Mid	Places	P16	Create/Improve Pedestrian Passageways
Mid	Places	P17	Implement/Install Standard Streetscape Elements throughout Downtown
Long	Places	P18	Place a Café on Green
Long	Places	P19	Construct a Downtown Landing
Long	Places	P20	Create a Barge Restaurant
Long	Places	P21	Extend the Westside Riverwalk

Short-Term (2015-2017)

The immediate short-term projects focus on the fundamentals of improving the Downtown experience. These include completing Main Street streetscape improvements and reconnecting and refreshing the Downtown sidewalk network (P1, P2). As these improvements are being undertaken, the Town can initiate work on transforming Church Lane into a "shared street" (P3).

Planning the restoration and revitalization of Elm Street (P5) should begin in this stage. The redevelopment of the west side riverfront project (P6) will be advancing at this point. The Town should coordinate with the developer for bringing the concept of the pedestrian bridge across the Saugatuck to fruition (P7), which will require coordinating with various agencies and securing appropriate permits. The groundwork for creating a Westport Arts & Culture Heritage "Trail" (P8) should also begin in this stage.

Mid-Term (2017-2021)

Two of the most significant Downtown public realm improvement projects will begin in this stage: the transformation of Parker Harding Plaza (P10), projected to start in 2017, and the reinvention of Jesup Green (P11), which could start in 2019. The reinvention of Jesup Green is linked to the Library Transformation Project (P9), which will break ground within the next few years, and to several strategies in the Mobility section, including the redesign of Jesup Road (M14).

Long-Term (2021-2023)

By this time, many projects will have been initiated and completed, and the results of some of them will become apparent. At this point the Town should begin to look more closely at whether any of the long-term strategies should be advanced.

B: MOBILITY: TRAFFIC & CIRCULATION

This section covers the following four topics:

- Vehicular Traffic & Circulation
- Wayfinding
- Transit
- Bicycle Circulation

Vehicular Traffic & Circulation

Vehicular Traffic & Circulation: Existing Conditions & Analysis

While most of the major roads in Westport follow the same paths of roadways from earlier centuries, the Town was basically inaccessible except by railroad, water, or the Post Road (Route 1) until the Merritt Parkway was built in the 1930s. Following World War II, with the construction of I-95 and the rise of automobile ownership, Westport truly became connected to New York and the region.

Several roads serve the area and provide access to neighboring towns (such as Norwalk, Fairfield and Wilton) and to important destinations in Westport such as Saugatuck and Compo Beach. These roads are relatively narrow, which can contribute to congestion and make future improvements, especially those involving bike facilities and sidewalks, challenging. The following are descriptions of these roads. Descriptions of state roads, which are under the purview of CTDOT, include route numbers:

Post Road (US 1). Post Road is a four lane roadway classified as an Urban Principal Arterial Other that runs roughly east-west through Westport. It is fronted by mostly commercial land uses along its entire route within Westport. Outside Downtown the commercial properties are more widely spaced, consisting of mostly shopping centers or larger standalone stores. Within Downtown, the properties are more closely spaced together, giving the roadway more urban character.

Riverside Avenue/ Wilton Road (SR 33). Riverside Avenue/Wilton Road is a two lane Urban Minor Arterial that runs west of and roughly parallel to the Saugatuck River in Westport. The land uses along Riverside Avenue/Wilton Road near Post Road are mostly commercial, while farther from Post Road the land uses are primarily residential. Wilton Road to the north provides a link from downtown Westport to

Goals & Objectives

- ★ **Improve Overall Walkability and Pedestrian Safety at Crossings** to enhance connections between parking areas and Downtown and to reduce automobile traffic by creating conditions that promote walking over driving.
- ★ **Improve Intersection Geometry** to reduce bottlenecks and create safer turning movements for motorists and pedestrians.
- ★ **Link Downtown into the Public Transportation Network** to provide alternatives for employees and visitors other than driving to Downtown.
- ★ **Improve Conditions for Bicyclists** by providing amenities such as bicycle racks and shelters, building on the prior study of Post Road, and undertaking a Town-wide bicycle plan.
- ★ **Improve the Wayfinding System** for both motorists and pedestrians.

Figure 62: A car travels east on Post Road while pedestrians cross Main Street

the Merritt Parkway, and Riverside Avenue to the south provides a link to I-95.

Compo Road (SR 136). Compo Road is a north-south two lane Urban Minor Arterial that runs east of, and roughly parallel to, the Saugatuck River. It links Downtown and Post Road to the Saugatuck area of Westport and to the recreation areas along Long Island Sound. Compo Road is fronted by residential properties along its entire length within Westport.

Main Street. Main Street is an Urban Minor Arterial that runs north-south. Main Street begins at Post Road and runs north out of Downtown towards the Merritt Parkway. It is a single lane, one way northbound street between Post Road and Myrtle Avenue, and a two lane bidirectional street north of Myrtle Avenue. In Downtown, Main Street is fronted with many national chain retailers, which gives it an outdoor "mall" character.

Imperial Avenue. Imperial Avenue is a two-lane local road that also runs north-south roughly parallel to the Saugatuck River. It connects Downtown to the Saugatuck area of Westport and provides access to the "park-and-ride" lot near Downtown. Imperial Avenue is fronted by businesses in Downtown, and by residences to the south, outside of Downtown.

Myrtle Avenue. Myrtle Avenue is a two-lane local roadway that runs roughly northwest-southeast around the outer edge of Downtown. It connects Post Road on the east side of Downtown to Main Street on the north side of Downtown. Myrtle Avenue is fronted by businesses, single family homes, Town Hall, and Veteran's Green.

Church Lane. Church Lane is a two-block long local roadway that runs northeast-southwest within Downtown. It is two lanes north of Elm Street and one westbound lane south of Elm Street. Church Lane is fronted by commercial businesses, as well as the Christ & Holy Trinity Church.

Elm Street. Elm Street is a short, one-block long, two-lane local roadway within Downtown. It is fronted by businesses, as well as the large Elm Street/Baldwin public parking lot. The Kemper-Gunn House was relocated to Elm Street.

Avery Place. Avery Place is a short, one-block long local roadway that runs east-west on the northern edge of the downtown. It is a two-lane street, with one lane in each direction. Avery Place is fronted mostly by commercial properties and also provides access to the large, privately-owned Avery Place parking lot.

Figure 63: Map highlighting the Downtown street network and entry points/gateways

Parker Harding Plaza. Parker Harding Plaza is a local service roadway that runs around the edge of the Parker Harding parking lot between the north and the south exits of the lot. It is two lanes between Main Street and the northern exit of the parking lot, and it has one southbound lane between the northern exit of the parking lot and Post Road. There are no buildings that have frontage along Parker Harding Plaza.

Jesup Road. Jesup Road is a two-lane local roadway that runs along the southern edge of Downtown. It runs roughly northwest to southeast from Post Road to Imperial Avenue. It is fronted mostly by businesses and public municipal buildings, such as the library and the police station.

Bay Street. Bay Street is a one-block long local roadway within Downtown. It is one-way southbound and runs from Post Road on the north to Jesup Road on the south. Bay Street is fronted mostly by commercial uses, including a few of the public and private parking lots in downtown.

Taylor Place. Taylor Place is a one-block long, one-way northbound road connecting Jesup Road to Post Road. With sidewalks on both sides and aligned slightly offset from Main Street, it provides an important pedestrian connection from the Library and Jesup Green to Main Street.

Traffic & Accident Analysis

To determine existing and future traffic conditions in Downtown, RBA performed a detailed traffic analysis, which provided level of service and other measures of effectiveness for key intersections located in Downtown, along Post Road (US 1), and in the surrounding area. Intersections were analyzed using Synchro™ traffic modeling software to establish a baseline traffic model that the Town of Westport can utilize to evaluate the traffic impacts of future development. The traffic analysis also included an analysis of accidents in Downtown to determine problem intersections.

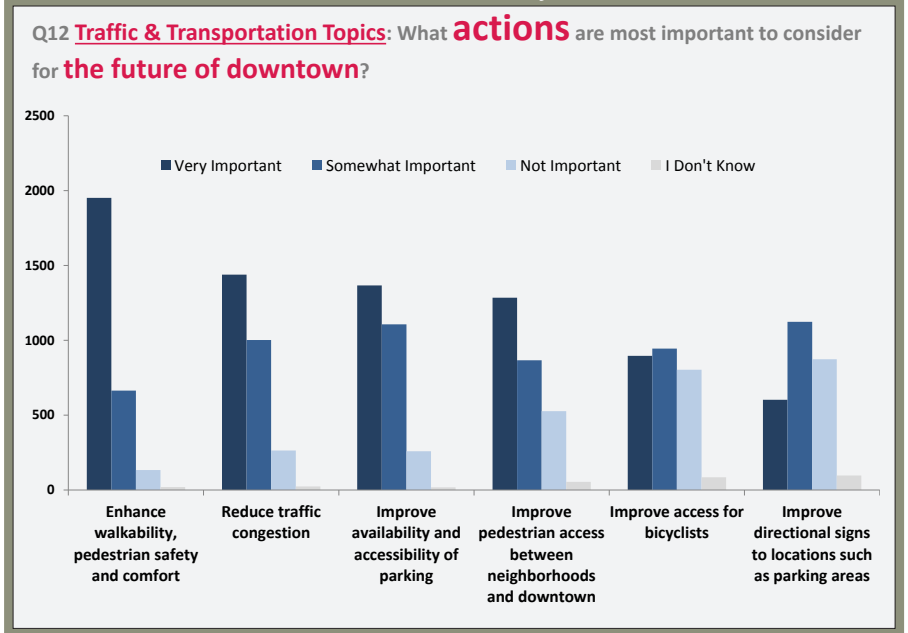
To assess potential impacts of the proposed roadway improvements across the greater study area, it was necessary to determine existing and then future No-Build conditions. The future "no-build" condition represented traffic operations as they are projected to be in the future without any traffic or roadway improvements recommended by the Master Plan. The no-build conditions included planned developments and roadway improvements, and served as the baseline to which future conditions with proposed master plan improvements were compared. To evaluate how any proposed design alternatives for the study area would work in the future, conditions were assessed for a future no-build analysis year of 2016.

Future Traffic Forecasts

The forecasting of future traffic volumes consisted of three components: background growth, projected real estate development, and planned transportation improvements. To project background traffic growth, a growth rate of 0.75 percent per year was used as directed by CTDOT. This growth rate yielded a growth factor of 1.023 for the 2016 analysis year.

Any projected developments approved by P&Z and were anticipated to impact

from the Downtown Survey for Residents...



the study area were included in the analysis of future No-Build Conditions. It was determined that six sites could affect additional traffic volumes to the study area, all of which were anticipated to be completed by 2016. These sites included the following:

- 24 Ludlow Road – Beit Chaverim Synagogue
- National Hall Redevelopment
- 325 (321-329) Riverside Avenue Medical Offices
- Bedford Square
- Relocation of Westport YMCA (Mahackeno)
- Sasco Creek Village (1655 Post Road East)

The traffic impact studies associated with each of these sites were used to determine the projected traffic volumes to be included in the 2016 No-Build Conditions analysis.

CTDOT is in the process of planning several roadway capital projects to implement traffic signal improvements along Post Road (US 1). According to CTDOT staff, there are no significant geometric improvement projects planned to be undertaken by 2016 that would affect the study intersections.

The background-grown traffic volumes and the additional trips due to the projected development sites were combined to create the Weekday AM, Midday, and PM, and Saturday Midday and PM peak-hour No-Build traffic volumes.

Future No-Build Traffic Conditions

As previously stated, the future "no-build" condition represented traffic operations as they are projected to be in the future without any improvement recommended by the master plan. These traffic analyses were performed for the Weekday AM, Midday, and PM, and the Saturday Midday and PM peak hours at 31 study intersections across Westport.

No significant impacts to traffic operations in the Downtown or the larger study area were identified for the future 2016 no-build condition based on projected future traffic volumes from projected growth and development. The analysis did not include projects that had not been approved at the time of the study.

See Figure 65 and Figure 66 on page 57 for examples of maps from the study comparing the 2013 existing and 2016 future no-build peak hour levels of service.

Accident Analysis

Accident summary data was obtained from CTDOT for 11 intersections in Downtown Westport for the period from January 1, 2010 through December 31, 2012, the most recent three-year period for which data are available. Figure 64 highlights the accident frequency at these intersections.

Based on CTDOT standards, none of these locations are considered high accident locations. As traffic and pedestrian volumes increase in the future, it is possible that crash frequency could increase in the vicinity of the study area under future 2016 No Build conditions, although no significant changes to crash frequency are projected.

While no significant impacts to traffic operations or safety in the Downtown were identified in the traffic and accident analysis detailed above, various strategies that arose during the master plan process, from public and stakeholder input, were

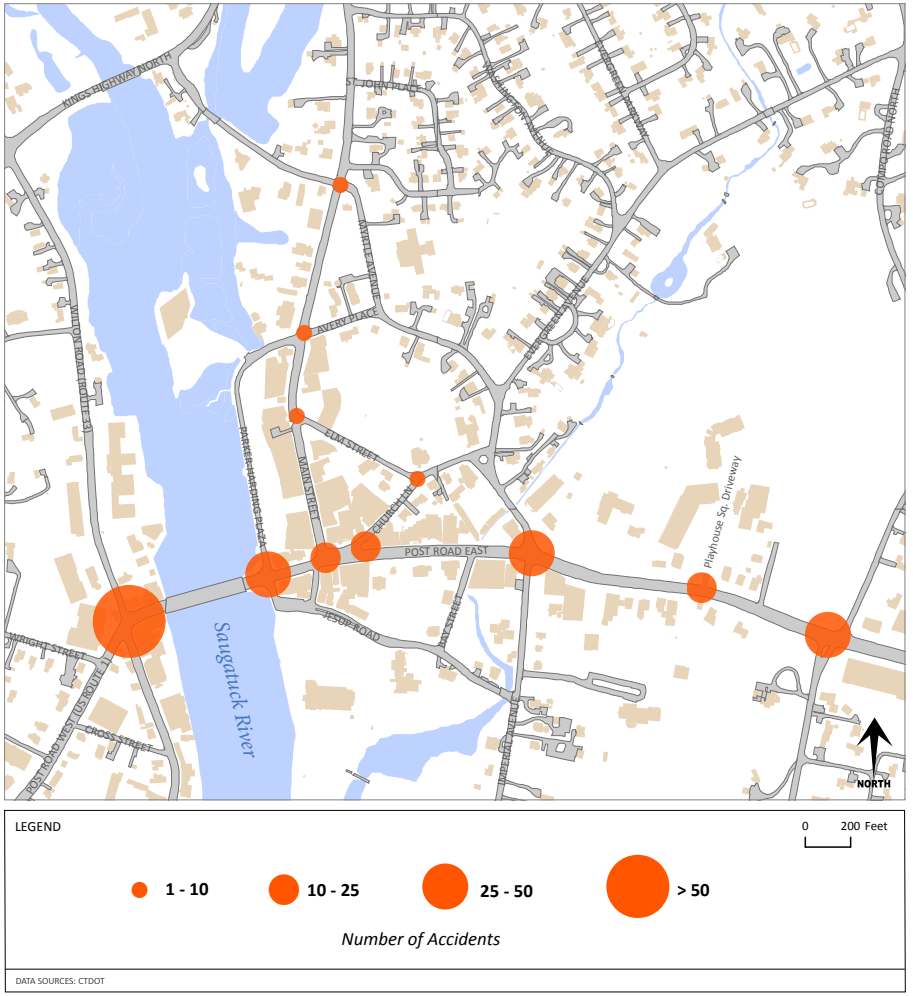


Figure 64: Map showing frequency of traffic accidents at Downtown and near Downtown intersections

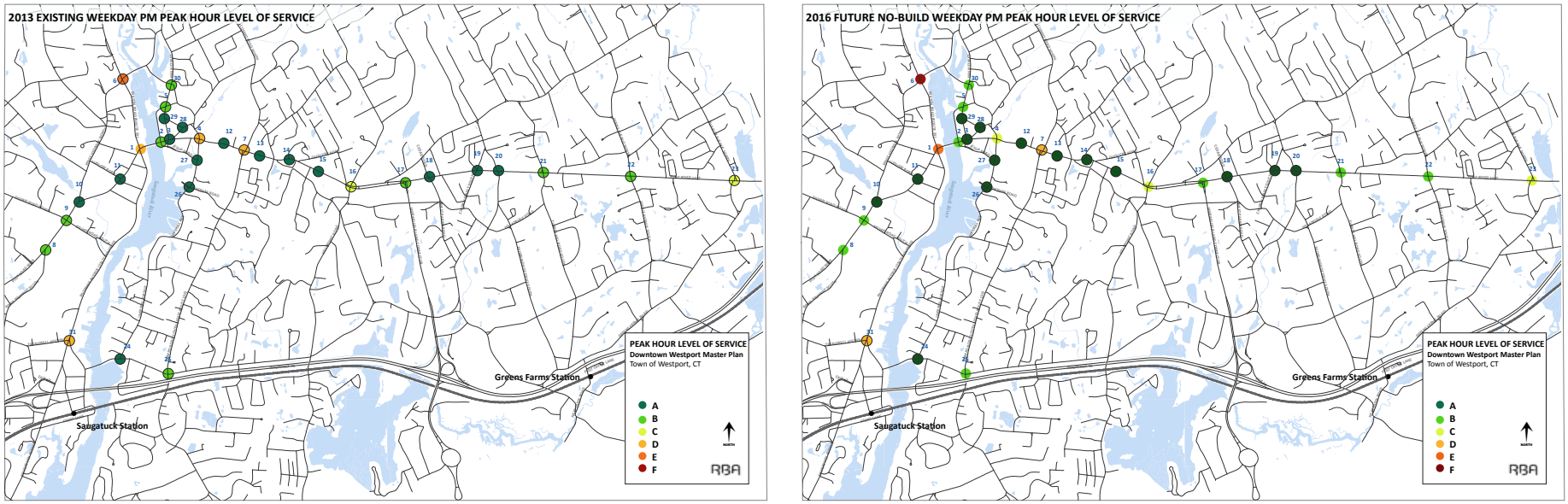


Figure 65: Maps comparing 2013 Existing Weekday PM peak hour level of service (left) compared with the 2016 Future "No-Build" peak hour level of service (right) at intersections in and around Downtown. A-F represents the level of service designations, with F being the least favorable conditions.

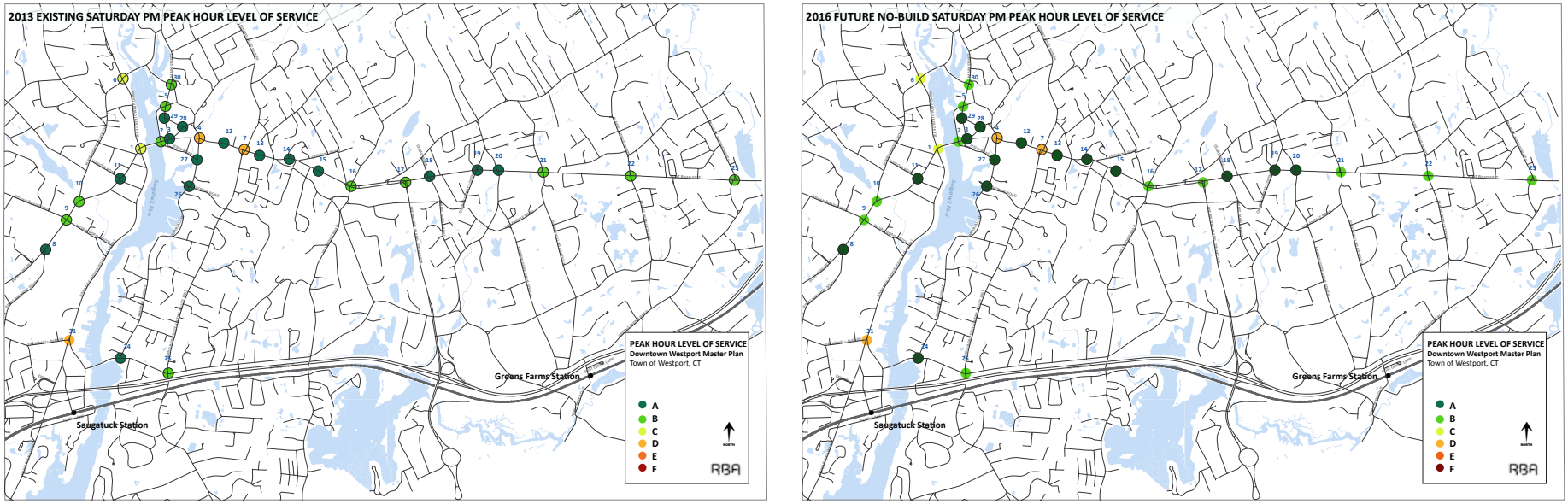


Figure 66: Maps comparing 2013 Existing Saturday PM peak hour level of service (left) compared with the 2016 Future "No-Build" peak hour level of service (right) at intersections in and around Downtown. A-F represents the level of service designations, with F being the least favorable conditions.

evaluated to confirm whether they would have a positive or negative impact on traffic operations and safety in the Downtown. Some of the strategies that were evaluated included street closures and intersection configuration changes.

The following strategies were investigated and found to have negative impacts to traffic operations and, therefore, are not recommended:

- **Closing Church Lane to traffic**. Re-routed traffic volumes would cause excessive congestion along the alternate routes. Instead, the Plan recommends redesigning Church Lane as a "shared street" with the potential to close it to vehicles on weekends, holidays, and special events (see P3).
- **Closing Main Street to traffic**. Re-routed traffic volumes would cause excessive congestion along the alternate routes.
- **Converting Main Street from one-way to two-way**. The narrow roadway width would mean eliminating on-street parking on one side of the street, which is an important resource in Downtown. In addition, for the intersection of Main Street and Post Road to function properly (and not cause queuing on Main Street) left turn lanes would need to be provided in the southbound direction. There is not adequate width to provide these two lanes along with a northbound moving lane and a parking lane.
- **Reducing the number of lanes on the Saugatuck River Bridge (Post Road) to one lane in each direction**. Excessive queues and unacceptable level-of-service during peak periods would result from delays at the intersections at Route 33 and at Jesup Road.

The strategies and recommendations that follow were analyzed and found to improve pedestrian safety and vehicular connectivity without negatively impacting traffic operations.

Moving forward, the Town should update the traffic model developed as part of this Plan as new development projects with definitive build years come before P&Z for approval to determine their impacts on traffic operations, safety, and parking. Approximately $6,000 is allocated in the current Westport Town Budget for this task.

from the "Ideas" Page of the Downtown Westport Master Plan Website

"I have always felt that Westport should be more of a walking and biking friendly town, that there ought to be a direct and safe way one could walk or let kids bike from one end of town to the other. A lot of traffic congestion stems from shuttling kids around to and from one venue to another. If parents felt like there was a safe way their kids could get to town on their own, it would foster more independence and better health for the community and environment."

Finally, although projects identified in this Plan are projected to have a positive impact on traffic operations and safety, the analysis was more qualitative in nature. Therefore, more detailed traffic studies should be undertaken during the implementation of certain projects (see Chapter 3. Plan Implementation & Policy Recommendations).


STOP
Reserved P

M1: Improve Pedestrian Safety at Post Road Crossings

M2: Improve Ped. & Vehicle Safety at Post Road thru Traffic Signal Modifications

SEE ILLUS. PLAN SECTION 4
page 61

Post Road can be an intimidating street for pedestrians to cross. Therefore, it acts sort of as a barrier in Downtown, dividing it into two parts. Parking is typically well-utilized—up to capacity at peak times—in lots and on-street spaces north of Post Road. On the other hand, there is capacity south of Post Road. However, motorists are often hesitant to park there—even though it is very close to the Main Street stores—because of the precarious pedestrian crossings at Post Road. This project involves improving pedestrian crossing conditions at Post Road intersections. In doing so, this project would encourage better use of available parking spaces located south of Post Road and help support businesses located there.

The following Post Road crossings should be improved: at Main Street (see Figure 67), at Parker Harding Plaza/Jesup Road (see Figure 68), at Taylor Place, at Church Lane, at Bay Street, and at Imperial Avenue. In addition, a mid-block pedestrian crossing, possibly with a pedestrian-actuated signal, should be created at the approximate location of the Old Town Hall building.

Various techniques should be considered to improve pedestrian safety, including curb extensions; high-visibility and/or in-ground flashing crosswalks; flashing pedestrian crossing beacons and/or HAWK signals; improved pavement markings and signage for both motorists and drivers; narrowed travel lanes; and strategic use of colored and/or textured pavement on the street surface (see Chapter 4. Downtown Design Guidance).

CTDOT would need to conduct an analysis to determine the need for a new traffic signal at Bay Street. In addition, CTDOT should determine if adjustments could yield additional pedestrian crossing time at the following Post Road intersections:

- Parker Harding Plaza (which includes adding a pedestrian crossing phase)
- Main Street/Taylor Place
- Church Lane
- A proposed mid-block crossing @ Old Town Hall
- Bay Street
- Myrtle Avenue/Imperial Avenue
- Route 33

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Figure 67: A pedestrian crosses Post Road near Main St

Figure 68: The intersection of Post Road and Parker Harding Plaza/Jesup Road

EXAMPLE

Figure 69: A curb extension reduces crossing distance

M3: Improve Traffic Movements at the Route 1/33 Intersection

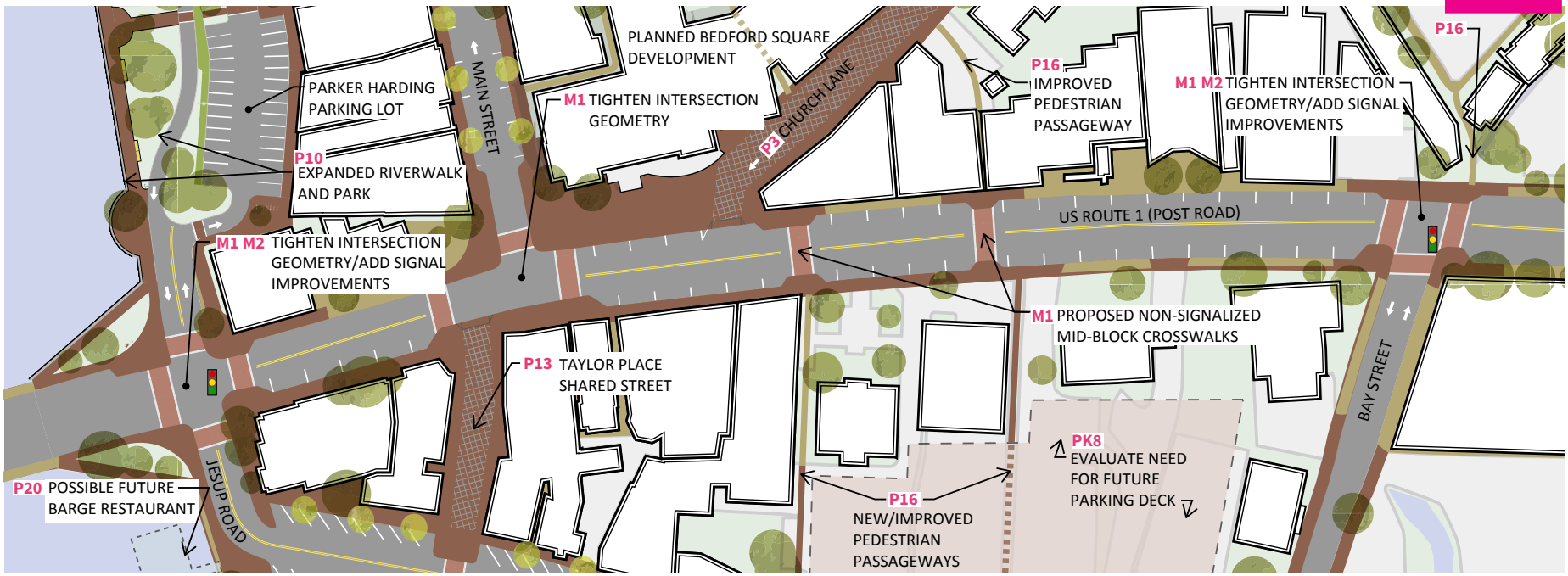
Create a southbound left turn lane at the intersection of Post Road (US 1) and Riverside Avenue (Route 33), which will add capacity and improve overall operations of the intersection (see Figure 71). This improvement is currently being proposed as part of the developer's plan for the former site of Save the Children (see P6). The developer proposes to relocate the structure located on the northwest corner of the intersection to make space for the additional turning lane.

EXISTING CONDITION

Figure 71: Stopped at a signal on Route 33 at the intersection of Post Road (US 1)

4

Figure 70: Illustrative Plan Section #4



M4: Redesign Myrtle Avenue Intersections

SEE ILLUS. PLAN SECTION 5 page 63

The Town should make pedestrian safety improvements to the following intersections with Myrtle Avenue: at Avery Place, at Post Road (see Figure 73), at Evergreen Avenue (see Figure 74), and at Church Lane. The same package of improvements should be made at these intersections, which includes: reduced turning radii, curb extensions, high-visibility crosswalks, clear pavement markings and signs. The intersection of Myrtle Avenue and Church Lane should be more intensively redesigned. The existing right lane from Church Lane to Myrtle Avenue in front of the nail salon should be closed, which eliminates the conflict between turning vehicles and parked vehicles and also creates safer walking and crossing conditions for pedestrians. Through this change in intersection geometry, a small public plaza or park area could be created as shown in Figure 72.

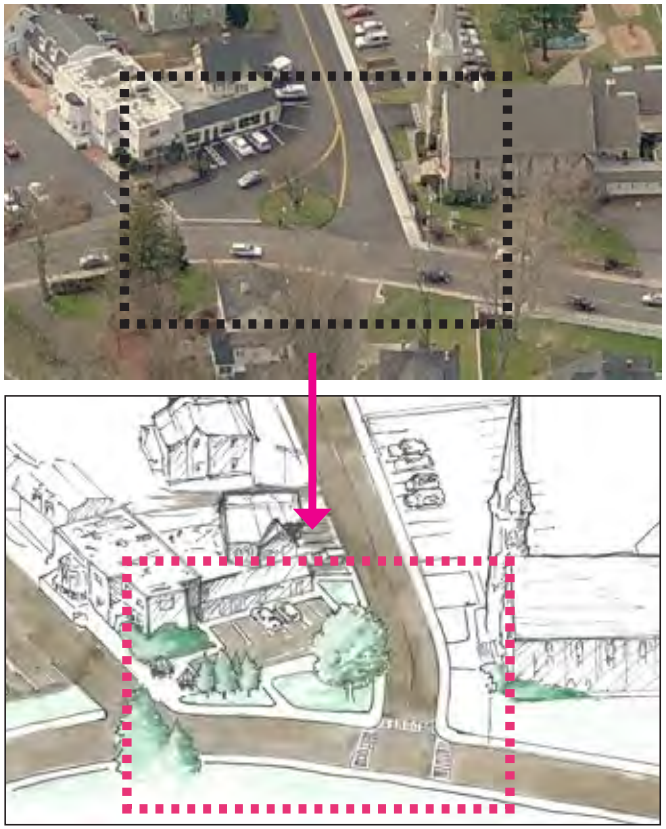


Figure 72: Myrtle Avenue & Church Lane Intersection: existing bird's eye view (top) and sketch depicting the redesign (bottom)

EXISTING CONDITIONS

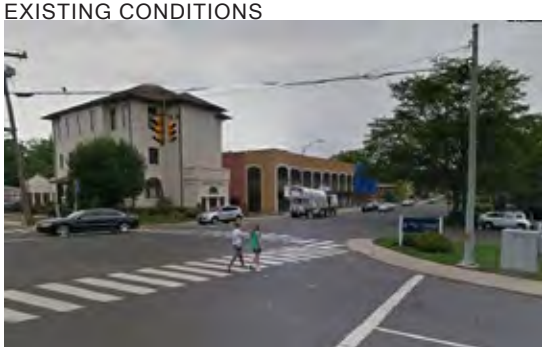


Figure 73: Myrtle Avenue & Post Road

Figure 74: Myrtle Avenue & Evergreen Avenue

5

Figure 75: Illustrative Plan Section #5

M11: Redesign the Main Street/Elm Street Intersection

The intersection of Main Street and Elm Street should be redesigned to create safer turning movements for cars and safer and more comfortable crossings for pedestrians. Main Street and Elm Street meet at a sharp angle (see Figure 90 and Figure 91). At this point, cars traveling south on Main Street have to turn left onto Elm Street because the rest of Main Street is one way traveling north. Redesigning the intersection would involve making the angle at which the streets meet closer to 90 degrees, which would reduce the length that pedestrians would have to walk to cross Elm Street. Furthermore, crosswalks should be applied along locations where pedestrians cross Main Street. Changing the angle at which Elm Street meets Main Street will also make room for sidewalks and a small plaza-like space with benches, trees, and an information kiosk in the heart of Downtown (see Figure 79 on page 65).

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Figure 76: The intersection of Main Street and Elm Street

Figure 77: A bird's eye view of the Main Street and Elm Street intersection

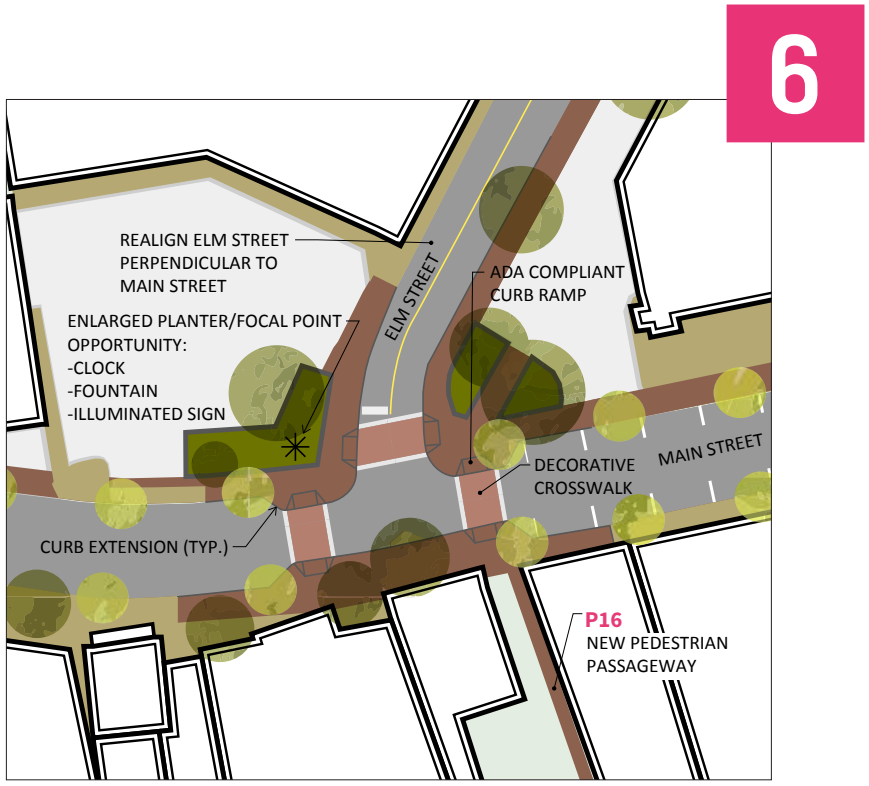


Figure 78: Illustrative Plan Section #6

PHOTO SIMULATION

Figure 79: A rendering of the redesigned Main Street/Elm Street intersection

M12: Create a New Street: Library Lane

SEE ILLUS. PLAN SECTION 3 7
page 45 page 67

To improve the connection from the area south of Jesup Road to Downtown, the Town should convert the parking lot driveway that connects Jesup Road with the Library parking lot south of the library (see Figure 80) into a formal street with parallel parking.

Design Details

Library Lane will have two travel lanes (one in each direction) and parallel parking, with sidewalks on both sides (see Figure 81). Building this street would accomplish the following specific objectives: it would provide parking, it would provide a more formal approach to the Library and Levitt Pavilion, and it would make the land on either side of it more valuable thus perhaps better positioning the Police Station property on the east side of it for eventual redevelopment. Finally, it would provide access to the proposed new bridge for vehicles over Dead Man's Brook (M13) and to the underutilized Imperial Avenue parking lot, which would promote easier access and better utilization of the parking resources south of Post Road.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Figure 80: The driveway of the parking lot adjacent to the Police Station would be converted into a formal street

PHOTO SIMULATION

Figure 81: A photo simulation depicting the driveway converted into a formal street, Library Lane

M13: Build a Bridge to Connect Motorists to the Imperial Avenue Lot

SEE ILLUS. PLAN SECTION 7

The existing Imperial Avenue parking lot should be a more attractive and readily-accessible parking alternative for Downtown visitors. To reach the lot requires looping around Downtown on Imperial Avenue. Once people have parked, they can walk over a pedestrian bridge across Dead Man's Brook, which connects the Imperial Avenue lot to the Levitt Pavilion and Library (see Figure 82). But it can take at least 10 minutes to reach Main Street. To create a more direct, comfortable link to the Imperial Avenue Lot, the proposed Library Lane (M12) should lead to a new bridge that extends across Dead Man's Brook, connecting motorists directly to the Imperial Avenue Lot. This could make the lot and its ample parking more accessible and appealing for visitors, which would increase activity in the area located south of Post Road. Illustrative Plan Section #7 also shows the long-term possibility of consolidating the lot that is currently leased by the Town to the Westport Woman's Club and part of the Imperial Avenue Lot.

EXISTING CONDITION

Figure 82: The pedestrian bridge that currently connects Levitt Pavilion and the Library with the Imperial Avenue Lot

Figure 83: Illustrative Plan Section #7

M14: Redesign Jesup Road

SEE ILLUS. PLAN SECTION 3 page 45

As the expanded Library and new Levitt Pavilion begins to attract more visitors, Jesup Road (see Figure 98) will bear more vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle traffic. Jesup Road should be reconstructed—from Post Road to at least Bay Street, and as far as Imperial Avenue—with continuous sidewalks, improved geometry and safety measures at intersections, and parallel parking on both sides. The approximately 52 new parallel parking spaces would help replace parking turned over to park space during the reinvention of Jesup Green (P11). The redesign of Jesup Road will help facilitate the future development of new retail along the north side of the street, where currently there are surface parking lots. It also might facilitate redevelopment of the Police Station site. It is also intended to compliment the other civic improvements proposed in this area: the reinvention of Jesup Green (P11); expansion of the Library (P14); creation of Library Lane (M12); and a new motor vehicle bridge connecting the proposed Levitt Lane to the Imperial Avenue Lot (M13). The rendering of the reinvention of Jesup Green depicts a redesigned Jesup Road (see Figure 52 on page 47).

EXISTING CONDITION

Figure 84: Heading east on Jesup Road toward the Police Station

M15: Consider Implementing a Real-Time Parking Information System

A real-time parking information system provides motorists with real-time information on parking availability. As such, it helps reduce congestion by preventing cruising for parking. This type of system could involve "smart signs" in specific lots in Downtown and/or using social media or apps (see Figure 85) to provide real-time parking information. The cost for a "smart sign" type of system typically ranges between $200 to $800 per space depending on factors including: type and level of accuracy of the information provided; number and degree of complexity in installation of the sensors; availability of communications channels; availability of power supplies for remote components; and signs to convey the information at appropriate decision points. For Downtown Westport, the cost of such a system could amount to approximately $800,000. A system based on social media or a custom-designed app may be less cost-intensive.

EXAMPLE

Figure 85: Example of a real-time parking app

Wayfinding

Existing Conditions & Analysis

Wayfinding represents a person's experience of navigating to and through a place, whether through a single building, a neighborhood, or an entire town. Wayfinding elements cue people in on their location and help them navigate to other locations. Iconic landmarks and architectural styles can serve as wayfinding aids, as do more intentional wayfinding elements such as gateways and directional signs.

Overall, the existing sign system in Downtown might provide visitors with some basic orientation within and through the area. However, the signs could be better located and coordinated and more informative. An improved sign system could help reduce traffic congestion by making motorists more confident and comfortable about navigating Downtown. Clearer signs at parking areas might help distribute parking more equally across either side of Post Road. With the exception of the blue Westport directional signs, many of the signs within the various wayfinding systems in Downtown lack the quality and craftsmanship that one sees in Downtown's buildings, facades, and streetscape elements. Many of the signs are "highway green" colored aluminum panels on metal posts. Some of the signs are crooked and discolored; some are also placed too close to each other and appear cluttered; and some have outdated messages.

There are no signs in Downtown specifically aimed at pedestrians. Given the small scale of Westport, a comprehensive sign system for pedestrians might not be necessary as it might lead to sign clutter. Furthermore, the vehicular-scaled signs can be just as helpful to pedestrians as to motorists. However, there are several opportunities to direct pedestrians to places, including pointing out passageways (both existing and proposed) that serve as shortcuts through certain blocks.

In Downtown Westport, there are five different wayfinding sign systems in place. Examples of each of these are included in Figure 86 and Figure 87.

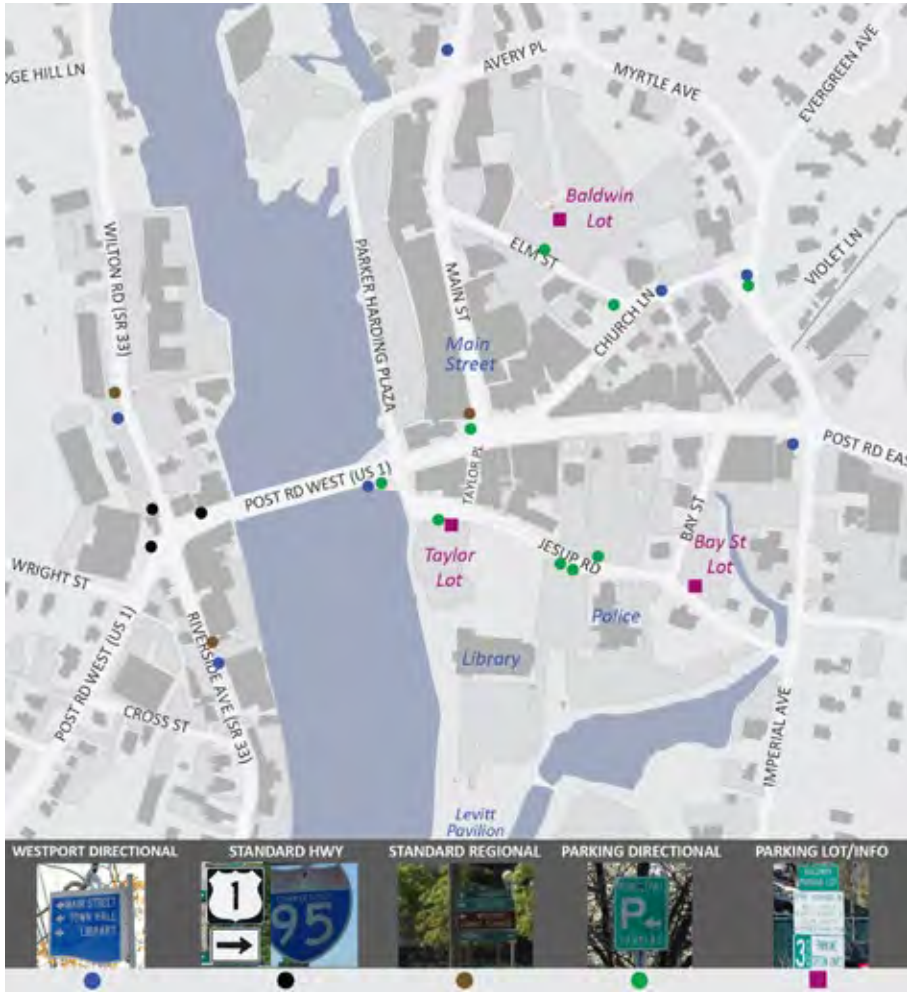


Figure 86: The existing wayfinding system in Downtown Westport

State Highway Markers/Directional Signs

These signs, which identify and direct people to state and interstate highways, are clustered around the Post Road/Route 1 & 33 intersection. They are not placed at the most clear, logical locations. The I-95 sign is located on the northwest corner of the intersection in a position that might confuse drivers traveling westbound along Post Road as it is not clear whether they should go straight or turn left to get to I-95.

State Regional Directional Signs

These signs direct motorists to places and destinations within and near the Town (e.g., Saugatuck, Westport Country Playhouse). One sign is located just north of the Route 1 & 33 intersection (facing southbound traffic). Another sign is located at the intersection of Post Road and Main Street. They are in fair condition, possibly difficult to read for some motorists, and their usefulness in helping motorists navigate through Westport and surrounding areas is questionable.

Parking Directional Signs

These small signs direct motorists to public parking areas. They are not highly-visible or conspicuous, and they do not indicate the name of the lots to which they direct motorists. They also do not indicate whether a lot is public or private. Given the importance of parking Downtown, this set of signs should be improved.

Parking Markers/Informational Signs

Currently located only in three public parking areas, these signs mark the name of the lot and provide parking instructions. These signs are simple metal panels. Their general appearance is not consistent among all the lots.

Westport Directional Signs

Custom-designed for Westport, these are the most visual appealing wayfinding signs in Town. They are highly-visible, attractive, and located at various locations in Downtown. However, the destinations they list are limited to the basics: Town Hall, Levitt Pavilion, Main Street, Library, the Police, and Parking.

Other Signs

In Downtown there are other small signs that point the way to destinations such as the Levitt Pavilion and one that points the way to the Westport Chamber of Commerce.

Gateways

Many communities have gateway treatments at prominent portals into specific neighborhoods or districts. While Downtown Westport currently has no formal gateway treatments, the Post Road Bridge—and the river itself—are all iconic features that, taken together, serve as a beautiful gateway.

Figure 87: The Post Road Bridge (as gateway) and existing signs in Downtown

M5: Improve the Wayfinding System for Motorists

The Town should initiate improvements to the existing vehicular wayfinding system through the relocation and replacement of existing signs and the design and placement of new signs. The Town should undertake the following specific actions:

- **Relocate the State Highway Markers/Directional Signs**. The signs should be placed at more clear and logical locations for motorists (see Figure 88). This initiative must be coordinated with CTDOT.
- **Reconsider the messages and placements of the State Regional Directional Signs**. These signs might be more useful if they were to list more critical destinations such as the rail stations.
- **Design a coordinated sign system for directing motorists to Downtown's parking resources**. The blue Westport Directional Signs indicate the general direction of "parking." As people get closer to Downtown's parking lots, a series of attractive, coordinated, and clearly-visible parking directional signs and markers should guide motorists to specific lots and inform them of the regulations for each lot.

See Chapter 4. Downtown Design Guidance for examples of sign types that might be appropriate for Downtown.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Figure 88: The placement and slant of this sign might confuse motorists leaving Downtown via Post Road

M6: Develop Directional & Informational Signs for Pedestrians

This project involves developing directional signs to help pedestrians navigate through Downtown. Given the small scale of Downtown, many pedestrians can use the proposed vehicular sign system to navigate through Town. Therefore, the signs for pedestrians generally should be focused on indicating passageways (see Figure 89) and providing information about the Town. Parking lots could contain an information "kiosk" displaying a map and directory of Downtown businesses.

See Chapter 4. Downtown Design Guidance for examples of sign types that might be appropriate for Downtown.

Figure 89: A small directional sign could help visitors locate the pedestrian passageway between Main Street and Parker Harding Plaza

Transit

Transit: Existing Conditions & Analysis

Fixed route bus, demand response and commuter rail services are currently available in the Town of Westport. The Westport Transit District (WTD), through an operating contract with the Norwalk Transit District, provides fixed route bus transit service and demand response service. The Coastal Link, a fixed bus route which provides service along US-1 in Westport (operating between Norwalk and Milford, Connecticut), is operated jointly by Norwalk Transit District (NTD), the Greater Bridgeport Transit (GBT), and the Milford Transit District (MTD).

Figure 90: The Coastal Link fixed bus route

The WTD fixed route services include seven routes, four (the S1, S2, S3, and S4) that provide commuter shuttle service to Saugatuck Station, two (G1 and G2) that provide commuter shuttle service to Green's Farms Station, and one that provides shuttle service between the Imperial Avenue Lot and Saugatuck Station (see Figure 90 and Figure 91). The S1, S3, and S4, travel through downtown Westport but only operate during peak periods and are only utilized by commuters.

The only full day service in the Town and Downtown is the Coastal Link which operates seven days a week, including during the midday and evening (from 6:10 am to 7:20 pm during the week and on Saturdays, and from 8:30 am to 6:30 pm on Sundays). Buses run every 20 minutes during the peak on weekdays and 60 minutes off peak. On weekends, buses run every 30 minutes during the peak (there is no peak service on Sundays) and 60 minutes during the off peak.

Although there is a bus stop identified on the Coastal Link printed and web-based schedule (at Main Street and Post Road), there are no bus stop signs or transit shelters in Downtown. Outside of Downtown, there are a number of Coastal Link bus stop signs, in addition to one transit shelter.

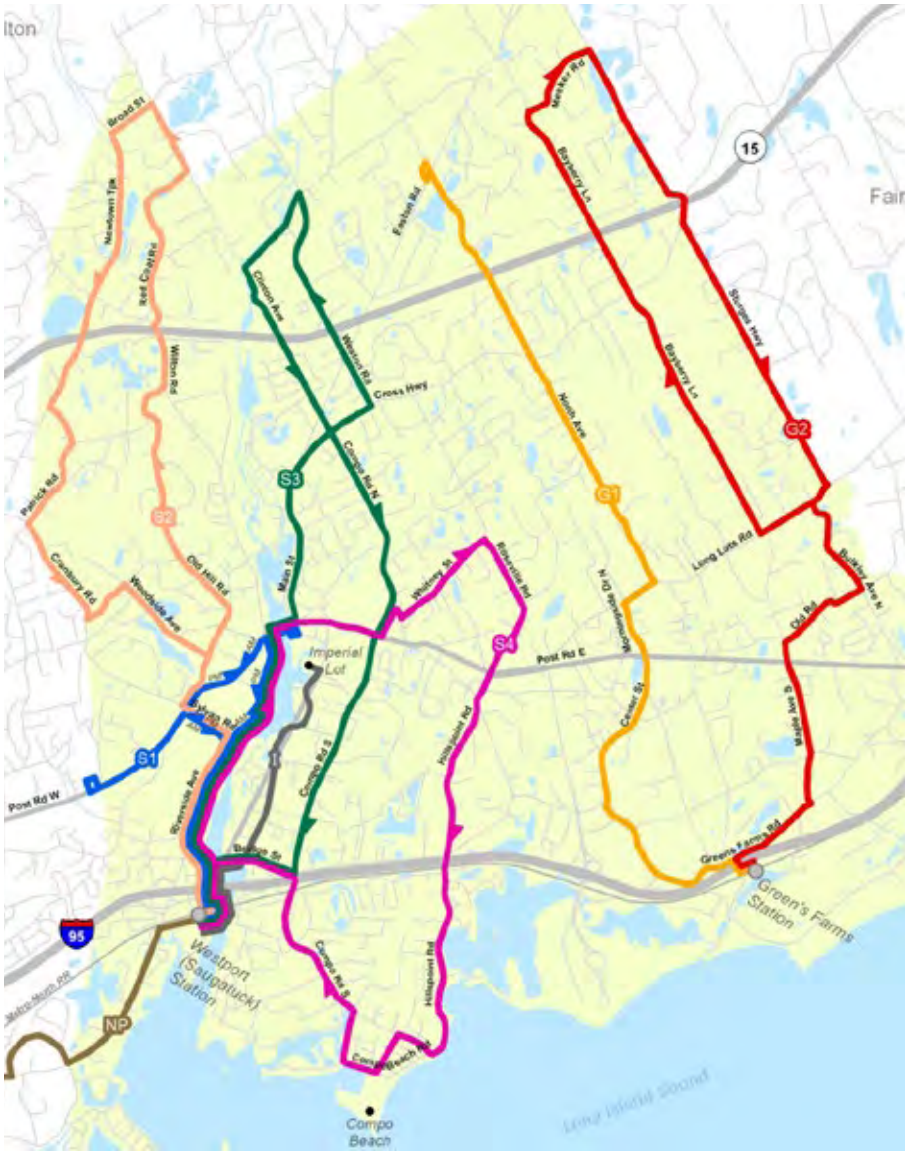


Figure 91: The Westport Transit District route map

WDMA's merchant survey indicated that some employees would be willing to take a shuttle from the train station if better service were provided during non-peak periods. The new connector would make the Imperial Avenue Lot a more appealing parking location for both Downtown employees and customers.

Westport can be accessed by other modes of transportation. MTA Metro-North Railroad provides commuter rail service to Saugatuck and Green's Farms Stations. Private sector services such as taxicabs are available for Westport residents, and major employers provide shuttles for their employees.

The South Western Regional Planning Agency conducted a study to explore ways to improve bus service and enhance public rail connections from both rail stations to work locations. Taxicab service is provided by Westport Star Taxi and Saugatuck Taxi. Rides for seniors are available through the Independent Transportation Network of Coastal Connecticut (ITN) and through NTD.

Note: At the time of the drafting of this Plan, SWRPA was renamed the Western Connecticut Council of Governments (WestCOG).

Westport Bus Service Operations & Needs Study

SWRPA conducted a study to explore ways to improve bus service and enhance public transportation in Westport. The study assessed current bus operations, including fixed route services, services for the disabled, services for the elderly, services to the two Westport rail stations, off-site parking, and after school shuttles. The study addressed these areas and identified ways to better serve residents' travel needs.

While the study focused on commuter routes between Downtown and the rail stations that form the backbone of the system, several observations are relevant to Downtown:

- A lack of daytime connectivity between Downtown, businesses on Riverside Avenue, the Coastal Link bus on Post Road, the Imperial Parking Lot, and Westport (Saugatuck) Station.
- There is no weekend service to serve residential, retail, and recreational areas (e.g., Compo Beach) within Westport. Access to commercial employment in Westport is a week-long need for employees of local businesses. Providing weekend service would enhance mobility for local patrons and might mitigate congestion and parking demand.

Based on these observations (including those focused on the commuter routes), additional outreach, and a subsequent analysis of operations and management, the study identified the following issues and opportunities:

- Core ridership and demand is generated by commuters.
- Expanding service hours will improve flexibility for commuters.
- Need for enhanced connections to Downtown
- Untapped potential for connections between rail stations and Imperial Avenue Lot.
- A growing/evolving need for connections to Town activity centers.

To address these issues, the following preliminary alternatives were developed:

- Modify G1 and G2 to serve Post Road
- Extend Imperial Avenue shuttle by one hour
- Expand AM/PM hours on all routes
- Create a new Saugatuck - Imperial - Downtown Connector (peak direction loop structure; AM to rail station, PM return; seven-hour span (9am-4pm); 20 -25 minute frequency
- Community Connector (Alt. 1) - new weekday, midday service; seven hour span (10am -5pm); connects retail/commercial, Downtown, schools, new YMCA; point-to-point route; hourly or half - hourly service
- Community Connector (Alt. 2) - new weekday, midday service; seven hour span (10am -5pm); connects retail/commercial, Downtown, schools, and new YMCA ; loop structure; hourly or half - hourly service

The study is posted online at www.swrpa.org.

M7: Support Initiatives to Access & Connect Downtown through Public Transit

This Plan supports the findings of the *SWRPA/WTD Bus Study* as they relate to improving public transit connections to and from Downtown, especially the recommendation for a new daytime connector between Saugatuck Station, Imperial Avenue Lot, and Downtown. The Plan also would support additional routes into Downtown. Providing more transit connections through Downtown would help reduce traffic as the hundreds of employees who work in Downtown every day—in addition to visitors—would have an alternative means of transportation to reach Downtown that does not require parking. Reducing vehicular traffic would also benefit the environment.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Figure 92: A shuttle bus awaits passengers at the Imperial Avenue Lot

Figure 93: A bus map and schedule affixed to a parking sign pole at the Saugatuck Station

M8: Provide Amenities for Public Transit Passengers

Transit amenities such as signs and shelters (see Figure 93 and Figure 94) should be provided for the benefit of passengers and to draw additional ridership. A transit shelter for a new daytime connector route, which could also serve the Coastal Link, should be installed along with a route map and schedule, at the intersection of Post Road and Main Street and at the Imperial Avenue Lot, with additional signs placed at appropriate locations along the route. At the time of the drafting of this Master Plan, SWRPA (now WestCOG) was in the process of undertaking the *Westport Rail Stations Parking Study*, which will explore—among many other strategies—providing more amenities for passengers.

EXAMPLE

Figure 94: A bus shelter

Bicycle Circulation

Existing Conditions & Analysis

There are currently no bicycle accommodations in Downtown Westport. Most of Downtown's streets are too narrow to carve out dedicated bike lanes. Nevertheless, there are other ways to make accommodations for bicyclists in Downtown.

The *2007 Plan of Conservation & Development* states goals of establishing and maintaining bicycle routes, enhancing bicycle access to the river, and providing bicycle facilities (such as racks, lockers, etc.) at train stations, businesses, and other locations. Furthermore, SWRPA's *2012 Bicycle & Pedestrian Safety Corridors Study*, which examined several high-priority corridors, recommended applying "sharrows" and bicycle signage (see Figure 95 and Figure 96) in the Downtown portion of the Post Road (US 1) corridor to improve safety conditions for cyclists.

According to SWRPA's *Westport Rail Stations Parking Study*, the Town installed bicycle racks for commuters at the Saugatuck and Greens Farms stations and reports that they are well-utilized. The Town installed additional bicycle racks at the stations in response to requests for more from commuters (see Figure 98 on page 76).

Figure 95: An example of a "sharrow"

Figure 96: A "share the road" sign to encourage vehicles to drive safely along with bicyclists

M9: Provide Bicycle Parking in Downtown

The Town should install bicycle racks in appropriate locations in Downtown, just as it has done at the Town's two rail stations (see Figure 98). Ideally, this could be accomplished as part of a coordinated and comprehensive streetscape treatment of Downtown streets (see P17). If the standard streetscape treatments throughout Downtown (see P17) will not be completed for a while, or if it is implemented in a piecemeal manner, the installation of bicycle racks should be prioritized as an early action. The Town should also install several bicycle parking shelters in visible locations in parking lots and on side streets (see Figure 99). Shelters provide space to park and lock up bicycles while also providing protection from the elements. Additional examples of bicycle racks and shelters are provided in Chapter 4. Downtown Design Guidance.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Figure 97: A bicyclist heading to the Saugatuck Station to catch a train

Figure 98: Bicycle racks at the Saugatuck Station are frequently full

M10: Create a Town-Wide Bicycle Plan

Building off of the 2012 *SWRPA Bicycle-Pedestrian Safety Corridor Study*, which recommended installing sharrows and bicycle signage in the Downtown portion of the Route 1 corridor to improve safety conditions for cyclists, the Town should commission a bicycle plan for the entire Town. This would entail producing a map that identifies connections among local attractions, employment generators, and schools and local/statewide designated bicycle routes. This map could be used to identify gaps and to accompany applications for securing state and federal government grants.

EXAMPLE

Figure 99: A bicycle parking shelter

Mobility: Phasing & Implementation

The table below lists **Mobility** strategies and their staging over the next 5+ years. Strategies are expected to be initiated in a particular stage, but they may not be fully implemented during that stage. Some projects may start in the short-term (i.e., within the next two years), but may not be completed until three or four years later. In addition, the proposed sequencing of strategies is not fixed. The timing and selection of strategies may change depending on the Town's ability to: build partnerships and finalize agreements, coordinate with relevant agencies, secure approvals and permits, and access financing and other funding sources. Another factor that might impact the timing of strategies is the need to minimize disruption to Downtown operations, traffic circulation, and parking.

Short-Term (2015-2017)

The first short-term strategies (M1, M2) aim to improve pedestrian comfort and safety at critical intersections along Post Road in Downtown. Within the next two years, the redevelopment of the west side riverfront will be underway (P6) and the jammed intersection at Route 1 and Route 33 will be improved (M3), reducing the blood pressures of motorists at peak hours. The improvements at the Myrtle Avenue intersections in Downtown (M4) will begin, helping to better connect adjacent residents to Downtown through safer and less daunting crossings. The redesign of the intersection of Main Street and Elm Street (M11) represents a significant and highly-visible Downtown core investment.

A coordinated system of wayfinding signs will help better route people through Downtown and direct them to various parking facilities (M5, M6). At the same time, the Town will pursue measures to improve transit amenities and bicycle circulation (M8, M9, M10).

Mid-Term (2017-2021)

Slated to be initiated within two to five years, these projects involve significant changes to Downtown's street network and are linked with several projects in the Places section. The redesign of Jesup Road (M14) will help replace and reallocate the parking spaces of the Taylor Municipal Lot converted into park space through the reinvention of Jesup Green (P11). Creating a new street, "Library Lane" (M12), is a complex and capital-intensive endeavor that will be initiated within the next two to five years. Library Lane can be fully effective for parking when a new bridge is constructed to connect to the Imperial Avenue Lot and the lot is improved to be more safer and nicer.

There are no long-term strategies identified in this section of the Plan. However, as the Town can revise the staging of strategies over time, some projects could be shifted into the long-term stage.

Timing	Category	#	Project
Short	Mobility	M1	Improve Pedestrian Safety at Post Road Crossings
Short	Mobility	M2	Improve Ped. & Vehicular Safety at Post Rd Intersections thru Traffic Signal Modifications
Short	Mobility	M3	Improve Traffic Movements at the Route 1/33 Intersection
Short	Mobility	M4	Redesign Myrtle Avenue Intersections
Short	Mobility	M5	Improve the Wayfinding System for Motorists
Short	Mobility	M6	Develop Directional & Informational Signs for Pedestrians
Short	Mobility	M7	Support Initiatives to Access & Connect Downtown through Public Transit
Short	Mobility	M8	Provide Amenities for Public Transit Passengers
Short	Mobility	M9	Provide Bicycle Parking in Downtown
Short	Mobility	M10	Create a Town-Wide Bicycle Plan
Short	Mobility	M11	Redesign the Main Street/Elm Street Intersection
Mid	Mobility	M12	Create a New Street: Library Lane
Mid	Mobility	M13	Build a Bridge to Connect to the Imperial Avenue Parking Lot
Mid	Mobility	M14	Redesign Jesup Road
Mid	Mobility	M15	Evaluate Implementing a Real-Time Parking Information System


BALDWIN
PARKING LOT
2 HR PARKING IN
3 HOUR
PARKING
GREEN LINES

C. PARKING: CAPACITY & MANAGEMENT

Existing Conditions & Analysis

An extensive parking analysis of Downtown was conducted to determine existing on-street and off-street parking conditions and how future projects might impact parking demand. While the analysis of on- and off-street parking considered for both sides of the river in Downtown, the summary that follows focuses on the east side of Downtown, where parking is in higher demand. The full results of the study are in the *Downtown Westport Master Plan Traffic & Parking Study*, which is located in Appendix C.

Parking Supply

There are a total of 1,889 spaces within the study area, of which 630 are privately-owned, and 1,259 are publicly-owned (see Figure 102 on page 80). The Imperial Lot has 214 public spaces, but many people perceive them to be "too far" to use. Therefore, the discussion that follows summarizes conditions both with and without the Imperial Avenue Lot. Not including the Imperial Avenue Lot, there are a total of 1,045 public spaces: 912 off-street spaces and 133 on-street spaces.

Parking Peak Demand

Parking utilization during typical weekdays peaks in the early afternoons around 1-2 pm. During the afternoon peaks, utilization of all parking north of Post Road and south of Avery was approximately 88%. South of Post Road the utilization was found to peak around 77% if the Imperial Avenue Lot is excluded, and 62% if the Imperial Avenue Lot is included. The east side combined parking peaks at almost 85% excluding the Imperial Avenue Lot. Figure 103 on page 81 shows peak conditions for the individual lots on weekends midday.

The industry standard for determining practical parking capacity is when supply is approximately 85-90% utilized. Above this range, parking is perceived to be full. Finding a space becomes difficult, which results in "cruising," or driving around to find an available parking space, which adds to congestion.

Parking within Downtown is essentially at the practical capacity limits north of Post Road during peak hours. Any actions that reduce spaces or increase demand will require strategies to manage parking appropriately.

Goals & Objectives

- ★ **Combine and Co-Manage** certain public and private lots
- ★ **Introduce Techniques to Reduce Parking Demand**
- ★ **Consider Longer-Term Measures to Increase Parking Supply**

Figure 100: The Parker Harding Plaza parking lot, a public lot, recently changed from 1-hour to 2-hour parking max

Figure 101: The Elm Street/Baldwin Lot

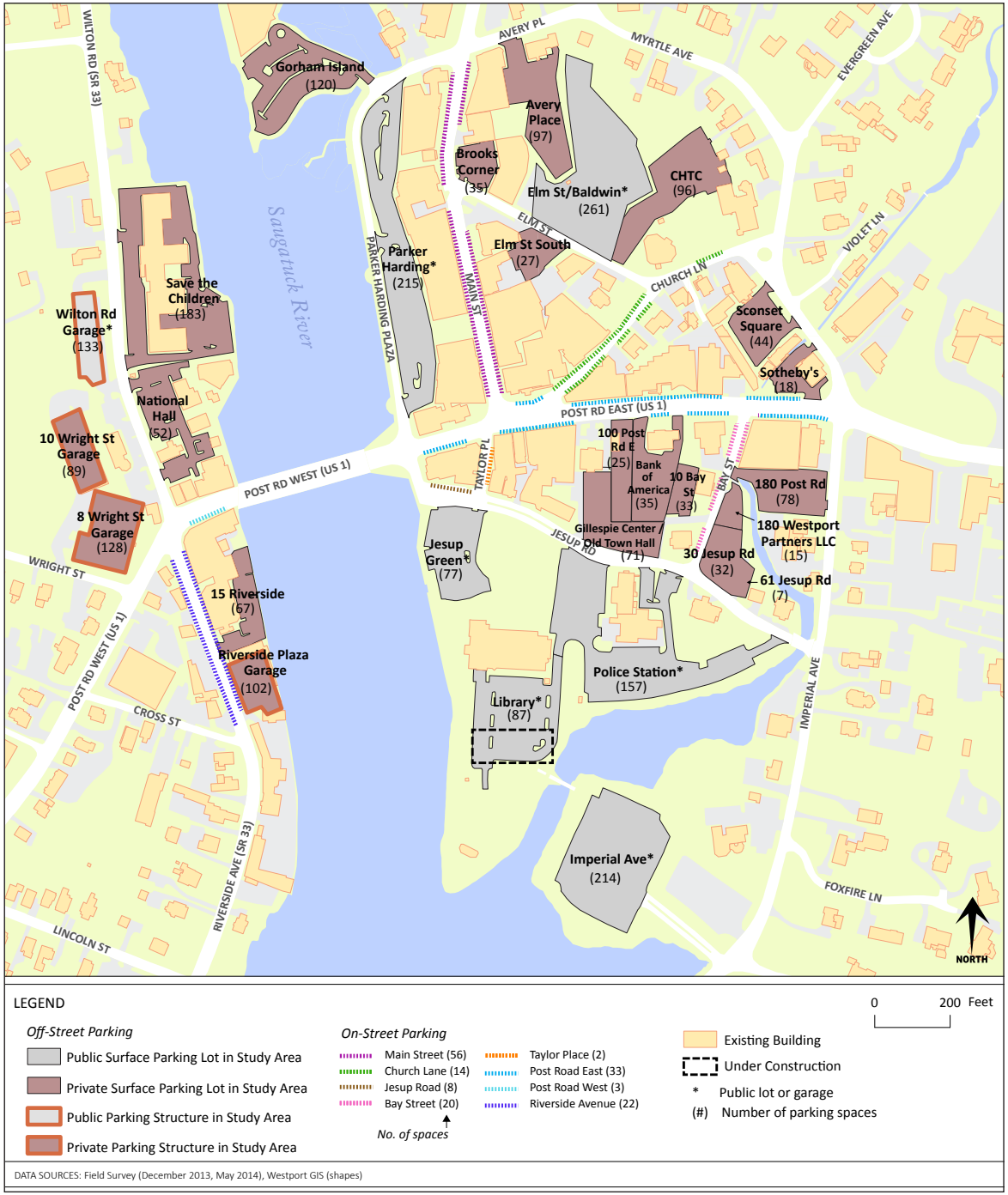


Figure 102: Downtown Westport's on- and off-street parking resources. Numbers indicate quantity of spaces

Several private development projects could potentially impact parking supply and demand in the future. The projects and their potential impacts are as follows:

- The **Bedford Square Development** may be parking neutral or possibly increase parking demand.
- The **relocation of the YMCA** has reduced demand and created additional availability. However, the full development of Bedford Square might reduce this availability.
- The **relocation of the Kemper-Gunn House** to Elm Street has reduced the capacity of the Baldwin Lot by 22 spaces.
- The **Westport Cinema Initiative** (P15) project might increase demand, but mostly during off-peak hours.
- **Westport Arts Center** (P14) being relocated closer to Downtown might increase demand, but most likely during off-peak hours.

Some of the strategies and recommendations in this Plan will individually impact parking capacity in Downtown. Figure 104 on page 82 is a visual representation of the potential impacts on existing parking capacity by project.

Parking Strategies

Solutions to deal with these goals can be complementary. Based on findings from the parking analysis and on input from the general public and key stakeholders, a series of parking strategies have been identified and developed that would minimize the impacts of the existing supply/demand model. These strategies are based on the common environmentally-minded philosophy of "reduce, reuse, and recycle." General, town-wide strategies based on this concept are described here, followed by strategies specific to Downtown.

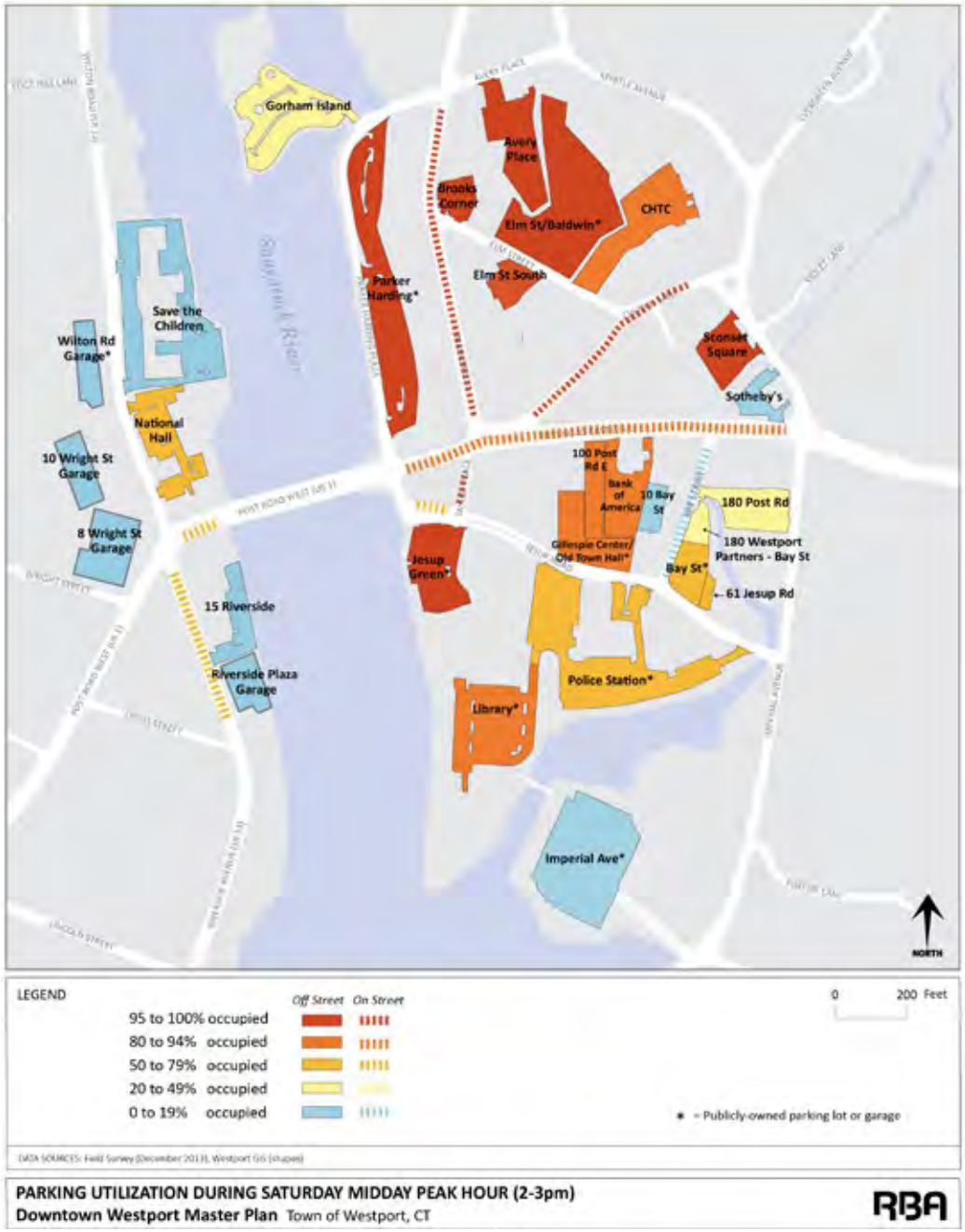


Figure 103: Map depicting parking count results on a Saturday midday (between 2:00 and 3:00 pm)

Figure 104: Potential Parking Impacts of Plan Strategies & Recommendations

			PARKING SUPPLY		PARKING DEMAND		PKG IMPACT	
			Reduction	Increase	Reduction	Increase	Net Change	Notes
-	*n/a*	**Existing Spaces in 2014 (on- and off-street parking spaces) = 1675**						Does not include 214 sp. at Imperial Lot. Demand (1,420) based on parking util. study Dec. 2013
Timing	**#**	**PROJECT**						
-	*n/a*	***Relocation of YMCA***	0	0	100	0	**100**	
-	*n/a*	***Elm Street/Baldwin Lot after relocation of Kemper-Gunn House***	22	0	0	30	**-52**	Retail and office uses
Short	P3	Redesign Church Lane into a "Shared Street"	7	0	0	0	**-7**	
-	*n/a*	***Bedford Square Development*** *(based on 55K sf retail, 5K sf rest., 10K sf office, 24 res. units)*	0	100	0	300	**-200**	Estimate utilizing ULI Shared Parking Model
Short	P5	Restore and Revitalize Elm Street	32	0	0	100	**-132**	
Short	P7	Build a Pedestrian Bridge Crossing the Saugatuck	0	0	40	0	**40**	
Short	PK2	Combine and Co-Manage Public & Private Parking Lots (Elm/Baldwin with Avery)	0	10	0	0	**10**	
Short	PK3	Combine and Co-Manage Public & Private Parking Lots (Gillespie Ctr. w/Old Town Hall)	0	10	0	0	**10**	
Short	PK5	Implement Seasonal Valet Parking	0	40	0	0	**40**	Seasonal valet on both Parker Harding and Baldwin/Avery
Mid	P9	Coordinate with and Integrate the Library Transformation Project	0	0	0	20	**-20**	
Mid	P10	Transform Parker Harding Plaza	27	0	0	0	**-27**	
Mid	P11	Reinvent Jesup Green	77	0	0	0	**-77**	
Mid	P14	Coordinate with and Integrate the Relocation of the Westport Arts Center	0	0	0	50	**-50**	
Mid	P15	Coordinate with and Integrate the Westport Cinema Initiative	0	0	0	50	**-50**	
Mid	M12	Create a New Street: Library Lane	6	22	0	0	**16**	
Mid	M13	Build a Bridge to Connect to the Imperial Avenue Parking Lot	0	160	0	0	**160**	Brings Imperial Ave Lot spaces into the Downtown parking system
Mid	M14	Redesign Jesup Road	0	52	0	0	**52**	
Mid	PK6	Improve the Appearance & Safety of the Imperial Avenue Lot	0	0	0	54	**54**	Improvements encourage increased utilization
Mid	PK8	Evaluate the Need for Structured Parking at Baldwin/Elm Lots	0	100	0	0	**100**	
Long	PK9	Eval. the Need for Structured Pkg. on Police Station Lot or Gillespie Ctr./Old Town Hall Lot	0	200	0	0	**200**	Structures built on both lots.

"Reduce, Reuse, Recycle" for Managing Parking Supply/Demand

As Westport approaches current parking capacity and projects the effects of future development and/or changes in land use, it is important to consider ways to reduce parking demand. Westport already does this in several ways, and improvements are described in this Plan in the Mobility section of this chapter. Many of these concepts make the Town more walkable and pedestrian friendly. Potential transit enhancements provide an alternate to short-distance car trips.

It is recommended that the Town consider progressive demand reduction strategies, such as implementing a shop-owner/employee program to discourage use of "prime" off-street parking spaces, integrating remote lots with shuttle services (see M7 and M13), and providing bicycle parking facilities to promote biking as a means of transportation (see M9). Other measures might include the following:

- Alternate modes promotion (transit, bicycling, walking)
- Bike lanes
- Parking cash out programs - Incentives to Downtown employees who don't drive
- Free or discounted transit passes (TransitChek)
- Priority parking for carpools or vanpools
- Ride-matching services for carpool or vanpool partners (CTRides)
- Car sharing programs (e.g. Zipcar)
- Shuttle bus to transit or parking (see M7)

With careful thought and implementation, each of these options can help reduce some of the overall parking demand and vehicular traffic in Downtown.

Along with the "reduce" initiatives, the Town can efficiently reuse existing parking supply so that some demand can be met without investing in additional parking infrastructure. Effective measures that would "reduce" parking dependence include: an improved wayfinding sign system (see M4 and M6), providing "plan ahead" access to parking information online, and providing shuttle services to remote lots (see M7 and M13). Other strategies to consider include:

- Reorganizing parking and changing existing parking regulations.

What is "Shared Parking?"

Many towns establish parking requirements for individual land uses. However, there are situations where two or more uses can share the same parking spaces. For example, an office building might share a parking facility with a movie theatre because the peak parking utilization for each use typically occurs at different times of the day, so parking for both uses can be accommodated in one parking facility. Shared parking strategies are most often feasible in mixed-use areas, such as downtowns, and can result in fewer parking facilities because visitors can park once and walk to multiple destinations.

- Enhance awareness via wayfinding signs that list the names of parking facilities.
- Encourage or require shared parking in existing lots. Co-manage public and private lots; "decouple" parking from specific businesses.
- Implement valet/attended parking services
- Implement a fee-based system to manage parking in certain locations.

If these measures still result in a shortage of parking, it is appropriate to consider increasing the supply of parking spaces. Ideally, the construction of new parking facilities should be undertaken with an effort to strategically locate these facilities where the benefits of shared parking and maximized utilization are strongest.

The parking strategies that follow have been identified for implementation. Strategies are presented in an incremental manner to manage demands (reduce), maximize supply (reuse), and expand capacity (recycle).

Figure 104 on page 82 provides information on the parking impacts of specific strategies—at least for those that are readily quantifiable. The potential cumulative impact of making pedestrian crossings safer throughout Downtown (see M1 and M4) is easy to quantify. This information will help the Town anticipate parking impacts and respond accordingly as it implements this Plan to ensure that the overall parking availability is close to the rule-of-thumb 15 percent in terms of availability.

PK1: Change Parking from 1-Hour to 2-Hour Maximum in Downtown

While this strategy does not reduce demand or provide expanded capacity, Downtown stakeholders felt that the maximum time for parking should be changed from one-hour to two-hour parking as many Downtown customers need longer than one hour to complete their visit. The parking regulations were modified accordingly along Main Street (see Figure 105) and their impacts monitored. As the change was successful, the Town has since coordinated with CTDOT to expand the two-hour parking maximum to on-street spaces along Post Road .

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Figure 105: The Town has already changed on-street parking spaces from 1-hour parking to 2-hour parking

PK2: Combine & Co-Manage Public & Private Parking Lots (Elm/Baldwin w/ Avery)

PK3: Combine & Co-Manage Public & Private Parking Lots (Gill. Ctr. w/Old Town Hall

The Town should take the initiative to provide co-management of public and private parking lots in order to increase overall supply of parking in Downtown. Both of these opportunities, of course, will require working and negotiating with private property owners. Combining the Elm Street/Baldwin lots with the Avery Place lot (see Figure 106) would provide the opportunity to re-stripe the combined lot—potentially gaining spaces as a result—and to make circulation improvements so that traffic could flow directly from the Avery Place lot to Elm Street. This could also be done with the Gillespie Center and Old Town Hall lots.

Figure 106: An aerial view of the Elm Street/ Baldwin and Avery parking lots

PK4: Relocate Long Term Parking to South of Post Road

The publicly-owned spaces north of Post Road generally are in higher demand than those south of Post Road. To help balance the demand between the two sides of Post Road, longer-term and all-day parking should be relocated. Spaces closest to Downtown should be shorter-term spaces for Downtown shoppers and visitors. Longer-term spaces can be located a bit farther in terms of walking distance and should be used primarily by employees of Downtown businesses, who generally need to park for a longer time period than shoppers.

Out of 476 public off-street spaces located north of Post Road, the Baldwin Lot (see Figure 107) contains 110 long-term (all-day) spaces. Some of these could be reallocated to lots south of Post Road. There are up to 152 short-term spaces available that could be converted into long-term spaces:

- 77 spaces (2-hour) in the Taylor Municipal Parking Lot
- 31 spaces (1-hour) in the Gillespie/Town Hall lot.
- 44 spaces (2-hour) in the Bay Street lot.

The only costs involved would be updating signs and pavement markings.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Figure 107: The Baldwin Parking Lot

PK5: Implement Seasonal Valet Parking

Valet parking offers the convenience of centrally-located drop-off while also increasing the amount of cars that can be parked in the selected valet lot versus self-parking. Valet parking could be implemented during peak days, seasons, and events—or it could be a more permanent solution depending on demand and utilization. The service should be offered for a maximum 2-hour stay to remain consistent with lot regulations, to control long-term parking, and to allow the service to terminate as demand decreases in the afternoon. Three areas that could serve as locations for pilot valet services are portions of the Parker Harding Lot and Elm Street/Baldwin Lot and Gorham Island on the weekends. Portions of the Christ & Holy Trinity Church parking lot could also be considered.

EXAMPLE

Figure 108: Valet parking

PK6: Improve the Safety & Appearance of the Imperial Avenue Lot

Improve the safety and appearance of the Imperial Avenue Lot to make it more desirable for people to park there (see Figure 109). The lot is surrounded by wooded areas, which makes it appear remote, and it has minimal lighting and landscape treatments. The proposed Library Lane (M12), the vehicular bridge connection to the Imperial Avenue Parking Lot (M13), and the potential for shuttle bus service between Saugatuck Station and Downtown (M7) should improve utilization of the lot, but the lot itself should be more welcoming.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Figure 109: The Imperial Ave Lot

PK7: Evaluate a Fee-Based System to Manage Parking in Certain Locations

The goal of managing parking should be to work toward a "reasonable and convenient" amount of parking availability on all streets and lots throughout Downtown. As a rule of thumb, parking should be managed so 15% of spaces on any block or lot are available. Parking is often seen as a right, but when demand begins to exceed supply, best practice suggests valuing parking as a commodity. This is especially relevant in downtown areas, where land is scarce. Parking is a public resource that occupies land and it should be managed to appropriately balance convenience with cost. In Downtown Westport, there is no charge for parking on-street or in public parking lots.

One strategy is to charge for parking in areas where demand is high. The price should be set so that parking availability is balanced with cost. Regular surveys of parking occupancy in various areas can help determine how extensively parking is utilized. Where parking is in such great demand that occupancy exceeds the 85% threshold, prices should gradually be raised to return to 85% occupancy. Conversely, where occupancy is less than 85%—perhaps at parking spaces located farther away—parking can be free or at reduced prices. Parking occupancy should be monitored and adjusted regularly so that changes in conditions and activity are reflected in the current price.

Charging for parking would require a policy change, in addition to a designated entity to administer the program, and some costs for equipment and software. Therefore, the Town should plan and implement this strategy carefully. Charging for parking should be seen first and foremost as a parking management strategy. Revenues that accrue from pay-for-parking programs typically are returned directly to local streets through streetscape improvements and improved pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Such reinvestment can help gain public acceptance of the policy. Pilot programs could experiment with discounts and/or permits for Westport residents, especially during off-peak hours.

Figure 110: A single-space parking meter

Revenue Collection and Control

While the means, methods, and technology associated with pay-for-parking continue to evolve quickly, there are two basic types of revenue control. These include:

- A meter-based system,
- An access-controlled system,
- A combination of the two (e.g., meter-based for on-street and access-controlled for off-street).

Both system types will require equipment and software to be acquired in the future to optimize operational efficiency. Detailed studies will be required to determine the most feasible and economical solution to meet the Town's needs.

Meter Systems

Metering can include single-space meters (see Figure 110) that correspond to a specific space or multi-space meters for to an entire lot, street, or side of block. Both types accept multiple means of payment (e.g., cash, coins, credit

card, pay-by-phone, apps.) Pre-paid tokens could be provided to patrons by local businesses as "vouchers."

The latest technology involves single-space meters that reset themselves after a space has been vacated. Wireless reports can be gathered by handheld receivers or through a WiFi connection and integrated into a central parking management computer system or in a stand-alone system.

Multiple-space meters (see Figure 111) involve one pay station for parking along a curb, or within parking garages and off-street surface lots. On streets, one pay station can replace up to ten single space meters on a block. Off-street, they can manage all spaces within sight, although more machines may be provided for convenience. The multi-space meters offer options to pay by space number (typical in lots/garages), or pay and display (typical for curb parking).

Figure 111: A multiple-space parking pay station

Access Control Systems

Parking lots, whether at-grade or structured, can implement a Parking Access Revenue Management System (PARCS). The systems include all ticket dispensers, card readers, gates, loop detectors, ticket acceptors and cashiering stations all linked together to one central computer.

Many software options are available depending on the extent of the reports desired. The data and reports can be used to monitor and plan for future parking needs and policies. Reports can be generated for data such as all lane activity for entry and exits, type of transaction, trends, daily fee, monthly fee, voucher verification, account activity, tickets for violations, etc. The systems can be expanded and integrated with parking guidance and wayfinding systems (see M5) providing real-time feedback to drivers to reduce congestion and improving access and efficiency.

System Costs & Revenues

The capital expense associated with installing a single space metering system is $300 per space, while multi-space metering systems range between $800 and $1,200 per space depending on the features selected. For Downtown Westport, this could amount to approximately $600,000. A sample calculation of potential revenue is based on the following assumptions:

- Existing hourly occupancy of the 1,045 publicly controlled on and off-street spaces (per parking survey)
- $1.00/hour fee
- Hourly turnover of one vehicle per space per hour
- Fees imposed for 8 hours between 10am – 6pm on weekdays

Based on these assumptions, approximately $1.5 million in revenue would be generated from meters. Another option would be to not include the Police and Library Lots in metering. This would reflect 801 on/off street spaces and result in a revenue generation of $1.1 million/year.

PK8: Evaluate the Need for Structured Parking

The public realm improvements recommended in this Plan, along with planned private/institutional development projects, will make Downtown Westport an even more beautiful, interesting, and lively place for residents and visitors. This may might draw more people (including more employees) to Downtown. While the strategies and recommendations in this Plan aim to reduce parking demand by better managing parking, improving conditions and facilities for pedestrians, and supporting new public transit connections, many people will still drive. In the future, the Town may need to consider increasing the parking supply through the creation of a parking deck to accommodate a greater number of vehicles in Downtown.

Three locations could potentially host a parking deck:

- **Elm Street/Baldwin Parking Lot**. The potential for a parking deck on this lot has been identified in the past. Such a structure would add approximately 100 parking spaces in Downtown. The design and construction costs for a deck at this site could amount to at least $1.2 million. If the Avery Lot could be combined through negotiation with a co-managed Elm/Baldwin Lot, then a larger deck accommodating more parking spaces might be possible to create.
- **Police Station Parking Lot**. The rear portion of the lot where the Police Station is located could be expanded to provide a parking deck, which could add approximately 100 spaces in Downtown.
- **Co-Managed Gillespie Center/Old Town Hall Parking Lot with 100 Post Road, Bank of America, and 10 Bay Street Lots**. A parking deck on the combined site could add approximately 100 spaces in Downtown. The frontage along Jesup Road could potentially be developed with liner buildings that present attractive facades and active uses to the street.

Given that one of the main values guiding this plan is maintaining a “small town” character, the design of any future parking deck, should a deck be necessary, must be carefully considered. The Town might look to neighbors Norwalk and Fairfield to examine how these communities have each financed and incorporated a parking deck into the tight fabric of their downtowns. In South Norwalk, CT for example, a parking deck is fully-obscured behind the historic buildings on Washington Street. Pedestrian access to this parking supply is provided through an alley between two buildings (Figure 112). A parking deck is similarly situated in downtown Fairfield, CT behind buildings on Post Road. Access is provided through a street located parallel to Post Road. The deck’s parapet hides the top level of the deck from the street and its frontage is well-landscaped.

EXAMPLES

Figure 112: A parking deck is located behind buildings along Washington Street in SONO in Norwalk, CT, with access provided through a pedestrian passageway

Figure 113: A two-story parking deck is located behind buildings on Post Road in downtown Fairfield, CT

Parking: Phasing & Implementation

The table below lists **Parking** strategies and their staging over the next 5+ years. Strategies are expected to be initiated in a particular stage, but they may not be fully implemented during that stage. Some projects may start in the short-term (i.e., within the next two years), but may not be completed until three or four years later. In addition, the proposed sequencing of strategies is not fixed. The timing and selection of strategies may change depending on the Town's ability to: build partnerships and finalize agreements, coordinate with relevant agencies, secure approvals and permits, and access financing and other funding sources. Another factor that might impact the timing of strategies is the need to minimize disruption to Downtown operations, traffic circulation, and parking.

Monitoring Program

The Town should set up systems to monitor parking trends, the impacts of various projects and developments, and the effects of the parking strategies. The monitoring program can take on various forms, including manual methods or the use of technology. The following are some possibilities:

- Expand responsibilities for existing Parking Enforcement division of the Police Department, or other Town departments such as P&Z or DPW.
- Engage a private service provider such as a consultant or data collection firm.
- Implement a technology-based monitoring system utilizing remote video cameras that can be monitored periodically from a central workstation. Although this approach could be implemented earlier, it could also be integrated into mid-term and long-term strategies.

Short-Term (2015-2017)

The relocation of the YMCA will temporarily reduce parking demand in Downtown Westport until the Bedford Square development is complete and occupied. Once the Bedford Square project is fully operational, there will probably be an increase in demand for public parking spaces compared with the midday peak demands generated in the past by the YMCA. This period will allow for various parking strategies to be implemented and refined prior to the effects of full demands from the Bedford Square project. In addition, several projects are proposed that will improve distribution of existing parking demand, facilitate general circulation, and alleviate congestion.

The parking strategies that are included in the short-term are sequenced to more make more efficient use of Downtown's parking resources and to more effectively distribute parking throughout Downtown (PK2-PK5).

Timing	Category	#	Project
Short	Parking	PK1	Change Parking from 1-Hour to 2-Hour Maximum in Downtown
Short	Parking	PK2	Combine and Co-Manage Public & Private Parking Lots (Elm/Baldwin with Avery)
Short	Parking	PK3	Combine and Co-Manage Public & Private Parking Lots (Gillespie Ctr. w/Old Town Hall)
Short	Parking	PK4	Relocate Long-Term Parking to South of Post Road
Short	Parking	PK5	Implement Seasonal Valet Parking
Mid	Parking	PK6	Improve the Appearance & Safety of the Imperial Avenue Lot
Mid	Parking	PK7	Evaluate a Fee-Based System to Manage Parking in Certain Locations
Mid	Parking	PK8	Evaluate the Need for Structured Parking at Baldwin/Elm Lots
Long	Parking	PK9	Evaluate the Need for Structured Parking on Police Station Lot or Gillespie Ctr./Old Town Hall Lot

Mid-Term (2017-2021) & Long-Term (2021-2023)

During this stage, the Imperial Avenue Lot will be improved (PK6), and Library Lane and the bridge connecting to the Imperial Avenue Lot will be designed and constructed (M12, M13), which help better integrate the 180 spaces of the Imperial Avenue Lot into the Downtown parking system.

Later in the mid-term stage, the Town, which will have already set up programs to monitor parking trends, should consider whether a fee-based system should be established in certain locations to better manage parking (PK7). It also may create a source of new revenue besides parking tickets. Should the aforementioned strategies not be sufficient to manage parking in Downtown, and parking demand continues to escalate, the Town should evaluate the need for structured parking. It should first explore this possibility at the Baldwin/Elm Lots (PK8). In the long-term, the Town might also consider evaluating the need for structured parking at other locations (PK9).

D. WATER: STORMWATER & FLOOD PROTECTION

Water makes Westport beautiful, yet, water also makes Westport vulnerable. Flood events have become an ongoing threat to property and public safety in Downtown. Floods also could jeopardize future investments like those identified in this Plan.

This section presents existing conditions related to flooding in Downtown, summarizes previous and ongoing efforts to address flooding, and outlines several recommendations that the Town should implement to protect Downtown from flooding to the degree possible.

Existing Conditions & Analysis

Downtown Westport is prone to flooding due to its location in a riverine coastal plain—an area of flat, low-lying land adjacent to a river or stream—and the large amount of impervious surface cover. Almost all of Downtown is developed, with only a minimal amount of open space providing natural drainage. Compounding the situation is Dead Man's Brook, which runs north-south along the eastern edge of Downtown and passes under Post Road, before draining into the Saugatuck River. This stream often overflows after heavy rains, creating localized flooding on Post Road and Myrtle Avenue.

Flood Hazard Areas

The FEMA National Flood Hazard Layer map (see Figure 115 on page 92) shows the probability of flooding in and around Downtown. This map indicates that much of Downtown Westport is in a flood hazard area. This is also indicated on the Town of Westport's Floodzone Map. The 100-year floodplain represents the area that will be flooded, on average, once every 100 years. However, it has a 1% chance of being flooded in any given year. While it is always possible for a 100-year flood to occur annually, smaller floods have a greater chance of occurring in any year and can still create a significant flood hazard to people and property.

The Town has experienced serious flooding several times in the recent past, including two major riverine (i.e., along rivers and streams) flooding events: Hurricane Diane in August 1995 and the Flood of October 1995.

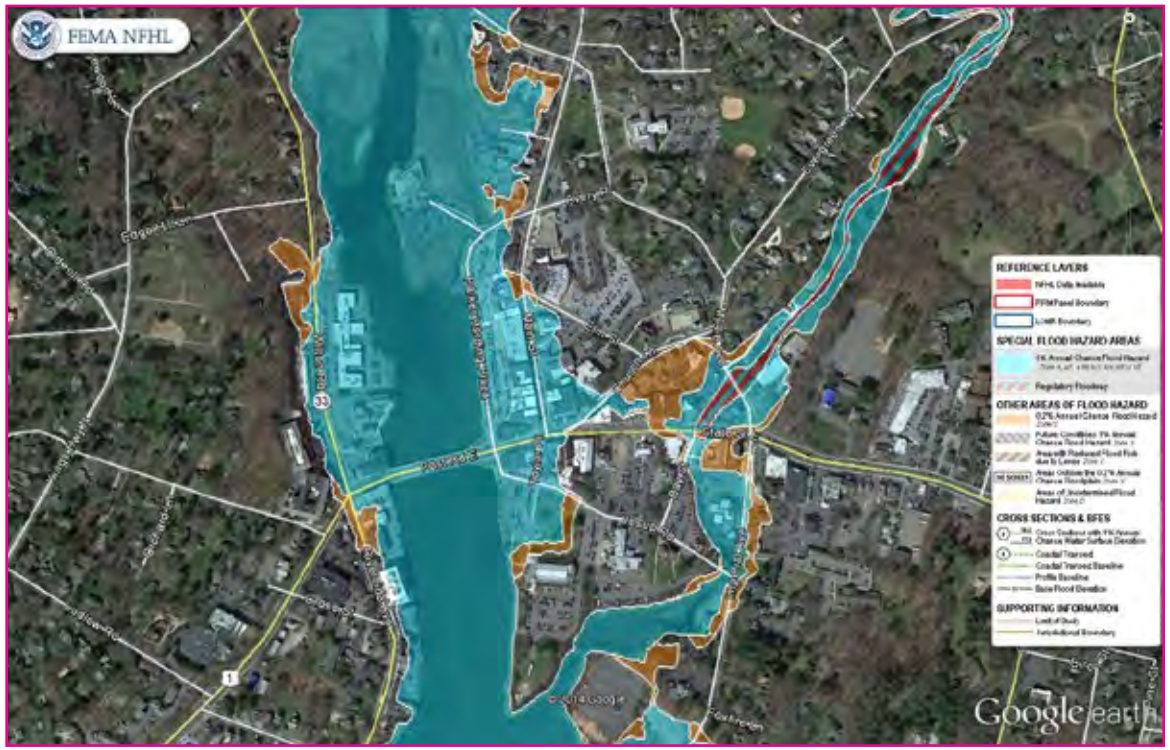
Significant flooding occurred also during Superstorm Sandy in October 2012, Tropical Storm Irene in August 2011, and Tropical Storm Beth in December 1992. While each of these storms were massive events with floodwaters reaching an elevation of 10.1 feet msl (mean sea level) during Tropical Storm Beth, none of them was considered a 100-year storm event.

Figure 114: WestportNow.com photo of Main Street after Tropical Storm Irene

Types of Flooding

Superstorm Sandy and Tropical Storm Irene represent two distinct types of flooding that occurs in Westport: an extreme rain event and a tidal event, each of which requires entirely different prevention and mitigation strategies.

- **Extreme Rain Events**. An extreme rain event typically involves downpours of at least 2 inches of rain in a 24-hour period. Average annual rainfall in Connecticut has been increasing steadily over the past 100 years, and extreme rain events are occurring more frequently, according to the report *Low Impact Development Techniques: Stormwater Problems, Green Infrastructure Solutions* produced by CLEAR and UCONN in 2014. Extreme rain events cause severe flooding in downstream locations, such as Westport, that are located at the bottom of large watershed areas. Figure 116 on page 93 maps the watersheds of the Southwestern Connecticut region. The Saugatuck River watershed—which includes Westport, Weston, and Redding—is the largest in the region, which underscores the regional nature of this type of flooding.



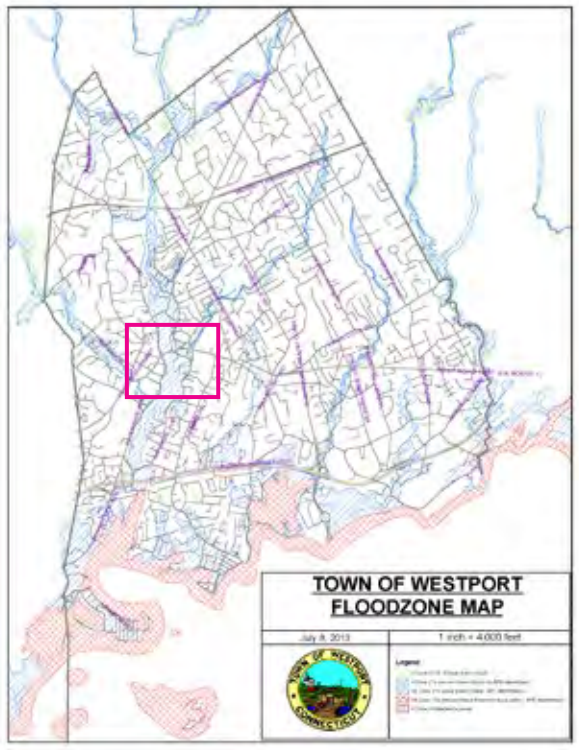


Figure 115: FEMA National Flood Hazard Layer for Downtown Westport, also shown on the Town's Floodzone Map

- **Tidal Flooding**. Tidal flooding occurs when high tide exceeds the normal level by one to three feet, depending on the location. Minor or nuisance flooding, as determined by the National Weather Service, can disrupt local transportation and daily life. Moderate flooding is more extensive and can threaten life and property. This type of flooding can occur with an extreme high tide, or when high tide combines with a storm system such as Superstorm Sandy. In addition, as sea levels continue to rise, tides will exceed these thresholds more frequently. Figure 117 on page 94 shows the impact of tidal flooding from Superstorm Sandy on Downtown.

Overall, Tropical Storm Irene and Superstorm Sandy cost the state more than $235 million and $360 million in damage, respectively.

Prior and Ongoing Efforts to Address Flooding

Town of Westport

As stated in the 2007 *Plan of Conservation and Development* and expressed by residents, business owners, and other stakeholders throughout planning process, storm drainage and flooding are major issues in Downtown Westport. In fact, to address drainage issues on a Town-wide basis, the POCD recommends that the Town's 1970 *Master Drainage Plan* be updated, reviewed, and compared to development trends and current best management practices. This recommendation was not implemented. However, FEMA did update their *Flood Insurance Study for Fairfield County* in 2013, which investigated the severity of flood hazards and revised or updated previous Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs).

Given the situation, the Town's Departments of Public Works, Conservation, and Planning & Zoning have done their best to address stormwater, drainage, flooding,

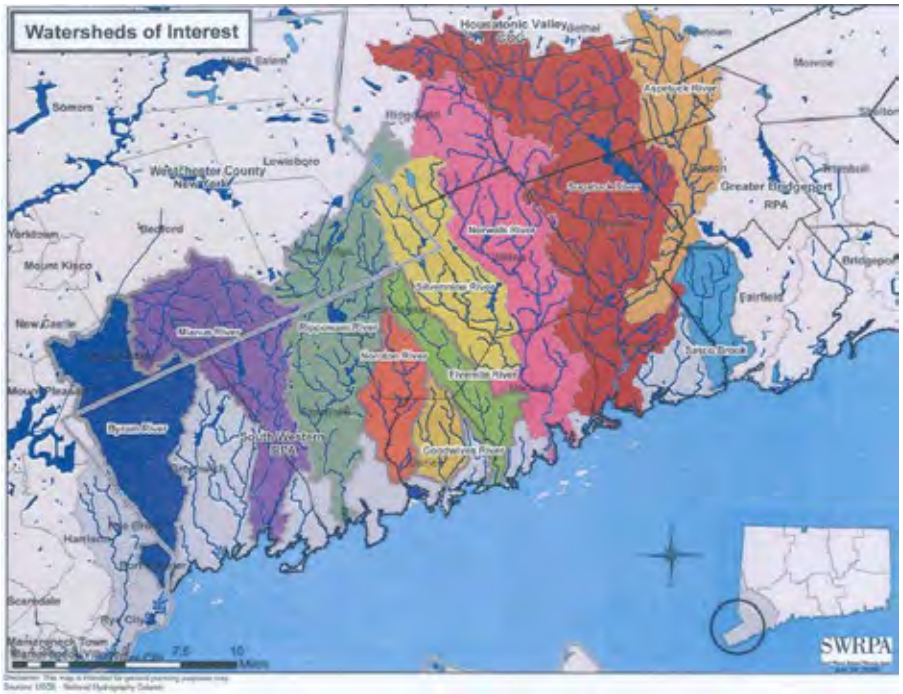


Figure 116: Map showing the watersheds of Southwestern Connecticut

and water quality by undertaking the following actions:

- **Flood Study of Parker Harding Plaza**. The Town conducted a flood study of Parker Harding Plaza in 2000, funded by a FEMA, to reduce flooding on Parker Harding Plaza, Main Street, Church Lane, and Jesup Road. The main recommendation of the study was to place a three-foot high, one-foot wide cap on top of the existing riverbank walls at Parker Harding Plaza and Jesup Road to raise the wall to one foot above the 100-year flood elevation. Additional options to mitigate flooding included installing flap gates on all storm drains discharging into the Saugatuck River, installing sheet piles along the riverbank wall at Parker Harding, and installing a pumping system in Parker Harding Plaza. The estimated cost of constructing the cap was $1.4 million dollars. The recommendations were not implemented.
- **Commercial Flood Audits**. The Town also conducted commercial flood audits of Downtown properties in 2002, funded by a FEMA grant, to identify potential flood proofing suggestions. The Town audited 19 properties with the assistance of the Natural Resource Conservation Service. Recommendations included installing waterproof shields, purchasing portable flood barriers, applying waterproof sealants, installing backflow prevention valves on waste lines, moving important items to above the base flood elevation, etc. Preliminary cost estimates for these recommendations were provided, although the individual property owners need to pay for and implement these flood-proofing measures.
- **Policy Actions**. The Town encourages certain activities and passed new rules to mandate specific measures, which included:
  - Encouraging the elevation of buildings to higher levels through funding support from state grants.
  - Enacting tough regulations on renovation and construction in flood-prone areas. Homeowners or businesses that build additions or renovations in flood-prone areas must elevate the structure to one foot above the Base Flood Elevation (BFE) if their renovations or additions exceed 50 percent of the fair market value of the property in any five-year period (as per FEMA National Flood Insurance Requirements enacted in 2012). Experience in Westport demonstrates that structures elevated above the 100-year flood hazard levels had less damage than structures that were not elevated.
  - Widening of channels and enlarging of culverts in flood areas.
  - Encouraging low impact development (LID) techniques.
  - Adopting a policy that requires a “zero net increase in the rate of runoff” for new residential construction.
- **Community Rating System**. The Community Rating System (CRS) is a voluntary program for National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) participating communities. The goals of the CRS are to reduce flood damages to insurable property, strengthen and support the insurance aspects of the NFIP, and encourage a comprehensive approach to floodplain management. The CRS provides incentives through premium discounts for communities to go beyond the minimum floodplain management requirements to develop extra measures to provide protection from flooding. Westport was first certified through CRS in 1995 and is in the process of being re-certified.

Despite the efforts of the Town and FEMA’s National Flood Insurance program, which provides reductions in insurance premiums if structures are elevated above

Figure 117: Map showing the impact of tidal flooding from Superstorm Sandy in Downtown

the BFE, the cost of flood insurance is still high for many small business owners, which can be a deterrent to locating in Downtown Westport. Flood protection measures have been installed at three commercial properties in Downtown: 125 Main Street, 103-105 Main Street, and National Hall.

Western Connecticut Council of Governments

The Western Connecticut Council of Governments (WestCOG), formerly SWRPA, recently released a draft of its 2016-2021 *Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan Update*. The report, which contains extensive technical analysis, is designed to provide residents, businesses, and emergency responders with information on storms and other extreme weather events, vulnerable locations, and methods to mitigate damage and limit disruption. For Westport, flood and sea level rise mitigation strategies that were ranked as high priorities included the following:

- Identify and publicize regulations that will: a) preserve and protect watercourses, waterbodies, wetlands, steep slopes, and floodplains, and b) conserve floodplain fringe areas, wellhead areas, areas of high groundwater availability, and unique/special habitat areas.
- Further control building in floodplain areas.
- Change floodplain regulations to require at least one foot of freeboard (i.e., feet above sea level) for new or substantially improved homes.
- Make necessary changes to the Floodplain Zoning Regulations so that all insured residents can be eligible for the additional mitigation coverage (i.e., coverage for increased cost of compliance with flood regulations).
- Evaluate how to best prepare for the implications of global sea level rise to best balance public health, safety, and welfare.

State of Connecticut

In March 2015, State Representative Jim Himes (CT-4) announced the availability of federal funds for the Army Corps of Engineers to conduct a feasibility study aimed at reducing flooding in Fairfield County and New Haven County. The study, which will include coastal areas devastated by Superstorm Sandy and Tropical Storm Irene and communities that have been plagued by frequent flooding for decades, is a change for Westport to participate in a regional effort to find ways to reduce flood hazards. The first installment of $300,000 is the federal government's share of funds for the study. The study will take three years to complete, with the total $3 million cost being split between the federal government and a non-federal partner.

Stormwater & Flood Protection Strategies

The following recommendations will advance efforts of the Town to better manage stormwater and combat flooding in Downtown. They range from low-cost strategies including low impact development techniques that are designed to reduce stormwater runoff to capital intensive strategies that address major tidal events coupled with sea level rise, such as building levees, floodwalls, etc.

W1: Coordinate Flood Prevention Efforts with Neighboring Upstream Towns

The Town should coordinate with WestCOG and its neighboring, upstream municipalities within the same watershed to devise collaborative solutions to reduce stormwater runoff in upstream locations. Solutions might involve preserving open space in upstream locations, reducing impervious surfaces in upstream locations, controlling erosion, restoring habitats, reconstructing stream channels, installing green or blue roofs, and constructing both "natural" and engineered detention and retention systems. The feasibility study to be undertaken by the Army Corps of Engineers, which is mentioned on the previous page, is a critical opportunity to participate in a regional forum.

W2: Continue to Implement Low Impact Development Techniques

The Town should continue to implement low impact development (LID) and sustainable design techniques which will accomplish the following. Specific stormwater management LID techniques that can be implemented in Downtown and beyond include pervious pavers, vegetative filters/buffers, stormwater planters, storage/infiltration beds, detention tanks, green roofs, infiltration areas/swales (such as those proposed for the redesign of Parker Harding Plaza), rain gardens/bioretention basins. A more detailed discussion of these techniques is included in **Chapter 4. Downtown Design Guidance**.

Implementing LID also improves water conservation (by catching, collecting, filtering, and reusing rainwater to reduce potable uses, and recycling stormwater for non-potable uses such as watering lawns), promotes energy conservation through techniques such as green roofs (as recommended for the possible Café on Green - P18), and makes the overall environment more attractive through the use of native plants in unconventional planting designs.

W3: Replace Existing Culverts and Pipes

The Town should continue to replace existing stormwater infrastructure, such as culverts and pipes, that were constructed years ago and are not large enough to handle the increased load. The Town has started investigating improvements to the culvert at Dead Man's Brook. According to DPW, before upgrading the culvert and relocating the sanitary sewer, the Town will need to conduct a hydraulic analysis, initiate a condemnation easement, and install a pumping system for local homeowners. The estimated cost for these improvements is $800,000. Where possible, culverts and pipes should be replaced in conjunction with streetscape and sidewalk improvements (see P2 and P17). The Town also should update the 1970 *Master Drainage Plan*—which was recommended in the POCD—as a first step in developing a comprehensive plan for replacing the remaining undersized culverts and pipes.

Figure 118: Map of Fairfield County, CT Towns

W4: Conduct Flood Audits of Downtown Commercial Properties

As many properties have changed hands since 2002, the Town should seek FEMA grants to conduct updated flood audits of commercial properties in Downtown. These audits would involve surveying properties and preparing a list of recommended flood proofing strategies. If these studies are conducted, the Town, perhaps in association with the WDMA, should follow up with individual property owners to monitor progress.

W5: Control Building Development in Downtown's Flood Hazard Zone

According to the recommendation from WestCOG's 2016-2021 *Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan Update*, the Town should control building development in Downtown Westport by carefully reviewing the impacts generated by any new or redevelopment project that is located in the floodplain. If a project is approved, the site plan review should ensure that floodproofing and LID techniques are incorporated into its design.

W6: Investigate Strategies to Combat Tidal Events/Sea Level Rise

The Town should begin to investigate strategies to combat tidal events coupled with sea level rise. *Encroaching Tides: How Sea Level Rise and Tidal Flooding Threaten U.S. East and Gulf Coast Communities over the Next 30 Years*, published by the Union of Concerned Scientists in 2013, describes how tidal flooding and sea level rise may increase over the next 30 years, and how coastal communities are responding. Case studies include: raising buildings and streets during periodic upgrades to infrastructure (Ocean City, MD); elevating roads, installing a new sewer system and water mains, and building a special drainage system to the bay (Broad Channel, Queens, NY); constructing surge barriers and levees (Portland, ME); constructing pumping stations to channel excess stormwater into the harbor along with sea walls (Charleston, SC); and constructing floodwalls, tide gates and pumping stations (Norfolk, VA).

The capital costs for most of these strategies are significant and would require long-term bonding to finance. Furthermore, detailed engineering studies would have to be commissioned. The following approximate unit costs are provided, for informational purposes only:

- **Levees**: Clay - $4,000 to $8,000/lf; T-Wall - $14,000 to $18,000/lf; Double Wall Levee - $5,000 to $6,000/lf
- **Elevating Roadways**: $1.6 million/mile per foot elevation
- **Elevating Buildings**: $60/sf
- **Floodwall Sheet Pilings**: $25/sf

EXAMPLES

Figure 119: Floodgates in Providence, RI

Figure 120: The City of Sunbury, PA, facing repeated flooding from the Susquehanna River, constructed flood walls along its riverfront

Water: Phasing & Implementation

The table below lists **Water** strategies and their staging over the next 5+ years. Strategies are expected to be initiated in a particular stage, but they may not be fully implemented during that stage. Some projects may start in the short-term (i.e., within the next two years), but may not be completed until three or four years later. In addition, the proposed sequencing of strategies is not fixed. The timing and selection of strategies may change depending on the Town's ability to: build partnerships and finalize agreements, coordinate with relevant agencies, secure approvals and permits, and access financing and other funding sources. Another factor that might impact the timing of strategies is the need to minimize disruption to Downtown operations, traffic circulation, and parking.

Short-Term (2015-2017)

With the exception of W6: Evaluate Strategies to Combat Tidal Events/Sea Level Rise, all of the strategies should be initiated in the short-term—within the next two years. With funding recently announced for a regional feasibility study, the Town should be ready to coordinate with neighboring communities (W1)

Implementing low-impact development techniques (W2) can continue as the design phases of specific short-term, mid-term, and long-term projects in the **Places**, **Mobility**, and **Parking** categories begin.

Replacing existing culverts and pipes (W3) should be coordinated as closely as possible with streetscape, sidewalk, and intersection improvement projects in the **Places** and **Mobility** categories to minimize disruptions to Downtown operations and to be as cost-effective as possible.

Additional short-term strategies include W4: Conduct Flood Audits of Commercial Properties and W5: Control Building Development in Downtown's Flood Zone. Although these are not high priority actions with respect to those strategies listed before them, they should still be initiated within the next two years.

Long-Term (2021-2023)

W6: Evaluate Strategies to Combat Tidal Events/Sea Level Rise is a long-term strategy.

Timing	Category	#	Project
Short	Water	W1	Coordinate Flood Prevention Efforts with Neighboring Upstream Towns
Short	Water	W2	Continue to Implement Low Impact Development Techniques
Short	Water	W3	Replace Existing Culverts and Pipes
Short	Water	W4	Conduct Flood Audits of Downtown Commercial Properties
Short	Water	W5	Control Building Development in Downtown's Flood Hazard Zone
Long	Water	W6	Evaluate Strategies to Combat Tidal Events/Sea Level Rise

3. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION & POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

A. MANAGEMENT

The projects identified in this Plan will require an entity or staff to manage and coordinate their implementation. Furthermore, determining how existing and new physical infrastructure investments are maintained—and by whom—also needs to be considered. This will entail reviewing the status of existing efforts and programs to maintain the Downtown public realm.

Town departments and staff will be involved at the appropriate capacity, with the understanding that Town staff work on behalf of the entire Town, not just Downtown. Partnerships with existing institutions and organizations will be instrumental in implementation and maintenance. The Town should also consider creating entities and mechanisms to oversee specific activities and contracting out certain maintenance responsibilities.

Two key management strategies must be undertaken in the short-term:

G1: Create an Entity/Position to Manage Plan Implementation

The Town should directly hire or contract with a professional—perhaps initially on a part-time basis—to manage the systematic implementation of this Plan. This Downtown Operations Manager—along with a Downtown Implementation Committee comprised of representatives of Planning & Zoning, Public Works, Parks & Recreation, Police, and WDMA—would manage and coordinate:

- Many of the actions outlined in the Implementation Plan (see Section C).
- A master implementation schedule.
- A range of public and private entities—among them Town departments/committees/boards, property owners, state agencies, consultants—that each will have various roles and responsibilities of their own.
- Discussions on assigning tasks to Town departments and allocating/sharing maintenance responsibilities among various entities (see G2).
- Information and outreach to residents, in collaboration with the Selectman's Office.

G2: Plan/Coordinate Maintenance of Downtown Public Infrastructure

The Plan will introduce new open spaces, roadway/traffic infrastructure, surfaces, plantings, furnishings, signs, and walkways in Downtown. This carries with it obligations to maintain such elements to meet community expectations for safety, cleanliness, and attractiveness.

Maintenance responsibilities (which would include financing) should be shared among the Town, property owners, merchants, developers, the Library, and other institutions, all of whom stand to benefit from the implementation of this Plan. It is important to note that existing Town ordinances already delegate responsibilities for certain maintenance activities. Furthermore, strategies involving infrastructure on State roadways would require coordination with CTDOT.

The Town, through the Downtown Operations Manager, should coordinate and negotiate with these entities to arrange for maintenance of public infrastructure as the strategies in this Plan are designed and implemented. In addition, the Town, which is the property owner in Downtown, may need to consider investing in expanded capacity and/or contracted services. Ultimately, the Town and its partners should develop a coordinated, shared maintenance plan and associated agreements that consider the following degrees of maintenance:

- Routine maintenance (e.g., trash and recycling collection, snow removal)
- Reactive/emergency maintenance (e.g., storm cleanup, accidents resulting in damage, vandalism)
- Preventative maintenance (e.g., curb and sidewalk maintenance, tree pruning)
- Capital projects and replacement

A Framework for Maintenance

The organizing structure of the strategies described in Chapter 2 is based on four categories, or types, of investments: **Places**, **Mobility**, **Parking**, and **Water**. Given the general commonalities of projects within each of these categories, guidance on maintenance can also be organized as such.

Within this framework, WDMA could be an important partner in implementing this strategy, along with its ongoing beautification activities, within a predefined area in Downtown. According to its mission, WDMA is a membership-based nonprofit organization of merchants and landlords "working together to improve the commerce and culture of Downtown Westport for the benefit of the community and the commercial interests in Downtown Westport." WDMA helped fund the construction of the curb extension at Main Street and Elm Street in 2013 and the Tunnel Vision project in 2014 (see Figure 121).

Given its mission, WDMA could manage the maintenance and beautification of certain parts of Downtown, perhaps looking to the maintenance and beautification process that will be used for the Bedford Square project, the redevelopment of the west side riverfront, and other properties within a predetermined core area of Downtown. The Town could work with WDMA to create a joint task force or oversight committee to identify the specific boundaries of the service area within Downtown that would receive maintenance and beautification services. The following basic maintenance and beautification activities could be assigned:

- Snow removal, plowing, salting of sidewalks
- Trash and recycling collection
- Landscaping (planting, pruning, maintenance, weeding, seasonal flowers, etc.)
- Sidewalk sweeping and maintenance
- Beautification projects (planters, banners, hanging flower baskets, etc.)

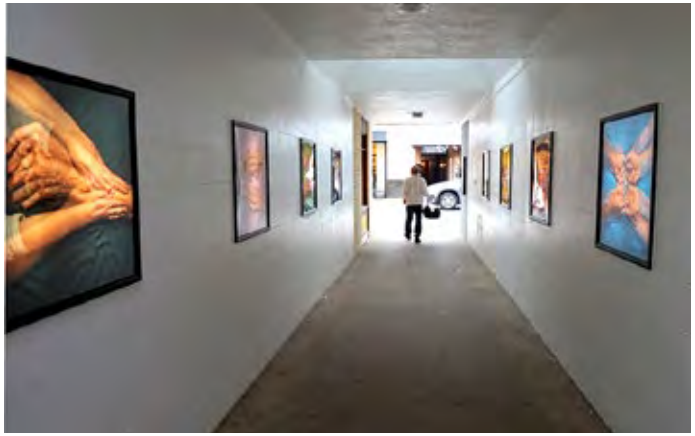


Figure 121: The Tunnel Vision project in the passage between Main Street and Parker Harding Plaza

Paying for Maintenance & Beautification

The Bedford Square project and the redevelopment of the west side riverfront (i.e., the former "Save the Children" site) may generate at least $1-$1.5 million in tax revenue for the Town. The Town should consider allocating a specific percentage of this revenue to pay for ongoing maintenance and beautification in Downtown. A portion of the parking ticket revenue also could be dedicated to these activities.

If a fee-based parking system is implemented in a portion of public parking lots, a percentage of these revenues also could be allocated toward Downtown maintenance and beautification.

Currently the Town has budgets for snow removal, garbage collection, landscaping, maintenance of lighting, signage, etc. for the entire Town of Westport. A percentage of this budget could be allocated specifically for Downtown maintenance and beautification.

Figure 122: A Framework for Maintenance

Category	Short- and Mid-Term Strategies Requiring Maintenance Plans	Applicable Ordinances/Regs	Town's Potential Maintenance Partners	New/Addl. Ideas to Consider
PLACES	**P1: Main Street Streetscape** **P2: Sidewalks/Curbs** **P3: Church Lane "Shared Street"** **P7: Pedestrian Bridge** **P8: Westport Arts & Cultural Heritage Trail** **P10: Parker Harding Plaza** **P11: Jesup Green** **P12: Public Restroom** **P13: Taylor Place "Shared Street"** **P16: Pedestrian Passageways** **P17: Downtown Streetscapes**	• **P2**: Sec. 50-407. - Business use sidewalks—Snow and ice removal and Sec. 50-406. - Business use sidewalks—Responsibility for maintenance, repairs.	• **P1**, **P2**: Property owners, business owners, WDMA, CT Light & Power • **P3:** Bedford Square Developer • **P7:** West Side Riverfront Developer • **P8:** Various local civic institutions/organizations • **P10**: Property owners, business owners, WDMA • **P11**: Library, future property owners along north side of Library Lane • **P13**: Property owners, business owners, WDMA • **P16**: Property owners, business owners, WDMA • **P17**: Property owners, business owners, WDMA	• **P1, P12, P13, P17**: Contract with private vendors and/or non-profit organizations (e.g., garden club, cooperative extension) • **P1**, **P10**, **P11**, **P16**, **P17**: Non-profit organizations; "Adopt-a-Tree" type programs for street trees, rain gardens/bioswales
MOBILITY	**M1: Post Road Crossings** **M2: Post Road Traffic Signals** **M3: Route 1/33 Intersection** **M4: Myrtle Avenue Intersections** **M5: Vehicular Wayfinding Signs** **M6: Pedestrian Wayfinding Signs** **M8: Transit Amenities for Passengers** **M9: Bicycle Parking** **M11: Main/Elm Intersection** **M12: Library Lane**	• **M1**, **M2**, **M3**: CTDOT maintenance standards • **M5**: CTDOT and MUTCD maintenance standards	• **M1, M2, M3**: CT DOT • **M5**: CTDOT, signed institutions • **M8**: NTD • **M9**: WestCOG • **M12**: Library, future property owners along north side of Library Lane	
PARKING	**PK2: Combined Elm/Baldwin with Avery Lot** **PK3: Combined Gillespie Ctr. w/Old Town Hall** **PK6: Imperial Avenue Lot** **PK7: Fee-Based Parking System**		• **PK2**, **PK3**: Property owners • **PK6**: NTD	• **P7**: Consider staffing the Traffic Authority or consider creating a Parking Authority
WATER	**W3: Culverts/Pipes**	• **W3**: Chapter 62: Utilities	• **W3:** Property owners	

Maintenance Activities & Costs

Public infrastructure maintenance activities and costs can vary considerably depending on many factors, among them the following:

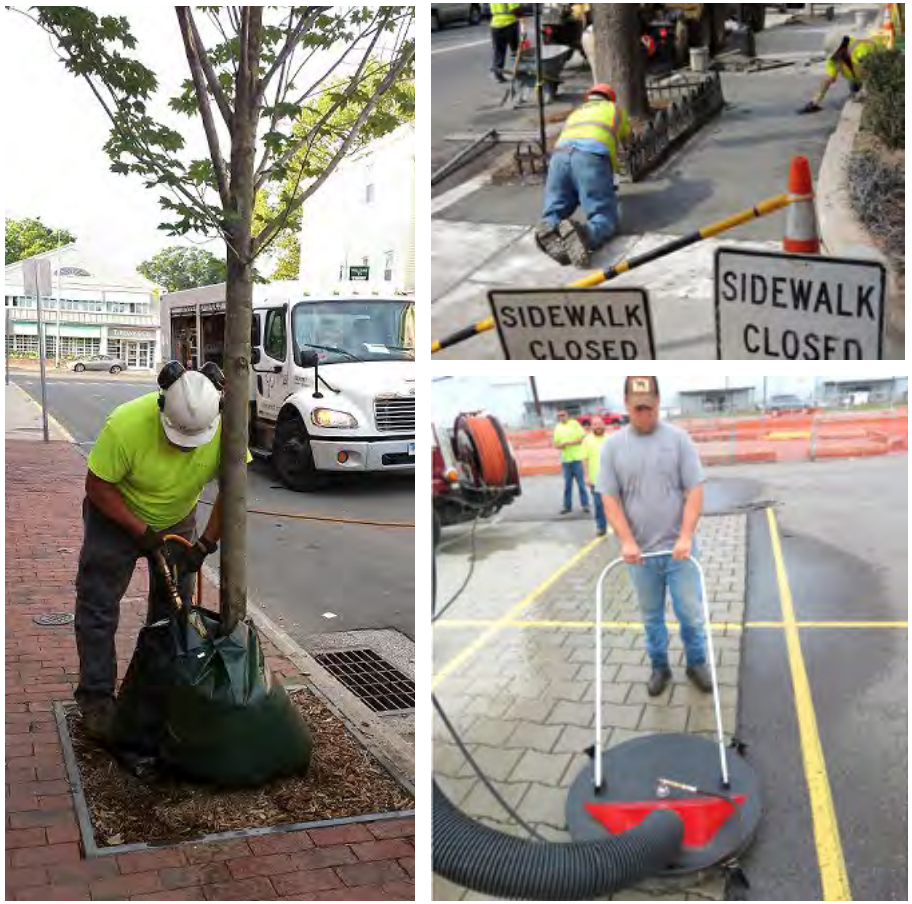
- Size/scale (i.e., area).
- Geography/topography, weather, and climate.
- Level of activity and utilization.
- Character/nature of adjacent land uses.
- Types, durability, complexity, and density of furnishings and surfaces (e.g., streetlights and water features such as fountains require electrical, mechanical, and/or plumbing expertise/equipment; bioswales may require specialized expertise)
- Types, species, and density of plantings (e.g., flowering vs. non-flowering, dense canopy vs. light canopy)

This Plan presents basic concepts for a range of public infrastructure projects. The precise design attributes of these projects, according to the list of factors above, will be determined during the preliminary and final design stages. Therefore, it is during these stages that maintenance cost estimates can be accurately calculated. For certain activities that may be bid out to private vendors, "true" costs will become apparent after bids are submitted and reviewed.

While cost information for maintenance is indicated as "to be determined" under the strategy G2: Coordinate and Manage Maintenance of Downtown in the Funding Worksheets subsection that follows, Figure 124 on page 104, titled "Funding by Source of Funds," shows how maintenance costs might be allocated among various entities, including developers, private property owners, civic institutions, and the State of Connecticut.

In Figure 125 on page 108, titled "Funding by Stage and Fiscal Year," maintenance costs, once they are determined, should be included for public infrastructure projects only **after** each project is expected to be constructed. Maintenance costs should be represented as annual costs as each project can be expected to generate a certain amount of costs each year.

Figure 123: Examples of maintenance activities



Tree maintenance along Main Street in Downtown Westport | Sidewalk repair around a tree pit | Permeable pavements require specialized maintenance in order to function properly

B. FINANCING

Overview of Financial Resources: Capital Projects

Municipalities utilize capital improvement plans to identify present and future needs requiring capital infrastructure. Such plans typically operate for a shorter duration than a master plan, often three-to-five years, and list planned projects and capital programs along with corresponding revenues and financing sources. Considering financial factors during the development of this Plan helps ensure a smoother transition of long-range plans to implementation and reduces the impact on the capital improvement plan and future operating budgets. To adequately guide the fiscal, operating, and land use needs of Downtown, Town finance staff should use this Plan as a framework for capital project requests that are listed in the capital improvement plan.

Funding Strategies

The following are descriptions of typical strategies that the Town can use to finance a capital project investment plan:

- **Bonding**. General obligation bonds are paid out of the Town's annual revenues over a period of time. Revenue bonds are sold to develop projects that will produce revenues for the Town in the form of user fees.
- **Impact Fees**. Charges against developers to pay for Town services that the new developments may require including upgrades to sewers, roads, parks, etc.
- **Enterprise Funding**. Dedicate a portion of the revenue stream from leases and taxes generated from investment on Town-owned property (see P5) to fund capital improvements.
- **Capital and Non-recurring Funds**. Reserves or funds from the general Capital Budget or Town Operating budget used to offset the costs of capital infrastructure improvement.
- **Parking Impact Revenue**. Revenue generated from implementation of a fee-based parking program (see PK7) that can be reserved to offset future infrastructure projects and as collateral for bonding future monies.
- **Special Service Districts**. Often called "business improvement districts," SSDs provide special services to a finite area of impact, supporting itself with special taxes earmarked for improvements.

The following are critical questions that the Town must consider in the implementation of each project described in this Plan:

- Should a particular infrastructure project be financed?
- Should the Town bond as a capital expense?
- Should the Town use non-recurring capital from Town budgets?
- Should Town reserves be used?
- Can the Town seek grants from State or Federal agencies?
- Can costs be shared with private and institutional actors?
- What non-traditional means might be considered to raise funds for specific types of projects (e.g., naming rights, crowdfunding, etc.)

Special Services District

Municipalities can also create SSDs, on behalf of the property owners of an area. SSDs have been most commonly used by downtown areas to provide services desired by specific areas, such as merchants desiring extra street cleaning, lighting, or trash pickup. SSDs can also acquire and convey real and personal property, recommend to the municipality's legislative body that it impose a separate tax on property in the district to support its operations, and borrow money for up to one year backed by district revenues.

The process to form an SSD formally begins when a town adopts an ordinance establishing the district. However, the initiative usually comes from property owners who desire extra public services and are willing to pay for them through extra property taxes. The ordinance takes effect only if the affected property owners vote within 60 days to approve it. The voting process varies depending on how the district is configured.

Funding Worksheets

There are two versions of the funding worksheets for this Plan. Figure 124, titled "Funding by Source of Funds," shows how the costs for each project might be allocated among the Town and other sources such as state and federal agencies and developer contributions. Figure 125 on page 108 shows the costs by stage (short-term, mid-term, long-term) and further allocates costs within each stage by fiscal year.

Funding by Source of Funds

Figure 124: Funding by source of funds

Timing	#	PROJECT	TOWN (Operating Capital or Bond)	TOWN (Capital, Non-Recurring)	CIVIC / NONPROFIT CONTRIB.	DEVELOPER FUNDS / CONTRIB.	STATE	FEDERAL
Short	G1	Create Entity/Position to Manage Plan Implementation	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Short	G2	Coordinate & Manage Maintenance of Downtown	20%	0%	20%	10%	25%	0%
Short	P1	Implement Planned Main Street Streetscape Improvements	0%	0%	0%	0%	80%	0%
Short	P2	Improve & Complete the Sidewalk Network throughout Downtown	75%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Short	P3	Redesign Church Lane into a "Shared Street"	25%	0%	0%	75%	0%	0%
Short	P4	Support Improvements to Toquet Hall	0%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Short	P5	Restore and Revitalize Elm Street	0%	5%	0%	80%	0%	0%
Short	P6	Coordinate with and Integrate Redevelopment of the West Side Riverfront	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
Short	P7	Build a Pedestrian Bridge Crossing the Saugatuck	0%	8%	0%	92%	0%	0%
Short	P8	Create a Westport Arts & Culture Heritage "Trail"	0%	20%	30%	0%	40%	0%
Short	M1	Improve Pedestrian Safety at Post Road Crossings	0%	0%	0%	0%	20%	80%
Short	M2	Improve Ped. & Vehicular Safety at Post Rd Intersections thru Traffic Signal Modifications	0%	0%	0%	0%	20%	80%
Short	M3	Improve Traffic Movements at the Route 1/33 Intersection	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
Short	M4	Redesign Myrtle Avenue Intersections	90%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Short	M5	Improve the Wayfinding System for Motorists	0%	90%	10%	0%	0%	0%
Short	M6	Develop Directional & Informational Signs for Pedestrians	0%	90%	10%	0%	0%	0%
Short	M7	Support Initiatives to Access & Connect Downtown through Public Transit	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Short	M8	Provide Amenities for Public Transit Passengers	0%	0%	0%	0%	20%	80%
Short	M9	Provide Bicycle Parking in Downtown	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Short	M10	Create a Town-Wide Bicycle Plan	20%	0%	0%	0%	80%	0%
Short	M11	Redesign the Main Street/Elm Street Intersection	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Short	PK1	Change Parking from 1-Hour to 2-Hour Maximum in Downtown	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Short	PK2	Combine and Co-Manage Public & Private Parking Lots (Elm/Baldwin with Avery)	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Short	PK3	Combine and Co-Manage Public & Private Parking Lots (Gillespie Ctr. w/Old Town Hall)	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Short	PK4	Relocate Long-Term Parking to South of Post Road	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Short	PK5	Implement Seasonal Valet Parking	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Short	W1	Coordinate Flood Prevention Efforts with Neighboring Upstream Towns	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Short	W2	Continue to Implement Low Impact Development Techniques	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

NOTE: Sequence of projects and cost information/allocations subject to change.

The cost information presented on these pages, calculated by RBA's landscape architects and engineers (with input from the Department of Public Works), are order of magnitude costs based on general concepts. These are not formal cost estimates. Formal, itemized cost estimates will be calculated during the preliminary and final design and engineering stages of each project, based on more detailed drawings and construction documents.

PRIVATE CONTRIB.	TOTAL	TOTAL TOWN SHARE	*NOTES*
0%	$180,000	$180,000	
25%	TBD	TBD	
20%	$799,000	$0	*MSIF*
25%	$1,320,000	$990,000	*Possible STEAP and/or STIP allocation*
0%	$1,500,000	$375,000	*Bedford Square project developer*
50%	$65,000	$32,500	
20%	TBD	TBD	*Town receives revenue/taxes from lease of land. Costs/revenue TBD*
0%	$0	$0	*Not a Town capital expense*
0%	$1,050,000	$84,000	*Developer of the west side riverfront redevelopment project*
10%	$50,000	$10,000	*DECD grant*
0%	$1,500,000	$0	*STIP includes 80% federal/20% state share*
0%	$220,000	$0	*STIP includes 80% federal/20% state share*
0%	$765,000	$0	*Developer of the west side riverfront redevelopment project*
10%	$270,000	$243,000	*Possible propertyowner contribution at Myrtle & Church intersection*
0%	$155,000	$139,500	*Incl. contribution from signed destinations*
0%	$30,000	$27,000	*Incl. contribution from signed destinations*
0%	$0	$0	*Not a Town capital expense*
0%	$75,000	$0	*STIP includes 80% federal/20% state share*
0%	$10,000	$10,000	*Possible STIP allocation*
0%	$50,000	$10,000	
0%	$150,000	$150,000	
0%	$1,500	$1,500	
0%	$140,000	$140,000	
0%	$20,000	$20,000	
0%	$1,500	$1,500	
0%	$0	$0	*Vendor pays Town to provide service and collects revenue*
0%	$300,000	$0	*Not a Town capital expense; federal appropriation*
0%	$0	$0	*Incorporated into individual projects*

TOWN

Town of Westport.

CIVIC/NONPROFIT

This category may include local civic institutions and organizations such as the Westport Art Center, Westport Cinema Initiative, Westport Library. It could also include other local, regional, and national nonprofit organizations and foundations.

DEVELOPER

Real estate developers of projects in Downtown Westport.

STATE

This includes State of CT agencies such as the Office of Policy & Management (OPM), Department of Economic & Community Development (DECD), Department of Housing (DOH), and Department of Transportation (CTDOT). This may include grants through the Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP), the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), Main Street Investment Fund (MSIF) or other programs. STIP includes a 20% state share (see FEDERAL).

FEDERAL

This includes federal agencies such as FEMA and the Army Corps of Engineers. It also could include Congressional appropriations and other federal sources. STIP includes an 80% federal share of funding.

PRIVATE CONTRIBUTION

This category includes property owners, business owners, and residents.

NOTE: Sequence of projects and cost information/allocations subject to change.

Funding by Source of Funds (continued)

Timing	#	PROJECT	TOWN (Operating Capital or Bond)	TOWN (Capital, Non-Recurring)	CIVIC / NONPROFIT CONTRIB.	DEVELOPER FUNDS / CONTRIB.	STATE	FEDERAL
Short	W3	Replace Existing Culverts and Pipes	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Short	W4	Conduct Flood Audits of Downtown Commercial Properties	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Short	W5	Control Building Development in Downtown's Flood Hazard Zone	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Mid	P9	Coordinate with and Integrate the Library Transformation Project	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Mid	P10	Transform Parker Harding Plaza	65%	0%	5%	0%	20%	10%
Mid	P11	Reinvent Jesup Green	65%	0%	5%	0%	20%	10%
Mid	P12	Provide Public Restrooms (either on Jesup or Parker Harding)	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Mid	P13	Redesign Taylor Place into a "Shared Street"	80%	0%	0%	0%	20%	0%
Mid	P14	Coordinate with and Integrate the Relocation of the Westport Arts Center	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Mid	P15	Coordinate with and Integrate the Westport Cinema Initiative	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Mid	P16	Create/Improve Pedestrian Passageways	80%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Mid	P17	Implement/Install Standard Streetscape Elements throughout Downtown	55%	0%	0%	0%	25%	0%
Mid	M12	Create a New Street: Library Lane	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Mid	M13	Build a Bridge to Connect to the Imperial Avenue Parking Lot	70%	0%	0%	0%	20%	10%
Mid	M14	Redesign Jesup Road	90%	0%	10%	0%	0%	0%
Mid	M15	Evaluate Implementing a Real-Time Parking Information System	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Mid	PK6	Improve the Appearance & Safety of the Imperial Avenue Lot	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Mid	PK7	Evaluate a Fee-Based System to Manage Parking in Certain Locations	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Mid	PK8	Evaluate the Need for Structured Parking at Baldwin/Elm Lots	80%	0%	0%	20%	0%	0%
Long	P18	Place a Café on Green	0%	0%	10%	10%	0%	0%
Long	P19	Construct a Downtown Landing	70%	0%	20%	0%	0%	0%
Long	P20	Create a Barge Restaurant	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Long	P21	Extend the Westside Riverwalk	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Long	PK9	Evaluate the Need for Structured Parking on Police Station Lot or Gillespie Ctr./Old Town Hall Lot	80%	0%	0%	20%	0%	0%
Long	W6	Evaluate Strategies to Combat Tidal Events/Sea Level Rise	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

NOTE: Sequence of projects and cost information/allocations subject to change.

PRIVATE CONTRIB.	TOTAL	TOTAL TOWN SHARE	NOTES
0%	$800,000	$800,000	
50%	$0	$0	*Town + Property owners*
0%	$0	$0	*Not a Town capital expense*
0%	$0	$0	
0%	$3,800,000	$2,470,000	*Possible FEMA/USACE funding, state grants*
0%	$1,000,000	$650,000	*Possible FEMA/USACE funding, state grants*
0%	$0	$0	*Incorporated into the cost of P10 or P11*
0%	$750,000	$600,000	*Possible STIP allocation*
0%	$0	$0	*Not a Town capital expense*
0%	$0	$0	*Not a Town capital expense*
20%	TBD	TBD	*Acq. cost of property from Main to Parker Harding*
20%	$500,000	$275,000	*CT Main Street improvement grant, STEAP*
0%	$700,000	$700,000	
0%	$2,100,000	$1,470,000	*Possible STIP allocation*
0%	$900,000	$810,000	
0%	$10,000	$10,000	*Possible STIP allocation*
0%	$220,000	$220,000	*Possible STIP allocation*
0%	$15,000	$15,000	*Could yield at least $1 million in annual revenue*
0%	$30,000	$24,000	
80%	$220,000	$0	
10%	$250,000	$0	*$175,000 already in Town Capital Plan for dredging*
0%	$0	$0	*Not a Town capital expense; cost borne by private sector*
100%	$125,000	$0	
0%	$30,000	$24,000	
0%	$0	$0	*To be determined*
	$20,102,000	**$10,482,000**	

TOWN

Town of Westport.

CIVIC/NONPROFIT

This category may include local civic institutions and organizations such as the Westport Art Center, Westport Cinema Initiative, Westport Library. It could also include other local, regional, and national nonprofit organizations and foundations.

DEVELOPER

Real estate developers of projects in Downtown Westport.

STATE

This includes State of CT agencies such as the Office of Policy & Management (OPM), Department of Economic & Community Development (DECD), Department of Housing (DOH), and Department of Transportation (CTDOT). This may include grants through the Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP), the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), Main Street Investment Fund (MSIF), or other programs. STIP includes a 20% state share (see FEDERAL).

FEDERAL

This includes federal agencies such as FEMA and the Army Corps of Engineers. It also could include Congressional appropriations and other federal sources. STIP includes an 80% federal share of funding.

PRIVATE CONTRIBUTION

This category includes property owners, business owners, and residents.

NOTE: Sequence of projects and cost information/allocations subject to change.

Figure 125: Funding by stage and fiscal year

Timing	#	PROJECT	SHORT 2015-16	SHORT 2016-17	SHORT Notes
Short	G1	Create Entity/Position to Manage Plan Implementation	$60,000	$60,000	
Short	G2	Coordinate & Manage Maintenance of Downtown		TBD	
Short	P1	Implement Planned Main Street Streetscape Improvements	$799,000		
Short	P2	Improve & Complete the Sidewalk Network throughout Downtown	$70,000	$250,000	*Design/Construction*
Short	P3	Redesign Church Lane into a "Shared Street"		$1,500,000	*Design/Construction*
Short	P4	Support Improvements to Toquet Hall		$65,000	
Short	P5	Restore and Revitalize Elm Street		TBD	*Town leases land*
Short	P6	Coordinate with and Integrate Redevelopment of the West Side Riverfront			*Private development*
Short	P7	Build a Pedestrian Bridge Crossing the Saugatuck	$50,000		*Design/Permitting*
Short	P8	Create a Westport Arts & Culture Heritage "Trail"		$50,000	*Design*
Short	M1	Improve Pedestrian Safety at Post Road Crossings	$100,000	$700,000	*Design/Construction*
Short	M2	Improve Ped. & Vehicular Safety at Post Rd Intersections thru Traffic Signal Modifications		$220,000	*New signal + signal studies*
Short	M3	Improve Traffic Movements at the Route 1/33 Intersection	$50,000	$715,000	*Design*
Short	M4	Redesign Myrtle Avenue Intersections	$45,000	$225,000	*Design/Construction*
Short	M5	Improve the Wayfinding System for Motorists	$30,000	$125,000	*Design/Construction*
Short	M6	Develop Directional & Informational Signs for Pedestrians	$5,000	$25,000	*Design/Construction*
Short	M7	Support Initiatives to Access & Connect Downtown through Public Transit			
Short	M8	Provide Amenities for Public Transit Passengers		$75,000	
Short	M9	Provide Bicycle Parking in Downtown	$10,000		
Short	M10	Create a Town-Wide Bicycle Plan		$50,000	
Short	M11	Redesign the Main Street/Elm Street Intersection		$150,000	*Design/Construction*
Short	PK1	Change Parking from 1-Hour to 2-Hour Maximum in Downtown	$1,500		*New signs*
Short	PK2	Combine and Co-Manage Public & Private Parking Lots (Elm/Baldwin with Avery)		$140,000	
Short	PK3	Combine and Co-Manage Public & Private Parking Lots (Gillespie Ctr. w/Old Town Hall)		$20,000	
Short	PK4	Relocate Long-Term Parking to South of Post Road	$1,500		*Signs, striping*
Short	PK5	Implement Seasonal Valet Parking			
Short	W1	Coordinate Flood Prevention Efforts with Neighboring Upstream Towns	$300,000		*Study*
Short	W2	Continue to Implement Low Impact Development Techniques			*Integrated into project costs*
Short	W3	Replace Existing Culverts and Pipes	$800,000		*Construction at Dead Man's Brook*
Short	W4	Conduct Flood Audits of Downtown Commercial Properties			
Short	W5	Control Building Development in Downtown's Flood Hazard Zone			

NOTE: Sequence of projects and cost information subject to change.

The cost information presented on these pages, calculated by RBA's landscape architects and engineers (with input from the Department of Public Works), are order of magnitude costs based on general concepts. These are not formal cost estimates. Formal, itemized cost estimates will be calculated during the preliminary and final design and engineering stages of each project, based on more detailed drawings and construction documents.

MID					LONG			TOTAL
2017-18	*2018-19*	*2019-20*	*2020-21*	*Notes*	*2021-22*	*2022-23*	*Notes*	
$60,000								**$180,000**
TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD		TBD	TBD		**TBD**
								$799,000
		$500,000	$500,000	*Construction*				**$1,320,000**
								$1,500,000
								$65,000
								TBD
								$0
$1,000,000				*Construction*				**$1,050,000**
								$50,000
$700,000				*Construction*				**$1,500,000**
								$220,000
								$765,000
								$270,000
								$155,000
								$30,000
								$0
								$75,000
								$10,000
								$50,000
								$150,000
								$1,500
								$140,000
								$20,000
								$1,500
								$0
								$300,000
								$0
								$800,000
								$0
								$0

NOTE: Sequence of projects and cost information subject to change.

			SHORT		
			2015-16	*2016-17*	*Notes*
Timing	**#**	**PROJECT**			
Mid	P9	Coordinate with and Integrate the Library Transformation Project			
Mid	P10	Transform Parker Harding Plaza			
Mid	P11	Reinvent Jesup Green			
Mid	P12	Provide Public Restrooms (either on Jesup or Parker Harding)			
Mid	P13	Redesign Taylor Place into a "Shared Street"			
Mid	P14	Coordinate with and Integrate the Relocation of the Westport Arts Center			
Mid	P15	Coordinate with and Integrate the Westport Cinema Initiative			
Mid	P16	Create/Improve Pedestrian Passageways			
Mid	P17	Implement/Install Standard Streetscape Elements throughout Downtown			
Mid	M12	Create a New Street: Library Lane		$50,000	*Design/permit*
Mid	M13	Build a Bridge to Connect to the Imperial Avenue Parking Lot			
Mid	M14	Redesign Jesup Road			
Mid	M15	Evaluate Implementing a Real-Time Parking Information System			
Mid	PK6	Improve the Appearance & Safety of the Imperial Avenue Lot			
Mid	PK7	Evaluate a Fee-Based System to Manage Parking in Certain Locations			
Mid	PK8	Evaluate the Need for Structured Parking at Baldwin/Elm Lots			
Long	P18	Place a Café on Green			
Long	P19	Construct a Downtown Landing			
Long	P20	Create a Barge Restaurant			
Long	P21	Extend the Westside Riverwalk			
Long	PK9	Evaluate the Need for Structured Parking on Police Station Lot or Gillespie Ctr./Old Town Hall Lot			
Long	W6	Evaluate Strategies to Combat Tidal Events/Sea Level Rise			
		TOTALS	**$2,322,000**	**$4,420,000**	

NOTE: Sequence of projects and cost information subject to change.

MID					LONG			TOTAL
2017-18	*2018-19*	*2019-20*	*2020-21*	*Notes*	*2021-22*	*2022-23*	*Notes*	
								$0
$1,900,000	$1,900,000			*Design/Construction*				**$3,800,000**
		$500,000	$500,000	*Design/Construction*				**$1,000,000**
				(either part of P10 or P11)				**$0**
$750,000				*Design/Construction*				**$750,000**
								$0
								$0
TBD	TBD			*Acquisition/ (TBD)/Design/Const.*	TBD		*Design/Construction*	**TBD**
	$500,000							**$500,000**
$650,000				*Construction*				**$700,000**
$100,000	$2,000,000			*Design/Construction*				**$2,100,000**
$75,000	$825,000			*Design/Construction*				**$900,000**
			$10,000	*Study/Evaluate*				**$10,000**
	$220,000			*Design/Ccnstruction*				**$220,000**
		$15,000		*Study/Evaluate*				**$15,000**
			$30,000	*Study/Concept*				**$30,000**
					$20,000	$200,000	*Design/Construction*	**$220,000**
					$250,000			**$250,000**
								$0
					$125,000			**$125,000**
					$30,000		*Study/Concept*	**$30,000**
								$0
$5,235,000	**$5,445,000**	**$1,015,000**	**$1,040,000**		**$425,000**	**$200,000**		**$20,102,000**

NOTE: Sequence of projects and cost information subject to change.

C. PHASING & IMPLEMENTATION

Implementing long-range plans for the future can be challenging, especially because they can span several different political administrations. Capital-intensive projects often require raising funds by bonding, receiving a substantial grant, or negotiating public/private partnerships. A carefully-crafted, comprehensive master plan, that embodies key principles agreed upon by local residents and stakeholders, organizes efforts and sets priorities. Such a plan provides the rationale and a logical framework for a community to make major investments in its future.

During discussions leading up to the creation of the *Downtown Westport Master Plan*, the projects that attracted the most consensus and excitement tended to be complex, capital-intensive endeavors. Municipalities strive to provide residents excellent services—to educate children, maintain public facilities, manage revenues, budget responsibly, and plan for the future. Ambitious projects, such as many of those identified in this Plan, may compete for the same public funding as other municipal obligations. Therefore, a key theme running through this Plan is that the Town is not the sole actor or financier responsible for implementing the Plan's strategies. Public-private, public-nonprofit, and state-local partnerships will be instrumental to implement this Plan.

The Implementation Plan

This chapter presents starting points for implementing the *Downtown Westport Master Plan*. The timeline for proposed projects is intended to align with the Town's fiscal calendar and budget cycle. Implementation of projects must be phased over time so each increment of investment and change occurs in the appropriate sequence, leverages the benefits of complementary public and private investments, and minimizes disruption to Downtown operations.

- **SHORT-TERM** projects are high-priority projects that should be started within the next two years (FY 2015/16 and 2016/17).
- **MID-TERM** projects, some of which are dependent on short-term projects being completed, should start within the next 2 to 5 years (FY 2017/18 to FY 2020/21), factoring time for preparations, budget allocations, and design and permitting to be undertaken in advance of construction.
- **LONG-TERM** possibilities are lower-priority, capital intensive and that should be considered after at least five years—after the impacts of short- and mid-term projects become apparent.

The Implementation Plan provides basic guidance for implementing each strategy. It lists preliminary steps; identifies regulatory, policy, and agency coordination actions that need to be taken; recommends partnerships that should be formed; and provides basic cost information (for budgetary purposes only). The Town will be the lead initiator for implementing many of these projects, with support coming from other sources such as private developers, local institutions, and state and federal agencies.

Implementers & Partners

This section provides additional detail on potential implementers and partners, many of which are identified in the Implementation Plans.

Town

Revenue Agreement

Acknowledging that more than 50% of Downtown property is owned by the Town and that Downtown property is highly-valued by commercial interests, the Town might consider sale or long-term lease of specific parcels. A long-term lease could be conditioned on specific architectural standards, maintenance requirements, and/or public access and could require a single upfront payment, which minimizes Town involvement after the transaction is complete. This approach could be a way to fund capital projects defined as important public objectives.

Capital Projects

Projects funded by special allocation through the normal annual budget process.

Traffic/Transportation Manager

If improvements are considered that are beyond the Town's capacity to implement, manage, or maintain, a new position should be created—or the roles could be fulfilled by a current staff person. These responsibilities could be conducted through the Town's Traffic Authority. Responsibilities may include: pursuing grants, addressing transportation-related issues associated with new developments,

serving on local and regional boards, coordinating with area employers to improve transportation options, and working with the WDMA on managing Downtown parking.

Public Works and/or Parks & Recreation

Some of the additional maintenance of new public amenities should be performed by Public Works or Parks and Recreation staff, understanding that these departments have broader responsibilities than just Downtown.

State Government

CT Department of Housing's Main Street Investment Fund (MSIF)

This program provides grants of up to $500,000 to municipalities with 30,000 people or less or to municipalities eligible for STEAP pursuant to section 4-66g of the general statutes for eligible projects. Eligible projects should be part of a plan previously approved by the governing body of the municipality to develop or improve town commercial centers to attract small businesses, promote commercial viability, and improve aesthetics and pedestrian access.

CT Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP)

STEAP funds economic development, community conservation and quality-of-life capital projects for localities ineligible to receive Urban Action bonds.

Arts Catalyze Placemaking (ACP) Program

The FY2016 ACP grant cycle will include program options (several project grant options and one operating support option), with specific programs designed to support Arts in Education, Public Art, and Arts Leadership in the Community.

CT State Bond Request

A specific request of legislative leaders is sometimes identified as an immediate action item and earmarked for funding.

Other Partners

Institutional/Private Funders

Provide substantial support for several Downtown projects.

Potential Developer Contribution

Refers to specific public realm improvements that may be undertaken in concert with a developer-led initiative.

CTDOT and Western CT Council of Governments (WestCOG)

WestCOG (formerly SWRPA) undertakes studies and coordinates federal funding for transportation-related projects primarily through the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (CTDEEP)

CTDEEP is responsible for state permitting related to construction and other work on the floodplain; construction, placement of structures, filling or dredging within tidal wetlands; and discharges to the waters of the State, including stormwater on a construction site five acres or larger.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)

USACE must permit any project that requires discharge of dredged or fill material, dredging, or placing structures into the waters of U.S., including wetlands.

Implementation Plan: Short-Term Projects *(to be initiated within the next two years: 2015-2017)*

#	Project	Preliminary Steps	Policy / Regulatory / Agency Actions	Implementers (+ Partners)	Linked Projects	Est. Cost*
G1	**Create Entity/Position to Manage Plan Implementation**	• Write job description(s) and qualifications • Determine hiring entity/contractual terms	• Board of Finance/RTM review	**Town**	**G2**	**$60,000/yr.**
G2	**Coordinate & Manage Maintenance of Downtown**	• Create a Downtown Maintenance Committee • Explore mechanisms to finance maintenance	• Board of Finance/RTM review	**Town** + WDMA + Property owners + Westport Library	**G1**	**TBD**
P1	**Implement Planned Main Street Streetscape Improvements** *(in progress)*	• Pursue grant opportunities (Phase 2 awaiting grant approval) • Commission topographic survey & engineering design	• P&Z staff review to determine if private property is involved	**Town** + WDMA + Property owners + CT MSIF + CT STEAP	**P2, P17**	**$799,000**
P2	**Improve & Complete the Sidewalk Network throughout Downtown**	• Pursue grant opportunities • Coordinate scheduling and responsibilities with WDMA, property owners • Commission topographic survey & engineering design	• Board of Finance/RTM review	**Town** + WDMA + Property owners + CT MSIF + CT STEAP + CT STIP	**P1, P17, W3**	**$2.6 million**
P3	**Redesign Church Lane into a "Shared Street"**	• Coordinate with Bedford Square Development • Identify adjacent property owners; coordinate outreach with WDMA • Commission topographic survey, traffic study, and engineering design	• Board of Finance/RTM review • Traffic Authority approval • P & Z Director Site Plan waiver • ZBA setback variance if needed	**Town** + Developers of Bedford Square		**$1.9 million**
P4	**Support Improvements to Toquet Hall**	• Raise money through private donations and grants to cover cost of A/E study and capital improvements • Work with Town to solicit RFP for engineering study and then capital improvements.	• Board of Finance/RTM review • Permitting would be needed if new kitchen is involved (PW, P&Z, Health Dept, Buildings Dept.)	**Toquet Hall Student Governing Board/Adult Advisory Board** + Town		**$65,000**

**Sequence of projects and cost information subject to change. Cost information provided is for budgetary purposes only. They are not formal cost estimates.*

Implementation Plan: Short-Term Projects *(to be initiated within the next two years: 2015-2017)*

#	Project	Preliminary Steps	Policy / Regulatory / Agency Actions	Implementers (+ Partners)	Linked Projects	Est. Cost*
P5	**Restore & Revitalize Elm Street**	• Evaluate existing zoning • Produce conceptual development plan and guidelines for Elm Street • Solicit RFP for potential development	• Board of Finance/RTM review, as needed • 8-24 P&Z approval if Town property • P&Z Site Plan approval • Potential P&Z rezoning/text amendment • ARB review • Consult Village District Overlay	**Town** + Private developers	**PK2**	**TBD + possible revenue/tax**
P6	**Coordinate with and Integrate the Redevelopment of the West Side Riverfront**	• Investigate text amendment rezoning	• P & Z coastal site plan review • CTDOT approval • WPLO review from Conservation Commission and Flood & Erosion Control Board	**Development Team** (David Adam Realty/Greenfield Partners, LLC) + Town + CTDOT	**P7, M3**	**n/a**
P7	**Build a Pedestrian Bridge Crossing the Saugatuck**	• Coordinate as part of P6 • Apply for necessary permits from Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CTDEEP), Army Corps of Engineers, etc.	• 8-24 P&Z review • Coastal site plan review • WPLO review from Conservation Commission and Flood & Erosion Control Board	**Town** + Development Team (David Adam Realty/Greenfield Partners, LLC) + CTDEEP + Army Corps of Engineers	**P6, M3**	**$1.1 million**
P8	**Create an Interactive Arts & Culture Experience/Trail**	• Pursue potential Arts Catalyze Placemaking grant opportunity with CT Department of Economic and Community Development – Office of Culture and Tourism. Information on next grant cycle available in late January • Create multi-disciplinary (historical, arts, government, youth, etc.) stakeholder group to advance ideas, themes, concepts • Identify opportunities and locations for public art installations • Board of Finance/RTM review, as needed	• ARB review • Secure permits (DPW, Buildings Dept.) • P&Z staff review • Consult Village District Overlay	**Town** + CT DECD – Office of Culture and Tourism		**$50,000**

**Sequence of projects and cost information subject to change. Cost information provided is for budgetary purposes only. They are not formal cost estimates.*

Implementation Plan: Short-Term Projects *(to be initiated within the next two years: 2015-2017)*

#	Project	Preliminary Steps	Policy / Regulatory / Agency Actions	Implementers (+ Partners)	Linked Projects	Est. Cost*
M1	**Improve Pedestrian Safety at Post Road Crossings**	• Coordinate with SWRPA (now WESTCOG and CTDOT to place project onto Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) • Commission topographic survey, traffic study, and engineering design	• CTDOT review and approval • Board of Finance/RTM review	**Town** + CTDOT + WESTCOG	**M2**	**$1.5 million**
M2	**Improve Pedestrian & Vehicular Safety at Post Road Crossings through Traffic Signal Modification**	• Coordinate with SWRPA (now WESTCOG) and CTDOT to place project onto Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) • Commission traffic signal design	• CTDOT review and approval	**Town** + CTDOT + WESTCOG	**M1**	**$220,000**
M3	**Improve Traffic Movements at Route 1/33 Intersection**	• Coordinate with redevelopment of the former Save the Children site	• CTDOT review and approval • P&Z and HDC review if moving building	**Town** + CTDOT + Development Team (David Adam Realty/Greenfield Partners, LLC)	**P6, P7**	**$765,000**
M4	**Redesign Myrtle Avenue Intersections**	• Commission topographic survey, traffic study, and engineering design	• P & Z review if private property is involved • Traffic Authority approval • Board of Finance/RTM review	**Town**	**M4, W3**	**$270,000**
M5	**Improve the Wayfinding System for Motorists**	• Consider locations of new static parking signs (DPW, Traffic Authority, Police Department, Planning Department). • Commission vehicular wayfinding concept plan/message book.	• Traffic Authority approval • CTDOT approval if located on state highways • Board of Finance/RTM review	**Town** + CTDOT	**M6**	**$155,000**
M6	**Develop Directional & Informational Signs for Pedestrians**	• Commission pedestrian wayfinding concept plan and sign design. Coordinate with M5.	• Traffic Authority approval • CTDOT approval if located on state highways • Board of Finance/RTM review	**Town** + CTDOT	**M5**	**$30,000**
M7	**Support Initiatives to Access and Connect Downtown through Public Transit**	• Provide letter indicating support of Downtown-related transit • Continue coordination with WESTCOG	• Coordinate with Transit District & Coastal Link • Board of Finance/RTM review	**Town** + WESTCOG		**n/a**

**Sequence of projects and cost information subject to change. Cost information provided is for budgetary purposes only. They are not formal cost estimates.*

#	Project	Preliminary Steps	Policy / Regulatory / Agency Actions	Implementers (+ Partners)	Linked Projects	Est. Cost*
M8	**Provide Amenities for Transit Passengers**	• Provide letter indicating Plan support • Coordinate with WESTCOG to get project put onto STIP.	• Architectural Review Board design review for shelters • Consult Village District Overlay • Site plan waiver	+ WESTCOG + Norwalk Transit District + Milford Transit District + Greater Bridgeport Transit District		**$75,000**
M9	**Provide Bicycle Parking in Downtown**	• Create multidisciplinary stakeholder group to Identify possible and feasible locations for bicycle parking in Downtown (WDMA, DPW, Traffic Authority, Police Department, Planning Department) • Consider existing styles/designs or custom design for Downtown bicycle racks • Solicit RFP for bicycle racks and shelters; include design parameters if seeking custom design for racks • Consider modifying zoning regulations to add bike parking requirements to new development	• Potential P&Z text amendment for new zoning requirement for bike parking requirements for new development • Board of Finance/RTM Review	**Town** + WESTCOG + CT STIP		**$10,000**
M10	**Create a Town-Wide Bicycle Plan**	• Work with WESTCOG to obtain funding/assistance • Commission a Town-Wide Bicycle Plan	• Board of Finance/RTM review	**Town** + WESTCOG		**$50,000**
M11	**Redesign the Main Street/Elm Street Intersection**	• Commission topographic survey, traffic study, and engineering design	• Traffic Authority approval • Board of Finance/RTM review	**Town**		**$150,000**
PK1	**Change Parking from 1-Hour to 2-Hour Maximum in Downtown**	• The Town has already changed the 1-hour parking regulations to allow 2-hour parking on Main Street and the Parker Harding lot. • The Town is seeking DOT approval to move to 2 hr parking along Post Road.	• Traffic Authority approval	**Town**		**$1,500**
PK2	**Combine and Co-Manage Public and Private Parking Lots (Elm/Baldwin with Avery)**	• Develop sharing arrangement between property owners • Commission engineering study to redesign lots	• 8-24 P & Z review not applicable if there is a license agreement in exchange for tax waiver – no change in use and ownership not transferred to Town. If land is acquired by the Town, 8-24 P&Z review necessary. • Board of Finance/RTM review	**Town** + Property owners	**P5**	**$140,000**

Implementation Plan: Short-Term Projects *(to be initiated within the next two years: 2015-2017)*

#	Project	Preliminary Steps	Policy / Regulatory / Agency Actions	Implementers (+ Partners)	Linked Projects	Est. Cost*
PK3	**Combine and Co-Manage Private Parking Lots (Gillespie Center with Old Town Hall**	• Develop sharing arrangement between property owners • Commission engineering study to redesign lots	applicable if there is a license agreement in exchange for tax waiver – no change in use and ownership not transferred to Town. If land is acquired by the Town, 8-24 P&Z review is necessary. • Board of Finance/RTM review	**Town** + Property owners		**$20,000**
PK4	**Relocate Long-Term Parking to South of Post Road**	• Coordinate need for new signs and possible striping with DPW	• Traffic Authority Approval • Board of Finance/RTM review	**Town**		**$1,500**
PK5	**Implement Seasonal Valet Parking**	• Research best practices/examples (e.g., Hoboken, NJ; Huntington, NY, etc.) • Brainstorm/coordinate with WDMA (logistics, communication, etc.) • Invite vendor qualifications	• Traffic Authority approval. • A kiosk may require P & Z review and zoning permit. • Police & Fire Dept. review	**Town** + WDMA + Business owners		**n/a**
W1	**Coordinate Flood Prevention Efforts with Neighboring Upstream Towns**	• Participate in upcoming Fairfield County/New Haven Counties feasibility study	• TBD	**Army Corps of Engineers** + Town + WESTCOG/SCRCOG		**n/a**
W2	**Continue to Implement Low Impact Development (LID) and Sustainable Design Techniques**	• Integrate LID in the design of various projects identified in the Plan	• P&Z site plan approval	**Town** + Project-specific partners		**n/a**
W3	**Replace Existing Culverts and Pipes**	• Coordinate with upcoming sidewalk and streetscape projects (P, P) • Commission hydrologic study of Dead Man's Brook	• Board of Finance/RTM review	**Town** + DPW + Property owners	**M4**	**$800,000**
W4	**Conduct Flood Audits of Downtown Commercial Properties**	• Investigate funding opportunities with FEMA • Coordinate outreach with WDMA	• n/a	**Town** + WDMA + FEMA + Business and Property owners		**n/a**
W5	**Control Building Development in Downtown Westport's Flood Hazard Zone**	• Consider stronger regulations for building in flood hazard zone	• P&Z approval	**Town**		**n/a**

**Sequence of projects and cost information subject to change. Cost information provided is for budgetary purposes only. They are not formal cost estimates.*

Implementation Plan: Mid-Term Projects *(to be initiated in the next two to five years: 2017-2021)*

#	Project	Preliminary Steps	Policy / Regulatory / Agency Actions	Implementers (+ Partners)	Linked Projects	Est. Cost*
P9	**Coordinate with and Integrate the Library Transformation Project**	• Coordinate Library renovation/expansion with (P9) the redesign of Jesup Green (P11) and the design of Library Lane (M12)	• 8-24 P&Z approval • ZBA variance • ARB review • P&Z Special Permit approval • Conservation Commission approval • Board of Finance/RTM/RTM review	**Westport Library** + Town	**P11, M12, M13, M14, PK6**	**n/a**
P10	**Transform Parker Harding Plaza**	• Pursue CT State Bond Request • Commission topographic survey and landscape architecture/engineering design	• Board of Finance/RTM review • 8-24 P&Z approval • Coastal area site plan review • WPLO review by CC and FECB	**Town** + CT Grant		**$3.8 million**
P11	**Reinvent Jesup Green**	• Coordinate with library renovation/expansion • Create multi-disciplinary stakeholder group to refine playground, public art, and other concepts • Commission topographic survey, traffic study, and landscape architecture/engineering design	• Board of Finance/RTM review • Special permit • Coastal site plan review • WPLO review by CC and FECB	**Town** + Westport Library + Civic/private organizations + CT Grant	**P9, M12, M13, M14, PK6**	**$1 million**
P12	**Provide Public Restrooms**	• Solicit RFP for design/construction (DPW or Parks and Recreation to maintain)	• Board of Finance/RTM review • 8-24 P&Z approval, re-zoning/text amendment • ZBA variance, if needed • P&Z Site Plan review • ARB review • Health Dept approval	**Town**		**Included in P10 or P11**
P13	**Redesign Taylor Street into a "Shared Street"**	• Identify adjacent business and property owners; coordinate outreach with DMA • Commission topographic survey, traffic study, and engineering design	• Board of Finance/RTM review • Traffic Authority approval • P & Z Director site plan waiver • ZBA for setback approval, if needed	**Town** + CT STIP		**$750,000**
P14	**Coordinate with and Integrate the Relocation of the Westport Arts Center**	• Continue dialogue with Westport Arts Center to identify future sites in Downtown; consider synergies with P8	• P&Z site plan review • Variances or reg. changes as needed (ZBA/P&Z) • ARB review • Permits as needed	**Westport Arts Center** + Town		**n/a**
P15	**Coordinate with and Integrate the Westport Cinema Initiative**	• Continue dialogue with Cinema Initiative	• P&Z site plan review • Variances or reg. changes as needed (ZBA/P&Z) • ARB review • Permits as needed	**Westport Cinema Initiative** + Town		**n/a**

**Sequence of projects and cost information subject to change. Cost information provided is for budgetary purposes only. They are not formal cost estimates.*

Implementation Plan: Mid-Term Projects *(to be initiated in the next two to five years: 2017-2021)*

#	Project	Preliminary Steps	Policy / Regulatory / Agency Actions	Implementers (+ Partners)	Linked Projects	Est. Cost*
P16	**Create/Improve Pedestrian Passageways**	• Start with new passageway between Main Street and Parker Harding Plaza; Identify property owners that need to be involved • Coordinate with DMA for outreach to property owners and Downtown businesses • Evaluate possible improvements to existing passageways	• Board of Finance/RTM review • 8-24 P&Z review required for acquisition, not if goodwill gift of easement (which would just require a permit and Board of Selectmen acceptance)	**Town** + Property owners + CT Grant		**TBD**
P17	**Implement/Install Standard Streetscape Improvements throughout Downtown**	• Pursue grant opportunities • Commission topographic survey & engineering design	• Board of Finance/RTM review • Consult Village District Overlay • RTM ordinance required for improvements on private property • Traffic Authority	**Town** + Property owners + CT MSIF + CT STEAP	**P1, P2**	**$500,000**
M12	**Create a New Street: Library Lane**	• Commission topographic survey, traffic study, & engineering design	• Board of Finance/RTM review • 8-24 P&Z review • P&Z to determine whether project creates need for subdivision • ZBA variance for coverage for 1 or 2 lots	**Town** + CT STIP	**P9, P11, M13, M14, PK6**	**$700,000**
M13	**Build a Bridge to Connect to the Imperial Avenue Lot**	• Commission topographic survey, traffic study, and engineering design • Apply for necessary permits from CTDEEP, Army Corps of Engineers, etc.	• Board of Finance/RTM review • 8-24 P&Z approval • Coastal site plan review • WPLO review by CC and FECB	**Town** + Army Corps of Engineers + CTDEEP + CT STIP	**P9, P11, M12, M14, PK6**	**$2.1 million**
M14	**Redesign Jesup Road**	• Commission topographic survey, traffic study, and engineering design	• Board of Finance/RTM review • Traffic Authority approval	**Town** + CT STIP	**P9, P11, M12, M13, PK6**	**$900,000**
M15	**Evaluate Implementing a Real-Time Parking Information System**	• Evaluate current necessity/feasibility of such a system (DPW, Traffic Authority, Police Department, Planning Department); reevaluate every 2 years. • Determine most appropriate locations for the system. • Solicit RFP for Real-Time Parking Information System	• Board of Finance/RTM review • Traffic Authority approval • CTDOT approval if located on state highways	**Town** + CTDOT + CT STIP	**PK7**	**$800,000**
PK6	**Improve the Appearance and Safety of the Imperial Avenue Lot**	• Commission topographic survey and landscape architecture/engineering design	• Board of Finance/RTM review • P&Z Director Site plan waiver	**Town** + CT STIP		**$220,000**

**Sequence of projects and cost information subject to change. Cost information provided is for budgetary purposes only. They are not formal cost estimates.*

Implementation Plan: Mid-Term Projects *(to be initiated in the next two to five years: 2017-2021)*

#	Project	Preliminary Steps	Policy / Regulatory / Agency Actions	Implementers (+ Partners)	Linked Projects	Est. Cost*
PK7	**Evaluate a Fee Based System to Manage Parking in Certain Locations**	• Evaluate need for fee-based system after first evaluating the effects of SHORT-TERM parking strategies • Determine fee structure and potential locations of priced parking spaces and meters (DPW, Traffic Authority, Police Department, Planning Department) • Solicit RFP for parking meter system	• Traffic Authority approval • Board of Finance/RTM review as needed	**Town** + Possible private developer + WestCOG	**M15**	**$600,000**
PK8	**Evaluate the Need for Structured Parking at Baldwin/Elm Lots**	• Evaluate need for additional parking supply; reevaluate every 1-2 years • Commission conceptual plan/designs for additional parking facilities • Commission topographic survey, traffic study, and engineering design • Solicit RFP for A/E design of facility	• 8-24 P&Z approval, re-zoning, text amendment • ARB • Board of Finance/RTM review as needed	**Town** + Possible private developer + Potential institution/nonprofit partners + WestCOG		**$30,000**

**Sequence of projects and cost information subject to change. Cost information provided is for budgetary purposes only. They are not formal cost estimates.*

Implementation Plan: Long-Term Projects *(to be initiated five years from now: 2021-2023)*

#	Project	Preliminary Steps	Policy / Regulatory / Agency Actions	Implementers (+ Partners)	Linked Projects	Est. Cost*
P18	**Place a Café on Jesup Green**	• Solicit RFP for developer/operator	• 8-24 P&Z approval, re-zoning/text amendment • ZBA variance, if needed • P&Z Site Plan review • ARB review • Health Dept approval • Board of Finance Review	**Town** + Private developer/operator		**$220,000**
P19	**Construct a Downtown Landing**	• Continue to investigate dredging the river with Army Corp of Engineers and CTDEEP (possible funding through GO Bonds) • Identify necessary permits • Commission topographic survey/engineering design	• ZBA setback • Coastal area site plan review • 8-24 P&Z approval • WPLO review by CC and FECB • Board of Finance review • DEEP approval	**Town** + Army Corps of Engineers + CTDEEP + Private contribution		**n/a**
P20	**Create a Barge Restaurant**	• Evaluate "readiness" and need for initiating this project • Solicit RFP for developer/operator	• 8-24 P&Z approval, re-zoning/text amendment • Coastal area Site Plan review • ARB review • WPLO review by CC and FECB • Health Dept approval • Board of Finance review, as needed	**Town** + Private developer/operation		**n/a**
P21	**Extend the Westside Riverwalk**	• Work with property owners to obtain easements to provide waterfront access	• WPLO review by CC and FECB • Site plan review if on public property • BOF as needed	**Town** + Property owners		**$125,000**
PK9	**Evaluate the Need for Structured Parking on Police Station or Gillespie Center/Old Town Hall Parking Lot**	• Evaluate need for additional parking supply; reevaluate every 1-2 years • Commission conceptual plan/designs for additional parking facilities • Commission topographic survey, traffic study, engineering design • Solicit RFP for A/E design of facility	• 8-24 P&Z approval, re-zoning, text amendment • ARB	**Town**		**$30,000**
W6	**Evaluate Strategies to Combat Tidal Events/Sea Level Rise**	• Commission detailed engineering studies for any potential long-term strategy	• TBD	**Town** + FEMA + WestCOG + Army Corps of Engineers		**TBD**

**Sequence of projects and cost information subject to change. Cost information provided is for budgetary purposes only. They are not formal cost estimates.*

D. POLICY & REGULATION

The planning process provided residents and other stakeholders an opportunity to set out a clear planning framework that is consistent with the Town's *2007 Plan of Conservation and Development*, is responsive to recent planning and development activities, and proposes specific map, text, and policy changes supportive of shared objectives emerging from the Plan.

1. Planning Framework

The *Downtown Westport Master Plan* recommendations are consistent with previous plans and with the *2007 Plan of Conservation and Development*. The 2007 POCD recommended a closer look at planning for Downtown. Key recommendations from the 2007 POCD, and how they are addressed in this Plan, include:

- **Make the pedestrian the "lead player" in planning for Downtown**. The *Downtown Westport Master Plan* details specific actions, policies and projects that will enhance the experience of being a pedestrian. Downtown will become a more safe, accommodating, interesting, and fun place to walk (see Section H. Downtown Values).
- **Establish a "village district" to guide the design of buildings and sites**. The *Downtown Westport Master Plan* builds on the recommendations and proposed provisions outlined in the *Village District Study* and embodied in the Village District Overlay. The principles and clear policy framework should be adopted and applied.
- **Encourage evening and outdoor activities—consider addition or conversion of third floors for residential, restaurants, art galleries, etc. consistent with the scale and style of the area**. The *Downtown Westport Master Plan* supports several strategies that would increase evening and outdoor activities. However, the public engagement process revealed only sporadic public support for more residential space and additional floor height in Downtown. Furthermore, the Bedford Square project and the redevelopment of the west side will lead to more evening and outdoor activity.
- **Encourage the development of major community and cultural facilities**. The *Downtown Westport Master Plan* supports and offers insights on how proposals for the Westport Arts Center, the Westport Cinema Initiative and the Library Transformation Project could be integrated into Downtown and connected to the constellation of other Downtown destinations.
- **Develop a coordinated design policy for paving, planting, lighting, and signage for Westport Center, including the commercial districts along the west bank of the Saugatuck River**. The *Downtown Westport Master Plan* supports the recommendations of the *Village District Study* and offers additional design guidance on public realm furnishings, lighting, plantings, surfaces, wayfinding, and low-impact development.
- **Conduct a study of traffic and parking for the entire downtown area.** The *Downtown Westport Master Plan* includes a detailed study of traffic and parking that provides projected future traffic impacts and parking demand generated by development to be completed by 2016 (see Appendix D)
- **Enhance the "natural" aesthetics of the downtown area**. The *Downtown Westport Master Plan* presents strategies that will expand the amount of open green space and planted space in Downtown. The Plan provides design concepts, cost information, funding guidance, and phasing suggestions for a range of public realm improvements for the riverfront, parks, and paths.

The YOUR DOWNTOWN Public Outreach Process

The YOUR DOWNTOWN public outreach events brought additional clarity to the outcomes of the Plan, guided by six planning "directives" that also reflect recommendations from the 2007 POCD.

- Reclaim and enhance riverfront access, views and walkways.
- Enhance pedestrian connections, walkways and bike paths.
- Enhance connections between key downtown destinations.
- Enhance and activate public open spaces.
- Improve traffic flow and rationalize parking.
- Improve streetscape and landscape attractiveness

These planning policy recommendations from the 2007 POCD and the planning "directives" emerging from the YOUR DOWNTOWN planning workshops inform the recommendations of this Plan.

2. Recent Zoning Activities

Prior to and during the Downtown master planning process, the Town drafted several studies, amended the zoning code, and received or approved significant development proposals. Taken together, and including the Bedford Square project, it became apparent that all of these possibilities should be evaluated in concert with each other so that outcomes and impacts can be fully understood.

Amendment #672: Gross Floor Area Restrictions

This text amendment, which has been adopted, limits the size of any building, store, restaurant, or other business within the BCD and BCD/H zoning districts to a maximum of 10,000 sf of gross floor area. The ramifications of this regulation revolve around two questions:

- Would this restriction impair effective use of properties?
- Would limiting store sizes to 10,000 sf materially impact the marketability of the district?

With regard to the first question, there are three potential scenarios of concern:

- **New Construction**. The high demand for retail space in Downtown Westport suggests that developers could readily shape new construction properties to attract less than 10,000 sf tenants. However, the development of mixed-use, multi-story properties may present circumstances in which shaping the first floor to accommodate multiple smaller retail tenants is difficult.
- **Reuse of Larger Non-Retail Structure**. In this situation, effective reuse of the property may necessitate a larger store size. For instance, consider a property with 100 feet of frontage and 300 feet of depth. Limiting store size to 10,000 sf would result in three stores with 33 feet of frontage and 300 feet of depth. For most retailers, that is an unwieldy configuration. Therefore, reuse of these properties may be negatively impacted by the proposed restriction.
- **Re-tenanting of Larger Spaces**. Depending on the configuration of the store space, it may be difficult to re-tenant larger (i.e., 7,000 to 10,000 sf) spaces with multiple users. If the space is only appropriate for a single user, finding an exact match—for instance, a new 9,800 sf tenant to replace a lost 9,800 sf tenant—might be difficult or impossible. In this case, adding a modest amount of adjacent space could be essential.

Downtown currently does not need to have larger anchor tenants to maintain its marketability. However, retail models, trends, and markets continually change. Downtown districts in some affluent communities have passed through cycles of national chain popularity and then dropped into decline. At their peak of popularity, these districts were able to attract high-rent-paying tenants, despite substantial regulatory restrictions in place. After trends changed, these districts ended up without anchor attractions, increased vacancies, and declining rents. Fortunately, this is not an immediate concern in Downtown Westport.

3. Downtown Zoning Considerations

UPDATING THE RULEBOOK: The Village District Study

Many zoning ordinances guiding downtown development and building improvements do not reflect the Town's aspirations nor the form and arrangement of lots, blocks, and buildings, which means there are many nonconforming properties. Some provisions governing Downtown, especially setback regulations, seem intended for other parts of Town. The *Village District Study* addresses this issue effectively within its geographic purview.

Main Street illustrates the rationale for modifying the setback requirements that are currently in place. Main Street, between Post Road and Avery Place, is within the BCD zone (as is most of Downtown). The Town's zoning ordinance requires a minimum 20-foot setback on streets other than Post Road. The Village District Draft Overlay provides property owners, architects, developers, the Architectural Review Board, Historic Commission and Planning and Zoning Commissioners a straightforward, durable guide. The proposed amendments are based on design principles that reflect the qualities of Downtown's varied building vocabulary, and are supported by specific standards and criteria. In most instances, nearby adjacent buildings provide a good framework so that new construction will have design features that are compatible, harmonious, continuous, and correspond in appearance as required by the Village District ordinances.

However, since the Village District provisions are to be adopted as an overlay, the underlying zoning nomenclature is expected to remain in place. Looking forward, it should be acknowledged that the zoning categories are overly-complicated and the nomenclature overly-technical. The Village District designation and its user-friendly tools provide a framework to refresh the district nomenclature so it is easier to understand intent and to comply with requirements.

SIMPLIFY THE RULES: Character-based Zoning Districts

There are few significant differences between the various zoning districts. For example, the difference between BCD and GBD is setbacks on streets other than Post Road. The difference between GBD and RBD involves several allowable uses. RPOD and RORD are virtually identical, except RORD permits more commercial uses.

Removing redundancy by combining districts and creating subdistricts for minor differences will make the intent and purpose of the rules easier to understand. Furthermore, nomenclature and descriptions should be updated to address desired character rather than particular uses. For example:

- **Village Center 1, 2**: RORD, BCD and RBD within the Village District (see Figure 126). Eliminate BCD/H with adoption of the Village District designation.
- **Crossroads Corridor 1, 2, 3**: GBD, RBD, BPD, and RPOD in the immediate vicinity of downtown (see Figure 128) should be included in "Village District 2" which should provide detailed guidance on design/appearance outcomes but will not require Historic Commission oversight. The Town can expand the Village District designation and provide design oversight to gateway commercial intersections outside of the Village District.
- **Riverside District 1, 2**: GBD, and HDD on the west bank of the river and fronting on Wilton Road between Edge Hill Lane and Lincoln Street.
- **Village Green 1, 2**: Town Hall, Veterans Park, Jesup Green, Library, Levitt Pavilion, Imperial Avenue Lot.

The predominant zoning on the west side of the river is GBD, General Business. Provisions for setbacks, coverage, and height should be reviewed and revised to reflect the character of the emerging riverfront district.

GBD, RBD, BPD, and RPOD in the immediate vicinity of Downtown should be included in Village District 2, which would provide detailed design guidance, but not require Historic Commission oversight.

The Town can expand the Village District designation and provide design oversight to gateway commercial intersections outside of the Village District study area.

MAKE DOWNTOWN LEGAL: Dimensional Requirements.

Many of the zoning districts provide lot area or street frontage requirements that are larger than existing development within those zones. As a result, variances are required for renovations or new construction on non-conforming parcels. The zoning code could be updated, taking into account existing conditions and further limiting non-conformities. As documented in the Zoning Review section of the *Village District Study*, non-conforming parcels are prevalent throughout the district. Proposed provisions regulating setbacks provide partial remedy, but dimensional standards for frontage, area, and FAR provisions are not addressed.

PUBLIC USES: Zoning for Public Use

Jesup Green, the Library, Police Station, Town Hall, and Veterans Park are zoned for residential use. Public uses and planned improvements for Jesup Green, the Library expansion, and the new Library Lane street connection to the Imperial Avenue Lot are not guided by the current zoning classifications. A new zoning district, supportive of long range goals, should be defined and adopted. The district could include the proposed linear park at Parker Harding Plaza (see Figure 129).

Zoning & Parking:

The parking requirements for Downtown zoning districts ensure that any expansion of commercial activity contributes to the parking supply to the extent possible:

- Within the BCD district, any on-site parking that currently exists must remain, even if a building's program size is reduced or expanded.
- An addition to a building requires 1 parking space per 180 sf, which is a high ratio is high for a compact commercial district.
- The code allows for "joint" or shared parking, with a reduction of up to 50%. Shared parking is effective, but sharing often is contingent on uses with different parking needs. Residential uses complement commercial in terms of time of need for parking, but it is not permitted in Downtown currently.
- Where residential is permitted, parking requirements for multi-family residential are greater than those for single family housing.

- Any new construction of at least 10,000 sf of gross interior floor area must provide concealed parking as noted in §34-12 of the Supplementary Regulations.
- Fee-in-lieu of parking.

Supplementary Regulations:

Outdoor Seating

The code allows for outdoor seating, but it prohibits it from interfering with sidewalks or walkways. Presumably this means that sidewalk cafés are not allowed. Outdoor seating is allowed on private property and in parking spaces as "pop-up" seating. Westport could increase the opportunity for outdoor dining with specific language defining a minimum unobstructed path along the sidewalk. While Main Street does have narrow sidewalks, allowing a minimum unobstructed path of five feet might allow for sidewalk dining in some locations.

4. Subdivision Regulations

Curb Radii

The code requires that the curb radius at corners is 20 feet. The smaller the radius, the more comfortable and safe for pedestrians. The Town should consider whether this metric should remain or be changed.

Open Space Requirements.

The code states that all subdivisions are required to provide parks and open space. Not more than 10% will be required, but it is not clear what a minimum requirement would be. The Town should clarify this requirement.

Figure 127: The Village District Overlay

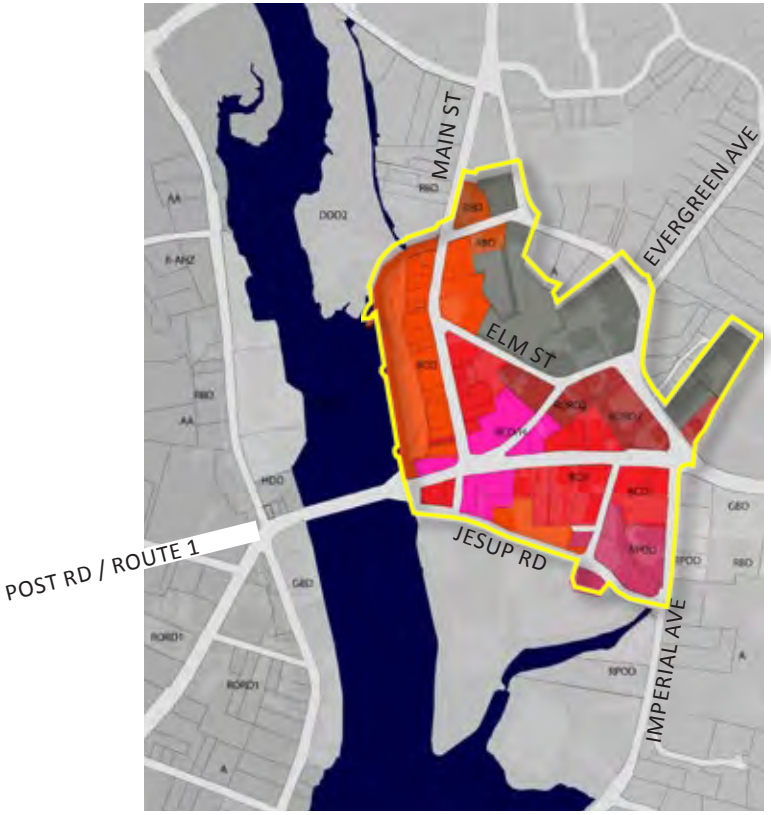


Figure 126: The GBD, RBD, BPD, RPOD adjacent to Downtown should be included in "Village District 2"

Figure 128: Zoning on the west side of Downtown is predominantly GBD (General Business)

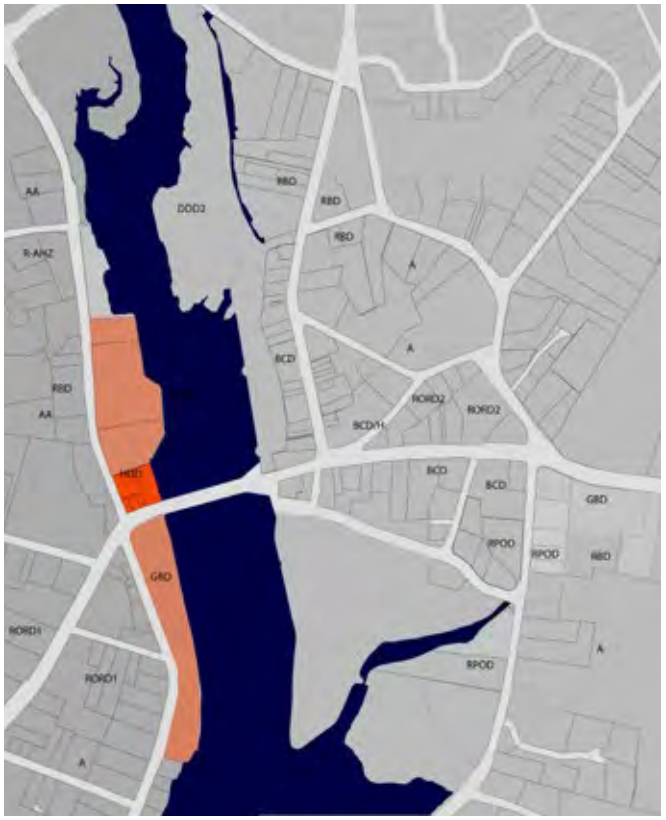
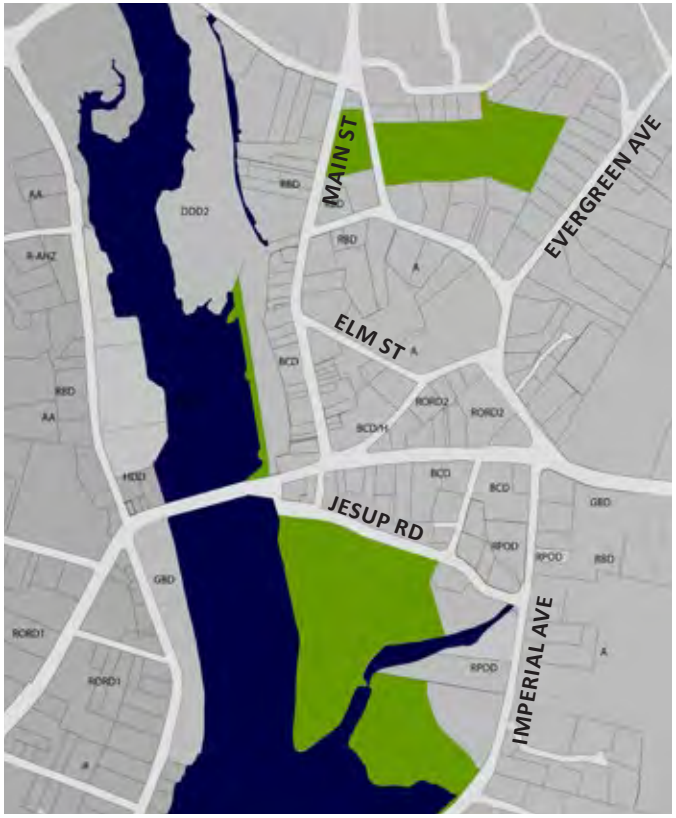


Figure 129: Map showing current and future public uses



E. SUSTAINABILITY

Environmental sustainability is one of the main principles guiding this Plan. One of the organizations in Town that has been taking the lead on sustainability issues is the Green Task Force. This group advises the First Selectman and Town commissions and departments on determining and setting environmental policy and decisions for the purpose of transforming Westport into "a sustainable green community." The following are the Green Task Force's main goals and activities:

- Identify areas of Town operations or policy that could/need to be adjusted to move the Town toward becoming a sustainable green community.
- Review programs and policies related to transforming Westport into a sustainable green community as they are brought to the Task Force by staff, elected town officials, environmental/community groups or concerned members of the public.
- Make recommendations in the form of formal motions directed to the town leadership and provide an annual report to the First Selectman.
- Pursue a limited advocacy role through resolutions, formal statements, presentations at other public meetings, and community education platforms.
- Address only those issues and projects in Westport that have a significant potential to impact the goal of becoming a sustainable green community.

The Green Task Force has been involved in a range of environmentally-focused initiatives in Westport, including the Town's ban on point-of-sale plastic bags, advancing the use of solar energy, and providing charging stations for electric vehicles in parking spaces in Downtown and at the rail stations.

Green Task Force Recommendations

The Green Task Force reviewed this Plan and supports the Plan's emphasis on utilizing natural methods for stormwater retention and improved/increased opportunities for non-vehicular transportation throughout Downtown. It also offered the several recommendations, which this Plan supports. Many of the recommendations are achieved through specific Plan projects, which are identified in the following paragraphs.

Air Quality

- Encourage the use of public transportation through better advertisement of this public resource. This can be achieved through stronger signage and bus shelters to make residents aware of this transportation option, particularly if bus routes are expanded. See M8.
- Prioritize the planting of trees along sidewalks and parking lots in Downtown to provide shade and reduce the heat island effect. Future zoning regulations should require more trees than the existing regulations require. See P1, P17.

Biodiversity

- Use native species in the redesign of Downtown green space to enhance biodiversity and provide nesting areas for local avian species that frequent the Saugatuck River. See P10, P11.

Clean Energy / Green Buildings

- In its re-evaluation and expansion of parking opportunities the Town should analyze the need for and potential location of electric vehicle charging stations. See PK2-PK4, PK6-PK9.
- Should parking decks be needed in the future, they should be constructed with living roofs, high albedo roofs or solar-shaded parking. See PK7, PK8.
- The Town should re-evaluate its zoning regulations to allow for the possibility of solar shaded parking.
- The Town should re-evaluate its zoning regulations to encourage the use of clean energy in future development through building orientation requirements.

- Future development in the public sphere should emphasize the use of energy efficient technologies and explicitly endorse green building certifications for public projects and future commercial development.

Recycling & Waste Management

- Expand the number of recycling bins available on Downtown streets. See P17.

Water Quality

- Potential development into the Saugatuck River should include controls to protect water quality and opportunities to enhance stormwater retention (e.g. marshland) should be taken advantage of. See W5.

Figure 130: View of the Saugatuck River

4. DOWNTOWN DESIGN GUIDANCE

A. INTRODUCTION

The objectives of this chapter are to:

- Highlight the existing types and qualities of streetscape elements in Downtown.
- Identify the "standard" streetscape elements selected by the Town for installation on Main Street between Post Road and Avery Place, which should be replicated in the future along certain streets in Downtown.
- Illustrate the variety of materials, site furnishings, and design treatments that should be considered during the design of specific public improvement projects described in Chapter 2 of this Plan.

With respect to the design of specific public improvement projects, the intention is to encourage quality design, inspire creative design thinking, and guide future policy and design decisions. The guidance provided here is not intended to be specific recommendations or formal design standards.

The overall intent is to demonstrate that high-quality, durable materials and furnishings, in addition to specific design treatments and techniques, can transform streets and public open spaces in Downtown into safe, attractive, lively, and more ecologically-sustainable spaces that complement their broader context. At the same time, the design and selection of public realm elements should be balanced so as not to be overly-prescriptive. Downtown Westport is a dynamic place. Its look and feel has changed over time and will continue to evolve over the next decade. Much of this change has been incremental, which has given Downtown an organic, eclectic ambiance. That said, public realm improvements on both public and private property should:

- Be distinctive and of high-quality with respect to materials and furnishings specified. Components should be cost-effective, durable, and easily-maintained.
- Aesthetically complement the surrounding built environment, without seeking to replicate it.
- Incorporate the Town's environmental sustainability goals.
- Promote a sense of order, visibility, and safety.

Standard vs. Customized Design Elements

Many of the projects identified in this Plan will incorporate the Town standard, or typical, landscape elements and materials. The Town can usually install and maintain standard items using in-house and/or regularly contracted maintenance and operations resources, and at reasonable cost. Standard elements should be adopted into the Town's zoning regulations to ensure conformity.

Certain key projects merit a non-standard, or customized design treatment. Non-standard materials and design treatments are typically considered or used in specific areas with one or both of the following attributes:

- The specific location possesses a unique character that warrants customization and the possible additional expense, such as Parker Harding Plaza and Jesup Green, or a designated historic district.
- The specific location has a responsible partner that has requested such items and has agreed to accept maintenance responsibility, unless the Town is willing to take on such responsibility.

Design Qualities

Style: Historic vs. Contemporary

Style is subjective; it is a choice. There is no set right or wrong style for Westport. Downtown Westport is a place where vestiges of its past mingle with contemporary elements and forms. That said, the public outreach process revealed a preference for preservation and enhancement of a "small town" atmosphere in Downtown. Residents described this environment with words and phrases such as: quaint, charming, low-rise, pedestrian-scale, and decidedly "not urban," but certainly urbane. Residents also pointed out the Town's artistic heritage, which suggests an eclectic approach to the selection of materials and furnishings that mix traditional

features with artistic features or styles. Some residents voiced concerns about creating an over-historicized public realm—one that appears artificial or fake.

Given these sentiments, the images presented in this chapter run the gamut from historic to contemporary as a way of acknowledging that this distinction is keenly observed by Westport's population. Contemporary solutions are offered because there are examples, both in Westport and in other communities, of contemporary styles successfully intermingled with more traditional styles. Sometimes a touch of contrast—as opposed to rigorous homogeneity—is the best way to reveal a community's character and values.

Themes & Motifs: The River

For too long Downtown Westport has largely turned its back on its greatest asset, the Saugatuck River. The river is presented with asphalt parking fields and has few visual reminders of Westport's once industrious riverfront. Westport used to be an important shipping center where raw materials were delivered by boat and products shipped to New York and other ports. There is an opportunity in the selection of furnishings and materials to incorporate visual cues and motifs from the river and from Downtown's agro-industrial heritage.

B. EXISTING STREETSCAPE ELEMENTS

Some of Downtown Westport's streets are furnished with an array of streetscape elements of various styles. Many of these elements are captured in the photographs in Figure 131.

- **Street Trees.** Street trees of various types and maturity line Main Street. The south end has small, young trees that have recently been planted along the sidewalk, while the wider north end sidewalk has tall, mature trees.
- **Sidewalk Pavers**. As it is Downtown's principal street, Main Street's sidewalks are treated with red brick pavers. On other streets in Downtown, sidewalks are, for the most part, comprised of concrete and have no special paving treatment. The two exceptions are sidewalks along part of Wilton Road/Route 33 and the south side of Church Lane, which are constructed with pavers that appear to be slightly different colors than those on Main Street's sidewalks.
- **Street Lights**. There are a handful of decorative pedestrian-scaled, lantern-style street lights located along Main Street. The Post Road Bridge is treated with the most elaborate and distinct lights: a decorative style of street light with four arms, each topped with a globe fixture. A version of these lights that with two arms and two globe fixtures lines Wilton Road and continues along the path along the riverfront at Jesup Green.
- **Roadway Lighting**. "Cobra-headed" fixtures mounted on tall metal poles, which are typical along many highways, are located along Main Street and Post Road. These types of lights illuminate the road, but not sidewalks. Along Elm Street, several cobra-head light fixtures are mounted on telephone poles.
- **Street Furniture**. Benches and trash receptacles of a matching black color and "traditional" style are located on Main Street. The only furnishings that exist on other streets in Downtown are trash receptacles—the same kind that are placed on Main Street.
- **Hanging Elements**. On Main Street, banners and hanging planters decorate the poles. Flags are often added to the Post Road Bridge.
- **Honor Boxes**. There are several honor boxes clustered together on the west side of Main Street that offer local newspapers and circulars.

Figure 131: Photos showing existing streetscape elements in Downtown Westport

View of the Main Street, looking south toward Post Road

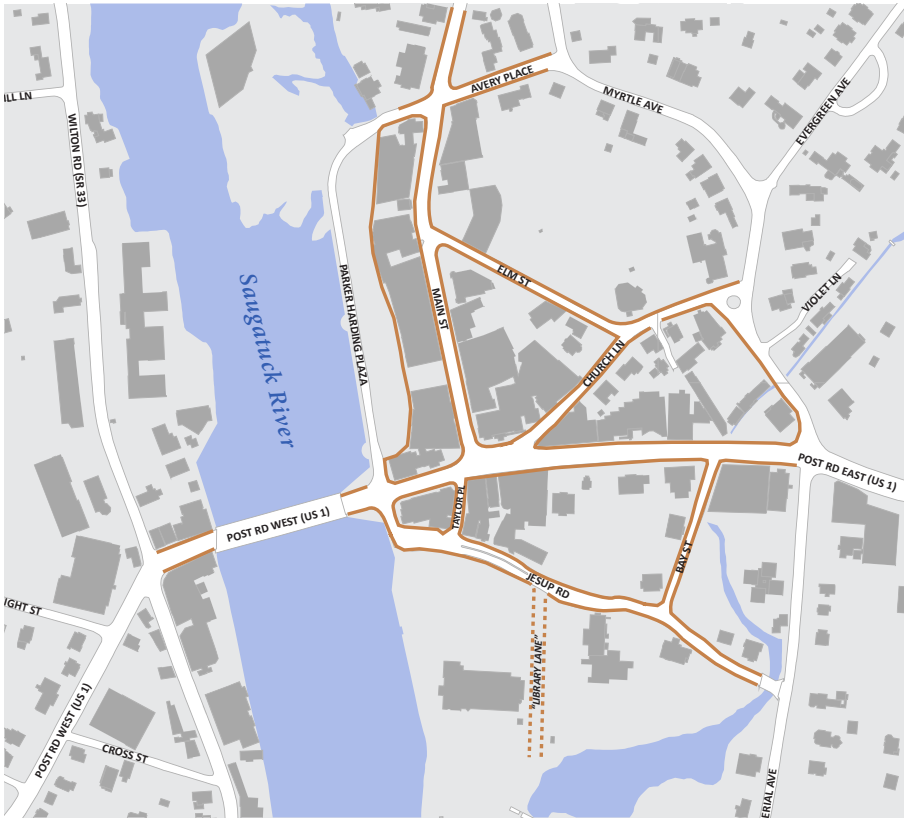
View of the west side of Main Street

The Post Road Bridge features elaborate light fixtures | A similar type of light fixture is located along Wilton Road | Brick pavers comprise the sidewalk on the south side of Church Lane

C. STREETSCAPE DESIGN STANDARDS

The Town recently approved a specific street light pole and luminaire and a specific style of brick sidewalk pavement to install along Main Street between Post Road and Avery Place (see P1). These elements should be adopted into ordinance as standard elements for all future such streetscape improvement projects (see P17) and installed on the streets highlighted in Figure 132.

Figure 132: Downtown streetscapes in which standard elements should be installed



The Town should also adopt standards for street trees, tree pit details, and street furniture (i.e., benches, bicycle racks, trash receptacles, etc.).

Standard Street Light

The Town selected a new standard light pole and luminaire for Main Street, which will replace the existing cobra-headed style aluminum poles (see Figure 133). The new poles, have a "traditional" styling, are approximately 15 feet tall and painted black. They will be fitted with an arm for hanging banners and planted baskets.

Figure 133: The Downtown "standard" street light: Philips Lumec L80-SF80, R61 LED

Figure 134: The Downtown "standard" sidewalk pavers: Whitacre Greer clay brick (mix of 30-Clear Red, 32Antique, and 33 Dark Antique)

Standard Sidewalk Paving

Many sidewalks in Downtown are currently paved with red bricks. The Town has selected natural red brick pavers to install in Main Street's sidewalks (see Figure 134). Under the municipal code, installation and maintenance of sidewalks are the responsibility of adjoining property owners. However, as part of a planned upgrade project, the Town may choose to replace existing sidewalks or construct new sidewalks itself. During the installation process, care should be taken to ensure that the sidewalks can withstand upheaval from tree roots and the stress of wintertime temperature changes.

D. DESIGN SUGGESTIONS/EXAMPLES FOR STREETS & OPEN SPACES

Vibrant streets in downtowns large and small are typically furnished with a range of landscape elements that, taken together, aim to maximize the comfort and safety of pedestrians and enhance the visual appearance of the area. Landscape elements within downtown open spaces, such as parks, alleys, plazas, and shared streets, may serve similar purposes but often have a customized palette of landscape elements with a different look and feel than those installed as part of a streetscape.

This section provides design guidance for and showcases examples of the following types and "families" of elements:

- **Street Trees**
- **Sidewalk & Pavement Treatments**
- **Street & Area Lighting**
- **Furnishings**
- **Public Art**
- **Water Features**
- **Kiosks & Small Structures/Buildings**
- **Pedestrian Bridges**
- **Pedestrian Safety Accommodations**
- **Wayfinding Signs**
- **Parking Lots & Structures**

This section also includes a special subsection on **Low Impact Development and Green Stormwater Infrastructure**.

Street Trees

Street trees should be planted in sidewalks along Downtown streets at regular intervals (see P1, P17). Trees create a link to the natural environment, provide shade, create oxygen, and reduce the urban heat island effect. They serve as buffers between pedestrians on the sidewalks and cars traveling on the street, and can help calm traffic. As Downtown consists of rows of ground floor businesses, the trees should have a canopy that grows to be high enough and is not so thick that it blocks views of storefronts (see Figure 135). Trees can be planted at-grade in individual or connected tree pits, with or without pavers and grates, or they can be planted in raised planters.

As Westport has an appointed Tree Warden, a consistent approach should be taken toward specifying street trees in Downtown and designing tree pits. Hardy species of trees with a columnar form recently have been installed recently on Main Street. This is an appropriate approach given the narrow dimension of sidewalks on Main Street between Post Road and Elm Street. In other parts of Downtown, where sidewalks are wider, trees with a broader spreading habit—which offer shade when mature—should be considered. Such species may include *Zelkova* or other hardy, disease-free deciduous canopy trees with a similar habit.

Figure 135: Examples of street trees in downtowns

Greenwich Avenue in Greenwich, CT

King's Highway in Haddonfield, NJ

Trees in concrete planters (cast-in-place)

Tree Pit Design Guidance

Street trees are subject to great stress. Few reach maturity due to factors such as soil compaction; lack of air, water, and nutrients; and exposure to polluted air and salt. The proper design of tree pits can allow more water and air to reach roots. Two strategies are to use porous pavers over root zones and to expand the size of the tree pit by using structural soil (i.e., a mix of load-bearing rock and organic soil) under the pavement between tree pits. Connected tree pits along a sidewalk and curb, or a continuous tree trench, give roots more space, which improves tree health and longevity. In areas with heavy pedestrian traffic, the trench of connected tree pits can be bridged by sidewalk slabs supported either by structural soil or a subsurface frame system.

The simplest and most effective tree pit design is an opening in the sidewalk, 25-40 sf in size (5x5 to 5x8, may be as narrow as 3.5 feet x length-varies), with one or two courses of heavy Belgian blocks placed just inside the outside edge of the pit on a bed of sand, with sand joints. Low metal fences (tree guards) may be installed on three sides of the pit facing the sidewalk. Tree grates should be used only where sidewalk width is limited and pedestrian traffic is high, such as at building entrances and in outdoor dining areas.

Sidewalk & Pavement Treatments

Sidewalks should be constructed with a firm and durable surface such as concrete or pavers. Natural clay red brick pavers have been chosen as the standard for sidewalks in Downtown. In public open spaces such as parks (P11), plazas (P10), alleys (P16), along riverfront esplanades (P10), and on shared streets (P3, P13), other pavement materials and treatments may be considered to achieve a certain visual and/or functional impact.

Decorative Unit Pavers

Pavers create a distinctive visual appearance and feeling on streets, sidewalks, and crosswalks (and, especially, on shared streets). In historic districts, bluestone or granite blocks should be preserved wherever possible. They can be matched by sourcing similar stones from either domestic or international quarries. A wide variety of competitively-priced natural stone unit pavers is now available.

Concrete Treatments

There are many ways to create custom textures and appearances on plain concrete. Tinted concrete sidewalks can be surfaced with colored pebble-sized aggregate to create a textured surface. Even blue and green glow-in-the-dark aggregates are now available to mix into the surface of a concrete walkway. High-albido (i.e., light-colored) exposed aggregate surfaces help reduce the urban heat island effect by increasing reflectivity. Poured concrete pavement can also be surfaced with silicon carbide to add sparkle and increase slip resistance. Concrete can also be colored with bright vibrant, durable colors designed in fun and interesting patterns using a Lithochrome color hardener and sealant.

Thermoplastic Treatments

Asphalt pavement can be covered with patterns and colors on the surface that mimic the appearance of decorative pavers. However, this might not be as durable and easy to maintain. A more durable and authentic-looking alternative is placement of a thermoplastic treatment called Brickprint on top of an asphalt roadway or path.

Figure 136: Examples of sidewalk and pavement treatments

Sidewalks in downtown Portland, ME consist of red brick pavers. The street in this picture consists of cobblestones

Sidewalk composed of multi-colored aggregates | Colored concrete

Brickprint is a thermoplastic treatment that mimics brick pavers

Street, Path & Area Lighting

Lighting should be provided to illuminate, brighten, and define sidewalks, paths for pedestrians, and open spaces such as Jesup Green (P11) where people are encouraged to congregate. Pedestrian-scale street lights should be positioned 15-20 feet above sidewalks and designed in context with surrounding land uses. Lighting in public spaces should provide a minimum illumination of 0.5 foot-candle per square foot level, depending on surrounding uses and security concerns. Energy-efficient light-emitting diode (LED) bulbs or solar powered lights can be used in all settings.

Lighting comes in many sizes, styles, and configurations, from bollards and in-ground lighting pathways to single mast/luminaire area lights (see Figure 138) and elaborate multi-light fixtures, such as those that are on the Post Road Bridge and along the boardwalk on the west side (see Figure 137).

Figure 137: Elaborate light fixtures line the west side boardwalk in Downtown Westport (photo by Helen During)

Figure 138: Examples of street and area lighting

A solar-powered plaza light | Lighted bollards illuminate the street and sidewalk

In-ground lighting illuminates an alley | A bike path illuminated by LED "pebbles"

Furnishings

Furnishings in streetscapes and open spaces can include a wide range of elements. In Downtown Westport, the following types of furnishings can be expected:

- Seating
- Planters
- Trash & Recycling Receptacles
- Bollards
- Bicycle Racks & Shelters
- Charging Stations
- Railings

Main Street is already furnished with benches, trash receptacles, and seasonal hanging planters. The style, material, and color of the benches and trash receptacles are coordinated and, taken together, convey a traditional appearance. The Town might consider making these the standard benches and trash receptacles for streetscapes in Downtown, or, at the least, the standard for Main Street (see P17) .

Appearance should not be the only factor considered when selecting streetscape furnishings. In Downtown Westport, the types, sizes, and quantities of furnishings provided should be comfortable, durable, and, to allow some flexibility, available in several different configurations (e.g., armless and backless benches). Furthermore, other factors to consider include the high volume of Downtown visitors (which generates a significant amount of trash and recyclables) and the Town's sustainability goals, which might mean, for example, including receptacles for recycling alongside those for trash.

Seating: Formal & Informal

Both formal (e.g., benches and chairs) and informal (e.g., seat walls and steps) seating options should be provided in Downtown. Benches allow people to rest, talk, or just take in the surroundings. Benches should be placed away from the flow of heavy pedestrian traffic, in areas of special interest, and at important view corridors. Benches should be placed conveniently for pedestrians, but they should not impede foot traffic. In public open spaces, a variety of seating could be offered, including seats with and without backs as well as movable and fixed chairs.

While most people appreciate a comfortable bench with a supportive back rest, younger people are sometimes less discerning about their seating preferences. Teenagers will often avoid formal seating, instead preferring to "colonize" a low wall or flight of steps to create their own space in the middle of the action. This is not necessarily a negative thing as long as there is ample opportunity for them to do this without blocking main pedestrian desire lines.

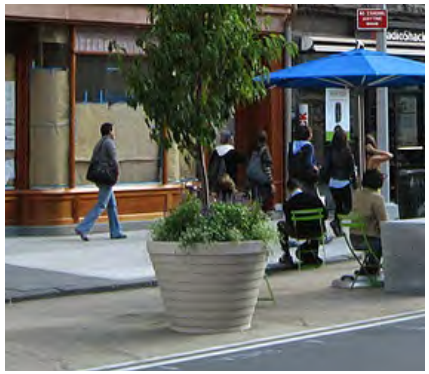
Benches also can combine features of public art or be designed to match a certain motif (see Figure 139).

Figure 139: Examples of formal and informal seating

Planters

Planters can serve many different purposes, among them to add color and texture to streetscapes and open spaces; to separate pedestrian space and vehicle space; to provide an edge on which people can sit; and/or to absorb noise, pollution, and stormwater. There are three general types of planters: hanging planters, planting beds, and movable planters (see Figure 140). They are typically planted with flowers, native grasses, shrubs, and/or trees. Merchants can purchase and maintain movable planters in front of their stores, or they can be designed, installed, and maintained collectively on a street by street basis by the WDMA or the Town.

Figure 140: Examples of planters



Movable planter with tree | Movable planter with flowers and shrubs/grasses

Raised planting beds in downtown Cape May, NJ

Trash & Recycling Receptacles

Trash receptacles are located on Main Street and several other Downtown streets. The Town should also provide recycling receptacles (see P17). Both trash and recycling receptacles come in a variety of styles and colors; they also can be branded (Figure 141). In many downtowns, solar-powered “Big Belly” trash and recycling bins shown can be seen on sidewalks. They have internal compactors, which allows the bins to hold much more trash than non-powered bins. These are best for areas with high pedestrian traffic.

Figure 141: Examples of trash and recycling receptacles

Coordinated trash/recycling receptacles | A trash receptacle style typical in park-like settings

Compacting trash/recycling bins

Bollards

Bollards are post-like objects embedded in the ground that can serve various aesthetic and functional purposes (see Figure 142). Bollards can define space and also serve as important separators between different transportation modes, keeping cars out of or off of facilities designed for pedestrians and cyclists. They can also be used as decorative informal seating elements and/or lighting elements. Many stock styles are available to choose from traditional to modern, or they may be custom designed. The bollards themselves can reflect a place's heritage or a certain motif. Bollards may be an important component of the planned Church Lane and Taylor Place shared streets (P3, P13).

Other more informal barriers can serve much the same function as bollards, including large stone blocks and planters. Barrier and bollard applications can range from low-cost improvements to costly capital projects. Use of these features should fit the need for safety and aesthetic enhancements.

Figure 142: Examples of bollards

Bicycle Racks and Shelters

The Town should provide safe and secure bicycle parking in and around Downtown to accommodate existing bicyclists and encourage more bicycling. Many styles of bicycle racks are available, and they can be customized. Private property owners can also provide non-standard racks.

Bicycle shelters could also be provided. Cyclists appreciate having a place to store their bicycles that is protected from the elements. A simple shed-roof can go a long way to encouraging bicycling to Downtown even when inclement weather threatens. See Figure 143 for examples of bike racks and shelters.

Figure 143: Examples of bicycle racks and shelters

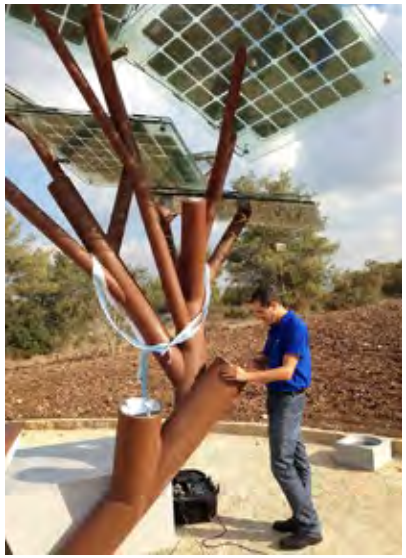
Contemporary bicycle racks in stainless steel | A creative but functional bike rack

Parking meter converted into a bike rack | A simple bicycle shelter

Charging Stations

A relatively new type of furnishing, outdoor charging stations provide a place for people to recharge their mobile devices. In downtowns, they are typically located in public open spaces. Some come with seating, while others serve additional purposes such as wayfinding elements or information kiosks (see Figure 144). A charging station could be included as part of the planned Westport Arts & Culture "Trail" (P8).

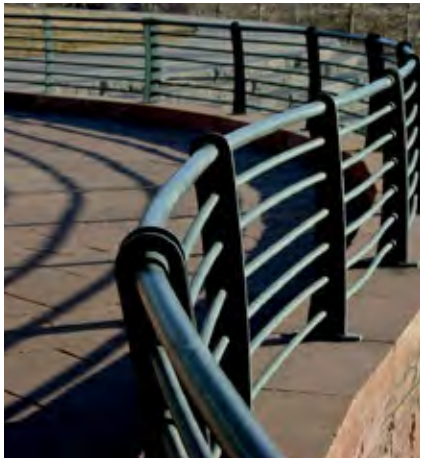
Figure 144: Examples of charging stations



Railings

The specific design of railings along the river, especially along a transformed Parker Harding Plaza (P10), is one of the most important decisions that needs to be made. This is one design element that should be custom-designed, with thought and creativity. The railing will visually define a long stretch of riverfront along Parker Harding Plaza to Jesup Green and the expanded Library, and possibly beyond. It could also be replicated on the West side of the river. It will be one of the most distinctive and defining elements that people see as they enter Downtown from the west across the Post Road Bridge. Figure 145 shows examples of various styles and types of railings.

Figure 145: Examples of various railing styles along riverside parks and esplanades



Public Art

Public art should be included in public open spaces, such as Jesup Green (P11), to serve as an anchor and/or to highlight important nodes (see P8). Public art can come in various forms, including sculpture, lighting, murals, and temporary. Choices that can be applied in a linear fashion include decorative fences, light pole banners, and wall murals. When designed and installed by local talent, public art is also a good mechanism for engaging the community and encouraging a sense of ownership of a particular locale, thus helping to ensure respect for the art and deter vandalism. Proposals should be reviewed and approved by an arts committee that observes open and fair artist selection guidelines.

Figure 146: Examples of public art

Water Features

Various types of water features can be included to anchor a public open space, such as Jesup Green (P11), and provide a recognizable visual element. They can be designed to be formal and static or playful and engaging. Formal fountains can provide a pleasant place for people to sit and gather while other types of water features such as spray parks can serve as playful and engaging landscape elements in warm weather.

Figure 147: Examples of water features in public open spaces

Kiosks & Small Structures/Buildings

Kiosks and small structures, which can serve a range of purposes (e.g., information booth, a food stand, café, etc.) can activate an open space such as Jesup Green (see P18) and provide amenities to visitors. Such structures are available pre-designed/fabricated or can be custom-designed by an architect (see Figure 148). These structures can create an identity and lend character to a place, so should be designed and specified with care and creativity.

Figure 148: Examples of kiosks and other small structures

Pedestrian Bridge

A pedestrian bridge is proposed across the Saugatuck River connecting Gorham Island and the former Save the Children site, which is going to be redeveloped (see P6, P7). The bridge is an opportunity to create a signature architectural element across the river in Downtown. The design could communicate old world charm or embody a more modern aesthetic, with shade and lighting that points to the future of Westport (see Figure 149). While the stylistic choice belongs to the people of Westport, it should be a highlight of Downtown and a point of pride and beauty.

Figure 149: Examples of pedestrian bridges

Parking Lots & Structures

Surface Parking

Much of Downtown Westport's land area is comprised of paved surface parking lots. As lots are created, reconstructed, or reconfigured, they should be designed to be more attractive, sustainable, and pedestrian-friendly. Lots with sufficient space, such as the Imperial Avenue Lot (see PK6), should have more greenery, better lighting, more pervious surfaces, and safer accommodations for pedestrians. The design of surface parking lots should consider the following elements:

- **Trees**. Parking lots plantings should include wide-spreading canopy trees to provide shade and reduce noise and exhaust. The species chosen should not leave on the ground sap or berries.
- **Lighting**. Lighting should provide a level of illumination so people feel safe. Light fixtures should be directed downward to prevent glare and spillage.
- **Green Stormwater Infrastructure**. Rain gardens and bioswales can absorb stormwater, as can porous pavement materials.
- **Pedestrian Accommodations**. Parking lots should be designed with designated pedestrian aisles along known desire lines to safely lead people walking to and from their cars.

Figure 150: Examples of surface parking lots and treatments

A parking lot with a wide-spreading tree canopy | A well-lit parking lot

A bioswale in a parking lot | A walkway in a parking lot, lined by rain gardens

Pervious paving after a rain storm

Parking Structures

Should the Town determine in the future that a parking structure is needed in Downtown to meet increasing parking demand (see PK8, PK9), several important design guidelines should be considered:

- A parking deck type structure (see Figure 151), versus an enclosed parking garage, would be better suited for the scale of Downtown Westport and the quantity of cars likely to be accommodated. In parking decks, the top level is open to the air, and other levels typically have few enclosures.
- The facility should be obscured from view from the primary street and secondary streets as much as possible. There are many examples of downtowns where parking structures are located within the interior of blocks or behind buildings, with access provided through alleys and/or side streets.
- The materials and colors used to construct the facility should complement, to the extent feasible, surrounding building materials and colors.
- People should feel safe utilizing the facility, especially at night. The structure should be well-lit and regularly monitored by security.
- The facility should be constructed with sustainable materials and features.

Figure 151: Example of a parking deck

Behind the shops along Post Road in Fairfield, CT is a two-story parking deck that can be accessed from Sherman Street, which runs parallel to Post Road. The top level, which is obscured from view by the parapet, is accessed by a ramp. Pictured below is a parking deck with a green roof system.

Pedestrian Safety Accommodations

This Plan identifies strategies to improve and complete the sidewalk network in Downtown (P2) and improve pedestrian safety at various intersections (see M1, M4, M11). Sidewalks and crosswalks should be designed to be safe and comfortable. Sidewalks should be in good repair and provide at least 5 feet, and preferably at least 7 feet where possible, of unobstructed pedestrian space. Distinctive treatments should be considered in order to provide enhanced visibility and priority to pedestrians alongside and across streets.

Crosswalks

Crosswalks make pedestrian actions more predictable for motorists by indicating accepted crossing locations. The design of crosswalks should be consistent throughout an area. Non-standard crosswalks should utilize materials, textures and colors that are compatible with the materials and furnishings included in the overall streetscape design.

Curb Extensions

Curb extensions, also known as neckdowns or bumpouts, are pedestrian safety features that reduce the length that a pedestrian has to walk in order to cross a street. In addition, they require that motorists slow down as they make right turns at an intersection. Other benefits of curb extensions include added space for sidewalk furniture and improved visibility between pedestrians and drivers. Special attention should be paid to placement along bike routes to avoid narrowing the width of the roadway and forcing bicycles and vehicles into an unnecessary shared lane configuration.

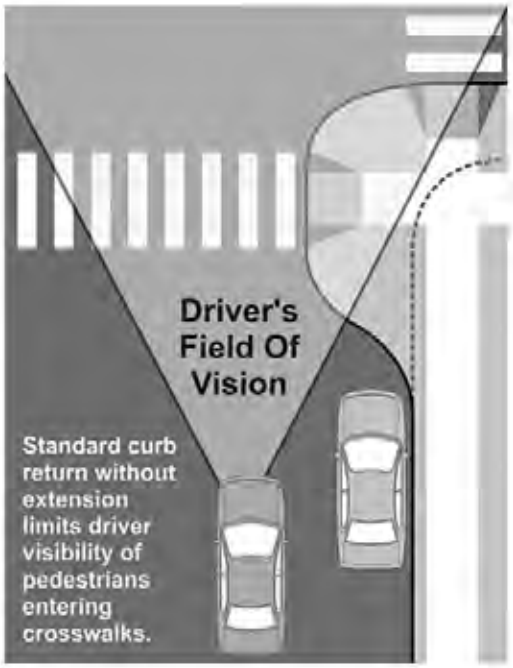
Curb extensions can be costly if drainage or utility infrastructure needs to be relocated. A less permanent option is to use colored epoxy gravel, thermoplastic line striping, and flexible plastic bollards to create extended pedestrian areas, which should also have reduced curb radii to calm traffic. The temporary alternative can also be implemented as a short-term option while funding is sought or while permanent curb extensions are being designed.

Figure 152: Examples of crosswalks

Crosswalks comprised of brick pavers in downtown Easton, PA

Highly-visible striped crosswalks in downtown Essex, CT

Figure 153: Examples of curb extensions

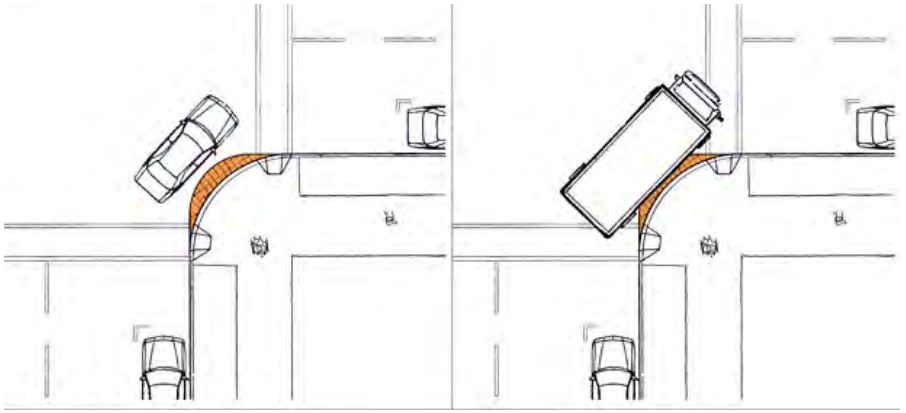


Mid-block curb-extension

Curb Radius Reduction

Reducing curb radii slows down turning vehicles and shortens pedestrian crossing distances. During design, curb radii should be tested by designers to provide the tightest possible radius at each intersection. Standard unit vehicle specifications should be tested to ensure that emergency vehicles and other vehicles with limited maneuverability can make all allowable turning movements through each intersection. On truck routes, reduction of curb radii may not be feasible due to the need to accommodate larger vehicles. Curb radii reduction should be considered in the redesign of the Myrtle Avenue (M4) and Main Street/Elm Street intersections (M11).

Figure 154: Diagram illustrating the impacts of reduced curb radii on cars and trucks



Pedestrian Safety Signs and Signals

There are various signs and signaling systems commonly deployed for the safety of both vehicles and pedestrians. Pedestrian countdown signals should be installed at high-volume signalized intersections to notify pedestrians when it is safe to cross and how much time remains in the pedestrian phase (see M1, M2). A HAWK (High-intensity Activated Crosswalk) signal is a combination of a flashing beacon and traffic signal used at marked crosswalks. When pedestrians wish to cross, they push a button, which activates a traffic signal for motorists that flashes yellow, then solid yellow, then red. Pedestrians then receive a "Walk" signal, followed by a "Don't Walk" signal with a countdown. The motorist signal switches to flashing red, which requires motorists to stop until pedestrians have cleared the crosswalk. This signal should only be installed at marked crosswalks with applicable warning signs. It should not be used at crosswalks controlled by yield signs, stop signs, or existing traffic control signals. This signal is most useful in areas of frequent conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians, or where pedestrians have difficulty obtaining a gap in continually flowing vehicular traffic during which to cross.

Figure 155: Examples of pedestrian safety signs and signals

A HAWK signal

Wayfinding Signs

Wayfinding signs (see M5, M6) provide useful information about nearby destinations and public places including parks, historic and cultural sites. Interpretive signs can help enliven a place by educating visitors about local history and ecology. When designed with engaging content and located appropriately, they can help encourage people to stop and linger a little longer than usual in a particular place. Special care should be taken when designing wayfinding and interpretive signs to ensure that they are attractive, durable, legible, and blend well with the overall character of the streetscape.

Figure 156: Example of a comprehensive and coordinated system of wayfinding signs

Figure 157: Examples of wayfinding signs for parking

E. LOW-IMPACT DEVELOPMENT & GREEN STORMWATER INFRASTRUCTURE

In Downtown Westport, stormwater is routed through a traditional infrastructure of catch basins and pipes that drain to treatment facilities and, ultimately, into the Saugatuck River. Green stormwater infrastructure relies on natural systems to slow, absorb, and filter stormwater before it enters local water bodies.

The replacement of impervious pavement with green stormwater infrastructure allows more stormwater to percolate into the ground and recharge the aquifer instead of flowing into storm drains. This also slows stormwater, which reduces the possibility of overwhelming the stormwater system during major rain events.

Given Downtown's proximity to the Saugatuck River, low-impact development (LID) techniques and green stormwater infrastructure should be included to the extent possible in public and private projects in Downtown Westport. LID has the potential to improve water quality in the Saugatuck River—and, by extension, Long Island Sound—because Downtown Westport is low-lying and close to the water table. This means stormwater enters quickly into the ecosystem. Advances in the design of techniques such as rain gardens and bioswales enable the capture and infiltration of large quantities of water in very small spaces.

Objectives of Low-Impact Development

The following are several objectives for adopting LID and green stormwater infrastructure:

- **Optimize the use of the existing infrastructure for stormwater management**. Utilize both natural and hardscape surfaces to improve the hydrology. Surfaces can be designed to retain, detain, store, change timing, or filter runoff.
- **Improve water quality**. Design a configuration of LID technologies that allows the natural systems available on proposed development sites to filter stormwater and promote infiltration.
- **Divert water away and disconnect from the Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO)**. Design collection/storage facilities to recharge, filter, retain and detain runoff (bioswales, rain gardens, slopes, bioretention cells, sub- surface retention cell) and use inlets that control facilities to delay peak rates.
- **Reduce runoff volume and runoff peak**. Utilize small-scale controls distributed across a site to modify the hydrologic condition and balance of the site. Systems such as bioretention cells, bioswales, cisterns, tree box filters, and slopes work well in this regard.
- **Direct runoff into distributed LID systems**. Improve the hydrologic function of sites by utilizing stormwater controls at the source and directing stormwater toward small-scale LID systems that are dispersed throughout the site in order to manage (filter, infiltrate, store) water in an evenly distributed manner.
- **Disconnect impervious surfaces**. The runoff from roofs, driveways, roads, sidewalks, parking lots, and other impervious areas should be directed toward pervious areas to decrease the directly connected or effective impervious areas.

Green Stormwater Infrastructure

Green stormwater infrastructure should be included in the redesign of Downtown's paved surfaces, which includes streets, sidewalks, parking lots, and plazas. Locations where streets have extra pavement space should be documented so that this space could be converted into planting areas. Rain gardens and bioswales are not the same as conventional planted areas (see Figure 158 on page 152). A cross-section through a properly-designed rain garden or bioswale shows a deep section filled with layers of sand and gravel and soil. This composition resists compaction and, thus, allows water to percolate. The spaces in the sand and gravel can retain high volumes of water and the varying densities of the layers effectively filter the water as it percolates down into the aquifer. Proper planning and design of rain gardens and bioswales would involve taking soil to analyze existing soil composition and determine depth to groundwater and/or bedrock. Species of vegetation planted in a rain garden or bioswale must be moisture tolerant, adaptable to the soil type used, and capable of thriving into an auto-oriented environment. These can be implemented incrementally, targeting high-flood locations first.

Figure 158: Examples of rain gardens and bioswales

A rain garden

Slotted curb allows water to flow into planting bed

A stormwater tree trench

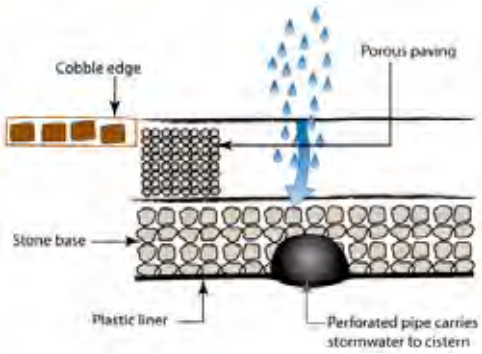
Porous Pavements and Pavers

When possible, porous surfaces should replace impervious surfaces to minimize stormwater runoff (see Figure 159). Porous pavement may be used on sidewalks and bicycle paths, low-volume travel lanes, parking areas, walking paths, and other low-traffic areas.

Porous surfaces can be created using pavers, cement, asphalt or structural soil, and/or compacted stone screenings designed to allow water to infiltrate the ground either through joints in the pavers or directly through the pavement surface itself. Under the paving material, a stone base holds water during rain events, gradually allowing it to seep into the ground below and ultimately circulate back into the groundwater system without entering the sewer system.

Figure 159: Examples of porous pavement in use

On-street parking with porous pavers



Bioswale with water tolerant plants and urban soil mix)

Porous pavers on a sidewalk

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APPENDICES

A. Downtown Westport Market Assessment

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C. Downtown Visioning Workshop Results Presentation

D. Downtown Westport Traffic & Transportation Study

E. Public Comments & Responses

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