



MASTER PLAN OF DEVELOPMENT

with MUNICIPAL COASTAL PROGRAM...
WESTBROOK CONNECTICUT

ADOPTED APRIL 23, 1990



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I. PREFACE

A. WHAT A TOWN PLAN OF DEVELOPMENT IS

The Westbrook Plan of Development is a statement, in narrative and map form, of the Planning Commission's recommendations for the physical and economic development of the town. The Plan is an advisory document adopted pursuant to Section 8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes. The Plan of Development should be used by both public and private interests to promote development in the proper places and direct it away from those sections of the community which, because of natural resource attributes or existing sound development, should remain undisturbed. The Plan serves as a guide for decisions by town officials and others responsible for land use, economic development, road improvements, recreation programs and environmental protection. The Plan should be used when reviewing zoning map and regulation changes; it is a guide for town officials in planning, locating and allocating tax resources for capital improvements and the Planning Commission's reference point when called upon to report on proposed municipal improvements as required by Section 8-24 of the Statutes. The Plan is written as a general statement of what the town would like to be -- its residential characteristics, tax base, recreational amenities, employment opportunities and other factors which contribute to community development.

B. MUNICIPAL COASTAL PROGRAM

A municipal coastal program was first included in the 1982 Westbrook Plan of Development. The Westbrook Coastal boundary is a continuous line which designates either the 100 year flood line, or 1,000 feet from mean high tide or from tidal wetlands, or any other legally designated coastal resource, whichever is the farthest inland. Westbrook's coastal area is about 2,565 acres or about 24 percent of the town's land area.

Since the last plan was adopted, several important changes have been made to the Zoning Regulations to carry out the objectives of the Coastal Program. A special Commercial Boating District has been established and mapped. Coastal site plan review standards have been

incorporated into all land use regulations as well as the requirement of a 50 foot building setback from tidal wetlands. There is also a Coastal Conservation District established to protect off shore islands.

While some of Westbrook's shellfish beds have been closed because of pollution, other areas remain open. The town tests periodically to insure compliance with federal health standards. The town will continue to test shellfish growing areas in an effort to maintain their productivity and comply with the state's Shellfish Sanitation Program. It is hoped that the wastewater treatment system will permit reopening of most shellfishing areas.

Westbrook will continue to act in accordance with the goals and policies of the Coastal Management Act, and to coordinate with Connecticut's coastal management office "to ensure that development, preservation or use of the land and water resources of the coastal area proceeds in a manner consistent with the capability of the land and water resources to support development, preservation or use without significantly disrupting either the natural environment or sound economic growth." (Section 22a-92(1) Westbrook incorporates the resource and use policies of the Connecticut Coastal Management Act into this plan of development.

C. OVERVIEW OF GOALS

The Plan of Development is a statement of goals, policies and standards for the physical and economic development of the community. The goals for the 1990 Plan are

1. TO PRESERVE AS MUCH OF THE TOWN'S "SMALL TOWN" CHARACTER AS IS POSSIBLE IN THE FACE OF GROWING POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT PRESSURES.

- A discussion of the factors which shape the character of the town is presented in the next section - Westbrook - Past and Present.

2. TO AVOID DEGRADATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND SURFACE AND GROUND WATER RESOURCES.

- To achieve these goals the town must carry through with programs already proposed or underway. These include the proposed sewer system; and the collection, recycling and disposal of solid waste materials, including hazardous waste materials from homes or industry. We must continue to insist on properly engineered and installed septic systems where necessary.

3. TO ENACT THROUGH THE PLAN OF DEVELOPMENT THE CONNECTICUT COASTAL AREA MANAGEMENT PROGRAM.

- Have all town land use review boards address the land and water resource policies of the CAM program in reviewing development projects.
- Review the coastal use policies of the CAM program to determine if proposed land use designations are consistent with coastal resources.
- Promote the coordination of planning and regulatory activities to insure protection of Westbrook's coastal resources.
- Manage uses in the coastal boundary, giving highest priority and preference to water-dependent uses and facilities at all shorefront areas.

4. TO PRIORITIZE AND PURSUE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS.

- Improve or expand the Town Hall
- Support the changes required to improve school facilities
- Add a north village fire station
- Improve our roads, bridges and sidewalks.

The ultimate goal is to enhance the quality of life for all residents of Westbrook.

II. PEOPLE AND PLACE

BACKGROUND OF THE PLAN OF DEVELOPMENT

A. HISTORY

1. Westbrook - Past and Present

The present town was part of the Saybrook Colony established in the 1630's. In 1648 the area between the Pachaug and the Menunketesuck Rivers was known as the Oyster River Quarter. From 1724 to 1810 this area was called Pachaug or Saybrook West Society. In 1810 it was renamed Westbrook, and in 1840 it was incorporated as a separate town. The area of the town is approximately 16 square miles. Among early settlers we find names still familiar in Westbrook today: Bushnell, Chapman, Stannard, Post and Wright. The 1872 maps shown on the cover of this report indicate that the town center and developmental pattern were well established more than a hundred years ago.

The historic fabric and small town rural character of Westbrook are appreciated and many of our townspeople find these qualities a legacy worth saving. The character of the town is still defined in large part by its coastal location and history. Its attractive beaches and river inlets shaped the vacation housing and marine businesses that characterize much of the town south of the turnpike. Its ties to the past are expressed by historic buildings and cemeteries throughout the town. The town center retains some of its historic character and scale but is in need of renovation.

Recent development in town has been rural residential with some growth in multi-family residential units along the Route One corridor. Commercial development remains small scale and is confined essentially to the Route One corridor.

The three basic characteristics of the town that should be maintained and enhanced are the vacation and marine facilities, the historic nature of the town "look", and the basically residential use of the land with small scale commercial development in the presently designated areas. Rising land values have brought pressure for greater intensity of use, both residential and commercial. The essence of planning is to balance growth with acceptable levels of traffic, public services and environmental protection.

2. The History of Planning in Westbrook

In 1956 a joint Planning and Zoning Commission was established in Westbrook, and zoning and subdivision regulations were adopted. In 1957 the town commissioned the firm of Technical Planning Associates of New Haven to make studies for a Plan of Development. The Plan was presented to the Commission in 1960, but only a small part of it, a zoning map, was adopted.

In 1968 the joint Planning and Zoning Commission was abolished. The new Planning Commission took up the task of preparing a Plan of Development for Westbrook.

The 1977 Plan was the first formally adopted Plan of Development for Westbrook. It was the product of a conscientious citizen commission effort supported by the Connecticut Department of Community Affairs (1972) and technical and professional planning advice provided over the years by the Connecticut River Estuary Regional Planning Agency.

The 1982 Plan of Development Revision was undertaken to reflect significant legislation, namely, the Connecticut Coastal Area Management Act and to incorporate new information on water quality, agricultural lands, sewer avoidance and 1980 census statistical data. The CAM Municipal Coastal Program was the catalyst for this revision. Coastal resource policies and recommendations for the initiation of a municipal coastal program are woven throughout the 1982 Plan.

The 1990 Plan of Development Revision reflects accomplishment of many past recommendations and acknowledgement of new problems, challenges and goals. It should also be noted that in 1988 the State Legislature revised the general statutes (Section 8-23) to require review of the plan of development at least once every ten years. The Planning Commission must adopt such amendments to the plan as are deemed necessary to update it.

B. GEOGRAPHY

1. Topography (Coastal Plain and Upland)

From sea level on Long Island Sound, the land generally rises to the northwest. There is a bank of very rugged land composed of rocky ledges and ridges interspersed with swamps and poorly drained areas which runs across the town from southwest to northeast. While this area is not very high, it effectively divides the town into two parts which might be called the coastal plain and uplands.

The coastal plain is very flat along the shore and is broken up by many extensive areas of tidal marsh, especially around the mouth of the Menunketesuck and Pachaug Rivers. The latter and its extension, Trout Brook, form a valley extending up the Essex town line. This valley is utilized by Route 153, the major north-south highway connection in the town.

The two significant existing land use features of the coastal plain are seasonal and year-round houses on small lots, occupying 350 acres (about five miles of shorefront) and the 65 acres of marina trades (about two miles of shorefront). It is in this area of very small lots and high water table that many of the town's pollution problems exist. The town is under orders from the Department of Environmental Protection to abate pollution. On-site solutions (septic systems) are not feasible and a sewer avoidance policy, at least in this area, is no longer appropriate. The town is pursuing a municipal sewer system for areas where on-site corrections are not feasible.

The shoreline's total tidal length, including the Pachaug and Menunketesuck Rivers, is approximately 14 miles.

2. Drainage

The major part of the town is drained by the Pachaug River and its tributaries, Fishing Brook and Trout Brook. The extreme north and northwest segment of town is drained through Messerschmidt and Wright's Pond by Falls River to the Connecticut River in Essex. The western edge of the town is drained by the Menunketesuck River which joins the Pachaug River at its estuary.

The Menunketesuck and Pachaug Rivers are estuarine embayments. Estuaries have both natural functions and man made uses. They are areas of high productivity for marine organisms, function as breeding and spawning grounds for many species, provide sheltered habitats and their circulation patterns affect nutrient levels. Man's uses of estuarine embayments; have heavily influenced Westbrook's coastal scene. These areas provide recreational, commercial, and navigational benefits to Westbrook.

The major streams descend from the upland to the coastal plain interspersed with poorly drained areas. When the streams reach the coastal plain, they are already close to sea level so become quite sluggish and their banks are usually flat and marsh covered. Tidewater extends some distance inland. Johnson Pond, which is almost three miles from the shore, is only thirteen feet above sea level. Much land in the plain is therefore poorly drained wetlands.

Within Westbrook's coastal area there are approximately 320 acres of freshwater wetlands. Freshwater wetlands provide space for stormwater storage, act as flood and erosion buffers, provide wildlife habitat and influence the salinity and estuarine circulation through freshwater input. Some inland wetlands within Westbrook's coastal zone are located within the Cold Spring Brook drainage basin, the large wetland system which flows south from Stone Hedge and Forge Roads into the Pointina Beach tidal wetland marshes, and the inland wetlands in the town center between Fiske Lane and Brookside West. This inland wetland system is particularly important because it drains the storm water from the Spencer property to the tidal marsh outlet to Long Island Sound.

Tidal wetland resources comprise approximately 400 acres of Westbrook's coastal area. These coastal marshes are among the most naturally fertile areas of Connecticut. Tidal marshes functionally serve as storm buffers, trap sediments, stabilize shorelines, provide scenic vistas and open space. They are important for waterfowl habitats, shellfish beds, and spawning grounds for commercial fisheries.

3. Water Supply Resources

The most promising groundwater sources in Westbrook are the coarse grained stratified-drift deposits underlying the inland 'valleys of Trout Brook and Spring Brook north of McVeagh Road. In the Trout Brook aquifer, Connecticut Water Company tests of the "Holbrook Well" indicate that this site has a potential yield of .5 million gallons per day. The "Westbrook Well" on McVeagh Road is already part of the Connecticut Water Company's supply system and yields .20 million gallons per day.

In 1984-85 the Conservation Commission mapped and developed regulations for a Water Resource District. These regulations were adopted by the Zoning Commission in 1986. This is an overlay district whose purpose is to prevent contamination of the ground and surface waters providing public water supply. In 1989 the state legislature adopted a stringent aquifer protection law (Public Act 89-305). Westbrook's regulations will be amended as necessary to comply with state regulations adopted pursuant to statute.

4. Coastal Flood Hazard Area

The mapped flood plain along Westbrook's coastal zone represents about 1,264 acres, approximately 49 percent of the land area within the coastal boundary. Coastal Westbrook is affected by tidal flooding from Long Island Sound. Westbrook's Flood Insurance Study estimates that

approximately 70 percent of the coastline has some type of seawall protective structures. The highest coastal flood levels in Westbrook have been caused by heavy rainfall and hurricane winds, resulting in heavy runoff and abnormally high tides. In September, 1938 the largest flood of record affected Westbrook's coastline. This storm raised the flood water of the Menunketesuck River to 8 to 10 inches over the Route 145 highway bridge. In the coastal hazard area tidal flooding pushed flood waters to 9.4 feet above sea level. The heaviest property damages resulting from coastal storms have occurred along the 4,200 feet of shorefront in the West Beach area, including Coral Sands and Middle Beaches.

Development within the inland hazard area consists of sparse residential land uses north of Route 1 and highly concentrated, seasonal and year-round houses south of Route 1 in the coastal area.

Commercial development within the flood hazard area is light with the majority of the uses being marine trades along the coastal reaches of the Menunketesuck and Pachaug Rivers.

5. Beaches and Dunes

Westbrook's shoreline includes both sand and gravel beaches. The sands along the Grove Beach Point spit are characterized as wind blown. A 500-600 foot section east of the town beach and a 200 foot section east of the point where Cold Spring Brook enters Long Island Sound constitute the only portion of the shoreline that truly can be classified as dunes. Westbrook's historical development is tied to its very desirable natural beaches. Seasonal communities were built at those shorefront locations where natural beaches were wide and sandy. We now know that building on beach sands, removing vegetation, leveling dunes and improperly constructing groins to retain eroding sands, can hasten the erosion of a beach and is not proper activity.

Sections of Westbrook's beaches are particularly sensitive to changes because of their windblown characteristics (Grove Beach Point) or adjacent erodible sediments (Quotonset Beach) which form their landward edges. Beach sediments along Westbrook's shorefront are not very thick. The quality, depth and width of the beach sands is affected by the precarious balance between erosion and deposition by waves and longshore currents.

Waves strike the beach at an angle, the water runs over the sand and recedes at a right angle to the shore. The receding waves pull the sand downdrift of its origin. Along Westbrook's beach front sand is transmitted from east to west. This is called littoral drift (longshore

current) and is a major factor in determining beach configuration. Observation shows that where groins have been built their easterly sides tend to erode while the westerly end between groins is usually replenished with sand.

Erosion is caused by a number of interrelated dynamic factors. The changing influence of tides, waves and wind affects the shoreline each day. Because of its dynamic nature no shoreline or shore feature such as a sandy beach, can be considered as strictly erosional, stable or building, but rather, each should be viewed as continuously changing.

6. Barrier Islands

Westbrook Coastal Resources Map identifies three islands along the shoreline, Salt Island, Menunketesuck and Duck Island. All three islands are undeveloped. Menunketesuck is the largest, approximately 5 acres, and is privately owned; Salt Island is owned by the town; and Duck Island was acquired in 1973 by the State as public open space. Menunketesuck Island and the Duck Island breakwater are important because of the protection they afford to the Pilot's Point and Grove Beach communities. Duck Island is also a popular safe anchorage. Menunketesuck Island has been classified by Connecticut Coastal Area Management Program and the Federal Department of Interior as a barrier island, which means that development will be discouraged and the maintenance of the island for storm protection and resource habitat should be encouraged.

C. POPULATION AND HOUSING

According to the 1980 census, the population of Westbrook was 5,216. The Connecticut Office of Policy and Management projects the 1990 population to be 5,590, an increase of 7%. This is the smallest decennial increase since 1920. In 1950 the population was 1,549. By 1960 this had increased 55% to 2,399. The greatest rate of increase occurred between 1960 and 1970 when a 59% increase occurred. Between 1970 and 1980 the population increased from 3,820 to 5,216 or 36%. The projected population for the year 2000 is 6,000, a 7% increase over the 1990 figure.

Even though large population increases are not foreseen, other changing characteristics of the population are important for planning purposes. Until 1990 census data are available, state projections for 1990 and beyond must be used. These figures show a decrease in household size (2.57 persons to 2.5 persons), a greater than average increase in people over 70 from 1980 to 1990 (33%) but only an average increase in this population from 1990 to 2000. As pointed out in the Analysis of Regional Housing Needs (CRERPA, 1987) the most spectacular growth

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rate is taking place in the so-called frail elderly segment of the population aged 80 and over. This increase in Westbrook was 84% between 1980 and 1990 and is projected to be 21 % between 1990 and 2000.

The number of dwelling units in Westbrook was 2,762 in 1980 and is estimated to be 3,159 in 1990, a 14% increase. Much of this increase has been in single family houses of increasing value. Records kept by the building department on construction of single family houses show that the average construction cost has more than doubled in the last four years.

<u>Year</u>	<u>#5F Houses</u>	<u>Const Cost</u>	<u>Avg. Cost</u>
85/86	42	2,622,130	62,431
86/87	60	5,381,564	89,692
87/88	48	5,671,790	118,162
88/89	26	4,087,626	157,216

Given these statistics, it is little wonder that the Connecticut River Estuary Regional Planning Agency has identified the foremost housing need of the region as "the need to provide a wider choice of housing types at lower cost for smaller households. The need is broken down into three identified unmet housing demands, (1) those of low income elderly persons, (2) those of low and moderate income families -and (3) those of small households seeking smaller, rental units," (Analysis of Regional Housing Needs, December, 1987). Because land values and construction costs are so high, these types of housing must be heavily subsidized if they are to be truly available to designated groups. Because of environmental considerations, densities cannot be raised beyond the level now permitted for multi-family housing.

SEASONAL HOUSING

Westbrook has a significant but ever decreasing number of seasonal housing units. The town has no policy or regulation preventing conversion of seasonal to year-round dwellings. Conversions are subject to the requirements of the Public Health Code for septic systems and the town sanitarian reviews conversions for septic system adequacy. Because so many seasonal dwellings are on non-conforming lots, most expansions require relief from the Zoning Board of Appeals.

The advent of sewers does not signal a change in planning or zoning policy on shorefront development. Sewers are and always have been intended to relieve existing pollution problems. They are not being considered as the basis for increased intensity or change of use.

HOUSING FOR THE ELDERLY

Since the last Master Plan update, 58 subsidized units for the elderly have been constructed, 22 at Safe Harbor and 36 at Ambleside. A study conducted by the Estuary Regional Committee on Aging in September, 1986 revealed that there was greater demand among Westbrook's elderly population for subsidized apartments than for group or congregate housing. The need for elderly apartments has been partially addressed by Safe Harbor and Ambleside. The needs of the frail elderly are proposed to be addressed by the development of a congregate housing facility on the town-owned Spencer site.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

In addition to subsidized units for the elderly, 36 subsidized family dwelling units were constructed at Ambleside. Recent state legislation encourages towns to seek local solutions to the affordable housing problem. Westbrook now has a housing authority and is a member of the Housing Partnership Program pursuant to Sect 8-336f of the Connecticut General Statutes. With two important organizational/implementation mechanisms for affordable housing in place, the town is in an advantageous position to address the question of affordable housing. The town is actively pursuing the construction of 14 units of limited equity cooperative housing, also on the town-owned Spencer site.

PLAN OF DEVELOPMENT: GOALS, POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following statement of goals, policies and recommendations is designed to guide the nature and extent of town growth and development. The plan is based on physical, social, economic and governmental conditions and trends. It indicates priorities in actions and use of town resources which will aid orderly growth and provide needed services.

Four major issues are addressed: Land Use, Open Space, Transportation and Community Facilities and Services.

LAND USE-ALL DISTRICTS

GOAL: TO ACHIEVE LAND USE THAT RESPECTS THE CARRYING CAPACITY OF THE LAND AND AVAILABILITY OF SERVICES INCLUDING ROADS; PROTECT COASTAL AND OTHER NATURAL RESOURCES.

When asked what they liked best about Westbrook, most respondents to the Planning Commission's 1988 Questionnaire said "its ambiance, character and small town atmosphere." A substantial majority (62%) felt that use of land for residential purposes was "very important" and an even larger majority (75%) felt that natural resource protection was "very important". Most respondents thought that growth should consist of a mix of resort, commercial and residential land uses. Large majorities thought it important or very important to encourage low and moderate cost family housing, housing for young marrieds and housing for the elderly.

Zone changes to create additional areas of commercial development along the Boston Post Road and the two turnpike interchanges were deemed undesirable by most respondents. Most other comments pertaining to commercial development were aimed at the town center. A number of people mentioned the improvement of the appearance of

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this area as a main priority of the town. The town's overall goal for land use should be to achieve land use that respects the carrying capacity of the land and availability of services including roads. Protection of coastal and other natural resources is inherent to this goal. The town's zoning regulations presently require a 50 foot setback from all inland and tidal wetlands and watercourses for buildings and structures. Some consideration might be given to requiring a setback for parking areas also.

The multi-family provisions of the zoning regulations state that no tidal or inland wetlands may be included in the minimum required lot area of five acres. Because of the intensity of multi-family use, this provision should be retained and perhaps strengthened. The Commission should consider amending this section to make clear that the multi-family density calculation is based only on non-wetland acreage.

The ultimate constraint on development intensity in Westbrook is the need to protect potable groundwater sources. Septic systems must be installed in appropriate and adequate soils. Individual as well as public water supply wells must be protected. Westbrook has been under orders from the Department of Environmental Protection since December 1985 to abate community pollution problems. The town has been actively working to create a three town sewer system but the reality of public wastewater collection and treatment facilities is still years away (see section on Community Facilities and Services). Meanwhile the limitations posed by the necessity for clean water and nondegradation of the environment throughout the town restrict development intensity to fairly low levels.

This is not to say that the introduction of sanitary sewers should trigger major commercial or residential expansion. The capacity of the system proposed is in fact geared to current zoning. The objective of the sewer system is to abate current pollution, not to permit unlimited development expansion. The construction of a limited capacity municipal sewer system to solve existing pollution problems from past development does not mean that new development should be allowed which is inconsistent with Westbrook's small town character. Sewers are intended to eliminate current pollution problems and insure pollution abatement in the future. They are not, and never have been intended as, a vehicle to promote more intense development. The need to protect groundwater will remain. Public water supply resources exist in areas not served by sewers. Intensity and use must remain within the limits required to protect these resources.

Recommendations – all districts

- Base multi-family bedroom density and lot area only on non-wetland acreage.
- Compare existing land uses to what is permitted by zoning to evaluate conflicts and potential modifications.
- Perform and maintain a vacant land survey.
- Periodically review Zoning Regulations in order to assure resulting development is consistent with town character.

Given the natural constraints in development, the desire of many residents to maintain the character of the town, and other objectives expressed in the questionnaire, following is a discussion of land use needs and recommendations in the major categories.

RESIDENTIAL

Single family zoning should remain as mapped but it is strongly recommended that the minimum permitted lot size be increased from 10,000 square feet to one-half acre (21,780 square feet). One-half acre is generally recognized as the minimum lot size necessary in areas served by public water and where individual septic systems are used.

Given the town's dependence on groundwater supplies and the abundance of wetlands throughout the town, consideration should be given to an ordinance prohibiting underground storage of fuel oil and other hazardous materials.

Multi-family housing is permitted under certain conditions in the MLR and commercial districts. The current minimum lot size of 5 acres and maximum density of six bedrooms per acre should be retained. It should be made clear, however, that minimum area and density are to be calculated only on non-wetland acreage. The Master Plan has always supported housing for the elderly and a reasonable percentage of moderate cost units. At present the town is reviewing two forms of subsidized housing on the Spencer site. Proposals for both congregate elderly housing and limited equity cooperative family housing are being evaluated. The congregate housing is designed for the elderly who are no longer able to live independently, but who do not require nursing home care. Only schemes which comply with current zoning and land use densities should be considered.

In addition to the program under way, the longer term requirements for assisted housing in Westbrook should be addressed. Land is a major hurdle for any project. The town should look into all options, such as

state land, future acquisitions, and gifts as a way to acquire sites. Maximum cooperation between state and local officials is desirable to obtain funds and technical assistance necessary for constructing subsidized housing.

Recommendations

- Increase minimum lot size to *one-half* acre (21,780 square feet).
- Explore methods for expanding housing choices for smaller households, affordable housing, and housing for the elderly, by continuing the work of the Housing Authority and the Housing Partnership.
- Consider an ordinance prohibiting underground storage of fuel oil and other hazardous materials.

COMMERCIAL

While expansion of commercial space is not seen as critical, preservation and enhancement of existing commercial areas is a near term goal. It is universally agreed that attention should be focused on the town center - its appearance, traffic circulation and parking. Ideally, a new appearance would be accomplished through public and private efforts. A special town center commercial zone should be created which emphasizes retail and service uses and does not require individual on-site parking for such uses. Utility wires should be placed underground and the town should consider commissioning a conceptual plan for the area which includes landscaping, signage, decorative street lighting, and sidewalk pavement. As individual buildings are rehabilitated they would be encouraged to meet designated design standards. A walkway between the town center and the Spencer site should be considered. Traffic flow patterns, possible public parking, sight lines and views should be studied and improvements made as feasible. A plan for public amenities and landscape improvements on the town Green should be drawn up. There are many attractive old buildings in the town center. Cooperation and effort on the part of both the town and property owners could result in dramatic changes and a downtown that is a source of pride and not a topic of complaints.

Outside the downtown, more explicit site plan review requirements for landscaping, sidewalks and facade improvement could lead to more attractive commercial development. There is a need to review building regulations in both the commercial boating and the commercial district. The relationship between building size, parking and landscaped area must be understood so that the regulations produce desired and

desirable development. Building regulations must be reviewed and realistic limits imposed on size and coverage. This should be accomplished through a floor area ratio/building coverage limit. Uses should be examined. Some uses such as auto body repair shop, might be limited to industrial districts.

MARINE COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

The marine commercial district is a special area with most commercial enterprises directly associated with marine trades. While problems and opportunities tend to be harbor-specific, common issues include overcrowding, encroachments into federal navigation channels, transient boat and boater facilities, preservation of coastal resources and water dependent facilities, and a need for more local participation in the regulation of harbor uses. While zoning regulates land use, there is presently no plan for the "wet side" of the marine district which would provide guidance for managing Westbrook's increasing boat population. A Municipal Harbor Management Plan, as provided for in Section 22a-113K through 22a-113t of Connecticut General Statutes, allows a municipality to establish a land-use plan specifically for harbor areas, which will help in guiding development in this special land-use area. Further, by developing such a voluntary harbor management plan, a municipality is assured that local goals and objectives are incorporated into the federal and state permit decision-making process.

When experience demonstrates that fine tuning of the zoning regulations is necessary, this should be done.

Recommendations - Commercial, Town Center

- Create a special Town Center Commercial District with appropriate use and design standards. This should be a cooperative effort by property owners and town officials.
- Study traffic patterns, pedestrian crossings and curb cuts in downtown area for improved circulation.
- Provide public parking, decorative lighting and pavement, and encourage underground utilities.
- Study existing landscaping, pedestrian circulation and views for improvement.
- Use public improvements as catalyst for restoration and improvement of private property.

Recommendations – General Commercial

- Consider floor area ratio and building coverage limits in the Commercial and Commercial Boating Districts
- Develop a Harbor Management Plan.
- Require landscaped buffer around parking areas.
- Review uses in Commercial District to make sure all permitted is appropriate.

INDUSTRIAL

As there is vacant land in the industrial and TIC zones, consideration need not be given at this point to rezoning for industrial use. When rezoning is considered, however, industrial zoning should follow the turnpike and not be expanded north or south into residential areas. Emphasis should be placed on permitting uses which do not have the potential to pollute ground water. Also, careful attention should be paid to requiring proper disposal of all hazardous and toxic substances used on site. Beyond these concerns building size and site plan review standards should be reviewed to make sure that building size will be reasonable and not be out of proportion to expectations. A floor area ratio and reduced coverage would also be appropriate in the industrial zone. Landscaped buffers adjacent to residential zones and parking areas should be required.

Recommendations

- Review building size and site plan review standards to promote appropriate development.
- Consider industrial rezonings only along the turnpike, not expansion in residential areas.
- Require landscaped buffer adjacent to residential zones and parking areas.

OPEN SPACE, NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION AND RECREATION

GOALS: TO PROTECT AND ENHANCE A HIGH QUALITY ENVIRONMENT WHICH CAN ACCOMMODATE AN ATTRACTIVELY BUILT COMMUNITY WITH MINIMAL IMPACT ON AIR (INCLUDING NOISE), LAND, WATER QUALITY, NATURAL HABITATS, AND COASTAL RESOURCES.

TO INSURE THAT ALL DEVELOPMENT OR REDEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE COASTAL AREA IS CONSISTENT WITH THE GOALS AND POLICIES OF THE CONNECTICUT COASTAL MANAGEMENT ACT, C.C.S. 22a-90 et seq., AS AMENDED.

TO ENCOURAGE ADDITIONS TO AND TO INSURE THE PRESERVATION OF OPEN SPACES IN THE TOWN.

TO PROVIDE COMMUNITY-WIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTIVE AND PASSIVE RECREATION TO MEET BOTH PRESENT AND FUTURE NEEDS.

Open space land is land which serves one or more of three broad functions: conservation and protection of natural resources, recreation, and the control of the location and timing of development. Open space planning provides an opportunity to evaluate needs and to define goals regarding wise use of natural resources, recreation, and orderly development.

In 1989, in response to a Planning Commission town-wide questionnaire, 95% of all respondents said that protection of natural resources is "very important" (75%) or "important" (20%). Of those who thought that natural resource protection is important, 48% felt that town purchase of areas for open space and recreation is the most effective measure.

In this revision of the Plan of Development protection of natural

resources has been given prime consideration in planning for open space.

Generally speaking, open space is undeveloped, undisturbed land. Open space can refer to land held open or available for the benefit of the public, or it can refer to land, as yet undeveloped, the future of which is uncertain. Open space is defined by statute, Section 12-107 e(c) (see also 12-504e) as "any area of land including forest land, land designated as wetland under section 22a-30 and not excluding farmland, the preservation or restriction of the use of which would (1) maintain and enhance the conservation of natural or scenic resources, (2) protect natural streams or water supply, (3) promote conservation of soils, wetlands, beaches or tidal marshes, (4) enhance the value to the public of abutting or neighboring parks, forests, wildlife preserves, nature reservations or sanctuaries or other open spaces, (5) enhance public recreation opportunities, (6) preserve historic sites or (7) promote orderly urban or suburban development".

Passive open space areas can protect and preserve natural areas that perform important ecological functions. They include areas such as freshwater wetlands, lakes, ponds, rivers and streams aquifer recharge areas, watersheds and stream corridor buffer zone, floodplains, steep and highly erodible slopes, ridgetops, forests, significant habitats and natural communities, and areas with high aesthetic value. Active open space includes agricultural lands and areas used for recreational purposes such as parks, recreational beaches, hiking areas, scenic overlooks, playfields and other outdoor sports facilities.

Planning for open space is especially important so that some open land is contiguous, providing "green belts" for protecting water courses, providing wildlife travel ways, retaining visual character, and for hiking trails connecting throughout town. Also important, and usually most expensive, is the acquisition of adequate land for active public recreation. The northeast quadrant of the town is especially lacking in both active and passive open space. Another desirable acquisition would be additional open space in coastal areas for both recreation and resource protection purposes. Open space planning can help achieve a better balance of "green areas" throughout the town.

In 1988/89 the Conservation Commission, in cooperation with the Planning Commission, inventoried and mapped significant open space areas relative to the land's characteristics in order to identify critical areas that best protect the Town's natural resources. These factor maps include:

- Open Space Map

- Coastal Resource Map
- Water Resource Map
- Unique or Sensitive Natural Areas and Agricultural Land
- Soils Map

The maps indicate that most of the remaining open land in Westbrook which is not presently functioning as designated open space, is undeveloped due to constraints such as wetlands, steep slopes, or shallow soils. Such land does function to protect natural resources. Using the Factor maps the Conservation Commission has identified properties that function to a high degree to protect critical natural resources. For example, a property or a portion of a property with steep slopes, soils constraints for development, and/or containing significant wetlands might be recommended for open space designation.

Westbrook's excellent water resources are its most important natural resource, significantly contributing to the economic, public health, and environmental stability of the community, and should be given primary consideration for protection in all land use decisions. These water resources include coastal waters, tidal wetlands, inland wetlands and ground water. Water quality and quantity can be protected through open space preservation. This might include designating stream corridors, steep and highly erodible slopes, flood plains, aquifer recharge zones, tidal wetlands, and significant inland wetlands as open space, and/or pursuing town acquisition of critical areas.

A number of methods exist to help communities preserve open space. Aside from outright donations and purchases, these methods include open space set-aside in subdivisions, zoning regulations for conservation districts, conservation restrictions, conservation easements, and preferential tax assessment; i.e. Public Act 490 (C.C.5. Sect. 12-107a *et seq.*). Also available are facade preservation restrictions for buildings of historic or architectural significance.

Subdivision set-asides are provided for in Westbrook's Subdivision Regulations, which stipulate that the Planning Commission may require up to 10% of the total area of a subdivision be set aside for open space. By designating priorities for open space in the Town Plan of Development.. land use commissions, property owners, and developers will have information regarding the optimum areas for open space designation and protection.

The Water Resource District regulations enacted in 1986 were designed to prevent contamination of ground and surface water resources

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providing water supply for the town of Westbrook. These regulations will have to be updated to meet the requirements of P A 89-305, an act to protect aquifers, passed by the legislature in 1989.

Preferential tax assessments, under Connecticut Public Act 490 (C.G.S. Section 12-107a et seq.), concern the taxation and preservation of farm, forest, and open space land for the purpose of controlling the location and timing of development through tax incentives. The three "land use" categories covered by this act are defined as follows:

Farm Land means any tract or tracts of land, including woodland and wasteland, constituting a farm unit.

Forest Land means any tract or tracts of land aggregating twenty-five acres or more in an area bearing tree growth in such quantity and so spaced as to constitute, in the opinion of the State Forester, a forest area, and maintained, in the opinion of the State Forester, in a state of proper forest condition.

Open Space Land means any area of land, including forest land farm land, and land designated as wetland under Section 22a-30, the preservation or restriction of the use of which would maintain and enhance the conservation of natural or scenic resources; protect water supply; promote conservation of soils, wetlands, beaches or tidal marshes; preserve historic sites; enhance public recreation opportunity and promote orderly urban or suburban development.

Once a property is shown on the Plan of Development as farm, forest, or open space, the owner may file an application for classification with the tax assessor which will enable the owner to benefit from a reduced assessment. All three of these land types retain their classification until sold or altered in such a manner as to adversely affect their character as open space. Should this occur before a ten year period has elapsed, the owner must pay a conveyance tax to the Town. In the 1989 Planning Commission town-wide questionnaire, of those residents who thought that natural resource protection is important (95%), 48% felt that the town purchase of areas for open space and recreation is the most effective measure. Several means exist through which towns can acquire open space land. These include open space grant-in-aid programs, the acceptance of conservation easements and/or restrictions, and fee simple acquisition by the town. The selection of any particular method will depend on town priorities, funds, and year-to-year changes in Federal and State funding programs. Regardless of the method used, given the importance Westbrook residents give to protection of natural resources, the town should aggressively pursue opportunities to preserve and acquire open space

and protect our natural resources. The Conservation Commission has drawn up a list of land it deems priority for open space acquisition.

Recommendations

- The town should acquire through subdivision approval, acquisition, or donation open space areas in the northern section of town, especially the northeast, which have potential for recreational uses.
- Continue to acquire conservation restrictions for unique and sensitive land within subdivisions and other developments.
- Set aside funds for the acquisition of recreational and other open space lands in Westbrook. Consult open space acquisition recommendations made by the Conservation Commission.
- Acquire additional open space in coastal areas for both recreation and resource protection purposes.
- Make every effort to acquire contiguous open space areas and establish a trail system.
- Continue open space set aside requirement in subdivisions, not limited to undevelopable land.
- The town should acquire additional beach property to supplement its existing beaches. Provision should be made for improving public access at the ends of town rights of way to the waterfront. These areas should be marked.
- Structures which restrict movement along the water's edge should be identified and evaluated to determine if alterations can be made to permit passage. New structures should be designed to allow passage along the shoreline.

TRANSPORTATION

GOAL: TO PROMOTE AN INTEGRATED VEHICULAR AND PEDESTRIAN ROAD NETWORK WHICH EFFICIENTLY CARRIES INCREASING VOLUMES OF TRAFFIC.

There are 56 miles of road within Westbrook - 17 miles (30%) maintained by the state and 39 miles (70%) maintained by the town.

The major circulation network consists of three east-west routes (the Connecticut Turnpike, the Boston Post Road, and the Old Clinton Road) and two north-south routes (Connecticut 153 and 145) both with turnpike access. Route 153 (the Essex Road) is an important link between the town center and neighboring towns to the north. It also serves as a connector on the secondary east-west route provided by Spencer Plains and McVeagh Roads. The Cross Road, West Pond Meadow, Dennison, East Pond Meadow system is a secondary east-west route. The Pond Meadow system is the only secondary north-south route.

The Boston Post Road traverses the town for a distance of 3.9 miles. Access to the road is controlled by the State Department of Transportation but in many areas indiscriminate uncontrolled access is a problem due to lack of curb cuts. In the town center problems are caused by undefined curb cuts, acute street angles and inadequate control of vehicular access. As properties are developed or redeveloped, sidewalks, curbs and rationally placed curb cuts should be required through the site plan review process. The town should work with DOT officials to plan model curb cuts and possible intersection realignments. These should be mapped and used as a reference in reviewing site plans.

The state may order piecemeal widening of Rt 1 as needed for specific development. For example, a by-pass lane for east to west traffic was recently constructed on the north side of the road in front of Water's Edge.

ROADWAY NETWORK

Problem areas involving state roads should be reviewed with state officials. The Planning Commission will continue to require that subdivision streets be laid out to connect with each other and with

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existing streets. In this way, circulation across the central portion of the town north of the turnpike will be improved.

It is recommended that additional east-west connectors be established and that an alternate secondary north-south connector be built in the northeast.

Recommendations

- **Crosstown Connector.** Eventual connection of Essex Road and Connecticut 145 north of the turnpike. Pequot Park Road will be extended as land is developed to join with Pond Meadow near McVeagh Road.
- **The North End Connector.** Another east-west route should be planned between West Pond Meadow Road and Route 145 north of the route mentioned above and south of Cross Road. This can be implemented by requiring new subdivision roads.
- **The existing East Pond Meadow, Dennison, West Pond Meadow, Cross Road connection** should be improved to increase safety.
- **Toby Hill Road Extension.** Extension of the existing Toby Hill Road to the Essex town line will provide an alternate secondary north-south connector and will relieve the traffic on East Pond Meadow Road.
- **To eliminate indiscriminate access and egress on the Boston Post Road,** curbs and well defined curb cuts should be required. When properties are redeveloped, subdivided, or undergo site plan review, or when the state performs work, curbs should be required.
- **Insure the convenience and daily availability of the road system by continuing a road maintenance program.** Pursue the "Roadway Improvement and Tracking Schedule" recommended in the 1988 Wengell, McDonnell and Costello report on Pavement Condition.
- **Consider asking the state to construct a left turn lane on Route 153 southbound at Spencer Plain Road and northbound at McVeagh Road.**
- **Review Golf Links/Boston Post Road intersection with state.** Investigate any possible improvements.

SIDEWALKS

With so much of the town's population concentrated south of the turnpike and within walking distance north of it, sidewalks add an important measure of safety to walking. Subdivision regulations require sidewalks as improvements in all new subdivisions. Zoning regulations should require sidewalks in accordance with this plan as parcels are developed or redeveloped. Most of the town's existing sidewalks are

concentrated in the central area. The goal is to connect existing sidewalks, have sidewalks on both sides of the Post Road for its entire length, construct a sidewalk out of the town center along Route 153 to McVeagh Road, construct sidewalk along Rt 166 at least as far as the YMCA and construct a sidewalk the entire length of McVeagh Road. A sidewalk should also be constructed along Norris Avenue (north of railroad) to the railroad station.

The maps showing priorities for sidewalk construction and other transportation improvements are hereby incorporated and made a part of this plan.

Recommendations

- Add sidewalk construction as capital improvement in areas already substantially subdivided.
- Create priority list for sidewalks.
- Require sidewalks as part of site plan review when parcels are developed or redeveloped.
- Construct sidewalks according to priority list.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Westbrook is currently served by two forms of public transportation and a third is expected to start in the spring of 1990. Currently a bus runs several times a day between New Haven and Old Saybrook. It will stop on demand anywhere along the Post Road. The bus is subsidized but not well used. Its operation may be discontinued.

The other form of public transportation currently in use is special services. These are essentially in the form of dial-a-ride and medical outpatient transportation service.

In the spring of 1990 limited commuter rail service is expected to start between New Haven and Old Saybrook. Runs will be westbound in the morning and eastbound in the afternoon. Four runs in each direction are expected at the start. DOT has constructed a parking area, platform and shelter for use as a railroad station at the end of Norris Avenue (north side of the tracks). If this lot is to be maintained and plowed by the town, it should be paved, not a gravel lot.

If commuter train service is successful and is expanded, it could have a profound effect on housing in the town. Train use from Westbrook should be monitored and evaluated on a yearly basis.

Last, Westbrook has two commuter parking lots which permit drivers to share rides or van pool. The lot at Rt. 145 and 1-95

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accommodates 26 cars. Usage rate increased from 43% of capacity in 1988 to 48% in 1989. The lot at Rt. 153 and 1-95 accommodates 50 cars. Its usage rate dropped from 63% of capacity in 1988 to 49% in 1989.

Recommendations

- Cooperate with and support state and regional special transportation services.
- If town is to maintain parking lot at railroad station, lot should be paved, not gravel.
- Monitor commuter trail usage and evaluate on yearly basis for impact on town.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

GOAL: TO HAVE AN EFFICIENT SYSTEM OF PUBUC SERVICES PROVIDING FOR STORM WATER MANAGEMENT, WASTE WATER MANAGEMENT, SOLID WASTE RECYCLING AND DISPOSAL, FIRE PROTECTION, EDUCATIONAL, RECREATIONAL, WATER AND OTHER SERVICE NEEDS FOR THE TOWN OF WESTBROOK.

In addition to the usual community facilities and services issues road maintenance, town hall expansion and use of former school sites the town of Westbrook faces planning for the critical issues of the 1990's; waste water treatment and solid waste recycling and disposal. Since December, 1985 the town has been under orders from the Commissioner of Environmental Protection to abate community pollution problems.

STORM WATER MANAGEMENT

Storm water management in Westbrook is dependent on storm drains and pipes which divert rain runoff to inland wetlands, tidal wetlands and Long Island Sound. While in recent years the Planning and Zoning Commissions have required a zero percent increase in the rate of runoff from new developments, older developments divert runoff from roofs, driveways and parking lots onto streets and/or directly into wetlands.

Westbrook's storm drains and piping are relatively old, particularly that part of the system in the center of town. During severe storms, and/or when normal ground absorption cannot handle storm water, flooding has occurred in the town center, and in other parts of town. There is a need to examine the capability of the present system to accommodate "100 year" storm water under various environmental conditions; i.e., ground saturated or frozen, and to develop a system for filtering out pollutants carried by storm water.

Recommendations

- Field map drains and piping system, specifying sizes and capacity.
- Produce contour map of Westbrook to integrate with storm water system and calculate capability of system based on runoff flow speed.
- Develop management plan to accommodate 100 year storm and reduction in road pollutants.
- Continue and upgrade use and management of detention basins for slow release and filtration of storm water.

WASTEWATER TREATMENT

The town of Westbrook is working toward the establishment of a tri-town sewer system (Clinton, Old Saybrook and Westbrook). Funding must be authorized by referendum.

Representatives of the State DEP have advised that state grants (now 20%) may disappear and be replaced by 100% loan financing. Delay is always costly and projects ready to proceed to construction will be first in line for any available funding.

Sewers are no longer optional for parts of the town. The longer the delay, the greater the levels of pollution. Existing problems cannot be corrected by on-site facilities and property value damage in the long run will greatly exceed funds expended now to correct the situation.

Local support for sewers was expressed in the town-wide questionnaire. In response to the question "What area of town should be sewered?" 67% of the respondents said existing problem areas should be sewered. Another 27% answered that the entire town should be sewered. As stated in the land use section, sewers are intended to abate current pollution problems. The capacity of the system is based on current zoning and does not contemplate increases in permitted intensity.

It should be made clear that while some parts of town need municipal sewers to address existing problems, the policy regarding the remainder of town is sewer avoidance. Sewers can efficiently serve those parts of town already divided into small lots. Sewers are not a cost effective alternative where larger lots prevail. In these areas of town, a sewer avoidance policy will continue to be followed. All steps must be taken to insure that septic systems are adequate. Further, uses which potentially affect ground water quality must be carefully controlled.

Recommendations

- Proceed expeditiously with design and site acquisition stage of tri town municipal sewer system.
- Maintain sewer avoidance policy for those parts of town not be served by municipal sewers.

SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

The town "dump" on McVeagh Road is presently open for bulky waste, leaf composting, and metal collection. Bulky waste is defined as landclearing debris and waste resulting directly from demolition activities other than clean fill. The town has arranged for voluntary recycling of newspaper. A container was placed behind town hall in October, 1989 and is hauled to a paper recycler when full. All other municipal solid waste is collected by private haulers and taken to the Essex transfer station. From there its taken to a waste to energy plant in Hartford.

In 1987, Public Act 87-544 was enacted, which established a mandatory schedule for the implementation of recycling by municipalities in the state. The act set a goal of decreasing Connecticut's solid waste stream by 25% through recycling and related strategies by 1991. After January 1, 1991 designated items may not knowingly be accepted at a landfill or energy recovery facility for permanent disposal. The designated items are:

- Cardboard
- Glass food containers
- Metal food containers
- Newspaper
- Office paper
- Scrap metal Storage
- batteries Waste oil
- Leaves

The principal issue faced by the town is how will recyclable items be collected, transported and ultimately transferred to recyclers. Markets for recyclable materials are currently in a state of flux and are expected to be for at least 3 to 5 years. Whereas previously municipalities were paid for certain items of solid waste, now

municipalities must pay to get rid of some items. This is because markets are inundated with material and not presently set up to reprocess all available material. Calculation of costs for recycling in the near term are therefore very difficult.

The town has appointed the Planning Coordinator as Recycling Coordinator. Alternatives for collection and disposition of recyclables are being investigated and evaluated. The town expects to comply with all recycling laws and regulations as they go into effect.

Recommendation

- Study various methods for collecting recyclable materials, calculate costs and efficiency of each method.

WATER SUPPLY

Westbrook's public water supply is provided by the Connecticut Water Company's Shoreline Region-Guilford System. According to 1987 statistics, 3,837 people are served or 69.1 % of Westbrook's population. Water supply sources are from the Westbrook Well on McVeagh Road and a combination of surface and ground water sources carried to Westbrook from Clinton. The supply sources for this system are approximately 70% surface water, consisting of two surface reservoirs and nine active wells.

In 1986 the Zoning Commission adopted regulations for and mapped a Water Resource District. The purpose of the district is to protect the public health by preventing contamination of the ground and surface water resources providing water supply for the town of Westbrook. The water company assisted in the preparation of these regulations. These regulations are now supplemented by the provisions of P.A. 89-305 which establishes a state/local aquifer protection program. Under this law, DEP adopts statewide regulations and provides technical assistance to local officials. Local governments delineate aquifer protection areas as approved by the DEP and must designate an existing board or commission to act as an Aquifer Protection Agency. The town will comply with this law as regulations are promulgated.

The Connecticut Water Company has plans to develop additional sources of supply and construct system improvements to meet future demand requirements. The chief new source of supply for Westbrook is expected to be the Holbrook Well located on the west side of Rt 153.

The water company currently has numerous policies and procedures relating to source protection, conservation, and emergency procedures. Methods of source protection, in addition to owning land around wells

and reservoirs, include review and comment on local land use plans, regulations, and development proposals. In Westbrook, the Westbrook Well is inspected weekly because of its proximity to the town landfill and septage lagoons.

Water from the Westbrook Well has a high iron and manganese content and must be treated prior to distribution. The Westbrook Well is normally operated only in the summer months to meet the higher seasonal demands in the Westbrook/Old Saybrook area. No increase in this well's normal output is currently possible unless treatment capacity is increased and the treatment plant is modified for cold weather operation.

Water pressure is good throughout the Guilford system of which Westbrook is a part. Fireflow is adequate in most places with Westbrook enjoying the highest rating among the towns served. For areas not served by public water, the Planning Commission will continue to require dry hydrants to provide a reliable year round water source for fire fighting in new subdivisions.

According to its master plan, the Connecticut Water Company employs many conservation measures including constant monitoring for leaks, and has contingency plans to deal with various possible water supply emergencies. One recommendation made is that municipalities adopt ordinances requiring water use restriction during droughts. The company itself has plans for restricting use at various levels of drought but feels that ordinances enforced through the police power of the municipality would be helpful.

Recommendations

- Provide public water service to all densely populated areas of Westbrook (generally lots of 20,000 sq ft or less) and commercial and industrial zones.
- Periodically review water resource district mapping and regulations to insure that the goal of groundwater protection is met.
- Insure firefighting capacity in existing residential areas and new subdivisions not served by public water by requiring dry hydrants and fire ponds.

FIRE PROTECTION

In 1984 the Westbrook Chemical Engine Co. purchased 4 acres of land on the west side of Pond Meadow Road just south of Dennison Road. It is expected that this land will be used for the long-awaited north-

end fire station.

TOWN OFFICE SPACE

Growth of town government arises not only from increased population to serve, but also from increased burdens imposed by state legislation. Town office facilities will have to be expanded to accommodate workers, file storage, and office equipment. In response to the question "how should additional town office space be provided?" 49% of the respondents favored the expansion of the existing town hall. Thirty-five percent thought converting an existing building would be appropriate. Most people in favor of conversion indicated that the Mulvey School would be the best site.

It is desirable to keep town offices in one building as at present. This is more efficient for workers and a great convenience to the public. A feasibility study of town hall expansion should be considered to examine the possibilities of expansion on the present town hall site. The central location is preferable to expansion elsewhere. The Mulvey School site (5+ acres) would be available for other purposes.

SCHOOLS

Westbrook operates one of the smallest *K-12* school systems in the state. Because of declining enrollments, and for perceived benefits, the question of regionalization has been considered twice since 1988. In June, 1988 the town voted 550-308 not to study regionalization. On the basis of that vote the Board of Education filed educational specifications with the state and the town appointed a building committee to direct the construction of new and improved school facilities. In 1989 the town approved a \$17 million bonding issue to construct a number of improvements to the Junior/Senior High School and the Daisy Ingraham School.

In January, 1990 the issue of studying regionalization again went to referendum. By a very narrow margin, the town voted in favor of studying regionalization. Old Saybrook voters, however, voted against such a study at this time.

Whatever the ultimate outcome of regionalization, the redesign of the school system and facilities is going ahead. This is the most costly project the town has ever undertaken. The entire system will be redesigned from a *K-3, 4-6, 7-12* grade system to a *K-S, 6-8, 9-12* system in three separate schools.

Upon completion of improvements, Mulvey School would be abandoned as surplus property.

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