

# CONSERVATION THEMES

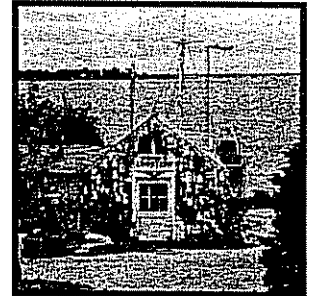
**Protect Natural Resources**



**Create A Meaningful Open Space System**



**Protect Coastal Resources**



**Protect Historic Resources**



**Promote Community Character And Spirit**



# PROTECT NATURAL RESOURCES

## 4

### Overview

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Natural resources are important to community character and the pride and spirit of residents. Protecting natural resources is an important issue in the Plan since such efforts help:

- guide development in harmony with the natural environment
- preserve vital natural functions
- improve the quality of life for existing and future generations

Protection of such resources will not happen without some effort. If Groton residents are to be successful at preserving the things that matter most to them and that enhance the community, we must take positive steps to identify and protect important resources.

The Plan recommends that the Town seek and use every possible means that will enable Groton to identify and protect important natural resources.

*Natural resources  
make a significant  
contribution to  
community char-  
acter and quality of  
life ...*

Poquonnock Cove



## **Water Quality Protection**

To protect water quality, Groton has established a Water Resource Protection District as part of the Zoning Regulations. The regulations, which regulate or prohibit certain types of uses or activities, apply to reservoir watershed lands and aquifer areas.

## **Non-Point Pollution**

For many years, water quality protection focused on eliminating "point" sources of pollution (such as industrial discharges).

With the progress that has been made in reducing or eliminating pollution from these sources through various governmental regulatory programs, attention has now turned to "non-point" sources. This includes storm drainage discharges, lawn fertilizer, septic systems, agricultural runoff, and similar sources.

Protecting water supply resources is also important. Groton has incorporated a Water Resource Protection District in the Zoning Regulations in order to protect public water supply watersheds and water quality in watershed areas.

# **Protect Water Quality and Water Resources**

Protection of water quality is Groton's most important natural resource preservation priority.

While this strategy is especially important given the need to protect the drinking water supply for Groton residents, it is also significant in terms of protecting overall environmental health. Each of Groton's water resources (rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, water supply reservoirs, Long Island Sound, wetlands, swamps, marshes, vernal ponds, aquifers and bedrock fractures) plays an important role in Groton's ecosystem and lifestyle.

Protecting water quality must involve concerted efforts on several levels. First, local activities designed to protect and enhance water quality should continue and be enhanced where feasible. Second, public education and involvement must be essential elements of any strategy to protect water quality.

Educational programs must address such issues as residential, commercial, and municipal hazardous wastes, lawn and garden fertilizers/chemicals, sediment runoff, septic maintenance, yard composting, resource recovery/recycling, and similar issues. Such programs must be continually promoted due to the "turn-over" of Groton's population.

Specific actions to address water quality include:

- incorporating stormwater management provisions in the Town's zoning regulations
- retrofitting antiquated stormwater systems at and near redeveloped sites
- using "best management practices" such as vegetative buffers and bio-infiltration islands
- establishing minimum standards for stormwater treatment systems
- establishing standards for "zero net increase" in total suspended solids, runoff rates, and volumes
- redefining lot coverage to include all impervious surfaces
- restricting the clearing of steep slopes
- instituting road standards that encourage curbless and narrower roads, shared driveways and parking, and alternative pervious parking surfaces
- retrofitting existing stormwater systems
- regular street sweeping
- storm drain stenciling projects

## Recommendations

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1. Continue to monitor and protect water quality in Groton.
2. Strive to preserve and/or acquire extensive wetland and streambelt systems.
3. Continue to implement watershed protection regulations in public water supply watersheds.
4. Examine the amount of impervious surfaces allowed in all zones and areas.
5. Establish strict standards for impervious coverage in significant watersheds.
6. Continue to reduce pollution from septic systems.
7. Continue to reduce pollution from marine waste.
8. Continue careful review of septic designs by all departments prior to approval.
9. Encourage the Ledge Light Health District to develop a program to guide property owners on acceptable practices in non-sewered areas.
10. Continue to reduce pollution from storm drainage systems, including trapping, removing, and suitably disposing of sediment from storm drains.
11. Upgrade the location, construction, and operation of salt storage areas (such as the DOT location on Welles Road and the Town facility at Fort Hill) to minimize the potential for contamination of ground or surface water.
12. Implement educational programs for Groton residents about:
  - the nature and value of water resources in Groton (such as Long Island Sound, inland and tidal wetlands, streams and rivers, and aquifers)
  - programs on how to protect them (such as hazardous waste disposal and septic system maintenance)
13. Take other appropriate actions to reduce diffuse (non-point) sources of pollution.

Groton Utilities Reservoir



## Preserve or Conserve?

Preservation means:

- to protect from harm
- to maintain intact or unchanged

Conservation means:

- to save from loss or depletion
- to avoid wasting

Webster's Dictionary

## Unique Habitats

The unique habitats and special areas identified on the map on the facing page are sites that have been recognized by the State Department of Environmental Protection (CTDEP) for:

- known occurrences of state or federal endangered or threatened species
- state special concern species
- significant natural communities
- unique natural or cultural areas

When development or other activities are proposed in these areas, the applicant and/or the Town should contact CTDEP for additional information.

## Protect Other Important Natural Resources

While protecting water quality is the most important natural resource priority, there are also other resources that deserve protection.

Some resources are so significant for preserving environmental quality or community character that efforts must continue to ensure that these resources are preserved. Preservation generally means to avoid altering these areas to the extent feasible and prudent.

### Resources For Preservation

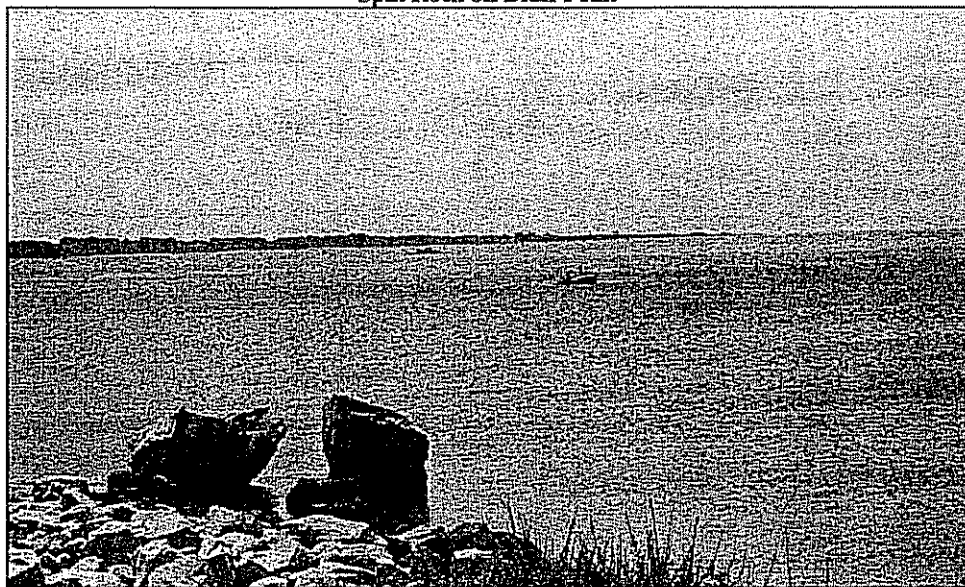
- Watercourses
- Inland and tidal wetlands
- Floodplain (100-year, 1.0% probability)
- Coastal "V" flood hazard area

On the other hand, some important functions of other natural resources can be maintained while compatible activities take place nearby. In other words, the natural resource functions of these areas could be conserved in an environmentally sensitive way.

### Resources For Conservation

- Slopes exceeding 25 percent
- Floodplain (500-year, 0.2% probability)
- Coastal "A" flood hazard area
- Watersheds for public water supplies
- Areas of high groundwater availability
- Unique or special habitat areas

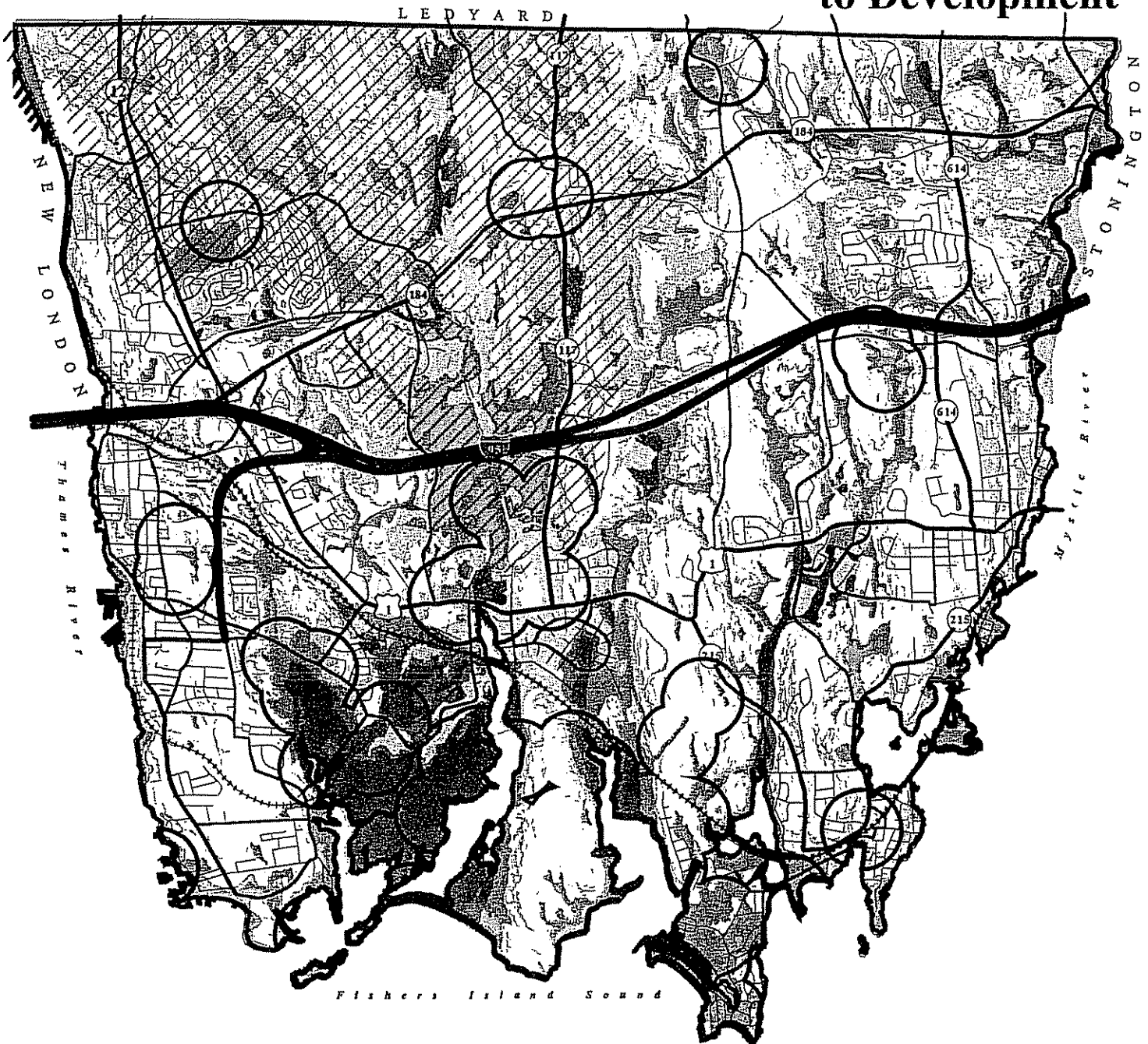
**Split Rock off Bluff Point**





# Natural Resource Conservation Plan

n of Groton, CT


## Areas Sensitive to Development






### Significant Conservation Areas

-  > Poorly drained soils (wetlands)
- > Watercourses
- > Floodplain (100-year, 1.0% probability)
- > Coastal flood hazard areas
-  > Water

### Important Conservation Areas

-  > Any soil with slopes in excess of 15%
- > Floodplain (500-year, 0.2% probability)

### Legend

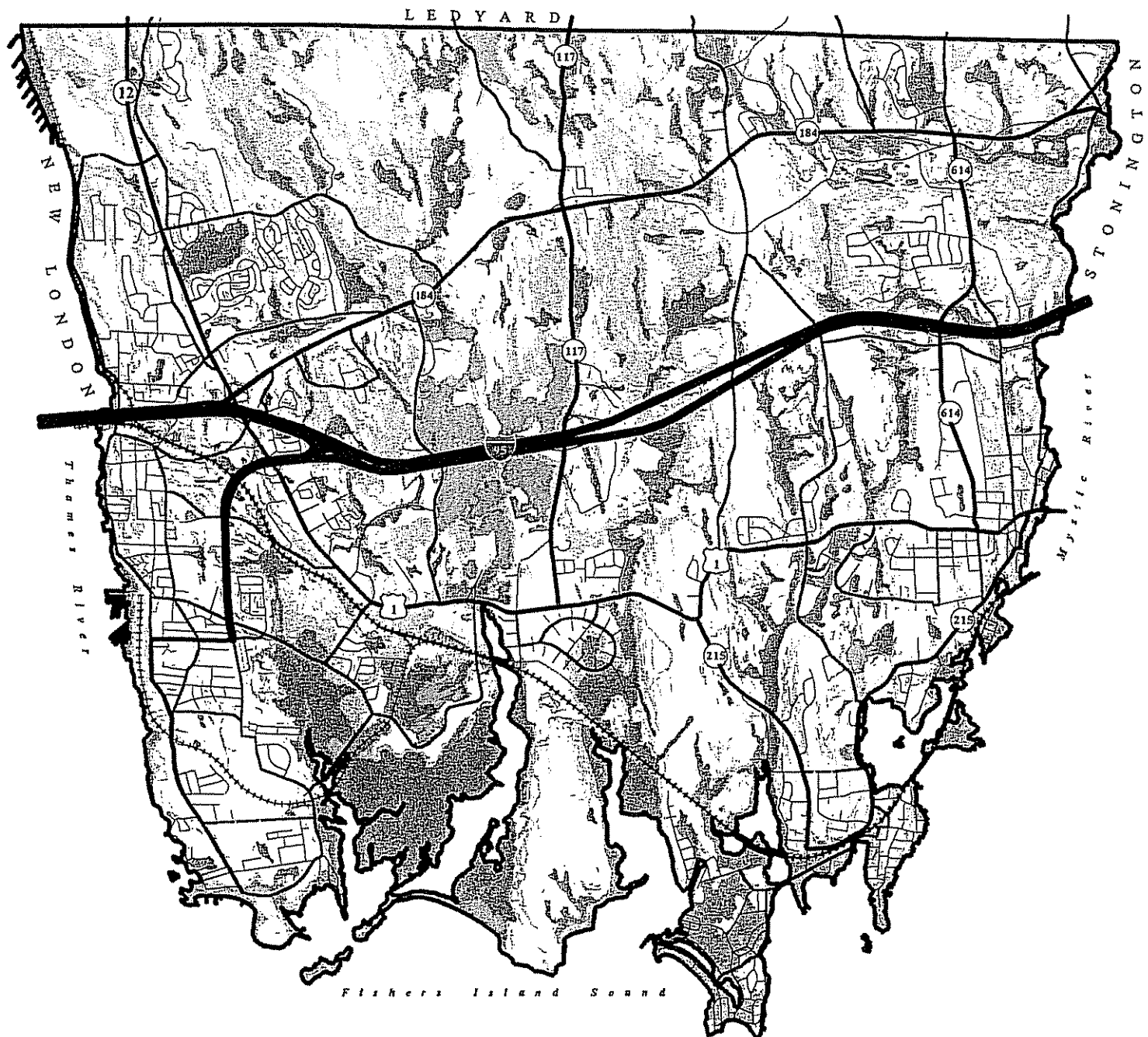
-  Areas of high groundwater availability
-  Public water supply watershed
-  Natural Diversity Database Sites

0 5000 Feet



# Natural Resource Conservation Plan

Town of Groton, CT



## Significant Conservation Areas

- > Poorly drained soils (wetlands)
- > Watercourses
- > Floodplain (100-year, 1 0% probability)
- > Coastal flood hazard areas
- > Water

## Important Conservation Areas

- > Any soil with slopes in excess of 15%
- > Floodplain (500-year, 0 2% probability)

5000 0 5000 Feet



## Recommendations

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1. Continue to protect and preserve:
  - watercourses
  - inland and tidal wetlands
  - inland and coastal floodplains
  - natural diversity database sites
  - critical coastal resource areas (such as beaches, dunes, rocky shore-fronts, bluffs, and escarpments)
2. Expand the definition of regulated area in the wetland regulations to include areas within a certain distance from inland wetlands and watercourses.
3. Establish regulations or policies requiring non-disturbance buffer areas around inland wetlands, coastal wetlands, watercourses, and critical coastal resources.
4. Conserve steep slopes, public water supply watersheds, areas of high groundwater availability, and unique or special habitat areas.
5. Continue to provide and enhance provisions for local fish and wildlife.
6. Encourage informational activities involving natural resources (such as shellfishing, crabbing, hiking, bicycling) to educate residents on the importance of conserving the resources unique to Groton.

North End of Beebe Cove



# PRESERVE OPEN SPACE

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## Overview

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Open space when permanently preserved in adequate quantities and appropriate locations can help protect community character, enhance the quality of life for residents, conserve important natural resources, provide wildlife habitat, provide fiscal and economic benefits, shape development patterns, and preserve lands for recreational uses.

While most people perceive “open space” as any land that is not built upon, it is important to stress that the Plan defines open space as land that is permanently preserved for or dedicated to open space uses.

Groton is fortunate that about 22 percent of all the land in Town has already been preserved as open space. This includes open space owned by the State of Connecticut, City of Groton Utilities, and other entities.

Yet more can, and should, be done. Since open space makes a significant contribution to community character and quality of life, efforts to preserve open space in Groton should continue.

*Preserving open space is important to maintaining community character ...*

Open Space Greenway



## **Greenbelt History**

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Groton has been a leader in the identifying greenbelts as a major organizing feature in the community.

The 1961 Plan of Development identified an open space system focused on streambelts. The 1969 Conservation Plan expanded this to identify three major "greenbreaks" in the community. The 1990 Plan of Development and the 1990 Conservation Plan continued these concepts.

## **Greenbelts and Greenways**

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A greenbelt or a greenway is a corridor of open space that:

- may protect natural resources, preserve scenic landscapes and historical resources or offer opportunities for recreation or non-motorized transportation
- may connect existing protected areas and provide access to the outdoors
- may be located along a defining natural feature, such as a waterway, along a man-made corridor, including an unused right-of-way, traditional trail routes or historic barge canals
- may be a green space along a highway or around a village

General Assembly  
Public Act 95-335

## **Establish Greenbelts**

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While the amount of preserved open space is important, the configuration of the open space system should be the critical consideration in open space planning for Groton. If parcels of open space can be interconnected into a cohesive overall "greenbelt" system, the value of the open space to residents and the impact on community character will grow exponentially.

There are many greenbelt opportunities in Groton. For example, the large amount of open space that already exists in the Poquonnock River valley presents an opportunity to create a "greenbelt" that could lead from the Bluff Point Coastal Reserve on Long Island Sound to the Ledyard town line. This opportunity is particularly apparent because much of the land in this "greenbelt" is already in public ownership or the few remaining linkages could be obtained. Many other opportunities also exist to create greenbelts that will enhance community character and the quality of life for Groton residents.

As a result, it is a goal of this Plan that a comprehensive greenbelt system which interconnects preservation, conservation, open space and recreation areas should be the major coordinating element in the future conservation and development of Groton. Such a system would provide a linkage between existing open spaces and protect important resources from future development pressures.

In addition to protecting Groton's character, a greenbelt open space system will:

- protect important natural, scenic, or other resources
- allow for a trail system that interconnects different areas
- contribute to the enjoyment and quality of life for residents
- provide for contiguous wildlife habitat and corridors

## **Recommendations**

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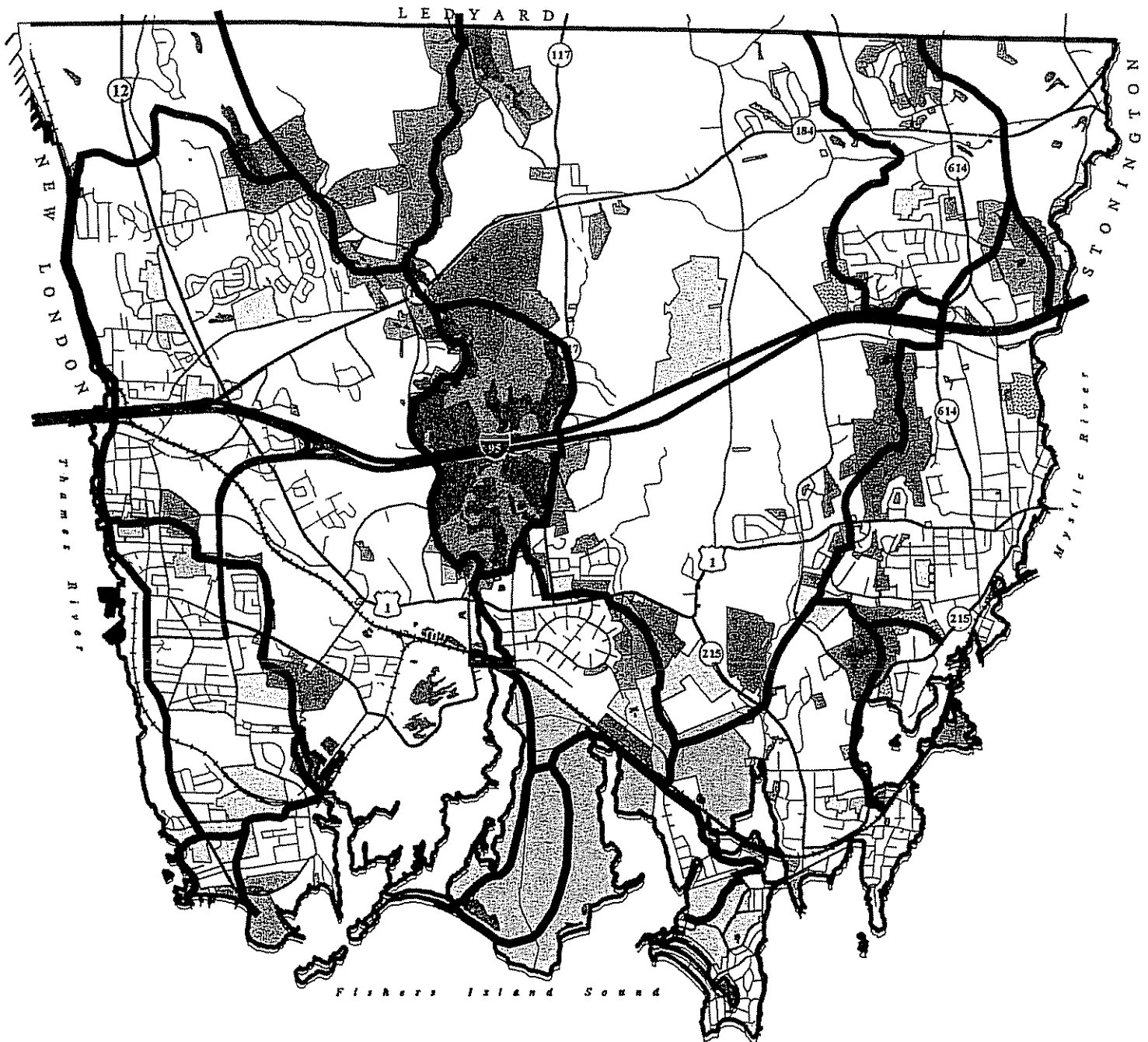
1. Maintain the Conservation Commission as the appropriate entity to develop an action plan for open space preservation.
2. Develop an action plan to establish, expand, and connect greenbelts in Groton.
3. Continue to coordinate efforts with neighboring towns to create greenbelts, which protect common resources (such as wetlands and waterways).
4. Strive over the long term to establish a "Shoreway" in Groton to take advantage of Groton's biggest asset.

# Existing Open Space

1 of Groton, CT

# Possible Future Trails

Town of Groton, CT



## Dedicated Open Space

- Municipal Dedicated Open Space
- State Dedicated Open Space
- Private Land Trust Dedicated Open Space

## Managed Open Space

- Public Managed Open Space
- Private Managed Open Space
- Groton Utilities Land
- Cemetery
- Golf Course

## Legend

### Facilities

- Municipal Facilities
- State Facilities

### Other

- Water



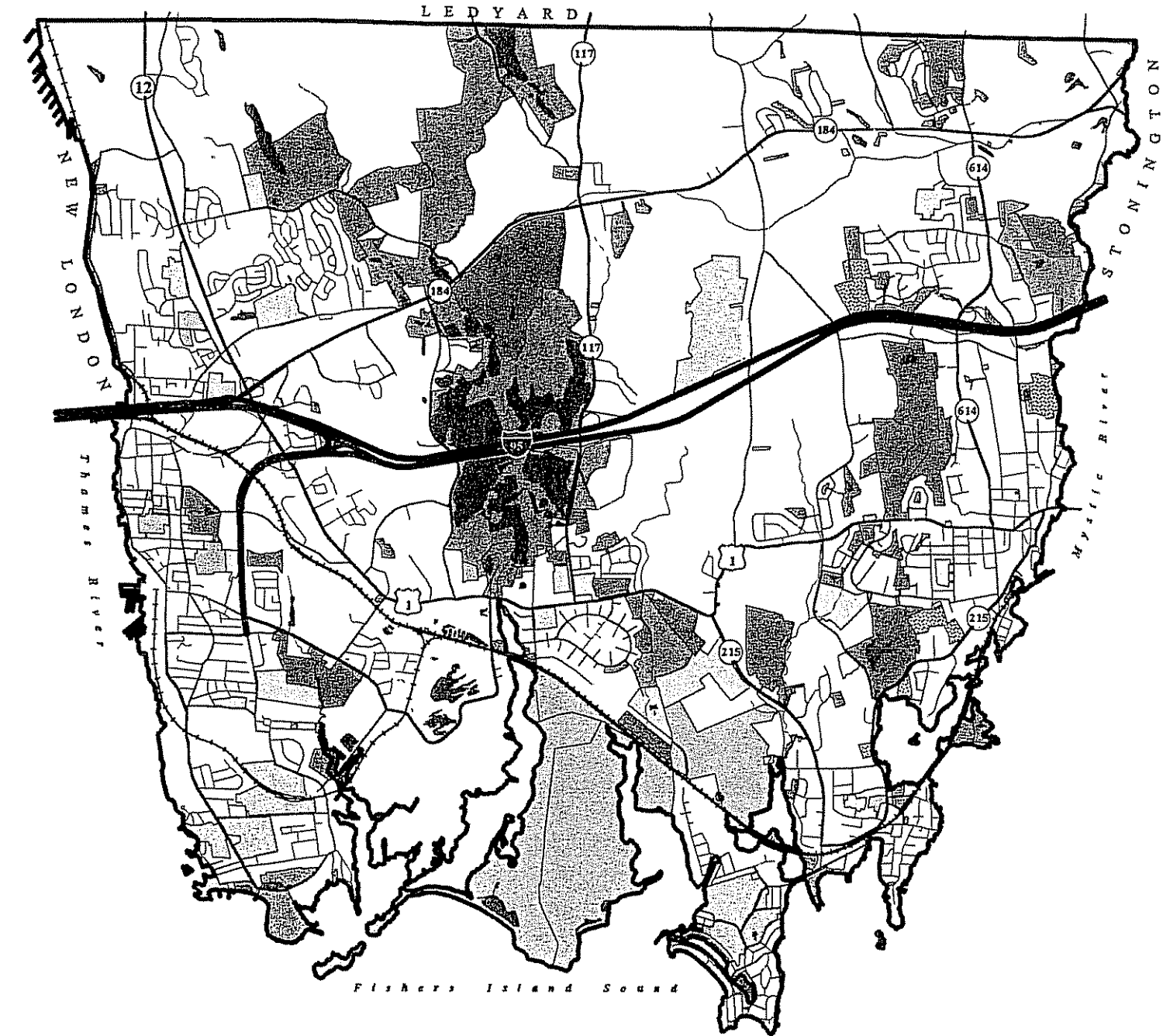
Possible Trails

0 5000 Feet



# Existing Open Space

Town of Groton, CT



**Dedicated Open Space**

- Municipal Dedicated Open Space
- State Dedicated Open Space
- Private Land Trust Dedicated Open Space

**Managed Open Space**

- Public Managed Open Space
- Private Managed Open Space
- Groton Utilities Land
- Cemetery
- Golf Course

**Facilities**

- Municipal Facilities
- State Facilities

**Other**

- Water

5000 0 5000 Feet



## **Trail Guide**

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An excellent way to increase the awareness and use of open space is to create and maintain trails and inform people through a trail guide.

The guide would contain maps and text describing the trails located throughout Groton.

## **Establish A Trail System**

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As open space is preserved and greenbelts are established in Groton, it will greatly increase their utility if opportunities are provided for the public to access these areas. Trails for pedestrians and bicycles are one way to do this. Trails greatly enhance the value of open space and are becoming very popular throughout Connecticut for hiking and other recreational activities. Significant opportunities exist to establish, expand and enhance the trail system in Groton and make it one of the premiere trail networks in the state.

For example, coastal access opportunities (such as at Bluff Point) differentiate Groton from many other communities and are a major amenity for the community. Moreover, Groton has also been a leader within the State in obtaining coastal public access opportunities. These efforts should continue and be integrated into the open space greenbelt and trail system so that more of the 18 miles of coastline along the Thames River, Long Island Sound, and the Mystic River are available for public access.

In addition, connections to trails and open space lands in adjacent communities will create opportunities to establish a greenbelt of regional and statewide significance.

During the planning period, the use of Groton Utilities land in Groton for trails needs to be pursued. This land, comprising over 1,300 acres of land for water supply and protection, is currently unavailable for use by residents. This land along the Poquonnock River from Long Island Sound to the Ledyard Town Line provides the opportunity for a greenway of regional significance.

During the process of preparing this Plan, it was determined that gaining public access to the Groton Utilities land could be the most significant accomplishment of the Plan and an important legacy for future residents. Efforts to gain public access to this land should be pursued through whatever means are available.

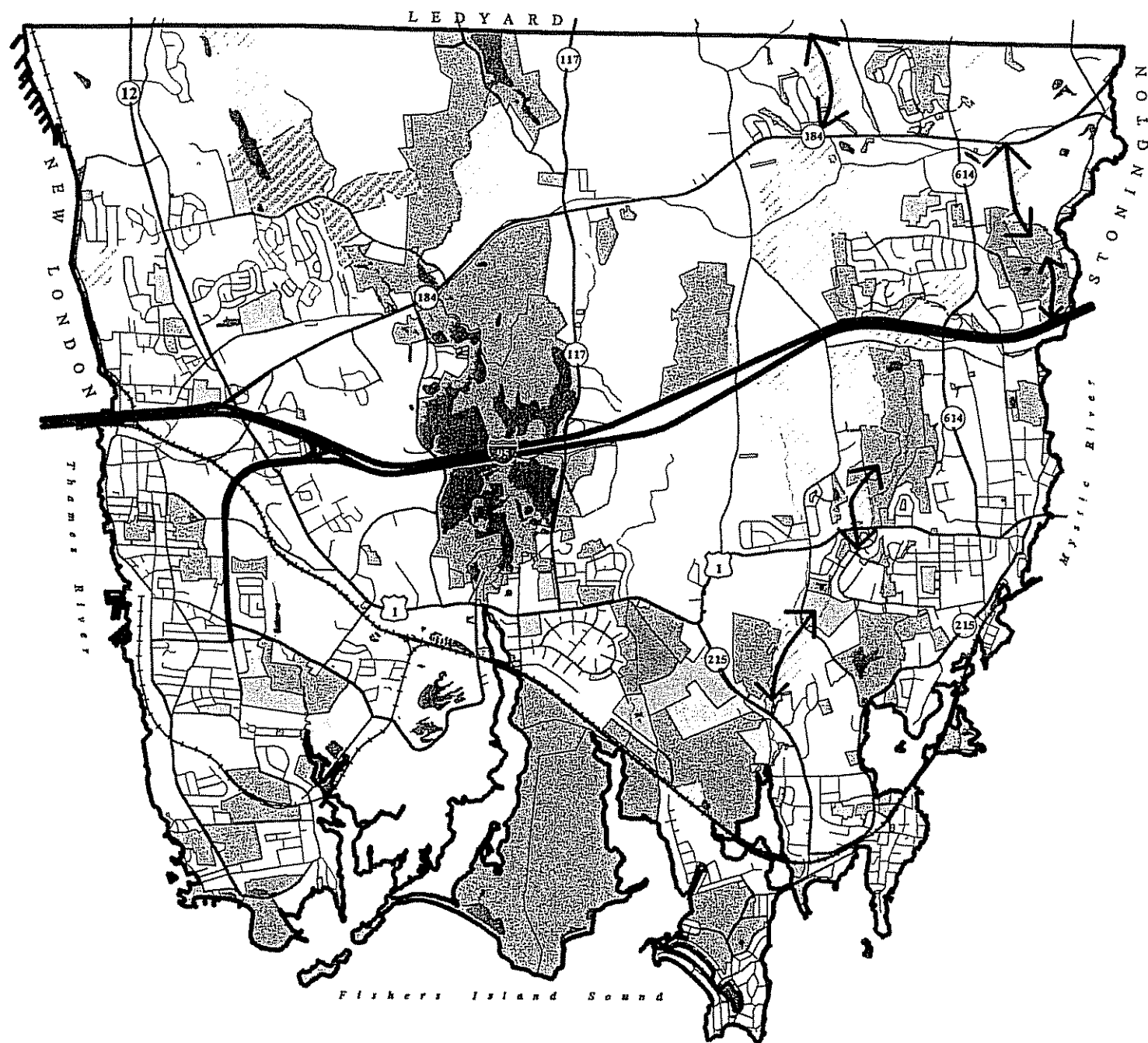
## **Recommendations**

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1. Work with Groton Utilities to obtain reasonable public access to their properties.
2. Work with major property owners (such as the State DEP, Groton Utilities, local land trusts, and other groups) to create an overall trail network on their combined land holdings that interconnect open space areas.
3. Acquire and open up additional public access opportunities to Long Island Sound, the Thames River, and the Mystic River.
4. Continue to implement the signage plan to identify coastal access points.
5. Work with local and regional open space organizations, as necessary, to expand and maintain the local trail network.
6. Require the identification and consideration of trails as part of any land use application.

# Possible Future Open Space Plan

Town of Groton, CT



**Existing Open Space**

- Existing dedicated and managed open space
- Municipal facilities
- State facilities

**Possible Future Open Space**

- Desirable acquisition by public entity
- Connections
- Preservation through land trusts, conservation easements open space development

**Other**

- Water

5000 0 5000 Feet



## Possible Action Plan

A possible open space action strategy could include:

1. Creation of greenbelts that interconnect existing open spaces
2. Protection of, and/or access to:
  - Fishers Island Sound
  - Thames River
  - Mystic River
  - important streambelts and watercourses.
3. Acquiring land adjacent to existing preserved open space.
4. Preservation of non-dedicated open space (such as the YMCA property).
5. Location for more accessible linked trails.
6. Protecting significant views within and at "gateways" to Groton.

## Implement The Open Space Plan

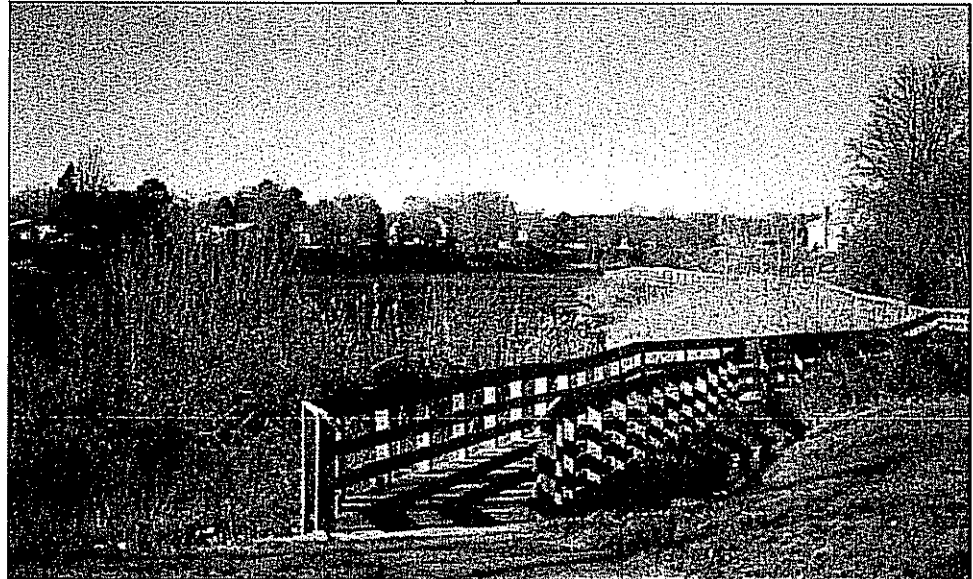
Groton has exhibited leadership in open space preservation efforts. More than 30 years ago, the Groton Conservation Commission adopted a plan for the establishment of greenways that pre-dated the current trend towards greenways. In the late 1980s, the Town of Groton authorized bonding up to \$8 million for open space acquisition to purchase and preserve important open space parcels. Only about \$6 million was spent.

What is remarkable about these efforts is that they occurred many years prior to the current statewide interest in open space protection. Groton was truly a leader in identifying open space protection as an important issue.

However, Groton has not always followed through on its open space planning efforts. The 1969 greenway plan was never implemented. In addition, not all the open space funds authorized in the 1980s were expended and the authorization expired. In many respects, Groton's grand open space visions have not come to fruition, efforts have recently languished, and momentum has been lost. While there remains strong interest in open space protection in Groton, there has been little acquisition of property or appropriation of funds.

Groton should set aside municipal funds for open space acquisition so that important open space parcels can be purchased and preserved. Such efforts can be funded through annual contributions, capital campaigns for the acquisition of specific properties, or a bond issue. Annual contributions will provide a baseline spending program for open space acquisition.

Walkway Along Poquonnock Cove



Many organizations can and will play a critical role in the preservation of open space land. The Town should, along with land trusts and other open space and conservation organizations, undertake a multi-faceted effort to identify:

- properties for acquisition (an action plan)
- type of acquisition (such as conservation or access easement)
- priorities for acquisition (an action strategy)
- sources of funds

In addition, Groton should continue to preserve open space at the time of development of properties. The subdivision regulations currently provide for the preservation of 10 percent of a parcel as open space at the time of development.

Now is the time for Groton to set up appropriate open space preservation programs, implement a measured plan for the permanent protection of open space, and avoid the “feast” or “famine” that has seemed to characterize past efforts.

**Greenway Trail at Bluff Point**



## Recommendations

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1. Establish an open space acquisition fund within the Town funded by an annual line item in the budget.
2. Amend subdivision regulations to allow payment of fees-in-lieu of open space dedication with funds deposited in an open space acquisition fund.
3. Strive to implement the recommendations of the open space plan.
4. Strive to convert managed open space to dedicated open space.
5. Maintain subdivision regulations that require open space be deeded to the Town, a land trust, or other open space organization.
6. Strive to ensure that open space areas preserved as part of development are not comprised entirely of wetlands, steep slopes, or other unbuildable areas unless such open space is critical to preserving these resources.
7. Consider amending subdivision regulations to require a greater percentage of land be preserved for open space dedication.
8. Amend subdivision regulations to allow donation of land elsewhere in Groton to meet the open space requirements of a development.
9. To help maintain existing open space resources, consider acquiring a priority right to purchase land owned by City of Groton Utilities should the land become available.
10. Develop an open space management plan that contains an inventory of the resources on existing open space and provides a guide for future uses (such as trails, fields, community facilities) and management strategies (such as selective tree cutting, meadow mowing).
11. Continue to encourage the efforts of land trusts.
12. Support enactment by the General Assembly of a conveyance tax on the sale of property to support open space acquisition.

# PROTECT COASTAL RESOURCES

## 6

### Overview

Groton is one of only 24 municipalities in Connecticut that directly abut Long Island Sound and one of 41 communities that are considered part of the coastal area of Connecticut. Due to the importance of the coastal area to Groton's character and quality of life, Groton has an important obligation to carefully manage these areas.

The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection - Office of Long Island Sound Programs (CTDEP-OLISP) oversees activities within the land area of coastal communities and seaward to the limits of the State's jurisdiction in Long Island Sound. The Town of Groton is also responsible for managing areas seaward of the "coastal boundary" through coastal site plan reviews and harbor management.

*Coastal areas and  
their resources also  
make Groton  
unique ...*

Groton Long Point Area



## Coastal Area

The Connecticut coastal area shall include the land and water within:

- the area delineated by the westerly, southerly and easterly limits of the state's jurisdiction in Long Island Sound
- the town of Groton (and other coastal municipalities)...

Within the coastal area, there shall be a coastal boundary which shall be delineated on the seaward side by the seaward extent of the jurisdiction of the state and on the landward side by a continuous line delineated by whichever is farthest inland; of the following:

- the interior contour elevation of the one hundred year frequency coastal flood zone, as defined and determined by the National Flood Insurance Act
- a one thousand foot linear setback measured from the mean high water mark in coastal waters
- a one thousand foot linear setback measured from the inland boundary of tidal wetlands

CGS Section 22a-94

## CGS SECTION 22a-93 – COASTAL MANAGEMENT – Coastal Resources

Coastal resources means "the coastal waters of the state, their natural resources, related marine and wildlife habitat and adjacent shorelands, both developed and undeveloped, that together form an integrated terrestrial and estuarine ecosystem" and includes the following:

- coastal bluffs and escarpments
- rocky shorefronts
- beaches and dunes
- intertidal flats
- tidal wetlands
- freshwater wetlands and watercourses
- estuarine embayments
- coastal hazard and flood hazard areas
- developed shorefront
- island
- nearshore waters
- offshore waters
- shorelands
- shellfish concentration areas

## CGS SECTION 22a-92 – COASTAL MANAGEMENT – Legislative Goals and Policies

### **Overall Policies**

- To preserve and enhance coastal resources
- To manage the ... coastal area in a manner consistent with the capability of the resources
- To give high priority and preference to uses which are dependent upon proximity to the water;
- To give high priority and preference to uses that minimize ... impacts on ... coastal resources
- To consider the potential impact of coastal flooding and erosion patterns
- To encourage public access to the waters of Long Island Sound
- To conduct, sponsor and assist research in coastal matters
- To coordinate the activities of public agencies
- To insure adequate planning for facilities and resources which are in the national interest

### **Resource Management Policies**

- To preserve natural beach systems and tidal wetlands
- To manage coastal bluffs and escarpments, rocky shorefronts, intertidal flats, coastal hazard areas, and undeveloped islands
- To promote the use of existing developed shorefront areas for marine-related uses
- To regulate shoreland use and development in a manner which minimizes adverse impacts upon adjacent coastal systems and resources
- To maintain the natural relationship between coastal landforms through the promotion of nonstructural mitigation measures
- Minimize adverse impacts on:
  - water quality
  - circulation patterns of coastal waters
  - patterns of shoreline erosion/accretion
  - alteration of drainage patterns
  - coastal flooding
  - visual quality
  - wildlife, finfish, and shellfish habitat
  - water-dependent uses

### **Development Guidelines**

- To give highest priority and preference to water-dependent uses ... in shorefront areas
- To guide infrastructure only to areas which are suitable for development ...
- To promote reasonable commercial and recreational fishing and boating uses
- To require that structures minimize adverse impacts on coastal resources
- To ... minimize the risk of oil and chemical spills at port facilities
- To use existing facilities as the main means of meeting transportation needs in the coastal area
- To encourage increased recreational boating use of coastal waters,
- To protect coastal resources by managing such boating uses and facilities
- To protect facilities serving the commercial fishing and recreational boating industries
- To require reasonable mitigation measures where development would adversely impact historical, archaeological, or paleontological resources

## Update Coastal Planning

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A municipal coastal program for the Town of Groton was adopted in 1982 and this has served as the coastal portion of previous Plans of Conservation and Development. While much of the information regarding coastal resources is still applicable, a separate planning effort should be undertaken to review and update the 1982 Municipal Coastal Program, either for specific topics, specific areas, or in its entirety.

### Recommendations

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1. Undertake a separate planning effort to review and update the 1982 Municipal Coastal Program, as needed.

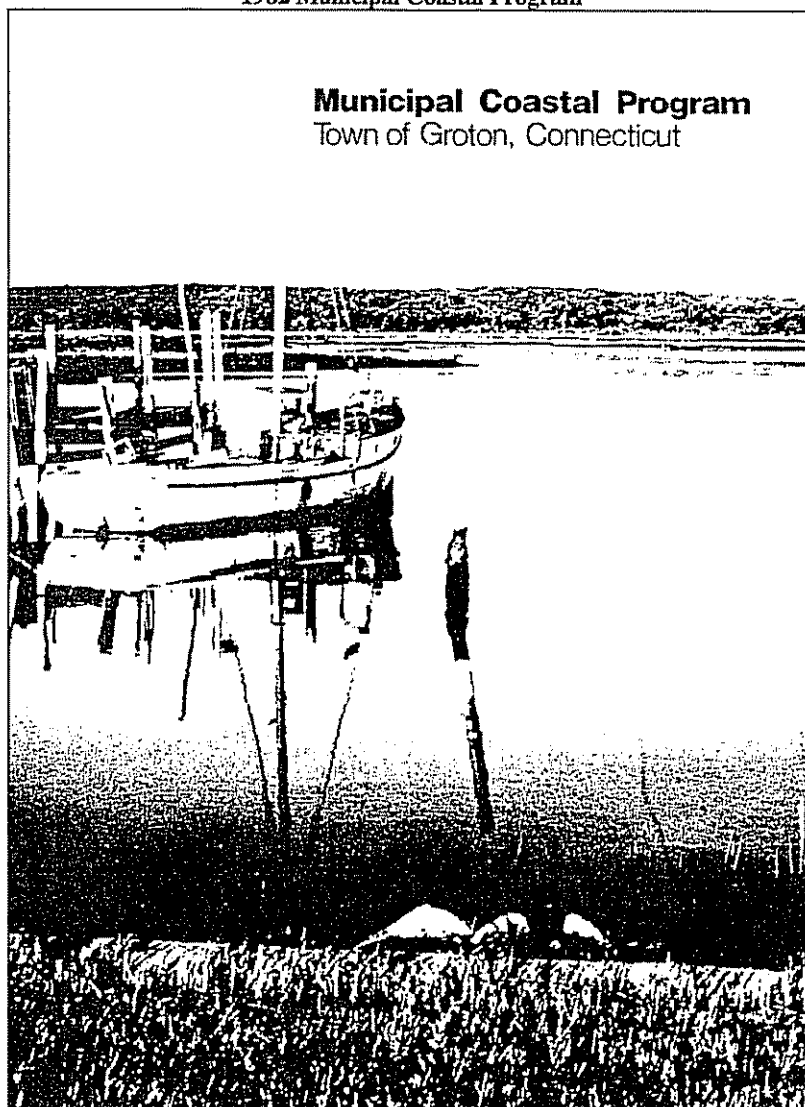
### Coastal Resources

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The 1982 Municipal Coastal Program contains a map showing the location of coastal resources in Groton.

While that map has not been included here because it is too small to be legible, a copy of the original resource map is available at the Planning and Development Department at the Town Hall Annex on Groton Long Point Road.

1982 Municipal Coastal Program



## Coastal Requirements

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Groton completed and adopted a Municipal Coastal Plan (MCP) in 1982. Noank developed and implemented one of the state's first harbor management plans in 1992.

Within the coastal boundary, all significant private and municipal development projects must conform to coastal site plan review requirements administered in Groton by the Planning Commission, the Zoning Commission, and the Zoning Board of Appeals.

State and federal coastal zone management acts contain policies for:

- coastal resource protection
- coastal land and water uses
- facilities in the national interest

## Protect Coastal Resources

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Groton enjoys the many benefits of a coastal location, being situated directly on Long Island Sound. Groton's shoreline extends more than 20 miles from the Ledyard Town Line on the Thames River around the City of Groton, Groton Long Point, Noank, and in the Groton portion of Mystic to the Ledyard Town Line on the Mystic River.

This location significantly enhances community character and the overall quality of life. However, such location also carries with it the responsibility and authority for wise use of coastal resources.

Analysis of Groton's coastal management efforts indicates that the Town has done a commendable job of managing its coastline and coastal resources. In particular, the Town has established a number of key public access improvements, improved coastal water quality, adopted harbor management plans, promoted water dependent uses, and helped clean up coastal areas.

While Groton has done an excellent job, these efforts must continue in order to maintain and enhance coastal resource areas.

## Recommendations

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1. Continue to carefully manage activities in the coastal boundary in conformance with state law and with consideration of state policies and guidance.
2. Continue coastal management programs to maintain and enhance coastal resource areas.

Coastal Wetland Area



## Protect Coastal Water Quality

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Coastal water quality in Groton is generally very good and has improved with the expansion of sewage treatment facilities and the relocation of the discharge from the treatment plant to the Thames River. Good water quality is important since it promotes recreational use of the coastal area (swimming, boating, and shellfishing), enhances aesthetics, and enhances community character and quality of life. It also supports recreational and commercial fishing, shellfishing, and aquaculture.

While sewage treatment plant and industrial discharges historically had the most visible and significant impact on coastal water quality, pollution from stormwater runoff is currently recognized as one of the most significant problems with regard to coastal water quality. For example, some shellfish areas in Groton may be temporarily closed after a heavy rainfall due to pollution from stormwater runoff.

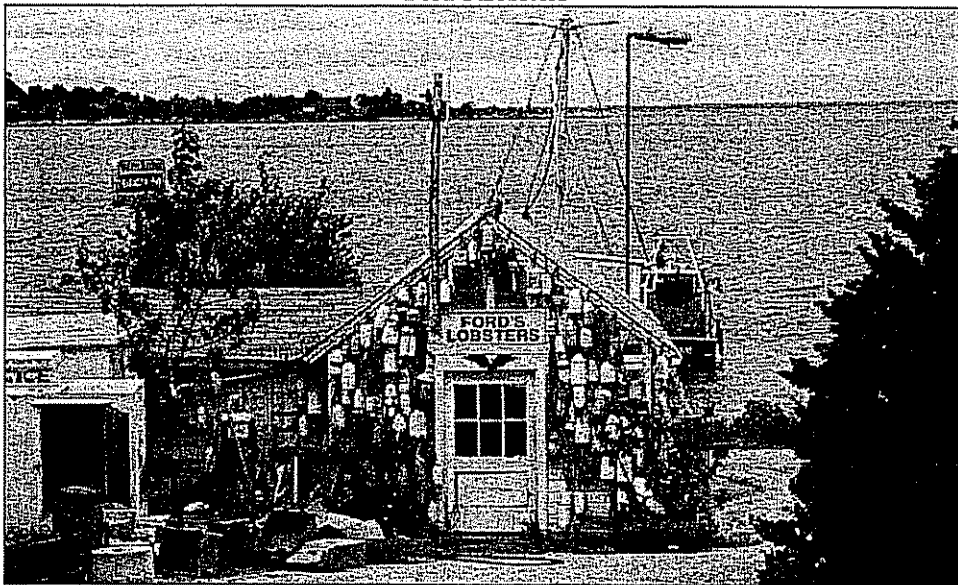
Efforts to improve coastal water quality should continue. Programs to pursue could include adopting relevant parts of CTDEP's model stormwater management ordinance, reducing impervious surfaces, monitoring the proper disposal of marine sanitation pump-out wastes, and conducting investigations to determine the cause of water quality problems (such as intermittent problems from Birch Plain Creek).

### Recommendations

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1. Continue efforts to protect and improve coastal water quality.

Ford's Lobsters



### Shellfish Resources

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There are a total of seven areas available for recreational shellfishing:

- Poquonnock River
- Vixen Ledge / Horse-shoe Reef
- Groton Long Point (Seaflower and Outer Palmer's Cove)
- Mumford Cove (winter)
- West Cove (winter)
- South of Morgan Point

Most areas are "conditionally open" which means that they may be closed temporarily after heavy precipitation due to pollution from stormwater runoff.

## **Coastal Considerations**

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During the process of developing this Plan, the Commission considered:

1. the character and distribution of the coastal resources within its coastal boundary,
2. the capacity of and limitations on such resources to support development,
3. the types and methods of development compatible with the wise use, protection and enhancement of such resources,
4. the nature and pattern of existing development,
5. the need for public services.

CGS Section 22a-102(b)

## **Improve Coastal Public Access**

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Groton is a leader statewide, both in terms of available public access and access gained through the water-dependent use standards set forth in the Connecticut Coastal Management Act. In addition, Groton has a number of full-service marina facilities that provide excellent boating access opportunities.

The Town should continue to encourage and enhance the use of waterfront sites for public access and, in particular, consider acquiring any waterfront site that can provide for community benefits.

### **Recommendations**

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1. Continue successful efforts in obtaining, marking, mapping and aggregating public access.
2. Identify and acquire sites and parcels that would contribute to a contiguous greenbelt/riverbelt access system or provide for community benefits.
3. Consider acquiring any waterfront site that can provide for community benefits.
4. Establish a waterfront land acquisition strategy to ensure that the Town can act swiftly when key coastal properties come to market.

## **Provide For Water Dependent Uses**

---

Since available waterfront land is relatively scarce, a key principle of coastal management is to preserve waterfront lands for water-dependent uses (such as the Navy Base, Electric Boat, and other marine facilities in Groton). Water dependent uses are uses that are functionally dependent upon proximity to coastal waters.

Water-dependent uses can include marinas, commercial fishing facilities, recreational beaches, and industrial or commercial uses dependent upon water for processing or cooling. In some cases, a non-water-dependent use (such as a restaurant or housing development) may be rendered water-dependent by providing reasonable coastal access to the general public, provided the site is not uniquely suited for a more active water-dependent use.

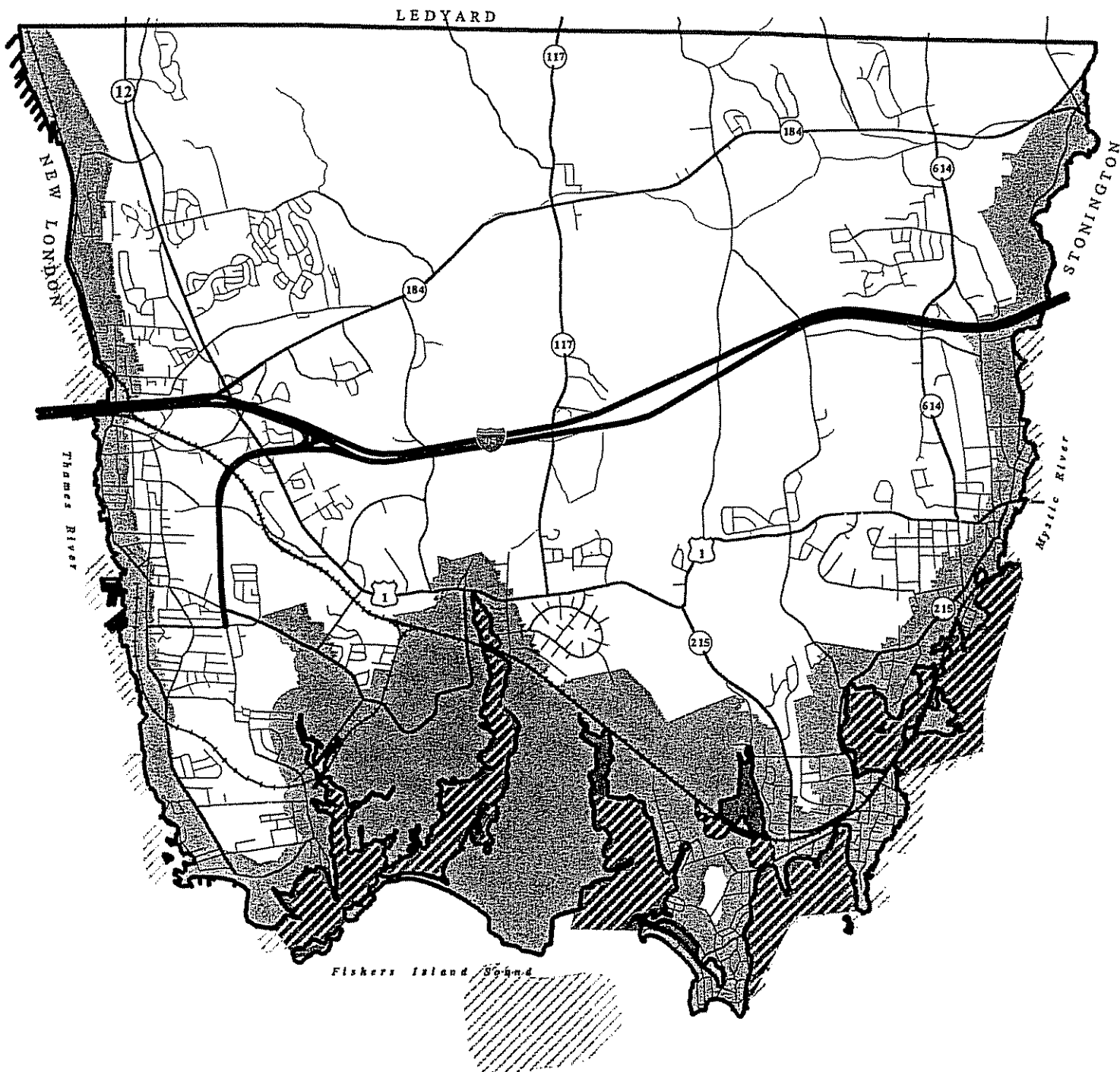
### **Recommendations**

---

1. Continue to place highest priority and preference on the use of waterfront sites for water-dependent uses through the coastal site plan review process.

# Coastal Area Resources Plan

Town of Groton, CT



## Legend

- Coastal boundary
- General location of shellfish beds
- Areas for special water quality protection

For detailed information on the location of coastal public access points, contact the Town of Groton for a Coastal Public Access Map.

5000 0 5000 Feet



## **Flooding Damage**

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Flooding damage can be aggravated by the placement of structures, particularly near or below the waterline.

For example, seawalls can exacerbate problems during floods by deflecting wave energy onto adjacent property or accelerating sand loss.

Since much beach-front property in Groton would be flooded in a repeat of the 1938 hurricane, the community must remain cognizant of the threat of coastal flooding and the need to minimize the danger to life and property.

While man-made structures such as groins, jetties, breakwaters, and bulkheads can slow erosion in some areas, they can also increase sand loss at other locations and threaten people, structures, property, and infrastructure.

## **Carefully Manage Coastal Development**

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Development activities continue in the coastal areas on numerous small parcels and major sites. Development in coastal areas can affect coastal resources and the cumulative impacts of development and redevelopment need to be considered. Opportunities should also continue to be explored for ways to provide public access and protect tidal wetlands and other coastal resources.

Efforts should continue to encourage or require buildings to be built as far back as possible from eroding shorelines and vulnerable beach areas. This includes the careful review of variance applications to the Zoning Board of Appeals for any activities proposed in coastal areas. Efforts should also continue to encourage "non-structural" erosion control measures and to oversee any structure to ensure that secondary or cumulative shoreline impacts will not result.

### **Recommendations**

---

1. Continue to manage the cumulative impacts of development and redevelopment in coastal areas.
2. Continually review regulations affecting coastal areas to ensure that:
  - there are adequate controls for development, individually and cumulatively,
  - siting of development within coastal flood hazard areas (A- and V-zones) is discouraged, and
  - hazards to life and property are minimized.
3. Encourage or require property owners to build as far back from eroding shorelines and vulnerable beach areas as possible.
4. Consider flexible yard requirements to allow for and encourage larger separations of buildings from coastal high hazard areas (like FEMA "V" zones).
5. Develop a protocol to address redevelopment of buildings severely damaged or destroyed after a major coastal storm.
6. Continue to carefully review all coastal site plans for coastal flood and erosion control structures.
7. Discourage or prevent use of flood or erosion control structures except when unavoidable and necessary to protect infrastructure, a water-dependent use, or an inhabited residential structure that pre-dates January 1, 1980.
8. Strive to ensure that structural measures will not cause secondary or cumulative shoreline impacts.
9. Encourage or require use of "non-structural" erosion control measures (such as vegetated slopes and elevated foundations) when and where appropriate.
10. Continue to ensure that all coastal flood and erosion control structures are in compliance with appropriate state and federal requirements.
11. Consider purchase of shoreline properties at critical locations after significant hurricane or other storm events.

# PROTECT HISTORIC RESOURCES

# 7

## Overview

Preservation of historic resources is an important way for Groton to provide a sense of identity and stability, preserve community character, and maintain the Town's historical heritage.

*Groton is a community rich in historic resources ...*

Jabez Smith House



Local Cemetery



William Carlebach

## Historic Importance

Groton is significant for the wealth of historic resources from different eras, some that are national in significance:

1. **The Pequot War**  
The first major conflict between a Native North American people and colonists.
2. **America's Navy**  
Actions during the Revolutionary War and War of 1812 that helped establish America's naval presence.
3. **Maritime Enterprises**  
The entire fishing and maritime activities of the nineteenth century.
4. **Submarine Evolution**  
The manufacture and deployment of the United States naval submarine force through most of the twentieth century.

## More Information

Additional information on local historic resources can also be obtained at the Library, from the Municipal Historian, from the Groton Historic District Commission, Mystic River Historical Society, and from the Connecticut Historical Commission.

## Continue to Identify Historic Resources

Groton contains many recognized historic resources and has undertaken extensive local programs to identify and protect these resources. Groton has clearly shown its commitment to historic preservation through:

- preparation of five historical and architectural surveys since 1992 identifying hundreds of buildings, structures, sites, and districts that may be eligible for listing on the State and National Registers of Historic Places
- preparation of a Historic Preservation Plan (1996) which identified potential new or expanded National Register Historic Districts and recommended strategies for historic preservation

In fact, Groton's local historic preservation efforts have been recognized through the Certified Local Government program administered by the Connecticut Historical Commission. This program provides financial assistance to communities that participate and Groton has used these grants to study historic resources.

Groton has twelve listings on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), five districts and seven individual sites. Entries on the National Register are also on the State Register of Historic Places (SRHP). The 1996 Historic Preservation Plan identified other locations with potential for designation as state or national historically significant sites or areas.

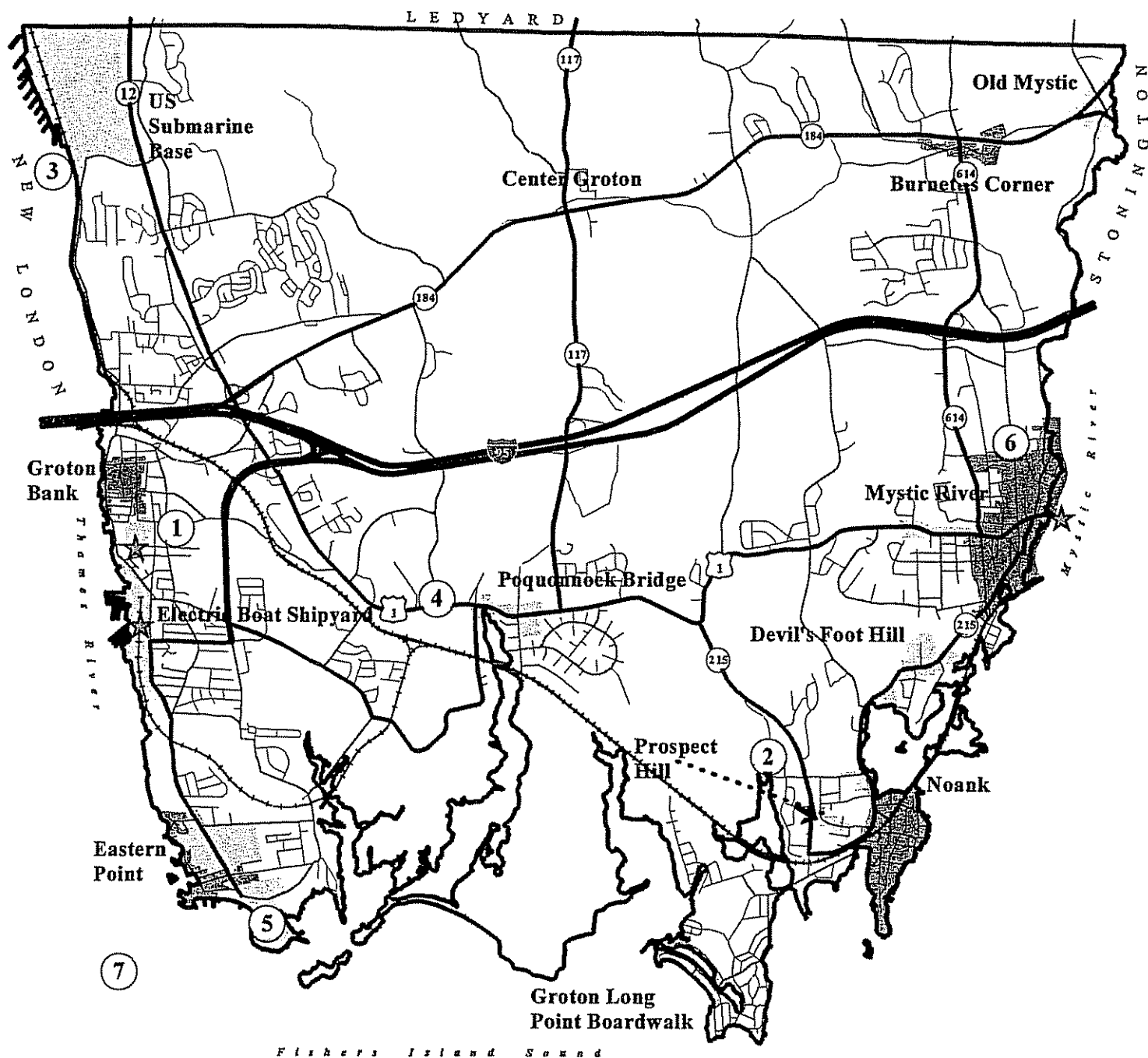
### Resources on the National and State Register of Historic Places

Existing NRHP Districts		Existing NRHP Sites	
A.	Mystic River Historic District	1.	Fort Griswold
B.	Noank Historic District	2.	Yeoman House (Cove Nook Farm)
C.	Eastern Point Historic District	3.	USS Nautilus (Submarine-SSN-571)
D.	Groton Bank Historic District	4.	Jabez Smith House
E.	Burnett's Corner Historic District	5.	Branford House
		6.	Pequot Fort
		7.	New London Ledge Lighthouse
Potential Districts			
Eastern Point expansion (Avery Point)		Devil's Foot Hill	
Groton Bank expansion		Groton Long Point Boardwalk	
Mystic expansion		Prospect Hill	
Noank expansion		Poquonnock Bridge	
US Submarine Base		Old Mystic	
Electric Boat Corporation Shipyard			
Potential National Landmarks			
Electric Boat Corporation Shipyard		Fort Griswold	
Mystic Bascule Bridge			

Other areas that may have significance for state or national recognition include the Gungywump area, the former railroad house in the Bluff Point area, and the World War II worker housing in the Midway Oval area.

# National Historic Preservation

Town of Groton, CT



### Existing Regulations

Groton's zoning regulations already contain several provisions that promote historic resource protection:

- the WDD zone which is intended to enhance the historic qualities of the Mystic area
- provisions for the reuse of historic properties as provided in Section 7.1-38

In addition, the Town of Groton has four local historic districts (LHD). The 1996 Historic Preservation Plan also identified locations with potential for designation as local historically significant areas.

### Local Historic Resources

Existing Districts		Potential New Districts
W.	Center Groton Historic District	Old Mystic
X.	Mystic River Historic District	Fort Hill
Y.	Eastern Point Historic District	Poquonnock Bridge
Z.	Burnett's Corner Historic District	

### Recommendations

1. Implement the recommendations of the 1996 Historic Preservation Plan, as appropriate, including nominating sites for state or federal recognition.
2. Continue to budget or obtain funds to prepare historic resource surveys and document specific resources.
3. Undertake efforts to identify archeological resources in Groton.

## Continue to Protect Historic Resources

It is important to realize that designation of a historic resource on the National or State Register of Historic Places only recognizes historical merit and only affects activities involving federal or state funding. Designation may not prevent unreasonable destruction of important resources. In other words, these designations provide recognition but carry no special protection.

Local historic districts differ from State or National districts in that a local Historic District Commission regulates activities in local districts. The construction or demolition of buildings or structures or the alteration of external architectural features in districts require a Certificate of Appropriateness.

### Village Districts

Zoning regulations establishing village districts shall protect the distinctive character, landscape and historic structures of such areas and may regulate:

- (1) alterations and improvements in such areas;
- (2) substantial reconstruction and rehabilitation of properties within the district and in view of public roadways.

CGS Section 8-2j

A new tool that is available for protection of historic resources is village district zoning (as authorized by Public Act 00-145). This act enables a zoning commission to develop regulations to protect village areas, an important distinction from a local historic district that must be endorsed by the property owners.

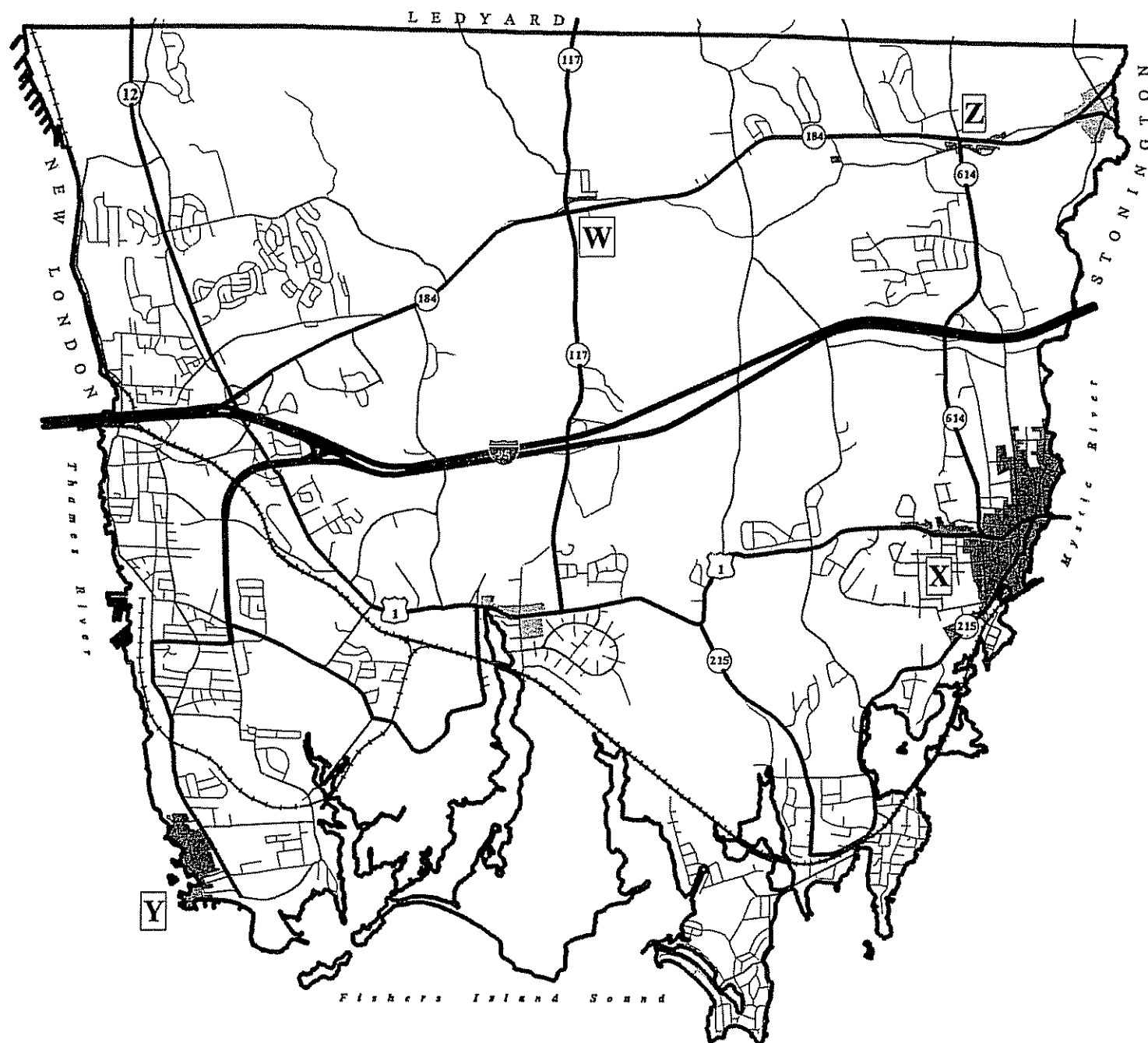
Thus, the most effective means of protecting historic resources include:

- ownership by preservation organizations or societies
- establishment of local historic districts with a governing board
- establishment of a village district in historically significant areas




A local *historic* district may be most appropriate in residential areas since it requires a two-thirds vote of those affected. A *village* district may be more appropriate in commercial areas where business owners may be less concerned with protection of historic buildings or character.

# Local Historic Preservation

Town of Groton, CT



## Local Historic Districts

-  Existing district
-  Potential new districts
-  Text reference (see page 52 for detail)

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Additional protection can come from adoption of local ordinances to promote historic preservation:

- a demolition delay ordinance (that allows time for exploring alternatives to demolition or for historical documentation)
- a tax abatement ordinance (that reduces or abates taxes on a historic property if taxes are a factor that threaten the structure)

As shown on the preceding maps, the boundaries of the National Register Historic Districts and local historic districts differ in certain areas. This situation can arise since:

- the National designation is largely ceremonial and its primary purpose is to identify significant historic resources
- the local designation involves a local ordinance that property owners must vote on and agree to be subjected to

In other words, the National/State designation best reflects the location of identified historic areas and the local designation best reflects the historic areas that have some measure of protection.

In addition, protection of historic resources can be promoted through education of property owners and other Groton residents about the importance of these resources to community character and overall quality of life.

### **Recommendations**

---

1. In areas with historic significance, encourage establishment of local historic districts overseen by a Historic District Commission.
2. When appropriate, consider establishing village districts within the Town of Groton regulatory jurisdiction overseen by the Zoning Commission in:
  - business areas with historic significance or character
  - where no local historic district has been established
3. Consider adopting ordinances to provide for demolition delay, substantial rehabilitation delay, and/or tax abatement, when appropriate, for preserving historic properties.
4. Coordinate preservation activities of various jurisdictions on a town-wide basis so that all historic resources are managed and protected.
5. Encourage the efforts of local organizations that promote historic preservation.
6. Establish educational programs for homeowners to promote awareness of historical resources on their properties.
7. Encourage owners of archaeological and historical resources to give special consideration to preserving and protecting them.
8. Continue to maintain a municipal historian to preserve historic information.
9. Seek a central repository for historical information about Groton.
10. Amend zoning and subdivision regulations to allow the Commissions to require archeological surveys prior to construction
11. Maintain designation as a Certified Local Government in order to be eligible for funding assistance for historic preservation.

# PROMOTE COMMUNITY CHARACTER

# 8

## Overview

Community character and community spirit are intangible, but important, elements of Groton and the overall quality of life in the community.

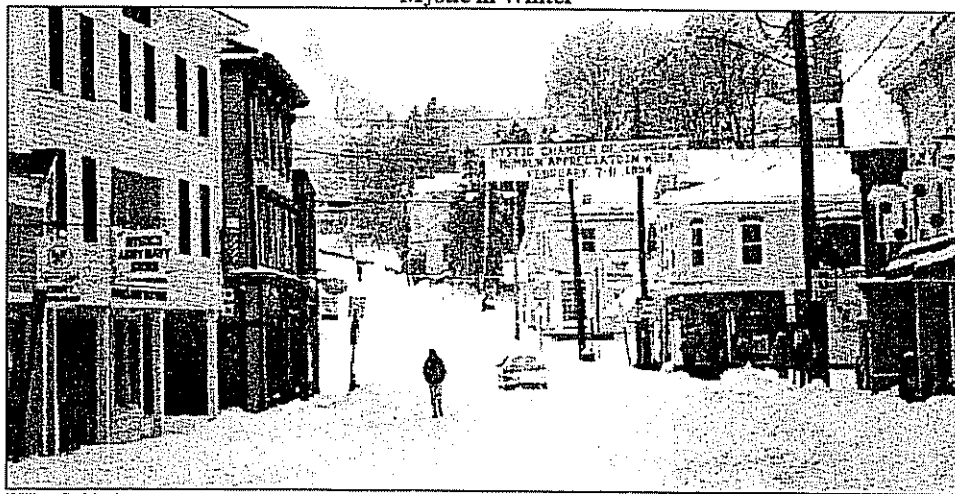
*Community character is a large part of what makes Groton special ...*

## Protect and Enhance Character Resources

While the elements of what comprises community character are different for each person, physical attributes are an important component. Physical character elements discussed elsewhere in the Plan include:

- **Natural Resources and Open Space** - Natural features and open space contribute to community character and strategies related to preservation of these resources are identified in the Plan.
- **Historic Resources** - Local historical and archeological features contribute to community character and strategies related to the preservation of these resources are identified in a special chapter of the Plan.
- **Village Areas** - The villages of Mystic and Noank are often cited for their character and are a source of pride for local residents.

Mystic in Winter



William Carlebach

### Trees and Vegetation

Trees and vegetation are an important part of community character.

In some communities, tree protection ordinances have been used to protect significant or specimen trees, prevent unreasonable removal or damage, or manage tree clearing.

Other elements that contribute to the physical character of Groton include:

- **Scenic Features and Areas** - Scenic roads, panoramic views, and other scenic areas that enhance the character of Groton.
- **Architectural Characteristics** - The architecture of buildings in Groton significantly contribute to overall community character.
- **Undeveloped Land** – Undeveloped land, which leaves the perception of open space and contributes to community character.
- **Local Facilities** - Community character is also enhanced by local facilities such as recreation facilities and libraries.
- **State Facilities** – Such as Bluff Point Coastal Reserve, Haley Farm State Park, and other State facilities.
- **Agricultural and Rural Features** - Groton contains stone walls, barns, and other features that contribute to community character.
- **Vegetation** – Vegetation is another important aspect of community character.

### Recommendations

1. Continue to protect natural resources, open space, coastal resources, and historical resources in order to enhance their scenic value and overall community character.

## Protect Scenic Resources

### Scenic Road Designation

State statutes (CGS Section 13b-31) allow the Department of Transportation to designate State Scenic Roads if they meet certain criteria.

Groton has adopted a local scenic road ordinance in accordance with statutory guidelines (CGS 7-149a).

Recognized scenic roads in Groton include:

- Sandy Hollow Road
- River Road

Scenic resources are one of the factors that contribute to community character. Scenic resources are considered to include areas (scenic areas that are viewed from elsewhere), and vistas (locations affording scenic views from them).

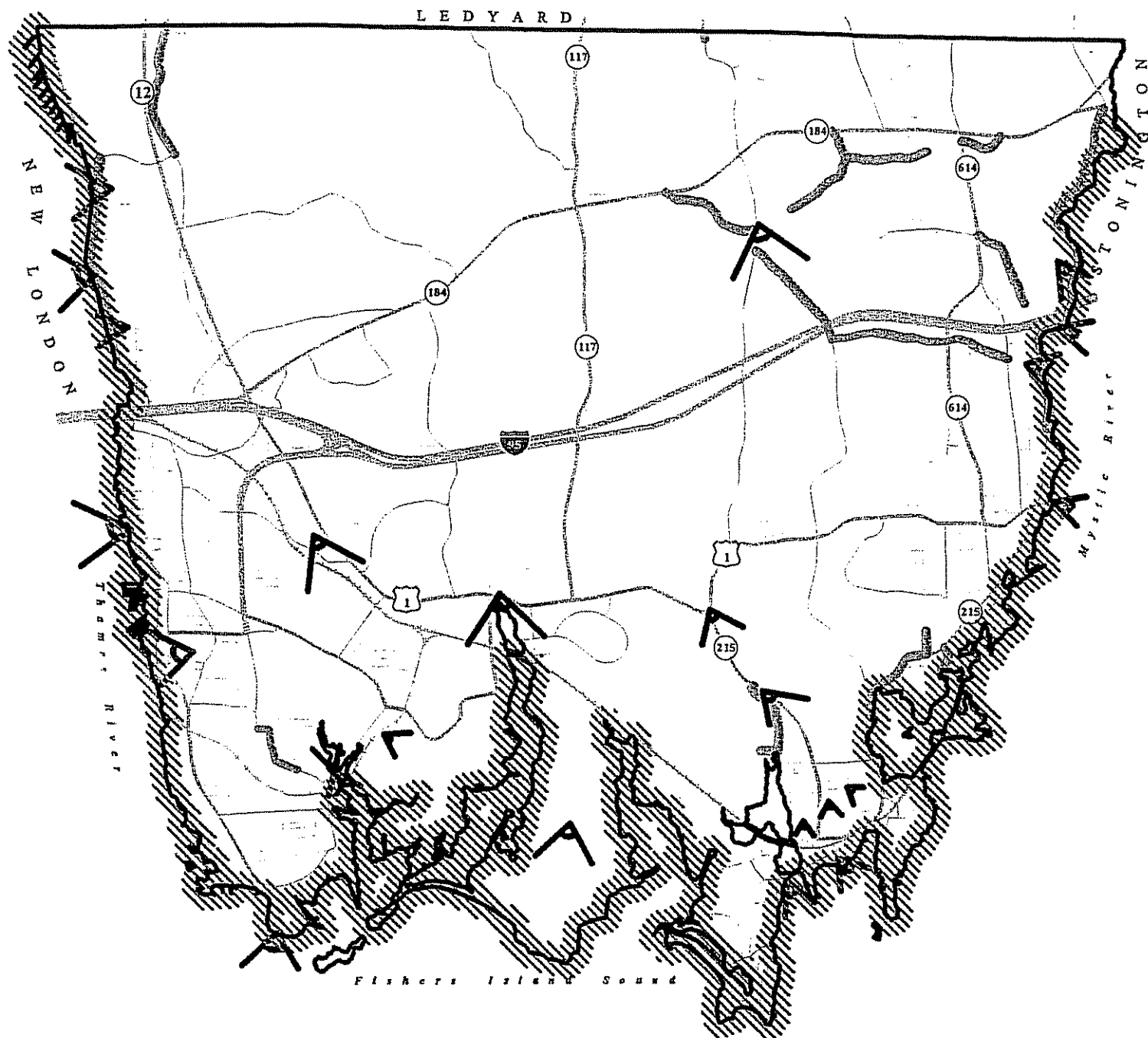
Some major scenic resources, such as ridgelines or coastal areas, are located on the map on the facing page. Other scenic resources include stone walls, barns, fences, tree canopies, and scenic roads (discussed in the Transportation chapter). Since these resources enhance the character of Groton and would compromise the unique beauty of the Town if not given special consideration, efforts to identify and preserve scenic resources must continue.

### Recommendations

1. Continue to identify scenic views, scenic vistas, scenic roads, and other scenic resources in Groton.
2. Preserve or relocate scenic resources such as stone walls, barns, fences, and other scenic resources that are visible from public streets.
3. Amend land use regulations to include protection of scenic views, scenic vistas, scenic roads, and other scenic resources, especially in coastal areas.
4. Protect tree canopies from unreasonable destruction from utility pruning.

# Scenic Character Map

Town of Groton, CT



## Roads of Scenic Value

### Primary

Cedar Road (part)  
Cold Spring Road  
Godfrey Road (part)  
Haley Farm Lane  
Military Highway (part)  
Noank-Ledyard Road (part)  
Oral School Road (part)  
Pleasant Valley Road North (part)  
Sandy Hollow Road (part)  
Shennecossett Road (part)  
Stanton Lane (part)  
Yetter Road (part)

### Secondary

Brook Street (part)  
Lambtown Road (part)  
Noank Road (part)  
Packer Road (part)  
Rogers Road (part)

## Legend

- Scenic coastal areas
- Locations with scenic views
- Roads of scenic value

## Scenic Viewpoints

Brook Street, views south over Palmer Cove  
Elm Street, views east over Beebe Cove  
Fort Hill Road, views south toward Long Island Sound  
Gravel Street, views toward Mystic Seaport  
High Street, views east over Mystic River  
Lestertown Road, views over Thames River  
Long Hill Road, views south toward Bluff State Park  
Military Highway, views over the Thames River at various points  
New London Road, views south over Fisher's Island Sound  
Prospect Hill Road, views south toward Long Island Sound  
River Road, views looking south down the Mystic River  
Runway Lane, views east over airport toward Bluff Point State Park  
Tanglewood Area, views south over Long Island Sound  
Thomas Road, views over marshes on either side  
Westview Avenue, views south over Long Island Sound  
Williams Street, views looking east

5000 0 5000 Feet



## Sense of Place

A "sense of place" is enhanced when areas have:

- identifiable focal points
- defined edges
- strong structures

Areas, such as Mystic and Noank, that have such features are easily distinguishable from other areas, both in Groton and around the country, that have development patterns that do not exhibit these attributes.

In many respects, the current debate about "suburban sprawl" is a recognition that some areas do not have any real sense of place.

## Enhance "Sense of Place"

Unlike many other communities, Groton already has a basic community structure that contributes to community character. In addition, Groton already has a number of places that are attractive and inviting to people because of the types of uses and activities that occur there. The reason that places such as Mystic and Noank are widely recognized to have community character is that they have a "sense of place."

Groton should continue to encourage development patterns that contribute to, and enhance, the "sense of place" that exists in parts of the community.

While a "sense of place" is important, it would be inappropriate to simply copy elements that may contribute to a sense of place in other areas. In essence, if all places were to look or feel the same, none of these areas would have any real sense of place. As a result, care must be taken to develop a sense of place that is unique and appropriate for each area of Groton. Diversity in "sense of place" will also contribute to community character.

Maintaining a "sense of place" is also important. Some basic level of property maintenance should be encouraged or required. In addition, abandoned buildings should be addressed as promptly as possible (through renovation or improvement to make them ready for development) so that the property becomes ready for occupancy or development and the "sense of place" is maintained or enhanced.

Noank



## Recommendations

---

1. Continue to encourage development patterns that contribute to, and enhance, the “sense of place” that exists in parts of the community.
2. Encourage a diversity in “sense of place” in order to promote the unique and appropriate character of each area and the overall community.
3. Recommend adoption of a property maintenance code.
4. Address abandoned buildings as promptly as possible so that the property becomes ready for occupancy or development and the “sense of place” is maintained or enhanced.

Mystic Character



Route 12 Character



## Design Review

---

At some time in the future, Groton may wish to consider establishing a design review process with members appointed from the community at large.

The design review process would not generally be applied to the development of single-family houses.

On the other hand, the process would be utilized for development of:

- multi-family uses
- business uses
- institutional uses
- special permit uses
- other uses that could have a significant overall impact on the community

Members would review plans and provide formal comments to the Planning Commission and/or the Zoning Commission about how to improve the design of buildings and sites.

Since the design review comments occur during the time period between receipt of an application and action by a Commission, it should not extend the decision timetable for an applicant. In addition, since the comments from the design review process are advisory, a Commission could choose to not impose conditions that it considered impractical or unrealistic.

In the future, the process could also be applied to other types of applications (such as subdivisions) if the Planning Commission felt it would be desirable.

## Promote Good Design

---

While zoning is primarily concerned with land uses and intensity, community residents typically care most about the design of a particular proposal. It is this “disconnect” between perception and reality that causes a lot of anxiety about new development.

However, design and character are subjective issues. What some see as “good design”, others see as visually incompatible or inappropriate. In addition, design is relative -- what is appropriate in one area may not be appropriate in another simply because it does not relate well to the context of the buildings that surround it. In other words, good design is not absolute. Good design requires an understanding of context and scale and community character. It is hard to teach good design.

This is why Groton should establish design review guidelines within the community as a whole and for specific areas (since a different development character may be appropriate in Mystic as compared to the Drozdyk Drive area). Experience in other communities has shown that when developers understand what design standards are expected or encouraged, they are more likely to provide what the community has indicated that they want.

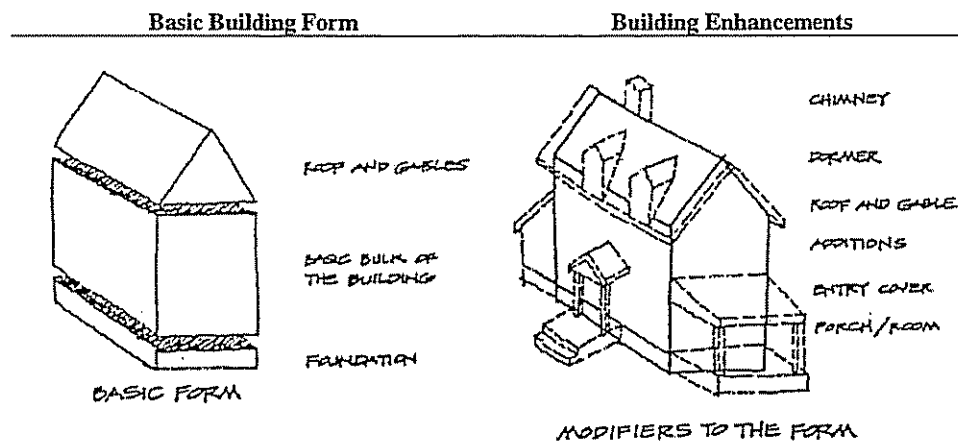
As discussed in the sidebar, Groton may also choose to establish a design review process in the future to enhance design guidelines and/or to review specific applications. Such a process would involve residents in guiding the physical design of their community and help promote more and better discussion about community design.

## Recommendations

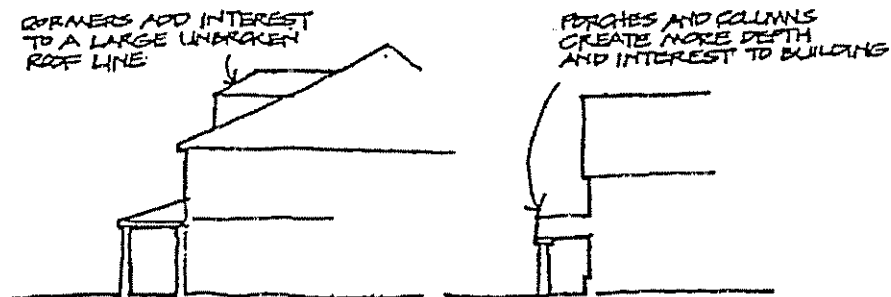
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1. Establish and maintain design review guidelines for commercial, multi-family residential and other development and activities to promote design consistency and overall appropriateness.
2. Consider establishing a design review process at some time in the future, if appropriate.

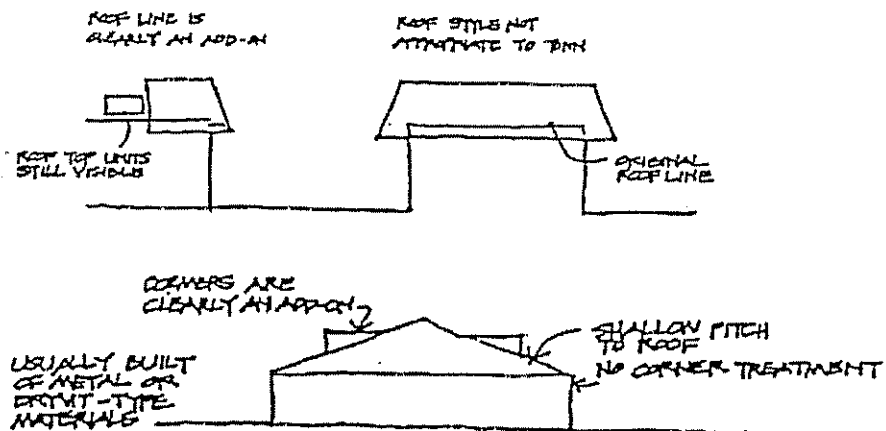
## Sample Design Guidelines



### Appropriate Use of Building Enhancements

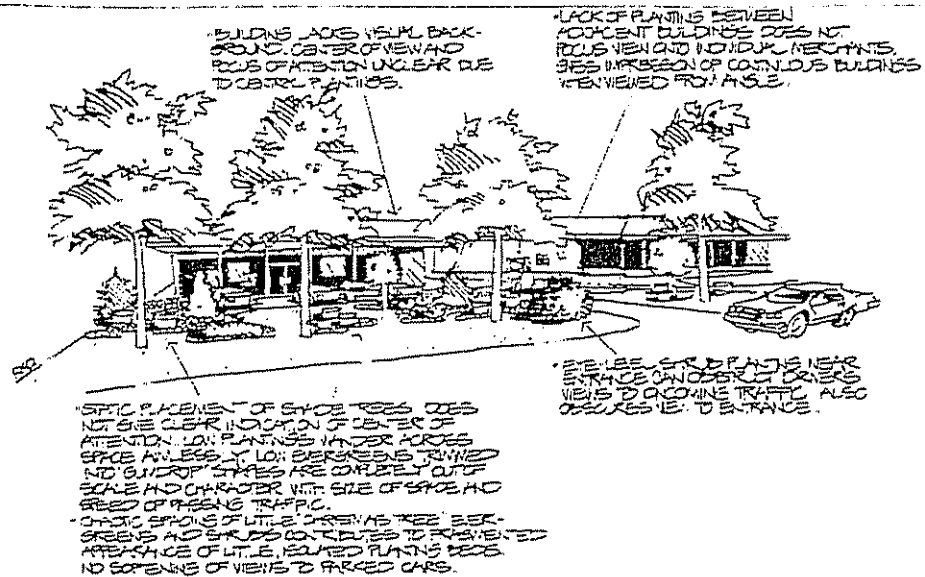


### Inappropriate Use of Building Enhancements

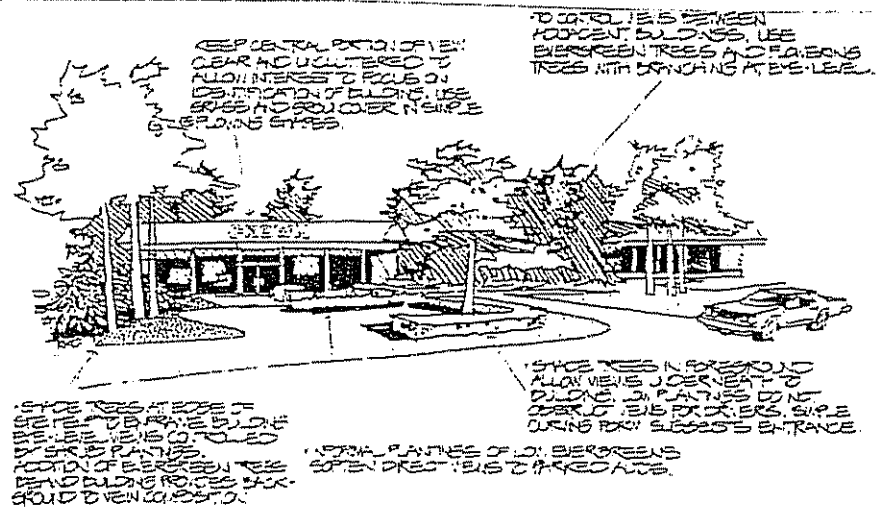


## Sample Design Guidelines

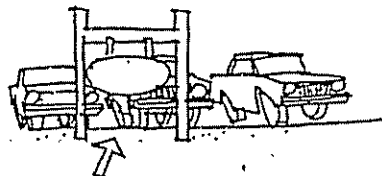
### Typical Planting Mistakes



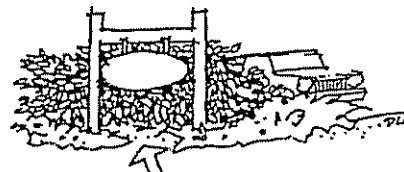
### Recommended Planting Arrangement



### Recommended Signage Landscaping



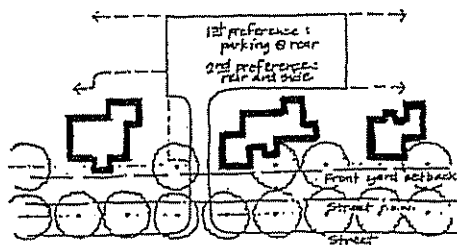
SIGN WITH OPEN SUPPORTS CAN BE CONFUSING AND DIFFICULT TO READ WHEN SEEN AGAINST "BUSY" BACKGROUND.



PLANTING IMMEDIATELY BEHIND SIGN ELIMINATES COMPETITION FROM BACKGROUND, FOCUSES ATTENTION ON SIGN.

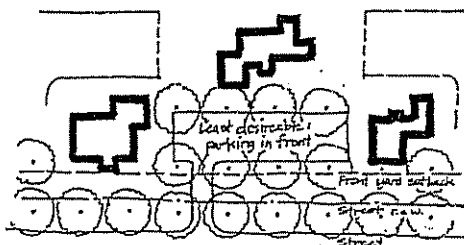
## Sample Design Guidelines

### Desirable Building Location For Streetscape Continuity



STREET FACADE MAINTAINED  
MINIMUM FRONT YARD DISTURBANCE

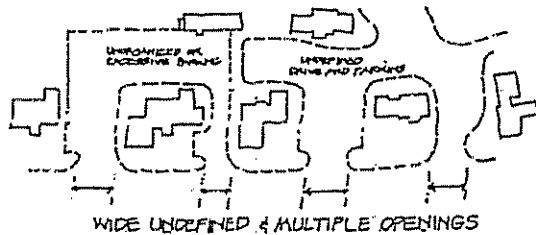
### Undesirable Building Location For Streetscape Continuity



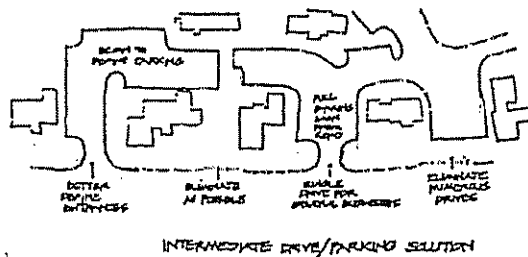
STREET FACADE "BROKEN UP"  
'BAND OF CONTINUITY' INTERRUPTED

### Recommended Consolidation of Buildings, Parking, and Access

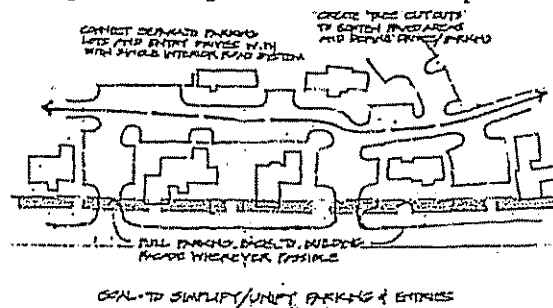
#### Initial Condition - Individual Parking Lots With Multiple Driveways



#### Intermediate Condition - Consolidated Driveways



#### Ultimate Condition - Integrated Parking Lots and Pedestrian Improvements



## Perceived Open Space

Undeveloped land promotes community character since it is also "perceived open space". Retaining undeveloped land can have positive fiscal implications for the community if it might otherwise be developed residentially.

Some land in Groton currently participates in the PA-490 program. Forest lands, which are designated by the assessor, are the largest category of PA-490 lands. Farm lands, which are also designated by the assessor, are much less extensive.

If the open space assessment were used in Groton, it would be based on criteria established by the Planning Commission and adopted by the legislative body.

## Retain Undeveloped Land

Undeveloped land also adds to community character since it is perceived as "open space". As more and more land is developed, it is the loss of "perceived open space" that is typically the greatest concern to residents. However, there are strategies available to preserve undeveloped land.

For example, the Public Act 490 program (CGS 12-107e) is an assessment policy that encourages land to remain undeveloped as "perceived open space." The program helps to reduce development pressure by assessing land as farm, forest, or open space, reducing the tax burden on those parcels and making such land more affordable to own.

In order to encourage the retention of undeveloped residential land, the Plan recommends that the Representative Town Meeting adopt the following policy for open space assessment:

1. For any residentially zoned parcel that is more than two times the minimum lot size for the zone in which it is located, that portion in excess of the minimum lot size shall be eligible.

OR

2. For any residentially zoned parcel that is owned separately from any adjoining land and has an area of at least ten acres.

While the PA-490 program does not result in permanent open space preservation, it does reduce the local property tax burden as a reason that property might be developed in the future and promotes land ownership strategies that enhance the perception of open space in Groton.

## Recommendations

1. Establish an open space assessment policy in order to promote the retention of undeveloped land in residential zones.
2. Consider establishing a local tax abatement program (similar to Public Act 490) for residential property that stays undeveloped for an extended period of time (more than 10 years).
3. Consider establishing a program to purchase development rights to preserve farmland.

# ENHANCE COMMUNITY PRIDE AND SPIRIT

# 9

## Overview

Community pride and spirit is also something that is important to Groton. Community character and quality of life will be maximized when residents are proud of Groton and what it has to offer.

*Community pride and spirit are important to the overall quality of life in Groton ...*

Groundbreaking



## **Promote Community Spirit**

---

Successful “communities” have a pride and spirit that permeates local events and activities. This attitude, when nurtured, creates an on-going culture of positive results. People want to contribute to making such communities successful and this energy becomes self-perpetuating. Groton needs to assure that this positive energy is cultivated and continues to grow.

Elements that contribute to community spirit in Groton include:

**Local Organizations** - Local organizations also build community spirit. These include religious institutions, charitable organizations, sports leagues, and other organizations where people help each other and their community accomplish important priorities.

**Volunteer Contributions** - Volunteer contributions have a lot to do with what makes Groton special. Over the years, it is the tireless devotion of residents to making Groton a better place that has helped preserve community character, built community spirit and made Groton the place that it is today. It is simply not possible here to recognize everyone that has contributed to Groton’s evolution over the years.

**Local Programs Or Events** - Events (such as community festivals, art or antique shows, fireworks displays, and community concerts) are important occasions when citizens of all groups join in a common activity that contributes to community spirit and character.

**Local Recognition** - Community spirit and pride is enhanced by positive publicity of local events and activities. This includes those things important to residents such as educational quality, community appearance, local excellence, and other factors.

**Unique Local Sites And Facilities** – Sites such as Mystic, Noank, Groton Long Point, Avery Point, Bluff Point, the libraries, historic sites (such as the USS Nautilus and the Groton Memorial), and similar facilities that people recognize as being “Groton” build community pride and spirit.. Community pride and spirit can also be enhanced through broader recognition of factors such as educational quality, community appearance, local excellence, and other factors.

### **Recommendations**

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1. Continue to coordinate and promote unique local programs or events that promote community pride and spirit.
2. Maintain and enhance unique local services or facilities that promote community pride and spirit.
3. Continue to promote recognition of Groton’s special qualities in order to promote community pride and spirit.
4. Encourage other actions and programs that promote a sense of community.

## **Enhance Neighborhood Identity**

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One of the most interesting features of Groton is the diversity of neighborhoods and identities. Groton should try to find ways to recognize and enhance the unique features of each part of the community. These efforts will help promote a diverse community and enhance community pride and spirit.

However, this diversity must also occur in a balanced way that makes it clear that each neighborhood is a part of the larger community that is Groton.

The philosophy should not be to promote the neighborhood over the community or the community over the neighborhood. In reality, each must work with the other and with other local organizations if Groton is to promote itself most effectively.

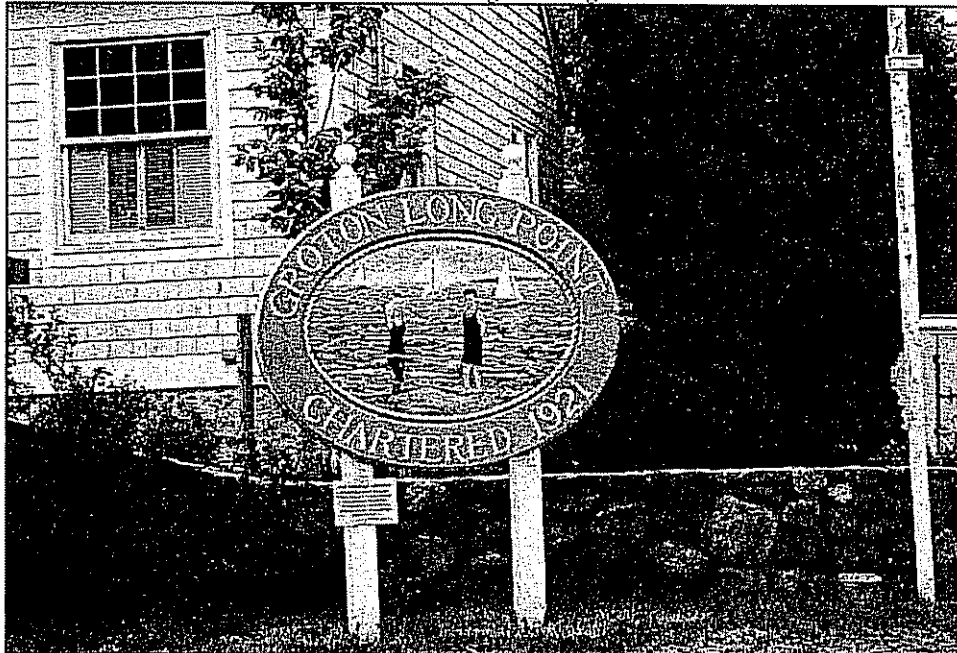
Strong neighborhoods all working together will help make a strong community.

### **Recommendations**

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1. Recognize that strong neighborhoods all working together will help make a strong community.
2. Find ways to recognize and enhance the unique features of each part of the community while making it clear that each neighborhood is a part of the larger community that is Groton.
3. Encourage each neighborhood to work effectively with other neighborhoods and with other local organizations.

**Groton Long Point Sign**



## Promote Community Involvement

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Volunteers have a lot to do with what makes Groton special. Over the years, many past and present residents have worked to make Groton a better place. This has helped preserve community character, built community spirit, and made Groton the place that it is today. Efforts need to be devoted to recognizing and encouraging these significant contributions.

In addition, efforts must be devoted to having people become actively involved in their community. When people sit back and criticize local activities rather than contribute in meaningful ways, community pride and spirit are eroded.

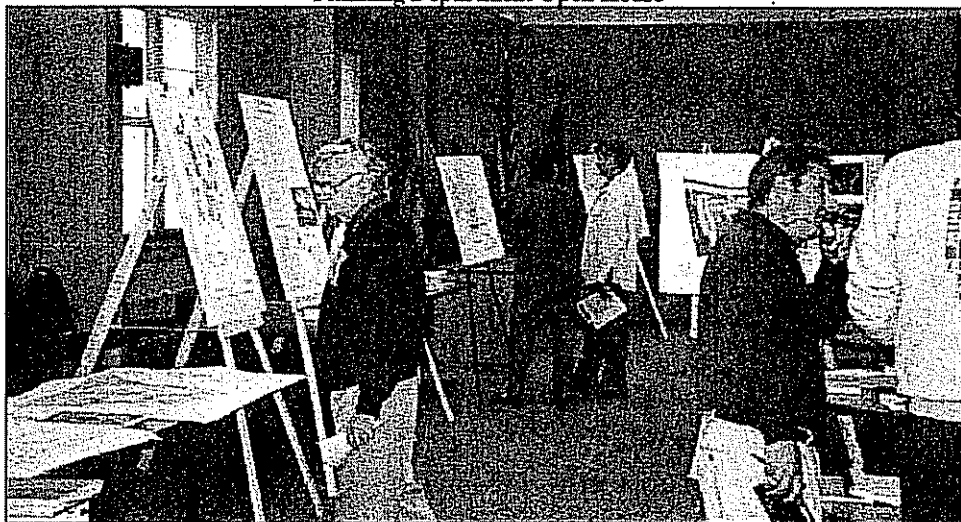
Groton's unique government structure presents a special challenge to involving residents in the larger community. For example, Groton residents have tended to identify their location as "the City" or "Mystic" or "Noank" or other areas as if these areas were not part of the overall community of Groton. While it could be helpful to organize "neighborhood" events (like "A Taste of Mystic" or "Navy Week" or "No Anchor Days"), it must be stressed that they are activities intended for all Groton residents and the region.

### Recommendations

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1. Continue to encourage volunteers who promote community activities and the overall quality of life in Groton.
2. Establish a more active program to develop volunteers.
3. Continue to promote and encourage volunteer organizations.
4. Recognize local volunteers (through such annual events as a picnic, a "hometown heroes" plaque, and/or "volunteer of the year" designation).
5. Strive to involve neighborhoods in the overall community that is Groton.
6. Encourage "neighborhood" events that involve all Groton residents in celebrating what makes Groton special.

Planning Department Open House



William Carlebach

## Improve Communications

Communication within a community is an important component of involving residents and maintaining community pride and spirit. There is little doubt that communication will continue to be a challenge that will require attention and resources. With the growing use of the Internet and community television, there are several avenues available to inform residents about current issues and important community priorities.

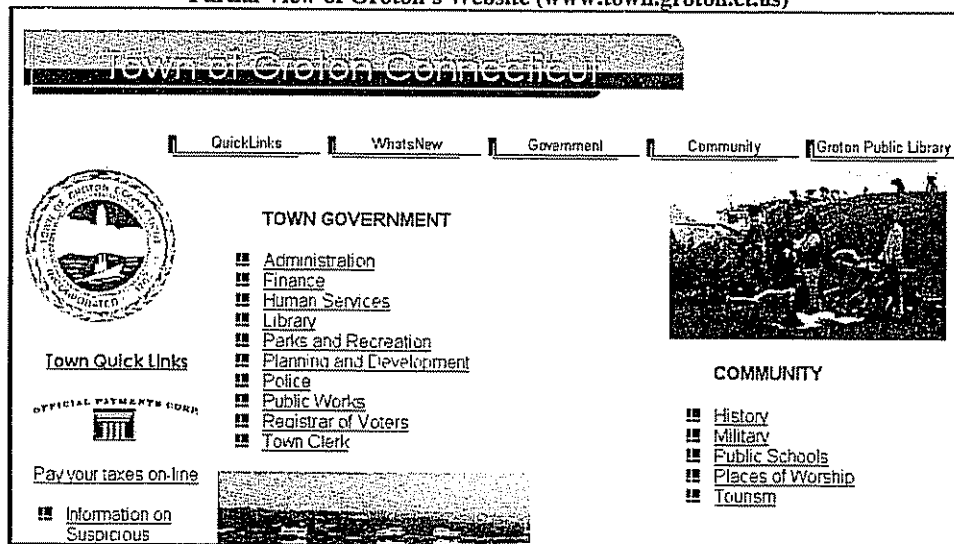
A regularly updated community "web page" which provides information on meeting agendas and current issues and allows for e-mail would be an important method of community involvement. Similarly, special issue shows on community television providing three to five minute issue summaries and opportunities for community feedback and editorials would also facilitate community involvement in important issues.

Maximum use should be made of these resources to keep residents aware of community activities and events. If additional resources - either human or financial - are required, those resources should be directed towards community education and involvement.

## Recommendations

1. Educate and communicate information about all community activities.
2. Publish a "community calendar" to inform people of coming events.
3. Maintain a Groton "website" to provide information on community activities and allow for e-mail and other communications with Town departments.
4. Continue to use Community Television to provide information on local issues and events to residents.
5. Continue to publish local newsletters and other information.
6. Promote better coverage by local newspapers.

Partial View of Groton's Website ([www.town.groton.ct.us](http://www.town.groton.ct.us))



## **Promote And Market Community Assets**

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Groton is a unique and special place but many people do not know what Groton has to offer. To overcome this, Groton should undertake a program to market Groton to a broader audience. This will have a number of community benefits:

- it will make Groton more visible in terms of economic development
- it will bring visitors to Groton businesses
- it will promote community spirit among Groton residents

This program should highlight Groton's "sense of place" in both existing and new nodes, the coastal resources that exist here, the major employers located here, the incredible history that took place in Groton, and other resources.

### **Recommendations**

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1. Undertake a program to market Groton to a broader audience.