



DARIEN Plan of Conservation & Development **2026**

Overview for the Board of Selectmen

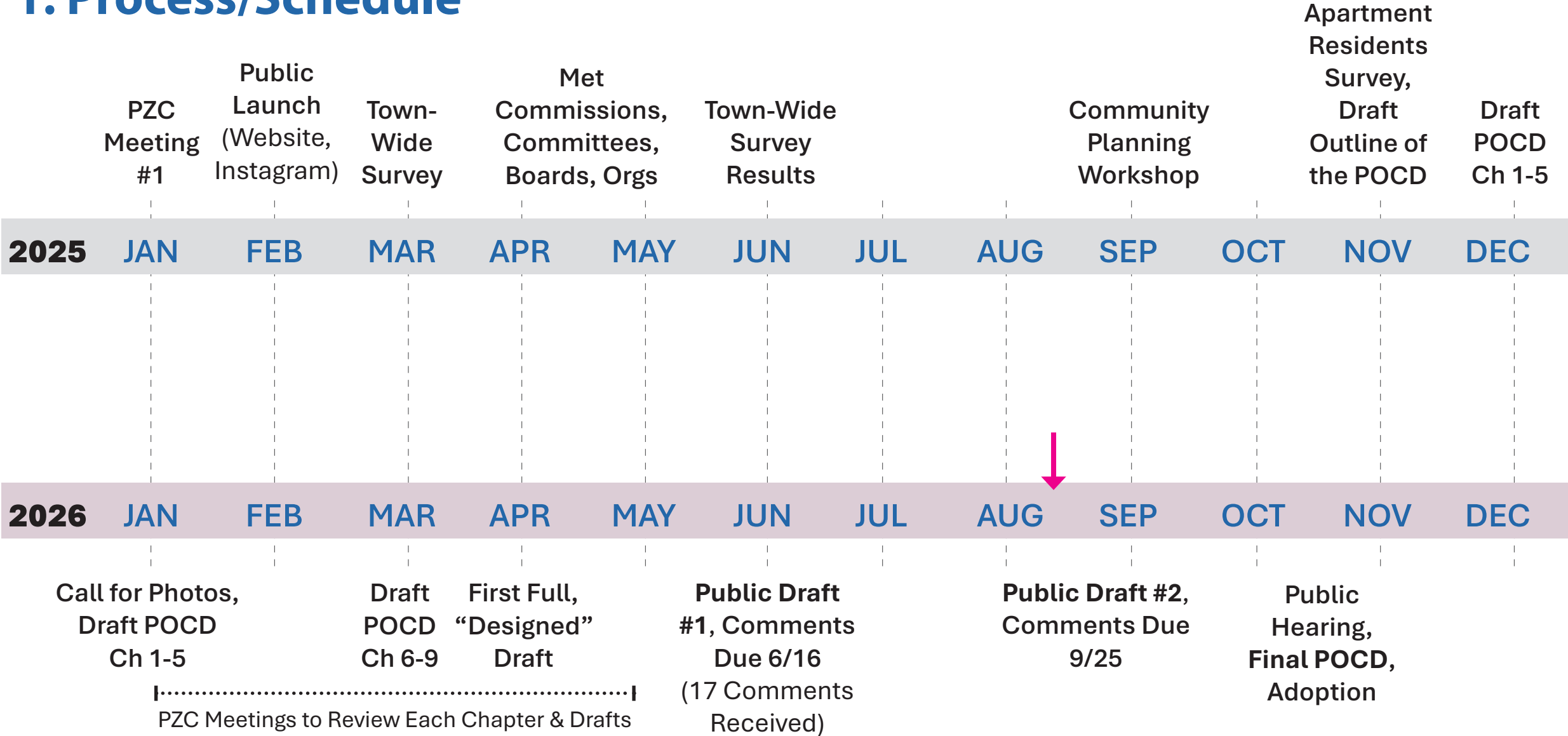
Town of Darien, Connecticut

August 10, 2026

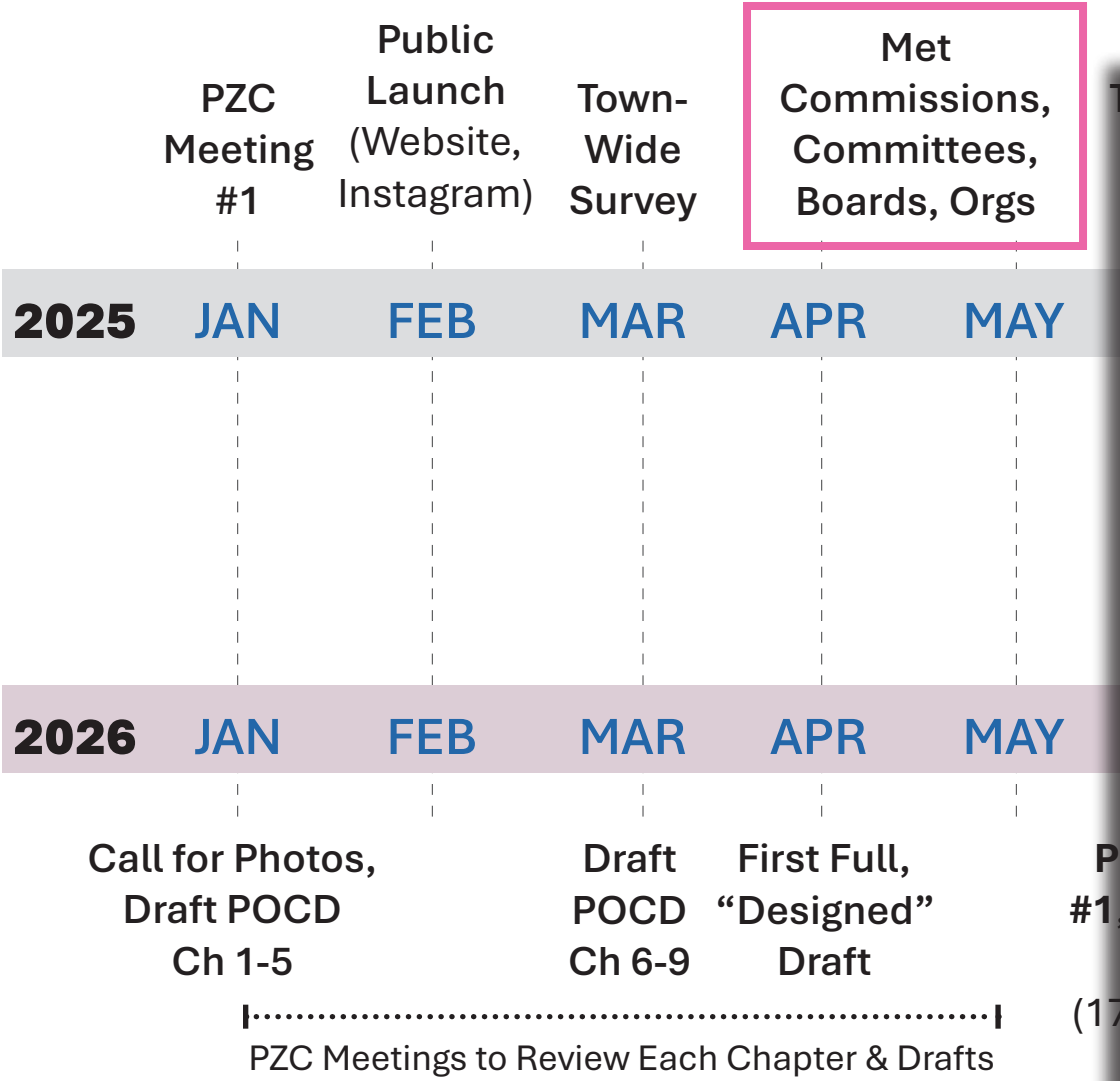
Agenda

- 1. Process/Schedule.** The process to date, the remaining timetable, and the respective roles of P&Z and the BOS
- 2. Structure.** The organization of the document, its principal themes, and the most important changes from the 2016 POCD
- 3. Recommendations.** The major recommendations, particularly those that may require BOS involvement, significant Town investment, or further policy consideration
- 4. Issues.** The relatively limited number of issues, if any, on which there was meaningful disagreement during the P&Z or stakeholder process, including significant suggestions that were considered but ultimately not incorporated

1. Process/Schedule



1. Process/Schedule



Apartment Residents Survey													
MEETINGS													
<i>Commissions, Boards, Committees</i>													
Parks & Rec Commission							4/9						
Parks Department							4/9						
RTM - Public Works							4/10						
Public Works Department							4/10						
Commission on Aging							4/16						
Advisory Committee on Sustainability							4/16						
Beautification Commission							4/16						
Advisory Commission on Coastal Waters							4/16						
RTM - Planning, Zoning & Housing							4/17						
Architectural Review Board							4/22						
Sewer Commission								5/6					
Environmental Protection Commission								5/14					
Darien Public Schools										7/30			
Darien Housing Authority													
<i>Organizations</i>													
Darien Chamber of Commerce							4/21						
Darien Land Trust								5/1					
Darien Green Wave								5/1					
Darien Pollinator Pathway								5/1					
Neuro-Inclusive Housing								5/16					
At Home in Darien													
V20 Group													

1. Process/Schedule



Work Products – Town of Darien

darienpocd.com/work-products/

Create a site for fre...

DARIEN

Plan of Conservation & Development 2026

FAQ

THE 2016 POCD

SCHEDULE

WORK PRODUCTS

CONTACT US

Type your email...

Subscribe

Work Products

Relevant State, Regional, & Local Plans and Studies. Examining state and regional plans can help the POCD be aligned with broader policies, informed by reliable data and recommendations, and coordinated with neighboring towns. It may strengthen eligibility for funding and support while also highlighting where local priorities may differ from regional and state goals. Most of the documents listed can be located through an Internet search. Reach us through the [Contact Us](#) page if you're having trouble finding any of them online or if you have additional documents to bring to our attention. (Updated 1/5/2026)

2016 POCD Implementation Summary. The 2016 POCD contains 303 recommendations. This summary provides a snapshot of what's been implemented and what's not been implemented.

Summaries of Meetings with Boards, Commissions, Committees & Organizations. We met with various Town boards, commissions, committees and organizations, in addition to several Town department directors. This file

About

This website provides the latest information on the process of updating the Town of Darien's 2016 Plan of Conservation & Development (POCD), which will culminate in the drafting and adoption of the Town's 2026 POCD. To learn more about POCDs and the update process, visit the [FAQ](#) page.

Which chapter of the 2026 POCD interests you most?

Your Response(s): (required)

Subscribe

2. Structure

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION..... 1

2. DARIEN TODAY 3

The Place3

The People6

Demographic Data Snapshots7

The Government9

The Institutions & Organizations..... 10

3. DARIEN TOMORROW13

Taking Stock: Community Engagement..... 13

Cross-Referencing the Results.....17

The Town Planning Workshop.....18

Meetings with Town Entities, Organizations & Institutions19

POCD Community Engagement Summary.....20

Board of Selectmen’s Updated Town Plan Vision Statement 21

4. THE STATE POCD & LEGISLATION..... 22

2025-2030 Connecticut Conservation & Development Policies Plan 22

CT General Statutes Section 8-23: Updated POCD Requirements 23

Housing & Land Use Legislation Adopted by the State Legislature..... 24

5. DARIEN & THE REGION 26

WestCOG 2020-2030 Regional Plan of Conservation & Development..... 26

Other Relevant WestCOG Plans & Guidance.....28

Other Regional Entities29

Darien’s Neighbors: Stamford, Norwalk & New CanaanINDEX OF RECOMMENDATIONS

6. ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE & SUSTAINABILITY 33

Environmental Quality & Protection..... 34

Climate Change: Risk, Adaptation & Resilience 44

Sustainability 48

7. TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY 56

Driving 56

Parking for Downtown Patrons 61

Taking the Train 62

Transportation for Seniors & People with Disabilities..... 64

Walking 65

Biking 66

8. COMMUNITY FACILITIES, AMENITIES & SERVICES 72

Parks & Recreation.....72

Public Works.....74

Town Hall.....76

Senior Services.....77

Police78

Fire.....79

Emergency Medical Services 80

Library..... 81

Public Schools..... 82

9. THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT 89

Land Uses & Building Forms 89

Housing Data Snapshots..... 90

Zoning Districts & Development..... 94

The State of Housing97

Housing & Residential Development..... 98

Commercial & Mixed-Use Development.....103

Redevelopment in Darien (2017-2027).....104

Historic Preservation 107

APPENDICES 117

A. Consistency with Regional & State Plans 117

2. Structure: 2026 POCD

- ▶ Environment, Climate & Sustainability
- ▶ Transportation & Mobility
- ▶ Community Facilities, Amenities & Services
- ▶ The Built Environment

Structure: 2016 POCD

Conservation Strategies	4	Maintain and Enhance Community Character	35
	5	Preserve Open Space	47
	6	Manage Coastal Resources	53
	7	Protect Natural Resources	59
Development Strategies	8	Maintain and Enhance Downtown	69
	9	Transform Noroton Heights Business Area	83
	10	Manage Residential Development	97
	11	Guide Business and Economic Development	107
Infrastructure Strategies	12	Maintain and Enhance Community Facilities	115
	13	Address Transportation Needs	125
	14	Manage Utility Infrastructure	145
	15	Promote Sustainability and Resiliency	151
Conclusion	16	Future Land Use Plan	159
	17	Implementation	167
	18	Conclusion	170

3. Recommendations: 2016 POCD

- ▶ 303 Recommendations
- ▶ Identified those Implemented and Not Implemented
- ▶ Aspiration for 2026 POCD: Fewer Recommendations

2016 POCD: Sampling of Policies & Action Steps IMPLEMENTED			
Chapter	Page	Action Steps	Notes
4: Maintain & Enhance Community Character	37	Enact an ordinance that will enable the Town to address the issue of blight / property maintenance directly.	Blight Ordinance passed and took effect January 2017. Has been a useful tool in addressing blight.
4: Maintain & Enhance Community Character	41	As appropriate, identify additional properties that are worthy of the "Protected Town Landmark" designation.	Mather Homestead property was designated a Protected Town Landmark by the Planning & Zoning Commission in January 2017.
4: Maintain & Enhance Community Character	41	Better publicize the Stephen Mather Home and encourage use of the property for educational purposes.	Mather Homestead property was designated a Protected Town Landmark by the Planning & Zoning Commission in January 2017. At that time, an amendment to their Special Permit was approved, allowing them to increase public use and events on-site.
4: Maintain & Enhance Community Character	42	Consider extending design review to multi family residential development, mixed uses, and institutional uses.	ARB continues to review multi family residential development, mixed use buildings, and institutional use projects relative to signs, awnings, and/or façade changes.
4: Maintain & Enhance Community Character	42	Review and update the Design Guidelines on a regular basis to ensure they properly reflect current design standards for Darien.	The Commercial Design Guidelines were originally adopted in 2009, and were revised/updated in 2021.
4: Maintain & Enhance Community Character	46	Recognize local volunteers through a picnic, or other means.	Done, but by not by the Town itself, but via another local organization which recognizes volunteers annually.
5: Preserve Open Space	50	Consider acquiring land adjacent to existing open spaces in order to expand and enhance existing open spaces.	In 2023, a cul-de-sac bulb adjacent to Great Island was purchased by the Town to give improved access to Great Island.
5: Preserve Open Space	50	Pursue state and federal grants for open space acquisition.	In 2017, the Town purchased a property, partially with a State grant, on Hecker Avenue. More recently, FEMA grant money was used to purchase a property on Crimmins Road.
		Seek to acquire any property that is adjacent to or near Wood Beach	The Town bought Short Lane property circa 2013 and has put forth a proposal to

7: Protect Natural Resources	64	Review the Drainage Manual for possible incorporation of LID stormwater management standards from the Connecticut Water Quality Manual or other sources.	A comprehensive rewrite of the Town of Darien 2003 Stormwater Management and Drainage Manual was presented to the Board of Selectmen in April 2025, and a public hearing held by the Planning & Zoning Commission in May 2025. The document was adopted and the new associated regulations take effect on September 21, 2025.
------------------------------	----	--	---

7: Protect Natural Resources	64	Review the Drainage Manual for possible incorporation of LID stormwater management standards from the Connecticut Water Quality Manual or other sources.	A comprehensive rewrite of the Town of Darien 2003 Stormwater Management and Drainage Manual was presented to the Board of Selectmen in April 2025, and a public hearing held by the Planning & Zoning Commission in May 2025. The document was adopted and the new associated regulations take effect on September 21, 2025.
------------------------------	----	--	---

3. Recommendations: 2026 POCD

INDEX OF RECOMMENDATIONS

6. ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE & SUSTAINABILITY

33

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY & PROTECTION

50

6-1. Create a Separate Conservation Commission.

50

6-2. Prepare an Open Space Plan.

50

6-3. Consider a Tree Protection Ordinance.

50

6-4. Prepare an Invasive Species Communications & Management Plan

50

CLIMATE CHANGE: RISK, ADAPTATION & RESILIENCE

50

6-5. Consider Preparing a Climate Resilience Plan

50

6-6. Evaluate the Acquisition of Properties for Flood Prevention and Open Space.

51

6-7. Incorporate Additional Flood Protection and Resilience Standards into Zoning Regulations.

51

SUSTAINABILITY

51

6-8. Encourage the Installation of EV Charging Stations.

51

6-9. Consider Expanding Food Scrap Collection to Schools.

51

6-10. Encourage Sustainable/Green Building in Zoning Districts that Permit Multi-Family and Mixed-Use Development.

51

7. TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

56

7-1. Encourage Road & Intersection Improvements that Enhance Public Safety

68

7-2. Reduce Traffic Congestion

68

7-3. Expand the Network of Facilities & Accommodations for Pedestrians.

68

7-4. Encourage Facilities & Accommodations for Safe Biking throughout Town.

69

7-5. Improve Multimodal Access to the Train Stations

69

7-6. Update and Modernize the Vehicular Wayfinding Sign System.

69

7-7. Continue to Plan for Increased Delivery Vehicles and Last-Mile Delivery Activity.

70

7-8. Continue to Manage Commercial Parking to Maximize Customer Convenience.

70

8. COMMUNITY FACILITIES, AMENITIES & SERVICES

72

OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS

84

8-1. Consider an Environmentally Sustainable Municipal Fleet Policy.

84

8-2. Consider a Municipal Green Buildings Policy.

84

8-3. Acquire Adjacent Available Property for Potential Expansion Needs.

84

PARKS & RECREATION

84

8-4. Update the Parks & Recreation Master Plan.

84

PUBLIC WORKS

84

8-5. Create an Implementation Plan for the Drainage Study Findings.

84

8-6. Protect Facilities from Flooding and Other Weather Events.

84

8-7. Consider an On-Site Parking Plan for Great Island

84

TOWN HALL

84

8-8. Continue to Monitor Space Needs and Existing Leases.

84

TOC

SENIOR SERVICES

8-9. Continue to Support The Mather Center and At Home in Darien.

8-10. Ensure that Emergency Planning Incorporates Needs of Town Residents.

POLICE

8-11. Address Ongoing Police Department Building Issues.

FIRE

8-12. Implement Recommendations of the 2025 Study of the Noroton Heights Fire Station.

8-13. Support the Creation of Live-In Facilities or Nearby Residential Options for Volunteers

8-14. Encourage Aquarion to Update & Improve their Infrastructure to Enhance Fire Protection.

EMS

8-15. Consider Building Upgrades and/or Relocation of Current Building.

LIBRARY

8-16. Explore Methods for Creating Additional On-Site or Adjacent Parking.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

8-17. Continue to Collaborate on Safe, Multimodal Access to and from Schools.

8-18. Continue to Look for a Location for a Bus Depot.

8-19. Consider Illuminating Additional Sports Fields & Expand the Use of Existing Lighting.

9. THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL

9-1. Review and Update the ADU Provisions in the Zoning Regulations.

9-2. Consider Reducing Maximum Building Coverage in Certain Residential Districts.

9-3. Explore Instituting Developed Site Area Limits in Certain Residential Districts.

9-4. Consider Rezoning Residential Areas Containing Non-Conforming Properties

MARKET RATE HOUSING

9-5. Encourage the Development of More For-Sale Multifamily Units Versus Rental Apartments.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

9-6. Encourage and Support the Development of Affordable Housing in Appropriate Locations.

9-7. Evaluate the Purchase or Long-Term Lease of Surplus Utility Land for Affordable Housing.

9-8. Explore Additional Funding Sources for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

9-9. Continue to Support the Creation of Employer-Assisted & Volunteer Housing.

STATE REQUIREMENTS

9-10. Revise the Zoning Regulations to Comply with State Requirements.

INDEX OF RECOMMENDATIONS

84

84

84

85

85

85

85

85

85

85

85

85

85

85

85

85

85

89

108

108

108

108

108

108

108

108

108

108

108

108

109

109

INDEX OF RECOMMENDATIONS

DRAFT #2: JULY 15, 2026

BUILDING FORM & HEIGHT

109

9-11. Evaluate the Application of Historic Preservation and Village District Zoning Tools in Downtown.

109

9-12. Reexamine the Definition and Calculation of Building Height in Residential Districts

109

9-13. Review and Update the Commercial Design Guidelines.

109

9-14. Update the Lighting Regulations.

110

9-15. Evaluate New Uses for Potential inclusion in Commercial and/or Mixed-Use Zones.

110

9-16. Simplify the Special Permit Process.

110

FUTURE REDEVELOPMENT

110

9-17. Consider Rezoning Properties on the South/East Side of Old King's Highway South from Designed Office (DO) to Central Business District (CBD).

110

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

111

9-18. Consider Updating the 1980 Natural and Architectural Preservation Survey (NAPS).

111

9-19. Support Adaptive Reuse of Historic Structures

111

9-20. Strengthen the Demolition Delay Ordinance.

111

GREAT ISLAND

111

9-21. Consider Zoning Changes to Great Island

111

3. Recommendations: Significant

6. ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE & SUSTAINABILITY

DRAFT #2: JULY 15, 2026

Implementation Strategy

Legend

Phase	Lead & Support Entities	Potential Cost / Investment
Priority = Priority (start within 6 months from now)	Gov = Board of Selectmen	\$ = \$150,000 or less
Short = Short-Term (start bet. 6 months and 2 yrs. from now)	Dep = Town Departments	\$\$ = \$150,000 to \$500,000
Mid = Mid-Term (start within 2-4 yrs. from now)	Com = Boards, Commissions, Committees	\$\$\$ = \$500,000 to \$1 million
Long = Long-Term (start 4 yrs. or later from now)	Org = Local & Regional Organizations	\$\$\$\$ = > \$1 million
	Agn= External Agencies	
	Oth = Other	

#	Recommendation	Phase	Lead Entity Support Entities	Planning Cost Impl. Cost Funding Source
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY & PROTECTION				
6-1	Create a Separate Conservation Commission	Priority	An Advisory Conservation Committee has been convened to study such a Commission.	n/a
6-2	Prepare an Open Space Plan	Short	Conservation Commission Dep: Dept. of Planning & Zoning, Dept. of Parks & Recreation Com: Planning & Zoning Commission, Environmental Protection Commission, Parks & Recreation Commission Org: Darien Land Trust & Partners Agn: Eversource, Aquarion, CTDOT	\$ \$\$\$\$ CTDEEP Grants Capital Budget
6-3	Consider a Tree Protection Ordinance	Mid	Planning & Zoning Commission Dep: Dept. of Planning & Zoning, Dept. of Public Works, Dept. of Parks & Recreation Com: Conservation Commission, Environmental Protection Commission Org: Darien Land Trust & Partners Agn: Eversource, Aquarion Water Company, CTDOT	n/a
6-4	Prepare an Invasive Species Communications & Management Plan	Mid	Public Works, Parks & Recreation Com: Conservation Commission, Environmental Protection Commission, Org: Darien Land Trust & Partners, Save the Sound	\$ \$\$ Oper. Budget
CLIMATE CHANGE: RISK, ADAPTATION & RESILIENCE				
6-5	Consider Preparing a Climate Resilience Plan	Short	Board of Selectman Dep: Dept. of Public Works, Dept. of Parks & Recreation, Dept. of Planning & Zoning Com: Advisory Commission on Coastal Waters, Planning & Zoning Commission, RTM Public Works Committee, Sewer Commission Org: Darien Land Trust & Partners, Save the Sound, WestCOG, The Nature Conservancy Agn: CTDEEP, CTDOT, Aquarion Water Company Oth: UCONN CIRCA, City of Norwalk, City of Stamford	\$ \$\$\$\$ CTDEEP Grants Capital Budget

Chapter 6: Environment, Climate & Sustainability

- ▶ 6-2: Prepare an Open Space Plan
- ▶ 6-5: Prepare a Climate Resilience Plan

Chapter 7: Transportation & Mobility

- ▶ 7-1: Encourage Road & Intersection
- ▶ 7-2: Reduce Traffic Congestion

Chapter 8: Community Facilities, Amenities & Services

- ▶ 8-3: Acquire Adjacent Available Property for Potential Expansion Needs

Chapter 9: The Built Environment

- ▶ 9-10: Revise the Zoning Regulations to Comply with State Requirements.

4. Issues: Recommendations Reconsidered & Deleted

- ▶ Conduct a Tree Inventory
- ▶ Prepare a Forest Management Plan
- ▶ Evaluate the Installation of Green Infrastructure Demonstration Projects on Public Property
- ▶ Integrate Riparian Protection into Zoning and Subdivision Regs
- ▶ Consider Additional Wetlands and Watercourse Protections
- ▶ Engage Large Propertyowners (i.e. Country Clubs) about Grounds Maintenance Practices
- ▶ Promote a Culture of Biking & Walking in Town

4. Issues: Recommendations Discussed & Not Included

Encourage New Housing Types & Affordable Housing in Certain Residential Zones

- ▶ Permit propertyowners in 2-acre residential zones to subdivide their lot to create a 0.5 acre lot on which a single-family home or duplex and an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) would be permitted that could count toward the Town's affordable housing stock.

Roles in Implementing the POCD

Challenge: The POCD is an Interdisciplinary/Interdepartmental Plan

- ▶ P&Z Role
- ▶ Board of Selectmen Role
- ▶ Role of Departments
- ▶ Role of Committees & Commissions

Implementation Mechanisms:

- ▶ Operating Budget
- ▶ Capital Plan
- ▶ Grants
- ▶ Zoning