

The comments received on Draft #2 of the POCD (dated July 15, 2026) have been compiled into a series of tables within this document to facilitate PZC review. A total of 23 comments were submitted. The comments have not been edited in any manner. Formatting (e.g., bold or underlined typeface) has been replicated to the extent possible. The original submissions are available at <https://darienct.portal.opengov.com/> under PL-26-137.

All of the comments can be classified into one or more of the following comment types.

1. Minor corrections or clarifications to Draft #2 that could be made without the need for formal PZC approval.
2. Minor to moderate changes or additions to Draft #2 that could likely be made without the need for formal PZC approval.
3. Substantive changes to Draft #2, particularly those involving recommendations, that will likely require PZC deliberation and direction.

The tables include a column indicating the comment types within each submission.

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TABLE 1. COMMENTS SUBMITTED BY INDIVIDUALS
arranged in alphabetical order by last name of commenter

Name	Chs or Recs Referred to in Comments	Comments	Comment Types	Response(s) to Comments
BAYNE, CAROLYN	Chapter 6: Environment, Climate & Sustainability	Page 3: <u>Paragraph 1, first sentence:</u> a word (or words) seems to have been left out. Suggested rewording: Darien’s natural environment is an essential part of its infrastructure, just as important as its engineered counterparts. <u>Paragraph 4:</u> “Sustainability” should be defined for the general reader who may be unfamiliar with how this term is being used. Suggested rewording: Many municipalities are also committing to sustainability, which is a comprehensive, ongoing commitment to support healthy residents, build vibrant communities and advance environmentally responsible practices. 2018-2026 HIGHLIGHTS Pages 33-34 Question: Why does the “HIGHLIGHTS” period not date back 10 years, or to the last POCD? One of the Property Acquisitions listed (Highland Farm, 2017) falls outside of the 2018-2026 time period, so why not just make it the past decade? <u>Plans & Studies</u> Region 2024 Long Island Sound Report Card This is a biennial report and the most recent, 2026, is now available. In the designated time period report cards were issued for 2026, 2024, 2022, 2020, and 2018 Suggested rewording: 2026 Long Island Sound Report Card (issued biennially beginning in 2016) <u>Town Projects</u> • States that the Salt Box Lane Drainage project was conducted in 2024. As of September 2026 it is going through the relevant town commissions for review and approval.	1 2	

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		Suggested rewording: 2023 Salt Box Lane Drainage Investigation Report revealed that the existing drainage is undersized for the area it serves; recommended the replacement of pipes with larger, box culverts to reduce the frequency, severity, and duration of flooding. • Sustainable CT – fails to mention that Darien was recertified Silver in 2025 Suggested rewording: 2025. Recertified, Silver-level, by Sustainable CT. In 2019, certified Bronze. In 2022, certified Silver. • Suggested Addition: 2019. Solar photovoltaic systems (PVs) installed on three Town buildings: the Police Station, the Department of Public Works garage, Darien Town Hall. [Note on formatting inconsistency: in the “2018-2026 HIGHLIGHTS” section some entries show a period after the year while others do not. It should be one way or the other for all entries.] Environmental Quality & Protection Page 35: First Sentence: the Sewer Commission should be added here. Suggested rewording: The Town, through both its Public Works Department and the Sewer Commission, continues to work toward eliminating groundwater and stormwater from entering its sanitary sewer system. <u>Paragraph 3:</u> • The first sentence refers to the Save the Sound annual report card; note that it is released every two years. Note also that this section should be updated to include the findings in the 2026 report card, including the improvement in dissolved oxygen. Suggested rewording: Save the Sound releases a biennial report card that reviews water quality findings throughout the Sound.... (need to update to include 2026 findings) • The general reader may not understand the significance of eelgrass. Suggested rewording: High levels of seaweed have been observed in some areas, indicating excessive nutrient pollution. This can endanger native eelgrass, which provides a number of critical ecosystem functions including marine life habitat, shoreline protection, water filtration, and absorption of greenhouse gases. Page 41		

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		<u>Paragraph 1</u>: It's important to underscore that while volunteer groups have undertaken projects to manage invasive plants on certain properties, the invasives have not been eradicated. The word "managed" implies that they are under control which, in most cases, they are not. The following is suggested <u>immediately after Paragraph 1(new paragraph 2)</u>: Despite efforts, invasive plants are difficult to eradicate. Many produce massive quantities of seeds that remain in the soil for years before germinating. Seeds are also dropped by birds and carried by wind. Others have resilient root systems that enables the plant to regenerate if even a tiny fragment is left behind. All lack natural controls on growth and reproduction such as insects, diseases, and herbivores and require multi-year management. The <u>last sentence of the next paragraph (now paragraph 3)</u> should be reworded to: The Commission aims to remove invasive plants before working in any area, but they often reappear after planting for reasons mentioned above. Page 43 <u>Paragraph 5</u>: The last two sentences 1) do not recognize the existence of leaf blower ordinances in three additional nearby municipalities; and 2) gives the impression that Darien has a dedicated ordinance when it does not. Suggested rewording: Several neighboring municipalities, including Greenwich, Stamford, New Canaan, Norwalk, and Westport, have enacted ordinances relating to gas-powered leaf blowers. Restrictions vary but all include seasonal limits on use; most include time of day restrictions and prohibit their use on Sundays/holidays. Darien currently relies on the State of Connecticut's noise regulation which exempts the operation of engine-powered lawn care equipment during the daytime hours of 7am to 9pm. Sustainability Page 48 Inclusive and Equitable Community Impacts Optimize for Equity: this is not the best example to highlight as we did not meet the criteria for this action and were not awarded points. Better examples are actions submitted in the 2019 and 2025 applications: Suggested rewording: The Town applied the Sustainable CT Equity Toolkit to the Darien Swap Shop, a popular waste-reduction initiative where residents with a Recycling and Refuse		

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		Center permit can pick up, for free, a wide variety of household goods, sports equipment, toys, and other useful items. Accessibility was analyzed for financially at-risk families (2019) and Darien seniors (2025) to ensure the program was inclusive. Thriving Local Economies Inventory and Promote Local Products: Add “and Services” Should note that these initiatives were through the Darien Chamber of Commerce. Suggested rewording: “<i>The Darien Chamber of Commerce developed a comprehensive....</i>” Renewable and Efficient Energy Infrastructure: Renewable Energy: Note: correct subtitle is “Increase Use of Renewable Energy in Municipal Buildings.” Although this is good information, it may be more appropriately listed elsewhere as Darien was not recognized by Sustainable CT for these projects (they either did not meet all criteria for the action or projects were completed outside the relevant time period). For the Town Hall/Police Station/DPW garage installations I previously suggested listing in the Highlights section under “Town Projects” on Page 34. For DPS buildings with solar installations: note that only two DPS buildings (Darien High School and Ox Ridge Elementary) have solar PV systems. The other schools named and the BOE building do not, as verified by Kevin Munrett, DPS Facilities Director. If mention of the schools’ solar PV systems is used elsewhere in the POCD, the following correctly reflects DPS’ solar PVs: Suggested rewording: To date, Darien Public Schools has integrated solar photovoltaic systems into two school buildings: Darien High School and Ox Ridge Elementary School. [Since the above information on solar PVs does not belong in the Sustainable CT section, I recommend substituting one or more of the additional actions listed in the green sidebar (below).] Benchmark Energy Use: The results of the portfolio manager were the <u>opposite</u> of what is stated. Suggested rewording: Darien utilized ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager in 2022 to track and report the energy performance of all municipal buildings. Four buildings (Darien Town Hall,		

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		Middlesex Middle School, Royle Elementary, Holmes Elementary) demonstrated that they operated more efficiently than at least 75 percent of similar buildings nationwide, earning ENERGY STAR Certification by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Strategic Materials Management Food Scrap Recycling: mistakenly quantifies how much material is diverted annually; it's also difficult to gauge whether we have one of the state's "most successful" residential drop-off programs when other municipalities are doing more to increase access (e.g. multiple drop-off locations, co-collection pilots, etc.). Suggested rewording: Darien maintains a successful residential food scrap drop-off program, through which residents divert more than 40 tons of food from the waste stream annually. Effective, Compassionate Homelessness Prevention Municipal Liaison Training: Note that this subheading should be "Collect and Share Homelessness Data" Suggested rewording: Serving as the liaison to the regional Coordinated Access Network (CAN), Darien's Human Services Director tracks individuals and families at risk of experiencing homelessness and provides emergency financial support as needed. Innovative Strategies and Practices Sustainable Packaging Initiative: Recycle Additional Materials (list under Strategic Materials Management) Darien reduces residential solid waste and increases recycling through drop-offs at the Recycling and Refuse Center for several materials not designated as mandatory by the State of Connecticut: mattresses, paint, textiles, and smoke detectors. Well Stewarded Land and Natural Resources: • Develop an Open Space Plan/Increase Open Space in your Community With the purchase of the 60-acre coastal estate known as Great Island in 2023, Darien actively expanded its inventory of open space. • Manage for Drought and Municipal Water Use Within its Code of Ordinances, Darien outlines how a water-related public emergency is determined, how residents should be notified of the existence (and termination) of one, any restrictions which may be imposed, and how restrictions will be enforced. Inclusive Engagement, Communication and Education: Provide Effective Community Communications		

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		Darien's inventory of current communications channels was recognized for being extensive and covering a wide range of media platforms. Healthy, Efficient and Diverse Housing: Implement Policy for Sustainable, Diverse Housing Options Darien's inclusionary zoning regulations require that residential developments of four or more units designate a minimum of 14 percent of the total units as deed-restricted affordable housing as defined by Connecticut General Statutes. This reusable container program was piloted in Middletown, not Darien. This should be deleted and replaced by any of the actions highlighted in the green sidebar. Page 49 DIVERTING FOOD WASTE Suggested Rewording: Darien's residential food scrap recycling program was launched in October 2018, the first in lower Fairfield County. The Department of Public Works reports that within six months more than 16 tons of food scraps had been diverted from the waste stream; by the close of Fiscal Year 2026, the total had exceeded 300 tons. Darien's trash, or Municipal Solid Waste (MSW), is trucked to the WIN Waste Bridgeport facility and incinerated. Collected food scraps are instead hauled to a commercial composting facility where they are transformed into nutrient-rich compost that is sold to farmers, landscapers, and garden centers. Most MSW in Connecticut is incinerated in-state at one of four remaining waste-to-energy facilities, like the one in Bridgeport. However, this infrastructure is aging and an increasing amount, currently 40 percent, is exported to out-of-state landfills. Food is the single largest component of MSW, estimated at more than 22 percent by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. It is also wet and heavy, requiring that incinerators burn hotter and longer. Diverting food from MSW enables these facilities to operate more efficiently, resulting in fewer toxic emissions and a decreased volume of residual ash. It similarly reduces the tonnage of MSW going to landfills, where decomposing food releases methane, a powerful greenhouse gas.		

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		Darien's food scrap program is an easy and sustainable way to reduce MSW. It enables all food scraps to be recycled, including meat and bones, which are typically difficult to compost at home. Drop-off bins are conveniently located at the Darien Recycling Center. Recommendations Page 50 ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY & PROTECTION 6-1. Create a Separate Conservation Commission Somewhere in this narrative it should be noted that the Conservation Commission is currently part of the Darien EPC (Darien's Code of Ordinances, Chapter 22, Article II, sections 22-26 and 22-27); otherwise the recommendation for a "separate" commission will be confusing to the general reader. Recommended rewording (sentence insertion and restructuring): Conservation Commissions are volunteer municipal government bodies that are authorized by statute to "conserve, develop, supervise and regulate natural resources." (cite). In addition to its charge to prevent floods and protect the Town's inland wetlands and watercourses, the Darien Environmental Protection Commission also serves as the Town's Conservation Commission. In January 2026, the Town formed an Advisory Conservation Committee to investigate the potential for a new, separate Conservation Commission and how to structure it to better protect, preserve, and maintain the Town's natural resources. It could take on several roles including, but not limited to: conducting a natural resource inventory; inventorying, acquiring, and managing open space and easements; and advising on coastal resiliency projects and watershed management. A Tree Subcommittee or a separate Tree Commission could be formed to advise on managing, protecting, and expanding public tree canopies. Several environmental concerns were highlighted as "very important" in the preceding narratives for which a recommendation(s) does not follow. For example, under Environmental Quality & Protection: Water Quality (Page 34), the following is stated: "The community engagement process for the POCD revealed that many residents are concerned about water quality in the Long Island Sound, rivers, ponds, and at local beaches."		

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		Several pages of narrative follow that discuss threats to water quality; however there are no corresponding recommendations. The following recommendations are suggested, particularly as so many properties in town have wetlands and/or watercourses (note that the phasing of many of the following suggested recommendations is “short” because they are not only important, but they require minimal effort and/or few resources to implement). 6-5. Enhance Water Quality Protections (note that all following Recommendations will need to be renumbered) Phase: short a. Continue routine maintenance as outlined in the 2022 remediation plan related to sewage overflows into Long Island Sound; b. Increase awareness among residents about wetland buffers and riparian borders; what they are and their value in protecting water quality and in reducing flooding and erosion; c. Educate residents about Organic Land Care (OLC) and its importance in protecting water quality. The Town should lead by example and prioritize OLC on municipal properties. Similarly, under Air Quality (Page 43), the following is stated: “According to the American Lung Association’s 2023 State of the Air Report, Fairfield County has the worst ozone pollution in the NY-Newark Metropolitan area, earning an “F” for ozone pollution....” It continues on to describe health issues that ensue from ozone and the burning of fossil fuels, etc. Vehicles and gas-powered leaf blowers, in particular, are cited as contributing to poor air quality. Since there are no corresponding recommendations in this section, the following is recommended: 6-6. Improve Air Quality (Phase: short to mid) a. Conduct a campaign to educate residents about Connecticut’s “No Idling” regulation, which prohibits idling for more than three consecutive minutes except under certain conditions, such as extreme weather; b. Encourage the installation of EV charging stations on public and private properties (this belongs here as well as under Sustainability, Page 51); c. Solicit feedback from neighboring communities with ordinances on gas-powered leaf blowers and continue to gauge public support for setting limits on them in Darien. CLIMATE CHANGE: RISK, ADAPTATION & RESILIENCE		

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		Several pages in this chapter are dedicated to climate change and the risks posed to a coastal community like Darien. Given that the phasing of this recommendation is coded as “short” in the Implementation Strategy section, the word “Consider” should be removed from 6-5. It should simply be Prepare a Climate Resilience Plan. SUSTAINABILITY 6-9. Consider Expanding Food Scrap Collection to Schools. An estimated 22 percent of MSW is comprised of food waste, and given how easy food scrap diversion has proven for residents participating in the existing food scrap program, food scrap recycling should be highly encouraged. Note that in FY26 nearly 6,000 tons of MSW passed through Darien’s transfer station. If even 10 percent of that had been diverted via food scrap recycling, there would have been a drastic reduction in MSW. Also note that a state law that went into effect on 7/1/26 expands the existing Commercial Organics Recycling Law (PA 24-45) to include schools K-12. The law applies to individual school buildings and not school districts as a whole. None of Darien’s schools currently meets the tonnage threshold, but DHS is close, and therefore greater priority should be given to setting up food scrap collection in schools. The DPS Facilities Director, Kevin Munrett, is well-aware of this law and has already attended several programs aimed at preparing schools. Suggested rewording: Expand Food Scrap Collection (Phase: short) a. Conduct a campaign to encourage a greater number of residents to participate in the residential drop-off program; b. consider establishing one or more additional drop-offs in town; c. infrastructure for food scrap collection should be required as part of the approval process for multifamily developments; d. Work with the Board of Education and Darien Public Schools Facilities Director to explore expanding food scrap collection to schools. The benefits of native plants are mentioned on Page 40. The fact that they require less water and maintenance than non-natives (and lawn grasses), filter runoff, reduce flooding and		

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		erosion, as well as form the ecological foundation for birds and other pollinators, is evidence that they should be encouraged. Suggested wording: Prepare a Native Plant Communications Plan (Phase: short) a. Increase awareness among residents of what native plants are and the critical function they serve; b. Publicize the continuing work of the Darien Beautification Commission to install native gardens on municipal properties.		
BIGELOW, PETER	Ch 7: Transportation & Mobility Ch 8: Community Facilities Ch 9: The Built Environment	Section 7 - Transportation This section appears to only include flat data — listing roads, traffic congestion areas, etc. Since the last plan was released in 2016, there have been three major changes that impact traffic. One, which everyone talks about, is the considerable development that has and is taking place in town. However, there are two other changes that should be acknowledged. First is the dramatic increase in the number of Amazon/UPS/FedEx trucks making deliveries all over town as well as lawn services with ever increasing size trucks and trailers. These trucks stop in front of homes and cause a serious safety risk as they often stop near curves and hills where a driver of a vehicle cannot see the stopped truck from a safe distance and ends up slamming on their brakes to avoid an accident. The second is the increase in electric scooters and bicycles used primarily by youth in Darien. These vehicles are on the roads as well as sidewalks and as they are operated by younger people, who often are not following traffic rules, signaling when they turn, etc., cause a safety concern, especially for those using the electric scooters. Traffic studies do not mention the impact of stopped delivery and lawn vehicles and also do not mention either regular bicycles or electric scooters and bicycles. However, I believe both should be acknowledged in the POCD as contributors to traffic, their impact on public safety, and the impact they have on realistically planning future development and growth Section 9 - The Built Environment Looking at the 2016 POCD, it shows on page 23, 6,698 then existing "Households" and on page 24, 7,074 then existing "Housing Units". Back in April you shared a spreadsheet listing projects including affordable units. This spreadsheet showed affordable and market rate units within the various projects developed and approved/under construction as of April but does not show other additional units created by smaller sub-divided and tear-down	2	

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		residences. I subtracted units that were in existence in 2016 (636-283 = 353) and added the approved/under construction (348) for a total of 701 new "Households" in town. This represents an approximate 10% increase in households in Darien over one decade. The last time the town saw that number and percentage of new households was during the 1960's. This should be noted in the plan. It also should be a red flag for planning in Darien as the impact on infrastructure is significant and real. Section 8 - Community Facilities and Services All the comments above directly impact Darien's facilities and services. The town really needs to commit manpower and budget to do an inventory and analysis of the capacity infrastructure (roads, sewer, water, etc.) and services (Police, schools, parks, community support agencies, etc.) currently have and the amount and type of growth they can support going forward. Without this objective information, the best plans may become unattainable. Overall I fear that this POCD, like most of the past plans, including the one I was involved in back in 2006, will end up being more of a feel-good wish list rather than a real pragmatic and implementable plan. In my corporate days, I was involved in strategic and operational planning. In each case the plan listed the "must" do, "should" do, and "would be nice to" do initiatives. The Must Do items were the essential, limited in number and prioritized so resources could be immediately deployed. The "should" do items were also prioritized. All the others were just listed. I would highly recommend that the final version of the POCD have a similar delineation of "must do" and prioritize them, with input from appropriate town Departments and Commissions, so everyone can stay focused on the important needs of Darien. I would also recommend that the inventory and assessment of facilities and services be at the top of the must-do items. Hopefully this makes sense, is submitted in time for consideration, and is constructive input. The POCD is a huge undertaking, and I hope it results in a solid document that is beneficial to all Darien's various Departments, Commissions and Services — as well as the town's residents.		
CAIN, JULIET	Ch 6: Environment, Climate & Sustainability	Thank you for publication of Draft 2 of the POCD and an opportunity to comment. I would like to ask that the POCD clarify the Town position on green/natural stormwater management. The POCD contains several disparate, and sometimes confusing statements which, when read together with remarks by the Planning & Zoning Commission, reflect	2	

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		neither a coherent picture of current law/regulation/policy nor a set of clear recommendations for the future. As you know, Darien experienced severe flooding last weekend, photos of which have been circulated online and in social media by the Town and affected businesses. I live near Old Kings Highway South, where waves of water cascaded from the Corbin Drive area onto OKHS and into Stony Brook, all above the storm drains. <u>POCD Statements</u> POCD page 14 references concerns expressed by residents related to flooding and a rating of "Dissatisfied" with respect to stormwater management. POCD page 20 sets out recommendations from the POCD Community Engagement Summary including: "Encourage, incentivize, and/or require sustainable building and green stormwater management practices." POCD page 39 states that the Town's Stormwater Quality Manual "requires the prioritization of stormwater design to encourage low impact development practices (LID), an approach that manages stormwater runoff as close to its source as possible by using natural, landscape-based features such as bioswales, rain gardens, green roofs, and permeable pavements to infiltrate, filter, store, and evaporate runoff. By prioritizing the disconnection of impervious surfaces from the municipal storm sewer system, the Town aims to restore natural infiltration and protect the ecological health of its waterways" This statement is accompanied by a photo of a green roof in Virginia. In a meeting of the P&Z Commission on July 7 this year, various recommendations proposed in the POCD were discussed. One of these related to green stormwater infrastructure. The Vice Chair of the P&Z Commission stated that he wasn't sure what green stormwater infrastructure is. No one on the Commission supplied an answer. He concluded, despite admitting a lack of knowledge, that it was not needed - it was "redundant" because, "If there's one thing this Board (<i>sic</i>) is extraordinarily attuned to, it's flooding and stormwater management issues." The proposed recommendation was accordingly deleted. The Board of Selectmen has clarified the statement on POCD page 39 to clarify that the reference to reduction in impervious surface in the Town's Stormwater Quality Manual is a reference only to the amount of impervious surface that triggers a stormwater management plan. POCD page 45 references the webinar titled "Flooding in Connecticut Through the Lens of Land Use & Zoning" hosted by WestCOG, which emphasized that flooding across		

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		Connecticut, in certain cases, may be exacerbated by land use decisions including by the expansion of impervious surfaces. POCD page 51 recommends the Town acquire flood-prone properties to act as a buffer and/or open space which suggests some desire for natural solutions. Recommendation 6-7 on POCD page 53 states: "Incorporate Additional Flood Protection and Resilience Standards into Zoning Regulations." None of these suggestions include natural or green solutions. Recommendation 6-10 on POCD page 51 states: "Consider requiring new development of larger than 10,000 square feet to meet high performance standards, including Passive House, Green Globes, LEED or other certification." These standards can include green stormwater infrastructure. (Please note that the summary of this recommendation on POCD page 53, seems inconsistent with the language on page 51.) The Board of Selectmen has requested that Recommendation 6-10 be reworded to read: "Encourage energy-efficient and sustainable construction in zoning districts permitting multi-family and mixed-use development where the anticipated benefits justify the cost." How does this recommendation work with the existing LID "requirements"? And would any cost-benefit analysis include the savings from reduced storm prep and clean-up? <u>Issues</u> Last weekend's flooding (and the increasing force and frequency of storms), forces us for many reasons (public health and safety, economics, water quality, environmental....) to focus on stormwater management. It seems the current LID "requirements" as described in the POCD aren't working. But do we actually have any green roofs in town? The small retention pond at the bottom of Corbin Drive has not been maintained (and only one drain feeds into it). I don't believe permeable surfaces were used in Darien Commons. And the underground holding tank seemed to protect only the immediate area - Vavala's, for example, flooded last weekend in much the same way as it did before the development and the Noroton Heights Flood Mitigation project - and we don't have any meaningful requirements for natural landscapes within or around developments. Our current engineering solutions seem insufficient too. While measures such as sealing a garage or using protective cinder blocks can insulate a particular building or facility from flooding, these measures also serve to redirect water back into the flow, arguably exacerbating the problem for others.		

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		Absorption and retention of water are key to reducing the risk of, and damage from, flooding. In other words a focus on prevention is as important as mitigation and adaptation. As requested above, clarity on the Town's current law/regulation/policy in relation to green/natural solutions, which offer many of these preventative measures, and a set of clear recommendations for the future would be most welcome.		
CAMERON, SUSAN	Ch 8: Community Facilities	Carolyn Bayne reached out to me about a paragraph on the Swap Shop in the POCD. It's on page 74. I think the following is a more appropriate entry. To begin with, the Swap Shop opened in January 2010. The Swap Shop, which opened in 2010, was created to divert items from the waste stream which still have a useful life. It is available to residents with a dump sticker. Items are free and the Swap Shop is a popular destination. In 2025, the Swap Shop partnered with At Home in Darien to dedicate a morning once a month for seniors to give this population a chance to visit without the crowds. The Swap Shop is run by a dedicated group of volunteers. Let me know if you have any questions.	1 2	The language on page 74 about the Swap Shop can be corrected/edited accordingly.
DEAN, JOHN	Recommendation #8-19	I live at 193 Noroton Avenue. My family has lived here since 1999 and we raised our two children here. We can see the fields from our house. I was unhappy when the loud speaker installation occurred but accepted it without complaint. I was pleased with the upgrades to the building and the fields. I am 100% against the Illumination section of the town plan, allowing lighting and games played after dark. McGuane Field sits in a neighborhood surrounded by homes. The lights and the noise that will accompany them will decrease our quality of life as well as that of our neighbors. Please do what you can to stop the installation of night lighting at McGuane	3	
HIRSCHLER, BENJAMIN	Recommendation #8-19	I am the owner of one of approximately 36 homes that backs on to McGuane Park and I write to oppose the plan to install athletic field lights at McGuane Park. Most of us 36 owners have young children and athletic field lights at McGuane Park would create a light and noise	3	

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		nuisance to our properties in the evenings, disturbing our children's sleep and homework routines. Given the number of homes that back on to McGuane Park , I urge the Town of Darien not to install athletic field lights at McGuane Park and in so doing respect our children's sleep and homework routines. Thank you.		
LAIRD, IAN	Ch 6: Environment, Climate & Sustainability Ch 7: Transportation & Mobility	I have reviewed Draft 2 of the 2026 POCD and have 2 suggestions The transportation & mobility section references the new Advisory Sidewalk Committee (https://www.darienct.gov/1650/Advisory-Sidewalk-Committee) on page 65 however the recommendations on page 68 says, "Review the Pedestrian Infrastructure Advisory Committee recommendations from 2015 to identify priority projects that should still be considered." Shouldn't the recommendation be to use the output of the new Advisory Sidewalk Committee, which will have much more recent data and community input? In the Environment Climate & Sustainability section there are many references to flooding, but there is not a recommendation to have an overall flood mitigation plan. I would make that a recommendation and move some of the other recommendations (e.g. 6-6 and 6-7) to be sub-parts to this overall recommendation.	3	
LAURI, BENITA & TOM	Ch 9: The Built Environment	So we agree with the 1-year moratorium on multi-family housing to give us an opportunity to discuss and complete the POCD. Accessory housing units are a good idea where zoning permits, however some residents like us have lot sizes that are too small. Our thoughts are that it would be helpful to add multi-family rentals, both affordable and market rate, and if possible give priority to: Adult children, parents and grandparents of current residents, and to long time residents that are downsizing, and to town employees, police, teachers, etc. This could improve the quality of life for these folks and should have a smaller impact on town facilities than other new residents would likely cause.	2	

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LEROUX, KATIE & JACK	Recommendation #8-19	8-19. Consider Illuminating Additional Sports Fields & Expand the Use of Existing Lighting: As residents whose home directly backs up to Baker Park, we are particularly concerned about Baker Park being considered for lighting or expanded evening use. Baker park's immediate adjacency to numerous residential properties makes it fundamentally different from the lit school athletic complexes. Permanent field lighting would represent a significant change in both the intensity and hours of use of the park, meaning the impact on surrounding residents would not necessarily be limited to an occasional event. The impact of lighting goes well beyond the lights themselves. With lights comes more activity/disruption to the surrounding homes – music and noise, additional traffic and parking constraints (Noroton Ave cannot support street parking), more trash, and other disturbances extending later into the evening. For the many homes immediately surrounding the park, light spill could also directly affect bedrooms, yards, and the ability to enjoy our properties in the evening. We recognize the Town's need for additional recreational space and understand the desire to make better use of existing fields. However, that need should be balanced against the impact on the residents who live immediately around these facilities. We would strongly encourage the Town to prioritize any expanded nighttime athletics and permanent lighting at locations that already support that level of use and have greater separation from surrounding homes.	3	
MICHALSKI, PAUL	Recommendation #8-19	Re: 2026 Plan of Conservation and Development — Recommendation 8-19, "Consider Illuminating Additional Sports Fields & Expand the Use of Existing Lighting" Dear Chair Olvany and Members of the Commission: I write to object to the inclusion in the proposed 2026 Plan of Conservation and Development of Recommendation 8-19, currently titled "Consider Illuminating Additional Sports Fields & Expand the Use of Existing Lighting." I respectfully request that the Commission remove this recommendation from the Plan. My objection is not that lighting could never be appropriate at any particular field. It is that the Town Plan should not establish a townwide policy encouraging additional field lighting and expanded use of existing lighting before the impacts at particular locations have been identified, studied, and weighed against Darien's longstanding planning priority of protecting its residential neighborhoods. The Recommendation Prejudges the Solution Before Studying the Problem The current draft states that there is high demand for field and other outdoor recreational space and that, because existing lighted fields are limited, "it is important to make the most	3	

Name	Chs or Recs Referred to in Comments	Comments	Comment Types	Response(s) to Comments
		efficient use of the limited recreation space available.” It then recommends consideration of additional lighted fields and/or courts, while stating that this “must be carefully balanced against potential disturbances to adjacent residential neighborhoods.” That formulation puts the cart before the horse. If Darien needs additional athletic-field capacity, the Town Plan can appropriately identify that need and recommend evaluating ways to address it. But it should not preselect nighttime illumination—and expanded use of existing illumination—as preferred solutions before determining whether those solutions are compatible with the locations involved. Illuminating an athletic field does not merely allow the same activity to occur under different lighting conditions. It changes when the property can be used and can substantially increase the duration and intensity of its use. Lighting permits games and practices to continue after dark and can bring with them spectators, traffic, parking, whistles, amplified announcements, recorded music, bands and other activity during hours when surrounding residential neighborhoods otherwise become quieter. Those impacts are necessarily site-specific. The appropriate balance at a field substantially separated and screened from residences may be very different from the balance at a field immediately adjacent to residential properties. The suitability of nighttime use therefore should begin with the characteristics and impacts of a particular site—not with a Town Plan recommendation encouraging additional illumination. The Commission’s July 7 Discussion Demonstrates the Breadth of the Proposed Policy The Commission’s own July 7 discussion illustrates my concern. Recommendation 8-19 began as “Consider illuminating additional fields.” During the discussion, however, the proposal was expressly broadened. Commissioners discussed “more illumination,” “more outdoor practices,” “hours of play,” and possibly “expand[ing] the hours” of existing lighting. Baker Field and McGuane Field were specifically mentioned as possible locations for lights. The resulting recommendation became both “Illuminating Additional Sports Fields” and “Expand the Use of Existing Lighting.” The draft itself also identifies the temporary seasonal lighting that has been approved at Holahan Field behind Town Hall. Thus, the recommendation is not an abstract planning concept. It potentially affects specific recreational facilities embedded in or immediately adjacent to established residential neighborhoods.		

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		That is a significant policy recommendation for a Plan intended to guide the Town for the coming decade. Yet I am unaware of any townwide study presented to the Commission evaluating which fields might be suitable for permanent or expanded lighting; their proximity to residences; existing buffers; potential noise and light impacts; traffic and parking; appropriate hours; frequency of nighttime use; environmental effects; or the cumulative effects on surrounding neighborhoods. The Experience at Darien High School Should Counsel Caution The experience at Darien High School should counsel particular caution before the Town adopts a policy encouraging additional field lighting. Stadium Field is actually one of the more favorably situated athletic fields in Darien for nighttime activity. The stadium is located well within the High School campus. It is separated from surrounding residences by other school facilities, substantial distances and, particularly toward Middlesex Road, a significant wooded buffer. Many of the fields that could potentially be considered for permanent or expanded lighting do not have those advantages. As the aerial photographs attached as Exhibit A illustrate, McGuane, Baker and Holahan Fields are surrounded in substantial part by residential neighborhoods, with homes close to the playing areas. Holahan has already had temporary seasonal lighting approved for Darien Junior Football. Even at Darien High School, other athletic fields—including the baseball, softball and multipurpose fields—are closer to the perimeter of the campus and neighboring residential properties than Stadium Field. Yet despite Stadium Field’s comparatively favorable location and buffering, nighttime use there has generated significant neighborhood problems and ultimately years of controversy and litigation. Importantly, experience has demonstrated that the principal neighborhood impact is not necessarily the illumination itself. Modern lighting technology can substantially control light spill. As I told this Commission in 2022, after five years of experience with permanent Stadium Field lighting, the lights themselves had proven to be “by far the lesser evil.” The greater nuisance was “everything that comes with activity under lights”—including crowd noise, PA commentary, recorded music, bands, whistles, horns and other activity. That experience is particularly relevant when considering other Town fields. If nighttime use has generated substantial problems at one of the Town’s comparatively better-separated and better-buffered athletic facilities, the Commission should be extremely cautious about		

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		adopting a Town Plan recommendation encouraging nighttime use at fields that are closer to homes or less buffered from residential neighborhoods. Nor should this be viewed simply as a question of whether modern fixtures can illuminate a field without spilling excessive light onto neighboring properties. Lighting changes the use of the property. Illuminating a previously unlighted field creates a nighttime recreational facility where none previously existed. Permanent or expanded lighting at a field where temporary lighting has been permitted can likewise increase the duration, frequency or permanence of nighttime activity. The planning inquiry therefore must consider everything that comes with intensified nighttime use, not simply the photometric characteristics of the lights. Protection of Residential Neighborhoods Has Long Been a Darien Planning Priority The proposed recommendation is also difficult to reconcile with a fundamental principle that has run through Darien's Town Plans and this Commission's land-use decisions for decades: protecting the character and quiet enjoyment of residential neighborhoods from the effects of intensified neighboring uses. This is not a principle invented during the recent controversy over Stadium Field. When the Commission considered lights at Darien High School in 1994, it stated: "The hours of use and frequency of use need to be very specific if the Commission is to have a level of comfort with the proposal." It also found: "It appears strongly that the lighting of Darien High School would create a number of nuisances to several of the surrounding residential neighborhoods." Noise was among those concerns. In 2008, when the Commission determined that a proposal to light Stadium Field was inconsistent with the Town Plan, it stated: "The Darien High School and its associated fields are located in a single-family residential neighborhood. The Town Plan is generally predicated on the preservation of these residential neighborhoods." The Commission went on to state:		

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		“The Commission policy has been and continues to be the preservation of the character of these neighborhoods, particularly of areas of competing uses adjacent to residential zones. Our traditional concern has always been light and noise intrusion from a Special Permit.” In 2012, when the Commission permitted temporary lights at Stadium Field, it again emphasized the location of the High School “in a fully developed residential zone, surrounded on all sides by single family houses” and the need “to closely monitor the use of these field resources to ensure minimal encroachment on neighboring residential development.” Most significantly, the Commission stated: “Any incremental use and physical enhancement to the existing fields and facilities is subordinate to maintaining the character and quiet enjoyment of those pre-existing neighborhoods.” It also stated: “The Commission has traditionally maintained the preservation of residential character with regard to any increased use of adjacent properties.” Finally, when the Commission approved permanent lighting at Stadium Field in 2017, it emphasized: “It was clear from the applicant’s presentation that no different or more intense use is being proposed as part of this application.” It also emphasized that the lights were proposed for “a very limited duration” and that “[a]ny longer duration would trigger further review by the Commission.” “Subordinate To” Is Not the Same as “Balanced Against” Against that history, Recommendation 8-19 represents a significant change in planning emphasis. The Commission previously said that increased use of athletic facilities was: “subordinate to maintaining the character and quiet enjoyment of those pre-existing neighborhoods.” The proposed 2026 Plan instead says the perceived need for additional lighted fields:		

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		“must be carefully balanced against potential disturbances to adjacent residential neighborhoods.” Those formulations are not equivalent. “Subordinate to” establishes protection of existing residential neighborhoods as the priority. “Balanced against” treats preservation of those neighborhoods and expansion of nighttime recreational use as competing considerations. That matters because preservation of residential character has not historically been a peripheral consideration in Darien’s planning. It has been repeatedly described by this Commission as a fundamental planning priority, particularly where more intensive uses adjoin residential neighborhoods. Recommendation 8-19 does not merely authorize consideration of lighting if a particular need arises. It affirmatively identifies additional illumination and expanded use of existing lighting as Town planning objectives. If the Commission intends to make that change in planning emphasis, it should do so only after a deliberate examination of the consequences—not through a recommendation adopted without a comprehensive analysis of the fields and neighborhoods that could be affected. The Recent Stadium Field Experience Reinforces the Need for Site-Specific Analysis The recent history at Darien High School reinforces the point. The Commission approved permanent Stadium Field lighting subject to detailed limitations intended to protect the surrounding residential neighborhood. Efforts to expand use of the lights later resulted in extensive public proceedings and litigation. In December 2025, the Superior Court invalidated the Commission’s approval of the 2022 Special Permit amendment because, among other things, the Commission failed to establish objective standards for noise emissions and any requirement to measure them. The lesson is not that athletic-field lighting can never coexist with residential neighborhoods. The lesson is that intensifying nighttime recreational use next to residential neighborhoods raises difficult land-use issues involving much more than the lights themselves. It is particularly difficult to understand why the new Town Plan should affirmatively encourage expanded use of existing lighting while this Commission is simultaneously addressing on		

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		remand the consequences of expanded use at Stadium Field and determining what protections are required for its surrounding neighborhood. The Plan Should Identify the Need, Not Prejudge the Solution There is an important planning distinction between identifying a community need and prescribing a particular solution. If the Town believes it lacks sufficient athletic-field capacity, the Plan can say so. It can recommend evaluating the Town's recreational needs and studying ways to use existing resources efficiently. But nighttime illumination should be one possible alternative to be evaluated—not a Town planning objective established in advance. Inclusion in the POCD matters. The Plan will guide Town policy and land-use decisions for years. Once it expressly recommends illuminating additional fields and expanding use of existing lighting, that recommendation can be cited in future applications and deliberations as evidence that expanded nighttime use advances the Town's planning objectives. The Commission should not make that townwide policy judgment without first undertaking the analysis necessary to support it. Requested Action I therefore respectfully request that the Commission delete Recommendation 8-19 from the proposed Plan. If the Commission believes the Plan should address athletic-field capacity, I suggest replacing the current recommendation with neutral language that identifies the need without prejudging lighting as the solution: “Evaluate the Town's need for additional athletic-field capacity and opportunities to make efficient use of existing recreational facilities, taking into account the location and characteristics of individual facilities and potential impacts on adjacent residential neighborhoods, including noise, lighting, traffic, parking, hours and intensity of use, and other quality-of-life impacts.” That language would not prevent the Town from considering lighting at a particular location. Nor would it prejudice that lighting is appropriate. It would permit lighting and other alternatives to be evaluated based upon the characteristics of individual sites and their effects on surrounding neighborhoods.		

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		Darien's parks, schools and athletic fields are valuable community resources. So are the residential neighborhoods in which many of those facilities are located. For decades, Darien's planning policy has recognized that intensified uses adjacent to residential neighborhoods require particular care and that preservation of residential character is a fundamental planning objective. The experience at Stadium Field demonstrates the wisdom of that approach. The new Town Plan should reaffirm that principle—not reverse it. I respectfully request that the Commission remove Recommendation 8-19 concerning illumination of additional athletic fields and expansion of existing lighting from the 2026 Plan of Conservation and Development, or replace it with neutral language along the lines suggested above. Thank you for your consideration.		
MURPHY-LYNCH, LILLIAN	Recommendations 7-2, 9-1, 9-2, 9-3, 9-4, 9-5, 9-11, 9-15, 9-17	Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft 2026 POCD. I support targeted investments in sustainability, conservation, parks, public amenities, and transportation. However, several recommendations would facilitate additional residential and commercial development at the expense of Darien's small-town character. 7-2.4, Connect Old Kings Highway North and South: Support. This could improve circulation and address an existing need without relying on additional development. It should proceed with appropriate traffic, safety, environmental, and neighborhood review. 9-1, Facilitate ADUs: Oppose as written. Darien only adopted its ADU regulations in 2024. The Town should first evaluate impacts on density, privacy, parking, drainage, trees, and neighborhood character rather than actively accelerating ADU construction. 9-2 and 9-3, Reduce building coverage and limit total developed site area: Support. These measures would preserve neighborhood scale, yards, trees, and open space while reducing impervious surfaces and stormwater runoff. 9-4, Rezone nonconforming residential properties: Oppose. One-acre properties in two-acre zones should not be broadly rezoned simply to reduce the need for variances. Any change should be parcel-specific and consider development capacity, drainage, trees, and neighborhood impacts. 9-5, Encourage additional for-sale multifamily housing: Oppose. Changing units from rental to ownership does not eliminate the impacts of additional density, traffic, infrastructure	3	

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		demand, and larger buildings. The Town should assess the cumulative effects of development already completed, approved, or underway before encouraging more. 9-11, Maintain and reduce building heights: Strongly support. Darien should retain the two-story limits in the Central Business and Designed Business zones, reduce the Designed Office maximum from three stories to two, and eliminate third-story incentives. 9-15, Add hotels, inns, medical spas, and clinics: Oppose. These uses could introduce additional traffic, parking, lighting, signage, and commercial intensity. The POCD should prioritize neighborhood-scale businesses and services that meet residents' needs. 9-17, Rezone Old King's Highway South: Oppose. Improved pedestrian connections may be worthwhile, but they do not require rezoning Designed Office properties to Central Business District. The existing zoning should remain to avoid facilitating greater commercial, mixed-use, or residential intensity. Overall, the implementation strategy should prioritize conservation, open-space acquisition, parks, tree-canopy protection, stormwater management, lower building coverage and heights, and reinvestment in existing Town amenities. After substantial recent development, Darien's next decade should focus on stewardship and preserving the qualities that make the Town distinctive.		
OBIN, ROLF		My comments to the POCD are as follows: PUBLIC SCHOOLS "30 Edgerton Rid to be considered for future Middlesex Middle School Expansion." This statement in the POCD is premature at best as neither the Board of Selectmen (BOS), or the RTM has been presented with any plan to utilize the property nor has the BOS and RTM approved turning over this property to the Board of Education. This statement is premature and precedent setting and therefore should be either re-worded or removed from the POCD. "Additional lighted fields co-ordinated with Parks and Rec and Public Works" To my knowledge, there is no pending application to P&Z to add permanent lighting to other "park" facilities in Darien.	2	

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		Therefore, I find this statement in the POCD to be pre-mature and precedent setting before the Town has conducted any serious proposal; it should be either re-worded or removed from the POCD. ZONING DISTRICTS "Designed Office Multi-Family Residential Overlay Zone", this overlay zone has, in my view, been controversial as residents have voiced numerous objections to the Parklands and Thorndale Circle development and in both applications, their concerns were essentially ignored. P&Z has done a poor job protecting neighborhoods; this particular overlay zone needs review and revision to better protect surrounding neighborhoods. SIDEWALKS "The Town had established a Pedestrian Infrastructure Advisory Committee in 2015 that culminated in a presentation that identified 10 key areas where improvements should be made" This is old news; presently there is the Advisory Committee on Sidewalks. They are reviewing the Town sidewalks and drafting a set of recommendations to be presented to the Board of Selectman by December 2026. While this is mentioned in the POCD, this section needs to be augmented and or updated for this Committee's present day initiative; I recommend someone sit in one of their meetings or read their meeting minutes. SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL 9-2. Consider Reducing Maximum Building Coverage in Certain Residential Districts. "Reduce maximum building coverage limits in the R-1 and R-2 zoning districts. The current limit is 20% in all single-family residential zoning districts." This "reduction" should not only review building height but also set back standards as there has been too many tear-down replacement homes that have extremely narrow boundary setbacks.		
PIANTINO, SEMA	Recommendation #8-19	I live at 258 west ave. next to Mc Guane park. My name is Sema Piantino. I don't want night games and practices in my quiet neighborhood and the noise that comes with it. Please remove the illumination section from the Town Plan.	3	
SINI, JOHN		One thing I noticed on is the maps of pages 4 and 42:	1	See Table 3.

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		Page 4 shows Highland Farm as a Government, Institutional and Community Facility Page 42 notes Highland Farm as empty white space. Perhaps we should depict Great Island the same way as Highland Farm on the two maps—brown on page 4 and blank on page 42? One other tweak. The Highland Farm label on Page 42 should be moved over the white area so it is not confused with ORR&R Club.		
SWEET, ALEXIS	Recommendation #8-19	Written Public Comment for the July 14, 2026 P&Z Commission Meeting Re: PL-26-93 July 13, 2026 Dear Chairman Olvany and Members of the Planning & Zoning Commission, As you prepare to consider the July 14, 2026 agenda item regarding the BOE/DHS Stadium Field sound remand, I wanted to offer a few comments prompted by the Commission's July 8, 2026 discussion of the athletic field lighting section of the draft 2026 POCD. During that discussion (see approximately 57:01), a commissioner advocated for strengthening the draft POCD language to encourage additional field lighting, including at other facilities. Generally, I imagine we all agree that recreational opportunities are an important part of our community, but that they should also be balanced with the interests of nearby residents. Policies that encourage expanded field lighting (with or without amplified sound) will inevitably have impacts on neighboring homes through increased noise, activity, traffic, and other associated effects. With that in mind, and as it relates to the DHS/Stadium Field matter before you now, I respectfully ask the Commission to give careful consideration to how it will "operationalize" its conditions of approval so that they are as useful as possible in practice. Beyond this particular remand, it seems important that conditions be specific enough to provide meaningful guidance to applicants, neighboring residents, Town staff, and future Commissions alike so that they can be implemented consistently over time. Thank you for your consideration.	3	
SWEET, ALEXIS (2)	Ch 6: Environment, Climate & Sustainability	Hi, I wanted to share this article (link below, hope it works), recently published in The Hour. In case you have to search for it independently, the headline is: "Climate-fueled storms overtake	2	

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		sea-level rise as biggest threat to CT salt marshes, study finds". It has a photo of Pear Tree Beach! The research finds that while sea-level rise remains a major cause of tidal wetland loss, increasingly intense storms driven by climate change are now the primary factor accelerating wetland degradation, underscoring the need for resilient land use, coastal management, and natural resource protection strategies in our planning efforts. Thank you for your consideration. https://www.thehour.com/connecticut/article/ct-tidal-wetlandloss-uconn-study-storms-climate-22295236.php		
SWEET, ALEXIS (3)	Recommendation 9-21	Dear Members of the Planning & Zoning Commission, I am writing to object to the Board of Selectmen's (BOS) proposal to delete Recommendation 9-21 ("Consider Zoning Changes to Great Island") from the 2026 POCD Draft. The BOS's rationale for removing this phrase is that the town is "actively evaluating the appropriate land-use framework for Great Island. The POCD should not prejudge that process or narrow the Town's options." However, this explanation creates a direct and confusing contradiction with two other edits the BOS is recommending in the same package: • BOS Update 25 suggests creating a new map designation, "Great Island Special Planning Area," specifically to accommodate a wide range of contemplated community, educational, and recreational uses. • BOS Update 16 recommends stating in the Great Island Master Plan sidebar that future projects remain "subject to required land-use approvals." If the Town wants to create a special planning designation for a broad range of future uses, and is expressly acknowledging that those projects may require land-use approvals, it is unclear why the POCD should avoid stating that zoning changes may need to be considered – particularly when Great Island is currently zoned R-1. Removing the "Consider Zoning Changes" language is problematic because it removes a clear signal to residents that some of the future uses being contemplated for Great Island may not be permitted under the current R-1 zoning and may therefore require a zoning change.	3	

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		I respectfully ask the Commission to reject the proposed deletion of Recommendation 9-21 and keep the phrase "Consider Zoning Changes" in the final plan.		
VAN VOORHEES, CLIFFORD		I refer to the POCD draft number two of July 15, 2026, which in its file name says draft number four. This document contains a great deal of valuable information and background, as well as some lovely pictures. As a document, dedicated to vision, guidance, goals, and policies, I find chapter 6 on the environment, climate and sustainability to be particularly important. Little by little, we are killing the ecosystem upon which we depend for our very survival, and as an educated community, we have a particular responsibility to mitigate or even eliminate as much as possible of the damage we do to the environment. I would like to see paragraph four express a vision, goals, and policies that are designed to move our community in the direction of fulfilling our responsibilities. The opening line, which says that many municipalities are committing to sustainability, is a rather weak statement and says nothing about Darien. Darien's participation in Sustainable CT is a nice thing, but is nowhere near enough, and does not represent a vision or a policy or even a goal. The presentation about water quality is really comprehensive and encouraging. The section on plants seems adequate to me, though. I'm sure others would prefer to see it much weightier. The section on air qualities spells out the problem, very clearly, but does not provide vision, guidance, goals, or policies for Darien. The blue box entitled "diverting food waste" has a good recognition of the problem, and cites one of the things we have done to manage it, but does not reflect how little we have done compared to what needs to be done. What we collect at the transfer station is a tiny fraction of the waste coming from our homes. It will be wonderful when the schools divert their food waste, but there are also other significant generators of food waste, including all the clubs in town, the three senior residences with graduated care, and our restaurants. Our vision should include capturing and using this valuable resource for compost and energy production. Our ultimate goal should be to go from what might be 1% to something closer to 100%. Recommendation 6-9 should include actively encouraging all residents to divert their food scraps and exploring ways to encourage clubs and other large food waste generators to do the same. And requiring new multi-unit developments to provide room for food scrap bins with the trash and recycling bins.	2	

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		A missing piece seems to be about the rest of municipal solid waste. We have a wonderful transfer station where things can be sorted and recycled. Unfortunately, our town generates huge quantities of waste, with the private haulers collecting most of it from our residences. There is little to no recycling by those households using haulers, and too many residents who directly use the transfer station to throw unacceptable items into single stream. They need to be educated, starting with our kids in school. Thank you for considering these comments.		

TABLE 2. COMMENTS SUBMITTED BY BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, COMMITTEES + BUSINESSES, ORGANIZATIONS, REGIONAL AGENCIES
sorted alphabetically by name

Name	Chapters or Recs Referred to in Comments	Comments	Comment Types	Response(s) to Comments
100 TOKENEKE LLC	Recommendation #9-11(c)	Dear Chairman Olvany and Members of the Commission, Thank you for the work the Commission and staff have put into the draft 2026 Plan of Conservation & Development, and for the opportunity to comment. We write as the owner of 100 Tokeneke Road, an underperforming and end-of-life commercial property we purchased with the intention of redeveloping it into a contextually scaled, steel & concrete residential project designed specifically to attract and retain Darien's downsizing residents. As the draft POCD's own community engagement summary documents indicate, there is a clear local desire for downsizing options for empty-nesters. We believe our vision aligns perfectly with these community needs, as well as Darien's stated goals of expanding housing variety and reinvesting in underutilized commercial properties. We are writing to raise a specific concern with Section 9-11.c of the draft Plan, which recommends reducing the maximum building height in the Designed Office (DO) Zone from three stories to two. This change would directly and materially affect our ability to redevelop 100 Tokeneke Road, and we respectfully ask the Commission to remove or revise this recommendation before the Plan is finalized. Why the third story matters We want to be clear that we are not asking the town for anything beyond what is currently allowed, only that the existing three-story allowance in the DO Zone be preserved. The economics of redeveloping an older office building; demolition, site work, parking, updated infrastructure, and construction costs that have risen substantially in recent years, require a certain amount of built area to support the investment. At two stories, we do not believe a project of this or any type of commercial use on this site would be financially feasible under any design, effectively eliminating the economic incentive for site renewal. Our commitment to working with the town We value the opportunity to work collaboratively with the Commission and Town staff toward a project of which Darien can be truly proud. We appreciate the careful consideration the Commission has consistently shown to redevelopment proposals over the last decade, leadership that has allowed underutilized properties to be	3	

Name	Chapters or Recs Referred to in Comments	Comments	Comment Types	Response(s) to Comments
		transformed in ways that expand local housing choices and grow the grand list, all while preserving the town's essential character. We respectfully request that Section 9-11.c be revised to maintain the current three-story maximum height. Thank you for your time and careful consideration of this comment, and please do not hesitate to reach out if it would be helpful to discuss our plans for the property directly. Sincerely, Brandon Lacoff Managing Member		
ARCHITECTURE REVIEW BOARD	Chapter 9: The Built Environment Recommendations 9-13, 9-14	This document organizes ARB comments for the POCD process into action-oriented recommendations that clarify the ARB's role, strengthen design and zoning tools, and support preservation, sustainability, and village-scale development. Key Recommendations • Formalize the ARB recommendation process within P&Z applications, especially for large-scale, mixed-use projects. • Update commercial design guidelines and zoning regulations to address scale, massing, materials, signage, lighting, landscape, and sustainability expectations. • Strengthen preservation tools through historic incentives, a historic committee, adaptive reuse pathways, and village district overlays. 1. ARB and P&Z Review Process a. Adopt a formal ARB recommendation process for large-scale, mixed-use project application hearings, including timing expectations for applicants and clear integration with P&Z review. 2. Commercial Design Guidelines a. Address the scale and visual impact of larger developments by defining expectations for massing, frontage rhythm, architectural variety, and pedestrian-scale design. b. Clarify where zoning regulations and commercial design guidelines can give the ARB meaningful influence during the review process.	2 3	

Name	Chapters or Recs Referred to in Comments	Comments	Comment Types	Response(s) to Comments
		c. Update the commercial guidelines with specific criteria drawn from successful recent development examples in town. d. Define acceptable exterior materials and construction quality standards. e. Identify materials and design approaches that should be discouraged or prohibited. i. Use examples such as Grove Street Plaza, Corbin Drive, and Villages on Post to illustrate desired outcomes. ii. Require signage, lighting, and landscape master plans for large commercial and mixed-use projects. iii. Address residential unit mix and building typology, including condos, townhouses, larger apartments, and one- to two-bedroom units. 3. Zoning Regulation Updates a. Update zoning regulations to respond to the scale of large mixed-use developments and strengthen the town's ability to influence aesthetic outcomes. b. Establish zoning limits for massing, height, scale, and architectural style where the ARB currently lacks direct authority. c. Clarify whether and how ARB recommendations may become enforceable conditions through P&Z stipulations. d. Review zoning regulations regularly so they evolve with current development conditions while remaining consistent with the POCD. e. Revise setback, roofline, and building-length standards to require meaningful breaks in large commercial, multifamily, and mixed-use structures. f. Consider specific dimensional thresholds, such as maximum building lengths, required roofline reductions, and increased setbacks along extended street frontages. 4. Sustainability, Green Space, and Lighting Standards a. Sustainability		

Name	Chapters or Recs Referred to in Comments	Comments	Comment Types	Response(s) to Comments
		i. Adopt sustainability guidelines that support net-zero development goals where feasible. b. Green Space i. Establish clear green-space requirements for commercial and mixed-use projects. ii. Evaluate zoning provisions that increase green-space connections, public open space, and village-scale gathering areas. iii. Explore legally available alternatives to impact fees, such as public-space or green-space requirements tied to redevelopment or rezoning. iv. Require pedestrian pathways within appropriate walking radii of commercial village areas. v. Increase tree canopy requirements in commercially developed zones using the commercial guidelines' approved tree lists. c. Lighting Standards i. Establish townwide signage and exterior lighting recommendations for lumens, color temperature, and appropriate fixture types. ii. Consider approximately 3000 Kelvin for warmer exterior lighting, subject to further review of appropriate lumen levels and site conditions. iii. Incorporate dark-sky principles into commercial lighting standards. iv. Require site lighting to be dimmed or turned off after business hours where safety permits. v. Discourage box lighting, face-lit signs, and halo-lit signs, and encourage traditional exterior illumination methods in the commercial guidelines. 5. Historic Preservation and Village District Tools a. Historic Home Tax Credit Program.		

Name	Chapters or Recs Referred to in Comments	Comments	Comment Types	Response(s) to Comments
		i. Create incentives for residential and commercial property owners who restore and renovate existing structures rather than demolish them. b. Create a Historic Committee. State Historic Preservation Officer confirmed formation is done through town code; no study is needed. i. Review and approve applications for the historic home plaque program. ii. Review demolition requests involving historic structures. iii. Serve as a referral body for the Historic Home Tax Credit Program. iv. Provide historic district and future village district oversight, including consultation on commercial applications under applicable state statute. v. Develop adaptive reuse application pathways for ZBA review. c. Implement Village Districts i. Implement Village District overlay zones in targeted areas experiencing significant commercial development pressure. ii. Evaluate potential Village District areas, including Corbin and downtown, the historic district, Darien Commons, Heights Crossing, OKH, Tokeneke Road, and Villages on Post at Norton/Post Road.		
BOARD OF SELECTMEN	Recommendations 6-1, 6-3, 6-2, 6-5, 6-7, 6-10, 7-2, 7-3, 7-4, 7-5 8-1, 8-2, 8-3, 8-7, 8-9, 8-18 9-2, 9-3, 9-6, 9-6, 9-8, 9-11	Pursuant to C.G.S. § 8-23, the Board of Selectmen has reviewed the draft 2026 Plan of Conservation and Development. The Board endorses the plan except for the recommendations and portions identified in Section I below, which are not endorsed as currently written. Section II contains recommended revisions, factual corrections and implementation clarifications. Page references are to Draft #2 dated July 15, 2026. Effect of non-endorsement. Under C.G.S. § 8-23(i)(2), a plan section or recommendation not endorsed by the Board of Selectmen may be adopted by P&Z only 1. by a vote of at least two-thirds of the full Commission.	1 2 3	

Name	Chapters or Recs Referred to in Comments	Comments	Comment Types	Response(s) to Comments
		I. RECOMMENDATIONS OR PORTIONS NOT ENDORSED AS WRITTEN 1. Tree protection on private property and proposed fund Reference: Recommendation 6-3, p. 50; implementation table, p. 52. BOS position: The Board does not endorse new tree-preservation requirements affecting privately owned residential property or a policy objective of funding tree programs through fines or enforcement revenue. The Town may protect important trees on Town property and encourage voluntary preservation on private property. 2. Absolute prohibitions in flood-prone areas Reference: Recommendation 6-7(d) and (e), p. 51. BOS position: The Board supports stronger flood-resilience standards but does not endorse absolute prohibitions that could prevent necessary public-safety, utility, environmental-restoration or risk-reduction projects. 3. Mandatory green-building certifications Reference: Recommendation 6-10, p. 51. BOS position: The Board supports energy-efficient and sustainable construction but does not endorse language establishing the premise that a particular certification or standard should become mandatory regardless of cost or project circumstances. 4. Sidewalk priorities and regional connections Reference: Recommendation 7-3(b), including 7-3(b)(i)-(iii), p. 68. BOS position: The Board does not endorse establishing separate sidewalk priorities before the Advisory Sidewalk Committee completes its work. Crosswalk decisions require safety and engineering review and, on State roads, CTDOT approval. A regional connection should not automatically become a Darien priority. 5. Bicycling committee and regional bicycle connections Reference: Recommendation 7-4(a) and (b), p. 69. BOS position: The Board does not endorse directing the creation of another standing committee. Regional bicycle or pedestrian connections should be evaluated, not presumed to be Town priorities.		

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		6. Great Island on-site parking recommendation Reference: Recommendation 8-7, p. 84; implementation table, p. 86. BOS position: The Board does not endorse this recommendation. Great Island parking is already an active Town project with a committee working on design and implementation. It should not be presented as a new ten-year planning recommendation. Proposed language: Delete Recommendation 8-7 and its implementation-table entry. 7. Residential building coverage Reference: Recommendation 9-2, p. 108; implementation table, p. 112. BOS position: The Board does not endorse this recommendation. It would reduce existing development rights only in certain residential districts without establishing a sufficient need for the change. Proposed language: Delete Recommendation 9-2 and its implementation-table entry. 8. Developed site-area limits in residential districts Reference: Recommendation 9-3, p. 108; implementation table, p. 112. BOS position: The Board does not endorse this recommendation. Restrictions of this scope should not be advanced without compelling evidence of a problem that cannot be addressed through existing stormwater and other regulations. Proposed language: Delete Recommendation 9-3 and its implementation-table entry. 9. Great Island zoning Reference: Recommendation 9-21, p. 111; implementation table, p. 113. Current language: "Consider Zoning Changes to Great Island." BOS position: The Board does not endorse this recommendation. The Town is actively evaluating the appropriate land-use framework for Great Island. The POCD should not prejudge that process or narrow the Town's options. Proposed language: Delete Recommendation 9-21 and its implementation-table entry. 10. Conservation Commission process		

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		Reference: Recommendation 6-1, p. 50; implementation table, p. 52. Current language: "Create a Separate Conservation Commission." BOS position: The Board supports completion of the review already assigned to its Advisory Conservation Committee but does not endorse language that prejudices that committee's work. The committee's approved mission is to recommend whether a separate Conservation Commission should be created and, if so, how it should be structured. Its recommendations are advisory, and the final decision remains with the Board of Selectmen and, where applicable, the Representative Town Meeting. 11. Old Kings Highway North and South connection Reference: Recommendation 7-2(d), p. 68. Current language: "Connect Old Kings Highway North and South." BOS position: The Board is willing to consider the concept, but the wording understates the magnitude of the undertaking. A connection would require a tunnel beneath the New Haven Line, substantial capital investment, and approvals from CTDOT, Metro-North and other agencies. The POCD should call for evaluation rather than imply that the Town has decided to construct it. 12. Bus rapid transit Reference: Recommendation 7-5(d), p. 69. BOS position: The Board does not endorse implementation before determining whether bus rapid transit or additional stops would benefit Darien. The analysis should also recognize possible land-use and zoning implications associated with designation of BRT stations. 13. Acquisition of property adjacent to Town facilities Reference: Recommendation 8-3, p. 84; implementation table, p. 86. BOS position: The heading implies an acquisition policy and financial commitment that the Town has not made. Monitoring potential opportunities is appropriate, but any acquisition should require a demonstrated need and separate fiscal review and approval. 14. Affordable housing on larger residential lots		

Name	Chapters or Recs Referred to in Comments	Comments	Comment Types	Response(s) to Comments
		Reference: Recommendation 9-6(c), p. 108; implementation table, p. 112. BOS position: The recommendation could lead to substantial changes in low-density residential neighborhoods without explaining the model contemplated or its effect on development rights, infrastructure, the environment and neighborhood character. The Board does not endorse broadly expanding residential development rights without a demonstrated need, careful study and public input. 15. Affordable Housing Trust Fund revenue Reference: Recommendation 9-8, p. 108. BOS position: The Board does not endorse dedicating blight liens or zoning-enforcement fines to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. Enforcement should serve compliance and the public interest, not become a revenue objective. Such receipts should remain General Fund revenue. The Trust Fund should continue to receive payments made by developers who elect the payment option rather than providing the full 14% affordable-unit requirement under the inclusionary zoning regulations. 16. Potential Village District expansion Reference: Recommendation 9-11(a), p. 109. BOS position: Most major Downtown redevelopment has already been approved or completed. New restrictions should not fall primarily on the remaining properties without first identifying what distinctive historic or architectural resources remain, the proposed boundaries and standards, and the effects on property owners. Extension into residential areas would require a separate demonstrated need and public process. II. RECOMMENDED REVISIONS, CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS 1. Advisory nature of the POCD Reference: Plan-wide clarification; introductory or implementation section. BOS position: The plan should clearly distinguish long-range guidance from an authorization or commitment to act. 2. Cost, staff capacity and implementation responsibility Reference: Implementation Strategy tables, including pp. 52, 71, 86-87 and 112-113.		

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		BOS position: The tables are useful planning guides but should not be read as an approved work program or capital plan. Advisory bodies should provide input; responsibility for scope, timing, staffing and execution must remain with the appropriate departments and governing bodies. 3. Open Space Plan leadership Reference: Recommendation 6-2, p. 50; implementation table, p. 52. BOS position: If an Open Space Plan is undertaken, it should be directed by the appropriate Town bodies and developed closely with Planning & Zoning, Parks & Recreation, Public Works and other professional staff. An advisory commission may participate but should not independently manage a major Town planning project. 4. State Locational Guide Map Reference: Narrative, p. 22. BOS position: The sentence is vague and does not explain why the methodology matters to Darien. 5. Section 8-30g typographical correction Reference: Narrative, p. 24. BOS position: Delete the stray word. 6. Sanitary sewer overflows and Town projects sidebar Reference: Narrative and Town Projects sidebar, p. 34. BOS position: Focus on the resulting agreement and the Town's continuing work. The study identified problems; it did not itself remove them. 7. Town Projects and Sustainable CT sidebar updates Reference: Town Projects sidebar, p. 34. BOS position: Update the record through 2026. 8. Beach water quality Reference: Narrative, p. 35. BOS position: Add the most recent results and make the improvement clear.		

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		9. Impervious-surface estimates Reference: Narrative, p. 38. BOS position: Explain the difference and retain the context that Darien contains major transportation infrastructure and receives runoff from upstream communities. 10. Stormwater-management threshold Reference: Narrative, pp. 38-39. BOS position: Clarify that the change lowered the threshold triggering a stormwater-management plan, not the amount of impervious coverage allowed. 11. Flood-prone property acquisition Reference: Recommendation 6-5(d), p. 50, and Recommendation 6-6, p. 51. BOS position: Combine the overlapping provisions. 12. Transportation highlights and Advisory Sidewalk Committee Reference: Transportation and Mobility Highlights, p. 56. BOS position: Correct the date range and add the current Town initiative. 13. Municipal fleet and green-building policies Reference: Recommendations 8-1 and 8-2, p. 84; implementation table, p. 86. BOS position: Retain and strengthen those qualifications. Sustainability should include making full use of existing assets, including police vehicles that may remain useful to other Town departments after front-line service. 14. Mather Center and At Home in Darien Reference: Recommendation 8-9, p. 84. Current language: “Continue to Support The Mather Center and At Home in Darien.” BOS position: The Mather Center is operated by a Town department, while At Home in Darien is an outside nonprofit partner. The wording should reflect that distinction. 15. Gas-powered lawn equipment Reference: Air Quality narrative, p. 43.		

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		BOS position: Make clear that the discussion is background information and not a recommendation for additional Town restrictions. 16. Great Island Master Plan sidebar Reference: Narrative sidebar, p. 75. BOS position: Update the sidebar to summarize the adopted plan and the current status of implementation without implying approval of future funding or land-use actions. 17. Town Hall rooftop air-conditioning units Reference: Town Hall Planned Projects, p. 76. BOS position: Add the current project, which has progressed to bidding. 18. Police Department facility description Reference: Narrative, p. 78. BOS position: The description should recognize completed work and should not imply that all locker rooms remain outdated. 19. Edgerton property Reference: School facilities narrative, p. 83. BOS position: The Edgerton property is owned and managed by the Town, not the Board of Education, and the Town has not made a decision to use it for fields, parking or school program space. 20. School bus depot Reference: Recommendation 8-18, p. 85; implementation table, p. 87. Current language: "Continue to Look for a Location for a Bus Depot." BOS position: A depot could allow additional transportation providers to bid and materially reduce the Town's annual school-bus costs. School Administration estimates potential annual net operating savings of approximately \$274,000 to \$544,000, before property acquisition and construction costs. Suitable sites within Darien are scarce and expensive, but the Town may acquire an appropriate site outside Darien. A depot should be pursued only if projected competitive-bidding and		

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		operational savings are reasonably expected to justify the capital and continuing costs within a reasonable payback period. 21. Residential zoning map changes Reference: Recommendation 9-4, p. 108. BOS position: A zoning-map change could also create additional subdivision or development potential. The analysis should include notice to affected owners, public input and evaluation of those consequences. 22. Multifamily homeownership opportunities Reference: Recommendation 9-5, p. 108. BOS position: The Board welcomes more ownership and downsizing opportunities but does not intend to express a Town preference against renters. The Town regulates a project's location, size, design and impacts, while rental versus ownership is generally determined by the developer and project economics. Condominium development may involve more difficult construction financing, phased individual sales and carrying risk, and greater potential liability for defects in common building systems. The recommendation should encourage broader housing choice without suggesting that the Town can require a particular ownership structure or limiting the opportunity to a particular age group. 23. Demolition delay ordinance Reference: Recommendation 9-20, p. 111. BOS position: The Board supports a delay of up to 180 days for genuinely historic structures, but a 50-year threshold would now encompass buildings constructed as recently as 1976. Age alone at that level is not a sufficient indication of historic significance. 24. Applicability and balance of cited source material Reference: Plan-wide; references and endnotes. BOS position: Outside research can be useful, but the consultant and P&Z Commission should be able to explain its relevance to Darien and whether the cited material provides a current and balanced basis for a recommendation. 25. Great Island map designation		

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		Reference: Land-use and environmental maps, pp. 4, 42 and 91. BOS position: This designation does not fully reflect the unique character of Great Island or the range of uses contemplated in the adopted Great Island Master Plan. The property includes sensitive ecological areas, historic structures, public access, low-impact recreation, and potential educational, community and adaptive reuse opportunities. REQUESTED ACTION The Board respectfully requests that the Planning & Zoning Commission incorporate the revisions and corrections above before adopting the 2026 Plan of Conservation and Development.		
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS & RECREATION	Chapter 6: Environment Climate, Sustainability Chapter 7: Transportation & Mobility Chapter 8: Community Facilities	The Director submitted marked up pages that identified mostly typos. Any substantive comments are identified below: Recommendations 6-3. Consider including Parks & Recreation Commission 6-4. Consider including Parks & Recreation Commission 7-4. Consider including Parks & Recreation Commission 7-5. Consider including Parks & Recreation Commission Chapter 8 p. 73: Highland Farm should be mentioned, but also note that it is a BOS project and governed by BOS, with DPR providing maintenance.	2	
REDNISS & MEAD	Recommendation #9-11(c)	RE: DRAFT POCD PUBLIC COMMENT CBD & DO Zone Building Height Dear Chairman Olvany and members of the Commission, Thank you for your thoughtful efforts to draft Darien's 2026 Plan of Conservation & Development. I appreciate the opportunity to provide this public comment on the draft version of the plan. As you know, Redniss & Mead represents land use applicants in Darien from time to time, including those with properties within the Central Business District, Designed	3	

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		Office Zone, and Designed Office Multifamily Overlay Zone. I am also a resident of Darien and personally share the recommendations and opinions expressed in this letter. There is one sentence in the draft POCD to which I would like to draw the attention of all Commission members. Item 9-11.c. on page 109 (attached) reads as follows: c. Maintain the two-story height limit in the Central Business District (CBD) and Designed Business Zone (DB) and reduce the maximum height of buildings in the Designed Office Zone (DO) from three to two stories. I believe this sentence is regressive, not consistent with the Connecticut Conservation & Development Policies, counter to Darien's interests, and should be deleted from the POCD. Below is a review of three of the state's Growth Management Principles (GMP). GMP 2: Expand Housing Opportunities and Design Choices to Accommodate a Variety of Household Types and Needs. In the Central Business District, eliminating the potential to develop a third story not only reduces the ability to expand housing opportunities by half on upper stories within the zone, but it also specifically reduces the likelihood that additional affordable or below market rate housing will be built as increasing the number of such units pursuant to the inclusionary zoning regulation is one of two ways in the current zoning code to develop a third story. Similarly, in the Design Office zone, eliminating the potential to develop a third story reduces the ability to expand housing opportunities within the zone by at least a third pursuant to the Designed Office Multifamily Overlay as density is ultimately controlled by building coverage and number of stories in that zone, but more likely, eliminating the third story will discourage redevelopment altogether by eliminating the economic incentive to do so. GMP 3: Concentrate Development Around Transportation Nodes and Along Major Transportation Corridors to Support the Viability of Transportation Options. This principle clearly promotes development around Transportation Nodes, eliminating the ability to develop a third story in the CBD and DO zones clearly runs contrary to this principle. All properties in the Central Business District are entirely within ½-mile of the Darien Train Station, and 59% of the private property within the		

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		DO zone, not currently zoned with the DOMR overlay, is within ½-mile of a train station. These are locations where the ability to develop should, at a minimum, be maintained or expanded, and not reduced as proposed. GMP 1: Redevelop and Revitalize Regional Centers and Areas with Existing or Currently Planned Physical Infrastructure. Eliminating the potential for a third story in the CBD and DO zones will slow or stall the redevelopment and revitalization of properties within ½-mile of train stations and which properties generally have, but are required to prove, that the physical infrastructure exists to handle such development. PZC has acted with Darien's best interests in mind. The thoughtful considerations and actions by the Planning & Zoning Commission over the last 10 to 20 years to allow for suburban renewal and the redevelopment of underutilized properties has seen those properties successfully redeveloped while retaining local architectural review and special permit planning and design standards. These actions have resulted in the expansion of housing variety, additional affordable, below market rate, and supportive housing units at no cost to the town, increased the grand list, and expanded commercial and retail activity to the benefit of the town and its residents. We only need to look to our neighbors to the north in New Canaan to understand what can happen when reasonable redevelopment opportunities are restricted and where Planning & Zoning was forced by the courts to approve a five-story apartment building in a residential area near their train station to prove that Darien Planning & Zoning Commission's considered decisions have prevented such actions in our town. Thank you for your careful consideration of the above, and your continued stewardship of the best interests of the town. Sincerely, Craig J. Flaherty, P.E.		
RTM PLANNING, ZONING & HOUSING COMMITTEE	Recommendations 6-3, 6-6 7-1, 7-2, 7-3, 7-4, 7-8	I am writing on behalf of the Planning Zoning and Housing Committee ("PZ&H") of the Darien Representative Town Meeting ("RTM") to outline our comments on the second draft of the 2026 Plan of Conservation and Development (the "POCD") dated July 15, 2026.	2 3	

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	8-3, 8-8, 8-10, 8-18 9-2, 9-4, 9-6, 9-11, 9-20	PZ&H met on September 3, 2026 to discuss the draft POCD. During this meeting we focused primarily on the recommendation sections since those were new in this draft. Our comments on the recommendations are listed below in the order that they appear. In addition to our comments on the recommendations our group also had some concerns with the document as a whole. Those concerns are as follows: 1) Unlike prior POCDs this draft seems to focus mainly on conservation/sustainability issues and increasing residential options. While this may be intentional, we find the total lack of attention to commercial development problematic. As written, it appears that the Town's plan for the next ten years is no new commercial development. We would ask that the Commission consider adding a section to discuss commercial development particularly with a focus on encouraging the development and strength of existing and new local businesses. 2) We have concerns about the financial impacts of some of the proposed changes on individual taxpayers. While the POCD directly addresses the potential cost of to the Town of implementing certain changes it does not acknowledge the cost to individual property owners of, for example, the proposed resiliency and flood mitigation measures. We believe that the cost to homeowners should also be factored in when deciding if a change should be implemented. 3) Much of the work in Darien is done by volunteers and currently there are difficulties finding volunteers to staff some of the existing commissions and committees. We find the focus on adding new committees to not be reasonable. We recommend that to the extent new areas of focus are identified that the POCD consider adding those responsibilities to existing committees or commissions. Our comments on the specific recommendations are as follows: Chapter 6 – Environment, Climate & Sustainability • 6-3: We do not agree with including a tree protection ordinance as a POCD recommendation. This seems like overreach particularly to the extent that it seeks to control individual homeowner's ability to manage trees on their property • 6-6: We do not think that the acquisition of open space should be limited to flood prevention. There is value to the Town continuing to acquire open space as it comes available even if it is not in a buffer or flood zone.		

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		Chapter 7 – Transportation & Mobility • 7-1, 7-2 & 7-3: We have concerns that these sections go into too much detail on specific recommended changes to the Town’s sidewalk system rather than deferring to the existing Sidewalk Advisory Committee and recommending implementation of their recommendations. • 7-4: We do not agree that there is a need for a separate Advisory Bicycle Committee. Further we do not believe that it is necessary to amend the zoning regulations to require bicycle facilities. Storage facilities will be constructed within commercial developments if there is a need for such facilities. The Town’s focus should be on making bicycle storage available at Town properties. • 7-8: We do not agree that parking should maximize convenience. It should not be a goal for consumers to move their car to park in front of each individual store. Instead, we believe that the goal should be to manage traffic flow for customer convenience and to improve the walkability in commercial areas. Chapter 8 – Community Facilities & Services • 8-3: We believe that the Town should continue to monitor potential property for acquisition and not be limited to properties adjacent to existing Town property. • 8-8: The Town recently extended a lease to an outside organization. We are not sure why there would be any discussion of relocating government services out of Town Hall if we have sufficient space to house outside organizations. • 8-10: We believe that this should be the first section in an emergency services section with the police, fire and EMS sections to follow. Emergency services planning should be done for all residents, not just seniors. • 8-18: We recommend changing the title of this section to “Evaluate acquiring an in-Town Bus Depot” since, as described, this is more of an evaluation than an expectation that a bus depot will be acquired once a location is identified. Chapter 9 – The Built Environment • 9-2: We do not agree with the recommendation that building coverage limits should be reduced. Property owners purchased property with an expectation that they can expand their homes to 20% and we do not believe it is appropriate to change that limit		

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		at this time. We believe that the goal of reducing impervious surface is better achieved through the recommendation in 9-3. • 9-4: The POCD should include the blanket goal of rezoning non-conforming properties, but we do not agree this recommendation should be limited to one acre lots in two acres zones. • 9-6: We are not in favor of the Town studying models for creating affordable housing units on large lots. • 9-11: Currently many buildings in the CBD and Office Zone are already over two stories. We do not understand why we would want to limit future development to less than what exists currently in these areas. • 9-20: We do not believe that there is any call to extend the demolition delay ordinance. We are not aware of any issue with homes of historic significance being demolished without due oversight under the existing ordinance. Thank you for taking our comments into consideration.		
WESTCOG	Chapter 3: Darien Tomorrow Chapter 4: The State POCD & Legislation Chapter 5: Darien & The Region Chapter 7: Transportation & Mobility Chapter 8: Community Facilities Chapter 9: The Built Environment	Thank you for providing a draft of the 2026 Plan of Conservation and Development for the Town of Darien for WestCOG review. WestCOG was in receipt of the referral on July 28, 2026, in accordance with Section 8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes. The Western Connecticut Council of Governments find the draft Darien POCD to be generally consistent with the 2020-2030 Western Connecticut Regional Plan of Conservation and Development, the Connecticut Conservation & Development Policies Plan 2025-2030, and the Plans of Conservation and Development for the surrounding municipalities. WestCOG staff have several comments for the Darien Planning and Zoning Commission to consider prior to finalizing the Plan: 3. Darien Tomorrow • Page 13 & 59: The congestion discussion would benefit from a more nuanced consideration of the many factors contributing increased traffic. As written, the discussion could be interpreted as attributing congestion primarily to growth and redevelopment in Stamford and Norwalk when we know there are broader trends at play including:	2	

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		○ Spillover development and travel from the New York City Metro Area. I-95 is one of the only access points for people and goods travel into the rest of New England. ○ Increased e-commerce, package delivery, and freight activity. This is a huge societal convenience shift since the last POCD affecting both local and regional roadways throughout the country. Many households are getting several packages a week, and sometimes per day. ○ Shift to parents driving children to and from school rather than using school bus transportation. • Page 13, second paragraph under “Taking Stock: Community Engagement”: There seems to be information missing after “..into four categories:” 4. The State POCD & Legislation • Page 23: The State’s Locational Guide Map does not identify any Regional Activity Zones in Darien, the light pink areas are “Local”. • Page 24, under CGS Section 8-30g Updates heading: incomplete sentence ("because" should be expanded upon or deleted) 5. Darien & The Region • Page 28: The 2024 Noise Abatement Study investigated the feasibility of establishing federally designated “Quiet Zone” which would eliminate the required train horns when crossing the eleven at-grade crossings. The recommendations are linked to the federally required safety improvements needed to reduce the risk of crashes when train horns are silenced. The study description would benefit from clarifying the intent of the study (reducing train noise pollution) and a recommendation added to continue coordination with the City of Norwalk, Town of New Canaan, and WestCOG to explore funding opportunities/next steps. • Page 28 & 56: The 2026 Traffic Calming and Complete Streets Best Practices Toolbox was completed in March 2026. The final document can be found on the WestCOG website: https://westcog.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/FINAL-WestCOG-Traffic-Calming-Toolkit.pdf • Page 28: The title of the report is the “Western Connecticut Regional Affordable Housing Toolbox”. • Page 29: The City of Norwalk POCD link is no longer correct.		

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		• Page 32: WestCOG is currently updating the 2018 Regional Tree Canopy Analysis with the most recent data. We expect a report to be available in 2027. • Page 33: Under Regional “Plans & Studies,” you might also include WestCOG's recent "Local Zoning Innovations for Coastal Flood Resilience" report. • Page 35: It is unclear what the columns/colors in Figure 6-1 indicate. • Page 36: It is unclear what the red lines indicate in Figure 6-2. It is also unclear if or where additional sewer systems are planned and areas where sewers are to be avoided. 7. Transportation & Mobility • Page 56: The title of the report is “Regional Bicycle Plan”. • Page 59 & 69 (Recommendation 7-5d): Bus Rapid Transit for Route 1 is included in the project listing in HVMPO and SWRMPO’s 2023-2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan for the entire corridor New Haven to Port Chester (Westport to Greenwich in the region). I would recommend coordinating with WestCOG on progressing this project to the next phase. • Page 60: Is the data/map from Figure 7-4 from the UConn Crash Data Repository, not CTDOT? • Page 62: More discussion regarding bus service in Darien would be helpful. For example, CTtransit Route 341 serves Route 1 in Darien with service to Stamford and Norwalk. This is a critical transportation link, especially for employees of the businesses along Route 1, likely coming from these neighboring cities. Are there any improvements that would make this service better? You may want to consider coordinating with CTDOT, WestCOG, CTtransit for improvements like bus shelters, accessible sidewalks and ramps to and from stop locations, more frequent or extended service hours, and/or supporting the recommendations from the Route 1 BRT Study. • Page 66: The final sentence on this page appears to be unfinished or simply lacking a period. Also, given the high dissatisfaction identified in the Town-Wide Survey on the topic of biking, further information on this topic would be welcome, such as the status of the grant pursued by NBWC or additional information on the status or results of DPH’s pilot project.		

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		• Page 68, Recommendation 7-1 d: We encourage evaluating the traffic calming strategies provided in the 2026 Traffic Calming and Complete Streets Best Practices Toolbox. Traffic circles can be useful the appropriate context but is not the only or best strategy. 8. Community Facilities, Amenities & Services • Page 81: Further information on how the 2023 Emergency Services Analysis recommendations will or will not be integrated would be welcome. 9. The Built Environment • Page 97: Regarding the discussion on housing affordability, a more nuanced discussion on the factors affecting Darien, rather than the country, would be helpful. WestCOG has documented in the Regional Affordable Housing Toolbox that the greatest hurdles to building housing affordably in the region are the cost of materials, labor, and land, with land being a significant proportion of the cost of new housing in the region. Vacant lots in the southwestern region are on the market for upwards of \$1,000,000 an acre (see page 17 & 123 of the Toolbox). Darien and the greater Western Connecticut Planning Region are influenced greatly by the New York City Metropolitan Area housing and development market. • Page 98, Regional Housing: WestCOG is currently developing a Regional Housing Growth Plan in partnership with our member municipalities to address the state mandates. • Page 99: Regarding the discussion of Smaller Housing Types for an Aging Population, townhomes are not the most appropriate housing type as people age due to the multi-level nature of the buildings involving a lot of stairs. You may want to consider discussing and recommending new senior housing have at-grade entry, single floor layouts, and/or elevators for multi-story buildings. • Page 99, last paragraph: The statement that there are “few housing units available for less than \$500,000” is misleading because ACS data reflects housing values, not homes currently listed or available for sale. Homes with an ACS reported value below \$500,000 (or even between \$500,000 and \$1 million) likely would enter the market at substantially higher prices. Consider revising the statement to distinguish housing values from market availability. • Page 109, Recommendation 9-5: People of all ages would benefit from the opportunity to live in smaller single-family homes or multifamily housing. The number		

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		of one and two person households is rising across the country, which would more efficiently be accommodated in smaller units. Reconsider aiming this recommendation for people of all ages, not only seniors. Other Comments • A discussion on “the need for technology infrastructure in the municipality” should be expanded on. It would be useful to address some or all of the following topics: broadband, cellular service, utilities, AI impacts government, online government services (taxes, permitting, etc.), and/or smart transportation technologies (real-time parking status, signal improvements such as video detection and adaptive signal control, variable messaging sign opportunities, etc.).		

TABLE 3. COMMENTS ON DRAFT #1 TO BE RESEARCHED DURING THE SUMMER AND INCORPORATED INTO THE POCD

Name	Comments	Response(s) to Comments
DARIEN LAND TRUST	Figure 2-1 on Page 4, Figure 6-4 on Page 42 and Figure 9-1 on Page 87 are all missing both DLT fee owned and conservation easement properties. Seven (7) fee owned properties and fifteen (15) CE properties are not represented on the map. Page 88 - The land use table in the upper right hand corner assigns percentages to various entities. What is the source of this data? The terminology used in the table does not correspond to the headings in the text. It is hard to believe that the percentage assigned to “Vacant” (3%) consisting of “a few parcels” throughout Town is greater than the percentage of Preserved Open Space (DLT) (2%).	The figures in the POCD will include two additional DLT conserved properties that were identified by DLT in its meeting with the Planning & Zoning Department.
RTM PLANNING, ZONING & HOUSING COMMITTEE	We are confused why there is a full demographic breakout for 2023 but not for 2013 on page 6.	The data referred to will be enhanced and, furthermore, all references to 2023 ACS data throughout the document will be updated to 2024 ACS data. This includes the Demographic Data Snapshots on page 7 (Chapter 2) and Housing Data Snapshots on page 90 (Chapter 9). Where population is called out specifically in the text, the CT Department of Health estimates are utilized. This response also addresses a comment on the data in Draft #2 made by the Department of Parks & Recreation (see Table 2).
H&H (POCD CONSULTANT)	1. Figure 2-1: Structure a. Add two missing Darien Land Trust properties identified by Jeremy Ginsberg on a marked-up map. b. Show Tokeneke Road as State Route 136 with shield. c. Change the classification/color of Highland Farm from Government Facility to Public Open Space & Recreation d. 1 Parklands should be Multifamily Residential (not Commercial). 2. Figure 6-4: Map of Environmental Features a. Add two missing Darien Land Trust properties b. Show all state routes with shields like the rest of the maps. c. It appears that 1 Parklands and 3 Parklands are shown as green. They are both multifamily residential.	These represent changes made to various figures in the POCD to correct errors and improve consistency and accuracy.

Name	Comments	Response(s) to Comments
	3. Figure 7-1: Roadway Classification a. Show all the state route shields with numbers. 4. Figure 9-1: Land Use Map a. Add two missing Darien Land Trust properties. b. 1 Parklands should be Multifamily Residential (not Commercial) c. What is currently labeled Highland Farm, Private Open Space & Recreation, is the Ox Ridge Riding and Racquet Club. There is a piece that is north of this that is Highland Farm and should be green. That blue should be the dark green of public open space and recreation and the label for Highland Farm should be over or next to the dark green. d. I-95 Right Of Way: make it Transportation-Exempt e. Change legend item "Private Open Space & Recreation" to "Private Recreation" f. Make the color of Transportation-Parking in the legend and the map to a dark gray, darker than Utility. Right now it appears too greenish. 5. Figure 9-2: Land Use Composition Table a. Update the table based on the latest changes.	