

# Plan of Conservation and Development

2009



## Vision and Policies

5.12.2009

Adopted by the Planning and Zoning Commission,  
Town of Greenwich, Connecticut

This plan has been developed to be viewed on-line.  
The on-line version is free and environmentally friendly.

GREENWICH



# Contents

<b>Chapter 1 – Water and Land Resources</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter 2 – Scenic and Historic Resources</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Chapter 3 - Residential Development and Housing</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Chapter 4 - Downtown, Commercial Development and Villages</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Chapter 5 – Traffic, Transportation and Parking</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Chapter 6 – Infrastructure, Community Facilities and Services</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Chapter 7 - Future Land-use Plan and Plan Consistency</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>Chapter 8 - Implementing the Plan</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>75</b>

## THE GOALS OF THE 2009 PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

May 12, 2009

The Town of Greenwich derives its authority to plan from the 1951 State of Connecticut Legislature Special Act (Act 469, 1951) that says the Greenwich Town Charter is the source of planning authority. In turn, the Greenwich Town Charter (Title 9, Sections 92 through 98) authorizes the Planning and Zoning Commission (P&Z) to prepare, adopt or amend a plan that:

*“...shall show the Commission’s recommendation for the most desirable use of land within the Town for residential, recreational, commercial, industrial and other purposes; for the most desirable density of population in the several parts of the Town a system of streets and drains, for parks, for the general location, relocation and improvement of public real property and public buildings, including schools; for the general location and extent of public utilities and terminals, whether publicly or privately owned, for water, sewerage, light, power, transit and other purposes; and for the location of public housing projects. Such other recommendations may be made by the Commission and included in the plan, as will, in its judgment be beneficial to the Town.”<sup>1</sup>*

Pursuant to this authority and recognizing its responsibility to do so, during the last 21 months, P&Z, its staff and consultants, have been involved deeply in this planning function and have worked through many convergent and divergent concepts. At the same time, the residents of Greenwich, its agencies, boards, departments and commissions have participated in this Plan of Conservation and Development. They have provided commentary and insight at extensive meetings and in memoranda. This input has guided P&Z’s overall planning process with insights, reflections, ideas, suggestions and opinions. This community effort has resulted in this document *The 2009 Plan of Conservation and Development* (POCD).

This POCD is an advisory document. It contains recommendations for Town agencies, boards and departments. The Town departments have reviewed and commented individually on the listed recommendations. All the land-use departments (Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency, Conservation Commission, Department of Public Works, and Department of Parks and Recreation) and the First Selectman have provided written statements of support for this POCD.

On those issues which may require further insight, or where sufficient specific knowledge and information is not available, P&Z urges the establishment of committees under the direction of the Selectman’s Office. In recommending the appointment of these committees, the Planning and Zoning Commission retains the authority to independently review any recommendations and must render a final decision on them.

This POCD is important because our residents are proud of Greenwich and the opportunities it affords our families. We hold dear and important that we are primarily a residential community. We are proud of our safe, industrious schools, both public and private; attractive municipal offices; and the high level of municipal service. Special characteristics of Greenwich are the inherent natural aesthetics of the landscape; its green and open spaces; pleasant and diverse parklands and recreational facilities; and coastal and community activities. We hold in highest regard Greenwich Town government, with about 2,000 municipal and quasi-municipal workers, a volunteer 230-member Representative Town Meeting, and hundreds of other residents who donate untold hours on task forces, agencies, boards, commissions, and as consultants to both our municipality and our institutions and our charities.

<sup>1</sup> Greenwich Town Charter, Section 94

Change seems to have occurred around us surprisingly and with rapidity. From its historic roots as a largely self-sustaining community, Greenwich has, in the past few decades, become more of a destination for many of our near and far-surrounding neighbors. Similarly Greenwich residents need to travel to other towns to fulfill many basic needs. Our streetscapes seem unprotected and unfamiliar as we witness severe site regrading, and clear-cutting of our trees, shrubs and vegetation. Age-old homes are razed in less than a day and replaced with looming houses and structures built to near maximum floor area ratios. Often, this crowding creates a sense of unease in neighbors in ways never anticipated by our existing Building Zone Regulations.

Indeed, as individuals and as a community, we are not immune to change or from its challenges that we face. We experience the results of these changes daily, some anticipated, others not, some welcomed, others not. Our general sense, without specifics, is that the economic value of Greenwich land and properties is guiding these changes and creating the challenges around us.

Traffic congestion in many areas of Town at certain times is becoming more and more evident. Safety of our bicyclists, drivers, pedestrians (especially our children) is a concern. Realizing the cumulative results that the potential build-out in all regulatory zones may bring, including in the commercial and residential zones, it is not difficult to understand our frustration and feeling that others are reshaping our world, and that the Town cannot control the changes of the overall character of Greenwich.

However, there is no need for this sense of loss of control. The purpose of this Plan of Conservation and Development is to organize and create a guideline for management of these changes in a way that is consistent with the needs and interests of the residents of this Town. It clearly is within the power of our community to control change.

We must continue to strive to maintain a quality of life that has made Greenwich such a fine place in which to live, work, worship, and raise a family. We can and should maintain our primarily residential community with housing for its entire diverse people. We can refocus our commercial property sector to complement personal, business, recreation and cultural needs of our residents.

Specifically, this Plan of Conservation and Development is first about conservation. Second, it is about development. While saving what is the essence of Greenwich we must improve and provide this road map as we and our families grow and change in a healthy, safe, environmentally-sensitive community with strong attention to our overall community welfare. Third, the POCD is about choice and change. We need not resign ourselves to a community designed by change. Changes in Greenwich must be motivated by, and addressed to, our quality of life choices and not motivated by chance or economic motivation. We must continue to renew our spirit and commitment to a community by design.

This entire document represents a compilation of all planning efforts and strategies developed as part of the planning process for implementation and direction of the future of Greenwich. Here is a synopsis of our goals:

**THE GOALS OF OUR 2009 PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT  
AND FUTURE LAND USE REGULATION AND INTERPRETATION**

1. *Be and remain primarily a well-maintained residential community for all of our current and future residents.*
2. *Protect and enhance well-defined neighborhoods and village centers.*
3. *Protect and enhance overall community character and quality of life, including the quality of our schools, cultural institutions, recreation, library system, and municipal and quasi-municipal services.*
4. *Encourage retail, residential, dining, cultural institutions, light business centers and other businesses that provide a variety and quality of goods and services for our residents.*
5. *Protect and enhance water and land natural resources, pervious surfaces, open space, parklands, recreational facilities and areas in an environmentally sensitive manner.*
6. *Continue, initiate and encourage renewed commitment for land-use regulation to underscore the importance of conservation and encourage development that preserves a sense of community around historic centers, schools and other institutions.*
7. *Development should be discouraged or prohibited when it is not compatible with and does not preserve existing land-use patterns. We need to provide alternate zoning opportunities to ensure that such development meets residents' needs.*
8. *Strive for consistency with business, retail, recreational, entertainment and commercial activities, and the needs and desires of our residents.*
9. *Develop and implement a Town-wide traffic plan that emphasizes transport and access, rather than parking, to achieve a living and working environment that is controlled and focused on sustainability in terms of system design, environmental impact and energy-efficiency with the least amount of congestion.*
10. *Continue to investigate and adopt energy conservation measures and initiatives for private and public properties and continue our healthy and safe environment. Promote incentives to encourage this.*
11. *While saving what is the essence of Greenwich, protect the Overall Environment, Preserve Energy, Build "Smart," Remain Sensitive to Historical and Cultural Preservation and Keep Greenwich Green.*

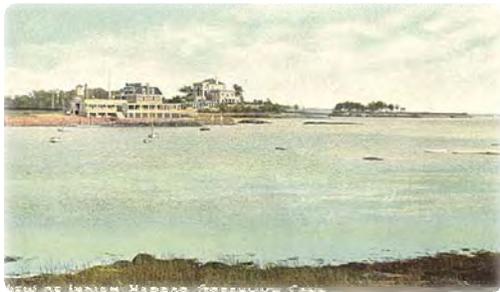
## How This Plan is Organized

Vision and Policies is the Plan of Conservation and Development as adopted by the Planning and Zoning Commission. When approved by the RTM it will be the Plan of Conservation and Development for the Town.

It is a compilation of all planning efforts and strategies developed as part of the planning process for implementation and direction of the future of the Town over the next ten years. Of the total action items in this Plan, the Department of Public Works has been assigned 38 recommendations, the Department of Parks and Recreation has been assigned 16, the Planning and Zoning Commission has been assigned 30, the Conservation Commission has been assigned 10, and the First Selectman has been assigned 4.

The Explanatory Materials are in support of Vision and Policies and are provided for information purposes only. They are not part of the Plan. They are intended to be a clearing house of summaries of plans, special reports and studies commissioned by Town agencies and to provide in-depth comments.

### Indian Harbor, circa 1907-1915



Wikipedia

### Greenwich Avenue, circa 1910



Wikipedia

### Environment and Character

- **Water and land resources**
- **Scenic and historic resources**

### Residential and Commercial Development

- **Residential development and housing needs**
- **Downtown, commercial development and the villages**

### Infrastructure

- **Traffic, transportation and parking**
- **Infrastructure, community facilities and services**