

WATERFORD TOWN CENTER VISION AND STRATEGIC PLAN

JORDAN VILLAGE / CIVIC TRIANGLE / POST ROAD GATEWAY

PREPARED FOR TOWN OF WATERFORD
AUGUST 5, 2014



HUTTON ASSOCIATES INC. STRATEGIC PLANNING / URBAN DESIGN
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ECONOMIC STEWARDSHIP CULTURAL, HERITAGE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



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Hutton Associates Inc. *Strategic Planning / Urban Design*

Saratoga Associates LLC *Landscape Architect / Corridor Design*

Nelson Edwards Company Architects LLC *Architecture / Historic Preservation*

Economic Stewardship Inc. *Cultural, Heritage and Economic Development*



FINAL REPORT

Proposed Amendment to *Town of Waterford Plan of Preservation, Conservation, and Development* (2012)

August 5, 2014



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Connecticut
still revolutionary

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Executive Summary

BACK TO THE FUTURE:

Jordan Village and Waterford Town Center

A wonderfully evocative reminiscence of days past in Waterford's Jordan Village recently appeared as a column in the *Waterford Times* (*Jordan Village Revisited: 70 Years on the Main Street*, 'Random Ramblings' by Thomas S. Perkins). In it the author describes growing up in Jordan Village and his fond memories of the shops and services to which he and his family walked-- the local grocery store, the post office, the barber shop, the firehouse. A local resident, a retired press photographer, could often be seen documenting these amenities, which had evolved as Jordan Village itself grew as Waterford's first neighborhood, bounded by the old millpond and nourished by regional linkages along Rope Ferry Road.

Unfortunately today, the only uses that remain (not necessarily under the same ownership) are the barbershop— now a unisex salon— and the firehouse. And even though, as the author points out, the village appears to look the same, it doesn't have the same vitality as in those days past. When Pigs Fly—a popular eatery and regional draw—has replaced some of the activity, but it is activity generated by auto traffic, not foot traffic, as visitors follow their noses to a delicious meal. The grocery that provided daily services for residents, and a bit of local flavor for visitors, has disappeared as big supermarkets and pharmacies further east on Route One have captured its market (though not its charm).

The Town is now asking Waterford citizens, through a participatory action plan funded by the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation, how we can recapture that activity and ambiance, keeping the authentic qualities of the eclectic mix of small scale Greek Revival, Italianate and Arts and Crafts buildings that still survives. A parallel and equally important question, however, is how to reinforce the economic viability of the village so that it can again support the rich mix of shops and services that once existed.

The intent is not, as properly feared by the author of the *Times* article, to create an ersatz 'Main Street,' an artificial Disneyland version of Jordan Village that would look like any other idealized image of a small downtown district. Rather, the challenge is how to use available tools—zoning, landscaping, street design, economic strategies—to keep Jordan Village 'Jordan Village'— a charming, quirky, heritage-rich but economically viable part of Waterford's larger Town Center.

To this end, this Vision and Strategic Plan documents the architectural context of Jordan Village and proposes design review guidelines to ensure that renovations, or even new construction, will maintain appropriate scale, character, and architectural quality. The Plan also discovered through an analysis of Town zoning that most buildings in the village are grandfathered 'non-conformances' that meet few of the setbacks or lot dimensions of existing zoning standards superimposed on it thirty or more years ago. To remedy this problem, the Plan proposes a new zoning district and design

guidelines that will replicate the informal rules that led to Jordan Village's original historic evolution.

Discussions and research have also revealed that aspects of parking regulations in Jordan Village are impossible hurdles to overcome for new shops or restaurants. The Plan therefore explores creative ways to provide for needed parking while not burdening individual property owners or requiring unsightly accommodation to the auto—ways to allow sharing of parking among multiple owners, expanding the supply of spaces to benefit everyone in the Village. As detailed in the pages following, landowners such as the Baptist Church have volunteered their willingness to consider participation in such a program.

Finally, the plan is looking at the larger 'Waterford Town Center' context—the Civic Triangle area along Rope Ferry Road, and the 'big-box' businesses within the Route One 'Post Road Gateway.' Together with Jordan Village, these areas represent the true core of Waterford. And like Jordan Village, they can be improved over time in terms of increasing the numbers of interrelated uses, enhancing pedestrian and auto safety, improving the quality of design, and achieving more functional interconnections between sites. For instance, a focus on re-energizing Jordan Green can start with a catalyst project, renovating the Town-owned Nevins Cottage and adjacent barn as a coffee house/ ice cream shop and an associated 'makerspace' workshop for local hobbyists and entrepreneurs.

But one of the most exciting aspects of the Plan, in parallel with how to implement attractive roadways and buildings for the Town Center, is how to program the area with events and activities that will increase use by a wide range of residents, young people, and older citizens, increasing demand to support new services, amenities, and retail attractions. These events can include bringing back Waterford Week as an annual event or reinstating the Rope Ferry Road Memorial Day parade. Leveraging the renovation of Jordan Green, in conjunction with the library, historical society, and municipal agencies, will be a key part of this effort—as suggested in the Plan, possibly featuring an annual Town 'PuppetFest' in potential partnership with the O'Neill Theater Center, the Library, or other educational or cultural institutions.

Review the Plan's ideas, contribute your own, and participate in the evolving results of these exciting efforts—ideas for projects and events as part of a community based program in support of the Plan—taking Jordan Village 'Back to the Future' through a partnership effort to establish Waterford Town Center as a vibrant focus of regional life and activity.

Introduction: Overview of Work Process

Waterford Town Center, a multi-use destination for the Town of Waterford and surrounding region, incorporates the historic Jordan Village residential and commercial community, the adjacent Civic Triangle and associated neighborhood and institutional uses, and the nearby 'Post Road Gateway' commercial/ mixed-use area (containing Stop & Shop, CVS, and other highway-related stores). This composite area, illustrated in the following graphic, draws both Town citizens and regional residents for services, shopping and amenities. Its development as an integrated Town Center was a major goal of the Town's current Plan of Preservation, Conservation, and Development (approved 2012).

Project Genesis and Approach

Jordan Village, situated on the Jordan Brook millpond, was the initial settlement as the Town of Waterford evolved as an agricultural extension of New London. Based on this historic past, the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation provided Waterford with a grant to document Jordan Village's present status and its future potential as a living heritage resource for the Town and its surrounding region.

This effort also examines Jordan Village's adjacent Civic Triangle context, examining potential public- private infrastructure and mixed-use opportunities in this important location, to complement the Town Hall, Library, and various park and recreational amenities that serve Town citizens.

The strategy also recognizes the need to incorporate the nearby Route One commercial area—the 'Post Road Gateway'— a

collection of shopping center and individual commercial buildings that draw shoppers from throughout the region and serve as an economic engine for the Town.

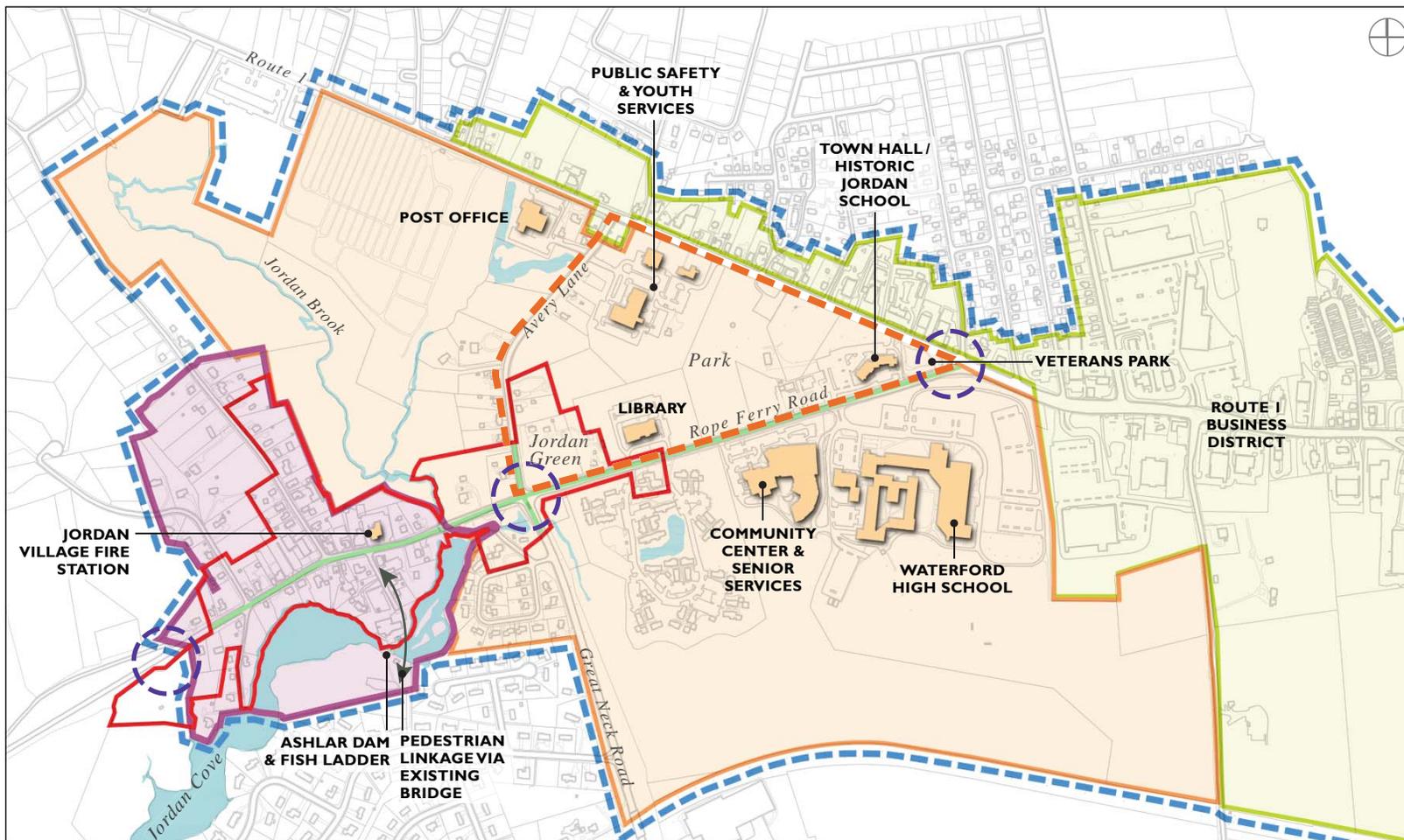
The Town Center planning, design and development strategy examines a variety of uses and issues regarding preservation and growth, institutional and economic development, placemaking and building design, transportation and landscape infrastructure. It recommends a framework of planning and design criteria to coordinate development and achieve community objectives, capturing visitors that may be traveling to local institutions such as the Town Hall, schools and library, cultural/ recreation draws such as the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center or Harkness State Park, or regional venues such as Niantic beachfronts, Montville or Ledyard casino resorts, or New London ferries.

Planning Process: Participation and Research

The development of the Plan is based on community input and interaction—structured as an intensive 'charrette-based' process that involved a variety of community participants and civic organizations, as well as private business interests and public officials. It is the first in a series of detailed place-based studies to update and implement the Town of Waterford 2012 Plan of Preservation, Conservation, and Development (the comprehensive planning process itself included extensive public participation).

The dual community-driven objectives in creating this Town Center Development Strategy are collaboration and participation. In order to supplement the Town's recent planning initiatives and the consultant team's research and site analysis, the team first conducted interactive key person.

Study Area



- Waterford Town Center Overlay Study Area
- Jordan Village National Register Historic District
- Civic Triangle
- ⊕ Gateway Node
- Jordan Village Study Area
- Civic Triangle Study Area
- Post Road Gateway Study Area
- Streetscape Improvements

interviews with public officials and departments, private citizens and landowners, and local civic advocates and community stakeholders, as well as workshops with the project's multi-disciplinary Advisory Committee and Town Department of Planning staff.

A central result of this initial effort was a three-day community 'charrette', or series of stakeholder and public workshops, combined with open public input sessions and consultant design studies. A 'charrette' derives its name from the French word for 'wheelbarrow.' The reason for the rather strange terminology is that architecture students at the Ecole de Beaux Arts in Paris in the nineteenth century, chronically working to the last possible moment, would have their friends push them in a wheelbarrow to the faculty juries at which their projects would be judged—much to the bemusement of curious passers-by. The term 'charrette' has therefore come to mean an intensive and open work process leading to a public presentation—used most often in recent years in community based planning and design processes.

The Waterford Town Center charrette began with a Thursday evening public Forum for residents at large—focused on Jordan Village, the 'Civic Triangle' institutions and surrounding uses, and the 'Post Road Gateway' area of large commercial retail development. The result of the small group discussions and large group recap was a summary of outstanding issues to be changed or improved and positive elements to be preserved and maintained:

- Concerns included auto dominance and traffic conflicts with pedestrian circulation, lack of landscaping and poor sense of visual unity, and inconsistent regulations and incentives;
- Positive features on which to build included the charming ambiance of Jordan Village, Waterford's strong municipal institutions, and popular public amenities such as parks and playgrounds.

This result was illustrated by a second exercise to define a potential vision for the corridor, what participants wanted to see in ten years' time:

- an integrated Town Center area, a vibrant and attractively landscaped area with new amenities and uses that encourage walkability and convenience, maintaining the unique qualities of each subarea.

Based on these public priorities and preferences, consultants and associated Town staff engaged in a follow-on two-day intensive open work session, held in the Waterford Town Library. The team met with invited stakeholders and welcomed the public to look over their shoulders and react to evolving ideas. A Saturday morning 'walkabout,' a public on-site tour focused on Jordan Village history and conditions, provided immediate response as to localized issues and opportunities in that priority area.

Consolidation of Public Participation and Project Research

In the weeks following the charrette, members of the larger planning team held further sessions with various entities in order to test conclusions and discuss opportunities for implementation. These included followup conversations with town officials, not-for-profit civic representatives, property owners and private business interests. The results were presented to a series of Advisory Committee meetings for feedback and reaction. The schedule also included public presentations to Town officials, the Planning and Zoning Commission, and pertinent Board of Finance/ Representative Town Board members.

Report Recommendations and Next Steps

The report documents a development strategy that combines form and function, dealing with planning, design and transportation issues as they relate to Waterford Town Center as a whole and to individual projects or opportunities:

- *a long-term 'vision' and short-term approach for the project area, focusing on a variety of public initiatives as well as privately- owned properties (the owners of which were invited to participate in the planning process);*
- *an implementation strategy, including new planning approaches (revised zoning for Jordan Village and Village Overlay District tools for the Town Center as a whole).*

With official Town approval of this document-- as an updated and detailed refinement of specific aspects of the Town's Plan of Preservation, Conservation, and Development that will become part of that larger plan-- citizens will have a framework for

further detailed planning, design and implementation. In the Civic Triangle and Post Road Gateway areas, additional detailed local or Town-wide zoning recommendations, design guidelines, economic strategies, and investment priorities can be later drafted and approved. Based on these actions, public- private development strategies can be refined, setting the stage for future development of the entire area that will set in motion the Waterford Town Center vision expressed by the community and stakeholders throughout this process.

A Plan of Preservation, Conservation, and Development implementation Commission is being defined to help refine and prioritize suggested Townwide improvements and policies.

And as part of Waterford's larger action-oriented planning context, the Town has recently been awarded a State of Connecticut Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP) grant. This grant will provide funding for a similar process for design and physical improvements to the Mago Point area to the west of the Town Center, in conjunction with its various maritime businesses and other participants. This process will create a parallel destination at Mago Point for citizens and tourists that will complement and reinforce this Waterford Center Vision and Strategic Plan.

1 Waterford Town Center: Focus Of Town Heritage, Civic Activity, and Economic Stability

The Waterford Town Center area is proposed for enhancement as the central mixed-use focus of the Town. Located along the Post Road/ Route One Corridor, the area contains Jordan Village (the first settlement in Waterford as it evolved from adjacent New London), the Civic Triangle and associated areas (the location of the Town's municipal and institutional facilities and services), and the 'Post Road Gateway' complex of commercial and retail development (a central shopping area for Town and regional residents).

1.1 Regional and Town Context

The function of this area as an activity nexus for Waterford is due to its geographic location along the main Route One (Boston Post Road) highway corridor, and the corridor's area role as a major connector between New London to the east and East Lyme to the west. Rope Ferry Road, which intersects Route One in the site area, is a historic corridor that links to Mago Point, a waterfront node on the western edge of the Town featuring marinas and tourism amenities, and beyond to Niantic and adjacent CT shore communities.

The Town Center area is also the center of access to shorefront Waterford attractions and opportunities serving a larger regional audience:

- Harkness State Park, a popular seasonal recreation resource for music events and beach use (Waterford has one of the finest beaches in Connecticut), as well as a venue for weddings and other rentals;
- the 50-year-old Eugene O'Neill Theater Center (listed on the National Register of Historic Places), a noted educational facility that hosts scholarship students in playwriting, set design, and other theatre arts (and also the historic home of major puppetry courses and events, celebrating next year the 25th anniversary of such activities with the dedication of the new Jim and Jane Henson Rehearsal Hall);
- a major regional golf course, a market draw for enthusiastic users and their families;
- and the potential of future shore-based resort or amenity developments—inns, restaurants, and other facilities-- that can attract new users to the Town and provide spinoff benefits to local businesses and tax base.

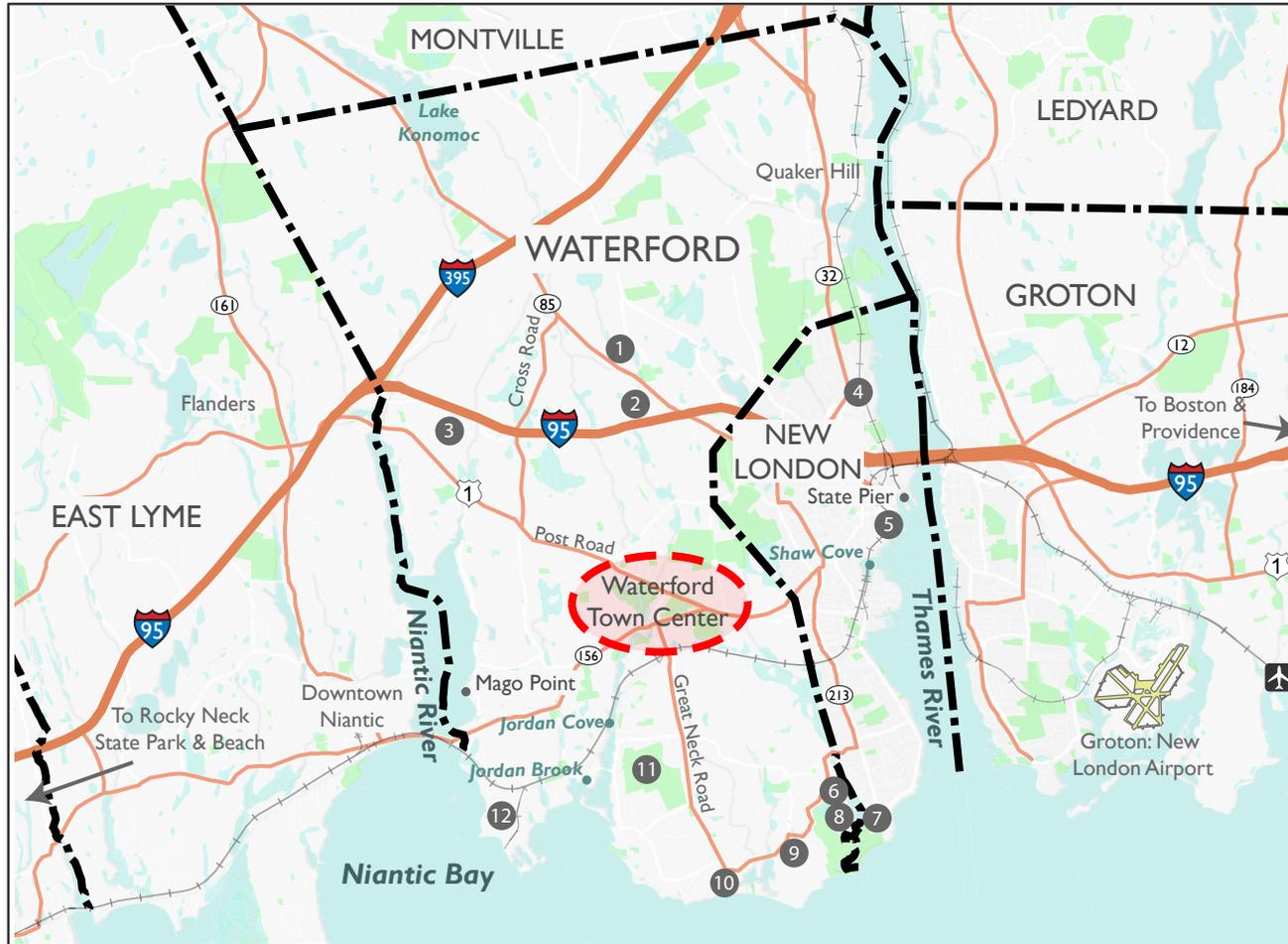
In the larger region, the Waterford Center area provides a useful functional bridge between urban New London to the east, along Route One/ Post Road, to East Lyme to the west, as well as along Rope Ferry Road to coastal waterfront communities beyond Niantic including Old Lyme and Old Saybrook.

1.2 Land Use, Historic, Cultural and Environmental Framework

Land Use Framework

The Town Center is the venue for a number of important Waterford services, institutions, and businesses:

I.1 - Regional and Town Context



- | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town Boundaries Project Area | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Waterford Commons 2. Crystal Mall 3. L+M Hospital Cancer Center 4. US Coast Guard Academy 5. Amtrak Station/ Coast Guard Museum 6. O'Neill Theatre | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Ocean Beach State Park 8. Waterford Beach Park 9. Harkness Memorial State Park 10. Seaside Regional Center 11. Great Neck Country Club 12. Dominion's Millstone Power Station | |
|---|--|---|--|



- In Jordan Village (although primarily residential), the ‘When Pigs Fly’ café, (which draws both regulars and tourists to its unique and inimitable breakfast and lunch specialties), the 1920 Mill complex (the original mill having burned in 1942, is now home to a cutting-edge engineering firm), and the Jordan Village Firehouse (one of five similar facilities);
- In the Civic Triangle area, the Town Hall (focus of various municipal and school board services), the Library (in many ways the heart of the Town, providing not only a relaxing passive space for reading and browsing, but also active courses and activities for all ages), the High School (a recently expanded state of the art educational complex), the Community Center (providing programs and services for seniors and others), and the Friendship School (a charter school serving as a magnet for children from the surrounding area).
- In the ‘Post Road Gateway’ area, businesses such as Stop & Shop (a full service supermarket anchoring the Waterford Shopping Plaza center), the CVS Pharmacy (an important draw of the shopping area to the south), and Benny’s (a popular discount store, part of the Waterfall Shopping Center to the east).

Historical Framework

The initial Native American presence in Waterford occurred along Jordan Cove and Jordan Brook. The natural features of woodland, rolling hills, large boulder and glacial rock formations and water bodies provided an optimal location for Native American camps which were located close to Jordan Cove in the summer and then moved further inland and upland in the winter months.

Rope Ferry Road began as a Native American footpath and trail serving as a connection between the various camps of the local

Nehantic tribe. The coastal area between the Connecticut River in Old Saybrook and the Pawcatuck River in Stonington served as the Tribal Territory for Nehantic. This trail, known as Nehantic Way, linked the Fort Trumbull area in New London to the Niantic River.

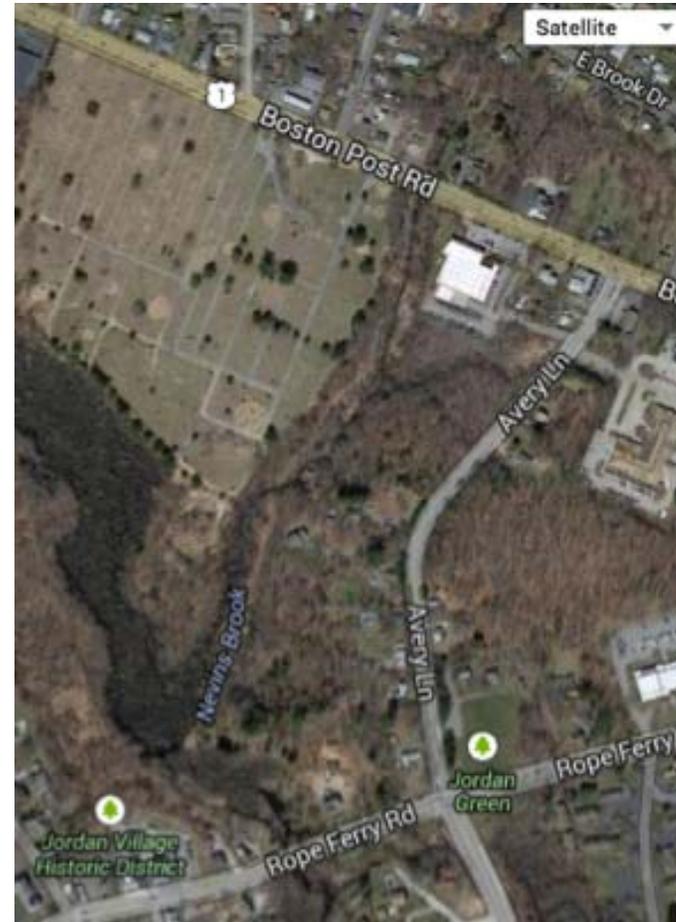
As the area became settled by European colonists, farms and homes were built along the ‘Rope Ferry Road’, whose name derived from a manually-drawn ferry linking to Niantic across the river. The Jordan Cove area, with its industry built around the harnessing of water power for a grist mill, naturally evolved into the present day Jordan Village, with Rope Ferry Road continuing as a major transportation route between Niantic and New London.

Chapter 2.1 describes the organic growth of Jordan Village as an important settlement. In Chapter 3.1, as Waterford grew, institutions were added in the Civic Triangle area as well as elsewhere in town to the north and south, and residential development continued to disperse throughout the still agricultural landscape, complementing New London’s urban growth. Chapter 4.1 describes the commercial development that followed, based primarily on accessibility from various highways throughout the Town.

As a vivid demonstration of how the area has grown, the following illustrations compare aerial photographs from Waterford’s still agricultural early twentieth century fabric, relative to more recent views 80 years later of the same area, with much of its urbanized fabric in place.



The above photo focuses on Jordan Village and the surrounding area to its north. In 1934 and today one can see Jordan Village itself much the same, although Great Neck Road, rather than connecting directly into Avery Lane as today, intersected Rope Ferry Road to the west to avoid drainage issues, partially but not quite engineered away today.



While Jordan Green is in both photos, one can also note in the earlier aerial the absence of later-added public buildings such as the Library and Police Complex, within the Civic Triangle, and the Post Office on Post Road west of Avery Lane.



The above photo focuses on the institutional and commercial areas to the east of Jordan Village. In 1934 the area was obviously predominantly agricultural, with only an incipient neighborhood northwest of Route One.



Eighty years later, the Town of Waterford has evolved its present structure and land uses, including new educational and community center buildings south of Rope Ferry Road and retail shopping centers, complete with frontage-deadening surface parking lots, north and south along Route One.

Cultural Framework

The Town of Waterford is home to a number of cultural institutions that serve the Town and surrounding region:

- Within the Town Center area itself, physical institutions described above such as the Library and Community Center provide well-liked and needed services. The Civic Triangle Park, with its physical amenities and recreational programs, is a popular destination for town citizens.
- The seasonal Farmers' Market, held in the Town Hall parking lot, attracts shoppers from throughout the region. On the verge of outgrowing its space, it is looking for a larger but similarly available, visible, and accessible location in the Town Center area.
- Other traditional Town events have also taken place in the Civic Triangle area—Waterford Week activities or the annual town parade. Although in recent years their organization has been less active, there is opportunity for their revival in the context of other events.
- Jordan Green, at the corner of Avery Lane and Rope Ferry Road, is the venue for a collection of historic buildings that both house meeting space for groups such as the Historical Society but have also in the past provided space for Town-wide events and activities such as the 'Sheep to Shawl' festival or school visits to building exhibits.
- Nearby on the west side of Avery Lane is the 'Rose House,' the home/ workshop/ theatre of famous mid-20th century puppeteers Margo and Rufus Rose. Among their other accomplishments, this talented couple created Howdy Doody, one of the most well-known puppets of the 1950s who, together with his companions Phineas T. Bluster and Princess Summerfallwinterspring, became an early television star.
- The O'Neill Theater Center, located near the end of Great Neck Road, is a complex including the historic home of prizewinning playwright Eugene O'Neill. The 50-year-old Institute, best known for its national young playwrights program of work-study and public readings, for 25 years has also counted puppetry as one of its many programs (it houses the collection of Jim and Jane Henson, creators of the now Disney-owned Muppets).
- Harkness State Park is a large beachfront property, Connecticut tourist attraction and recreational resource containing the historic Eolia mansion, now a popular wedding venue and gardens designed by noted landscape designer Beatrix Farrand. For many years it housed a popular summer-long music festival, which has been replaced in recent years by a series of individual concerts, although there is still enthusiasm about reviving the previous program.
- Other local cultural venues in nearby New London include the Garde Arts Center, a non-profit professional arts center (nationally recognized for its restored vaudeville

theatre and multi-faceted programming), Hygienic Art (a non-profit gallery providing art exhibits, music and movies), the Lyman Allyn Art Museum (which attracts approximately 25,000 visitors annually), and educational institutions Connecticut College and the Coast Guard Academy. New London is also the designated site of the future Coast Guard Museum (as well as the home base of the Bark Eagle and the docking site of other visiting tall ships).

Environmental Framework

A variety of natural open space areas are located within and around Jordan Village, the Civic Triangle and the Post Road Gateway. Some of these areas such as Stenger Farm Park are town properties.

Man-made responses have taken advantage of the natural landscape. These include parks such as Jordan Cove Park (connecting to Jordan Village by a soon-to-be-repaired pedestrian bridge over the Jordan Mill Dam), Jordan Green (preserved as open space along with a collection of historic buildings), and the Town Park (which provides both active and passive recreational facilities within the Civic Triangle). There are also nearby public recreational facilities at Waterford High School and Stenger Farm Park.

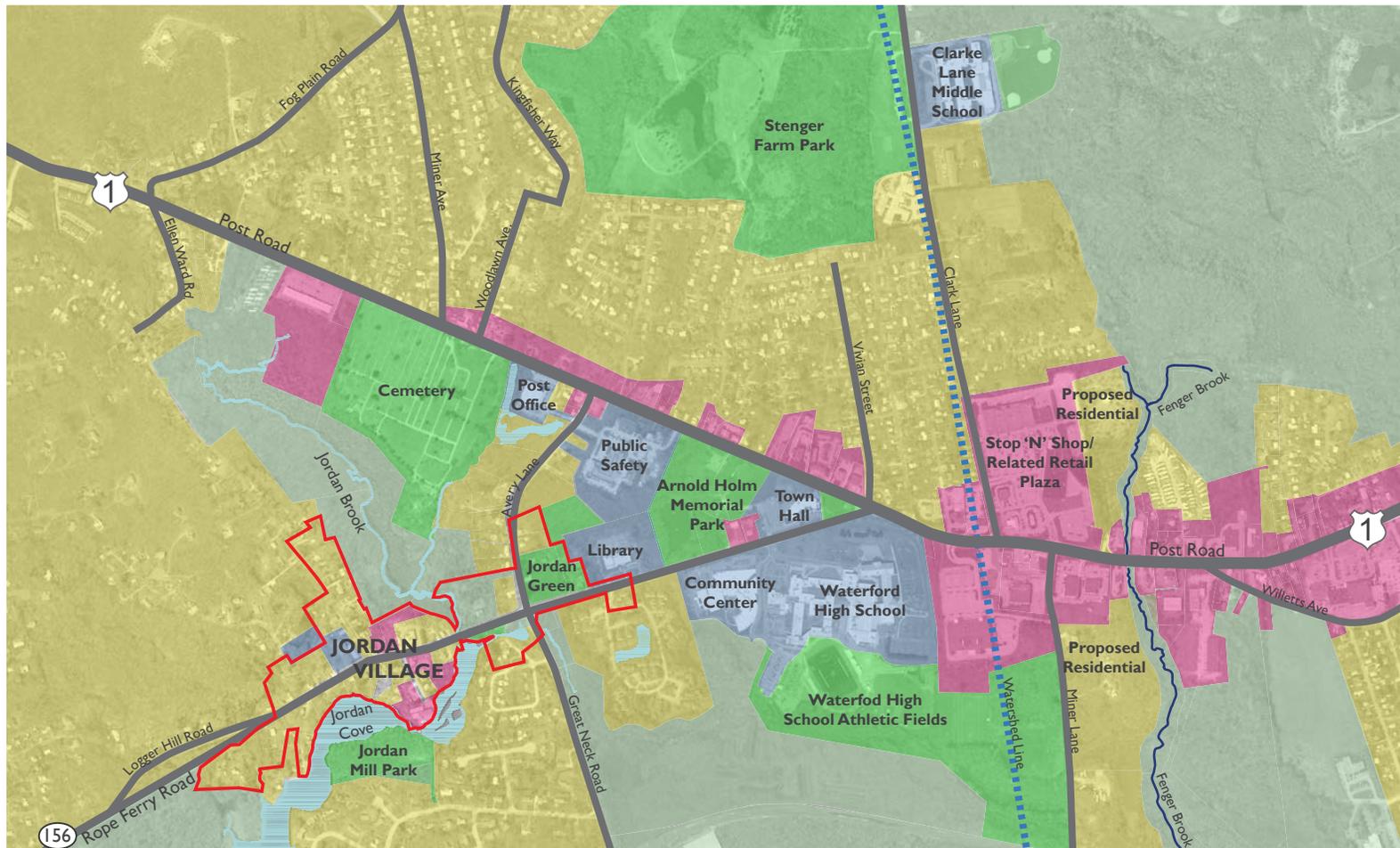
A major goal of this project lies in recommending safe pedestrian connections between the many natural open spaces and man-made park facilities within Waterford Center.

In terms of natural systems, the Town Center is in two main watershed systems, each of which drain directly as frontal systems into the Long Island Sound:

- to the west, the Jordan Brook system, which drains through the millpond into Jordan Cove and the Long Island Sound, and
- to the east, the Fenger Brook system, which drains from Bates Woods Park in New London through southeastern Waterford into the Long Island Sound.

Flooding and storm water issues are a particular problem immediately east of the Jordan Mill Pond area, exacerbated by the poor drainage resulting from the reconstruction of the area around the intersection of Avery Lane/ Great Neck Road and Rope Ferry Road.

I.2 - Land Use, Historic, Cultural and Environmental Framework



- Jordan Village National Register District
- Parks and Active Recreation Areas
- Commercial Land Use
- Institutional and Public Properties
- Open Space Areas
- Residential Land Use



1.3 Gateways, Corridors, and Pilot Projects

The Town Center area is structured within an armature of corridors and gateways, within which the three individual subareas are located. Two pilot projects were chosen because they can function as short term action projects in order to set in motion the plan's implementation. The adjacent graphic describes these aspects.

Gateways as Welcoming Transitions

As a driver enters the Town Center area, or travels between the distinct subareas, there are currently no transitional signals that welcome or offer orientation. The adjacent graphic describes those 'gateways'-- locations at the de facto boundaries between different zones that are opportunities for placemaking and wayfinding:

- the eastern entry point at Willetts Avenue/ Route One;
- the Rope Ferry/ Route One intersection, an awkwardly-angled traffic bottleneck;
- the intersection of Rope Ferry Road with Avery Lane/ Great Neck Road, an opportunity for signage to major town institutions and shorefront amenities;
- the Jordan Brook bridge, the natural gateway along Rope Ferry Road into Jordan Village;
- the entry from the west into Jordan Village, a point of transition for Rope Ferry Road from a higher-speed highway into a dense, pedestrian-focused village roadway.

Ideas and options for these gateways will be illustrated in later sections, and next steps will be proposed for more detailed traffic and landscape design studies to facilitate the vision of an

integrated Town Center, heralded by attractive design solutions at these key entry gateways.

Corridor Framework: Pedestrian Safety and Traffic Calming

The Route One/ Post Road corridor is a main regional spine. Through Waterford, this corridor connects East Lyme in the west and New London in the east. Because of its high capacity and connectivity, it serves as the prime access for the various regional commercial stores, such as Stop & Shop, CVS, or Benny's, located in the easternmost 'Post Road Gateway' portion of the Waterford Town Center. On the northern edge of the Civic Triangle adjacent land uses become a mixture of commercial and residential.

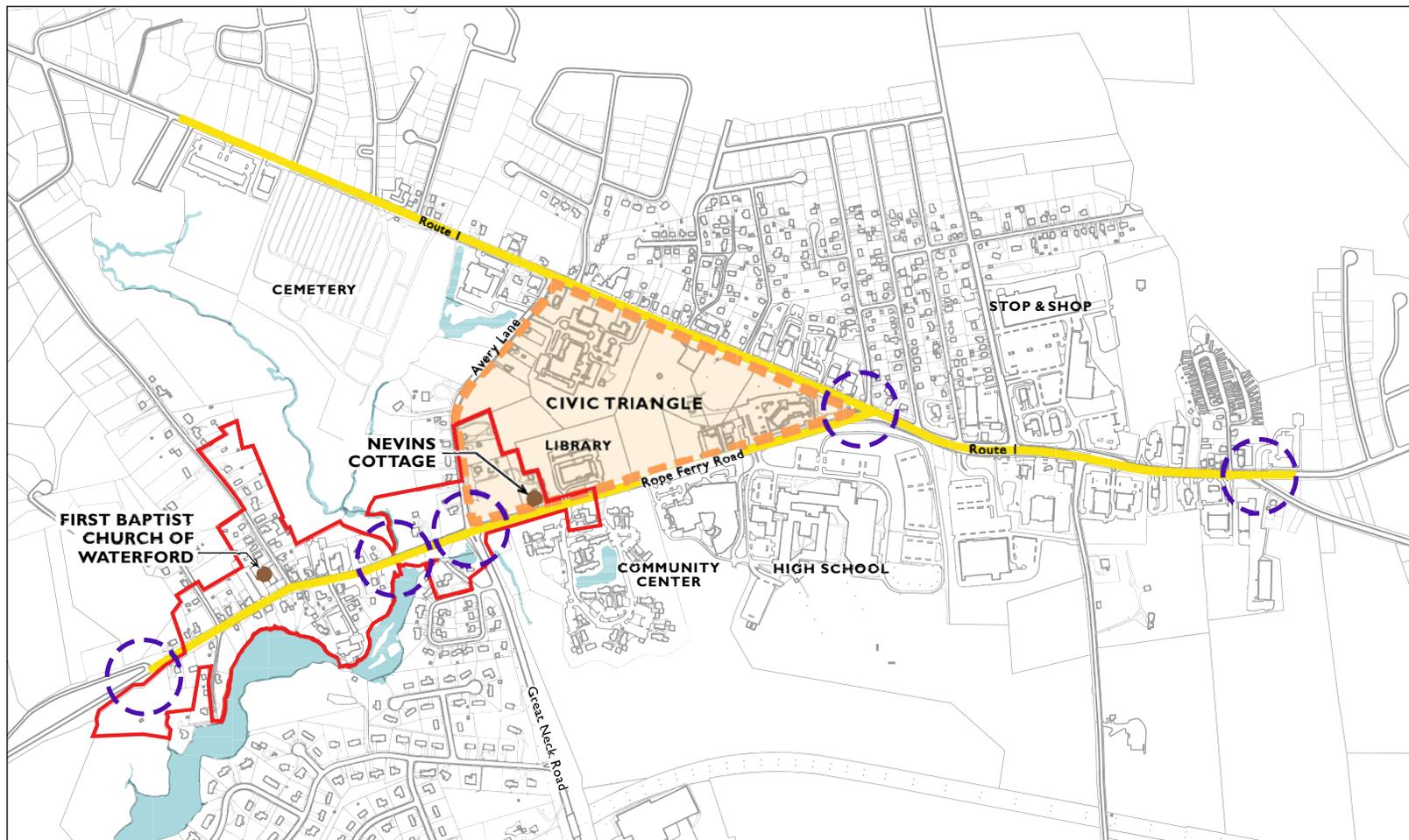
Unfortunately Route One is designed as an auto-dominated highway, unsafe and unfriendly to pedestrians walking along its edge and a dangerous barrier to those trying to cross. Shoppers with errands on both sides of the roadway have to get in their car and drive to the opposite side to complete their trip.

At the eastern corner of the Civic Triangle, a second main corridor, Rope Ferry Road, intersects the Post Road in a clumsy oblique intersection. Rope Ferry in this area is also an auto-dominated road, separating town facilities on its north side from school, community and residential uses on the south. These same pedestrian- unfriendly characteristics can be found further west as Rope Ferry traverses Jordan Village. (In fact these dangers are even more pronounced in eastbound lanes, where cars picking up speed down Logger Hill zoom through the quiet, small-scale central area of Jordan Village).



The Waterford Town Center is the nexus of a variety of cultural and recreational facilities located within the Town. (Clockwise from the top right: Waterford Town Library, Eolia Mansion at Harkness Memorial State Park, Eugene O’Neill Theater Center, and Civic Triangle Park Duck Pond.)

I.3 - Waterford Town Center: Gateways, Corridors and Pilot Projects



- Gateways
- Pilot Projects
- Corridor

- Jordan Village National Register District
- Civic Triangle

Rope Ferry Road in Waterford comprises the easternmost section of Route 156 (a Connecticut State Highway). Route 156 begins at an intersection with Route 82 in southeastern East Haddam and ends at an intersection with Route One in Waterford. It is a two-lane state road, heavily traveled at peak commuter hours in morning and afternoon, connecting residents into New London, to other routes that link to I-95, to nearby shopping areas and schools, and to Waterford town services located in the Civic Triangle.

Avery Lane, a quieter residential artery, completes the triangle of corridors in the Town Center.

Pedestrian safety is an item of major concern due to the number of adjacent residential units, public service buildings, schools, and retail locations that present areas of potential vehicular–pedestrian conflict. Crosswalks along Rope Ferry Road occur at North Road near the Baptist Church in Jordan Village, at the major intersection of Avery Lane/ Great Neck Road and Rope Ferry Road, between the library and the Rope Ferry Commons Condominium complex, and between the Town Hall and the High School/ Community Center/ Charter School complex.

There are three major areas of concern for pedestrian safety along site area roadways:

1. Logger Hill Road entering Jordan Village: Another hazardous situation is present at the bottom of Logger Hill Road, the western extent of this project. Vehicles entering from the west, accelerate speed as a result of the steep decline in Rope Ferry Road at this location. Vehicles thus

enter the densely populated Jordan Village at speeds much higher than those posted. This presents a hazard to residents as well as visitors to the village

2. Library and Rope Ferry Commons: Due to a sudden topographic shift along a section of the road near the library, visibility is diminished creating a hazard at the crosswalk in this location. Traffic records show that an elderly person was struck and killed while crossing at this intersection.
3. Route One/ Rope Ferry Road Junction: The awkward transition between Rope Ferry Road and Route One at the juncture of the Civic Triangle and the Post Road Gateway presents another hazardous condition for both vehicles and pedestrians.

Based on observations of traffic patterns during peak and non-peak use periods and of roadway conditions in fall, winter and spring as well as during the day and nighttime hours, this study recommends traffic calming measures at these three locations in particular, as well as other locations within the study area.

Through the implementation of traffic calming measures, uses and areas along the Rope Ferry and Route One Corridors will be better served.

The Institute of Traffic Engineers defines traffic calming as “*the combination of mainly physical measures that reduce the negative effects of motor vehicle use, alter driver behavior and improve conditions for non-motorized street users*”. Its traffic calming objectives include: achieving slow speeds for motor vehicles, increasing the safety and the perception of safety for non-

motorized users of the street, reducing the need for police enforcement, enhancing the street environment (aesthetics), encouraging water infiltration into the ground, and increasing access for all modes of transportation.

Key pedestrian/ vehicular traffic conflicts are a major problem along Jordan Village's Rope Ferry Corridor, as traffic proceeds along Rope Ferry through the Civic Triangle area, and along Route One in the Post Road Gateway area. Through recommended traffic calming measures specific to each area, these conflicts should be mitigated or minimized.

As Rope Ferry Road, a state highway, and Route One, a US highway, are both maintained by CT DOT, design standards respond as to which type of traffic calming measures can be used on state roadways. To facilitate snow plowing, measures such as speed bumps, raised crosswalks, 'bump-outs,' or road narrowing are not allowed on state roads.

Enforcing speed limits is always an approach, although limited by practical constraints of police personnel and priorities. But other approaches beyond enforcement, such as ways to vividly call attention to potential pedestrian activity, can be useful techniques to encourage drivers to slow down as they move through more urbanized Town Center areas. These approaches will be discussed in following sections dealing with each area as part of design guidelines dealing with public infrastructure and transportation.

Pilot Projects as First Steps to Implementation

A major part of the Town Center strategy is to define short-term potential to begin long-term implementation. Two such opportunities have been identified as pilot projects, places in which programmatic capacity, design prospects, land ownership, and stakeholder enthusiasm all provide the preconditions for key actions that can jump start the Town Center vision:

In Jordan Village, working with the First Baptist Church and its longer term plans as a partnership to resolve parking issues that represent a current and future problem for local businesses;

In the Civic Triangle, taking advantage of a Town-owned and available resource, Nevins Cottage, to establish a potential partnership with the Library, the O'Neill Theater Center, and Historic Society stakeholders to begin a revitalization effort for the larger Jordan Green complex.



Typical gateway entry showing signage and banners as signals that driver is entering special area.

1.4 Public Infrastructure Investment: Corridors and Streetscape, Parks and Walkways

Figure 1.4 describes a design framework for long-term, phased public infrastructure investment for the Waterford Town Center as a whole:

- it identifies pedestrian-oriented interventions—crosswalks and associated landscaping features—that will achieve traffic calming by signaling to drivers that they are in a Town Center precinct in which slow speeds and careful driving are natural responses;
- it defines a larger network of off-street greenways (suitable than highway sidewalks or on-road bikeways) for shared use with bicyclists of all ages. This interconnected framework is planned to link the Town Center areas to larger town and region open spaces, recreation locations, parks, and waterfronts;
- and it reinforces gateway points described above where design features can welcome drivers to the Town Center or its subareas and traffic studies can recommend intersection improvements to roadways.

Roadway and Pedestrian Improvements/ Traffic Calming: Connecting, not Dividing, Uses and Areas

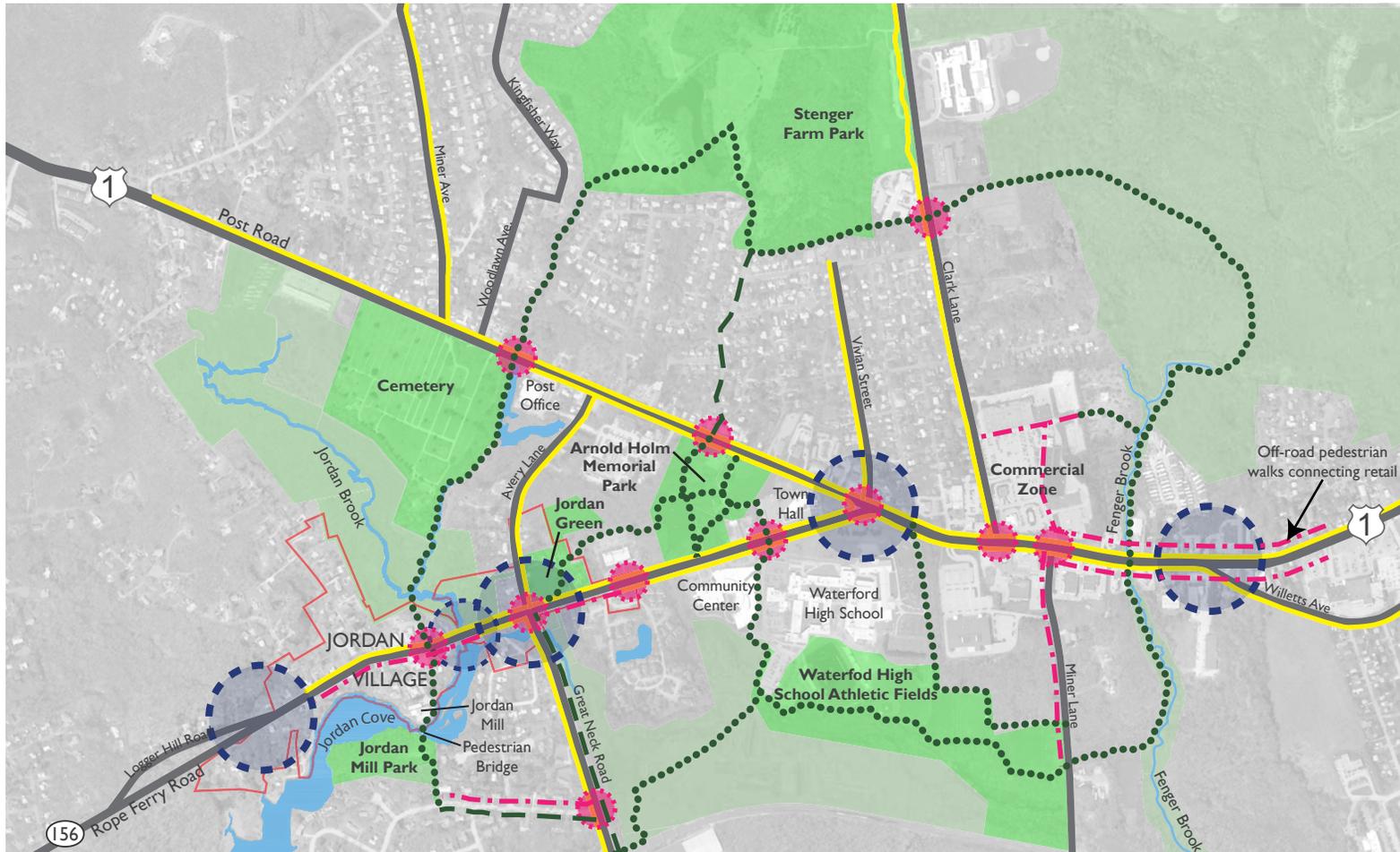
Rope Ferry Road and Route One (Post Road) are the main spines of the Waterford Town Center. Along those roadways, this report recommends acceptable traffic calming measures, which will not impair CT DOT maintenance:

- Specially colored and textured pavements set flush with the roadway pavement, that meet CT DOT standards for crosswalk width and nighttime reflection. For maximum visual recognition, these areas of special pavement should cover an expanded width crosswalk at the locations shown on the map.
- Placement of bollards or granite posts at the ramps associated with pedestrian crosswalks. These vertical elements will help both pedestrians and drivers identify crosswalks. Style and material should be in keeping with the historic character of the area.
- Landscaped areas (trees and flowering plants) placed either side of the crosswalk entrance behind the sidewalks. These areas will provide a visual focus for both pedestrians and motorists, further highlighting the crosswalk. They will also aesthetically enhance the roadway corridor.
- Light poles of appropriate scale, character and height to enhance village character and provide safe nighttime use. These poles can be placed along Rope Ferry Road and Post Road at crosswalks and key intersections. They will provide another vertical element to help slow vehicular traffic speeds. Further study as to height and design of these poles is recommended.

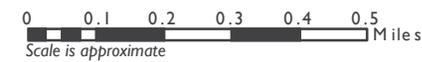
Connect Uses and Areas:

- Wayfinding signage that directs pedestrians to key points of interest and to pedestrian trails within Waterford Center. Signs must be of a character and scale appropriate to the surroundings. Signs must not be overused.
- Clearance of overgrown vegetation that is obscuring vehicular and pedestrian view corridors.

I.4 - Corridors and Streetscapes, Parks and Walkways



- Parks and Active Recreation Areas
- Open Space Areas
- Off-street Trails (Bike, Pedestrian)
- On-street Bikeway
- Existing Sidewalks
- Potential New Sidewalks
- Special Pavement Crosswalks
- Gateways



1.5 The Village District Act: Enabling Design Review Guidelines

As part of the effort to preserve the important character of the Town's early center, the Town asked the consultant team to review the Connecticut Village District statute (CGS§8-2j) and make recommendations for possible designation of a Village District in order to preserve the existing character while promoting economic vitality.

The Village Districts Act was passed by the Connecticut General Assembly in 1998 and is currently in use in a variety of towns throughout the state. The law is intended to help municipalities protect areas of towns that have distinctive character, landscape and historic structures.

Under the law municipal zoning commissions may adopt regulations (i.e. Design Guidelines) that consider the design and placement of buildings, relative mass and scale of buildings to existing buildings, maintenance of public views, and retention of important natural and built landscape elements. The Village District Act also encourages the "conversion and preservation of existing buildings and sites in a manner that maintains the historic, natural and community character of the district."

This Vision and Strategic Plan proposes that the entire Waterford Town Center area—Jordan Village, the Civic Triangle area, and the Post Road Gateway commercial area-- be designated as a 'Village District overlay zone' under this enabling legislation. This will maintain the underlying zoning while allowing for an overlay of design criteria and economic incentives in individual sub-areas

(the only change to existing underlying zones is a new Jordan Village Mixed Use Zone, described in Section 2.3 following). This concept is illustrated in the adjacent Figure 1.5.

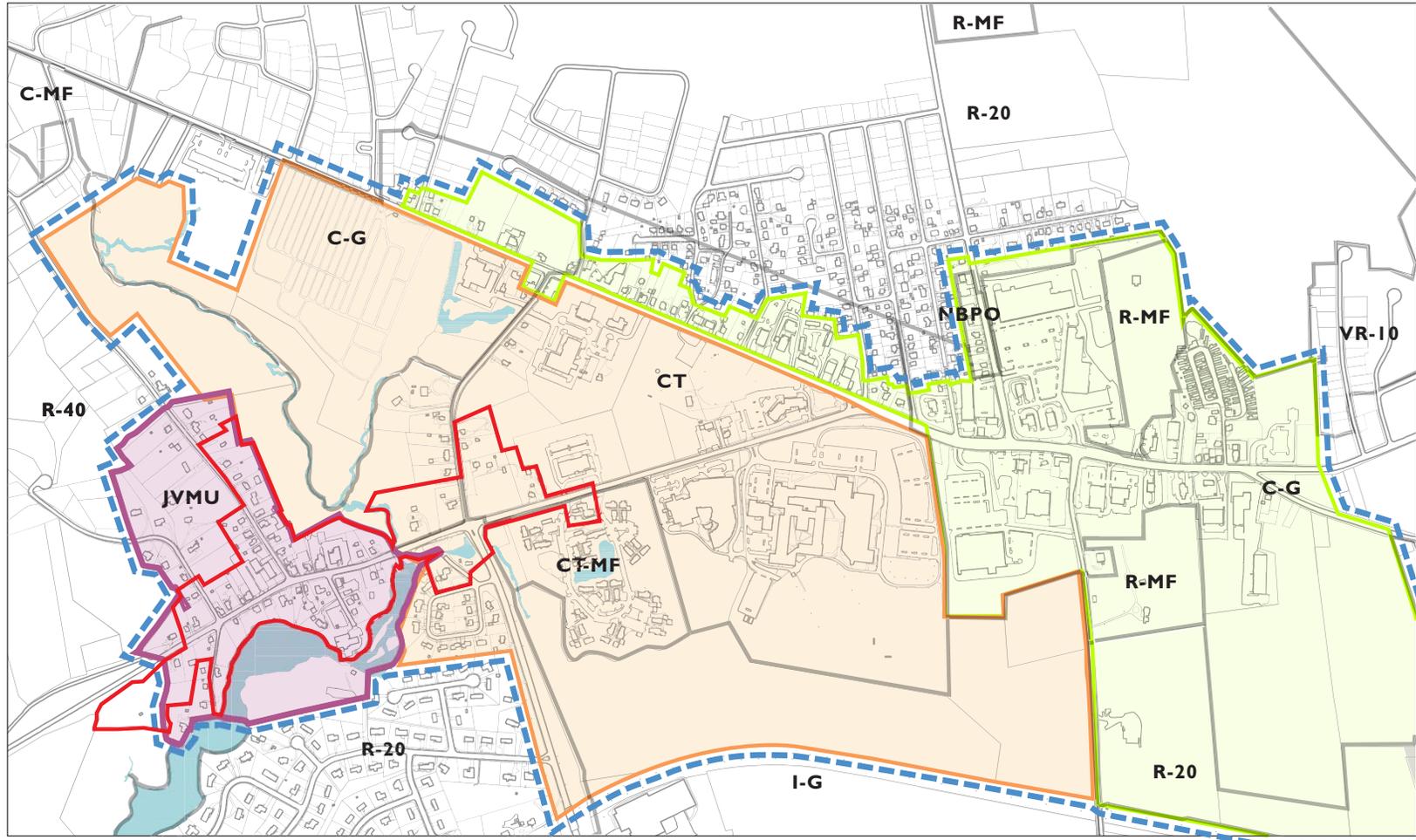
The benefits of such a Town Center-wide overlay are threefold:

- 1- It will allow the underlying zoning to remain in place, minimizing disruption to existing areas (although refinements will independently be made to Jordan Village area zoning, as described in later sections);
- 2- It will enable under the legislation the development of design guidelines for each of the three sub-areas; and
- 3- It will facilitate other Town Center-wide economic development tools, which can allow for shared investment between sub-areas.

Detailed design guidelines for Jordan Village, introduced in Section 2 and presented in Appendix A, can potentially be used as a template for future similar areas, such as Mago Point. This report also provides outline considerations for design guidelines (public infrastructure and private development) for the other areas of the Waterfront Town Center—the Civic Triangle and Post Road Gateway areas.

Related Town Center-wide economic development tools made possible by this district designation are described in more detail in Section 6 of this report. These considerations are summarized in Sections 3 and 4, and can be refined and detailed in future work. A design review board has been established and became effective May 1 of 2014. Members have been appointed and will be reviewing all applications for site plans and special permits throughout the town.

I.5 - Waterford Town Center Overlay District and Related Sub-Areas



- Existing Zone Lines
- Jordan Village National Register District
- Waterford Town Center Overlay District

- Proposed New Jordan Village Sub-area
- Civic Triangle Sub-area
- Post Road Gateway Sub-area

1.6 Waterford Policy Framework: The Plan of Preservation, Conservation and Development

These proposals all have their genesis in the ongoing planning undertaken by the Town of Waterford over the last decade.

This planning direction is summarized in the Town of Waterford's main planning policy document, the *Plan of Preservation, Conservation, and Development*, approved by the Town and effective January 1, 2012.

Like any comprehensive plan, it is carefully structured to treat the Town's social, economic, and physical elements as an equitable and balanced framework. It was created with input and feedback from the public at large and from various stakeholder groups from the public, private and civic sectors.

The major goal of the report was reached by consensus in these public meetings:

- Guide the future of Waterford so that:
 - o important resources will be preserved,
 - o development will enhance neighborhoods and the community,
 - o community needs will be addressed, and
 - o the overall ambience and quality of life will be maintained.

The conclusions of the Plan of Preservation, Conservation, and Development include the following recommendations pertinent

to this Town Center strategic plan, which serve as its overall goals and objectives:

- *Protect Coastal Resources:* Jordan Cove is an inlet that brings Waterford's coastal resources into the heart of the community. Its access at Jordan Mill Park and the dam are called out in an illustrative map.
- *Be aware of flooding:* The area surrounding the intersection of Rope Ferry Road and Great Neck Road/ Avery Lane is graphically highlighted as a problem area for storm water drainage.
- *Establish A Coordinated Open Space / Greenbelt / Trail System:* Open space connections and greenbelt buffer areas are proposed in the Town Center area as part of a larger network. A special multi-agency committee is suggested to coordinate administrative/ maintenance responsibility.
- *Establish An Advisory Design Review Process:* This highly critical step has now been taken by the Town, which approved a Design Review Board on May 1 2014. This panel will report to the PZC and will consider both building and site design as seen from public rights-of-way.
- *Continue to Protect Historic/ Archeological Resources:* Jordan Village (National Register of Historic Places) is called out as a specific resource for attention, and a strategy of identification, recognition, preservation and cooperation is encouraged.
- *Preserve Scenic Resources:* The Jordan Brook/ Jordan Cove inlet is cited as a scenic coastal area, with the Jordan Mill Pond. The vicinity around the dam is cited as a scenic resource area. Existing stone walls (prevalent in the site area) are encouraged as preservation priorities.

- *Promote Special Events/ Activities:* The plan recommends increasing the quality and quantity of local events, many of which formerly or currently take place in the Town Center.
- *Encourage Farms and Farming:* The Waterford Farmers' Market is an important farm supportive program, currently located adjacent to the Town Hall but in need of expansion.
- *Strive to maintain a community comprised of identifiable villages, neighborhoods, and locations with a strong "sense of place:"* The Civic Triangle area is cited as a community focal point, Jordan Village as an important example of concentrated development, and the Route One/ Clark Lane area (called in Town Center report the 'Post Road Gateway') as a major business area, all of which contribute to Waterford's character.
- *Reinforce Overall Community Structure:* Supporting existing villages and hamlets is described as a key strategy in maintaining the charm and diversity of Waterford's ambiance.
- *Seek To Create An Overall Town Center / Focal Point For The Community:* While the Civic Triangle is identified as a community focal point, it is primarily a municipal destination, and what is needed is a 'Mixed-Use Focal Point'. Expanding and enhancing the Civic Triangle east and west is seen as an important strategy to achieve this objective.
- *Increase Opportunities For Mixed Use And Village-Style Development:* the plan recommends the use of 'smart-growth' approaches such as concentrated development paired with open space conservation, mixed-use opportunities for a range of

housing and transportation choices within a walkable context, and collaborative, cost-effective decision making. All can be applied to creating the Town Center.

- *Consider Allowing Small-Scale Neighborhood Businesses Where Appropriate:* Using guidelines to guarantee appropriate size and design of retail services can add to the vitality and walkability of areas like Jordan Village.
- *Encourage a variety of housing types and densities to meet the housing needs of current and future residents:* The Plan maps the Town Center (Civic Triangle/ Rt 1 area) as a major mixed-use center in which a variety of residential unit types will contribute to a new mixed-use character. Jordan Village is an area of concentrated development.
- *Promote business and economic development to meet local needs and maintain a favorable tax base:* A similar map in this business session reinforces the same areas as above for mixed-use business development.
- *Invest In Infrastructure To Encourage Business Development:* The plan recognizes that business growth doesn't happen without careful cultivation and far-sighted public investment to shape the location and incentivize the implementation of new development.
- *Support Appropriate Home-Based Businesses:* The facilitation of various non-traditional work occupations and locations can work to the advantage of creating mixed-use development in areas such as Jordan Village.

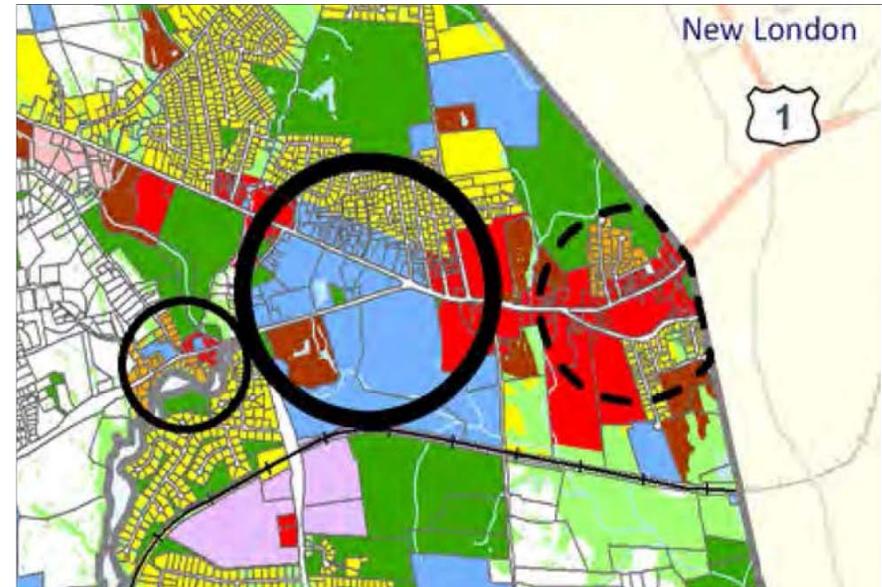
- *Monitor And Adapt To Changing Community Facility Needs:*
 Understanding future demographics (such as the rise in senior populations) can reinforce a policy of locating housing adjacent to existing relevant services, such as those clustered about the civic triangle.

- *Provide for the transportation and mobility needs of the community, including pedestrians, bicyclists, vehicles, and transit:*
 A map of sidewalks designates Jordan Village as an area for 'desirable pedestrian links', although the plan recognizes that the Town's assumption of snow shoveling responsibility provides a cost detriment to the creation of new sidewalks.

Finally, the resulting 'Future Land Use Plan' consolidates these goals and objectives into a single mapped plan for Waterford. A key aspect of the plan, as described above, is the Route One/ Civic Triangle area and its adjacent Jordan Village 'Area of Concentrated Development', bookended with an expanded Route One area to the east (up to the New London border), described as a 'Possible Future Mixed Use Node' (see illustration to the right).

These principles of dense, walkable mixed-use development, fulfilling market demand and served by transit routes, bikeways and sidewalks as well as by social and educational services, complementing historic preservation and revitalization, can be integrated into a vibrant central Waterford Town Center'. Aspects of such a policy (for instance the Jordan Village zoning and design guidelines) can serve as a template for future complementary development, such as Mago Point or other similar areas.

The following sections of this report detail our work and recommendations to achieve these important policy objectives.



Future Land Use Plan (segment)
 from *Town of Waterford Plan of Preservation, Conservation, and Development* (Jan '12)



2. Jordan Village: Preservation and Evolution

2.1 An Historic Neighborhood: Uses and Function

Jordan Village, as the area currently exists, is a mixture of residential and small commercial enterprises principally organized along Rope Ferry Road-- a busy thoroughfare extending from the commercial Route One corridor on the east to the Niantic River on the west. Extending north and south from Rope Ferry Road are small-scale residential neighborhoods and buildings.

With one or two exceptions of larger recent buildings (Fire Station and Jordan Mill) the area retains the feel of a small New England town; the principal vertical element remains the spire of the First Baptist Church, the buildings are close to the street, and residential in scale – even when used for commercial purposes. By having both a mixture of commercial and residential areas in close proximity to town facilities such as the Library, Community Center, High School, Jordan Green and Jordan Mill Park, and the commercial venues of the Rt. 1 corridor, the area provides all of the necessary elements for a vibrant live- work community.

However, undermining the feeling of community is the high-speed traffic of Rope Ferry Road itself (CT Rt. 156). The speed at which vehicles travel along the road, coupled with the intermittent placement and varying condition of sidewalks, serves to alienate

people from the streetscape and undermine the desire to live and work in the area.

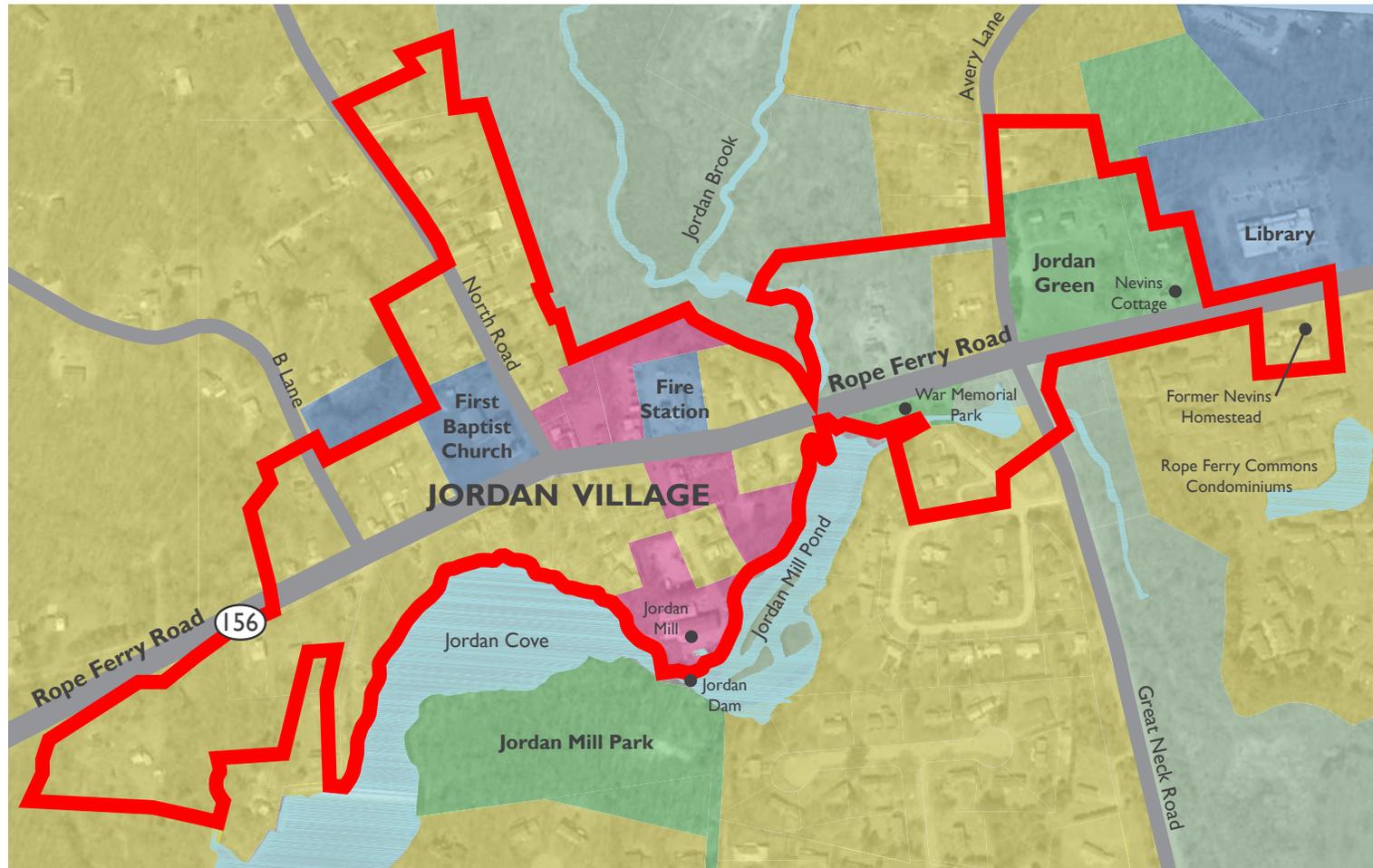
National Register District

Jordan Village National Register District was placed on the National Register of Historic Places on August 23, 1990. The period of significance for the district is given in the Register as 1780– 1940 with 1848, the year of the construction of the First Baptist Church, identified as the start of the principal building effort within the village. Jordan Village National Register District includes 70 resources (buildings and sites) of which 58 buildings and one site are considered as “contributing” to the integrity of the National Register district and the remaining 11 buildings and sites are considered non-contributing. The non-contributing buildings and sites represent more recent additions to the area.

The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the Nation’s historic places worthy of preservation. Authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Park Service’s National Register of Historic Places is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate and protect America’s historic and archaeological resources. Listing can be in the form of individual sites and or buildings or a grouping of sites and buildings such as the Jordan Village National Register District.

The resource summary for Jordan Village characterizes the area as “a well-preserved, discrete, residential community of small and moderate-scale buildings that developed primarily after 1848, the date of construction of the First Baptist Church of Waterford.” The

2.1 - An Historic Neighborhood: Uses and Functions



- Jordan Village National Register District
- Parks and Active Recreation
- Commercial Land Use
- Civic and Public Properties
- Open Space Areas
- Residential Land Use



summary continues with the statement that the “period of greatest development was from 1848 through the 1860s, when 20 buildings were constructed. This pattern of growth gives the village an architectural homogeneity that distinguishes it from surrounding communities”. The National Register listing also highlights that the appearance of the original village is retained due to the fact that the serial refreshment of commercial storefronts in the 20th century did not take place in Jordan Village and that commercial uses, when introduced, were housed in residentially scaled buildings.

Defining Character

While primarily developed after 1848, the Jordan Village National Register District encompasses a mostly homogeneous group of residentially scaled buildings, with a variety of architectural styles that range from Early Colonial (The Nevins Mansion) through various revival styles, and including mid 20th-century structures. Illustration 2.1.1 provides a graphic illustration of the location and relative density of the various architectural styles, including a local variant on the late-nineteenth century residential vernacular that we have termed in Jordan Village “Waterford Vernacular” (although this same style can be found throughout the region).

Clustered around the First Baptist Church in the area of the Rope Ferry Road and North Road intersection is a group of Greek Revival structures – some now used for commercial function, while others for residential use. Extending to the east and west from this area, and mirroring gradual development, are later nineteenth century styles.

2.2 Existing Zoning: Inconsistencies and Conflicts

Zoning regulation in the United States came into being in the early years of the 20th century in response to unprecedented growth of buildings within urban areas. Zoning regulation in the Town of Waterford was first adopted in 1954, more than 100 years after most development of Jordan Village.

As is frequently the case with historic neighborhoods that pre-date the development of municipal zoning regulation, the lot size, coverage, setbacks and other criteria promulgated by the zoning regulations does not match the existing historic development pattern.

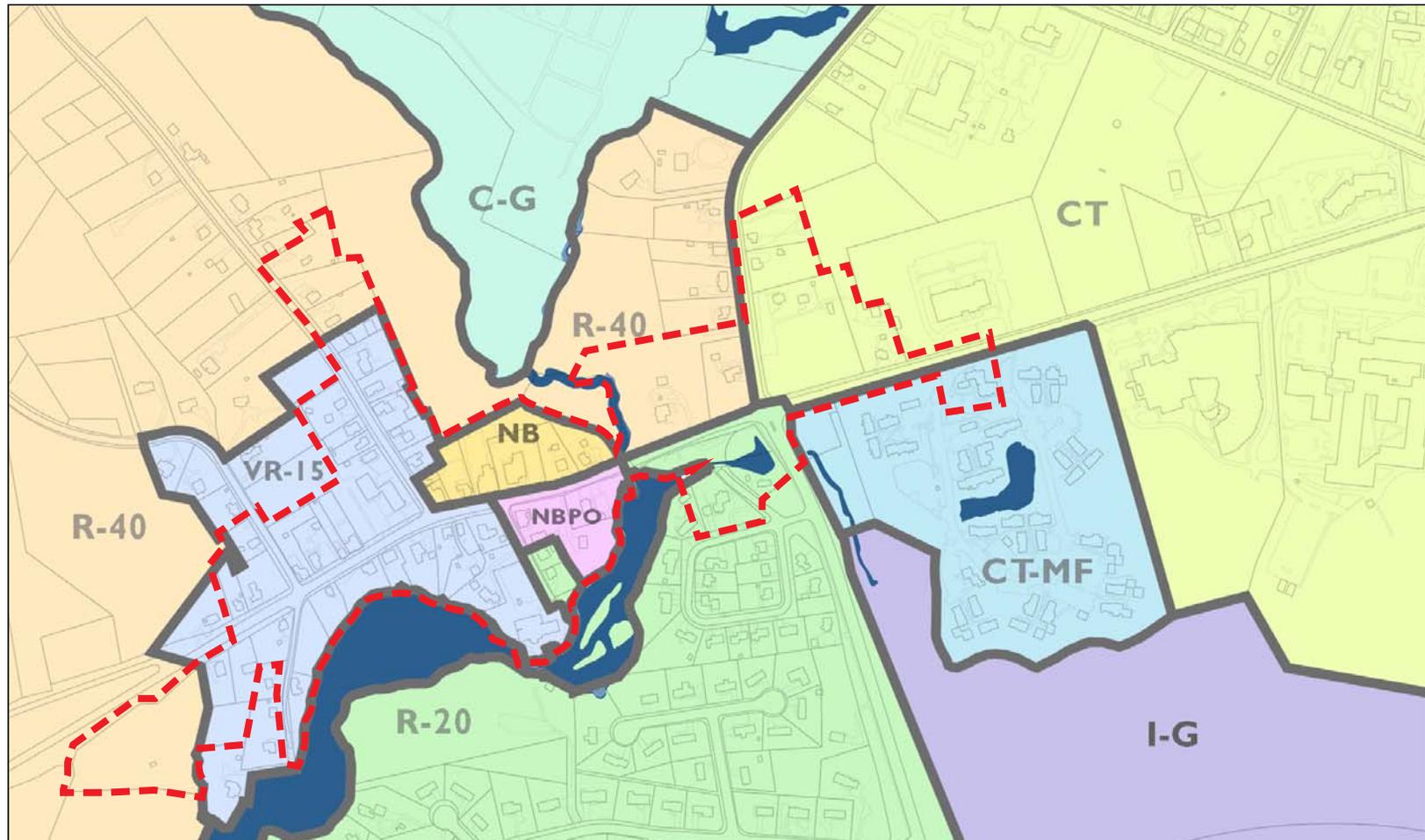
Within this small geographic area, the National Register District of Jordan Village contains 69 structures in seven separate zones – VR-15, NB, NBPO, R-40, R-20, CT and CT-MF (refer to illustration 2.2.) The requirements for each of the zones vary with regard to permitted use, lot size, lot coverage, setbacks and the like, and none of the existing zones, as currently articulated, permit development that replicates the historic streetscape and building placement of Jordan Village as it currently exists.

Figures 2.2.1 (setbacks) and 2.2.2 (lot size and frontage) illustrate how current setbacks and lot coverage limits, as defined for each of the existing zones that overlay the National Register District, conflict with the existing historic neighborhood fabric. This confirms that few buildings in Jordan Village can be rebuilt under

2.1.1 - Map of Historic Building Styles

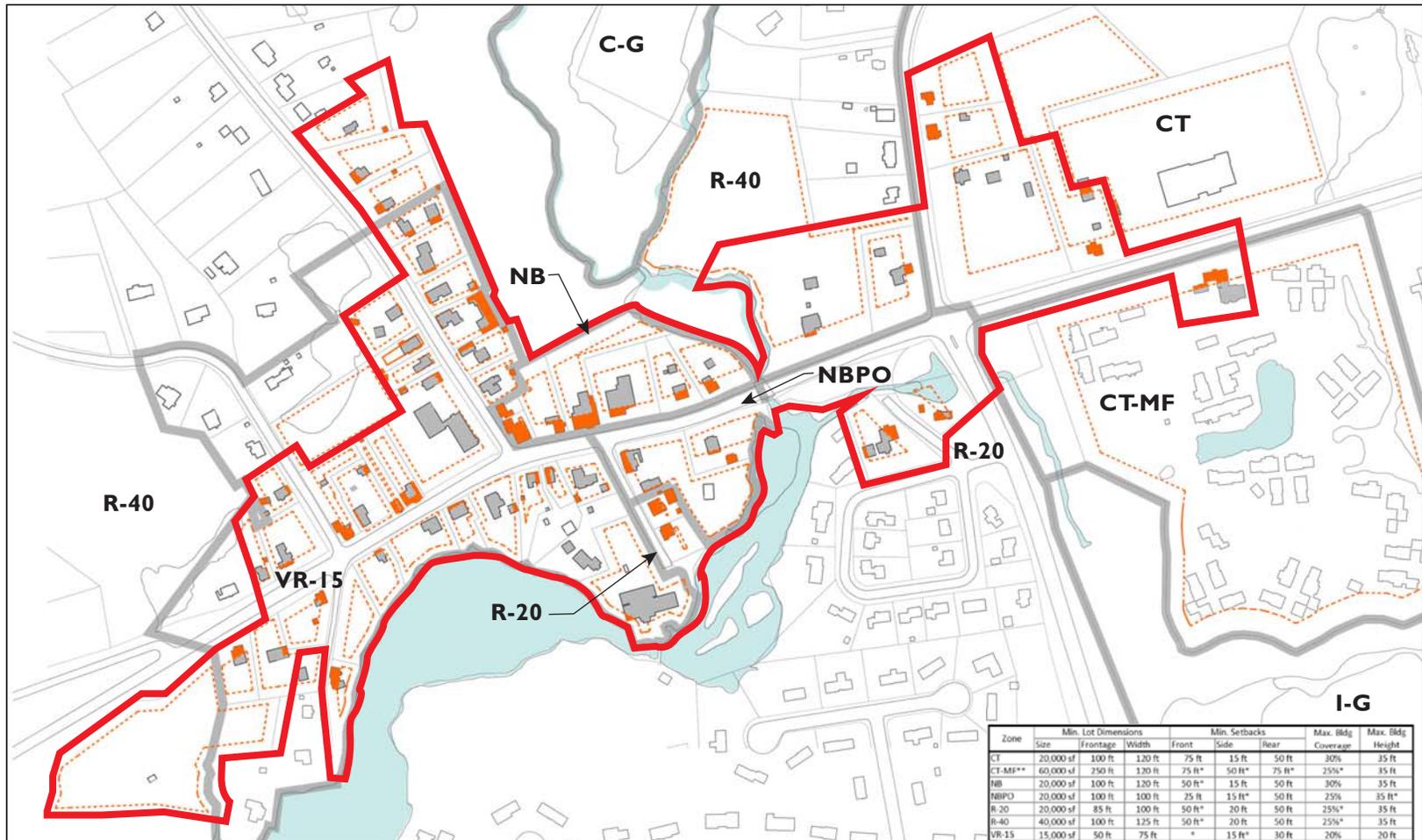


2.2 - Existing Zoning and National Register District: Jordan Village



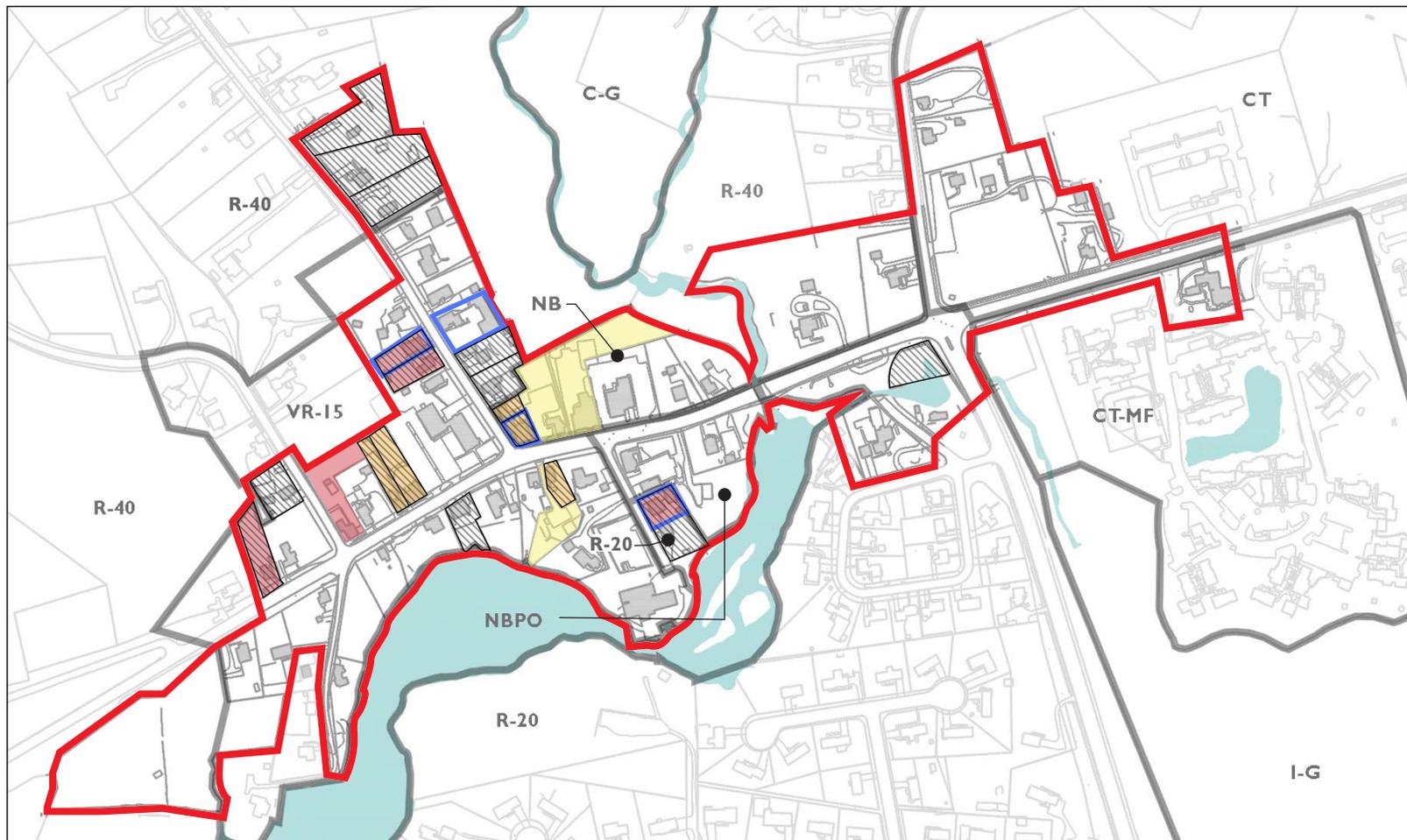
Existing Zone Line —
National Register District —

2.2.1 - Existing Zoning Analysis - Setbacks



- Existing Setback Lines as Identified by Zone ———
- Area of Existing Building Not in Compliance ■
- Jordan Village National Register District ———

2.2.2 - Existing Zoning Analysis - Jordan Village



- Jordan Village National Register District
- Non-conforming Aggregate Building Coverage (as % of total size)
- Non-conforming Lot Size (too small, by zone)

- Non-conforming Lot Frontage
- Non-conforming Lot Width
- Non-conforming Lot Frontage and Lot Width

2.3 Proposed New JVMU Zone: Simplifying and Clarifying Regulatory Structure

In order to align current Town of Waterford Zoning regulations with Jordan Village, and to promote compatible development, this report recommends amendment of the Town Zoning Map and standards to create a new Jordan Village Mixed Use (JVMU) zone that encompasses much of the National Register District, and bases use, lot size, setback, lot coverage and other criteria on the existing historic neighborhood as developed.

The purpose of this new zone is to define a single regulatory structure that can ensure the preservation of the unique patterns and historic architecture of Jordan Village, minimizing the non-conformances that have been identified between the existing village buildings and the current zoning districts that have been imposed after the fact on top of its historic pattern.

Such a single district will provide a streamlined and clarified regulatory structure for the area that will remove confusion as to physical standards and potential uses, facilitating renovation and new construction in a way that maintains the flavor but increases the vitality of the existing village.

Defining Boundaries for a New Zoning District

The first step in creating a new zoning district for Jordan Village is to define those boundaries that encompass areas of similar features that

characterize the village area. Figure 2.3 on page 46 proposes recommended boundaries for the new zone:

- Along the Rope Ferry Road spine, a western boundary starting near the eastern intersection with Logger Hill Road leading into the village. An eastern boundary at the Jordan Brook bridge, a natural entryway into the village.
- Incorporating into the village the Jordan Mill Pond, dam and adjacent areas of Jordan Cove south of the dam, as well as Jordan Mill Park across the soon-to-be-reconstructed bridge.
- Including those eastern areas of the National Register District that based on the nomination and historical analysis represent the characteristic 'Jordan Village' (excluding other nearby historic district areas in the eastern part of the district not considered part of the village proper).
- Extending the boundary north along North Road and B Lane to incorporate residential areas that although not historically significant are part of the common physical fabric of the village.

Identifying Compatible Standards among Existing Zones

This new JVMU zone will consolidate the previously-existing small-scale zoning districts that were added or subdivided over the years to respond to specific concerns but in the aggregate have resulted in a confusing pattern of differing regulations and standards.

In creating this new district, the charge is to identify a common set of dimensional and use standards that simplify and clarify common village characteristics. These zoning standards, together with clearly defined design review guidelines (see section 2.5), will provide a clear

framework for individual building renovation or new construction as well as historic, town planning, and landscape criteria that will maintain and enhance the current character of Jordan Village.

Following are some preliminary dimensional and use criteria for this new zone. These possible criteria are cited to give an indication of the types of zoning standards that could be part of a new ordinance.

The fact that development in the JVMU zone will be subject to Village District design controls means that for this area, more detailed review will take place. As part of this review an examination of proposed use in terms of its impact and appropriateness can take place at the same time as its form-based dimensional fit in the Jordan Village context, as spelled out in the design guidelines (see Appendix A).

District	Mimimum						Maximum	
	Lot Area	Frontage on Public Street	Lot Width	Front Yard	Side Yard	Rear Yard	Height	Bdg Coverage
JVMU	7,500sf	50'	60'	build-to line	10'	30'	35'	25%

District	One family Dwellings	Two family Dwellings	AssistedLvg/ Nurs Home	Age Restr Housing	Multi Family	Accessory Apartments	Accessory Dwelling	Home Occupations
JVMU	ZC	P	P	P	P	ZC	P	ZC

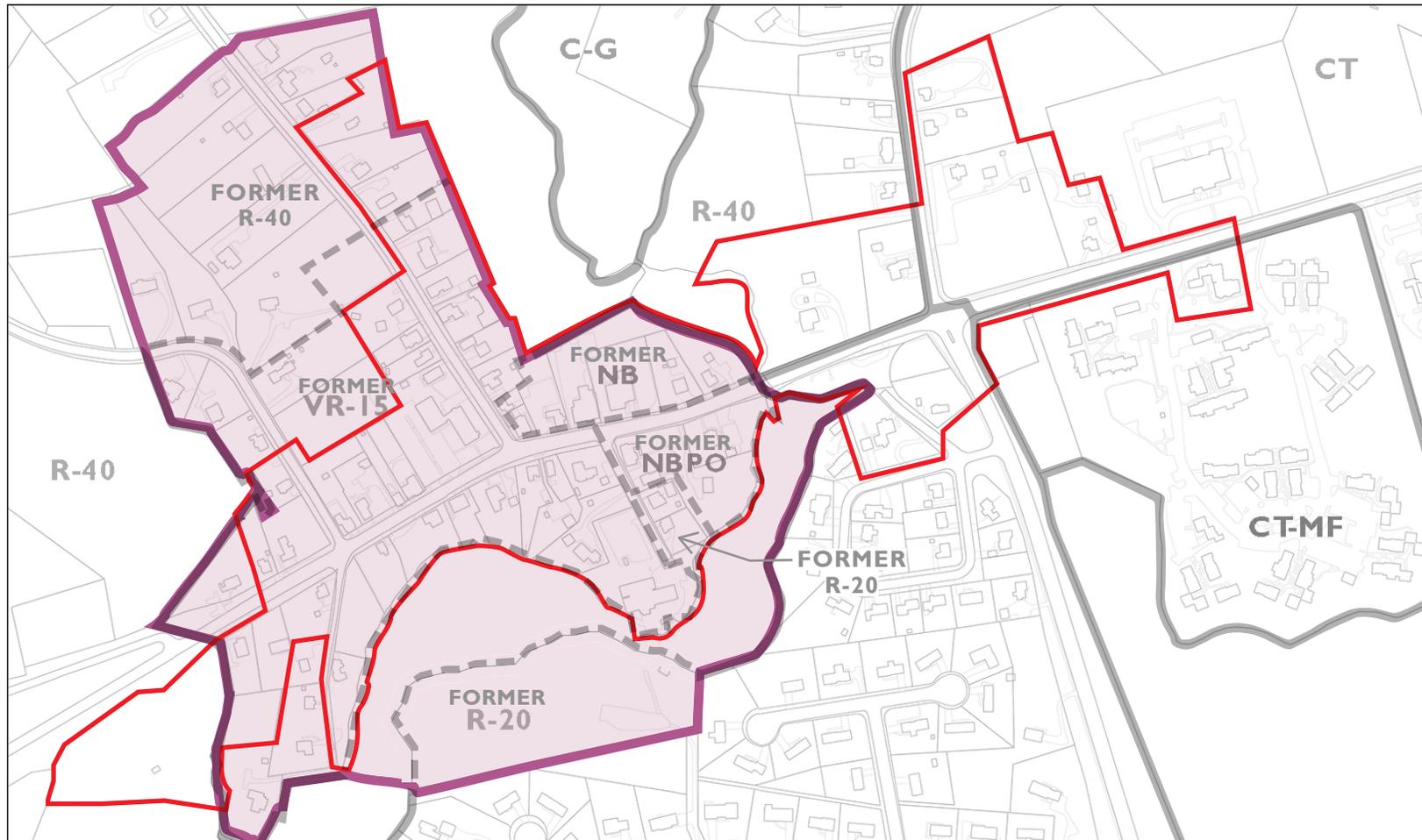
District	Retail stores service	Personal service	Prof Office <2500sf	Bus Office >2500sf	Restaurant	Tavern	Service Station	Motel/Hotel (B&B?)
JVMU	SP	SP	S	SP	SP	SP	P	SP

Key to Use Tables

- A= Allowed, no permit required
- P= Prohibited

- S= Site plan approval required subject to Section ____
- SP= Special permit required subject to Section ____
- ZC= Zoning compliance permit subject to Section ____

2.3 - Proposed Zone Changes: Jordan Village Mixed-Use Zone (JVMU)



Proposed JVMU Zone
Jordan Village National Register District

Existing Underlying Zone Lines Outside JVMU (to remain)
Former Zone Lines Within JVMU (to be removed)

Refining Parking Opportunities

One opportunity with the new zoning is to provide the basis for alleviating other constraints to potential economic revitalization in Jordan Village. Parking issues have been cited by local businesses as a limitation to their ability to attract an expanded clientele. At the same time, an analysis of zoning suggests that parking requirements for new development may serve as a barrier to potential new business location in Jordan Village-- regulations specifying numbers of spaces needed for businesses may run into conflict with capacity of individual properties, not to mention interference of curb cuts with pedestrian circulation and aesthetic problems with parking lots in the main street village context.

Additional off-site parking supply can be created, but regulations need to allow the accessibility of shared spaces to be substituted for on-site parking. These spaces could be allocated on a first-come basis, not earmarked to individual users. The proposed JVMU zoning allows for this possible substitution in two related steps:

- A special permit procedure to allow shared spaces as satisfaction of zoning requirement, upon verification by Town of adequacy of supply and approval of an agreement with Town and shared space provider;
- Once permission is granted, a payment in lieu of providing spaces will be assessed on a per-space basis, with funds into a pool designated for parking lot maintenance and administration;

Section 5.2 of this report describes a pilot program to provide such a supply pool of shared spaces, under a proposed agreement with the First Baptist Church, which has volunteered its possible participation.

2.4 Outline Design Guidelines:

Public Infrastructure and Private Development

These outline design guidelines are a combination of public infrastructure and private development approaches for the Jordan Village area, presented as a framework for future planning.

The proposed public infrastructure investment in this area should be seen as an incentive that both improves the public realm and encourages private development as suggested in the suggestions and examples following. It can be instituted over time as financial priorities are defined with respect to benefits to the area.

After additional study, the public infrastructure approaches should be considered for inclusion in Town capital budgets at appropriate times. The private development design guidelines for Jordan Village are presented in detail in a stand alone Appendix A document.

1) Public Investment Design Guidelines: Corridor, Streetscape, Park and Walkway

Roadway Traffic Calming: Connecting, not Dividing, Uses and Areas

Rope Ferry Road is the main spine of Jordan Village. Along the roadway, this report recommends the following acceptable traffic calming measures, which will not impair CT DOT maintenance. These measures can be modified to fit specific conditions not only

in Jordan Village but in other Waterford Town Center areas to the east.

- Gateway landscaping and signage, announcing the entry into Jordan Village from both the Loggers Hill Road/ Rope Ferry Road intersection as well as at the Jordan Brook Bridge;
- Prominent -pavement crosswalks, for instance at the end of Mill Lane at When Pigs Fly Cafe and Jordan Firehouse, of a contrasting color and material that call drivers' attention to the fact that they are going through a pedestrian zone;
- vertical bollards and light poles at these locations., coupled with landscaping and light pole banners;
- adding sidewalks to the south side of Rope Ferry Road (this will require careful design, as the right of way is limited through the center of the village)

Natural Features and Park Design

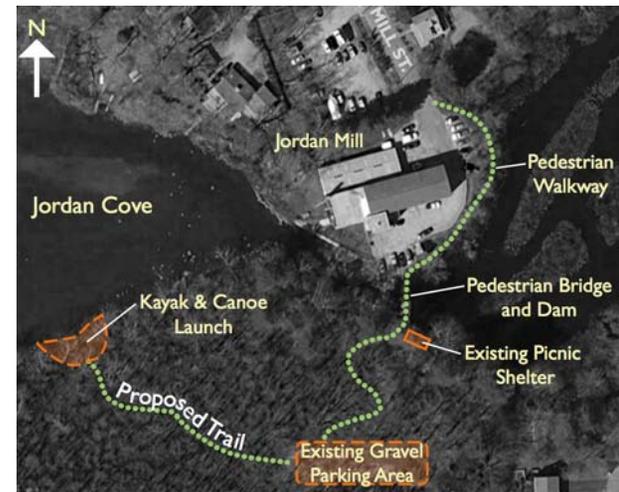
Development over the years has altered the Jordan Village



Potential streetscape in Jordan Village in front of When Pigs Fly and Firehouse, showing banners, lighting and streetscape patterns to alert drivers they are in a pedestrian zone.

landscape, but the major natural features—area of woodland (some second growth), rolling hills, large boulder and glacial rock formations, and water bodies--remain extant. Specific features include Jordan Cove, Jordan Brook and the natural woodlands along both of these water bodies.

Jordan Mill Park is located on the south side of Jordan Cove across from the Jordan Mill. It provides a site for wildlife observation and relaxation in the midst of a densely populated area. The park is a beautiful woodland setting providing parking for 15 cars, a pavilion with picnic tables, a car-top boat launch and walking trails. The park is a designated Long Island Sound Public Shoreline Access area. There is a footbridge connecting the park to an easement linking to Mill Lane and the Jordan Mill parking lot, providing direct pedestrian access from Jordan Village.



Concept plan for Jordan Mill Park and surrounding area

2) Private Development: Renovation and New Construction for Jordan Village Buildings

The Design Guidelines, presented in a separate document as an Appendix to this report, are intended to assist and guide property owners, developers, and the Town of Waterford in choosing appropriate design strategies that maintain the integrity of the historic village and natural environment.

The Design Review Guidelines have six principal objectives:

- To encourage site planning and architectural design that will maintain and enhance the character of Jordan Village and ensure that new development fits into the village;
- To protect the buildings and sites that contribute to the Jordan Village National Register District, as listed;
- To provide guidance and flexibility in application of development standards;
- To improve communication and participation among building owners, developers, neighbors and the town early in the design and siting of new or substantially reconstructed commercial, mixed use and residential development;
- To identify items that impact the quality of life and livability of the zone;
- To promote pedestrian oriented streetscapes and neighborhoods.

The Guidelines include seven categories of review:

- Sustainable Design and Integration
- Traffic Calming
- Demolition
- Site Planning
- Architectural Design

- Landscape Design
- Other Design Elements

The Guidelines are informed by the following considerations:

- 82% of the current properties in the proposed JVMU zone are currently residential, not commercial.
- However, one of the intents of the zoning and guidelines is to facilitate where appropriate provision of low scale economic development, which will help enliven the area and provide needed or desired services.-
- In order to have a user-friendly document that will clarify and make more transparent development goals, the language in the Appendix is simple and bulleted to make it easy to understand the criteria and to keep from overwhelming the readers with a dense document.
- It is recommended that the Design Guidelines offer considerable flexibility. To this end the Guidelines articulate the principle but not the exact specificity of the design of a given item. Actual design or dimension is best left to a conversation between the applicant and the reviewing party.

3. Civic Triangle: Town Activities and Public Services

The Civic Triangle and its surrounding area are the heart of Waterford: the one part of the Town where, sooner or later, everyone goes.

3.1 Civic Triangle/Environs: Uses and Functions

The Civic Triangle area includes assets that can help breathe new life and economic activity into Waterford. Given Waterford's dispersed and distinct neighborhoods, the Civic Triangle's value as the part of town that truly belongs to all citizens is significant. Its verdant green space and historic character, coupled with the presence of important community amenities, makes it resonate with both residents and visitors; it is an enjoyable place to be.

Civic Triangle Municipal Uses – The Civic Triangle is home to Waterford's most vital public service offerings. Together they form the context for the majority of every resident and business owner's interaction with their municipality.

- The Library represents one of Waterford's most treasured places; more than a place to borrow books, it offers a place of comfort, delight and community. It has an aggressive program of activities that can potentially be expanded to neighboring properties.
- Town Hall's adaptive reuse of a former school conveys its business orientation: it's where the community comes for

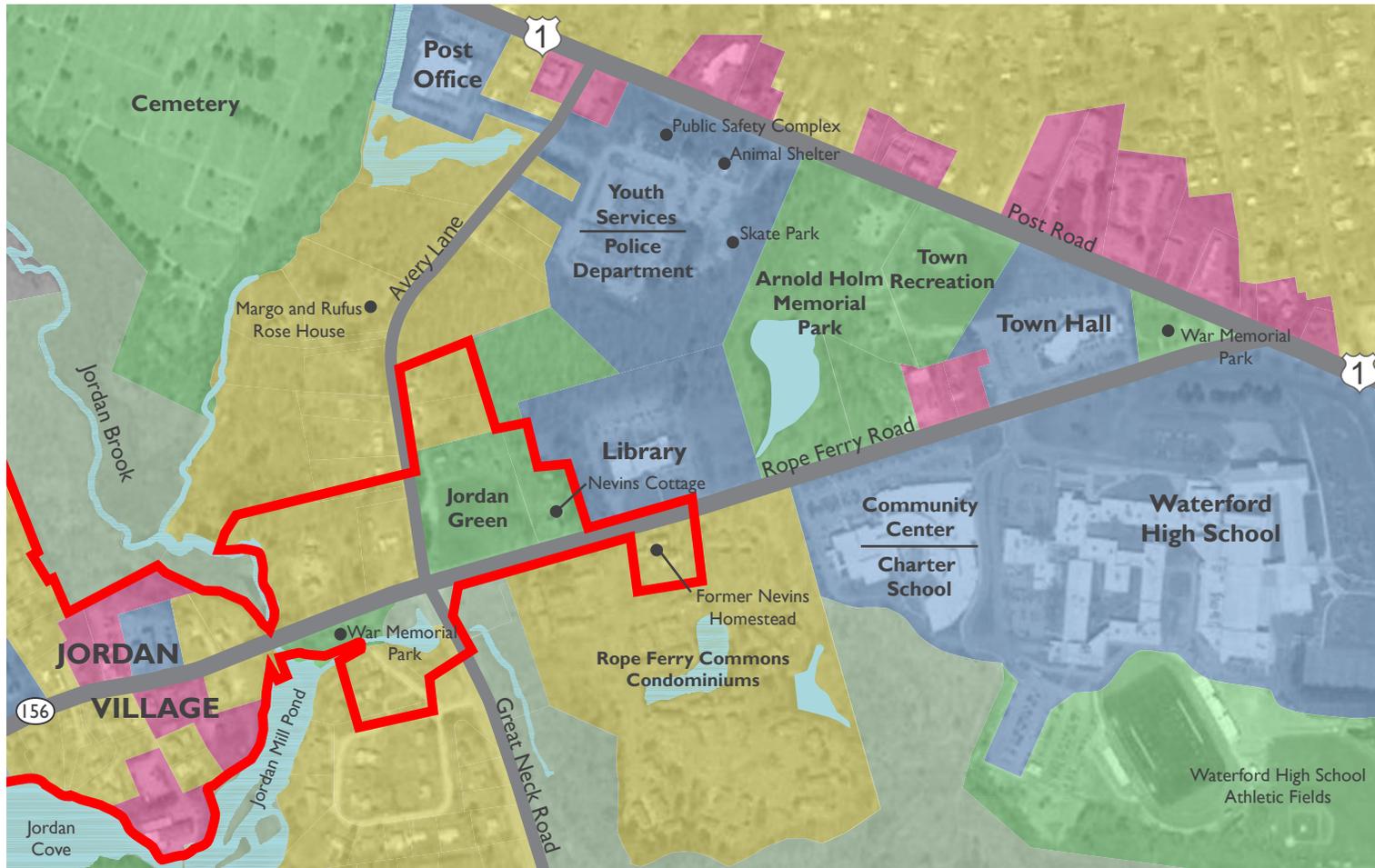
serious discussions about its shared future and the resources required to balance fiscal responsibility and quality of life.

- The Police Department embodies safety and confidence.
- Open space and even the parking lots associated with the various Town buildings also contribute to the Town's appeal. Waterford residents enjoy shopping at the summer farmer's market, roaming the paths that crisscross the Triangle and using the fields and other recreational amenities. Older residents remember feeding ducks—or even skating—at the pond.
- Last, but not least, Jordan Green and its historic structures create a built environment that is compact and appealing. Re-animating this cluster of buildings could reinforce a charming and distinctive asset that will attract people to the area.

Civic Triangle South - Just outside the Civic Triangle, south across Rope Ferry Road, may be found additional important places that draw people from throughout Waterford:

- Waterford High School evidences community commitment to youth and education; generations of Waterford residents will pass through its halls.
- The Community Center, like the Library, finds ways to keep people of all ages active and engaged with each other. Its special focus on Senior Citizens goes a long way towards ensuring that people can age in place within Waterford and boosts the competitiveness of nearby residential developments, including the adjacent Rope Ferry Condominium complex.
- Behind the educational and residential uses lining the south side of Rope Ferry Road, additional open space

3.1 - Waterford Center: Civic Triangle



- Jordan Village National Register District
- Institutional and Public Properties
- Parks and Active Recreation Areas
- Open Space Areas
- Commercial Land Use
- Residential Land Use



contributes a sense of rural character to Waterford, even though the bustling commerce along Route One is close by.

- Jordan Green, at the corner of Avery Lane and Rope Ferry Road, is an informal, traditional New England open space in which original buildings on its edge have been supplemented by other vernacular structures, added over the years to form a charming complex intended to capture the flavor of Waterford past. It has traditionally been the home for community events such as ‘Sheep to Shawl’ and a popular venue for school visits.

Civic Triangle West – To the west, residential properties line Avery Lane, including the home where puppeteers Margo and Rufus Rose created the legendary Howdy Doody and often entertained neighborhood children with impromptu performances. Just west on Route One, Jordan Cemetery’s green space and historic grave markers provide families and friends with a lovely setting for remembrance and solace.

3.2 Outline Design Guidelines:

Public Infrastructure and Private Development

These outline design guidelines are a combination of public infrastructure and private development approaches for the Civic Triangle area, presented as a framework for future planning.

The proposed public infrastructure investment in this area should be seen as an incentive that both improves the public realm and

encourages private development as suggested in examples following. It can be instituted over time as financial priorities are defined with respect to benefits to the area.

After additional study, the public infrastructure approaches should be considered for inclusion in Town capital budgets at appropriate times. The private development suggestions should be refined into more detailed building siting and design criteria for use in the planning and approvals process.

1) Public Infrastructure: Increasing Safety and Attractiveness

As with Jordan Village, the same roadway tools and techniques can be applied to pedestrian safety and traffic calming in order to integrate municipal/ institutional uses on the north and south sides of Rope Ferry Road. The objective, as in Jordan Village, is to create an attractive, walkable, and enhanced area for citizens, families, and students. As other potential mixed uses or activities are added, as described below, these measures will become even more important.

Roadway Traffic Calming: Connecting, not Dividing, Uses and Areas

Rope Ferry Road is the main spine of the Civic Triangle area. Along Rope Ferry Road, this report recommends the following (DOT-acceptable) traffic calming measures, which will not impair road maintenance. See the previous Jordan Village section for detailed descriptions.

Enhance Pedestrian Safety at Crosswalks and Key Intersections: (see Figure 2.6)

These crosswalks should occur at important locations such as Jordan Green, the Library, Town Hall, and where Town Park/School bike and walking lanes connect. They should also be located with respect to auto turning lanes into parking or circulation, and accompanied by traffic signalization as appropriate:

- Expanded width crosswalks made up of specially colored and textured pavements set flush with the roadway pavement.
- Bollards or granite posts at the handicapped ramps leading to pedestrian crosswalks as signal to both pedestrians and drivers.



Proposed streetscape on Rope Ferry Road near Library: enhanced pavement and crosswalks, landscaping, banners and lighting to promote traffic calming and pedestrian safety.

- Landscaped areas (trees and flowering plants) placed either side of the crosswalk entrance behind the sidewalks. In the Civic Triangle area, these can also be groupings that add pedestrian scale and rhythm to the drive, slowing traffic naturally.
- Light poles placed along Rope Ferry Road at crosswalks and key intersections.



Intersection of Rope Ferry Road with perpendicular walkway and bikeway connecting parkland and school sites

Gateways: Design, Function and Wayfinding

Figure 1.3 shows proposed 'Gateways' at locations within the Waterford Town Center. Two of these gateways are in the Civic Triangle area-- the Rope Ferry Road/ Avery Lane- Great Neck Road Intersection and the Route One/ Rope Ferry Road Intersection.

Rope Ferry Road/ Avery Lane- Great Neck Road Intersection

This intersection serves as a crossroad for the east-west Route One56 (Rope Ferry Road) and the north-south routes of Avery Lane and Great Neck Road.

Avery Lane functions as a connecting road between Route One and its related commercial (restaurants and small retail) and civic (dog pound, public safety, youth center, police station, post office) resources. Jordan Green, one of Waterford's major central open spaces, is accessed directly from Avery Lane.

Great Neck Road is the major connector to Waterford's shoreline features, including the O'Neill Theater Center, Harkness State Park, Waterford Town Beach, and Great Neck Country Club and restaurant. It also provides a bike route, which can be expanded and enhanced under state programs..

This intersection is signaled and has crosswalks running east-west at Avery Lane and north-south on both corners of Rope Ferry Road. The road will soon require storm water management revisions, which may facilitate other simultaneous improvements.

Recommendations for enhancing this intersection include:

- Analysis of alternative geometric configurations and signalization for rebuilding the intersection-- to minimize accident potential, improve traffic flow, and improve pedestrian safety and convenience;
- Special pavements at the crosswalks;
- Stone walls framing all four corners of the intersection to define the intersection as a point of arrival and distinguish it as a gateway.
- A possible bike rental shop either at the southeast corner of the intersection located on town-owned property, or at Nevins Cottage adjacent to Jordan Green;
- A landscaped and paved entry feature at the corner of Jordan Green to invite pedestrians into the Green;
- Auto-visible wayfinding signage providing direction to nearby Great Neck Road facilities as well as to Town services to the east and Jordan Village features to the west.

Post Road/ Rope Ferry Road Intersection

The triangular intersection at Rope Ferry Road and Post Road presents many challenges to both the motorist and pedestrian but is it a particularly daunting intersection for pedestrians to cross. This intersection is signalized and currently has crosswalks leading from Rope Ferry Road to a traffic island and then on to the north side of Route One.

This intersection serves as the Gateway into the Civic Triangle for all traffic travelling from the east. Properties abutting this

intersection include the Veterans' Park, Waterford High School and mixed-use retail- residential.

Recommendations for enhancing this intersection are similar to those for the previously-described intersection (see also section 5.2, Jordan Green for additional description).

- Analysis of alternative geometric configurations and signalization for rebuilding the intersection to minimize accident potential, improve traffic flow, and improve pedestrian safety and convenience
- Special pavements at crosswalks
- Reduction of visual clutter before implementation of new wayfinding signage
- Re-assessment of existing vegetation to ensure open sight lines and to emphasize as an placemaking feature the veteran's monument at the apex of the triangular intersection.

A Network of Walkway and Bikeway Linkages

Overall, throughout the Civic Triangle area the existing network of walkways should be expanded into a framework linking the Town Center as a whole beyond to the Town and region (illustrated in the previously-described Figure 1.4)

2) Private Development: Integrating Retail Attractions with Civic Uses and Open Space

New Commercial/ Retail Development Opportunities

The Civic Triangle, while a much-used and much-appreciated civic space for public service buildings, is very much a single-use, as compared to multi-use, area. Given the extensive public open space and municipal building ownership, changing this broad pattern is not feasible or desirable.

However, facilitating commercial development of individual properties in the Triangle (such as two sites mentioned for potential private redevelopment immediately to the west of Town Hall) may provide opportunities for balancing the civic/ public ambiance with retail or other private development that can respond to market demand from students, town hall users, or other visitors to the area. These can include snack shops, book or gift shops, food stores, or other convenience uses.

Future zoning for the Civic Triangle area could include these sorts of opportunities as allowable uses. Future design guidelines (under the Village District Act) could mandate design review that would define both siting standards (for example, building facades adjacent to front lot line, defining street presence, with parking to side and behind) and building criteria (for instance, signage requirements, entry locations, or window treatment).



Potential commercial uses can be integrated into the Civic Triangle on possible redevelopment sites near Town Hall

4. Post Road Gateway: An Evolving Mixed-Use Nexus

Shoppers from throughout southern Connecticut know Waterford for its namesake regional mall and other nearby restaurant and retail offerings: the warehouse clubs, large specialty stores (toys, electronics, office supplies, etc.) and other mid-tier and upscale chains that all benefit from easy access to Interstate 95. But the Boston Post Road, especially the segment between Rope Ferry and Coleman Street in New London, continues to fulfill its historic purpose: providing easy access between communities and fulfilling daily shopping needs.

4.1 Existing Development

The Post Road Gateway's character stands in sharp contrast to the Civic Triangle and Jordan Village: instead of historic buildings surrounded by plenty of green space and uses dedicated to culture, government and civic gatherings, this area of Waterford is unapologetically geared towards accommodating automobiles and the customers who drive them.

With its low-slung commercial buildings, front parking lots and pole signs, the Post Road Gateway reflects 1960s-70s suburban strip retail patterns. Although there are many examples of nicely landscaped commercial buildings that are newly built or well-maintained, the vast expanses of asphalt, numerous curb-cuts, corporate architecture, and some larger developments that are a

bit down-at-the-heels gives an overall impression of a place that is underloved and undervalued.

The Post Road Gateway benefits enormously from its thriving Super Stop & Shop, located within the Waterford Shopping Plaza Shopping Center at the intersection of Post Road and Clark Road--its success reflects its ability to draw customers from New London and other regional locations as well as Waterford itself. The area features a mix of:

- Strip centers offering convenience goods and the occasional specialty retailer, like the JoAnn's Fabric that co-anchors the Waterford Shopping Plaza;
- In-line stores, like the Dollar Tree and A&P Spirit Shop, which offer niche goods and/or serve a niche market. Many of these locations offer personal or business services, like the AAA offices and the several hair salons and manicure shops. Not all of these tenants are franchise operations or national chains; there are several mom-and-pop restaurants and small specialty retailers, like the jeweler shop.
- Free-standing fast food restaurants, banks, and pharmacies, some built on out-parcels, that feature drive-through windows and their associated service lanes. Many of these structures, like the McDonalds, the CVS and the Citizens Bank, are newer buildings in good condition, but their garish corporate dress and single-purpose architecture contributes to the Post Road Gateway's overall auto-dominant character.

- Gas stations and other automobile related businesses, like the JiffyLube and Toyo Tires, which also feature drive-through service.
- One or two story buildings with ground floor office tenants in demised spaces that open to the parking area, like the Atlantic Insurance Company and CitiFinancial.
- Residential properties converted into retail or office uses, such as Aileen’s Custom Dresses, Waterford Dental Health and several law firms, financial advisors and accountants;
- Several small apartment buildings and a few remaining detached single family homes
- Vacant buildings and land, such as the former drive-in movie theatre and Ocean State Job Lot building, once a grocery store.

In short, the Post Road Gateway is a strictly utilitarian shopping district, but that does not detract from its importance as a significant contributor to economic diversity. Its mix of uses and retail typologies—from big box to small store—helps residents and businesses flourish by providing convenience access to essential goods and services. An inventory of different types of commercial spaces enables small local businesses to prosper in proximity to larger, national concerns. That creates employment and entrepreneurial opportunities that keep Waterford’s economy vibrant.

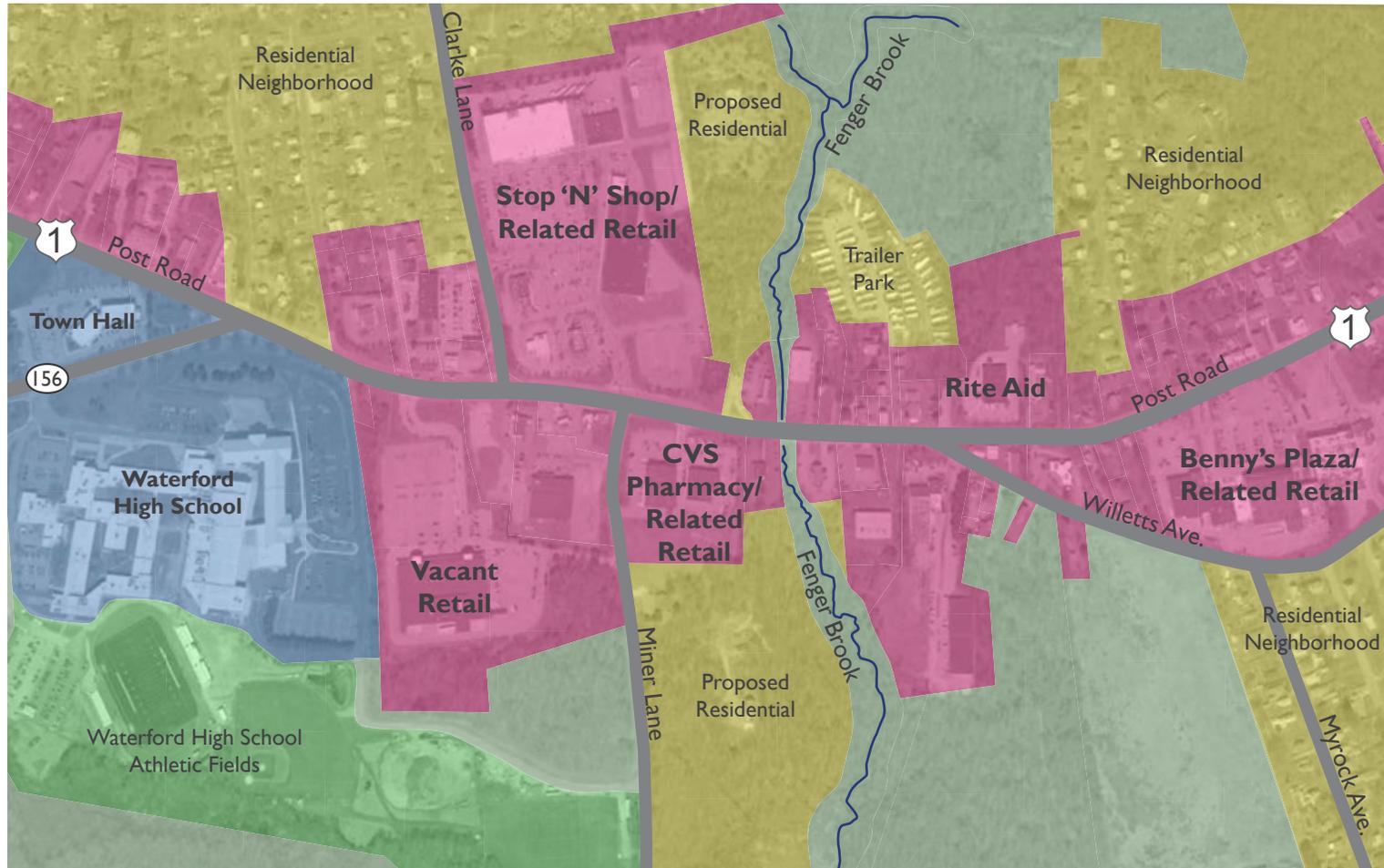
Consequently, signs of disinvestment and deferred maintenance in some Post Road Gateway venues are concerning. Waterford is not alone. Most commercial strip corridors were built to fulfill specific purposes, serve competitive markets and meet strict

return requirements, criteria that outweighed any impulse to invest in design. Intended to last only 20 years or so, it’s no wonder that many commercial strip corridors are in decline and becoming less attractive to real estate investors. This dynamic is occurring even when, as in Waterford, there’s no evidence of overbuilding and the surrounding residential areas—as the saying goes, retail follows rooftops—remain stable and prosperous.

Certainly the Post Road Gateway is not immune to broader trends affecting retailers everywhere. Some, like the ever-growing e-tail sector, lie beyond local control. Others, like the market’s increasing preference for retail environments that offer an authentic, distinctive flavor and an enjoyable shopping experience located in an appealing area, can be positively influenced by public action. Healthy shopping districts come about when both retailers and local government advance mutually beneficial reciprocal actions-- not a partnership per se, but an awareness that each depends on the others’ continued quality investments in the built environment.

Waterford needs this area to remain a competitive and viable choice for commercial activity. Since there’s community need for the goods and services the Post Road Gateway provides, how can the Town do its part without straining the municipal coffers? Some communities do take on the challenge and expense of large-scale intervention, from reworking streetscapes to launching aggressive economic development programs (complete with incentives) and even purchasing troubled property outright. But an incremental approach, while less dramatic, can be just as effective over time.

4.1 - Post Road Gateway: Existing Commercial Development



- Commercial Land Use
- Residential Land Use
- Institutional and Public Properties
- Open Space Areas
- Parks and Active Recreation Areas



Either way, it's important to understand the ultimate goal. Municipalities can change their land use regulations, adapt their economic development initiatives accordingly and advance the plan in the course of routine maintenance work like repaving and restriping streets. This plan sets forth strategies for achieving a better Post Road Gateway that can be implemented in either a comprehensive or incremental fashion. They address the regulatory environment, to influence developers and property owners to do their part, as well as streetscapes and other aspects of the public realm.

Fortunately, there are several private sector initiatives in the pipeline that will help:

- Waterford Development Associates seeks to build a 90-unit income- and age-restricted apartment complex on the 11-acre site just east of the Stop & Shop grocery store that once was a drive-in theater. The project, to be called Victoria Gardens, would include a patio, garden and large community room along with one- and two-bedroom apartments geared towards people aged 55 and older who meet certain income requirements. With its challenging topography, this site has been vacant for 30 years.
- On the south side of Boston Post Road another large-scale residential development plan is in the works on a parcel nestled behind the retail uses fronting the roadway.
- Interest in other available properties remains strong and it is conceivable that 300+ new residential units can be realized in the next two to three years. The question is how to positively integrate these new residents into an

auto-dominated area—evolving the areas into a walkable, attractive mixed-use neighborhood.

By increasing the in-market population, both of these projects will inject more dollars into the Post Road Gateway system. Other projects—like finding a tenant for the Ocean State Job Lot and successfully redeveloping the nearby Seaside site—are immensely more complicated but are receiving attention from both public and private sector organizations. Identifying new development projects for vacant and under-utilized parcels is just one piece of the puzzle, however: how to revamp the existing inventory so it better serves the needs of shoppers, investors and the Town? As the Great Recession recedes, competition from new investment, including from within surrounding communities, will accelerate. Waterford needs to be ready.

4.2 Enhancing Economic Potential: Attractiveness and Walkability

Over the years, real estate professionals have learned that the classic strip commercial layout—a bank of stores configured in a the shape of a U, I or L looking out over a sea of parking to the roadway beyond—makes for an inefficient use of land and an unpleasant experience. An aerial view of the Post Road Gateway reveals that many more acres are devoted to parking and driving cars than for the uses attracting people to the area. Cars are essential, obviously, and need to be accommodated, but ensuring they are treated more rationally frees up land for denser development patterns that out-perform their strip commercial counterparts.

In general, retail development has been moving away from linear configurations and into clusters and creating ever more specialized products. Over the past 20 years, the enclosed shopping malls and strip centers that dominated the preceding decades gave way to so-called “lifestyle centers” that combined retail and leisure. In a case of “Back to the Future,” they were styled like traditional commercial districts, with “Main Streets” lined with articulated storefronts, fancy facades, walkable and human scale thoroughfares and nearby greenspace. Cars were parked behind the buildings (or stashed in structures) so they didn’t impinge on an entertainment experience oriented towards pedestrians. Soon “town centers,” a variant, started including office and residential development above and around the retail. Back to the Future indeed.

The lifestyle centers sucked up enormous demand, however, requiring high-traffic crossroads and large market areas. Consequently, they contributed to the devolution of their strip center predecessors. Waterford’s Post Road Gateway strip commercial suffers from typical conditions that contribute to the challenges they face staying viable, including:

- Inventory of low-cost construction intended to last only a short time;
- Inflexible configurations, e.g., shallow lot depths with extensive frontage on the street, often in several layers, many with their own driveway and curb cut;
- Disinvestment and accelerated depreciation, especially during the Great Recession;

- Denser development patterns, in retail settings, create an environment conducive to market support.

Retail formats come and go and the competitive landscape is constantly evolving. For Waterford it’s important to track how the Post Road properties perform and be on the lookout for signs of distress. Vacancies signal trouble, of course, and can accelerate a property’s downward spiral. If a significant tenant closes its doors, it can set off a vicious circle whereby reduced traffic harms in-line stores and reduced revenues leads to deferred maintenance and decreased marketing. Savvy municipalities track sales per square foot trends and match local performance against operating costs to determine whether local properties are maintaining healthy financial ratios and assess whether to approach management.

Although “if you build it they will come” and “location location location” are simplistic, retail re-tenanting based on site advantages—most notably access—represents the only non-replicable advantage. Re-positioning a shopping center, especially one eclipsed by new competition elsewhere in the market area, inevitably means substantial reinvestment, presuming that other factors, like area demographics and access, remain compelling. Unfortunately, many such shopping centers that are over-leveraged must hit bottom—including foreclosure—first. A low cost basis can make reinvestment feasible and enable the property to entice new tenants through attractive rents, FF&E provisions and other concessions.

Repurposing aging shopping centers (without razing them and starting over) can also entail a range of solutions that don’t all

involve retail uses. Higher education facilities, churches and even manufacturing concerns find that adaptive reuse spares them both capital expenditures and a drawn-out development process. Former department stores now house server farms and distribution centers, with in-line stores providing office and other supporting space.

In certain over-built markets where distressed properties cry out for repurposing, developers have discovered, somewhat counter-intuitively, that right-sizing through consolidating construction plans with selective demolition creates a supportable cost basis that can attract investors. It also frees up land for other uses, including hotel, office and residential, that strengthen the market and let the cycle begin anew.

The advantage of establishing a legal district boundary, such as created for the consolidated Waterford Town Center, can provide opportunities for economic development. Justifying cost of investments with benefits within a fixed boundary offers the potential for prioritizing projects for maximum positive impact—quality public infrastructure that can act as an incentive for private development response, or earmarked funds for site specific renovation or new construction that can serve as a catalyst for additional development.

Examples for using districts as a public-private mechanism for maintenance, investment, and promotion can be found in Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) or Special Service Districts (SSDs) throughout Connecticut and over the US. And using a defined portion of new tax revenue resulting from future growth as a way to prime the pump for new development, as in Tax

Increment (TIF) Districts, can make funds available for such programs as revolving loan funds for façade improvement--assistance that can make all the difference in encouraging desired development in places such as Jordan Village.

4.3 Outline Design Guidelines: Public and Private Infrastructure/ New Building Design and Siting

This plan's overarching concern is to create a viable context for redevelopment that will use discrete, strategic Town investments to attract private sector dollars and, ultimately, ensure that the Post Road Gateway creates value for all parties: property owners, business operators, residents and the municipality.

The following principles of infrastructure and building design can be consolidated into zoning refinements and design guidelines for use by highway planners, private developers, and public approval bodies.

The adjacent photos illustrate the positive benefits of the development principles and design guidelines outlined below, and the case study example of a real redevelopment that evolved over time demonstrates the benefits of increased density, diversified program, and refined circulation and landscaping.

1) Public and Private Infrastructure: Accessibility and Ambiance

Attention to both public sector highway design and private development interior circulation can improve both the

functionality and the market appeal of commercial strip development such as is prevalent in the Post Road Gateway area.

Public Highway Improvements

Defining the edge of the highway through landscaping and curbing will structure the experience of driving through the Post Road area—an improvement over the current view of asphalt and autos seen from the highway.

- Minimizing curb cuts and structuring entry points into parking areas, in conjunction with related pedestrian crossing zones as described above for Rope Ferry Road and Jordan Village, will help calm traffic and improve safety.

Private Development Improvements

- Parking lot roadways should also be structured with landscaped edges in order to create an attractive framework for drop off, pick up, and internal circulation.
- The parking lots themselves should be landscaped at the end of rows in order to increase the amount of shade and tree cover.
- Storm water management techniques such as rain gardens can be incorporated into these landscaped areas.
- Rationalization of parking requirements to reflect modern needs can incorporate shared parking arrangements as well as facilitate structured parking to make possible additional density.
- A system of cross easements for auto circulation should be formalized to increase options for access and egress through adjacent parcels and onto adjacent streets.

- Rather than rely on perimeter roadside sidewalks bounded by highways and parking lots, a parallel internal network of pedestrian ways can link building destinations directly with each other.
- These will require cooperative access arrangements between adjacent properties for both autos and pedestrians.

Such discrete investments in infrastructure can benefit everyone:

- Town residents and visitors will enjoy enhanced accessibility, better safety for drivers and pedestrians alike, and more attractive ambiance for through traffic, which will positively influence Waterford's image.
- Post Road Gateway property owners will benefit from short-term improvement in market appeal and customer perception-- translated into increased return and long-term image enhancement from real estate value and mixed-use expansion.
- The municipality itself will benefit from both potential political success and increased tax revenue to carry out items as approved and prioritized.



2) New Building Design and Siting

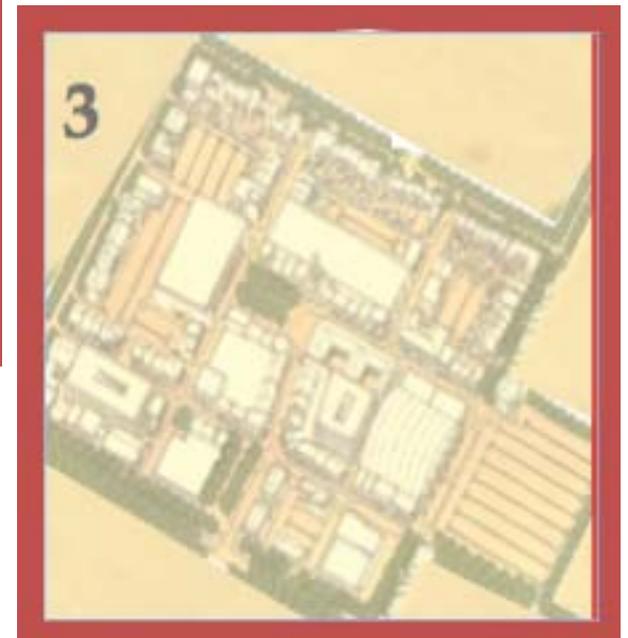
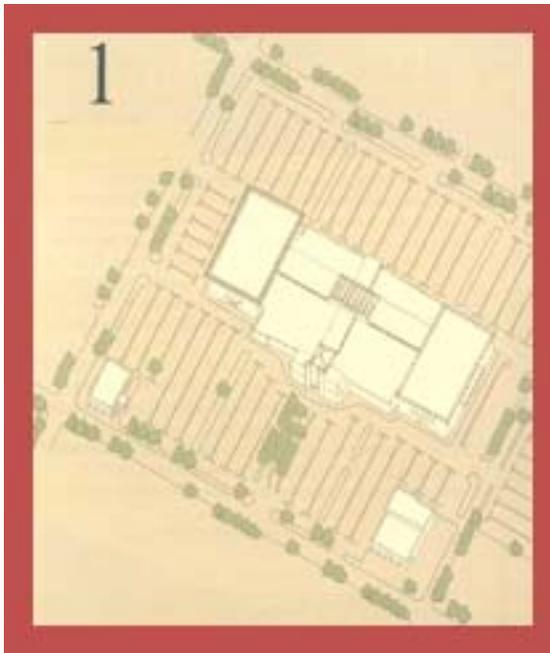
Reconfiguring the Post Road Gateway's strip commercial development is a multi-year, public- private challenge. Tactics that can be refined into guidelines include:

- Maximize densities to cultivate vitality by setting minimum standards. Somewhat counter-intuitively, denser shopping areas with more people feel both safe and exciting to shoppers;
- Encourage mixed use—residential and institutional development as well as commercial-- to add variety and verve;
- Require quality design to create lasting buildings valued by the community;
- Facilitate property acquisition, assembly and re-parcelization.
- Build new structures on land made possible by consolidation of parking due to refined standards or sharing between complementary land uses.
- Site such structures so as to reinforce highway edges or corners, shielding views of parking lots, contributing to attractive roadway ambiance, and reinforcing pedestrian accessibility.

By setting regulatory requirements and expectations, the Town can help shape private sector investments. Attracting developer interest is a further challenge. Programmatic interventions by the Town's economic development team are addressed in later pages.

(To right and previous page: Images of Garden City Center, Cranston RI— a recently renovated shopping center with new shops, landscaping and pedestrian amenities)





Shopping areas such as the Post Road Gateway can evolve over time from asphalt-surrounding parking lots to mixed use districts with an attractive, walkable ambiance, such as this actual redevelopment example.

5. Pilot Projects: Jordan Green and First Baptist Church

This section describes two pilot projects that entail partnerships between the Town, landowners and others stakeholders to:

- Collaborate on a mutually beneficial activities that improve Jordan Village’s viability and the connections between it, the Civic Triangle and the Post Road Gateway;
- Build upon the strengths in Waterford’s history and character to foster a genuine identity and sense of place.
- Focus improvements in strategic areas to boost market appeal and cultivate urban vitality.

Reestablishing Jordan Green and helping Jordan Village’s First Baptist Church achieve its long-term goals will make this area more appealing for residents and visitors.

5.1 Jordan Green/Nevins Cottage

Popularly known as ‘Jordan Green’ (although deeded to the Town as ‘Jordan Park’ by Anna Nevins in the 1950s), this attractive, informal open space at the corner of Rope Ferry Road and Avery Lane has been the venue of many community events, such as the annual Sheep-to-Shawl festival hosted by the Waterford Historical Society in partnership with Waterford Youth Services.

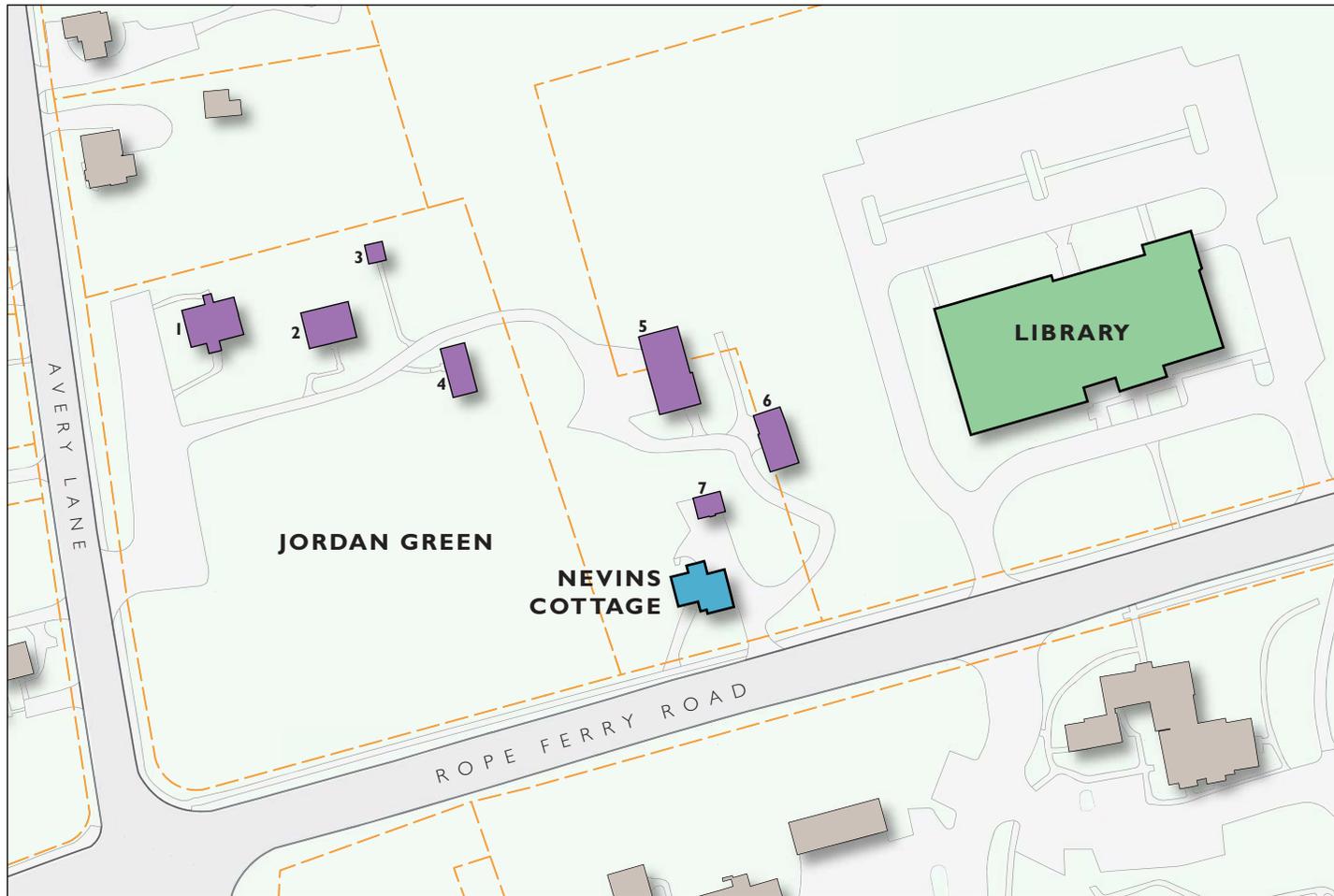
Longtime residents remember as schoolchildren touring the small buildings on and adjacent to the Green—“like a miniature Sturbridge Village!” one exclaimed—and seeing a blacksmith and other artisan craftsmen at work. Although preservation purists might express dismay that the buildings were relocated to Jordan Green from their original sites, most people simply enjoyed the pleasant setting and comfortable scale. In short, Jordan Green provided a valuable asset and an amenity that Waterford residents cherished.

But over the years, interest and ability to look after Jordan Green suffered. Deferred maintenance has taken its toll on the historic structures. From the outside, all is well-- the exteriors and grounds neatly kept, their charm intact, even though buildings like the Beebe-Philips House or Nevins Cottage (adjacent to the Green) are slowly deteriorating. Without activity, Jordan Green usually stands empty and silent.

Like every community, Waterford needs to adapt. Changing times mean that the fortunes-- and core group of citizen volunteers-- of key not-for-profit organizations have ebbed and flowed.. For Jordan Green, the Historical Society is experiencing the challenges of contracting membership and more obligations than resources.

Over the long term, community interest in reviving the entire Jordan Green experience may prompt community action, but that entails a heretofore unrealized level of commitment and devotion.

5.1 - Jordan Village Proposed Uses / Linkage



- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Jordan Park House (formerly library) | 5. J. Morgan Miner, Jr. Barn/Museum |
| 2. Beebe-Philips House | 6. Blacksmith shop |
| 3. Corn crib | 7. Carriage Barn (part of Nevins Cottage) |
| 4. Jordan School | |

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------|
| Property Line | — — — — — |
| Driveways & Walkways | □ |
| Roads | ■ |



However, sufficient energy and interest exists to complete several initiatives that may serve as catalysts for further action:

- Return Nevins Cottage to Public Use
- Program Jordan Green events to capture new markets

Nevins Cottage

Nevins Cottage is the jewel of the larger Jordan Green area, but today it sits vacant, vulnerable and in need of some serious TLC.

A potential partner to the Town is the Waterford Library, which could consider participation in public-private-civic initiatives to expand its constituent base, although it has to be wary of its fiduciary responsibilities as a quasi-public entity, The Waterford Public Library's mission sets forth its commitment to *"help the citizens of Waterford to enrich their lives through access to the ideas, information, and entertainment available from books as well as from a variety of other resources. To this end, the Library provides an array of materials, services and professional assistance, as well as facilities for the support of educational, civic and cultural activities."* Fulfilling that mission means staying flexible and finding ways to engage Waterford citizens so they can enjoy the gifts that the pursuit of personal interests provides. As a cultural institution, the Waterford Public Library is unabashed in its devotion to engage the population by any means necessary.

Like all libraries, the Waterford Public Library works hard to keep patrons coming through the door. Although the most difficult people to engage may resist all entreaties, there exists a core group of people who never visit the Library while still holding an

essentially positive attitude about it-- they may be intimidated, traumatized by past experiences (Sshhh!!!), out of the habit, or somehow think the Library "isn't for them." And yet at the same time, many of these people frequent bookstores and devour information electronically. Breaking through to the youngest of these refuseniks is especially important-- it's an opportunity to create a lifelong love of libraries.

Makerspaces

Many libraries, in Connecticut and elsewhere, have found alternative venues for attracting this group, offering appealing programming and providing access to materials and equipment that is generally unavailable or unaffordable to the public. They achieve these objectives by creating so-called 'third spaces'-- places neither home nor work, where people can gather to just hang out, socialize informally and put aside the concerns of their daily life.

- 'Makerspaces' combine manufacturing equipment, community, and education so community members can design, prototype and create manufactured works that wouldn't be possible to create with the resources available to individuals working alone. Though they share common characteristics, like 3-D printers, makerspaces are tailored to fit the needs of the community they serve.
- Third places can be anywhere-- hanging out with other people, be they friends or strangers, is both legitimate and unremarkable. Barber shops, bars and laundromats all serve this function, but the greatest and most beloved are bookstores and coffee shops.



Area of significant structural deterioration. Closed to the public.

E Nevins Cottage - Existing First Floor Plan
not to a scale



P Nevins Cottage - First Floor Plan as Library Tea Room
not to a scale



Nevins Cottage can be renovated as a convenient coffee and ice cream shop for library patrons and others (concept plans to right)



A community 'makerspace', with shared tools such as 3D printers, could be located in the adjacent Jordan Green barn. (<http://oedb.org/ilibrarian/a-librarians-guide-to-makerspaces/>)

Although still in the realm of conjecture, what if:

- Nevins Cottage were retrofitted into a coffee shop geared towards the entire community (not just library patrons)? With outdoor seating for temperate days, and a view out to Jordan Green? Occasional talks or music presentations?
- The white barn just north of Nevins Cottage were repurposed as a makerspace for inventors, hobbyists, and entrepreneurs?

A principal purpose of a program to establish a coffee shop is to attract and serve Library (and other) constituents in a low-key environment. The possible availability of volunteers and low- or no- occupancy costs—Nevins Cottage is owned by the Town—gives partners in such a venture flexibility to take their time, tailoring offerings to balance programmatic needs with profitability. From a market perspective, a coffee (and ice cream?) shop can capitalize on:

- Patrons frequenting the library and community centers;
- High school student body;
- Nearby residents and employees;
- Through commuters;
- Visitors passing through Jordan Village en route to nearby attractions like the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center and Harkness Memorial State Park;
- People attending activities programmed for Jordan Green, as addressed in Chapter 6.

The Nevins Cottage renovation could provide a two-room coffee house facility, with the eastern room devoted to a serving and sales area and the western room to a sitting area to enjoy purchased refreshments. (The upstairs, due to lack of egress and other code issues, cannot be used as public space.)

The proposed design builds on the most recent building analysis prepared for the town (a preliminary study that will require additional investigation). The existing back room-- colored orange in the adjacent floor plan illustrations-- was diagnosed in the analysis as irreparable, providing the opportunity for removal and replacement with a rear entry porch into the facility, although the main entry will remain on the front Rope Ferry side of the building.

Other buildings adjacent to Nevins Cottage can also be returned to public use, possibly in their traditional role as historic exhibits of Waterford's past, but also, as in the case of the adjacent barn, for potential use as a 'Makerspace'-- described in the next section.

Barn Opportunity: the Waterford Makerspace

'Makerspaces' are a type of public workshop facility, offering shared tools and available space, often sponsored as a public service by local libraries in conjunction with other sponsors. Most makerspaces offer memberships or structure themselves around user fees. And while its tempting to presume that makerspace patrons are geeky young people who just want to mess around with robotics and 3D printers, the reality is that designers and inventors use them to test, refine and build prototypes. Real businesses have emerged from makerspaces, often financed

through unconventional sources like KickStarter and its ilk. Hands-on learners enjoy being able to delve into the aspects of science and technology that interest them, at their own pace; it's the 21st century way to scratch the same itch Popular Mechanics discovered in the 20th. Makerspaces also attract retired engineers, designers, patent lawyers, and marketers who want to keep their hand in their profession by mentoring others with their projects. Finally, makerspaces enable home hobbyists to become familiar with the safe use of tools.

Fortunately, both a coffee shop and a makerspace are highly flexible and forgiving. Sponsors can scale each effort according to interest and availability and grow them over time as interest and resources dictate. Preliminary budgets should include both capital items (reuseable tools, from screwdrivers to laser cutters, for the makerspace and equipment for the coffee shop, from cups to refrigerators) as well as the first round of replenishable supplies.

Obviously the upfront capital requirements can vary widely: will there be restaurant seating or funky mismatched kitchen/ dining sets from thrift shops? The coffee shop need not mimic Starbucks; it doesn't have to include fancy refrigerated cases or offer twelve kinds of breakfast pastry. It can purchase prepared portable food from outside vendors instead of preparing them in-house.

The makerspace equipment decisions are much more complicated and will require input from the user community. Many operators

find that tools and other equipment materialize: neither companies nor home hobbyists throw such gear away.

Project partners should expect, however, that each entity will require at least \$35,000 in capital costs: \$50-\$75,000 would be much more comfortable. For example, mid-range startup costs totaling \$65,000 for a coffee shop might include:

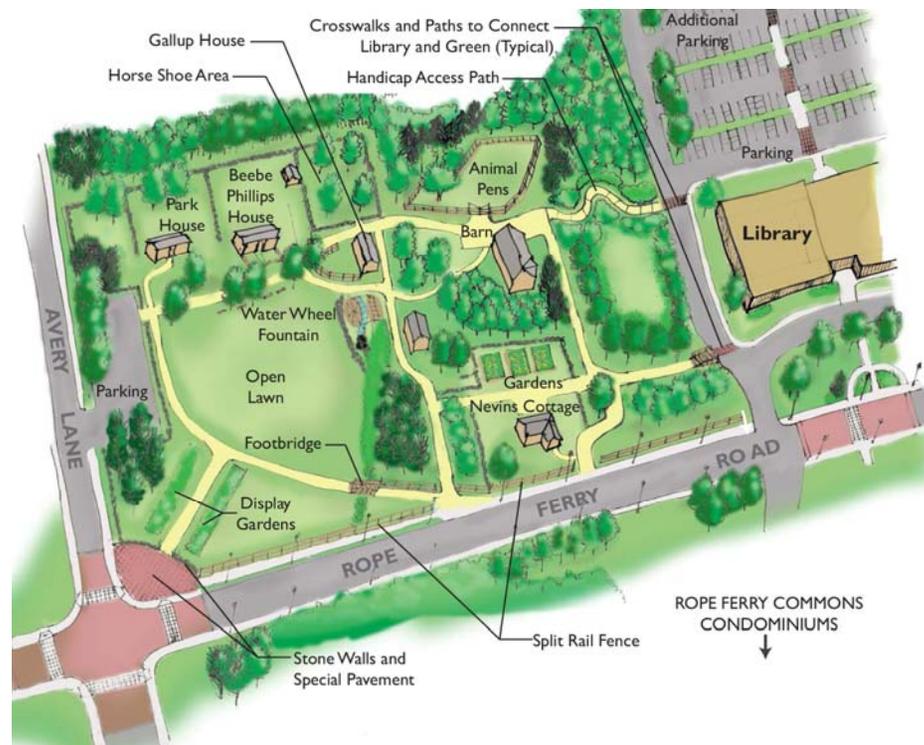
- Espresso machine - \$6,000
- Coffee maker and grinder - \$1,250
- Food service equipment (microwave, toasters, dishwasher, refrigerator, blenders, etc.) - \$15,000
- Storage hardware (bins, utensil rack, shelves, food case) - \$3,750
- Counter area equipment (counter top, sink, ice machine, etc.) - \$10,000
- Serving equipment (plates, glasses, flatware) - \$3,000
- Store equipment (cash register, signs) - \$5,000
- Office equipment \$3,500
- Furniture - \$16,000
- Other miscellaneous expenses - \$1500

In addition, it would behoove the sponsors to budget additional funds for initial purchases of consumable supplies and general operating expenses, including insurance and employee wages, since income will lag these expenses.

Making Nevins Cottage and the barn a vibrant active place will give Waterford's people a reason to reconsider Jordan Green... and redefine their relationship to Jordan Village.

Right is an illustrative plan of the larger Jordan Green, showing other potential modest and inexpensive improvements to complement the Nevins Cottage and Barn projects discussed above:

- new entry landscaping at the corner of Rope Ferry Road and Avery Lane;
- a new perimeter spit rail fence to define the Green as a special civic space;
- community gardens behind Nevins Cottage for local participants to tend flowers and vegetables;
- recreational and park amenities to reinforce the historic nature of the Green and its buildings
- a potential site for yet another historic house, a place-making tool to better define the Green's central lawn.



Concept for repositioning Jordan Green as an active community space

5.2 First Baptist Church of Waterford

The First Baptist Church of Waterford is a postcard-perfect New England church. Built in 1848, this Greek revival structure makes a gracious statement with its pure white exterior and lovely proportions. It's been an important Jordan Village landmark throughout its history... and it houses the oldest congregation in Waterford, whose local roots go back to 1710.

First Baptist's ministry goes beyond offering its congregation Sunday services and special programs for children and youth; it operates outreach programs to help people in need across New London County and around the world.

To that end, First Baptist has expanded its campus to include additional properties fronting Rope Ferry Road between B Lane and North Road. Recently, the Church purchased an historic former retail structure to replace an adjacent building that it had outgrown. The Church uses this structure to host meetings for recovery groups and other community organizations for which the sanctuary, gym and other facilities are inappropriate. On occasion, visiting clergy stay in a second floor apartment.

For the moment, the Church has space adequate to meet its needs, but some of its functions are housed in less than ideal circumstances. Most notably, the children's ministry occupies the basement in the main building during Sunday services. Having the children near the Sanctuary works well for the parents, but all agree that providing a better setting for the youngsters is a goal.

First Baptist wants to help strengthen the community in ways that are both spiritual and material, including identifying ways that its campus—in both today's configuration and how it might evolve over the next decade or so—could reinforce plans to revive Jordan Village.

Discussions revolved around three possibilities:

- Expand the campus to reinforce its edges and fill in the “missing teeth” along Rope Ferry Road, creating a stronger presence for Jordan Village and signaling to east-bound traffic that it's time to slow down for a small business district;
- Determine whether there is potential for a mutually beneficial partnership with the Town that would allow the Church parking lot to be used to supplement the available spaces currently serving Jordan Village businesses (mostly behind the buildings housing When Pigs Fly and the Jordan Fire Company);
- Consider, once all other Church programming and space requirements are satisfied, returning the historic storefront to retail use.

Expansion Plans: The Church's importance to its growing congregation has led to a short-term need for more classroom space for Sunday School and other activities. A possible program is for eight small and four larger classrooms, new space that will replace or expand current space in its current facilities. A new

building can provide such space on Church property adjacent to the existing house owned by the Church (whose preservation as part of the National Register District is a community objective). This new structure can be built according to Jordan Village design guidelines described elsewhere in this report to fit into the community context.

At the same time, as illustrated in the conceptual site plan for the Church property, creation of 122 parking spaces will satisfy the church's desire to expand their existing parking to provide sufficient paved spaces for their major services, the overflow spaces for which now require parking on unpaved areas of their site. The plan proposes how this parking and circulation could work, maintaining a buffer to the pond area in the north of the Church property. This will also open up opportunities for shared parking, as described in the next section.

Shared Parking: Parking in Jordan Village is extremely tight, with one business reporting that its customers sometimes actually give up. As described above, the First Baptist Church maintains a large surface parking lot that is rarely full other than during Sunday morning services and special occasions like weddings and funerals.

Shared parking serves multiple destinations within walking distance of the same parking facility. It's most effective when either the destinations share patrons, so that people park once and visit multiple destinations, or generate parking demand at different times like, say, an office building and a movie theater. Shared parking is often found in traditional commercial areas

where a single public parking facility services many different shops and other close by destinations.

Might there be a mutually beneficial opportunity whereby the Church allowed Jordan Village visitors to park on its property, perhaps in exchange for maintenance or other consideration by the Town? It's easy to envision in theory, especially since some informal shared parking occurs already, but negotiating an agreement will entail determining:

- Use of Facilities with exclusions for Church needs;
- Maintenance and snow removal
- Signage, including indicating when public parking is forbidden
- Enforcement
- Insurance coverage, liability and indemnification
- Mutual responsibilities
- Other considerations
- Termination and renewal

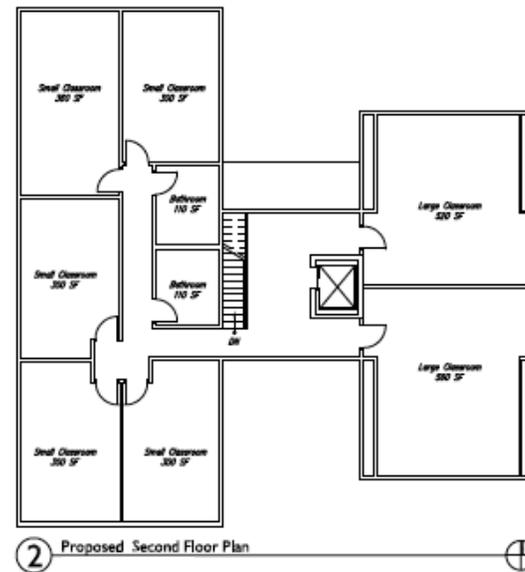
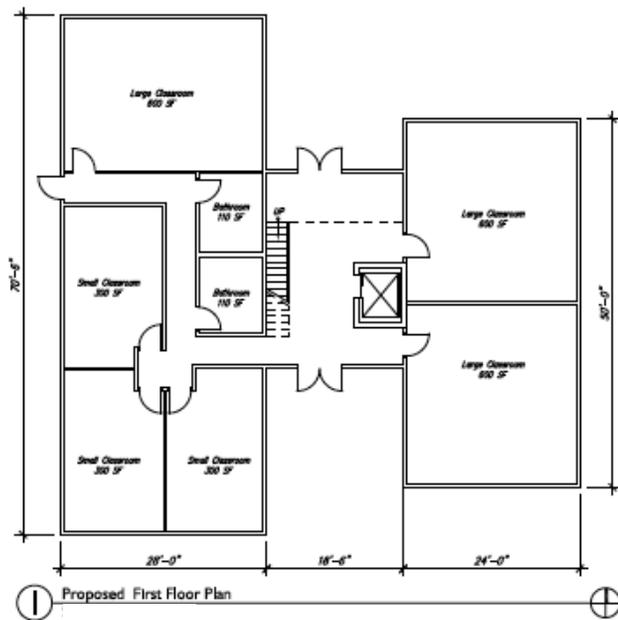
Given that both the Town and the Church have expressed interest in working together, perhaps a way to explore possibilities might be to start on a short-term or event-specific basis.

Returning the Storefront to Retail: If the Church expands its campus in the spirit of the plan described above, the Storefront may become surplus space. However, it's also easy to imagine that the Church would want to keep this property in its holdings in case it was needed in the future, especially given that demolition is discouraged within the National Register District. That said, the

structure is clearly re-purposed retail space with much to contribute to the Jordan Village experience. Leasing the structure to an appropriate retail enterprise raises questions for First Baptist that require due consideration. Like all churches, First Baptist enjoys its status as a tax-exempt organization and takes pains to ensure that its financial management and accounting practices do nothing to jeopardize it. Churches may engage in income-producing activities unrelated to their tax-exempt purposes, if the unrelated activities do not comprise a substantial aspect of the organization's activities. Otherwise, the net income from these unrelated business activities will be subject to the "Unrelated Business Income Tax" (UBIT) if it meets a variety of conditions designed to provide latitude for certain traditional and occasional activities, e.g., holding rummage sales run by volunteers or renting the facility for a family celebration. What about renting property on a long-term basis to a commercial enterprise?

Fortunately, the IRS considers rent to be a special category. According to the IRS, "In general, rents from real property, royalties, capital gains, and interest and dividends are not subject to the unrelated business income tax unless financed with borrowed money." The logic is that a rented property for which a church has assumed debt is, ipso facto, an investment unrelated to its religious mission and so any income produced should be taxable. Otherwise, the property is presumed to have been acquired via mission-consistent means and therefore its income is tax-exempt.

It's certainly premature to plan for this structure's return to retail use—there is no question that First Baptist of Waterford needs the space now—but it's useful to know that no accounting burden stands in the way.



A new classroom building for the First Baptist Church (twin winged building to right) can be designed with respect to Jordan Village design guidelines to fit within the historic neighborhood context,

The existing Church-owned house to the left could be considered for return to its traditional ground-floor commercial use.



5.2 - First Baptist Church Potential Site Development



-  Existing Buildings
-  Existing Buildings: Church Property
-  Proposed Buildings: Classrooms

Parking: Handicap (H): 6 Spaces
@ 20' L: 68 Spaces
@ 18' L: 48 Spaces
Total: 122 Spaces



6. Waterford Town Center: Facilitating Economic Development and Public Amenities

Quality of life is increasingly at the top of the list of factors influencing location-based decisions: where to locate a business, raise a family, take a vacation, and retire. On a day-to-day basis, quality of life also encompasses more prosaic concerns: how hard is it to fulfill everyday needs vis-à-vis getting around town, shopping for groceries, and driving the kids to school and other activities. Communities that wish to address both facets of quality of life must ensure that they offer areas that accommodate the different land uses and development patterns each entails.

Waterford is fortunate to have all of the necessary ingredients for both dimensions of quality of life in close proximity to each other. Together, the Post Road Gateway, Civic Triangle and Jordan Village function as a town center for Waterford, balancing the historic with the contemporary, preservation with development, and community and commercial perspectives.

Balance is essential. Communities that fetishize their historic districts and block economic growth in the name of character risk a stagnant tax base and lack of diversity. Communities that sacrifice their historic areas on the altar of economic development suffer consequences too, losing their distinctiveness and soul. Consequently, quality of life has become the purview of economic, community, tourism, and downtown development

practitioners. Although difficult to define, quality of life clearly encompasses people, values, economic opportunity, culture and place. Placemaking efforts apply to all aspects of a community, from historic fine-grained neighborhoods like Jordan Village, to modern auto-oriented shopping districts like the Post Road Gateway.

6.1 Mutual Reinforcement: Ensuring that Jordan Village, the Civic Triangle and the Post Road Gateway Work Together for Waterford

Jordan Village, the Civic Triangle and the Post Road Gateway fulfill distinct but complementary roles in Waterford town life. Each requires different strategies that reflect their development history and future economic requirements. Together, however, they can be mutually reinforcing and work together to increase Waterford's competitiveness as a place to live, work and visit.

- The Post Road Gateway fulfills the region's daily requirements. This area, like the rest of Waterford's commercial sector, relies on the community's locational advantages. Whereas the more recent development oriented to Interstate 95 created a pattern reflecting the needs of its time—large, deep sites with organized interior circulation patterns—the Town's older commercial uses occupy a patchwork of parcels including both within the Post Road Gateway and further west on Route One. To help the Post Road Gateway retain its vibrancy, this plan proposes a series of physical and economic interventions, as discussed in Chapter 4.

- The Civic Triangle accommodates the community's need to conduct municipal business and avail itself of public services. Its park setting looks lovely from above, but on the ground it is less inviting and needs some refreshment to fulfill its promise as a community gathering spot. To remedy this shortcoming, this plan proposes taking advantage of potential for new commercial uses and breathing new life into Jordan Green, as discussed in Chapters 3 and 5.
- Jordan Village connects residents and visitors to Waterford's heritage: the older homes, the Brook and its Mill, and the small commercial district where it's still possible to interact with the people who own and operate the businesses. Quirky building patterns lend Jordan Village much of its charm, but also make it difficult to accommodate new uses. In the past, a zoning system that deemed most existing development non-compliant didn't help matters. In Jordan Village, many of the most evocative structures cannot be rebuilt under existing regulations. Consequently, this plan proposes a new suite of land use regulations, as discussed in Chapters 1, 2 and 7.

Taken together, these three areas can:

- Work as an economic engine for Waterford, maintaining existing markets and building new ones;
- Help Waterford stand out from other coastal Connecticut communities competing for investments, and;

- Signal to residents and other stakeholders that Waterford insists on a quality built environment.

Unfortunately, contemporary development has essentially eschewed several of Waterford's most distinctive traditional commercial nodes, including Mago Point and Jordan Village. Avoiding incompatible development helps preserve character, but small scale, appropriate uses can help Jordan Village—the town's oldest settlement—fulfill its potential to help Waterford stand out from other southeastern Connecticut communities and foster affection and civic pride among its residents.

Across the country and around the world, certain communities, both large and small, inspire deep, fond regard while others leave little lasting impression. But when people describe why they love a particular city or town, they tend to cite a few specific features followed by intangible aspects of their experience, from a feeling of community to friendly encounters with strangers to a heightened sense of well-being.

In Waterford, people mention the Civic Triangle and Jordan Village. They wax nostalgic about playing on Jordan Green, Children's Hour at the Library and a long gone (but not forgotten) grocery store.

And no wonder. Jordan Village and the Civic Triangle feature physical and economic characteristics that benefit from and contribute to:

- Strong links to the past, stirring a sense of continuity and belonging;
- Distinctive built environments, with the personality and scale that evoke positive psychological responses.
- Potential for a bright future, which fuels optimism and the desire to invest time, money, energy, and ideas.

Together, these facets of the Waterford experience create a sense of place that grows stronger over time. While newcomers will never understand a community's sense of place as deeply as do life-long residents, even leisure travelers can recognize it within a very short time.

But how to translate that sense of place into economic advantage for the Town Center, and the Town as a whole? This plan, by refining the regulations that currently discourage new uses in Jordan Village, the Civic Triangle, or Post Road Gateway, takes an important step in protecting that critical sense of place.

But the plan also represents a second step. By linking the Jordan Village and Civic Triangle areas with Post Road Gateway through the Waterford Town Center Overlay District (authorized by the state as part of Village District legislation), the plan sets in motion opportunities for longer-term large-scale economic growth, and the potential of capturing the value of that future growth for the benefit of the Waterford Town Center area as a whole. And if

accomplished with careful planning and design consideration, it can lend those older areas' cachet of past authenticity to the future potential of the Gateway area.

Treating the three districts as an integrated Town Center offers some strategic advantages, via-a-vis:

- Qualifying for state and federal assistance programs geared towards a wider array of characteristics and objectives, e.g., traditional economic development and small business district revitalization;
- Demonstrating to would-be investors the ability to capture a more economic and socially diverse mix of markets;
- Identifying Waterford as a community that cares about its economic future while honoring its past, an attractive combination;
- Leveraging a portion of the Town Center's future additional revenue-producing capacity to help finance infrastructure costs associated with making improvements that benefit the whole—such as upgrading the intersection of Post Road and Rope Ferry Road, or traffic calming and landscaping improvements, or a façade improvement revolving loan program-- perhaps facilitated via the state's Tax Increment Financing (TIF) enabling legislation.

6.2 Partnerships and Placemaking

Placemaking encompasses the process of identifying and implementing strategies to reinforce the physical, economic and social dimensions of experiencing a city or a neighborhood. Placemaking is therefore the work of many professions, including historic preservation, economic development, design and others concerned with aspects of community livability and quality of life. This plan addresses all of these aspects of placemaking, but implementation relies on partnerships.

Community reinvigoration is a long-term game and most often requires multiple players (local governments, economic development programs, as well as private investors and property owners). High capacity organizations are skilled at orchestrating complex revitalization projects, most of which require sophisticated financing, careful sequencing, and familiarity with a range of agencies and programs. Investing in community capacity is essential for long-term leverage and sustainability. The more challenged the community's finances, the more challenging it will be to marshal the necessary resources.

For many years Waterford enjoyed tremendous property tax benefits relative to its size, thanks to the presence of the Millstone Nuclear Power Station; at one point, the plant provided a majority percent of the community's tax revenues. Deregulation forced Waterford to figure out how to make do on much, much less: inevitably, taxes went up despite necessary cuts in public services. The process understandably scarred the community, which now takes a fiscally conservative approach to

all decisions. Everyone in Waterford is very attuned to the ways in which capital investments made when times are flush can lead to burdensome annual operating and maintenance costs, especially when the economy falls short of expectations.

Waterford's Economic Development Commission (EDC) has its hands full dealing with traditional economic development matters: activities that straddle the intersection of public policy and private commerce to create jobs, businesses and prosperity. The EDC has a bold vision and is tackling big problems, like delving into energy production with its MicroGrid strategy, trying find a tenant for the Ocean State Jobs Lot site (formerly Big Y) or possibly launch a commercial kitchen.

This group of citizen volunteers works hard, with limited staff help through the Town Planning Department. Without staff support, there is no capacity to engage as well in a more contemporary approach to economic development: harnessing partnerships with non-profit and commercial enterprises, as well as pertinent state and regional agencies, for mutual benefit.

Partnerships can't be forced; they only work when they arise out of a shared sense of purpose. Capacity constraints, left uncured, will always preclude the Town's ability to make commitments to partners even when they make obvious sense.

To its credit, the EDC is willing to tackle tough problems-- but this plan requires also taking on fine-grained issues. Tasks like identifying and nurturing entrepreneurs to launch businesses in vacant retail spaces around town or working with other capacity-

challenged groups, like the Historical Society, requires a more bespoke approach:

- Developing one-on-one relationships with a wide array of people whose interests both overlap and conflict, including real estate brokers, lenders, providers of technical assistance, business operators, and government agencies;
- Linking entrepreneurs and enterprises to needed programs and support that other organizations—including area universities or the economic development group SeCTor—provide;
- Coaching entrepreneurs through their formation and start-up years;
- Brokering agreements and mediating any skirmishes that arise;
- Identifying and validating opportunities, like underserved markets and gaps in the menu of things to do and places to eat, sleep and shop;
- Making the case for economic development with local, state and federal elected and appointed officials, including documenting results and defending spending;
- Putting Waterford’s best foot forward as a community of choice by advancing a potent brand identity and implementing a perceptive, appealing marketing program.

This is time-intensive and often frustrating work, but it can be extremely rewarding. Opportunities and strategies worth pursuing within the context of this plan include the following components:

- Boutique (B&B) lodging to accommodate upscale Waterford business and leisure visitors, who can now choose only between numerous lower- and mid-tier hotels. People hoping for fancier accommodations or a special getaway have few options. Waterford is home to two destinations that attract a wealthy, discerning clientele: the O’Neill Theater Center and the Sonalysts Sound Stages. Each report that their visitors and clients, respectively, seek lodging elsewhere.
- Small enterprises suitable for the adaptive reuse of residential houses in and adjacent to Jordan Village. Jordan Village includes many conducive to repurposing as niche-oriented specialty retail shops, e.g., galleries, house + garden, toys, baby + child apparel, etc.
- A war chest earmarked for small-incentive programs (such as for façade improvements, sign design, paint studies, etc.) as well as other ways to help overcome impediments to character-enhancing investments;
- A road map to shepherd would-be developers through the Town’s approval system-- and guidelines to advocate for quality design;
- Renovation of the older Post Road Gateway shopping properties, including the judicious conversion of existing commercial land uses to residential;
- Traditional community events couples with newly-launched efforts, developed in partnership with local arts and cultural institutions.

Revitalizing Jordan Village within the context of the Town Center will clearly require additional resources. In order to move public and private efforts forward, this strategy recommends that a Community Development Specialist be hired to work under the direction of the Planning Director. This individual could also provide support to the EDC, to ensure ongoing coordination while enabling separation between the planning and economic development function-- as is sometimes necessary when sensitive business development matters arise. The position could be part-time, at least at first, and potentially funded through non-municipal sources, such as a grant program like those offered through the Community Economic Development Fund.

6.3 Community Events: Collaborative Opportunities

Community events create opportunities for newcomers to southeast Connecticut to discover Waterford and for long-time residents to reaffirm their commitment to the Town. Festivals organized around historic and cultural themes demonstrate that the community values its heritage. Jordan Green and the Civic Triangle are ideal spots to hold festivals, muster parade participants, conclude a marathon, and celebrate significant events.

Reinvigorating the late, belated Sheep to Shawl festival would be a relatively easy way to rally support for public events on Jordan Green; nostalgia for this event runs deep in the community. But there are other topics that could drive new events: perhaps

testing the waters for creating permanent attractions in and around the Civic Triangle/ Jordan Green area.

Waterford Farmers Market expansion

The Farmers Market has proven a popular and healthy addition to Waterford life, but it's running out of space at its Town Hall parking lot location. The operation needs a location with customer accessibility and visibility, as well as space for trucks to park and set up their stalls. A venue that takes advantage of Waterford Town Center's central location is ideal. Might the Farmers Market be accommodated at adjacent Waterford High School parking lots or at the First Baptist Church in Jordan Village?

Waterford PuppetFest

Waterford was home to legendary puppeteers Rufus and Margo Rose, often billed as 'America's Foremost Artists of the Marionette Theatre'. They trained in the pioneering Tony Sarg Studios in New York City, and established their own puppet company, Rufus Rose Marionettes, in 1936. They remained active until the mid-1970s and introduced the world to their friend Howdy Doody, who was created by Margo and operated by Rufus throughout his 1950s television career. The Roses, a true husband-wife team, lived on Avery Lane just west of Jordan Green, and long-time Waterford residents remember the impromptu puppet shows they performed for neighborhood children.



Howdy Doody with his TV pal 'Buffalo Bob' Smith (FYI, Howdy is the small person waving on the right).

In a happy coincidence, the O'Neill Theater Center also curates a significant collection of puppetiana, including original material from Jim and Jane Henson, of Sesame Street/ Electric Company/ Muppets fame (although the Muppets themselves are under copyright to Disney). It also has a relationship with the Ballard Institute and Museum of Puppetry at the University of Connecticut, Storrs, and hosts the annual National Puppetry Conference, internal to the O'Neill Center, in which invited puppet artists create, collaborate and communicate through puppets, developing and producing new works for the Puppet Theater. Participants have gone on careers as professional puppeteers, many with important companies.

Creating the Waterford 'PuppetFest', a complementary Town-oriented public event built around this compelling local puppet history, would entail partnering with the O'Neill Theater Center and associated resources. But it can also involve potential partners such as the Waterford Town Library. Both organizations have expressed interest in participating in the planning for such a venture. Waterford's public schools offer another potential event

partner-- opportunities to develop programming geared towards school children are abundant. For example, the proposed 'makerspace' could provide materials and assistance (including use of 3D copying) to enable participants (both kids and adults) to design and build puppets for use in the festival. Again, grants to provide seed money are available.

Steps to bring this idea to fruition might include:

1. Form a small committee of dedicated can-do people with a stake in the event's success;
2. File an application to incorporate as a not-for-profit;
3. Secure start-up funding and permission to use Jordan Green from the Town;
4. Develop an event concept and use it to create a series of fundraising and promotion events;
5. Use the event concept to guide outreach activities, e.g., to the community, to paying audiences if there will be admission fees, to artisans if their will be craft show booths, etc.
6. Generate buzz;
7. Identify sponsorship opportunities associated with different aspects of the event (e.g., sound equipment) and shop them to potential donors;
8. Avoid over-reaching and keep costs low;
9. Develop master schedules, checklists and contingency plans;
10. Create a place to store critical documents, e.g., permits, insurance policies, etc.
11. Enlist local restaurants, food trucks, farmer's market participants, caterers and others to provide food;

12. Document the event;
13. Hold a post mortem to identify improvements for next year;
14. Celebrate success!

Ideally, all who experience the festival and come to know Waterford and Jordan Green can take away memories of an authentic setting that strengthens connections between past and present, natural and developed, people and place.

7. Next Steps and Conclusion

7.1 Next Steps: Further Planning, Analysis & Implementation

As described in this document, a great deal of enthusiastic participation has taken place around the planning process—the topic of creating an attractive and functional core for the Town, based on history, services and amenities, is a compelling challenge for Waterford citizens.

But the implementation of this vision is only at its beginning stage. A series of next steps are important to refine the ideas and set the plan in motion.

Public Approvals: Proposed Plan, Zoning and Guidelines

In order to get on the Waterford docket as an implementation objective, the Plan must first be established as Town policy. Adoption as a detailed amendment of the 2012 *Plan of Preservation, Conservation, and Development* by the Planning and Zoning Commission (which has been an important participant in the planning process) will affirm that the Plan is in agreement with the goals of the Plan and that its proposed projects and proposals should be refined and prioritized as part of the Plan's implementation process.

To that end, the proposed new Jordan Village Mixed-Use Zone (JVMU) should be detailed and adopted as part of the ongoing update of the Town Zoning Code, consolidating and replacing the myriad underlying smaller zones within its boundaries.

At the same time, after refinement by the Planning Department, the Commission should also approve the Waterford Town Center Overlay District under the State of CT 'Village District' enabling legislation (known as '801j' as its legal designation). This will both maintain the existing underlying zoning but also allow for creation of design guidelines for the three subareas under the District purview—Jordan Village (the JVMU boundary), the Civic Triangle (including surrounding educational, recreational, and residential areas), and the Post Road Gateway (the commercial area on either side of Route One east of the Civic Triangle). It will also provide a framework for the future economic development of the Town Center, sharing cost and benefits among the three areas.

Finally, the Commission should approve, as the first package of guidelines under the new Overlay District framework, the 'Jordan Village Design Guidelines' prepared as part of this Plan and included by reference as an Appendix to this document.

Further detailed planning in the Civic Triangle and Post Road Gateway areas can take place as prioritized in the context of opportunities and schedules, and as funding is made available.

Public Infrastructure Improvements:

Welcoming Gateways, Safe Roadways, Attractive Landscaping

Some of this detailed planning needs to focus on public sector responsibilities and capabilities as investment to improve safety and attractiveness or to provide incentive to encourage private development. The sorts of lower-cost, low-maintenance infrastructure development proposed in this Plan can leverage

multiple dollars of return in private commercial or residential development.

These infrastructure projects have been proposed as a menu of potential improvements for future study and implementation based on overall Town funding and development priorities:

- Welcoming, well-designed and signed gateway entries to alert drivers they are entering an important Town Center;
- Safe roadway linkages with prominent crosswalks, curbing and lighting to calm traffic and maximize pedestrian safety for schoolchildren and shoppers alike;
- Attractive landscaping of roadway edges and interior parks and greens to enhance a sense of place, facilitating Town Center activities and programs.

Pilot Project Initiatives: Jordan Green and Baptist Church

Each of these projects has a core of dedicated support, but the next stages, in which the true feasibility is defined, tested, and approved by the ultimate partners, will be critical. These catalyst short-term projects can set the entire Town Center concept in motion.

7.2 Establishing an Organizational Framework with Local Stakeholders

The projects and processes described in this report will each take champions beyond the generous support of the participants already identified.

Town staff and elected officials must take a catalyst role in promoting projects and coordinating input of others

- Local institutions can decide what role they can play consistent with their own mandates (the O’Neill Center, the Baptist Church and the Library have discussed their potential participation).
- Civic volunteers—of which Waterford has many—will be key in terms of making the case to the town and other investors that costs will be worth the investments.
- Private sector businesses and individual residents, if guidelines and incentives are rational and compelling, will respond with further creative ideas to make this framework a reality.

7.3 Conclusion

As this intensive five-month process has evolved, each step has revealed a level of increasing enthusiasm, from issues and opportunities defined in initial key person interviews, to creative ideas and volunteer advice evidenced in the three-day community charrette, to the practical support provided by the series of fruitful meetings with the ad hoc Project Advisory Committee and the Planning and Zoning Commission.

The potential for Waterford Town Center as a central regional and town-wide focus of activity and amenity is real. Opportunities to expand the partnership needed to implement this Plan are apparent.

This Plan is poised to take on a momentum of its own, but it needs demonstrated commitment by elected officials, appointed bodies, and the participants described above. On the basis of the enthusiasm demonstrated throughout the planning process—the interviews, charrette workshops and walking tour, and myriad advisory committee meetings—such commitment is waiting to occur.

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