



GROTON STRATEGIC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Prepared for:

THE TOWN OF GROTON

Prepared by:

Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates, Inc.

FXFowle Architects, PC

Mt. Auburn Associates, Inc.

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Acknowledgments

This plan was prepared under the oversight of a broad-based Steering Committee, and many of the recommendations are the result of the meetings and brainstorming sessions held with the committee. The members of this committee are as follows:

STRATEGIC PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

Heather Sherman Bond	Town Council (TC)
Genevieve Cerf	Groton Open Space Association (GOSA)
Susan Dowling	Business Representative (former RTM)
Peter Fairbank	Representative Town Meeting (RTM)
Robert Frink	Economic Development Commission (EDC)
Stephen Hudecek	Zoning Commission (ZC)
Nancy Mitchell	Business Representative (former RTM)
Raymond Munn	Planning Commission (PC)
Peter Pappas	Economic Development Commission (EDC)
Deborah Peruzzotti	Representative Town Meeting (RTM)
Bill Rambow	Business Representative
Tom Skrmetti	At-large Member (former Town Councilor)
James Streeter	At-large member (present Town Councilor)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Peter Pappas	Chairman
Lian Obrey	Secretary
Nancy Bloom	
Al Dion	
Susan Dowling	
Robert Frink	
Peter Rotella	

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT STAFF

Michael J. Murphy, AICP	Director of Planning and Development *
Barbara Goodrich	Manager of Planning Services **
Barbara Strother, EDP	Economic & Community Development Specialist *
Deborah Jones	Planner II – Environmental

Diane Glemboski, AICP	Planner II – Land Use
Susan Cullen, AICP	Planner I
Paul Duarte	Planning Technician
Robin Moulding	Office Assistant III *
Sheila Discordia	Office Assistant II
Debra Stanowicz	Office Assistant II
Robin M. Silsby	Office Assistant II *

*** Primary Staff on this study.**

**** Former Staff member.**

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0 Executive Summary

The following Strategic Economic Development Plan sets forth a comprehensive analysis of economic development conditions in the Town of Groton and a detailed strategy for securing the Town's economic future. It comes at an important time: the Town recently emerged from the potential loss of one of its prime economic engines, the Groton-New London Submarine Base. While this outcome was averted, both the Town and the region have again become focused upon the issue of economic diversification, in recognition of the region's high degree of economic exposure to forces beyond local control.

The Strategic Plan represents a synthesis of many existing project and policy proposals, combined with a number of new proposals, all repositioned to address four core objectives:

- Diversifying the Town's economy, both from the standpoint of the industry mix as well as the degree of dependence upon military spending and the pharmaceutical industry.
- Redeveloping Downtown Groton in a manner that unlocks its latent economic potential while revitalizing the civic core of the community.
- Improving the Town's ability to compete for tourist activity and spending.
- Improving the Town's overall quality of life, which speaks directly to its attractiveness as a place both to live and to operate a business.

The plan draws on extensive local outreach and input. Both ideas and oversight were provided by a broad-based Steering Committee comprised of boards and commission members, elected officials, business leaders and a representative of an environmental group. Two public workshops were held to gain input into the plan as well as feedback on a draft version. Further, several days of interviews were conducted with a variety of business owners, economic development professionals, government representatives, and other stakeholders. The information and insights obtained through this outreach are reflected throughout the document. The vision that was the culmination of this input includes:

- A diversified economy that builds on local strengths and assets, but that reduces the Town's historic reliance on the defense and pharmaceutical industries, provides jobs with good wages and opportunities for advancement; and strengthens and broadens the local tax base.
- An enhanced climate for business investment that streamlines to the greatest extent practical the path from development application to approval; supports and nurtures entrepreneurs and small businesses; and provides appropriate regulations to provide a stable and predictable climate for investment.
- Downtown Groton converted into a vibrant and pedestrian-friendly mixed-use center accommodating new residences and office in addition to retail; and with new civic spaces and uses that bring the community together at its core.

- New development patterns that maximize economic value while minimizing their ecological footprint and impact on sensitive environmental features, including waterbodies and wildlife habitats.
- A vibrant coastal shoreline which accommodates natural habitats, working waterfronts, tourist destinations, and recreational facilities.

0.1 KEY FINDINGS

- Groton businesses are fortunate in being able to draw from a productive, educated and skilled workforce based in the Town and region. However, the workforce is aging, and the shifting demand for labor may result in shortages for certain occupations.
- Wages in the region are higher than national norms, but not as high as often assumed. The cost of labor is lower than many northeast locations and only a few percentage points higher than national norms. A rising cost of living, driven by a tight housing market, may upset this balance, however.
- The concentration of manufacturing occupations in Groton helps explain its relatively high wage base, as these jobs pay significantly better than other sectors. However, over 14,000 manufacturing jobs have been lost since 1990 in the region—many due to downsizing, including Electric Boat.
- The three major employers—the Subase, Electric Boat and Pfizer—still dominate the Town’s economy and are major sources of employment in the region. However, the two casinos are now the region’s number one and three employers; their growing appetite for workers is driving significant economic and demographic shifts in the region.
- The size and relative stability of EB and Pfizer have helped the Town enjoy a balanced tax base and maintain moderate levels of property taxation over time. The recent reaffirmation of the Town’s triple-A bond rating, even in the face of a possible negative outcome in the BRAC process, speaks well of the Town’s fiscal soundness and management.
- The BRAC process has served as a wake up call regarding the lack of diversification in the local economy. While there is no single project on the horizon, or even conceived of, that would replace the loss of one of the Town’s big three employers, efforts to attract a multitude of smaller employers would help soften the impact of any major changes affecting the Subase, EB or Pfizer.
- From a cost of business perspective, Groton shares many of the same liabilities as other New England locations, including higher land costs, limited land availability, higher utility costs, and higher taxes at the state level. Within New England, however, Groton compares favorably on many of these measures.
- Groton is able to offset some of these cost disadvantages through its Enterprise Zone, other local incentives, and various state economic development programs. Groton is able to offer more attractive economic development inducements than many municipalities of comparable size.
- The lack of developable commercial and industrial land served by roadways and utilities remains a key constraint in the Town to attracting new business. Small users have nowhere to go, and only major developments (particularly retail and housing) are able to shoulder the cost of the significant site improvements and infrastructure investments necessary to develop in Groton.

- Groton continues to attract the attention of large-format retailers looking to expand their presence in the region, yet many of its older retail areas, including Downtown Groton, are underperforming due to the superior competition in Waterford and elsewhere.
- In particular, Downtown Groton suffers from a location no longer central to the region's population, an aging stock of buildings no longer suitable for modern retail tenants, and an out of date image and appearance. Significant investments, beyond landscaping, will be necessary to improve the performance of the area.
- Further, with its days as the region's premier shopping destination behind it, Downtown Groton should look to diversify its base from an exclusive focus on retail, to include housing and civic uses.
- Tourism has historically been important to the region, and is more so now than ever, but the nature of tourism has been transformed by the two large casinos. Few spin-off benefits have accrued to places such as Groton, yet traditional tourist attractions such as historic Downtown Mystic, the Seaport, and the Aquarium, continue to attract significant numbers of visitors.
- While most of the big attractions are outside of Groton's borders, Groton has a number of smaller attractions that could help attract more of the weekend getaway market when properly packaged and linked with complementary attractions in the neighboring towns of Stonington and New London. The Thames River Heritage Park, still in its formative stages, is a significant step in this direction.

0.2 PROPOSED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

1. Diversify the local economy by attracting new business, retaining and growing existing businesses, and assisting with the startup of new business

Improve outreach to local businesses through on-site visits, a business calling program, business caravans, etc. Conduct "exit interviews" for every business that closes or relocates out of Groton, to better understand why businesses close or leave the Town. Market the Town's incentive programs, such as the Enterprise Zone, to existing as well as prospective businesses, as job growth that occurs through the expansion of existing firms is no less important than that from new firms. Pursue local niches in maritime security and nuclear engineering, leveraging the unique assets and skills base in Groton. Continue to employ and enhance local incentives for business development, and reinstate funding for the Development Assistance Fund to provide startup funding for promising ventures.

2. Take a proactive approach to creating sites for economic development

Facilitate the expansion of "turnkey" industrial/commercial/flex sites in Groton through targeted investments in infrastructure. As an important step, set aside land for a true commerce park near the Mystic Marriot. Should "big box" development occur in the vicinity, seek to leverage such development to create infrastructure to support a variety of development types. Expand the amount of incubator space in Groton, whether at Avery Point or through new development. Take the lead in planning for the reuse of the Mystic Education Center site, one of the most important reuse sites in the Town. Continue to involve Groton Utilities in local economic development decision-making, to make sure that utilities planning dovetails with economic development planning.

3. Enhance economic development capacity at the Town level and through regional partnerships

Update the Town's marketing materials, and put procedures in place to keep them up to date over time. Update the computer inventory system of available sites so that such information is always at the ready. Adopt a specific tax abatement policy to avoid ad-hoc decision-making and potential perceptions of political dealing. Enhance the Economic Development function of the Town to meet program needs and requirements. Consider the creation of a Groton Economic Development Corporation empowered to undertake capital and development plans and projects. Compile and update the data necessary to track progress and make informed decisions. Market local sites and opportunities through CERC and seCTer.

4. Zone with economic development in mind

Implement new form-based zoning standards for development in the DDD district that combine more meaningful guidance with greater predictability with regards to approvals. Promote mixed-use development in the downtown by specifying the types of mixed-use buildings permitted and setting appropriate standards. Only conditionally permit "big box" retail in industrial zones to avoid the potential for all the Town's prime sites to be converted to retail without Town input. Promote a variety of housing types within Groton, from apartments to high-end single family developments, in keeping with the diversity of the workforce. Create a new mixed-use, neo-traditional floating zone or zoning provision applicable to large sites within Groton as a means of spurring higher quality, coordinated development in appropriate locations.

5. Improve the aesthetics and image of Groton's highway business corridors, including Downtown Groton

Undertake streetscape improvements along Route 1, including landscaping and pedestrian enhancements. As a short-term project, work with property owners to provide landscaping along Plaza Court to make it more of a public street. Enhance the Town-owned open space at Route 1 and Poquonnock Road. Implement revised signage standards for the entire Route 1/Route 12 corridor outside of historic Downtown Mystic.

6. Improve circulation and access in Downtown Groton and throughout the Town

Reinforce the "100 percent corner" of Route 1 and Poquonnock Road through pedestrian, roadway, and design improvements. Open up the interior of the downtown with enhanced visibility and access by rerouting Drozdyk Drive to connect with Poquonnock Road. Connect downtown with adjacent neighborhoods and developments. Facilitate pedestrian and bicycle circulation no less than automotive. Improve pedestrian circulation in and around Downtown Groton and other densely populated areas. Plan for a new rail station in Downtown Groton, located at Poquonnock Road, if or when the Shoreline East service is extended into Groton

7. Work with property owners to spur the redevelopment of downtown Groton

Use public investments as a catalyst for private investments, such as the roadway improvement proposed above. Work with property owners to create infill development opportunities. Encourage the strategic use of structured parking to increase development capacity, even to the point of subsidizing such parking, if necessary.

8. Preserve and enhance the Town's historic, scenic, and open space resources to create both local and tourist amenities

Reposition Thames Street as a complimentary counterpoint to historic Downtown Mystic, in terms of theming and marketing. Designate more Scenic Byways in Groton, either locally or through the state DOT's scenic byways program. Continue to pursue new greenways/bikeways to create a network of parks and open spaces. Improve access to existing parks, through better car and bike parking, new trailways, etc. Promote the preservation of Groton's historic heritage, buildings and sites. Along identified scenic byways, pursue land use policies aimed at preserving scenic and/or rural landscapes. Make the protection of reservoirs and watersheds a priority as it relates to land preservation and environmental protection.

9. Improve the packaging and marketing of existing tourist attractions

Focus on the weekend getaway market for tourism, capitalizing on Groton's location a few hours from both Boston and New York. Continue to pursue the Heritage Park concept for Thames River attractions. Improve gateways to the Nautilus Museum. Promote more B&B's in historic Mystic and along or near Thames Street through appropriate zoning. Prepare a Groton-specific tourist map and guide to local attractions, including historic sites, scenic byways, and bike trails. Market Groton's attractions locally as well as afar; word of mouth by locals is often as effective as any marketing strategy. Work with regional tourism entities (such as Mystic Coast & Country and the Region's Tourism District) to promote local events. Implement a comprehensive system of wayfinding signage.

10. Undertake projects and plans which bolster community pride and image

Encourage community-wide events in each of Groton's unique sub-districts—Groton City, Noank, Groton Long Point, and Mystic—to celebrate their unique character, and to give residents a reason to visit. Make Downtown Groton a place for the whole community to come together, through new open spaces and civic uses. Create a new regional tourism event centered in Groton, perhaps through a local contest, and in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce.

0.3 PROPOSED PROJECTS

1. Downtown Groton—Route 1 Retail Area Pedestrian and Streetscape Improvements

The proposed enhancements would address gateway signage and landscaping at the western edge of Route 1 near the I-95 interchange; improved crosswalks, sidewalks and landscaping along Route 1 in the heart of downtown; and other improvements to be identified.

2. Downtown Groton Internal Circulation Study

As part of the planning for Downtown Groton, a new circulation system is being proposed that would reconfigure Drozdyk Drive and Plaza Court, and introduce new pedestrian and bicycle shortcuts to adjacent residential areas. The new pattern is proposed to:

- Reinforce a “100 percent” corner at Poquonnock Road and Route 1.
- Open up access and visibility to Groton Shopping Center.
- Create a new focal point for Downtown Groton.
- Facilitate pedestrian circulation to and from, as well as within, Downtown Groton.
- Set the stage for infill development in the downtown, and eventual redevelopment by the current property owners.

3. Business Park Utilities Infrastructure Improvement Project

The Flanders Road industrial district is home to two mid-size manufacturing firms—Medtronics and Aqua Massage—and a number of smaller businesses. A Town-sponsored study is currently underway to determine the best and most cost effective way to extend utility service to the Flanders Road and IP-zoned areas to enhance developable properties. A key goal is to choose a route which provides the most efficient utility service to other developable lands within this area of the Town. Based on the conclusions of the study, the Town will determine whether to, and if so, how to move forward with the utility extension.

4. Military Highway Linear Park

Military Highway runs between the Groton-New London Subase and Fairview Avenue in Groton City. The roadway runs parallel to the Thames River shoreline, providing scenic views of the river along its length. The proposed project would introduce a new linear park element running alongside Military Highway on the river side of the street. This linear park would be usable by cyclists, joggers, strollers and roller bladers.

5. Thames River Heritage Park

The Thames River waterfronts in Groton and New London are home to a number of historic areas and attractions: Fort Trumbull and downtown New London on the New London side; and Thames Street, Fort Griswold, Groton Bank area, the National Submarine Memorial, and the Nautilus Museum on the Groton side. The Thames Maritime Heritage Park project is intended to link these varied attractions together both thematically and physically through the use of a new water taxi system. The project includes water taxi docks in New London and in Groton at the Nautilus Museum and Fort Street Landing on Thames Street. New rest room facilities at Fort Griswold will be constructed. The project also has marketing and exhibit design components.

6. Thames Street Revitalization

Thames Street is a charming retail street with significant maritime heritage and an emerging dining and specialty shopping niche. However, the street still faces several obstacles to revitalization, including its geometry which allows for only narrow sidewalks and a single lane of on-street parking; significant gaps in retail continuity; and shallow property depths. A comprehensive revitalization study would examine the following topics:

- Modifications to roadway geometry.
- An on- and off-street parking strategy encompassing side streets in addition to Thames Street.
- The creation of specific points of interest, such as scenic overlooks and historical markers, along the length of the street to encourage strolling.
- Soft sites and redevelopment opportunities.
- Appropriate zoning.
- Potential for B&B development.
- Maximizing the benefits of the Heritage Park and Military Highway Park.

7. Mystic Education Center

The Mystic Education Center (also known as the Oral School) occupies over 100 acres of land perched above the Mystic River just north of I-95. The property, which is owned by the State, is underutilized. The site represents a unique opportunity to plan for a significant new development in Groton. The proposed study would examine the site's suitability for development from an environmental and infrastructure point of view, and its highest and best use from both a market and economic development point of view.

8. City & Town Bikeway/Trailway Plan (Thomas Road)

The creation of greenways and greenbreaks is a primary goal of the Town's Open Space Master Plan. Both the Town and the City are looking to encourage bicycle and pedestrian connections as a means to better connect commercial and residential areas, encourage recreational activities, and promote healthier lifestyles that incorporate outdoor exercise. The proposed bikeways and trailways are also consistent with other projects including the Thames River Heritage Park and Military Highway linear park. The proposed project is also consistent with the Bike and Pedestrian Routes anticipated in the 2004 – 2005 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).

9. Center for Excellence in Maritime Security

The Regional CEDS prepared on behalf of seCTer identified an opportunity to promote R&D and commercial applications related to maritime security. The proposed *Center for Excellence in Maritime Security* would leverage existing regional resources to bring together regional research and educational institutions with relevant programs and focus, and has the capacity to leverage the resources of individual institutions to promote a more integrated approach to maritime security research and education. The Center would support research scientists and engineers seeking to

develop and commercialize new products as well as existing regional companies already working in this field.

10. Business Incubator

An entrepreneurial strategy focused on business startups is a cornerstone of the overall economic diversification strategy. Most of the small and mid-sized companies in Groton have their origins as local startups that occupy a unique niche (Medtronics, ProtoPower, Aqua Massage, etc.). Some are spin-offs from EB and Pfizer, others were founded by local inventors and technologists, all initially required low-cost space. A business incubator can help fulfill this need. Such a facility might be either a traditional incubator (i.e. a building with subsidized space and shared resources, which seeks to graduate startups out of the incubator over time), or simply a building or complex of buildings offering low cost, adaptable space suitable for a variety of startups in engineering, R&D, and manufacturing.

11. Mystic Multimodal Transportation Study

The Town's Plan of Conservation and Development recommends an intermodal transportation study focused on Mystic to connect downtown Mystic with the seaport and aquarium, likely using a trolley-like bus attractive to tourists. The service will necessarily be focused on the Stonington side of the river, yet there are significant benefits for Groton as well. A new trolley has the potential to bring more people into downtown than could be accommodated otherwise, increasing business for downtown merchants. Further, if the new service is successful, it could be extended to link Mystic with other nearby historic areas such as Noank and Esker Point Beach.

12. Wayfinding Signage

Groton has a wealth of attractions large and small—downtown Mystic, Groton Long Point, Noank, Thames Street, Bluff Point, the Nautilus Museum, Groton-New London Airport, Fort Griswold, the Submarine Memorial, various scenic roadways, etc.—but these are dispersed throughout the Town and are not necessarily easy for visitors to find. A more comprehensive system of wayfinding signs would help visitors access Groton's many attractions.

13. Submarine Base Gateway Project

The Town's Plan of Conservation and Development identifies this area as a significant development node in the Town. This project is intended to provide needed attention in the form of gateway, traffic and multimodal improvements to Crystal Lake Road and its intersection with Military Highway and Route 12.

1 Introduction

The Town of Groton occupies a position with regards to economic development that is not only enviable but also, at the same time, precarious. On the one hand, the Town has enjoyed a stable base of large employers and taxpayers that allows it to enjoy robust employment (far exceeding its resident labor force) and property tax rates which are low for the region. However, these employers are three in number: the Navy Submarine Base (Subase), the Electric Boat Corporation, and the global pharmaceuticals giant Pfizer. This places the bulk of the Town's economy at the mercy of external forces—decision-making at the Pentagon and distant corporate headquarters.

This report has been undertaken at an important time in the Town's recent history. The Town, Southeastern Connecticut Region and State of Connecticut, received a significant jolt in May of 2005 when the Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC) recommended the complete closure of the Groton Subase. The positive outcome of having the Base removed from the closure list was due to the efforts of committed local, regional, state and national partners and elected officials who made a compelling case for retention of the Subase. While the immediate future of the Town appears stable, the BRAC process serves as a compelling reminder that the Town cannot take its economic security for granted, but must continue to plan with an eye towards ensuring its future prosperity.

Groton is therefore fortunate to possess assets that extend beyond its historic role as a center of the defense and pharmaceuticals industry. However, taking full advantage of these assets will require that the Town overcome significant obstacles, not the least of which is local inertia resulting from its past good fortune. These challenges are the major focus of this report.

1.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Economic development, as typically defined, refers to actions that result in an increase in jobs and/or the tax base within a specific locality or jurisdiction. Over time, the definition has broadened to include planning questions relating to economics or market questions, such as the revitalization of a commercial area, a downtown, or a neighborhood. While in the past economic development activities focused on marketing and business recruitment, often bolstered through the application of targeted government subsidies or incentives, today economic development can take the form of a wide variety of actions aimed at improving the attractiveness of a location for investment that results in more, or higher quality, economic activity.

The purpose of this report is to set forth a strategic action plan for improving the economy of Groton. The focus is not only on direct job creation and tax base increases, but also the quality of jobs and development, their likely stability over time, and their fit with local community values and aspirations. The strategy set forth here is *asset-based*, in that it seeks to leverage real local assets to attract more private (and public) investment. It is also *market-based*, in that it recognizes the opportunities and

constraints imposed by local markets for commercial and residential real estate. Finally, it responds directly to the opportunities and constraints that emerged from the economic research, scores of stakeholder interviews, and the public workshops held as part of the Plan.

The scope of work for this plan has included the following items:

- An extensive public and stakeholder outreach effort, detailed in a later section, which included two public workshops, numerous stakeholder interviews, and oversight by a broad-based steering committee.
- Compilation and analysis of demographic and economic data for the Town and region.
- Field surveys of key sites and corridors throughout the Town, including a detailed inventory of businesses in Downtown Groton.
- An analysis of socio-economic and spending power data for primary and secondary trade areas centered on Downtown Groton.
- A review of the Town's existing zoning and land use regulations, as well as its current Plan of Conservation and Development and other relevant plans and studies from the past two decades.
- A review of other relevant documents provided by the Town which relate to its enterprise zone and other economic development programs.

1.2 LOCAL AND REGIONAL CONTEXT

Groton is located on the Long Island Sound between the Thames and Mystic Rivers in New London County, in the southeast portion of Connecticut. Groton is approximately 55 miles from Providence, Rhode Island, 50 miles from New Haven, and 55 miles from Hartford. It is also located about 3 hours from New York City and 2 hours from Boston. It is bordered to the north by the Town of Ledyard. Across the Thames and Mystic Rivers are the City of New London and the Town of Stonington, respectively. Groton's location in the northeast is shown on **Map 1**.

The Town owes its historic development to a strategic location adjacent to two navigable rivers with direct access to the Long Island Sound, and thence to the Atlantic Ocean. In particular, the Thames River has been a center for commercial and military marine traffic for more than two hundred years. Its military role is now dominated by the nuclear submarine fleet stationed at the Subase, and the submarine manufacturing facilities at Electric Boat. Commercial marine traffic is centered at the State Pier across the river in New London. More recently, ferryboats have begun to ply the mouth of the Thames River between Long Island and New London. Other maritime facilities in the region include the United States Coast Guard Academy, located in New London. The Mystic River, by contrast, now primarily serves as a tourist and recreational destination.

MAP 1: LOCATION



The Town of Groton includes within it three independent jurisdictions which, while not recognized as stand-alone municipalities, exercise certain powers and provide certain services that would otherwise be provided by the Town. The most independent of these is the City of Groton, which has its own Mayor and Council, along with appointed land use and other municipal boards. The City exercises its own land use authority; provides public services including fire, police, and trash collection; and owns Groton Utilities, a public utility company which serves the City, Town, and beyond with electricity, water, and internet access in limited locations. The City does not have its own school system, but shares the Town’s schools. There are two other jurisdictions with independent land use authority—the Noank Fire District and Groton Long Point. These jurisdictions rely much more heavily on Town services.

Groton sits within the Norwich-New London Labor Market Area (LMA), an economic region defined by the State’s Department of Labor, Labor Market Information division for the purposes of data reporting. A Labor Market Area is intended to correspond to a *commuting shed*, i.e., a geographic area in which people typically live and work. The Norwich-New London LMA consists of the following towns:

Bozrah	Griswold	Montville	Old Lyme	Salem
Canterbury	Groton	New London	Old Saybrook	Sprague
East Lyme	Ledyard	North Stonington	Plainfield	Stonington
Franklin	Lisbon	Norwich	Preston	Waterford

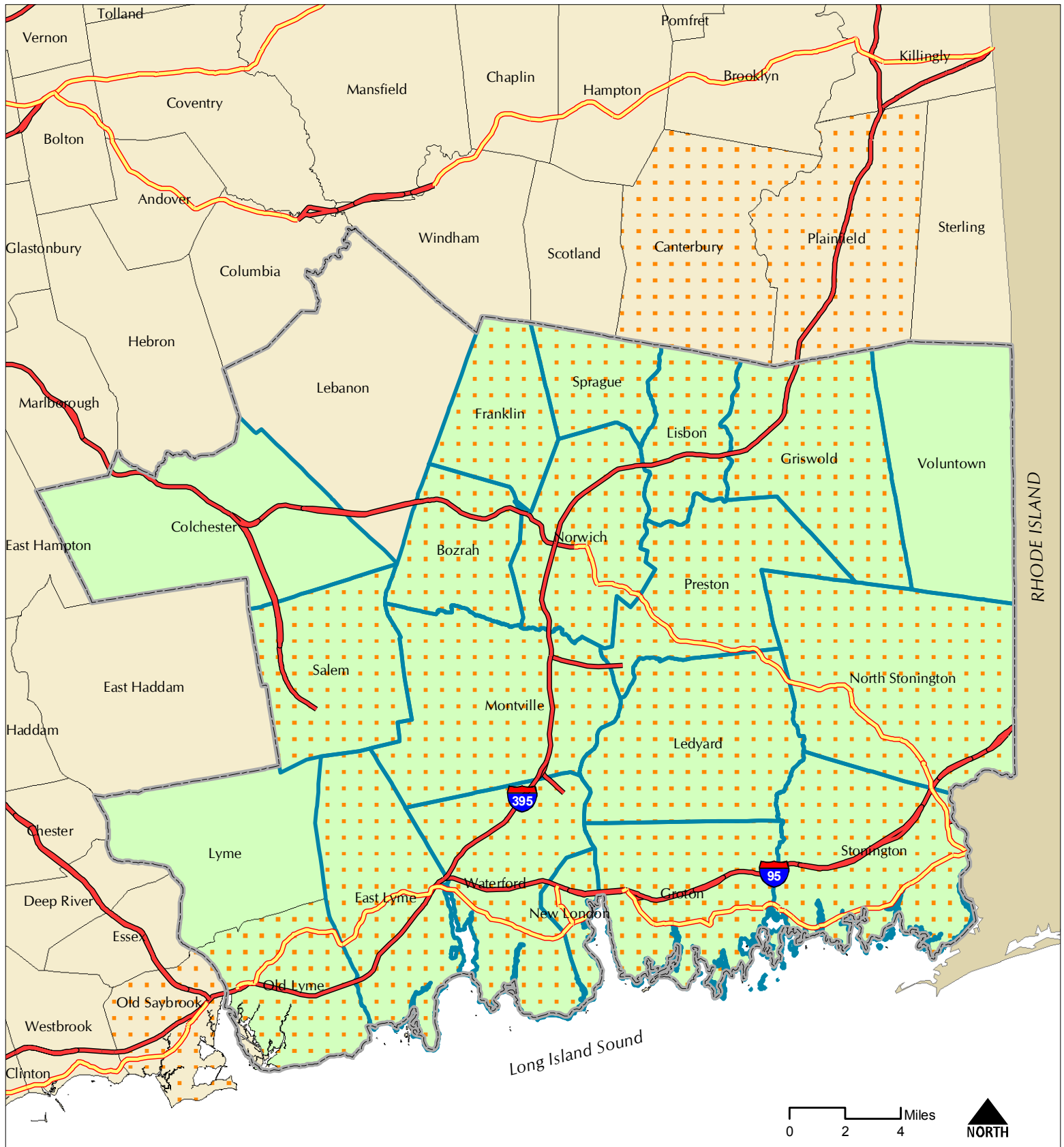
Groton is also a member of the Southeast Connecticut Council of Governments (SCCOG). The SCCOG region is similar to that of the Labor Market Area, except that it includes additional towns—Colchester and Voluntown—but does not include other towns within the LMA—Canterbury, Old Lyme, Old Saybrook, and Plainfield. The SCCOG is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for transportation funding, which means that the SCCOG must prepare Transportation Improvement Plans (TIPs) for the region, which form the basis for federal funding of regional transportation projects. In addition to its important role in transportation, the SCCOG has also been active in identifying and quantifying the region’s housing needs, particularly for affordable housing, and proposing means by which these needs might be met.

Groton also falls under a public-private regional economic development organization known as seCTer (for Southeastern Connecticut Enterprise Region). SeCTer’s geography encompasses all of New London County, including, in addition to the towns in the LMA, Colchester and Lyme. The mission of seCTer is “to promote and to preserve the attractiveness of the region, to encourage new businesses, and to assist and to nurture existing and expanding local enterprises.” The organization was involved as one of the region’s advocates during the recent Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) round which looked at closing the Subase. SeCTer’s Executive Director, John Markowicz, also chaired the Subase Realignment Coalition (SRC), which had a major role in this effort. SeCTer also markets the region, administers a regional revolving loan fund, and partners with other regional economic development entities including

the Eastern Connecticut Workforce Investment Board (EWIB). All of the above definitions of the region are illustrated on **Map 2**.

Southeastern Connecticut's economy has long been dominated by the defense industry and by pharmaceuticals and Groton has been the epicenter for both of these industries with the Subase, Electric Boat, and the Pfizer research facilities. The region also has had a secondary industry in tourism, centered on the Mystic River attractions—Mystic Seaport, Mystic Aquarium, Mystic Village, and historic Downtown Mystic—which, until recently, were the most-visited tourist destinations in the state. While these remain important pillars of the economy, the development of two Native American gaming facilities (Foxwoods Resort Casino and Mohegan Sun Casino and Entertainment), and their evolution into hyper-scaled entertainment and resort destinations, has transformed the local economy, regional demographics, the labor market, and transportation needs.

Map 2: Regional Location



Legend

- Norwich-New London Labor Market Area (LMA)
- Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments Region (SCCOG)
- South Eastern Connecticut Enterprise Region (SeCTer)
- New London County boundary

Source: Connecticut DEP GIS Data
ESRI GIS Data

Map Prepared by:
Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates, Inc.
December 2005

1.3 PAST PLANNING EFFORTS

The Town of Groton has undertaken a number of plans over the years either directly or indirectly related to economic development. Each of these plans was reviewed as part of this study. This plan is intended to build upon these past planning efforts. The following is a brief overview of the major economic-development related recommendations from each plan. These plans are as follows:

- Town Plan of Conservation and Development (2002)
- City Plan of Conservation and Development (1996)
- Town Historic Preservation Plan (1996)
- Target Industry Identification and Marketing Plan (1991)
- Economic Development Plan (1985)
- Downtown Development Program (1984)

1.3.1 Town Plan of Conservation and Development (2002)

The Town of Groton adopted a full update of its Plan of Conservation and Development in 2002. The plan takes a comprehensive look at the full range of planning issues in the Town, from economic development to environmental protection and open space. The plan is intended to provide a framework for future decision-making regarding Groton's physical, social and economic development. On the conservation side, the plan addresses the protection of natural resources, open space, coastal resources, historic resources, community character, and community spirit. On the development side, the plan's overall goal is to encourage appropriate residential and business development; diversify transportation options; and enhance community facilities and infrastructure.

A background economic development report undertaken as part of the planning process went further in some regards in addressing the need for greater local initiative in economic development. Specifically, the report noted that the Town has historically been reluctant to invest in infrastructure (such as road connections, sewer and water) that would potentially benefit private landowners; but that without such investments, the Town's plans for industrial parks are little more than lines on a map. The report indicated that if the Town chose to wait for the private sector to make these investments, that the wait could potentially be a long one.

The plan realized that future economic development would likely result from the expansion of, or spin-offs from, the three major regional clusters: defense businesses, pharmaceuticals, and tourism/leisure. The plan contained a series of "nodes" for accommodating different types of development—retail, commercial, civic—which were identified at important intersections and over existing centers. The plan also included the following economic development recommendations:

- Develop a Strategic Economic Plan (this Plan fulfills that recommendation).

- Support economic diversification
- Simplify business zoning and procedures
- Nurture existing businesses and recruit new clean business and industry
- Encourage development of fully serviced sites
- Modify commercial development patterns and encourage development of mixed-use nodes at most suitable sites (not “strip” development)
- Target specific opportunity areas

1.3.2 City Plan of Conservation and Development (1996)

The City of Groton adopted its own, independent Plan of Conservation and Development in 1996. The purpose of the plan was to outline the best thinking about future growth, and to encourage development that results in a diversified economy and variety of employment. Major recommendations included:

- Promote the development of the Thames Street Corridor as a destination
- Work closely with major employers to make sure that their existing and future needs are satisfied in the City
- Foster public-private partnerships
- Realize maximum potential of marine research institutions at Avery Point
- Encourage the creation of a “city center”
- Identify locations for accommodating new commercial development

Many of these recommendations remain very relevant. This report also focuses on strategies for capitalizing on the destination potential of Thames Street. The Town and City recently collaborated on a zoning study for the area around the Pfizer campus. Avery Point remains an underutilized resource; this report identifies the campus as the possible location for an expanded business incubator and a Center for Excellence in Maritime Security.

1.3.3 Town Historic Preservation Plan (1996)

The Historic Preservation Plan contains an evaluation of Groton’s historic resources, a vision for their protection, as a series of historic preservation goals and specific recommendations for their implementation. The four goals were as follows:

- Strengthen Groton’s Historic Resources Policy
- Preserve, Protect and Enhance the Town’s Historic Resources
- Protect and Enhance the Environment for Historic Resources
- Increase Public Appreciation for and Benefit from Historic Resources

Specific recommendations included enhancing the Town's capacity to promote historic preservation, including creating a comprehensive inventory of resources and improving coordination among commissions; regulatory strategies including a demolition delay ordinance and more local historic district and site designations; the implementation of local financial incentives for preservation, including loans/grants and tax abatements; and the designation of scenic roads and projections for scenic vistas. The plan also addressed new development, recommending more traditional development patterns of the edges of existing village areas.

1.3.4 Target Industry Identification and Marketing Plan (1991)

The purpose of this report was to identify specific industries for Groton to recruit, and to recommend a market plan to attract these industries. The report relied on an analysis of the economic structure of the Town and region; and an assessment of the Town's strengths and weaknesses from a business location perspective. The overall conclusion was that the Town should target labor intensive industries with significant manufacturing skill needs, in keeping with the region's skilled labor force and relatively high cost of doing businesses. Specific sectors included High Tech Manufacturing/Services (ex: pharmaceutical prep, medical equipment) and Light & Select Heavy Manufacturing (ex: plastics products, fabricated metal). Many of the suggestions remain relevant, while others (such as the recommendation to pursue tech support call centers) have clearly moved on with globalization. The report also identified the need for promotional marketing material and an active business recruitment program.

1.3.5 Economic Development Plan (1985)

The Town's last stand-alone economic development plan was completed nearly 20 years ago in 1985. The purpose of the plan was to provide a market-based economic development strategy that creates jobs, diversifies the economy and enhances quality of life. Major recommendations of the plan included:

- Developing an office/research/industrial park at I-95/Route 117
- Implementing the 1984 Downtown Plan
- Recruiting and retaining new employers
- Improving the appearance of gateways
- Fostering service employment around retailing and tourism
- Marketing Groton's attractions

It is notable how many of these recommendations are still on the table. The vision for a Commerce Park at Route 117 is still largely unfulfilled, although the Mystic Marriot and Mystic Business Park are steps in the right direction. Downtown is still a focus of planning. Improvements to the Route 1 gateways are on the Town's current list of capital projects, and improvements to other gateways (such as to the Nautilus Museum) figured prominently in the 2002 Plan of Conservation and Development. While there remains a

focus on tourism, the nature of regional tourism is now entirely different than it was in 1985 due to the development of the two Native American casinos.

1.3.6 Downtown Development Program (1984)

In 1984, the Town commissioned a physical development plan for Downtown Groton. The plan was based on an assessment of the potential for retail in the downtown, but ended up in a similar place to more current thinking—specifically, the need to diversify the mix of uses within the downtown, create community focal points, and change the circulation. Major elements of the development program included:

- A new park between Downtown and Long Hill Area
- Transportation improvements on Route 1 and construction of new roadways
- New housing north of downtown
- Improved parking configurations and conversion of some surface parking to pedestrian plazas
- Upgrading of existing building storefronts and introduction of landscaping

It is worth noting that some of the plans recommendations were implemented, but not quite in the way the plan envisioned. Plaza Court created a new interior roadway, and an open space area in the downtown was created, although its location and design are lacking. More significantly, a large amount of multifamily housing has been developed north of the downtown, although connections to the downtown could be improved. However, this plan was very important in that it did result in positive improvements and set the stage for thinking about the downtown in a new way.

1.4 PLANNING PROCESS

This plan has been developed under the oversight of a broad-based steering committee and through a public outreach effort that included two public meetings. Further factual basis for the plan was provided through an extensive series of interviews of local business people and stakeholders.

A Steering Committee was formed to oversee the preparation of the plan. A full list of committee members is provided in the acknowledgements section at the start of the report. The committee members were chosen to represent various aspects of the Groton community, including Economic Development Commission members, open space and preservation advocates, land use commission members, elected officials from the Town Council and Representative Town Meeting and business representatives. Brainstorming sessions with the Steering Committee led directly to many of the recommendations in the plan. Each major section—the background studies, the policies and strategies, and the project list—was subject to a review and vetting process with the committee. Finally, the committee helped with the planning for the public meetings.

Two public meetings were held as a part of this process. The first was an evening workshop designed to obtain public input in the plan. The meeting opened with a presentation of the purpose of the plan and an overview of past planning efforts, but the bulk of the work occurred in four breakout groups organized topically, and conducted as a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Constraints) exercise. The four topics were Economic Diversification; Downtown Repositioning; Tourism; and Community Quality of Life.

Significant outreach was undertaken to provide the opportunity for the public to review the draft plan, including having the plan available on the Town's web site, at the local libraries, and municipal buildings. The draft plan was also referred to several Town boards and commissions. The feedback obtained was incorporated into the final draft of the plan. A second public meeting was then held to provide the opportunity for final public input prior to completing the plan.

Finally, several days worth of stakeholder interviews were undertaken. A complete list of interviewees is included in an appendix. The interviewees included local business owners and representatives; major property owners; real estate developers and professionals; and representatives of local institutions such as UConn Avery Point. The range of businesses interviewed ranged from representatives of global giant Pfizer down to the owner of a two-person coffee shop. These interviews yielded a wealth of information and ideas that have been crucial to the development of the plan.

1.5 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT VISION

- A diversified economy that builds on local strengths and assets, but that reduces the Town's historic reliance on the defense and pharmaceutical industries, provides jobs with good wages and opportunities for advancement; and strengthens and broadens the local tax base.
- An enhanced climate for business investment that streamlines to the greatest extent practical the path from development application to approval; supports and nurtures entrepreneurs and small businesses; and provides appropriate regulations to provide a stable and predictable climate for investment.
- Downtown Groton converted into a vibrant and pedestrian-friendly mixed-use center accommodating new residences and office in addition to retail; and with new civic spaces and uses that bring the community together at its core.
- New development patterns that maximize economic value while minimizing their ecological footprint and impact on sensitive environmental features, including waterbodies and wildlife habitats.
- A vibrant coastal shoreline which accommodates natural habitats, working waterfronts, tourist destinations, and recreational facilities.

1.6 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

The remainder of this report is organized as follows:

- Chapter 2 consists of an opportunities and constraints analysis for the Town. The chapter provides much of the factual basis for the policies and projects recommended later in the Plan.
- Chapter 3 concentrates on Downtown Groton, its prospects for improving as a retail destination, and the basis for a new physical development and redevelopment strategy.
- Chapter 4 outlines the specific policies and strategies designed to implement the four key goals of economic diversification, downtown revitalization, enhanced tourism, and improved quality of life.
- Chapter 5 provides a list of specific projects that carry forward specific policies and strategies.
- Chapter 6 includes an implementation plan, including a timeline for actions, the responsibility of each implementing entity, and a preliminary prioritization of projects.

2 Opportunities and Constraints

The core background research for the economic development plan has taken the form of an opportunities and constraints analysis focused on the various factors which impact economic development in the town. These factors include:

- The **labor force**, including variables pertaining to labor availability, wage rates, educational attainment, and skill level.
- The **economic structure** of the Town and region, with regards to sector employment trends.
- An analysis of the sources and uses of **government revenue**, as well as local **government structure**.
- The overall **cost of business** in the Town and region, including labor costs, taxes, land, etc.
- The availability and effectiveness of local **economic development programs**.
- The capacity for local **infrastructure and utilities** to support economic growth.
- The town's geographic position as it relates to **market access**.
- The existing market for **tourism**, and prospects for growing this market.
- The current state of the region's **retail** markets.
- The availability of **development and/or redevelopment sites** to accommodate new development.
- The overall **quality of life** in the community, as it relates to the factors informing both business and residential location decisions.

Each of these core competitive elements is analyzed in the sections that follow.

2.1 LABOR FORCE

One of Groton's greatest assets for economic development is its highly skilled and productive labor force, both within the Town and the region as a whole. The labor force includes both those with advanced degrees (i.e. scientists, engineers, and researchers) and those who may not have an advanced or even a college degree, but possess unique skills (production workers at EB or the many highly-specialized local manufacturing companies and the Submarine Base). This labor pool is a key factor in making Groton an attractive location for specific companies to locate their businesses.

Southeastern Connecticut has one of the largest concentrations of educated, highly-skilled scientific and technical workers. Groton, itself, has a strong business and maritime heritage and a history of precision manufacturing and research and development. As the birthplace of the nuclear Navy, Groton has been a center of innovation for decades. Given the large number of businesses currently operating in Groton (from the Subase and Electric Boat to Pfizer), it continues to command a large and skilled labor force with expertise relevant to the existing industry clusters in the region: Defense Technology, Engineering and Advanced Manufacturing; Healthcare and Biotechnology; Education and Marine Research; and

Tourism and Entertainment. Educational attainment levels in Groton and the region are further testimony to the merit of this labor force. Nearly 90 percent of Groton’s population age 25 or older are high school graduates (exceeding both State and national averages), and over 25 percent have a bachelor degree or higher.

Table 1: Educational Attainment, Population Aged 25 and Older

	<u>High School</u> <u>Graduate</u>	<u>Some College</u>	<u>College Graduate</u> <u>or More</u>
Town of Groton	31%	32%	26%
New London LMA	32%	20%	33%
State of Connecticut	28%	24%	31%

Source: U.S. Census, 2000

The regional labor force is employed in an array of occupations that generally mirror the occupational distribution of the State as a whole. There are, however, some notable exceptions. The New London LMA¹ tends to have fewer people working in management positions, in business and financial operations, architecture and engineering (this may be due to lack of data—biotechnology engineers are not reported) and in administrative office positions. On the other hand, the region has more than its share of people employed in the life, physical and social sciences. But the biggest concentration is people employed in food preparation and serving related occupations, which is directly related employment generated by the Casinos which serve food to millions of visitors each year.

The labor force in Groton and Southeastern Connecticut is also notable for its productivity, with workers ranked among the most productive in the country. According to the Southeastern Connecticut Almanac produced by seCTer, workers’ dollar output and value-added productivity currently surpass national and New England averages. Productivity is likely to be enhanced by agglomeration effects. In addition to Pfizer and Electric Boat, the region is home to several businesses in similar fields as well as other Fortune 500 companies including Dow Chemical, U.S. Foodservice, Stone Container, and Phelps Dodge. Synergies between like businesses have enhanced efficiencies and innovation through proximity, collaboration and exchange of information. Additionally, research institutions in Groton, such as University of Connecticut’s Marine Science facility at Avery Point, have provided another vehicle for bolstering the area’s research and development expertise.

¹ The name of the Labor Market Area (LMA) was recently changed to drop “Norwich” from the name, and the area now includes Westerly, RI.

Table 2: Distribution of Employment by Occupation, 2005

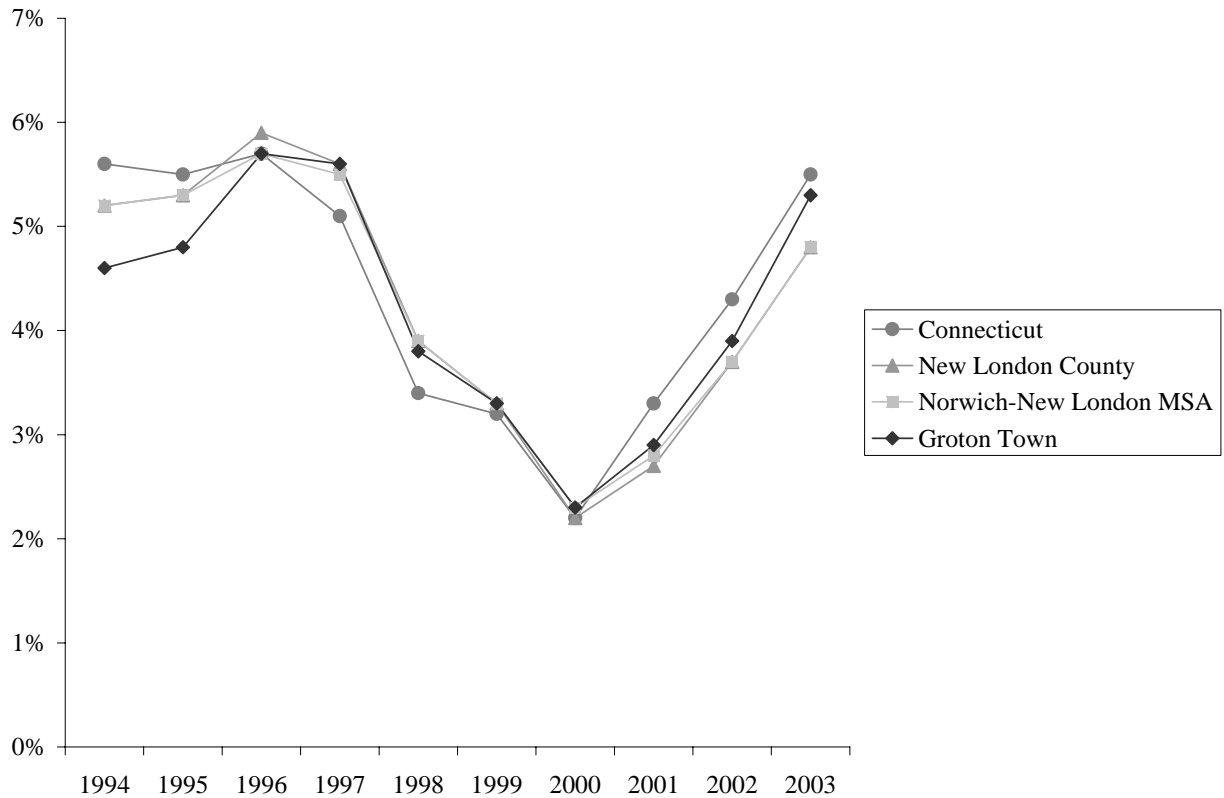
Occupational Employment Categories	New London		State	Percent
	LMA	Percent		
Management	5,080	3.6%	79,870	4.9%
Business and Financial Operations	4,720	3.4%	84,410	5.2%
Computer and Mathematical	2,620	1.9%	46,290	2.8%
Architecture and Engineering*	1,200	0.9%	37,290	2.3%
<i>Life, Physical, and Social Science</i>	<i>2,540</i>	<i>1.8%</i>	<i>16,970</i>	<i>1.0%</i>
Community and Social Services	2,480	1.8%	30,120	1.8%
Legal	650	0.5%	12,560	0.8%
Education, Training, and Library	8,790	6.3%	119,500	7.3%
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	1,530	1.1%	20,790	1.3%
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	6,380	4.5%	87,220	5.3%
Healthcare Support	3,260	2.3%	47,460	2.9%
<i>Protective Service</i>	<i>5,130</i>	<i>3.7%</i>	<i>37,190</i>	<i>2.3%</i>
<i>Food Preparation and Serving-Related</i>	<i>16,370</i>	<i>11.7%</i>	<i>114,910</i>	<i>7.0%</i>
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	5,690	4.1%	58,780	3.6%
<i>Personal Care and Service</i>	<i>10,130</i>	<i>7.2%</i>	<i>44,340</i>	<i>2.7%</i>
<i>Sales and Related</i>	<i>16,350</i>	<i>11.6%</i>	<i>174,990</i>	<i>10.7%</i>
Office and Administrative Support	20,810	14.8%	298,440	18.3%
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry*	40	0.0%	1,470	0.1%
<i>Construction and Extraction</i>	<i>5,400</i>	<i>3.8%</i>	<i>54,650</i>	<i>3.3%</i>
<i>Installation, Maintenance, and Repair</i>	<i>5,400</i>	<i>3.8%</i>	<i>54,820</i>	<i>3.4%</i>
Production	7,990	5.7%	117,330	7.2%
Transportation and Material Moving	7,900	5.6%	93,960	5.8%
	140,460		1,633,360	

Source: Connecticut Department of Labor, Office of Research, 1st Quarter 2005

*Note: Occupational employment figures numbers are incomplete in these categories for the New London LMA

The local and regional labor market has been marked by relative stability. Overall, wages in Groton have been stable and competitive. Good labor/management relations are cited as positively contributing to the stability of the local labor market. Additionally, unemployment has remained low and steady despite significant defense downsizing. Between 1990 and 2003, the Norwich-New London MSA lost nearly 8,800 manufacturing jobs. Between 1996 and 2003, about 3,600 jobs were lost in Groton. In spite of these job losses, Groton's unemployment rate has remained in line with the regional and state averages. In fact, even though the bulk of Groton's post-1996 job losses occurred by 2000, the unemployment rate in the Town reached its lowest point of 2.5 percent in 2000. This is due in large part to the transition of the regional economy from a predominately manufacturing focus to an entertainment/tourism one following the opening of nearby casinos, Foxwoods and Mohegan Sun. Employment in New London County grew significantly between 1996 and 2000, and continued to expand, albeit at a slower rate, since 2000, even as the State went into a recession.

Chart 1: Groton Unemployment Rate 1994 – 2003

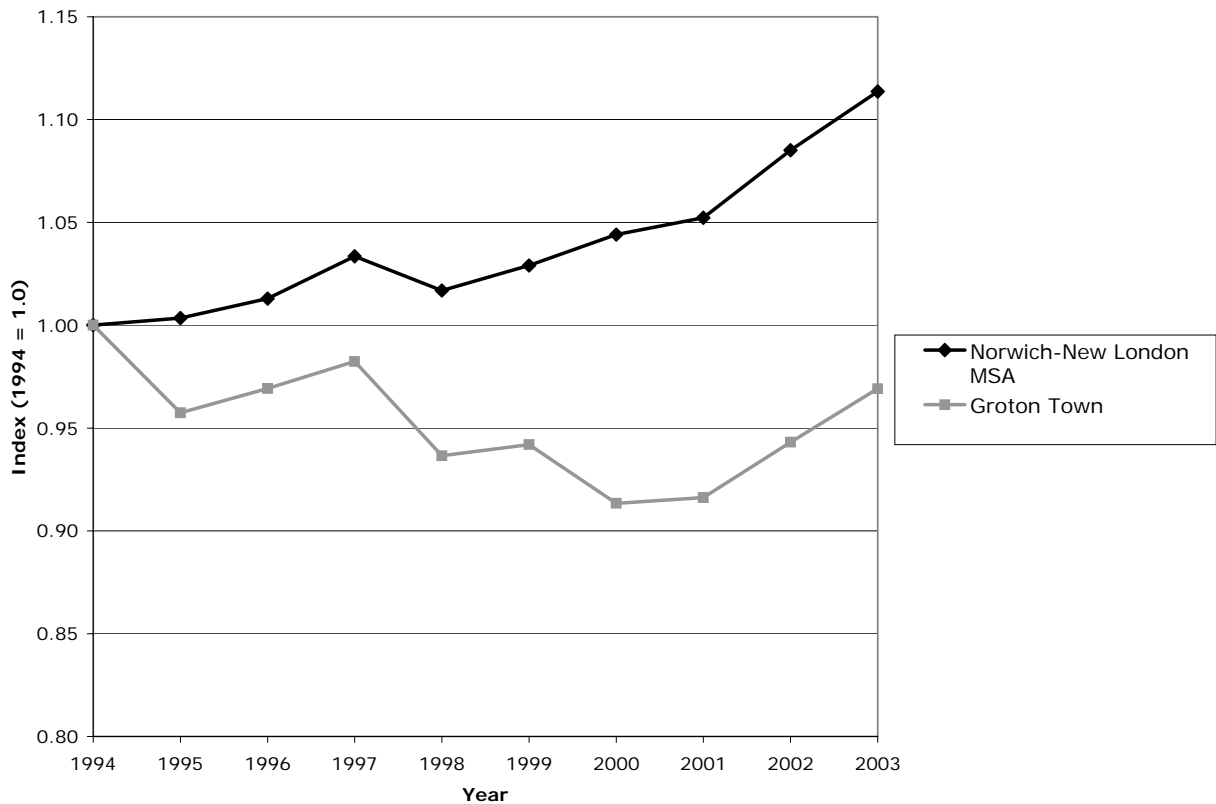


Source: Connecticut Department of Labor, Local Area Unemployment Statistics

Despite these strengths, Groton also faces some liabilities associated with its workforce. The cost of labor is frequently cited as a liability for regions in Connecticut—indeed, the average salaried wage in the State is \$47,283, or more than 27 percent higher than the national average wage of \$37,130 (Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2003). However, the average annual wage in New London County is \$38,743, only about 4 percent above the national average. This figure is skewed by the growing number of service sector jobs related to the two large casinos. Manufacturing wages in the County are much higher: about \$67,800 versus \$29,800 in the gambling industries. These manufacturing wages place the County 14 percent above the national average of \$59,300. Even still, wages in the Groton region are not far out of balance with national norms, although they are clearly higher than low-wage states within the U.S.

Another potential constraint is the availability of labor. Groton has a slightly declining population and an aging demographic. Accordingly, the size of the Town's labor force has seen a slow decline since 1994. At the same time, the size of the regional labor force has increased (see Chart 2). However, this is likely due to casino expansion, and likely the composition of the labor force has changed as much of the new job growth has required very different types of workers than the region's traditional core industries of defense and pharmaceuticals.

Chart 2: Local and Regional Labor Force Trends



Source: Connecticut Department of Labor, Local Area Unemployment Statistics

A further challenge to Groton's labor force is the transition to new industries and the adjustment to changing market needs. The economic landscape in Southeastern Connecticut has been shifting as demands in the service sector have increased, primarily associated with the boom in regional casinos. Thus, the worker profile has changed to a degree, requiring fewer skills and commanding less income. Also, defense downsizing has initiated another major change in labor force demands; however, the local labor force has proven its ability to adapt. A study completed by the Workforce Investment Board Southeastern Connecticut found that most of the downsized defense workers continued to stay in the region, either retraining for new positions or becoming involved in entrepreneurial ventures.

There are several opportunities at hand to capitalize on Groton's skilled workforce while compensating for its limitations. Firstly, Groton has the chance to do a better job preparing for the transition away from defense industries. Given the precedent of workers staying in the region following downsizing, Groton should develop economic incentives and create a regulatory environment that helps foster and encourage entrepreneurial and incubator activities. Groton could focus on developing a "start-up" or "spin-off" niche centered on industries compatible with the existing industry clusters in the Town (an example is Proto-

Power, which consults to the nuclear power industry). There is already a strong base of incubator activities to build on. The Town may need to go further and begin to address the issue of space for homegrown mid-caps.

The future of the local labor force is also linked to quality of life. There is an opportunity to indirectly foster workforce growth and increase the attractiveness of Groton as a business location through measures that enhance livability. Groton (and the region) will be a more attractive business location if it provides the type of environment and amenities that would attract talented 20-somethings to live and work. Groton-based companies have actually commented on the difficulties of recruiting and relocating employees to Groton due to the perceived lack of cultural institutions and other amenities (this is particularly true of Pfizer, which must recruit specialized talent not only nationally but globally). In truth, the local region is relatively rich in such amenities given its population and distance from a major metropolitan area. Regardless, increasing and enhancing the community's cultural activities, dining options, and recreational resources is likely to give Groton a competitive edge.

Opportunities

- Educated and skilled workforce
- High labor productivity
- Entrepreneurial opportunities associated with core industries

Constraints

- Tight labor market
- Relatively high wages, although not as high as often assumed
- Potential mismatch between workforce skills and future growth sectors
- Aging of workforce
- Lack of cultural and other amenities of a larger metro area

2.2 ECONOMIC STRUCTURE

The entire southeastern Connecticut region is part of a defense industry cluster, with Groton serving as the focus for this cluster. The United States Naval Submarine Base New London (Subase) and Electric Boat's (EB) submarine manufacturing facilities, both based in Groton, comprise the principal share of this market. Although Electric Boat has been scaling back significantly over the past several years (with over 14,000 jobs already lost), and the Subase underwent the recent BRAC scare, there are still an estimated 10,000 servicemen and women and civilian employees at the naval base and another 8,800 people employed at Electric Boat (a December 2005 announcement was made by Electric Boat regarding as many as 2,400 additional layoffs). There are a number of other defense-related activities in Groton including the Coast Guard's Research and Development facility at Avery Point.

The second major industry in Groton and region is Pharmaceuticals, represented by Pfizer, which operates a major research and development campus in Groton. The company also opened its research division headquarters in New London in 2001, which was the largest in-state corporate expansion in Connecticut history. Total Pfizer employment in Southeast Connecticut now totals 6,000, including contract workers.

As important as these industries remain, the regional economy is increasingly dominated by the gaming industry, fueled by the phenomenal growth of the region's two Native American casinos, Foxwoods and Mohegan Sun. Collectively, these two casinos are now by far and away the largest employers in the region, and Foxwoods is the largest even by itself.

Table 3: Top Five Employers in New London County

<u>Employer</u>	<u>Number of Employees</u>
Foxwoods Casino Resort	11,000
U.S. Naval Submarine Base	10,500
Mohegan Sun Casino	10,000
Electric Boat Corporation	8,800
Pfizer**	6,000
Total	46,300

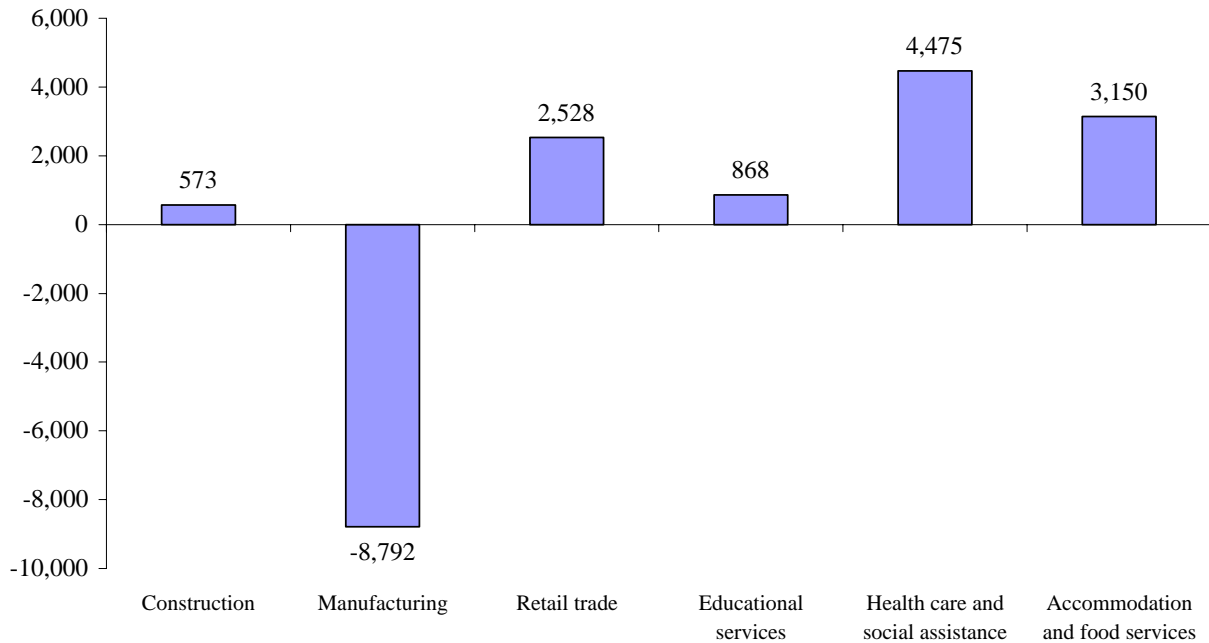
*** Includes contract employees*

Source: Economy.com, 2004

Over the past decade the region has seen significant shifts in its employment structure. Specifically, there have been significant losses in the manufacturing sector, primarily corresponding to downsizing and EB but possibly including smaller manufacturers as well; while employment in retail and services have greatly increased, as shown in Chart 3.

While the trends illustrated in Chart 3 are not dissimilar to other regions in Connecticut and throughout the nation, the extent to which the regional economy has come to rely on gaming is a unique circumstance in the state and perhaps the entire Northeast.

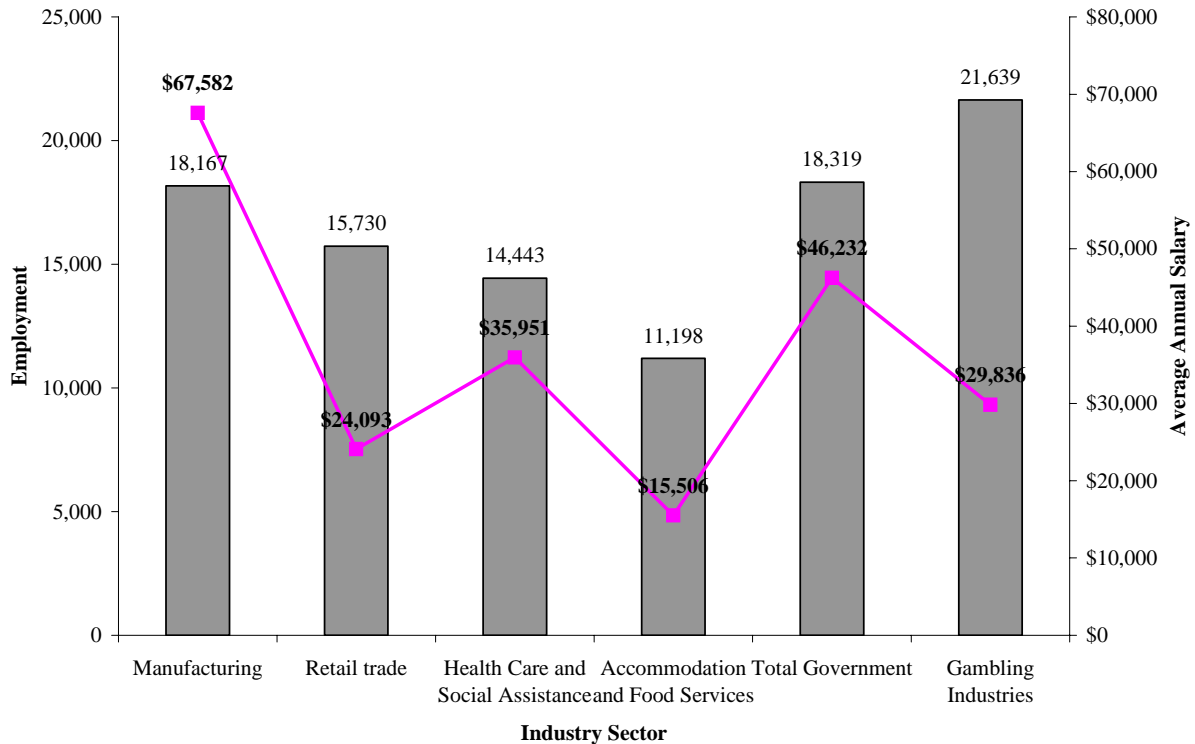
Chart 3: Employment Changes in the Norwich-New London MSA, 1990 – 2003



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

The shift away from defense-related manufacturing industries to gaming has significant repercussions for the local wage structure. The chart below shows both the distribution of employment by major sector as well as the average annual wage for each sector. As is clear from the chart (and as was noted in the Labor Force section), manufacturing wages in the region far exceed other employment sectors. They are, for example, twice as high as average wages in the gaming industry, and significantly higher than government and service wages as well.

Chart 4: Employment and Wage Levels by Industry, Norwich-New London MSA, 2003



Source: Connecticut Department of Labor, ES-202 Series

Faced with two key issues—a lack of local economic diversification, and increasing reliance on lower-wage sectors—Groton and the region need to look for new industries and sectors to pick up the slack should something impact the region’s major employers. Given the skilled labor force, as well as the locational advantages of Groton, Groton should focus on attracting diversified but complementary businesses. A 1991 study which recommended target industries for Groton to pursue aptly noted that the Town would need to focus on “labor intensive industries with significant manufacturing skill needs and willingness to sacrifice cost savings for resource and market proximity.” The study concluded that the most desirable industries to attract would be high-tech manufacturing (e.g., Pharmaceutical Preparations, Radio/TV Equipment, Engineering/Scientific Navigation Equipment, Surgical and Medical Equipment, Information Processing) and light and select heavy manufacturing (e.g., Plastics Products (transportation-related), Fabricated Structural Metal Products, Industrial Machinery, and Aircraft Parts and Equipment). Clearly, the regional and national economy, as well as globalization, have moved on since 1991. Yet, the basic thrust of the study—that Groton should focus on leveraging its strengths rather than trying to compete solely on cost—remains relevant.

Other opportunities for diversifying the local economy have been identified as part of the regional CEDS process, as well as through this planning process. These include:

- Maritime-related R&D activity, including such disparate undertakings as marine research; aquaculture; and even marine-related homeland security technologies.
- Short-stay and second home based tourism, leveraging the region's convenience to major metropolitan areas and unique natural and historic qualities.
- Also leveraging the region's access to metro areas, industries that are linked with or provide services to major clusters in Hartford, New Haven, Boston and New York.
- Entrepreneurial-based strategies targeting highly-skilled researchers and professionals who have left Pfizer or EB. Protopower, a firm providing consulting services to the nuclear power industry, is an existing example of a company founded by former EB engineers. Rising energy costs and a new interest at the federal level in nuclear energy may provide additional opportunities in this particular niche.

Opportunities

- Strong clusters in defense and pharmaceuticals
- Potential niches in maritime industries, maritime security
- Proximity to major metro areas

Constraints

- Heavy reliance on a few key employers
- Local economy extremely sensitive to defense restructuring
- Employment growth concentrated in lower-wage industries

2.3 GOVERNMENTAL REVENUES AND SERVICES

Groton's strong ratable base solidly positions the local government from a revenue and services standpoint.

Groton has a total Grand List of \$2.9 billion, of which \$2.2 billion is comprised of real property. As of 2005, Groton had an average equalized net grand list per capita of \$28,259, placing it 106 out of the 169 towns in Connecticut, but above many of the other towns in the local region. The tax base has been generally growing along with the region. As a major regional employment center, Groton represents approximately 20 percent of all employment in Southeastern Connecticut. It is already a net exporter of jobs, with 165 percent ratio of local jobs to workers according to the Department of Labor and Housing (1997). As such, businesses comprise a higher portion of Groton's property tax base, nearly twice the

state average (1999). Dominating the property tax base are Pfizer and Electric Boat, the largest taxpayers, making up over 20 percent of the total.

Table 4: Components of Revenue Base in Groton, 2002

<u>Property Category</u>	<u>Assessed Value</u>	<u>Percentage of Gross Taxable Grand List</u>
Real Property	\$2,160,710	74.1%
<i>Residential</i>	<i>\$1,284,523</i>	<i>44.1%</i>
<i>Commercial & Industrial</i>	<i>\$816,332</i>	<i>28.0%</i>
<i>Land & Other Property</i>	<i>\$59,855</i>	<i>2.1%</i>
Personal Property	\$579,462	19.9%
Motor Vehicle Property	\$174,282	6.0%
Gross Taxable Grand List	\$2,914,454	100%

Source: Town of Groton Tax Assessor

Table 5: Major Taxpayers in Groton, 2004

	<u>2004 Total Net Assessment</u>	<u>2004 Percentage of Grand list</u>
Pfizer Inc.	\$418,634,332	16.2%
Electric Boat Corp	\$172,933,220	6.7%
Total Net Assessment	\$2,593,601,363	100%

Source: Town of Groton Tax Assessor

Due to its robust business tax base, Groton is less dependent upon residential property taxes than many communities of similar size. Approximately 50 percent of the Town's Grand List is comprised of residential property and automobiles, with the remainder comprised of non-residential real estate and personal (business) property. Therefore, the Town's residential property taxes can be kept comparatively low—the Town boasts one of the lowest effective tax rates in the region at \$22.75 per \$1,000 of assessed value (as of 2004). Moderate tax rates enhance the desirability of Groton as a place to live and operate a business. Future development patterns have the potential to impact the strength of the tax base. According to the Groton Tax Impact Analysis completed by Planimetrics in 1999, while commercial and industrial property categories are estimated to have positive net fiscal impacts, all residential property categories with the exception of condominiums are projected to have negative net fiscal impacts (overall) due to the school-age population generated by such developments.

Although a tax exempt property, the Subase also contributes to government revenues for Groton. The federal government pays approximately \$6.5 million annually in general fund revenue to Groton for base impacts. While the Subase covers most of its own services in terms of fire, police and recreation, the bulk of the expenses generated from the Subase are for education as the Subase produces about one-third of the students in Groton's school system. Considered in isolation, the naval base has a negative net fiscal impact on Groton since education expenses are estimated to exceed the impact fees paid by the federal government. However, the presence of the Subase helps support other commercial development that contributes to the Town's tax base, and it is a major generator of jobs for the Town and Region.

In addition to solid tax revenue to cover municipal services, Groton's debt rating gives the Town further flexibility to make needed capital investments. Groton's bond rating is AA, which allows the Town to bond at a favorable four percent long-term in the current market. The only significant source of public debt is for schools: \$91.9 million in 20-year bonds for school improvements was approved by voters in April of 2004. This represents phase one of a three phase project.

Opportunities

- Strong tax base with sizable commercial component
- Good bond rating allows low-cost public financing
- Reasonable local property tax (mil) rate

Constraints

- Heavy reliance on a few big taxpayers
- Navy contribution towards service costs does not cover educational costs associated with base families

2.4 COST OF BUSINESS

In many ways, the cost of business is a major liability in attracting and retaining business in Groton. Labor, land, and utility costs in the Town, although moderate for the Northeast, are quite expensive when compared with other parts of the country. Groton must rely on attracting and retaining businesses that value the area's labor productivity/skills, market access, resource proximity and local quality of life over cost-savings.

Land and labor costs comprise the bulk of the costs associated with most business operations. Median wages in Groton for White- and Blue-collar jobs are significantly below metropolitan New York and Boston, yet are comparatively high on a national (and certainly international) scale. These high wages reflect the relatively higher cost of living in the Northeast. They also reflect local labor demand and

supply, and labor productivity. When worker productivity is taken into consideration, labor cost differentials are offset to an extent by the increased output offered. Since the labor market remains tight, as reported by businesses and reflected in the low unemployment rate, wages are not likely to decline without a major economic disruption.

The cost of land in Groton is also considered expensive relative to other parts of the country. Land costs are particularly sensitive when it comes to industrial use. Demand for land for industrial use is very high at low prices, although it steeply drops off as the cost of land increases (see Section 12: Development/Redevelopment Opportunities). Land costs in Groton are also high since there are only a limited number of fully-serviced, available development sites (or “turn-key” sites). Based on interviews, net rents are reported to range \$15 to 20 per square foot for new retail (\$10 in Downtown Groton, and much higher than average in Downtown Mystic), and about one-third of that for industrial net rents. Costs are considered particularly high for industrial users. In the industrial and business zones that lack sewer, the cost of infrastructure also weighs into business location decisions. Proximity to large markets, namely the New York and Boston metropolitan areas, can lower distribution costs for some businesses; however, roadway congestion issues (particularly on Interstate 95) can erode these transportation savings.

The utility rates in Groton are considered competitive regionally, with standard and industrial tariffs among the lowest in the Northeast. However, utilities remain generally more expensive in Connecticut than other locations nationally. The relative importance of utility costs depends on the size and type of operation. For example, utilities costs are an essential consideration and sizable expense for a manufacturing operation whereas they are rather inconsequential to a restaurant or café. Groton has moderate utility costs because there are two utility suppliers, the City of Groton Utilities Department and the Connecticut Light and Power Company. The City of Groton purchases power wholesale from other generators and therefore can offer slighter cheaper utility rates to businesses than other areas in the region. The preponderance of large commercial users gives Groton Utilities a favorable balance between daytime and evening/weekend power demand. Groton Utilities also negotiates its rate structure for large users based on their specific needs (such as the time-profile of power usage). Some of the large-scale businesses in Groton actually produce some of their own energy (e.g., Pfizer).

Taxes also factor into the cost of business. To create a more attractive business environment, the State of Connecticut has cut its corporate income tax nearly in half since 1991, from 13.8 to 7.5 percent. The State also reduced workers’ compensation by over 25 percent. As an Enterprise Zone Community, Groton also has a range of incentives available to manufacturers and other businesses that locate in the Town. Some of the State and local incentives include: corporate tax credits, property tax abatements, exemption from certain state sales and use taxes, state grants for the creation of new full-time jobs, job training and placement assistance, as well as other local incentives such as deferrals of taxes on business plant and equipment (personal property). These incentives generally provide financial relief or increase the capital/leverage available to businesses, thus reducing the overall cost of business.

There are some opportunities for Groton to increase the appeal of the Town in terms of cost of business. One avenue is through capital investments in roadway and transportation infrastructure that reduce time/cost to market associated with transportation. The Town can also decrease the cost of business for start-up companies or entrepreneurial ventures (a market niche that is within Groton's reach) by zoning for and encouraging "flex space" which tends to be cheaper and more adaptable than traditional office space, yet conducive to the needs of most incubator operations.

Opportunities

- Reasonable local tax rates
- Availability of State and local financial incentives
- Enterprise Zone
- Competitive utility rates

Constraints

- High cost of land and labor
- High cost of housing
- Lack of available/affordable office and industrial space

2.5 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

For a municipality of its size, Groton offers a reasonable array of economic development incentives. To complement this, the Town staff is considered responsive by the business community. Economic development programs have tended to give priority to non-defense related industries, in line with economic diversification objectives. The suite of economic development incentives include: tax incentives including abatements, zoning incentives, and two economic development funds—the Development Assistance Fund and the Economic Assistance Fund. Overall, Groton has a healthy and robust range of programs which are fairly straight forward to implement. Thus, Groton's economic development programs are quite good in their current capacity.

Among the most effective economic development tools is the Groton Enterprise Zone. Connecticut "enterprise zones" were created to encourage the reuse of established industrial areas of the state through a mix of local and state incentives including tax abatements and electric utility rate reductions. Formation of the zones had been based solely on unemployment and poverty levels. The Groton zone was approved in 1995 under a new law that allowed the state to designate as an enterprise zone areas affected by closings or cutbacks at defense plants and military bases. The Groton Enterprise Zone is anchored by the EB shipyard along the Thames River and reaches south to include the Pfizer campus, and east to include the three main shopping centers along Route 1 (Downtown Groton) and industrially zoned land, including the Airport Industrial Park. Also included are the Groton-New London Airport and the Midway Facility

on Depot Road. The Enterprise Zone program targets firms that move to or expand in the designated zone area. Such companies may be eligible for corporate tax credits, property tax abatement, exemption from certain state sales and use taxes, and state assistance. The program also includes a local component.

The current Economic Development Program in Groton consists of the following facets:

- Oversight of the two economic development funds;
- Property inventory shared with regional and state agencies;
- Creation and distribution of promotional and demographic material;
- Working with existing companies with expansion plans;
- Special events;
- Participation in regional economic organizations and activities, such as seCTer and the regional CEDS planning efforts; and
- Participation in the state-wide economic development organization, CEDAS.

In 1999, a resolution passed in Groton to allow the use of financial incentives to encourage the most desirable economic development of the limited available land in Groton. These funding programs include the Economic Assistance Fund and the Development Assistance Fund. The Economic Assistance Fund is focused indirectly on job creation. It provides capital for the construction of extraordinary public infrastructure improvements that attract new job-creating businesses to Groton, particularly in light manufacturing, assembly, research and development, and related industries. The Development Assistance Fund aims to offset the cost of development assistance such as preliminary planning, engineering evaluations, market data research, and labor availability prior to a business deciding to locate and/or expand in Groton. This latter fund has been phased out, but the Town should consider reinstating its funding, as it performs a useful role not covered by other available incentives.

There is a business incubator located at the Avery Point UConn Campus. The incubator is part of the UConn's Center for Science and Technology Commercialization (CSTC), which also oversees similar initiatives at the Storrs and Stamford campuses and the UConn Health Center in Farmington. The Avery Point incubator has a particular focus on marine science and technology.

Groton does not have an economic development corporation with the staffing and powers necessary to undertake development and redevelopment activities, including the acquisition and disposition of real estate, building of infrastructure, issuing of bonds, etc. In general, Groton has had no need for such an entity, as there have been no projects identified as part of past plans that would require a development corporation for their implementation. However, site availability has been identified as a constant problem by local stakeholders. A direct approach to attacking this problem, such as a publicly financed business park, would require a local development corporation to carry out. Depending upon the outcome of this plan, Groton may eventually need to consider the creation of a development corporation.

One thing that hinders the effectiveness of existing economic development programs in Groton is the bureaucratic context and varied agendas of the governing bodies and staff. There is a need for coordinated efforts regarding economic development. The idea is to ensure companies developing or expanding their businesses in Groton are fully supported through a fast-track process for matching incentives. Another constraint of existing economic development programs is that some have tended to be implemented on a case by case basis that is inconsistent. Developing explicit criteria and/or a consistent review process should be considered for relevant programs.

An example is the Town's economic development funds, both of which require that grants be approved by the Town Council. While this ensures oversight of fund disbursement by elected officials, it also slows and complicates the process of obtaining a grant from the funds, which may discourage their use by interested businesses. As an alternative, the Council may wish to adopt certain guidelines for grants and set threshold limits, thereafter leaving grant approvals to an administrative process conducted by Town staff.

Also, due to the concerns regarding the various agendas of the governing bodies, consideration should be given to reconfiguring the make-up of the Town's Economic Development Commission to include formal representation by the Town Council and RTM (similar to the Economic Development Strategic Plan Update Steering Committee membership).

As stated earlier, Groton is and will remain a comparatively high-cost location on the national stage. Decisions by businesses to startup, relocate, or expand in Groton will be based on considerations other than the lowest cost land, utilities, or labor. At the same time, financial incentives can still play a valuable role in economic development. Lower cost financing is often essential for small startups. For larger companies, some sort of incentive is often the "sweetener" which seals a deal which might likely work even without the incentive, but would be less certain.

Opportunities

- Availability of Enterprise Zone benefits
- Availability of local incentives and funds
- Strong regional ED infrastructure (seCTer, COG)
- Avery Point—incubator, technology transfer

Constraints

- Some local businesses still reluctant to take advantage of available incentives and programs
- No local development corporation
- Lack of political leadership in economic development
- Bureaucratic procedures and delays

2.6 INFRASTRUCTURE AND UTILITIES

In general, Groton is well-served in terms of utilities and infrastructure, and is capable of supporting a range of business operations and a large residential population.

Groton has a solid utilities and communications system. Yankee Gas Company provides natural gas to the Navy Base, Pfizer, Electric Boat Corporation, as well as the corridors of Routes 12 and 1; while the City of Groton Utilities Department and Connecticut Light and Power cover the electric utilities for the Town. Groton has excess water resources/capacity, with an ample supply available for manufacturing operations. The Town also has an advanced communications network. SBC is the dominant phone provider in the region and both SBC and Comcast offer broadband and DSL internet access. Groton Utilities also has recently ventured into the cable and broadband business. Groton presently has two different sewer systems. In the City of Groton, sewer is provided by the City, while the Town (including Noank and Groton Long Point) and the Naval Base is serviced by the Town.

The primary source of drinking water in Groton consists of the two reservoirs in the center of the Town. Interstate 95 runs right over these reservoirs, and in recent years the Department of Transportation has been installing barriers along the highway to prevent runoff or accidents from introducing contaminants into the reservoirs. The two reservoirs are surrounded by a sizable watershed, only 20 percent of which is owned by Groton Utilities. The remainder is in private hands, and much of this land is zoned for commercial or industrial development. Inappropriate development could have a significant impact on the quality of Groton's, and the region's, drinking water supply, an impact that would have to be fixed at public expense through enhanced water treatment facilities and procedures. In fact, enhanced treatment in the form of a chlorine dioxide system has already been necessitated due to a combination of declining water quality and changing regulatory requirements, according to Groton Utilities.

With the completion of a new water pipe crossing the Thames River in the vicinity of the Mohegan Sun casino, Groton Utilities is evolving into a regional water utility. The pipe was conceived both as a means of addressing a specific need at Mohegan Sun (the casino covered much of the capital cost of the project) as well as a growing water supply issues on the west side of the Thames. As Groton Utilities expands to serve the region's water needs, it may have an impact on the surplus availability of water in Groton. It also makes the protection of Groton's reservoirs a regional as well as a local issue.

The major constraint in terms of utilities and infrastructure is the lack of developable commercial sites that are fully-serviced. For example, there is no existing sewer service or municipal infrastructure in the designated business park area between Route 117 and Flanders Road (except along the 117 corridor in the vicinity of the Mystic Marriott). This has proved to be an obstacle to development and business attraction since small to mid-sized companies tend to prefer fully-serviced "turn-key" sites since they are more affordable and easier to develop. To the extent that such sites are available elsewhere in the region, the

competitiveness of Groton from a site location perspective will be diminished. Although this issue has been highlighted in several planning studies and reports, the Town of Groton has yet to come up with a comprehensive approach to addressing this situation. The extension of sewer and water service to portions of Route 117 and the Flanders Road area is currently under study by the Town. Many other areas north of I-95, including northern portions of Flanders Road, are designated as Sewer Avoidance Areas.

Because water and sewer service is provided by multiple jurisdictions, decisions regarding the timing and geography of utility extensions may not reflect the Town's economic development priorities. For instance, Groton Utilities may well base decisions regarding the extension of water service on the presence of a sufficient number of ratepayers to justify the capital cost. The Town, on the other hand, may wish to pursue a more proactive strategy so as to foster business development in key areas. The fact that economic development and utility infrastructure are not coordinated may impact the availability of competitive sites in Groton.

Opportunities

- Local municipal utility company: flexible and cost competitive
- Large water supply
- Good telecommunications infrastructure

Constraints

- Multiple jurisdictions for water and sewer service—lack of coordination between utilities and economic development policies
- Significant gaps in water and sewer service to targeted development areas
- Quality of water supply vulnerable to inappropriate development

2.7 MARKET ACCESS

With several locational advantages, Groton offers superior market access for businesses.

Located between New York and Boston, within the densely populated Northeast corridor, Groton is a short distance away from major markets. Groton's main advantage is its location along Interstate 95, the highway spine of the Northeast. Nearby are other major routes in the regional highway network, including Interstate 395, and State Routes 2 and 11. Given its excellent highway access, Groton provides businesses proximity to major population centers. According to seCTer's Southeastern Connecticut Almanac, Groton has access to 150 million people, one-third of U.S. manufacturers, and two-thirds of Canadian manufacturers within a 500-mile radius. Groton still has several developable sites available with good access (i.e., in close proximity to I-95 interchanges).

A drawback of Groton's location is that traffic congestion, particularly on I-95, is often bad and becoming worse over time. Traffic volume has been increasing steadily in the past decade and Interstate 95 already exceeds planned capacity. The planned connection of Route 11 to I-95 has yet to be completed, slowing access to the Hartford area, although its completion took a step forward recently with new funding allocated for the project. For businesses, traffic congestion increases the cost of goods being transported. Unfortunately, this trend is only likely to worsen since much of the gridlock is now considered casino-related, and there is speculation about an additional casino opening in the County and another in West Warwick, Rhode Island. Notwithstanding ambitious proposals such as Utopia in Preston or a NASCAR track in North Stonington, just with background increases and planned casino expansions, the traffic outlook for the Southeastern Connecticut portion of I-95 is alarming. Besides the extra costs incurred by businesses, traffic detracts from quality of life and may eventually dissuade tourists from journeying to the region.

Groton also has nearby air, port and rail facilities that enhance market access. Groton-New London Airport is located within the Town. The Airport, which has over 625 full and part-time employees, is owned and operated by the State Department of Transportation. At present, it is mostly used by business owners (mainly the casinos, EB and Pfizer), for private flights and flight school students. More robust air service and facilities are offered by TF Green Airport in Rhode Island, which is about 40 minutes away, and at Bradley Airport near Hartford (Windsor Locks) about 75 minutes away. Located right on the Long Island Sound, Groton also has marine access for freight and transit in the immediate vicinity. The Port of New London is situated along the mouth of the Thames River, a natural harbor. It is a deepwater seaport and channel, enabling freight shipping and receiving. There are two freight rail lines along the Thames: the New England Central Railroad on the New London (west) side and the Providence and Worcester Railroad on the Groton (east) side.

Passenger rail and ferries are also available in the Groton area. The Shoreline East provides commuter rail service from New Haven to New London and Amtrak's Northeast Corridor line has a station stop in New London and Mystic. Ferry service, including high speed ferries, is also available to points in Long Island, Martha's Vineyard and Block Island in New London.

To capitalize on its locational advantages, Groton must participate in regional and State decisions regarding the investments that will secure its competitive edge in terms of market access. Traffic on I-95 is the most pressing issue surrounding Groton's time to market and will only become a more serious problem. In response, Southeastern Connecticut towns and business organizations must lobby for increased roadway and infrastructure investments in the region to accommodate the impacts of rapid economic growth. Top priorities for roadway improvements include expansion of narrow segments of I-95 east of Branford and the completion of a direct highway route (Route 11) to Hartford, which has recently received new funding.

The Groton-New London Airport, while not currently serviced by commercial airlines, is nonetheless a key asset as it serves the corporate passenger travel needs of Pfizer, EB, the Subase, and other local businesses, as well as the casinos located in Southeastern Connecticut. The airport also supports a small cluster of aviation-related businesses. Recently, the Airport was threatened with the loss of its CFR Part 139 Commercial Airport Certificate, due to State budget cuts. Loss of the certificate would have complicated or prevented any future return of commercial aviation to the airport, and could have resulted in downgraded security and other services, impacting not only the airport itself but also on-site business tenants. The Town government should not only support the airport in its efforts to have a viable, stable budget but also provide whatever assistance possible to ensure that the Airport retains its certification for commercial flights, even if private planes and charters dominate current business.

More generally, Groton should seize the opportunity to promote better linkages between the various modes of transportation. Stakeholders have suggested that there may be ways for Groton (and the region) to take better advantage of its nearby access to a deepwater port, through both better marketing of the facility and the recruitment of industries that can make use of it. From a passenger transportation standpoint, Groton should study the potential for expanding transit options. The idea for an Amtrak station in Groton has been floated; however, given the proximity of current stations in Mystic and New London, this seems unlikely to be supported by either Amtrak or State and local politicians. On the other hand, Groton could lobby for the station name at either Mystic or New London to be changed to include Groton (e.g., Mystic-Groton or Groton-New London station) for marketing and identity purposes.

Opportunities

- I-95 corridor location
- Airport to accommodate corporate helicopters and jets
- Port facilities in New London
- Shoreline freight railroads
- Route 11 to be completed

Constraints

- I-95 congestion
- Limited port facilities in Groton: land is occupied by Subase and EB
- No rail station in Groton: closest are in New London and Mystic
- Closest commercial airport is in Rhode Island

2.8 TOURISM

Tourism is a substantial and growing industry in Connecticut, estimated at \$10 billion. It now surpasses both the manufacturing and insurance sectors as a top employer, comprising 13.4 percent of all jobs in the

State (2001 Economic Impact of Connecticut's Travel and Tourism Industry). Most of Connecticut's tourists come on leisure visits, and a growing number are staying over at least one night (60 percent). It is best described as a weekend destination market in which tourists typically are coming for short getaway trips, mostly from the New York and Boston Metropolitan areas.

Southeastern Connecticut is one of the most visited areas in the State and ranks among the top tourist destinations for New England. Two-thirds of all visitors to Connecticut spend time and money within the region. Tourism in Southeastern Connecticut has traditionally focused on shoreline and heritage sites (e.g., Mystic Aquarium and Mystic Seaport) but now there is a greater focus on the gaming industry. Located close to Groton, the Foxwoods and Mohegan Sun casinos are by far the biggest tourist draw. In fact, nearly 30 percent of leisure visitors to Connecticut visit these casinos. Groton has the opportunity at hand to tap into this market. The Town should pursue better linkages with casino tourism, promoting Groton as a nearby excursion focused on recreation and heritage activities to round out the gaming experience for tourists—or, conversely, promoting the casinos as nightlife destinations to visitors spending their days at Mystic attractions.

Groton has a number of tourist attractions within the Town. These destinations include: historic Downtown Mystic, the Historic Ship Nautilus and Submarine Force Museum (Nautilus/Submarine Museum), Fort Griswold, Esker Point and Eastern Point Beaches, significant coastal access points and coastline, and several recreational/outdoor opportunities including Bluff Point and Haley Farm State Park. The commercial core of Mystic is on the Groton side of the river yet the Seaport is on the Stonington side, and therefore Stonington is more often associated with Mystic by tourists. This highlights the issue of competing identities in Groton due to the naming of enclaves within the Town. The Nautilus/Submarine Museum celebrates Groton's naval history and its claim as the home of the first nuclear submarine. The museum experienced a decline in visitors post 9/11; the addition of new exhibitions is hoped to help attract more visitors. While, Groton is endowed with water access, open space and natural amenities, it may not have yet fully realized the potential of these assets.

With Mystic Seaport being the largest attraction in the immediate area, Groton should channel resources into getting Mystic Seaport visitors to explore more of Groton. The Town should bill itself as a scenic, water-oriented community with a range of historical and recreational activities. Groton remains a unique example in the region of a “working and playing” (industrial and recreational) waterfront. Additionally, outdoor activities abound, such as the bikeways in areas such as Bluff Point and Haley Farm. An intermodal study being undertaken by the Towns of Groton and Stonington is exploring the use of shuttles and water taxis to link attractions and lodging in Mystic and elsewhere—this could help bring more tourists to the Groton side of the river.

Groton also needs more accommodations for the leisure tourist. One source estimated that there are approximately 1,300 rooms in Groton, ranging from business class hotels such as the Marriot on Route

117 to the cluster of moderate hotels and motels near the Subase. An inventory of lodging in Groton is provided in Table 6.

Analyzing this list, it becomes apparent that Groton lacks the type of quaint lodging that tourists to Mystic Seaport tend to seek. Since most tourists to the region originate from within a reasonable driving distance (2+ hours), an overnight stay is likely to be based on either convenience or charm. Although there are tourist motels in Stonington, there are few smaller bed and breakfasts or inns on the Groton side of Mystic, save for the Steamboat Inn and the Valiant. Thus, to diversify the Town's lodging options, Groton should look to encourage additional lodging options, particularly B&Bs, on the Groton side of Mystic. Such a niche is consistent with a "weekend getaway" strategy for the region. B&B's would also be appropriate in historic areas of Groton City on or near Thames Street.

Table 6: Lodging in Groton

Name	Number of Rooms
Mystic Marriot Hotel & Spa	285
Best Western Olympic Inn	140
Groton Inn & Suites	112
Quality Inn	110
Super 8	173
Hampton Inn Groton/Mystic	80
Clarion Inn	69
Bestway Inn & Suites	62
Flagship Inn & Suites	60
Econo Lodge	50
Howard Johnson Express Inn	48
Sojourner Inn	45
Windsor Motel	29
Thames Inn & Marina	26
Benham Motel	22
Total	1,311

Source: Mystic & The Quiet Corner, Map & Guide, Eastern Connecticut Tourism District

Many residents have also suggested revitalizing Thames Street as a specialty shopping destination and counterpoint to Downtown Mystic. Thames Street has great character but suffers from a lack of retail continuity and mass. It also has limited parking, a circumstance that will likely never be fully addressed due to space constraints. Any revitalization strategy for Thames Street should both seek to increase the

street's retail mass and continuity through selective infill, while improvising the pedestrian appeal of the linear street through the creation of interesting "events" that break the strip up into a series of attractions. These might include riverfront access points, historical markets, interpretive signs documenting the area's maritime history, etc.

Groton and its immediate region are home to many attractions that may not be destinations in themselves, but might be if properly linked and packaged. In addition to those already discussed (Thames Street, Fort Griswold, the Nautilus/Submarine Museum) there are many historic areas on the New London side of the river, such as Whale Oil Row, the Custom House Museum, Shaw Mansion and Fort Trumbull State Park. A Heritage Park concept is moving forward that will link these many attractions together with some sort of waterborne transport, likely water taxis. In Groton, landings at Fort Street and the Nautilus/Submarine Museum are in the planning stages or underway. The idea will work best if the waterborne part of the journey is integrated as a key part of the attraction.

Many stakeholders have fairly pointed out that boosting Groton's tourism industry is not simply about repackaging and marketing the attractions which already exist, but rather infusing the market with new projects and experiences. Steps that would help bolster tourism in Groton include creating more pedestrian-friendly, walkable environments for visitors (Thames Street, Downtown Mystic, and their associated waterfronts) and developing and hosting more regional-level events, which draw upon existing successful events (e.g., the Esker Point and Washington Park concert series, OP Sail).

Opportunities

- Strong hospitality market
- Potential for more corporate hotel/conference center development
- Increased capture of Mystic tourism market within Groton—B&Bs, Inns
- Repositioning of Thames Street as a tourism/dining/specialty shopping destination
- Heritage Park and water taxi/ferry
- Nautilus/ Submarine Museum

Constraints

- Uninviting gateways
- Limited spin-off from Casinos

2.9 RETAIL CONDITIONS AND OUTLOOK

Groton has two auto-oriented shopping areas: Route 1 (downtown Groton, discussed in detail elsewhere) and Route 12. It also has two traditional downtown retail areas: Downtown Mystic and Thames Street in Groton City. These latter areas once served as the commercial cores of the waterfront shipbuilding and

seafaring communities that clustered on the Mystic and Thames Rivers, respectively. With the post-war shift towards auto-based shopping, Downtown Groton became the retailing powerhouse for the region. Today, while Mystic thrives as a tourist and specialty shopping driven destination, Groton has been sidelined in the regional retailing marketplace by major new shopping destinations further west along I-95 in New London and Waterford. Downtown Groton is showing its age, and is primarily tenanted by value-oriented retailers or non-retail tenants. Thames Street has great potential but currently lacks the retail mass and continuity to serve as a specialty destination. In the long term, the repositioning of both Downtown Groton and Thames Street will be required for them to thrive. (Downtown Groton is discussed in more detail in the next section; strategies for Thames Street were touched upon under Tourism.)

Because of its available land and location at the intersection of I-95, I-395, and Route 85, Waterford has emerged as the premier retailing destination in the region. Waterford's offerings include the Crystal Mall anchored with a Sears, Macy's and JC Penny's; category killer retailers (stores offering deep discounts and broad selection in a specific category of goods) such as Best Buy, Borders, Babies R Us and Linen N Things; and big box discounters including Wal Mart, Target and Toys R Us. In contrast, Downtown Groton is now anchored by a discount variety retailer (Benny's), a discount clothing retailer (TJ Maxx), and a supermarket (Big Y).

Rather than attempting to replicate or directly compete with Waterford's offerings, Groton should explore retailing concepts currently underrepresented in the region. Groton's demographics are not necessarily conducive to the attraction of more upscale shopping developments such as lifestyle centers. However, wealthy enclaves are located nearby in Stonington, East Lyme, and other towns, and the year-round success of Downtown Mystic shows that local market support exists for specialty concepts given the right setting. Groton may wish to explore the possibility of taking advantage of current developer interest in neo-traditional (i.e. town center) development prototypes to explore the possibility of new mixed-use development incorporating specialty retail with small offices and housing, either in close proximity or in mixed-use buildings.

Opportunities

- Repositioning of Downtown Groton
- Strong interest from chain retailers
- Thames Street has great character which is underutilized
- Developer interest in neo-traditional and mixed use formats

Constraints

- Downtown property owners are reluctant to make significant changes to the existing conditions
- Significant regional competition
- Trade area demographics not conducive to upscale shopping concepts

2.10 DEVELOPMENT/REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Economic development is not the same as real estate development, as it encompasses such activities as job training and placement, technology deployment, and other policies which are not directly related to physical development. Yet, expanding the employment base and tax base typically involves creating new commercial or industrial development. Therefore, the ability of a locality to accommodate new development on appropriately located and zoned property is an important dimension of economic development capacity. Further, in a mature community such as Groton, some development opportunities will take the form of redevelopment, i.e., the intensification and reuse of vacant or underutilized properties. This section explores such opportunities in Groton, starting first with the demand for real estate, and then examining the supply.

2.10.1 Demand

There is significant demand for developable property in Groton for the following uses, in declining order of value: residential, retail and industrial/flex.

The current residential market in Groton is a historical anomaly, with both sale prices and rents at unprecedented levels. The driving factors have been both external to the region—historic lows in interest rates, aggressive new mortgage instruments, and a national house price boom; and internal—phenomenal employment growth at the region’s two Native American casinos coupled with a regional shortage of new housing production. On a land value basis, residential currently trumps retail above density thresholds which are easily met in Groton’s multi-family zoning districts.

The retail market is also strong with large-format retailers jockeying with each other for prime sites. Many of these retailers are in direct competition for the same customers (i.e. Lowes and Home Depot) with site location decisions being made more for the sake of strategic advantage than anticipated capture rates of regional purchasing power. In other words, cannibalization of the existing market is a likely outcome of future retail expansion. Even still, retailers are able to pay premium prices for large sites with utility access and highway proximity. With Waterford increasingly tapped out for sites, locations in places such as Groton have increasingly become a focus of attention.

There is also demand for industrial and flex space (i.e. low-cost buildings combining office with production/distribution functions). The typical user in Groton is looking for a site of modest size (2 – 5 acres) with utilities in place (water, sewer, roadways) and a level area on which to erect a low-cost steel building with associated parking and loading areas. The value of industrial space is far less than retail, and as a result industrial development cannot pay for expensive site development costs such as roadway extensions, sewer line installations, extensive regrading, etc.

The best local example of such industrial/flex development is the small industrial park located adjacent to the airport, which has been quickly filling up once a roadway was put in place and the adjacent land made available for subdivision. However, there are few such opportunities left. The same is true in other towns—for example, the Norwich Industrial Park, after expanding, has filled to capacity.

2.10.2 Supply

If the above represents the demand side of the equation, what of the supply? Groton's status as a "company town" has left it with a unique and problematic real estate and property market. The bulk of the Town's office and industrial development, other than retail, is organized into self-contained campuses devoted to single users (i.e. Pfizer and EB). As a result, there is little in the way of industrial and office space cycling through the market at any given time, which has impacts on space availability for new business formation. The existing office market is largely limited to service-oriented users (medical, professional users) looking for small blocks of space with retail-type locational qualities. The Town has an almost total lack of Class A or Class B office space outside of Pfizer and EB.

Groton has only a small set of realistically available sites for development. This conclusion is not evident from the Town's zoning map, which shows large tracts of undeveloped property designated for industrial or commercial use. In reality, however, much of this land is environmentally or topographically constrained, lacks roadway access, and/or is unsewered. As noted above, only residential and retail development produce enough value for the private sector to make such major investments. As a result, the large tracts of industrially-zoned land between Route 117 and Flanders Road have remained largely undeveloped, and are likely to remain so for the foreseeable future without either rezoning or public sector intervention.

The Town has three large sites currently attracting interest from retailers. These are the D'Angelo/Antonino Site, currently targeted by a big box discounter; the Downes-Patterson Site located north of the Mystic Executive Park, which could interest other big box retailers, such as a home improvement superstore; and the Paulson Site also on Route 117 near the Mystic Industrial Park, which is currently optioned for retail development subject to approvals. The development of all three sites for retail would effectively consume nearly all of the best greenfield land targeted for long-term economic development in Groton.

Another potential redevelopment opportunity is the Mystic Education Center overlooking the Mystic River, and located just north of I-95. The site has dramatic views and an appealing natural setting, but has poor roadway access. A detailed study should be undertaken for its reuse. The site is State-owned, and its redevelopment will require State participation. Groton should be proactive in partnering with the State in planning for the site's reuse and potential redevelopment.

Groton cannot diversify its economy with only new housing and retail. Yet, office, industrial and flex users do not have enough “juice” to spur the development of Groton’s inventory of constrained commercial property. Therefore, rethinking is needed if the Town is to create meaningful development and redevelopment opportunities that will solve the “site problem.” Possible strategies include:

- Rethinking the zoning of the industrial lands along Route 117 to spur development. Potentially leveraging of residential, retail and mixed use development to pay for infrastructure and access improvements that facilitate later phases of office and industrial development.
- The formation of a Local or Economic Development Corporation empowered to acquire and dispose of real property, make site improvements, and undertake particular physical development projects (such a step should only occur after sufficient planning has taken place).
- Taking a hard look at opportunities for expanding existing commercial and industrial zoning in favorable locations, potentially linked with contractions of such zoning elsewhere.

Opportunities

- Strong demand for housing and retail
- Demand for affordable industrial/flex space
- Significant opportunities at the intersection of Route 117 and I-95
- Mystic Education Center

Constraints

- Available sites constrained by lack of sewer, water and/or roadway access; as well as topographic and environmental constraints
- Most sites too expensive to develop for anything other than a high-value use such as retail or housing
- Danger that retail will consume much of the prime economic development land
- Limited Class A or B office market
- Limited existing inventory of available office or industrial space to accommodate new businesses
- No local development corporation

2.11 QUALITY OF LIFE

Residents have commented on the “desirable lifestyle” and “comfortable diversity” of the Town as reasons for living in Groton. Quality of life is an intangible yet essential angle to consider in formulating Groton’s economic development strategy. Quality of life not only affects the tenor and image of the

community but also its ability to attract and retain quality employers and employees. It shapes the long-term health and viability of the community. For example, Groton cannot rely solely on its many advantages in terms of resources, transportation, and access to attract business. Living conditions, culture, amenities, services and aesthetics also play an important role, especially for headquarter operations. Factoring in quality of life considerations is the key to ensuring that balanced and compatible development occurs in Groton. For small and mid-sized companies, the place where the CEO wants to live is often a major factor in site location decisions.

One of Groton's greatest advantages in terms of quality of life is its coastal location. There are approximately 58 miles of shoreline between the Thames River, Mystic River and Fishers Island Sound. Marine-based recreation has proven a very attractive amenity. Groton has several marinas and boatyards in the vicinity. Yet, there remains no acceptable community beach according to residents. Consequently, there is an opportunity to create better waterfront access points. Groton should continue to designate additional public waterfront access as well as view corridors. A map of these waterfront points of interest would reinforce the marine-orientation of the community while also serving as a tourism asset.

Groton also has significant open space, with over 3,500 acres of reserved open space and active recreational areas. Open space helps protect the natural environment and habitat, while maintaining the character of the Town amid development pressures. Community advocates have pushed for Groton to place a greater emphasis on preparing for the future open space needs of Groton. The Town has an open space plan, which is in the process of being updated, and a Conservation Commission charged with identifying priority sites for future acquisition as open space. A key goal for the Commission and the open space plan is the completion of the existing greenbreak system.

A common complaint from residents and companies alike is Groton's (perceived or actual) lack of cultural activities—arts, entertainment, etc. There are only a few venues in Groton that currently provide this, such as Avery Point Playhouse located at University of Connecticut's Avery Point campus, although there are additional venues regionally including the Garde Arts Center in New London and the Spirit of Broadway in Norwich. The community has reiterated the need for more things to do at night and more activities related to the arts. There should be an emphasis on making Groton a place where things are going on: a place to be. Groton may choose to adopt a "restaurant row" market niche strategy for Thames Street. Local events that activate the community such as farmer's markets and seasonal celebrations, as well as those of a regional scale, such as the Esker Point and Washington Park concert series that attract people from a wider trade area, should be expanded upon. Furthermore, there is an opportunity to better tie the community into the activities of local educational institutions.

The aesthetics of the Town also factor into community character. With breathtaking waterfront views, a historic walkable village (Mystic), other historic neighborhoods (Noank, Groton Long Point and Groton City) and large recreational areas, Groton has several beautiful settings within the Town. However, there are a number of areas within Groton, particularly highway corridors, retail areas and the

industrial/residential edge that could use improvement. Downtown remains unattractive and auto-oriented, dominated by dated strip centers. Improving Downtown's character through increased landscaping; higher density/in-fill development and pedestrian amenities would significantly improve the aesthetic and civic quality of Downtown. Downtown, the Thames Street Corridor and several highway corridors need to evoke a more evident sense of arrival. For this, Groton should continue its CIP improvements beautifying its gateways through appropriate signage and landscaping.

Services are also a major consideration for the livability of a community. Groton remains attractive due to its good municipal services and below average tax rates. There are safe neighborhoods and state-of-the-art healthcare facilities within Groton. As for education, there are a number of good public and private school options for Groton residents. In fact, per pupil spending in Connecticut ranks among the highest average in the country. The Town is in the process of designing two new elementary schools and a major addition to the high school, based on a town-wide referendum passed in April of 2004. The \$91.9 million package is presently in the design phase. The elementary schools are scheduled for occupancy in August 2007 and work will be finished on the high school in early 2008. This is the largest project undertaken by the Town of Groton and demonstrates the Town's commitment to education. Work on the remaining schools is expected to follow based on educational and facility needs.

Housing is another important component of quality of life which contributes to the desirability of Groton as a home or work address. From a housing stock perspective, Groton has a diverse range of housing options, from apartments to condos to single family homes, with different settings including the enclave communities such as Noank, Groton Long Point and Mystic. With housing prices among the most affordable in the State, this bodes well for attracting people to the area. As for housing tenure rates, about 46 percent of housing in Groton is owner-occupied versus 60 percent for the County and 63 percent for the State (this reflects the greater diversity of housing type and income level in Groton). There is a serious housing shortage in the region, particularly for affordable and rental housing. Groton should continue to pursue a housing strategy that ensures that housing development remains balanced, offering a range of housing types and preserving the existing character of established neighborhoods.

Opportunities

- Coastal location
- Extensive waterfront
- Parks and recreational opportunities
- Proposed greenways
- Diverse housing stock
- Regional assets: theater and arts in New London, Norwich; casinos; Playhouse at Avery Point
- Thames River scenic corridor/bikeway

Constraints

- Deferred investment in schools (now being rectified)
- Perceived shortage of cultural venues and facilities
- Unattractive shopping corridors

3 Downtown Groton

Downtown Groton has been singled out for particular attention as part of this planning effort. It is the only specific geographic area to merit a standalone chapter. The reasons are several. First, the downtown area represents, collectively, the largest agglomeration of commercial property outside of the EB and Pfizer complexes. Its real estate value therefore has a meaningful impact on the Town's real property tax base. Second, the downtown is located in a highly visible location for passby traffic. Therefore, its visual appeal and vibrancy (or lack thereof) reflects upon the whole community. Third, the downtown has symbolic value. It is the only "central place" in the Town, although the Town has other historic centers. All eyes turn to it. The condition of the downtown therefore has significant implications for civic pride.

Downtown Groton is not a traditional downtown, but in fact is a collection of outdoor shopping centers straddling Route 1 as it runs south from I-95 to the Poquonnock Bridge area. These shopping plazas were among the earliest suburban-style shopping centers developed in the region. At the time of their construction in the 1950s and 1960s, the interstate system was not yet fully developed, and Route 1 was a major regional corridor for automotive traffic. These plazas were state of the art, and must have seemed to be the height of modernity to an increasingly motorized public. They were conveniently located to the historic population concentrations in the Town and City of Groton, and were also accessible to a regional population.

Yet time has not been entirely kind to these centers. The completion of Interstate 95 and 395, along with improvements to State Route 85, shifted the center of gravity of the region to Waterford. The Crystal Mall and nearby retail developments, all located in the "golden triangle" formed by 95, 395 and 85, now form the region's premier shopping destination. Larger and more modern shopping plazas have also been constructed along the I-95 service roads in the City of New London. The floorplates, ceiling heights, column spacing, and general configuration of the Groton shopping plazas are increasingly obsolete, and incapable of accommodating the programmatic needs of national credit retail tenants. The result has been a shift towards lower-value and non-retail tenants in these shopping plazas.

However, Downtown Groton still retains significant assets on which to build. It is advantageously located in the heart of Town, not far from a major interchange with I-95. Route 1 is a four-lane road, capable of supporting a higher intensity of development than exists today. The property itself is large by Groton standards and imposes few constraints on redevelopment other than the existing tenancy. Finally, the region, like other parts of the nation, is experiencing an unusually strong real estate market, led by housing, but also including retail. The current strength of this market, combined with growing developer acceptance of mixed-use development concepts, means that trends may have re-converged in the downtown's favor.

This chapter analyzes the relevant planning, design, and market factors impacting the downtown, and sets forth a coordinated response to these factors that shows how the downtown might redevelop over time

through a partnership between Town government and the affected property owners. Underlying this response is vision for the downtown as a more vibrant, mixed-use central place for the downtown, which incorporates housing and civic uses in addition to retail.

The analysis is based on a detailed inventory of existing conditions in Downtown Groton. All four shopping plazas, along with related outparcels, were surveyed and their tenancy recorded. A detailed urban design inventory was also undertaken. Competing shopping areas were surveyed for their general type (regional, community, convenience, etc.) and major anchors. Demographic and spending power estimates were obtained for primary and secondary trade areas around the downtown. Finally, interviews with downtown property owners, knowledgeable real estate developers and brokers, and others helped inform the conclusions here.

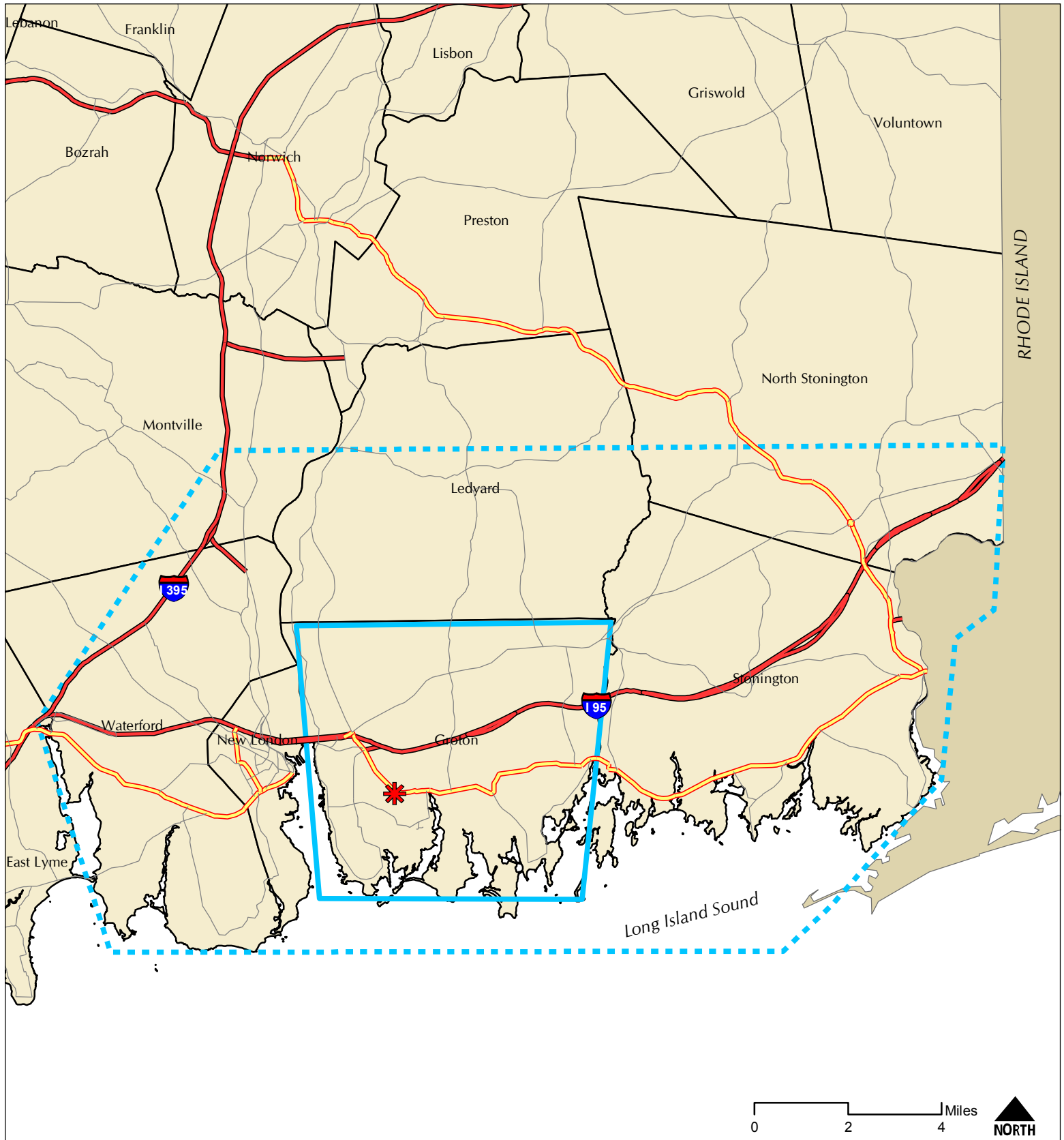
3.1 DOWNTOWN LOCATION AND TRADE AREAS

Downtown Groton is located on Route 1, also known as Long Hill Road, south of I-95. The extent of the downtown is not precisely defined. A narrow definition would include those parcels within the Downtown Development District (DDD) on the Groton zoning map. However, the commercial character of Route 1 begins earlier, a little south of the I-95 interchange, and continues beyond the DDD area to a little ways past Poquonnock Bridge. These areas are zoned CA-12 Commercial Arterial. For purposes of this report, the DDD area will be referred to as the “core” of Downtown Groton, while the CA-12 areas will be the “fringe.” These areas are illustrated on **Map 4: Downtown Location**.

Currently, the downtown is anchored by a grocery store (Big Y), a discount variety store (Benny’s) and other retail establishments including CVS, Ethan Allen and TJMaxx. These establishments do not have regional drawing power, and therefore the area primarily services the convenience needs of local residents. In areas with suburban or greater densities, people generally travel about 10 minute for convenience needs. A 10 minute drive time roughly corresponds to the boundaries of Groton, and for simplicity the town boundaries are chosen to serve as the **primary trade area**.

For comparison shopping, fine dining, etc., people are willing to travel longer distances. In rural areas or for major destinations, drive times of 30 to 45 minutes are not uncommon. For Groton, which lacks the square footage of a major destination, 15 to 20 minutes is likely more realistic, and certainly more conservative. The **secondary trade area**, which is illustrated on **Map 3: Trade Areas**, corresponds to this drive time, with areas east of the Thames River corresponding more closely to the longer driving time due to the lack of competing retail centers. The secondary trade area extends all the way to the Rhode Island border, taking in all of Stonington and portions of North Stonington, Preston, and Ledyard. New London City and parts of Waterford and Montville are also included.

Map 3: Groton Trade Areas



Legend

- Primary Trade Area (Groton Town)
- Secondary Trade Area (15 to 20 minute drive)

Major Roads

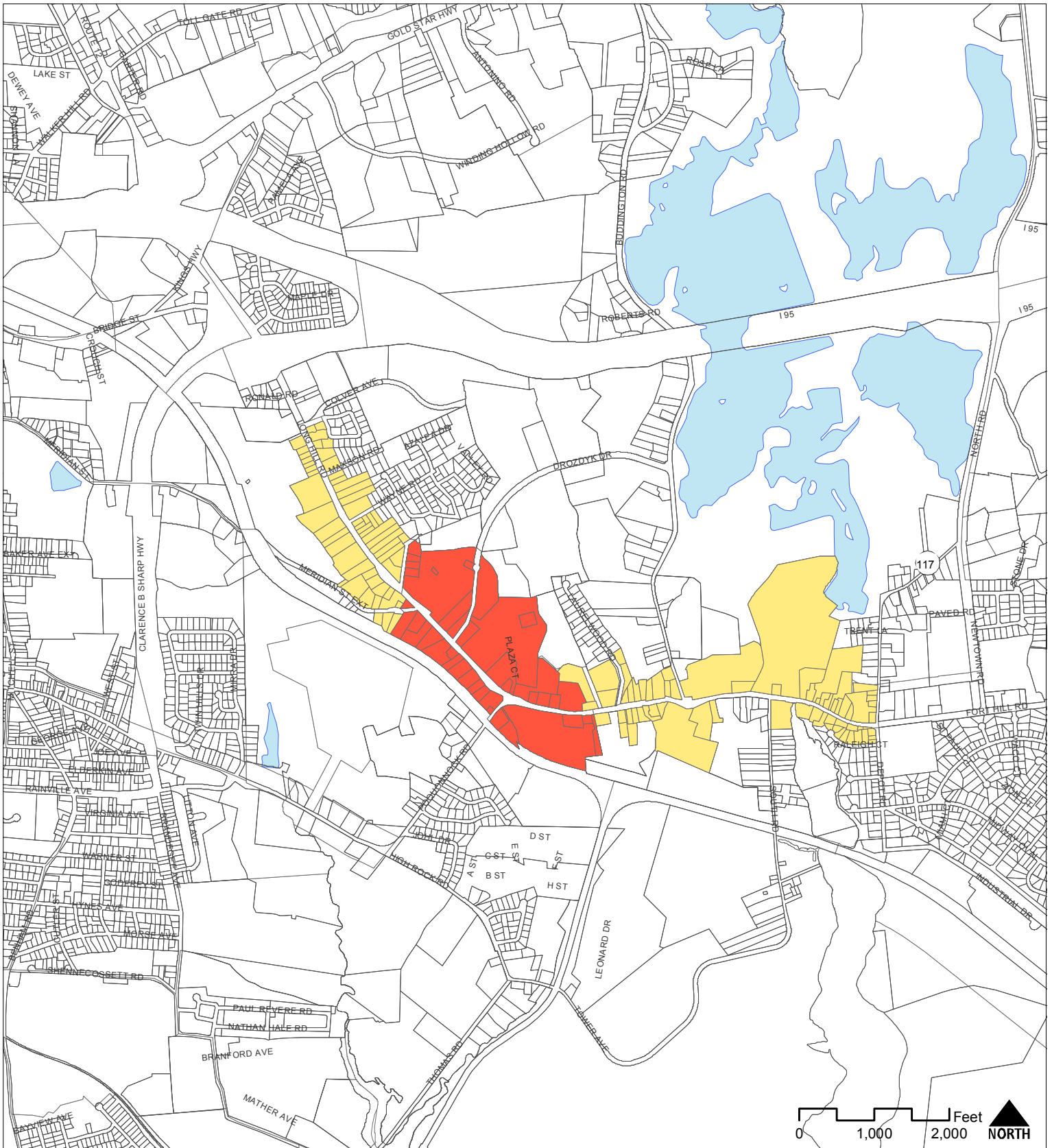
- Limited Access Highway
- Highway
- Local Roads

* Downtown Groton

Source: Connecticut DEP GIS Data
ESRI GIS Data

Map Prepared by:
Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates, Inc.
December 2005

Map 4: Downtown Location Map



Legend

- Downtown Core
- Downtown Commercial Periphery
- Waterbodies

Source: Connecticut DEP GIS Data
ESRI GIS Data

Map Prepared by:
Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates, Inc.
December 2005

Table 7: Selected Trade Area Demographics, 2005

Variable	Primary Trade Area	Secondary Trade Area
2005 Population	40,183	132,849
2010 Projection	40,612	135,879
Growth	429	3,030
Annual Percent Growth Rate	0.21%	0.45%
Median age	34.13	37.32
Percent 0 – 17	23.5%	22.2%
Percent 18 – 25	27.9%	24.3%
Percent 35 – 55	27.5%	29.3%
Percent 55 – 64	8.6%	10.1%
Percent 65 or older	12.5%	14.1%
Per capita income	\$27,745	\$27,466
2005 Households	15,693	52,487
Average household size	2.35	2.35
Percent family households	63.6%	63.2%
Percent married couple w/ children	23.7%	20.1%
Median household income	\$52,124	\$52,871
Percent less than \$25,000	17.2%	19.6%
Percent greater than \$100,000	17.9%	18.2%
Average vehicles per households	1.62	1.66
Occupied housing units	15,693	52,487
Percent owner occupied	51.2%	60.2%
Percent single family detached	49.0%	57.1%
Median housing value	\$199,233	\$215,307
Percent built since 1990	12.7%	13.8%
Percent built before 1960	62.0%	57.9%
Percent built before 1940	26.7%	18.0%

Source: Claritas Inc., 2005

Key demographic variables are summarized in **Table 7**. Within the primary trade area (Groton) there are an estimated 40,180 people as of 2005, living in 15,690 households. Projected growth is modest, at less than a half percent a year, with only about 3,000 new residents anticipated in the secondary trade area by 2010. This growth will generate some additional demand. However, based upon recent trends, much of this growth will occur in lower-income households moving into the region to take employment at the casinos. Therefore, this demand will primarily register in day-to-day categories such as groceries and discount variety retailers, less so for more specialized retail.

The bulk of Groton’s population is relatively young, as would be expected in a Town with a large military population. Relatively little of the population falls into the pre-retirement, empty nest category (55 – 64), and only 12.5 percent at or above retirement age. About a quarter of the population is in the prime child-rearing age group (35 – 55).

A significant share of Groton’s households, nearly 64 percent, are family households. However, fewer than a quarter are traditional married couple households with children at home (consistent with the age distribution noted above). Median household income levels for Groton are fair, at a little over \$52,000. About 18 percent of households are high-income (greater than \$100,000), while about 17 percent are low-income (half of the median, or less than about \$25,000). Only slightly over half of Groton’s households own their units, and fewer than half live in single-family homes, attesting to the diversity of the Town’s housing stock. Much of the housing stock is aging, with more than 62 percent of units built before 1960, and over a quarter built before 1940. This creates additional demand for home improvement products.

3.2 DEMAND AND SUPPLY

3.2.1 Downtown Inventory

Despite Downtown Groton’s physical issues in terms of design and aesthetics, it is a relatively bustling commercial area. The four core shopping plazas that make up the downtown total about 370,000 square feet (see **Table 8**). Collectively, this is enough for the downtown to serve as a modest destination—yet, each center tends to function somewhat independently. The two oldest centers tend to be on the small size for stand-alone strip centers, with about 75,000 and 85,000 square feet apiece. Only the Big Y center meets the prevailing size for neighborhood shopping centers, with 120,000 square feet. If the centers were more integrated, the drawing power of the entire agglomeration would be enhanced.

Table 8: Estimated Retail Floor Space, Downtown Groton

Center	Square feet
Groton Shopper's Mart	121,000
Groton Shopping Plaza	84,700
Groton Shopping Center I	75,400
Groton Shopping Center II	86,300
Total	367,400

Source: Town of Groton GIS; FXFowle Architects, PC

Table 9: Retail Inventory, Downtown Groton

Category	Stores	Percent	Category	Stores	Percent
Food Stores	1	0.8%	Entertainment/Community	9	7.3%
Supermarkets	1	0.8%	Learning Center	1	0.8%
Specialty	0	0.0%	Cinema	1	0.8%
			Children's Gym	1	0.8%
Eating/Drinking Places	23	18.5%	Gym/Fitness	5	4.0%
Fast/lunch/take-out	14	11.3%	Billiards	1	0.8%
Sit-down	6	4.8%			
Bars	0	0.0%	Other Retail	30	24.2%
Coffee shops	3	2.4%	Books	0	0.0%
			Toys, games, hobbies	2	1.6%
General Merchandise	3	2.4%	Camera, photography	0	0.0%
Variety	3	2.4%	Pets	1	0.8%
Small general merchandise	0	0.0%	Laundry, dry cleaning	4	3.2%
			Travel Agents	1	0.8%
Apparel	6	4.8%	Cosmetics	1	0.8%
Shoe Stores	1	0.8%	Jewelry stores	1	0.8%
Women's Specialty	0	0.0%	Stationary	1	0.8%
Men's specialty	1	0.8%	Art Supplies	1	0.8%
Children's	0	0.0%	Sporting goods	1	0.8%
Family Wear	2	1.6%	Florists	0	0.0%
Other (second-hand/surplus)	2	1.6%	Gifts and related	0	0.0%
			Video Rental	1	0.8%
Furniture/Home Furnishings/			Antiques	0	0.0%
Appliances/Music	14	11.3%	Optical/eyeglasses	1	0.8%
Furniture/home furnishings	4	3.2%	Hair salons	6	4.8%
Appliances	1	0.8%	Nails	2	1.6%
Home electronics	1	0.8%	Tanning	2	1.6%
Record stores	2	1.6%	Alcoholic Beverages	2	1.6%
Computer/software	1	0.8%	Misc.	3	2.4%
Musical instruments	1	0.8%			
Telephone/Cellular	4	3.2%	Non-Retail	22	17.7%
			Banks	7	5.6%
Hardware/Home Improvement	0	0.0%	Insurance	3	2.4%
			Tax preparation	4	3.2%
Drugstores	2	1.6%	Real Estate	1	0.8%
			Medical Offices	4	3.2%
Auto	6	4.8%	Professional Offices	3	2.4%
Auto parts and repair	4	3.2%			
Gas stations	2	1.6%	Vacant storefronts	8	6.5%
			Total Retail Storefronts	124	100.0%

Source: Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates, Inc., 2005

The results of the inventory by retail category are summarized on **Table 9**. Convenience shopping dominates the retail mix and consists of the following business types: grocery stores, drugstores, laundry mats, salons, gyms, banks, and cleaners. The major convenience retail anchors are Big Y Supermarket, Walgreen's and CVS. There are a number of moderately-priced dining options in downtown, ranging

from national restaurant chains (e.g. Applebee's) and fast food restaurants to local sit-down restaurants. The area has also attracted entertainment businesses, including a multiplex theatre, a billiards hall, and several fitness facilities.

Downtown's shopping centers function as a comparison shopping destination, as well. Among the major comparison retail anchors are: TJMaxx, Ethan Allen, and Benny's (a variety store). Looking at downtown as a whole (both shopping plazas and stand alone destinations), it appears that the district has four discernible comparison shopping clusters: 1) auto sales, auto parts and repair; and 2) furniture, home furnishings, and home appliances; 3) wireless telecommunications and 4) discount or value clothing. There are also a number of financial services and medical offices interspersed within the shopping centers. Nearly 18 percent of the storefronts are occupied by non-retail businesses, a sign of low retail rents and slack demand for retail space, as in strong markets retailers are typically able to outbid other types of users.

Overall, downtown has approximately 120 retail store spaces (of varying sizes). With about seven vacancies in the area, downtown has an estimated 6.4 percent retail vacancy rate. Over half of all businesses in downtown can be categorized as independently-owned or local chains.

3.2.2 Demand

Table 10 shows estimated consumer buying power within the two trade areas, based upon the rule of thumb that for the median household, retail spending is approximately one-third of gross household income. The estimation shows that buying power within Groton totals about \$275 million, while in the primary trade area it is \$925 million. Based on the industry standards of \$250 in annual sales per square foot for retailers, this spending is enough to support a total of 3.7 million square feet of retail.

Table 10: Estimated Trade Area Spending Power, 2005

Variable	Primary Trade Area	Secondary Trade Area
2005 Households	15,693	52,487
Median household income	\$52,124	\$52,871
Estimated spending power (\$000s)	\$272,661	\$925,013
Retail square feet	1,090,643	3,700,054

Source: Claritas Inc., 2005; Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates, Inc.

The four shopping centers comprising the downtown total less than 400,000 square feet. There are likely another 100,000 square feet scattered in various smaller buildings and developments along the Route 1 corridor, and perhaps another 300,000 square feet located in the Route 12/Route 184 corridor, where Wal-

Mart and other retailers are currently located. Add in the various storefronts in Downtown Mystic, Thames Street, and elsewhere, and it appears that Groton has just enough retail inventory to satisfy truly local demand. That leaves 2.7 million square feet worth of additional demand to be satisfied elsewhere from secondary trade area residents.

3.2.3 Competing Retail Areas

Primarily, this additional demand is satisfied by competing retail areas in Waterford, New London and elsewhere.

- The **Crystal Mall** in Waterford is the premier regional shopping destination, and only enclosed mall, in the region. It has over 130 stores and is anchored by **Macy's**, **J C Penney** and **Sears**.
- In the vicinity of the Crystal Mall is located a large agglomeration of big box and category retailers, as well as various chain restaurants located on outparcels. These shops include category killers **Best Buy**, **Borders**, **Babies R Us**, **Toys R Us**, and **Linen n Things**; and big box discounters **Wal-Mart** and **Target**.
- The I-95 frontage roads in New London are also developed for retail, and have seen some significant upgrades in recent years. The **New London Mall** is a development in the form of a “lifestyle center:” an open air mall with no clear anchor, and tenanted by higher-end comparison retailers (typical examples include Williams Sonoma, Talbots, and Barnes & Noble). In New London, however, the tenant mix is less upscale, and includes **Chili's**, **Dress Barn**, **Marshalls**, **Shop Rite**, and **Strawberries**. The center is attractively designed, and includes arcaded sidewalks.
- The **New London Shopping Center**, located on the south frontage road, is a more traditional community shopping center. It includes a variety of retailers, including **Staples**.
- While they originally included retail only as an adjunct to the casino operations, the **Mohegan Sun** casino has evolved into a specialty shopping destination, with such eclectic tenants as **Ben & Jerry's**, **Brookstone**, **Discovery Channel Store**, **Godiva Chocolates**, and **Yankee Candle**.

Although a small part of the overall retail market, the region also has several traditional downtown areas. These include Downtown Mystic, Downtown New London, and Thames Street. Downtown Mystic is the most successful, and includes specialty retailers that primarily depend on the summer trade (some close in winter) along with dining establishments which are open year round. Thames Street primarily has dining, and overall has a very small inventory of retail. Downtown New London is in a state of transition, recently buoyed by new housing conversions and rehabilitations in the downtown. Its retail offerings include several restaurants (including ethnic dining), a music instruments store, and Thames River Greenery, a flower/gift shop/café.

Although Waterford is more favorably located to serve the fullest amount of regional shopping demand, much of Groton's trade area is located on the east side of the Thames River, for which Groton is a more

convenient location. Because of the larger breadth of offerings, and larger size (hence drawing power), it is not anticipated that Downtown Groton could directly compete with Waterford. However, the downtown could look to tap underserved markets located nearby in Stonington, North Stonington, and Ledyard, by focusing on a mix of specialty shopping and high-quality convenience goods.

3.3 URBAN DESIGN ANALYSIS

3.3.1 Site Context

The area considered Downtown Groton is centrally located along Route 1 in the southwest section of the Town. The downtown area consists of a cluster of auto-oriented shopping centers straddling both sides of the highway. The district is centered on the intersection of Route 1 and Poquonnock Road. The area stretches from Kings Highway to the northwest and Buddington Road to the east. The area is defined by the steeply sloping south slope of Long Hill. The three largest centers include Groton Shopping Center, Groton Shopping Plaza and Groton Shoppers Mart located respectively along Route 1 from the north to the south.

3.3.2 Access

Route 1 provides direct access to I-95. Route 1 from I-95 through the shopping district is a minimum of two traffic lanes in each direction with substantial sections including an additional dedicated turning lane. South of the downtown area Route 1 is reduced to one traffic lane in each direction. The retail centers are all accessible directly from Route 1. Plaza Court, a private roadway that functions much like a public roadway bisects Groton Shopping Plaza. Although passenger trains travel through downtown Groton, there is no station stop in downtown Groton. SEAT provides local bus service along the Route 1 corridor, with service actually routed through the Groton Shopping Plaza where there is a bus stop.

3.3.3 Parking

The shopping centers provide surface parking for their customers on-site. The surface lots are extensive and contribute to the poor aesthetics of the area. While a parking study is beyond the scope of this project, it appears that the district has a surplus of parking. In interviews with property owners and tenants it was stated that except during peak periods the amount of parking is more than adequate.

3.3.4 Pedestrian Accessibility

The pedestrian experience in the shopping area is lacking. While there are sidewalks along Route 1, the sidewalks are poorly marked and are not integrated with the adjacent development. Sidewalks are narrow and close by Route 1. The roadway is heavily trafficked and there is nothing to buffer pedestrians from this relatively high-speed traffic. Pedestrian crossings are infrequent and given the excessive width of the

roadway, crossing Route 1 on foot is a challenging task. The sidewalk itself is interrupted by numerous curb cuts, creating several opportunities for vehicular / pedestrian conflicts.

Besides the poor quality of the walking environment itself, connectivity between uses is also an issue. The retail uses are set back from the highway and separated from the sidewalks by surface parking lots. The most distant retail is set back by over 750 feet from Route 1. Ironically the most civic function found in downtown, the Post Office, is located in an isolated and off-center section of the shopping center. The large expanses of surface parking do not provide clearly marked pedestrian routes, augmenting the potential for conflicts between automobiles and pedestrians. The distance between shopping centers is also on the long side to be considered walkable and is a detriment to establishing a connected downtown business district. In spite of the hostile pedestrian environment, pedestrians were observed walking along the roadway during a recent field visit.

3.3.5 Uses

The downtown area comprises all of the uses typically found in a downtown central business district including retail, entertainment (movie theater), civic functions (Post Office) and housing (Senior-housing, mobile home and multi-family housing within a long walking distance).

3.3.6 Aesthetics

Besides the mix of uses, the district lacks the special characteristics that we have come to identify with a “downtown” such as a town green or prominent civic functions. The earliest shopping center dates from 1953 and as was common in that period, was developed around the automobile with little thought to public amenities. There is no gateway to signify to shoppers and residents that they have arrived in the downtown area. Development in the downtown area appears haphazard, as if each parcel has been developed with little thought to the creation of a coherent downtown. With no focal point and a lack of open space, the downtown offers few opportunities for interaction by residents and few reasons to frequent the downtown beyond shopping. The disparate development patterns have resulted in isolated development centers that support little interaction between nearby uses.

The physical and aesthetic quality of the centers varies widely. While all three centers are dated and show signs of wear, two-thirds of the Groton Shoppers Mart has been recently renovated to include a Big Y supermarket. Although the Big Y has been newly renovated, other renovations for the remainder of the center are in the planning stages. As a result, the recent renovations have not fully transformed the image of the center. The surface parking lots have few landscape elements. Much of the paving is in worn condition. High tension wires in the northern section of the downtown are a negative visual influence. Signage is uncoordinated, even within individual shopping centers, contributing to an uneven appearance.

Improvements are currently underway to Route 1 in the vicinity of Kings Highway that should improve the aesthetics of this key gateway area. These include new sidewalks and landscaping, as well as gateway

signage. The small Walgreen's-anchored shopping center on Route 1 demonstrates that good landscaping and pedestrian access improvements can help soften the visual impact and improve the appeal of even traditional auto-oriented retail developments.

3.4 OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

Constraints

Because of poor landscaping and architecturally bland structures, there is a lack of visual interest that is needed to create a positive identity for the area. While vehicular access and parking are necessary for the downtown to attract shoppers, this has been done at the expense of the pedestrian. The excessive width of Route 1, combined with the substantial front set back of the retail buildings, does not foster a human-scaled environment. Overall, Downtown Groton suffers from a poor image, as illustrated by the following elements:

- Lack of gateway and no sense of arrival
- Disparate development with lack of a focal point
- Limited and poorly organized open space
- Poor aesthetics
- Little or no landscaping
- Poorly maintained structures
- Excessive roadway width
- Poor pedestrian circulation
- Limited pedestrian connections

Addressing these issues in a comprehensive manner would require the coordinated efforts of the downtown property owners and the public sector. The existing ownership which, while local and vested in the future of the community, is currently satisfied with the status quo and reluctant to undertake or participate in major changes to the existing condition. Additional work is needed to formulate a compelling alternative vision for the downtown which captures the imagination and confidence of the property owners.

Opportunities

- Encourage compact nodal development to support a mix of uses and minimize distance between uses, through zoning and other means
- Institute a parking management plan to take advantage of shared parking
- Incorporate public space and civic uses to expand downtown uses beyond destination shopping
- Balance needs of the pedestrian with needs of vehicular traffic to create a walkable core
- Provide linkages to nearby multi-family housing

- Create design guidelines to support an attractive environment
- Implement traffic calming and landscape improvements along Route 1

These opportunities and constraints are illustrated in **Figures 1 and 2**.

3.5 DOWNTOWN STRATEGY

3.5.1 Market Strategy

Downtown Groton can no longer compete as a traditional, suburban-style shopping destination. It lacks the critical mass and highway access and visibility of the larger destinations in Waterford and New London. Nor can it continue to serve only as convenience retailing for Groton residents: typically no more than half of local spending power is spent on convenience purchases. There are simply not enough convenience-oriented dollars in Groton to support both Downtown Groton and the retailers on Routes 12 and 184. Clearly, a new direction is needed.

The most logical place to tap additional retail spending is from areas located east of the Thames River, including Ledyard, Stonington and North Stonington. These towns currently have scant opportunities to satisfy their retail demand within their own borders. However, a shift to a specialty orientation to capture these markets will not support significant additional retail beyond what exists, but will only impact the character of the tenants. To grow the downtown will require the introduction of new uses.

The public outreach effort consistently identified the desire for Downtown Groton to function more as a true community center. This argues that the downtown, over time, should accommodate more public and quasi-public uses, such as government offices and services (the Post Office is already located there), a library, etc. However, these are insufficient to drive any significant new development or redevelopment in the downtown.

The strongest element of the local development market is currently for housing. The area around Downtown Groton is already well established as a successful multi-family housing location, with two major and successful developments located just to the north along Drozdyk Drive. The strong housing market, coupled with developer's new found interest in mixed-use development, argues for using new housing as the profit-leader for reconceptualizing Downtown Groton.

The market strategy therefore calls for the downtown to evolve into a more mixed-use center blending multi-story housing development with ground floor retail. The general tenants of the New Urbanism—buildings framing streets and public areas, an emphasis on walkability—should drive the planning standards for the downtown. Government and civic uses should be incorporated into the existing and new structures where possible. In terms of tenancing, certain of the retail centers—the Shopper's Mart with Big Y, for example—should continue to focus on locally-serving convenience retail. Over time, Groton

Shopping Center and Plaza (in their present or a new form) should emphasize more specialty retail, including unique shops and dining.

3.5.2 Physical Development Strategy

The market conditions described in this chapter are already at play, and the existing zoning standards set forth in the DDD zone district already permit mixed-use development of the type described above, at densities which far exceed the existing built condition. Yet, no significant investment in redeveloping Downtown Groton has either occurred or is planned for the future. Clearly, some sort of stimulus is required.

Groton would be unwise to try to incentivize the redevelopment of downtown purely through subsidy dollars. Further, a publicly-led redevelopment effort involving the taking of private property is not proposed. Therefore, some other catalyst is needed.

Based on the urban design analysis detailed above, a proposed redevelopment scenario for Downtown Groton has been prepared. This vision represents one feasible means of spurring the redevelopment of the downtown; it also provides the basis for the policy strategies summarized in a later chapter. It revolves around a key public investment in a new roadway running through the center of Downtown Groton. The purpose of this new roadway is to open up the interior of the downtown to greater through traffic, increasing the visibility of retailers and creating new frontages, while simultaneously reinforcing the intersection of Route 1 and Poquonnock Road as the “100 percent” corner in the downtown by making it a true four-way intersection.

The proposed phases of the development strategy are outlined in **Figures 3 to 6**, and described in narrative form below:

Phase 1

Phase 1 consists of streetscape improvements to Route 1 to beautify the area. In fact, these improvements have already been proposed by the Town, and appear both in the project list and the policies plan. These streetscape improvements are illustrated in the core, but in fact should extend throughout the “wings” of the downtown.

Phase 2

The centerpiece of Phase 2 is the realignment of Drozdyk Drive to connect directly with Poquonnock Road. The existing leg of Drozdyk Drive that connects with Route 1 would be redirected to intersect with the new alignment at a right angle. As both a traffic control and a place-making device, a compact roundabout could be considered for this intersection. This roundabout could serve as a new focal point in Downtown Groton. Greenway elements, for pedestrians and cyclists, should be incorporated into the new drive.

This proposed new roadway network may seem like a simple reconfiguration of the existing Plaza Court. However, it accomplishes multiple purposes:

- It replaces a private access drive with a public street.
- A significant share of the traffic currently using Drozdyk Drive will utilize the new alignment, increasing the visibility of uses in the interior of Downtown Groton, particularly Groton Shopping Plaza.
- It significantly increases the amount of real estate with frontage along a public right-of-way, and therefore creates new “addresses” within Downtown Groton.
- Related, it creates four new corner locations within the downtown. Corner locations typically have the highest real estate value for uses which value visibility.
- It creates a new block pattern, hence parcelization, within the downtown. This will facilitate the phased redevelopment of the downtown area.
- Finally, it sets the stage for improved connectivity with existing residential areas to the north of the downtown.

Implementation of this new road network requires further thought as to implementation. The new roadways will require dedicated rights of way and will change the shape and extent of private land parcels (although the total usable land area will be roughly the same). It is suggested that the Town look for a voluntary dedication of the right-of-way from the affected property owners, who will benefit from the increased traffic and visibility, the publicly-funded improvements within the rights-of-way, and the removal of Plaza Court from their maintenance budget.

Phase 3 and Phase 4

These phases lay out a plausible redevelopment scenario, most of which would be initiated by the private sector, although some public sector participation may be required. As an initial project, a new “wing” for the Groton Shopping Center and Groton Shopping Plaza is proposed, framing the rerouted Drozdyk Drive. This would turn this strip mall into a “V” shaped development. The new wing would feature four to five stories of residential on a retail base. Lost parking would be made up for with a new deck tucked between the existing buildings. This deck would consist of a single layer above ground level; topography permitting, access could be provided without the need for a space-hogging, and expensive, ramp between the two levels.

Additional mixed use development is proposed for sites flanking Drozdyk Drive and facing out on the new roundabout. These would also be multi-story mixed-use developments. Where possible, grade changes should be used to provide two layers of parking. All of these proposed Phase 3 developments can occur without any displacement of existing uses, as no demolition is proposed.

The existing Town-owned open space parcel at the corner of Route 1 and Poquonnock would be improved as a true public square, and framed by a new access drive with on-street parking to provide access to the park. Additional landscaped elements would beautify and reinforce this central corner. At the roundabout, increased building setbacks should be mandated to provide for a plaza-like environment framing the circle. This area could be activated with outdoor dining during the warmer months.

The final phase proposes the elimination of the Groton Shopping Plaza and its replacement with an additional mixed use building. This building would be brought forward to frame the street, and would feature, like the others, two layers of parking tucked behind. Throughout the redeveloped downtown, additional parking can be provided on-street and in existing surface areas not disturbed.

Also contemplated in Phase 4 is a new rail station potentially located adjacent to the improved public square, and utilizing the new drive framing the square for a pull up and drop off access. Currently, there is scant rationale for such a station. Projecting forward to a time of greater energy scarcity and renewed focus on passenger rail, such a station might be considered essential to the downtown's fortunes. It is therefore recommended that the possible need for such a station be considered in future planning. To provide parking for the station, a small deck will be needed in the vicinity. Such a deck is shown on the opposite corner, and would be lined on the ground floor with retail and otherwise designed to improve its visual appearance and anchor the corner. These are conceptual locations only, and do not take into consideration environmental or other site constraints.

FIGURE 1



FIGURE 2

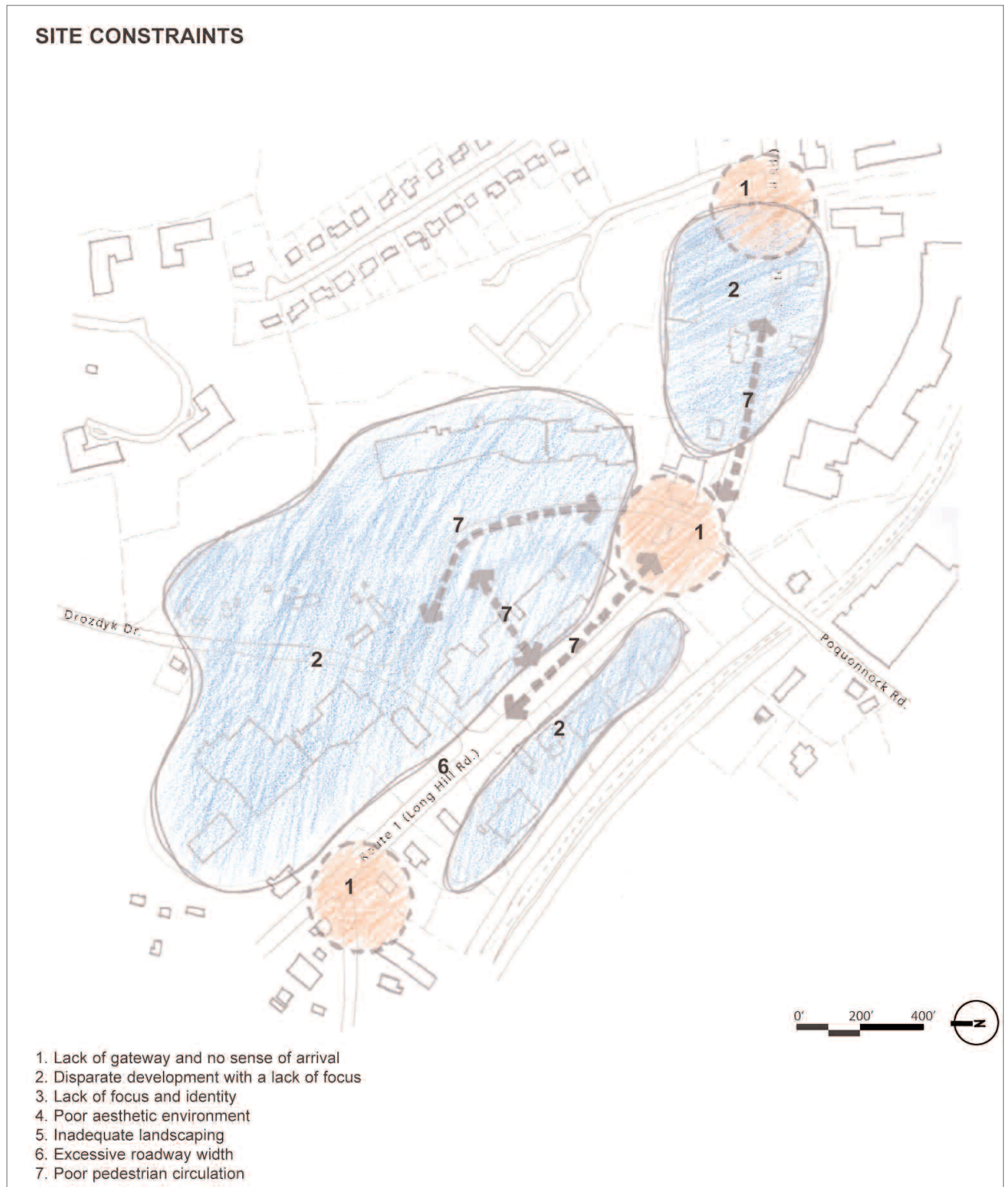


FIGURE 3

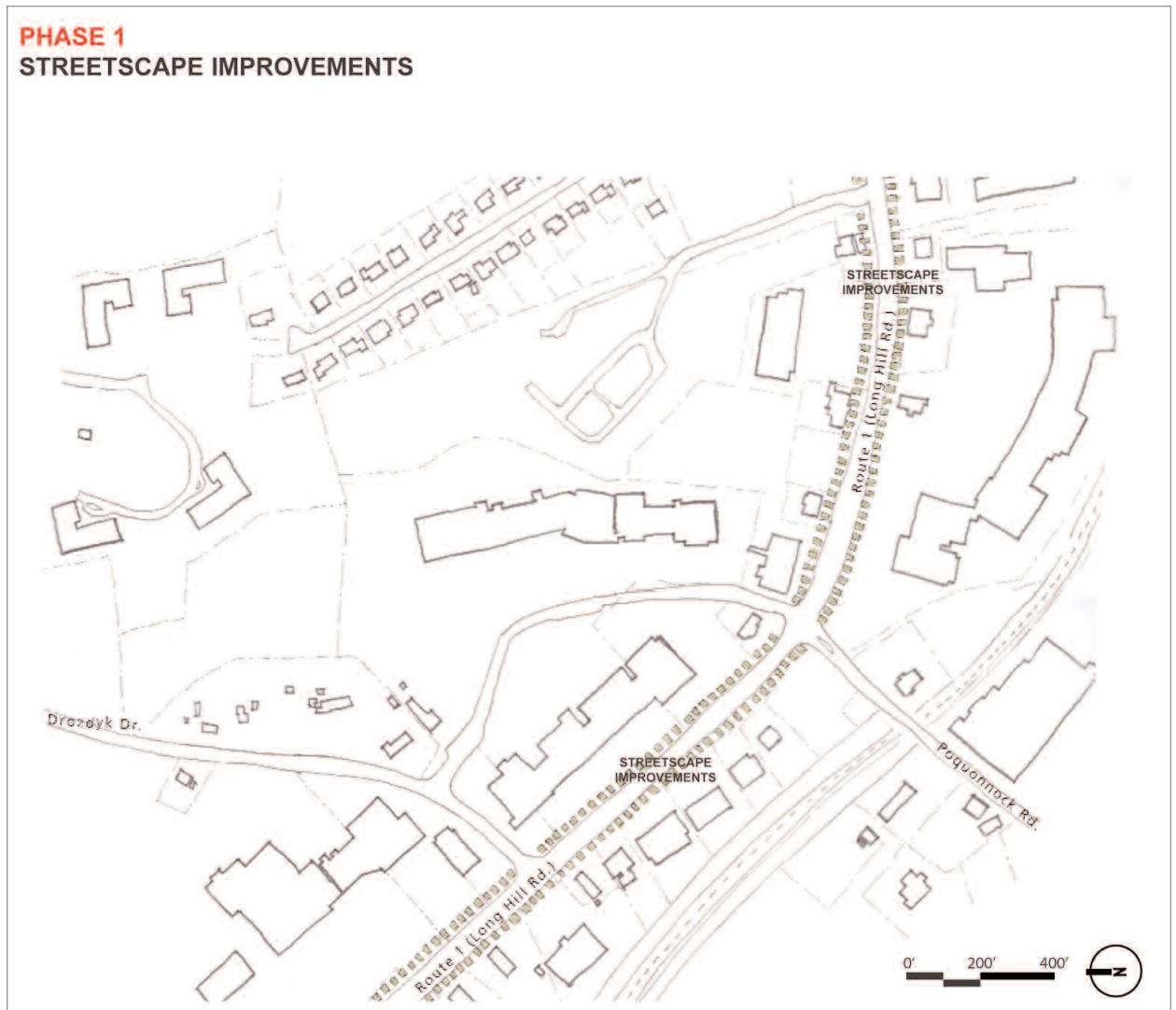


FIGURE 4

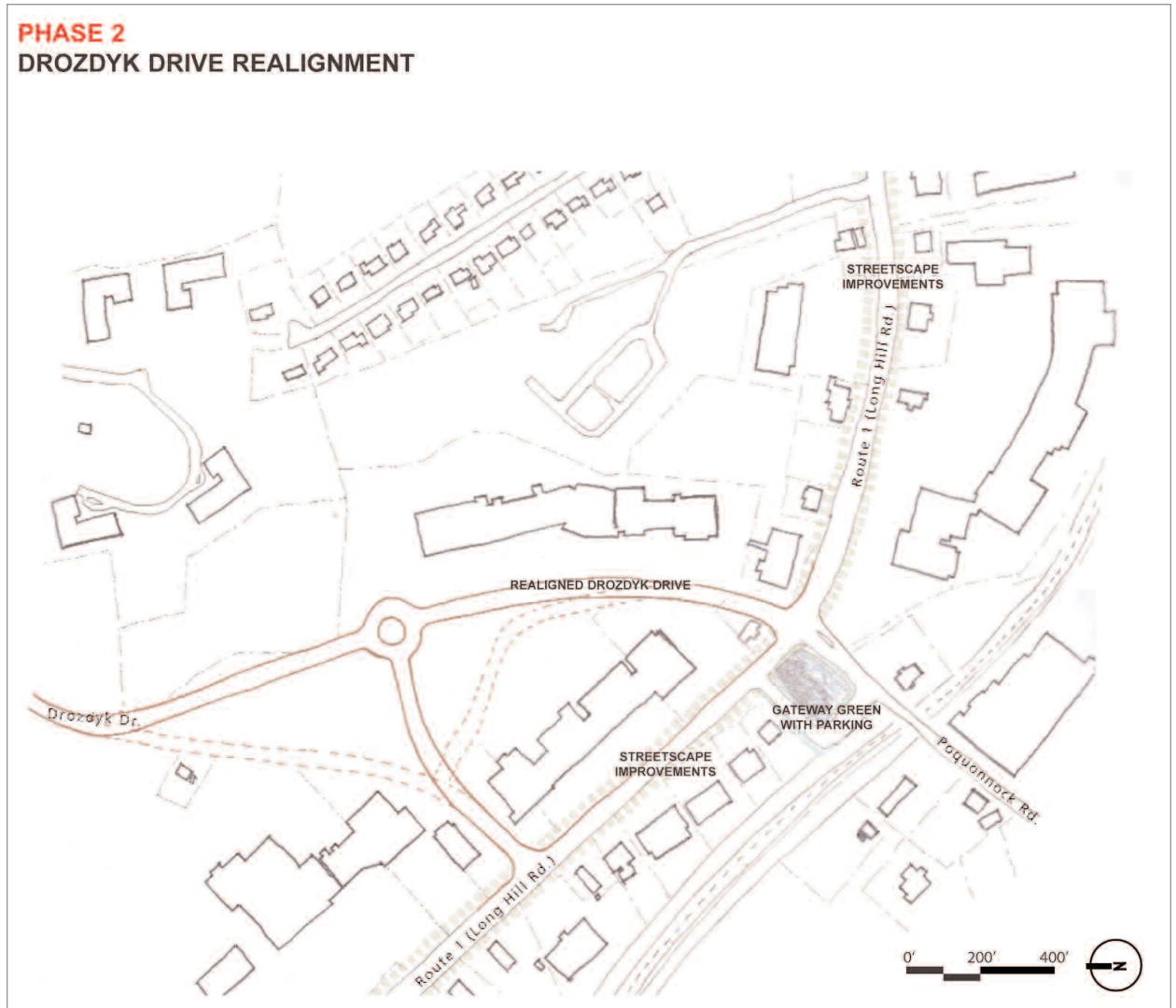


FIGURE 5

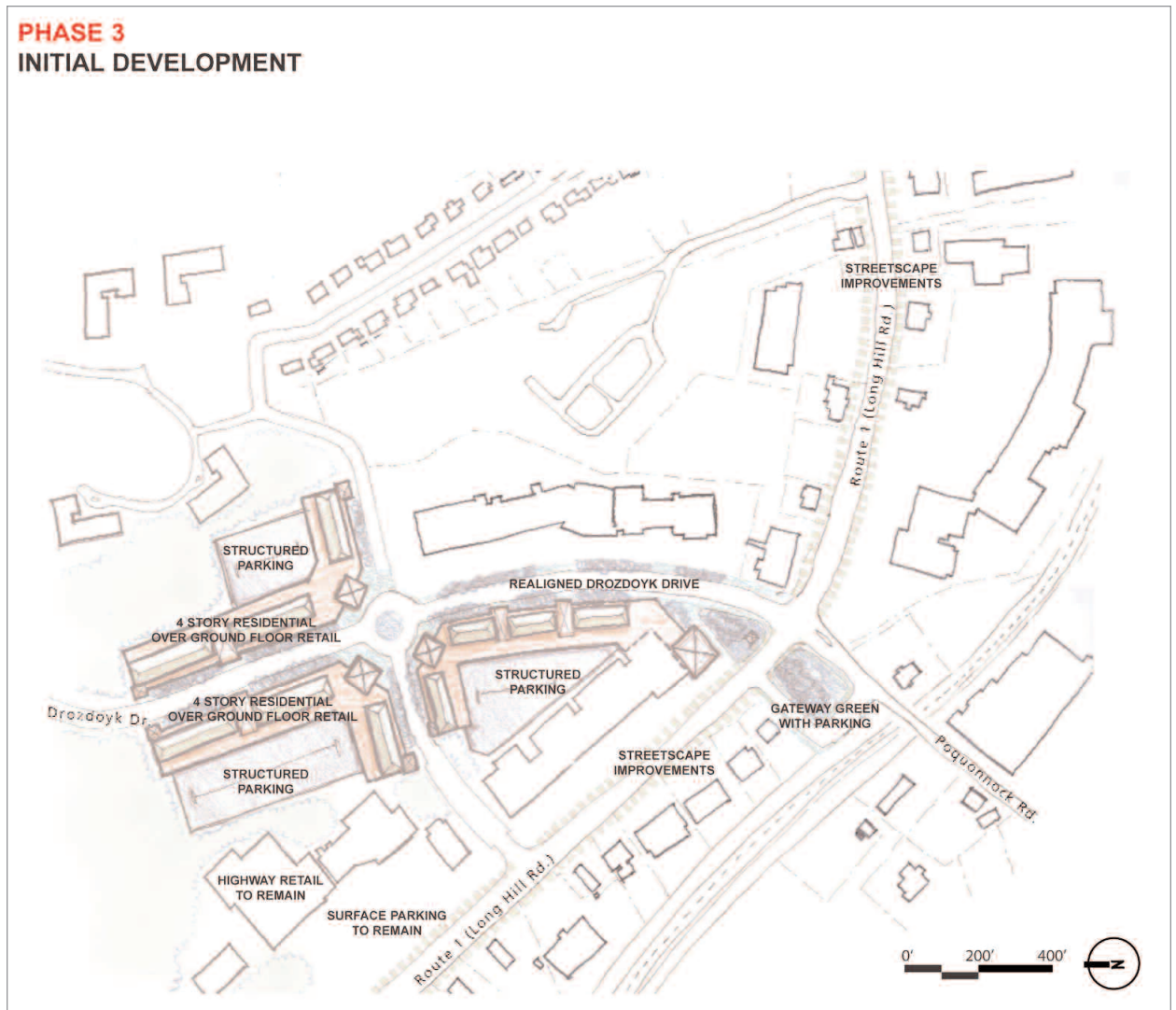
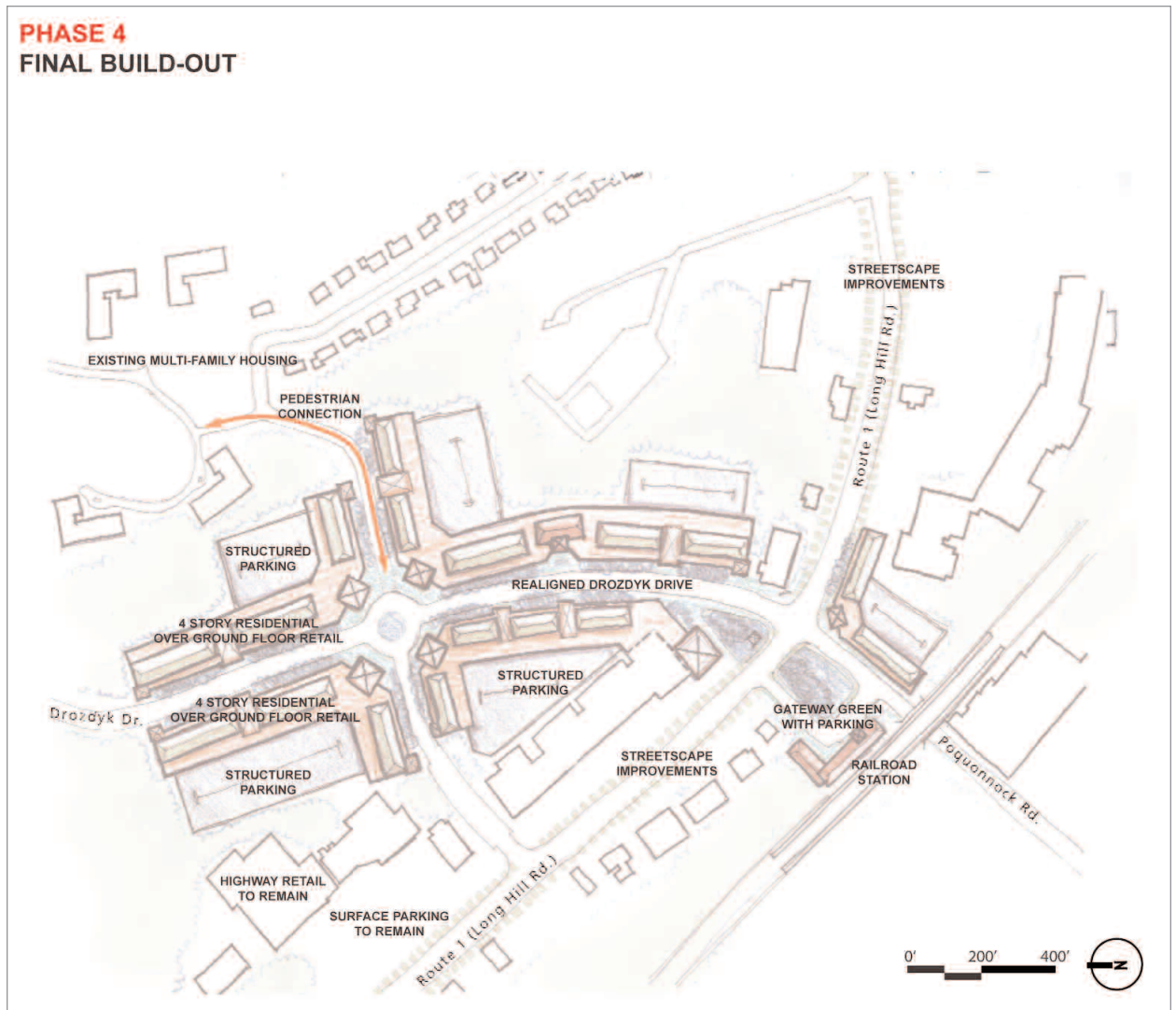


FIGURE 6



4 Policies and Strategies

This chapter outlines the specific policies and recommended strategies for fostering economic development in Groton. A total of 10 policies and 61 strategies are proposed. The policies are designed to achieve specific identified objectives, such as diversifying the economy and expanding tourism; as well as overcoming identified constraints, such as the lack of ready-to-go sites and need for greater economic development capacity at the Town level.

The policies and strategies link back to the four organizing objectives identified through the public involvement process. These are:

- **Diversifying the Economy:** Diversification is not an end in and of itself, but a tool for managing risk, particularly the risk that outside forces—such as the decisions of distant corporate headquarters or of the Pentagon—could put the Town’s employment and revenue base in jeopardy. Diversification in Groton can take two forms—increasing the number of firms which, though independent entities, may link back in some form to the three principal employment sectors; and increasing the number of firms which have little or no connection to these sectors.

The three traditional economic development strategies are business retention (keeping and growing the employers you have); business attraction (attracting companies or company expansions); and business development (promoting the formation of new locally-based businesses). Each of these has a place in Groton. However, recent history seems to indicate that while business attraction has historically been the focus of economic development entities, Groton may have as much or more success with a retention and development-focused strategy. From a business attraction standpoint, Groton’s assets are real and significant, but face extraordinary competition regionally, nationally and even globally. One of the Town’s and region’s most compelling strengths is the local concentration of technical talent, inventors, and entrepreneurs. Keeping these talented workers in the Town and region is important for business retention, and the local talent pool provides opportunities to promote new business startups.

- **Downtown Groton:** Downtown Groton has been and remains a major focus for revitalization in Groton. The potential for the area is great, but so are the obstacles to meaningful change. Clearly, the path of least resistance, and lowest short-term risk, is the continuation of business as usual. The Town’s role would fall to incremental improvements. There is no immediate justification, nor local support, for a government-led redevelopment effort that would impinge upon private property rights.

The Town’s zoning already permits a much greater level of development intensity than the existing built condition, but to date, no developer or property owner has sought to take advantage of this extra development potential. In order to jumpstart the process, a significant investment

enhancing the roadway infrastructure and circulation within the downtown is proposed. The increased visibility and frontage provided to interior properties should have an enhancing impact on their values, and set the stage for new infill development and redevelopment targeting existing parking lots, and later, existing buildings.

- **Tourism:** Groton has no blockbuster attractions within its borders, but is a short distance from three such attractions: Mystic Aquarium and Seaport, and the two casinos. Groton is also accessible to a vast population in the New York and Boston metro areas, but so are many other places. The challenge for both the region and Groton is how to diversify its tourism offerings in a way that increases repeat visitation. The emphasis for the foreseeable future will be on marketing, packaging, and incremental enhancements to existing attractions and historic areas.
- **Quality of Life:** The public outreach process and interviews conducted to date reveal that Groton has wonderful quality of life assets that merit preservation and enhancement. At the same time, more can be done to make the Town a great place to live and work. Any quality of life initiative must build upon the Town's core assets:
 - Waterfront location
 - Diverse and interesting neighborhoods and districts
 - Two historic downtown areas
 - Good transportation access
 - Extensive preserved open spaces and parks
 - A diverse housing stock

A key issue raised at the public meetings is Groton's image, not only in the region, but locally. Much of the historic commercial core of Mystic is in Groton, but people do not associate this village center with the Town. The Town is divided into a series of sub-areas—Noank, Groton Long Point, Center Groton—and people much more strongly self identify with these areas than with the Town as a whole. Two strategies to address this are proposed. One is to create a central gathering place that can serve as the civic heart of the community. Downtown Groton is proposed for this role. The second is to create community pride events in each sub-district, to give local residents a reason to celebrate each of their town's unique places.

The ten policies and associated strategies are described in detail below. Each policy is followed by a short description, then a list of specific implementing strategy recommendations. While the policies are intended to be a macro-level guide to future economic development decision-making, the strategies should be viewed as representing thinking at this moment in time, and will surely evolve as the Town moves forward into the future.

4.1 DIVERSIFY THE LOCAL ECONOMY BY ATTRACTING NEW BUSINESS, RETAINING AND GROWING EXISTING BUSINESSES, AND ASSISTING WITH THE STARTUP OF NEW BUSINESSES

Diversity is always the prime goal for company towns. The diversification strategies presented below look to enhance the ability of Groton to attract, retain, and grow businesses. They do not address the issue of site availability, which is the topic of Policy 4.2.

1. Improve outreach to local businesses through on-site visits, a business calling program, business caravans, etc.

Business retention begins with an understanding of existing business concerns, and this understanding is best achieved through regular, Town-initiated dialogues with local business owners and managers. Whether done through the telephone or face to face, such calls perform a dual function—not only do they provide the Town’s economic development staff with important information, but they also signal to businesses that the Town is interested in them and concerned about their welfare.

2. Conduct “exit interviews” for every business that closes or relocates out of Groton

Inevitably, businesses will, for one reason or another, either close up shop or relocate outside of the Town. It is important for the Town to understand why. Therefore, an “exit interview” process for businesses that are either closing or relocating is recommended to identify potential problems that led to the loss of a business, as well as whether and how such problems could be addressed.

3. Market the Town’s incentive programs, such as the Enterprise Zone, to existing as well as prospective businesses

Local business incentives are often marketed primarily to prospective businesses looking to locate in town, but they can be just as meaningful to existing businesses contemplating an investment or expansion. Business interviews conducted as background to this report revealed that some business owners are either unaware of the benefits available to them, or harbor misconceptions regarding the complexity and expense of applying for these benefits. A clear explanation of the benefits in the form of a short flyer, coupled with verbal outreach through the business calling program detailed above, would help better promote the existing programs.

4. Pursue a local niche in maritime security

The regional CEDS plan has identified a potential local niche is maritime security, building upon regional assets including UConn at Avery Point; the Coast Guard Research and Development Center; the Institute for Exploration Research at Mystic Aquarium; and the National Undersea Research Center in Groton; as well as private sector entities such as JMS Naval Architects & Salvage Engineers in New London; PEL Associates in Groton (an industrial affiliate of UConn’s Marine Sciences and Technology Center developing low-costs sensors for shipping containers and port

security); and MPRI Ship Analytics in North Stonington (which has developed incident management software to respond to disasters including terrorist attacks).

Groton should take the lead in pursuing this niche (through specific projects such as the Center for Excellence in Maritime Security, described in the project list); and other actions such as marketing and recruitment.

5. Pursue spin-offs from the “core specialization” of nuclear engineering.

Electric Boat is essentially in the business of engineering and building mobile nuclear reactors; and radiology is a growing component of both patient care and pharmaceuticals research. In both applications, detailed knowledge of the technical, regulatory, and safety aspects of radioactive materials is key. Further, the region is home to one of New England’s largest nuclear plants. Finally, the combination of global warming and increasing fossil fuel costs is directing attention back to nuclear power after a 30-year hiatus in new power plant construction. Groton already has examples of companies in this industry, ProtoPower being the largest. The Town should actively highlight the local skill and knowledge base in this industry both in its own marketing materials and the region’s.

6. Continue to employ and enhance local incentives for business development

The Town’s inventory of local incentive programs goes beyond what many municipalities of comparable size have to offer. These programs are largely oriented towards increasing Groton’s cost competitiveness, but their real value lies in two areas: as a sweetener to seal a deal that makes sense even without the incentives, but that might go elsewhere but for local initiative; and in promoting business development among small entrepreneurs. The main issue regarding the Town’s incentives is the agreements have generally been developed on a case-by-case basis, which could lead to time delays and/or perceptions of favoritism or unfairness. This problem is addressed in Strategy 17.

7. Reinstate funding for the Development Assistance Fund

This unique program provides funding for feasibility studies, market research, planning studies, and other “soft” activities which small businesses may be reluctant to take on due to risk and uncertainty with regards to payoff. Carefully managed, a program of this nature can provide big payoffs if a study or plan leads to a new market niche or new business investment, and therefore has the potential to be quite cost effective. Funding has not been allocated for this program in the Town’s most recent budgets; the Town should seriously consider reinstating funding in future budgeting cycles.

4.2 TAKE A PROACTIVE APPROACH TO CREATING SITES FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The lack of available sites with appropriate infrastructure to accommodate future growth was raised repeatedly in interviews as a key constraint hampering the Town's efforts to attract and grow new business. Outside of retail, the job-creating uses that might locate in Groton do not create enough real estate value to justify expensive site improvements. By being proactive, but not without some expenditure of funds, the Town can help facilitate the use of such lands by multiple users who would be unable to afford such improvements on their own.

8. Facilitate the expansion of “turnkey” industrial/commercial/flex sites in Groton

Groton has had industrial park zoning in place for large tracts of land between Route 117 and Flanders Road for some time. The land is favorably located, with a nearby interchange with I-95. Portions of the property have been developed. The Mystic Marriot is located just north of the interchange, and a few commercial parcels to the rear have been developed. A medical use is located south of the highway. Brokers and property owners report strong demand for industrial and flex space locally.

The vast majority of the property, however, remains undeveloped. This is because the area is not a true industrial park, i.e., it does not offer subdivided (or subdividable) property with roadway frontage and utilities. At present, these utilities would have to be provided by the private landowners. Since retail and residential uses are much more profitable and bankable than office and industrial, there is little interest on the part of landowners in installing streets, water and sewer lines for a commercial park development; but there is considerable interest in developing specific properties for retail use. Without the proper infrastructure, none of the interior sites can be considered “ready to go” when prospective businesses are looking for sites. As a result, such businesses are likely to look elsewhere.

If the Town is serious about seeing some of this land developed for a commercial park, it will be necessary to make an investment in providing streets and other infrastructure to support the development of these lands. An opportunity was recently missed with the proposed connector road project. The issue is currently being revisited as a part of the Flanders Road Area Utility Extension study. The Town should seriously consider using this project as a means of providing specific sites with the roadway access and infrastructure that is currently lacking.

9. Consider setting aside land for an expanded commerce park adjacent to the Mystic Marriot.

The Route 117 IP-zoned area is one of the best remaining business locations in Groton. The Mystic Marriott brings to the area a key amenity and imbues it with a business/corporate imprimatur. Much of the land to the north has been investigated by private interests for a potential large-format retail development. Whether or not such a development comes to pass, the Town should consider ways to reserve at least a portion of this area for an expansion of the small, yet largely undeveloped

commercial park located up Poheganut Drive from the Marriott. Ways to secure this parcel, or other parcels which the Town may desire to reserve for future business development, include new zoning requirements which limit retail development in the area (see Strategy 24), or the creation of a Town-sponsored industrial park.

The most direct method of creating new industrial sites, and the one with the greatest up-front cost, would be to pursue a Town-sponsored industrial park pursuant to the 1990 Manufacturing Assistance Act (Sections 32-220 and 32-234 of the Connecticut General Statutes). The planning phase would require the adoption of an approved Municipal Development Plan (MDP), as provided for in Sections 8-186 through 8-200 of the Connecticut General Statutes, which would provide the Town with the authority to acquire property and make all necessary improvements throughout the designated project area. The implementation phase would involve land acquisition, the construction of roads and provision of infrastructure, and the marketing of sites to end users. Whether the resulting industrial land is sold or leased, an entity to manage the real estate aspects of the undertaking would have to be designated-this would argue strongly for the creation of an Economic Development Corporation to take on this role, as discussed in a later recommendation. One of the first tasks of this approach would be to identify a parcel appropriate for this type of project, and for the Town through its Economic Development Commission and Town Council, to reach consensus on whether this is a desired approach for securing future business sites in the community.

10. Leverage “big box” development to create infrastructure to support a variety of development types

An extension of Strategy 8 (above), the Town should attempt to leverage any big box development to meet other local development goals. This could include bringing water, sewer and roadways to interior locations where they do not already exist; and setting aside out-parcels for non-retail development. Such actions will be most effective where discretionary approvals are involved (see Strategy 24).

11. Expand the amount of incubator space in Groton

In order to nurture startup businesses, Groton needs to have available the sort of low cost space that small startups can afford. A traditional “business incubator” involves an office, research, or flex building that incorporates shared services such as fax machines and printers, a central receptionist, etc. The cost of the space is subsidized, and businesses are expected to “graduate” out of the incubator as their business picks up and expands. The UConn incubator at Avery Point is an example of this type. A more informal type of incubator consists of nothing more than low-cost, flexible space, and can be privately owned and operated. The small industrial-flex development on Flanders Road is an example. For the purposes of Groton, incubator space should be broadly defined as any low-cost, flexible space available in small blocks suitable for small startup businesses.

Incubators are often located on the sites of existing institutions (like UConn), in old buildings in need of reuse (such as industrial lofts or a failed strip mall), or on low-cost industrial sites. Groton does not have any easy sites or buildings readily available for incubator development. There are potentially several methods in which Groton might be able to increase the amount of incubator space in the Town:

- Working with UConn to enlarge the Avery Point incubator.
- Working with existing property owners (such as on Flanders Road) to facilitate the expansion of existing low-cost industrial/flex development.
- Extending necessary utilities and infrastructure to areas capable of supporting such development.
- Incorporating outparcels appropriate for such development into the conditional approvals for large development projects that involve either government participation or discretionary approvals (see Strategies 10 and 24).

12. Plan for the reuse of the Mystic Education Center site

The Mystic Education Center is the largest reusable waterfront site in the Town. It is owned by the State of Connecticut, and the State will be involved in any planning for its eventual reuse. Yet, there are strong reasons why the Town should be a partner in both the study and potential reuse of the site.

- The Town ultimately has the most to gain or lose, as the property is located within the Town's borders.
- The State's interest will necessarily be more abstract and political, given distance from the capital and the desire to make a political statement that extends beyond the local region.
- The Town can be more nimble, and will be more focused on a timely process than the State, given the location of the property.
- Lastly, the site, while large for Groton, is not of potentially statewide significance as is the Norwich State Hospital site.

A two part strategy is needed. First, the Town should partner with the State in the preparation of a feasibility study for the reuse of the site prior to any determination of reuse by the State. Hopefully the study will be funded at least in part by the State. Secondly, the Town should initiate a dialogue with the State hopefully culminating with an agreement for the Town to obtain a significant role in guiding the redevelopment process to foster full community support.

13. Actively involve Groton Utilities in local economic development decision-making

Groton Utilities provides electricity and water service (and now internet) to both businesses and residents. Decisions about when and where to extend service are made, appropriately, based on the number of ratepayers to be served. As a result, however, places targeted for economic development under the Town's plans may not have adequate utility infrastructure to support such development. It

is therefore recommended that Groton Utilities be encouraged to become a more active partner in economic development planning Town-wide, so that economic development considerations can be incorporated into the decision-making process regarding utility service.

14. Ensure that economic development in the Route 117 area does not negatively impact the water quality of the nearby reservoirs and other waterbodies

The Route 117 area represents the largest quantity of undeveloped, industrially-zoned land. It is also within the watershed of Groton's drinking water supply, and contains other stream courses and wetland areas. Clearly, mitigating the impacts of stormwater runoff is essential to providing for productive development without degrading the Town's sensitive environmental features, not to mention its water infrastructure. The development of the Mystic Marriot in the area went forward through the use of state of the art stormwater management techniques. A similar emphasis on best practice solutions should be implemented throughout the area with an eye towards accommodating productive economic development, lowering development costs through innovative techniques (such as natural stormwater storage and treatment), and protecting the Town's reservoirs and other waterbodies.

4.3 ENHANCE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY AT THE TOWN LEVEL AND THROUGH REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

The Town has a better-developed economic development function than many municipalities of comparable size. Yet, with a few improvements, the Town's capacity could be greatly enhanced. Further, the ongoing issue of a shortage of development sites raises the question as to whether the Town should have an economic development-focused entity with the capability of undertaking capital projects.

15. Update the Town's marketing materials

Demographic and economic data are continually updated, and local business and market conditions are ever in a state of flux. The Town's marketing materials therefore must be updated on a regular basis to remain fresh and relevant. To save on printing costs, those elements of the package which are relatively static can be incorporated into a glossy brochure, accompanied by inserts which provide up to date information such as economic and market data, available sites, etc.

16. Update the computer inventory system of available sites

The Town has traditionally maintained an inventory of available development sites, but this inventory has not been kept up to date. The Town's high quality GIS system makes such an inventory particularly easy to keep updated, so long as up-to-date property information is maintained. The site inventory should be easily available to any prospective business making inquiries, and should also be linked with the state-wide SiteFinder system operated by the Connecticut Economic Resource Center (CERC). These sites can also be co-marketed with seCTer.

17. Adopt a specific tax abatement policy to avoid ad-hoc decision-making and potential perceptions of political dealing

The Town has provided tax abatements for specific projects, such as the Mystic Marriot, but these agreements have generally been developed on a case-by-case basis. While flexible, this means that each deal must be negotiated from scratch, there is no guidance for developers as to what to expect, and the system is open to charges of playing favorites.

18. Enhance the Economic Development function of the Town to meet program needs and requirements

The program management of both the Economic Development and Community Development functions is currently handled by a single person, with each function being detail oriented and time consuming. As a result, Economic development may not be receiving the appropriate level of attention necessary to fully implement the Town's desired programs. More focus may need to be applied to the economic development function to provide additional resources to address the existing work program including business calling, maintaining the site inventory, promotion of available incentives, timely completion of necessary tasks, etc., and the additional recommendations contained here.

19. Consider the creation of a widely-drawn Special Services District to fund economic development activities in the Town.

Special Services Districts (SSDs) are special taxing districts, whereby an extra levy imposed on commercial property within the district is paid into a dedicated fund, which can then be used for a wide variety of purposes related to commercial revitalization. SSDs are most commonly pursued in downtown areas, where the money is used to fund enhanced sanitation and security, façade and other grant programs, planning activities, marketing and tenant recruitment, and even capital improvements such as landscaping. The budget for an SSD can range from a few tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Both historic Downtown Mystic and Thames Street are too small to fund their own SSD, and Downtown Groton is likely in too few hands to make the benefits of an SSD manifest (each large property owner may feel they can better spend the money themselves). However, a sufficiently broadly drawn SSD, perhaps taking in all of Routes 1 and 12, along with other adjacent commercial areas, might have significant appeal, as a modest assessment could generate sufficient funds to create a full-time economic development position for these retail corridors. This person could perform a number of activities ranging from marketing, to the coordination of special events, to day-to-day advocacy for the SSD in front of local, regional, and State governments and decision-makers.

20. Consider the creation of a Groton Economic Development Corporation empowered to undertake capital and development plans and projects

The creation of an Economic Development Corporation has been a key recommendation of the Town's Economic Development Commission. Given issues identified as part of the strategic planning effort, the creation of such an entity should be seriously explored. However, it will have to be approached with caution, and with clearly defined purposes in mind.

The Town of Groton currently has no entity empowered to undertake projects that require capital improvements, site improvements, and the acquisition or disposition of property. This is not surprising—Groton is not a heavily urbanized community, and heretofore has had little reason to undertake the type of public/private redevelopment efforts that are common in more urban municipalities. However, there are a number of circumstances when it might be useful to have an economic development driven entity available to promote the effective development and redevelopment of specific sites. Examples include:

- Stewarding the potential redevelopment of the Mystic Education Center.
- Overseeing (or participating in) complex planned development within the Town's IP zones and proposed mixed-use PUD district.
- Assisting with the development of structured parking in strategic locations in Downtown Groton to facilitate infill development.

The entity being proposed might have the following powers:

- To apply for and administer grant funding from State agencies such as DECD.
- To undertake projects funded with community development funds.
- To administer the Town's Economic Assistance Fund for capital projects.
- To acquire and dispose of real property.
- To hire consultants and contractors through a competitive bidding process.

21. Expand the membership of the Economic Development Commission to include elected officials

Due to the various broad-based policy and budget issues which the Town's elected bodies (Town Council and Representative Town Meeting) are engaged in, they are often in a reactive position with regards to projects or ideas which the Economic Development Commission develops. Consideration should be given to expanding the Economic Development Commission to include more formal representation by the Town Council and RTM (regular members of the Commission rather than liaisons) so that these groups can be a part of formulating political leadership on economic development issues based on a thorough knowledge of these issues.

4.4 ZONE WITH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN MIND

By and large, the Town's current zoning is appropriate, and consistent with its Plan of Conservation and Development, which was adopted just three years ago. The following are some modifications based on economic development considerations, with a particular focus on downtown zoning.

22. Implement new form-based zoning standards for development in the DDD district

The existing standards in the Downtown Development District (DDD) are flexible—in fact, too flexible, in that they provide little guidance as to what the Town would wish to see happen in the downtown. There are no limits on building height or on building coverage. The Zoning Commission is empowered to deviate from key requirements such as parking and yards, but it is not specified under what circumstances. On the other hand, certain requirements—such as 30' side yards—are not consistent with traditional downtown development, which includes attached buildings on separate lots (even in modern developments property is subdivided for financing or insurance reasons resulting in zero lot lines).

As an alternative, it is suggested that the Town adopt a more specific set of bulk standards oriented towards building type rather than use. These standards would impose a specific height limit appropriate for Groton (say, five or six stories) and would provide for a set of building typologies to include both existing buildings such as are currently found on the site, as well as traditional downtown style buildings with no side yards and limited front yards. The standards should also mandate ground floor transparency and other urban design elements intended to foster a positive pedestrian experience.

23. Promote mixed-use development in the downtown

Retail and commercial uses are permitted as of right in the DDD district, and multifamily residences are permitted as conditional uses. It is recommended that the ordinance be explicit with regards to mixed-use buildings (i.e. residential over retail, or office over retail), by adding them to the list of principal permitted or conditional uses, and setting forth appropriate standards.

24. Only conditionally permit “big box” retail in industrial zones

Local demand for large-format retail space is currently strong, with major retail chains currently looking at several potential sites in Groton. Currently, such uses are permitted not only in the Town's commercial zones such as CA, CB and DD, but also in industrial districts including IP-A. This leads to the possibility that a significant share of the Town's land designated for industrial and business park development might end up as retail instead. To address this, it is proposed that large-format retail be made a conditional use in the present IP-A district, to provide for a greater amount of discretionary review. As part of such discretionary review, the Town could look to configure projects in such a way as to achieve other goals, such as providing access to currently inaccessible sites.

25. Promote a variety of housing types within Groton, from apartments to high-end single family developments

Groton's occupational employment profile includes everything from retail workers, to skilled production workers, to research scientists and engineers, to managers. Not all of these people will want to live in Groton, but the Town should still strive to provide a full range of housing options commensurate with its diverse employment base. These include affordable apartments and condominiums, single-family houses on small lots, and even larger estate homes on generous lots for highly paid managers and professionals. Enhancing the ability of people who work in Groton to also live in Groton will increase the connection between the Town's major employers and the civic life of the community.

26. Create a new mixed-use, neo-traditional floating zone or zoning provision applicable to large sites within Groton

Groton has some large tracts of land currently zoned for industrial development located between Route 117 and Flanders Road. These sites are complex from an environmental, topographic and access point of view, and it is an open question whether they will ever be developed for the business park type uses envisioned in the current zoning. It is therefore recommended that for these and other large sites, a new development option be provided in the form of a floating zone or other zoning provision. This provision would provide for planned mixed-use development, and would contain design standards aimed at creating a walkable mixed-use development combining commercial use with a variety of residential types.

27. Continue to manage growth using the nodal development framework set forth in the Plan of Conservation and Development

The Town Plan of Conservation and Development created a series of nodes intended to serve as an organizing principal for future development, as a way to bolster community character and give shape to sprawl. The nodes ranged from the urban (Groton City) to the rural (Center Groton). They include commercial centers (Downtown Groton) as well as centers of public use. This plan reaffirms the nodal development concept of the Plan of Conservation and Development, and builds upon it through the more detailed proposals for enhancement and redevelopment of the node at Downtown Groton.

4.5 IMPROVE THE AESTHETICS AND IMAGE OF GROTON'S HIGHWAY BUSINESS CORRIDORS, INCLUDING DOWNTOWN GROTON

The commercial arterials—Routes 1, 12, and 184—are the public face of Groton to most people passing through the Town. These corridors tend to be more functional than attractive. As a result, they have not attracted the quality of retail that that could, and they do not fully reflect the value of the community of which they are a part. The Town should look to improve the appearance and image of these corridors

both through public investment and through appropriate standards for landscaping, signage, and site improvements.

28. Undertake streetscape improvements along Route 1

Better landscaping and streetscaping should be an early implementation item in Downtown Groton. The focus should be on greening—with trees, shrubs, and new green spaces—and pedestrian improvements, including street crossings and links from public sidewalks into the shopping areas. The new Walgreen’s shopping center on Route 1 points the way with its superior on-site landscaping and pedestrian pathway to Route 1.

29. Work with property owners to provide landscaping along Plaza Court

Plaza Court is currently a glorified parking lot access drive, but could become more of a public street. The vision of the downtown redevelopment strategy is to convert Plaza Court into a public street through a realignment of Drozdyk Drive. In the short term, providing some plantings on both sides of the drive will make both shopping centers flanking the drive more appealing and attractive.

30. Enhance the Town-owned open space at Route 1 and Poquonnock Road

The Town owns a modest square of land at the intersection of Route 1 and Poquonnock Road. The site is low-lying and wet during rainy periods. While unsuitable for development, it would be suitable for a more attractive, landscaped open space, which could serve to reinforce the intersection of Poquonnock Road and Route 1 as the focus area of Downtown Groton.

31. Implement new signage standards for the entire Route 1/Route 12 corridor outside of historic Mystic

The Town’s existing sign ordinance provides considerable detail with regards to the size, placement, type and number of signs, but less consideration to the appearance of signs. As a general rule, some flexibility is to be favored over a boring consistency. However, a few additions to the sign standards would help promote a better appearance in the downtown and elsewhere, including:

- A reduction in the size of wall signs, which can be as big as 200 square feet in the current ordinance (by contrast, free-standing signs are limited to 100 square feet).
- Mandating the use of light letters on dark backgrounds for awnings and wall signs, particularly internally illuminated signs.

4.6 IMPROVE CIRCULATION AND ACCESS IN DOWNTOWN GROTON AND THROUGHOUT THE TOWN

Groton has a mature and well-developed roadway network. However, there are still opportunities to improve connections throughout the downtown. The development of Drozdyk Drive is an example of a

new roadway connection which has helped attract a significant amount of new investment. The strategies below are largely focused on the downtown, but have applicability elsewhere.

32. Reinforce the “100 percent corner” of Route 1 and Poquonnock Road

The downtown is “centerless.” Traditionally, development centered around the point of maximum visibility and traffic, the “100 percent corner.” The most logical candidate for such status is the intersection of Route 1 and Poquonnock Road. Design and beautification efforts should be implemented in a manner that makes this intersection a focal point. A place to start is with the Town-owned open space located at this corner. This intersection should also be the first place to focus on upgraded pedestrian crossings.

33. Open up the interior of the downtown with enhanced visibility and access

Plaza Court, the interior roadway separating the front and back areas of the Groton Shopping Plaza, could be a much more meaningful connection than it is today. In keeping with the above policy, it is recommended that Drozdyk Drive be rerouted to connect with the alignment of Plaza Court, thence with Poquonnock Road. The remaining leg of Drozdyk Drive could then be rerouted to connect at a right angle with the new alignment. This change effectively subdivides the shopping area into three distinct blocks which can be redeveloped over time. In the short term, it also increases the value of the existing retail space by providing enhanced access and visibility.

34. Connect downtown with adjacent neighborhoods and developments

Downtown Groton is located a short distance from adjacent residential neighborhoods, including two relatively large multifamily complexes. However, the pedestrian connections to these areas are circuitous, and require significant detours. The downtown could be better connected with these areas through a new network of pedestrian and bicycle ways, or even low-speed roadways if appropriate.

35. Facilitate pedestrian and bicycle circulation no less than automotive

This strategy is applicable to both Downtown Groton, as well as other densely-built areas of the Town.

The current configuration of Downtown Groton encourages patrons to drive from store to store, meaning that they may occupy two or more parking spaces in the course of a single trip. A more efficient design would facilitate and encourage patrons to park once and circulate throughout the shopping area on foot. From a retail perspective, foot circulation is good for small merchants who may depend on happenstance for at least part of their customer base. Moreover, there are a significant number of people living close enough to downtown to walk or bike. A pedestrian strategy is therefore an important part of the downtown’s revitalization.

Most of Groton's commercial areas consist of arterial highway strips. Only Thames Street and historic Downtown Mystic provide pedestrian-oriented shopping opportunities. However, there are sufficient densities in other parts of Groton to make pedestrian circulation a potential issue. These include some neighborhoods and nodes in Groton City, such as the intersection of Mitchell Street and Poquonnock Road. In these areas, the Town should look at implementing such pedestrian and traffic calming improvements as neck-down at key intersections, textured pavement, raised crosswalks, diagonal parking, and other devices.

36. Actively support regional roadway initiatives such as the widening of I-95 and the completion of Route 11

Groton's economic health, as well as that of the whole region, depends on its connections with the rest of the state and the nation. Transportation is important for the movement of goods, the movement of people to and from work, and in the case of Southeast Connecticut, the movement of large numbers of day trippers and tourist to and from the region's attractions. The most significant capacity constraints in the region today are I-95, which is primarily four travel lanes in the region; Route 11, a major connection to Hartford which has never been completed, and Route 2, a two-lane country road which must service the enormous Foxwoods complex. From the perspective of Groton, easing congestion on I-95 and improving links to the state capital region have the most economic import for the Town in terms of increasing its value as a site location. The Town should therefore use its membership in the COG to advocate for these projects.

37. Don't give up on a new roadway connection between Route 117 and Flanders Road.

With the demise of the connector road project, local opinion has discounted the potential for reviving a similar project. However, such a connection would have multiple benefits, not only opening up new land for development, but also providing sites along Flanders Road much better access to I-95. With a utility extension to the area under study, it may not be too late to consider options for providing a roadway connection as well.

38. Plan for a new rail station in Downtown Groton when or if the Shoreline East service is extended into Groton

The Northeast Corridor rail line runs the width of Groton, yet the nearest stations are in New London and Mystic (on the Stonington side). New London's station is a major intermodal hub, while the Mystic station has infrequent service but is important from a tourism perspective. Connecticut DOT operates a commuter rail system, Shoreline East, which extends such service eastward from New Haven, where the Metro North system terminates. Shoreline East runs as far east as New London, but only on a sporadic basis. With energy supplies once again a concern in the U.S., there may be increased demand and need for passenger rail service in the future. Should service ever be extended, Downtown Groton, in the vicinity of Poquonnock Road, would be a logical place to locate a station. Long term planning for the downtown should be mindful of the potential for a downtown rail stop.

4.7 WORK WITH PROPERTY OWNERS TO SPUR THE REDEVELOPMENT OF DOWNTOWN GROTON

In the downtown (as elsewhere) the Town's proposals for redevelopment are not coupled with site control. Therefore, partnerships with the affected property owners will be necessary to help jump start and guide proposed redevelopments.

39. Use public investments as a catalyst for private investments

Since the Town will not be directly redeveloping property in the downtown and elsewhere, it is important for it to play a catalytic role. The proposed rerouting of Drozdyk Drive is an example of a catalytic investment. Streetscape improvements are another. The idea is to focus on improvements that create real estate value. In terms of retail, this means improvements in access, visibility, and image. For residential, it means image, amenity, and zoning for sufficient density.

40. Work with downtown property owners to create infill development opportunities

For any Town-initiated investments, the downtown property owners must be made partners. First, public investments are more likely to spur development and redevelopment if the property owners understand and participate in the plans. Further, since the path of least resistance is to do nothing, the Town will have to take the lead in creating the vision of what could be developed in Downtown Groton. The proposals included as part of this plan represent a first step down this road.

41. Encourage the strategic use of structured parking to increase development capacity

Structured parking is expensive, so much so that only high value development can justify its cost from a developer's perspective. While no examples of privately developed parking structures are found within Groton, the residential developments to the north of downtown have had to rely on extensive site grading and improvements, which entail a somewhat comparable expense. Similarly dense residential or mixed-use development in the downtown might provide the necessary economic return to justify a move to structured parking. If not, some public participation might be necessary.

The cheapest form of structured parking consists of a second layer added over a surface layer of parking, taking advantage of sloping topography to provide access points at both elevations without the use of a ramp. Downtown Groton offers such possibilities in discrete locations. This should be the preferred method of addressing parking supply issues while intensifying the use of the site.

4.8 PRESERVE AND ENHANCE THE TOWN'S HISTORIC, SCENIC AND OPEN SPACE RESOURCES TO CREATE BOTH LOCAL AND TOURIST AMENITIES

Groton is rich in historic, scenic and recreational resources. While some of these are famous tourist destinations (historic Downtown Mystic), others are known mostly to locals (Bluff Point). In a place like Groton, the things that make it a good place to visit also make it a good place to live—its natural areas, scenic vistas, and historic places are the local attractions. As a military town with a transient population that comes from around the nation, there are many opportunities for its attractions to be advertised far and wide by word of mouth. Therefore, things that both preserve and promote the Town's unique natural and cultural resources will improve local quality of life in addition to attracting new visitors and residents.

42. Reposition Thames Street as a complimentary counterpoint to historic Downtown Mystic

Both downtown Mystic and Thames Streets are steeped in maritime history, yet their associations and ambience are quite different. Mystic is associated with tall sailing ships; Thames Street, with submarines, naval warships, and steamships. Mystic's historic bridge is an example of early 20th century ingenuity; Thames Street's views include the mighty I-95 twin span. Mystic River is narrow and inviting to kayakers; the Thames River is broad and deep, and plied by submarines, shipping vessels, and high-speed ferries.

With this in mind, the “branding” and theme for Thames Street should emphasize its unique character, to serve as a counterpoint to the famous character of Downtown Mystic. This will make Thames Street a unique rather than a “me-too” destination, and will give visitors to Mystic a reason to also visit Thames Street as part of their stay. The existing lighting standards, which have a stark industrial quality, represent a step in this direction.

43. Designate more Scenic Byways in Groton, either locally or through the state DOT's scenic byways program

Groton has a number of existing and recommended historic and scenic roadways. Some of these are already locally designated scenic roadways, such as Sandy Hollow Road and River Road. The Connecticut DOT has a Scenic Byways program for State roads that offers a combination of funding and a commitment to protect the character of the byway when making roadway improvements. State-designated byways are located in Preston, North Stonington and Stonington. The 2002 Town Plan of Conservation and Development makes recommendations to protect scenic resources including roads and scenic views. Potential roads for local designation should be pursued. While not generating new sources of funding, local designation would represent a policy statement on the part of the Town to preserve the character of these roadways, and could be marketed as part of the Town's attractions. The Town's 1996 Historic Preservation Plan, and the 2002 Plan of Conservation and Development, propose a list of potential scenic roadways, which serves as a good starting point for deciding which roads to consider.

44. Promote Groton as a destination for outdoor and maritime recreation and eco-tourism

Groton's long and varied shoreline and location on the Long Island Sound are wonderful assets. Recreational boating is already a fixture of Groton's waterfront areas. The Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut hosts a striped bass tournament that covers the Thames River from its mouth up to Norwich—this year's will be held from May 19 to 20. There is likely potential for other such events and attractions in Groton. Avid birdwatchers seek out locations where migratory birds congregate—are there any such locations in Groton? The Town could promote kayaking expeditions in Mumford Cover or the Poquonnock River, or organized hikes in Bluff Point with a focus on environmental and wildlife education. With further thought and imagination, surely other similar ideas would emerge.

45. Continue to pursue new greenways/bikeways to create a network of parks and open spaces

A primary focus of the Town's Conservation Commission is to create a series of greenways linking open spaces throughout the Town, through land acquisition, purchases of easements, etc. These efforts should be seen as an important part of the Town's overall efforts at improving its quality of life for local residents, and its attractiveness to visitors. The Town's Master Trails and Bikeway Plan was recently completed. These types of recreational and outdoor amenities are especially important to the next generation of talented workers who tend to place a premium on such amenities. Funding for the projects recommended in the plan should be supported.

46. Improve access to existing parks, through better car and bike parking, new trailways, etc.

Groton has extensive parklands, but they are not always as accessible as they could be. The Town recently provided for improved access at the park off of Route 184, with a new parking area and associated amenities. More such improvements at other locations could help enhance the Town's park areas and promote their greater usage.

47. Promote the preservation of Groton's historic heritage, buildings and sites

Groton has a wealth of historic sites and districts. Many have received National Register designation, including specific sites such as Avery Point Lighthouse and the Branford House on the UConn campus; and districts, including Mystic Bridge and Mystic River, Noank, and Burnett's Corner (located along Route 184 at Parker Road). National Register designation carries with it recognition and eligibility for historic preservation tax credits, it does not do anything to protect the historic character. While some areas (such as Noank) have their own zoning, other areas could possibly benefit from more protection, such as Village District zoning, additional Historic District zoning, or a Town-wide Demolition Delay ordinance. Note these and other strategies were also recommended in the Town's 1996 Historic Preservation Plan.

48. Along identified scenic byways, pursue land use policies aimed at preserving scenic and/or rural landscapes

A prior policy recommended new locally designated scenic byways in Groton. Planning policy should look to keep these recognized scenic roadways scenic. Techniques can include direct acquisition of land or easements, as well as specialized zoning techniques to preserve view corridors.

49. Continue to target key areas in the Groton Utilities Watershed for preservation such as along streams that feed into the reservoir

The Town has identified public water supply watersheds and aquifer recharge areas as environmentally sensitive areas of the community, and they have taken steps to lessen development impacts in these areas to protect water quality (such as creating the Water Resource Protection District). Although preservation policies should be site specific, and in accordance with the Plan of Conservation and Development, as a general rule, the Town should continue to focus preservation efforts on land that is environmentally sensitive, desirable as open space, or land that is deemed beneficial for recreation to improve the quality of life in Groton while allowing for desirable economic development.

4.9 IMPROVE THE PACKAGING AND MARKETING OF EXISTING TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

Groton has no blockbuster attractions; Mystic Aquarium and Seaport are located on the Stonington side of the river, the Casinos to the north. Yet, it does have the attributes necessary to serve as either a weekend get away or as a side trip made by visitors to the big attractions. The key to capitalizing on this market is better packaging and promotion of the Town's attractions; the payoff will be increased traffic and business for hotels, restaurants and specialty retailers.

50. Focus on the weekend getaway market for tourism

Groton's location—within three hours of 17 million people—and the nature of the attractions in the Town and Region make it a perfect location for a weekend getaway. Much of Mystic's current tourism already taps this market. The key is to diversify Groton's offerings, within the regional context. Most of the policies under tourism are keyed to this market niche.

51. Continue to pursue the Heritage Park concept for Thames River attractions

The Heritage Park project for the Thames River area, which includes water transport and historic thematic links between Thames Street, Fort Griswold, the Nautilus/Submarine Museum, and historic attractions in New London, is a good idea worthy of substantial future support. The Town, along with the City, should continue its cooperation with the City of New London, the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development, and the Connecticut Department of Environmental

Protection to bring this vision to reality, including the pursuit of funding for the capital portions of the project, such as the water taxi landings, pedestrian connections, and signage.

52. Improve gateways to the Historic Ship Nautilus and Submarine Force Museum

The Nautilus/Submarine Museum is a unique attraction, yet it is hidden from the main thoroughfare (Route 12) and lacks a sense of arrival. New gateway elements are needed, both at Route 12, and at the entrance to the museum itself. This recommendation is also contained in the Town's Plan of Conservation & Development. Note that the proposed Heritage Park provides a more dramatic means of accessing the museum—via the water.

53. Promote more B&B's in Historic Mystic and along or near Thames Street

There is currently an abundance of roadside motels both in Groton and in Stonington north of Mystic. With the addition of the Mystic Marriot, the Town now has a first rate, business class hotel. To fully tap the weekend getaway market, however, the Town needs more quaint lodging options such as small inns and bed and breakfasts. The logical places to encourage such uses are in the Town's two historic centers—historic Downtown Mystic and Thames Street in Groton City.

54. Prepare a Groton-specific tourist map and guide to local attractions

The regional tourist organizations, such as Mystic Coast and Country and the Tourism District, do a great job of marketing the entire region, but their focus is necessarily on the blockbusters—historic Downtown Mystic, Mystic Seaport and Aquarium, and the two casinos. The smaller but still unique attractions in Groton may not get their full due.

Groton has a large number of hotel and motel rooms, and the existing tourist attractions, coupled with visits related to the Subase and corporate travel, creates a national and international audience that can be reached simply by having a Groton tourism brochure available at local hotels. The Groton brochure could also be accompanied by a web site, which provides an up to date calendar of events.

55. Market Groton's attractions locally as well as afar

In most areas across the County, even in tourism regions, the primary source of out of town travel is visits to friends and family. These visits often involve overnight stays at people's homes rather than at hotels and inns. In order to tap this tourism market, local residents must be aware of the local attractions and events. Much business can be generated through word of mouth referrals.

56. Work with regional tourism entities (such as Mystic Coast & Country, the Tourism District and Chamber of Commerce) to promote local events

Whatever local initiatives are launched, the regional tourism entities, by virtue of their greater base of funding and geographic reach, will continue to do most of the promotion. Groton should continue to ensure that its attractions and events are reflected in the regional marketing materials and web sites.

57. Implement a comprehensive system of wayfinding signage

With two historic downtowns, a separate shopping hub, three historic waterfront neighborhoods, a submarine museum, an airport, a large waterfront preserve, and assorted scenic roadways, visitors wishing to take in all that Groton has to offer will necessarily be doing a significant amount of driving or biking. The roadway network in Groton is confusing to outsiders. A comprehensive system of wayfinding is a must if visitors are to be able to easily navigate their way from place to place. Groton already has some such signage, but more is needed.

4.10 UNDERTAKE PROJECTS AND PLANS WHICH BOLSTER COMMUNITY PRIDE AND IMAGE

Groton the Town is divided into multiple sub-areas and jurisdictions that at first blush appear to have little to do with each other: Groton City, Noank, Groton Long Point, Mystic. Some of these, like Mystic, eclipse the Town in terms of name recognition. However, they are all part of the same community that is tied together not only by a shared government but also by economic, geographic and social ties. The economic diversity of the Town was identified by residents as a key strength. However, the lack of a single civic focal point has made it all too easy for residents to devote attention to their particular turf rather than the whole town. The strategies suggested here represent potential means for strengthening the civic fabric and community pride in Groton.

58. Host communitywide events in each of Groton's unique sub-districts: Groton City, Noank, Groton Long Point, and Mystic

New York City hosts "street fairs" originally intended to celebrate a distinct neighborhood—Orchard Street on the Lower East Side, Broadway on the Upper West Side, etc. Over time, these have lost their uniqueness, but the original idea had considerable merit. A similar set of events is proposed for Groton, whereby a weekend day would be set aside for each unique district to host a festival or fair. The idea is to provide an opportunity for Groton's residents to spend a day in each of their unique places—Thames Street, Noank, Groton Long Point, etc. Each festival could feature live music; historic house tours; food provided by local restaurants; etc.

59. Make Downtown Groton a place for the whole community to come together

A prior section outlines a physical development strategy for making this happen. However, the Town can take other symbolic actions that will help cement the downtown as the central place in the Town.

These include hosting special events in the downtown such as the Holiday Parade and Christmas tree lighting that currently take place, for example; locating town functions in the downtown; creating a community bulletin board in a public open space in the downtown; and other appropriate actions yet to be thought of.

60. Consider the creation of a multipurpose, Town-owned Arts Center

The public meeting and steering committee process raised the desire for a facility capable of hosting performing arts events and visual arts exhibits in Groton. However, there is no existing, organized arts group with both the desire and fundraising wherewithal ready to come forward to operate such a facility, even if capital money were to be raised.

As a lower-cost alternative, it is suggested that the Town look to create such a facility at low cost, using existing land and/or building resources. The facility might be located in an existing park, for example, or be added to an existing structure, such as the library. Perhaps the Town could secure the donation of a building, or the capital costs could be raised through fundraising. Whatever the path, the intent would be to create a public facility that could be used for modest fees by any number of local arts groups and organizations, and that would have very low carrying costs by virtue of not requiring full time operations or maintenance staff.

61. Pursue the creation of a new special event celebrating Groton

The Regional CEDS plan recommended that one or more new events that promote regional “community building” and/or the attraction of non-local visitors be developed through a process to involve SeCTer, local governments, and local and regional tourism organizations. The region’s experience with OpSail; Boats, Books and Brushes; and several annual music and art festivals shows the value and benefit of such events. Groton could spearhead the development of a new event specifically showcasing Groton’s assets, history, or showing support for the region’s military personnel with a “Navy Day.”

5 Project List

The following chapter presents a list of projects designed to implement the policies and strategies described in the prior chapter. While that chapter included a wide range of recommendations including programs and regulations, the focus of this chapter is on projects having a capital or development component. As examples of the distinction, investments in new gateway signage and landscaping for downtown Groton are considered a project; while new zoning for the downtown would be considered a policy. Planning studies to be undertaken in preparation for a capital project are included, however.

The projects listed here have been culled from a variety of sources. These include:

- A listing of identified CEDS projects prepared by the Town's planning and economic development staff.
- The regional CEDS plan prepared for SeCTer.
- Ideas generated as part of the steering committee and public outreach processes.
- Ideas generated by the consultant team.

The projects and project ideas included here are at different stages of gestation. Some are well defined projects with cost estimates attached, while others are preliminary ideas. It is anticipated that this list will continue to evolve with regards to its contents and specifics, even after the completion of this plan.

The Economic Development Strategy has been organized into four major themes: economic diversification, Downtown Groton, tourism, and quality of life. The emerging vision for the future economic development of Groton addresses each of these:

- Entrepreneurial initiatives to diversify the economy by nurturing new home grown companies.
- A retooled Downtown Groton offering new public spaces, infill developments, and an enhanced network for vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle circulation.
- Existing and new tourist attractions and resources packaged, linked and marketed to major population centers nearby.
- Quality-of-life enhancing park, recreation, and planning initiatives aimed at increasing the attractiveness of Groton as a place to live and work.

Each project listed in this document is intended to further one or more of the four overarching economic development goals, and is consistent with the vision outlined above. Further, each project is described using a standard format:

- First, projects are categorized according to type, i.e., whether they are capital projects or studies, and the topic of the study (infrastructure, public realm improvements, parks and recreation, etc.).
- Next, the project is placed into one or more categories corresponding to the four themes of the economic development strategy: economic diversification, Downtown Groton, tourism, and quality of life.
- The source for the project idea is identified. Six of the projects are CEDS projects already identified by the Town. The remainder comes from the regional CEDS plan, the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development, or ideas proposed by the consultant team based on interviews, research, and steering committee input.
- Implementing agencies and entities are identified.
- If known, an estimate of project costs are provided.
- Identified and/or potential funding sources are identified.
- A description of the project details and benefits is provided.

5.1 DOWNTOWN GROTON—ROUTE 1 RETAIL AREA PEDESTRIAN AND STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

Project type:	Capital projects—public realm
Categories:	Downtown Groton Quality of Life
Source:	Town CEDS project list
Implementing agents:	Town of Groton Downtown property owners
Project costs:	Unknown. \$100,000 has been programmed for construction in 2007
Sources of funds:	Town Federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) (CEDS) DECD
Description:	The Downtown Groton area remains the single largest concentration of retail businesses and activity in Groton. Based on an estimate of 300,000 square feet in the downtown, it is home to some 300 retail jobs. It is widely perceived by local stakeholders as underperforming and not reflective of the value of the community as a whole. Barring significant redevelopment of the existing inventory of properties, physical improvements to the downtown area will primarily address the public realm—the configuration of the streets and sidewalks, pedestrian amenities, and landscaping of public areas.

The proposed enhancements would address gateway signage and landscaping at the western edge of Route 1 near the I-95 interchange; improved crosswalks, sidewalks and landscaping along Route 1 in the heart of downtown; and other improvements to be identified.

5.2 DOWNTOWN GROTON INTERNAL CIRCULATION STUDY

Project type:	Study—transportation
Categories:	Downtown Groton
Source:	Consultants/steering committee
Implementing agents:	Town of Groton Downtown Groton Property Owners
Project costs:	\$25,000 for study (estimate)
Sources of funds:	Town, Federal STP-U funds, private dollars
Description:	The Town has focused pedestrian and streetscape efforts to date on the Route 1 corridor. With the construction of significant amounts of new multifamily housing north of the downtown, additional attention is needed to vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle links to these new developments, as well as existing adjoining neighborhoods. Further, pedestrian circulation within the cluster of shopping centers, particularly Groton Shopping Center and Groton Shopping Plaza spanning Plaza Court, is in need of improvement.

As part of the planning for Downtown Groton, a new circulation system is being proposed that would reconfigure Drozdyk Drive and Plaza Court, and introduce new pedestrian and bicycle shortcuts to adjacent residential areas. The new pattern is proposed to:

- Reinforce a “100 percent” corner at Poquonnock Road and Route 1.
- Open up access and visibility to Groton Shopping Plaza.
- Create a new focal point for Downtown Groton.
- Facilitate pedestrian circulation to and from, as well as within, Downtown Groton.
- Set the stage for infill development in the downtown, and eventual redevelopment by the current property owners.

5.3 BUSINESS PARK UTILITIES INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Project type:	Study—infrastructure
Categories:	Economic diversification
Source:	Town CEDS project list
Implementing agents:	Town of Groton
Project costs:	\$100,000 for study
Sources of funds:	Study has been funded by the Town. Capital costs may be funded by Town funds, Town bonding, Federal EDA funds, and/or DECD funds.
Description:	The Flanders Road industrial district is home to two mid-size manufacturing firms—Medtronics and Aqua Massage—and a number of smaller businesses. About 100 people work in the area. All of these businesses rely on well water and all except Medtronics rely on on-site wastewater

disposal. As a heavy user of water, and producer of wastewater, Medtronics must truck wastewater offsite several times a day and dispose of its wastewater at the Town's Water Pollution Control Facility. The Flanders Road area also adjoins other industrially zoned lands to the south of I-95 which could benefit from sewer and water infrastructure also. Expansion for these businesses is constrained by the lack of utilities, as is the development of new industrial space at the area.

A Town-sponsored study is currently underway to determine the best and most cost effective way to extend utility service to the Industrial Park zoned area. A key goal is to choose a routing which provides utility service to other developable lands within this area of Town if the project is to be publicly funded. The Town should evaluate whether to, and if so how to, move forward with any potential utility extensions. As part of this, an analysis of the potential build out of lands to be served by the new utilities, along with associated job production, should be undertaken to evaluate the potential return on investment. Development is anticipated in the study area as included in the 2002 Plan of Conservation and Development.

5.4 MILITARY HIGHWAY LINEAR PARK

Project type:	Capital projects—parks and recreation
Categories:	Tourism Quality of life
Source:	Town CEDS project list
Implementing agents:	Town of Groton City of Groton
Project costs:	\$250,000 for design, \$3 – 5 million for construction, \$1.3 million for related land acquisition
Sources of funds:	Federal EDA, Trust for Public Land (\$1.3 million anticipated), Town & City funds
Description:	Military Highway runs between the Subase and Bridge Street in Groton City. The roadway runs parallel to the Thames River shoreline, providing scenic views of the river along its length. No development is located between the river and the roadway; however, the intervening land area is encumbered by a freight rail line and constrained by topography.

The proposed project would introduce a new linear park element running alongside Military Highway on the river side of the street. This linear park would be usable by cyclists, joggers, strollers and roller bladers. It would expand intermodal and open space linkages by connecting the future Heritage Park water taxi dock and the Nautilus Museum and Goss Cover Park to the coastline and the existing side walk network on Fairview Avenue. It will also upgrade the proposed Regional Bike Route in the RTP between the Town and City of Groton.

5.5 THAMES RIVER HERITAGE PARK

Project type:	Capital projects—regional
Categories:	Tourism Economic Diversification
Source:	Town CEDS project list
Implementing agents:	Town of Groton, State DECD, State DEP City of Groton City of New London
Project costs:	\$3.48 million (\$1.3 million for Groton Projects)
Sources of funds:	Connecticut DEP and DECD
Description:	The Thames River waterfronts in Groton and New London are home to a number of historic areas and attractions: Fort Trumbull and downtown New London on the New London side; and Thames Street, Fort Griswold, the National Submarine Memorial, and the Nautilus Museum on the Groton side. The Thames Maritime Heritage Park project is intended to link these varied attractions together both thematically and physically through the use of a new water taxi system. The project includes water taxi docks in New London and in Groton at the Nautilus Museum and Fort Street Landing on Thames Street. New rest room facilities at Fort Griswold will be constructed. The project also has marketing and exhibit design components.

The new water taxi service will be both an attraction in and of itself and a unique intermodal connection that ties into the transportation center in New London with its rail and ferry services; as well as the new bicycle and pedestrian links proposed for Thames Street and Military Highway. Currently, the only connection between New London and Groton attractions is the I-95 bridge over the Thames River. The project also links with the Thames Street revitalization activities proposed as a complementary project.

5.6 THAMES STREET REVITALIZATION

Project type:	Study—revitalization
Categories:	Tourism Economic diversification
Source:	Town CEDS project list
Implementing agents:	Town of Groton City of Groton
Project costs:	Unknown
Sources of funds:	Town and/or City funds, federal EDA, State DECD.
Description:	Thames Street is a charming retail street with significant maritime heritage and an emerging dining and specialty shopping niche. Streetscape investments, including brick pavers in the sidewalks and unique street lights, have been made in the recent past. However, the street still faces several obstacles to revitalization, including its geometry which allows for only narrow sidewalks and a single lane of on-street parking; significant gaps in retail continuity; and shallow property depths. The

Maritime Heritage Park project provides an opportunity to build upon past investments and create a comprehensive strategy for retooling Thames Street to better serve its new niche. A comprehensive revitalization study would examine the following topics:

- Modifications to roadway geometry.
- An on- and off-street parking strategy encompassing side streets in addition to Thames Street.
- The creation of specific points of interest, such as scenic overlooks and historical markers, along the length of the street to encourage strolling.
- Soft sites and redevelopment opportunities.
- Appropriate zoning.
- Potential for B&B development.
- Maximizing the impacts of the Heritage Park and Military Highway park.

5.7 MYSTIC EDUCATION CENTER

Project type:	Study—redevelopment
Categories:	Economic diversification
Source:	Town CEDS project list
Implementing agents:	Town of Groton State of Connecticut
Project costs:	Unknown; perhaps \$100,000 – 150,000
Sources of funds:	Town and/or State funds; Federal EDA.
Description:	The Mystic Education Center (also known as the Oral School) occupies nearly 100 acres of land perched above the Mystic River just north of I-95. The existing campus occupies only a minor portion of this land area. The remainder of the site is wooded. Access is provided by Oral School Road, a narrow road connecting with Cow Hill Road/Mystic Street, which has an interchange with I-95. River Road runs between the site and the Mystic River.

In a town with a limited number of development sites, the Mystic Education Center represents a unique opportunity to plan for a significant adaptive reuse development in Groton. The site's singular combination of riverfront views, proximity to I-95, and natural beauty both increases the site's value and creates the imperative for careful planning to maximize this value while preserving the site's unique features and attributes. As the Town will be most impacted by the redevelopment of the site, it is logical that the Town partner with the state in reviewing the potential for the site's reuse.

The proposed study would examine the site's suitability for development from an environmental and infrastructure point of view, and its highest and best use from a market, economic development, and land use point of view.

5.8 CITY & TOWN BIKEWAY/TRAILWAY PLAN (THOMAS ROAD)

Project type:	Study—parks and recreation
Categories:	Quality of Life
Source:	Town
Implementing agents:	Town of Groton City of Groton
Project costs:	\$50,000 expended to date.
Sources of funds:	Study has been funded by the Town. Capital costs will be funded partially by Town CIP funds and by Federal Transportation Funds.
Description:	The creation of greenways and greenbreaks is a primary goal of the Town's Open Space Master Plan. Both the Town and the City are looking to encourage bicycle and pedestrian connections as a means to better connect commercial and residential areas, encourage recreational activities, and promote healthier lifestyles that incorporate outdoor exercise. The proposed bikeways and trailways are also consistent with other projects including the Thames River Heritage Park and Military Highway linear park. The proposed project is also consistent with the Bike and Pedestrian Routes anticipated in the 2005– 2006 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).

5.9 CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE IN MARITIME SECURITY

Project type:	Study—business development, regional
Categories:	Economic diversification
Source:	Regional CEDS
Implementing agents:	Town of Groton SeCTer
Project costs:	Unknown
Sources of funds:	Federal EDA; SeCTer; Town funds.
Description:	The Regional CEDS prepared on behalf of SeCTer identified an opportunity to promote R&D and commercial applications related to maritime security. Post 9/11, port security has been a growing concern at the local, state and federal levels. New technologies and techniques are needed to ensure the security of the nation's major port facilities. The proposed <i>Center for Excellence in Maritime Security</i> would leverage existing regional resources including UConn at Avery Point; the Coast Guard Research and Development Center; the Institute for Exploration Research at Mystic Aquarium; and the National Undersea Research Center in Groton; as well as private sector entities such as JMS Naval Architects & Salvage Engineers in New London; PEL Associates in Groton (an industrial affiliate of UConn's Marine Sciences and Technology Center developing low-costs sensors for shipping containers and port security); and MPRI Ship Analytics in North Stonington (which has developed incident management software to respond to disasters including terrorist attacks).

As outlined in the Regional CEDS, the proposed Center “would bring together regional research and educational institutions with relevant programs and focus, and has the capacity to leverage the resources

of individual institutions to promote a more integrated approach to maritime security research and educations. The Center would support research scientists and engineers seeking to develop and commercialize new products as well as existing regional companies already working in this field.”

While the Center is conceived of as a regional project, Groton may make a logical place to actually host the center, and therefore could take a leading role in its development. Two potential sites are located in Groton—the Avery Point campus of UConn and the Mystic Education Center. Either site would offer waterfront access and a campus environment suitable for an R&D focused institution. In addition to its region-wide economic significance, the Center, if located in Groton, has the potential to spin-off technology-based commercial ventures with a strong incentive to locate in Groton to maintain close relationships with the Center research activities.

5.10 BUSINESS INCUBATOR

Project type:	Capital project—business development
Categories:	Economic diversification
Source:	Consultants/steering committee
Implementing agents:	Town of Groton UConn Avery Point
Project costs:	Unknown
Sources of funds:	Town, DECD, UConn, Federal EDA
Description:	An entrepreneurial strategy focused on business startups is a cornerstone of the overall economic diversification strategy. Outside of the three big employers (the Subase, EB and Pfizer), most of the small and mid-sized companies in Groton have their origins as local startups that occupy a unique niche (Medtronics, ProtoPower, Aqua Massage, etc.). Some are spin-offs from EB and Pfizer, others were founded by local inventors and technologists. All initially required low-cost space. A business incubator can help fulfill this need. Such a facility might be either a traditional incubator (i.e. a building with subsidized space and shared resources, which seeks to graduate startups out of the incubator over time), or simply a building or complex of buildings offering low cost, adaptable space suitable for a variety of startups in engineering, R&D, and manufacturing.

UConn already operates a business incubator at its Avery Point campus as part of the Technology Incubation Program. This incubator offers small blocks of space (250 square feet) suitable for office or laboratory use (with fume hoods, gas connections, etc.). It is intended for startups with a link to research being conducted at the campus. One option would be to expand the Avery Point incubator both in size and scope. Another would be to pursue an entirely separate facility on a different site. Potential sites might include the Flanders Road area, sites off of Route 117, an underutilized retail property, or a portion of the Mystic Education Center. Even if not physically located at Avery Point, linkage with the Avery Point incubator is still appropriate, as the new facility could provide expansion space for successful startups at UConn. It could also be linked with the proposed Maritime Security Center described above.

5.11 MYSTIC MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Project type:	Study—transportation
Categories:	Tourism Economic diversification
Source:	Groton Plan of Conservation and Development
Implementing agents:	Town of Groton Town of Stonington
Project costs:	\$50,000
Sources of funds:	Federal Surface Transportation Program/High Priority Funding

Description: The Town’s Plan of Conservation and Development recommends an intermodal transportation study focused on Mystic to connect Downtown Mystic with the seaport and aquarium, likely using a trolley-like bus attractive to tourists. As much of the hotel capacity (along with associated parking) is located near I-95, any new trolley service should take in these hotels as well. The service will necessarily be focused on the Stonington side of the river, yet there are significant benefits for Groton as well. Much of the commercial core of Downtown Mystic is in Groton and is short of parking capacity. The new trolley has the potential to bring more people into downtown than could be accommodated otherwise, increasing business for downtown merchants. Further, if the new service is successful, it could be extended to link Mystic with other nearby historic areas such as Noank and Esker Point Beach.

5.12 WAYFINDING SIGNAGE

Project type:	Capital projects—transportation
Categories:	Tourism
Source:	Consultants/steering committee
Implementing agents:	Town of Groton Downtown Groton Property Owners
Project costs:	\$20,000 for study (estimate)
Sources of funds:	Town, Federal STP-U funds
Description:	Groton has a wealth of attractions and destinations large and small—downtown Mystic, Groton Long Point, Noank, Thames Street, Bluff Point, Groton-New London Airport, the Nautilus Museum, Fort Griswold, the Submarine Memorial, various scenic roadways, etc.—but these are dispersed throughout the Town and are not necessarily easy for visitors to find. Signs for many of these destinations exist to direct motorists to and from I-95 and Route 1, but there are significant gaps in the signage, particularly between destinations, and Groton’s geography renders it confusing to those who are not familiar with the Town. A more comprehensive system of wayfinding signs would help visitors access Groton’s many attractions and destinations. Further, Groton already has some designated scenic

roadways. More such designations—for Military Highway, High Street, River Road—could help form a comprehensive system of scenic and historic drives which could be used to promote tourism within the Town. Finally, gateway signage could be added or improved at key locations, such as at the gateway to the Airport on Tower Avenue at High Rock Road.

5.13 SUBMARINE BASE GATEWAY PROJECT

Project type:	Study—transportation
Categories:	Diversification Quality of Life
Source:	Capital Improvement Program
Implementing agents:	Town of Groton
Project costs:	\$50,000
Sources of funds:	Town, Connecticut DECD
Description:	The United States Navy has recently completed reconstruction of the two main gates to the Subbase, and the BRAC process has run its course. The Town’s Plan of Conservation and Development identifies this area as a significant development node in the Town. This project is intended to provide needed attention to Crystal Lake Road and its intersection with Military Highway and Route 12, through the design and eventual construction of geometric improvements, road resurfacing, multi-modal links between the Base and Navy Housing areas (Bikeway), other gateway improvements into the Base, and to identify land acquisition opportunities along Crystal Lake Road, to support the needs of the Base population and operations.

The geographic location of the above listed projects are illustrated on **Map 5**.

Map 5: Location of Proposed Projects



- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Downtown Groton-Route 1 Retail Area Pedestrian & Streetscape Improvements | 7. Mystic Education Center |
| 2. Downtown Groton Internal Circulation Study | 8. City & Town Bikeway/Trailway Plan (Thomas Road) |
| 3. Business Park Utilities Infrastructure Improvement Project | 9. Center for Excellence in Maritime Security |
| 4. Military Highway Linear Park | 10. Business Incubator |
| 5. Thames River Heritage Park (multiple locations) | 11. Mystic Multimodal Transportation Study |
| 6. Thames Street Revitalization | 12. Wayfinding Signage (various) |
| | 13. Submarine Base Gateway Project |

6 Implementation

The purpose of this final chapter is to provide guidance to the Town and other partners with regards to carrying the policies, strategies, and projects proposed as part of the Economic Development Strategic Plan forward. It addresses four key elements of implementation:

- **Roles and responsibilities**, i.e., who does what.
- **Priorities**, specifically which projects are ready to move forward, and which need more thought and development.
- **Timing**, i.e., what should be done when.
- Finally, **metrics**, or quantitative measurements of progress and success.

Like the rest of the plan, this chapter is a living document that will surely evolve over time in response to shifting priorities and changes in capacity at the Town and regional level. Hopefully, however, it will provide the initial guidance and “push” necessary to begin the process of implementation.

6.1 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The strategies and projects proposed in this Plan will primarily fall to Town government to implement. However, it cannot be implemented without partners, at other levels of government and in the private and non-profit sectors. The purpose of this section is to identify the roles and responsibilities of each implementing agency.

6.1.1 Town of Groton

Most of the recommendations presented in this plan either directly or indirectly require the participation of the Town. This includes not only staff, but also broad oversight by the Economic Development Commission, involvement by the Town Council and RTM whose roles it is to approve funding, and the Zoning Commission, whose role it is to adopt any changes to zoning regulations. These responsibilities are discussed in further detail below.

Staff Level Responsibilities

This plan has been prepared under the oversight of two separate yet interrelated divisions of the Planning and Development Services Department.

Planning and Development is responsible for formulating and administering the land use policy and regulatory framework in the Town, specifically the Plan of Conservation and Development, and the zoning regulations. Planning and Development reviews project proposals and provides input to the Town’s planning and zoning commissions and also undertakes subdivision review for the district of

Noank. Planning and Development also formulates and coordinates specific projects, such as the upcoming streetscape improvements to historic Downtown Mystic.

Planning and Development's primary role in the implementation of this Plan, barring the creation of a new entity such as an Economic Development Corporation (discussed below), would be twofold: to work to implement the proposed modifications to local zoning, and to commission the studies and capital projects proposed herein.

The present Community and Economic Development division currently folds together two different responsibilities: administering the Town's community development activities, including projects undertaken with CDBG funds; and undertaking the Town's economic development activities. These include the administration of the economic development incentive programs such as the Enterprise Zone; conducting outreach to businesses and serving as an advocate for business interests to the Town; and performing the Town's marketing functions.

As noted as part of the recommendations of this report, these dual roles may have resulted in a shortage of capacity to fully perform the economic development function to the level necessary, and augmentation of the economic development function will be necessary to make sure the appropriate level of attention is given to the recommendations of this report.

Appointed Boards

Economic Development Commission

The EDC, as currently formulated, is an advisory body. It can comment on plans and projects, as well as propose its own, but it has no power to implement its proposals. Such responsibilities current fall to the Town. Its most important role at present is as advocates for economic development and a link for the business community.

Development Review Boards

Development review and approvals in the Town of Groton are administered by four boards:

- The Planning Commission reviews and approves development applications not requiring a variance from the Town's zoning regulations, primarily through site plan and subdivision review. The Planning Commission further adopts the Plan of Conservation and Development.
- The Zoning Commission hears requests for developments that require special permits outlined in the Town's zoning regulations. The Zoning Commission also adopts the zoning regulations and map.
- The Inland Wetlands Agency is charged with ensuring that all developments comply with applicable State and local regulations regarding the avoidance of impacts on wetland areas.

- The Historic District Commission reviews applications for developments, both new and rehabilitation that occur within a locally designated historic district or would impact a locally designated historic structure.

The Zoning Commission would have the direct responsibility for formulating (with appropriate input from the Planning Commission) and adopting any modifications to the zoning map or zoning regulations that might occur as a result of this report.

The Planning Commission would administer many of the zoning recommendations included in this report. For example, retail might become a special permit use in the IP zones under revised zoning; the Planning Commission would be charged with making sure that the special conditions are properly applied and met by applicants at site plan stage.

Perhaps the most important overall function served by all these commissions and boards is to ensure that future development in the Town be of high quality. Since this report argues that local community quality of life is an important economic development asset, such considerations as the aesthetics of new development matter, and the Town is justified in holding applicants to a high standard for site and building design and landscaping, especially where discretionary approvals are involved.

Town Council and Representative Town Meeting (RTM)

Local funding is prerequisite of many of the studies and projects proposed as part of this strategic plan, and the Town Council and RTM hold the responsibility of allocating money from the general fund or to approve bonds not requiring a referendum. In the past, the Council has exhibited some reluctance to continue authorization of State funds for economic development-related projects, a high-profile example being the proposed Connector Road between Route 117 and Flanders Road. Even still, the Town must continue to use its limited local funds in a manner that leverages outside government and private dollars to the maximum extent possible.

6.1.2 Groton City

Historic Thames Street and the Fort Street landing, and at least one proposed water taxi landing for the Heritage Park, are located in the City of Groton. Much of the Town's employment is also located within the City's borders, including Pfizer's campus and EB. Avery Point is also within the City limits. Further, Groton Utilities is an arm of City government. Therefore, the City's cooperation and participation is essential to the implementation of many key recommendations in the Plan.

The City will be an important leader when it comes to the revitalization of Thames Street. The City will participate in developing plans for its capital improvements and property acquisition.

This Plan has been prepared on behalf of Town government with all interest in mind but does not directly address decision-making at the City. However, it strongly urges that the Town and City work cooperatively together on economic development. Past history has shown that neither the Town nor the City can be complacent when it comes to their economic futures; partnership provides the best hedge against uncertain times.

6.1.3 Quasi-governmental organizations

Economic Development Corporation

The Economic Development Commission has recommended the formation of a true Economic Development *Corporation*, an idea echoed in this Plan. Many municipalities and some regions have such entities. They are distinguished by possessing powers necessary to directly undertake economic development projects, including physical projects. Specifically, a corporation would have the ability to apply for and receive grant funds and other government monies; issue Requests for Proposals and contract with consultants for studies; put projects out to bid and manage them; and acquire and dispose of real property. Such an entity requires at least some professional staff. A full fledged economic development corporation is somewhat uncommon for a town the size of Groton but not unheard of—Naugatuck and Shelton are examples of smaller Connecticut towns that have gone to the EDC model.

Were Groton to form an actual EDC, it would be logical for all manner of economic development activities for project implementation to find a home there, rather than being duplicated within Town government. As an example, the Shelton EDC performs the following functions (from the Shelton EDC website):

- Technical support with expansion, relocation and financing aid
- Economic, housing and community development
- Facilitators of public & private partnerships
- Site location assistance
- Real estate acquisition and development
- Planning and zoning consultation
- Liaison to city and state agencies
- Grant preparation, writing and administration
- Property management
- Business promotion
- Brownfield Redevelopment
- Regional Economic development activities and cooperation

6.1.4 Regional Actors

Groton is one town in a larger economic region. While the Town can and should take actions to promote its own interest, in truth it will gain as much or more through strategic partnerships with regional economic development entities.

Southeastern Connecticut Enterprise Region (seCTer)

This agency is the regional economic entity responsible for marketing the entire region of which Groton is a part. As a regional organization, seCTer has greater reach and pull than any specific town would have. Its only downside is that it has no mandate to give Groton any particular level of focus higher than any other town in its area. Yet, seCTer's Executive Director, John Markowitz led the way as advocate for the region's effort to save the Subase during the BRAC process. The committee's informed and effective advocacy likely was a decisive factor in the outcome. With BRAC behind the Town and region for the time being, the same level of commitment and capacity with regards to data gathering, presentation, and persuasion can be brought to bear on regional issues with import for Groton. These include, in addition to marketing, advocating for transportation and infrastructure funding from the State; and pursuit of specific CEDS projects such as the Center of Excellence in Maritime Security.

Southeast Connecticut Council of Governments (SCCOG)

The SCCOG serves as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the region. Its Transportation Improvement Plans serve as the conduit for Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration funding in the region. Further, the SCCOG has made itself a champion of other regional planning issues, most notably affordable housing production. The SCCOG's studies on the topic were the first to quantify the problem and focus public attention upon it. Its follow-up studies have continued to track housing production in the region and the housing needs of the regional population. For the purposes of this study, the SCCOG is most valuable as an advocate for transportation improvements which benefit both the Town and the region, such as the Mystic Intermodal Study, the completion of Route 11, and other transportation studies focused on rail, ferry, and port facilities. The SCCOG can also help marshal funding for other transportation-related studies and initiatives such as the linear parks and bikeways proposed for Military Highway and other locations.

6.2 PROJECT EVALUATION & PRIORITIZATION

As part of this plan, a project scoring system has been developed to evaluate existing and future project proposals. It is adapted from a system first developed and employed by the Metro Hartford Millennium Project as part of their decision-making process for how to allocate funding to competing project proposals; and later employed by the Partnership for Growth in Waterbury for the same purpose.

A detailed description of the methodology is provided in Appendix B. Although numerical scores are used, the system is a mix of quantitative measures and qualitative judgment. The system places equal emphasis on project benefits and feasibility, so that only those projects that combine significant public

benefits with a reasonable likelihood of success can obtain high scores. The methodology has several further distinguishing features:

- Unlike traditional evaluation methodologies, the Groton methodology can be used to compare very different projects. This is because the quantity measures are expressed in relative terms, e.g., the number of jobs relative to project costs.
- The methodology is also designed to reveal the strengths and weaknesses of projects in a manner that allows for project improvements. This is because the scores are grouped into categories, so that the reasons for the low and high scores are illuminated. The fact that a project may have received a lower score than others does not mean it is not as valuable to the community. The project rankings may also change as they are further refined.
- Finally, the methodology incorporates the preliminary goals and objectives articulated by the Town and City in past planning efforts and during the current economic development planning process, as revealed in meetings and workshops to date. Due to the fact that many of these projects could be influenced by external conditions, as they evolve, the methodology can and should be revised.

Groton Project Scoring Summary

Benefits (50 points)

1. Job and Tax Impacts (25 points)

- a. Job retention and creation (4 points)
- b. Quality of jobs (4 points)
- c. Supports entrepreneurship (2 Points)
- d. New vs. replacement jobs (2 points)
- e. Job and business spin-off (2 points)
- f. Direct tax base increases (4 points)
- g. Tax base stabilization (3 points)
- h. Impact on public services (4 points)

2. Economic and Neighborhood Infrastructure (25 points)

- a. “Crowd-in” and “synergistic” investments (3 points)
- b. Diversifies the local economy (4 points)
- c. Creates/ Enhances tourist attractions (2 points)
- d. Improves Groton’s image (2 points)
- e. Bolsters Downtown Groton (2 points)
- f. Improves transportation infrastructure (2 points)
- g. Import substitution/export development (3 points)
- h. Promotes sustainable communities (5 points)
- i. Relationship to other plans (2 points)

Feasibility (50 points)

3. Project Feasibility (25 points)

- a. Site control (2 points)
- b. Time horizon (2 points)
- c. Committed tenants (2 points)
- d. Committed funds (2 points)
- e. Availability or likelihood of non-committed funds (2 points)
- f. Private capital leverage (3 points)
- g. Government capital leverage (2 points)
- h. Dependence on other projects (2 points)
- i. Legal, zoning or legislative actions (2 points)
- j. Local political support (2 points)
- k. Organizational capacity (2 points)
- l. Reasonableness of costs (2 points)

4. Project Sustainability (25 points)

- a. Long-term market support (10 points)
- b. Likelihood of new and superior competition (5 points)
- c. Need for and likelihood of long-term subsidies (5 points)
- d. Need for and likelihood of continued public involvement (5 points)

The following presents a summary of initial scores for each project described in Chapter 5 of this Plan. The scores presented are based on the status of the projects at this point in time. Because many of the projects are in their formative stages, they suffer somewhat on the feasibility score. It can be expected that as details are added to the projects, including potential funding sources and partners, these scores will improve.

Scores for each major category, along with rankings within each category, and overall scores are presented in Table 11. The table reveals several broad trends within the projects.

The projects that rate best in terms of **Job and Tax Impacts** are those which directly facilitate new commercial ventures and development—the Center for Excellence, the business incubator, and the Business Park Utilities Infrastructure. However, the job impacts are best measured against the cost of the projects, which is speculative at this time. When more accurate projections of both job creation and project costs become available, these scores could change. At the other end of the scale, many of the “soft” projects, such as the bikeways, linear parks, and wayfinding signage, tend to score low in this category, as they primarily bolster existing business, rather than directly creating new jobs.

The **Economic and Neighborhood Infrastructure** category ranks projects for how they fit with the Town’s planning framework and local priorities. It also considers indirect impacts, such as synergies with other projects and potential for business spin off. Some of the soft projects score very high in this category, such as the bikeways, the circulation plans for Downtown Groton, the Military Highway linear park, and the Thames River Heritage Park. There is considerably less spread between the scores than in the prior category, in part because many of the sub-categories cover unrelated goals, so that a project that does not bolster Downtown Groton may help diversify the economy, and vice versa.

Projects without committed funds, tenants, or a strong existing base of political support, tend to score low on **Project Feasibility**. These include such otherwise worthy projects as the Center for Excellence and the business incubator. More than any other category, scores within this category are likely to change as projects advance from the conceptual phases to more advanced states of planning.

Most of the projects score reasonably well in terms of **Project Sustainability**. The lower scoring projects, such as the business incubator and Thames River Revitalization, either suffer from the need for ongoing subsidy and management, or uncertainty with regards to market support. Again, additional work is needed to flesh out these projects and confirm the long term prospects for both public sector and market support. The project which scores the highest is the Business Park Utilities Infrastructure, which would be sustained by ratepayers over the long term, and would become a permanent part of the Town’s infrastructure.

Table 11: Project Scoring Summary Matrix

Project name	Job & Tax Impacts		Economic & Neighborhood Infrastructure		Project Feasibility		Project Sustainability		Overall	
	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank
1 Route 1 Pedestrian & Streetscape	11	6	13	4	21	1	12	9	57	4
2 Downtown Groton Circulation	13	4	16	1	14	6	18	3	61	2
3 Business Park Utilities	18	2	12	5	16	4	19	2	65	1
4 Military Highway Linear Park	8	7	15	2	12	7	18	3	53	7
5 Thames River Heritage Park	11	6	14	3	15	5	12	9	52	8
6 Thames Street Revitalization	12	5	12	5	14	6	14	7	52	8
7 Mystic Education Center	17	3	13	4	11	8	15	6	56	5
8 City & Town Bikeways/Trailways	5	9	15	2	15	5	17	4	52	8
9 Center for Excellence, Maritime Security	19	1	14	3	10	9	16	5	59	3
10 Business Incubator	18	2	10	6	10	9	13	8	51	9
11 Mystic Multimodal Transportation	7	8	13	4	19	2	14	7	53	7
12 Wayfinding Signage	7	8	13	4	15	5	20	1	55	6
13 Submarine Base Gateway Project	8	7	13	4	17	3	15	6	53	7

Source: Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates, Inc.

From the above analysis, it is clear that the projects most ready to move forward are those that the Town has already accomplished some funding and evaluation of. Each score well and deserved continued support. These include:

- The Route 1 streetscape and pedestrian improvements
- The Thames River Heritage Park
- The Business Park Utilities Infrastructure (barring an unexpected outcome from the study)

There are other projects yet still in their formative stages that have potentially big payoffs, and should be prioritized for further study and due diligence. These include:

- Downtown Circulation
- Business Incubator
- The Center for Excellence in Maritime Security
- Mystic Education Center

The Thames Street Revitalization Project needs a stand-alone planning study before its merits can be properly evaluated. The City has a particular interest in this topic. The Town should assist the City in pursuing funds for a detailed planning and economic strategy for Thames Street.

Some projects have modest score but fit well within a larger framework aimed at better packaging the Town to tourists, as well as improving quality of life. These projects should be pursued, but can be improved by making sure they are coordinated with each other and with other initiatives. They include:

- The Military Highway Linear Park
- The Bikeways/Trailways
- Wayfinding Signage
- Submarine Base Gateway

Lastly, the Town stands to reap some benefits from the Mystic Multimodal Study, but the project sponsor is the Town of Stonington. Groton is a partner, but not the manager, for this project.

6.3 TIMELINE

This economic development strategy contains 61 strategies and 13 projects. The intent of this section is not to place all 61 in order, but rather to group them together as to whether they should be short, medium or long term actions. Short term actions are those which are either already underway or can begin with minimal startup lead time. They correspond to a time frame of 0 to 2 years. Medium term actions are those which require additional planning but not a significant time commitment in terms of securing funds,

undertaking political outreach, etc. These can be largely implemented in 2 to 5 years. The long term actions are those which, by virtue of their expense and complexity, are likely at least five years away or more from implementation. The Strategic Plan Implementation Tables are included in Appendix C.

6.3.1 Short Term Actions

Many of the proposed strategies can be implemented starting immediately—in fact, the major limitation will likely be staff resources rather than anything inherent to the specific strategies. For that reason, an initial step will be to consider issues of capacity— whether to add staff capacity to the economic development function at the Town, and/or whether to explore the formation of an Economic Development Corporation. With regards to the latter, it is not expected that this could be accomplished in the two year time frame, although discussions regarding the matter could occur as projects are actually initiated.

Some early implementation items address the marketing of the town and outreach to businesses— updating the marketing materials and the site inventory, putting a business calling and exit interview program in place, etc. Staff resources to do all these day-to-day economic development tasks are currently tight, but these tasks are an important starting point.

Other short term actions include projects already underway or in the advanced planning phase. These include the Heritage Park, the Downtown Groton Gateway and Streetscape Improvements, Route 1 Streetscape Improvements, and the Business Park Utilities Infrastructure. It is entirely possible that the capital components of these projects could be underway within the two-year time frame, although it is also possible that one or more may lag into the medium term window. Should the Flanders Road Area study arrive at a feasible, desirable and cost-effective option for utility extension, it is recommended that the Town move to secure funding and move ahead with what could be an important project.

Zoning is an obvious short-term action item, as it only involves a vote of the Zoning Commission and does not require extensive funds. However, zoning directly affects the use of property and its value, and therefore is seldom far from controversy. Moreover, the zoning proposals presented here will require significant further study to turn them into workable ordinance language. For these reasons, some proposed changes to the zoning may end up taking place over the medium term time horizon.

The area of Downtown Groton has been a particular focus of this study. While the full redevelopment vision presented in the downtown chapter and echoed in subsequent chapters will take many years to implement, many of the elements can begin in the short term. The chief among these is additional study, particularly with regards to the proposed realignment of Drozdyk Drive. Other early implementation items include improved landscaping along Plaza Court, and improvements to the Town-owned lot at Route 1 and Poquonnock Road.

Finally, many of the tourism related recommendations are short term action items. A study for wayfinding signage could begin in the next two years. The marketing elements of the tourism strategy can also proceed forward, although staff resources remain a constraint.

6.3.2 Medium Term Actions

Many of the medium term actions result from moving from the study phase to the capital phase of particular project proposals. For example, the following might be physically implemented during the 2 – 5 year time frame: utility extensions to the Flanders Road/Business Park area; installation of wayfinding signage, the realignment of Drozdyk Drive.

The study of the reuse of the Mystic Education Center will be a key project, but timing is uncertain. It is anticipated that planning could begin during the medium term, including a potential reuse study to be performed by an outside consultant. Negotiations with the State will be required for the Town to be able to exercise a significant amount of authority over the planning and bidding process for reuse. The actual redevelopment of the property will likely be a long term project.

As noted above, a significant share of the Downtown Groton projects should be in place during the medium term time horizon. The major capital component, the rerouting of Drozdyk Drive, could occur during this time. The revised zoning and signage regulations should be in place. If things go particularly well, a first phase of new building could also begin, perhaps the “v” shaped extension of the Groton Shopping Plaza/Groton Shopping Center as illustrated as part of Phase 2 in the downtown chapter.

In Groton City, the Heritage Park infrastructure should be in place within the medium term. The planning for physical improvements for Thames Street would either be complete or underway, with the actual capital component to be begun towards the end of medium term time horizon, or shortly into the long term. Gateway improvements, at Thames Street and the Nautilus Museum, are also items that should be completed in the medium term.

6.3.3 Long Term Actions

Long term actions are those that, due to their complexity, expense, or dependence upon other actors outside of the Town’s sphere of influence, are anticipated to take many years to complete.

The long term redevelopment of Downtown Groton is one such action. While there are aspects of the downtown plan which can be implemented in the short and medium terms, the full set of changes recommended in the plan will likely take many years to fully implement. The main variable will be the length of time it takes the private sector to respond to the public improvements and revamped vision that would be implemented by the Town. Also, the most speculative of the proposed improvements—the new

rail station at Poquonnock Road—would depend upon some significant shift in travel behavior and state policy towards transit that may or may not occur within the time horizon of this Plan.

Other long term projects include the potential redevelopment of the Mystic Education Center and the creation of a Center of Excellence in Maritime Security. Both will require partnerships with the State and regional agencies, the development of detailed physical plans, and the identification of private sector partners and developers.

6.4 METRICS FOR MEASURING SUCCESS

As the plan goes forward, the public, elected officials, and others will want a means of measuring the effectiveness of the proposals set forth. Some of them will be simple matters of observation—how does the downtown look, is new development occurring, etc. However, quantitative measures are also important, because they elevate the debate away from opinions to objective, measurable facts; and they can more easily be tracked over time, while memories and perceptions change. This section suggests a set of metrics that can be used to track the progress of economic development within the Town. They have been chosen because they met the following criteria:

- Directly or indirectly measure an objective of the town, such as a larger grand list.
- Involve data that is readily available from secondary sources, Town records, or simple direct observations.

6.4.1 Direct Job Increases

Overall employment numbers for Towns can be easily obtained from the Connecticut Department of Labor. Changes in local employment can be tracked to see how the Town’s economy has been doing relative to its region and the State. Job numbers are also typically available at the Town level for “super-sectors” such as manufacturing, retail, etc. These numbers can be tracked on a quarterly and an annual basis.

6.4.2 Labor Force Measures

The total size of the labor force and the unemployment rate give a broad picture as to how well labor is being utilized in Groton. A high unemployment rate indicates slack in the local labor market and is associated with economic slowdowns. A low rate indicates a tight labor market, which leads to higher wages, but may also impact competitiveness if companies have trouble filling positions. Changes in the size of the labor force also indicate local conditions. A growing labor force shows that people are entering the labor force or moving into Groton seeking work. A declining labor force indicates that people are leaving giving up on looking for work, or are leaving Groton to look for work elsewhere.

6.4.3 Earnings

Earnings per worker data are readily available for Town from the Bureau of Economic Analysis Local Area Personal Income data series. Time series comparisons should be made in real (inflation-adjusted) dollars. Growing earnings per worker indicates that Groton is able to attract well-paying jobs. On the other hand, it can also indicate an uncompetitive wage structure. To separate the two, it is more useful to compare earnings per worker for broad categories of jobs, i.e., manufacturing, retail, services, etc. For example, Groton has higher than average earnings per worker largely because it has more of its jobs in the manufacturing sector than the norm.

6.4.4 Tax Base

Three relevant measures are proposed: the overall size of the grand list; the grand list per capita; and the incidence of taxation that falls on residents as opposed to businesses. The first two are available locally and, for every town in Connecticut, are published by DECD. This allows Groton to compare itself to statewide norms and other towns in the region. To the extent that changes are tracked over time, these variables should be converted to real (inflation-adjusted) dollars.

6.4.5 Diversification

Diversification can be measured through a “dissimilarity index,” which compares employment by sector in Groton to the State. The index measures the percentage of workers who would have to switch industries for the Town to be as diversified as the state. The problem is the lack of detailed sector employment data at the town level. Public sources of data would be suppressed due to non-disclosure requirements. Private sources of employment by industry area available, but are less reliable. It is suggested that Groton work with CERC or seCTer to develop and track diversity indices not only for the Town, but for the region.

6.4.6 Development

New developments are the most tangible outcomes of economic development—everyone can drive by and see them. All new developments require the filing of plans and issuance of approvals and permits. Relevant information can be pulled from these materials, such as use and square footage, and running totals can be kept to see how successful Groton has been in attracting new development and investment. On the other hand, since Groton has only so much developable land, it cannot expect to record big new developments every year, nor should it, given the equal local emphasis on conservation and preservation.

6.4.7 Retail Sales

The Connecticut Department of Revenue Services publishes, with a two to three year delay, total retail sales receipts for general retail categories by Town. The data are far from perfect, as sales are often recorded not at the place of sale but at a regional headquarters location. However, with some careful reading, the data can be examined over time to see trends in local retail sales. As with other data expressed in dollars, it is important that it be adjusted for inflation. In addition, sales in Groton should be benchmarked against total sales in New London County to see if the Town is gaining or losing share, and by how much.

7 Appendix A: Interviews

Individuals Interviewed	Organization/Company
Ken Buttinger	Wyman Gordon DBA PCC Structurals
Paul Cataldi	Tommy's Flowers
Tom Duguay	UConn Avery Point
Ken Ewell	Proto Power
Paul Fidrych	Paul's Pasta
Tom Green	American Laboratory Trading
Dave Hammerstrom	Chelsea Groton Bank
Maria Hanna	Survival Systems
John Holstein	First H & M
Nancy Klotz	Downes-Patterson Corporation
Jack Lazarek	Tee's Plus
Chris McLaughlin	Airport Industrial Park
Gary Paul	Paul's TV
Brae Rafferty	Conservation Commission
Bill Rambow	RPS Applied Engineering Controls
Michael Rottas	Pfizer Corporation
Catherine Young Sebastian	Groton-New London Airport
Greg Tiefert	Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation
Juan Torrellas	Vincente Espresso Café

Groups Interviewed	Organization/Company
Downtown and Groton Business Group	
Stan Cardinal	Cardinal Honda
Bud Fay	Pop's Kitchen/Car Wash/Mum's Wash Tub
Nancy Hillery	H. R. Hillery Co.
Greg Hammond	Lighthouse Square/Country Glen Apartments
Jerry Olsen	Groton Shopping Plaza
Gino Partenza	The Ledges Apartments
John Scott	Bailey Agency

Economic Development Group

Ken Bowers	Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates, Inc.
Al Dion	Groton Utilities

Deborah Donovan
Bob Frink
Linnea Lindstrom
Tom Marano
Michael Murphy
Mark Oefinger
Peter Pappas
Tony Sheridan
Barbara Strother

SeCTer
Economic Development Commission
Mystic Chamber of Commerce
Northeast Utilities
Director of Planning and Development - Town of Groton
Town Manager – Town of Groton
CT Small Business Development Center
Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut
Economic and Community Development Specialist –
Town of Groton

Flanders Road Group

Dave Cote
Scott Quaratella
Tim Tylaska

Aqua Massage International
Medtronic
Tylaska Marine Hardware

Mystic Group

Tina Guido-Kelsey
Linnea Lindstrom
Tricia Barkley
Cathy McHugh
Mickey & Donna Williston

Greater Mystic Chamber of Commerce
Greater Mystic Chamber of Commerce
Greater Mystic Chamber of Commerce
Stoneware Clothing
Framers of the Lost Art/Finer Line Gallery

Real Estate Group

Dan Barber
Ron Lyman
Lian Obrey

Northeast Property Group
Lyman Commercial
Re/Max Property Consultants

Tourism Group

Greg Doyle
Nancie Keenan
Chris Jennings
Capt. Michael Regal, Retired
Donna Simpson
Lt. Cdr. Christopher Slawson

Mystic Marriott
Groton Inn and Suites
Mystic Coast and Country
Nautilus/Submarine Museum
Connecticut East Convention and Visitors Bureau
Nautilus/Submarine Museum

Other Town of Groton

Sal Pandolfo
John Phillip

Finance Director
Assessor

8 Appendix B: Project Scoring and Evaluation Methodology

Benefits (50 points)

1. **Job and Tax Impacts (25 points)**—This category evaluates the direct economic yield of the project. Only those impacts directly attributable to the project are included; only long-term permanent effects are counted; and only net increases in employment and taxes are considered.
 - a. **Job retention and creation (4 points)**—This will be evaluated on a capital-cost-per-job basis. Four points are awarded to projects which have a development cost-per-job ratio of up to \$50,000 per job; three points for a ratio of \$50,000 to \$100,000 per job; two points for a ratio of \$100,000 to \$150,000; one point for a ratio of \$150,000 to \$200,000; and no points if the cost-per-job exceeded \$200,000. Construction jobs are not included because they are short-term and do not vary considerably from project to project on a cost-per-construction-job basis.
 - b. **Quality of jobs (4 points)**—Projects that bring jobs that offer decent salaries and benefits and which provide chances for upward mobility will be given one to four points, based on quality of job.
 - c. **Supports Entrepreneurship (2 points)**—Most non-defense, non-pharmaceutical and non-retail job creation in Groton has historically been due to local entrepreneurs starting or locating their businesses in Groton. Projects are awarded points based on their ability to support entrepreneurial business development.
 - d. **New vs. replacement jobs (2 points)**—Projects are awarded points based on whether the jobs created are new to the region, or simply result in a reshuffling of jobs which would have existed anyway.
 - e. **Job and business spin-off (2 points)**— Some projects generate secondary economic growth, such as business spin-offs and sales multipliers. Higher points will go to projects which leverage greater indirect benefits.
 - f. **Direct tax base increases (4 points)**—This measure awards up to four points when projects make a direct net contribution to government revenues, beyond sales and payroll tax increases tied to employment, business, and tourism gains (which are reflected in other measures). Property tax (grand list) increases are the most important variable here.

- g. Tax base stabilization (3 points)—Beyond direct property tax increases, improvements to the stability of the tax base are also given points here. For example, projects that enhance and contribute to home value and income stabilization serve to solidify Groton’s tax base.
 - h. Impact on public services (4 points) —While direct tax base increases are important, they can be offset if the new development demands additional public services. Projects are awarded points to the extent that they can be adequately served with existing infrastructure, do not overwhelm the Town’s schools, and do not require the provision of new or unique services.
2. **Economic and Neighborhood Infrastructure (25 points)**—This category focuses on the indirect economic impacts that the project might have on Groton.
- a. “Crowd-in” and “synergistic” economic development investments (3 points)—A “crowd-in” investment is one which triggers or protects other private investments in the immediate area. A new highway exit or arterial connector, for instance, usually results in commercial development in the surrounding area. A “synergistic” investment is one which increases the benefits of other projects in the immediate area. Several developments on the same street, for instance, could result in more sales for each individual development than would have occurred if the several developments were in separate places. Projects will be given one to three points, based on the anticipated level of synergistic or crowd-in effects from the investment.
 - b. Diversifies the local economy (4 points) —A diverse local economy is essential to Groton’s ability to withstand the impacts of macro forces beyond the Town’s control (globalization, trends in the pharmaceuticals industry, defense spending). Projects are awarded two points for increases employment in an industry sector underrepresented in the Town or Region; and one point each for (1) increases non-defense, non-pharmaceutical employment; and (2) if the project bolsters a cluster targeted in the regional CEDS or local economic development plans.
 - c. Enhances existing or creates new tourist attractions (2 points) —Groton’s existing tourist attractions include downtown Mystic and the Nautilus Museum. Proposed attractions include a revitalized Thames Street and the proposed Thames River Heritage Park. Projects which create or enhance a local attraction are awarded one point; and a regional attraction or super-regional destination, two points.
 - d. Improves Groton’s image (2 points) —Although portions of Groton (like Mystic) have high visibility and image in the region and beyond, the Town lacks a strong image. Projects which promote a positive image of the Town in the region receive one points; those that promote the Town beyond the region receive two.

- e. Bolsters Downtown Groton (2 points) —Projects which enhance the existing condition are awarded one point. Those which result in more major physical and circulation improvements or significant redevelopment merit two points.
- f. Improves transportation infrastructure (2 points) —Transportation improvements are vital to moving goods and people in the Town and region, and should include transit, biking and walking in addition to roadways. Projects which improve circulation and connectivity within Groton are awarded one point; those that improve Groton's connections with the world beyond its borders receive two points.
- g. Import substitution/export development (3 points)—This category analyzes the extent to which a particular project can attract dollars to Groton which would otherwise be spent elsewhere. Import substitution occurs when local businesses recapture money directed to purchasing goods and services outside the neighborhood. Export development occurs when local businesses cater to regional markets and thereby bring in fresh capital that had never been spent in Groton. Up to three points are awarded depending on the extent to which import substitution and export development is expected to occur with the project.
- h. Promotes sustainable communities (5 points)—This category includes projects and programs that improve neighborhood quality of life, e.g., school improvements, park amenities, cultural programs, crime prevention efforts, beautification campaigns, commercial strip preservation and revitalization programs, etc. Two points are awarded if neighborhood quality of life is improved, with an extra point if the Town's overall quality of life is enhanced. Another two points will be awarded if there are no major environmental impacts associated with the project.
- i. Relationship to town, city and regional plans (2 points)—This measure assesses compliance with spirit or letter of physical and economic development plans. These presently include the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development and the regional CEDS plan, as well as several other local and regional planning efforts. One point is awarded if the project is consistent with the spirit of one or more of these plans; two points are awarded if the project is expressly contained in one or more of these plans.

Feasibility (50 points)

- 3. **Project Feasibility (25 points)**—This category analyzes the feasibility of the project based on such variables as funding and a sponsor's experience and capacity. An independent feasibility study or financial audit cannot be prepared for each project as part of the cost-benefit evaluations. However,

independent judgment can be used in determining the reasonableness of development costs or market research based on comparable projects.

- a. Site control (2 points)—Project sponsors who have support from the present owner of the site receive one point. Sponsors who have formal site control (i.e., those with an option, contract, lease, license or deed) are awarded two points.
- b. Time horizon (2 points)—Projects which will take one to two years to complete receive two points and those with a three- to four-year time frame receive one point. Projects which will take more than four years to complete receive zero points because longer-term projects are more uncertain and entail more risk.
- c. Committed tenants (2 points)—Projects with a formal commitment from an anchor tenant receive two points, while those with a less formal (e.g., verbal) commitment receive one.
- d. Committed funds (2 points)—Projects with 50 percent or more of their funding committed receive two points. Those with at least some funding committed receive one point.
- e. Availability or likelihood of non-committed funds (2 points)—Projects which look certain to receive as-yet-uncommitted funding get two points. Projects with unsure prospects in this regard get one point. Projects unlikely to get non-committed funds get zero points.
- f. Private capital leverage (3 points)—Projects that are developer- or lender-financed are more likely to have market viability, represent a net import of capital, and not compete for precious public subsidies. One point is awarded for every 25 percent of the total financing that is to come from non-government and non-foundation sources, with three points for projects that receive 75 percent or more from non-government and non-foundation sources.
- g. Government capital leverage (2 point)—This measure awards an extra point where State or local foundation gifts are leveraged, and two points where federal or national foundation gifts are leveraged. Non-city subsidies bring fresh capital to the Town without depriving other projects.
- h. Dependence on other projects (2 points)—Some projects depend on other projects before they can move to completion. An industrial park, for example, may need to wait for a highway improvement or clean-up of a brownfield. This category assesses what other projects are necessary and whether those other projects are feasible. If the other projects are assured or feasible, one point is given. If no other projects are required, then two points are given.

- i. Legal, zoning or legislative actions (2 points)—A project which has already received, or will not need to receive, any zoning modifications, statutory changes, or other approvals from public entities has a greater chance of happening than one which has yet to confront those obstacles. Projects that are already approved or are “as of right” receive two points. Projects which are confident, and have reason to be confident, of such approvals receive one point.
 - j. Local political support (2 points)—Projects that have already received, or do not require, support from local political leaders for funding or for legal, zoning or legislative actions are more feasible than ones that do have to worry about such matters. A project with unanimous support from local political leaders receives two points. A project with some support receives one point. Controversial projects receive zero points.
 - k. Organizational capacity (2 points)—Certain project sponsors have a more effective track record in project development than others. A project sponsored by an organization or team with a proven and extensive track record gets two points. A project sponsored by an organization or team with some relevant experience gets one point.
 - l. Reasonableness of costs (2 points)—Costs include development, construction and operating costs. Projects which are relatively inexpensive on a unit basis, as compared to the industry standard for similar projects, get two points. Projects with average unitized costs receive one point.
4. **Project Sustainability (25 points)**—This category evaluates the project's ability to survive in the long term.
- a. Long-term market support (10 points)—A project which will cater to a market which has already been proven to exist is obviously less risky than one which plans to rely on uncharted demand. Projects which depend entirely on existing demand or on well-documented consumer demand receive full points. Those which rely on wholly speculative or highly unlikely sources of demand receive no points.
 - b. Likelihood of new and superior competition (5 points)—This measure refers to a particular project's chances of survival given the competition that it is likely to face in the future. The assumption is that if poorly sited or conceived, the project will face superior competition at some point in the future.
 - c. Need for and likelihood of long-term subsidies (5 points)—Obviously, when additional public or private funds are required to subsidize an annual operating deficit, long-term stability is uncertain. Therefore, higher points are awarded to those projects which can survive on their own financially or which have an extremely reliable source for subsidy funding.

- d. Need for and likelihood of continued public involvement (5 points)—Projects which require continued intervention or supervision by the community sponsor or a government entity are inherently more complex and difficult to sustain than those which, once built, are propelled by private investment and reinvestment. For example, a community food co-op or farmer's market would usually be harder to sustain than a private supermarket, all other factors (site location, marketability, etc.) being equal.

9 Appendix C: Implementation Tables

[illegible]

[illegible]

	Action	EDC	ZC	PC	TC	RTM	Staff	Other	Pg
43. Designate more Scenic Byways in Groton, either locally or through the State DOT's scenic byways program	M							CDOT	99
44. Promote Groton as a destination for outdoor and maritime recreation and eco-tourism	M							GMC EC MC	100
45. Continue to pursue new greenways/bikeways to create a network of parks and open spaces	S							TCC	100
46. Improve access to existing parks, through better car and bike parking, new trailways, etc.	S							TPR	100
47. Promote the preservation of Groton's historic heritage, buildings and sites	S							CHC	100
48. Along identified scenic byways, pursue land use policies aimed at preserving scenic and/or rural landscapes	S								101
49. Continue to target key areas in the watershed for preservation	S							TCC	101
4.9 Improve the packaging and marketing of existing tourist attractions									
50. Focus on the weekend getaway market for tourism	M							GMC EC MC	101
51. Continue to pursue the Heritage Park concept for Thames River attractions	S							CDEP DECD CNL COG	101
52. Improve gateways to the Nautilus Museum	S/M							DECD GDC	102
53. Promote more B&B's in historic Mystic and along or near Thames Street	M							CPZ	102
54. Prepare a Groton-specific tourist map and guide to local attractions	M							GMC EC MC	102
55. Market Groton's attractions locally as well as afar	M							GMC EC MC	102
56. Work with regional tourism entities (such as Mystic Coast & Country) to promote local events	S/M							CTB	103
57. Implement a comprehensive system of wayfinding signage	M							TM CMO	103
4.10 Undertake projects and plans which bolster community pride and image									
58. Host communitywide events in each of Groton's unique sub-districts: Groton City, Noank, Groton Long Point, and Mystic	M							GMC EC MC	103
59. Make Downtown Groton a place for the whole community to come together	M							GMC	103
60. Consider the creation of a multi-purpose Town owned art center	M/L								104
61. Pursue the creation of a new special event celebrating Groton	S/M							GMC EC TPR	104

SPECIFIC PROJECTS

		Action	EDC	ZC	PC	TC	RTM	Staff	Other	Pg
1.	Downtown Groton—Route 1 Retail Area Pedestrian and Streetscape Improvements	S/M								106
2.	Downtown Groton Internal Circulation Study	S/M								107
3.	Business Park Utilities	S/M								107
4.	Military Highway Linear Park	L								108
5.	Thames River Heritage Park	S/M								109
6.	Thames Street Revitalization	M							CMO	109
7.	Mystic Education Center	S/M							COPM SL	110
8.	City & Town Bikeway/Trailway Plan	S							CDOT	111
9.	Center for Excellence in Maritime Security	M							GDC	111
10.	Business Incubator	S/M							UCONN	112
11.	Mystic Multimodal Transportation Study	S/M							TOS	113
12.	Wayfinding Signage	M							TM CMO	113
13.	Submarine Base Gateway Project	S/M							DECD GDC	114

ID	Reference
CDEP	Connecticut Dept. of Environmental Protection
CDOT	Connecticut Dept. of Transportation
CERC	Connecticut Economic Resource Center
CHC	Connecticut Historic Commission
CMO	City Mayor's Office
COG	City of Groton
CNL	City of New London
COPM	Connecticut Office of Policy and Management
CPZ	City Planning and Zoning Commission
DECD	Connecticut Dept. of Economic and Community Development
EC	Eastern Connecticut Chamber of Commerce
EDC	Economic Development Commission (TOG)
GDC	SE CT Governor's Diversification Committee
GMC	Greater Mystic Chamber of Commerce
GU	Groton Utilities
MC	"Mystic Country" – SE CT Tourism District
PC	Planning Commission (TOG)
PO	Property Owners
RTM	Representative Town Meeting (TOG)
Staff	Staff (TOG)
SECT	Southeastern Connecticut Enterprise Region
SL	State Legislators
TC	Town Council (TOG)
TCC	Town Conservation Commission
TM	Town Manager
TOG	Town of Groton
TOS	Town of Stonington
TPR	Town Parks and Recreation
UCONN	University of Connecticut
ZC	Zoning Commission (TOG)

ACTION TIMELINE LEGEND

Timeline	Description
S	Short Term Action: Already ongoing or underway, or up to two (2) years
M	Medium Term Action: Two (2) to five (5) years
L	Long Term Action: Five (5) or more years