

Summary of the two Town Plan Documents - Village of Woodbridge Town Development Concept Plan (2013) and Town Plan of Conservation and Development (2015-25)

Village of Woodbridge Town Development Concept Plan (2013):

My bullet points from the Village of Woodbridge Development Concept Plan (prepared by The Yale Center for Urban Design) in conjunction with the Woodbridge EDC and the Town of Woodbridge. 2008-2013

- Define the business district as a brand, create identity and marketing
- Use consistent signage and other devices to define the physical boundaries of the business district and build the brand identity.
- Use the state DOT redevelopment of Exit 59 as an opportunity to improve the business district physically
- Landscaping and sidewalks to make the business district pedestrian friendly
- Encourage infill mixed use (commercial/residential) development

-Online Business District website which is a business map of the Woodbridge business district as well as a physical sign in key locations of the WBD

Details from the Village of Woodbridge Development Concept Plan (prepared by The Yale Center for Urban Design) 2013

Page 5 – YCUD has been working with Woodbridge EDC from 2008-13 on this plan

Page 5 – Plan indicates the Woodbridge business district is to be known as “the Village of Woodbridge”

Page 5 - Village should develop more of its own identity as the “downtown” of Woodbridge, while taking better advantage of its close physical relationship with the large concentration of shopping in the adjacent areas of New Haven.

Page 7 – Work with the DOT in the context of their current study of the intersection of Routes 15, 63 and 69 (Interchange 59) to ensure that all possible improvements to enhance safety and smooth flow of traffic are implemented in a timely manner, and that those improvements also enhance the quality of commercial and residential life in the Village of Woodbridge. Specific recommendations and details are included in Appendix 2.

Page 9 - The first phase of streetscape and sidewalk improvements should focus on the Lucy and Bank Street and Selden Street corridors as the principal local and pedestrian framework for the future development and improvement of the Village, as noted above. Lucy Street and Bank Street should have improved sidewalks, landscaping, lighting and signage on both sides, connecting across Route 69 to the West River corridor and eastern areas of the Village, and across Route 63 to the Selden Avenue area, as well as north along Route 63 to Bradley Road. Selden Avenue and its commercial properties should be comprehensively improved over time as a miniature “Main Street” for the Village, connecting better to the Amity Plaza Shopping Center in New Haven, providing curbs and sidewalks (or a “complete street” section), and encouraging new development and/or landscaping to make the eastern side of the street feel more like a front, rather than a back, as is currently the case.

Page 9 - Village signage (i.e. public signage) should be coordinated with the information and publicity program, and website, being developed for local businesses, while local businesses should be encouraged to develop appropriate and distinctive signage that matches their general presentation in advertising as well as architecture. See page 36 & 37 for examples.

Page 11 – Summary of the problem - While the Village can boast several destination business, such as Amity Bicycle, those businesses are neither sufficiently celebrated by design and setting nor adequately positioned and connected to other uses, to effectively serve as anchors. Combined with the lack of an overall Village identity, marketing and management strategy, shared parking and pedestrian network, this means that every business must function largely on its own, rather than taking advantage of the shared image and resources typical of successful commercial developments, whether they are a small village center or a large shopping mall.

Page 13 - Finally, the recently discussed commitment of the State Department of Transportation to study and improve the intersections of Routes 15, 63, and 69 in this area represents a huge opportunity for Woodbridge to coordinate planning for the Village of Woodbridge with potentially significant infrastructure improvements. This particular opportunity should not be missed. Preliminary recommendations include several items that have been discussed in the context of this study, including a “new north-south connector road” linking Routes 63 and 69 and serving both the entrance and exit from Route 15 for southbound traffic. This link would go a long way towards rationalizing the traffic patterns in the Village especially if the new road is eventually connected to

more continuous street grid providing the local circulatory framework for the Village.

Page 33 - In order to support the pedestrian-oriented, modestly dense, mixed-use commercial center and residential neighborhood that is characteristic of successful village centers around the country, Woodbridge needs to encourage over time both infill development and new development that will move the Village away from the current pattern of disconnected suburban style, auto-oriented development. The recommendations in this area fall within the jurisdiction of Planning and Zoning, and therefore will require a collaborative effort on the part of the Economic Development Commission, Planning and Zoning, as well as merchants, residents and property owners in the Village. There are important opportunities for new infill building and reconfiguration of underperforming, strip-style commercial sites, that should have the effect of making them more attractive and pedestrian-friendly, while also increasing their commercial performance and contribution to the overall character of the Village.

Page 39 – Business Map, Website - In particular, it is recommended that the Woodbridge Economic Development Commission and the Village of Woodbridge establish and maintain a website, with an on-line

business directory, and a coordinated business map of the Village, in both interactive digital format as well as paper and other hard copy formats. This business map could also be a distinctive piece of signage in either banner or conventional signage formats. The job of distributing and updating this database in its various formats would be a regular task for the custodian of the website to insure fresh content and up-to-date information.

*Action Plan from the Village of Woodbridge Town
Development Concept Plan*

Short-term (1-2 years):

- Establish a Woodbridge Business Special Services District, or similar association to manage, maintain and promote the Village and its businesses.
- Develop a plan for shared parking to be managed collectively by the Town of Woodbridge and the Village SSD.
- Develop a website for the Village, with an on-line business directory and map.
- Establish a structure to facilitate ongoing cooperation and sharing of information between the Economic Development Commission and the Plan and Zoning

Commission in the planning and development of the Village.

- Maintain close and continuous coordination through the Economic Development Commission, Planning and Zoning and the Woodbridge Traffic Commission with the DOT study, with respect not only to large scale planning issues such as the location and configuration of ramps and intersections, but also the relevant details of landscape, lighting and signage.
- Design one or more public installations of the business map at strategic locations in the Village.
- Proceed with the implement the program of sidewalk construction as outlined in Appendix 1 below, in order to establish a continuous pedestrian network throughout the Village. Underground overhead utility lines whenever undertaking streetscape improvements.

Mid-term (2-4 years):

- Complete a comprehensive program of sidewalk construction and improvement, with crosswalks and associated streetscape elements to establish a continuous pedestrian network throughout the Village. Underground overhead utility lines whenever undertaking streetscape improvements.
- Develop and implement a bike lane system within the Village, including signage and

bike racks.

- Develop a façade and landscape improvement program with matching funds to encourage property owners to improve facades, parking and pedestrian areas, signage and landscaping at their businesses.
- Focus on the T formed by Selden Street, Bank Street continuing along Lucy Street to Route 69, as well as the connection north along Route 63 to Bradley Road, with the goal of giving Selden Street and the Intersection of Lucy and Route 69 a more local Main Street character.
- Work with Connecticut DOT to plan the needed improvements to Interchange 59 on the Wilbur Cross Parkway and adjacent sections of Routes 63 and 69, as discussed in Appendix 2 below.
- Working with Planning and Zoning, develop a zoning overlay for the Village that encourages infill development and redevelopment of underdeveloped and underperforming sites, with higher density mixed-use development as illustrated in this report, aiming to make two to three story buildings with retail ground floors and office or residential above, street and pedestrian oriented with minimal setbacks and rear parking the norm for new development in the Village.

Long-term (4-10 years):

- Plan for the eventual improvement and redevelopment of large sites within the Village to be more compatible with the concept of a Village Center as discussed and illustrated in this report.
- Implement major improvements to the vehicular network within the Village in concert with DOT improvements to Interchange 59, to establish a well-functioning vehicular grid of local and regional streets.

NEXT STEPS

This Plan is intended to be used as a framework and guide for ongoing planning, improvement and development of the Village. In the section that follows, projects discussed in the body of the report are organized according to priority and phasing. While most of the recommendations of the report have long-term implications in terms of funding, maintenance and management, some projects, due to their scale, complexity and expense may take years to develop. In the meantime, it is extremely important to identify short-term projects that can translate the energy and concerns of the planning process into immediate and visible action. **While these short-term projects are intended to address, if not resolve, real issues, they have over-riding importance as momentum builders and as a demonstration of the commitment of the Economic**

Development Commission and residents to working towards goals. In order to monitor and maintain progress towards the realization of this plan and its recommendations, and to keep the Plan current and fresh by continuing the discussion and the planning process, it is recommended that the Economic Development Commission establish a Planning Sub-Committee to liaise and work with the Plan and Zoning Commission and to be the custodian and executor of this Plan, and to revisit and update its recommendations periodically, with a comprehensive review and revision no later than 5 years from the adoption of this Plan. Of course any of these phased recommendations can change places in line, as circumstances, needs and opportunities arise.

**Town Plan of Conservation and Development (2015-25)
(selections that pertain to Woodbridge EDC):**

My bullet points from the Town Plan of Conservation and Development (2015-25)

-TPCD repeats the Yale/EDC recommendations (page37)
see action plan above

- Encourage small business growth as a Woodbridge success to build on
- TPCD action plan encourages working with developers to achieve goals

Details from the Town Plan of Conservation and Development (2015-25)

Page 37 - In 2013, the Woodbridge Economic Development Commission completed a Development Concept plan for the Amity area that outlined “strategies for the improvement and future development of the area to be known as the Village of Woodbridge.” Based on an extensive collaboration with local business owners and the Economic Development Commission, the Plan developed a set of recommendations for transforming the area from an auto-oriented commercial area into a modern mixed-use village center style of development. The Concept Plan’s primary recommendations include - · Enhancing walkability and a unique local identity with pedestrian improvements, and improved landscaping and building facades, · Establishing design standards for sidewalks, lighting, street trees, and other furnishings, · Encouraging infill

development and densification of key sites, including housing above ground floor commercial units, · Improving wayfinding and village identity with distinctive signage, area maps, and an online presence, · Lobbying for major improvements to Interchange 59 and the surrounding street grid. Many recommendations of the Concept Plan inform the recommendations set forth for the Village area in the Plan of Conservation and Development.

Page 40 - Woodbridge's economic development goal should be to “stay small, stay local” and emphasize small business development, niche retailers, and high-value industrial opportunities. Enhancing the infrastructure and built environment of the Woodbridge Village area can enhance the Town's ability to attract valuable investments and enterprises.

Page 68 – There is a large parcel on Litchfield Turnpike at Bradley road that could be developed

Action Plan from the Town Plan of Conservation and Development (2015-25) for Economic Development and Woodbridge Village

Ongoing Actions

Build on the success of a high value-added commercial base

- Continue to promote new businesses that provide synergies with existing businesses without exacerbating traffic problems
- Be alert to tax benefits of operations with high value instruments

Maintain regular contact with the business community

- Reach out to business owners and employees to maintain a business-friendly climate and solve common problems proactively

Seek out appropriately-scaled businesses, housing, and community amenities on large opportunity parcels in the Village if and when they become available for redevelopment:

- Crest Auto site and adjacent commercial sites
- Former Subaru dealership site
- Selden Plaza site
- Vacant parcels adjacent to Bradley Road
- Parking lot adjacent to Our Lady of the Assumption church
- Commercial parcel adjoining Merritt Parkway on eastern side of Litchfield Turnpike

Consult with development community

- Engage in consultations with residential and commercial property developers to identify steps to attract high-quality residential and commercial mixed-use projects

Near-Term Action Agenda

Support new business development

- Lead continuing business recruitment and development towards achieving a mix of economic assets in Town
- Establish contacts with home-based businesses to include them in development initiatives and opportunities

Advocate for solutions to transportation needs

- Partner with New Haven, other surrounding communities, and affected businesses to support accelerated timeline for planned improvements to Route 15 and Litchfield

Turnpike

- Expand sidewalks and install additional wayfinding elements to the Village to benefit businesses and their customers

Foster a 21st century economy linked to the creative economic sector

- The Town should promote opportunities for the creative economy sector to establish itself, grow, and expand through the fostering of networking, support for regional arts and cultural institutions, and events.

Understand the Town's role within the larger regional economy

- Focus on the unique strengths that Woodbridge has (community character, open space transportation connectivity, adjacency to New Haven) and look for opportunities to collaborate with other surrounding municipalities and neighborhoods (e.g. Westville) to strengthen economic networks and initiatives.

Bring local foods to accessible locations

- Seek out a location in the Village District suitable for an accessible farmer's market

Mid-Term Action Agenda

Explore potential benefits of a Business Improvement District (BID)

- Discuss potential for Village businesses to vote to create a BID to coordinate and finance marketing, parking, pedestrian improvements, and online presence and branding

Encourage home enterprises to move to the Village District

- The EDC can assist in connecting entrepreneurs and home office-based businesses to mentors and resources to grow in size, profile, and local impact

Actively seek Village area funding Opportunities

- Identify and pursue grants and other funding sources to improve infrastructure and economic capacity in the Woodbridge Village

Effectively market Woodbridge to visitors

- Promote local businesses, natural assets and features, and seasonal events to the region

Long-Term Action Agenda

Find space, funding, and partners to launch a business incubator and/or coworking space

- Examine and support (e.g. through state tax incentives) opportunities to start an incubator space to support new local businesses with space, resources, and shared expertise, potentially in partnership with Yale or other universities.
- Look for opportunities to develop shared working spaces.

Create live-work spaces

- Support creative industries by developing live/work units in Woodbridge Village Mixed Use district.