

# CAREFULLY MANAGE DEVELOPMENT

# 9

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## OVERVIEW

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While most residents of Madison place a higher emphasis on conservation issues, development activities will continue in the future as property owners elect to develop or use their property. As a result, patterns of development must be considered as a part of the Plan.

Development can have positive effects in Madison. For example, economic development can expand the tax base and provide tax revenue to help provide community services. Development in village centers can enhance community character, result in businesses offering a wider variety of goods and services for residents, and provide for housing diversity. The key issues to be addressed are what type of development occurs and where or how it takes place.

The challenge of this Plan is to carefully guide and manage development activities so that residents feel that development is preserving Madison's character and protecting the town's important features.

New Development



*Charlotte Evarts Archives*

***Where and how development occurs is important to maintaining Madison's character and quality of life ...***

### **Madison Center**

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As previously indicated, Madison Center is the business, cultural, and institutional center of Madison. Much effort has been devoted over the years to studying the Center and devising strategies to guide future activities and ensure the vitality of the Center and these efforts should be continued.

The Chapter on Madison Center contains more information on policy recommendations for this area.

### **North Madison Center**

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In the Plan, the term North Madison generally refers to areas north of Green Hill Road.

On the other hand, the term North Madison Center generally refers to the area around the traffic circle at Route 79 and Route 80.

## **Enhance Village Centers**

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One of the main themes of the Plan is to enhance the existing village centers (Madison Center and North Madison Center) to the extent possible since they enhance community character and help meet the daily needs of residents.

North Madison Center, more of a neighborhood center than a community center, helps meet the daily needs of residents of North Madison and other nearby areas. While several studies have been done of Madison Center, no comparable studies have been done for North Madison Center. During the planning period, a study of North Madison Center should be undertaken to ensure it continues to meet residents' needs and complements other aspects of community character. In particular, the list of uses allowed in North Madison Center should be reviewed to ensure that it maintains its role as a neighborhood-oriented center rather than a highway-oriented strip.

### **Recommendations**

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1. Undertake a study of North Madison Center to ensure it continues to meet residents' needs and complements other aspects of community character.
2. Establish a neighborhood village center zone to provide a consistent set of guidelines for the North Madison Center area and greater control over development patterns and architectural and site design.
3. Review the list of permitted uses in North Madison Center to ensure that it maintains its role as a neighborhood-oriented center.



## **Simplify Business Zones**

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Madison currently has a number of business zones with subtle distinctions between them. Overall, it seems that Madison would be better served by simplifying the number and variety of business zones in the community. A suggested overall structure is summarized in the sidebar.

As previously mentioned, separate village districts (as authorized under Public Act 98-116) should be established in Madison Center and North Madison Center. Another village district (or another type of business zone) could be established for existing business areas on Route 1. A business park zone (or another type of business zone) could be established to encourage appropriate economic development in possible future business areas that are identified on the Future Land Use Plan on page 85.

Finally, all zones should then be evaluated as to location and requirements. Madison recently upgraded and simplified zoning classifications and regulations in Madison Center in order to promote compatible development. This effort should be continued in other zones as well.

Madison has used conditional use areas (called “Special Exception Permit Areas” in Madison) to guide development in business and transitional areas. These areas should also be reviewed and some areas might be incorporated into the new business zones.

### **Recommendations**

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1. Establish a new hierarchy of business zones in Madison to simplify the business structure of the community.
2. Review all business zones and areas as to location and requirements.

### **New Business Zones**

In summary, the proposed zoning structure would be as follows:

Madison Center Zone  
North Madison Center  
Zone  
Route 1 Business Zone  
Business Park Zone  
Industrial Zone

## Enhance Commercial Areas on Route 1

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Other than the Center, Madison has three commercial areas on Route 1 that are more “strip-oriented” than “village-oriented”:

- between Mungertown Road and the railroad tracks,
- From Old Boston Post Road to Guilford (west), and
- between the Hammonasset Connector and Clinton (east).

While the businesses in these areas provide goods and services, employment, and tax revenue to Madison and its residents, these areas lack the character of the village centers in Madison and interrupt the otherwise residential character of the Route 1 corridor. These business zones should be restricted to their present extent unless significant community benefits can be demonstrated.

During the planning period, the zoning designations of these areas should be reviewed in order to encourage development and land use that is most in keeping with Madison’s character. Permitted uses, setbacks, lot coverage, landscaping, building design, and site design requirements should all be reviewed to ensure the most appropriate development and redevelopment of these areas. Incentives should be built into the regulations to encourage:

- mixed uses (including residential units),
- commercial uses that are consistent with the plan,
- architecture that is more in keeping with Madison’s character,
- consolidated development where adjacent parcels integrate parking, access, and vehicular and pedestrian circulation, and
- enhanced landscaping.

**Area West of Mungertown Road**



Special attention should be paid to the two “gateway” commercial areas on Route 1 at the borders with Clinton and Guilford.

While village district zoning could accomplish many of these objectives, it should be carefully considered before being applied in these areas.

### **Recommendations**

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1. Prevent commercial “creep” along Route 1.
2. Consider undertaking a special study of each commercial area along Route 1 in order to help guide the appropriate future development of these areas.
3. Evaluate current zoning designations and requirements along Route 1 to determine if uses, setbacks, and other requirements are appropriate.
4. Modify zoning regulations to create incentives for compatible development and redevelopment of these commercial areas, including encouraging consolidated development with shared access, parking, and circulation.
5. Look at village district zoning for commercial areas along Route 1.

**Boston Post Road**



*Jerome Wexler*

## Conflicting Opinions?

About two-thirds of Madison residents feel that the Town should do more to encourage more business development in order to reduce taxes on residents.

However, about two-thirds disagree with the rezoning of residential land to business uses to encourage more business.

Business people surveyed by the Madison Business Planning Council were most in favor of attracting:

- corporate offices,
- retail stores,
- entrepreneurs,
- research facilities,
- restaurants, and
- professional services.

The areas considered to be most suitable included:

- Hammonasset area,
- Route 1 East,
- Route 1 West, and
- North Madison Center.

## **Maintain and Expand the Tax Base**

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For the purpose of this section of the Plan, the term “economic development” is considered to refer to any use or activity that provides more in municipal revenue (especially tax revenue) than it requires in municipal services.

Of all of the land area in Madison, only about 1.5 percent is used for business and industrial purposes. Yet, these uses comprised about seven percent of the 1998 Grand List in Madison. Since non-residential uses do not result in school-age children, much of their tax revenue supports community programs and activities that benefit Madison residents. Clearly, business and industrial uses make important contributions to Madison’s character and quality of life and are one form of economic development.

However, economic development can also take other forms. Some housing developments occupied by elderly persons (with no school age children) can represent economic development since their municipal service needs can be modest. Economic development can also include lodging facilities, public utility facilities, and state or federal facilities that make payments-in-lieu-of-taxes (PILOT).

During the planning process, there was discussion of increasing the opportunities for economic development in Madison in order to provide for more local employment, more goods and services for residents, and more tax revenue in order to support community programs and activities.

As shown on the fold-out map on the facing page, there are only a few locations that were identified as having some potential to provide for economic development. While other areas were considered, it was felt that those other areas had the potential for significantly impacting existing residential areas, community character, and quality of life.

The Plan suggests an overall strategy for Madison to pursue which involves strategic efforts to expand the tax base by:

- nurturing existing businesses in Madison,
- enhancing use of existing business sites,
- recruiting clean businesses for sites located near Route 1, Interstate 95, and the railroad tracks, and
- seeking other forms of economic development appropriate for Madison.

For example, the Hammonasset area of Route 1 site is well-located to accommodate some forms of economic development. Another site that may have merit for consideration is the property west of Copse Road and north of Interstate 95.

When opportunities for economic development present themselves, consideration should be given to maximizing the use of business zoned properties.

To pursue this strategy, the Town needs to identify a person or organization responsible for overseeing and coordinating economic development efforts. This could be an existing person (such as a member of the Board of Selectmen), an existing organization (such as the Business Planning Council), or the Economic Development Commission.

### **Recommendations**

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1. Identify a person or organization responsible for overseeing and coordinating economic development efforts.
2. Continue to work with existing organizations (such as the Chamber of Commerce and the Business Planning Council) in order to help create a business-friendly environment.
3. Continue to help existing businesses stay in Town and grow.
4. Continue to pursue a broader tax base through recruitment of compatible business and industry.
5. Identify and study areas appropriate for economic development and/or rezoning (airport, existing zoned land).
6. Consider developing “vision” plans for potential economic development areas in order to obtain conceptual approval that will help guide potential businesses and developers.
7. Consider rezoning areas identified on the map to allow for economic development.

### **Encourage Business Activity Consistent with the Intent of the Plan**

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While there is interest in expanding the tax base, this must also be balanced with the desire to enhance Madison’s character and quality of life. Business development should support the overall business structure in Madison and complement the community. In the long term, business development for the sake of business development has the potential to detract from Madison’s character and erode the overall quality of life.

### **Recommendations**

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1. Continue to ensure that business development supports the overall business structure in Madison and complements the character and quality of life in the community.

**Potential Economic Development Areas**  
(flip page up)

## **Multi-Family Development**

Multi-family and/or higher density developments should:

- have strict density controls,
- be discouraged away from major roads, and
- provide ample buffers to the road and neighboring uses.

To ensure compatibility of location and design before significant funds are expended, a two stage approval process is recommended:

- conceptual design where the location, density, and design is addressed, and
- final plan approval.

The Advisory Committee on Community Appearance should be involved in both stages.

## **Coastal Areas**

Residential development in coastal areas is addressed in more detail on pages 61 to 64.

# **Manage Residential Development**

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## **Overall Structure**

The residential zoning structure of Madison is well established and is strongly related to soil types, terrain, and infrastructure availability and capacity. No major changes are anticipated or recommended in the basic pattern of:

- moderate densities south of Interstate 95,
- low densities between Interstate 95 and Green Hill Road, and
- lowest densities north of Green Hill Road.

However, a review of residential zone standards should be conducted to:

- see if zones can be consolidated, and
- permitted uses and standards are appropriate.

Some multi-family (and/or higher density) developments have been allowed in outlying areas of Madison where they provided opportunities to preserve natural features, open space, or provide for housing diversity. This Plan recommends that such developments be encouraged in Madison Center and surrounding areas in order to promote development of an active and vibrant center with a variety of land uses. Multi-family (and/or higher density) developments should be discouraged in other areas unless there is some significant community benefit that will result.

## **Regulatory Changes**

In order to guide residential development at appropriate densities and provide additional flexibility in siting of homes, Madison should adopt a buildable land regulation and a residential density regulation.

A buildable land regulation excludes areas that contain serious constraints to development (such as wetland, watercourse, floodplain, and steep slope areas) when determining the amount of buildable land. Depending on the degree of constraint to development, such areas can be totally excluded or can be discounted by a certain amount. For example, a 25 acre parcel with 5 acres of wetlands and steep slopes may have a total of 20 buildable acres.

A residential density regulation (lots per acre) regulates the number of lots that can be created in a development based on the size and characteristics of the property (the amount of buildable land). For example, a parcel with 20 buildable acres at a density factor of 0.70 units per acre would result in a maximum of 14 units that could be built on that property.

Experience in other towns has shown that, once the maximum unit yield is determined by these regulations, a developer typically strives to design the *best overall plan* for the development and conservation of the parcel rather than the *most* sites for homes. Furthermore, since the development yield (number of lots) is now established, flexibility can be provided in minimum lot sizes to preserve more open space, protect natural resources, and provide for housing diversity.

In addition, consideration should be given to modifying regulations to:

- require greater residential setbacks on arterial and collector roads,
- require greater frontage on arterial and collector roads to encourage provision of roadside buffers, and
- discourage lot access onto arterial and collector roads.

## **Recommendations**

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1. Maintain the existing residential density structure with decreasing density in the northern parts of Madison.
2. Review residential zones to see if zones can be consolidated and review permitted uses to ensure flexibility and appropriate standards.
3. Encourage multi-family and/or higher density housing in the Madison Center area.
4. Discourage multi-family (and/or higher density) developments in areas outside Madison Center unless there is some significant community benefit that will result.

## **Regulatory Changes**

5. Adopt a buildable land regulation.
6. Adopt a residential density regulation.
7. Provide flexibility in minimum lot sizes to preserve open space, protect natural resources, and provide for housing diversity.
8. Consider modifying regulations to:
  - require greater residential setbacks on arterial and collector roads,
  - require greater frontage on arterial and collector roads, and
  - discourage lot access onto arterial and collector roads.

## **Residential Density**

Years ago, Madison used a “lot averaging” scheme where the development yield from a parcel of land was determined by dividing the parcel area by a factor related to the minimum lot size requirement. In fact, this scheme was instrumental in preserving much of the open space holdings of the Madison Land Conservation Trust.

The density concept is very similar to this “lot averaging” scheme.

Prior to adoption, density standards should be:

- compared to actual development experience in Madison, and
- reviewed to ensure design flexibility.

The density factor:

- accounts for open space and road area requirements, and
- is applied after the developable land calculation has been completed.

## Open Space Development

Madison presently has an Open Space Conservation District (OSCD) regulation but it has been rarely used since adoption in 1991.

Adoption of the buildable land and residential regulations will simplify much of the present OSCD regulations. In addition, the OSCD should not be a zone change.

To encourage open space development patterns, the Planning and Zoning Commission could:

- make OSCD a conditional use in a residential zone, or
- make conventional development a conditional use.

Other regulatory provisions should also be reviewed to make OSCD a more desirable program for developers.

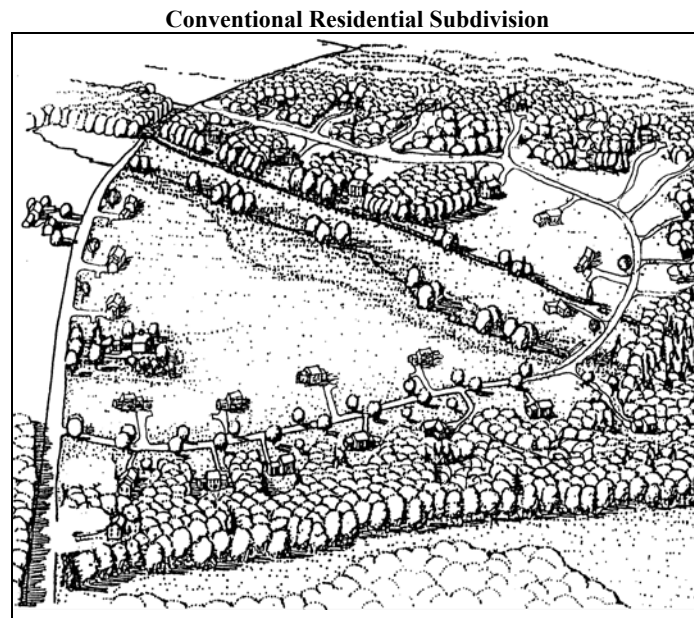
## **Development Patterns**

This Plan seeks to enhance community character and maximize the amount of open space that is preserved in Madison. While relating residential densities to natural resource constraints will help to resolve issues of appropriate density, it will not fully address issues of development patterns.

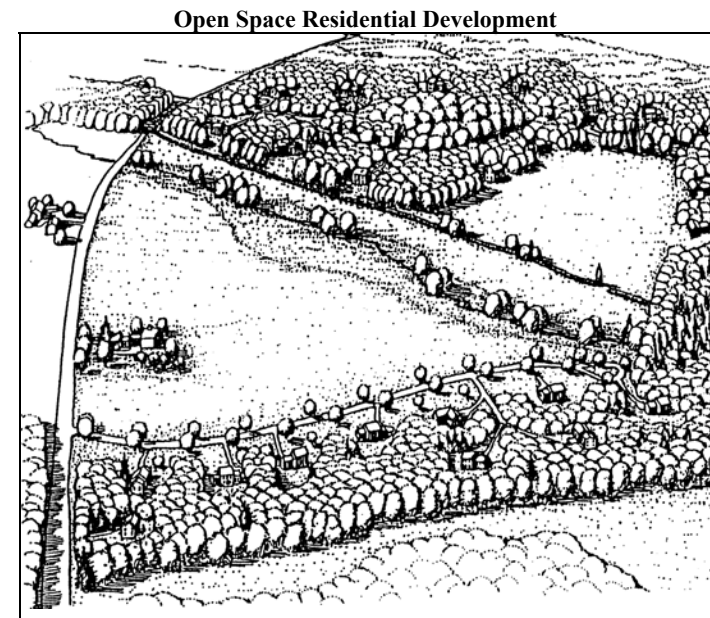
As shown in the following graphic of development patterns, the predominant type of residential development in Madison has been conventional subdivisions. On the other hand, open space subdivisions are more favored since they can enhance community character and maximize the amount of open space that is preserved. Regulatory changes should be made to make this happen.

## **Recommendations**

1. Promote or require open space development patterns.
2. Review and revise the Open Space Conservation District Regulations.



*Adapted from Randall Arendt*



*Adapted from Randall Arendt*

## Encourage Housing Diversity

In addition to development densities and patterns, provisions also need to be made for housing needs. Madison would like to be a diversified community with a variety of housing types that are affordable and include housing units in existing homes (accessory apartments), above stores in Madison Center, in low-rise apartments, condominiums, and other appropriate housing types. Madison wants to be pro-active in providing for suitable housing types in appropriate locations (as described on page 36 and pages 60-62).

### Elderly Housing

As the population ages, additional provisions will need to be made for elderly housing. There are currently no vacancies at Concord Meadows (a private non-profit facility on Woodland Road) and the estimated waiting list can be as long as two years. In a recent senior citizen needs assessment survey, the top two issues identified by seniors were affordable assisted living (47 percent of respondents) and affordable housing (32 percent).

Provision should be made for additional elderly housing. It could be desirable to locate new senior housing units near downtown Madison since access to transportation, shops, and recreation is an important consideration. However, the Plan supports a variety of choices for the location of elderly housing locations that address identified local needs. Affordability to seniors is also a key consideration.

While additional units will help meet local needs, other elderly residents may wish to remain in their own homes or may not be eligible for these units. Programs allowing elderly people to reside in their homes as long as they are able should continue. Since cost and maintenance are the two main housing concerns of this age group, the current accessory apartment regulations should be maintained to help address these issues.

Elderly Housing at Concord Meadows



### Statutory Reference

The “Plan shall make provision for the development of housing opportunities, including opportunities for multifamily dwellings consistent with soil types, terrain and infrastructure capacity, for all residents of the municipality and the planning region ...”

“The Plan shall ... “promote housing choice and economic diversity in housing, including housing for both low and moderate income households, and encourage the development of housing which will meet the housing needs identified in the housing plan prepared pursuant to section 8-37t and in the housing component and the other components of the state plan of conservation and development prepared pursuant to section 16a-26.”

CGS 8-23

**Housing Affordability**

State statutes (CGS 8-39a) define affordable housing as housing for which a family earning the area median income or less pays 30 percent or less of their income.

**'Affordable Housing'**

Affordable housing options that have been explored by some communities include:

- establishing a housing trust fund as provided in Section 8-2i,
- requiring some percentage of all new housing development be deed restricted to affordable levels,
- municipal acquisition or private donation of property for a development of affordable homes,
- density bonuses for provision of affordable homes, or
- creation of affordable rental units by churches or other local organizations.

**Affordable Housing**

The following table outlines how housing units are considered to be “affordable” relative to the New Haven area median income for a family of four.

1997 New Haven Area (family of four)	Maximum Monthly Rent	Maximum Sales Price	Number of Units with Lower Market Value		1997 Median Sales Price
			Number	Percent	
<b>Median Family Income (\$56,600)</b>	\$1,415	\$200,000	2,900	42%	\$225,000
<b>80 Percent of Area Median</b>	\$1,132	\$165,000	1,700	25%	
<b>60 Percent of Area Median</b>	\$849	\$125,000	490	7%	

The number of units with a lower market value is based on the estimated market value of housing units in Madison as determined by the Assessor for the October 1, 1998 Grand List. Assessed values would be set at 70 percent of estimated market value. Note that the number of housing units includes 231 apartment units.

State statutes are also concerned with housing units that are price-restricted to affordable levels. According to data from the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development, Madison had about 134 housing units in 1998 that were considered to be price-restricted to affordable levels since they were either governmentally assisted (91 units), subject to CHFA/FmHA mortgages (25 units), or were deed restricted to affordable prices (18 units). With less than two percent of all housing units in Madison meeting these criteria, Madison has fewer affordable housing units than the region or the state average.

While nearly two-thirds of survey respondents feel that Madison should be actively involved in making sure that affordable housing is available, there is less direction about how that should be accomplished.

While Madison presently has an Affordable Housing District Regulation, it has been used only a few times and the results are considered by some to be less than satisfactory. Opportunities to encourage the development of less expensive housing should be explored. The option that may have the most potential for Madison is to work with churches or other local organizations to create affordable rental units.

**Recommendations**

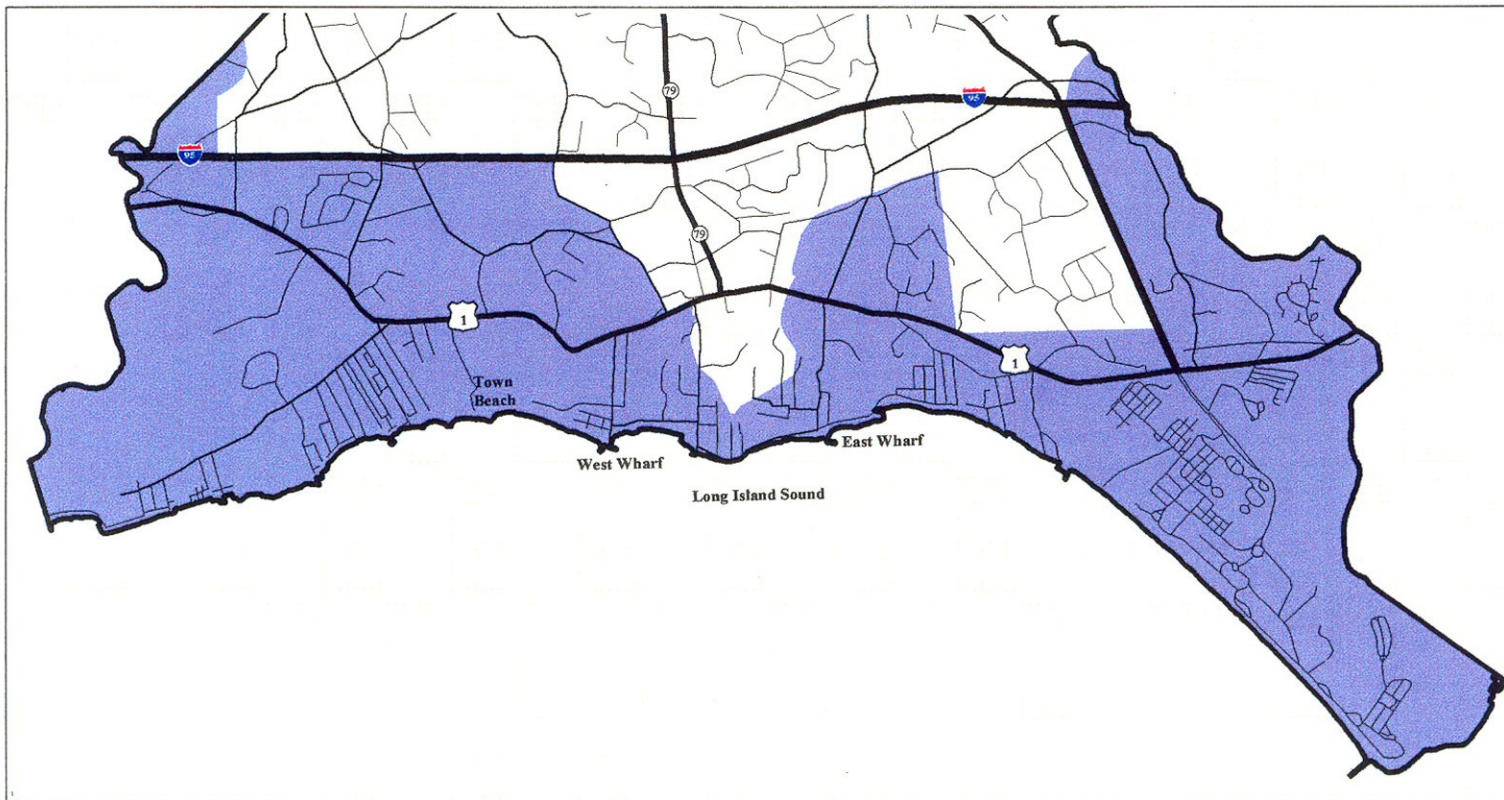
1. Continue to provide for a diversity of housing types in Madison.
2. Continue to address identified local needs for elderly housing and affordable housing.
3. Strive to locate any new senior housing units near downtown Madison or near transportation, shops and recreation.
4. Explore creative ways to create affordable housing, including through churches and other local organizations.

## Carefully Manage Activities in Coastal Areas

Madison is one of only 24 municipalities in Connecticut that directly abut Long Island Sound and one of 41 communities that are considered part of the coastal area of Connecticut. Due to the importance of the coastal area to Madison's character and quality of life, Madison has an important obligation to carefully manage these areas.

The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection - Office of Long Island Sound Programs (CTDEP-OLISP) oversees activities within the land area of coastal communities and seaward to the limits of the State's jurisdiction in Long Island Sound. The Town of Madison is also responsible for managing areas seaward of the "coastal boundary".

While the precise definition of the "coastal boundary" is contained in CGS Section 22a-94, the following map illustrates the approximate location of the coastal boundary in Madison.



### Coastal Area & Boundary

The Connecticut coastal area shall include the land and water within:

- the area delineated by the westerly, southerly and easterly limits of the state's jurisdiction in Long Island Sound;
- the towns of ... Madison  
...

Within the coastal area, there shall be a coastal boundary which shall be delineated on the seaward side by the seaward extent of the jurisdiction of the state and on the landward side by a continuous line delineated by whichever is farthest inland; of the following:

- the interior contour elevation of the one hundred year frequency coastal flood zone, as defined and determined by the National Flood Insurance Act,
- a one thousand foot linear setback measured from the mean high water mark in coastal waters, or
- a one thousand foot linear setback measured from the inland boundary of tidal wetlands..

CGS Section 22a-94

## **Coastal Resources**

According to statute, coastal resources means “the coastal waters of the state, their natural resources, related marine and wildlife habitat and adjacent shorelands, both developed and undeveloped, that together form an integrated terrestrial and estuarine ecosystem” and includes the following:

- coastal bluffs and escarpments,
- rocky shorefronts,
- beaches and dunes,
- intertidal flats,
- tidal wetlands,
- freshwater wetlands and watercourses,
- estuarine embayments,
- coastal hazard areas" including flood hazard areas,
- developed shorefront,
- island,
- nearshore waters,
- offshore waters,
- shorelands, and
- shellfish concentration areas.

CGS Section 22a-93

### **EXCERPTS FROM CONNECTICUT GENERAL STATUTES**

#### **SECTION 22a-92 – COASTAL MANAGEMENT – Legislative Goals and Policies**

##### **Overall Policies**

- To preserve and enhance coastal resources,
- To manage the land and water resources of the coastal area in a manner consistent with the capability of the resources,
- To give high priority and preference to uses which are dependent upon proximity to the water;,,
- To give high priority and preference to uses that minimize adverse impacts on natural coastal resources,
- To consider the potential impact of coastal flooding and erosion patterns,
- To encourage public access to the waters of Long Island Sound,
- To conduct, sponsor and assist research in coastal matters,
- To coordinate the activities of public agencies, and
- To insure adequate planning for facilities and resources which are in the national interest.

##### **Resource Management Policies**

- To preserve natural beach systems and tidal wetlands,
- To manage coastal bluffs and escarpments, rocky shorefronts, intertidal flats, coastal hazard areas, and undeveloped islands,
- To promote the use of existing developed shorefront areas for marine-related uses,
- To regulate shoreland use and development in a manner which minimizes adverse impacts upon adjacent coastal systems and resources, and
- To maintain the natural relationship between coastal landforms through the promotion of nonstructural mitigation measures.

##### **Development Guidelines**

- To give highest priority and preference to water-dependent uses and facilities in shorefront areas,
- To guide infrastructure only to areas which are suitable for development; except when necessary to abate existing sources of pollution,
- To promote reasonable commercial and recreational fishing and boating uses,
- To require that structures minimize adverse impacts on coastal resources,
- To disallow the siting of new fuel and chemical storage facilities and to minimize the risk of oil and chemical spills at port facilities,
- To use existing transportation facilities as the primary means of meeting transportation needs in the coastal area,
- To encourage increased recreational boating use of coastal waters,
- To protect coastal resources by managing such boating uses and facilities,
- To protect facilities serving the commercial fishing and recreational boating industries, and
- To require reasonable mitigation measures where development would adversely impact historical, archaeological, or paleontological resources.

## General Coastal Management

Madison enjoys the many benefits of a coastal location, being situated directly on Long Island Sound. However, such location also carries with it the responsibility and authority for wise use of coastal resources.

Certain activities in coastal areas require a coastal site plan application for review and approval by the Town of Madison. Madison should continue to carefully manage activities in the coastal boundary in conformance with state law and consideration of state policies and guidance.

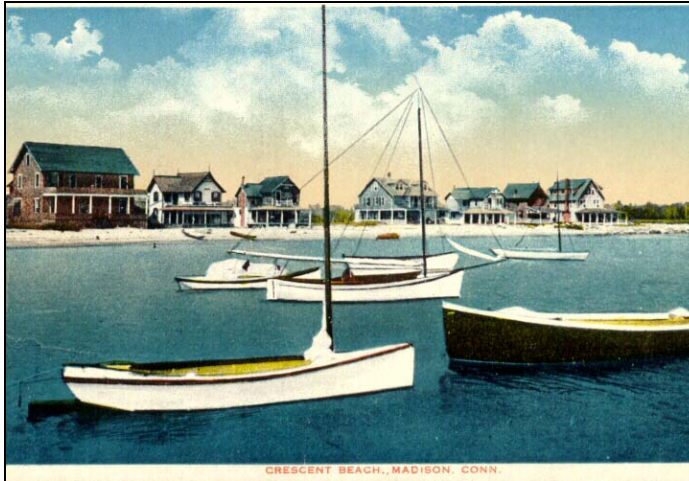
To assist property owners and local commissions, the current coastal site plan application form should be reviewed and revised so as to make it less cumbersome and unwieldy.

## Recommendations

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1. Review and revise the coastal site plan application form.

Crescent Beach Postcard



*Charlotte Evarts Archives*

Circle Beach Area



*Patricia Anderson*

## Statutory Considerations

During the process of developing this Plan, the Commission considered:

- (1) the character and distribution of the coastal resources within its coastal boundary,
- (2) the capacity of and limitations on such resources to support development,
- (3) the types and methods of development compatible with the wise use, protection and enhancement of such resources;
- (4) the nature and pattern of existing development and
- (5) the need for public services.

CGS Section 22a-102(b)

## **Coastal Considerations**

The federal and state coastal zone management acts contain statutory policies for:

- coastal resource protection,
- coastal land and water uses, and
- facilities in the national interest.

Except for state or federal projects, all significant private and municipal development projects must conform to coastal site plan review requirements administered in Madison by the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Zoning Board of Appeals.

## **Water Dependent Uses**

Since available waterfront land is relatively scarce, a key principle of coastal management is to preserve waterfront lands for water-dependent uses (such as recreational beaches and marine facilities in Madison). Water dependent uses are uses that are functionally dependent upon proximity to coastal waters.

Water-dependent uses can include marinas, commercial fishing facilities, recreational beaches, and industrial or commercial uses dependent upon water for processing or cooling.

In some cases, a non-water-dependent use (such as a restaurant or housing development) may be rendered water-dependent by providing reasonable coastal access to the general public provided the site is not uniquely suited for a more active water-dependent use.

Since Madison's shorefront consists primarily of sandy beach, it has few areas appropriate for marinas, commercial fishing facilities, and industrial or commercial uses dependent upon water for processing or cooling. However, there are some areas in the East River and the Hammonasset River that may be appropriate for such use.

In any event, coastal access and recreational beaches are two areas where Madison can address the issue of water-dependent uses. The Town should continue to encourage and enhance the use of waterfront sites for such uses and, in particular, consider acquiring any waterfront site that can provide for community benefits (such as expansion of the Surf Club or other public facilities).

## **Recommendations**

1. Continue to place highest priority and preference on the use of waterfront sites for water-dependent uses through the coastal site plan review process.
2. Consider acquiring any waterfront site that can provide for community benefits (such as expansion of the Surf Club or other public facilities).
3. Establish a waterfront land acquisition strategy to ensure that the Town can act swiftly when key coastal properties come to market.

**Surf Club**



*Joanne Volage*

## Development

Development activities continue in the coastal areas on numerous small parcels and major sites (such as the Griswold Airport property). Development in coastal areas can affect coastal resources and the cumulative impacts of development and redevelopment need to be considered. Opportunities should also continue to be explored for ways to provide public access and protect tidal wetlands and other coastal resources.

In Madison, the redevelopment of former beach cottages into more substantial year-round dwellings has environmental implications on the lot itself and other impacts within the neighborhood. Land use regulations should be continually reviewed and enforced to ensure adequate controls regarding the improvement of existing residential structures on substandard lots (bulk and height standards, additional septic system requirements, and reductions in impervious coverage), both individually and cumulatively.

The Board of Selectmen recently adopted a new “winterization” ordinance that requires septic upgrades when seasonal housing units are converted to year-round use. The Plan supports this and other programs that will protect the public health and provide adequate controls in this sensitive area.

Madison should also consider modifying the maximum lot coverage regulation in the R-2 zone. Since so many lots in the R-2 are small, the current 10 percent lot coverage limitation results in a number of non-conforming lots and a number of requests for variances for small additions. One option to consider is to limit lot coverage to between 15 and 20 percent, not to exceed 4,000 square feet.

## Recommendations

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1. Continue to manage the cumulative impacts of development and redevelopment in coastal areas and to explore opportunities for ways to provide public access and protect tidal wetlands and other coastal resources.
2. Continually review regulations affecting coastal areas to ensure adequate controls for large sites and the improvement of existing structures on substandard lots, individually and cumulatively.
3. Consider adopting more stringent requirements governing the conversion of small and seasonal structures to larger year-round structures and continue to oversee seasonal conversions through winterization requirements.
4. Consider increasing the maximum lot coverage restriction in the R-2 zone.

## Coastal Development

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Due to the numerous unique situations that arise in the coastal area, management of redevelopment activities can best be managed by the Zoning Board of Appeals with input and formal comments from Town Staff and, when appropriate, the Planning and Zoning Commission.

In particular, the Planning and Zoning Commission can consider floor-area ratio regulations to guide the overall bulk of redevelopment in coastal areas.

A floor-area ratio limits the total floor space that can be built as a ratio to the overall lot size and is used to regulate the bulk of buildings.

## **Flooding Damage**

Flooding damage can be aggravated by the placement of structures, particularly near or below the waterline.

For example, seawalls can exacerbate problems during floods by deflecting wave energy onto adjacent property or accelerating sand loss.



## **Flooding And Erosion**

A recent book about Connecticut's shore concluded that all beach-front property in Madison would be flooded in a repeat of the 1938 hurricane. Such statements serve to remind us of the threat of coastal flooding and the need to consider how to minimize the danger to life and property.

In terms of erosion, Madison ranks fourth of 41 coastal communities in Connecticut for total beach area and for the amount of significantly eroding shoreline. While man-made structures such as groins, jetties, breakwaters, and bulkheads can slow erosion in some areas, they can also increase sand loss at other locations and threaten people, structures, property, and infrastructure.

Efforts should continue to be devoted towards encouraging or requiring buildings to be built as far back as possible from eroding shorelines and vulnerable beach areas. This includes the granting of variances by the Zoning Board of Appeals for any activities proposed in coastal areas. Efforts should continue to encourage "non-structural" erosion control measures and to oversee any structure to ensure that secondary or cumulative shoreline impacts will not result.

## **Recommendations**

1. Encourage or require property owners to build as far back from eroding shorelines and vulnerable beach areas as possible and consider placing restrictions on variance applications to accomplish this.
2. Consider flexible yard requirements to allow for and encourage larger separations of buildings from coastal high hazard areas (like FEMA "V" zones).
3. Consider developing a protocol to address redevelopment of buildings severely damaged or destroyed after a major coastal storm.
4. Continue to carefully review all coastal site plans for coastal flood and erosion control structures.
5. Discourage or prevent use of flood or erosion control structures except when unavoidable and necessary to protect infrastructure, a water-dependent use, or an inhabited residential structure that pre-dates January 1, 1980.
6. Strive to ensure that structural measures will not cause secondary or cumulative shoreline impacts.
7. Encourage or require use of "non-structural" erosion control measures (such as vegetated slopes and elevated foundations) when and where appropriate.
8. Continue to ensure that all coastal flood and erosion control structures are in compliance with appropriate state and federal requirements.