



4

HOUSING

Source: Compass Real Estate

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Goal

Actively encourage a diversity of housing options to meet the needs of current and future residents while maintaining and enriching Waterford's existing neighborhoods and promoting affordability.

Baseline Conditions

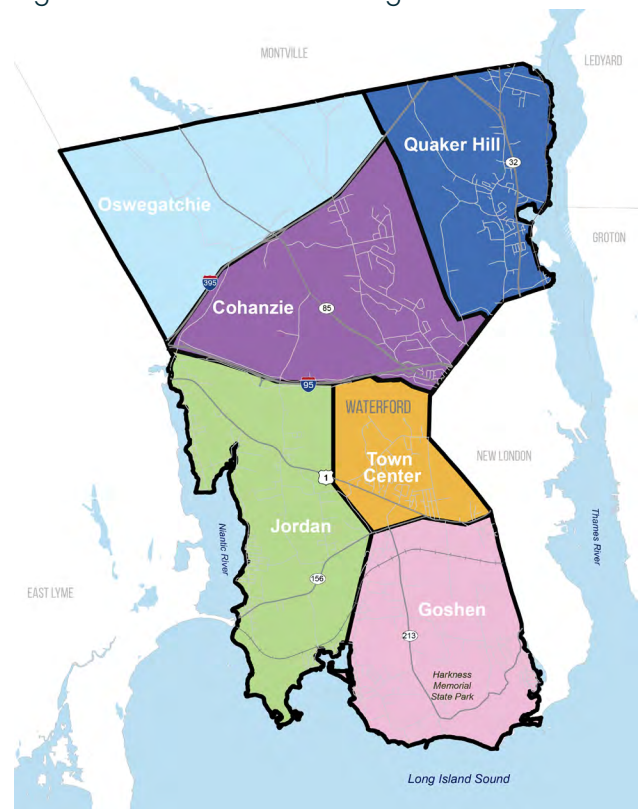
Waterford's housing supply was built over multiple decades and consists of a variety of neighborhoods spread across the Town's unique villages such as Quaker Hill, Oswegatchie, and the Town Center. The Town's land use is dominated by residential development, with residential properties occupying almost half of the Town's land area. Waterford has approximately 8,500 housing units, over three-quarters (86%) of which are single-family units.

Waterford is mostly associated with older single-family neighborhoods, although the majority of recent residential development has been multi-family complexes or buildings. These developments have occurred primarily along major transportation routes such as Route 85 and Route 1.

Home ownership is valued by the Waterford community and many of Waterford's residents have called the Town home for many generations. Ownership protects residents from rising rental costs, builds equity that provides financial security, and provides a stable environment for families with children. Ownership also provides neighborhood stability by minimizing resident turn-over, providing incentive for reinvestment, and providing stable school-aged populations. Home ownership in

Waterford has long been desirable due to the Town's coastal location and environmental assets, access to jobs and services, and the overall high quality of life. To maintain this desirability, public and private reinvestment in neighborhoods is vital. Maintaining an appropriate balance of owner and renter occupied homes contributes to Waterford's stability and helps to provide appealing housing options for both long-time and new residents.

Figure 4.1. Waterford's Villages

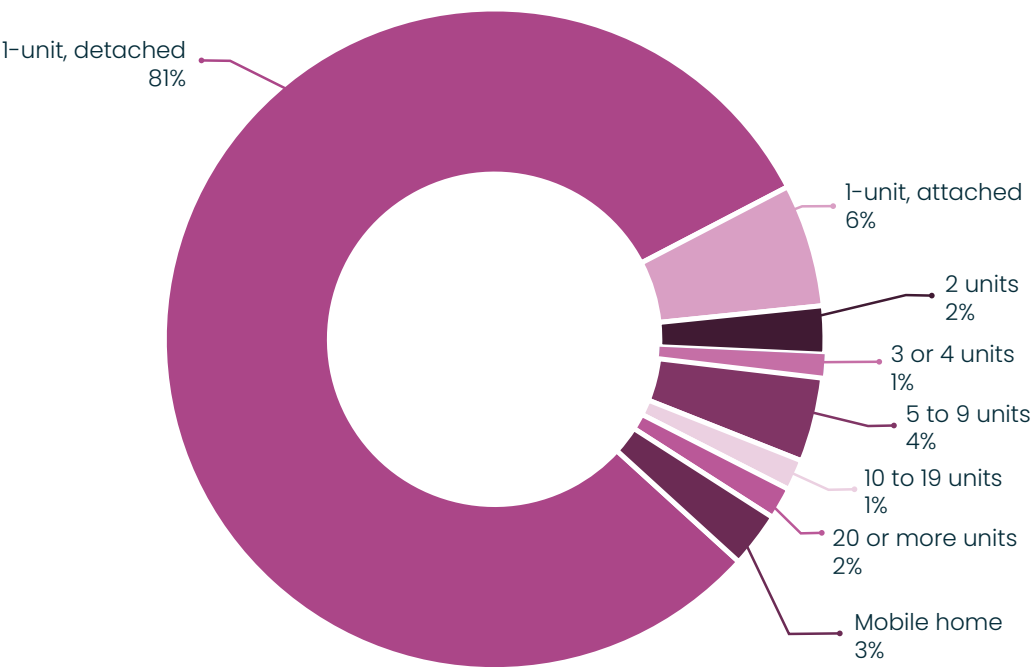


Source: Town of Waterford

Housing Type

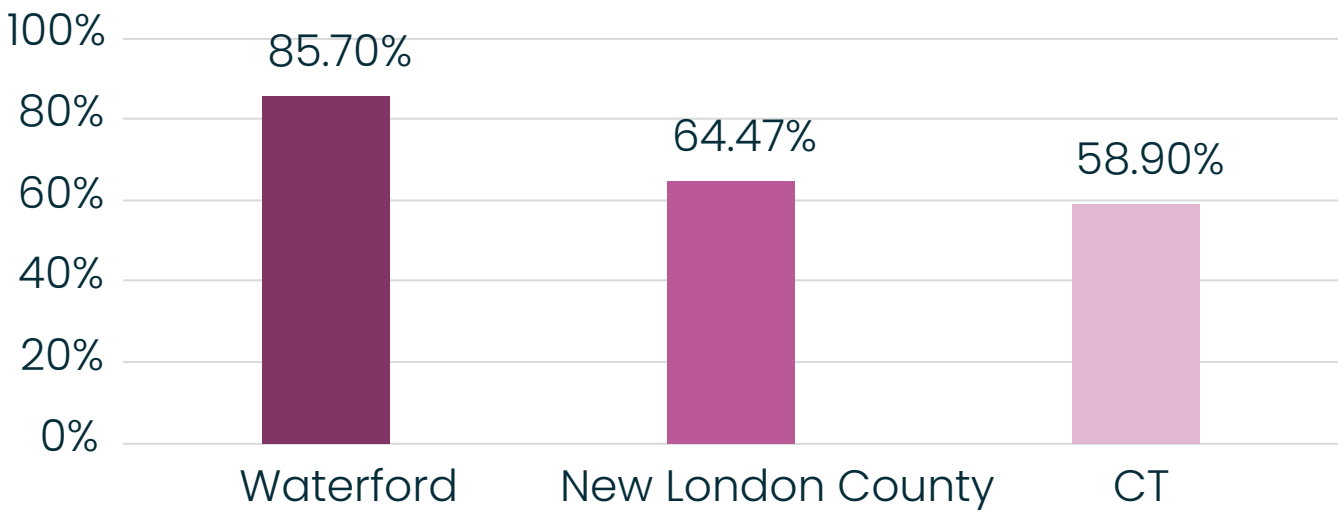
While the majority of Waterford’s land area is occupied by single-family residences, there are clusters of multi-family housing units in Town. About 14% of the Town’s housing stock is non-single-family detached housing. This includes townhouses, two- to four-family homes, apartment buildings, assisted living facilities, and nursing homes.

Figure 4.2. Housing Type



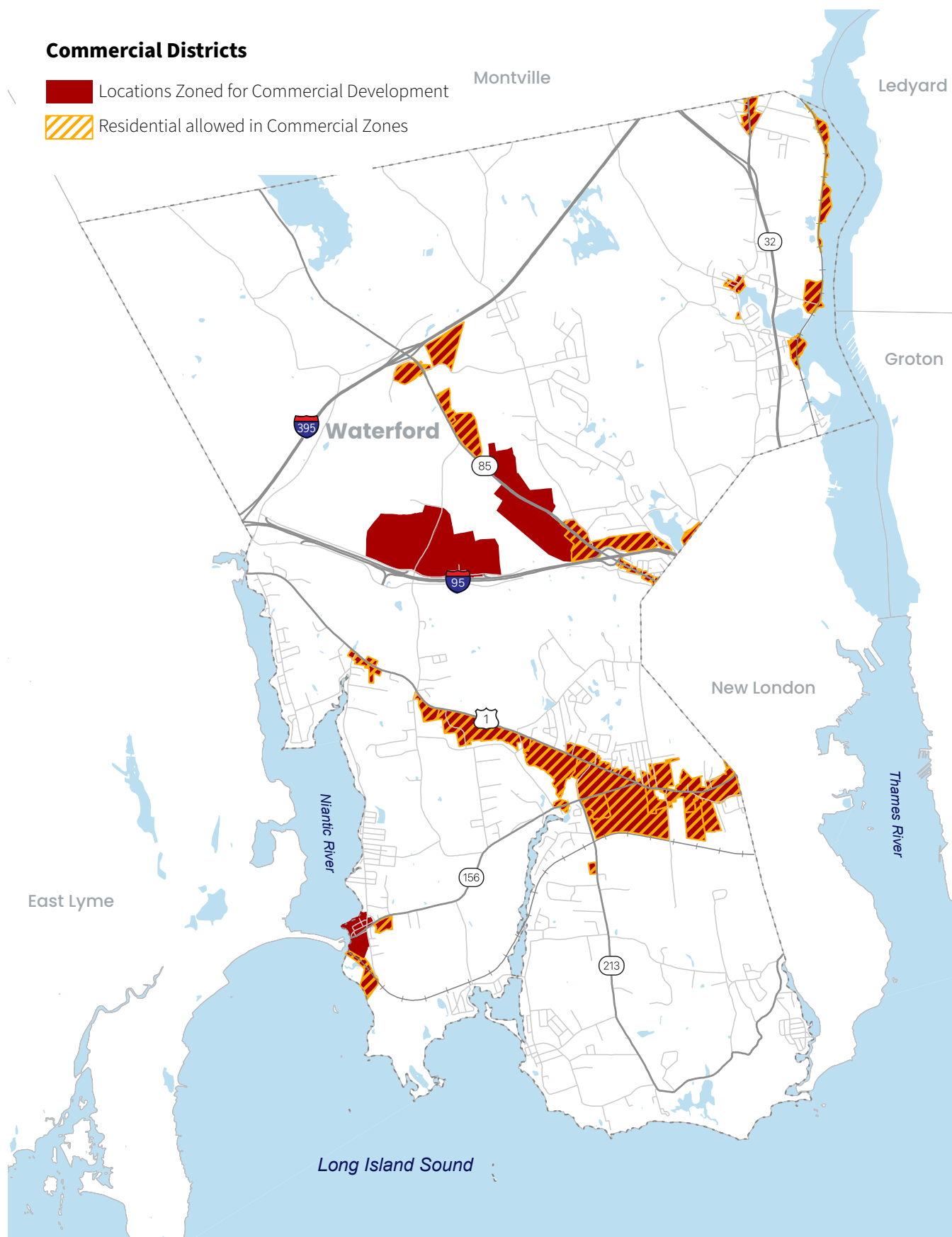
Source: American Community Survey – 2021

Figure 4.3. Single Family Detached Housing (2021)



Source: American Community Survey – 2021

Figure 4.4. Commercial Districts



Zoning

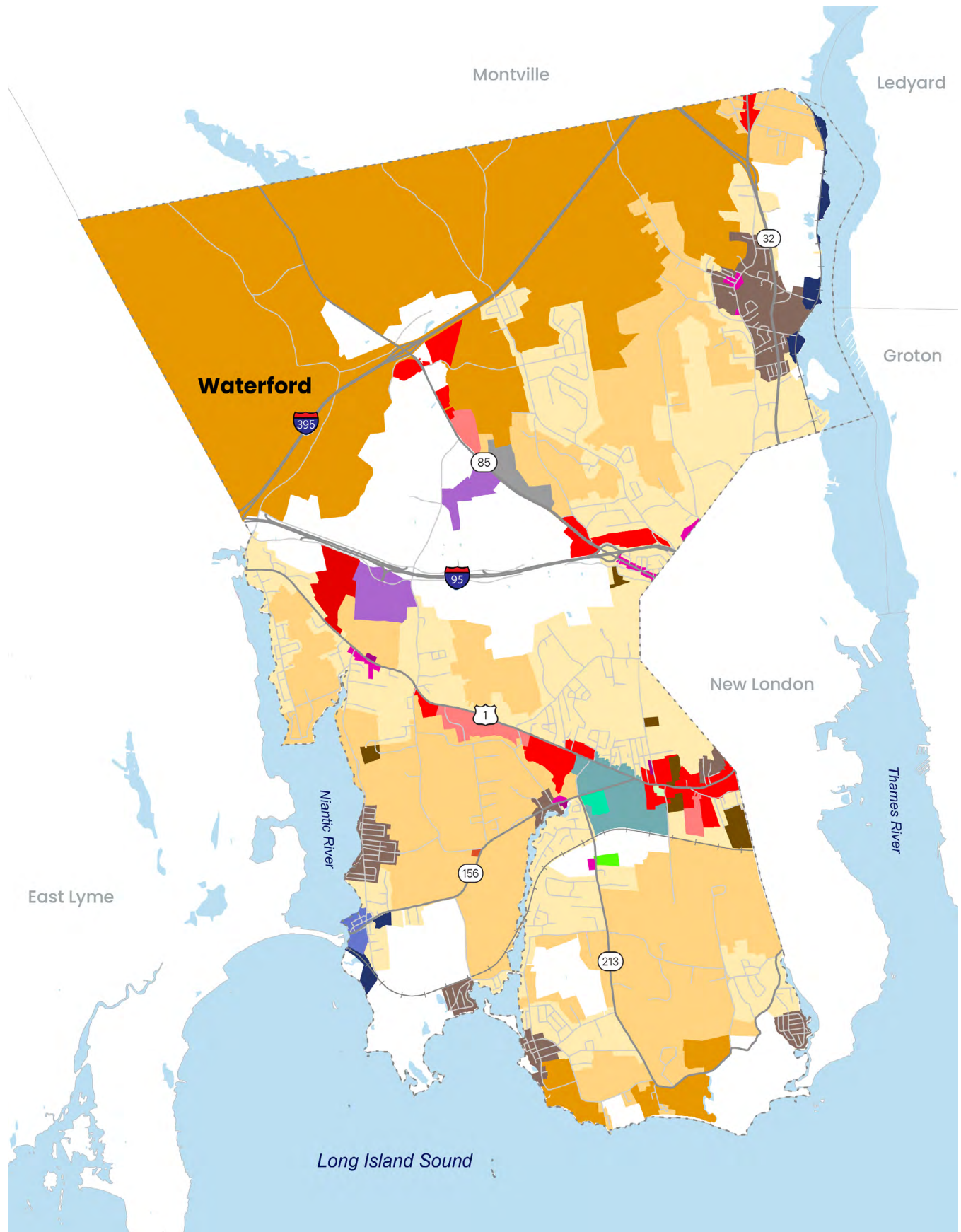
Waterford's zoning is dominated by single-family residential districts that cover most of the Town's geography with the exception of commercial areas such as Waterford Commons, the Crystal Mall Plaza, and industrial areas along the I-95 corridor and Cross Road. Multi-family residential districts are concentrated in the center of Town, primarily between Route 85 and Route 1, both of which are serviced by public water and sewer and public transit.

While Waterford has a number of multi-family residential districts and properties, the Town has a higher share of single-family homes than New London County and the State. Recent and proposed high-density multifamily housing projects will shift the Town's balance of housing but its share of single-family housing is unlikely to change much relative to the Region.



AHEPA Senior Apartments located on Clark Lane, Source: Waterford 2022-27 Housing Plan

Figure 4.5. Residential Supportive Zoning



Residential Supportive Zoning

RESIDENTIAL

-  R-MF - Residential Multi-Family
-  VR- Village Residential
-  R-20 - Medium Residential
-  R-40 - Low Density Residential
-  RU-120 - Rural Residential
-  HOD - Housing Opportunity
-  I-MF - Industrial Multi-Family

COMMERCIAL RESIDENTIAL

-  CT - Civic Triangle
-  CT-MF - Civic Triangle Multi-Family
-  C-G - General Commercial
-  NB - Neighborhood Business
-  NBPO - Neighborhood Business Professional Office
-  C-MF - Commercial Multi-Family
-  WD - Waterfront Development District
-  MPD - Mago Point District

OTHER DISTRICTS

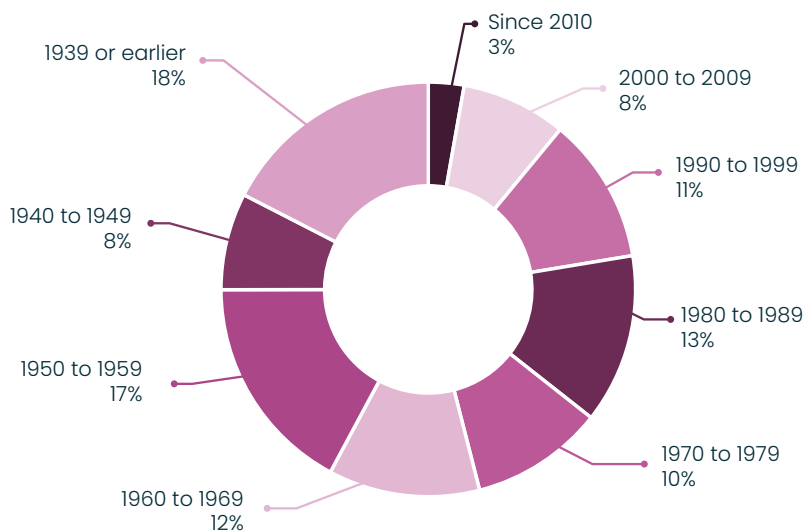
-  PDD-1 - Planned Design 1
-  PDD-2 - Planned Design 2

Housing Stock

Waterford has 8,732 housing units (according to the 2021 American Community Survey). The Town's housing stock was largely constructed prior to 1980 with 78% of units built before that year. Older homes are require more maintenance than new homes, are typically less energy efficient, and may carry environmental risks such as lead paint, all of which may increase the cost of occupying these homes. Housing construction in Waterford was strong between 1950 and 1990 with more than half (56%) of Waterford's current supply of housing being added during that period. Housing construction has since slowed with only 3% of Waterford's housing stock constructed since 2010.

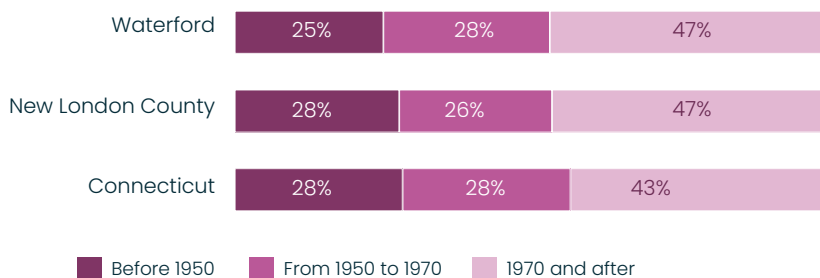
Housing permit activity over the period from 2012 to 2022 reveals a significant spike in permits in 2019 (100 permits). Since that spike, 63 permits have been issued, with around 20 issued per year. The issuance of a building permit does not affirm that the unit was constructed within the same year or at all. Hence, housing permits issued over the past decade exceed units added to the Town's supply (as documented by census data).

Figure 4.6. Housing by Year Built (2021)



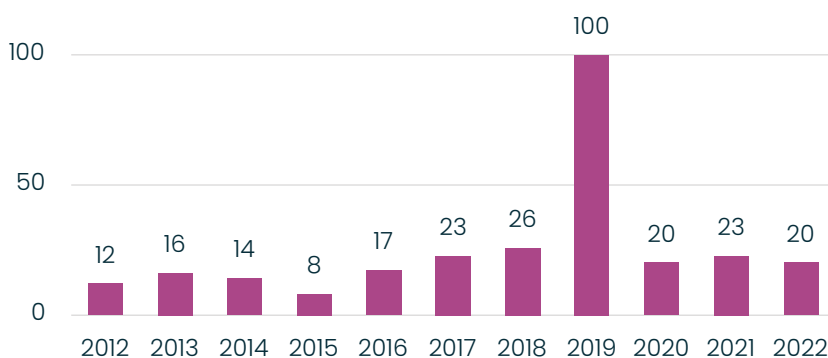
Source: American Community Survey - 2021

Figure 4.7. Age of Units



Source: Partnership for Strong Communities 2022 Housing Data Profile Stratford

Housing Permits (2022)



Source: Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development

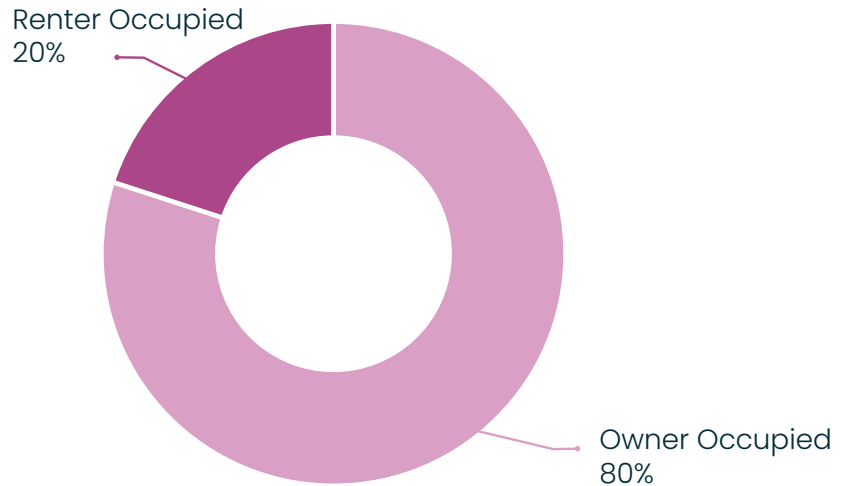
Home Ownership

Owner-occupied homes comprise 80% of Waterford's housing stock with 20% of homes being renter-occupied. Data is not available regarding the share of single-family homes that are owned versus rented, but it is likely that most of Waterford's single-family homes are owner-occupied. Waterford's home ownership rate is several percentage points higher than home ownership rates in both New London County and the State. This is directly related to the Town's higher share of single-family detached housing which is associated with higher ownership rates than multi-family housing.

Housing Tenure

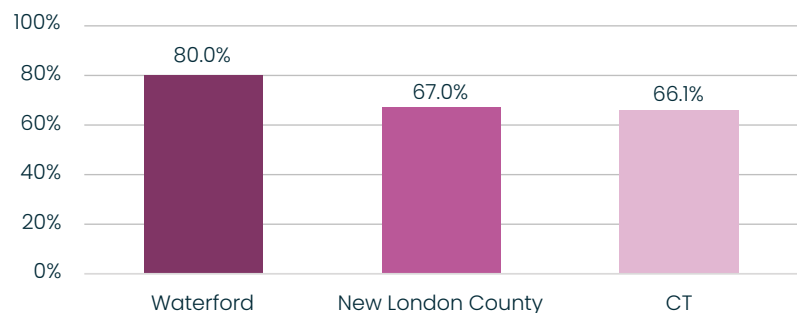
Waterford's housing tenure is comparable to both New London County and the State. One-third (33%) of residents have lived in their homes since 1999 or earlier, about a fifth (21%) of residents moved into their homes between 2000 and 2009. Waterford saw a significant turnover of housing occupancy between 2015 and 2018, when 25% of households moved into their current housing. These figures suggest a healthy turn-over in housing which affords home ownership and rental opportunities for existing residents seeking different housing in Town and for prospective residents seeking housing in Waterford.

Figure 4.9. Owned vs Rental Housing (2021)



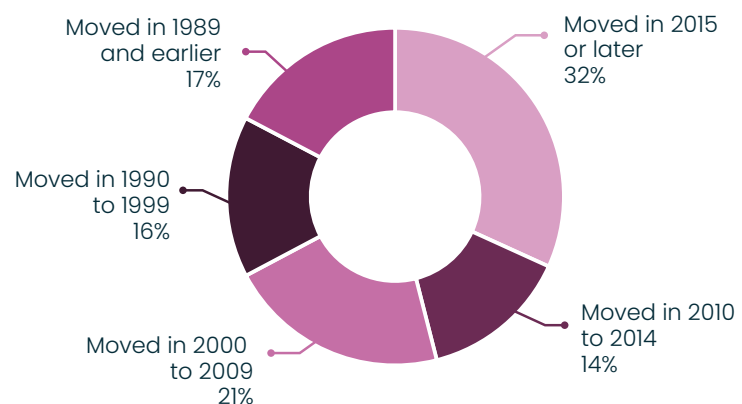
Source: American Community Survey - 2021

Figure 4.10. Home Ownership Rate (2021)



Source: American Community Survey - 2021

Figure 4.11. Tenure in Housing (2021)



Source: American Community Survey - 2021

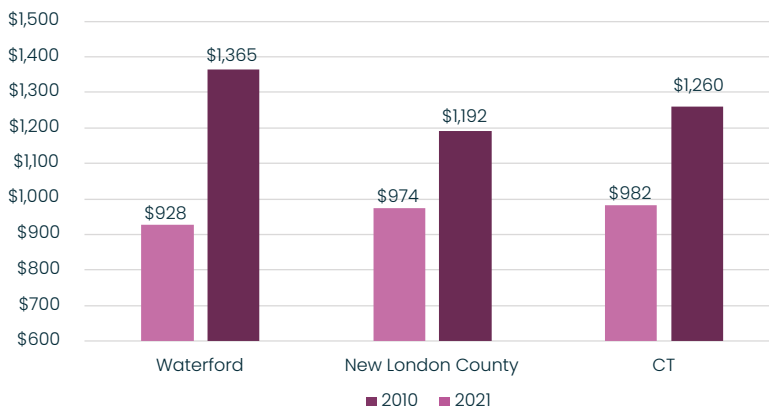
Housing Cost

On average, housing in Waterford costs more than housing in New London County and across the State. The Town's median gross rent of \$1,365 is about 13% higher than the County and about 8% higher than the State. Since 2010, median gross rents in Waterford have increased at a higher rate than both the County and State.

Home sales prices have seen a sizable increase since the beginning of the COVID pandemic, with Waterford seeing a median home sales price value of \$340,488 as of April 2023. This is below Connecticut's median home sales price of \$350,658, but above New London County's median sale price of \$339,433 during the same time period. Waterford saw a 5.4% increase in home sale prices in 2022, with the average listing being on the market for eight days before going to pending status. This is a shorter on-market period than the average in both New London County and the State.

Median owner-occupied home value in Waterford is lower than the median sales price. According to the American Community Survey, the median home value in Waterford was \$263,000 in 2021. This value is higher than median across the County but lower than the State. The age of Waterford's housing stock plays heavily

Figure 4.12. Median Gross Rent 2010 vs 2021



Source: American Community Survey - 2021

Figure 4.13. Median Gross Rent (2021)



Source: American Community Survey - 2021

Figure 4.14. Median Home Sales Price and Value



Source: American Community Survey - 2021, Zillow Home Values 2022



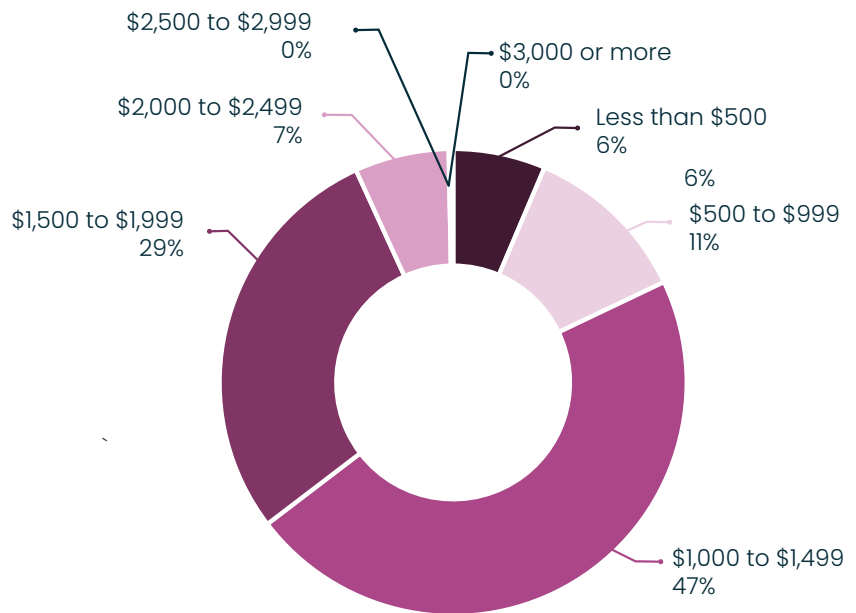
In 2022, Waterford was selected by CT Magazine as a Top 15 Real Estate “Hot Spot” in the state and recognized nationally as a Realtor.com Top 50 Hottest Housing Market in the U.S. and third hottest housing market in Connecticut!

into the median value with older homes typically being smaller and often valued less than newer housing stock.

Waterford’s housing stock varies considerably in cost as measured by both rental cost and housing value. Over half of the Town’s rental housing (65%) costs less than \$1,500 per month, with 18% of rental housing costing less than \$1,000 per month. Approximately 29% of rental housing in Waterford falls between \$1,500 to \$1,999 per month. Only 7% of the Town’s housing stock costs \$2,000 per month or more.

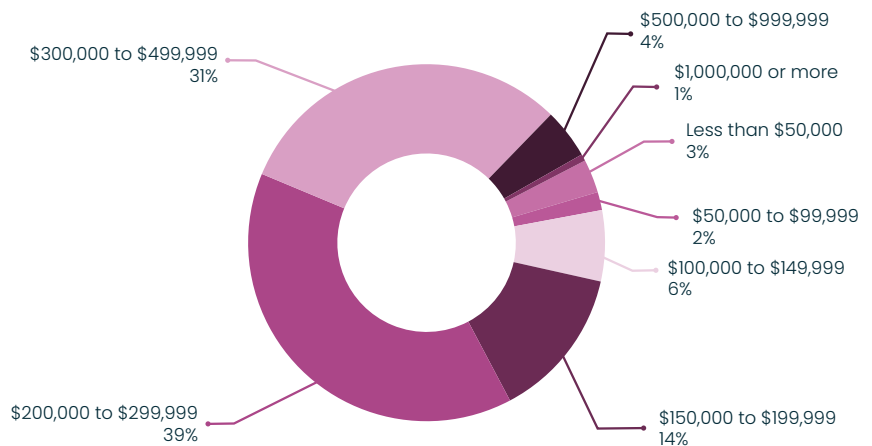
The largest share (39%) of Waterford’s owner-occupied housing is valued between \$200,000 and \$299,999 and 25% of the Town’s owner-occupied housing is valued at less than \$200,000. This distribution in values suggests that the Town’s housing stock is affordable to a wide spectrum of households with varying incomes, although this does not imply that sufficient housing is available for purchase to meet the needs of lower-income buyers.

Figure 4.16. Gross Monthly Rent (2021)



Source: American Community Survey - 2021

Figure 4.15. Owner-Occupied Housing Value



Source: American Community Survey - 2021

Housing Affordability

The median household income in Waterford is \$96,000, which is greater than both that of the County and State. Since 2010, median household income in Waterford has risen by nearly \$26,000. This household income increase is higher than the increase experienced in the County and across the State.

Households that are housing cost-burdened spend more than 30% of their income on housing. In Waterford, approximately 20% of owner households are considered to be cost burdened. This is below the State's rate (30%) and the County's (27%). Over 39% of rental households in Waterford spend 30% or more of their income on housing compared to 46% in New London County and 51% in the State. The share of housing cost burdened homeowners without a mortgage in Waterford is slightly higher than both the County and the State. It is assumed that these are older residents who are retired and on fixed incomes.

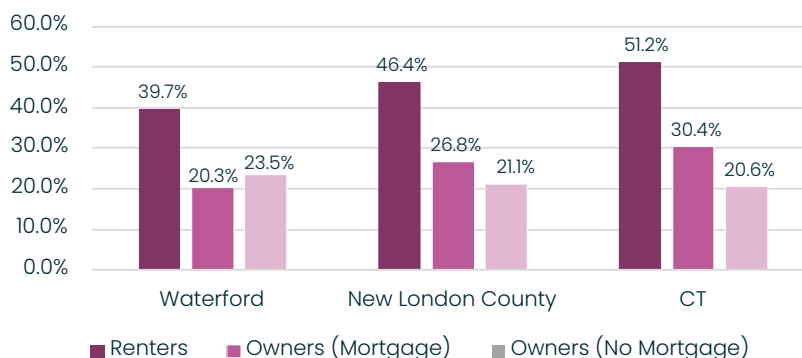
Waterford's share of affordable housing, as classified under C.G.S. Section 8-30g, is 5.62% of its housing stock as of 2021. Affordable housing as defined by 8-30g is comprised of government assisted housing units, tenant rental assistance households, CHFA/USDA mortgages, and

Figure 4.17. Median Household Income (2021)



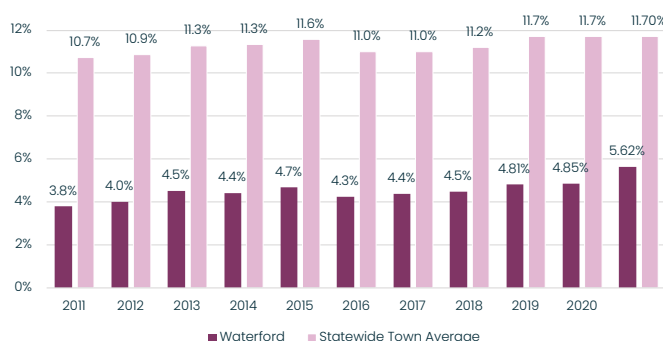
Source: American Community Survey - 2021

Figure 4.18. Housing Cost Burden Households



Source: American Community Survey - 2021

Figure 4.19. Share of Affordable Housing (2011-2022)



Source: American Community Survey - 2021

deed restricted units. These combine for a total of 485 affordable units in Town. The share of affordable housing units in Waterford has been relatively stable over the last several years although it has increased slightly since 2002. Because Waterford does not have an affordable housing stock of at least 10%, it is not exempt from the State’s affordable housing appeals process.

Waterford’s share of affordable housing is, and has been, consistent with the Statewide town average for several years. Waterford has a comparable share of affordable housing when compared to surrounding towns, with the exception of the City of New London.

Accessory Dwelling Units

In May of 2023, the Town of Waterford updated its zoning regulations to allow for accessory dwelling units. As such, ADUs shall be permitted in all districts where single family homes are permitted, in accordance with the standards contained herein, and in compliance with all applicable state, local, health, building and housing codes. ADUs may be within a single family home or may be detached units, but no more than one attached and one detached ADU shall be permitted on a single parcel of land.

Percentage of Affordable Housing (2021)

Waterford	5.62%
New London	22.52%
East Lyme	6.15%
Montville	5.16%
Groton	23.22%
Ledyard	4.34%

Source: American Community Survey – 2021

Key Issues and Trends

Almost 90% of all housing units in Waterford are single-family detached homes and while such homes meet the housing needs of many people, they do not meet the housing needs of all present or future Waterford residents.

- People have different housing needs at different ages / life stages and Waterford's age composition has more older residents than ever before.
- People are living longer and may have to afford housing over a longer period of time.
- Younger persons and families may not be able to find housing in Waterford that meets their criteria (including cost).
- About 40% of Waterford's population is over age 55 and "empty nester" and "elderly" households may want smaller units in order to:
 - a. have access to more amenities,
 - b. reduce property maintenance requirements (grass cutting, snow clearing, gutter cleaning, leaf raking, etc.),
 - c. be closer to other people, and/or
 - d. reduce housing costs.
- With smaller household sizes, people may want smaller (or less expensive) units than were built in the past.
- Over 2,100 Waterford households are considered cost burdened because they are spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing – this includes a number of elderly households and low- and moderate-income households.
- Overall, Waterford has 485 housing units that meet State criteria for "affordable housing."
- All of the units of "affordable housing" which meet State criteria were created by entities and organizations other than the Town of Waterford.
- Waterford is subject to the Connecticut "Affordable Housing Appeals Procedure" (zoning over-ride) because less than 10% of the housing stock meets the State criteria (Waterford is at 5.6%)

Plans of Conservation and Development (and other studies) in Waterford over the past two or three decades have recognized these issues and challenges. While the Town has been active working towards many of these issues, more can and should be done to address the housing needs that are currently presented in Waterford.

Relevant Housing-Related Initiatives In Waterford

2022-27 Housing Plan

In 2022, the Planning and Zoning Commission adopted the Waterford Housing Plan. This Plan, which was prepared by Waterford's Planning and Zoning Commission, recommended strategies to help Waterford increase the number of affordable housing units in Waterford. Since statutes require that this Plan be updated every five years, it will be a companion to this element of the POCD in term of housing strategies.

Fair Housing Policy Statement

In 2020, Waterford's First Selectman's Office signed a fair housing policy statement for the Town. The policy states that the Town of Waterford will promote fair housing opportunities and will encourage racial and economic integration in all its programs and housing development activities.

Design Review Board

Since 20XX, Waterford has had a Design Review Board who's purpose is to provide guidance to the Planning and Zoning Commission to assist with application review and with regard to the compatibility of building and site design as it pertains to community character, community structure and other elements of the current Plan

of Preservation, Conservation and Development, as well as its long-range goals and policies.

Human Services

Waterford's Human Services Department provides the community with a variety of resources such as housing placement, community assistance programs, veteran and senior services, and a variety of other services.

Senior Citizen's Commission

Waterford's Senior Citizen's Commission study's the needs of, sponsors, initiates and coordinates programs of the senior citizens of Waterford.

Thoughts from the Waterford Community



Through the Plan's community engagement process, a number of ideas and desires regarding neighborhoods and housing were discussed. The need to maintain the unique attributes Waterford's villages and residential neighborhoods was emphasized.

Residents also expressed concerns about weaknesses and threats to the Town's neighborhoods and housing. These include high property tax rates, housing choice and cost for seniors and young adults as well as workforce housing. Some residents voiced concerns over multi-family housing developments, stating that the Town does not need any more housing.

Many ideas and opportunities regarding neighborhoods and housing were identified by residents and stakeholders including the need to promote a greater diversity in housing options and prices and focusing on mixed-use development to provide greater residential options in appropriate locations.

Goal

Actively encourage a diversity of housing options to meet the needs of current and future residents while maintaining and enriching Waterford's existing neighborhoods and promoting affordability.

Strategies & Action Steps

Strategy #1. Protect existing residential neighborhoods

- Encourage the preservation and enhancement of Waterford's residential neighborhoods.
- Enhance existing residential neighborhoods through streetscape design, tree planting, and other beautification initiatives.
- Continue to pursue Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding programs when funding does become available.

Strategy #2. Establish an Affordable Housing Committee

- Establish a committee to focus on affordable housing within the community. The committee could include a variety of representatives from Planning and Zoning, Board of Selectman, Senior Services, Youth and Family Services, residents with experience in housing and public policy, residents with experience in building and development, and residents with experience in residential real estate.

Strategy #3. Implement inclusionary zoning

- Require affordable units in any new residential development by adopting a zoning regulation requiring that a certain percentage of any new residential development meet State affordability criteria.
- Consider accepting multiple residential lots instead of an affordable unit.
- Consider the use of density bonuses for providing affordable units.
- Allow/Require payment of a fee in lieu of affordable units through zoning regulations.

Strategy #4. Guide residential development

- Change zoning to encourage or require establishment of walkable, pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use nodes with a variety of housing options where public water, public sewer, road capacity, bus transit, is available, while maintaining / enhancing the overall “sense of place.
- Identify locations where higher density residential development should be considered.
- Encourage housing in areas where factors support housing options.
- Discourage housing in areas with environmental factors that may not be suitable for housing.

Strategy #5. Update multi-family housing regulations

- Increase the number and variety of multi-family units by undertaking a comprehensive review/ revision the multi-family regulations.
- Consider encouraging/allowing smaller scale multi-family housing which maintains the scale and appearance of residential neighborhoods but bridges the gap between single-family housing and large-scale multi-family developments.
- Encourage adaptive re-use of existing buildings such as commercial properties on major roadways.

Strategy #6. Provide a diversity of housing choices

- Encourage a variety of housing for residents of different age and income groups.
- Seek to provide housing for an aging population. Continue to allow for assisted living facilities and life care facilities in appropriate locations.
- Consider ways to provide housing opportunities for Waterford’s younger residents, families, and workforce.

Strategy #7. Utilize a variety of strategies

- Establish a “housing trust fund” (as authorized by CGS 8-2j) to receive funds from appropriations, fees, grants, donation, and other sources. Expend funds for public/private partnerships producing affordable housing, deed-restricting existing units, rehabilitation loans in exchange for deed restrictions.
- Consider the use of property tax incentives for affordable housing.
- Support and facilitate Aging in Place. Continue to offer tax relief for lower income seniors and disabled. Maintain / expand Town services (Social / Nutrition / Health / Education / Transportation, etc.) which can help older residents age in place.
- Support owner/tenant assistance programs such as CHFA/USDA Mortgages, “Tenant-Based” rental assistance and “Project-Based” rental assistance.
- Encourage livability improvements such as universal accessibility standards (zero step thresholds, lever door handles, handicapped accessible bathrooms, higher toilets, lower light switches, first floor master bedrooms, etc.).

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A large crowd of people is gathered outdoors on a grassy field, sitting on lawn chairs. They are facing towards the left side of the frame. In the background, there are large green trees and a building with a sign that says "Early". A person is standing in the foreground on the right, and a traffic cone is visible in the bottom right corner. The entire image has a teal overlay.

5

COMMUNITY SERVICES

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Goal

Provide services to residents, property owners, business owners, workers, and visitors that meet evolving community needs.

Baseline Conditions & Existing Services

The Town of Waterford provides a range of services and facilities to its residents, property owners, and visitors. Town services are provided from many facilities across the community. These include municipal buildings such as Town Hall and the Department of Public Works complex, the Waterford Community Center and Waterford Library, public facilities such as fire stations and police station, parks and recreation facilities, schools and school grounds, and the Town's beaches. Planning for the continued and future delivery of these services is an important function of this Plan.

Civic Triangle

Waterford's Civic Triangle is comprised of the Town Hall, Police Department, Fire Marshall, Library, and Community Center. The Civic Triangle is located generally between Boston Post Road (Route 1), Rope Ferry Road (Route 156) and Avery Lane. These facilities provide a centralized location for Waterford's community services. Below is a brief overview of the various facilities and services offered within the Civic Triangle Campus:

Town Hall

Waterford Town Hall houses offices for the town clerk, the tax assessors and collectors, the First Selectman, and offices for various Town staff. The Town of Waterford offers its residents many publicly provided community services.



Waterford Town Hall, Source: FHI Studio

These services include:

- A full K-12 education system
- Broad Public Works functions including an extensive sewer coverage area and wastewater treatment facilities; household waste collection, disposal and recycling service; parks and recreation; conservation; and road and public building repair and maintenance
- Full-time Police Department
- Volunteer Fire Departments (5) and Emergency Management Services
- A robust Library and Community Center
- Extensive inventory of parks, beaches, forest, and open space properties with varied activities programmed by the Recreation and Parks Department
- Waterford Youth and Family Services Department that promotes general health and well-being of the Town's population
- Animal Control Department and animal shelter
- A Planning and Development Department that reviews the development of Waterford's commercial and residential structures
- General financial, legal and other administrative government functions

A review of the Town's fiscal operating budgets from 2013 through 2023 reflects a local government that has proactively managed and improved Town operations in the midst of a stagnant state economy. The budget looks towards the future in both its capital

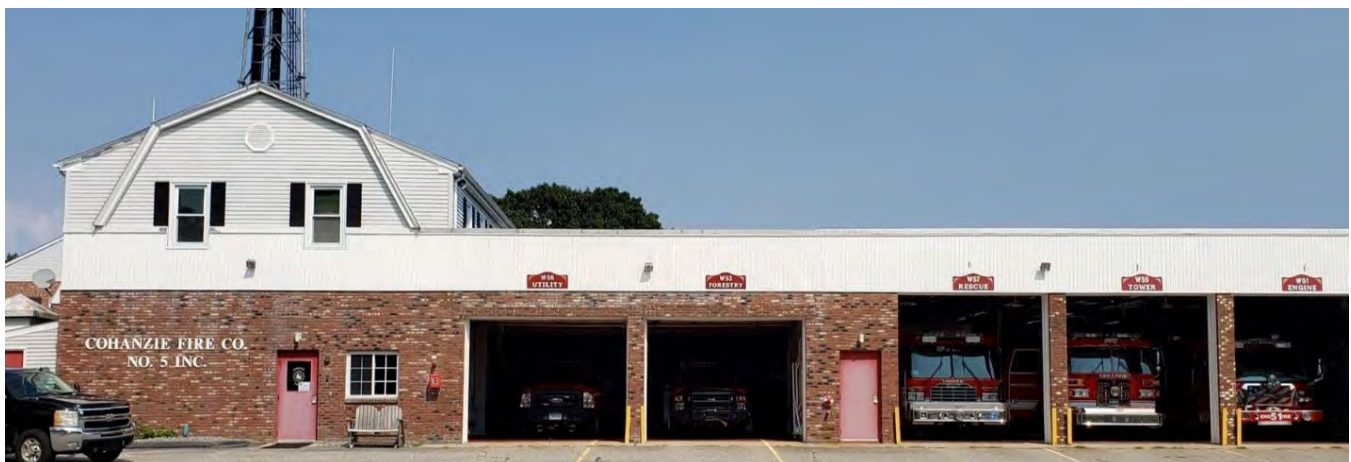
expenditures, expectations for growth, and efforts to attain cost savings for taxpayers.

Waterford's adopted operating budget for fiscal year 2023 was \$99,381,223. This budget represents an increase of over \$4 million since 2020. As with most Connecticut municipalities, the largest share of Waterford's budget is spent on education (52%). The Town recognizes that a high-quality education system is crucial to its quality of life. Municipal expenditures comprise the other half of the Town's budget (roughly 48%).

Waterford Schools

Waterford is home to a large public school system that includes three elementary, one middle, and one high school. The Waterford School district has an enrollment of approximately 2,338 students and employs more than 234 full-time equivalent employees. School district enrollment in Waterford has been on the decline since 2013, a trend that is prevalent across the State.

In 2010, the Town undertook a major school improvement project at Waterford High School. The project consisted of building a new high school and renovation of the sports field house. Various improvements to Waterford's other schools, such as field improvements and facilities improvements have also occurred in the past decade. Waterford's school system is top rated and is an attractive lure for families.



Cohanzie Fire Company, Source: Town of Waterford



Turf Field at Waterford High School, Source: FHI Studio

District-wide Initiatives and Highlights

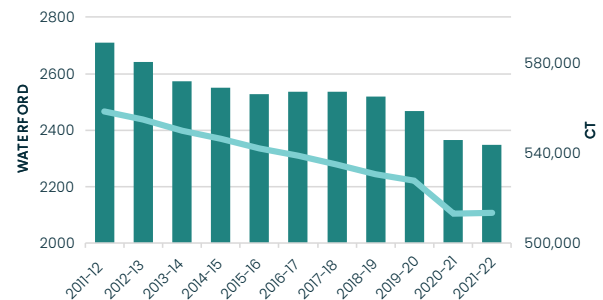
- Administration and staff applied for and received over \$73,000 in grants to enhance the educational platform for the district and students. These 14 grants, which we applied for, are a vital instrument in bringing educational programs and opportunities to students in the district we otherwise might not be able to support.
- In alignment with the Board Goal to “Advocate for and build a district that promotes equity”, the district continued our focus on equity as a significant initiative in the 2021-2022 school year. The District Equity Team met for its second year and worked on creating a District Equity Plan to be embedded in the District Strategic Plan. A curriculum equity audit was infused in all curriculum revisions and a Black and Latino Studies course was implemented at Waterford High School.
- Waterford Public Schools partnered with United Community and Family Services to open two School-Based Health Centers in the fall of 2021 at Waterford High School and Clark Lane Middle School. The School-Based Health Centers, open to all Waterford Public Schools’ students, provided comprehensive physical and behavioral health and well care to students.
- The design and implementation of programs to meet the Social and Emotional needs of students remain a focus for the

district. Effective School Solutions was implemented to provide a therapeutic day program for high needs students at WHS. Additional mental health staff was also added at the secondary level to support our students in this vital area.

Waterford Community Center

Waterford’s Community Center is a multipurpose center that offers a variety of social, educational, and recreational programs. The Center offers exercise classes, trips, and

Figure 5.1. Public Schools K-12 Enrollment



Source: CT Department of Education, Waterford Public Schools

games. The Community Center also houses many of Waterford's other social programs such as Senior Services and Youth and Family Services. Craft Fair's, Farmer's Markets and other events are held at the Community Center.

Waterford Library

Waterford has had a public library since 1923 when an association was incorporated by a small group of interested people to provide library services for the town. The Library has a



*Craft Fair at Waterford Community Center,
Source: FHI Studio*

collection of over 85,000 items including books, videos, audio books, magazines and music CDs for adults, children and teenagers. It also offers a wide variety of entertainment, informational and cultural programs for all ages.

The Library provides several online databases as well as public computers and Wi-Fi access. Meeting rooms are available for use by non-profit groups. Exhibits of local artists and organizations are featured monthly. The Library provides a book drop at the Quaker Hill Fire House for the convenience of its customers. Waterford residents and taxpayers may register for a library card and this card may be used at any public library in Connecticut.

The mission of the Waterford Public Library is to help the citizens of Waterford to enrich their lives

through access to the ideas, information, and entertainment available from books as well as from a variety of other resources.

Waterford Youth and Family Services

Waterford Youth and Family Services was established by the Town Ordinance in 1991 to:



Source: FHI Studio

- Increase the number and diversity of positive youth development programs
- Provide a coordinated means for the prevention of delinquency
- Reduce the amount of chemical abuse among youth

Waterford Youth and Family Services offers programming that supports the following areas:

- Family Connections
- Peer Relationships
- School Connections
- Community Connections

Human Services

In the past year (and especially since COVID-19), Waterford committed itself to focusing on helping residents with needs and taking an interdisciplinary approach to improving the overall quality of life of its residents. A designated Human Services Coordinator works with residents to remediate problems,

administer social services programs, improve accessibility, and oversee mental health services in coordination with the contracted clinical director. Hundreds of residents are served and provided with programs and services that meet the unique needs of individuals, families, and seniors.

Veterans Services

Waterford is dedicated to its Veterans and their needs. The Department hosts a monthly coffeehouse at Filomena's Restaurant. It is the largest gathering in the region. Over seventy Veterans are provided with a free, full breakfast and coffee service. Two additional coffeehouses for Veterans are hosted in a residential complex. These easily accessible meetings provide a licensed clinical social worker (LCSW), who is also a Vietnam War Veteran, to assist them with navigating the Veterans Affairs system and emotional well-being. Veterans are also provided with case management services, re-housing, food and meals, enrichment programs and transportation.

Waterford Community Food Bank

The Waterford Community Food Bank has served thousands of residents struggling with food insecurities. The food bank and its devoted group of volunteers have expanded its options to include paper goods, toiletries, and kid friendly snacks.

Recreation and Parks Department

The mission of Waterford's Recreation and Parks Department is that programs will be offered for all ages and interests giving each individual the opportunity to engage in a variety of activities. Through these activities, participants will be able to make constructive use of leisure time and contribute to positive physical and mental health, and good sportsmanship. The Recreation and Parks Department offers a plethora of programs for residents of all ages,



A FULL DAY SUMMER CAMP EXPERIENCE FOR CHILDREN ENTERING PRE-K TO 8TH GRADE

An amazing summer adventure full of fun, friends, beach trips, drama programs, Dungeons & Dragons, games, crafts, dance parties and so much more!

JUNE 22nd to AUGUST 11th
Two Camp Sites for 2023:
Oswegatchie or Quaker Hill

As part of Waterford Youth and Family Services summer camp, Camp Dash, the Volunteer Leadership program is designed for youth entering 8th, 9th, and 10th grade. The program focuses on developing communication and leadership skills within the Summer Camp program.



Mental Health

500 Mental Health Cases

Renter's Rebate

Residents received \$84,973.11 in grants

Energy Assistance

176 households received grants ranging from \$150 to \$1,890 for their heating costs

Farmer's Market Coupons

\$2400 worth of coupons given to 100 Seniors

Other Programs

DSS Benefits
SNAP Applications for Food
Housing
Meals On Wheels
Waterford Cares Teams
Other Services (Handicap Resources, Home Repairs, Home health aid, in-home care & cell phones.)

Source: Town of Waterford

ranging from children's yoga to senior citizen swim. The Department also manages Waterford's beaches, organizes events such as the Harvest Festival, and sponsors Wednesday evening summer concerts at Waterford Beach Park. Table 5.1 provides an inventory of the parks and recreation facilities that are available to Waterford's residents.

Waterford's Senior Services Department

Waterford's Senior Services Department provides a wide variety of resources to Waterford's senior citizens. This includes information about Medicare and social assistance programs, social programs such as card games, fitness and art classes and many many more programs. Wellness programs



Source: Town of Waterford



Source: Town of Waterford, The Day Magazine



**Lets Go Waterford,
What's Your Idea?**

DO YOU HAVE AN IDEA FOR A NEW PROGRAM, EVENT OR CLASS? MAYBE A NEW IDEA FOR AN OLD SPACE OR A HOBBY YOU CAN TEACH TO OTHERS. FILL OUT OUR PROGRAM PROPOSAL SO WE CAN HEAR FROM YOU.

Waterford
RECREATION AND PARKS

Waterford's Recreation and Parks Department is always seeking the community's ideas for programs, events and classes. Residents can submit their ideas for new programs conveniently on the Town's website at https://wysb.formstack.com/forms/rec_park_program_proposal

Table 5.1. Public Parks and Recreation Facilities

	Baseball/ Softball	Basketball	Fishing	Hiking/ Walking	Playground	Swimming	Tennis	Picnic Area	Kayak Launch	Fitness Rooms
Civic Triangle Park Located between Boston Post Rd & Rope Ferry Rd	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓		
Clark Lane Middle School 105 Clark Lane	✓									✓
Community Center 24 Rope Ferry Road		✓								✓
Dedrick Field Dayton Road Across from Cohanzie School	✓				✓			✓		
Great Neck School 165 Great Neck Road	✓	✓			✓					
Grimsey Beah 47 Oswegatchie Road			✓					✓	✓	
Jordan Mill Park-Governor's Landin Look for marker sign sff of Trumbull Rd			✓					✓		
Kiddies/Beebe's Beach Located on Ni.annc River Road				✓				✓	✓	
Leary Park 739 Vauxhall Street Extension	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓		
Mago Point Park On River Street overlooking Niantic River Bay			✓					✓		
Oswegatchie School 470 Boston Post Road	✓	✓		✓				✓		
Pleasure Beach Located on New Shore Road						✓				
Quaker Hill Green Intersection of Old Norwich Rd & Old Colchester Rd								✓		
Quaker Hill School 118 Old Norwich Road, Quaker Hill	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓		
Ridgewood Park 30 Shore Orrve								✓		
Sanctuary Basin Located on Kingfisher Way				✓				✓		
Stenger Farm Park Located on Clark Lane across from school			✓	✓				✓		
Veterans' Memorial Field Boston Post Road	✓							✓		
Waterford Beach Park 317 Great Neck Road			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Waterford High School 20 Rope Ferry Road	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓			✓

Source: Town of Waterford, The Day Magazine

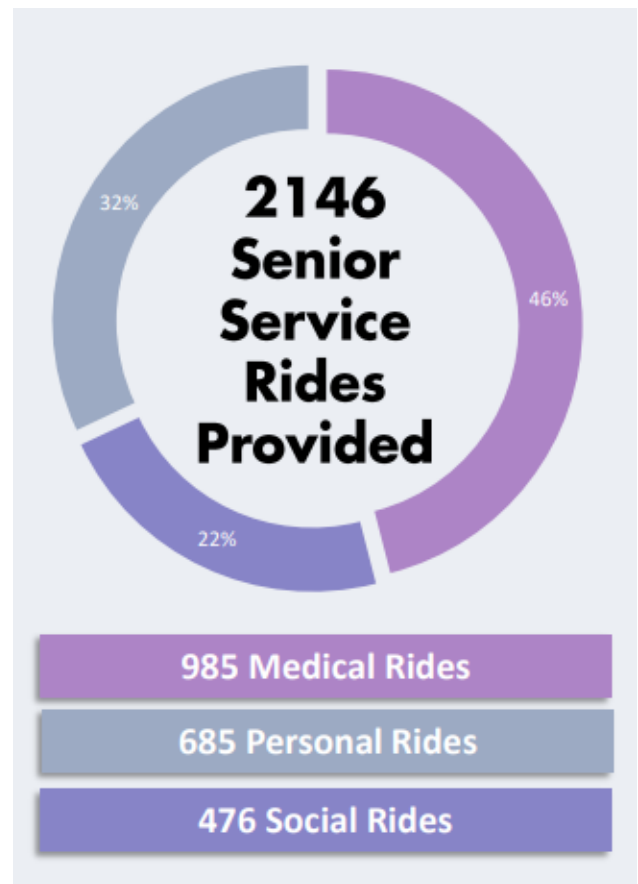
are provided through the Senior Services Departments and include programs such as blood pressure check ups and mindful meditation classes. Additionally, Senior Services provides transportation services. In 2022, the Waterford Senior Services transportation program provided 4,169 one way rides. Close to 50% of the rides were for medical appointments. Three senior vans provided rides to a variety of activities including; exercise classes, card games and luncheons at the Community Center. Vans took seniors to the grocery stores, banks, barbers and the places they needed to go. Transportation services allow residents to remain independent and handle errands and social activities on their own.

Police Department

The Waterford Police Department covers approximately 33 square miles and also covers several bodies of water, including the Thames River, Niantic River and Long Island Sound.

Waterford Police Officers use marked cruisers, unmarked vehicles, a patrol boat, jet-skis, ATV's, bicycles and other methods to protect and serve the Town of Waterford. The department is proud to have officers who have acquired additional training and qualifications in specific areas which benefit our and the surrounding communities. These specialized areas include an Accident Investigation Team, K-9 Units, Youth Education Instructors, Drug Recognition Experts and Police Instructors in numerous law enforcement subjects. The department also has officers who participate in and are assigned to task forces, cold case units and other regional and state efforts periodically.

The primary mission of the Waterford Police Department is to "protect those who rely on us for their safety, and to serve our community in times of need. The Department works with the community to help deter crime, protect others and educate the public. The Waterford Police Department delivers professional and dedicated service to all in our community."



Source: Town of Waterford



Smores at Harvest Fest, Source: Town of Waterford



Waterford Police Department supporting a local Cub Scout car wash that was held at the Cohanzie Fire Department, Source: Town of Waterford

As part of their commitment to the community, the Waterford Police Department hosts events like "Coffee with a Cop" where refreshments are served and residents can socialize and ask questions. Additionally, the Department hosts a Citizen's Police Academy where officers donate their time to build relationships with the community.

Fire Department

The Waterford Fire Department is a combination department, which utilizes volunteer, part time, and career members and is comprised of five (5) fire stations:

- Waterford Fire Company #1 (Jordan)
- Waterford Fire Company #2 (Quaker Hill)
- Waterford Fire Company #3 (Goshen)
- Waterford Fire Company #4 (Oswegatchie)
- Waterford Fire Company #5 (Cohanzie)

The department protects the life and property of Town residents, businesses, industrial, and visitors from fires, motor vehicle accidents, and critical health threats through its primary operations in response to fire and medical emergencies.



Waterford Fire Department talking to students about fire safety at Clark Lane Middle School, Source: Waterford Fire Department

Emergency Management

Waterford's Emergency Management Department provides the Town with information about emergency services and aid for evacuations and emergency instructions. During the Covid-19 Pandemic, Waterford's Emergency Management Department met regularly with Ledge Light Health District (LLHD), the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH), the State of Connecticut Governor's Office, the State of Connecticut Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) - Region 4, and others to determine best practices and public safety during the unprecedented pandemic. COVID-19 testing was offered by Ledge Light Health District at the Waterford Public Library beginning in September of 2021. Waterford Police, Youth & Family Services, Public Works, Recreation & Parks and the Fire Department assisted with the distribution of several thousand home test kits and N-95 masks to Waterford citizens at no cost. The Town of Waterford continues to be a Regional Distribution Center during area emergencies. A written agreement with the

State of Connecticut was recently renewed for this purpose.

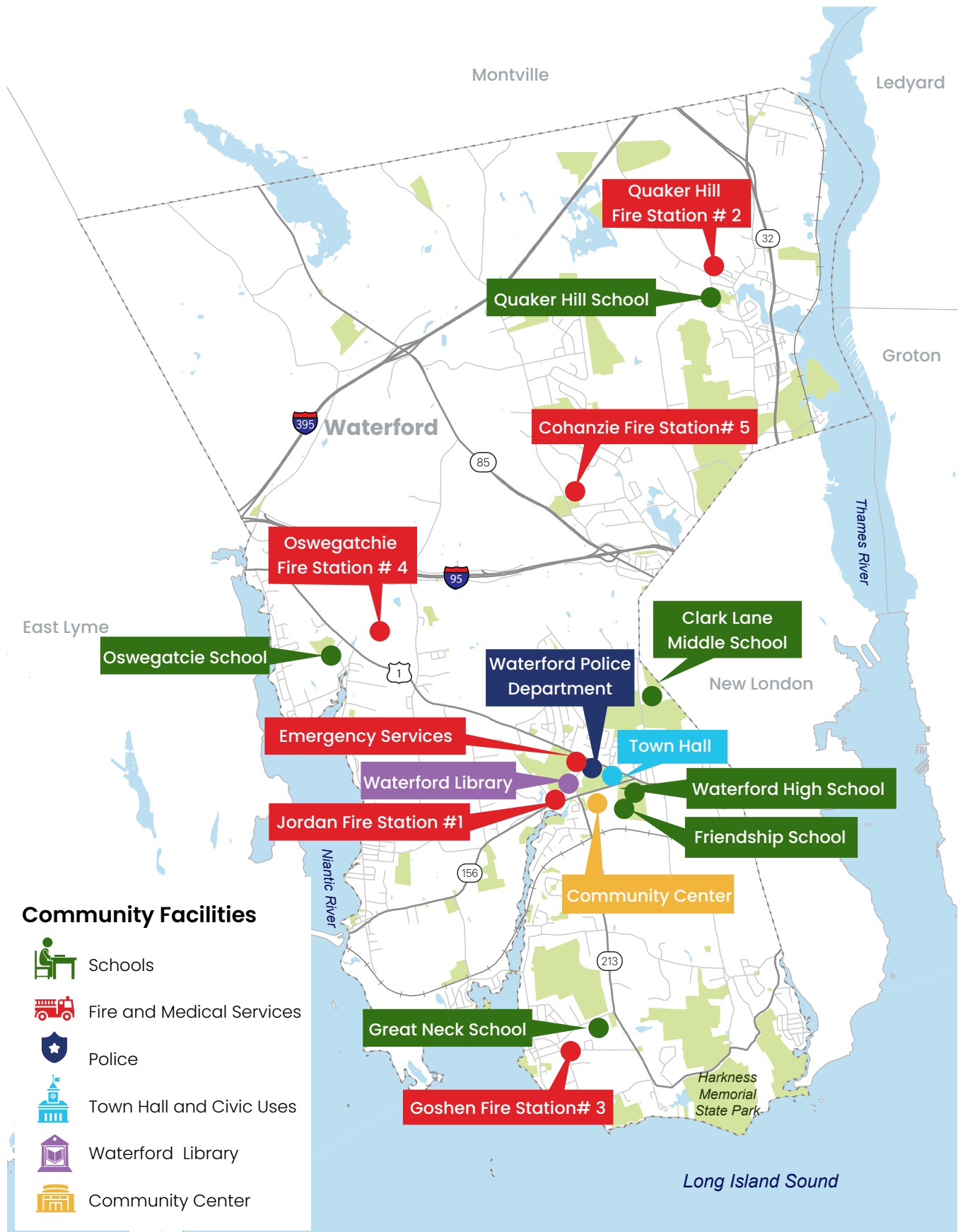
Department of Public Works

Waterford's Public Works Department provides many important functions that have a direct impact on the welfare and quality of life of its residents. The goals of the Department are to; protect and prolong the life of Waterford's assets, support the advancement of the quality of life and to provide cost effective and efficient services. The Department is comprised of: Highway Operations, Equipment Maintenance, Solid Waste, and Administration Divisions. Public Works maintains transportation systems, essential infrastructure, and open space. It also provides waste removal. Utilities and water are provided by private companies. The Department also is involved with various community events and community involvement initiatives like Touch-a-Truck.



Source: Town of Waterford

Figure 5.2. Community Facilities



Findings

- The Town has an array of community facilities serving many different ages and in different areas of the town. Many of these facilities are located within the Civic Triangle. It can be challenging for residents in other areas of town to travel to that location.
- Continuing to provide the level of services that residents expect continues to be challenging for the Town.
- Waterford's geography is spread across 33 miles, it's size makes it challenging at times to provide services to residents in the northern areas of town.

Thoughts from the Waterford Community



Through the Plan's community engagement process, Waterford residents expressed many ideas and desires regarding community services in the Town. Repeatedly, residents emphasized Waterford's public beaches and park facilities as assets to the community. Waterford is recognized by its residents as providing a variety of high-quality services and facilities not found in neighboring towns. Programming at the Community Center is "top – notch" and provides services for Waterford's residents of all ages. Residents are also very proud of the Waterford School System and the programs that it provides to its students and families. Concerns over maintaining services were expressed by some residents.

Goal

Provide services to residents, property owners, business owners, workers, and visitors that meet evolving community needs.

Strategies & Action Steps

Strategy #1. Ensure that Waterford continues to adequately serve its residents and businesses with community services.

- Continue to monitor the evolving needs of the community and seek input on desired services that could benefit Waterford's residents.
- Collaborate with neighboring and regional municipalities and organizations to consolidate duplicate services where feasible.
- Promote the shared use of public spaces and facilities.
- Continue to ensure that Waterford's facilities are ADA compliant. To date, the Library is not ADA compliant.

Strategy #2. Ensure that the town's finances are professionally and carefully managed to deliver the highest level of services and programs as efficiently as possible

- Monitor future public investments in acquisition, new construction/ additions and improvements in relation to the delivery of service to the maximum number of Waterford residents and businesses and for the highest priority public service needs.

Strategy #3. Prioritize improvements to the Town's facilities to meet diverse program needs.

- Conduct a Town Facilities Master Plan to assess capacity to meet current and anticipated program needs, to identify energy and other efficiency improvements, and to explore opportunities for consolidation and reuse.
- Address accessibility needs of the physically disabled population in utilizing Town facilities and services.

Strategy #4. Prioritize improvements to the Town's school facilities to meet program needs.

- Recommend the Board of Education complete an enrollment and space utilization study of all schools to determine current and projected facility needs.
- Improve school facilities to ensure that high quality, modern, and fully accessible facilities are available to Waterford's students.
- Continue to invest in Waterford's education system to maintain and elevate its status as a desirable place to raise a family.
- Consider doing more workforce development programs at the High School. Provide more programming for jobs right out of school.

Strategy #5. Promote special events and activities.

- Continue to encourage events and activities that contribute to the local quality of life in Waterford.

Strategy #6. Implement other programs to enhance the quality of life in Waterford.

- Continue to encourage, promote and sponsor events that contribute to community spirit and pride.
- Promote volunteerism by residents which helps to support community programs. Recognize local volunteers.
- Promote philanthropy by residents which will help to enhance the community and its quality of life.

8



**ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT**

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Goal

Foster a vibrant economy that provides residents with access to goods, services, and employment opportunities while diversifying the Town's property tax base.

Baseline Conditions

Waterford supports a diverse, thriving base of successful businesses, ranging from regional shopping destinations such as Waterford Commons, manufacturing, and industrial businesses such as Sonalysts and an abundance of family-owned legacy businesses. Waterford's strategic location, excellent infrastructure system (roads and utilities), low property taxes, existing business base, and progressive regulations are significant assets in terms of retaining and attracting economic development. Despite a changing retail market and the increase in online commerce, Waterford's top industry continues to be retail trade which employs approximately 2,885 workers. This is well above the number of employees who are employed in the second highest industry, which is health care and social assistance industry, which employs 1,665 workers. Retail trade employment in Waterford greatly exceeds that of the County and State.

Additionally, Waterford has a higher percentage of utilities, transportation and warehousing, and construction jobs than the County of the State, as can be seen below. Much of Waterford's land area is zoned for commercial and industrial uses, aiding in the development of these types of businesses.

Table 8.1. Top Industries (2019)

	Employment	Employers	Avg. Wages
1 Retail Trade	2,885	149	\$27,943
2 Health Care & Social Assistance	1,665	64	\$45,548
3 Accommodation & Food Services	874	55	\$25,905
4 Local Government	794	13	\$58,555
5 Transportation & Warehousing	464	10	\$27,350
All Industries	10,604	684	\$55,146

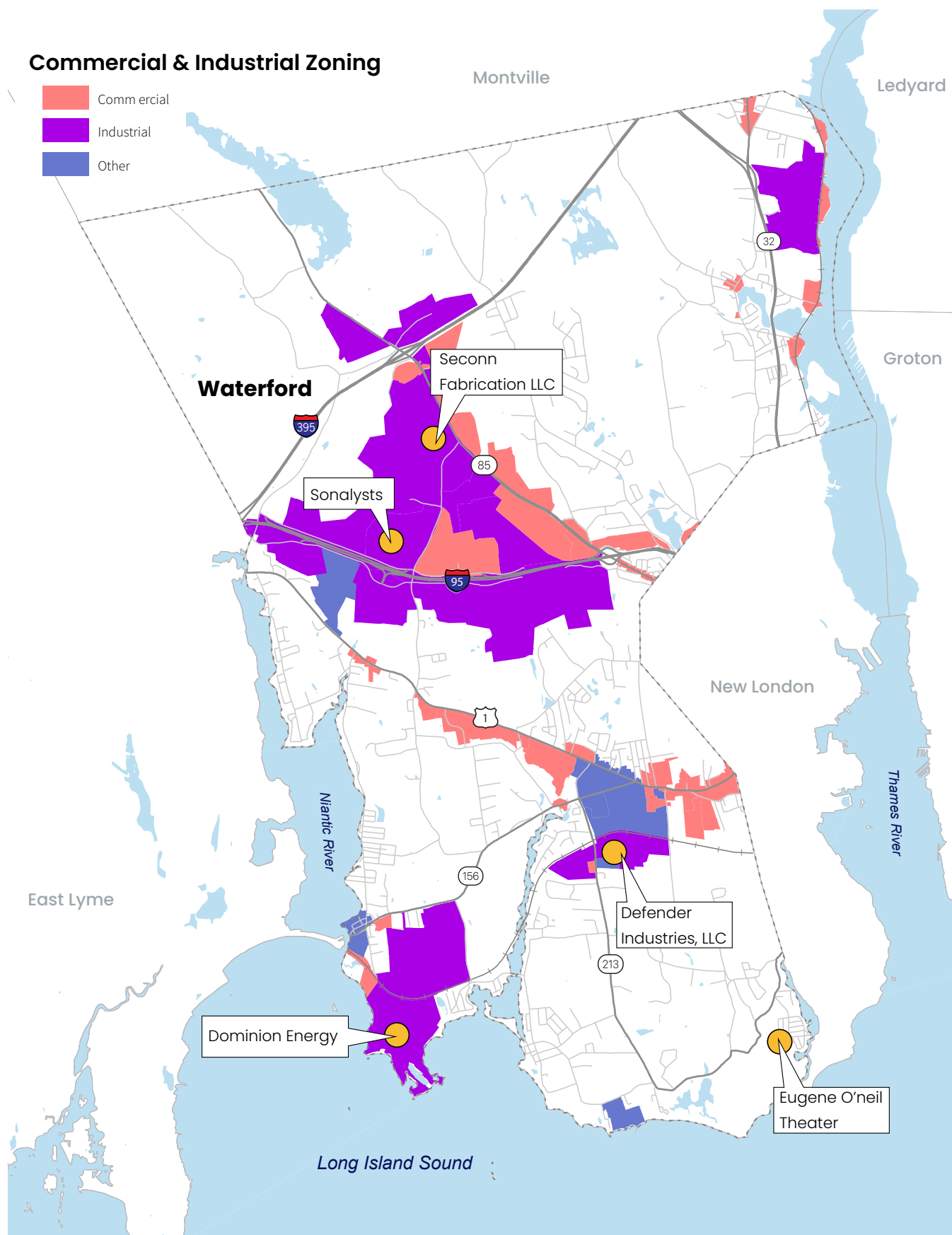
Source: CT Data Collaborative, 2021 Waterford Town Profile

Table 8.2. SOTS Business Registrations (2021)

Total Active Business Registrations								1,745
New Business Registrations by Year								
2001	124	2006	105	2011	90	2016	86	
2002	98	2007	121	2012	68	2017	105	
2003	92	2008	92	2013	87	2018	117	
2004	124	2009	101	2014	113	2019	138	
2005	131	2010	85	2015	81	2020	137	

Source: CT Data Collaborative, 2021 Waterford Town Profile

Figure 8.1. Commercial & Industrial Zoning



Labor Force

Waterford has a total labor force of 9,690 workers as of April 2023 and accounts for roughly 8% of New London County's labor force, which totals 129,777. Waterford's labor force has shrunk since 2019, a pattern which is also noticed in both New London County and the State. This implies there may be a segment of the unemployed population removed from the labor force and unemployment rate statistics because they are not actively looking for work. Several factors may be contributing to this, including early retirement, lost immigration, lingering COVID apprehension, increased childcare responsibilities, and discouragement.

Waterford is a major employment center for the region, and when adjusted by population, Waterford has more jobs (per capita) than the surrounding municipalities of East Lyme, New London and even New London County.

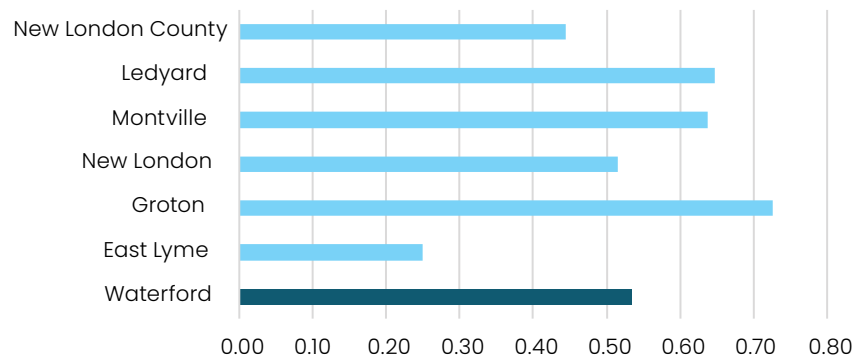
Waterford's unemployment rate has declined nearly 4% since 2013, where it was at 7.8%. There was a spike in 2020 where the unemployment rate was at 8.3%, but that can be attributed to COVID-19 and is consistent with the unemployment rates of New London County and the State. Waterford's unemployment rate has consistently been below that of the County and State.

Figure 8.2. Labor Force and Unemployment Rate (April 2023)



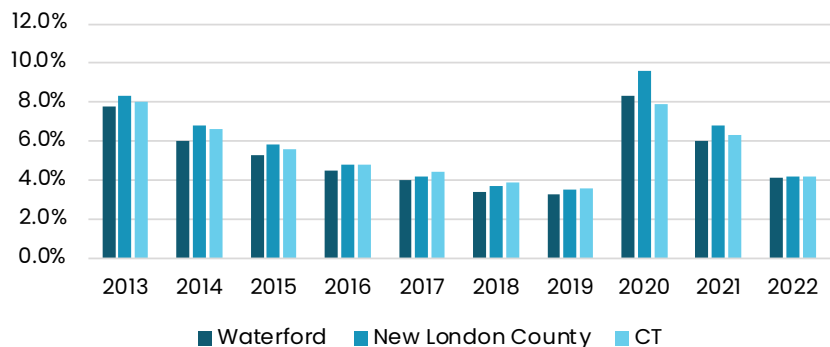
Source: CT Department of Labor, 2023

Figure 8.3. Jobs per Capita (2019)



Source: US Census Bureau Longitudinal 2019 Employer-Household Dynamics Origin Destination Employment Statistics

Figure 8.4. Unemployment vs County and State (2013-2022)



Source: CT Department of Labor, 2013-2022

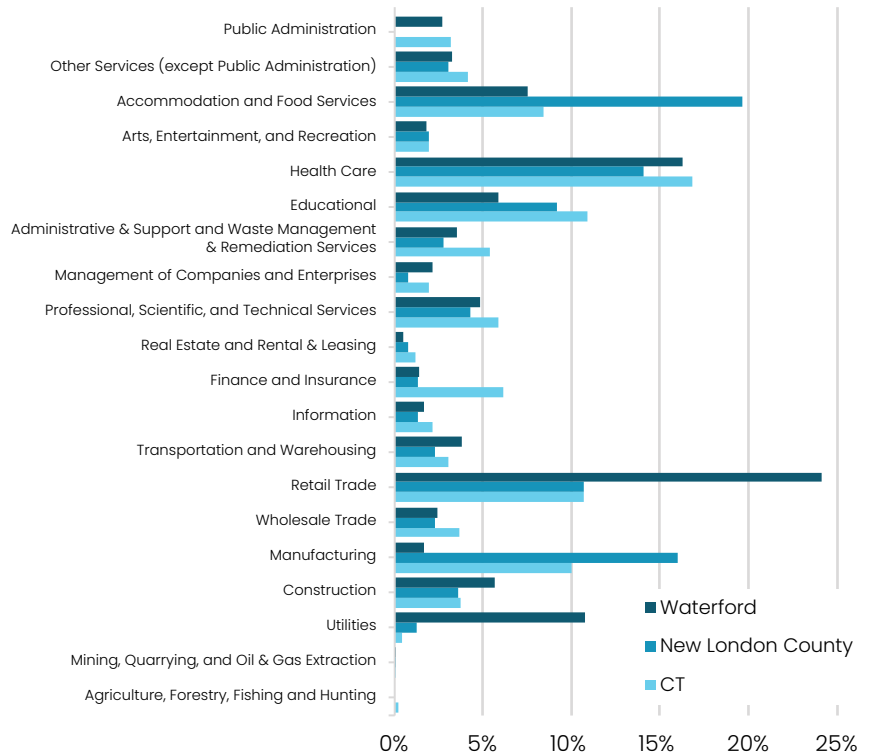
Industry

When compared to New London County and the State with respect to its composition of business across industry sectors, Waterford has a much greater percentage of Retail Trade jobs. This can be attributed to its status as a regional shopping destination, home to businesses such as Home Depot, Lowes, Target and other national retailers. Additionally, Waterford has a higher percentage of utilities and construction jobs than the County of the State. Dominion Energy, Waterford's top employer, is responsible for the Town's higher percentage of utility industry jobs. Much of Waterford's land area is zoned for industrial uses, aiding in the development of these types of businesses.

Waterford lags behind the County and State in its share of educational, manufacturing, and accommodation and food services jobs.

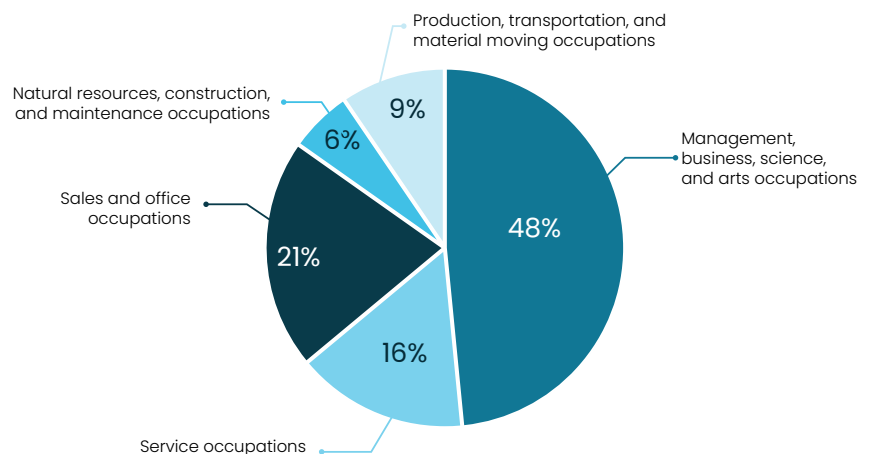
Of Waterford's employed population 16 years and over, approximately 48% of workers are employed in management, business, science, and arts occupations. Over 16% are employed in service occupations, over 20% are employed in sales and office occupations. About 9% are employed in production,

Figure 8.5. Share of Jobs by Industry (2019)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, 2019

Figure 8.6. Occupations (2021)



Source: American Community Survey – 2021

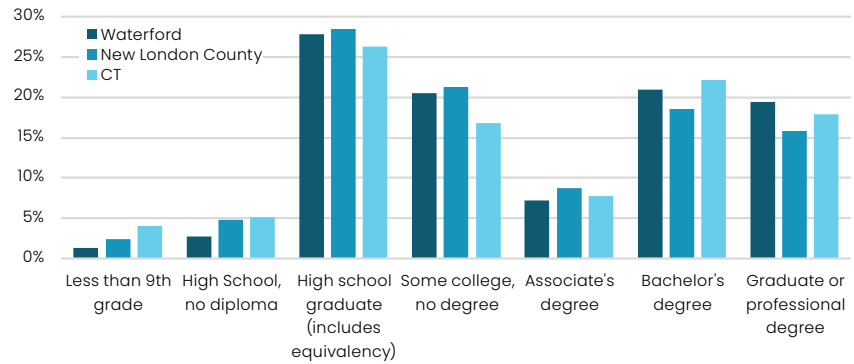
transportation, and material moving occupations. About 6% are employed in natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations.

Education and Income

Waterford has a well-educated population. As of 2021, nearly half of residents aged 25 and older held at least an associate's degree and 40% had obtained a bachelor's degree or higher. The educational attainment of Waterford's residents is on a positive trajectory, improving between 2010 and 2021 with more residents who have bachelor's and graduate degrees and fewer residents with less than a bachelor's degree. Waterford's residents hold more bachelor's degrees than New London County residents, and more graduate or professional degrees than that of the County and State.

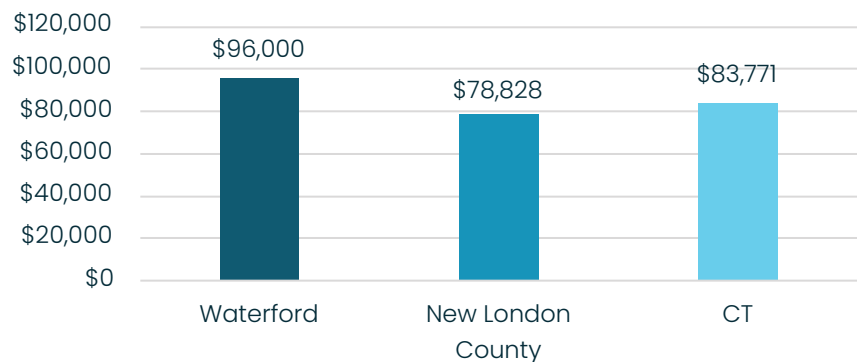
Household incomes are higher in Waterford than both New London County and the State's household incomes. Census data indicates that the largest share of Waterford households earns between \$100,000 and \$150,000 annually. Approximately 1,798 households fall within this earning bracket, equaling 22% of the Town's total households. Nearly half (45%) of Waterford's households earn \$100,000 or more compared to 39% in New

Figure 8.7. Educational Attainment (2021)



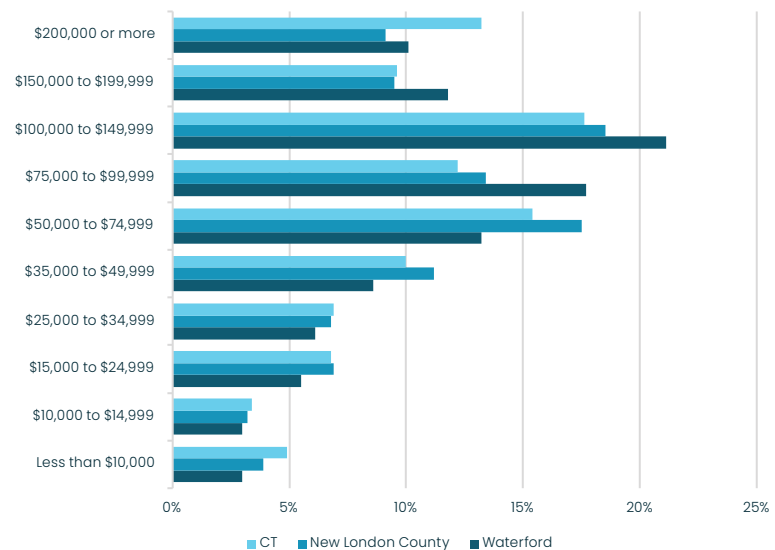
Source: American Community Survey – 2021

Figure 8.8. Median Household Income (2021)



Source: American Community Survey – 2021

Figure 8.9. Percentage of Households by Income (2021)



Source: American Community Survey – 2021

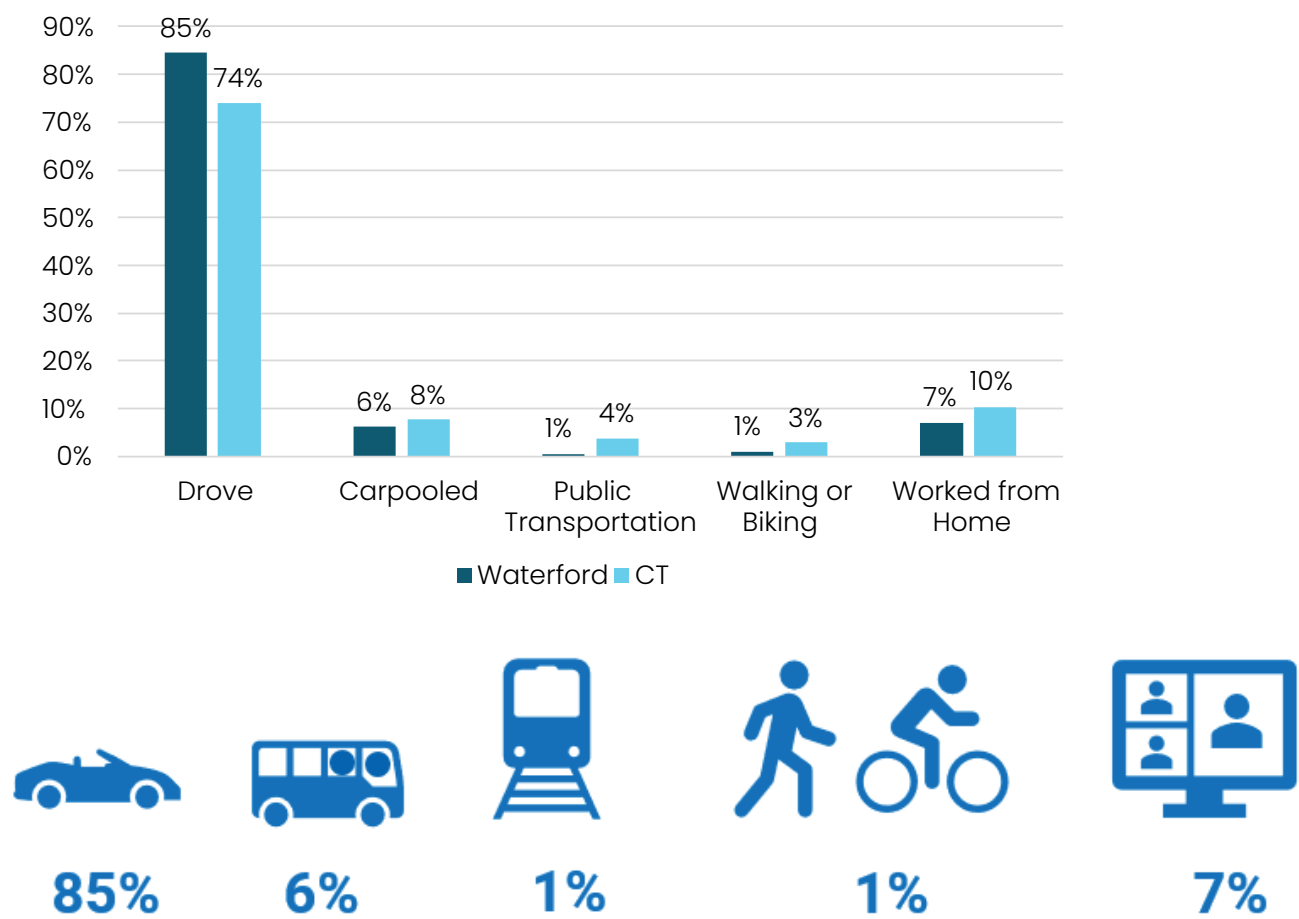
London County. Waterford also has a lower share of households in income brackets below \$25,000 than both the County and State.

Job Locations and Commuting Trends

More workers commute into Waterford daily for employment than the number of Waterford’s residents who commute out of Town each day. Nearly 8,000 working residents commute to locations outside of Waterford while over 8,500 people who live elsewhere commute into the Town for work each day. Approximately 1,500 residents of Waterford both live and work within the Town. Since 2010, the number of residents commuting out of Waterford has increased, while the number of workers commuting into Town has decreased. Waterford’s residents who commute outside the Town for work go as far as Hartford and New Haven and as close by as New London. The five leading work destinations outside of Waterford include New London, Groton, Norwich, Mashantucket, and Hartford. The majority (85%) of Waterford’s residents drive alone to work, while about 6% carpool, 1% take public transportation and about 1% walk or bike. Approximately 7% of residents work from home, which has increased since 2019 pre-pandemic numbers. These commuting trends closely resemble those of the State as a whole.

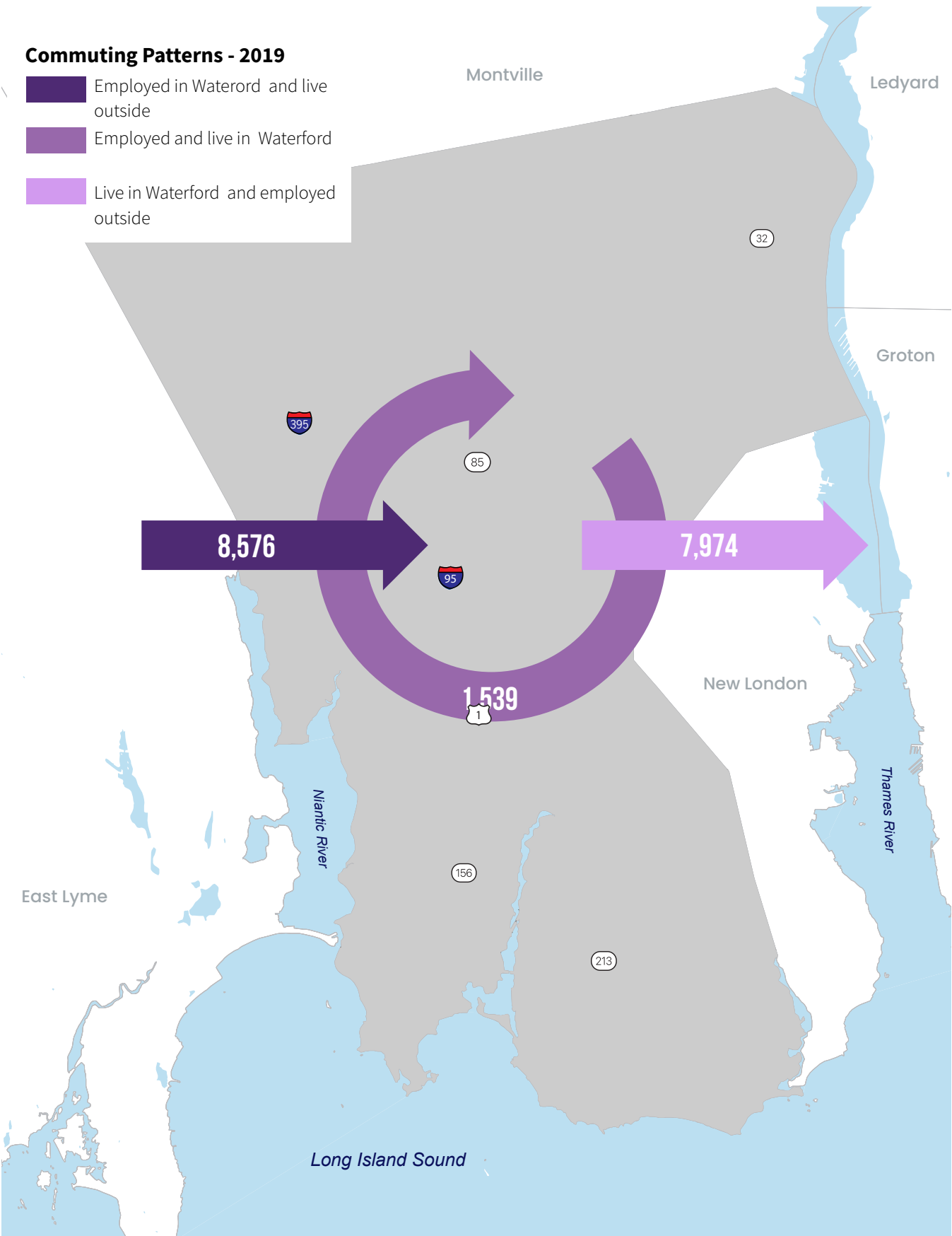
Waterford’s concentration of jobs are primarily located near the Town’s commercial areas including the Route 1 corridor and Route 85 corridor, as well as within the Civic Triangle area. These areas, that are zoned for commercial and industrial uses, are the locations of several of Waterford’s major employers and are the commercial centers of the Town.

Figure 8.10. Journey to Work (2021)



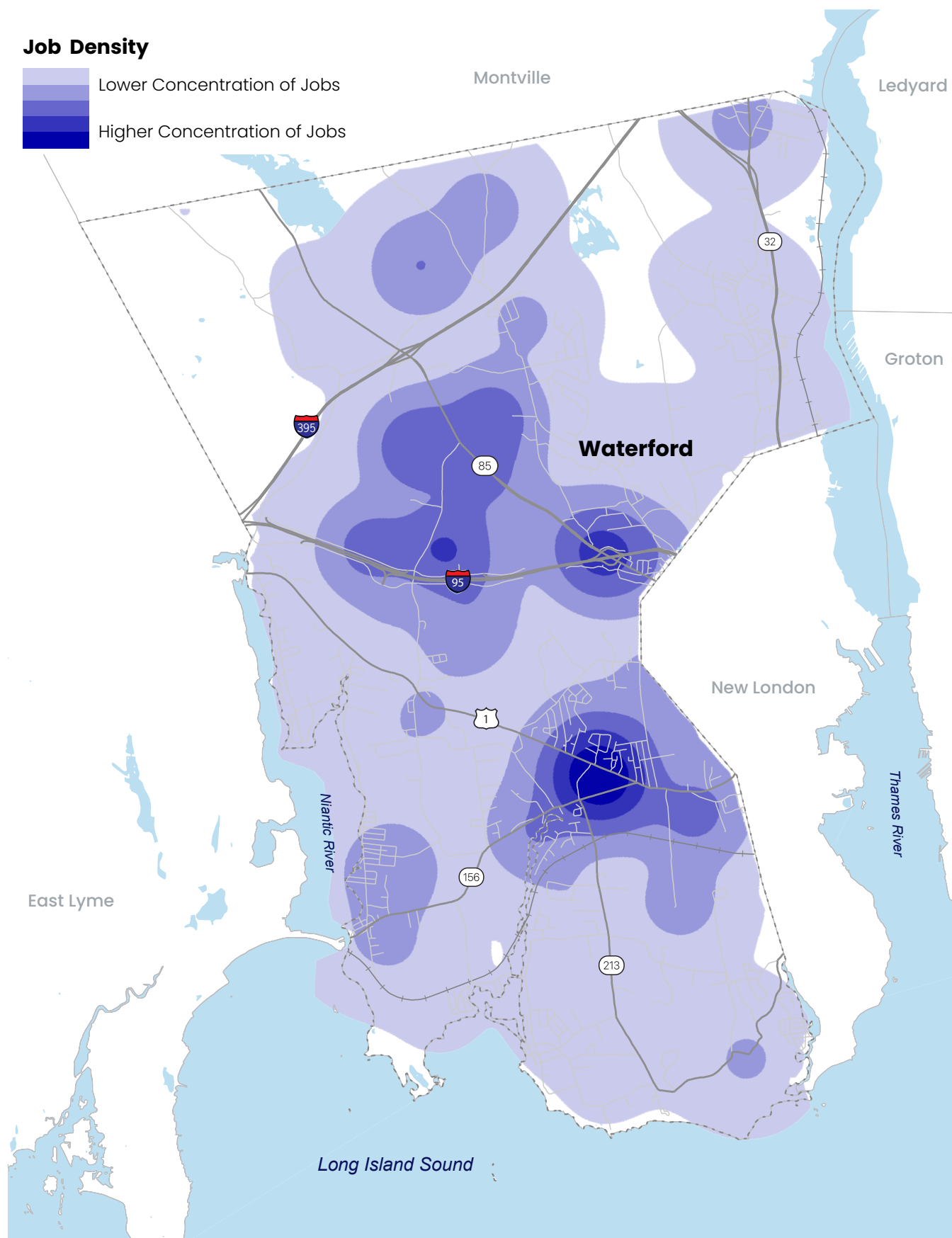
Source: American Community Survey – 2021

Figure 8.11. Job Locations and Commuting Trends



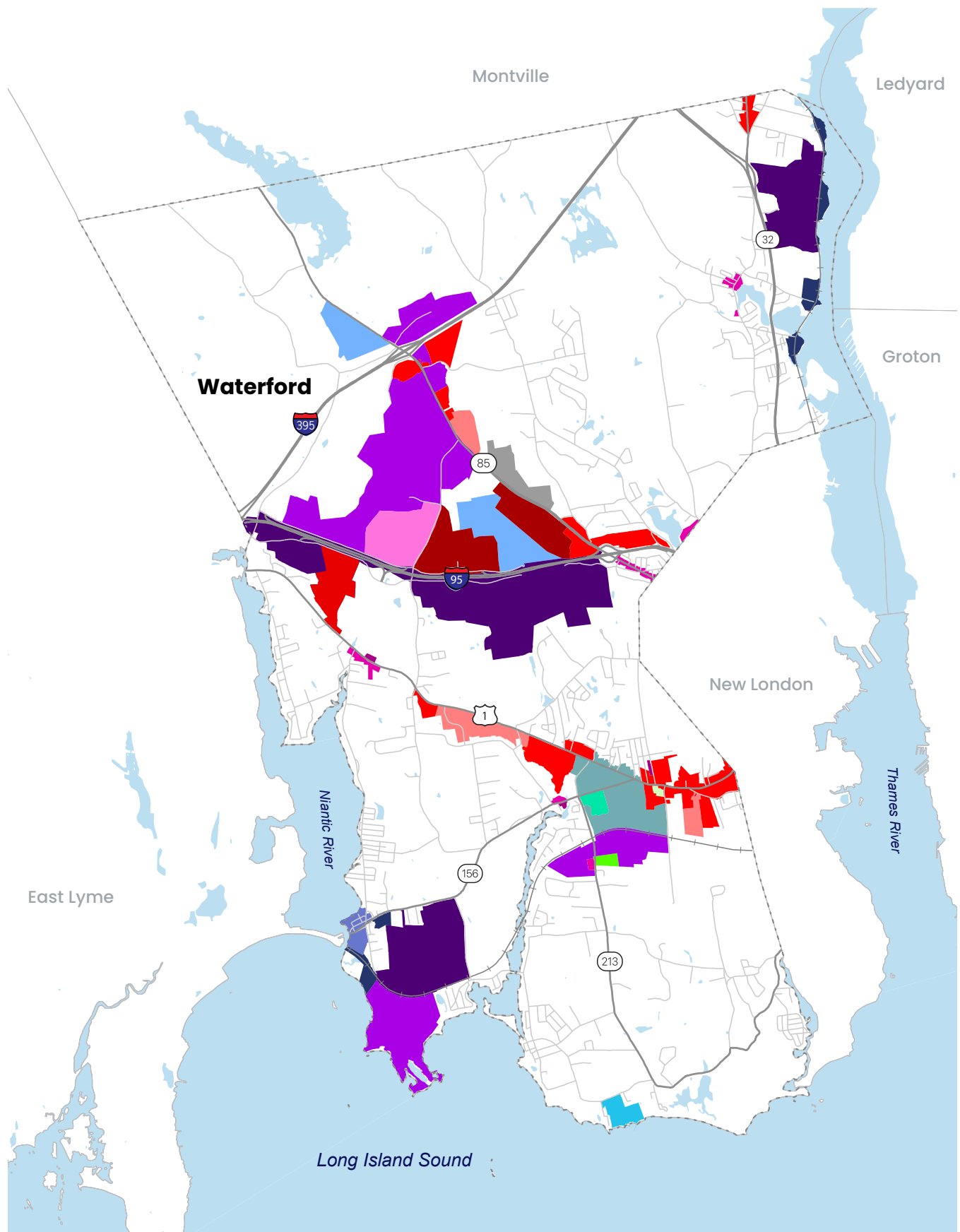
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, 2019

Figure 8.12. Concentration of Jobs (2020)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, 2019

Figure 8.13. Business Zoning



Commercial & Industrial Zoning

COMMERCIAL

	C-R - Regional Commercial
	SDD - Special Development District
	C-G - General Commercial
	NB - Neighborhood Business
	NBPO - Neighborhood Business Professional Office
	C-MF - Commercial Multi-Family
	WD - Waterfront Development District
	MPD - Mago Point District

INDUSTRIAL

	I-C - Industrial Commercial
	I-G - General Industrial
	IP-1 - General Industrial Park
	IP-3 - Special Aquifer Industrial Park
	I-MF - Industrial Multi-Family

OTHER DISTRICTS

	CT - Civic Triangle
	CT-MF - Civic Triangle Multi-Family
	MCOD - Medical Campus Overlay Zone
	SPD - Seaside Preservation District
	PDD-1 - Planned Design 1
	PDD-2 - Planned Design 2

Business Districts

Waterford has four business districts that include two the Neighborhood Business (NB) District and the Neighborhood Business Professional Office District (NBPO). The NB District allows for a combination of single-family, retail stores, business office and professional buildings, restaurants and civic uses such as libraries and firehouses. The NBPO District is intended to provide a reasonable use of existing structures and the development of new uses consistent with these regulations. Located along major arterial and collector routes, this district contains existing residential neighborhoods which have been encroached upon by non-residential development, creating a need to provide transition uses between residential and commercial uses and to prevent further encroachment on stable residential neighborhoods. The Waterfront Development District's (WD) purpose is to preserve and enhance existing water-dependent uses, encourage new water-dependent uses where appropriate and encourage development which is compatible with the coastal resource characteristics. Access for the general public along the water's edge and the development of complimentary uses and activities on the



Utopia Centre on Boston Post Road, Source: LoopNet

waterfront helps to integrate this District with surrounding districts. The Medical Campus Overlay Zone (MCOD), is an overlay zoning district located in the area south of Interstate 95, west of the boundary of the R-20 Zoning District adjacent to Cross Road, north of 429 to 475 Boston Post Road, and east of the boundary of the existing IP-1 Zoning District. The MCOD is located in an area where a range of business, industrial, and residential land uses are permitted in close proximity to interstate highways and frontage roads. The purpose of the MCOD is to enable a site with at least 40 contiguous acres to be developed into a medical campus.

Commercial and Retail Districts

Waterford has two commercial districts that include a Regional Commercial District (C-R) and a General Commercial District (C-G). C-R districts are located along the I-95 and Route 85 Corridors and are where Waterford's regional

shopping destinations such as Home Depot and Target, are located. C-G districts can be found along the Route 1 Corridor and other locations along major roadways such as Route 32. In addition to these districts, Waterford also has a Civic Triangle (C-T) District that is located in central Waterford at the junction of Route 1 and Rope Ferry Road (Route 156). This is the location of the Town's municipal campus, including Town Hall, the Library, Community Center, and Waterford High School. The purpose of the Civic Triangle (CT) District is to allow a mixture of land uses which enhance the vitality of the district, support municipal facilities and functions, protect historic buildings and landscape features and contribute to a vibrant town center.

Industrial Districts

Waterford has a variety of industrially zoned districts, most of which are concentrated between I-95 and Route 85. Land uses within the industrial districts are characterized by older industrial buildings and properties that are



Sonalysts, Inc. Property, Source: Sonalysts

home to a mixture of commercial services, auto repair and sales, machine shops, construction yards, storage, and manufacturing facilities. Start-up spaces are also a sought-after use in the industrial area. The industrial area is anchored by major establishments such as Sonalysts and Seconn Fabrication, LLC. Recognizing the value that an industrial presence adds to Waterford, the Town has actively promoted the reuse and adaption of industrial properties and seeks to balance shifting market trends that favor mixed-use development with the importance of preserving land for future generations of industry.

Key Findings and Opportunities

The Town's priority should be to identify new economic development opportunities which focus on redeveloping former industrial and brownfield lands. Moving forward, the Town should continue to incorporate policy and recommendations items that make Waterford a more livable community, financially and physically.

Mago Point

As the only area in Waterford with a concentration of water-dependent uses, Mago Point attracts many visitors to the blend of restaurant, recreation, marina, public boat launch, and fishing charter operations. This overall character should be maintained and enhanced.

Even though there may only be limited development or redevelopment opportunities in this area, Waterford should continue to guide activities in the Mago Point area in ways which will maintain the waterfront village ambience, enhance its vitality, and attract customers and visitors to this area. As part of this, efforts should be devoted to extending and enhancing public access like the East Lyme boardwalk.

Crystal Mall

Faced with years of increasing vacancies and falling sales revenue, the Crystal Mall was auctioned to a developer in early 2023. Although the future of the property is unknown at the time of this Plan, it is anticipated that the Town will work very closely with the developer as redevelopment of the property occurs.



Rendering for Mago Point Waterfront District, Source: BETA



Source: Waterford Patch

Former Waterford Airport Property

Abandoned since 1988, the former Waterford Airport property on 189 acres in the IP-1 zone and four additional lots on 139 acres in the R-40 zone are being offered as a master development of mixed uses for commercial, industrial, recreational and residential. Potential uses include manufacturing, warehousing, professional offices, medical clinics and laboratories, specialty schools, hotels and motels, sports related recreation, data centers, battery energy storage and residential development. The 328 acres, with 600 feet frontage on I-95, are located off exit 81 north and south to Cross Road.

Home Based Businesses

The Covid-19 pandemic created a shift in the number of workers who work from home in Waterford and across the Country. With a larger percentage of the population working from

home (7% in 2021), Waterford should maintain regulations to allow and manage home-based businesses (professional uses, business services, personal services, and contractors).

Special efforts should continue to:

- Manage the activities of home-based contractors
- Limit the parking of commercial vehicles in residential areas
- Mitigate negative effects of home-based businesses to surrounding residential neighborhoods

Economic Development Initiatives

Waterford has an active Economic Development Commission (EDC). The Commission promotes and develops Waterford's economy by:

- Researching economic conditions and trends
- Recommending actions to improve Waterford's economy
- Coordinating and cooperating with outside economic groups
- Advertising and promoting Waterford's economy
- Reporting on activities and recommendations for Waterford's economy

Additionally, the EDC was responsible for the facilitation and distribution of the Town's Small Business Grant Program. This program, funded by the Coronavirus State and local fiscal recovery funds or American Rescue Plan Act, aka ARPA, provided grants for small businesses who were impacted by the Covid 19 pandemic. In 2022, **XX** small businesses in Waterford received grants thru the program. Another round of grant funding will be distributed in 2023. The EDC is currently developing an Economic Development Marketing Plan for the Town that will guide economic development strategies and initiatives in Waterford.

The EDC works closely with regional partners such as the Southeastern Connecticut Enterprise Region (seCTer) and Chamber of Commerce

of Eastern Connecticut (ChamberECT) to promote economic development across the southeastern Connecticut region.

Thoughts from the Waterford Community



When discussing economic development with the community, many residents felt that Waterford really lacks a Town Center or Downtown. The idea of strengthening the Town's identity through the promotion of the various unique villages was emphasized. Streetscape improvements, wayfinding, and pedestrian amenities could strengthen these connections. The need for more restaurants and small local businesses was expressed. Downtown Niantic and the Boardwalk were often cited as desirable types of development. Mago Point and opportunities to create a vibrant commercial node in that area were discussed.

Many of Waterford's business owners discussed the ease of conducting business in Waterford, complimenting the Town on its straightforward permitting processes and ongoing support of the business community. Many business owners described Waterford as being a business-friendly community, and cited Waterford's location and connectivity to the region and employee base as a main factor when locating their business in the Town. Concerns over the future of the retail businesses and the Crystal Mall property were also discussed.

Southeastern Connecticut Enterprise Region (seCTer)

The Southeastern CT Enterprise Region (seCTer) is the region's designated private, non-profit Economic Development Organization providing a broad range of services and resources to stimulate and support economic development and diversification within Southeastern Connecticut. Please visit <https://www.secter.org/> for more information about the support and services that seCTer provides.

Goal

Foster a vibrant economy that provides residents with access to goods, services, and employment opportunities while diversifying the Town's property tax base.

Strategy #1. Encourage the growth and retention of Waterford's existing businesses.

- Ensure that the Economic Development Commission has the resources needed to engage in the strategies of this Plan and meet the ongoing needs of economic development in Waterford.
- Continue to streamline the Town's business permitting and licensing processes to be efficient, effective, and straightforward.
- Work with area legislators to enhance economic development incentives.
- Continue to pursue economic development which is consistent with the community.
- Continue to support regional comprehensive economic development strategies and programs.

Strategy #2. Encourage the diversification and growth of the Town's tax base.

- Facilitate new development that bolsters the local tax base.
- Encourage future business activity in appropriate areas.
- Partner with the Southeastern Connecticut Enterprise Region (seCTer) and the Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut (ChamberECT) to actively promote Waterford and distribute campaign materials and information.

Strategy #3. Pursue adaptive reuse of the Crystal Mall property as a potential for mixed-use and residential.

- Work cooperatively with the future owner of the Crystal Mall to guide future development.

Strategy #4. Identify areas in Waterford that are suited for redevelopment and adaptive reuse for industrial, commercial, retail, and office businesses.

- Encourage infill development on vacant and underutilized lots.
- Encourage the expansion of co-working spaces in commercial districts.
- Encourage mixed-use and higher density development in locations that are serviced by public water, sewer, and transit and existing commercial districts.
- Encourage the expansion of high-speed broadband coverage and gigabit internet access along the Route 85 and Route 1 business corridor in order to attract high tech, precision & supply chain manufacturing that bring specialized jobs. Amenities should also support people working from home such as public wifi.

Strategy #5. Continue to invest in Waterford's commercial nodes and villages through infrastructure and streetscape improvements, building façade improvements, public spaces for gathering and events, and marketing and attracting people to town.

- Continue to support housing development in the Civic Triangle Multi-Family District and the Commercial Multi-Family District as a catalyst for reuse/redevelopment and a built-in customer base for local businesses.
- Continue to invest in and support infrastructure improvements that improve the quality and safety of the pedestrian and bicycle facilities in commercial districts.
- Enhance connectivity between anchor institutions and major employment and commercial districts through targeted public infrastructure improvements. Improvements that enhance sustainability should be prioritized and all improvements should be consistent with Waterford's Fair Housing Policy statement.
- Encourage property owners to invest in and rehabilitate commercial structures and provide support and assistance in pursuing State and Federal funding opportunities.
- Continue the work of Waterford's Design Review Board to review all development applications for consistency with the unique attributes of the community.
- Identify infrastructure enhancements that are needed in Waterford's commercial nodes and villages.

Strategy #6. Review the zoning ordinances, and revise as necessary, to support the current and futures needs of the business community while preserving and protecting the residential character of the surrounding neighborhoods.

- Review zoning regulations to ensure that the regulations support desirable land uses and site design and provide opportunities for housing development without displacing commercial uses.
- Review the parking zoning ordinances and identify potential areas for targeted modification that modernize the Town's approach to commercial parking requirements.
- Review zoning regulations and create guidelines for home-based businesses within the Town.

Strategy #7. Partner with Waterford Board of Education, Southeastern Connecticut Enterprise Region (seCTer) and the Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut (ChamberECT), and major employers in the region to encourage workforce development, training, employee pipelines, and the potential for innovation or entrepreneurial activity.

- Hold a quarterly education roundtable that brings together Town leadership, staff, and educational institutions (including Waterford Public Schools) to discuss opportunities.
- Continue to develop early career education in the middle and high schools promoting career pathways in the trades and local industries.
- Work with regional workforce partners to identify skills gaps or employee shortages in the trades and work collaboratively address shortfalls.
- Support seCTer and ChamberECT in conducting annual and semi-annual regional job fairs.

Strategy #8. Explore ways to increase employment opportunities for disadvantaged groups in Waterford.

- Provide translations of all outreach materials related to economic development, business start-ups, licensing and permitting, workforce development, etc.
- Identify supply chain linkages between large businesses and anchor institutions in the town/region and increase purchasing from local minority and disadvantaged businesses.