An aerial photograph of a scenic lake area. In the foreground, a wooden dock extends into the water with a white boat moored at it. The shoreline is lush with green trees and grass. In the middle ground, a stone bridge with three arches spans across the lake. Several houses are visible along the banks, surrounded by dense foliage. The background shows a vast expanse of green trees under a clear blue sky.

DARIEN

2016 Plan of Conservation and Development

Planning and Zoning Commission

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview

This Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) is an advisory document which is intended to provide a framework for consistent decision-making with regard to conservation and development activities in Darien. It is an update of the 2006 POCD.

Darien has a history of preparing plans to guide future conservation and development activities and it is in that spirit that this POCD has been prepared.

This POCD was prepared with an eye to two key things:

- Involving residents and property owners in identifying and refining of POCD recommendations
- Promoting implementation of the POCD following adoption.

The POCD focuses on identifying “policies” and “action steps”:

- A “policy” is an on-going policy or approach which does not generally have an end date.
- An “action step” is a recommended task that helps implement the strategy (a task has an end date or specific result).

Within the chapters of the POCD, these policies and action steps are assigned to “leaders” and “partners” so that the community will know who is responsible for accomplishing the recommendations of the POCD.

Coastal Location



Key Facilities

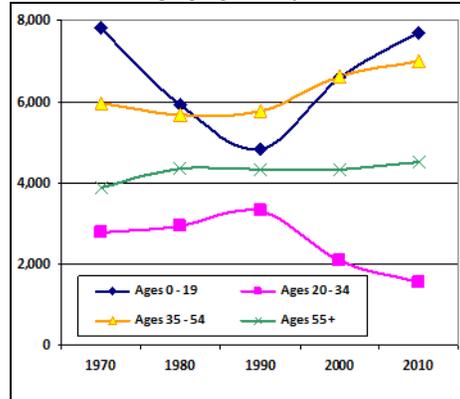


Planning Context

The first section of the POCD presents background information on:

- planning and POCDs,
- conditions and trends affecting Darien at the time the POCD was being prepared, and
- issues identified as important by Darien residents.

Changing Age Composition



Public Meeting Exercises



POCD Themes

The POCD is organized around three main thematic elements:

- **Conservation-Related Strategies** - Things Darien wants to protect or preserve in the future.
- **Development-Related Strategies** - How Darien wants to guide future growth and change.
- **Infrastructure-Related Strategies** - Facilities Darien wants to support the overall vision.

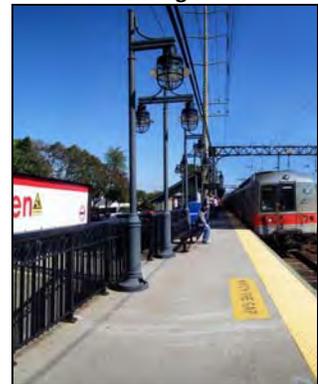
Conservation Strategies



Development Strategies



Infrastructure Strategies



Conservation Strategies

Maintain And Enhance Community Character

- Maintain And Enhance Overall Character
- Manage Character Features
- Protect Historic And Archeologic Resources
- Continue To Promote Architectural Character
- Promote Community Spirit

Preserve Open Space

- Preserve Open Space
- Enhance The Open Space Toolbox

Manage Coastal Resources

- Protect Coastal Resources
- Maintain And Enhance Coastal Access
- Address Other Coastal Issues

Protect Natural Resources

- Protect Water Quality
- Address Water Quantity and Flooding
- Protect Other Important Natural Resources

Downtown



Open Space



Coastal Resources



Natural Resources



Development Strategies

Maintain And Enhance Downtown

- Encourage Appropriate Development
- Maintain Character
- Enhance The Downtown Street System
- Enhance Pedestrian-Friendliness
- Manage Downtown Parking
- Modify Downtown Zoning Regulations
- Address Other Downtown Issues

Transform Noroton Heights Business District

- Transform Noroton Heights Business Area
- Address The Roadway System
- Enhance Pedestrian-Friendliness
- Ensure Appropriate Character
- Guide Private Development
- Enhance The Train Station And Associated Areas
- Address Other Issues In Noroton Heights

Manage Residential Development

- Maintain Residential Character
- Review Residential Zoning Provisions
- Continue To Diversify Darien's Housing Portfolio

Guide Business And Economic Development

- Promote Business / Economic Development
- Manage Business Development

Downtown



Noroton Heights



Infrastructure Strategies

Maintain And Enhance Community Facilities

- Address Community Facility Needs

Address Transportation Needs

- Address Overall Circulation
- Address Other Vehicular Transportation Issues
- Manage Parking
- Improve Pedestrian Options
- Improve Bicycling Options
- Improve Rail Services And Amenities
- Enhance Other Transit Services

Manage Utility Infrastructure

- Maintain and Enhance Piped Utilities
- Maintain and Enhance Other Utilities

Promote Sustainability And Resiliency

- Promote Sustainability
- Promote Resiliency

Community Facilities



Roadways



Utilities



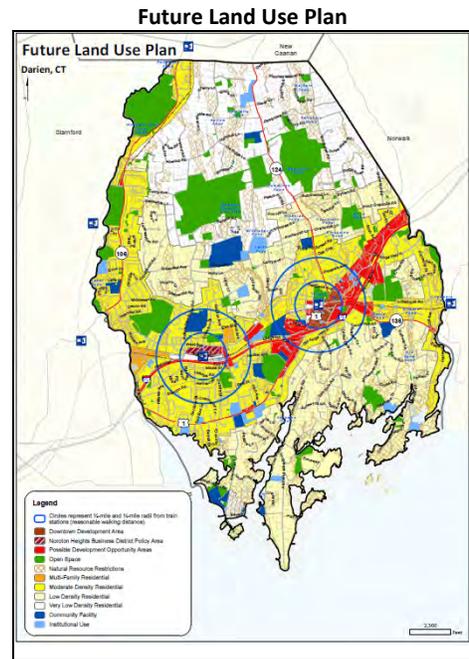
Sustainability



Conclusion

The final section of the POCD contains a Future Land Use Plan which shows the Commission’s recommendations for the most desirable use of land in the community. Since Darien is 97 percent developed, there are no major changes proposed to the overall land use pattern.

Importantly, State and Regional policies and principles are consistent with Darien’s Future Land Use Plan. This will help ensure that activities undertaken at the local level are eligible for support from regional and state programs.



Implementation of the POCD will occur over time as policies and action steps are implemented by the responsible leaders and partners. Some of the key initiatives which may unfold in the near term might include:

0-3 Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update regulations to implement POCD recommendations • Begin redevelopment of Downtown / Noroton Heights • Establish new organizations to implement strategies • Establish a Land Acquisition Fund • Begin to address community facility needs
3-6 Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue implementing pedestrian infrastructure improvements • Improve parking and amenities at train stations • Improve traffic operations in downtown and Noroton Heights
6-9 Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revisit Design Guidelines to ensure they continue to meet needs • Continue infrastructure improvements
9+ Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update POCD to address community issues at that time

Key Dates

Following a public hearing on May 10, 2016, the Plan of Conservation and Development was adopted at a Planning and Zoning Commission meeting on May 24, 2016 with an effective date of June 19, 2016.

However, in accordance with a policy established by the Connecticut Office of Policy and Management, State agencies consider this POCD to be in effect until May 24, 2026.

Revisions, if any, are listed below:

Adopted Date	Effective Date	Page(s)	Summary
5/24/16	6/19/16	All	Adoption of 2016 POCD

Town Plan Vision Statement

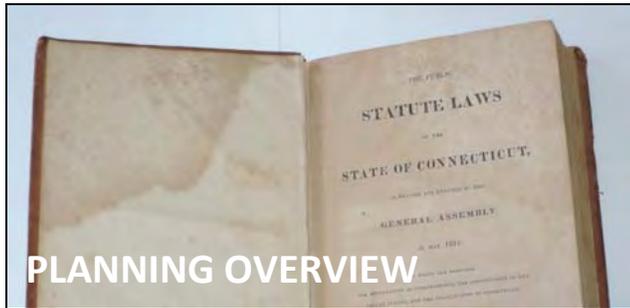
The Town Plan serves as a flexible blueprint for the continuing development of our community. It identifies enhancements and additions to our infrastructure and provides the basis for maintenance of our existing resources.

- *Darien continues to be primarily a New England style, single-family dwelling community.*
- *The Town Plan must balance growth and development with preservation and protection of the existing ecosystem on which our future depends, i.e. open space, the Long Island Sound, coastal habitat, our streams, ponds and wetlands.*
- *Downtown and traditional neighborhood commercial centers or corridors, through scale, character and density should create a strong sense of place for living, shopping and dining and add to the vitality of our community.*
- *Multi-modal transportation and pedestrian-friendly streetscape should be complimentary to the character of our town.*
- *Total citizen involvement, including our elected, appointed and volunteer groups, are critical to effective planning and successful implementation.*

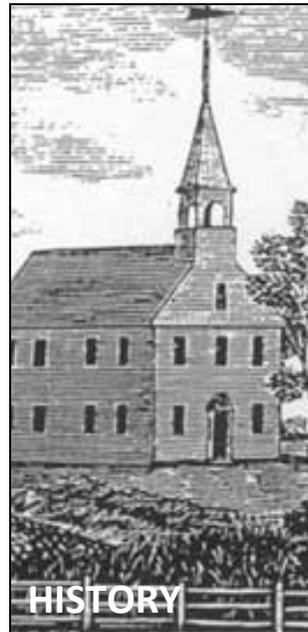
The town must adopt and implement high quality public policies promoting long-term growth, development and infrastructure improvements. Thoughtful, dynamic leadership continues to be necessary to ensure our community implements the blueprint provided by this Town Plan.

Darien Board of Selectmen

PLANNING CONTEXT



PLANNING OVERVIEW



HISTORY



PLANNING ISSUES



CONDITIONS AND TRENDS

POCD Maps

If you wish to look at the POCD maps in more detail, the POCD is available on the Town's website and a PDF viewer will allow you to zoom in on the maps.

Glossary Of Terms

A glossary of some terms and acronyms used in the POCD is located at the end of the document.

INTRODUCTION

1

Overview

A Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) is a document whose purpose is to establish a common vision for the future of a community. The recommendations of the Plan are intended to reflect an overall consensus of what is considered desirable for Darien and its residents in the future.

It is important to note that the Plan of Conservation and Development is primarily an advisory document. It is intended to guide local boards and commissions and to provide a framework for consistent decision-making with regard to conservation and development activities in Darien in the future. As per State statutes, it is anticipated that this POCD will be effective to June 19, 2026.

Once the vision is established, the next step is implementation. The POCD identifies policies and action steps that will help attain the overall vision.

While the statutory responsibility to adopt the Plan rests with the Planning and Zoning Commission, implementation will only occur with the diligent efforts of the residents and officials of the Town of Darien. The Plan will only be effective if it is understood and supported by the people of Darien, and implemented by local boards and commissions.

“If you don’t know where you’re going, you’ll wind up somewhere else.”

**Yogi Berra,
Baseball Legend
Renowned Punster**

Conservation Strategies



Development Strategies



Infrastructure Strategies



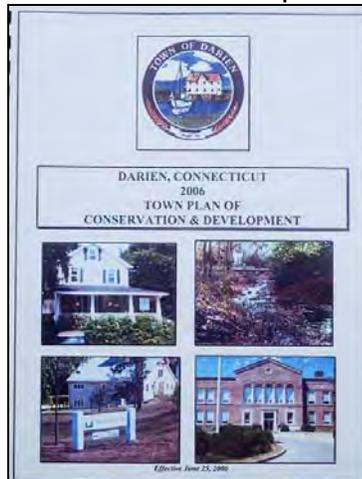
Prior Darien Plans

Darien has a history of preparing and adopting Plans of Conservation and Development (also called Town Plans, Master Plans, or Plans of Development) and these plans have:

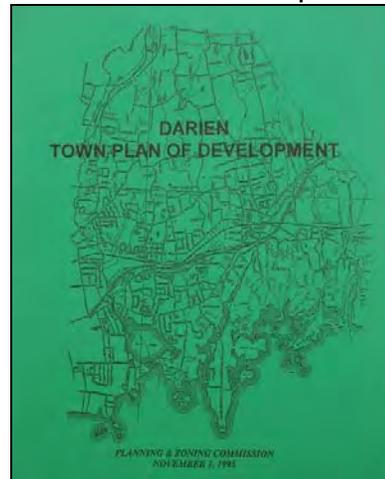
- influenced the current development patterns and land use regulations in Darien, and
- helped guide the overall conservation and development of the community.

Thus, it can be seen that Darien has prepared, adopted, and amended plans to address the appropriate conservation and development of the community. It is in that spirit that this POCD has been prepared.

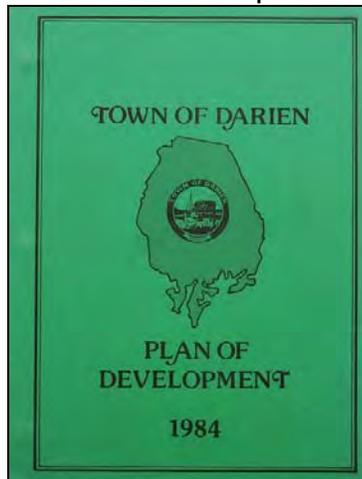
2006 Town Plan of Conservation and Development



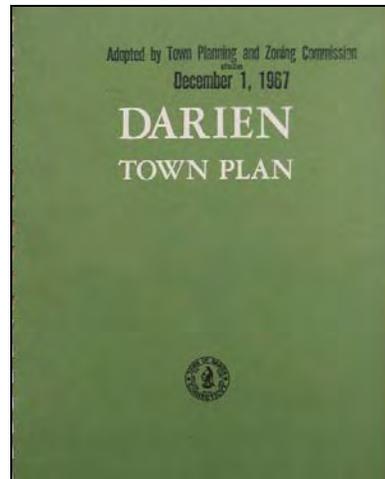
1995 Town Plan of Development



1984 Plan of Development



1967 Town Plan



**EXCERPTS FROM CONNECTICUT GENERAL STATUTES 8-23 –
PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

The Commission shall:

- prepare, adopt and amend a plan of conservation and development
- review the plan of conservation and development at least once every ten years
- adopt such amendments to the plan or parts of the plan ... as the commission deems necessary to update the plan

The Plan shall:

- be a statement of policies, goals and standards for the physical and economic development of the municipality
- show the commission's recommendation for the most desirable use of land within the municipality for residential, recreational, commercial, industrial and other purposes and for the most desirable density of population in the ... parts of the municipality
- be designed to promote with the greatest efficiency and economy the coordinated development of the municipality and the general welfare and prosperity of its people
- be made with reasonable consideration for restoration and protection of the ecosystem and habitat of Long Island Sound
- 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
- 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
- take into account the state plan of conservation and development ... and note any inconsistencies it may have with said state plan
- consider the use of cluster development to the extent consistent with soil types, terrain, and infrastructure capacity

The Plan may:

- show the commission's recommendation for a system of principal thoroughfares, parkways, bridges, streets and other public ways; for airports, parks, playgrounds and other public grounds; for general location, relocation and improvement of public buildings; for the general location and extent of public utilities and terminals, whether publicly or privately owned for water, sewerage, light, power, transit and other purposes; and for the extent and location of public housing projects.
- include recommended programs for the implementation of the plan
- (include) such other recommendations ... in the plan as will ... be beneficial to the municipality

Using The Plan

Most chapters of the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) contain strategies, policies, and action steps. As used in the POCD:

- A “strategy” is a long-term goal or course of action for Darien.
- A “policy” is a principle or course of action intended to help implement the strategy (a policy is an on-going activity which does not generally have an end date).
- An “action step” is a recommended task that helps implement the strategy (a task has an end date or specific result).

The box below illustrates how these terms are applied in the POCD.

Over the 10-year timeframe of this POCD, it is envisioned that these strategies, policies, and action steps will be used to review land use applications, guide the adoption of changes to the zoning regulations or map, develop work programs for local departments and agencies, and guide spending and investment decisions. The POCD is also used to review and guide municipal improvements in accordance with Section 8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes.

POCD TERMINOLOGY

Strategy (Goal) →

Policy →

Action Step →

A. Protect Water Quality		
Policies	Leader	Partners
1. Continue to protect water quality.	CC	PZC IWC
2. Implement “low impact development” practices to help manage water quality and water quantity issues.	PZC	
Action Steps		
3. Educate design professionals and homeowners about LID tools and techniques.	CC	
4. Conduct public education about protecting water quality (including reducing fertilizer, herbicide and pesticide use).	CC	
5. Consider adopting a “septic management ordinance” which requires pumping of septic tanks and inspection of septic fields on a regular basis.	BOS	RTM CC

In the strategy tables in the POCD, each policy and action step identifies a “leader” and may identify one or more “partners.” The “leader” is the entity considered most likely to bear responsibility for implementing the policy or completing the action step. Partners are other entities likely to be involved in implementation.

A legend for “leaders” and “partners” can be found on the inside back cover.

CONDITIONS & TRENDS

2

Overview

This section of the POCD provides a general overview of conditions and trends affecting Darien at the time this POCD was being prepared.

History of Darien

The landscape of the area we now know as Darien evolved over millions of years as a result of massive geologic forces. The advance and retreat of glaciers and fluctuations in climate and sea levels created a rocky coastline abutting a coastal sound. While there is no written record of their early habitation, Native Americans are believed to have lived in this area as early as 10,000 years ago.

European Settlement

Europeans “discovered” this part of New England in 1614 when Dutch explorer Adriaen Block sailed into what we now call Long Island Sound. For the next 20 years or so, the Dutch and English competed for trade with Native Americans and to establish settlements. The British settled in Plymouth (Massachusetts) in 1620 and the Dutch settled in New Amsterdam (New York) in 1624. Dutch and British trade with Native Americans eventually led to settlement of inland areas along the Connecticut River after 1634.

After the Pequot War of 1637, European settlement began to extend to other areas of what we now know as Connecticut. By 1642, Europeans had obtained land from Native Americans in what is now called Stamford and settlement began in this area. After 1674, the Dutch settlements to the west were consolidated under British rule (New Amsterdam was renamed New York).

As population grew, more land was needed for subsistence farming and settlers moved outwards from Stamford. It was not uncommon at that time for settlers to establish small settlements where they could help and protect each other. From the coves along the shore, residents would travel to fields and other areas to tend crops or raise livestock or fish.

“If we could first know where we are and whither we are tending, we could then better judge what to do and how to do it.”

**Abraham Lincoln,
American President**

Origins of the Town Name

Darien Our Town: A Handbook for Residents, compiled and published by the League of Women Voters of Darien (1978) tells the story of how Darien, Connecticut got its name:

"During the post-Revolutionary War period inhabitants of Middlesex Parish petitioned repeatedly for complete independence from Stamford. Thaddeus Bell, their state assemblyman, carried a petition for separation to eight successive legislative sessions. Finally, in 1820, the General Assembly passed an act which created a separate town. Grateful residents wanted to name the new town "Bellville," in honor of Mr. Bell. He opposed the idea. As Moderator of the first Town Meeting he was asked to choose another name. Allegedly his visiting sailor friend, who had recently returned from the Isthmus of Darien (called now the Isthmus of Panama), saw a similarity between the two sites. The Isthmus of Darien lay between two oceans. The Town of Darien lay between the larger towns of Norwalk and Stamford."

Formation Of A Parish

Life was difficult for early settlers in this area and it was made more challenging by the customs of the time where settlers would travel every week to a "meetinghouse" for religious services regardless of season or weather.

By about 1737, the population of this area had grown to the point where the residents felt they could support their own parish and no longer have to travel to Stamford for religious services. Permission was granted by the church and this new parish was called Middlesex. The first meetinghouse was later built at the corner of Brookside Road and the Boston Post Road.

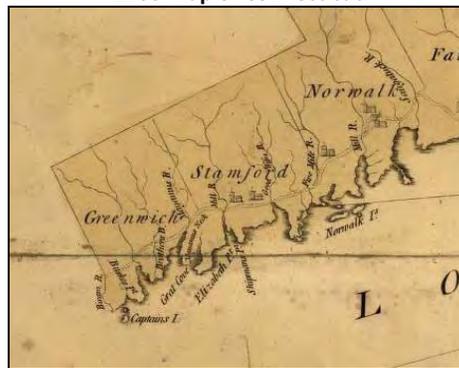
As concerns over safety diminished, settlers moved further out to create their own homesteads. Sawmills, blacksmith shops, and other communal amenities were established along brooks and streams to support the growing economy of this area.

Establishment Of A Town

Eventually, the population in the Middlesex Parish grew to the point where people no longer wished to travel to Stamford for militia training or for town meetings. A petition was undertaken to create their own municipality and, in 1820, residents received permission from the General Assembly to establish a separate municipality. According to the 1820 Census, there were 1,126 residents in the new Town of Darien.

At this time, the economy of this area was still dominated by subsistence agriculture although there were some emerging mills and early stores.

1766 Map of Connecticut



Re-Enactment Of Colonial Agriculture



Arrival Of The Railroad

With the industrial revolution, Darien began to change. This change was primarily the result of the introduction of steam trains and the establishment of a rail line from New York to New Haven (completed by 1849).

At first a great convenience for residents and an easy way to export agricultural produce to New York City, it soon had the effect of enticing in-migration to Darien.

Residents of New York City were attracted to Darien because of its beautiful shoreline, rural character, and short travel distance from the city. While people had travelled here before by carriage or by boat, Darien became more popular when it was accessible by rail. After the Civil War, the town became one of the many resorts where New Yorkers built luxurious, grand summer homes. The population of Darien doubled between 1850 and 1900.

Spread Of The Automobile

After the turn of the century, the advent of the automobile and paved roadways supported the continued growth of Darien. The opening of the Merritt Parkway between Greenwich and Norwalk in 1938 was a key event during this era. Between 1920 and 1940, Darien's population doubled again.

Following World War II, Darien experienced the same surge of growth that affected other communities in the region. A cultural trend toward suburban living and the flexibility offered by the automobile supported the development of Darien. Former farms were subdivided and developed and the population doubled again between 1940 and 1960. Construction of Interstate 95 in the 1950s encouraged the suburban development of residential areas and Darien was no different.

By 1970, Darien had grown to be a community of over 20,000 people and the overall pattern of the community became established.

While the amount of land available for *new* development is limited, there continues to be considerable interest in Darien because of its location, character, amenities, and the quality of life it offers its residents. As a result, there is the potential for *redevelopment* in the community as new uses replace existing uses; as existing buildings are updated, expanded, or replaced; and as land is subdivided or resubdivided.

Regional Role

Darien actually serves at least two regional roles:

- a residential suburb within the New York City metropolitan region with over 7,000 housing units and more than 20,000 residents.
- an employment center with over 7,000 daytime jobs .

Overall, Darien is a diverse and balanced community.

Darien's Population

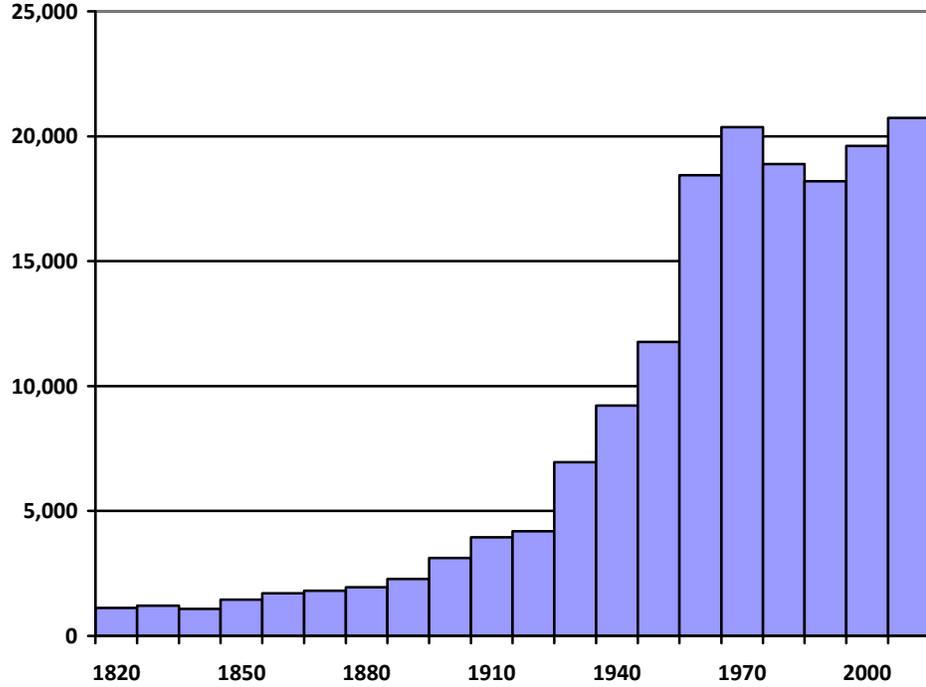
1820	1,126
1830	1,212
1840	1,080
1850	1,454
1860	1,705
1870	1,808
1880	1,949
1890	2,276
1900	3,116
1910	3,946
1920	4,184
1930	6,951
1940	9,222
1950	11,767
1960	18,437
1970	20,366
1980	18,892
1990	18,196
2000	19,607
2010	20,732

US Census data for 1820 to 2010.

People Of Darien / Demographics

According to the Census, Darien had a year 2010 population of 20,732 persons. This represents an increase of 1,125 persons from the 19,607 persons reported in the 2000 Census. Data from commercial sources estimates that Darien's population may have increased to 21,507 residents as of 2015.

Darien's Population (1820 – 2010)



United States Census / Connecticut State Data Center

From 1950 to 1970, *net in-migration* was the main driver of population change in Darien. From 1970 to 1990, *net out-migration* was the main driver of population change since there were fewer births during this period. Since 1990, growth has been a result of "*natural increase*" outpacing net out-migration.

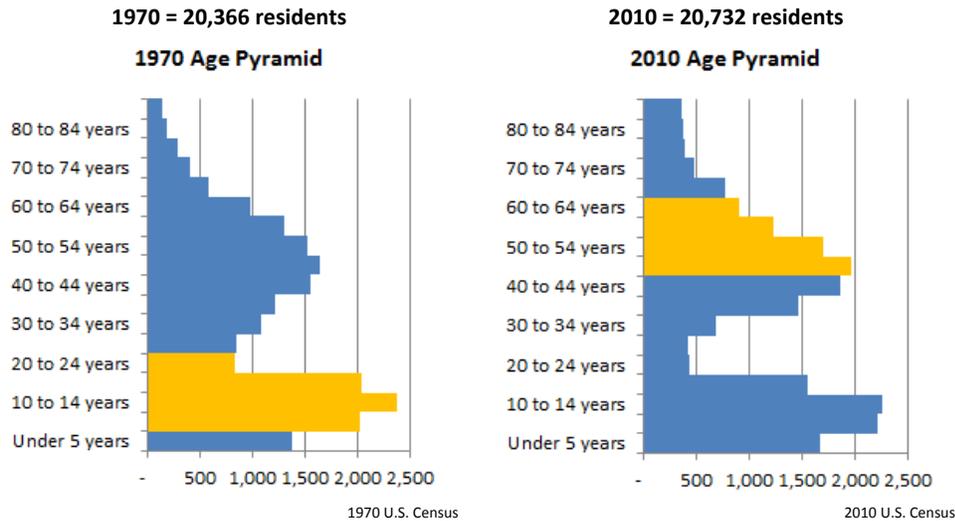
Components of Population Change

	1950s	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s
Total Change	+6,670	+1,929	(1,474)	(696)	+1,411	+1,125
Births	2,790	2,211	1,497	2,058	3,399	3,000
Deaths	1,168	1,289	1,390	1,361	1,217	1,179
Change Due To Natural Increase	+1,622	+922	+107	+697	+2,182	+1,821
Change Due To Net Migration	+5,048	+1,007	(1,581)	(1,393)	(771)	(696)

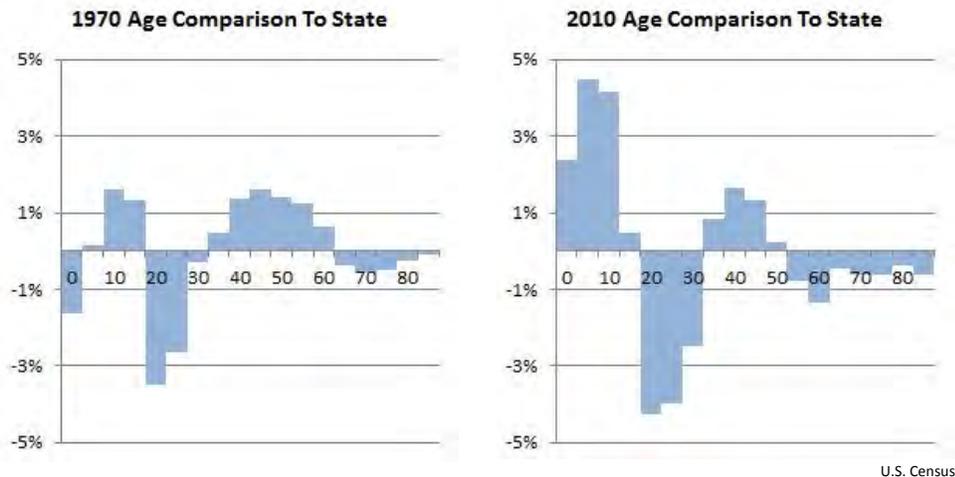
US Census, Connecticut Health Department reports,

Age Composition

The age composition of Darien changes over time due to the net effect of births, deaths, net migration, and natural aging. Much of the change in the age composition between 1970 and 2010 is attributable to people in the “baby boom” (people born between about 1945 and about 1965) shown in orange below.



As shown in the following charts, Darien has generally had a larger share of the population in the younger age groups (0 to 19 years) and in young families (ages 35 to 55) compared to Connecticut as a whole. In 2010, the share of the population age 0-19 was about 11 percentage points *higher* in Darien than in Connecticut. At the other end of the age spectrum, the share of the population age 55+ was about 6 percentage points *lower* in Darien than in Connecticut.



Median Age

Demographers often use “median age” to compare the age composition of different places. The “median age” number indicates the midpoint of the age distribution where half of the population is older and half is younger.

Data from the American Community Survey indicates Darien has a median age of 39.1 compared to the median age for Connecticut of 40.3 years. In other words, Darien’s population, on average, is younger than the State average.

In fact, when median age is ranked from youngest to oldest, Darien is ranked 23rd of the 169 municipalities in Connecticut.

Median (rank)	Age
12. Stamford	36.0
23. Darien	39.1
State	40.3
35. Norwalk	40.8
51. Greenwich	42.1
54. Wilton	42.2
60. New Canaan	42.7
115. Westport	45.3

American Community Survey

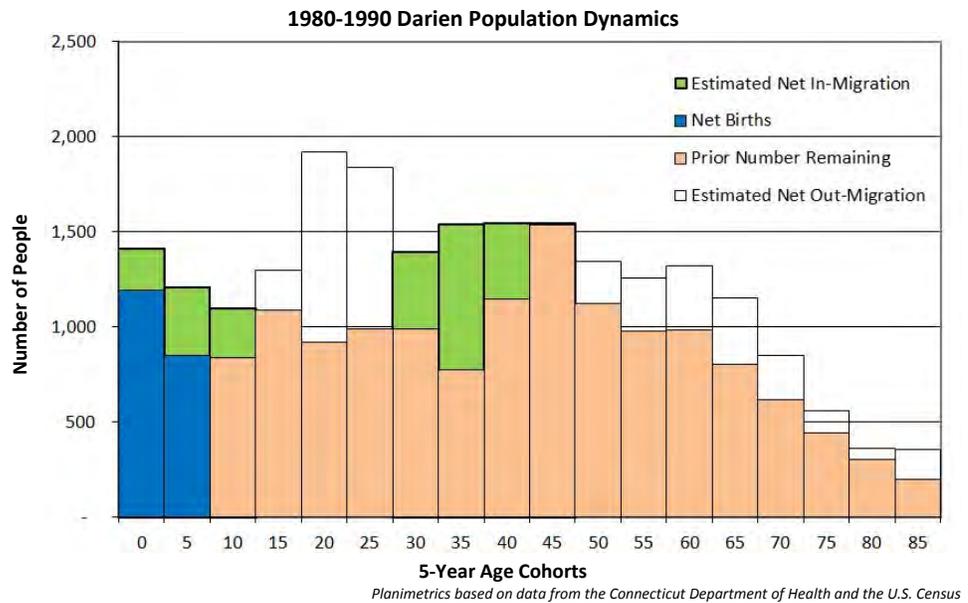
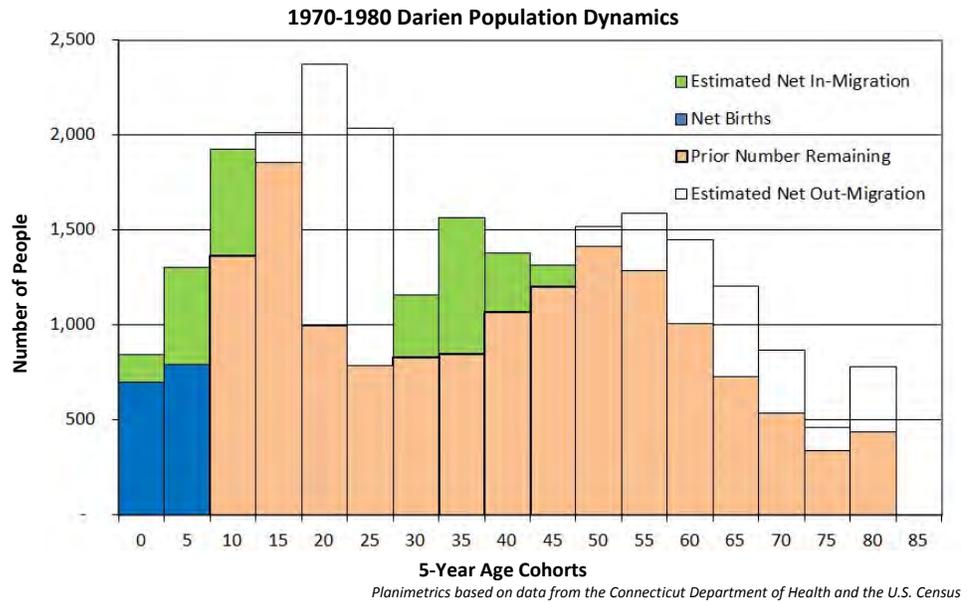
Legend

In the “population dynamics” charts, the height of the colored column represents the number of people in each 5-year age cohort at the end of the decade. The colored portions of the columns represent where those people came from (or went to) during the decade.

- The blue portion of the columns represents the number of children born in Darien during the decade
- The peach portion of the columns represents the number of people who lived in Darien at the beginning of the decade and are estimated to be here at the end of the decade
- The green portion of the columns represents the net number of people in that age cohort who moved into Darien during the decade
- The white portion of the columns represents the net number of people in that age cohort who moved out of Darien during the decade

By comparing the number of people in one age group in the Census to the number of people 10 years younger in the prior Census (10 years earlier), the dynamics of migration by age group in Darien can be evaluated.

Between 1970 and 1980, as shown in the chart below, the green portions of the columns indicates there was net in-migration of younger families (parents aged 30-49 with children aged 0-19). There was net out-migration of young adults (ages 15-29) as people went off to college or moved elsewhere. There was also net out-migration of mature adults (ages 50+) once their children were grown or their interests changed. A similar pattern occurred in the 1980s.

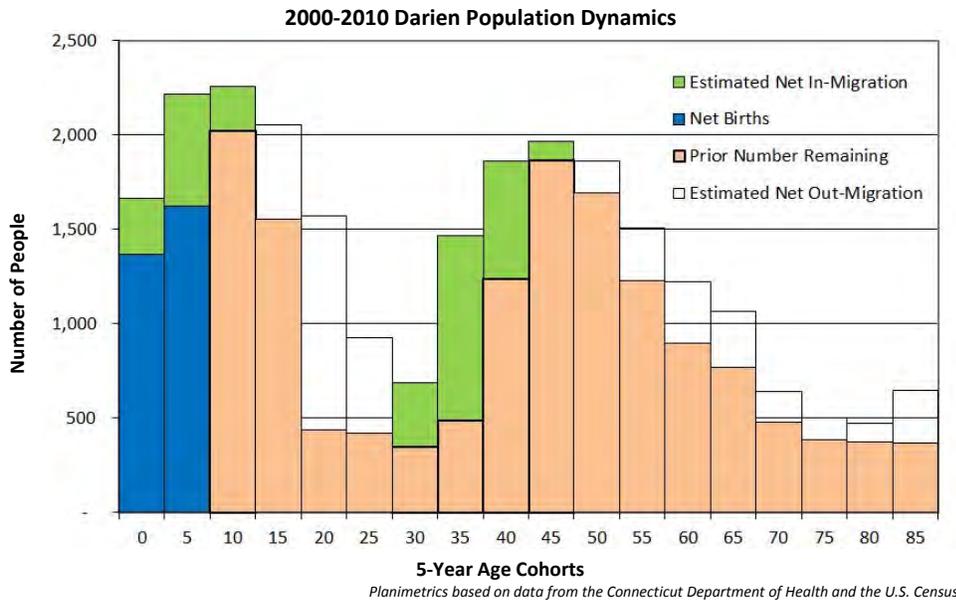
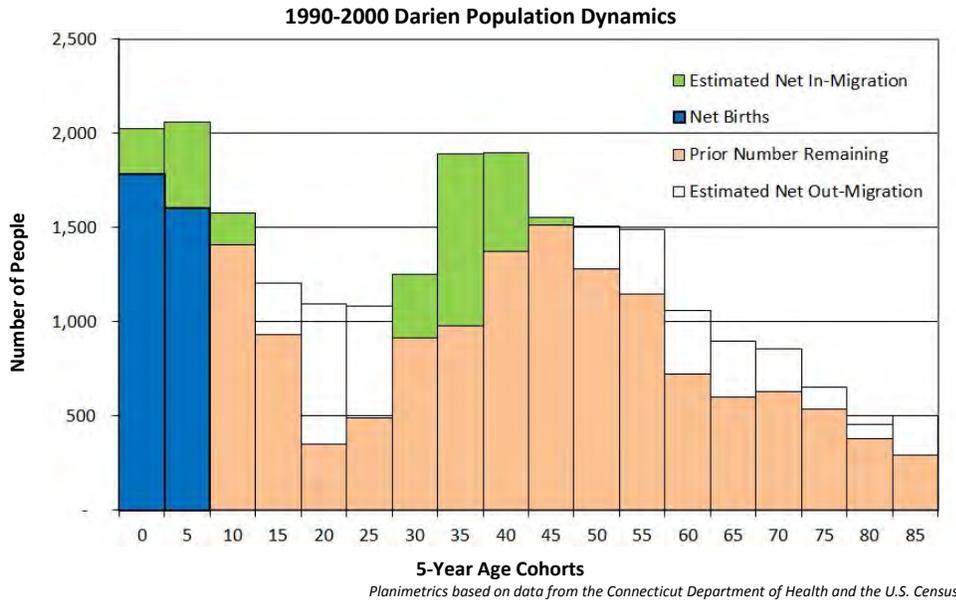


After 1990, as shown in the charts below, the number of births increased significantly (blue columns) and Darien continued to attract younger families with school-age children. More young adults and “empty nesters” (mature adults whose children have left home) continued to move out of Darien than moved in during these decades.

Relevant Materials

Additional information on population projections can be found from:

- the Connecticut State Data Center which updates population projections for the state and each municipality as new information becomes available (generally every 5 years or so), and
- school enrollment projections for Darien (such as those prepared for the Board of Education) which can be updated annually.



Enrollment Ratio

The following table lists the school enrollment ratio (public school enrollment as a percent of total population). The data is from 2010 in order to be able to compare enrollments to the population in a Census year.

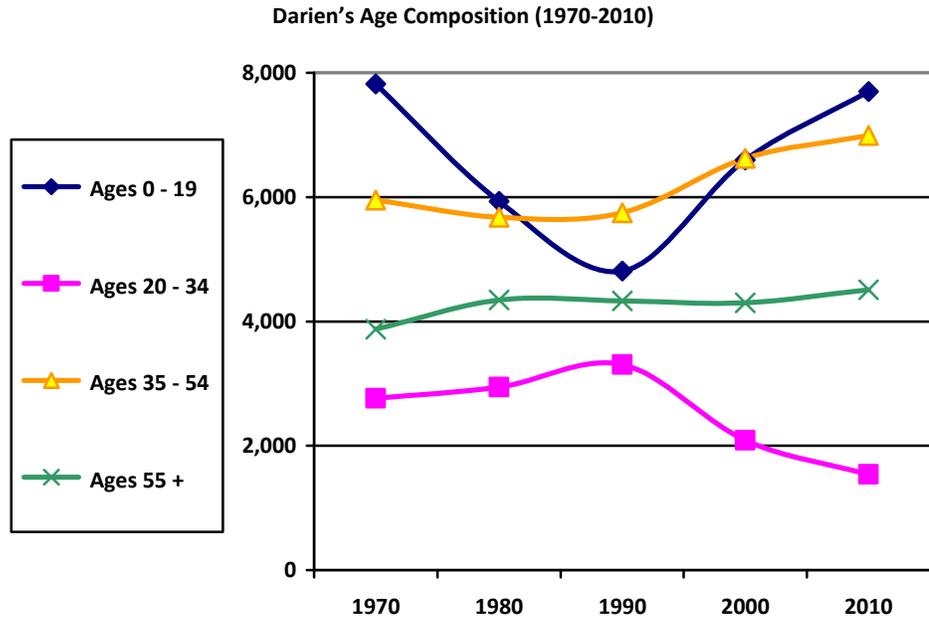
Top 10 Towns	Ratio
1. Weston	25%
2. Wilton	24%
3. Darien	23%
4. Ridgefield	22%
5. New Fairfield	22%
6. Westport	22%
7. Tolland	21%
8. Simsbury	21%
9. New Canaan	21%
10. Granby	20%

Other Communities	Ratio
23. Brookfield	18%
29. Fairfield	17%
36. Farmington	16%
41. W. Hartford	16%
64. Greenwich	14%
93. Norwalk	13%
101. Stamford	12%

Computed by Planimetrics based on data from the U.S. Census and the Connecticut Department of Education

As a result of these demographic trends, the age composition of Darien has been changing over time.

The following chart looks at Darien’s historic population composition for the period from 1970 to 2010. A significant characteristic of Darien is the predominance of young families (ages 35 to 54) with children ages 0 to 19. This trend is projected to continue assuming past patterns continue.



Planimetrics based on data from the Connecticut Department of Health and the U.S. Census

However, it is important to note that Darien may be different from other communities in some potentially significant ways:

- Other communities are experiencing an increase in the number of residents age 55 and older - reflecting the aging of the “baby boomers” (people born between about 1945 and 1965). These people are choosing to “age in place” in their communities. Since Darien has had a pattern of net out-migration in these age groups (i.e. – more people in these age groups are moving out of Darien than are moving in to Darien), the experience locally may be much more modest.
- Other communities are experiencing a decrease in the number of residents age 0-19 (school age population) while Darien is attracting families with children in these age groups. As a result, the school enrollment ratio (public school enrollment as a percent of total population) is among the highest in Connecticut. In 2010, Darien’s enrollment ratio (23%) was almost 50 percent high than the State average of 16 percent (see sidebar).

Population and Household Growth

While many communities are experiencing an increase in the number of smaller households, Darien is experiencing the opposite. Since 1990, the number of larger households has been increasing and the number of smaller households has been decreasing. It is unclear whether this trend will continue or whether Darien will start to experience the trends affecting other communities.

Darien's Household Size Composition (1970-2010)

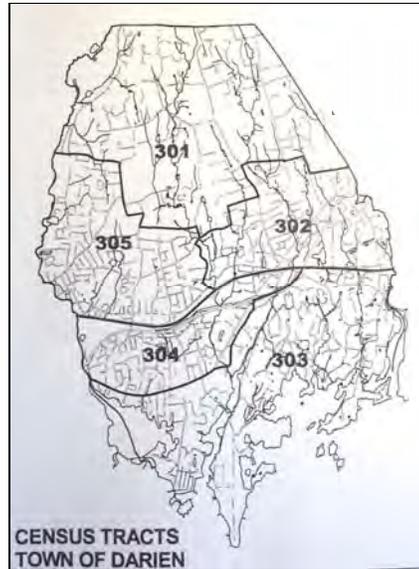
Household Size	1980	1990	2000	2010
1-2 people	2,688	3,150	3,073	2,801
3-4 people	2,539	2,502	2,500	2,633
5+ people	956	747	1,019	1,264
Total	6,183	6,399	6,592	6,698
Average Household Size	3.04	2.85	3.00	3.09

U.S. Census

Location of Growth

All Census tracts in Darien grew in population between 2000 and 2010. The most robust growth was in tracts 304 and 305.

While some of this growth can be explained by new construction (such as the Avalon Bay development in the early 2000s in tract 304), most change occurs within existing housing units (smaller households being replaced by larger households). As evidence of the impact of changes in existing housing units, almost all tracts in Darien showed a population decrease between 1970 and 1990 despite an increase in the number of housing units town-wide.



Population Change By Census Tract (1970-2010)

Census Tract	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
301	2,992	3,094	2,983	3,451	3,502
302	3,229	2,992	2,994	3,378	3,442
303	4,278	3,962	3,859	4,057	4,156
304	3,785	3,315	3,177	3,392	3,958
305	6,042	5,190	5,022	5,329	5,674

U.S. Census

Housing Units

1960	5,087
1970	5,952
1980	6,340
1990	6,653
2000	6,792
2010	7,074

US Census. Data for 1980 to 2010 reflects number of units. Due to data availability, data for 1960 and 1970 reflects number of households.

Housing In Darien

According to the U.S. Census, Darien had about 7,074 housing units in 2010. Over the last two decades, Darien has been adding an average of about 20 housing units per year. This growth rate is a reflection of the fact that there is little undeveloped land in Darien so net housing growth occurs primarily through redevelopment of existing properties.

The housing stock in Darien consists primarily of single-family detached homes. As a result, the vast majority of homes in Darien (85%) are owner-occupied. According to the 2010 Census, about 7 percent of the residential units in Darien were multi-family units at that time (although this does not reflect the development of “Kensett” or the redevelopment of “The Heights At Darien” since).

Housing Tenure

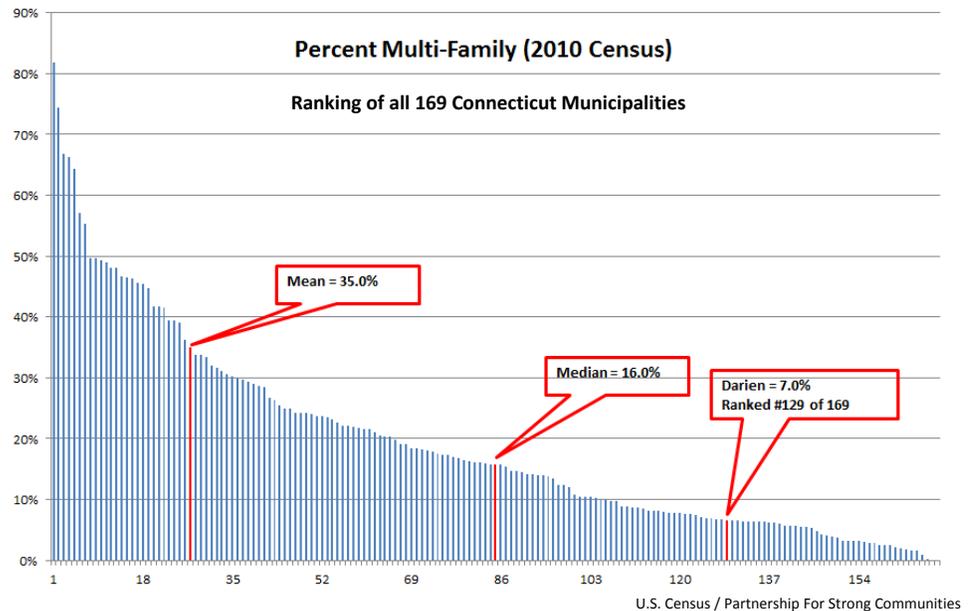
	Darien	State
Owner	85%	68%
Renter	15%	32%

2010 Census

Percent Multi-Family

Darien	7%
Westport	8%
Wilton	9%
New Canaan	16%
Greenwich	29%
State	35%
Norwalk	47%
Stamford	55%

2010 Census



As noted earlier, it is interesting that Darien has a different housing occupancy pattern compared to most other communities in Connecticut. Darien has fewer small households (generally younger households, “empty nesters”, and older residents) and more large households than other communities.

Affordable Housing

About 3.4 percent of the housing units in Darien are considered “affordable housing” (assisted housing, financed by Connecticut Housing Finance Authority mortgages, or sale price restricted by deed). Since less than ten percent of the housing units in Darien meet the State definition of affordable housing, Darien is subject to the State’s Affordable Housing Appeals Procedure (codified as Section 8-30g of the Connecticut General Statutes).

The Town has been working on increasing the number of affordable housing units in ways and locations appropriate for the community. Darien received a four-year moratorium with regard to CGS 8-30g in 2010 due to the number of affordable housing units created in Darien and has continued to create additional affordable housing units since then.

Single-Family House



Multi-Family Building



Affordable Housing



Affordable Housing



Housing Occupancy

	Darien	State
1-2 people	42%	60%
3-4 people	39%	31%
5+ people	19%	9%
Mean	3.09	2.52

2010 Census

Median Sale Price

Greenwich	\$1,550,000
New Canaan	\$1,413,750
Darien	\$1,225,000
Westport	\$1,025,500
Wilton	\$786,000
Stamford	\$560,500
Norwalk	\$424,750

CERC, 2014

Affordable Housing

Stamford	16.2%
Norwalk	11.8%
Connecticut	11.3%
Greenwich	4.8%
Wilton	3.9%
Darien	3.4%
Westport	3.0%
New Canaan	2.7%

CT Department of Housing, 2014

Jobs In Darien – 1960-2010

1960	3,735
1970	5,798
1980	8,120
1990	8,490
2000	7,820
2010	7,207

CT Labor Dept.

Jobs (2014)

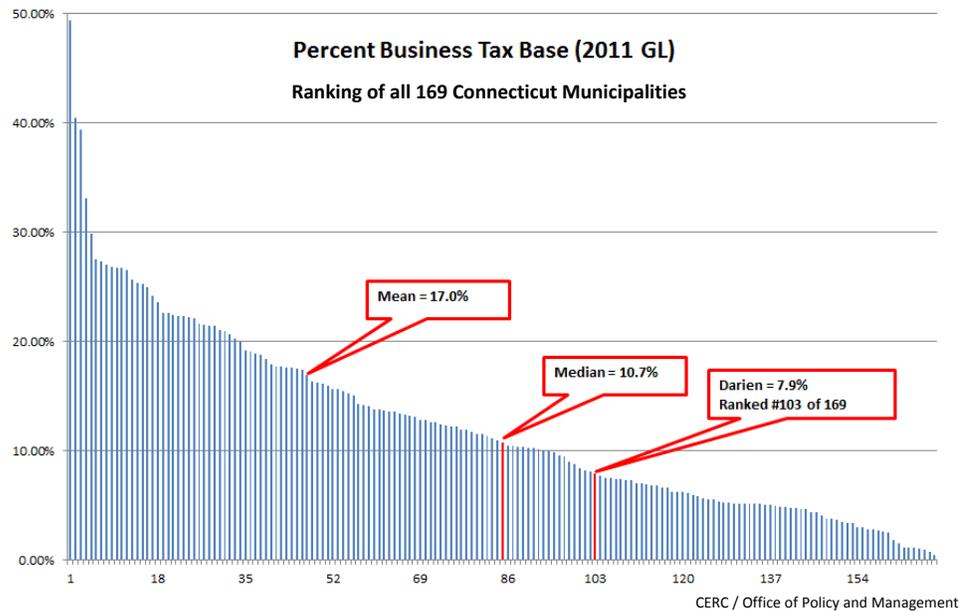
Stamford	75,096
Norwalk	44,463
Greenwich	34,719
Westport	15,420
Wilton	11,717
Darien	7,814
New Canaan	6,368

CERC, 2014

Economic Conditions in Darien

While Darien is not a major employment center, there are many jobs in the community. Darien benefits from its location within the New York City metropolitan area in terms of access to jobs and the availability of goods and services for residents. Overall, Darien has more jobs than housing units and this supports the local economy.

Since Darien is predominantly a residential community, the Grand List (the value of taxable property) is heavily influenced by the value of residential real estate. According to data from the Connecticut Economic Resource Center, the business component of the tax base is about 7.9 percent. It is important to Darien to maintain a strong tax base with a solid business component.



Retail Plaza

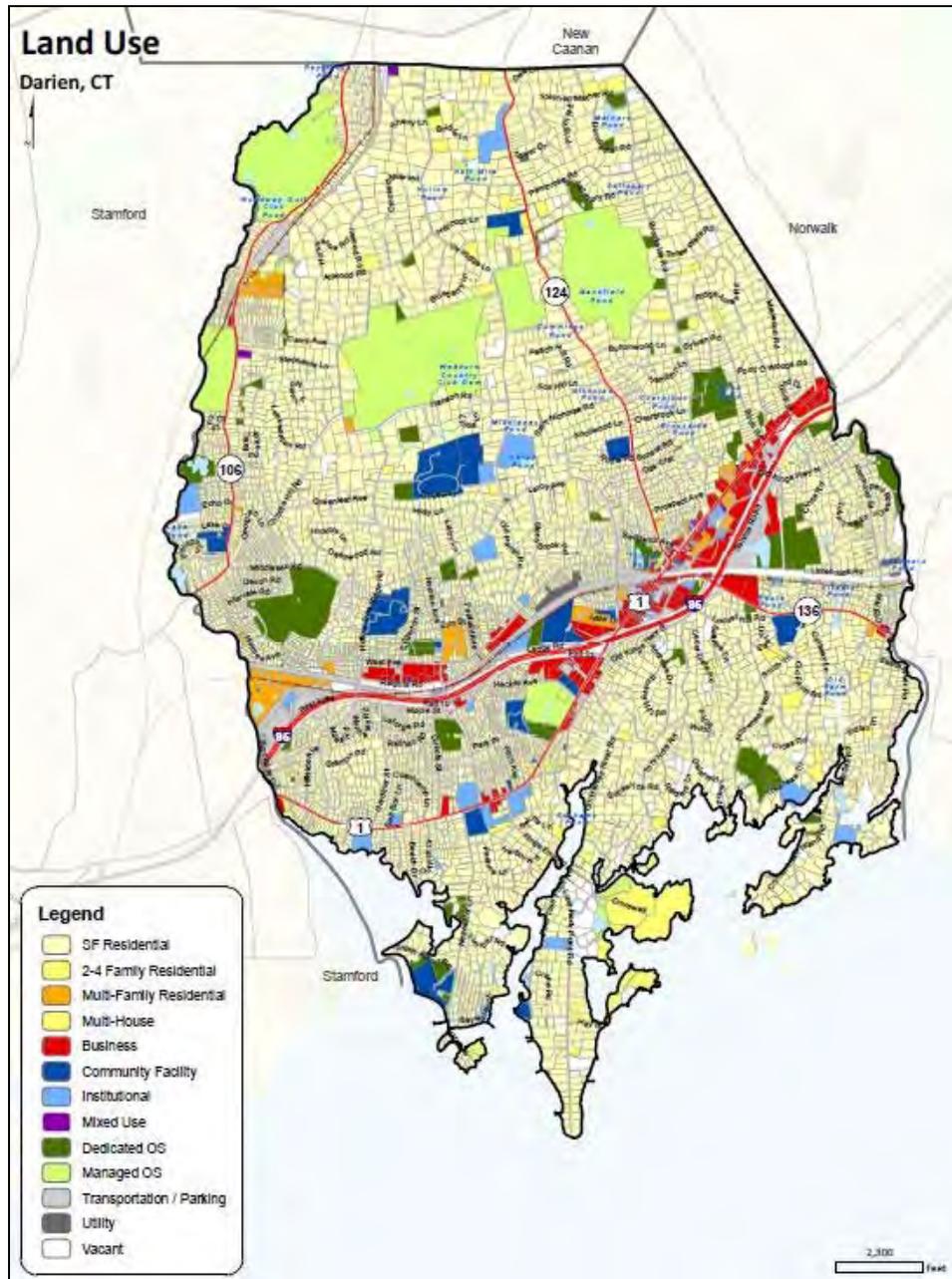


Office Building



Land Use In Darien

According to the Town's geographic information system (digital mapping), Darien contains approximately 8,236 acres of land. In 2014, about 97 percent of this area was occupied by residential, commercial, or institutional uses or was dedicated to a specific purpose such as public land or protected open space. The remaining land was uncommitted to a specific use.



Planimetrics based on Assessor database

Land Use Tabulation

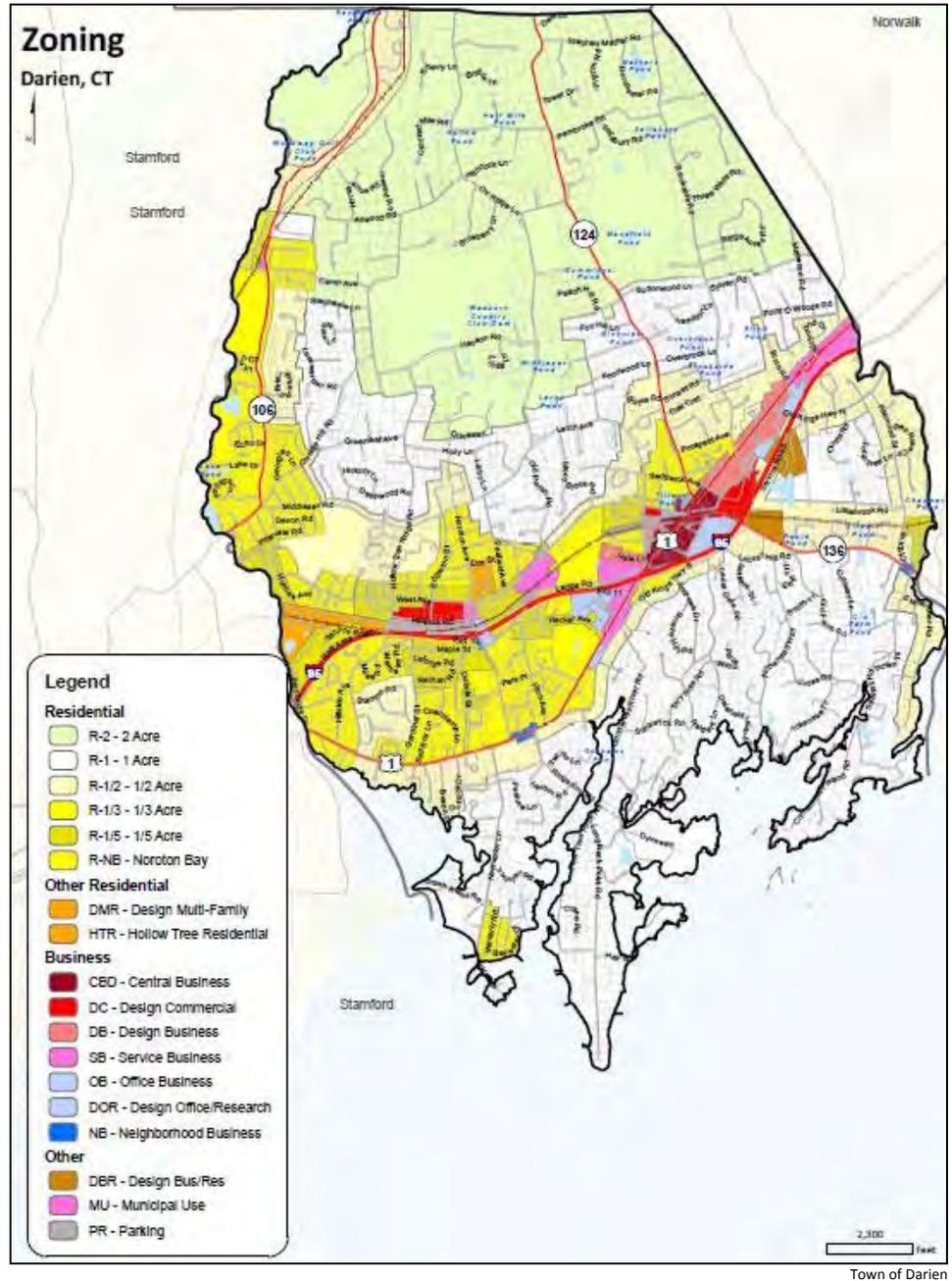
Based on Assessor records for 2014, properties in Darien were categorized as follows:

	Percent of Area
Residential	65%
Business	2%
Open Space	10%
Town Facility / Institutional	5%
Road / Rail / Parking / Water	15%
Developed / Committed	97%
Vacant	3%
Total	100%

Planimetrics based on 2014 Assessor database

Zoning In Darien

As of 2014, about 95 percent of Darien is zoned for residential use, about 4 percent is zoned for business use, and the remaining land is zoned for parking or municipal use.



PLANNING ISSUES

3

Overview

This section summarizes issues and concerns which were identified as part of the POCD update. These issues and concerns were identified through:

- a discussion of issues with the Planning and Zoning Commission,
- input from the Board of Selectmen,
- input from the Representative Town Meeting,
- responses to a survey of Town department heads,
- field trips around Darien,
- interviews with key officials and stakeholders,
- responses to an on-line survey, and
- a community meeting devoted to hearing from Darien residents.

“There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about.”

Margaret Wheatley
Writer

Public Meeting Exercises



BOS Input



Community Survey



PZC Discussions



“Proud” And “Sorry” Maps

These pictures show the overall distribution of dots on the maps used in the “Prouds” (green dots) and “Sorries” (red dots) exercises. Larger scale maps and more information about these exercises is on file at the Town Hall.

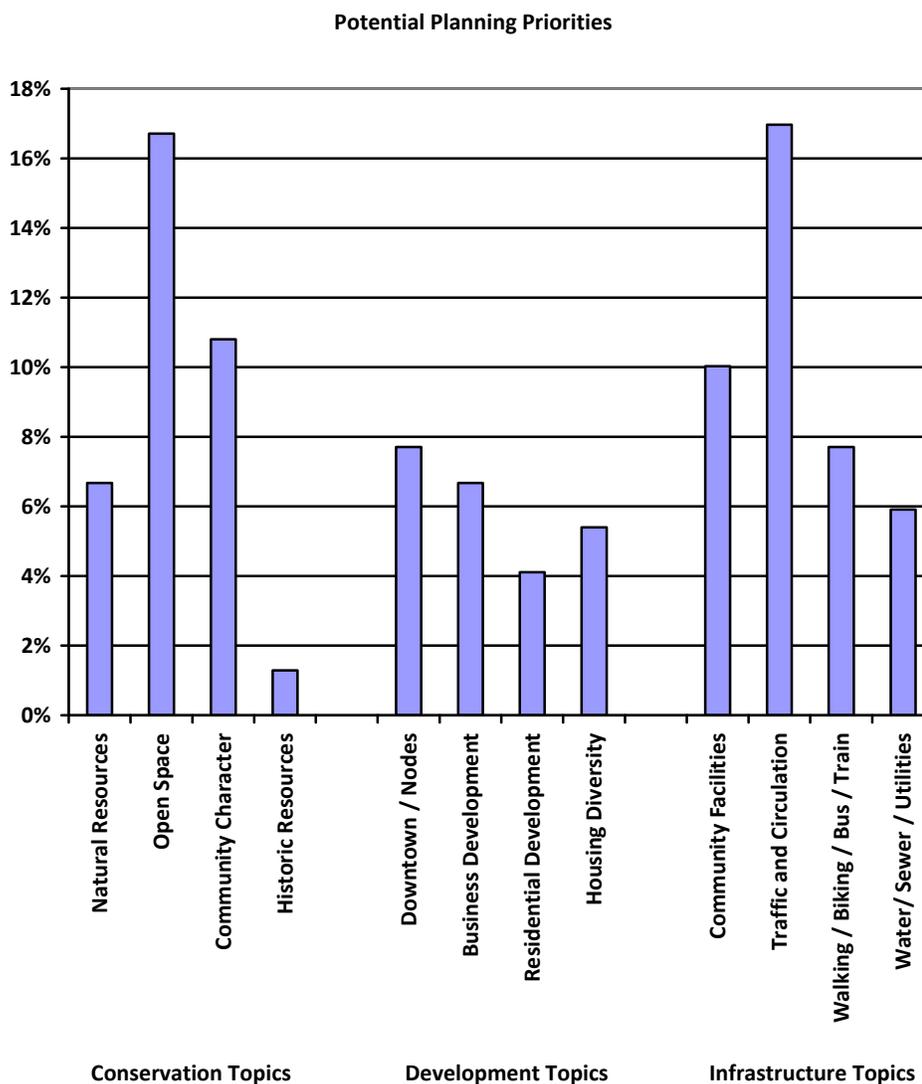


Community Meeting Input

In October 2014, a community workshop meeting was held at the Town Hall to get input from Darien residents. Approximately 50 people attended the meeting and participated in the following exercises:

- placing a blue dot on a map showing where they lived,
- identifying things or areas in Darien they were “proud” of,
- identifying things or areas in Darien they were “sorry” about,
- allocating planning points among topics typically considered in a POCD (see chart below), and
- participating in an open discussion of the topics that received the most planning points.

The potential planning priorities identified were traffic and circulation, open space, community character, community facilities, and downtown/nodes.

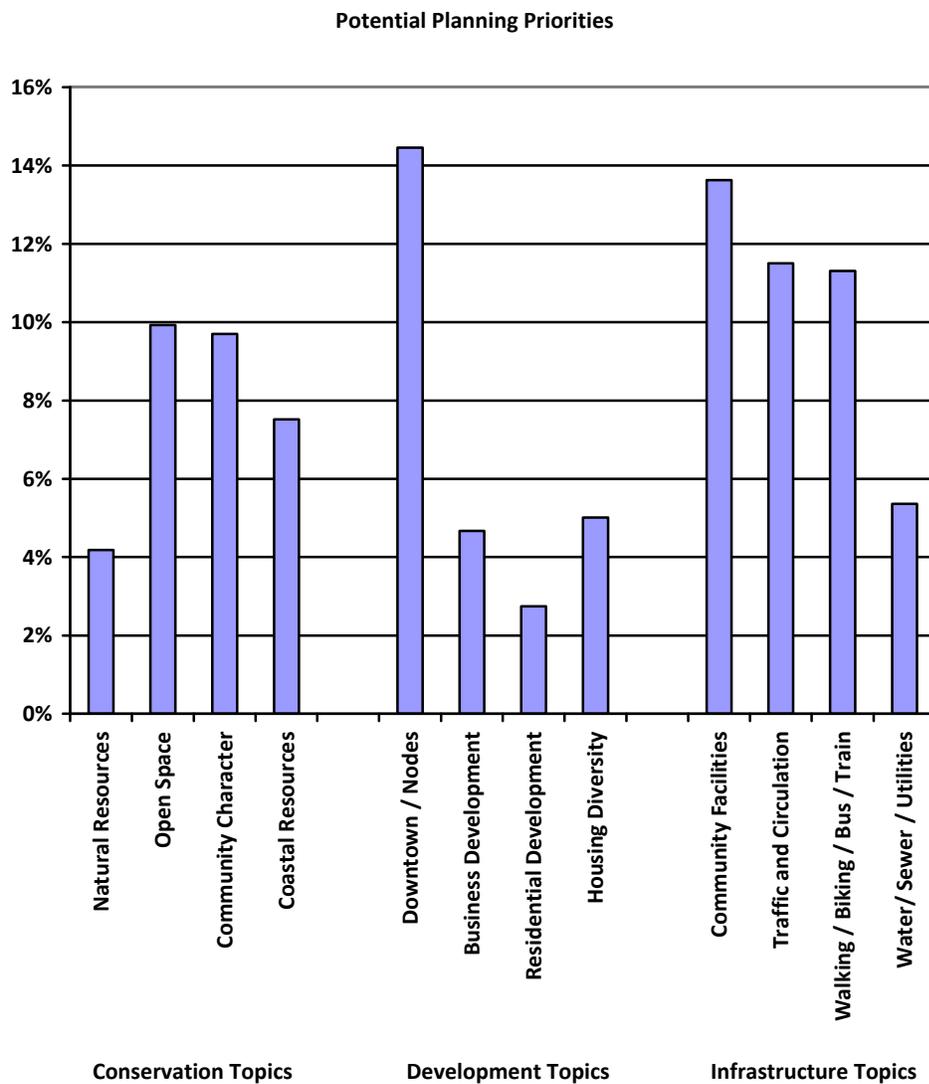


On-Line Survey Input

An on-line survey was also conducted to get input from Darien residents. The questions were similar to the exercises conducted at the public meeting. Approximately 850 people participated in the survey. The availability of the survey was publicized as follows:

- press releases,
- handouts at the train stations and the library,
- notifications to local officials and commission members, and
- the Town website.

The potential planning priorities identified were downtown/nodes, community facilities, traffic and circulation, walking/biking/bus/train, and open space.



POCD Input And Strategies

Following the introductory exercises, the Planning and Zoning Commission reviewed the input received. Based on the results of these exercises, it was felt that the POCD should be organized around three main thematic elements:

- **Conservation-Related Strategies** - Things Darien wants to protect or preserve in the future.
- **Development-Related Strategies** - How Darien wants to guide future growth and change.
- **Infrastructure-Related Strategies** - Facilities Darien wants to support the overall vision.

**Conservation
Strategies**



**Development
Strategies**



**Infrastructure
Strategies**

