

SECTIONS OF THE EAST HADDAM PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT – 2008

CHAPTER 8 – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Element #1 – Goodspeed Landing/East Haddam Village Center (The Village)

Goal –

It is the goal of this Plan to develop Goodspeed Landing as the town’s primary location for visitor services while retaining the rural, historic and cultural character of the Village. East Haddam Village is part of a sewer district. That opens up the opportunity for development that could not be permitted before in a compact village. The East Haddam Planning and Zoning Commission revised land use regulations for East Haddam and Moodus Village to allow flexibility in uses while preserving the historic and cultural integrity of the villages. From 2002 to 2005, the Planning and Zoning Commission participated with village residents and business owners to develop a vision statement for East Haddam Village aimed at preserving the neighborhood and architectural character, scale, scope, and views and vistas that have historically characterized the village. See Appendix XIV.

The future development of East Haddam Village and the Town Office site, in conjunction with expansion and renovation of Goodspeed Opera House Foundation housing facilities, could create the critical mass that would sustain significant economic growth.

Issues –

The following have been identified as issues impeding economic growth in the Goodspeed Landing section:

- The location for the Goodspeed Musical’s theatre expansion is unresolved
- Limited services & accommodations
- Insufficient critical mass to attract developers
- Traffic patterns & limited parking space
- A lack of walkable, attractive public spaces

Policy & Recommendations –

a. East Haddam Village - The Town, with the guidance of the Board of Selectmen, the Economic Development Commission, the Planning and Zoning Commission, the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission, and the Historic District Commission, should integrate the recommendations of the Mobility Study and Town Office Site Reuse Study to improve traffic flow, parking, public green spaces, and river access in East Haddam Village. The Town should continue to work with the Goodspeed Opera House Foundation and [the Rotary Club] to explore opportunities for transforming the existing Lumberyard Road area into a scenic asset that could attract even more visitors to the village. This could include riverside boardwalks, landscaped islands and park areas, and a decorative lighting system that could be implemented throughout the village. The properties of the Rotary, Goodspeed Opera House Foundation parking area, and the Town boat launch area are untapped resources that could provide scenic, historic, and cultural value to the community and to the region.

The Policies and Recommendations in this section might apply to several groups and organizations; therefore, specific responsibility for particular tasks have not been designated; however, it is expected that the Board of Selectmen and the Economic Development Commission will work collectively and independently on the following:

- a. Capitalize on theatre/arts/culture theme to recruit new retail shops.
- b. Capitalize on the river front.
- c. Pursue expansion of overnight visitor accommodations, niche businesses and restaurants.
- d. Support efforts to;
 - i. Pursue egress to the Town Office Site parking area from Route 149;
 - ii. Relocate Annex storage and raze town garage.
- e. Work with Haddam and developers to pursue growth opportunities.
- f. Identify/pursue appropriate grant opportunities.
- g. Work with the Town of Haddam and the State of Connecticut to create a walkway for pedestrian and bicycle access over the East Haddam / Haddam Bridge Swing Bridge.**

CHAPTER 11 - TRANSPORTATION

Background

East Haddam residents and those who visit the Town are almost completely dependent on the automobile as a means of transportation.

The State of Connecticut and the Town have both recognized that policies of the past have led to undesirable results. The State, through its revised Plan of Conservation and Development (2005 - 2010), has noted several key items that small rural communities should explore. The State's Growth Management Principle #3 is to "Concentrate Development Around Transportation Nodes and Along Major Transportation Corridors to Support the Viability of Transportation Options." The Plan states "that transportation planning, to provide safe, efficient and cost-effective movement of people and goods, is primarily a State and regional responsibility. Municipalities are responsible for planning and regulating land use development within their borders. The lack of integration between these two planning functions has had a cumulative effect on unintended development and the inefficient use of transportation resources."

The State recognizes that this continued sprawl has led to an expansive network of roads and suburban arterial roadways that are overloaded. The State Plan encourages clustering and mixed-use, mixed-income development in pedestrian friendly villages to reduce the number of automobile trips. In a small way, the encouragement of developing around village centers will assist with shortening daily trips.

One of the major policy recommendations from the State is to promote travel reduction programs which will reduce the rate of growth of annual vehicle miles traveled to a level that will contribute to the achievement of:

- 1) ambient air quality standards for ozone;
- 2) a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions;
- 3) energy intensity improvements and reduced petroleum reliance; and
- 4) satisfactory service levels.

There are five functional classifications for East Haddam's roads. The categories are: Arterial - State Highways; Collector - Local; Residential - moderate volume; Residential - low volume; Residential - dead end; and cul-de-sacs. A comprehensive list of East Haddam's public roads is included in Appendix XII. The Planning and Zoning Commission will continue to review these designations.

The Town also has an airport in East Haddam Village, boat traffic in the Connecticut River, and a resurrected rail line across the river in Haddam. The Goodspeed Airport is a privately owned airport located south of East Haddam Village. The runway is 2,150 feet in length, with an adjoining seaplane ramp leading from the Connecticut River, which has been designated for seaplane landings and take-offs. This airport, although limited in size, is used for smaller propeller airplanes and an occasional helicopter. Small cruise boats and pleasure boats are able to use the Connecticut River. The rail line that runs to Essex is in the planning stage to run from Old Saybrook to Middletown along the Connecticut River. This line runs through Haddam on the other side of the East Haddam /Haddam Swing Bridge.

Goals

The primary transportation goal is to provide for safe, efficient and reliable movement of persons, goods and services within and through the Town of East Haddam while preserving the Town's scenic views, natural environment and quality of life. In particular the character of existing neighborhoods should be preserved through appropriate road and transportation planning and policies.

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9. Reevaluate the feasibility of a pedestrian walkway for the East Haddam/Haddam Swing Bridge - A report was produced by Liechtenstien and Associates, Inc for the State of Connecticut Department of Transportation in 1999. The report stated it was feasible to install a cantilevered walkway. The State of Connecticut is planning to expand the railroad used in Haddam and to convert the former cruise line property into a State park. The Economic Development Commission should review the potential use of a walkway for pedestrians using the railroad and the State owned property along the Connecticut River in Haddam to facilitate potential increase in tourist visits to East Haddam Village.

CHAPTER 12 – MUNICIPAL IMPROVEMENTS

8. Create public green spaces

a. Create public green spaces, including river access, along the Connecticut River in East Haddam Village. This includes cooperative efforts with the Goodspeed Opera House Foundation on property south of the swing bridge, and private lands to the north of the swing bridge. The Draft Environmental Impact Evaluation and Conceptual Master Plan for East Haddam Village prepared for the Department of Economic and Community Development, and the Mobility Improvement Study for the Village of East Haddam prepared for the State of Connecticut Department of Transportation, both identified these areas for possible beneficial enhancements. (Draft plan included the walkway on the swing bridge.) The Town should continue to work with the Goodspeed Opera House Foundation and the Rotary to explore opportunities to transform the existing Lumberyard Road parking lot area into a scenic asset which could attract even more visitors to the village. This could include riverside boardwalks, landscaped islands and park areas, and a decorative lighting system that could be implemented throughout the village. The properties of the Rotary, Goodspeed Opera House Foundation parking area, and the Town boat launch are untapped resources that could provide scenic, historic, and cultural value to the community and to the region.