



# MEMORANDUM

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**To:** Housing Partnership  
Town of Stratford

**From:** Glenn Chalder, AICP

**Date:** June 4, 2020 (Revised June 11, 2020 for 2020 Ordinance Changes)

**Subject:** **Kickoff Meeting Materials – June 11  
Stratford Housing Study**

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Greetings!

I am looking forward to working with the Housing Partnership and the Town of Stratford to investigate and evaluate housing needs and prepare a housing plan. This memorandum organizes some materials to help guide the discussion at the “kickoff meeting” on June 11, 2020.

## 1. Housing Partnership Overview

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### Formation / Composition

Stratford adopted an ordinance in 1990 establishing the Housing Partnership based on State legislation promoting such entities and local concerns over housing-related issues. The ordinance was amended in 2020. Partnership membership (appointed by the Mayor) consists of the following :

- The Mayor.
- A representative of the Planning Commission.
- A representative of the Zoning Commission.
- A representative of the Inland Wetlands Commission.
- A representative of the Housing Authority.
- A representative of the Economic and Community Development Commission.
- One member of the local business community.
- One member of a public interest group, which group includes, but is not limited to, housing advocates, clergy, local civic groups and non-profit corporations.
- A local urban planning, land use or housing professional.

## **Roles And Responsibilities Of The Housing Partnership**

The ordinance states that the Partnership shall:

1. Examine and identify housing needs and housing opportunities within the Town.
2. Establish the price range of affordable housing.
3. Explore the availability of any state, municipal or other land that is suitable for the development of affordable housing.
4. Periodically advise the:
  - a. Town Council as to those properties identified as suitable for the development of affordable housing, and
  - b. other Boards, Commissions, or Committees of the Town as to such other matters which may restrict the development of affordable housing.
5. Review applicable zoning regulations to determine whether such regulations restrict the development of affordable housing in the community and identify and recommend to the Zoning Commission any necessary changes to such regulations to promote development of affordable housing in a manner consistent with the surrounding neighborhood.
6. Develop and activate a long-range plan to satisfy housing needs in the Town.

## **History of Partnership**

The Partnership was inactive at times due to preparation of other planning documents (Plans of Conservation and Development, Transit-Oriented Development, etc.), staffing changes which caused interruptions in their work, and attention being devoted to other municipal priorities.

**Do you have any questions about the Housing Partnership?**

## 2. Statutory Requirement For Housing Plan

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In 2017, the Connecticut legislature adopted Public Act 17-170 which established a statutory requirement for each municipality to adopt an “affordable housing plan” and update it every five years. The target date for such a plan would be July 24, 2022.

***Sec. 8-30j. Affordable housing plan. Hearing and adoption. Amendments. Filing requirement.***

*(a) At least once every five years, each municipality shall prepare or amend and adopt an affordable housing plan for the municipality. Such plan shall specify how the municipality intends to increase the number of affordable housing developments in the municipality.*

*(b) The municipality may hold public informational meetings or organize other activities to inform residents about the process of preparing the plan. If the municipality holds a public hearing, at least thirty-five days prior to the public hearing on the adoption, the municipality shall file in the office of the town clerk of such municipality a copy of such draft plan or any amendments to the plan, and if applicable, post such draft plan on the Internet web site of the municipality. After adoption of the plan, the municipality shall file the final plan in the office of the town clerk of such municipality and, if applicable, post the plan on the Internet web site of the municipality.*

*(c) Following adoption, the municipality shall regularly review and maintain such plan. The municipality may adopt such geographical, functional or other amendments to the plan or parts of the plan, in accordance with the provisions of this section, as it deems necessary. If the municipality fails to amend such plan every five years, the chief elected official of the municipality shall submit a letter to the Commissioner of Housing that explains why such plan was not amended.*

**Do you have any questions about the requirement for a housing plan?**

### 3. Proposed Approach

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In March, the Town issued a “Request for Proposals” where it sought a consultant to assist with this process. The Project Overview stated the following:

#### OVERVIEW

Promoting diverse housing opportunities is a priority for the Town of Stratford. Stratford is looking to expand the availability of housing that is affordable to the needs of its residents through a properly planned and executed process consistent with local zoning, which takes into account the Town’s Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) adopted in 2014.

Stratford’s median household income is \$66,451, much less than the median household income of Fairfield County (\$81,268) and the State (\$74,168), ... [and the] existing housing stock remains unaffordable for most residents even though it is moderately priced compared to other towns in Fairfield County. Housing costs witnessed an increase by 57% in Stratford since 2000 with the current median home value at \$249,000.

Census data indicates that 77% of Stratford’s housing stock is comprised of single-family homes, of which 60% have three or more bedrooms. Increasing housing costs coupled with a lack of modestly sized housing inventory therefore does not satisfy the needs of young workers and downsizing baby boomers. Nearly 60% of renters and 40% of homeowners are currently cost burdened.

The Town recently adopted an ordinance to revive the Housing Partnership (inactive since 2010) to address this issue. ... The primary goal of this Partnership is to develop an overall strategy for housing in Stratford that meets the needs of all residents.

Following review of the submittals, the Town selected Planimetrics (a Connecticut-based land use consulting firm) to assist with this process. The Scope of Work is summarized below.

## 1 Scoping / Researching

1. Meet with the Housing Partnership to review the re-establishment of the Housing Partnership and to discuss/confirm the overall goals of the project.
2. Review existing plans, studies, and documents relative to:
  - a. Housing supply / demand / need
  - b. Land use policies
  - c. Possible housing opportunity areas
  - d. Potential “best practices” applicable to a town like Stratford
3. Prepare report for the Housing Partnership summarizing issues (Town staff will assist in mapping)
4. Discuss findings with Housing Partnership / issue revised report

## 2 Organizing / Strategizing

1. Prepare discussion materials for the Housing Partnership :
  - a. A report discussing possible strategies to address issues (Town staff will assist in mapping)
  - b. A summary of alternative public meeting formats
2. Discuss material with Housing Partnership / issue revised report
3. Conduct a **public meeting** on housing needs and possible options:
  - a. Intro - Where I have lived in the past / Where will I live in the future / Reaction to Stratford's current housing mix
  - b. Policy – (may be limited to one of the following):
    - Audience-wide discussion of housing needs and strategies
    - Audience-wide visual preference survey of types / locations
    - Talking groups on possible housing strategies (with report out)
    - Working group exercise locating housing (Lego blocks)
    - Working groups exercise on preferred housing options in locations
4. Prepare report for the Housing Partnership summarizing results of public meeting
5. Discuss findings from **public meeting** / possible strategies with Housing Partnership

## 3 Preparing / Adopting

1. Prepare draft housing plan including:
  - a. available/potential resources needed to meet identified housing goals and strategies
  - b. actionable implementation plan that identifies and prioritizes specific actions
2. Discuss findings with Housing Partnership / issue revised report
3. As budget permits, present draft housing plan to other boards / commissions
4. Conduct a public meeting on draft housing plan (anticipated to be an audience-wide discussion of housing needs and strategies)
5. Summarize results of public meeting for the Housing Partnership
6. Finalize Housing Plan with Housing Partnership
7. Issue revised Housing Plan

**Ideally, the Housing Plan would be “adopted” or “endorsed” by the Town Council and other local agencies (in addition to the Housing Partnership). Depending on budgetary considerations, this important step may be coordinated by Town Staff.**

	2020								2021			
	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A
Project Initiation	[Grey bar from M to J]											
<b>1. SCOPING / RESEARCHING</b>												
Research / material review	[Dark blue bar from M to S]											
Kick-off meeting With SHP	[Red box from J to J]											
Draft report summarizing issues	[Dark blue bar from J to A]											
Discuss report findings with SHP	[Red box from J to J]											
Issue revised report on findings	[Dark blue bar from A to S]											
<b>2. ORGANIZING / STRATEGIZING</b>												
Research / material review	[Brown bar from J to S]											
Draft report summarizing strategies	[Brown bar from J to S]											
Discuss strategies with SHP	[Red box from S to O]											
Issue revised report on strategies	[Brown bar from S to O]											
<b>Public Meeting - Housing Needs Options</b>	[Yellow box from O to N]											
Draft report summarizing meeting	[Brown bar from O to N]											
Discuss meeting / strategies with SHP	[Red box from N to D]											
<b>3. PREPARING / ADOPTING</b>												
Draft preliminary housing plan	[Dark green bar from S to D]											
Discuss preliminary housing plan with SHP	[Red box from D to J]											
Issue revised plan	[Dark green bar from D to J]											
Present draft plan to other boards*	[Red box from J to J]											
<b>Public Meeting – Draft Plan</b>	[Yellow box from J to F]											
Draft report summarizing meeting	[Dark green bar from J to F]											
Finalize Housing Plan with SHP	[Red box from F to M]											
Issue revised Housing Plan	[Dark green bar from F to M]											

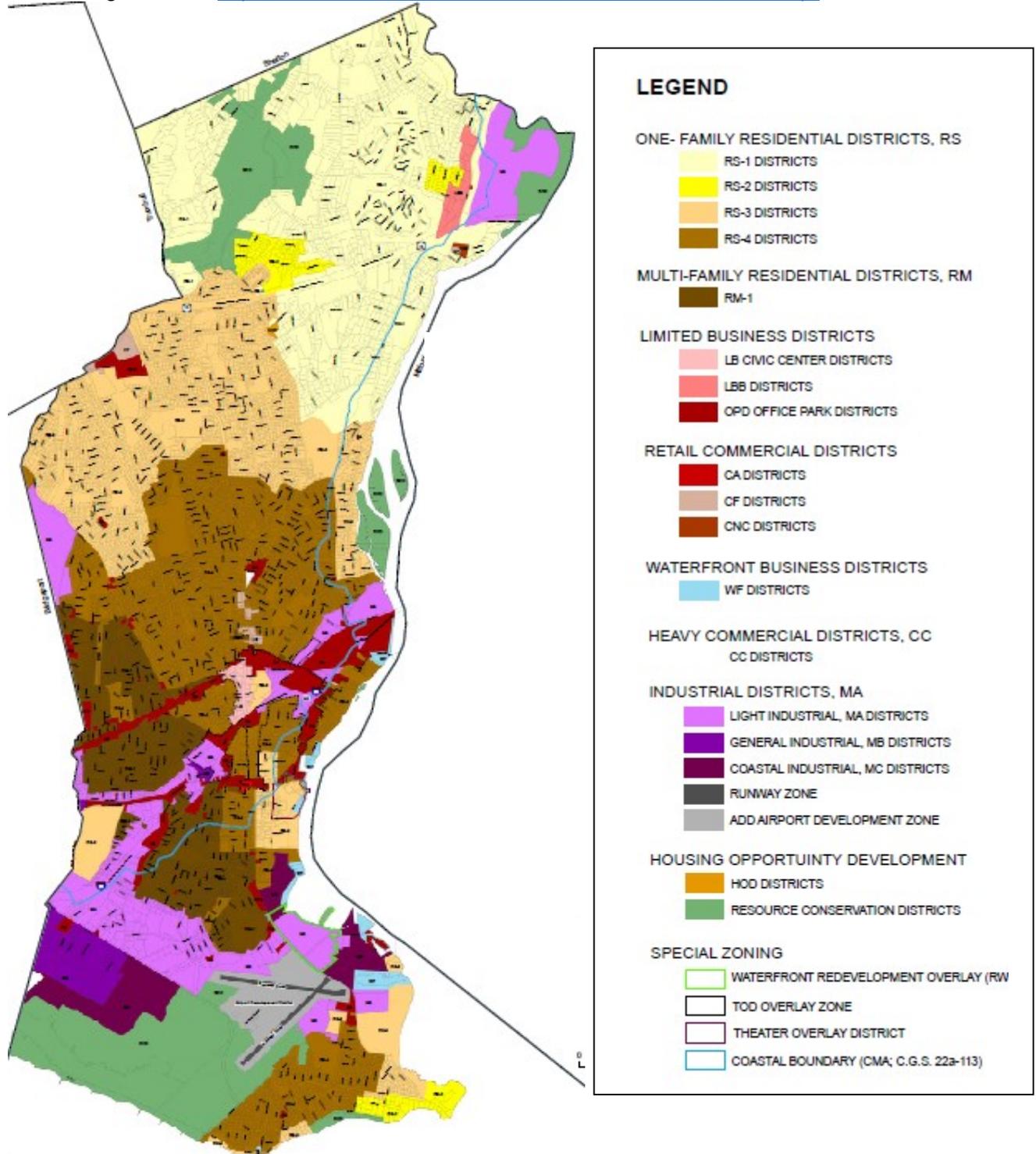
\* = Pending funding adequacy

**Do you have any questions about the overall scope of work or the process or the schedule?**

## 4. Related Information

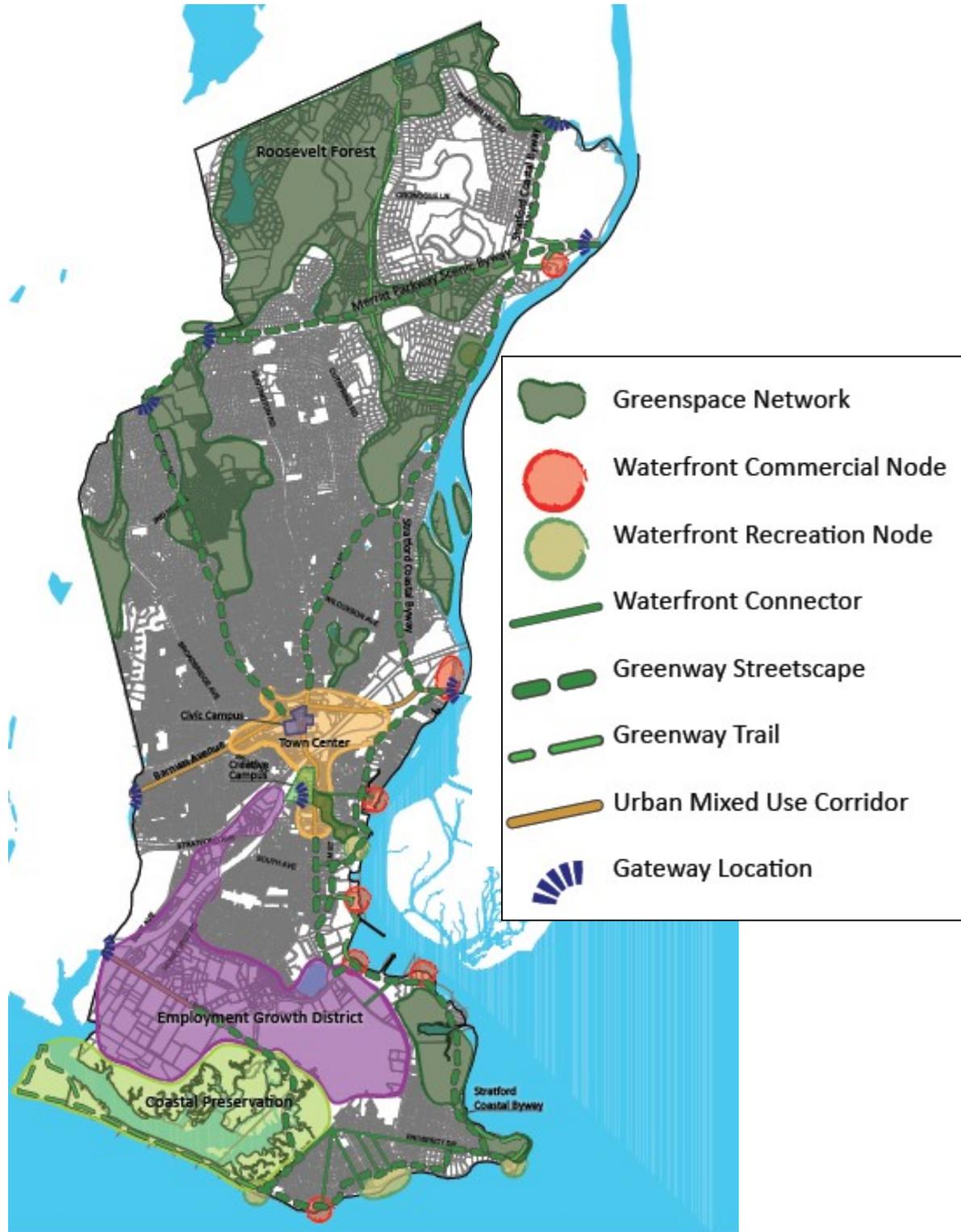
### Zoning Map

See link on right sidebar at <http://www.townofstratford.com/content/39832/39846/39923/default.aspx>



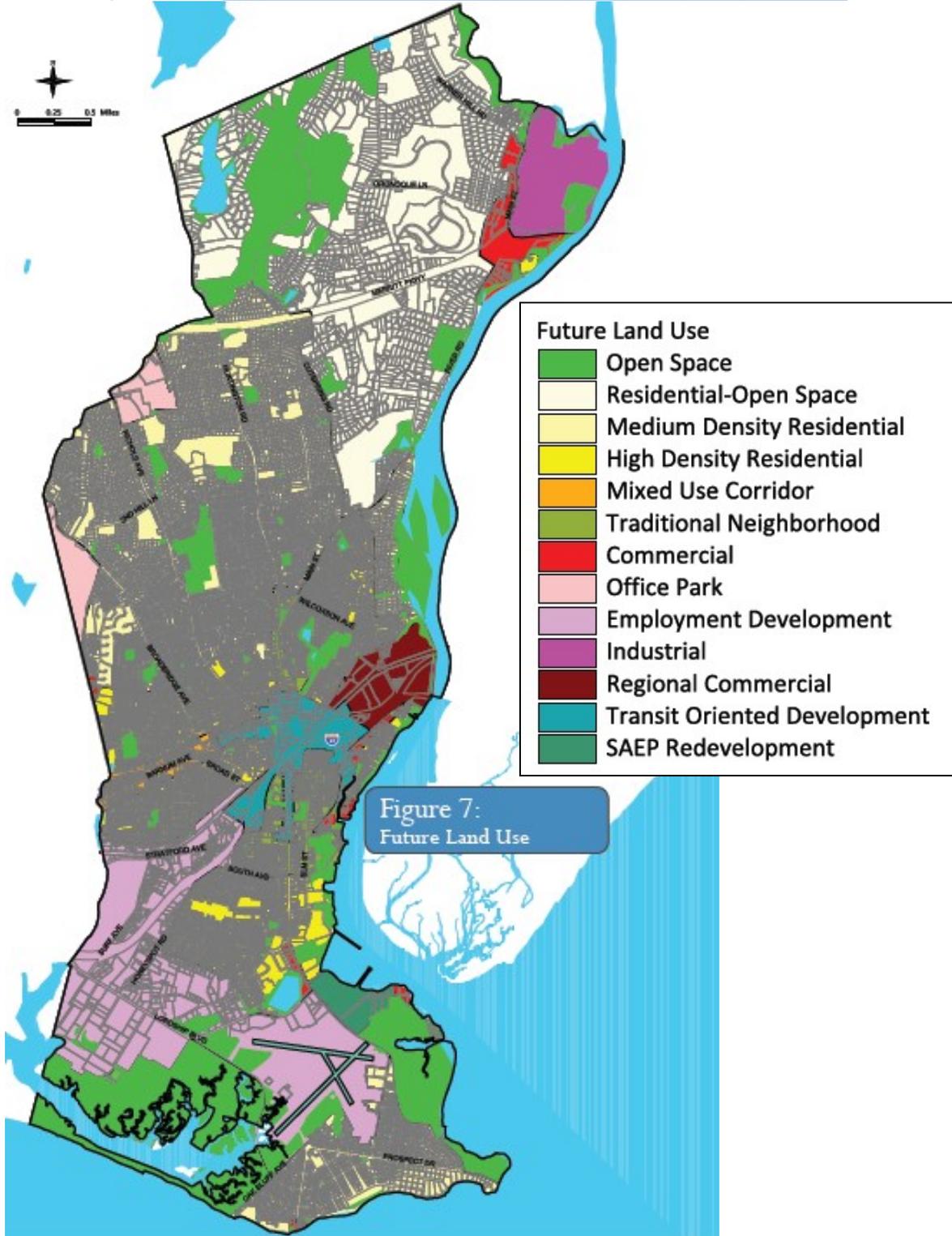
2014 Plan of Conservation and Development – Stratford Vision Plan (POCD page 17)

See link on right sidebar at <http://www.townofstratford.com/content/39832/39846/39923/default.aspx>



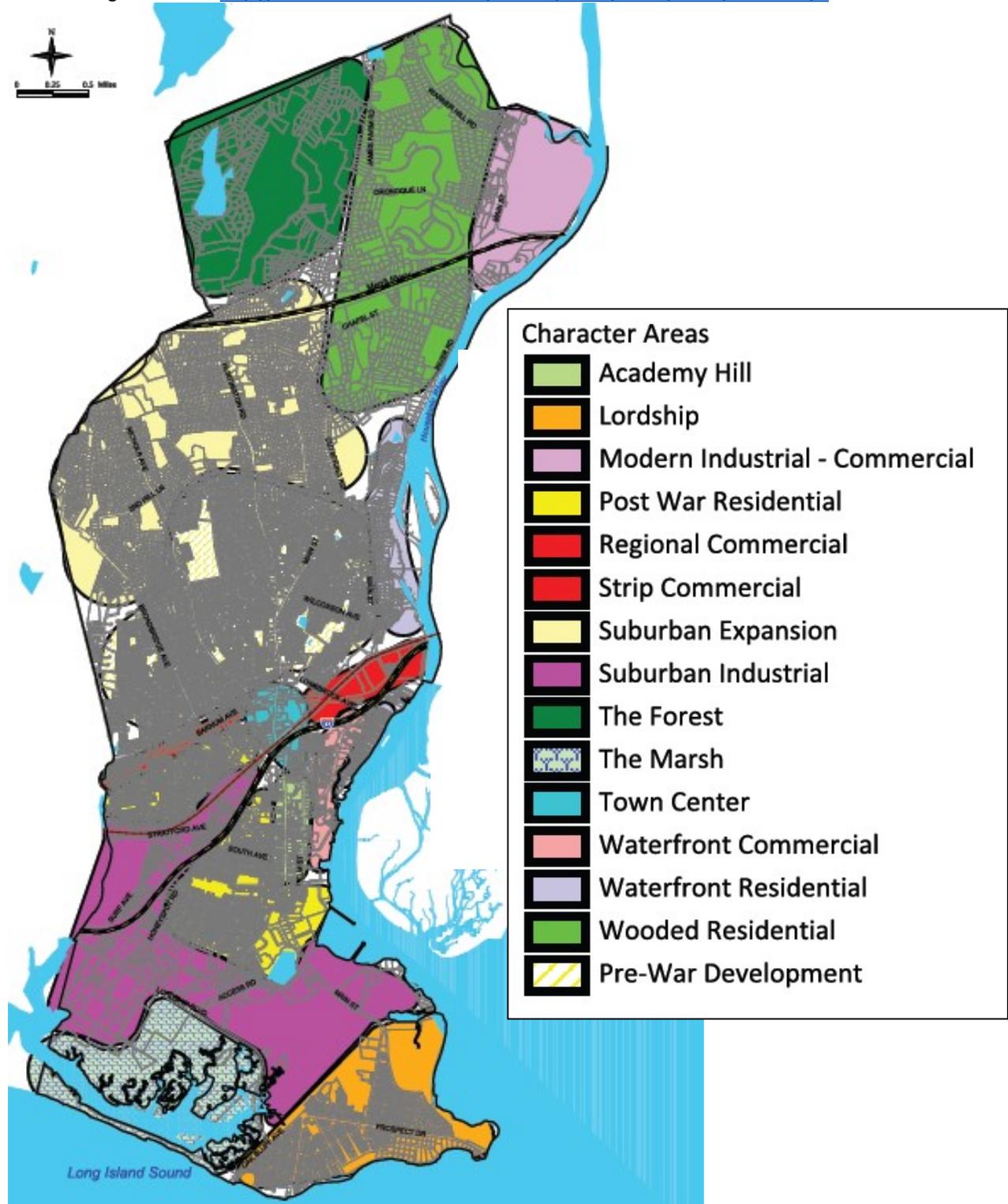
2014 Plan of Conservation and Development – Future Land Use Plan (POCD page 21)

See link on right sidebar at <http://www.townofstratford.com/content/39832/39846/39923/default.aspx>



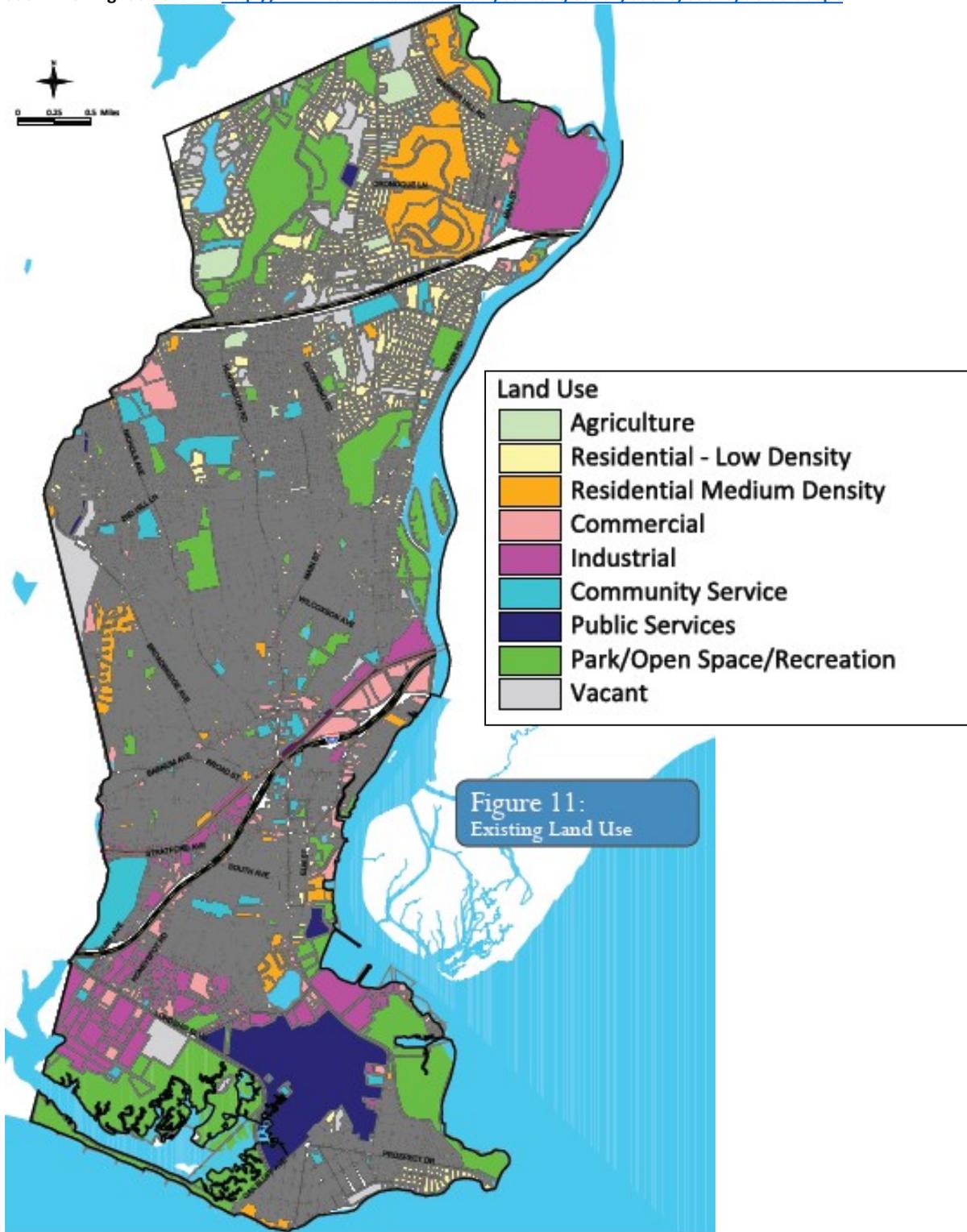
2014 Plan of Conservation and Development – Character Areas (POCD page 43)

See link on right sidebar at <http://www.townofstratford.com/content/39832/39846/39923/default.aspx>



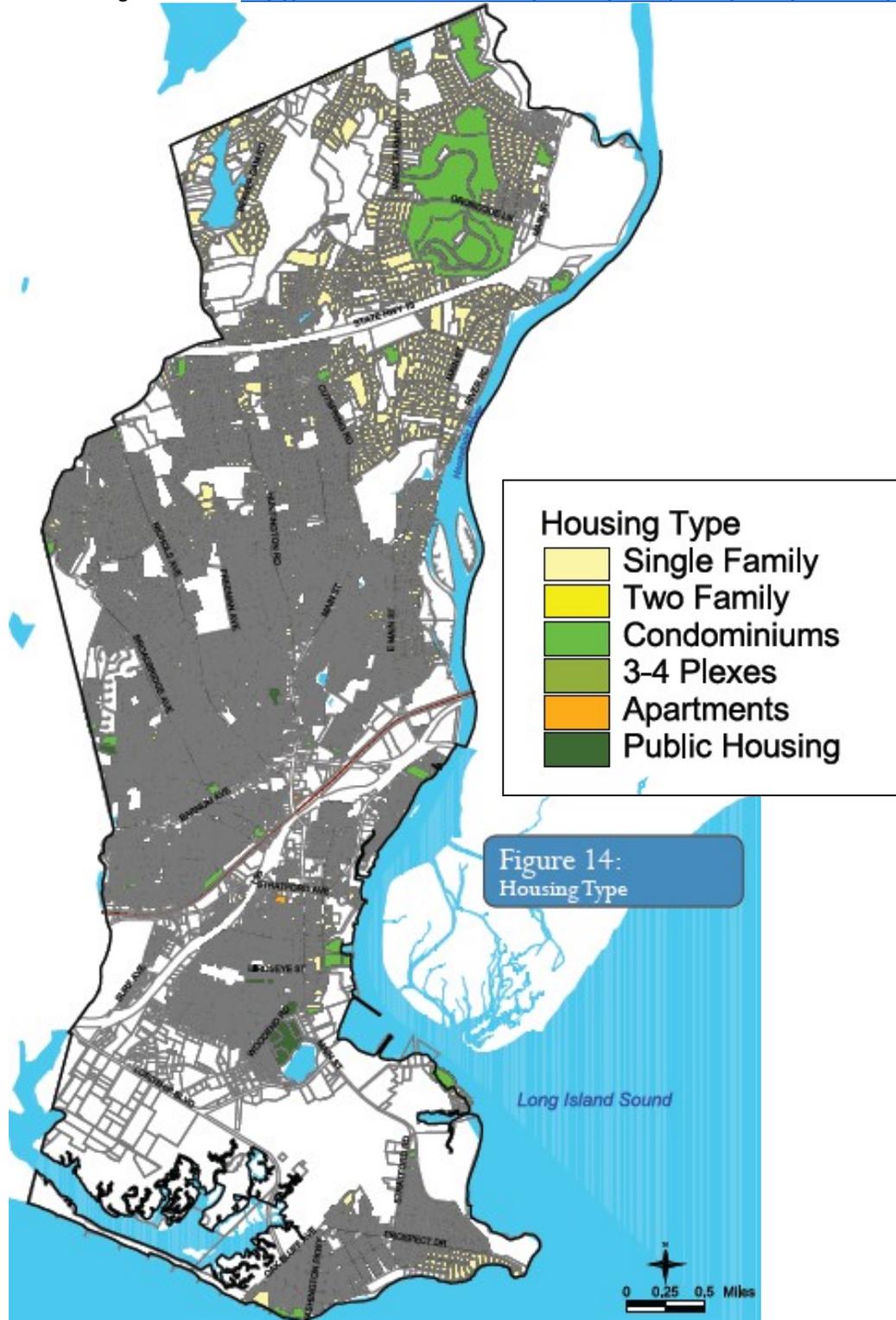
2014 Plan of Conservation and Development – Existing Land Use (POCD page 49)

See link on right sidebar at <http://www.townofstratford.com/content/39832/39846/39923/default.aspx>



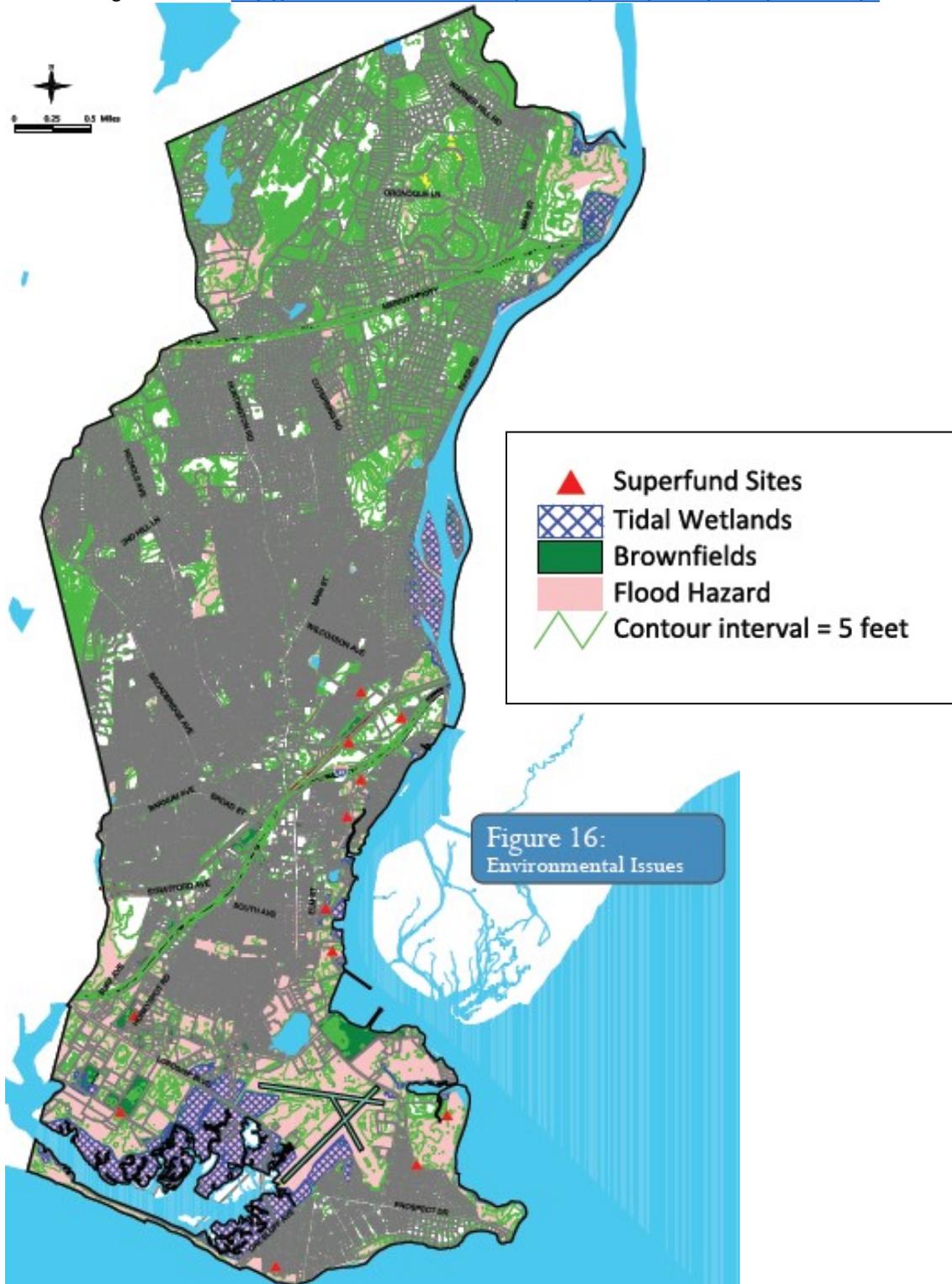
2014 Plan of Conservation and Development – Housing Type (POCD page 57)

See link on right sidebar at <http://www.townofstratford.com/content/39832/39846/39923/default.aspx>



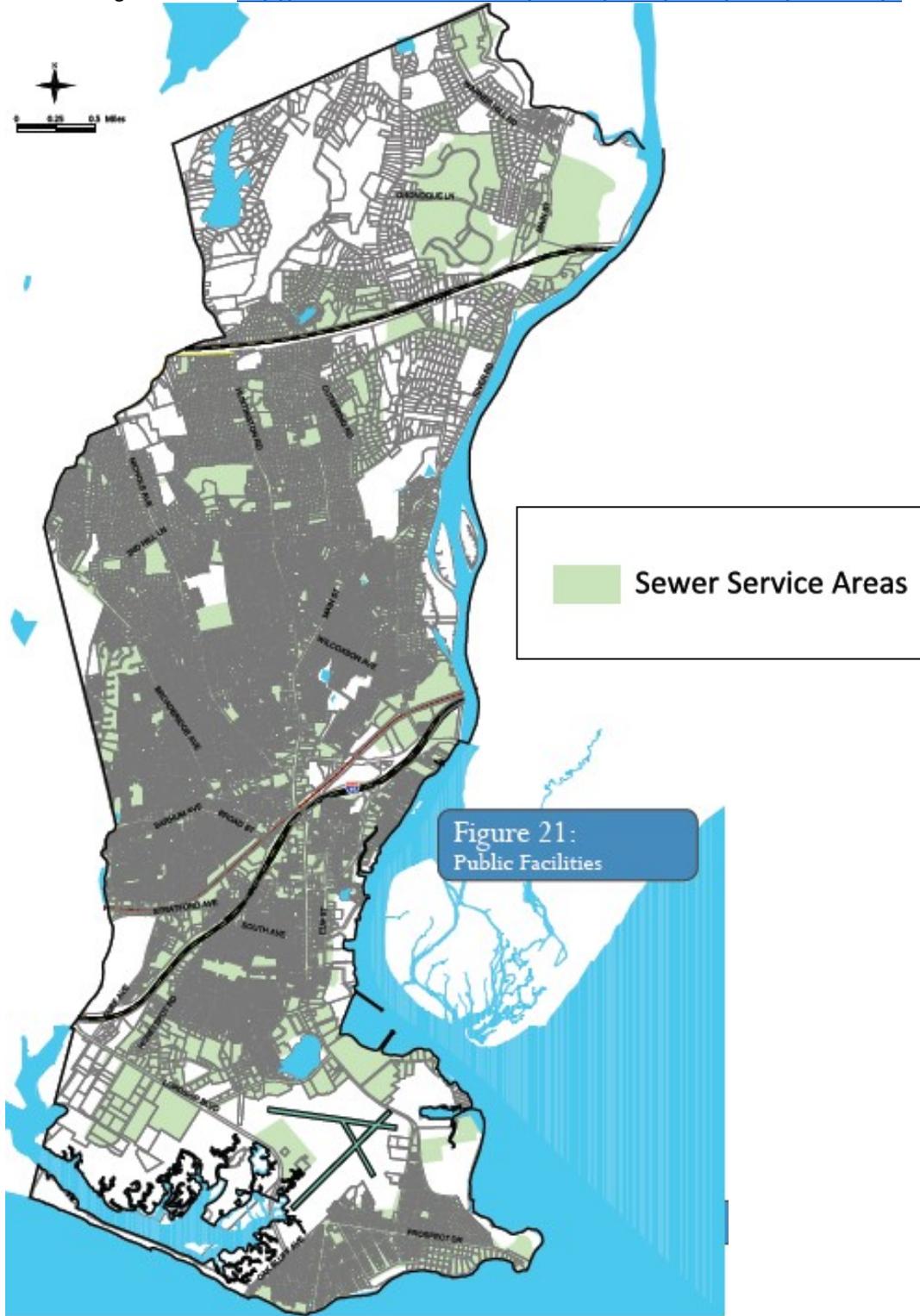
2014 Plan of Conservation and Development – Environmental Issues (POCD page 73)

See link on right sidebar at <http://www.townofstratford.com/content/39832/39846/39923/default.aspx>



2014 Plan of Conservation and Development – Public Facilities (POCD page 107)

See link on right sidebar at <http://www.townofstratford.com/content/39832/39846/39923/default.aspx>



2014 Plan of Conservation and Development – Synthesis Of Public Input (POCD page 133)

See link on right sidebar at <http://www.townofstratford.com/content/39832/39846/39923/default.aspx>

