

Local Positions

Land Use and Management

Adopted 1997, Revised 1998, 2012

The League of Women Voters of Westport supports the Town's current policy to preserve inland and tidal wetland as resources. As stated in the 2007 Town Plan of Conservation and Development "Some resources are so important to environmental quality or community character that alterations to these areas should continue to be avoided to the extent feasible and the land preserved in its natural state." In addition, the League supports strong regulation and review of development of activities affecting Westport's wetlands.

Explanation:

1. Implementation and Enforcement of Westland Regulations.

We support:

- a. a fee and fines system strong enough to ensure compliance;
- b. performance bonds for all projects with potential for significant impact on wetlands;
- c. a requirement that the applicant provide an environmental consultant to monitor and report regularly to the Commission for all projects with potential for significant impact on wetlands;
- d. frequent inspections by Commissioners and staff to ensure compliance with the regulations; and
- e. a program of public education to include printed information widely available in locations such as town offices, real estate offices and the Library.

2. We support the Commission's inland wetland regulatory responsibilities and, in addition, urge the Commission to focus on its mission of conservation.

3. We urge the Town to continue to improve the Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping of the Town's wetlands.

4. We support regular review of the Town's current wetland setback requirements.

5. Application and Hearing Process.

To train Commissioners we support:

- a. town-supported training of Conservation Commissioners and Planning & Zoning Commissioners on coastal and inland wetlands through Connecticut's DEEP workshops and videos, training in the field or similar training services;
- b. the inclusion, when applicable, of Conservation Commissioners in the Town's current Planning & Zoning land use training.

To provide sufficient background information to Commissioners, we support:

- a. neighbor notification and oral and written public input at hearings, in Summary as well as Plenary cases;
- b. the expectation that Commissioners walk properties prior to hearings; and
- c. the expectation that agenda and background information will be received by Commissioners in a timely fashion.

*Please refer to the League of Women Voters of Connecticut's position on Natural Resources (Wetlands, Watershed, Flood Hazards) appended to the LWV Westport positions.

The Library and Jesup Green

Adopted 1973, Revised 1992

To enable the Library to best serve the needs of the community, to enhance and preserve the town center, and to encourage the protection and beautification of the riverfront area, the League of Women Voters of Westport supported the location of a library in the Jesup Green area. It should be the only facility built on this property. LWV Westport considers two points essential in the development of the Jesup Green area:

- (1) As much as possible of the existing Green and of the large specimen trees surrounding it must be preserved.**
- (2) (2) The creation of a riverfront park must be considered an integral part of the plan.**

Explanation:

Because of our concern for the inherent fragility of that land and its surroundings, we maintain our former position that the Library should be the only facility built on this property. We recommend that as much as possible of the existing green and large specimen trees surrounding it be preserved. Parking areas should be unobtrusive and well screened.

We consider the development of a riverfront park an integral part of the plan to locate the Library in the Jesup Green area. LWV Westport, in its position on land acquisition, gives high priority to the preservation of land which is "waterfront, watercourses, wetlands, flood plains, or otherwise environmentally fragile."

The Saugatuck River is part of Westport's natural heritage, one of its outstanding resources, and as such should be cared for and cherished. The redevelopment of the Jesup Green area to include the Library and a riverfront park is appropriate use of municipally-owned land and good town planning.

PUBLIC LAND: MANAGEMENT, ACQUISITION, USE AND DISPOSAL

(Adopted 1966, Revised 1983,1985,1989,1992,1995, 2001,2012)

To maintain the character and beauty of our town and its natural resources, to contain and shape commercial growth, and to control traffic and town development, the League of Women Voters of Westport supports a strong program for municipal acquisition and preservation of open space. We urge the Town of Westport to acquire and retain through whatever means are available to it, specific parcels of undeveloped land that meet criteria adopted by LWV Westport, the 1997 Town Plan of Conservation and Development (the Town Plan), and the Westport Land Acquisition Committee Report, 2000 (LAC).

Explanation:

The League of Women Voters of Westport advocates a program of open space land acquisition and conservation in an age of ever-increasing population pressures. Westport is fast approaching its ultimate population under present zoning laws, and the possibility of future zoning breakdown has to be considered. Open land is fast disappearing. Once developed it is lost. Therefore, the urgency of the problem becomes immediate. Besides the preservation of the character and beauty of our town, we emphasize the importance of conservation of wildlife habitat and natural resources and the need for inland natural recreation areas. It makes fiscal sense to leave land undeveloped, as opposed to providing full municipal services for developed land. The Westport Land Acquisition Committee reported in 2000: "9.8% of Westport's land is open space as defined by the State. However, if State- and privately-owned land is removed from this, then only 4.8% is Town owned open space. Furthermore, much of this Town owned land is comprised of small parcels and

cannot be used for the municipal needs identified in the Town Plan. The LAC believes that Westport should be closer to the State guideline of 21% and, therefore, must be more aggressive in obtaining the privately owned parcels outlined in the recommendations."

OPEN SPACE DEFINITIONS

Westport has many different kinds of open space. To clarify differences, we recommend the town adopt the following open space definitions:

1. Open Space for **Passive or Non-Organized Recreation**. Areas with public access for informal, non-organized activities such as walking, picnicking, fishing, relaxation, bird watching and communing with nature. Includes undeveloped parks and beaches; woods, meadows and waterside areas and offshore islands. (Areas do not contain buildings, structures or playing fields.)
2. Open Space for **Active, General Formal Recreation**. Publicly accessible areas that may include playing fields, courts and/or structures. Includes playgrounds, golf courses, tennis courts, developed beaches, and areas for other active, organized sports.
3. Open Space for **Conservation. Environmentally fragile public areas**. Includes wetlands, flood plains, topographically limited areas (e.g., steeply sloped), farmlands, historic sites, green belts and buffer zones. Also, publicly accessible private and semi-private conservation reserve areas operated by not-for-profit land trusts and nature conservancies and societies; and public utility and water supply lands.
4. Open Space **Unsuitable for Public Use**. Land parcels of small size, inadequate access and/or parking. Includes rotaries, cemeteries, and miscellaneous small areas without sufficient open space for public use.
5. Open Space at **Schools and Other Public-Access Properties**. Publicly owned land around town structures and buildings that is currently or potentially usable for active or passive recreation.
6. Open Space in **Subdivision Reserve Areas**. Areas kept open as integral parts of private development. Includes portions of residential properties left in their natural state-owned by and accessible to development residents.

We are in agreement with the 1997 Town Plan Open Space Categories and Definitions for Public and Private Lands, p. 26.

CRITERIA 1. Criteria for Evaluating Acquisition or Retention of Town Land: The Town should acquire and retain land according to the following criteria:

- Land environmentally fragile, including wetlands and steep slopes.
- Land offering potential for public recreation.
- Land offering the potential for public building or other municipal uses.
- Land that acts as a buffer between conflicting uses.
- Land for pocket parks.
- Land along the waterfront.
- Land that in an undeveloped state maintains the character and beauty of our town
- Land that left undeveloped may help control traffic congestion and town development.

Parcels of land five acres or more. Land that is currently or potentially farmland. Other land designated "open space" in the Town Plan.

Top priority should be given to acquisition of the kinds of properties listed above, as well as the specific properties listed in the Land Acquisition Committee Report, June 2000, pp. 18-20 and the 1997 Town Plan, pp.28-29. In addition, emphasis should be placed on acquisition of waterfront properties such as Cedar Island and riverside parcels and farmland such as the Balta property. Other parcels should be pursued as they become available

Any 8-24 granted by the P&Z for acquisition of land should have a time limit for development plans.

2.Criteria for Evaluating the Disposal of Town Land:

Because there is so little open space remaining in Westport, the Town should dispose of land only after considering the following criteria:

The land should be examined in view of the criteria for acquisition or retention. The land has no potential public use, meets zoning approvals, and its disposal would be in keeping with the character of the neighborhood. The land is an isolated building lot with no potential public use and its disposal would be in keeping with the character of the neighborhood. Parcels with municipal buildings no longer needed or appropriate for public use that could be put to non-municipal uses without negatively affecting public land. The land could be given to an environmental group that will care for it

We are in agreement with the 1997 Town Plan, p. 25: "Disposal of Town owned land should only be considered under the most extreme circumstances and if the property does not meet any of the criteria outlines for the purchase or retention of property. In addition, the proceeds from any property sold should be deposited and held only in the Land Acquisition Fund."

We also agree with the recommendation of the 2000 Land Acquisition Committee Report, p. 24: to "Allow the sale of several parcels of Town owned land appropriate for residential construction with the proceeds "banked" for future land acquisition. This would include this report's specific recommendation to sell the 1 A acre lot on Maplewood Avenue and some of the 26 acres on Waterside Terrace at Longshore."

2. **Criteria for Evaluating the Use of Town Land (including land with buildings):** Is it a use anticipated in the 1997 Town Plan? (Possible locations for current or potential community facility's needs, pp. 98-99). Will the proposed use meet a public need that is broad-based and controlled by the Town for public use? Can, or should the needs be met elsewhere or by other means? What are the alternatives and how practical are they? Is the use needed all the time or only part of the time? Can it be shared and will the need continue in the future? How does this use or need relate to other town land uses and needs as to priorities, the number of citizens served, and preexisting like uses? How suitable is the land for the proposed use? Is the proposed use compatible with the existing zoning? How will the proposed use affect traffic? If only part of the land will be used for a particular use, is the use compatible with the uses planned for the rest of the land? How will the proposed use affect the neighborhood?
3. **. Criteria for Evaluating the Use of Town Land (including land with buildings):** Is it a use anticipated in the 1997 Town Plan? (Possible locations for current or potential community facility's needs, pp. 98-99). Will the proposed use meet a public need that is broad-based and controlled by the Town for public use? Can, or should the needs be met elsewhere or by other means? What are the alternatives and how practical are they? Is the use needed all the time or only part of the time? Can it be shared and will the need continue in the future? How does this use or need relate to other town land uses and needs as to priorities, the number of citizens served, and preexisting like uses? How suitable is the land for the proposed use? Is the proposed use compatible with the existing zoning? How will the proposed use affect traffic? If only part of the land will be used for a particular use, is the use compatible with the uses planned for the rest of the land? How will the proposed use affect the neighborhood?

JESUP GREEN

1. As much as possible of the existing Green and of the large specimen trees surrounding it must be preserved
2. The development of a riverfront park was an integral part of the plan to locate the Library in the Jesup Green area. LWV Westport, in its position on land acquisition, gives high priority to the preservation of land which is "waterfront, watercourses, wetlands, flood plains, or otherwise environmentally fragile." The Saugatuck River is part of Westport's natural heritage, one of its outstanding resources, and as such should be cared for and cherished.

LAND ACQUISITION AND MAINTENANCE

LWV Westport endorses one permanent committee to work with the First Selectman and Town boards and commissions to coordinate maintenance and acquisition and supervise inventory of town owned land and open space.

The 1997 Town Plan also recommends a permanent Natural Resources Citizen Committee (p.24). This Committee's mission should be expanded to develop policy for the use and financing of maintenance and improvement of Town owned land.

The Acquisition Fund should not be used for maintenance.

LWV Westport will work with other organizations, such as the Westport Woman's Club, the Historical Society, and the Conservation Commission, in increasing public awareness of the need for open space acquisition and land use management.

Planning and Zoning

HOUSING

(Adopted 1983, Revised 1992, 2012)

The League of Women Voters of Westport supports planning and zoning regulations that would provide a broad mix of housing options, including affordable housing, to meet the needs of various income and age groups. * All housing regulations should conform to the LWV Westport criteria for good planning, zoning and water use

Explanation:

A Regulations

We support the following regulations regarding housing:

- I. Provision to encourage retention of optimum proportion of open space to land covered.
- II. Provision that aesthetic characteristics harmonize with the surrounding neighborhood (e.g., scale, landscape, height, parking and traffic flow.)
- III. Provision for density control as to number of units per acre and bedrooms per unit, except single family housing.
- IV. Provisions to retain moderate size housing, especially on lots ½ acre or less

B Single- Family Housing

We support the concept of cluster housing (or open space housing) as an effective use of open space, and efficient use of marginal land, and as a way to reduce the cost of owning a singlefamily house. We recommend adoption of a regulation permitting construction of a limited number of small, single-family houses clustered to permit shared use of roads and services.

- I. We recommend that clusters be permitted on any parcel of open space large enough to accommodate a minimum of three legal building lots
- II. We propose perimeter setbacks to be in conformance with each zone.

C. Multi-Family Housing

I. We encourage provisions that allow multi-family housing in commercial zones and conversions of existing commercial buildings, or other large buildings, in areas tied to adequate sewer facilities for multi-family use. The use of these zones and buildings for residential use must be preceded by careful analysis as to the loss of the

commercial tax base and regulations that incorporate controls that will balance that loss with the need for multi-family housing.

D Accessory Apartments

I. **Background:** The problem of illegal apartments must be addressed. If allowed to proliferate without regulation, these apartments are likely to cause problems in the future (e.g., sewage, traffic, police and fire protection.) The Town has no means of insuring the health, safety or welfare of these tenants. Accessory apartments serve a need in Westport: They provide housing for tenants who might otherwise be unable to live here and income to help landlords maintain their properties. Accessory apartments are a means by which smaller families can utilize large houses. They generally serve the young and the elderly--age groups that find it increasingly difficult to secure appropriate housing in Westport.

II. **Criteria:** LWV Westport recognizes that accessory apartments in houses and out buildings are meeting certain housing needs in our community, and supports the legalization and regulation of such apartments. Criteria recommended by the League for consideration in the formation of a regulation include:

- a. off-street parking
- b. renewable permits
- c. not restricted to relatives
- d. owner in residence
- e. adherence to Westport-Weston Health District sanitary codes
- f. size limits
- g. one apartment per lot
- h. retention of single- family appearance
- i. certificate of occupancy

Following a reasonable grace period, all existing apartments should be identified and regulations strictly enforced, and permit fees should be used to defray enforcement costs.

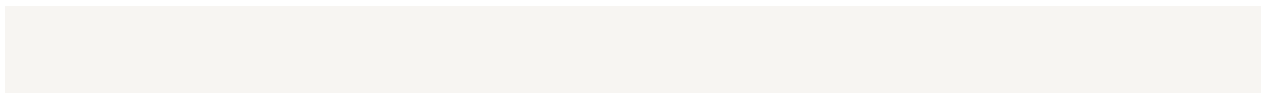
The following section not yet revised:

E. Continuing Care Facilities

We support the establishment of continuing care facilities in Westport with the following criteria:

- a. A facility should provide all three levels of continuing care (i.e., independent living, assisted living and nursing care.)
- b. The acreage on which the facility resides must be adequate for indoor and outdoor activities.
- c. A variety of unit sizes should be available so that at least some are moderately priced.
- d. Local transportation should be provided by the facility.
- e. Appropriate social and recreational programs should be available to residents.
- f. Three meals a day should be made available by the facility.

* Please refer to the League of Women Voters of Westport's position on Health and Human Services



MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS

(Adopted 1965, Revised 1983,1992, 2006,2012)

The League of Women Voters of Westport supports the strengthening of present procedures for the planning, construction and/or conversion of municipal buildings to achieve improved overall coordination among all town boards and agencies responsible for decisions at any stage of a building project.

Explanation:

LWV Westport believes that planning, construction, and/or conversion of municipal buildings can be accomplished more effectively if close attention is paid to the involvement of all of the following in the request procedure:

1. The Planning and Zoning Commission (According to State Statute, the P&Z must review the location of any municipal building before the local legislative body can vote it on, Chapter 126, Section 8-24 of the General Statutes, 1958 revision as amended.)
2. The Conservation Commission
3. The Moderator of the Representative Town Meeting and members of the RTM
4. The Board of Finance
5. The Public Site and Building Committee
6. The Director of Public Works, who acting as chief technical advisor of the Town may assist the project
7. The School Building Committee

The Town of Westport should provide for more coordinated and efficient communication among municipal offices. In addition, we believe that the First Selectman should foster cooperation among the various groups, thus lessening misunderstanding. One avenue to increased cooperation is to be found in the power granted to the First Selectman by the Town Charter. (The First Selectman may convene the members of any or all boards and commissions to review and coordinate activities and to plan operations of the town government and will convene a general membership meeting of such members at least once a year. Chapter 3, Section 3, Executive Powers of the First Selectman according to the Westport Town Charter, 1986.)

Planning and Zoning

(Adopted 1969, Revised 1970, 1983, 2001)

The League of Women Voters of Westport supports municipal planning and adoption and implementation of zoning regulations based on the current Westport Plan of Conservation & Development (the Town Plan). The town's planning and zoning regulation and enforcement should preserve the residential character of Westport, regulate commercial development minimize traffic congestion, and protect the open space essential to Westport's quality of life.

Zoning Board of Appeals

(Adopted 1967)

The League of Women Voters of Westport supports a policy of strict interpretation of the powers granted to the Zoning Board of Appeals, so that the ZBA shall be in harmony with the general intent of Westport's zoning regulations. Variances should be granted only when valid hardship concerning the use of the specific piece of land and/or property is proven. According to State Statute, financial loss does not constitute a valid hardship.

Zoning Enforcement

(Adopted 1967)

The League of Women Voters of Westport supports a forceful, thorough and adequately funded zoning enforcement policy that provides an adequate method to seek out zoning violations. The policy should also employ all legal tools necessary to correct these violations as swiftly as possible.

TOWN GOVERNMENT AND SERVICES

EDUCATION

(Adopted 1970, Revised 1973, 1976, 1983,1989, 1992, 2006)

Board of Education

The League of Women Voters of Westport believes that a Board of Education elected on a non-partisan basis would be the most effective organization for the Westport community. The League supports a Board of Education that:

- 1. Reflects diverse segments of the community;**
- 2. Supports efforts to modernize and clarify the budget+;**
- 3. Initiates a process for evaluation of program, personnel and facilities.**

Explanation:

1. A nonpartisan selection process would allow for candidate selection from the large pool of unaffiliated voters in Westport, in addition to registered members of the two political parties. Until this change is affected, the League encourages individual members to involve themselves in their party's candidate-selection process.

2. An overall interest in education, rather than a particular educational or vocational background, should be the consideration in choosing candidates.

3. We recommend the adoption of the policy of enlisting citizens' advisory groups to insure citizen participation in the policy discussion.

4. We recommend that the Board of Education seek ways of achieving greater public involvement in and acquaintance with its proposed policy decisions influencing budget alternatives, with emphasis on improved communications (i.e. PTA bulletins, news media, club bulletins, etc.) and wider agenda distribution.

5. We encourage open discussion between the public and the Board of Education in their deliberations and decisions.

LWV Westport believes the members of the Board of Education should continue to broaden their knowledge of educational development to enable them to support fully the funding of programs and materials necessary for education in Westport. When the Board of Education adopts a budget, it should defend it throughout the budgetary process.

+ Please refer to the League of Women Voters of Westport position on the budget process.

EDUCATION PHILOSOPHY

The LWV of Westport believes our curriculum should prepare all young people for the future. We recommend a broad- based intergraded curriculum that teaches critical and analytical thinking built upon communication skills, as well as literature, the arts, mathematics as science, technology, history, civics and the global world. It is important to remember that each individual learns at his or her own pace and in his or her own style. Therefore, it is recommended that the approaches to learning and to teaching remain sufficiently flexible to accommodate such individual differences.

BOARD OF FINANCE
(Adopted 1978, 1983,1992)

The LWV believes that Westport's budget process should produce budgets, both Town and Education, that meet the needs of the town as a whole. The budget process should:

- **Be transparent**
- **Afford opportunity for resident participation**
- **Reflect long-term planning**
- **Result in the adoption of a budget in a timely fashion**

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
(Adopted 2003, Revised 2006)

To meet the changing needs of Westport residents and to build a greater sense of community in all segments of Westport's population, the League of Women Voters of Westport supports a strong Health district and a strong network of Human Services. We support increased daycare, recreation and counseling services for children, and expanded affordable housing + and transportation. We recommend that the town adequately fund the Health and Human Services Department and hire a grants writer.

Explanation:

Recognizing that relevant town departments and supportive agencies have maintained a commendable level of health and human services, the League of Women Voters believes that these services should be extended to include:

- Increased daycare opportunities for children of working parents. This includes full-time care for younger children as well as part-time care for school-aged children. We encourage the Town to explore the use of excess school space and to work with local businesses to address unmet childcare needs.
- Expanded opportunities for unstructured recreation for all school aged children. The town should consider expanding the use of facilities, including the schools for recreational use after school, evenings and weekends.
- Outreach Counselors in the middle schools to address destructive and risky behaviors, modeled on the Outreach Counselor in the High School provided by the Health and Human Services Department.

To provide more housing for seniors and people of reduced economic or precarious personal circumstances and to attract and retain qualified personnel to work in Westport, The League of Women Voters of Westport supports creative approaches and vigorous action to increase the availability of affordable housing for rental and/or purchase. We support the development and enforcement of health and safety standards for rental units.

To meet the needs of all Westport residents and local workers, including seniors, children, and the disabled, the League of Women Voters supports, adequate, affordable public transportation throughout the day, evenings and weekends. Because the current transportation options include public, private and volunteer services, we support the creation of a single source of transportation information.

Because the initiation and programs and services is costly, the League of Women Voters strongly recommends the adequately funding of the Health and Human Services and the hiring of a grants writer.

+Please refer to the League of Women Voters position on house

PARKS AND RECREATION

(Adopted 1973, Revised 1985,1989,1995,2001)

The League of Women Voters of Westport recommends that the Town of Westport, through its appropriate agencies, be responsive to the active and passive recreational needs of the residents, and that the Town's recreational facilities and parks be well maintained.

The Town should develop a philosophy for parks which would include a vision of parkland conducive to the highest and best use of leisure for all town residents in parks, programs and facilities.

LWV supports a broad-based recreational program for all segments of the community-one that meets its changing needs. The Recreation Commission should establish criteria for present and future programs based on the facilities that are available or needed, the cost, the impact on the environment, and the impact on neighborhoods. There should be continual maintenance of recreational facilities with special emphasis on safety. The Town should maintain the existing percentages of approximately 85% user fees and 15% town taxes. Major adult programs should be self-supporting, and youth programs subsidized. Financial assistance should be available to both youth and adults who are in need. A brochure, listing facilities and programs, should be available to every resident.

Explanation:

The Town of Westport should have a long-range plan for developing, maintaining and upgrading all facilities under the jurisdiction of the Parks and Recreation Department. In addition, the Town should develop a detailed, comprehensive plan for each park, which would include a landscape design, use designations, and details for achieving goals. In all expansion and improvement projects the impact on the environment, and on neighboring properties, should be carefully weighed.

LWV Westport supports Parks and Recreation Commission with a strong commitment to parks. To allow for greater emphasis on parks, we support a Commission of at least seven members with commissioners who reflect a strong interest in parks and passive recreation. A staff member with specific responsibility for parks should be present at all Commission meetings. To facilitate improved functioning of the Commission, we recommend staggered terms.

LWV Westport supports the creation of a Parks Division within the Department of Parks and Recreation to balance passive recreation needs with those of active recreation. A program for passive recreation should be developed. We support open communication between the Department and Commission and other town agencies both public and private. Specifically, we support increased cooperation between the Conservation Department and the Department of Parks and Recreation. The League also recommends that there be information about all parks and active and passive programs in the Parks and Recreation Program Guide currently mailed to all town residents.

PARKS

LWV Westport would like the Town to be proactive in acquisition of land for open space and parks. There is a need for more parks and neighborhood playgrounds in various sections of the Town. It is important to provide for both passive and active recreation, including nature trails, benches, safe paces to walk and jog.

Maintenance should be a high priority with strict adherence to a maintenance schedule and committed budget support. It should include:

- Proactive tree and shrub care: pruning, feeding, spraying, and regular irrigation;
- Prompt removal and replacement of trees and shrubs when necessary;
- Regular path maintenance; adding or replenishing wood chips, pavement repair;
- Appropriate erosion control

We support a carry-in/carry-out policy for trash except in parks where concessions exist. To accomplish this effectively, we support active public education.

All parks, large and small, should be clearly identified with signs appropriate to a natural setting. Signs should also include regulations governing use of the park and the park's special features. Specimen trees and shrubs should be identified.

Unobtrusive portable toilets should be placed in appropriate locations.

Parking should be adequate for park's use. Permeable parking surfaces should be used wherever possible.

MAJOR PARKS

1. **Longshore Park**, we support the optimal use of Longshore Park as a community recreation center.
 - a. The Parks and Recreation Department maintenance area (including the building) should be relocated. There is a need for a more efficient parking pattern throughout the park.
 - b. The Town and the Parks and Recreation Department should monitor and support Longshore Inn and the Sailing School for the benefit of the Town and its residents: the golf course should only be available to Westport residents and their guests, and guests at the Inn. Proper identification should be required and the course should be well maintained. Short and long-term planning should provide for unobstructed views of the water, to the extent possible. Safety considerations, such as improved signs, should be a priority.
2. **Winslow Park** should remain passive open space for recreational uses without permanent structures. Consideration should be given to designating areas for specific purposes. Pathways and seating areas should be improved.
3. **Baron's South** should be retained as a park with adequate parking and amenities.
4. **Other parks.** Riverside Park should be upgraded and enhanced to incorporate the portion acquired in 1997. All other parks should be properly maintained and improved as needed.
5. **Potential parks.** The Town should consider converting existing land parcels into parks. The League supports the Town's acquiring suitable parcels when opportunities arise.

BEACHES should be cleaned, groomed and replenished with sand regularly. Garbage cans should be provided where needed and emptied as necessary; containers for recyclables should be available.

1. **Picnic tables** should be available to meet normal demands, including access for the disabled, and should be strategically placed for large outings. Adequate numbers of benches should be available, especially around playground and viewing areas.
2. **The Bathhouse** should be maintained and cleaned regularly. Adequate bathroom facilities should be available and portable toilets provided for that part of the season when rest rooms are closed. Operation and upkeep of the concession stand should be monitored.
3. **Sufficient lifeguard services** should be provided at beaches. Parking areas should be well maintained with handicapped parking available; parking rules should be observed and enforced.

TENNIS We support having an adequate number of public tennis courts throughout the Town and providing proper maintenance of these courts. Lighting for the tennis courts at Longshore Park should be adequate and tennis practice backboards should be provided.

PLAYING FIELDS, The Town of Westport needs multi-purpose and baseball fields sufficient to meet current and future use. We also support additional fields, as approved by the P&Z in 1992.

Consideration should be given to the following:

1. Playing fields should be rotated regularly.
2. Playing should be controlled, especially in the wet (Spring) season.
3. Playing fields should be available to all age groups.

ICE SKATING An opportunity for ice skating is desirable for Westport residents. If an indoor-enclosed rink is proposed, it should be private enterprise on commercially-zoned property.

BICYCLING Bicycle lanes should be well-maintained for safety, and where possible, extended. Town Roads should have white lines on the right side of the road, where feasible, as a demarcation between vehicular traffic and the pathway.

FUNDING We do not support the current policy of funding the entire Parks and Recreation Department budget from program fees beach stickers and hand passes.

PARKS Tax revenues should fund enhancement and maintenance of parks. The Town should seek additional funding from grants available through public and private sources. The role of Friends groups should include advocacy and fund raising for enhancement supplementary to Department responsibilities.

RECREATION Major adult programs i.e. golf, tennis, boating and beach, should be self-supporting. Youth programs should be subsidized. Financial assistance should be available to both youth and adults who are in need.

SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL/LEAF MANAGEMENT HOUSEHOLD SOLID WASTE

(Adopted 1971. Revised 1978, 1983, 1995)

The League of Women Voters of Westport Supports a regional long-term solid waste disposal program that will give special consideration to the quality of our environment and the recovering of our resources. We support continuing efforts toward waste reduction by an expanded recycling program.

LEAF MANAGEMENT

(Adopted 1995)

We believe the Town has a responsibility to provide a place on town property to which residents can take their leaves and brush. We assume the Town will be responsible for the proper use of such areas. The most environmentally sound, efficient and economical way to recycle Westport's leaves is residential backyard leaf management.

TOWN DEPARTMENT FUNDING

(Adopted 2004)

The League of Women Voters of Westport supports funding town departments other than the Department of Parks and Recreation + primarily through taxes. Charging reasonable fees for services is an acceptable way to supplement/augment town revenue, but should not become a significant funding mechanism.

Explanation:

The LWV believes that services provided by town departments which directly or indirectly benefit all Westport residents should be paid for by all residents through their property taxes. Funding departments primarily through taxes is justified because those residents who do not directly use specific services benefit indirectly from these services. Charging reasonable fees for services can help offset costs, but should be considered a supplement, not an alternative, to taxes. Many services provided by town employees promote the welfare of all residents and cannot be cost analyzed. The LWV believes that it is appropriate to increase existing fees to improve staffing levels and staffing resources.

Because income from fees may be erratic due to fluctuations in the economy, or other unforeseen circumstances the LWV believes the Town should avoid relying on fees for funding for town services. It has been traditional for the Town to charge user fees for those services which directly benefit individuals or organizations. Over the years only certain departments have charged fees. In order to control increases in existing fees, consideration should be given to instituting fees in other areas.

Large capital expenditures should be paid for through taxes, not user fees, such as major capital improvements benefit every resident of Westport either directly or indirectly.

+ Please refer to the LWV position on Parks and Recreation.

TRANSPORTATION

(Adopted 2000)

The League of Women Voters of Westport supports improved traffic flow and safety, and reduced congestion on local and state roads, but opposes widening the Post Road and adding lanes to major state highways. We Support traffic planning and engineering solutions for local roads and enhancement of mass transit both locally and regionally.

The League recommends measures to alleviate parking pressure downtown such as the use of satellite parking lots and shuttles from the perimeter of town as well as from neighboring towns.