

We can create compact, walkable communities. We can provide affordable housing and transit options. We can revitalize our villages and protect unique and historic places. We can preserve our farms and green spaces. We can create places where people choose to grow their families and their businesses. In Connecticut, we can and we are.

These pages tell the stories of dynamic communities with bright futures right here in Connecticut!

A New Storrs Center with a Sustainable Future

By Macon C. Toledano

Traditional town centers grow over time. Storrs Center needs to be completed in eight years. Creating a sustainable town center this fast meant LeylandAlliance had to move quickly to interpret and define the specific qualities that will give Storrs Center a character that is appropriate to the site, the Town of Mansfield, and the history of Connecticut and New England.

Historical examples throughout this region provide great insight into some of concepts that underlie smart growth—fundamental interrelationships with the land, concentrated footprints resulting in preservation of open space and critical ecosystems, efficient land use, and compact, mixed-use, communities with walking, biking, and public transit options.

LeylandAlliance assembled architects, planners, engineers, and ecologists to further define sustainable strategies for this site and to develop guidelines that dictate the town center's strategies for preservation of natural resources. These guidelines, developed by LeylandAlliance the Partnership, the town, and UConn, together with the expertise of environmentalist Michael Klemens and environmental consultants Steven Winter Associates, provide an adaptable framework of development standards that apply to every aspect of the project—from storm water management to green building practices.



Perhaps the most important step in creating a smart, sustainable community was to concentrate the village on 15 acres instead of sprawling across the full 45 acres available for development. The 15-acre site overlies previously developed property. The remaining area is a conservation zone. LeylandAlliance will utilize environmental best practices by treating the storm water and removing silt, oil, and other pollutants that would otherwise continue to degrade the surrounding ecosystem. The result will be a significant ecological enhancement of the land available to sustain indigenous biodiversity.

Green building practices will include water management, energy conservation, and indoor environmental quality and materials. The guidelines require recycled materials in all building projects and call for reductions in construction and building occupant waste. Whenever possible, locally manufactured products will be used to support the area economy and minimize transportation and energy costs. Third-party review will be required to ensure the proper implementation of the guidelines.

Mr. Toledano, Vice President of Planning and Development for LeylandAlliance, is project manager at Storrs Center.



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Preserving, conserving and growing smart

www.1000friends-ct.org



**1000 FRIENDS
of Connecticut**

Smart Growth

Stories



Blue Back Square

West Hartford townspeople held a referendum on their future. They engaged in a lively democratic process to set out a vision for the place they want to live. They were told they might jeopardize their mall, a car-oriented revenue generator on the edge of town that draws customers from all over the region. Still, in two successive votes, they overwhelmingly stated they supported strengthening their center – reinforcing the identity and sense of a place that is West Hartford.

Blue Back Square is 600,000 square feet of shops, condos and more in the heart of the highly successful West Hartford Town Center between South Main Street,



Farmington Avenue, Memorial Road and Raymond Road. Blue Back Square will be an extension of a popular pedestrian friendly shopping and dining district that presently consists of 140 upscale national, regional and local shops, restaurants and a new Whole Foods Market. Blue Back Square includes approximately 225,000 square feet of additional retail, 180,000 square feet of office and



110 condominiums. Among others, its retail tenants include: Crate and Barrel, REI, Barnes & Noble, Criterion Cinemas, Fleming's Steakhouse and Terra Restaurant. Hartford Hospital will be there and Healthtrax. The project is being developed by Ronus Properties, Street-Works and JDA Development. Blue Back Square will open in fall 2007.

How can you grow your community smart?

Contact 1000 FRIENDS of Connecticut, 860-523-0003; info@1000friends-ct.org.

1000 FRIENDS of Connecticut is a 501 c 3 nonprofit, education and advocacy organization.

We represent a broad coalition of politically, professionally and geographically diverse individuals and organization who share a commitment to growing Connecticut smart.

Sponsored in part by the Rockfall Foundation, Middletown, CT.

Higganum Village

Haddam, the only town straddling the Connecticut River, is a former ship building stronghold. Some would have said its best days are days gone by. But Haddam's citizens would vehemently disagree. And after four-years of surveying, organizing and planning, this little town has adopted some of the smartest thinking in the state. They made the village development ready. Mandatory cluster subdivision regulations outside the village will preserve the character and quality of the surrounding town.

Higganum Village Center sits in a natural depression, book-ended by the Higganum Reservoir and Haddam Cove on the Connecticut River. Here, Bible Brook, Candlewood Brook and Ponsett Brook become the lovely, though currently PCB contaminated, Higganum Creek. And here, a spread out, old, industrial cross-roads has adopted the planning, zoning, streetscape and sewer infrastructure to encourage a vibrant, pedestrian friendly village center, surrounded by scenic hills.

Zoning and physical improvements to Higganum Village feature traffic calming measures. They include narrowing



the intersection. Lighted sidewalks connect the elementary school, the green and the village. Parallel parking, bike lanes and cross walks replaced gravel shoulders. Density was increased. Setback requirements

reduced. New parking will sit behind buildings, bringing the activity closer to the street, creating a friendlier, more approachable scene. Plans are in the final stages for a new sewer line to support the growth of the village. Future plans include a public beach at Higganum Reservoir, with its recently rebuilt dam and accessible fishing platform. In time, Higganum Creek will be remediated, an historic structure and turbine restored, and walking trails will meander through the village connecting the Reservoir to the Connecticut River at



Haddam Cove. A beautiful historic structure now owned by the state will soon be transferred to the town. It and a five-acre former sawmill across from the grocery and hardware stores are ripe for revitalization.

Haddam's citizens welcome smart growth. Their plans, zoning and subdivision regulations provide a best-practices model for similar Connecticut towns.

Georgetown Land

Located in Redding – part of northern Fairfield County – Georgetown is adjacent to Route 7, a major artery that runs between Danbury and Norwalk. Georgetown has the Danbury spur of Metro North commuter rail road running along side it and the Norwalk River running through it. At the heart of Georgetown is the 55+ acre brownfield – the former Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill – owned by the Georgetown Land Development Company (GLDC).

Stephen Soler, President of GLDC, brings a new vision to developing brownfields and to this one in particular. It is an innovative vision of the future with respect for the past and the environment.

The Georgetown slogan tells the story: What was old will be new. What was brown will be green. What was historic will remain historic. Mr. Soler's project advances the concepts of smart growth, pedestrian friendly, transit oriented developments while respecting the history and character of the area. In fact, the project earned a US EPA National Award for Smart Growth Achievement for the Town of Redding and is one of only 4 developments in the country to earn a designation from the US Department of Treasury as a Qualified Green Building and Sustainable Design project.

The secret of Mr. Soler's success lies in something simple... listening. Unlike many developers, his company



refused to view area residents and government agencies as obstacles. Instead, GLDC worked hard to incorporate both residents and government agencies in the decision making process as stakeholders and valuable assets.

With more than 35 buildings that were used in the manufacturing process, this brownfield is large and complex. Yet GLDC's redevelopment has moved through the regulatory process at record speed.

In June 2004 a Master Plan was presented to the Town of Redding. In September of 2004 they received unanimous approval with no appeal – a unique accomplishment for any development of this size. Less than four years after taking ownership of the property, GLDC broke ground. The speed of this project and the recognition it has earned speaks to the process and its result.