

# MIDDLETOWN LEADS

## WHAT IS MIDDLETOWN LEADS?

*Middletown Leads* is a weekly newsletter intended to connect the Middletown community by providing information about the civic undertakings of the Town.

## COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLANS – THE CHALLENGES OF CHANGE & TIME

The State of RI requires that each community review and revise its Comprehensive Community Plan every 10 years. It recognizes that change is inevitable with the passage of time. Thus it requires a progress review every 5 years and allows as many as 4 amendments per year.

## MIDDLETOWN'S COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

The current Community Comprehensive Plan was approved by The Middletown Planning Board on September 10, 2014; it was adopted by the Middletown Town Council On March 2, 2015.

## MIDDLETOWN'S PLAN – THE OVERALL VISION

Middletown will preserve its *quality of life* for all generations as a *safe and friendly* community with a *distinctive heritage*, *extraordinary cultural and natural resources*, a *strong local economy* and *fiscally sound government*.

In this and future newsletters, we will explore the various areas addressed by the Comprehensive Plan to see how it addresses the values it has defined as equally important to the community's character:

1. Cultural & Historic Resources
2. Natural & Ecological Resources
3. Recreation, Conservation, & Open Space
4. Economic Development
5. Transportation
6. Housing
7. Facilities & Services
8. Land Use

## AREA # 8 – LAND USE

### Land Use Vision Statement

The Town of Middletown will ensure that the community remains a desirable place to live by promoting sound growth and quality development which preserves and protects the natural environment, rural landscapes, scenic beaches, and established neighborhoods. We will retain our scenic landscapes while meeting residents' needs for a strong local economy. Middletown's balance of land use will promote local and regional sustainability.

## LAND USE - MIDDLETOWN ZONING REGULATIONS

Approximately 60% of Middletown is zoned residential with the highest density district being R-10 (10,000 sf lots) and the lowest density district being R-60 (60,000 sf lots). The largest percentage of residentially zoned land is zoned R-40 (40,000 sf lots). Middletown has a high percentage of land zoned Open Space with over 17%. Commercial zoning, including general business, limited industrial, limited business, office business, and office park, has a total of over 12% of land in Middletown.

In order to protect the quality and supply of water, the town has in place established Watershed Protection Districts, which regulate the use and development of land adjoining watercourses and primary recharge areas.

## LAND USE - PROTECTION OF COMMUNITY CHARACTER

It is the town's goal to maintain strong and unique neighborhoods with long-term viability and appeal. In order to achieve this goal, the town should protect residential neighborhoods from impacts of commercial development and promote high quality and appropriate design and construction of all land development projects and subdivisions.

Controlling sprawl of commercial and retail development and preventing it from encroaching on residential land uses is an important goal to the town. Additional commercial development should be discouraged in areas outside existing established business corridors.

Some forms of economic incentive may be required to achieve the town's goal of continued agricultural land use. Most agricultural property in Middletown is zoned residential which places restrictions on the type and scale of business endeavors that agricultural landowners can pursue. In an effort to provide economic incentives for landowners to preserve their land as agricultural and allow for appropriate, agriculture related businesses on farms, the town would like to craft an agricultural business overlay district.

Industrial development is an important component of the town's economic development, and should be considered for sites suitable for more intensive uses. Middletown has a relatively small area of land currently zoned or planned for industrial use and the potential for new industrial development in town is limited.

## LAND USE - GOALS, POLICIES, & ACTION ITEMS

1. To achieve a balanced and harmonious development pattern in Middletown that promotes economic growth and reinvestment while preserving neighborhood integrity, environmental and aesthetic quality, and overall livability.
2. Appropriately site commercial and industrial uses
3. Preserve and maintain the agricultural landscape and heritage of Middletown
4. Protect natural resources including environmentally sensitive lands, flora and fauna, and water quality
5. Maintain and preserve beaches and other shoreline features as significant natural resources
6. Take advantage of opportunities for appropriate redevelopment of the West Side which benefit the Town and U.S. Navy
7. Protect and enhance the natural scenic beauty and heritage of Middletown as a coastal New England community

## FOOTNOTE

Commentary about Middletown community and municipal affairs may appear occasionally in the following blog: [MiddletownLeads@blogspot.com](mailto:MiddletownLeads@blogspot.com).