



GREENWICH SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE STATE OF SUSTAINABILITY REPORT 2024

Established in late 2019, the Greenwich Sustainability Committee (GSC) encourages the adoption of sustainable practices through the promotion of the goals established in the 2019 Greenwich Plan of Conservation and Development and the actions outlined for Sustainable CT certification. The GSC consists of committed volunteer residents working closely with town staff and government officials to advocate for a community-wide strategy to safeguard a healthy, high-functioning ecosystem for the benefit of all current and future residents. It communicates, educates, collaborates and advocates for a more engaged, just and sustainable community and promotes equity, diversity and inclusion in all its actions.

The GSC is organized into the following eight sectors: Business, Climate Resiliency, Community Culture, Food Systems, Land & Water, Legislative & Advocacy, Transportation & Air Quality and Waste Reduction. In addition, a liaison from the Energy Committee reports to the GSC at its monthly meetings, which are open to the public. Drafted by sector chairs, the State of Sustainability report provides a summary of each sector, including priorities, goals and challenges. The community accomplishments of our sector partners, including town departments, non-profits, businesses and other entities, are also highlighted, along with supportive actions taken by the committee. These community partners have achieved much success and continue working for the protection and restoration of our natural resources. While the report focuses primarily on initiatives within Greenwich, it also spotlights those at the state level that have local impact. This report will be updated annually and made available to the public via the GSC website.

Of special note in the past year, the GSC created a vision statement and endorsed a climate action plan that was drafted by the Greenwich Conservation Commission and approved by the Greenwich Board of Selectmen. The GSC met with the State Delegation to Greenwich to discuss legislative developments with sustainability implications to the Town, collaborated with Town department heads to better understand how it can support their sustainability-related work, and discussed with RTM leaders how to better inform community debate. To expand its reach, the GSC was thrilled to inaugurate a half-hour radio segment on WGCH on the fifth Monday of the month. In conjunction with the Town's Earth Day proclamation, the GSC awarded its second annual sustainability awards to Town residents who demonstrate a commitment to the GSC's guiding principles, with a particular emphasis on local youth leaders.

Greenwich Sustainability Committee Co-chairs

Janet Stone McGuigan, Selectperson
Beth Evans, Director of Environmental Affairs

Sector Chairs

Business: Silvina Skeverer
Climate Resiliency: Jimena Fernandez
Community Culture: Ashley Cole
Food Systems: Ali Ghiorse
Land & Water: Myra Klockenbrink & Joan Seguin
Legislative & Advocacy: Elizabeth Dempsey & Svetlana Wasserman
Transportation & Air Quality: Aleks Moch
Waste Reduction: Julie DesChamps & Jeff Robertson



BUSINESS

SUMMARY

The Business Sector advocates for and guides local businesses to adopt sustainable practices and to improve their environmental performance. The sector also aims to raise public awareness about sustainable consumption and production to promote sustainable lifestyles, conserve resources and reduce environmental impact. Regardless of size or industry, businesses can save money and enhance their operations through energy efficiency, renewable resources and waste reduction.

Businesses that adopt sustainable practices demonstrate a commitment to social responsibility, which can attract customers who are looking for ethical companies they can trust. By employing sustainable practices and developing eco-friendly goods or services, companies can differentiate themselves from competitors. The Business Sector envisions Greenwich as a center of ethical businesses committed to advancing socially and environmentally responsible practices.

COMMUNITY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- The GSC Business Sector and Waste Free Greenwich launched the **Greenwich Green Salon Challenge**, an initiative to empower hair salons to embrace sustainable practices, fostering business growth and environmental stewardship. The Challenge encourages salons to engage in recycling programs and sustainable product sourcing to attract eco-conscious clients and preserve the planet for future generations. The Earth Rise Club at Greenwich Country Day School designed social media campaigns and reached out to salons to encourage participation.



- Some local shops, including Rag and Bone, Madewell and Anthropologie, participate in **textile recycling programs** and offer discounts when customers drop off denim for recycling.
- Numerous for-profit and charitable thrift stores provide affordable and sustainable **second-hand shopping** options to the community, while reducing waste and promoting reuse over disposal.



BENEFITS OF SUSTAINABLE BUSINESSES

Sustainability in business refers to the impact companies have on the environment or society. By adopting strategies that address issues such as climate change, income inequality, pollution and fair working conditions, sustainable businesses aim to positively affect people, planet and profit.

- Enhance brand value & competitive advantage
- Meet consumer demand
- Increase productivity & reduce cost
- Improve financial and investment opportunity
- Minimize carbon risk and improve energy efficiency
- Attract talent and increase employee retention



BUSINESS

COMMUNITY ACCOMPLISHMENTS (cont.)

- A growing number of Greenwich grocery stores and restaurants donate surplus food to local receiving agencies via **Food Rescue US – Fairfield Country** supporting the food insecure and reducing waste.
- Greenwich is home to a number of seasonal **Farmer’s Markets** – Greenwich Farmer’s Market, Old Greenwich Farmer’s Market, Sam Bridge Winter Market and Tavern Green Market at the Greenwich Historical Society, which support local producers, build community and reduce the carbon footprint of our food.



B Corps are for-profit companies certified by the non-profit B Lab to meet rigorous standards of social and environmental performance, accountability and transparency. Several Greenwich businesses have achieved this recognition, including:

- **Aesop:** Australian luxury cosmetics brand specializing in skin, hair and body care formulations.
- **Allbirds:** sustainably-focused shoe and apparel company dedicated to using natural and renewable materials and committed to cutting its carbon footprint in half by 2025.
- **Armonia LLC:** a multigenerational family office that invests in regenerative food and agriculture solutions.
- **Athleta:** brand of women’s activewear featuring versatile premium performance apparel designed by women athletes.
- **Le Labo:** boutique perfumery producing body, hair and face products that are cruelty-free & plant-based.
- **Uncommon Good:** User-friendly and affordable software built for organizations of all sizes to drive change.

SEC CLIMATE DISCLOSURE REGULATIONS

The Securities & Exchange Commission approved climate-disclosure regulations aimed at enhancing transparency and accountability by requiring public companies to detail their efforts to integrate climate-related risks into operations, including:

- Climate risks and material impacts on business, strategy, and outlook.
- Governance of climate-related risks.
- Greenhouse gas emissions including direct (Scope 1) and indirect (Scope 2) emissions.
- Climate-related financial metrics and related disclosures in a note to audited financial statements.
- Climate--related targets and goals, along with a transition plan.

- In March 2024, community leaders, businesses owners, and executives gathered in Hartford with legislators to discuss how the state can advance climate policy and provide financial incentives for B-Corp companies and other responsible organizations promoting and acting more sustainably.



CLIMATE RESILIENCY

SUMMARY

The Climate Resiliency sector aims to develop and implement strategies and actions that help Greenwich adapt to the impacts of climate change. This includes the creation of infrastructure and systems that can withstand extreme weather events, such as flooding, hurricanes, and heat waves. The Climate Resiliency sector also promotes sustainable practices to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate the effects of climate change. The goal is to transition to a low-emissions and, eventually, a carbon-neutral society, while ensuring our community is resilient in the face of the impacts of climate change.

The impacts of climate change are already evident. Extreme weather – including higher precipitation, intense and frequent storms, coastal and inland flooding, and intense heat events, to name a few – affect water and air quality, threaten ecosystems, and pose serious risks to public health.

Since 2005, Greenwich has experienced nine of the ten warmest years on record; since 1950, Connecticut has seen the annual air temperature increase by 2.2 degrees Fahrenheit. Without action, it is expected to rise an additional 3 degrees by 2050. This is the difference between freezing and non-freezing, snow or rain; and wet rainy winters, followed by drier summers, with higher heat indexes and humidity, are predicted as a result.

Our natural ecosystems and the biodiversity they contain are critical for adapting to climate change and as such must be preserved and protected. Climate change presents many challenges, but adapting to it aligns with cleaner, healthier lives and improved quality of life. In direct correlation to a betterment in human society is the potential for a resurgence of our natural systems and their ability to support all manner of life.

To this end, the Climate Resiliency sector seeks to harness the energies of our young people and engage, educate and empower our residents to reduce their carbon footprint, protect our natural resources and step lightly on the land.

In the year ahead, the Climate Resiliency sector, in partnership with other GSC sectors, will hold a series of public engagement presentations to increase awareness, deepen knowledge and explore strategies for action. The

sector is working with stakeholders to advocate for energy efficiency practices and net zero buildings. It will promote organics diversion, EV charging infrastructure deployment and open space at all levels.

Our long-term goals include helping the community transition to carbon neutrality and adapt to the impacts of climate change. We will continue to advocate for strategic investment in renewable energy and targeted climate mitigation measures. The sector will engage business and homeowners regarding land care and landscaping practices that restore and preserve habitat, reduce noise and pollution and take our place as responsible stewards of our native landscapes. Lastly, the sector will activate stakeholders to rethink their consumer choices and prioritize source reduction to protect vulnerable communities.



By implementing carbon mitigation strategies and developing and adopting a plan of action for adaptation, Greenwich can better address the impacts of climate change on infrastructure, natural resources and public health and create a more resilient future for our community.

COMMUNITY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- The Board of Selectmen adopted the **Sustainability and Climate Resiliency Report**, prepared by a working group of the Conservation Commission, which included 10 recommendations to work towards measurable mitigation and adaptive strategies.



CLIMATE RESILIENCY

COMMUNITY ACCOMPLISHMENTS (cont.)

- In 2023, the Sustainability Committee created a Working Group to establish the foundation for the **Greenwich Sustainability and Climate Resiliency Plan** (hereinafter referred to as the **Climate Action Plan**) to be developed by the Town of Greenwich in 2024, pursuant to the Climate Resolution supported by the Board of Selectmen in 2022. The efforts of the Working Group were three-fold:
 - First, the Working Group **reviewed Climate Action Plans** from other towns and regional agencies to get a sense of what is happening in climate action at the different levels of government. It also reviewed State and Regional efforts from 2015 and onward.
 - Secondly, in June 2023, the Working Group launched a **survey** to gather input from town residents, business owners, and municipal employees, to establish key priorities and actions for the forthcoming Climate Action Plan. The results of the survey underscored the significance of the impacts of climate change to the town's residents and delineated a list of their priorities that should be addressed in the Climate Action Plan. The survey ensures that the Climate Action Plan includes all perspectives, is open to feedback, and represents the community's values and goals. By encouraging collaboration, participation, and community support, it improves the long-term success of climate efforts.
 - Lastly, the Working Group identified **focus areas** for strategies to be included in the future Greenwich Climate Action Plan. The following areas should not be restrictive, but rather used to guide future discussions. Focus areas include: New Buildings, Energy Efficiency, Transportation, Renewable Energy, Solid Waste, Water and Wastewater, Land Use, Natural Systems, and Town Operations.

- In March 2023, **Project Zero** was launched with the main goal of creating a net-zero future for Greenwich Public Schools by implementing geothermal energy systems. The project started a change.org petition which has now obtained more than half of the targeted signatures.
- GSC has partnered with the Energy Management Advisory Committee and worked together with the Representative Town Meeting and Greenwich Board of Education. They have hosted two **webinars** on net-zero to raise awareness and engage with the community.

SURVEY RESULTS

The survey provided invaluable insights into residents' perspectives on climate change and their priorities for addressing environmental challenges in Greenwich. Here are some key points from the survey results:

- **Climate Change Concerns:** A majority of respondents, 74.8%, expressed some level of concern, including being somewhat or very concerned, about the impacts of climate change in Greenwich.
- **Top Hazards:** Respondents identified flooding (both coastal and inland), extreme weather events, poor air quality, impacts on biodiversity, and sea level rise as the top five hazards that they believe could affect the town due to a changing climate.
- **Areas of Interest for Climate Action:** The top three areas of interest highlighted by respondents for inclusion in the Town's Climate Action Plan (CAP) were coastal and inland flooding mitigation, public waste reduction and recycling, and energy-related initiatives.
- Adopting green/sustainable policies, town funding towards sustainable incentives, and economic incentives to residents and businesses were the top three climate actions/incentives that appealed to the respondents.





COMMUNITY CULTURE

SUMMARY

The Community Culture sector tracks and supports community efforts focused on maintaining, protecting and enhancing public life in Greenwich. These efforts encourage beautiful, as well as functional, public areas and advocate for the protection of open space and well-conceived sustainable development. This sector seeks to encourage excellence and participation in all aspects of community life.

This sector fosters and supports public art and nurtures the natural environment. We provide lifelong learning opportunities for all residents and stimulate sustainable landscapes and civic beautification projects. Sustainable development patterns are also promoted to incorporate more affordable housing and support residents at all income levels.



Image credit: Magicpiano/Wikimedia Commons

COMMUNITY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Our sector continues to contribute to CTDOT's Planning and Environment Linkages study for the **I-95 corridor** in Greenwich. The Riverside Association and other neighborhood associations participated in the Project Advisory Committee that will inform the study. The PEL study process is expected to identify a broad range of improvements and will consider the mobility needs of all users, including motorized vehicles, pedestrians, bicyclists and transit riders.
- Historic Properties of Greenwich continues to work with homeowners who seek the "**Local Historic Property**" designation to protect their home. Samuel Ferris House was added to the town's list of protected properties in 2023, and two additional properties have begun the application process: Put's Cottage and a Queen Anne Victorian in Riverside.
- Greenwich Green & Clean, as well as neighborhood volunteers, maintain and improve the over **300 traffic islands and median strips** in town, clearing them of debris, litter, weeds, pruning and mulching them.
- The Community Culture Sector created and sponsors the **Sustainability Awards**, which honor local heroes for their efforts in sustainability and environmental conservation in Greenwich. The Awards were given during Waste Free Greenwich's annual ReThink Waste Fair.
- The **Waterfall Project** at Greenwich High School continues to pursue its efforts to preserve and protect the last natural and environmentally sensitive site on GHS campus. A world-class landscape designer has now been identified whose proposal will connect the cofferdam with Put's Hill and address it as an important cultural and historic landscape, to potentially be renamed Putnam Park. The waterfall, holding pond and other natural areas will be redesigned to conserve the natural beauty of the area, and trees will be reintroduced in the wetlands.
- The **Greenwich High School Vestibule Project** has identified a donor who hopes to sponsor a "green wall" – the first of its kind in Greenwich – to bring living plants to one of the brick walls in the GHS main entryway, as part of a plan to make that space more accessible, more secure, and aesthetically pleasing.
- The GHS Building committee along with the GHS PTA raised over \$150,000 with a **brick campaign** to help offset costs and outdoor furniture for the new security entrance.



FOOD SYSTEM

SUMMARY

The food system sector promotes and supports equitable access to fresh local food and stewardship of natural ecosystems through services, education and policy. The sector addresses barriers within the food system that cause food insecurity, dietary-related disease and lack of access to land through community-based initiatives. It aims to advance a food system that equitably nourishes everyone and creates a food culture that is rooted in heritage, landscape and a sense of place.

Connecticut has some of the Northeast's most fertile soils and abundant and nutrient rich shorelines. Our state's 5,500 farms contribute \$4 billion to the state's economy, and our aquaculture contributes \$30 million. Despite fruitful farming regions, coastal production and thriving urban and hydroponic farms, only 2% of all food consumed in Connecticut is produced in the state.



According to the 2020 Greenwich United Way Needs Assessment, nutrition ranked second in terms of importance among respondents, and food security persisted as a critical topic. The pandemic exposed economic disparities in our community and amplified the need for food system changemakers who are charting the path towards an equitable and resilient regional food system. Many community partners are creatively and thoughtfully meeting this need by expanding community and school gardens, teaching families how to source food from the Long Island Sound, restoring natural ecosystems and establishing educational and convening platforms to raise awareness about food justice and regionalizing our food system.

COMMUNITY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Since 2018, **Greenwich Pollinator Pathway (GPP)** has worked to assure that pollinators thrive, establishing a corridor of contiguous pollinator-friendly properties in town, including edible landscapes in Byram and Cos Cob, and organizing community education and outreach. In 2023, they grew heirloom squash varieties in a pocket garden adjacent to the Cos Cob Library. Through their health newsletter, GPP promoted native plantings as best practices.
- **Greenwich Community Gardens** provides opportunities for residents to grow their own food using organic methods, be active and outdoors, and create community at Armstrong Court, Bible Street and The Nathaniel Witherell. In 2023, they inaugurated the Tour de Veggie with Greenwich Land Trust to raise awareness of sustainable organic vegetable gardens, including the Culinary Wellness Garden at The Nathaniel Witherell. Greenwich Community Gardens provided over 600 lbs of fresh food to the Neighbor to Neighbor party in summer.
- Public and independent schools maintain **school gardens** to provide hands-on opportunities for nutrition learning and to encourage student health and wellness. Greenwich Country Day School now has a full-time employee to oversee both French Farm, a small-scale, historic farm, and their Hydrofarm, a freight farm housed in a shipping container. Leafy greens grown in the hydrofarm are used by dining services on both campuses.

PRODUCER TO CONSUMER CONNECTIONS

Purchasing food directly from farmers puts dollars in their hands, strengthens the Connecticut food economy, minimizes the carbon footprint from transport and reduces packaging and food waste.

- **Farmers' Markets:** Greenwich, Old Greenwich, Sam Bridge Winter Market, and Tavern Garden Market at Greenwich Historical Society
- **Farm Stands:** Versailles Farm and Augustine's Farm
- **Seed Libraries:** Byram Shubert, Cos Cob, and Perrot Memorial Libraries



FOOD SYSTEM

COMMUNITY ACCOMPLISHMENTS (cont.)

- The Town of Greenwich Shellfish Commission educates the public on the importance of our **local shellfish ecosystem** that provides habitat for juvenile fish and cleaner water, as well as healthy, locally sourced food, by providing hands-on harvesting demonstrations to local families.
- In 2023, **Greenwich Food Alliance** became a program of The Foodshed Network and continued to convene stakeholders in Greenwich who are working towards a sustainable and equitable food system. The Alliance hosted CT thought leaders who addressed food policy, farm to school, food and land justice and food security. Members received policy action alerts and updates on statewide initiatives such as School Meals for All, CT Grown for CT Kids and the Local Food School Incentive Program. Members also participated in the CT Food and Nutrition Analyst Community Engagement process.
- **The Foodshed Forum**, an initiative of The Foodshed Network in collaboration with Greenwich Conservation Commission, hosted two programs in 2023 – Long Island Sound: Estuary, Food Source and Cultural Legacy and A Tale of Two Towns: Addressing Food Insecurity in Greenwich. Both facilitated the cross-pollination of ideas and best practices and promoted a just, equitable, and resilient food system. The forums catalyzed connectivity between state and regionwide initiatives and empowered participants to be food system changemakers and support a regional foodshed.
- In March 2024, both Cos Cob and Perrot Memorial Libraries launched **seed libraries**.
- **Sam Bridge Winter Farmers Market**, now in its 7th season, connected 14 local farmers and artisans with our community to offer small batch and sustainably produced food during the winter months.



ALLIANCES FOR FOOD ACCESS

Numerous organizations in Greenwich support food insecure residents by providing and delivering nutritious meals

- In 2023, **Food Rescue US-Fairfield County** saved nearly a million pounds of fresh food in Greenwich alone, providing more than 400,000 meals to those experiencing food insecurity. They delivered healthy, fresh surplus food that would otherwise be disposed of to social agencies who serve those most in need in our community. Some of their local donors include major grocery stores, farmers' markets, bakeries, Greenwich Hospital and both public and private schools.
- **Barbara's House** continues to provide weekly food to the elderly and the most underserved families in partnership with Food Rescue US-Fairfield County.
- **Jewish Family Services** helped to minimize the effects of food insecurity through its programs. Supermarketing for Seniors brings weekly grocery shopping to homebound seniors. Greenwich Family Farm Stand, a weekly food supplementation program, provided over 4,000 packages of fresh produce and dairy to clients in 2023. A new partnership through the Friendly Fridge Program and Meals on Main to ensure families have access to fresh prepared foods outside school or typical office hours.
- **Greenwich United Way** collaborates with local groups and organizations and provides community investment grants to address food insecurity in Greenwich.
- **Filling in the Blanks** partnered with schools and social service agencies to provide weekend meals to 207 children this school year. In 2023, they launched its Fresh Food on the Move mobile pantry in Stamford, which serves Greenwich families on the 3rd Saturday of the month.
- **Meals on Wheels** delivers weekday meals for eligible Greenwich residents including seniors and those who cannot prepare their own meals, as well as pre-K and other school programs.



LAND & WATER

SUMMARY

The Land & Water sector represents where we live and what is vital to our existence: the land we stand on and the water we drink, both together the foundation of our livelihoods. Greenwich has always prized its open spaces and accessible shoreline and waterways, and we are learning more every day how important they are to balance the increasingly extreme and fluctuating temperatures and weather events we are experiencing. We are also learning that these same resources are vital to the biodiversity of our wild animal and plant life, and they anchor our native species so they can thrive and multiply.

Land & Water is committed to continuing Greenwich's long tradition of stewarding our land and water resources through habitat restoration and preservation, our parks and open spaces, the planting of trees and the husbanding of our current tree cover. We continue to prioritize the integrity of our shorelines and focus on the integral function of our soils to support all that is green and life-giving.

Land & Water advocates for the conservation of our water resources, and we continue to educate homeowners on the greedy needs of our overly abundant lawn-scape, which uses nearly half of our fresh water supply. To remain lush and green, these lawns require fertilizers and other chemicals to control pests, weeds and fungus that often wash into our streams, killing wildlife, destroying habitat and polluting Long Island Sound.

The community accomplishments for this sector represent our values, acknowledge our role as a responsible partner to the environment and are dedicated to the people who will inherit it from us.



COMMUNITY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Greenwich Pollinator Pathway (GPP) continues to explore the possibilities of **edible gardens** in public places, growing 150 pounds of squash varieties along the Cos Cob Library northern parking lot and distributing to student interns who helped with planting and their families. GPP co-hosted the Greenwich Food Alliance at the Library and served squash dishes at the meeting and featured a presentation on how edible gardens and habitat can be grown together to feed people and pollinators.
- Three **pollinator** gardens in downtown Glenville were planted by GPP with native flowers and maintained with the help of neighbors, volunteers and Parks and Recreation. The gardens were an instant hit with the community and pollinators. Native seeds were collected with plans to propagate more flowers over winter and share seeds in the spring to continue the restoration of pollinator gardens.
- GPP continues with its signature **habitat restoration** at the park between Cos Cob Library and the Firehouse, known as the Firehouse Park. This park centers around Strickland Brook (also called Brothers Brook), which runs under the Post Road into Mill Pond estuary. Invasive plant species had overtaken this park and GPP has successfully removed the invasive and continues to plant native herbaceous plants, many of which GPP has grown from native seed, as well as native shrubs and trees in partnership with the Greenwich Dept of Parks & Recreations.
- A **seed swap library** at Cos Cob Library was initiated by GPP, allowing patrons to swap native plant and organic edibles seeds. The Seed Library is comprised of native seeds that GPP members have gathered and packaged. The group had seed ball making sessions with Cub Scouts at Cos Cob Park and native seed giveaways at local environmentally-centered events throughout the year.
- GPP partnered with the **Bruce Museum** to educate members about the importance of native plants and pollinating insects through community events.
- Many hands make for light work! Several community organizations organized battalions of volunteers have worked to clear countless acres of **invasive plant species** that undermine our wild areas and parks.



LAND & WATER

COMMUNITY ACCOMPLISHMENTS (cont.)

- The GSC, in partnership with the Greenwich Tree Conservancy, featured a dynamic **discussion of Forests, Trees and Brain Health** with the renowned Dr. Susan Masino who shared her research illustrating how forests support public health and need to be protected.
- In partnership with the town, the **Greenwich Tree Conservancy (GTC)** has planted over 6100 trees throughout town. In 2023 GTC launched a **Tree Steward Program** to engage residents in identifying tree planting locations and maintenance planning. GTC continues to advocate for the preservation and protection of trees and recently labeled its 1200th tree in its Greenwich Town Arboretum. GTC held a town-wide **Oak Tree Scavenger Hunt** encouraging families to identify four species of Native Oak trees.
- **The Greenwich Conservation Commission** increased education and outreach since last April by hosting 15 public programs, partnered through outreach/tabling/speaking at 19 programs, and hosted various volunteer wildlife monitoring programs through the town, university, and state programs.
- In November 2023, **Greenwich Land Trust (GLT)** acquired 143 acres from The Nature Conservancy in Connecticut. This strategic land transfer brings GLT's total conserved land to over 1,000 acres, marking a significant achievement in conserving and stewarding the natural beauty and biodiversity of Greenwich. The 143 acres cover 10 different parcels along the upper portions of the Byram River that range in size from 51 acres to just over 2.5 acres. The transfer includes a 4-acre conservation easement as well.
- GLT's **Seed-to-Seed program** continues to expand with another successful season propagating and growing thousands of native plants. GLT staff and volunteers grew over 60 different species in 2023 with the majority of plants being used for habitat restoration projects throughout the community
- **Friends of Greenwich Point** installed a running freshwater feature at Greenwich Point that provides essential fresh water to the park's wildlife, a crucial resource for migratory birds during their long journeys. Native plants and trees were strategically planted around the water feature, creating a natural habitat that offers cover for wildlife and a sustainable food source.
- **Greenwich Audubon** continued its work on the development of youth conservation leaders and improvements to habitat. Six student interns and one teacher naturalist joined this year's Eco Leadership Corps and focused on the Center's emerging indigenous peoples' demonstration plot. Under the guidance of our Land Steward, Eco Leaders planted nearly thirty native trees that will support the Center's abundant wildlife by providing hard mast for years to come. In addition, the American Chestnut Foundation provided thirteen seedlings that, when mature, will help tell the story of the Center's pre-colonial landscape.
- **Greenwich Community Gardens** are fully subscribed by residents who enjoy growing their own organic food. GCG partnered with the Greenwich Land Trust in the newly established Tour de Veggie, raising awareness for organic sustainable vegetable gardens. Over 600 pounds of fresh food were grown and shared with Neighbor to Neighbor, helping our community and limiting waste. Medicinal and native perennial gardens to attract pollinators and feed our growing colony of bee hives.
- The **Greenwich Shellfish Commission** transferred over 30,000 hard-shell clams to enhance our recreational shellfish beds. A shell recycling program was created to divert shells from the waste stream and return them to Long Island Sound to restore oyster reefs. The benefits of a healthy shellfish ecosystem are shared with our community through outreach programs including Experience the Sound, community shellfish demonstrations days, sponsored talks, and published research articles.
- **Lights Out Greenwich** raises awareness of the impacts of light pollution on people, birds, and insects. Lights Out Greenwich held a community outreach discussion at the Perrot Library and was part of a coalition that successfully campaigned for a statewide bill that requires all unnecessary exterior lights to be shut off at state-owned buildings while locally advocating for updates to our town lighting statute.
- **The Greenwich Country Day School** is working with **Trout Unlimited** on a full-scale restoration project along Greenwich Creek, planting 150 trees for shade and bank stabilization. Students record progress by monitoring physical and biological variables along the creek.



LEGISLATION & ADVOCACY

SUMMARY

The Legislation & Advocacy sector supports state legislation and local ordinances that will enhance sustainability in our community for the benefit of our residents and resources. The State Assembly meets for only 5-6 months each year, and there is a large volume of legislation that is packed into these half-year sessions. Our goal is to support sustainable bills that can positively impact our town. Recent examples include legislation addressing climate change, transition to renewable energy, pesticide reform and rodenticide limits.

The Legislation & Advocacy sector notifies sustainability groups in Greenwich when issues they care about are being addressed in legislative hearings and helps them submit testimony. If local groups are bill proponents, our team can guide or assist the process by raising public support and awareness. We also liaise with our legislators to alert them to local issues and concerns and request their efforts to lobby for bill passage.

Our sector also advocates for municipal legislation that protects our resources and a healthy environment for Greenwich residents. We seek to maintain a balance between all stakeholder concerns and use research and local data to ensure our ordinances reflect the necessary protection of our natural resources and human health.

SECTOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Monitored and supported key 2023 CT legislation environmental bills and liaised with our state delegation.
- Worked with partner organization CT Coalition for Pesticide Reform to advocate for state ban on Neonicotinoid pesticide use.
- Convened meeting between state delegation and GSC to discuss annual legislative priorities.
- Rallied local attendance for the premier state environmental advocacy event, the CT League of Conservation Voters summit.
- Helped local advocates submit testimony on bills addressing their environmental priorities.
- Supported Quiet Yards Greenwich leaf blower efforts (see box).





LEGISLATION & ADVOCACY

SECTOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS (cont.)

ADVOCATING FOR HEALTHY, QUIET YARDS

Quiet Yards Greenwich is an advocacy group promoting Gas Leaf Blower (GLB) reform through the Health Department and the Representative Town Meeting, prohibiting their use in the warmer months. GLB limits improve public health, reduce excessive noise pollution, lower greenhouse gases, carbon, and airborne toxins.

- Provided opportunities for hundreds of Greenwich residents to advocate for GLB change.
- Presented a GLB Public Health Forum to Health Department, including testimony from national scientists, doctors, and landscapers on the health and business rationale for change.
- Raised public awareness through social media, op-eds, presentations at Perrot Library, RH Community Church, Town Landscaper forum, ReThink Waste Fair, and Experience the Sound, and multiple neighborhood presentations.
- Conducted over 40 meetings with town leaders, RTM representatives, and local landscapers.



Electric mowing
and
property care
now available

GSC'S LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

The Legislation & Advocacy sector coordinated with local and state environmental advocates to submit testimony on behalf of state bills resulting in hundreds of testimonies on bills:

- Broadening municipal options for building climate resilience.
- Banning the non-agricultural use of neonicotinoids.
- Increasing requirements to divert food scraps from our waste stream.
- Banning the use of PFAS in consumer products.
- Banning use of certain rodenticides that are threatening raptor populations.





TRANSPORTATION & AIR QUALITY

SUMMARY

The Transportation and Air Quality sector (TAQ) promotes efforts to improve air quality, including enhancement of local transportation modes, implementation of sustainable land management practices, education and promotion of relevant state and federal laws, such as anti-idling regulations.

Gasoline and diesel-powered motor vehicles are the leading source of air pollutants in Greenwich. Vehicle emissions contribute to the formation of ground level ozone (smog) and particulate matter, which can trigger health problems in humans, such as asthma, reduced lung capacity, heart attacks and increased susceptibility to respiratory illnesses.

Poor air quality also impacts local fauna and flora. Ozone reduces photosynthesis, the process plants use to convert sunlight to energy for growth and life. It also increases plants' risk of disease, damage from insects, negative effects of other pollutants and harm from severe weather. Affected plants pass their stress on the ecosystem they support. In the long term, this can result in changes to plant diversity, habitat quality and water and nutrient cycling. Similar impacts are experienced by the local wildlife, resulting in respiratory issues, cancer and changes in migratory patterns.

The TAQ sector is working closely with Quiet Yards Greenwich (QYG) on a new ordinance addressing air and noise pollution generated by gasoline powered landscape equipment.

COMMUNITY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Educational webinars to promote EV charging stations for businesses and ownership of electric cars were organized by TAQ, Greenwich Conservation Commission, Greenwich Chamber of Commerce and Greenwich Bicycle Task Force.
- The E-Expo 2022 featured electric cars, bikes, scooters and landscaping equipment to promote emission-free alternatives.
- Several bike safety clinics were organized to train new cyclist in safety and basic skills. Programs were offered by the Greenwich Bike Task Force at Boys & Girls Club, Cos Cob Library, North Street and Riverside Schools.
- Greenwich Bicycle Task Force organized the Riverside School "Bike Bus" to encourage students to bike to school. Like a bus, the riders make several stops along their route to collect more riders. Fourth grader Xavier K. saved his mom 74 hours in her car, avoided 590 lbs of CO₂ emissions, saved \$95.31 in gas and chalked up 45 hours of exercise!
- Greenwich and Stamford partnered to apply for a 2023 Connecticut Recreational Trails Grant for the design of an enhanced East Coast Greenway that connects and transits both towns.
- The Town of Greenwich purchased the first electric car in its fleet and installed an EV charging station to power municipal vehicles at Town Hall in spring 2023.





TRANSPORTATION & AIR QUALITY

COMMUNITY ACCOMPLISHMENTS (cont.)



- Quiet Yards Greenwich drafted a town ordinance to restrict the use of gas-powered leaf blowers. The goal of this ordinance is to find a better balance between the needs of landscapers and the concerns of homeowners about the impacts of gas-powered leaf blowers on health, environment and quality of life.
- The PTA Council Green Schools Committee of Greenwich Public Schools sponsors Walk To School Week each October and runs anti-idling campaigns throughout the year. For Earth Week 2023, the Old Greenwich School team sponsored a poster design competition to boost awareness about the negative health and environmental impacts of idling.
- An emission-free robotic lawn mower dubbed "Farmer Joe" was featured at the Town Hall lawn area as a pilot program in fall 2022.

IMPROVING OUR AIR QUALITY

Transportation is responsible for about 55% of the air pollution in Connecticut, but there are many ways to decrease the impact of pollutants in our Town.

- Expand and improve public transportation systems, including Metro North, TAG, Call-A-Ride, Norwalk Transit, CT Transit, taxis and sharing apps.
- Develop and improve micromobility and pedestrian infrastructure.
- Reduce the distance between the major shopping and transportation hubs through land use planning and zoning and making them more accessible to micromobility and pedestrians.
- Develop clean fueling infrastructure, such as electric vehicle charging and hydrogen fueling stations.
- Offer education on anti-idling regulations and improved congestion management.
- Purchase green fleet vehicles and equipment, including those with increased fuel efficiency, hybrids and emission-free options.





WASTE REDUCTION

SUMMARY

The Waste Reduction sector promotes and supports responsible waste management and stewardship of natural resources through strategies and policies that target source reduction and diversion. The Waste Reduction sector supports the state’s goal to achieve 60% diversion of municipal solid waste by the year 2024. In addition, it aims to promote and advocate for a more sustainable, just and equitable waste management system in Greenwich.

With the closure of the Hartford incinerator, aging infrastructure that is expensive to maintain and upgrade and waste facilities at or close to capacity, Connecticut will experience a dramatic increase in the amount of waste exported to other states. Our waste management system is at a critical point and is no longer self-sufficient.

Greenwich is predicted to generate 40,000 tons of municipal solid waste this year, and recycling rates are declining. The Peekskill, NY incinerator where the town’s waste is burned is slated to close in 2029. Our tipping fees will rise to \$119/ton in summer 2024, and costs are expected to increase exponentially. Further, burning and burying waste contributes to air pollution, produces greenhouse gas emissions and disproportionately impacts environmental justice communities.

While our community partners have made strides, greater efforts are required to mitigate the fiscal, environmental and public health impacts of our current waste management system. The Town must focus on effective and practical strategies and policies, such as prevention measures, expanded food scrap collection and diversion, increased reuse and recycling, deconstruction and unit-based pricing to reduce tonnage and address these challenges.

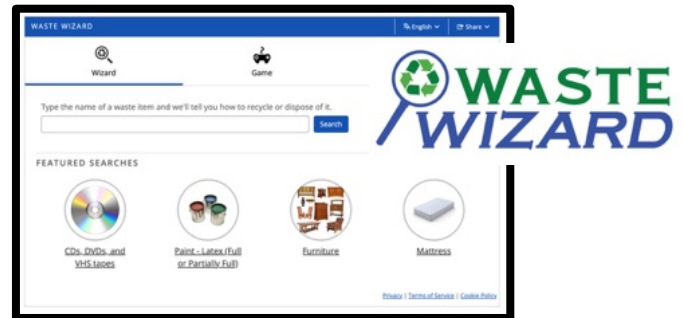
THE ZERO WASTE HIERARCHY 8.0

For detailed version visit www.zwia.org/zwh



COMMUNITY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- In 2018, the Town of Greenwich became the second municipality in Connecticut to pass a **reusable bag ordinance**, an effort led by BYOGreenwich.
- Greenwich Public Works provides **special recycling programs** at the Holly Hill Resource Recovery Facility for numerous materials outside of the single stream recycling system, including mattresses, batteries, scrap metal, motor oil and antifreeze, items containing freon, propane tanks, tires, construction and demolition debris, yard waste, food scraps, electronics, fluorescent light bulbs, dead animals, and now cooking oil. The Department also hosts an annual **Household Hazardous Waste Day**.
- The **textile recycling program**, established by Greenwich Recycling Advisory Board (GRAB), provides several convenient drop sites and has diverted over 102 tons of textiles from the waste stream since August 2020. The program raises funds for recycling education & outreach, enabling the procurement of the **Waste Wizard online search tool** and other educational materials.



- During the holiday season, Parks & Recreation collected **Christmas trees** to be mulched for use on town properties. GRAB sponsored a recycling drive for broken **string lights**, and the Conservation Commission and Waste Free Greenwich hosted the 3rd annual **“Merry, Bright and Waste Free Holidays” webinar** to share tips and tools for sustainable décor, meals and gifting.
- Greenwich Green & Clean and GRAB organized the annual **Paper Shredding Day**, attracting over 400 participants and collecting more than 9 tons of documents for shredding.
- Managed by community volunteers for over 40 years, the **Book Swap** at Holly Hill Resource Recovery Facility is a community resource for sharing books, CDs, DVDs and LPs. Over 40,000 items are reused every year.



WASTE REDUCTION

COMMUNITY ACCOMPLISHMENTS (cont.)



- **Greenwich Green Salon Challenge**, a program launched by the GSC Business Sector, in partnership with Waste Free Greenwich, aims to foster environmental responsibility and sustainable practices for local hair salons and empowers them to reduce waste and adopt environmentally friendly products.
- Hundreds of Greenwich residents participated in cleanups to remove debris from our shorelines and streets. The **Live Like Luke Beach Cleanup** was organized in spring by a consortium of environmental non-profits, and Greenwich Green & Clean hosted a town-wide cleanup for **International Coastal Cleanup Day** in fall. Greenwich High School student Thomas McKinney also hosted numerous cleanups at schools and parks.
- Waste Free Greenwich's 3rd annual **ReThink Waste Fair** featured eco-friendly vendors, educational exhibits, upcycled fashion show, cooking and composting demos, GSC Sustainability Awards, and proclamations for Earth Day and CT Food Waste Prevention Week to raise awareness about waste reduction.



WASTED FOOD SOLUTIONS

Over 22% of our municipal solid waste is composed of food scraps. Efforts to prevent, rescue and recycle wasted food are underway, but strategies, like co-collection, expanding infrastructure and strengthening policies, are necessary to significantly increase the tonnages diverted and participation rates.

- Collective Oyster Recycling & Restoration, in partnership with Greenwich Shellfish Commission, Greenwich Conservation Commission and Waste Free Greenwich, launched a **shell recycling program** with seven local restaurants: Elm Street Oyster Bar, East End, L'Escale, Le Penguin, Le Fat Poodle, Siren and Tony's at the J House. Participating restaurants divert shell from the waste stream to grow reef habitats and promote clean water in the Long Island Sound.
- PTA Council Green Schools Committee and Waste Free Greenwich expanded the **Zero Waste Schools Program** at Greenwich Public Schools to include food scrap recycling at five elementary schools - New Lebanon, Riverside, Hamilton Avenue, Julian Curtiss and Old Greenwich. Most independent schools in Greenwich also separate and divert food scraps.
- The **municipal food scrap recycling** program has diverted over 200 tons of food scraps from the waste stream since June 2020. Managed by Greenwich Public Works with the support of Waste Free Greenwich, GRAB, and Greenwich Green & Clean, the voluntary program has three sites for residential drop off.
- The 2nd annual **Great Pumpkin Rescue** organized by Waste Free Greenwich collected over 4,000 pounds of pumpkins for composting in November 2023.
- Over a dozen local restaurants, grocery stores, schools and health facilities partner with **Food Rescue US Fairfield County** to deliver surplus food to receiving agencies that serve our neighbors in need.
- In spring 2022, the **Greenwich Food Matters Challenge** empowered six local businesses to cut food waste through prevention, rescue and recycling.