



Old Lyme Economic Development

STRATEGIC PLAN | FIVE STRATEGIC INITIATIVES



Approved December 3, 2025

Vision Statement

By 2030, Old Lyme will be recognized as a destination that seamlessly blends historic charm with economic vitality, where:

Vision 1: Old Lyme's Business Owners Thrive:

Old Lyme is a place where businesses are encouraged, promoted, and patronized because they meet the needs of our residents, as well as our visitors who come here to enjoy our arts, unique shopping and dining, summertime recreation, and the natural beauty of our landscape.

Vision 2: Old Lyme's Light Industrial/Distribution District Remains Attractive:

The town has a diverse and strategic base of commercial spaces for small to medium-sized businesses. Our light industrial commercial zone (LI-80) retains demand among businesses that benefit from our convenient location off I-95 and near Route 9 and I-395; while utilizing clean technologies and providing good job opportunities.

Vision 3: Old Lyme's Housing Market is Diverse and Strong:

Old Lyme offers an assorted housing market that satisfies both year-round and seasonal residences for rent, investment, or ownership. The town is proud of its small-town way of life where we strive to sustain our natural resources, to always set the highest educational standards in an ever-evolving world of learning, and to exhibit a welcoming spirit. There is a range of housing cost entry points to accommodate the needs of an ever-changing population and demographic. In addition, Old Lyme is positioned to attract remote workers and home-based entrepreneurs who want to live and work in Old Lyme.

Vision 4: Old Lyme's Economic Base Can Adapt to Changing Times:

With an eye on market-driven economics, we remain diligent and sensitive to shifting business and employment paradigms. We strive to integrate transportation, communication systems, utilities, municipal services, and infrastructure that fairly balance tax revenues with growth opportunities and maintenance of current and future town needs.



Mission Statement

The EDC is committed to supporting these visions with three categories of effort:

1. Support the growth and sustainability of existing and future businesses, creating an improved quality of life for all who live in and visit Old Lyme.
2. Collaborate with other commissions and constituents to foster the business environment in a way that preserves the charm and character of Old Lyme, while strengthening its economic stability, growth, and diversification.
3. Provide resources, information and guidance on services and events available.



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INITIATIVE 1 | PROMOTION AND MARKETING

Goal:

Utilize cost-effective efforts to promote Old Lyme as a great place to live, visit, and work.

Tasks & Actions

Build our Story of Place, utilize placemaking communication strategies

- Research and share the concept of Placemaking/Story of Place
 - Consider and incorporate best practices for branded storytelling for Old Lyme’s economic success

Reach audiences through print pieces, online partners, and digital presence

- Website Management and Updates
 - Work with Selectman’s Office to create a business welcome page on EDC Town webpage. Provide resource links and mailing list signup
 - › Regularly review and update CTvisit.com as needed
 - › Update Explore Old Lyme website as needed
 - Encourage businesses to promote Explore Old Lyme with EDC window stickers with QR codes
 - Encourage links to Explore Old Lyme on business websites
 - › Monitor ExploreOldLyme.com and CTvisit.com page traffic
- Print Marketing Materials
 - Update Explore Old Lyme brochure annually (May/June timeframe)
 - Print at least 1,200 copies annually for distribution at key distribution points in Old Lyme, the State Welcome Center in Westbrook, and at events such as the Midsummer Festival and the Big E.
 - Timing: Updates ready by May 10, printing by May 20
- Photography and Video Content
 - Create list of needed photography/video for promotion

Utilize social media to promote the Old Lyme economy

- Regular Social Media Posting
 - Promote “buy local” and other initiatives and events regularly on the Town Facebook page
 - Develop calendar with Selectman’s Office

Pursue marketing ideas to attract visitors and increase spending

- Event Outreach and Old Lyme Business Promotion
 - Reserve and staff an outreach tent/table at local events such as Make Music Day and the Midsummer Festival
 - Collect business promotional materials (brochures, menus, business cards, etc) to promote on our businesses behalf
 - Annual Timing: April-July preparation and participation
- Business Milestone Support
 - Support businesses having significant anniversaries, openings, ownership changes
 - Attend ribbon cuttings and other special events. Present businesses a certificate of appreciate. Provide businesses guidance on promoting their event with information on our Town webpage.
 - Timing: Ongoing
- Tourism Business Support
 - Encourage tourism businesses to create CTvisit.com attraction pages
 - Email instructions to all tourism-related businesses

INITIATIVE 2 | BRANDED SIGNAGE/WAYFINDING INITIATIVE

Goal:

To enhance the visitor experience in Old Lyme, work with other Old Lyme stakeholders to pursue a unified (branded) wayfinding sign strategy.

Consistent signage of all municipal facilities and wayfinding signage to various locations in town ("Business District," "Sound View Beach," etc) will assist visitors and newcomers in navigating and appreciating our town assets. Signage can include QR Codes or other prompts to seek additional information on the Town website.

Tasks & Actions

Research and Planning Phase

- Create a Cross-Commission/Town Government Committee to drive the planning and implementation of the initiative
 - Stakeholders include (but not limited to) the Historic District Commission, Zoning, Sound View Commission, EDC, Board of Selectmen, Public Works
- Municipal Best Practices Research
 - Meet with representatives from other local towns with branded wayfinding signage
- Community Input Sessions: Host public forums on wayfinding priorities
 - Include accessibility considerations in design
 - Engage local artists/designers for creative input
- Scope Development
 - Determine sign locations to be covered

Seek out Grants and other Funding Efforts

- Cost Analysis
 - Research sign design and production costs
 - Get quotes from multiple vendor
- Comprehensive Grant Research
 - Research CT Tourism grants, federal rural development funding
 - Consider corporate sponsorship opportunities
 - Create comprehensive funding timeline
 - If unsuccessful, consider for 2027/2028 fiscal budget
 - Timing: Concurrent with subcommittee work

Create an Implementation Plan

- Committee to Create Phased Implantation Plan
 - Bid process, signage design, manufacture, and installation based on funding and final scope
 - Timing: 2027-2028 depending on funding

INITIATIVE 3 | BUSINESS RESOURCE INITIATIVE

Goal:

To support property owners in attracting businesses that will thrive in their location, build on online materials and other resources to help businesses choose the right location in Old Lyme and thrive.

Tasks & Actions

Commercial Space Information System

- Up-to-date Commercial Space Inventory
 - Investigate website plug-ins for EDC Town webpage

Process Clarification and Documentation

- Application and Permit Process Documentation
 - Work with Land Use Office to ensure commercial applications and other documents are easy to find and navigate. Seek to ensure processes are efficient for potential businesses and commercial property owners
 - Consider various communication tools and other mechanisms, creating a supportive system for business growth
 - Create a webpage with new business permit processes outlined in an easy-to-understand format
 - Timing: Dependent on Land Use Office Availability

New Business Guide

- “Doing Business in Old Lyme” Guide (Searchable PDF)
 - Develop step-by-step guide for new business applications. with flowcharts, timelines, and contact information
 - Includes demographics and information on various business districts in Old Lyme
 - Build on existing Advanced CT draft document

Online Resources for Businesses

- Ensure links to business resources continue to be updated and added on the webpage
- ExploreOldLyme.com/resources-for-OL-businesses

New Business Mentorship Program

- Partner with the Old Lymes’ Mentoring Corps for Community Development and/or local mentorship programs such as SCORE to link business leader mentors with our new businesses.





INITIATIVE 4 | ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS IN THE LAND USE PROCESS

Goal:

To actively engage in the Land Use Process, supporting the economic priorities of the Plan of Conservation & Development.

Tasks & Actions

Establish EDC Zoning Liaison Role

- Formally designate an EDC Commissioner as the primary Zoning Liaison.
The Liaison will:
 - Attend monthly Zoning meetings when commercial items are on agenda
 - Establish regular communication with Land Use Coordinator
 - Bring to the EDC requests for public comment by Applicants
- Define liaison responsibilities and reporting structure

Track Commercial Development Applications to Support Business Applicants as Appropriate

- Monitor all commercial applications submitted to Planning & Zoning
- Review applications for economic development implications
- Support applicants as deemed appropriate by the Commission at Public Hearings or by letter to the Planning and Zoning Commissions

Participate in the Zoning Commission's Regulation Review Process

- Actively engage in upcoming zoning regulation updates
- Provide economic development perspective on proposed changes
- Ensure draft regulatory changes do not create barriers to business that are out of alignment with the POCD
- Advocate for business-friendly regulatory language where appropriate

INITIATIVE 5 | COMMERCIAL DISTRICT SUPPORT

Goal:

To ensure the long-term viability of Old Lyme's commercial districts, support businesses and property owners' investment in Old Lyme.

Tasks & Actions

Commercial Real Estate Market Analysis

- Track Quarterly Vacancy Rates

Support the Reinvigoration of the Shoreline Gateway Area

- Collaborate with the Sound View Commission to support the current business environment
 - In April, September, and as needed, consult with the Sound View Commission chair(s) to determine issues of importance to Sound View businesses, including district improvements, and parking updates. Monitor SVC meeting minutes or attend.
 - Collaborate with the Sound View Commission to support new and existing businesses in the Sound View District, as well as events that bring awareness to the Sound View Business District.
 - Build on existing materials and Explore Old Lyme to further support the Sound View businesses.
 - Seek updates from Sound View businesses on end-of-season outcomes.
- Support the Shoreline Gateway Committee to position this important and historical area for future generations
 - Establish EDC /Gateway Liaison Position to ensure the EDC is aware of the ongoing efforts and appropriate ways to support the effort to reinvigorate this key commercial/summer tourism asset
 - Attend all Gateway Committee meetings and report back to EDC monthly on committee activities
 - Timing: Position Exists today

Build Actionable Plans for Key Districts including Halls Road and the Light Industrial/Distribution (LI/D) District

- Following any updated district regulations by the Zoning Commission, create actionable plans to encourage responsible economic investment in individual business districts.
 - Actionable plans would include researching grant funding for infrastructure and streetscape funding.





ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEMBERS

Name	Title	Term
Joseph Camean	Co-Chair	2023-2028
Jeff Hartmann	Co-Chair	2021-2026
Jean Wilczynski	Member	2021-2026
Wendy Russell	Member	2022-2027
Scott Smith	Member	2023-2028
Cheryl Poirier	Member	2024-2029
Mona Colwell	Member	2024-2029
(Vacant)	Member	2025-2030
(Vacant)	Member	TBD

PLAN REVIEW AND UPDATE SCHEDULE

Annual Strategic Plan Review

- Timing: Each March – April
- Process: Comprehensive review of all five initiatives
- Participants: Full EDC Commission, key stakeholders
- Deliverables: Annual progress report, updated priorities, budget recommendations

Quarterly Progress Reviews

- Timing: March, June, September, December
- Process: Review milestone achievement and adjust timelines as needed
- Participants: Lead commissioners and supporting members
- Deliverables: Quarterly progress dashboard, issue identification, corrective actions

Plan Update Triggers

The strategic plan will be updated when:

- Significant changes occur in local economic conditions
- New opportunities or threats emerge that require strategic pivot
- Major initiatives are completed ahead of or significantly behind schedule
- Town priorities or regional conditions substantially change
- New federal, state, or regional economic development programs become available

Success Metrics Review

Annual assessment of key performance indicators, including

- Commercial vacancy rates by district
- Website traffic and engagement metrics
- Tourism data
- Business retention and expansion activity
- Grant funding secured and projects completed





Old Lyme Economic Development Committee
Strategic Plan | Five Strategic Initiatives

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