

Halls Road Master Plan

Progress Update

Winter 2023/24

Community Goals for Old Lyme



Outdoor Dining



Walkable Browsing



Cafes



Wide Sidewalks



Town Green



Places to Live



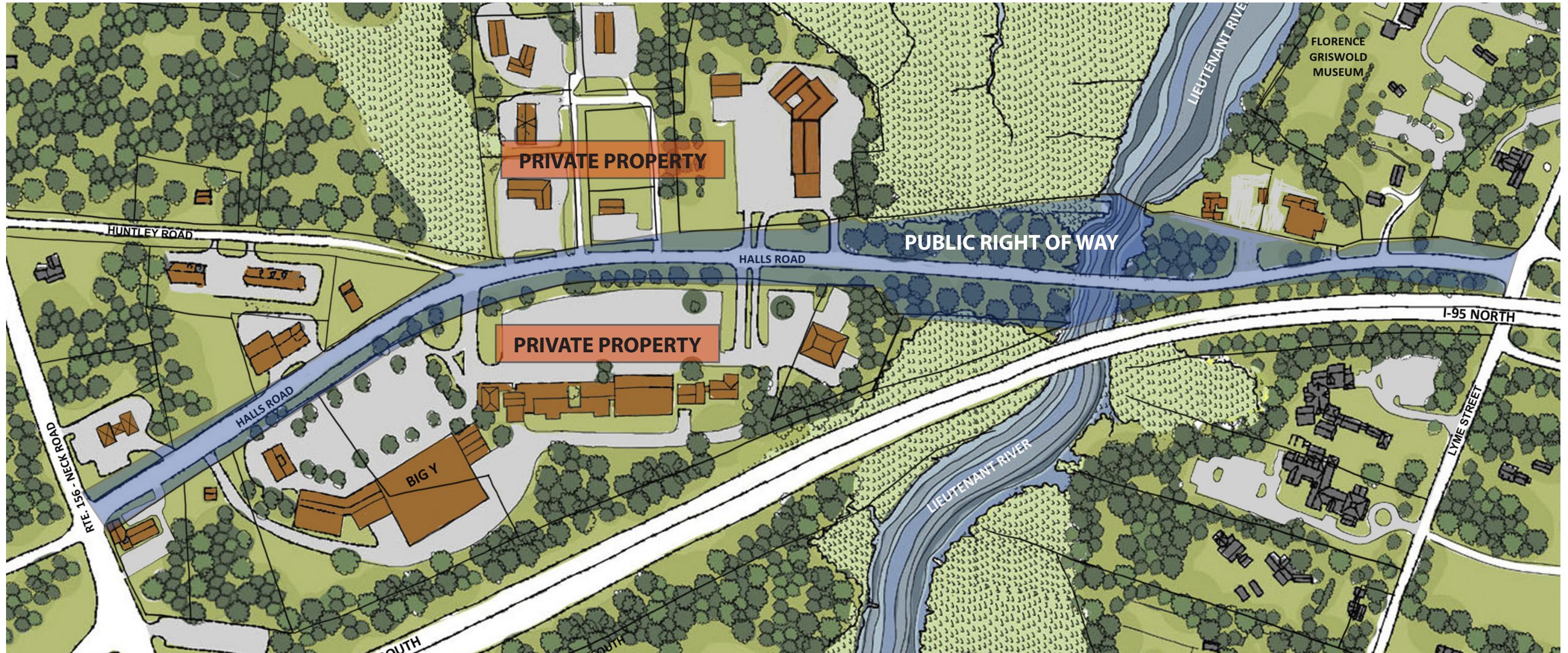
Feels like Old Lyme

Public Improvements

Support safety and connectivity within the district

- A. Create safe pedestrian and bike passage along Halls Road with sidewalks, crossings, bike lanes, lighting, and landscaping.
- B. Link historic town center and arts district via pedestrian bridge to the town's commercial district.
- C. Provide an open, green space for community gatherings.

Halls Road Today

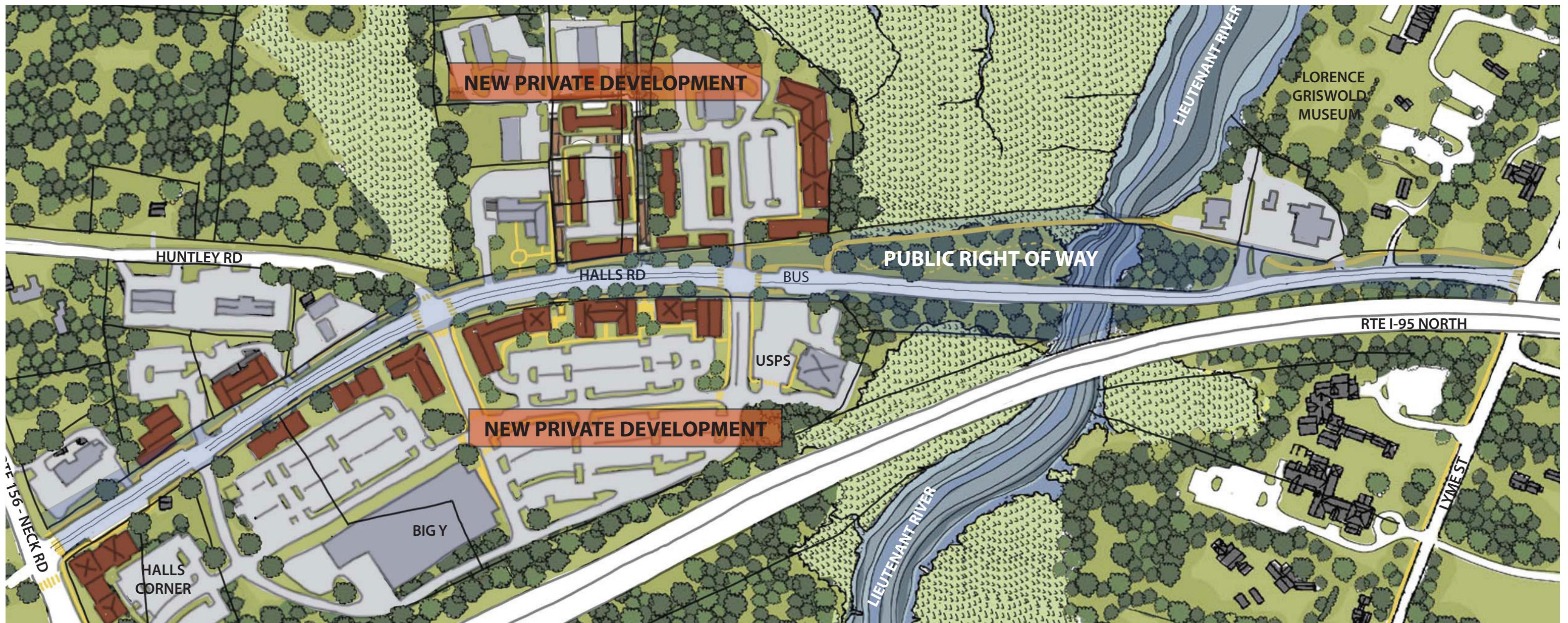


Private Investment Opportunities

Support additional development options for property owners

- A. Encourage mixed use development along Halls Road to support future prosperity of our commercial district.
- B. Provide residential alternatives to single family homes.
- C. Ensure new construction reflects the original character of Old Lyme.

Halls Road - Possible Future



State funding process underway for street upgrades

CT DOT Authorized “Complete Streets:”

- Sidewalks & crossings • Bike Lanes • Pedestrian Lighting • Landscaping

TODAY

LOTCIP Application*

submitted 2022. This is a formal request to DOT to review plans for new sidewalks & crossings, bikelanes, pedestrian lighting, & landscaping on state controlled Halls Road. A decision, and funding for project expected in 2025.

*Local Transportation Capitol Improvement Program

*Davis Road intersecting
Halls Road today*



Community Connectivity Grant

Applications open 2025. Apply for grant to connect Lyme St to new bridge & trails

NEXT STEPS

On DOT approval:

- Seek *design* grants for final “Complete Streets”
- Other Agency Approvals • RFP’s, Process Bids
- Secure construction funding • Select contractors
- Commence construction

COMPLETE PROJECT 2028 ?

*Sidewalks, lighting,
trees & crosswalks*



*New, mixed-use buildings along
Halls Road*



Town funding in place for pedestrian bridge

TODAY

Secure east-bank land from DEEP for bridge access. (In process.)

Design Trails & Bridge
• 2 grants funding AIE design work.
• Preliminary concepts reviewed Fall 2023

NEXT STEPS

Final Design layout: Early Winter 2024
• Final town review
• Secure Approvals
• Apply for construction grants
• Commence construction
Phase 1 - Bridge & Main trails
Phase 2 - Woodland Trail & Water Access

COMPLETE PROJECT 2025 ?



Town project: Pedestrian bridge connects historic & arts districts to renewed town center.

Why new Zoning opportunities?

EXISTING ZONING

C30-S Halls Road Commercial District

- Commercial development only, including Gas Stations.
- C30-S requires Special Permit from Zoning Commission.
- Does not allow Apartments, Town Houses, or Condos.
- No guidelines for building design.



Old Lyme Gateway entry to Old Lyme 100 Halls Road - TODAY



Old Lyme Gateway entry to Old Lyme 100 Halls Road - with C30-S only

PROPOSED OVERLAY ZONING

HROD - Halls Road Overlay District

- Completely *optional* (overlays C30-S).
- Allows Apartments, Town Houses, Condos.
- Mixed use: street-facing commercial with residential above or behind.



Old Lyme Gateway possible entry to Old Lyme with HROD mixed use.

WHY AN OVERLAY ZONE?

- Mixed use is best support for 21st century commerce.
- Address need for smaller-sized housing in town.
- Supports original mixed-use style of Lyme Street.
- Provides design guidelines that encourage architecture in keeping with styles on Lyme Street .

DEVELOPMENT SIZE & SCALE

- No buildings taller than 35'.
- No single structure longer than 200' and must have breaks in facade every 40'.
- Parking requirements limit density and scale of development.
- Infrastructure requirements (water and septic) also limit development scale.

APPROVAL PROCESS

- Each project must conform to HROD requirements, and receive permits from all pertinent agencies.
- Use of HROD requires Special Permit from Zoning Commission.
- Each HROD project passes a preliminary and a final design review based on Design Guidelines.

Questions & Answers

PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS

1. Who needs these sidewalks and bike lanes?

Halls Road is optimized for vehicular traffic. It has no accommodation for bike riders or pedestrians. There is no room on the highway bridge for a safe, ADA-compliant sidewalk and there is no lighting. Kids walking along Halls Road to and from town are particularly at risk, but so are cyclists.

2. Who would pay for new sidewalks and roadway improvements?

Halls Road makes up 0.7 miles of Rte. 1, connecting the Boston Post Road with Rte. 156. It is a state-controlled right of way under the jurisdiction of CT Department of Transportation (DOT).

No changes can be made in this right of way without DOT approval. Typically, the town submits a LOTCIP grant proposal to DOT. If approved the grant also provides funds for construction.

Old Lyme submitted its LOTCIP grant proposal in summer of 2022 and expects to hear a response from DOT in 2025. Though a formal decision must wait on formal review, in 2023 HRIC met with CT DOT, who found nothing in Old Lyme's plans that was against DOT's Complete Streets Program.

LOTCIP grants do not cover design costs, only construction. It is up to the town to cover design work with town funds and/or other grants.

3. Why bother with a pedestrian bridge?

The road bridge on Halls Road is not wide enough to accommodate an ADA compliant sidewalk or a bike lane. The old bridge abutments, just north of Halls Road (largely on town owned lands), offer an alternative crossing with better and safer access.

An 8' wide pedestrian bridge would provide safe access across the river, allow people to pause to take in river-views, and make an attractive, safe connection between our main commercial district and our historic, school, and arts districts along Lyme Street. Additionally the project would open the wooded lot along the western side of the river to public use and provide water access while protecting the riverbank.

4. Who pays for this bridge project?

The design and permitting of this project are covered by two grants secured in 2022 & 2023. The construction will require town funding or other construction grants. The CT Recreational Program that is helping to fund our design work may also be a source of funding for bridge construction.

5. How long will all these public improvements take?

Sidewalk construction will begin no earlier than 2026. The bridge and trails may come sooner if construction grants are available, perhaps as early as 2024 or 2025.

PRIVATE INVESTMENTS

What happens if HROD is not approved?

- A. Existing C-30S district continues to attract, primarily, new investment in highway services: gas stations, convenience chains, etc. More profitable investment opportunities are not permitted, so cannot create competition for these highway-facing uses.
- B. Commercial uses will continue to face challenges from Internet commerce. The out-dated strip center model is increasingly difficult to lease and many buildings currently need renovations.
- C. New sidewalks will get a view of strip centers behind half-empty parking lots.
- D. Smaller-scale residential will be built in less favorable places, using up open land and requiring more new roads and town services per unit.

What happens if HROD is approved?

A. How does HROD discourage highway services?

Existing C-30S district remains, but new, more profitable investment opportunities create stiffer competition for those who would build highway services. Property owners prefer better returns.

B. Will all the properties have to adopt HROD?

NO! The HROD is an *option* for new developments that meet its requirements.

C. If HROD is optional, won't Halls Road be a hodge-podge of one style and another?

Halls Road is already a hodge-podge, with no consistency beyond the 60' setbacks -- the result of 60 years of developers guessing what might pass as "acceptable" at any given time.

New projects under HROD will have the benefit of explicit design guidelines, ensuring some level of compatibility with Old Lyme's existing styles. HROD projects will be near the road, as on Lyme Street, with parking behind. The strip center model will remain for years, but many retailers prefer to be on the street where they're more visible. The on-street model will prevail over time. A walkable, browsable streetscape is better for business, and that makes it better for developers.

D. How do you prevent over-development?

HROD limits the size and scale of buildings and land coverage on each lot. Its parking requirements effectively limit the maximum development on a parcel. Traffic is also a concern of Zoning, and they can guide development to prevent undue strain on local roads. Beyond zoning, infrastructure requirements (water and septic) also limit the type and amount of development possible on particular parcels.

E. How do you find good developers?

The town should work to attract the kind of developers who will serve Old Lyme's needs. Creating a 'Developer's Kit' and spreading the word about the opportunities here will pay dividends. This merits a direct effort by the town.