

## Greenwich Time

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# Old Greenwich development mirrors town

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About 450 residences -- or about a quarter of all houses -- in Old Greenwich have been renovated, added to or demolished and rebuilt within the past five years, the town planner told residents last night during a meeting at First Congregational Church.

"Old Greenwich is a microcosm of what's going on townwide," Town Planner Diane Fox told about 100 members of the Old Greenwich Association yesterday at its annual meeting.

The neighborhood association, which meets once a year, invited Fox to discuss ways the area has changed and what residents can do to preserve their quality of life.

The redevelopment boom in Old Greenwich is leading to some of the same changes seen across town, including increased traffic and congestion, Fox said. Along with the development changes have come a population increase of about 14 percent since 1990, she said.

At the same time, development occurring in adjacent Stamford, such as the opening of Shoprite and Super Stop & Shop, is forcing some of the neighborhood changes. A longtime establishment, Kerr's Village Pharmacy, is closing its doors after 46 years, citing competition by nearby chain stores.

The competitive retail atmosphere and traffic congestion will likely become more intense if plans to build a new Home Depot adjacent to Super Stop & Shop goes through, Fox said.

"If that goes in, that will be a regional draw," she said of Home Depot. "That will have an effect on Feisod (Hardware.)"

For now, though, Fox said there are enough locally owned restaurants, coffee shops and other stores peppering the Old Greenwich retail section that the neighborhood's charm will likely be preserved.

"There is still a neighborhood village atmosphere," she said.

Old Greenwich also is home to nature preserves, golf courses and green spaces near its border with Stamford, which helps restrict some development from encroaching into the village.

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"Where else do you find a comparable strip of green space that is so large?" Fox asked.

Though the density in Old Greenwich has increased to the ire of some residents, Fox said the village could sustain more development, especially on the retail strip along Sound Beach Avenue. That area is home to several apartments above the retail stores. Fox said she advocates building more dwellings above those stores as a way to create more affordable housing in Greenwich, she said.

"This is an area we ought to talk about," Fox said.

Town planners are currently working on a "build-out" analysis to determine how many more dwellings the area could accommodate.

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