

Westport/Weston Family Y  
**PROJECT NARRATIVE**

**APPLICANT:** Westport/Weston Family Y  
**SITE LOCATION:** 4,5,11 & 14 Sunny Lane; Westport, CT  
**ZONE:** AAA Residence, Special Permit  
**AREA:** 30.7 acres

**RECEIVED**  
JAN 17 2008 07-075  
WESTPORT P. & Z. C.

**EXISTING CONDITIONS**

The 30.7± acre parcel, known as Camp Mahackeno, is located in the "AAA" Residence Zone of the Town of Westport, in the vicinity of Sunny Lane and Rice's Lane just south of the Merritt Parkway. Residentially developed land lies to the west and south of the property. The Merritt Parkway is located to the north and the Saugatuck River (Lees Pond) borders the property to the east.

Much of the property has been managed, as it supports the Mahackeno Summer Day Camp with buildings, athletic fields, access roads and a network of pedestrian paths throughout the property. The site is bisected by Poplar Plains Brook which flows west to east and connects to the Saugatuck River and Lee's Pond to the east. The north side of the property, approximately 9 acres, is accessed from Sunny Lane that connects to Wilton Road, Route 33. The balance of the property and south of Poplar Plains has a restricted/limited vehicular access from Rice's Lane. There are currently a number of buildings scattered around the site. To the south of Poplar Plains Brook the existing structures include: a small camp office, a lodge/first aid center, an in-ground swimming pool south of the brook, a small paved parking area also used as basketball courts, a fenced tennis court, baseball field, amphitheater, an archery range, fitness trails, fenced playground and along the shoreline of the Saugatuck River timber docks used for canoes.

Currently the main entrance to Camp Mahackeno is located on the north side of Poplar Plains Brook which includes the paved "drop off" area for the summer camp. The WWFY property north of Poplar Plains also includes the Rotary Lodge constructed by the Westport Rotary Club a number of years ago and is utilized for camp activities as well as community functions, there is also an arts and crafts activity pavilion to the east of the Rotary Lodge. A temporary tent is erected just south of the arts and crafts pavilion in a level mulched area adjacent to Poplar Plains Brook that is used by the campers for lunch time, miscellaneous activities and shelter during inclement weather. There are also 2 single family homes at 4 and 5 Sunny Lane owned by the Westport Weston Family Y, each are currently rented. Sunny Lane also provides access to the Bell Atlantic phone tower and building and 2 single family dwellings at 8 and 10 Sunny Lane.

The north and south sides of the Mahackeno site are connected by 2 small foot bridges and a recently constructed timber bridge that replaced an existing bridge. This timber bridge was designed to accommodate vehicles for periodic camp maintenance but is capable of supporting emergency vehicles that may need access to each side of the property.

As mentioned above Poplar Plains Brook flows easterly through the northern third of the property and drains to Lees Pond, which is an impounded segment of the Saugatuck River. Both bodies of water are bordered by mature riparian wetland systems. The balance of the property contains fragmented mature forests with an extensive trail system and maintained lawn areas used for passive and active recreation.

The topography consists of relatively flat areas north and south of the brook with steep (>25% slope) ridgelines bordering Poplar Plains Brook, along Lees Pond (Saugatuck River) and in the southwest portion of the property.

Those existing structures with plumbing fixtures are served by onsite sewage disposal systems and private water wells.

## **PROPOSAL**

The Westport/Weston Family Y, (WWFY) is proposing to relocate their facilities currently located in Downtown Westport to their property in the vicinity of Sunny Lane and Rice's Lane in the northwest portion of Westport. The property is located in the Residence AAA Zone, the WWFY will be seeking a Special Permit, as permitted in this zone, for the new facility that will be approximately 101,000 square feet of total building space on 2 levels with a footprint of 63,000 s.f. The new Y building will be located in the northeast portion of the property that it will share with Camp Mahackeno, the summer day camp that has been located there since the 1940's, the Camp will continue to operate after the new facility is constructed.

The proposal is to construct the new facility and the approximately 336 parking spaces on the north side of Poplar Plains Brook. Access to the new facility will be from Sunny Lane, a private road owned by the Westport/Weston Family Y, Sunny Lane connects to Wilton Road, Route 33 and the north bound entrance/exit ramp to the Merritt Parkway's, exit 41. The current access from Rice's Lane that serves the camp office and activities on the south side of Poplar Plains Brook will be eliminated and utilized as an emergency access only. It will be constructed on grassed pavers or reinforced earth that will support emergency vehicles.

The existing single family dwellings at 4 and 5 Sunny Lane owned by the Westport/Weston Y will be razed and have been included in the Mahackeno site acreage. Additionally, all of the current WWFY structure on the north side of Poplar Plains Brook, the Rotary Pavilion and the arts and craft pavilion will be razed, the 2 temporary tents are also to be removed. Each of these structures are an integral part of the camp operations and their removal will be compensated by the construction of two open-air Pavilions approximately 1,200 s.f. and 1,800 s.f. each located on the south side of Poplar Plains Brook and are shown on the proposed plans.

The 2 remaining single family dwellings at 8 and 10 Sunny Lane "rear" lots and 2 Sunny Lane (the Bell Atlantic cell tower) will continue to be accessed from the improved Sunny Lane. Extensive landscaping has been proposed for the areas between the proposed parking areas and the home at 8 and 10 Sunny Lane. The existing drives to each of the homes are proposed to be improved and efforts have been implemented to provide a clear delineation between the drive to the private homes and the drives to adjacent the parking area.

As part of the proposed new WWFY facility, Sunny Lane and the portion of the exit/entrance ramp of the Merritt Parkway to Wilton Road will be reconstructed to provide a more efficient access to the Parkway and the WWFY site. Those improvements will include the widening of the travelway between the exit/entrance ramp and Wilton Road and even some modification to the ramp immediately adjacent to the travelway of the Merritt Parkway. The proposed widening will increase the roadway to 4 lanes dedicated to the on and off lanes to the Parkway and another to Sunny Lane that will lead to the WWFY site. Sunny Lane from the exist/entrance ramp will also be widened to a 24' wide roadway constructed to Town of Westport standards that will provide a comfortable 2 lane roadway that will serve the existing homes and of course the new Y facility. These roadway improvements will include stormwater drainage within Sunny Lane and roadway from Wilton Road and the exit/entrance ramp that does not currently exist..

These proposed drainage improvements will have a beneficial impact on the adjacent properties and roadways. These improvements and the site improvements will be reviewed by the State Traffic Commission (STC), an application has been filed by the applicant to the STC.

The new WWFY facility will be served by public water, which is currently in Wilton Road and will be extended by the Y. Provisions will be made for laterals to the existing dwellings in the event they wish to connect. The balance of the utilities required to serve the new facility, electric, phone, cable will also be extended from Wilton Road and placed underground to the new building.

The new facility and remaining camp structures will all be served by an onsite sewage disposal system that includes a subsurface wastewater renovation system. For the Y's facilities the FAST (Fixed Activated Sludge Treatment) system was selected, which will provide denitrification of the effluent from the new facility. This system has received approval from the local and state Health Departments and the Department of Environmental Protection. The onsite sewage disposal system and treatment system was also the subject of a public hearing before the Department Of Environmental Protection where it was approved. That approval was appealed to the Commissioner of DEP Gina McCarthy who ultimately upheld the original approvals from her Department.

Portions of the onsite sewage disposal system, the septic tanks and pump chambers will be located just south of the new building where the effluent from the building will be collected. From that location the effluent will be pumped beneath Poplar Plains Brook (a method referred to as directional drilling will be utilized to minimize impacts to the brook and wetland) to additional storage tanks and the components of the FAST system where it will be received and then distributed to the leaching fields to be located further to the south. As mentioned previously all of the remaining camp structures with plumbing fixtures will be connected to the new sewage disposal system and have been included in the design flows. All existing septic systems serving the existing building and those systems of the buildings to remain will be abandoned or removed in conformance with the CT Health Code Standards.

Stormwater Management Plans and Drainage Reports were reviewed and approved by the Flood & Erosion Control Board and after many months of hearing were also approved by the Conservation Commission. The proposed stormwater management plan provides for zero incremental runoff in the post development conditions and includes water quality measures that alleviate impacts to the wetlands on site Poplar Plains Brook, the Saugatuck River and Lees Pond.

Extensive traffic analyses and reports, compiled after nearly 3 years of study have been prepared and included in the Planning and Zoning Application and the Applications to the State Traffic Commission of the Connecticut Department of Transportation. In addition to the roadway improvements additional signalization and new signal technology is being proposed to accommodate the new activity associated with the new WWFY facility.

As expected each of the project team members and representatives of the Westport /Weston Y responsible for preparing the many facets of the Plans, Reports and Applications associated with the proposed facility will be present and prepared to address the Commission and Staff throughout the approval process.