

HOUSING SOLUTIONS LAB



An aerial view of a housing development under construction July 6 on North Bridebrook Road in East Lyme.

PETER HUOPPI/THE DAY

Biden visits Idalia's Florida victims

DeSantis rejects meeting with him

By WILL WEISSERT
Associated Press

Live Oak, Fla. — President Joe Biden on Saturday saw from the sky Hurricane Idalia's impact across a swath of Florida before he set out on a walking tour of a city recovering from the storm. Notably absent was Gov. Ron DeSantis, a Republican presidential candidate who declined to join Biden after he suggested that the Democrat's presence could hinder disaster response efforts.

Biden, when asked about his rival's absence, said he was not disappointed by the turn of events, but welcomed the presence of Rick Scott, one of the state's two Republican U.S. senators.

He pledged the federal government's total support for Floridians.

"I'm here today to deliver a clear message to the people of Florida and throughout the Southeast," Biden said after the walking tour. He spoke outdoors near a church that had parts of its sheet metal roof peeled back by Idalia's powerful winds and a home half crushed by a fallen tree.

"As I've told your governor, if there's anything your state needs, SEE PRESIDENT PAGE A6

The developing Tale of Four Towns

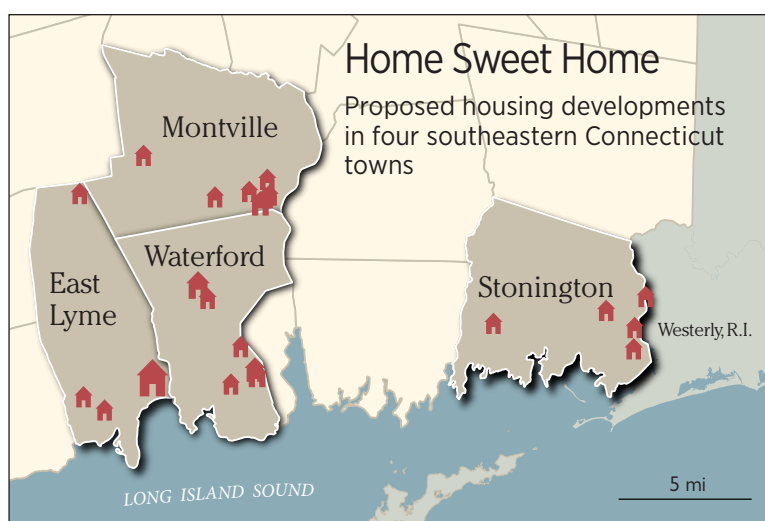
By JULIA WALKER
Special to The Day

Hundreds of new apartments, townhouses and single-family homes are on the drawing board or under construction in southeastern Connecticut, a building boomlet fueled in part by growth in the region's defense industry.

And even as developers look to cash in on that ballooning demand, the state is prodding each town to put at least 10% of its housing in reach of lower-income families. The result so far: a mix of old and new ideas, financial incentives and, in some cases, outright begging.

Bigger southeastern Connecticut towns, like Groton and New London, already meet the 10% threshold. So The Day decided to take a look at what's going on in a handful of surrounding towns — Montville, Waterford, Stonington and East Lyme — where the affordable housing rate hovers at around 5%.

We spoke with four planning departments about current projects in their towns, as well as their strategies to reach the state's affordable housing objectives. Of the roughly 1,510 units in the works in



MAPS BY SCOTT RITTER | SOURCES: TOWN PLANNING OFFICIALS
The red symbols show the location and relative size of the proposals. Several are under construction, while others are on the drawing board.

these towns, fewer than 300 are considered affordable, meaning the rent would amount to 30% or less of a household's income.

Waterford: 'Please, please, please'

Closing his eyes, placing his hands together, and pleading: "Please, please, please," Town Planner Mark Wujtewicz demon-

strates how Waterford tries to convince developers to include affordable housing in their plans.

Waterford's Planning and Zoning Commission has six approved and under-construction projects with 86 affordable units dispersed throughout, increasing Waterford's current affordable housing percentage of 5.6%.

"The best way is to work ahead to get the town's goals across to the developer. Hopefully, they can incorporate it into their project," said Planning Director Jonathan Mullen on asking developers to include affordable units.

A key incentive for affordable housing is a state statute, known as 830-g, which allows affordable-housing developers to override local zoning decisions in towns that haven't reached the state's 10% goal.

The approved Clark Lane Community will have 47 rental units, of which 14 are affordable, adjacent to Clark Lane Middle School. It was incentivized by the ability to override Waterford's zoning through the 830-g statute, Mullen said.

Next to Target on Hartford Turnpike, Brookside Commons is constructing 40 units, 30 of them affordable. Further down the turnpike is Waterford Heights, which will have 284 market-rate apartments.

Forty-two affordable units are approved for the Waterford Central, Ivy Hill Village and Waterford Woods projects which are respectively located at 61 Myrock Ave., 48 Great Neck Road, and 384 and SEE TOWNS PAGE A4

Tax revenue from cannabis retail sales heads to towns

By KIMBERLY DRELICH
Day Staff Writer

With cannabis retail sales beginning recently in Groton, Montville and Norwich, local towns and cities are looking ahead — even if they're not yet sure how much they will receive — to how they will spend the new tax revenue.

Groton and Montville are steering their funding toward youth services and programs to help people with addictions with the revenue they expect to receive from cannabis sales. Norwich is waiting for more information from the state before making a decision.

With the state allowing adult-use recreational marijuana, municipalities with cannabis retailers, hybrid retailers or micro-cultivators receive revenue from a 3% municipal sales tax on cannabis, according to the Office of Legislative Research.

Local officials said they can't fully SEE MARIJUANA PAGE A6

WEATHER

Today, mostly sunny and humid. High 80. Monday, sunny, warm and humid. High 83. E6

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INDIA LAUNCHES ITS FIRST SPACE MISSION TO THE SUN

India launched its first space mission to study the sun on Saturday, nearly a week after becoming the first country to land an unmanned robotic spacecraft near the moon's south pole.

The Aditya-L1 spacecraft, the latest mission in India's ambitious space program, took off around noon local time from the launchpad at Sriharikota in southern India, embarking on a journey to observe the outer atmosphere of the sun.

The launch was successful, the Indian Space Research Organization said soon after.

"The vehicle has placed the satellite precisely into its intended orbit. India's first solar observatory has begun its journey to the destination of Sun-Earth L1 point," ISRO said Saturday.

— Washington Post

'MAYOR OF MARGARITAVILLE,' JIMMY BUFFETT, DIES AT 76

Jimmy Buffett, the singer-songwriter and "mayor of Margaritaville," the mythical paradise of tropical breezes, frozen cocktails and laid-back escapism that inspired his greatest hit and fostered a hugely successful branding and business empire, died Sept. 1 at 76.

A statement posted on his website and social media accounts announced the death but did not disclose further details.

Mr. Buffett, a frustrated Nashville country artist, found his muse when he moved to Key West, Fla., in spring 1972, leaving behind a failed marriage and stalled career. Surrounded by blue water, he donned Hawaiian shirts, cutoff shorts and flip-flops, grabbed an old blender, and embraced the quirky beach community with his musical soul.

Obituary, A7

Pope travels to Mongolia



REMO CASILLI, POOL/AP PHOTO

Pope Francis signs the honor book Saturday at the State Palace in Sukhbaatar Square in Ulaanbaatar. Pope Francis arrived in Mongolia on Friday morning for a four-day visit.



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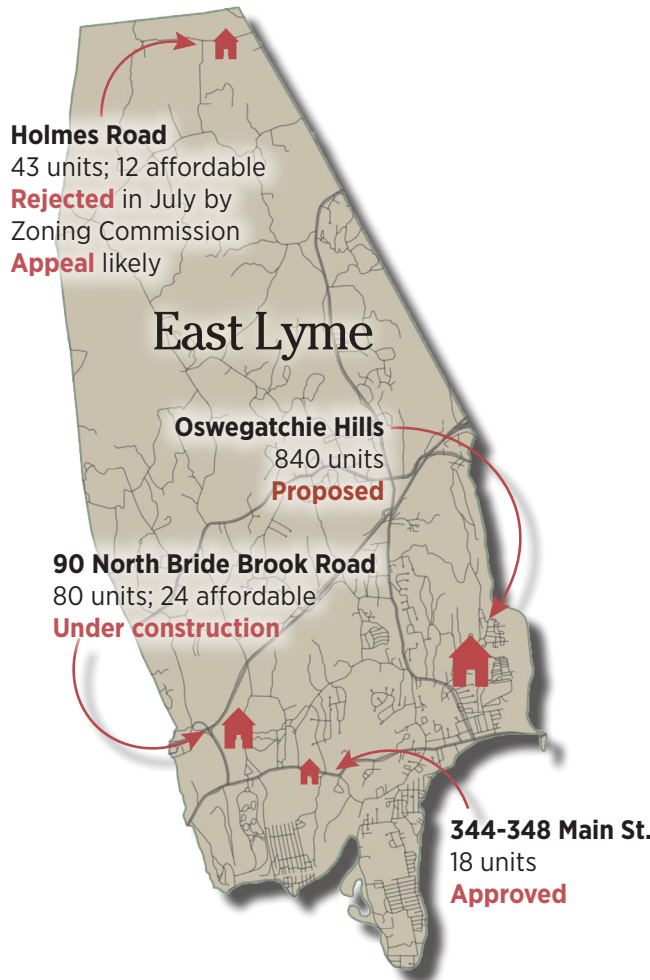
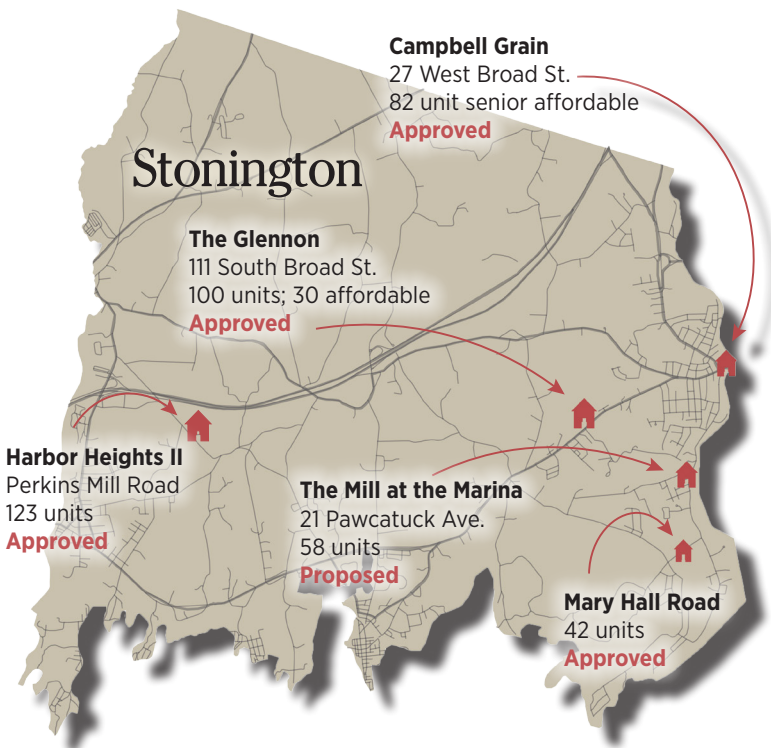
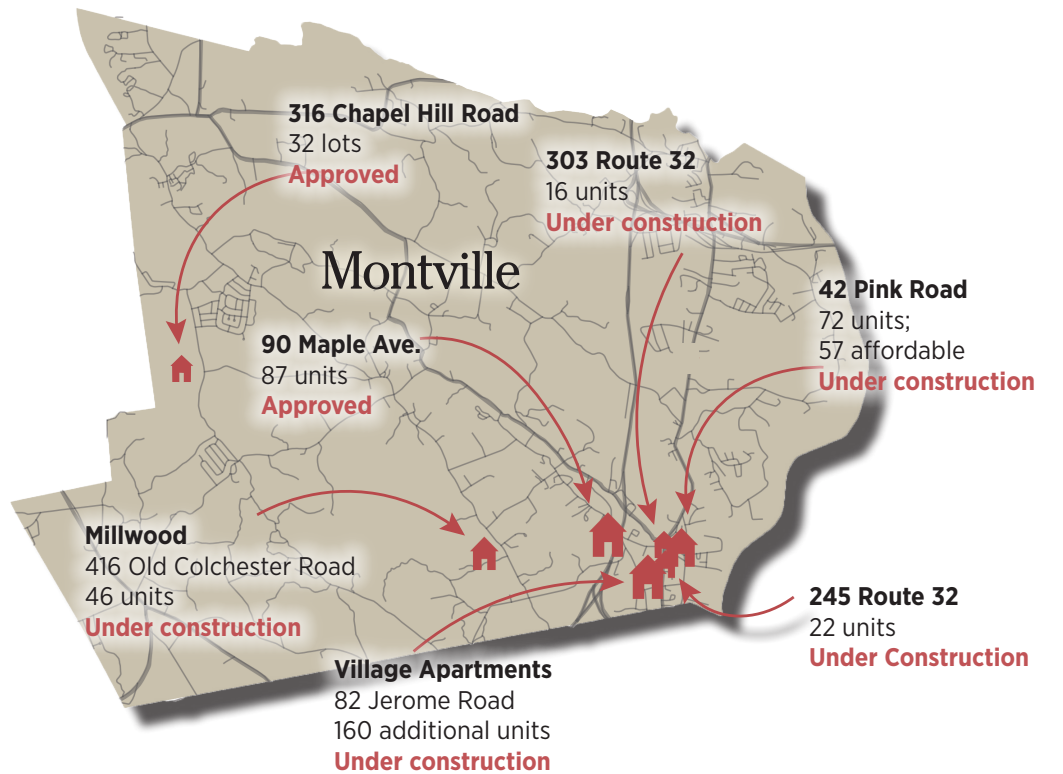
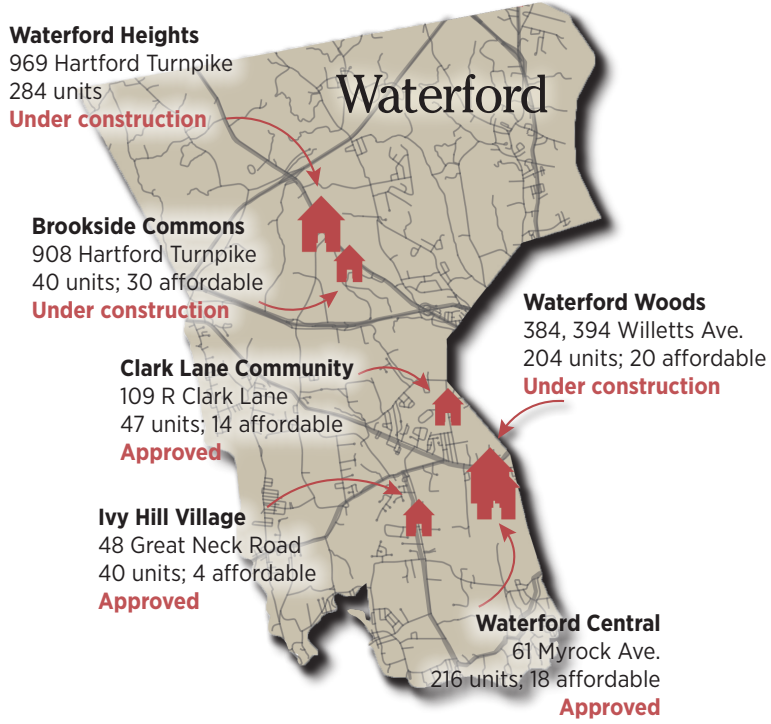
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PHOTOS BY PETER HUOPPI/THE DAY

Housing projects in various stages of development, from left, Waterford Woods on Willetts Avenue in Waterford, 42 Pink Road in Montville and 90 Maple Ave. in Montville. The aerial photos were taken July 5.

Towns try varied approaches to housing



options, Montville is subdividing five housing lots, including a “cluster subdivision” to create 32 individual lots out of the land at 316 Chapel Hill Road, said Burdick.

“Getting creative” pushes Montville closer to their housing “action plan” which includes diversifying housing supply and increasing options for elderly residents, Burdick said.

East Lyme: ‘Preserve the charm’

Tractors are burrowing into a grassy lot on North Bride Brook Road to construct Brookside Apartments, an 830-g project with 24 affordable apartments and 56 market rate ones.

Elsewhere, the Zoning Commission’s push to “preserve the charm” of East Lyme and make “the right decision for the farmland” of Oswegatchie Hills Nature Preserve have recently halted other projects which included affordable options.

Five percent of the town’s housing is affordable.

A decades-long, largely environmentally-based dispute left a proposed development of 840 affordable units in Oswegatchie Hills up in the air. Another Oswegatchie project on Holmes Road for 43 units, 12 affordable, was rejected in July.

However, a Main Street project for 18 market-rate apartments above shops was approved. A commission decision in May prohibited any more three-story buildings with apartments above shops to be built downtown in the future to maintain the small-town character of Main Street.

Maintaining East Lyme’s “physical, aesthetic, and cultural character” is listed first on the town’s “guiding principals for affordable housing” written in their affordable housing plan.

“Obviously there’s people looking to move in, and they want to move in now,” Zoning Official Bill Mulholland said, explaining the importance of creating more housing opportunities while still preserving the town’s character.

FROM A1

394 Willetts Ave. In total, these three apartments will have 460 units.

Stonington: Creating incentives

Construction of The Glennon, an approved South Broad Street “830-g apartment building” with 70 market rate and 30 affordable units, has been postponed due to funding issues, said Town Planner Clifton Iler. The building plans call for a four-story development in front of Brookside Village, an existing row of single-level townhouses, Iler said.

On Perkins Farm Drive, 123 market-rate units are under construction for the Harbor Heights II project. On Mary Hall Road, 42 single-family, market-rate units will be under construction by the beginning of 2024, Iler said.

Stonington’s Zoning Commission is re-writing zoning laws with new affordable housing incentives which

could include tax cuts for affordable housing owners and diverting some of Stonington’s property tax revenue towards affordable housing, according to Iler and the town’s affordable housing plan.

“There aren’t localized incentives to create affordable housing,” Iler said, explaining the town’s 6.07% affordable housing. “That doesn’t mean we don’t want that. I just don’t think it’s possible, the way our ordinances are currently written.”

An 82-unit affordable senior-housing project replacing the old Campbell Grain factory building was declared “dead in the water” this past July due to lack of funding, Iler said.

Located at 27 West Broad St. and 15 Cogswell St., this project could have provided seniors with walking access to the Westerly Amtrak Station and along the Pawcatuck River, according to a 2021 proposal overview. Although the project is on pause without a developer, it’s approved by the town and could be

built by other developers in the future, Iler said.

Montville: ‘Getting creative’

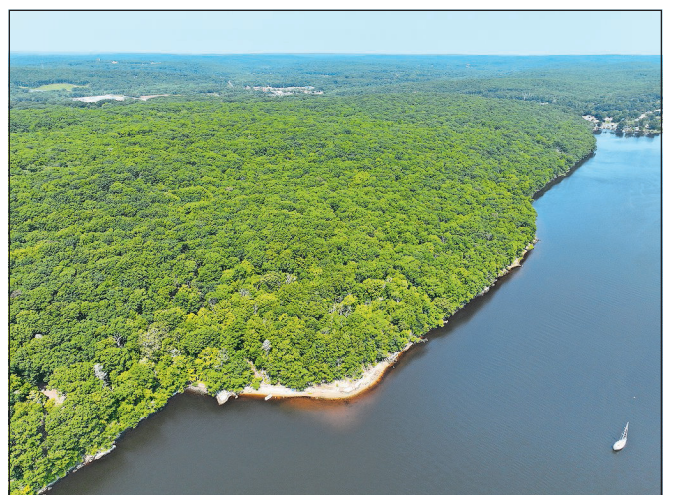
Renovating office buildings, creating mobile home communities and dividing residential lots all contribute to Montville’s six current approved and under-construction housing developments, said Land Use and Development Director Liz Burdick.

Five percent of the town’s current housing is affordable, according to its affordable housing plan, and 103 affordable units are under construction.

Forty-six new affordable senior living units are under construction at Millwood Mobile Homes on Old Colchester Road. Historic cotton mills at 42 Pink Row will be transformed into 72 multi-family units, 57 of them affordable.

Also under construction at 303 Route 32 are two renovated commercial buildings with a mix of one and two bedroom apartments and a 22-unit multi-family project down the road at 245 Route 32. Three buildings under construction on Jerome Road will include 160 multi-family, market-rate apartments.

In an effort to create more housing



From left, 27 West Broad St. in Stonington on July 6; Main Street in Niantic, where a housing development is proposed for the site of the Cafe Sol restaurant, bottom right, on July 11; and Oswegatchie Hills next to the Niantic River in East Lyme July 11.