

Town of Plymouth

“Connecting to the Future”

Plan of Conservation and Development 2004 Update

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Overview

The Plymouth Planning and Zoning Commission in concert with members of other boards and commissions of the Town, has prepared the Plan of Conservation and Development, in accordance with the provisions of Section 8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes. Those provisions mandate that every municipality in the state prepare a Plan of Conservation and Development and such plan be reviewed and updated if necessary at least once every ten years. The local planning and zoning commission is given the statutory responsibility to prepare the plan and has sole authority for adopting and amending it.

Section 8-23 states in part that “the plan of conservation and development shall be a statement of policies, goals and standards for the physical and economic development of the municipality” and that “the plan shall be designed to promote with the greatest efficiency and economy the coordinated development of the municipality and the general welfare and prosperity of its people.”

This current plan updates the Plan of Development, adopted in 1993. The plan was prepared by the Plan of Conservation and Development committee, composed of members from the Planning and Zoning Commission, Inland/Wetlands Commission, and the Finance Board. Town staff and the Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency provided technical assistance. Public involvement also helped shape the Plan, through a public forum held on December 8, 2003 and online input and comment on the policy statements and proposed actions.

Plan Components – By statutory requirement, municipal plans of conservation and development *must*:

“Be a statement of goals, policies, and standards for the physical and economic development of the municipality,

Show the most desirable use of land within the municipality for residential, recreational, commercial, industrial, conservation and other purposes and for the most desirable density of population in the several parts of the municipality,

Note any inconsistencies they have with the state plan,

Be designed to promote the coordinated development of the municipality and the general welfare and prosperity of its people with the greatest efficiency and economy,

Make provision for the development of housing opportunities, including opportunities for multifamily dwellings, consistent with soil types, terrain and infrastructure capacity, for all residents of the municipality and the planning region in which the municipality is located, as designated by the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management under section 16a-4a,

Promote housing choice and economic diversity in housing, including housing for both low and moderate income households, and encourage the development of housing (which will meet the housing needs identified in the housing plan prepared pursuant to section 8-37t) and in the housing component and the other components of the state plan of conservation and development.

Consider the use of cluster development to the extent consistent with soil types, terrain and infrastructure capacity.”

State and Regional Planning Context

Connecticut Plan of Conservation and Development – The Connecticut General Statutes require that the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) prepare a state Conservation and Development Policies Plan every five years for adoption by the Connecticut General Assembly. The first such plan was adopted in 1979; the most current one was adopted May 1998 and covers the period from 1998 to 2003. A 2004-2009 draft report was prepared by OPM and publicly reviewed; however, the General Assembly has postponed adoption to allow for consideration of public comment. OPM will resubmit the new plan on or before December 1, 2004.

Section 8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes requires that each municipal plan of conservation and development “take into account the state plan of conservation and development...and...note any inconsistencies it may have with said state plan.” In general, a municipal project which is in (greater) conformance with the State plan is more likely to receive state funds than one that is less so. As such, it is in the Town’s best interest that, to the maximum extent possible, this Plan of Conservation and Development be consistent with the State plan.

Central Connecticut Regional Development Plan – Future Land Use – 2010 – This plan, adopted in September 1993, outlines policy on a regional scale for a seven-town area, which includes Plymouth. Five policy statements address land use, environment, transportation, economic development, housing as well as an overall general goal.

Implementation Strategy – Implementation of actions to achieve the goals and objectives of the plan of conservation and development are divided into three timeframes, over the life of the plan, as follows:

Short-term (S):	<1 to 2 years
Mid-term (M):	3 to 5 years
Long-term (L):	6 to 10 years
Continual	

Demographic Findings and Implications

- Population growth over the decade 1990-2000 has been effectively stagnant, declining a fraction of a percentage point.
- Pre-teen and early teen populations suggest immediate and imminent impacts to the school system.
- Percentages of dependent populations townwide have stayed constant between 1990 and 2000.
- A large increase in householders 65 years and older, especially in Terryville, indicates a potential need for offering a variety of housing options for this population cluster. This statistic also indicates a potential increased supply of starter homes for the housing market.
- Median and per capita income levels range approximately within the bottom fourth of all Connecticut municipalities.
- Although a very high percentage of residents aged 25 years and older have graduated high school (41% compared to the State’s 28.5%), a larger percentage of residents did not finish ninth grade (7.0%) than experienced by the State as a whole (5.8%). A lesser percentage does not have advanced degrees (5.0%) when compared to the State (13.3%).

- Single-family housing units are increasing as the majority of housing types after two decades of essentially no change.
- The percentage of multifamily housing units experienced a decrease in the decade 1990-2000.

See the Background Report for details on Plymouth Demographics and Trends.

Housing and Residential Development

Introduction

Housing, as a basic human need, is an important element in a plan of conservation and development. Consideration of components of the types and densities of housing in the community is a requirement of plans of conservation and development. Availability of the variety of housing types in terms of affordability, size and other characteristics is crucial to a community's growth and viability.

Findings and Implications

- The vacancy rate of 5.6% for Tract 4255 is high. Such trends, if sustained over a period of time, may jeopardize the integrity and quality of neighborhood housing.
- Even though recent housing construction rates have climbed against other towns in the State, and multiple units have been added, the gap has widened between the number of single-family units (majority) and multifamily units (minority) available.
- Although the housing market acts mostly on forces beyond municipal control, encouraging a variety of housing choices can be incorporated into town policy.
- The Town is approaching the 10% threshold for exemption from the over-ride provisions of AHAP.
- Alternatives to traditional single-family subdivisions hold potential for positive net fiscal effects by attenuating infrastructure and educational costs.
- A variety of elderly housing options can stabilize out-migration of older populations and increase the inventory of starter homes.

See the Background Report for details on Housing and Residential Development.

Goal

Provide a variety of housing types to address the diverse needs of present and future populations and enhance the quality of life.

Objective

Establish measures that ensure that diverse housing opportunities are available for the community.

Implementation Strategy

Actions	Responsible Party for Implementation	Timeframe
Review lot-size requirements of zoning districts for efficiency and desired densities.	Planning and Zoning Commission	Short-term
Implement neighborhood preservation strategies to reduce vacancy rates in older sections of town.	Building Official	Mid-term
Expand the variety of residential zones to address infrastructure constraints and to provide a range of elderly and affordable housing opportunities.	Planning and Zoning Commission	Short-term
Encourage alternatives to traditional single-family subdivisions that hold potential for positive net fiscal effects and that minimize infrastructure and educational costs, such as cluster development.	Planning and Zoning Commission, Home Builders Association (outside assistance)	Mid-term

Economic Development

Introduction

The presence of a vital economic development sector in a community supports many of the quality of life factors that citizens desire. A healthy economy supports community expenditures for community functions and services. Strong economic development can also offer employment to members of the community and beyond. Employment centers have secondary positive effects if management and employee expenditures stay local. Considerations of goals and policies specific to economic development are statutory requirements of plans of conservation and development.

Findings and Implications

There are three issues involving the Manufacturing Zone. One involves the Zone itself: nature of the name, definition and development standards. The second issue is the context and the cohesiveness of the industrial zones. The third issue is the supply of land for future activity.

The Town has made changes to its Manufacturing Zones since the 1993 Plan of Development. Areas previously zoned Manufacturing have been rezoned. The Town may want to take another look at the locations of the Manufacturing Zone focusing on the cohesiveness, critical mass and the viability of each area for future growth and regeneration.

The Town should consider re-naming the Manufacturing Zone to the Industrial Zone. The current name has too narrow a focus. The global economy is evolving and making major changes in the economy of the United States as well. While manufacturing will remain important, its share of the industrial sector will change and will have impacts on local economies. By changing the name of the zone to Industrial, the zone will be more reflective of the diverse nature of business activity.

In addition, the Town's industrial zoning is one-dimensional; treating all sites the same (uniform setbacks, floor area ratio, landscaping requirements, etc.) despite significant differences in setting and functioning potential. Not all industrial settings can follow the pastoral model of the Plymouth Business Park.

The Manufacturing Zones at Poland Brook Road / Judd Road and at Wilton Road / Mount Tobe Road are stand alone, single parcel districts. Both locations are a substantial distance from the main business activity areas of the Town. The Wilton Road / Mount Tobe Road Manufacturing

Zone is far removed from other areas of intensive business activity in the Town. While the location is on a state highway, it is not close to RT 6. The Zone at Poland Brook Road / Judd Road is not as far removed from other areas with business activity. In fact, there is a parcel of Commercial Zoning to the immediate southwest of this parcel. Moreover, Poland Brook Road / Judd Road is part of the roadway leading to watershed lands. From Judd Road / Bemis Street north, RT 72 takes on a more scenic appearance, which is worthy of enhancement. Both will introduce industrial activity into a residential area. This industrial activity may be very intrusive unless changes are made to allow only very residential friendly uses for these settings. Both are outside of the public water and sewer service areas. The Town may wish to rezone both locations to surrounding residential zoning.

Another questionable location is the Tunnel Road / East Washington Road location. The Zoning Map shows this area of Manufacturing Zone as one, single parcel and it is not clear what the specific parcel is. This Zone location may not be viable at all, as one lot contains a single-family dwelling and the other possible parcel has very steep terrain.

Consider rezoning the Wolcott Road area to RA1, the zoning of the surrounding residential area. While the Manufacturing Zone designation is reflective of excavation's industrial character, having the area zoned generic Manufacturing is not necessary for this use to occur and leaves the door open for other industrial uses in the Wolcott Road Zone, with implications on the surrounding area. (The area is within the 50-year service area for public water and is outside of the public sewer service area.)

Excavation is a resource location dependent activity. Excavation can be regulated as a special permit use with performance standards, and permitted in all zones when the circumstances are appropriate. Once the resource has been mined, the area can be restored to a use compatible with the neighborhood.

Consider rezoning the Scott Road / Washington Road location to RA1 or creating a new agricultural use zone. There are two operating farms in this Manufacturing Zone. While a farm is definitely a business, it is not in the same class of business enterprise as a manufacturing plant or research laboratory. By having this location zoned Manufacturing, there is an opportunity for more intense industrial uses to locate in this Zone. In general, farming is compatible with residential uses although there is some potential for conflict (animal noises and smells, etc.) and the Town's Zoning Regulation do permit agricultural operations by right in the RA1 Zone. An agriculture zoning classification can be created whose focus is the protection of agriculture operations. This zone can permit residential use but only by special permit in order to assure that the residential use does not interfere with the viability of the agriculture operation.

Four locations of the Manufacturing Zone are very small and isolated. These are Church Street, Harwinton Avenue (East), Harwinton Avenue (West), and Town Hill Road. All contain operating business enterprises and all are surrounded by residential zoning. The Town may wish to reconsider having such isolated areas of industrial use zoning in deference to the surrounding residential uses. By utilizing flexible non-conforming use regulations, the Town can maintain the viability of these business locations while protecting the adjoining area.

Both the Church Street and the Town Hill Road Zones contains two properties. There are differences. The Town Hill Road location has two parcels and each is utilized by businesses. The Church Street location has two parcels as well, but one contains a business and the second contains a residence. Church Street is very close to RT 6 and the extensive areas of the Commercial Zone. The Town Hill Road location is much more isolated, in the midst of the RA1 Zone.

The two Harwinton Avenue locations, East and West, are also isolated situations of business use surrounded by residential zoning. Based upon the Zoning Map, both locations of the Manufacturing Zone are single parcels. Harwinton Avenue East is not quite as isolated, as there are two adjoining parcels of business use, numbers 80 and 88 Harwinton Avenue.

Five locations of the Manufacturing Zone have critical mass and cohesiveness: Plymouth Industrial Park, RT 72 Southern Corridor, South Main Street, Burr Road and Downtown Terryville. The question is how viable and functional are these areas for the future.

The Town sponsored Plymouth Business Park, Phases I, II & III, is the premier location for existing and new industry in Plymouth. Access to the Park area does need improvement. This is the only area with a substantial amount of vacant land and this land is now on the market.

The RT 72 Southern Corridor has the second largest amount of industrially zoned land and developed industrial space in the Town. This area should not be overlooked for the future. It has assets: location on an active rail line, inclusion in the public water and sewer service area, gas service, part of an existing industrial corridor that extends into the City of Bristol, location on a state highway, vacant land, and substantial square footage with the potential for adaptive re-use. This area also has problems: out of date buildings, potential for on site contamination due to the age of the structures and pre-environmental regulation industrial practices, and a substantial amount of residential use mixed into the Manufacturing Zone. On the positive side, a large amount of the residential use is located on the side roads of Center Street and Meridian Street. These parcels can be removed from the Manufacturing designation and rezoned to RA2. This will protect that residential enclave. Other dwellings are located along RT 72 and these interfere with the continuity of the industrial use along the corridor. Another obstacle to the continuity of this industrial zone is the RA2 zoning of the parcel at the northeast corner of South Riverside Avenue at School Street. Except for the lot to its immediate east on School Street, there is industrial zoning to the north, west and south. Furthermore, Canal Street is slated for roadway improvement, improving the access in the area. As with the Plymouth Business Park, this area presents the Town the opportunity to take the initiative to help foster the area's continued vitality. While this area is unlikely to become a high quality industrial space as the Plymouth Business Park, this area has the potential to serve users seeking less expensive, smaller and starter spaces. The State's Brownfields programs are likely to be an important part of any initiative. Furthermore, the Town may wish to consider creating a separate industrial zone for this location. This separate zone may not differ in uses, but should have different development criteria. The RT 72 Southern Corridor is an old industrial setting and not the pastoral landscape of the Plymouth Business Park. Applying zoning requirements intended for a pastoral setting may be ineffective and detrimental to the success of an older, industrial area. Because space may be at a premium, these sites may need to be developed more densely in order for these sites to be effective. Therefore differing development standards may be needed, such as yard setbacks, lot coverage, floor area ratio and landscaping. On the other hand, there are certain zoning requirements that are best left not modified, such as parking and traffic related requirements, in order to minimize activity spillover from business sites.

Although surrounded by residential zoning, the Manufacturing Zone on South Main Street is a viable industrial area for the future. This area has one thing that the Town's premier industrial area (Plymouth Business Park) does not: access to an active rail line. The site is located along the tracks of the Boston and Maine Corporation. Moreover, rail access is an asset that Plymouth has and many other towns within Plymouth's market area do not. In addition, the on site structures have a substantial amount of useable space plus important utilities such as public water and gas. Unfortunately, this site does not have public sewer service and must rely on septic systems. Extending public sewer service to this location will improve the viability and marketability of this industrial zone location.

The Manufacturing Zone on Burr Road / Main Street has expansion potential. The Main Street lot is vacant. Moreover, this Zone adjoins the Commercial Zone located between Burr Road and Scott Road. This area contains approximately 55 vacant acres, (per Assessor Cards). Furthermore, public sewer serves the area and public water service is anticipated. While the Burr Road properties are within the 50-year expansion, the properties along Main Street are within the 5-year expansion for public water service.

The last Manufacturing Zone is Downtown Terryville. This downtown location seems anachronistic for an industrial zone. Industrial areas need good access and a ready supply of parking and this location fulfills neither requirement. Two parcels ought to be removed from this Zone: Eli Terry Retirement Community and the Congregational Church complex. Neither property functions anymore as an industrial use, despite ties to an industrial past. Each needs to be re-zoned to reflect how each property currently functions. The Eli Terry Retirement Community is a senior residence and belongs in the RA2 Zone. The Church complex is situated on Main Street and belongs in the Commercial Zone. In addition, there are three small residential parcels located on the south side of East Orchard Street. The remainder of this Zone is a remembrance of past economic times. Three of the four remaining industrial parcels are still in use, as business properties. Four of the five buildings date back to 1918 and before. These businesses will be able to function if the area is re-zoned to Commercial. The big puzzle is the old, 1918 six level building, which appears to be abandoned. The listed use is warehousing, except currently, the market place prefers large one-story structures, and manufacturing also prefers one-story structures. While not readily marketable as an industrial facility, the building gives character to the central village area. A new use needs to be found that will infuse activity into the village while not creating large parking demands. One possible option is a museum, which is an appropriate use in commercial zone. One plan for the Terryville Waterwheel site includes a proposal for an industrial museum. This museum can be located in this old factory structure, thereby placing a second museum in the village area and adding another focal point to the village area. Another possibility is to locate the Lock Museum of America in this building, with other uses.

There are two issues involving the Commercial and Restricted Business Zones. One is the context, appropriateness and cohesiveness of these business zones. The second is the need for structure and differentiation in the regulation and location of these zoning districts.

To enable the village center and to increase development options, the Town needs to consider creating a hierarchy of commercial zone districts. These zoning districts will establish the desired land use pattern: ranging from the most concentrated central village area, to the more open outlying areas, and transition areas respective of high residential use. Each district will need to have its own particular combination of specific uses and land development standards for shaping the desired character of each particular zone. By creating differing commercial zone districts, the Town will be able to direct uses to specific areas along Main Street, North Riverside or wherever. This is in addition to the design control of the Village District provisions.

The Town has created a limited use hierarchy before, when the Restricted Business Zone was created. The Restricted Business Zone differentiates itself from the Commercial Zone by its list of limited permitted uses. The Zone seeks to protect residential uses from widespread business intrusion by limiting the type of business permitted in the specified area.

The existing Commercial Zone regulations provide little differentiation. There is the distinction between "by right" versus "special permit" uses. There is some variation in zoning requirements as some uses have their own lot size, setback and floor area ratio requirements. Overall, there is uniformity to the Commercial Zone. The list of permitted uses is constant, irrespective of any differences in the character and landscape of each location of the Commercial Zone.

For the most part, Main Street is the Commercial Zone, with 8 of the 11 Zones located on RT 6. These eight areas vary in character; setting and the mix of existing uses yet all follow the same set of permitted uses.

The eight Commercial Zones along Main Street are mixed in character, offering retail, office, storage, automobile related, industrial, institutional and residential uses. The residential component is very important in the mix and character of commercial areas. The main aspiration is to protect residential uses. Also, residential dwellings can be easily transformed into commercial uses, with office or retail space on the first floor and rental living space on the upper floors.

The Town needs to examine the use mix and setting of each Commercial Zone to determine its existing character, possibilities and proper boundaries. Equally important, there needs to be a vision of what types of areas are desired and the relative location of one area type to another. Furthermore, there needs to be an understanding on the list of appropriate uses for each type of zoning area.

Filling stations / garages break the flow of buildings due to the extensiveness of paved area and dealerships require extensive amounts of land for the display of vehicles. Both are intrusive and are inappropriate for the central village area. Both uses are better located outside of the central village area in lower density areas.

Village centers need to be compact, cohesive, continuous and walkable. One storefront should follow another storefront in a continuous row. There needs to be a compatible combination of uses: retail, restaurants, offices, upper floor residential and focal points. A focal point is a place and activity that draws people into the central village area. This is the area intended for Village District regulations. Of course, there needs to be adjoining supply of parking to support this activity.

Plymouth's central village area will be comprised from two areas zoned Commercial: Main Street between RT 72 and Prospect Street and the Terryville Waterwheel. The proposed central village area may extend from the proposed park at the Historic Waterwheel in the west and to the Baldwin Park in the east. This area contains the Lock Museum of America, the Congregational Church, the distinguished Old Terryville Bank & Trust Company building, and one of the Town's two shopping centers. The area also adjoins the Downtown Terryville Manufacturing Zone with the potential for adaptive reuse of an old factory structure. This proposed area is inclusive of the area proposed for the town center in the 1997 Bartram & Cochran report "Town of Plymouth Economic Needs Study and Market Research Analysis".

Adjoining the central village area are outlying districts. These have uses needing more land area and consequently creating a more open character. Depending upon the complexity of the community, there can be just one outlying zoning district or several, each with its own particular combination of uses and development densities.

Below is a possible organization scheme for the remaining areas of Commercial Zone. The suggested district outline is based on a combination of factors: looking at relative density of development, proximity to the central village area, the amount of residential development within each Zone, and the Town context and setting.

East Side - Main Street between Maple Street and Allen Street - This section along Main Street is to the immediate east of the central village area. It is sufficiently far from the center to not be viable as part of a village center zoning district. This area is important because it frames the

central village area.

There is no need for western transition zone. There is sufficient distance between the Zone at the Terryville Waterwheel and Kellogg Avenue to Town Hill Road / Holt Street area.

Main Street between Allen Street to the Bristol City Line and southern end of North Riverside Avenue - This area is defined by three corridors and three roadways: development along RT 6 from Allen St to RT 72, development along RT 6 from RT 72 to the Bristol City Line and development along the southern end of North Riverside Avenue (RT 72). While there are differences between each corridor, all of these areas serve the entranceway to the Town.

The area between Kellogg Avenue and Town Hill Road / Holt Street is a major concentration of retail. In contrast, the two areas, Todd Hollow Road / Scott Road and West / East of Seymour Road, have a larger amount of residential use in the mix.

The area between Burr Road and Scott Road adjoins the Manufacturing Zone on the western side of Burr Road. This location may be the area to permit heavier commercial and lighter industrial uses, such as a large office building, which needs large parking areas and prefers access from a major roadway, like RT 6. Permitting retail may be the wrong direction.

Plymouth Center: Main Street at North and South Streets - This Zone is small, organized around Main Street, North Street and South Street. The setting is historic. The entire Commercial Zone is within the Plymouth Center National Historic District. Not only is this Zone surrounded by residential uses, the Zone's use mix is substantially residential as well.

Residual Commercial Locations - There are three areas where the areas zoned Commercial lack any cohesive-ness or are isolated, singular parcels. The Commercial Zone at North Riverside Avenue / Poland Brook Road Zone is a collection of parcels and not a cohesive zone. The two isolated zones of South Riverside Avenue and Maple Street should be rezoned to the adjoining area. The parcel at 71 South Riverside Avenue contains a residence and can be rezoned to RA2 or the industrial classification. The Maple Street Zone is surrounded by the RA2 Zone and can prosper as a non-conforming use.

The Town needs to continue its pro-active efforts furthering Plymouth's economic development and offsetting any relative disadvantages due to location and accessibility.

As with the Plymouth Business Park, the Town should take an active role to prepare new locations sites for development potential. The Town should focus is to revitalize the older industrial area along RT 72 southern corridor. While the amount of vacant land is limited, in-fill development will allow an existing resource to be used for its full potential. There is also the potential for reusing existing industrial space. The Town should also focus on creating a new business park along the western end of RT 6, the Town's major roadway and the location for much of the business activity. In addition, the western end of RT 6 is closest to RT 8, the limited access highway. Areas currently zoned for Commercial Zone can be rezoned to a RT 6 Industrial Zone with a specific list of uses appropriate for the context and setting of RT 6.

For businesses involved with manufacturing, the Town should explore the cluster based economic development initiatives at the Connecticut Department of Economic & Community Development. The cluster concept utilizes the concept of nurturing Connecticut's key industries to improve competitiveness within the industries. The purpose of each cluster is to better pre-prepare members to face the challenges created by the new evolving global market place. The name of the metal manufacturing cluster is the Metal Manufacturing Education and Training Alliance (META). The cluster was formed in 1999. The second is to develop ties with the Institute of Technology &

Business Development at Central Connecticut State University. The Institute is an outreach program designed to assist in the development of Connecticut's economy.

See the Background Report for details on Economic Development.

Goal

Strengthen the Town's economic base and enhance municipal revenues with employment opportunity.

Objective

Create an overall economic development strategy that includes re-distribution of commercial and industrial areas in town.

Implementation Strategy

Actions	Responsible Party for Implementation	Timeframe
Create village center in Terryville to allow mixed uses.	Planning and Zoning Commission	Mid-term
Rename "manufacturing zone" to "industrial zone."	Planning and Zoning Commission	Short-term
Create multiple industrial zones reflecting historic context and to utilize land better.	Planning and Zoning Commission	Short-term
Encourage development in areas of established infrastructure and guide future development in concert with projected infrastructure expansion.	Planning and Zoning Commission, Economic Development Commission	Mid-term
Examine opportunities to capture shares of the Route 8 corridor.	Economic Development Commission	Continual
Explore feasibility to invigorate rail freight activity.	CCRPA, ConnDOT	Short- to Mid-term
Continue marketing development sites.	Economic Development Commission	Continual
Promote in-fill development	Economic Development Commission	Continual
Continue to re-zone isolated, unproductive industrial zones.	Planning and Zoning Commission	Short-term

Conservation of Natural Resources

Introduction

Conservation is a key component to a plan of conservation and development. The natural resources of a community serve innumerable purposes, and, often, they are not renewable resources. A plan policy that addresses conservation of natural resources considers wise land uses that emphasize sustainability and protection of natural resources.

Findings and Implications

- Delineation of different soil types and topography are vital to a POCD's ability to designate specific areas for conservation and/or development.
- Watershed dynamics operate within the bounds of associated watersheds only. The intensity of land use impacts is related to surface perviousness.
- Unregulated land uses in a flood plain not only can cause damage, but also can expand the breadth of a flood plain.
- Farmland is ideal land for development and conflicts can intensify, as developable land becomes scarcer.

- Habitat fragmentation can impair the value of habitats by isolating them.
- There are a variety of tools that can aid in natural resource conservation.

See the Background Report for details on conservation of natural resources.

Goal

Guide development that recognizes the existence of and plans for the protection of environmentally sensitive areas.

Objective

Establish proactive measures that assure for the long-term protection of natural resources.

Implementation Strategy

Actions	Responsible Party for Implementation	Timeframe
Compile a natural resources inventory.	Inland/Wetland Conservation Commission, UConn Cooperative Extension Service	Short-term
Prepare aquifer protection regulations based on the DEP model ordinances.	Planning and Zoning Commission	Short-term
Ensure wetland and watercourse regulated area boundaries.	Inland/Wetland Conservation Commission	Continual
Prepare regulatory guidelines for improving stormwater quality, based on the statewide DEP manual.	Public Works Department	Short-term
Participate in the development and implementation of the Pequabuck River Watershed Management Plan.	Inland/Wetland Conservation Commission	Short-term
Implement measures to lessen greenhouse gas emissions from municipal facilities.	Public Works Department, Board of Education	Mid-term
Develop public/private partnership to educate the public about pollution prevention in and around the home.	Inland/Wetland Conservation Commission	Short-term

Transportation Systems

Introduction

Accessibility and mobility are vital for a community's continued growth and good quality of life. All systems of transportation including single-occupant and multi-occupant vehicles, transit, bicycling and pedestrian have distinct impacts on the character of a town and its land use patterns. In turn, land uses influence the types of transportation systems that might be established in support of the land use type. A mix of transportation modes can offer some flexibility in how land uses are supported and can offer choices for a community on the shape of land use patterns in particular areas of town.

Findings and Implications

- While the Town has adequate road access, congestion is a concern along Route 6. This congestion could be addressed in such ways as alternate routing, infrastructure improvement and encouragement of carpooling, bicycling, walking and public transportation.
- It is important for the Town to monitor its bridge infrastructure and assure that bridges are repaired, maintained and replaced when needed.

- The process in developing the Capital Improvement Plan is important for considering needs, timing, expenditures and prioritization.
- Because some residents have no vehicle access and for the sake of the environment and public health, it is important to improve upon the Town's bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. Such improvements can include addition and repair of sidewalks; addition of bicycle lanes and bicycle route signage; improved intersection signal safety; and inclusion of bicycle racks in high-travel places.
- In working with ConnDOT and on its own, it is important for Plymouth to make efforts to reduce not only the number, but also the severity, of traffic accidents. Sometimes widening and straightening of roads can lead to dangerous conditions due to increased speed.

See the Background Report for details on transportation.

Goal

Provide a variety of safe and efficient transportation options, enhance mobility and access, and improve unsafe and inefficient facilities.

Objective

Develop projects that achieve modal balance, support economic development, and implement operational and safety improvements.

Implementation Strategy

Actions	Responsible Party for Implementation	Timeframe
Advocate for a Route 6 bypass with DOT, to include consideration of Greystone Road as the Route 8 connector.	Town Council, CCRPA	Short-term
Implement recommendations of the Route 6 & 72 study with an emphasis on alternative improvements for the intersection of Routes 6 & 72.	Town Council, CCRPA, ConnDOT	Mid- to Long-term
Explore feasibility of expanding regional fixed-route bus systems from Bristol and Waterbury.	Social Service Dept., CCRPA, Waterbury Transit District	Mid- to Long term
Optimize rail infrastructure and facilities.	Town Council, CCRPA, ConnDOT	Short- to Mid-term
Identify service gaps, safety needs, and areas to accommodate pedestrian and bicycle routes to key destinations.	Town Council, Planning and Zoning Commission, Public Safety Commission, Public Works Dept.	Short-term
Explore feasibility of creating road connections between North St. and Harwinton Ave.	Public Works, Planning and Zoning Commission, CCRPA	Mid-term

Community Facilities and Services

Introduction

As a community grows and its population changes, existing facilities can become outmoded. Additionally, public expectations for improved and varied facilities and services can change. The nature, extent and condition of a community's infrastructure all contribute significantly to its quality of life.

Findings and Implications

- Needs for increased space at facilities such as the police station, Terryville Library and the high school have been expressed and are at different stages of realization.

- The timing for establishing expanded facilities of some town functions can be considered with availability of other facilities created by planned consolidation of elementary schools.
- The process in developing the Capital Improvement Plan is important for considering needs, timing, expenditures and prioritization.
- The *1993 Plan of Development* recommended that a Master Sewer Plan be developed to guide further expansion of the system to areas designated as desirable for denser development. Such Plan would be useful, but could be overtaken by neighborhood public health issues that warrant expansion of the system.
- Although water needs are expanding, supplies are currently more than adequate. As with public sewer systems, public water systems and their future expansion can be planned, in order to maximize development in targeted areas with the minimum of cost.
- Similar to a Master Sewer Plan, a Master Recreation Plan can be thoughtfully designed to guide development of certain recreational facilities to areas expected and designated for residential growth.
- Locating community facilities requires consideration of service area, access and a balance of benefit and cost.

See the Background Report for details on community facilities and services.

Goal

Plan for municipal facilities and services that meet the needs of the community and needs of the future.

Objective

Develop long-range plans built on coordinated, interdepartmental needs projections.

Implementation Strategy

Actions	Responsible Party for Implementation	Timeframe
Utilize the annual capital improvement program as the steering mechanism for prioritization.	Planning and Zoning Commission, Board of Finance	Short-term and Continual
Identify proper locations of existing facilities to maximize efficiency.	All Municipal Departments, Planning and Zoning Commission	Continual
Consider co-location of municipal functions, senior centers, community centers, museums and schools as a flexible tool to address space needs.	All Municipal Departments, Planning and Zoning Commission	Continual
Encourage utilization of the new high school by other community functions.	All Municipal Departments, Community organizations	Short-term
Consider employing an outside consultant to address space planning needs and municipal interdepartmental function and relationship.	Town Council	Long-term
Recognize the social service responsibilities that manifest themselves in community infrastructure.	Human Services Dept., Housing Authority, CCRPA, Waterbury Transit District	Continual
Encourage coordination of projected water and sewer systems expansion.	Planning & Zoning Commission, Connecticut Water Co., Public Works Dept., Water Pollution Control Authority, DEP, Torrington Area Health District	Continual

Cultural, Historic and Recreational Resources

Introduction

The cultural, historic and recreational resources of a community can significantly define the unique character of a place. A link to the past is important for setting goals for the future. A community's heritage contributes greatly to civic pride and vitality. These assets form a singular component to a town's quality of life that influence other aspects of how the community develops. Preservation of these resources can lead to opportunities in economic and residential development.

Findings and Implications

- A cultural resource assessment can provide a picture of the historic, cultural and recreational assets of the community.
- Management of these assets can influence the community's character and tourism potential as well as provide guidance for prioritizing certain areas for development and conservation.
- A number of regulatory tools are available to municipalities interested in historic preservation.
- The current trail systems in town are linking certain open space tracts and some historic sites.
- Trail condition assessments can enhance utilization of these pedestrian systems.
- Future trail planning, such as the network at the industrial park, should consider strategies for linkage with new or existing paths or sidewalk networks.
- Properties that would qualify for inclusion under an historic register, but are not listed, should be inventoried.
- Preservation of known historic stone walls would enhance the inventory of typical early New England structures.

See the Background Report for details on cultural, historic and recreational resources.

Goal

Optimize utilization and preservation of cultural, historic and recreational resources.

Objective

Promote efforts to identify key resources and develop new resources based on needs and opportunities.

Implementation Strategy

Actions	Responsible Party for Implementation	Timeframe
Prepare a cultural resource assessment to inventory historic, cultural and recreational assets, with community outreach.	Planning & Zoning Commission Subcommittee, Recreation Dept., Town Council, Historical Society, Public Schools, Local Seniors, Conn. Society of Genealogists	Short-term
Prepare a study to identify recreational trail linkages between parks and open space, with inclusion of current or planned sidewalk networks.	Planning & Zoning Commission Subcommittee, Public Works Dept., Land Trust, Conservation Commission, CCRPA	Short-term
Prepare periodic inventories of historic sites and structures to be maintained regularly to track conditions and threats.	Planning & Zoning Commission, CCRPA, Historical Society or its subcommittee, Assessor's Office	Short-term
Strengthen zoning standards for historic preservation – e.g., fences reflecting time in history.	Planning & Zoning Commission, CCRPA	Short-term
Require mapping of stone walls for site plans to consider preservation.	Planning & Zoning Commission	Short-term
Evaluate feasibility of industrial heritage tourism opportunities.	Economic Development Commission, Historical Society, Northwest Connecticut Tourism District	Mid-term

Open Space

Introduction

The value of open space as a land use has become increasingly important in face of sprawl development over the last 50 years. Open space land is different from undeveloped land. While undeveloped land can be developed at any time, open spaces are dedicated undeveloped acreage, protected from development. The value of open space is that, while it does not produce tax revenues for the town, neither does it produce municipal costs associated with developed land, such as infrastructure (sewers, water, etc.). It is also valuable for preserving environmentally sensitive land and redirecting development to more appropriate locations.

Findings and Implications

- Public open space acreage increased by only 2% between 1993 and 2004, while residential acreage increased by 10% in the same period.
- The State of Connecticut owns the great majority of public open space acreage in Plymouth.
- Open space land uses can enhance natural conditions to preserve water quality and habitats, provide visual relief to development corridors, and reduce costs borne by the Town to provide services associated with developed land.
- An open space plan can establish a criteria and strategy for open space acquisitions by the Town.
- Physical patterns of open space dedication should be coordinated with patterns of developed land.

See the Background Report for details on open space.

Goal

Optimize the economic, environmental and social value of open space.

Objective

Design an overall plan that identifies policy, criteria, strategies and funding mechanisms for open space acquisition.

Implementation Strategy

Actions	Responsible Party for Implementation	Timeframe
Identify opportunities for linking open space parcels.	Planning & Zoning Commission, Conservation Commission	Short-term
Establish trail networks that reinforce parcel linkage.	Planning & Zoning Commission, Conservation Commission, Ad Hoc Subcommittees	Mid-term
Prepare an Open Space Plan that illustrates policies and strategies for acquisition.	Planning & Zoning Commission, Conservation Commission	Mid-term
Establish the administrative mechanism for utilizing open space funding.	Board of Finance, Town Council	Short-term
Utilize the state open space grant program in coordination with the land trust and water companies.	Planning & Zoning Commission, Conservation Commission, CCRPA	Mid-term

Land Use

Introduction

The essential nature of a plan of conservation and development involves defining a vision of the future character of a community in terms of both its natural features and its built environment. The type, location and intensity of land uses, and their existing and future patterns on the landscape, significantly affect that character.

Findings and Implications

- Residential development has increased by slightly over 10% in the decade between 1993 and 2003 in terms of land acreage. Population growth for the same period was effectively stagnant, indicating land sprawl conditions.
- Agricultural land uses are especially susceptible to conversion to more intense uses. An agricultural use plan, like an open space plan, could identify key parcels for preservation. Farmland preservation techniques could be employed in particular cases.
- Constraints on uncommitted land have reduced buildable acreage by 39%.
- Approximately +/- 3,000 acres of residential-zoned land are considered buildable currently.
- Development of a new cluster of industrial uses should be explored for future development within the life of this plan.

See the Background Report for details on land use.

Goal

Encourage sustainable growth.

Objective

Promote uses of land that balance societal needs with the land's individual characteristics.

Implementation Strategy

Actions	Responsible Party for Implementation	Timeframe
Create zoning districts and regulations that reflect the physical advantages and disadvantages of the particular area.	Planning & Zoning Commission	Mid-term
Promote a variety of housing types that reflect needs of small families, single wage-earners, low-income and elderly	Planning & Zoning Commission	Mid-term
Promote uses that reflect sensitivity to projected impacts.	Planning & Zoning Commission	Mid-term and Continual
Change residential zoning district names to reflect minimum lot size requirements therein.	Planning & Zoning Commission	Short-term
Devise soil-based zoning regulations that equate residential density by soil capability.	Planning & Zoning Commission	Short-term
Allow opportunity for new satellites of commercial and industrial/office complexes for emerging neighborhoods and regional connectivity	Planning & Zoning Commission	Mid-term and Continual

Town of Plymouth Future Land Use Distribution



THOMASTON

BRISTOL

WATERTOWN

WATERBURY



Future Land Use Categories

Agricultural Preservation Area	Institution	Road
Airport	Low Density Res.	Ridgeline Protection Area
Commercial	Medium Density Res.	Semi-public Open Space
High Density Res.	Ridgeline Protection Area	Very Low Density Res.
Industrial	Public Open Space	Waterbody

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