

New Milford 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development

New Milford Planning Commission
Adopted: July 6, 2010
Effective: August 6, 2010





TOWN OF NEW MILFORD

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New Milford Residents:

We are pleased to submit to you the 2010 New Milford Plan of Conservation and Development. This Plan is presented in a format that is easy to follow and is intended to serve as a guide that is flexible while maintaining stability in the long-term goals of the community. The Plan is a guide toward enhancing the quality of life and the community character of New Milford, addressing such important community issues as conservation, public facilities, transportation, economic development and the environment.

This Plan is the result of numerous meetings by the P.O.C.D. Committee, the Planning Commission, discussions with municipal employees and many public forums with residents over the past year, as well as many hours of research, review and discussion by the Commission, its staff and its consultant.

The 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development brings together in a thoughtful, comprehensive manner the various elements that contribute to the quality of life of New Milford.

We acknowledge and thank all involved for their contribution of time and commitment to the development of this Plan.

The New Milford Planning Commission

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INTRODUCTION

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About Plans of Conservation and Development

A Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) is a tool for guiding change that will inevitably occur in New Milford's future. A POCD should establish a common vision for the future physical development of New Milford and recommend policies to help attain that vision.

The goals and recommendations in a POCD should reflect an overall consensus of what is best for the community and its residents.

The POCD primarily addresses the conservation and development of New Milford (the physical layout). However, as you will see in the POCD, some social and economic development issues are addressed since they are often inter-related with conservation, development, and land use issues.

State Statutes set forth what must be included in a POCD. The following are excerpts from the Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) 8-23.

The POCD shall:

- Be a statement of policies, goals and standards for the physical and economic development of the municipality...
- Provide for a system of principal thoroughfares...sidewalks, multipurpose trails...

- Be designed to promote...the coordinated development of the municipality...to have compact, transit accessible, pedestrian-oriented mixed use development patterns and land reuse... recommend the most desirable use of land within the municipality for residential, recreational, commercial, industrial, conservation and other purposes and include a map showing such proposed land uses...
- Recommend the most desirable density of population in ... the municipality...
- Note any inconsistencies with the following growth management principles:
 - redevelopment and revitalization of commercial centers...
 - expansion of housing opportunities and design choices...
 - concentration of development around transportation nodes...
 - conservation and restoration of the natural environment, cultural and historical resources and existing farmlands...
 - protection of environmental assets critical to public health and safety...
 - integration of planning across all levels of government...
- Make provision for the development of housing opportunities...
- Promote housing choice and economic diversity in housing...

- Consider the following:
 - the community development action plan of the municipality...
 - the need for affordable housing...
 - the need for protection of existing and potential drinking water supplies...
 - the use of cluster development and other development ...
 - the state plan of conservation and development ...
 - the regional plan of development...
 - physical, social, economic and governmental conditions and trends...
 - the needs of the municipality ...
 - the objectives of energy-efficient patterns of development...
 - protection and preservation of agriculture.

The POCD may:

- Show the commission's recommendation for
 - conservation and preservation of traprock and other ridgelines...
 - airports, parks, playgrounds and other public grounds...
 - the general location, relocation and improvement of schools...
 - the general location and extent of public utilities...for water, sewerage, light, power, transit and other purposes...
 - the extent and location of public housing projects...
 - programs for the implementation of the plan...
 - proposed priority funding areas...

Use of this POCD

This Plan of Conservation and Development is an advisory document to the Planning Commission, other boards and commissions, and residents. It is intended to provide a framework for decision-making with regard to conservation and development activities in New Milford over the next 10 to 20 years.

While the statutory responsibility to adopt the POCD rests with the Planning Commission, implementation will only occur with the diligent efforts of the residents and officials of the Town of New Milford.

Past Plans in New Milford

The Town has consistently maintained a Plan of Conservation and Development. The most recent POCD was the 1997 Plan of Conservation and Development. Previous town plans were undertaken in 1959, 1965, 1972 and 1986.

The Town has undertaken other planning efforts including the 1996 *Downtown New Milford Plan* and various economic development studies.

The POCD Development Process

The process to create this POCD began in late 2007 when the Planning Commission held initial workshops to gather input from boards, commissions and residents. The Commission then formed a POCD Update Committee to oversee the process.

The New Milford Plan of Conservation and Development Update Committee prepared this POCD, with oversight by the Planning Commission and input from residents and other local officials.

Additional public input played a critical role. The Committee held three interactive public workshops to solicit ideas for strategies prior to the creation of Issue Booklets. Then, the Center for Research and Public Policy conducted a professional telephone survey of residents. The Committee held an additional meeting where residents and organizations/interest groups provided their input. In addition, the Committee allowed public input at each of its working meetings.

A Plan of Conservation and Development becomes an official document after a public hearing and adoption by the Planning Commission. A public hearing on adoption was held on July 1, 2010 and the Plan of Conservation and Development was adopted by the Commission on July 6, 2010. The effective date of this Plan of Conservation and Development is August 6, 2010.

Input into this POCD

Gathering input from residents and local officials played an important role while developing this POCD.

Board/Commission Scoping Meeting – October 30, 2007

Public Scoping Meeting – December 8, 2007

Conservation Input Meeting – October 23, 2008

Development Input Meeting – January 22, 2009

Infrastructure Input Meeting – February 26, 2009

Infrastructure Interviews – February, 2009

Telephone Survey – Conducted in May, 2009

General Public Input Meeting – June 23, 2009

Town Council Review & Endorsement – 65-day period prior to Public Hearing

Public Hearing – July 1, 2010

Notes:

CONDITIONS AND TRENDS

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Overview

New Milford is located in Litchfield County in western Connecticut. The Town is bordered to the north by Kent, to the east by Washington and Roxbury, to the south and east by Bridgewater, to the south by Brookfield and to the west by New Fairfield and Sherman. New Milford is a member of the Housatonic Valley Council of Elected Officials (HVCEO), a regional planning agency comprised of ten municipalities. New Milford and Bridgewater are the only HVCEO communities located in Litchfield County.



Regional Context

New Milford provides many amenities to neighboring communities and the region. Some of these regional amenities include:

- The New Milford Hospital
- Retail businesses
- Jobs
- Housing that is generally more affordable than in nearby communities
- Candlewood Lake
- Major roadways such as Routes 7 and 202
- Major rivers such as the Housatonic, Aspetuck, and Still Rivers
- State Parks
- Scenic mountains, such as Bear Hill and Mount Tom
- A food supply via local working farms

At the same time, New Milford residents depend upon communities in the HVCEO Region, communities further south and New York state for jobs and rely upon a regional transportation network.

Development patterns in New Milford are often influenced by trends occurring elsewhere in the region. Housing demand, the types of businesses that locate in New Milford and traffic are all influenced by the larger region.

Historical Highlights

Looking at New Milford's past gives insight into the forces that shaped development patterns. New Milford's natural features and man-made features played a large role in shaping the Town's patterns. These same resources continue to influence development in New Milford (e.g., limited options to cross the Housatonic River). Historic trends also continue to impact New Milford, including the loss of farmland and ever-shifting economies that require continual adaptation.

In 1712, the State General Assembly granted New Milford the privileges of a township. During these early years the first "highways" were laid out, local government formed, villages such as Gaylordsville emerged, and settlers built the first bridges across the Housatonic River.

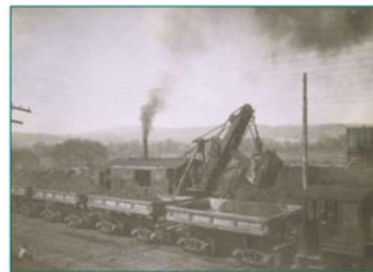
With abundant natural resources, the Town was able to play an important industrial role in the early 1800s. Local industry included marble quarries, iron works, a paper mill and agriculture. Having a means (the River) to ship these products was critical.

While the Housatonic River supported industry, crossing the River was a challenge. Bridges were built downtown and in Gaylordsville. These bridges, along with the opening of a rail line from Bridgeport to New Milford in 1840, helped the Town emerge as a trading center.

By the late 1800s, factories were active in the Downtown and the Town Hall and Town Green were built. Elsewhere, summer homes were being built as New Milford became popular with summer residents. This trend continued into the early 1900s and more and more farmland was converted to summer housing. New Milford then saw a decline in population from 1910 to 1930 as residents left for jobs in other cities. Also in the early 1900s, Downtown was greatly damaged by fire and was rebuilt.



Downtown, c. 1902-1915.



Railroad in New Milford, 1904.



Boardmans Bridge, c. 1913.

Development patterns greatly changed as advancements in communications and electricity enabled people to live throughout the Town. The development of electricity drastically altered New Milford's physical landscape when Connecticut Light and Power constructed the Rocky River hydroelectric project and created Candlewood Lake. The Lake proved to be a popular amenity and further enticed summer visitors.

Roads also shaped New Milford's development patterns. In the 1920s, Route 7 was paved as a two lane road and other state routes were constructed. As early as the 1930s, businesses aimed at meeting the needs of automobile drivers were built along southern Route 7. While Downtown was still a community focal point, Route 7 attracted business development.

By the 1960s, housing development was rapid, agriculture was still declining and the Town faced traffic and sewer capacity issues. The Town had recognized the need to plan for growth and adopted its first town plan in 1959. Then 11 years later, the Town adopted zoning; many development patterns seen today were already established by that time.



Downtown, 1938.

Land Use in New Milford

New Milford is the largest municipality in Connecticut at 64.4 square miles, or approximately 40,900 acres. More than half of all land in New Milford is either developed (e.g., residential, commercial, etc.) or dedicated to a use (e.g., dedicated open space). The remaining 41% of land is vacant, meaning it is possible that it might be developed. For developed and committed land, residential use is the largest category, with just under 10,000 acres.

Open space comprises 24% of all land in New Milford. Though of the 9,500 acres of open space, almost 3,500 acres are not permanently protected and thus classified as unprotected open space (see sidebar).

Definitions

Developed Land - with buildings, structures, or improvements used for a particular economic or social purpose (such as residential or commercial).

Committed Land - used for a particular economic or social purpose (including open space).

Protected Open Space - land or development rights owned by the Federal government, the State, the Town, land trusts, or conservation organizations intended to remain for open space purposes.

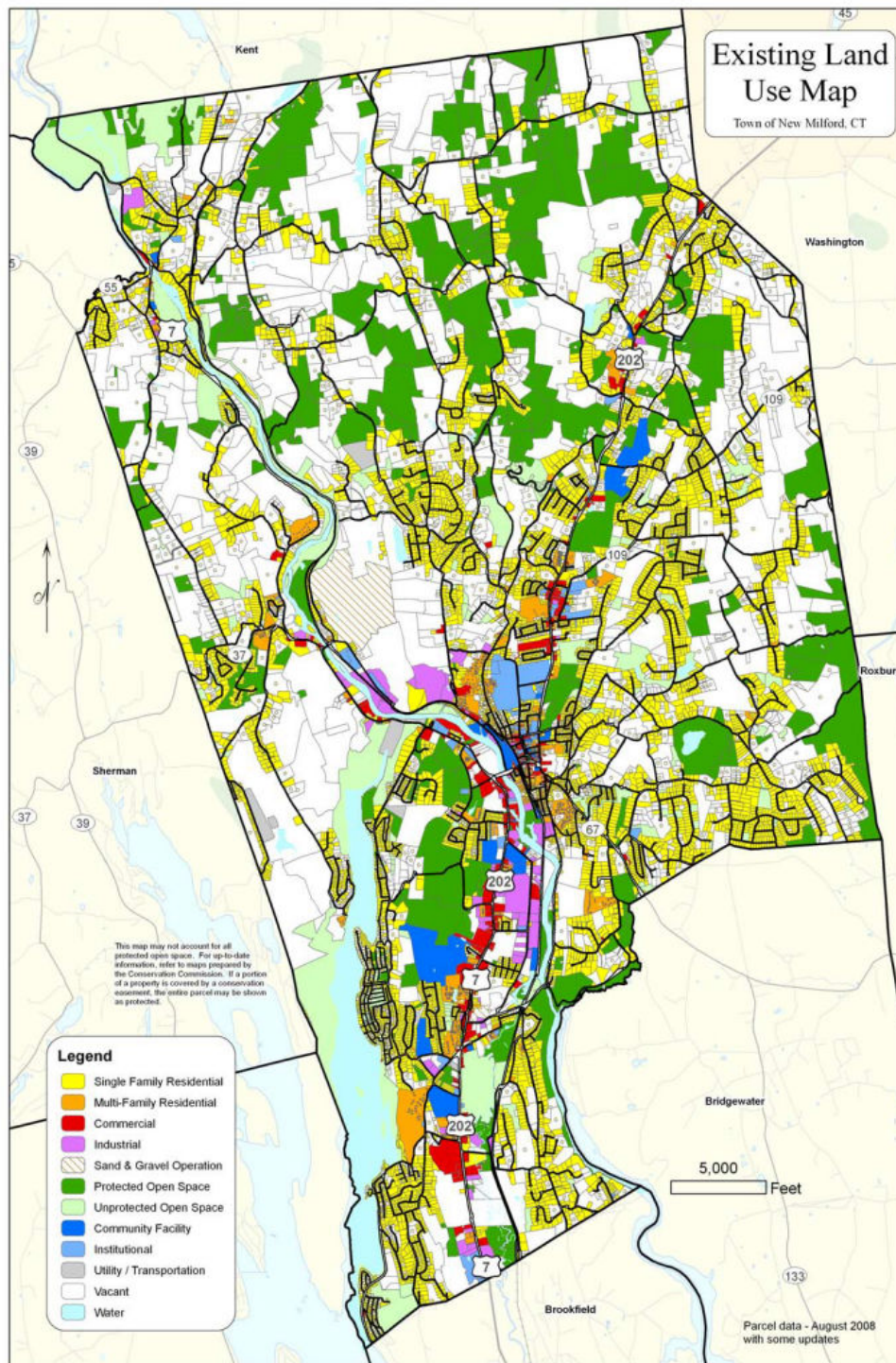
Unprotected Open Space - land used for other purposes but provides open space benefits, such as golf courses and water supply lands.

Vacant Land - land that is not developed or committed.

Land Uses in New Milford*

Use	Acres	% of Developed & Committed Land	% of Total Land Area
Residential	9,757	41%	24%
- Single Family Residential	9,033		
- Multi-Family Residential	724		
Commercial & Industrial	1,355	6%	3%
- Commercial	515		
- Industrial	478		
- Extraction	362		
Open Space	9,797	41%	24%
- Protected Open Space (likely larger based on recent acquisitions)	6,344		
- Unprotected Open Space	3,453		
Institutional & Community Facility	757	3%	2%
- Community Facility	434		
- Institutional	312		
Other	2,358	10%	6%
- Right of Way, Transportation, Utility	1,959		
- Water Features	426		
Total Developed & Committed Land	23,856	100%	58%
Vacant	16,902	--	41%
Total	40,953	--	100%

*Based upon available data available in August 2008, with limited updates. For up-to-date data on open space, see maps and inventory prepared by the Conservation Commission.



Hold for back of Land Use map

New Milford's People

Changes in Population

According to the Connecticut State Data Center (CSDC), an estimated 28,439 people lived in New Milford in 2007.

The Town's population increased by 5% from 2000 to 2007. This is a very low rate of growth compared to the previous four decades (see table). In fact, New Milford's rate of growth from 1970 to 2000 had been much higher than the State's rate, but is now more in line with the State (the State growth rate was 6% from 2000 to 2007).

Projections of future population levels can help a community understand how it may grow if current trends continue and can provide insight into possible demographic changes. Projections prepared by the CSDC and the Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT) project the Town's population to reach between 34,000 to 35,500 by 2030 (see table). This represents an addition of roughly 8,000 people over the 2007 population estimate, or a 28% increase.

Given the amount of vacant residentially-zoned land in the Town, these projections appear to be reasonable (see build out analysis on p. 26).

New Milford's Population

	Pop.	Change
1790	3,167	
1800	3,221	2%
1810	3,537	10%
1820	3,830	8%
1830	3,979	4%
1840	3,974	0%
1850	4,508	13%
1860	3,535	-22%
1870	3,586	1%
1880	3,907	9%
1890	3,917	0%
1900	4,804	23%
1910	5,010	4%
1920	4,781	-5%
1930	4,700	-2%
1940	5,559	18%
1950	5,799	4%
1960	8,318	43%
1970	14,601	76%
1980	19,420	33%
1990	23,629	22%
2000	27,121	15%
2007	28,439	5%

Sources: US Census, HVCEO. 2007 Estimate from CT State Data Center.

Population Projections, New Milford

	Population				# Change		
	2000	2010	2020	2030	2000 to 2010	2010 to 2020	2020 to 2030
CSDC	27,121	30,029	32,835	35,446	+2,895	+2,806	+2,611
ConnDOT		29,020	31,280	34,390	+1,886	+2,260	+3,110

Sources: CT State Data Center and ConnDOT LU-27C, 2008.

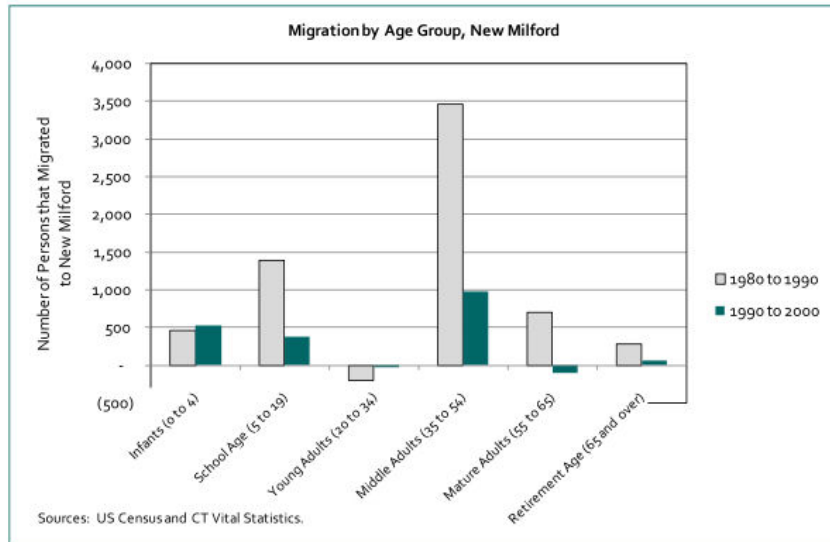
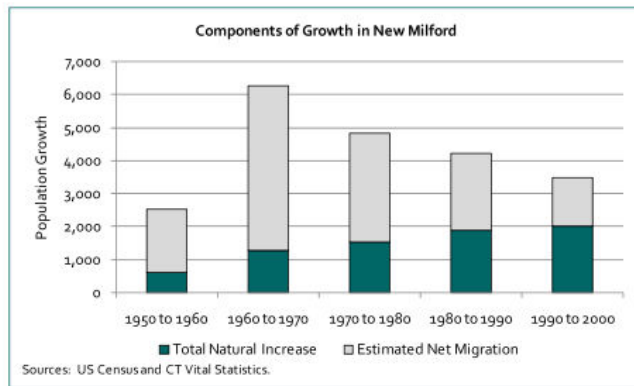
Components of Population Growth

From 1950 to 1980, in-migration was the main driver of population growth in New Milford. In-migration was especially experienced in the 1960s - 80% of growth during that decade can be attributed to people moving to New Milford.

The influence of migration on population increases began to moderate over the next 30 years and by the 1990s, just over half of new growth was due to natural increase.

An analysis of which age groups have been migrating to New Milford since 1980 reveals that the age 35 to 54 group dominated migration from 1980 to 1990. This migration pattern would likely have driven a demand for "trade up" housing (i.e., larger single family houses) in Town. They also tend to have school-age children. Migration of that age group slowed during the next decade, although this group and children still comprised most migrants.

Like many communities in Connecticut, New Milford is losing its "young adult" population. From 1990 to 2000, the Town also saw a loss of "mature adults", those ages 55 to 65, despite their in-migration in the previous decade. The Town has also seen slight in-migration of those at retirement age; this age group may be drawn to elderly housing, nursing homes and medical services offered in Town.



Age Composition

While the previous discussion looked at the age composition of migrants to New Milford, the following table looks at the age composition of all residents, how the age composition has changed over time, and the projected age composition (i.e., the proportion of the total population in each age group). Projected changes could mean that New Milford will see less demand for larger single family houses and a greater need for smaller units that are close to services.

Additional Demographic Characteristics

Additional characteristics of New Milford's residents, based on 2000 Census data, include:

- In terms of racial composition, 94% of residents are white, 2% are Asian, 1% are two or more races, and 1% are black
- 3% are of Hispanic or Latino origin
- 30% have a bachelors degree or higher
- 8% speak a language other than English at home and 3% speak English less than "very well"

Changes in New Milford's Age Composition						
Description	Age Range	Needs / Wants	1980 Share	2000 Share	Projected 2020 Share	Future Trend
Infants	0 to 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child care • Pre-school programs 	8%	7%	6%	↔
School Age	5 to 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School facilities • Recreation programs and facilities 	26%	22%	20%	↓
Young Adults	20 to 34	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rental housing, starter homes • Social destinations 	25%	17%	18%	↔
Middle Adults	35 to 54	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starter homes, trade-up homes • Family programs, school programs 	23%	35%	23%	↓
Mature Adults	55 to 64	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smaller homes, second homes • Leisure programs and facilities 	7%	9%	16%	↑
Retirement Age	65 +	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower upkeep, higher service housing • Elderly programs, tax relief 	10%	9%	18%	↑

Sources: US Census and CT State Data Center.

New Milford's Housing Stock

Trends

There were 11,367 housing units in New Milford in 2007, according to the Connecticut Economic Resources Center, Inc. (CERC). This increase of 657 housing units from 2000 to 2007 seems to indicate a slowdown in housing growth in New Milford when compared to the previous 40 years. The rate of housing growth had generally outpaced that of the Region over the last 40 years, though since 2000 the rates are similar.

Reflecting state-wide trends, New Milford's household size has been shrinking each decade, dropping to 2.68 persons per household in 2000. This means that New Milford needed more units to house residents in 2000 than over the previous 40 years.

Housing Characteristics

Overall, New Milford offers a range of housing types that can help meet needs of various age groups. While most of New Milford's housing units are single family units (78%), almost 1,500 housing units (or 13%) are in larger buildings that have five or more units. There are also a number of smaller multi-family housing units (8% of the housing stock). Of all housing units, almost 18% are rental units, according to 2000 census data.

The 2009 HVCEO *Housing Market Assessment* identifies 42 apartment / condominium complexes and one age-restricted development in New Milford. HVCEO also lists three nursing or residential care homes in New Milford, with a total of 218 beds. The Census considers nursing/residential care homes to be "group quarters" and counted 223 people living in group quarters in 2000.

New Milford has attracted a summer population for over 100 years. Census data indicates that 379 vacant housing units are for "occasional use." This represents around 4% of all housing units. These housing units may be important from a fiscal perspective because the owners pay property taxes but generally require fewer town services than units occupied year-round.

Housing Units in New Milford

	# of Units	Change
1960	3,415	--
1970	5,456	+2,041
1980	7,346	+1,890
1990	9,295	+1,949
2000	10,710	+1,415
2007	11,367	+657

	Town Growth	Region Growth
1960-70	60%	41%
1970-80	35%	36%
1980-90	27%	18%
1990-00	15%	10%
2000-07	6%	7%

Sources: HVCEO and CERC.

Persons Per Household

	New Milford	Region
1960	3.28	--
1970	3.21	--
1980	2.97	--
1990	2.77	2.75
2000	2.68	2.74

Source: HVCEO.

Types of Housing, 2006

Units in Structure	% of Units	
	New Milford	Region
1-unit	78%	74%
2-unit	4%	8%
3-4 units	4%	6%
5+ units	13%	12%
Mobile Home	1%	1%

Source: HVCEO Bulletin 135: *Housing Market Assessment*, 2009.

Housing Prices

New Milford provides modest priced housing for the region's residents. As shown the tables, New Milford's median single family and condominium sales prices were the lowest in the Region in 2006.

Data on sales for single family units and condominiums in New Milford from 1988 to 2008 shows an upswing in prices from the early 1990s until 2006.

The median sales price for a single family house peaked at \$370,000 in 2006. The peak median price for a condominium was \$184,250, also in 2006.

Median Sales Price, Single Family Houses, 2006

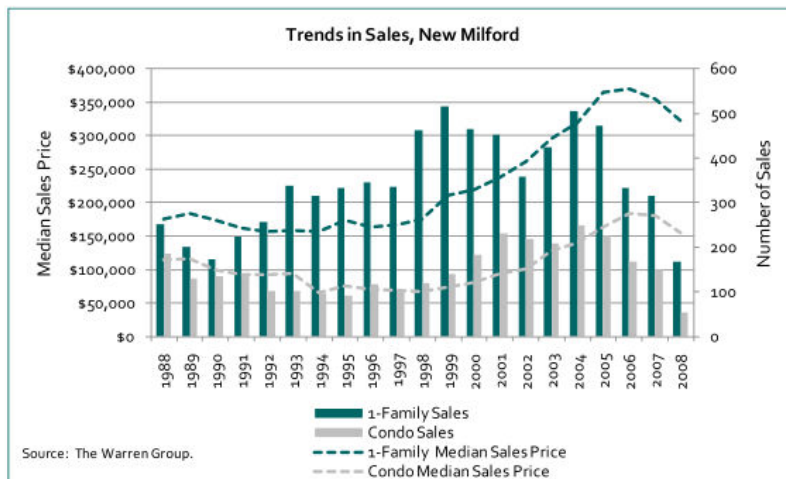
Ridgefield	\$797,500
Redding	\$676,500
Sherman	\$510,000
Bridgewater	\$490,000
Newtown	\$490,000
Brookfield	\$440,000
New Fairfield	\$422,000
Bethel	\$382,444
Danbury	\$373,000
New Milford	\$370,000

Source: HVCEO Bulletin 135: Housing Market Assessment, 2009.

Median Sales Price, Condominiums, 2006

Redding	\$675,000
Newtown	\$562,075
Ridgefield	\$413,000
New Fairfield	\$328,000
Bethel	\$268,000
Danbury	\$261,000
Brookfield	\$235,000
New Milford	\$184,250

Source: HVCEO Bulletin 135: Housing Market Assessment, 2009.



Housing Affordability

"Affordable housing" has many meanings including subsidized or low income housing or "work force housing". Work force housing generally means housing for lower wage employees, young adults just entering the work force and often municipal employees (those earning 80% to 120% of the median income). Affordable or modest price housing also is important for fixed income seniors who wish to stay in the community when ready to downsize to a smaller home.

When looking at New Milford's housing stock, there are two ways to analyze affordability. The first is to examine "naturally occurring affordability". These are housing units that have no resale restrictions placed upon them, but due to location, size, or condition have a lower market value and are therefore more affordable than other units in the Town or Region. However, the affordability of naturally occurring affordable units is not protected – prices can rise beyond the reach of local and regional residents.

The HVCEO *Housing Market Assessment* analyzed what could be considered the natural affordability of the Region's housing stock. The analysis used a commonly accepted rule of thumb that housing is affordable if no more than 30% of a household's income is spent on housing costs. According to the report, of the Region's ten communities, New Milford's and Danbury's housing stock provided the most affordable opportunities for median, moderate and low income households (see table).



Houses in New Milford.

Affordability of Housing Stock				
Affordable To:	New Milford			Region
	Affordable Price	# of Homes	% of Homes*	% of Homes
Median Income Households (100% AMI)**)	\$325,000	4,641	55%	33%
Moderate Income Households	\$255,000	2,767	33%	16%
Low Income Households	\$151,250	676	8%	4%

*Percentage based on owner-occupied units.

**AMI: area median income, \$80,192 in 2007.

Source: HVCEO *Bulletin 135: Housing Market Assessment*, 2009.

A second measure of affordability is to examine the number of protected affordable units in a community.

The State, pursuant to CGS 8-30g, considers a unit to be affordable if a dwelling unit is assisted, CHFA-financed or deed restricted (see sidebar for details). According to this definition, New Milford has 249 affordable units, comprising 2.22% percent of the Town's housing stock. While well-below the State's 10% goal, this percentage is the third highest in the Region.

These analyses indicate that while New Milford's housing stock appears to be affordable when comparing income to housing prices, the Town falls far short of having 10% of its housing stock protected as affordable.

The HVCEO *Housing Market Assessment* quantified the number of affordable housing units needed in each community based on population at risk of homelessness due to income and current housing payment levels. The analysis allocated the need across the Region based on a number of factors including the location of jobs and the existing affordable housing stock.

To address those at greatest risk (low or moderate income households that are paying at least 50% of their income for housing expenses), 716 units would be needed in New Milford. To address that group and provide for the next risk level (low or moderate income households paying more than 30% of their income for housing costs), 1,700 affordable housing units would be needed.

Affordable Housing Definition

In order to qualify as an affordable unit under CGS 8-30g, a dwelling must be:

- assisted housing (funded under a state or federal program);
- CHFA-financed housing (financed under a program for income-qualifying persons or families); or,
- housing that is deed restricted to be affordable to low- or moderate-income persons or families for at least 40 years.

Until 10% of a community's housing stock is affordable, it is subject to an affordable housing appeals procedure that shifts the burden of proof to the community to show that threats to public health or safety outweigh the need for affordable housing.

State-Recognized Affordable Housing, 2008

Danbury	10.29%
Bethel	5.02%
New Milford	2.22%*
Ridgefield	2.05%
Newtown	1.98%
Brookfield	1.71%
New Fairfield	0.66%
Bridgewater	0.13%
Sherman	0.06%
Redding	0%

*As shown in the table on p. 16, a large percentage of housing units in New Milford are "naturally" affordable to low and moderate income households. While most of those units do not meet the State's requirements for "affordable", they play a critical role in meeting the Town's and Region's housing needs.

Source: DECD 2008.

New Milford's Economy

This section highlights economic characteristics of New Milford's labor force and jobs in town. It is important to keep in mind the distinction between labor force and jobs:

- **Labor Force** – the labor force is comprised of New Milford residents who work or are seeking employment. They may work in New Milford or elsewhere.
- **Jobs** – These are jobs that are located in New Milford. They may be filled by New Milford's labor force or by people who live elsewhere.

Labor Force

According to the 2000 Census, roughly 74% of the Town's population age 16 or older is in the labor force. This equals just over 15,000 residents. As discussed later, there are roughly 8,600 jobs located in New Milford. With almost two working residents per job, this means that many residents must depend upon jobs elsewhere for employment.

According to the CT Department of Labor (CTDOL), New Milford's 2008 unemployment rate was 4.5%; which is almost triple the 2000 rate of 1.6%. However, the 2008 rate reflects the current economic downturn and is still lower than the State's rate of 5.7%.

In 2000, the largest number of New Milford residents worked in manufacturing, educational, health and social services, and retail (see table). Compared to the Region and State, New Milford had a slightly higher percentage of its labor force employed in manufacturing and retail trade.

Sectors of Employment, Labor Force, 2000

Industry	New Milford's Labor Force		Region's Labor Force	State's Labor Force
	#	%	%	%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, mining	84	0.6%	0.3%	0.3%
Construction	1,233	8%	8%	6%
Manufacturing	2,715	18%	17%	15%
Wholesale trade	452	3%	3%	3%
Retail trade	1,954	13%	12%	11%
Transportation, warehousing, utilities	582	4%	3%	4%
Information	544	4%	5%	3%
Finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing	1,199	8%	9%	10%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, waste management services	1,479	10%	13%	10%
Educational, health and social services	2,700	18%	18%	22%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	858	6%	6%	7%
Other services (except public administration)	678	5%	5%	5%
Public administration	343	2%	2%	4%

Sources: 2000 Census and HVCEO.

The majority of New Milford's labor force (73%) works within the HVCEO Region, according to 2000 Census data. This includes just over 5,200 residents who work in New Milford. Almost 500 residents worked at home in 2000.

The remainder of New Milford's labor force commutes to other parts of Connecticut, including the Waterbury and New Haven areas or to New York State. From 1990 to 2000, fewer New Milford residents worked in New Milford and slightly fewer commuted to Bethel. The other destinations, particularly Danbury and Ridgefield, saw increases in the number of New Milford residents commuting there for work.

All of the top ten work destinations, except for Washington and New Milford itself, are south of town. The dependency on jobs to the south, combined with the facts that more New Milford workers were heading to these work destinations in 2000 than in 1990 and that 84% of New Milford residents drive along to work, likely contribute to the Route 7 congestion issues in New Milford and on other stretches of Route 7 to the south.

Top Work Destinations, New Milford Labor Force, 2000

Destination	#	%	Change from 1990 to 2000
New Milford	5,236	36%	-424
Danbury	3,121	21%	+495
Brookfield	951	7%	+280
Westchester Co., NY	574	4%	+144
Ridgefield	472	3%	+331
Stamford	337	2%	+183
Bethel	291	2%	-11
Norwalk	283	2%	+79
Newtown	257	2%	+107
Washington	224	2%	+84

Source: HVCEO.

Jobs in New Milford

In 2007, there were roughly 8,600 jobs in New Milford (see sidebar); the Town lost approximately 500 jobs since 2000. The Town had seen steady increases in jobs from 1970 to 2000, though the increases slowed down each decade.

The retail and healthcare / social services sectors provide the most jobs in New Milford. This is not surprising given the number of retail stores in the Town and the presence of the New Milford Hospital. The local government and manufacturing sectors closely follow, providing roughly 1,100 and 900 jobs respectively.

Change in Jobs in New Milford

	Jobs	Change
1970	4,281	
1980	7,170	+2,889
1990	8,260	+1,090
2000	9,130	+870
2007	8,625	-505

Source: CT DOL.

Jobs by Industry, 2007

Industry	New Milford				Danbury Labor Market Area	State
	Establishments	% of Establishments	Annual Average Jobs	% of Jobs	% of Jobs	% of Jobs
Total - All Industries	892	100%	8,625	100%	100%	100%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting	*	*	*	*	0.1%	0.3%
Utilities	3	0.3%	47	1%	0.2%	0.4%
Construction	134	15%	471	5%	5%	4%
Manufacturing	68	8%	939	11%	14%	11%
Wholesale Trade	84	9%	420	5%	4%	4%
Retail Trade	121	14%	1,517	18%	17%	11%
Transportation and Warehousing	6	1%	24	0%	2%	2%
Information	6	1%	26	0%	2%	2%
Finance and Insurance	35	4%	143	2%	4%	7%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	24	3%	61	1%	1%	1%
Professional, Scientific, Technical Services	90	10%	484	6%	4%	5%
Management of Companies, Enterprises	*	*	*	*	4%	2%
Administrative, Support, Waste Management, Remediation Services	53	6%	433	5%	4%	5%
Educational Services	*	*	*	*	1%	3%
Health Care and Social Assistance	67	8%	1,558	18%	16%	14%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation	15	2%	172	2%	1%	1%
Accommodation, Food Services	60	7%	575	7%	7%	7%
Other Services	97	11%	329	4%	3%	3%
Federal Government	3	0.5%	50	1%	1%	1%
State Government	3	0.5%	40	0%	2%	4%
Local/Municipal Government	12	1%	1,144	13%	8%	9%

*Data not shown individually for confidentiality, but included in total, therefore percentages do not add to 100%.

Source: CT DOL, 2007.

The following table compares wages for jobs in New Milford to the City of Danbury, the Danbury Labor Market Area (LMA) and the State.

The data indicates that wages in New Milford lag in all but four industries (they are in bold). The total average annual wages in New Milford was roughly \$10,000 less than the Danbury LMA and \$17,000 less than Danbury and the State.

Top 10 Employers in New Milford, 2008

- Town of New Milford
- New Milford Hospital
- Kimberly Clark Corp.
- Wal-Mart
- Candlewood Valley Care Center
- Canterbury School Inc.
- Stop & Shop
- Medical Instill Technologies
- Big Y Foods
- New Milford Nursing Home

Source: Town Final Official Financial Statement, 2008

Average Annual Wages, 2007

For Jobs Located in:

Industry	New Milford	Danbury	Danbury LMA	CT
Total - All Industries	\$41,291	\$58,645	\$53,206	\$58,019
Utilities	\$94,501	*	\$84,595	\$105,462
Construction	\$45,542	\$55,579	\$53,012	\$55,912
Manufacturing	\$54,166	\$110,607	\$91,204	\$69,360
Wholesale Trade	\$57,049	\$84,993	\$75,552	\$79,901
Retail Trade	\$28,014	\$30,167	\$29,574	\$30,154
Transportation and Warehousing	\$28,909	\$60,726	\$47,743	\$46,762
Information	\$47,797	\$61,632	\$60,412	\$68,966
Finance and Insurance	\$45,433	\$125,555	\$109,000	\$146,288
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	\$38,986	\$40,394	\$44,737	\$53,587
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	\$65,279	\$71,478	\$69,495	\$83,372
Administrative & Support & Waste Management, Remediation Services	\$28,543	\$31,465	\$33,363	\$36,536
Health Care and Social Assistance	\$48,190	\$54,682	\$48,954	\$44,339
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation	\$32,686	\$28,492	\$26,937	\$28,153
Accommodation and Food Services	\$15,715	\$19,781	\$19,192	\$17,823
Other Services (except Public Administration)	\$28,642	\$26,821	\$26,405	\$29,222
Federal Government	\$53,770	\$66,285	\$61,799	\$57,929
State Government	\$60,999	\$46,797	\$46,902	\$59,243
Local/Municipal Government	\$40,757	\$46,704	\$45,272	\$47,016

Excludes Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting; Management of Companies and Enterprises; and Educational Services because wage data not available for New Milford.

Source: CTDOLE, 2007.

Manufacturing played an important role in New Milford's history. Manufacturing jobs peaked in New Milford in 1980 at just over 2,500 jobs (see table). New Milford began to see a decline in manufacturing jobs a decade before the Danbury Labor Market Area started its decline. CERC recently analyzed the HVCEO Region and reached the following conclusions about manufacturing:

- Manufacturing provides a greater share of jobs in the Region when compared to the State and the U.S.; but,
- The Region's future prospects in manufacturing are limited.

Manufacturing Jobs		
	New Milford	Danbury LMA
1970	1,769	17,016
1980	2,540	22,820
1990	2,240	24,100
2000	1,640	19,070
2007	1,769	17,016

Source: CT DOL.

CERC categorized remaining job sectors in the Region as follows:

Current Strength

- Retail trade
- Management of companies and enterprises

Emerging Strength

- Utilities
- Wholesale trade
- Educational services
- Arts, entertainment, recreation
- Accommodation and food services
- Other services (excluding public administration)

High Priority Retention Target

- Health care and social assistance

Limited Prospect

- Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting
- Mining
- Construction
- Manufacturing
- Transportation and warehousing
- Information
- Finance and insurance
- Real estate and rental and leasing
- Professional and technical services
- Administrative and waste management

The table below shows the top ten origins of those who work in New Milford (residents of those towns / regions who work in New Milford). In 2000, New Milford residents filled the majority of jobs in the Town, though that number decreased from 1990 to 2000.

New Milford employers depend upon residents from nearby communities and New York to fill jobs. The increase in commuters coming from the east could have implications for traffic along Route 202.

Top Origins of Workers in New Milford, 2000			
Origin	#	%	Change from 1990 to 2000
New Milford	5,236	54%	-424
Danbury	771	8%	0
NY State	312	3%	-152
Brookfield	258	3%	-80
Torrington	256	3%	+125
Washington	229	2%	+9
New Fairfield	180	2%	+74
Litchfield	173	2%	+39
Sherman	165	2%	-14
Bethel	159	2%	-19

Source: HVCEO.

Fiscal Overview

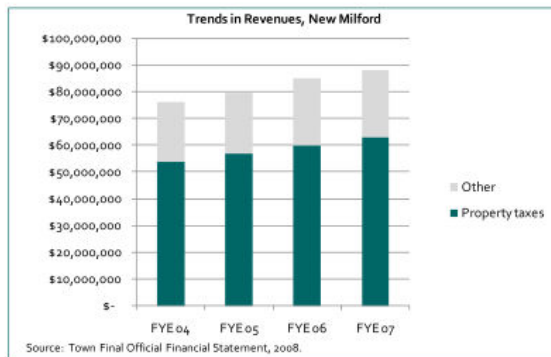
Revenue

New Milford's revenues totaled \$88 million in Fiscal Year Ending (FYE) 2007. This total represents a steady climb over the previous four years for a total increase of 16%. Both property taxes and "other" revenues increased each year over the past four years. "Other" revenue includes intergovernmental funding, charges for services, licenses, interest income and other sources.

Property taxes comprised 71% to 72% of revenue each of these years. Compared to other communities in the State, 97 municipalities derive a higher percentage of revenues from taxes than New Milford and 71 derive a lower percentage from taxes.

The top 12 taxpayers in New Milford are listed in the sidebar. In total, they comprise just under 6% of the net taxable grand list. Additional tax revenues come from property taxes from other land uses, from motor vehicle taxes and personal property taxes.

Compared to neighboring communities and the City of Danbury, New Milford has a lower per capita revenue than all but two communities.



Major Taxpayers, 2007 Grand List

	% of Grand List
Kimberly-Clark	1.97%
CL&P	1.16%
FNM Trust (shopping center)	0.52%
Home Depot	0.42%
First Light	0.30%
1 st Treetop (shopping center)	0.24%
Givaudan	0.23%
United Water	0.23%
Fairfield Plaza (shopping center)	0.21%
CLC Real Estate	0.17%
Danbury Road Developers	0.17%
Candlewood New Milford Med. Center	0.14%

Source: Town Final Official Financial Statement, 2008.

Per Capita Revenue, 2006

Roxbury	\$ 3,560
Bridgewater	\$ 3,359
Kent	\$ 3,285
Washington	\$ 3,165
New Fairfield	\$ 3,056
Brookfield	\$ 3,007
New Milford	\$ 3,004
Sherman	\$ 2,649
Danbury	\$ 2,296

Source: OPM.

Expenditures

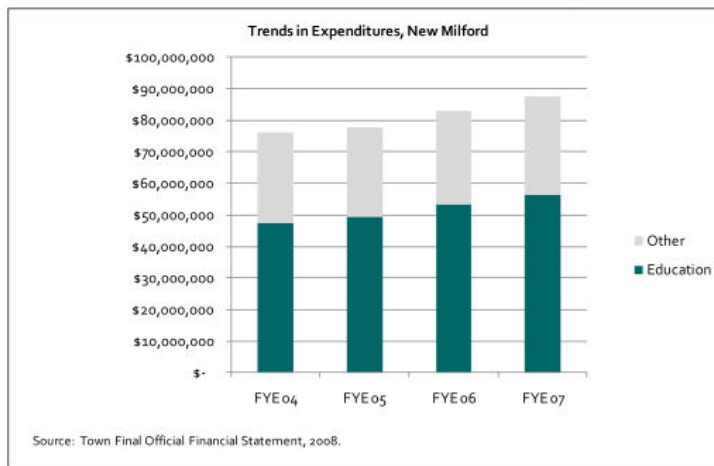
Expenditures increased by 15% the from FYE 04 to FYE 07. Education expenditures increased by 19% over this time frame while expenditures for remaining government functions increased less than half that rate (by 8%).

Compared to neighbors and the City of Danbury, New Milford had the third lowest expenditures per capita, at \$2,944.

Per Capita Expenditures, 2006

Roxbury	\$3,620
Bridgewater	\$3,298
Washington	\$3,296
Kent	\$3,245
Brookfield	\$3,023
New Fairfield	\$2,985
New Milford	\$2,944
Sherman	\$2,723
Danbury	\$2,241

Source: OPM.



Zoning

New Milford is divided into a number of zoning districts. There are 12 zones for residential uses and 7 zones for commercial and industrial uses. Just over 35,000 acres, or 85% of New Milford, are zoned for residential uses, with the majority slated for 1- and 2-acre lots. Just over 3,000 acres are zoned for business uses, with industrial zones comprising the largest acreage in that category.

Zoning in New Milford		
Zone	Acres	% of Land Area
Residential	35,010	85%
R-160 Residential (min. lot area 160,000 sq. ft.)	333	
R-80 Residential (min. lot area 80,000 sq. ft.)	16,676	
R-60 Residential (min. lot area 60,000 sq. ft.)	5,895	
R-40 Residential (min. lot area 40,000 sq. ft.)	9,489	
R-20 Residential (min. lot area 20,000 sq. ft.)	1,096	
R-8 Residential (min. lot area 8,000 sq. ft.)	570	
R-5 Residential (min. lot area 5,000 sq. ft.)	33	
Two Family Residential (R-8-2)	25	
Multi-Family Residential	163	
Active Adult Community (AAC)	291	
Cluster Conservation Subdivision (CCSD)	277	
Major Planned Residential Development (MPRDD)	163	
Commercial and Industrial	3,072	8%
Restricted Business (B-1)	591	
General Business (B-2)	254	
Lake Business (B-3)	55	
Business (B-4)	8	
Industrial – Commercial (I / C)	529	
Industrial (I)	1,350	
Restricted Industrial (RI)	284	
Other Zones	161	< 1%
Airport District	115	
Village Center District	40	
Motor Vehicle Wrecking and Junkyard (M-V)	5	
Town Landmark	1	
No Zone (Right of Way / Water / Other)	2,709	7%
Total	40,953	

Residential Build Out

A residential build out analysis was performed to gauge how much new development could occur in New Milford based on current zoning requirements. The analysis indicates possible land use patterns and total growth potential in the Town (see map on page 29).

In general, new development might occur on vacant land and on land that is underdeveloped (e.g., a parcel that has extra acreage).

The analysis assumed the following:

- New housing units would be single family dwellings, except in multi-family districts.
- Wetlands, steep slopes (25% or greater), water courses, and flood plains would preclude development.
- Permanently protected open space would not be developed.
- Non-conforming vacant lots would be developed if size and configuration might support a house.

The land use analysis indicated that there was just under 17,000 acres of vacant land in New Milford. Of that amount, almost all of it is zoned for residential development. After accounting for environmental constraints and zoning requirements, the analysis indicates that around 5,538 housing could be constructed in New Milford.

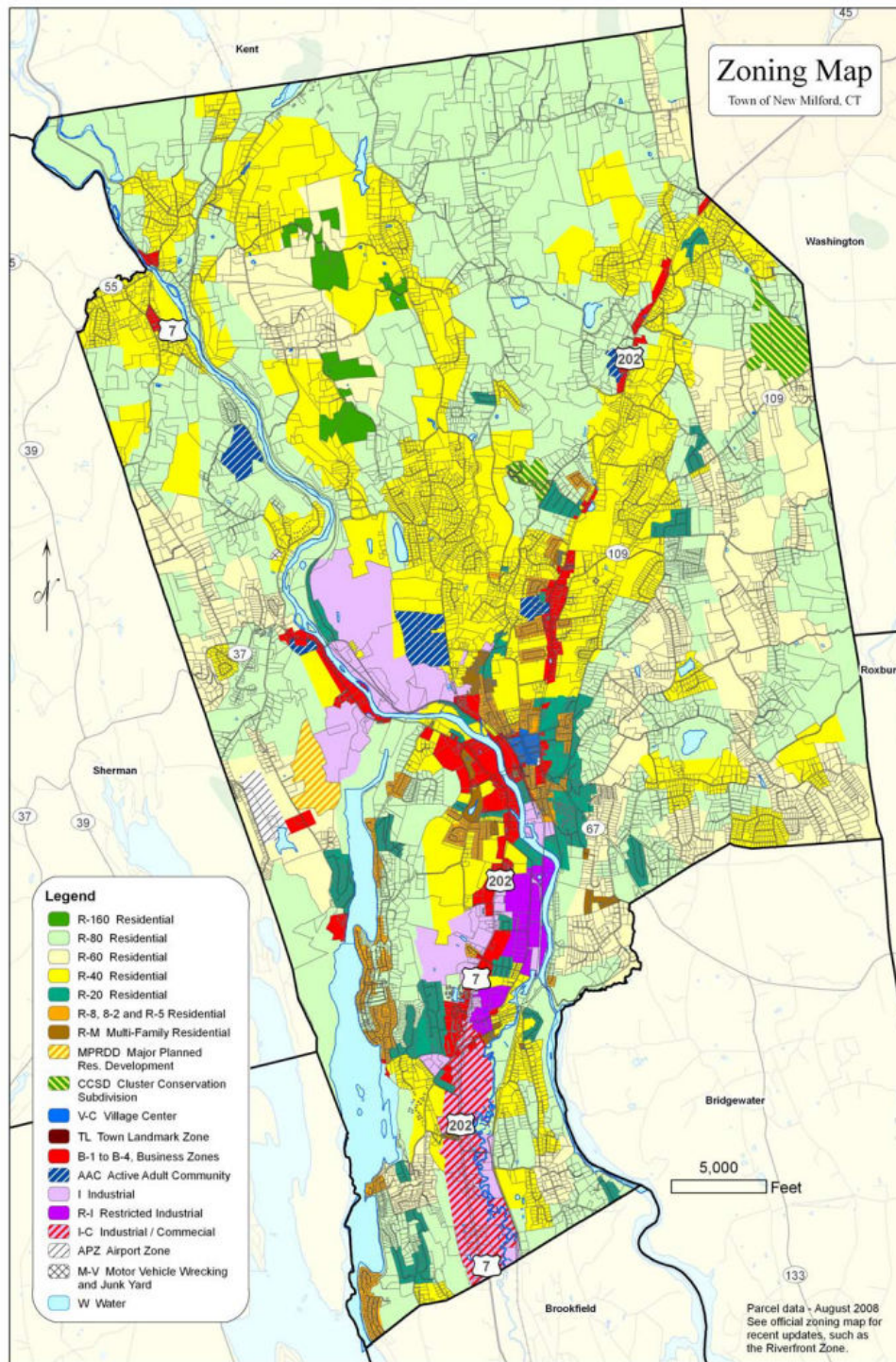
Residential Build Out Results		
	High	Low
Existing Housing Units (2007)	11,367	11,367
Potential New Units (+/-)	5,538	3,877
Total Units at Build Out	16,905	15,244
Existing Population (2007)	28,439	28,439
New Population (2.68 persons per unit) (+/-)	14,842	10,390
Estimated Population at Build Out (+/-)	43,281	38,829

While the analysis does account for some level of environmental constraints, the extent of constraints cannot be fully accounted without site inspections. Using GIS, some parcels were examined more carefully to calibrate the analysis. This more detailed analysis indicated that the primary constraint to achieving build out might be the difficulty in providing access to adjacent roads due to steep slopes. This analysis suggested that the build out analysis could be calibrated by reducing build out by 30%. This is the "low" estimate in the table.

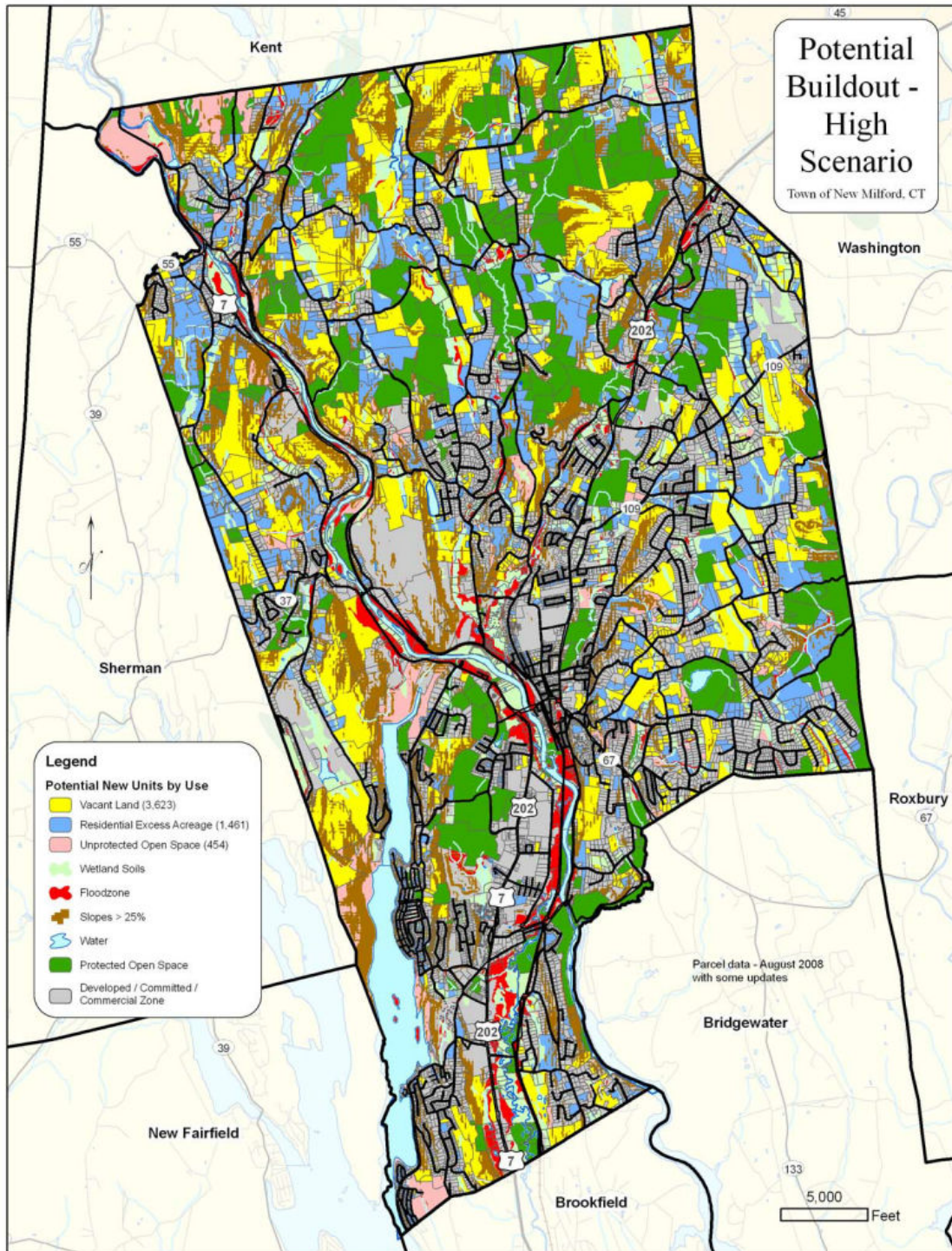
The build out analysis includes development on unprotected open space (450 units). It may be the case that the development potential of unprotected open space is low.

The 1997 POCD estimated that an additional 9,861 units could be added to the existing 9,295 units, for a total of 19,156. The current analysis estimates fewer units, likely due to some zoning changes, differences in how environmental constraints were accounted for, and differences in technology available to conduct the analysis. Regardless of these differences, the results of both analyses indicate that there may still be potential for a large amount of residential development in New Milford.

Regardless of the number of potential units, the build out reveals the potential pattern of housing development. There is very little land for residential development near the Town's core developed areas – near Downtown or along the southern Route 7 corridor. Under current zoning, new housing would be scattered around the Town in areas that are currently characterized by lower densities and around Candlewood Lake.



Back of Zoning Map



Notes:

ISSUES AND THEMES

3

Overview

A POCD should address issues that are important to the community and outline goals. To solicit input, the Town held a number of public workshops, conducted a statistically valid, random sample telephone survey, and invited various community groups to provide its input at a special meeting. Public input provided insight into the issues that residents felt should be addressed in the POCD. Residents also offered possible strategies that the Town could undertake to address these issues.



POCD Workshop Attendees.

Prominent Themes

Overall themes emerged during this process:

- When implementing the POCD, coordination and cooperation between town boards and commissions and non-profit entities will be critical.
- The distinct character of New Milford should be maintained.
- New Milford has numerous natural assets that should be protected.
- Zoning should protect natural resources and character, match the ability of infrastructure to support development, and guide growth to appropriate locations.
- Working farms should be preserved to protect our character, provide economic development activity and to provide a local food source.
- New Milford is a sub-center that provides, jobs, goods and services to its residents and the residents of other communities in the region. Continued business development is important.
- We should encourage that Downtown remain an activity center and a destination with a mixture of uses.
- The Downtown could be expanded to the River.
- Reopening the train station Downtown could increase vitality.
- Improving circulation and alleviating congestion Downtown are critical.

Goals

Based upon these themes, the POCD is organized into Conservation, Development and Infrastructure Goals. The Goals, intended to guide New Milford over the next 10 to 20 years, are summarized here. Strategies to help achieve these goals are outlined in the following chapters.

Conservation Goals (protecting natural and cultural resources and assets):

- Protect natural resources
- Protect water quality and address drainage issues
- Preserve open space and greenways
- Preserve, protect and promote working farms
- Preserve New Milford's character

Development Goals (guiding residential and business growth):

- Enhance New Milford's community structure
- Encourage residential growth to areas that can support growth and encourage flexible patterns
- Promote housing options and choices to meet needs
- Encourage business development in appropriate areas and enhance business zones
- Maintain and enhance Downtown New Milford as a hub of civic, business and residential activity

Infrastructure Goals (supporting conservation and development patterns):

- Address community facility needs
- Ensure roads meet the needs of the community
- Support transit options
- Improve the viability of walking and bicycling around town
- Address utility needs



Marshland in New Milford.



Medinstill.



Town Hall.

CONSERVATION

4

Overview

Identifying natural and cultural resources to protect is an important component of a Plan of Conservation and Development. Determining which features are important from an ecological perspective, for preserving character, and for enhancing overall quality of life sets the framework for discussions about future growth in New Milford.

Natural Resources

New Milford's natural resources contribute greatly to the Town's character. The hills and valleys, expansive water resources, wooded areas, and fields create dramatic landscapes around the Town. Each resource also contributes to New Milford's ecological well-being. Some resources warrant preservation, while for others, conservation can be a key strategy (see sidebar).



Housatonic River in Gaylordsville.

Resources for Preservation

Resources so important to environmental quality, public health or character that alterations should be avoided to the extent feasible.

These include:

- Watercourses
- Wetlands
- Very steep slopes (>25%)
- 100 year floodplain

Resources for Conservation

Resources with important functions that can be maintained while compatible development takes place if such development occurs in an environmentally sensitive way.

These include:

- 500 year floodplain
- Existing and future aquifers
- Unique or special habitat (from CT DEP Natural Diversity Database)

Like many communities, early development in New Milford occurred along its low-lying river beds - areas that, today, would warrant preservation. As a result, already-settled areas coexist with important natural resources. It would not be reasonable to expect a community to abandon established neighborhoods and business areas where infrastructure investments have been made. Rather, the focus in these areas should be on minimizing impacts when development and redevelopment occur. This can be achieved by educating residents and business on ways to reduce possible impacts to natural resources; possible future regulatory incentives to encourage property owners to take measures; and ensuring that town policies and practices preserve and conserve natural resources.

Maintaining lower densities and protecting open space are strategies for rural areas. Zoning regulations exclude some resource areas (wetlands, watercourses, and steep slopes) when calculating minimum lot size. Residential zoning strategies are discussed further in Chapter 5. Open space preservation has also helped to protect resources in these areas and will continue to be a valuable tool.

Having an inventory of the Town's natural resources can aid in land use decisions. The Town is fortunate to be a part of the Greenprint Project, which is a regional conservation effort of 27 communities to provide data and help create a regional conservation vision. The project is lead by the Housatonic Valley Association and the Trust for Public Land. Their work can serve as a resource to various town boards and commissions.

Overall goals for natural resource protection:

1. Encourage future development to locate away from sensitive natural resources.
2. When development does occur in conservation areas, minimize potential impacts.
3. When reviewing proposed developments, refer to natural resource inventories to help determine areas that should be protected.

Natural Resources in New Milford (partial list)

Rivers and Streams

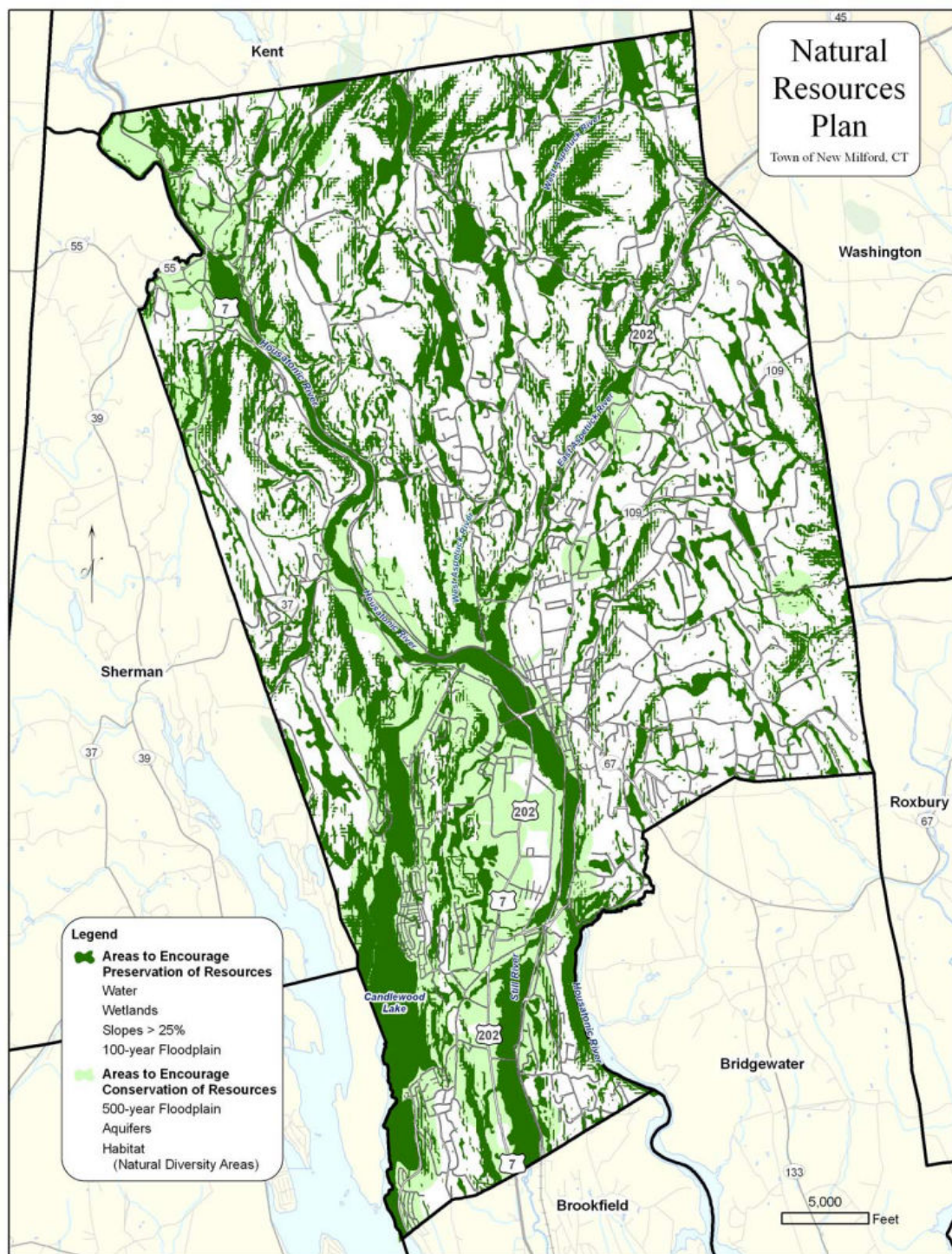
- Housatonic River
- Still River
- Aspetuck River (East and West branches)
- Merryall Brook
- Bullymuck Brook
- Squash Hollow Brook
- Winisink Brook
- Rocky River
- Bull Mountain Brook
- Womenshunk Brook
- Cross Brook
- Town Farm Brook
- Little Brook
- Walker Brook
- Great Brook
- Denman Brook
- Naromiyocknowhusunkatankshunk Brook

Lakes, Ponds and Swamps

- Lake Candlewood
- Ella Foh's Camp Pond
- Reservoirs (#3, #4)
- Mud Pond
- Ferris Pond
- Henderson Pond
- Tamarack Swamp
- Meetinghouse Swamp

Mountains (800 feet or higher)

- Bear Hill
- Peet Hill
- Iron Hill
- Green Pond Mountain
- Mt. Tom
- Long Mountain (including Rock Cobble, Pine Hill, and Bare Hill)
- Sawyer Hill
- Candlewood Mountain
- Great Mountain
- Second Hill
- Mine Hill
- Cedar Hill
- Stilson Hill



Water Quality and Drainage

New Milford's surface and ground water resources serve many purposes. They can provide scenic value, recreation opportunities, drinking water, and habitat. Some water resources, such as wetlands, protect properties from flooding. The health of water resources is very dependent upon the activities that occur in their watersheds.

Surface Waters

Candlewood Lake

Candlewood Lake is a unique natural resource and a valuable asset for New Milford, the region and the State. Originally built in 1929 as a reservoir for hydroelectric power, the Lake has evolved from an utility project to a cultural, economic and ecological focal point for the region.

Protecting the Lake's water quality has been a continuing challenge. Water quality has generally worsened since the 1950s, despite a period of improvement in the 1980s. The increase in storm water runoff has been an important factor.

Water quality is currently assessed by CT DEP as a "B" (AA is the best quality while D is the lowest quality). Protecting the Lake has been an important priority in previous town plans, regional plans and state plans.

The Candlewood Lake Authority issued the *Action Plan for Preserving Candlewood Lake* in 2002. The *Action Plan* commends New Milford for protection measures in zoning and wetlands regulations.

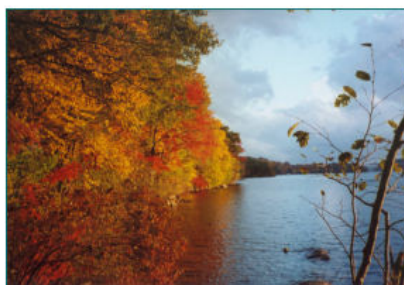
Since the *Action Plan* was issued, New Milford adopted the Candlewood Lake Watershed zone to "reduce the negative impact of storm water runoff affecting Candlewood Lake" to avoid the need for a public sewer system in the watershed. The regulation requires all development, including alterations to existing buildings, to prepare a storm water management plan if the total impervious surface area on the lot is 20% or greater. The regulation aims to reduce not only the peak rate of storm water, but also the total volume.

The *Action Plan* recommended additional measures for New Milford including:

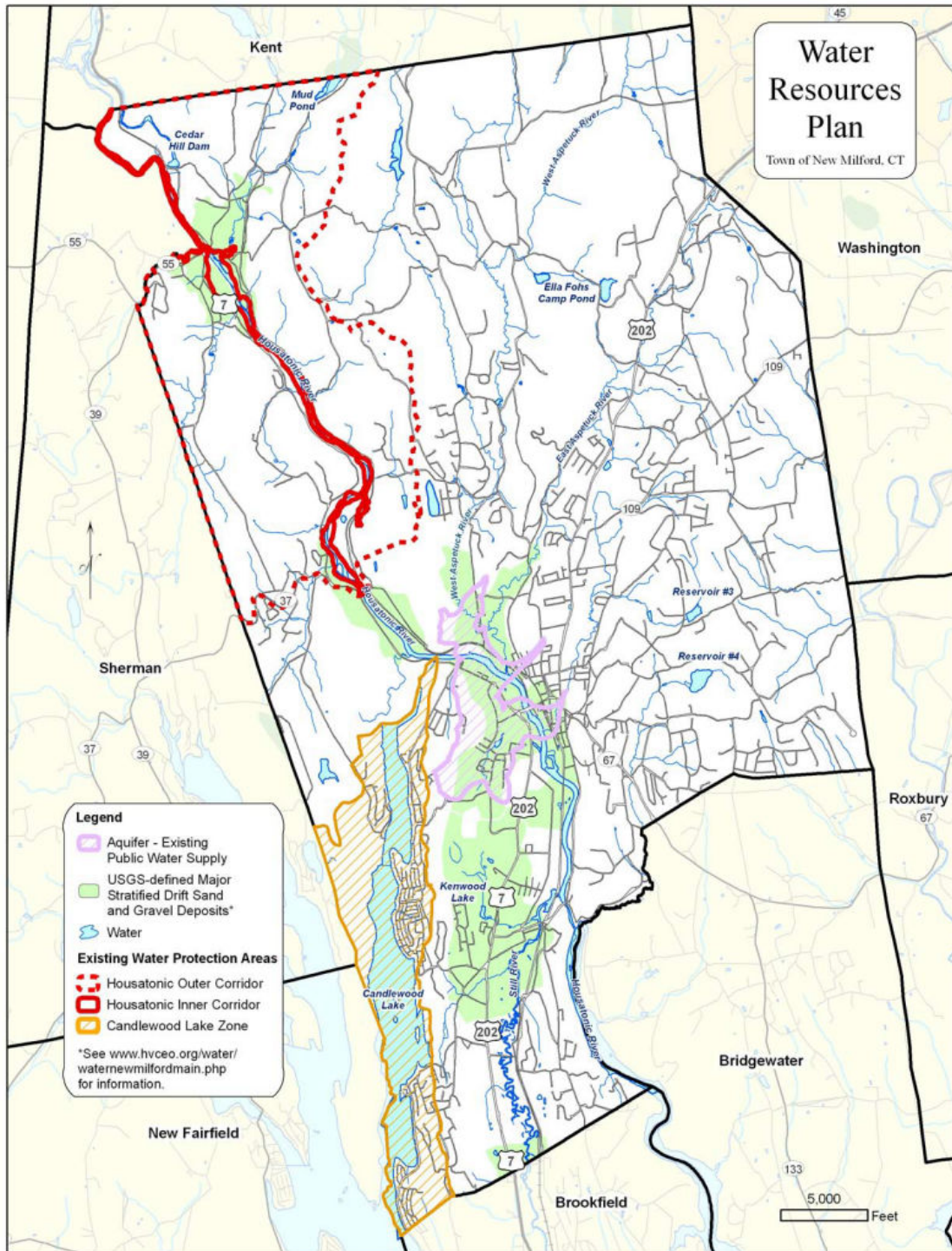
- Adopting a septic management program for the watershed.
- Reducing the half acre threshold of land clearance that triggers the need for an Erosion and Sediment Control Plan.
- Working with neighboring communities to preserve remaining undeveloped areas in the watershed as open space.

These are important strategies for the Town to consider over the long term.

The Candlewood Lake Authority's *Action Plan* also recommends that New Milford reduce the 20% impervious surface trigger to 10%. While that might be a strategy for the Town to consider over the long term, the Town would need to better understand the potential burden a lower threshold might pose to property owners. As discussed later, there may be other techniques (education and possibly incentives) that might be more appropriate for protecting water quality in the near-term.



Candlewood Lake.



Housatonic River

The Housatonic River flows 14.9 miles from Western Massachusetts to Long Island Sound. Along the New Milford stretch, the River provides environmental benefits, habitat, electricity and recreational opportunities. The River also enhances the Town's character.

In New Milford, the River's water quality is assessed as a C or D with a goal of being upgraded to B. To help improve water quality, the Town adopted the Housatonic River Protection District. The District runs along the River from Boardman Bridge north to the Kent line. The regulation requires a special permit for uses within the stream belt ("Inner Corridor") other than open space, hunting, farming, golf courses and similar uses. Factors such as soil suitability for septic systems, erosion, flood control, and water pollution are taken into consideration when granting a special permit. For the "Outer Corridor" (the remainder of the watershed) uses in the underlying zone are allowed. Any construction or earth-moving activities must provide for erosion and sediment control.

Opportunities for recreation along the River can be found in New Milford. Lacking though are recreational opportunities along the stretch that runs through Downtown. Strategies to better capitalize on the River in the Downtown are outlined in Chapter 5. Just over 70% of residents would like to see more recreation opportunities on and along the River.

The River has also served as an industrial resource to businesses located in New Milford. As discussed in the history section, the River played an important role in the Town's industrial past. That role continues today, as evidenced by the businesses that rely upon water from the River.

Other Major Rivers

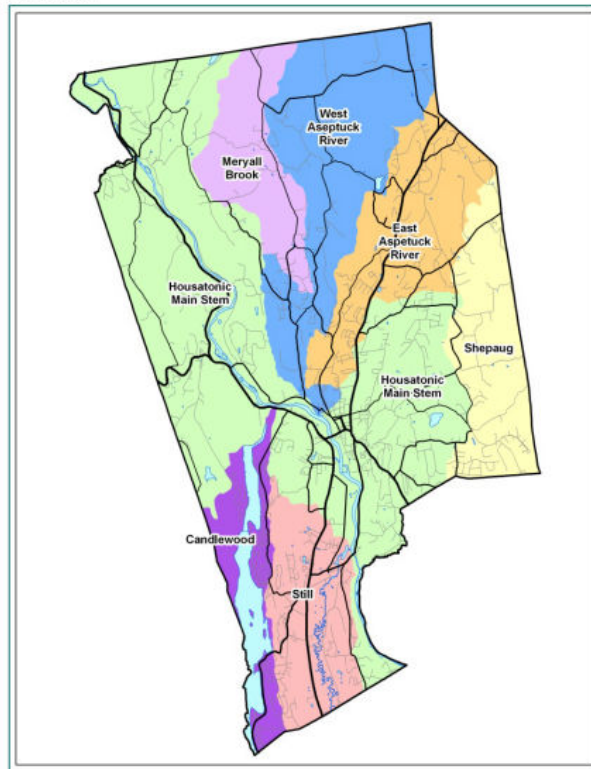
The Still River is assessed as a C or D with a goal of being upgraded to B.

The East Aspetuck River, Town Farm Brook, and smaller tributaries off of the Housatonic River are assessed as B, C or D with a goal of A.

The West Aspetuck River is assessed as AA, and has been identified by the State as a potential future regional water supply. Preserving its AA status is a Regional, State and Town goal.

While the Shepaug River does not flow through New Milford, it has also been identified by the State as potential future public water supply. A portion of New Milford is within the River's watershed.

Watersheds



Aquifers

The Water Resources map indicates the locations of public water supply aquifers and areas that may be able to serve as future public water due to favorable geological features.

The Town recently mapped its public water supply aquifer (this is called "A-level mapping") and will be adopting regulations that allow compatible development while protecting this aquifer.

Because the other potential aquifers (areas of high ground water availability) are not currently used for public water supplies, the Town is not required to adopt regulations to protect those sources. Water quality protection measures already in place and those suggested in this POCD can help to protect these ground water supplies as possible future water supplies.

Protecting Surface and Ground Water Quality

Activities that occur throughout a watershed can impact water quality. Pollutants from failing septic systems, the overuse of fertilizer or pesticides, and sediments and contaminants found in storm water runoff can degrade water quality in rivers and lakes. Research also indicates that water quality degrades when a watershed contains over 10% impervious surfaces.

In addition to protection measures discussed earlier, the Town and conservation groups have been working to protect water resources. The Department of Public Works prepares annual updates of practices and measures it undertakes to reduce water pollution. This practice is pursuant to the NPDES Phase II program (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System), which is a federal directive under the Clean Water Act.

A number of organizations also actively work to protect water resources. They provide public education, test water quality, and help communities protect water quality. Their continued efforts should be encouraged.

These measures are important although challenges remain. Minimizing the potential for septic system failure and addressing storm water runoff (both quality and quantity) are critical strategies to address.

Septic Maintenance

Failing septic systems and those not properly managed in higher density areas can degrade water quality. This is an issue town-wide but particularly an issue in watershed areas where septic systems are still the primary means of treating waste.

Regular maintenance (pumping) can reduce potential pollution. While many homeowners are diligent about regular maintenance, some homeowners may not fully understand proper maintenance. To address this source of pollution and help minimize the need for sewers, communities have adopted septic management ordinances (see below). New Milford should explore the feasibility of a septic management ordinance.

Brookfield and New Fairfield are examples of Connecticut communities that have adopted septic maintenance ordinances.

Septic Management Ordinances

A Septic Management Ordinance generally requires mandatory inspection and maintenance of septic systems. The ordinance sets how often maintenance must occur. Contractors provide proof of maintenance to the local health department.

Storm Water Flow

Reducing storm water flow reduces the flow of pollutants and lessens drainage problems. Strategies to reduce storm water flow might entail reducing impervious surfaces, encouraging on-site storm water infiltration, and maintaining vegetated covers. Residents can be encouraged to take steps, new developments can incorporate measures, and the Town should incorporate these measures into its own projects.

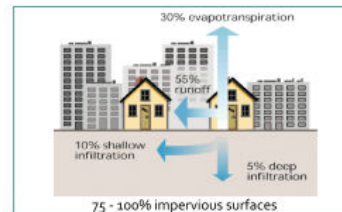
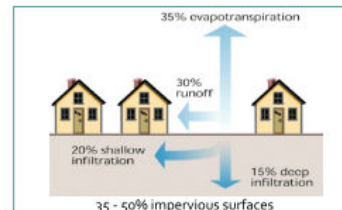
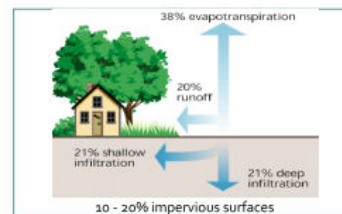
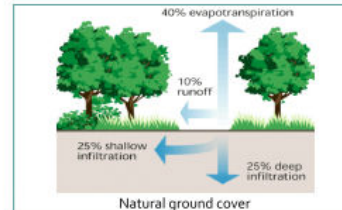
Low Impact Development (LID) is a comprehensive approach to reducing storm water flow. Traditional drainage systems tended to move storm water off a site as quickly as possible and empty untreated storm water into downhill water resources. LID encourages on-site infiltration, which slows storm water flow and allows the soil to filter pollutants before reaching water resources. LID also encourages capturing storm water to use for other purposes.

LID in New Milford might include simple measures for homeowners such as planting a rain garden or using a rain barrel to retain / slow down storm water runoff, or using pervious products for walkways, patios, etc.

For new businesses or large-scale residential developments or subdivisions, LID measures might include using underground water storage, vegetated rooftops, and reducing the amount of impervious surfaces used for walkways, access drives and parking lots. Many pervious surface products are available and they are becoming more commonly used by developers and communities. These products still provide the structural support needed but they allow water to infiltrate the ground, thereby reducing runoff.

Vegetation reduces and slows the flow of storm water compared to lawn areas and cleared land (see sidebar). Sometimes during construction more trees and vegetation are cleared than is necessary. Carefully reviewing the building envelope during the land development stage can help reduce excess clearing. Educating homeowners about the importance of maintaining vegetation in reducing drainage problems might encourage them to take action on their own properties.

Groundcover and Runoff



Other Pollution Sources

There are other potential sources of water pollution such as the overuse of pesticides and fertilizers, pet waste, road salt and others. The Friends of the Lake (a non-profit organization) developed guidebooks for homeowners and for landscape contractors. The guidebooks outline best practices to reduce potential water pollution. These guidebooks can serve as models for an educational approach to protecting other water resources in New Milford.

Drainage

Localized drainage problems occur in New Milford – i.e., when a small number of properties are impacted by an up-slope project. In a sense these localized drainage problems can be more challenging than natural flooding in floodplains. It can be difficult to balance the rights of a property owner to build upon their land with the protection of downhill properties from flooding.

Individual boards and commissions address storm water impacts in their regulations, but there is no overall town standard to ensure consistency. In addition, smaller projects may not trigger review or may have storm water standards waived.

Some communities have adopted town-wide drainage policies to ensure consistency in terms of which activities are reviewed and the standards that the projects must meet.

Some towns require drainage review for smaller projects. This can be as simple as requiring review by town staff to ensure that measures are taken to reduce the amount of runoff.

As discussed earlier, employing Low Impact Development techniques (LID) can help reduce the amount of storm water that runs off a property.

Naturally occurring flooding (e.g., along the Housatonic River) can be exacerbated by increases in impervious surfaces within New Milford and within the larger watershed.

Protect water quality and address drainage:

1. Explore the need for and feasibility of a septic management ordinance.
2. Reduce storm water flows:
 - a. Adopt a town drainage policy and standards to ensure consistency.
 - b. Consider adopting Low Impact Development (LID) standards into zoning and subdivision regulations.
 - c. Encourage town practices to employ measures to reduce storm water flow (LID).
 - d. Educate residents and property owners on ways that they can reduce storm water runoff and possibly adopt regulatory incentives over the longer term.
 - e. Continue to require storm water review in the Candlewood Lake District.
 - f. Collaboratively determine which types of construction projects might have potential to create significant off-site drainage impacts and require drainage review to reduce impacts to neighboring properties.
 - g. Continue to require erosion and sediment control review and consider reducing the threshold for triggering review.
 - h. During site plan review, continue to encourage that minimal land is cleared during construction.
3. Continue to enforce existing water quality protection measures.

Open Space

Open space contributes to character, provides passive recreation opportunities, and can protect natural resources. Research indicates that the permanent protection of land as open space provides a fiscal benefit since undeveloped land requires fewer town services than developed land.

To date, over 6,000 acres (or 15% of the Town) have been protected as open space. Another 3,500 acres are categorized as unprotected open space (these numbers may be higher; refer to the inventory prepared by the Conservation Commission). Unprotected open space are parcels that provide an open space function but are not permanently protected from development. These include the golf course, water supply lands, and other parcels. However, the probability that these parcels will be developed over the next 10 to 20 years may be very low.

Recent accomplishments include the protection of the Reservoir parcel and initiatives to provide trails on existing open space. The Town also has acquired open space through the subdivision process. The Cluster Conservation Subdivision provisions allow flexibility in lot dimensions if the applicant preserves 50% of the land as open space and offers a density bonus if the applicant dedicates 70% of the land. Wider use of this provision should be encouraged provided the subdivision results in an attractive, compatible neighborhood (see Chapter 5).

Other entities such as local land trusts have helped preserve open space in New Milford. For example, the Weantinoge Heritage Land Trust has preserved just over 3,500 acres in New Milford.

Residents are proud of efforts by the Town and by conservation groups to permanently protect open space and would like efforts to continue. Almost 80% of residents felt that the Town should set aside funds to purchase open space.

Residents also expressed a desire for New Milford to have an open space "system" rather than pockets of open space. The Conservation Commission is creating an open space plan which could outline such a "system" and provide guidance on areas of focus for future open space acquisition.

Another way to create an open space "system" is with greenways. Greenways – or corridors of open space – can connect destinations, provide wildlife corridors, and provide recreation opportunities. The Town has been working with HVCEO and others to establish greenways (see Open Space Plan). In addition, the Town is promoting the concept of greenways to its rivers by creating "River Trails" (water routes for canoes and kayaks).

The Weantinoge Heritage Land Trust has identified target areas for additional open space preservation based upon the abundance of resources in those areas.

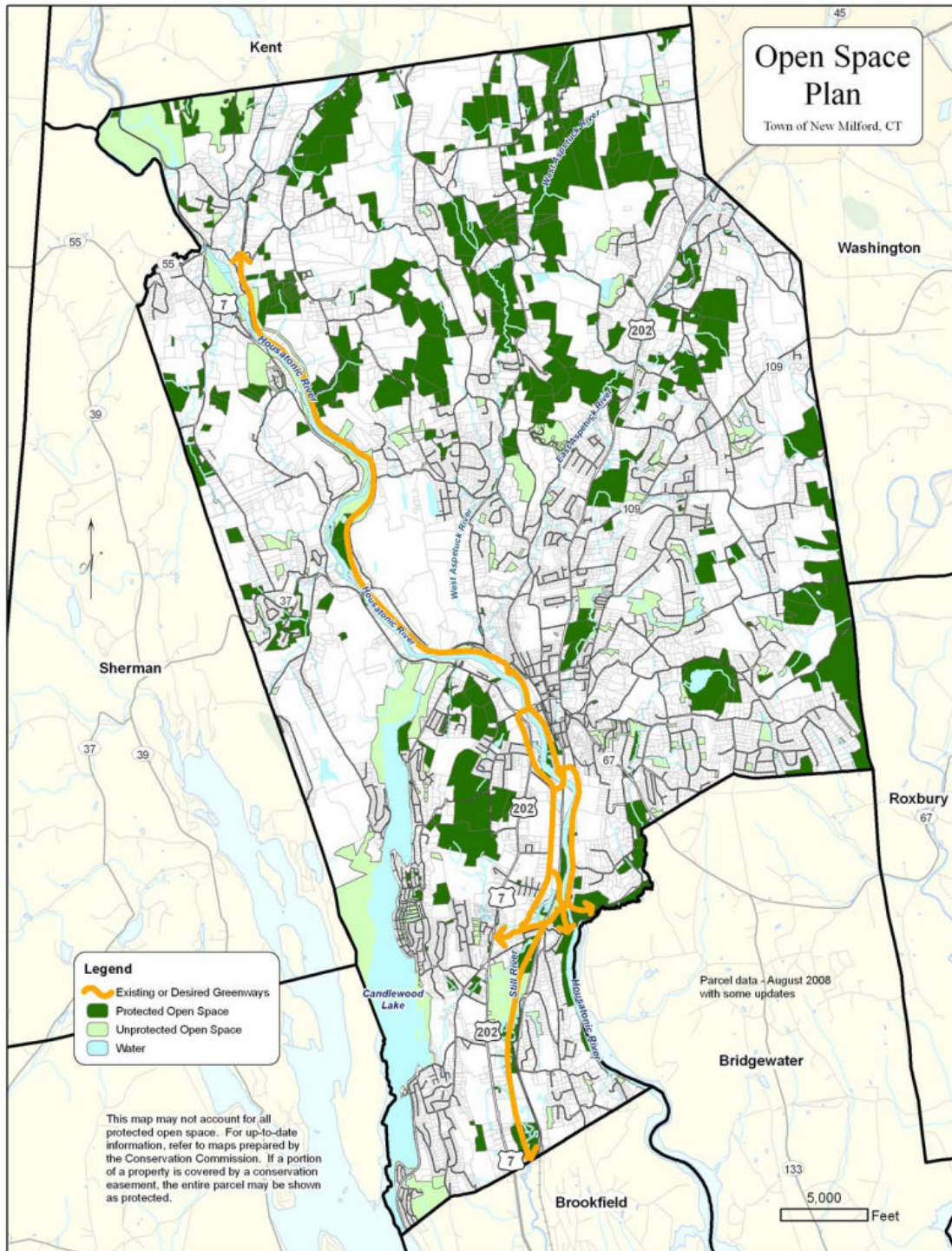
Open Space Definitions

Protected Open Space - land or development rights owned by the Federal government, the State, the Town, land trusts, or conservation organizations intended to remain for open space purposes.

Unprotected Open Space - land used for other purposes that provides open space benefits, such as golf courses and water supply lands.



Lovers Leap State Park.



When it comes to protecting open space, having a source of funding is critical. Currently, the Town does not annually set aside funding for open space acquisitions. Funding has been provided in past budgets for land preservation.

Funds also are acquired through the fee-in-lieu of open space provisions in the Subdivision Regulations. This fee-in-lieu funding is important to support purchases but it cannot serve as the sole source for funding; as of June 2008, that fund contained just over \$110,000. Administering the open space fee collections can be difficult because the fee is collected as lots are sold. This can happen years after the subdivision approval, making it challenging to keep track of sales and fees. A common and effective approach practiced by the Town is to place a note on the land records that the fee is due upon transfer.

The contributions made by private and non-profit entities cannot be overstated. Their efforts to acquire open space, to seek donated land, and to raise funds have been integral to open space protection in New Milford.

Finally, after open space has been acquired or preserved, it must be managed. Trails and amenities (if any) must be maintained, in some cases habitat must be managed, etc. It is a goal in this POCD to make the Town's open space accessible to all to enjoy.

The Town should also encourage private and non-profit entities to provide public access where appropriate, but especially in those cases where the land donor intended for Town residents to have access. The Town should continue to work cooperatively to provide access, connect trails, and promote enjoyment of open space.

Preserve open space and greenways:

1. Continue efforts to create an accurate database (i.e., GIS inventory) of permanently protected open space and make the inventory available to boards, commissions, town departments and non-profit entities that work to preserve open space.
2. Continue efforts to acquire Open Space and create Greenways:
 - a. Create a current open space plan that outlines a vision for an Open Space System and includes criteria to help prioritize future open space acquisition.
 - b. Move forward with planned trails and greenways and identify additional opportunities.
 - c. Continue efforts including seeking funding sources, encouraging private donations, working with developers to set aside open space, etc.
 - d. Establish administrative procedures to track when fee-in-lieu of payments are due.
 - e. Continue and expand partnerships between the Town, conservation organizations, the State, Federal funders and private landowners.
3. For existing protected Open Space:
 - a. Manage and maintain existing public open space areas.
 - b. Seek additional public access where feasible on public open space.
 - c. For privately owned open space, encourage the provision of public access in cases where the donor intended such access.

Farmland and Farming

Farmland is a valuable resource for expanded economic activity, job creation, and it provides a local source of food. It is the goal of this POCD that farming continues to be an important economic engine in New Milford. Farmland, along with other scenic vistas, also contributes to the Town's New England character.

Like the rest of Connecticut, New Milford has been losing farmland to development. As a result, over the last few years, maintaining working farms and preserving farmland have emerged as important town goals. Residents seem to strongly support this goal – 90% feel that the Town should do more to preserve farmland and 77% would like the Town to set aside funds to purchase farmland.

Farmland

New Milford created a Farmland Preservation Committee in 2006. The active Committee has compiled information on existing farms and farmland, prioritized areas of farms for preservation, prepared preservation recommendations, adopted a Strategic Plan for Farmland Preservation (see p. 48), and drafted the recently adopted New Milford Right to Farm ordinance. (The Committee also helped write much of this section of the POCD).

The Town, with help from the State and the Federal government, a local land trust, private citizens and foundations, has successfully preserved 800 acres of farmland. These include: Chapel Hill Farm, Crossmon Farm, Hunt Hill Farm, Smyrski Farm, Sullivan Farm, Sunny Valley Farm and Wasanuski Farm. Preserved farms are shown on the Agricultural Resources Plan map.

New Milford's farmers face a number of challenges including competition from vast, industrialized monoculture operations, structural changes in farming, overall costs of farming, fluctuating markets and advancing age. These challenges can make it more financially attractive for farmers to sell their land for development when they are ready to retire or even sooner. Yet, 21st century trends in farming (Community Supported Agriculture [CSA's], smaller, specialty produce farms, growing demand for organic and locally-grown and the emergence of a new generation of would-be farmers) plus the

existence of a potentially vast and sophisticated market within a 90-minute radius of the Town, offer a potentially powerful alternative. Without farmland, this cannot happen.

The Farmland Preservation Committee has identified the Ridge Road area as a priority area for farmland preservation. According to the Northwest Conservation District, this area has one of the highest densities of high-value farm soils in Litchfield County with over 50% of the area comprised of prime agricultural soils and soils of significance, as compared with 12% for the county as a whole. This area is shown on the Agricultural Resources Plan, along with other areas that might merit preservation due to favorable soils and land cover.

Some preservation tools provide financial equity to landowners, such as purchasing development rights, other creative financial tools, or outright purchase. New Milford should consider these as it continues to preserve farmland.

Importance of Farmland

According to the New Milford Farmland Preservation Committee, preserving farmland is important because it:

- Provides "food security"
- Ensures a source of fresh, locally grown produce
- Provides jobs and fiscal benefits
- Preserves New Milford's agricultural heritage
- Reduces sprawl
- Protects open space



Farm animals in New Milford.

Farming

Even when farmland is protected from development, this does not guarantee that farming activities on the land will be successful. The Farmland Committee understands this and has made economic viability a key component of its mission. Capital for farm improvements and structures, available labor, and a market for products are all needed to maintain working farms.

A number of programs and initiatives help keep New Milford's farms alive as working farms and put them in the public eye. These programs include:

- Sullivan Farm, which is run by the New Milford Youth Agency, where students plant, grow and sell products.
- New Milford Hospital's Plow-to-Plate™ program, a nationally-recognized program where the hospital promotes and uses local produce.
- The New Milford Farmers Market, held downtown May through November.

To help reduce the costs of farming, a number of farms in New Milford participate in the PA 490 use assessment program (see sidebar). This program reduces the assessment of farm land, thereby lowering a farm's property taxes. Communities also can offer reduced assessments on farm machinery and outbuildings. New Milford currently offers a tax exemption for farming equipment, but should consider allowing additional exemptions.

There are additional measures a community can undertake to ensure that local regulations and town policies support farming. Examples include reviewing zoning regulations to ensure that restrictions on farm stand signage and what can be sold on-site do not create great burdens on farmers. As noted in the *Strategic Action Plan*, allowing farm-related uses can help expand the markets of farms.

In some cases, development occurring around a farm can impact a farm's operation. New houses nearby can lead to complaints about noises and smells that are typical of farming. New Milford recently adopted a "Right-to-Farm" ordinance, which states that the Town does not consider farms to be a nuisance and sets forth procedures for resolving disputes between farms and their neighbors.

Requiring new housing developments to provide a buffer screen between the houses and the farm also can help reduce problems, as can requiring alternative site layouts for subdivisions, to ensure that the houses are not too close to the active farm.

New Milford could comprehensively address a number of these zoning-related measures by adopting an Agricultural Overlay Zone (see below).



Sunny Valley Farm.

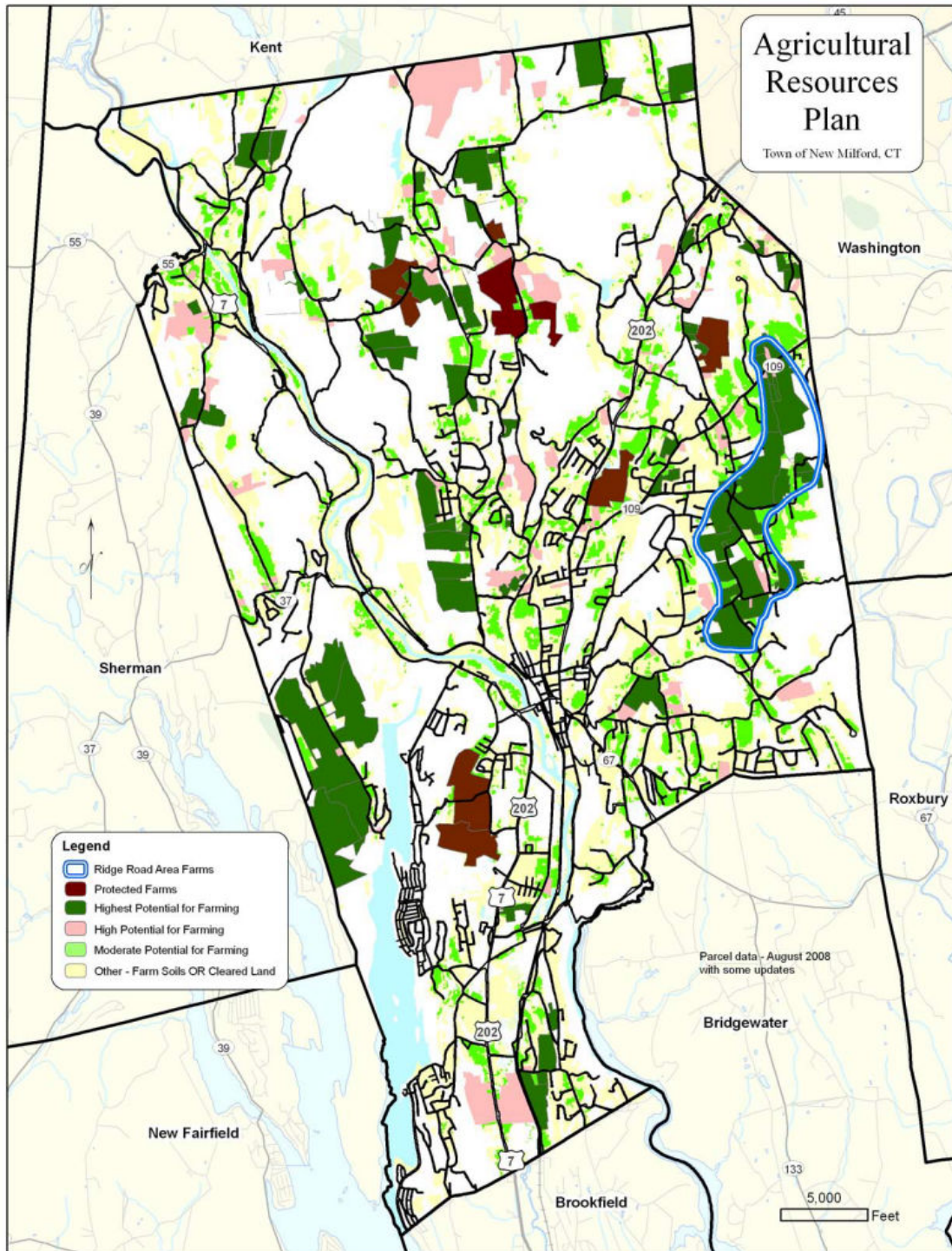
PA 490 Use Assessment

Use value assessment is a tax reduction program that preserves undeveloped land in private hands by making qualifying land less expensive to own. The program is authorized by Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) Section 12-107 (also known as Public Act 490).

Agriculture Overlay Zone

An Agricultural Overlay Zone could:

- allow additional agricultural-related uses that may not otherwise be suitable elsewhere
- have additional requirements for non-farm uses that occur in the zone, such as providing screening buffers or mandating cluster subdivisions
- serve as "sending zone" if a transfer of development rights program is established



Preserve, protect and promote working farms:

1. Implement the Farmland Preservation Committee Strategic Action Plan.
2. Maintain communication between the Town and farm owners.
3. Continue to preserve farmland and farms:
 - a. Focus farmland protection on the Ridge Road area and other high priority areas
 - b. Focus on approaches that are equitable to land owners
 - c. Establish a funding mechanism for purchasing farmland or development rights
4. Conduct a zoning audit to ensure zoning regulations are farm-friendly.
5. Consider adopting an Agricultural Overlay Zone as part of the zoning regulations.
6. Review current tax policies in light of tax reductions allowed by the State and determine if additional tax breaks would help farms.
7. Help expand the market for local products:
 - a. Continue to explore options to expand the Farmers Market
 - b. Help to publicize farms (such as on the Town's website and through better signage)
 - c. Promote agri-tourism

**Highlights of Strategies for Preserving Farmland,
from the New Milford Farmland Preservation Committee
2007 Strategic Action Plan**

- Develop a systematic approach for identifying farmland to be preserved
 - Create list of farms and farmland, map them, create inventory of information such as production, tillable acres, etc.
 - Develop criteria for priorities
 - Encourage farmers to share plans for land with the Town; help farmers understand preservation options
- Increase residents' awareness of the economic importance of farmland
 - Develop presentation materials, roadside signage, brochures
 - Learn what other towns in CT have done
 - Encourage residents to visit local farms
 - Work with restaurants to promote local produce
- Enhance the success of New Milford's Farmers Market
 - Determine "best practices" used by other farmers markets
 - Identify strategies to expand the market's customer base
- Encourage other strategies that provide economic benefit to local farmers
 - Update zoning regulations to allow additional economic activities on farms; create Agricultural Zones
 - Allow preserved land to be leased for farming activities
 - Encourage CSA operations, specialty farms, other farm-related ventures
 - Include language in POCD to protect, preserve and promote working farms
 - Ensure that new development next to farms provides a buffer
- Identify funding strategies
 - Work with local trusts, work regionally
 - Create farmland preservation sub-fund within New Milford Charitable Trust Fund, Inc.; provide an annual line item for farmland purchases in the Town's budget

New Milford's Character

"Character" means something different to each resident, but residents tend to agree that the Town's character should be protected. Community character often includes physical features such as natural resources or patterns of development that make a town unique. Residents and local officials identified things that add to New Milford's character and things that detract.

Enhances New Milford's Character

- | | |
|----------------|----------------------|
| • Farmland | • Lively downtown |
| • Open Space | • Historic buildings |
| • Scenic roads | • Small businesses |
| • Scenic views | • Community events |
| • Town Green | |

This section addresses a number of character-related features. Other features are discussed earlier in this chapter (e.g., farmland) or in later chapters (e.g., Downtown, development patterns).

Historic Resources

Historic buildings and structures add to a community's character, give insight to the community's past, and can create economic activity. Residents have noted the importance of maintaining New Milford's historic buildings and preserving the character of historic areas such as Downtown, Gaylordsville, Northville and Merryall. Most residents (72%) feel that the Town is doing a good job protecting its historic buildings.

National and State Historic District and Place designations recognize areas with historical merit. These designations affect activities involving federal and/or state funding and may prevent unreasonable destruction of historic resources (see locations on Map).

District listed on National and State Registers

- New Milford Center Historic District (including Town Hall)

Places listed on National and State Register

- Boardman's Bridge
- J. S. Halpine Tobacco Warehouse
- Hine-Buckingham Farms

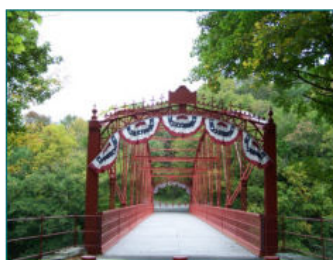
- Housatonic Railroad Station
- Lover's Leap Bridge
- Merritt Beach & Son Building
- Merryall Union Evangelical Society Chapel
- Noble, John Glover, House
- Schoverling, Carl F., Tobacco Warehouse
- United Bank Building
- Wildman, E. A., & Co. Tobacco Warehouse
- Merwinsville Hotel

Two additional properties are listed just on the State Register: the Bridgeport Wood Finishing Company and the All Saints Memory Episcopal Church.

Local Historic District designations give local historic district commissions the authority to regulate the construction and demolition of structures and the alteration of architectural features. There is one local historic district in New Milford: the Town Hall District.



Merryall Union Evangelical Society Chapel.



Lover's Leap Bridge.

In addition to recognition programs, other measures to protect historic resources can include regulatory protection, out-right ownership by a governmental or preservation organization, and active use of historic buildings and structures. Measures taken by the Town and others to preserve its historic resources include:

- In 1979, the New Milford Historic Preservation Society compiled an inventory of historic structures.
- New Milford became a Certified Local Government (a joint effort of the National Park Service and the State Historic Preservation Office that expands funding opportunities for historic preservation).
- The Town adopted a demolition delay ordinance that requires a 21 day waiting period before a demolition permit is granted and up to an additional 60 days if objections to the issuance of a demolition permit have been filed. While the ordinance cannot prevent the demolition, it provides time to work with the owner to see if preservation may be an option.
- Non-profit entities, such as the Gaylordsville Historical Society, own historic buildings and in some cases, open them to the public.
- New Milford has "adaptive use" zoning regulations that allow the conversion of older residential structures to either multi-family or business use. This flexibility can offer an economic incentive for the owners of historic buildings to maintain the building.

Many of New Milford's historic structures are not protected. There are no regulations in place to prevent the alteration of the appearance of any historic building in New Milford, other than the Town Hall. The Town has attempted to adopt some form protection in the Downtown area, but has not yet found an approach that is agreeable to landowners. Options such as Village District Zoning or the establishment of local historic districts should continue to be explored.

Archeological Resources

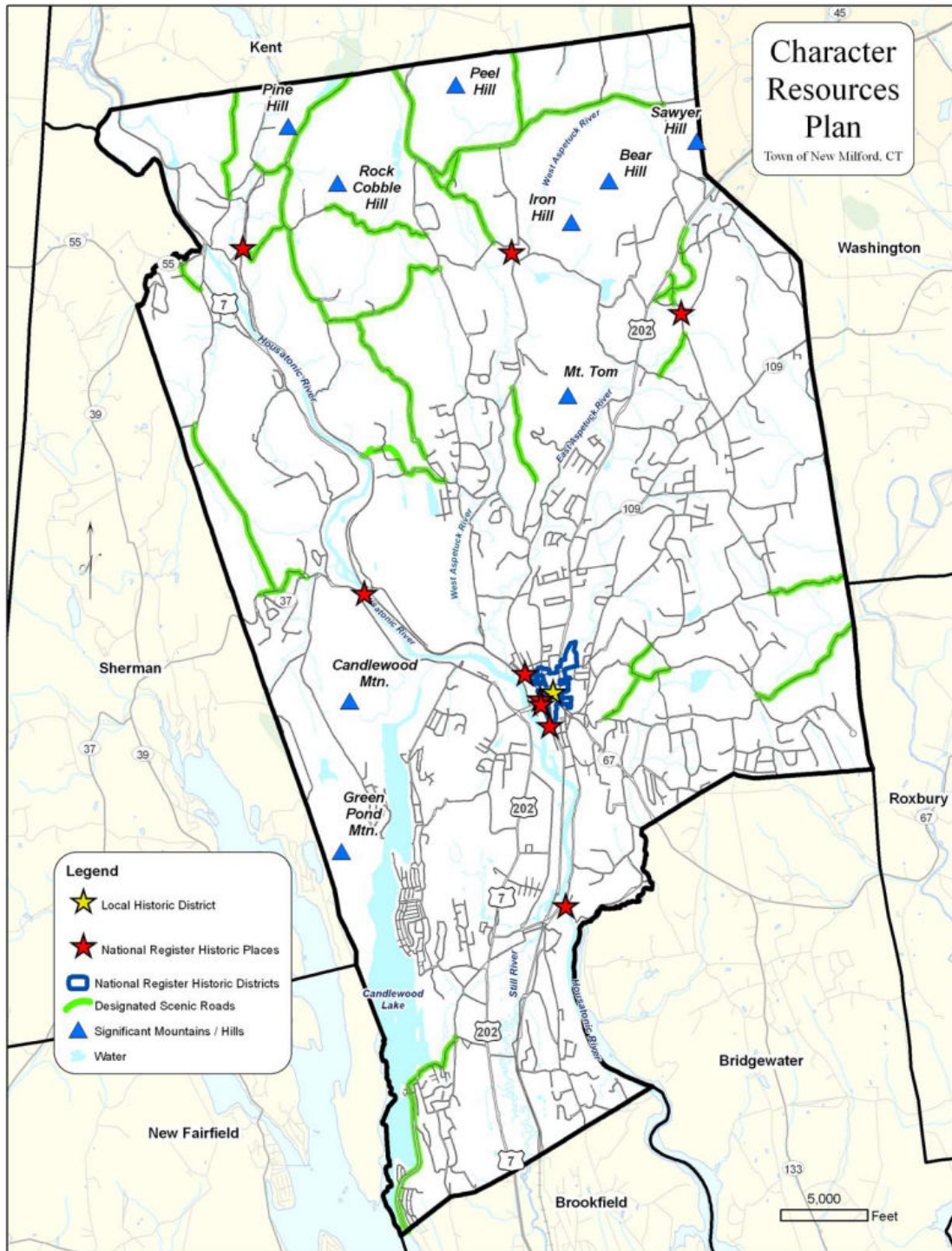
In 1990, HVCEO conducted a regional study of archaeological features; overall, the Housatonic River Valley is very rich in resources. Sometimes protecting archeological sensitive areas can be accomplished by redesigning site layout to avoid the areas. In cases where disturbance is unavoidable, the resources can be inventoried and catalogued.

Scenic Roads

New Milford has designated 27 town roads as scenic roads, pursuant to CGS 7-149a. These roads are shown on the map on page 51. This designation provides that road improvement projects must minimize or avoid impacts to the scenic features, such as vegetation and stonewalls. The Town should continue to designate additional roads that merit this type of protection.



Stilson Road.



Undeveloped Land (PA 490)

One of the ways that New Milford helps to maintain its character is through the use value assessment program, PA 490, for farm use, forest use and open space (see sidebar on page 46). This program does not protect land from development; but it can delay development and thus protect the Town's character for some period.

Open Space Use Assessment – Under the open space use assessment program, the assessor incorporates land into the program provided that the land parcel is designated (or the eligibility criteria are specified) in the Plan of Conservation and Development and the designation (or criteria) has been approved by the Town Council. Roughly 15 properties participate in this program in New Milford.

This POCD recommends using a set of criteria for eligibility and that, once the Town Council has adopted the criteria, land owners apply directly to the assessor (i.e., case by case reviews by the Town Council are not needed).

Recommended PA 490 Open Space Criteria

Pursuant to CGS 12-107e, the following land is designated as open space land for purposes of taxation under said statutes:

- A contiguous parcel of land, excluding approved building lots, which consists of at least twice the minimum lot size required for the zoning district within which the lot is located as designated on the official zoning map.

The following are excluded from open space land classification:

- Any land containing improvements such as, but not limited to, swimming pools, tennis courts, buildings and septic systems,
- Any land legally subdivided into any parcel and / or lot, and
- Any land zoned for non-residential uses.

Farm Use Assessment – The farm use assessment program is established by statute. In New Milford, 215 properties participate in this program.

Forest Use Assessment – The forest use assessment program is established by statute. Per CGS 12-107d, a state-certified forester determines whether the land meets the eligibility criteria. Currently 173 properties in New Milford utilize the forest assessment.

Protect Trees and Vegetation

In addition to environmental benefits, preserving existing trees and encouraging the planting of new trees contribute to New Milford's character.

The Town is in the process of adopting a tree ordinance which will further protect public trees. Trees can be very vulnerable during construction. Guidance from a professional can ensure minimal damage during construction and ensure that new trees are planted correctly. The Town should continue to require bonds for newly planted trees as part of development approval so that any damage that does occur can be mitigated. Protecting trees is important throughout Town, but special emphasis should be placed on Downtown where the loss of only a few trees can have a great impact to character.

The Town should continue to allow flexibility when laying out residential subdivisions. Landowners can be encouraged to retain trees along the front of properties. Subdivision roads can be designed so that such trees are in the right-of-way of new roads so that they can be preserved. Many communities have adopted provisions to successfully protect trees in this manner.

Town Green

The Town Green is an historic asset that also serves as a community focal point, with various community events held each year on the Green. Residents are proud of having a Town Green.

Preserve New Milford's character:

1. Protect historic resources:
 - a. Protect neighborhoods with historic character, possibly through Village District zoning or the creation of local historic districts.
 - b. Continue to allow adaptive reuse of buildings.
 - c. Promote the historic resources that are found throughout the Town to residents.
 - d. Encourage heritage tourism.
2. Continue to designate scenic roads.
3. Continue PA 490 designations for farm, forest and open space.
4. Update the PA 490 open space policy as recommended in this POCD.
5. Minimize the loss of mature trees:
 - a. Ensure that new development preserves existing trees, particularly in and near Downtown.
 - b. When reviewing site plans, ensure that new trees are planted correctly, are maintained, and require a bonding.
 - c. Encourage landowners to retain mature trees along existing roadways when subdivisions are built to "hide" the development, as feasible.
6. Maintain the Town Green as an attractive community focal point.



Dorwin Hill Road.



Town Green.

Notes:

DEVELOPMENT

5

Overview

How a community wishes to grow ("development") is a key component of a Plan of Conservation and Development. The Conservation Chapter provided strategies for those things that should be protected in New Milford (e.g., natural resources, farms, historic resources, overall character). This chapter outlines strategies for future development – residential and business development – including what, where and how growth should occur.



Downtown.



House in New Milford.



Medinstill.

Community Structure

The physical organization of a community enhances community character and quality of life.

People identify most strongly with areas that have a "sense of place." "Villages," "Nodes" and "Gateways" are examples of elements of a community's structure that can contribute to a sense of place. Examples in New Milford include Downtown and Gaylordsville.

Distinct neighborhoods can also contribute to a sense of place. Many residents identify themselves with a particular neighborhood.

Greenways, stream belts and other linear elements provide overall context to the community and enhance community character and community spirit. While recommendations to enhance some of these aspects of community structure were discussed in Chapter 4, it is important to recognize that they also contribute to community structure.

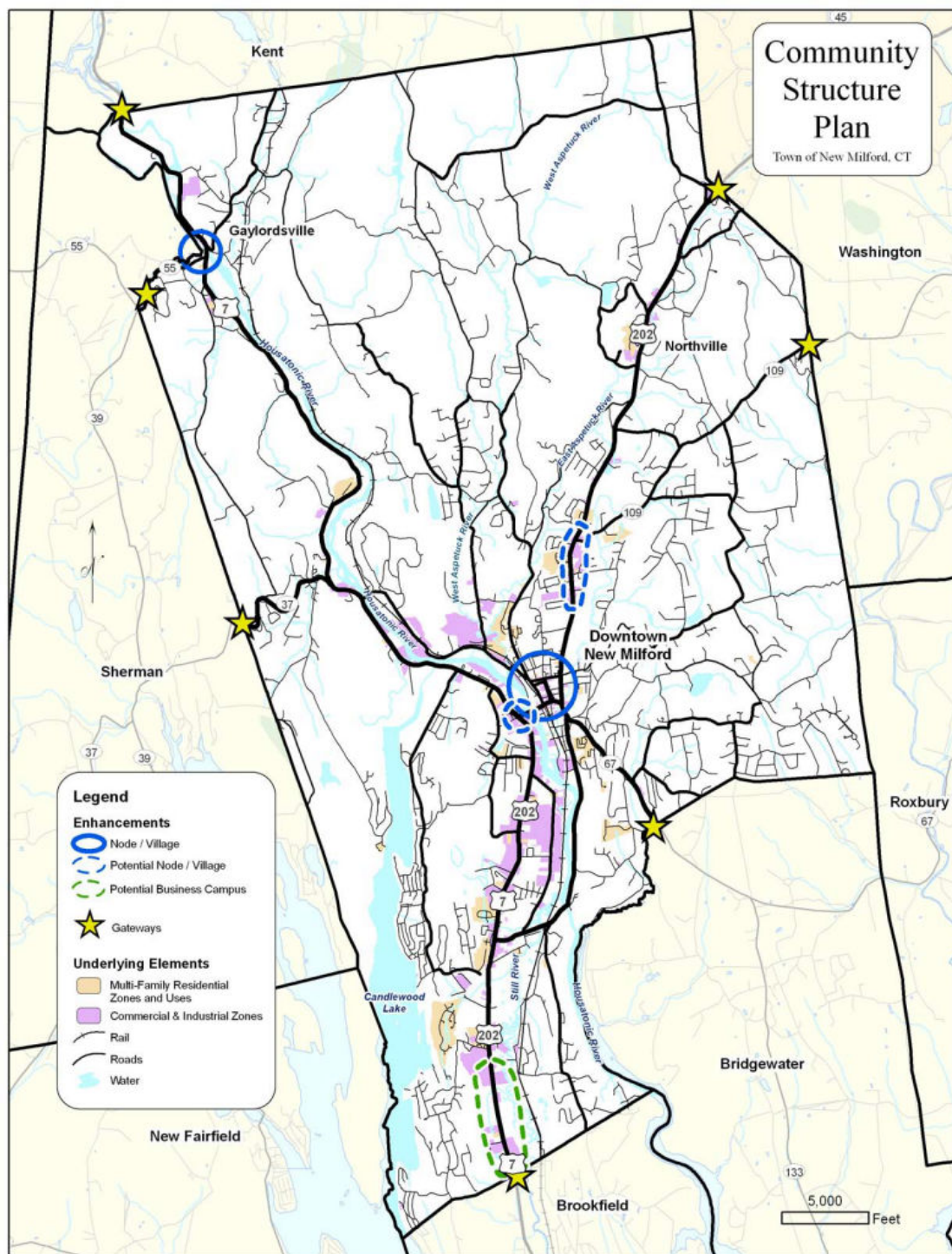
The Town should encourage positive elements of community structure. The Community Structure Plan identifies New Milford's existing and recommend structure.

Enhance New Milford's community structure:

1. Encourage development to occur in locations and in a manner that contributes to the positive elements of New Milford's community structure and character.
2. Discourage elements that detract from community structure and character.

Elements that Enhance Community Structure

- **Villages / Nodes** – community-size places with distinctive characteristics (e.g., Downtown).
- **Clusters / Campuses** – neighborhood size places identifiable by use, location, character or style.
- **Focal Points** – site size places identifiable by function, identity, character, or style.
- **Greenways** – trails, rivers, and other linear elements that provide overall context.
- **Gateways** – places providing a sense of entry or arrival.
- **Scenic Resources** – places providing a sense of beauty, scale, or perspective.



Residential Patterns

Overview

Roughly 85%, or 35,000 acres, of New Milford is zoned for residential uses.

The availability of infrastructure and level of natural resource constraints may limit densities in areas. Conversely, there are areas of Town that are more suitable for additional housing development. These include areas with road, water and sewer infrastructure, served by transit, and near Downtown or other commercial areas.

Strategies to protect existing neighborhoods, promote flexible lot layout, and town-wide residential densities are explained further here.

Existing Neighborhoods

Many of the strategies outlined elsewhere in this POCD can help preserve the character of existing neighborhoods throughout New Milford. There are some cases where additional protections may be necessary, such as to enhance protection from adjacent incompatible uses.

A number of neighborhoods are located next to business zones. In some cases there is a physical buffer (such as vegetation) to help protect the neighborhood from incompatible activities. In other cases, the neighborhood is separated by vacant land or by a less intense transitional use. And in a few cases, there is no buffer. Maintaining or creating buffers can help ensure that neighborhoods adjacent to potentially incompatible activities are protected.

Many neighborhoods are characterized by historic houses. In Downtown, historic houses contribute greatly to the village character of the area. Preserving these houses is important. While development and redevelopment of parcels will help keep the area vital and healthy, the Town should encourage the continued use of historic houses. In other neighborhoods, such as Merryall and Gaylordsville, protecting historic houses will help protect the character of those and other neighborhoods. Tools to protect historic buildings are found on p. 53.

Flexible Lot Layout

The next section addresses overall density patterns town-wide, while this discussion focuses on patterns on a given site.

Most residential development occurs through the subdivision process. Residential subdivisions can result in approaches that do not account for sites' natural and scenic features.

To address this issue, the Town adopted provisions to allow Cluster Conservation Subdivisions. Under this provision, landowners are given flexibility in lot layout and dimensional requirements, in return for preserving natural and scenic features.

The Town should continue to allow for diverse subdivision options.

Overall Residential Density

New Milford's residential development pattern generally follows historic trends. Downtown was an early focal point and people built their houses next to Downtown at higher densities. On a much smaller scale, a similar pattern occurred in Gaylordsville. The outskirts of town remained undeveloped or dedicated to agriculture, resulting in very low density housing patterns. As the community grew, subdivisions sprung up near Candlewood Lake, along state routes and in more remote parts of the Town. When zoning was adopted, it reflected the patterns that were already in place.

Today, this residential zoning pattern creates challenges for the Town. Many natural resources are located in areas currently zoned for medium densities. Also, remote areas without adequate infrastructure have seen more and more residential development.

Current zoning and public health regulations result in densities that reflect the capability of the land. For example, some areas may not have adequate areas suitable for septic systems. Other areas may be so constrained by steep slopes and ledge that it would be cost-prohibitive to build.

The Town has taken steps to address natural resource protection through the "Temple Amendment" and by allowing conservation

subdivisions. The Temple Amendment subtracts out the area of certain natural resources when determining the minimum lot sizes. As a result, the density is reduced on parcels that contain certain natural resource constraints.

Two residential density scenarios are provided on the following pages. The scenarios, which should only be used for discussion purposes, are as follows:

- Existing zoning
- Soil-based zoning – lowest densities are shown for areas with soils that have low or very low suitability for septic systems.

PRD and AAC

Planned Residential Developments (PRD) and Active Adult Communities (AAC) help to address the demand for smaller units in New Milford and afford flexibility in site layout, which can help protect natural resources and preserve open space.

By their nature, they allow densities greater than the existing zone. It is recommended that these types of developments continue to be permitted in New Milford, but that locational criteria are adopted so that these higher density developments are built in areas that are consistent with the goals and policies of this POCD. Specifically, the zones could be updated to require that new PRDs and AACs must be served by municipal sewer, served by public water, and are located on roads classified as Regional Arterials in this POCD. Other factors, such as proximity to business areas (retail and services) and public transit might also be considered.

Areas that Can Support Development

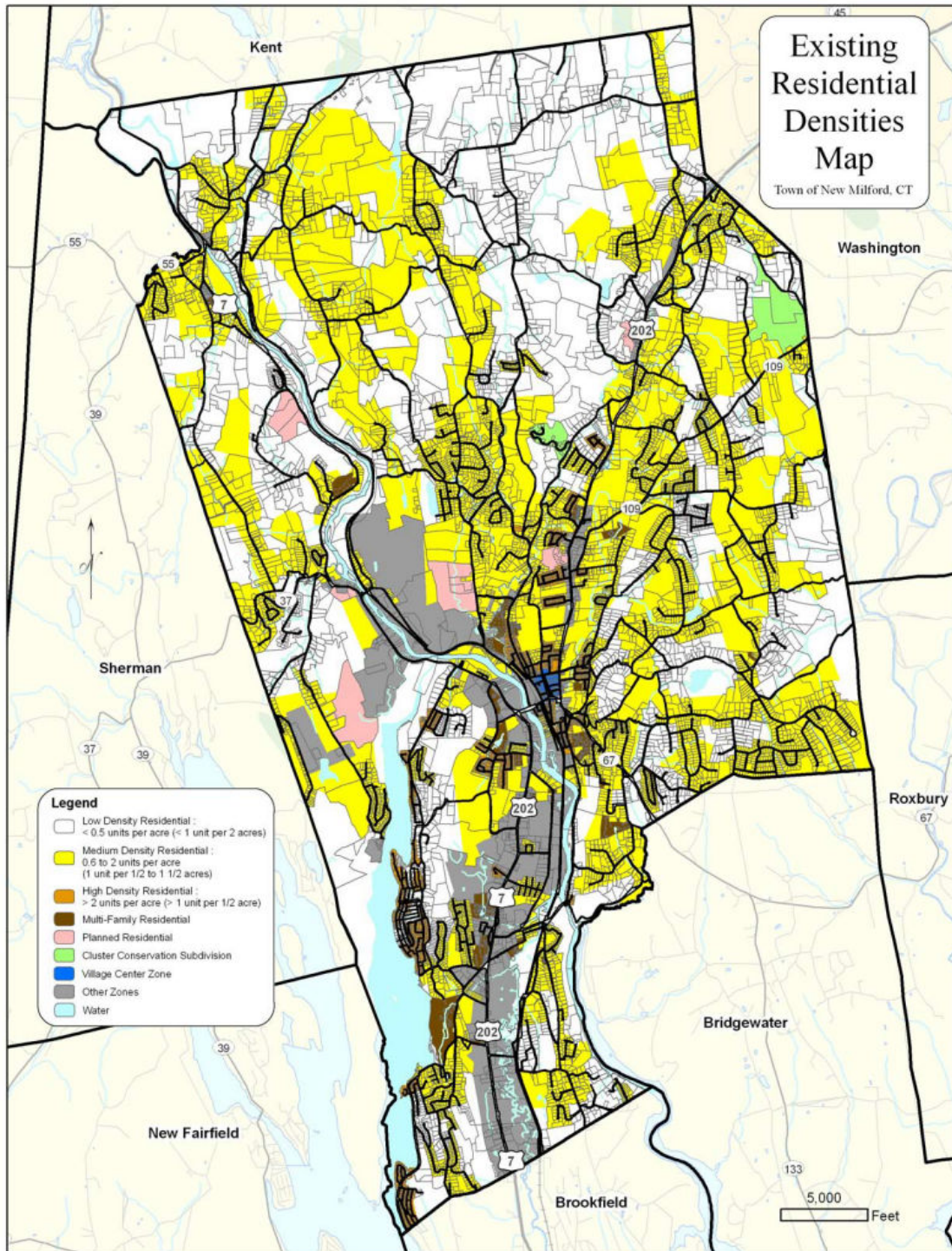
During the planning process, residents described a vision of mixed uses, where housing is blended with businesses in a village setting such as Downtown. Having more people living in or near Downtown can provide economic benefits and placing housing in areas where residents can walk or take transit. Residents were particularly interested in attracting housing for young workers and those with disposable incomes to build a customer base for existing Downtown businesses and to attract additional businesses. A greater residential presence in and near Downtown may enhance vitality.

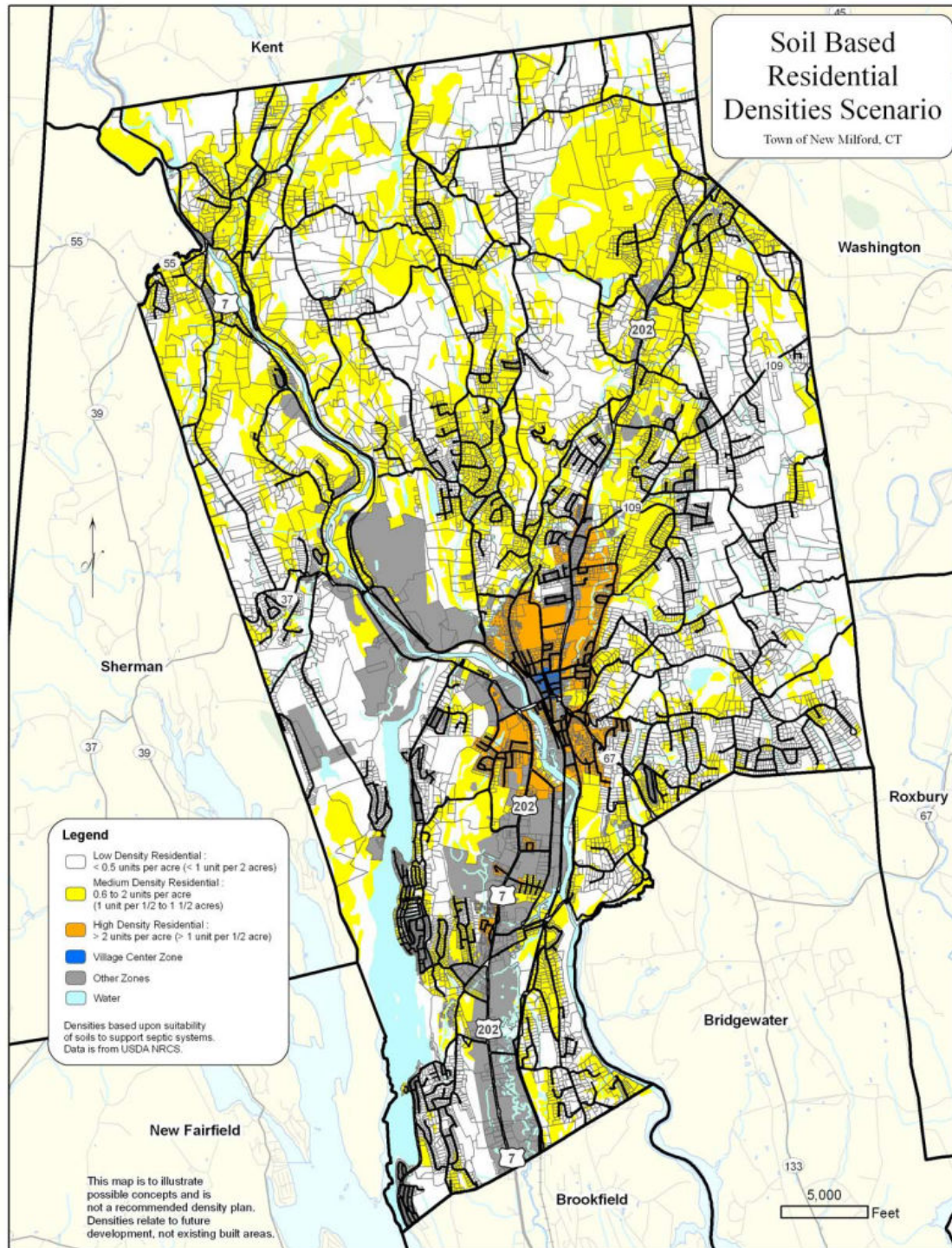
Current zoning supports higher residential densities in and near Downtown. Some zoning updates could better accommodate housing here. Possible zoning updates might include:

- Removing barriers that might prevent new housing in desired locations. For example, the Village Center Zone does not allow housing to be added to buildings that at one time were used for business purposes. This may prevent housing above retail. Zoning could be updated to allow upper story housing units while limiting non-business uses on the first floor in parts of Downtown.
- Incentive Housing Zones could increase housing opportunities in or near Downtown while providing fiscal benefits to the Town (see description on p. 63).
- Review standards for minimum parcel size and other requirements for PRD and AAC that might prevent its use in areas within walking distance of Downtown.

Maintain our residential areas:

1. Ensure that new development provides buffers to protect existing neighborhoods.
2. Continue to allow diverse subdivision options.
3. Consider amendments to special residential zones.





Housing Needs

As discussed in Chapter 3, New Milford is in a good position to address many housing needs, in that:

- There is a range of types of housing units, from single family units to apartments to mobile homes;
- Compared to the region, New Milford's housing stock (along with Danbury) provides the most affordable opportunities for median, moderate and low income households; and
- Housing prices have remained relatively affordable.

As the population ages, New Milford could see an increased demand for smaller units (for residents who wish to downsize) and for assisted living units. Almost half (49.8%) of residents felt that there are too few housing opportunities for elderly persons in New Milford.

New Milford's natural affordability may not last. While the Town, along with the State and Nation, are experiencing a downturn in housing prices, eventually, the Town could see its housing prices rise again.

The Town should continue to support opportunities for all ages and income levels in New Milford. The following strategies can help to accomplish this.

Surplus Land

The Town can initiate housing development in locations it feels are appropriate (possibly using the location criteria suggest on p. 59). The Town could review its property holdings and state-owned properties to identify which might be surplus and whether they are appropriate for housing. Even smaller sites that allow one or two units can help meet housing needs.

Smaller Scale Housing Opportunities

Accessory apartments and two-family homes provide affordable housing opportunities with minimal impact to character since the buildings are usually of a similar scale as a single family house. New Milford also allows the conversion of some existing houses into as many as four units. The Town should continue to allow the creation of these types of housing units.

The Town also allows accessory apartments in houses that are on lots of at least 40,000 square feet (the minimum lot size can be reduced to 20,000 square feet if the lot is served by public water and sewer). The Town may wish to determine if this minimum lot size requirement is preventing opportunities for accessory apartments on smaller lots in areas that might be most appropriate, such as Downtown.

Affordable Housing Partnership

Approximately 10 years ago, the Town Council created the New Milford Affordable Housing Partnership. The Partnership, comprised of volunteers, has successfully obtained grants and other sources of funding to create affordable units in New Milford. They have made existing units affordable by purchasing units and then selling them to income-qualified families at affordable prices. Their efforts have also lead to the construction of new units.

The Partnership's work has been invaluable. The Town should continue to encourage and support their work.



Indian Field Apartments.

Incentive-Based Approaches

Communities can offer incentives to developers to provide affordable housing units. For example, New Milford's zoning regulations allow for a density bonus if affordable units are provided. The Town should consider updating this regulation in order to be consistent with State statutes and to encourage its use (see below).

The State recently passed legislation allowing communities to provide another type of zoning incentive. Communities can adopt "Incentive Housing Zones" to encourage development of mixed income communities — 20% of the units in the zone must be affordable to those earning up to 80% of the area median income. The units must be deed-restricted for 30 years. The State offers communities financial incentives to adopt these zones (see below).

Seniors

The housing strategies above can help to provide more housing choices for seniors including affordable smaller units and accessory apartments. The Town has seen age-restricted neighborhoods built, which provide opportunities for over-55 residents. The allowance of these developments should continue.

Promote housing options and choices to meet needs.

1. Identify opportunities to use surplus town-owned and state-owned land for housing.
2. Continue to allow accessory apartments and consider reducing the lot size requirement for accessory apartments in and near Downtown.
3. Continue to allow the conversion of houses into multiple units.
4. Continue to support and encourage the efforts of the New Milford Affordable Housing Partnership.
5. Update the affordable housing density bonus provision.
6. Consider encouraging mixed income zones, possibly through the use of Incentive Housing Zones.
7. Continue to allow over-55 housing and assisted living.

Bonus Provision in Zoning

CGS 8.2g allows a community to provide a density bonus for affordable housing. The statute states that:

"For each dwelling unit constructed by the developer in excess of the number of such units permitted by applicable density limits, the developer shall construct in the municipality a unit of affordable housing."

In other words, if a developer is able to build 2 additional units with the density bonus, the developer builds 4 extra units — 2 market rates on site and 2 affordable units either on site or elsewhere in the community.

Section 035-100 of New Milford's Zoning states that all of the bonus units must be affordable. This requirement does not appear to be consistent with state statutes and may deter its use since the developer would have to build affordable units without receiving bonus market rate units.

Incentive Housing Zones

If a community adopts an Incentive Housing Zones (IHZ), the State provides payments to the community when the zone is adopted and when building permits are issued. To qualify, the district must allow the following minimum densities:

- 6 units per acre for single family detached units
- 10 units per acre for duplexes or town houses
- 20 units per acre for multi-family housing

At least 20% of the units must be affordable for a minimum of 30 years at prices where persons earning 80% or less of the median income pay no more than 30% of their annual income for such housing.

Business Development

Overview

Business development contributes to the tax base, provides jobs, and provides goods and services. The Town has taken an active role in increasing business development by creating an Economic Development Commission (EDC) and hiring an Economic Development Supervisor. In addition, the Town actively markets appropriate town-owned properties for business development.

The Town recently established a Development Services Team (DST). The DST, which is comprised of various town departments, reviews prospective development and construction projects prior to submission for formal review. This team approach helps applicants navigate the land use approval process.

The EDC adopted a Strategic Plan Initiatives that outlines strategies for marketing, infrastructure, finance, inter- and intra-agency coordination, and overall goals for business areas of New Milford, including Downtown. In addition, the Connecticut Economic Resource Center (CERC) prepared a land use report for New Milford that focused on economic development.

Many of the recommendations from these recent efforts form the basis for business strategies in this POCD. Some additional analysis may be necessary to make sure that New Milford is well-positioned to attract the business sectors that it would like to see and to have alternatives if there are cases where the market may not align with the vision.

Public education should play an important role in future business strategies. Educating residents about fiscal benefits of types of businesses could be important.

This section first discusses the need for an overall market analysis and then provides strategies related to uses and the form of development in key business areas.



A business on Main Street.



Businesses on Route 202.

Market Analysis

New Milford has traditionally attracted water-dependent industry along the Housatonic River because it was one of the few places along the River with flat, vacant land. The Town has long had a goal to continue to encourage industrial development along the River, generally in the Boardman Road area. In recent years, the Town also has put forth a vision for a "Corporate Boulevard" along Route 7, south of Lanesville Road to the Brookfield border.

New Milford may be at a crossroads. The Town wants to build upon its past successes in attracting manufacturing and industry, but those industries generally are in decline. The Town may need to better understand the types of business it is best suited to attract. Is there still a strong market for water-dependent industry? How might the recent Route 7 improvements increase business opportunities in New Milford?

Moving forward with these initiatives may require town investments, such as tax incentives and upgrades to infrastructure. Prior to making these investments, the Town might seek a professional market analysis to better gauge the local business climate and future prospects. If the analysis indicates that the market is there, then the Town can move forward with needed incentives and investments. If the analysis determines a new approach is needed, the Town would be in a position to create a "Plan B" for these areas – a plan that would still provide fiscal benefits, but is matched to New Milford's potential economic role.



Route 7 South of Lanesville Road.

Business Development and Business Zones

Route 7, South of Lanesville Road

The vision for this area is to have campus style development, with office uses, corporate headquarters, and some retail / ancillary uses to serve those offices. In this vision, properties would be well-landscaped and a greenway would run along the Still River. With the campus style development vision, there would be coordinated development of multiple buildings on a parcel with common access drives and parking areas.

A Corporate Boulevard area might be particularly vulnerable to develop in ways not desired by the community. Under current zoning, retail uses are permitted. This portion of Route 7 could ultimately develop in a similar fashion to those stretches north of Lanesville Road.

A proactive approach with appropriate zoning changes could minimize the potential for less desirable land uses here. The Town may desire an amendment to the regulations to discourage or prohibit strip style retail.

As discussed on page 65, the Town may need to further investigate the types of uses that can be attracted to this area with a market analysis. Should it be found that other uses may be more appropriate, it is still desirable that this form and style of development in the vision occurs (i.e., landscaped, greenway, coordinated development).

If it is found that the market might support office / corporate development, but not in the short term, the Town should review zoning to ensure it promotes interim uses that would have less traffic impacts and aesthetic impacts than strip-type retail.

Route 7, Lanesville Road to Downtown

This area is a "regional retail center" providing goods and services to residents of New Milford and the larger region. The area is characterized by retail and strip-type development, but also includes some industry and housing. Should additional large scale retail be built in New Milford, this area is best suited for it. Strategies could focus on improving the appearance of the area, providing pedestrian amenities, and access management (see sidebar).

New development might provide well-landscaped frontage, provide sidewalks, and comply with the

Curb Cut and Access Management Plan. The Town should consider incorporating design review into the approval process to improve the general appearance of buildings and signs. The Town could encourage existing development to make improvements such as consolidating curb cuts in accordance with the plan and improving landscaping.

The Bridge Street, Kent Road and Danbury Road intersection is the transition from a suburban commercial corridor to a downtown village core. Aesthetic enhancements can improve this Downtown Gateway, including:

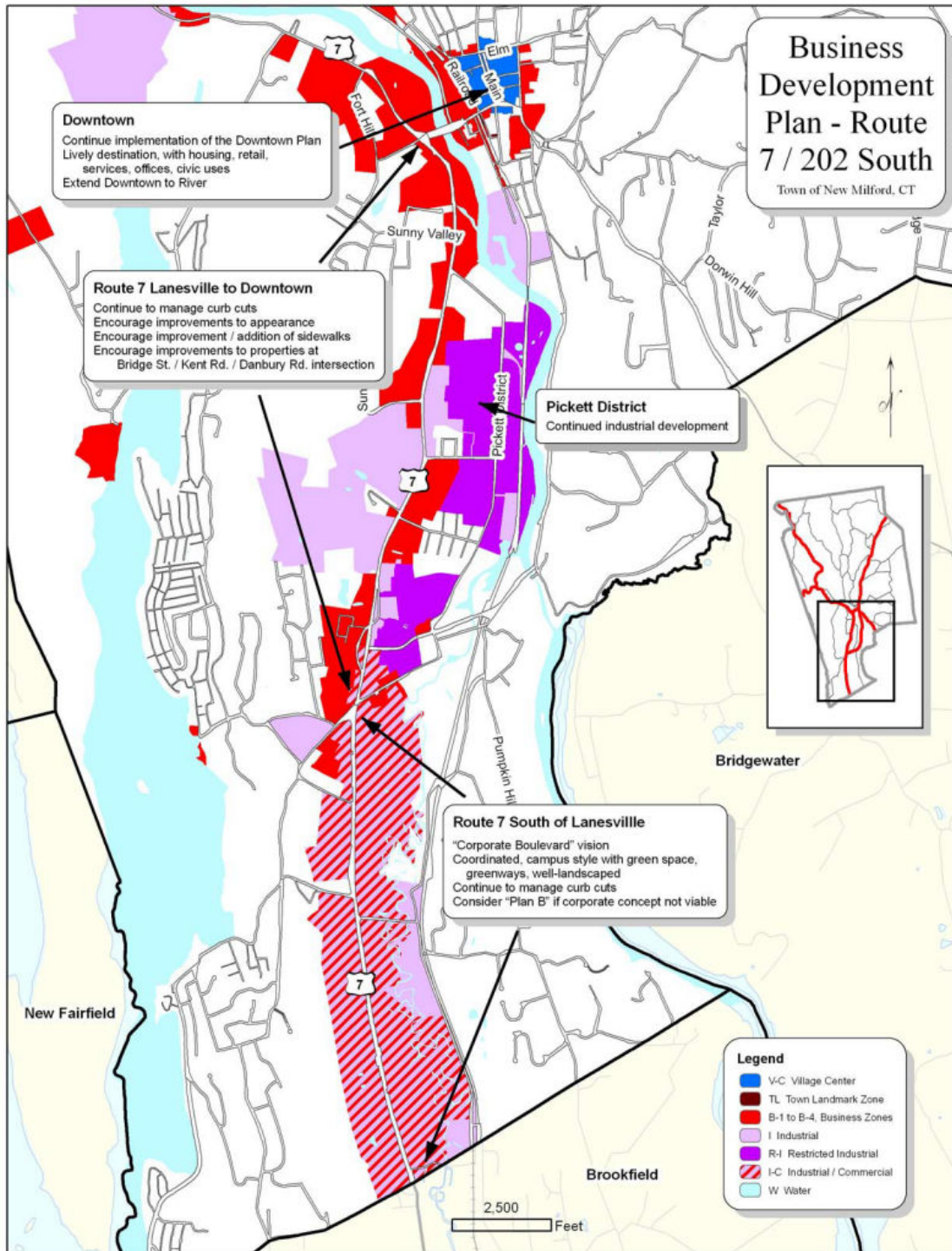
- Incorporate elements of the Downtown streetscape to this intersection (e.g., plantings, lighting, pedestrian amenities).
- Consider creating architectural design guidelines that complement the downtown style but are flexible to respond to the commercial nature of the immediate area.
- Provide a gateway along the intersection's northeast quadrant with signage.
- Promote building construction closer to the street and avoid placing parking in front of buildings.



Bridge Street, Kent Road and Danbury Road intersection.

Route 7 & Route 202 Curb Cut and Access Management Overlay Zone

HVCEO commissioned the 2008 access management study for New Milford. This was an update of a 1997 study. Curb cut and access management seeks to improve safety and roadway capacity while still meeting access needs of properties. The study reviewed existing driveway locations along Routes 7 and 202 and provided specific recommendations for access drive improvements, consolidations and closures. New Milford adopted a "Route 7 and 202 Curb Cut and Access Management Overlay Zone." It requires that site plan and special exception applications comply with the 2008 study.



Route 7, North of Downtown

There could be pressure to extend strip retail north of Veterans Bridge and it appears that zoning might allow those types of uses. This area serves effectively as a buffer from suburban style development to rural business uses as one travels from south to north on Route 7. Because of the proximity to Downtown, there may be opportunities here for housing within walking distance to Downtown.

Gaylordsville

Gaylordsville was an early village settlement and the area still retains village elements – historic houses are set close to the street and, although there are no sidewalks, the overall scale of development has a walkable feel. While little growth is anticipated in this area over the planning period, Gaylordsville could be maintained as a small scale, riverside, New England village.

Future business development in the commercial zones should contribute to the village feel and provide enhancements. The Town should be encouraged to promote building architecture that complements the historic village character of Gaylordsville.

The historic core and the neighborhood commercial area to the south could be tied together through pedestrian improvements such as sidewalks along Route 7 and a greenway along the River. Business property owners should be encouraged to improve their frontage.

Residential uses should continue to be allowed in order to provide a mixture of housing and businesses. The adaptive reuse of houses for commercial purposes should be encouraged since it maintains the character of the village.

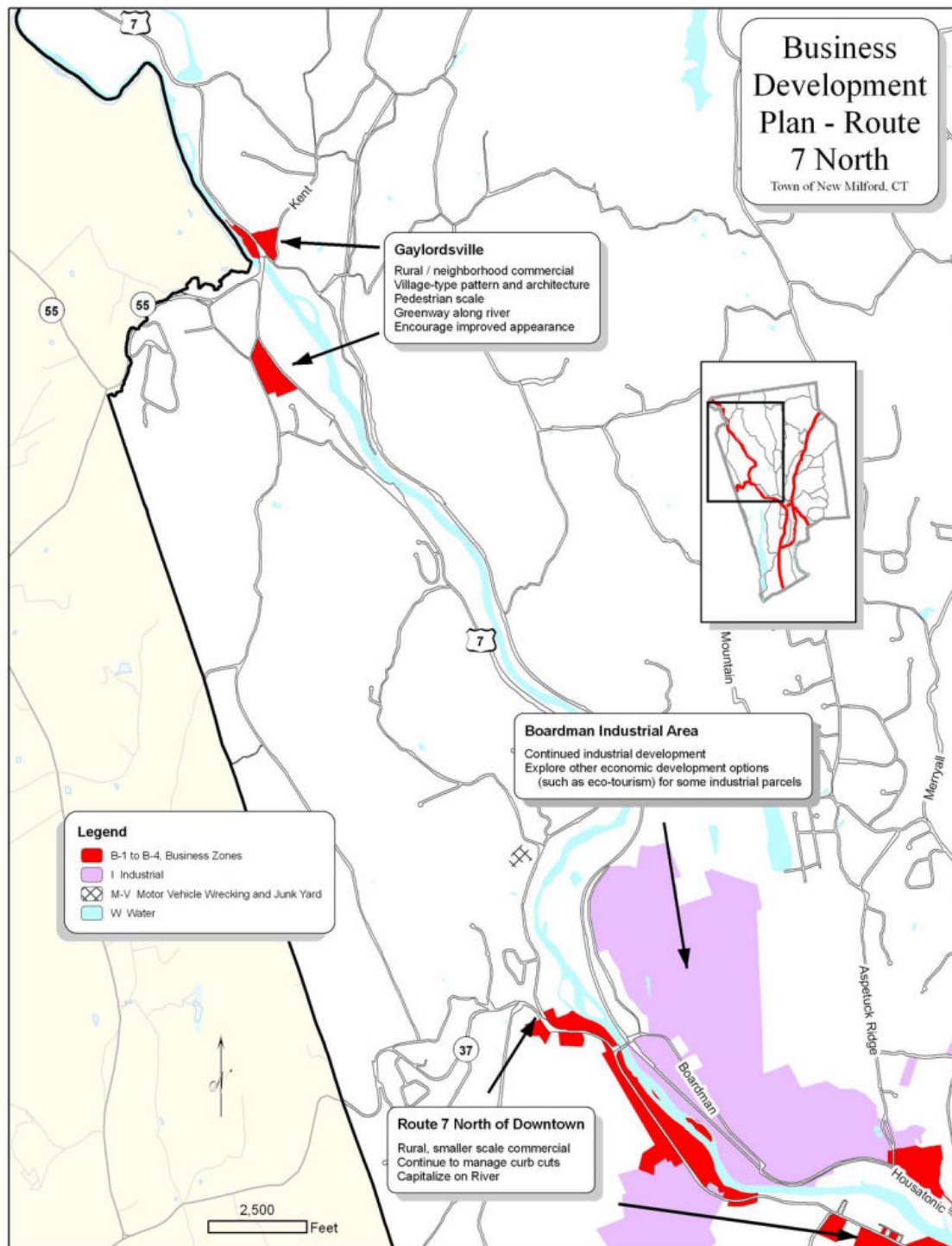
There is some industrial activity behind the commercial plaza, backing up to Gaylord Road. Over the long term, it might be desirable to transform the area into neighborhood commercial uses (small-scale retail and services). However, the industrial activities do not seem to intrude on surrounding properties so their continued presence should not impact the overall goal of enhancing the village feel of Gaylordsville.

Currently a number of uses are allowed in the business zones in Gaylordsville that are not likely compatible with a village feel, such as restaurants with drive-through windows. New buildings should strive to be compatible with the historic setting.

Gaylordsville



Image – 2009 Microsoft Corp, 2009 NAVTEQ, image courtesy of NASA.



Route 202, Northville

This rural section of Route 202 is best suited for the type of commercial development that is currently there – smaller scale, neighborhood style development. The look of new buildings will be important to maintain the rural flavor of this area. The Zoning Commission has adopted the “Litchfield Road (Route 202) Corridor District” to reduce the potential for strip-development in this area. Those restrictions should continue and be strengthened, if necessary.

Route 202, North of Downtown (Park Lane area)

The Park Lane area has some elements of a village, although it is not as evident here as in other parts of town. The businesses are neighborhood-oriented, buildings are relatively close to the road, and despite the lack of sidewalks, the area is pedestrian-scale.

This area has the potential to become more village-like, with better pedestrian connections and a more distinct “sense of place.” Such improvements could make the area more attractive to businesses and attract residents to visit businesses. With a number of neighborhoods nearby, there is a customer base within walking distance to this area.

Strategies to reinforce the village node here include improving the appearance, providing sidewalks, encouraging upgrades of buildings and facades, and managing curb cuts. The Litchfield Road Corridor District applies to only a part of this area.



The Park Lane area.

Industrial Areas

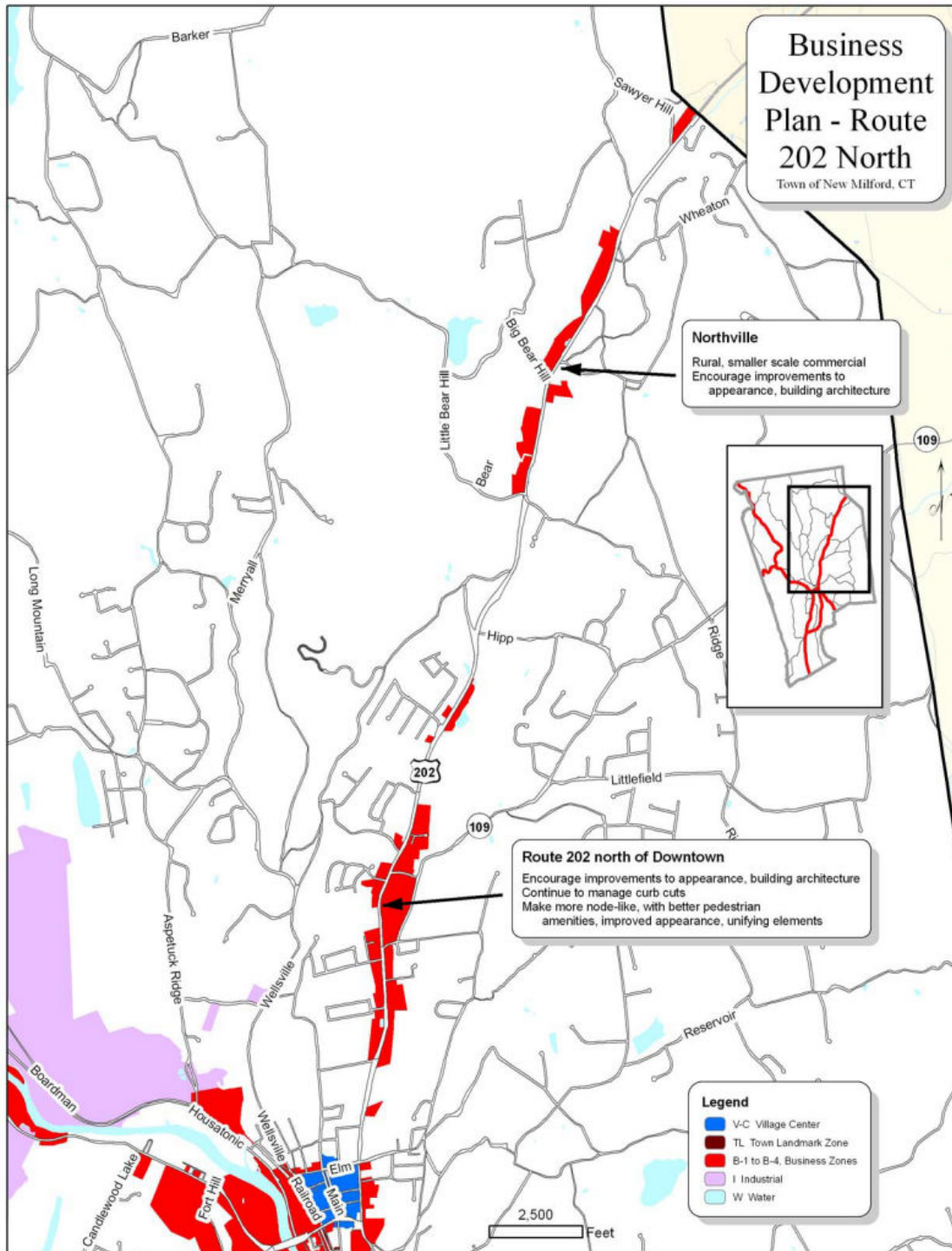
As discussed, a market analysis could help refine / amend the locations of and uses permitted in industrial areas to capitalize on market potential. Amending zoning regulations based upon the market analysis could help to reduce the possibility that less desirable forms and types of development occur in the Town's industrial areas.

Key strategies for industrial areas include:

- Continue to support industry in the Pickett District and minimize the potential for new housing to be placed next to industrial uses.
- Support industry in the Boardman Road area while examining additional opportunities that take advantage of the Housatonic River and stunning scenery. There could be other uses for properties in this area that contribute to the tax base, while capitalizing on New Milford's natural assets. Ecotourism is one idea that residents identified during the planning process.
- For other industrial zones in New Milford, attention should focus on their continued use for industry, while carefully managing potential impacts to nearby neighborhoods.



Pickett District businesses.



Encourage business development in appropriate areas and enhance business zones:

1. Consider a market analysis for industrial zones and for the "Corporate Boulevard" concept.
2. Route 7, South of Lanesville Road:
 - a. Promote campus style development with offices and some supportive retail for workers at those sites
3. Route 7, Lanesville Road to Downtown – make overall improvements:
 - a. Encourage improvements to the appearance of buildings, frontage, and signs for new development and when renovations / upgrades to existing buildings are made
 - b. Provide sidewalks
 - c. Continue to manage curb cuts
 - d. Encourage enhancement of the properties at the Bridge Street, Kent Road, Danbury Road intersection to better transition to Downtown
4. Route 7, North of Downtown:
 - a. Continue to explore housing opportunities within walking distance to Downtown
 - b. Support growth of existing businesses in appropriate areas
5. Gaylordsville:
 - a. Encourage new development to reflect the historic, village-style architecture and patterns; consider designating as a Village District
 - b. Tie business areas together with sidewalks along Route 7 and a greenway along the River
 - c. Encourage property owners to improve frontage
 - d. Retain residential uses and residential structures

6. Route 202, Northville – maintain as a rural commercial node:
 - a. Continue to ensure that the uses, size and scale of businesses reflect the rural nature of the area
7. Park Lane area – encourage neighborhood business, with elements of village-style patterns, where nearby residents can walk:
 - a. Encourage new buildings to reflect the New England style
 - b. Continue to manage curb cuts
 - c. Provide sidewalks, including connections to nearby neighborhoods
8. Support industrial development in industrial zones and capitalize on other business opportunities.

Downtown New Milford

Overview

Downtown New Milford is a treasure – it typifies a traditional New England Village, it is home to successful businesses and historic residences and it serves as a civic focal point. Downtown should continue to be a “destination” and provide a mixture of civic, residential and commercial uses.

Residents appreciate efforts to maintain the Town Green and to improve the appearance of sidewalks and streetscapes. When asked to rate characteristics of Downtown, 84% gave high ratings to the overall appearance, including that of the buildings, sidewalks and the Town Green. Meanwhile, traffic received the lowest ratings.

Having an organized group of downtown business owners is a tremendous resource in helping to promote Downtown and draw people there. The Village Center Organization can play this role and their efforts should continue to be supported by the Town.

Downtown Plan

New Milford has committed resources in the past to prepare plans for Downtown. The latest plan, the *Downtown New Milford Economic Enhancement Strategy* (1996), has served the Town well and many of its recommendations have been implemented.

The Plan should be updated as needed and implementation should continue. One issue that should be addressed in an updated Plan is parking. There are differing opinions and observations about whether there is an adequate amount of parking Downtown. Some feel that there is not enough parking. Others feel that there is adequate parking, but there may be a need for better signage to direct people to parking. Future parking needs, including the number of spaces and their locations, will need to be determined in order for Downtown to support additional businesses and housing. The idea of building a parking garage has been raised. Issues about location, ownership, and management should be examined. Public garages can be designed to blend into an historic downtown; appearance must be an important consideration.

Anchor Land Uses and Activities

“Anchor” land uses and activities draw people to the Downtown. According to the survey, on average, residents visit Downtown 14 times per month. The top reasons for visiting Downtown were: the Post Office, shopping and the Library. Other anchors are the New Milford Hospital, Town Hall, the many restaurants, and the theater.

Activities such as the farmers market and community events draw residents Downtown. According to the survey, 60% of households have visited the Farmers Market.

Without these uses and activities, there likely would be fewer downtown visitors and thereby fewer customers to support businesses.

Because these uses tend to draw a larger number of visits than other uses in the Downtown, conflicts can arise due to traffic or the need to grow and expand. It will be important to encourage the continued presence of these uses Downtown and to seek long-term solutions for balancing their needs and those of the community.



The New Milford Hospital.



New Milford Public Library.

River Front

The Housatonic River is one of New Milford's most visible and important assets, yet Downtown is separated from the River by the industrial-type facilities that house the Department of Public Works.

While there are no current plans to re-locate the DPW facilities, the DPW has expressed a need for a new facility at a more appropriate site (see Chapter 6). Moving DPW elsewhere would give the Town the ability to connect Downtown to the River.

Parks, mixed uses, retail, restaurants, civic space and housing could bridge the waterfront to the existing Downtown. Not only would this extension enhance Downtown, but it could contribute to the Town's tax base. Some efforts have begun, such as the planned greenway along the River.

To begin a conversation on what a Downtown River Front could be, some preliminary sketches have been prepared. The sketches consider several potential uses but in general focus on mixed use. The sketches do not represent a recommendation for the area, but are intended to inspire discussions about the potential that this land holds.

The sketches include:

- A mixed use streetscape along Young's Field Road with retail and restaurants on the first floor and office on second and third floors.
- Housing and a hotel/conference on the interior part of the site.
- A greenway extending to Bridge Street.
- A green connecting the Bennett Street neighborhood and the Railroad Street commerce area to the River and to the new mixed use development.
- A new community which provides for flexible housing options (i.e., multi-family rentals or condominium).

These sketches assume that the recreation fields and adjacent private businesses would remain.

There are challenges that would need to be addressed, such as determining how to connect across the railway and understanding the extent of flood plains. However, starting to develop initial ideas (a vision) for this area is a key first step.



Housatonic River in Downtown New Milford.

Conceptual Downtown River Front



Existing River Front



Illustrative Potential for River Front



Existing River Front



Illustrative Potential for River Front



Enhance the Periphery of Downtown

The buildings along the periphery should complement Downtown. There are a number of properties along Bridge Street, on the southern periphery, and along Railroad Street to the north, that detract from Downtown's overall character.

In some cases these buildings house well-established businesses that are successful and have been contributing to the tax base for many years. In other cases, properties are vacant. Short term solutions might include working with property owners to make minor aesthetic improvements to facades and frontage. Longer term, property owners may find that it will be desirable to upgrade or redevelop their property in a form that is more compatible with Downtown.

In any case, the Town should be encouraged to continue to make streetscape improvements to better tie these areas to Downtown (see sidebar).

Potential Streetscape Improvements

Bridge Street

- Continue the streetscape theme from Downtown to the west side of Bridge Street
- Incorporate decorative pavers and decorative lighting
- Enhance store fronts and facades
- Provide benches and pedestrian spaces
- Install crosswalks

Railroad Street

- Continue streetscape theme to Bennett Street by incorporating decorative pavers, installing decorative lighting, enhancing store fronts and facades, providing benches and pedestrian 'spaces', and installing crosswalks
- Consolidate curb cuts by promoting interconnected parking
- Capitalize upon Boardman Terrace for access to rear parking areas and interconnections
- Create strong pedestrian connections from Railroad Street east to Main Street and west over Railroad Street to site of future redevelopment of DPW facility.
- Evaluate the intersection of Bennett, Railroad, Housatonic and Wellsville for pedestrian safety and visibility (short term) and overall intersection alignment (long term).

Examples of Attractive Facades on Bridge Street



Maintain and enhance Downtown New Milford as a hub of civic, business and residential activity:

1. Continue to implement the *Downtown Plan* and update as needed.
2. Address parking issues:
 - a. Examine the need for additional and better located spaces.
 - b. Examine the feasibility of a parking garage to support existing and future uses Downtown.
3. Encourage the continued presence of "anchor" uses and activities and seek long-term solutions to balance their needs with a desire to keep the uses Downtown.
4. Make the Housatonic River an integral asset to Downtown by capitalizing on the Town-owned land between the River and Downtown:
 - a. Determine limitations for this area based on the presence of flood plains.
 - b. Explore options, which might include new businesses, community gathering space, housing and / or a river greenway.
 - c. Ensure that public access to the River is provided.
 - d. Encourage the creation of a Master Plan and renderings for the area that will set forth design principles.
5. Encourage improvements to the appearance of properties Downtown:
 - a. Work with property owners to upgrade properties.
 - b. Encourage the long term redevelopment of these properties to be in line with the character of Downtown.
6. Encourage continued improvements to the streetscapes Downtown.



Veterans Memorial Bridge.



Town Green.



Main Street.

Notes:

INFRASTRUCTURE

6

Overview

This Chapter examines strategies for community facilities, transportation and utilities. These are the underlying elements of New Milford's infrastructure.

Community facilities include town buildings and facilities needed to provide services to residents, businesses, and property owners, ranging from emergency services to schools to town administration. Transportation includes not only roadways, but also transit and facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians. Utilities include piped utilities (public water, public sewer, storm water and natural gas), wired utilities (electric and cable), and wireless utilities (cellular communications).

Often decisions about land use are based on whether infrastructure is available to support the development. However, infrastructure should not dictate development intensity or patterns. Infrastructure should support the development patterns desired by the community.



New Milford High School.

Community Facilities

Community facilities include those facilities that provide services to residents (such as overall governance and education), those that provide public safety (fire, police, etc.) and amenities (recreation, library, etc.).

When new facilities are needed, a number of considerations should factor into decisions, especially if a new location is proposed. Considerations should include whether facilities can be shared by multiple departments, whether the existing site or a new site will best meet the needs of the department and community, and, if moving to a new location, whether a public use is the best use for the new parcel. This last factor is especially important in cases where a public facility would be built in a business zone.

Community Services

Town Properties

Overall, long term needs for occupied town buildings include general maintenance, repairs, and improving energy efficiency. Because many town buildings are older buildings, updates can be challenging but the Town has made progress, such as with improving energy efficiency. Efforts to continue to make public buildings more energy efficient should continue.

The Town has been working to determine the best uses for surplus town-owned land and buildings. Some properties might be used for future community facilities, parks or open space. Others may best be used for economic development or housing. The Town should create a plan for the future use or disposal of surplus town land. This POCD can serve as guidance when determining the best use of those parcels.

Town Hall

Overall, Town Hall continues to provide office space for various town departments and services to residents. The historic designation of the Town Hall means that updates should be compatible to the architecture of the building. Recent improvements include interior and exterior repairs, upgrades and improvements to energy efficiency. Future needs will likely focus on upgrades and repairs to ensure the building can meet modern needs and space

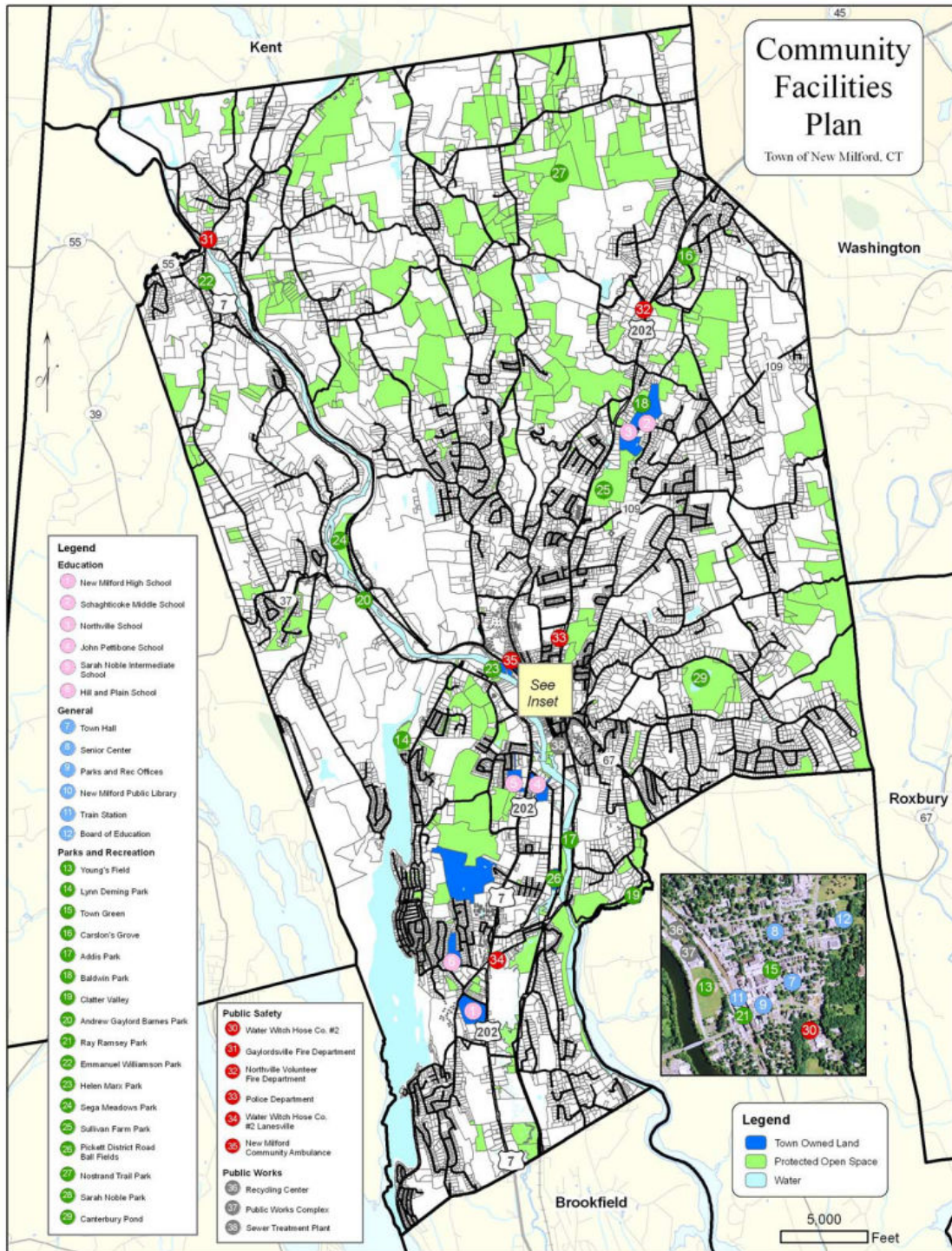
reconfiguration, as necessary. Ultimately options for expansion or additional space should be investigated.

Public Works

Needs for general public works facilities are included here. Discussions about waste disposal and road maintenance are outlined later.

The DPW facilities are located on Young's Field Road. Facilities include offices, equipment storage, a salt storage barn, a fueling station and the Recycling Center. According to the DPW, the facilities, some of which are 80 years old, are outdated and undersized to meet modern needs. Specific needs include: indoor and outdoor storage space for equipment, upgrades to comply with State and Federal environmental and safety regulations, and wash bays for vehicles.

The DPW facilities are not in an optimal location. The property, located between Downtown and the Housatonic River, could be put to better use. DPW facilities have an industrial nature and are not compatible with nearby residences. DPW has indicated that its preference would be to relocate to an industrial zone where they would have adequate space for their facilities and few houses nearby.



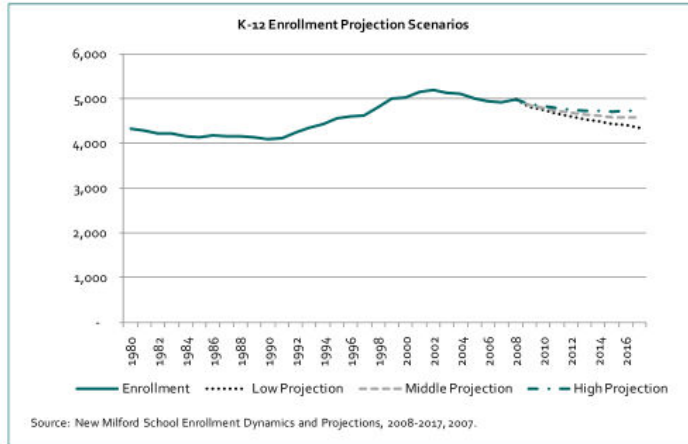
Educational Facilities

In 2008, there were just over 6,400 students enrolled in New Milford public schools. Since 1990, school enrollment has represented 17 to 19% of the Town's population. This percentage represents a slight decrease since 1980.

% of Population Enrolled in Public School System	
1980	22%
1990	17%
2000	19%
2007	17%

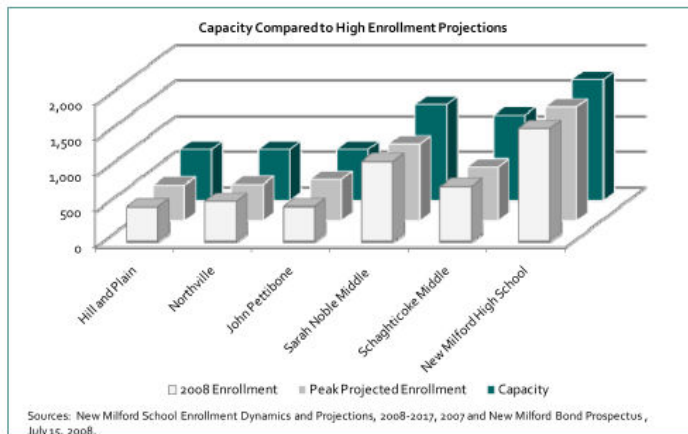
Overall, the New Milford School system is projected to have adequate capacity to meet projected future enrollments because:

- The Town recently constructed a larger high school.
- The schools are not filled to capacity.
- Enrollment projections for each school show small increases or decreases through 2017.



Enrollment projections were developed in the 2007 report, *New Milford School Enrollment Dynamics and Projections, 2008 - 2017* by H.C. Planning Consultants, Inc. The report examined three scenarios for future student enrollments: high number of births, flat line number of births (middle) and low number of births.

There appears to be adequate capacity in each school through 2017 under the worst case scenario (the high birth scenario). This assumes that the amount of space needed per student does not change greatly during this time frame.



Future school facility improvements during the planning period will likely consist of upgrades to buildings rather than new construction. All three elementary schools are adaptable in terms of accommodating additional grades should the need arise. The following outlines likely facility issues for each school, based on information provided by the Superintendent.

- Hill and Plain School – The school is roughly 40 years old. The building has been well-maintained and future projects will likely focus on general updates.
- Northville School – The school was built in 1981. Continued maintenance will be the focus at this school.
- John Pettibone School – Of the six schools, this is the oldest building. Generally it is not energy efficient and requires the most maintenance. Updates will likely be necessary in the future.
- Sarah Noble Middle School – The building was renovated in 2002. Continued maintenance will be the focus at this school. This is also the only school with a generator and it serves as a shelter.
- Schaghticoke Middle – The school was built in the 1970s and has been well-maintained. Future improvements will likely focus on maintenance.
- New Milford High School – The new high school opened in 2000. The main issue identified for this school is maintaining the recreation fields.

The Board of Education's administrative offices are located at 50 East Street in a building that was built roughly 70 years ago. Some staff is located elsewhere. Over the long term, it is desirable to have staff in one facility. The Board of Education studied potential building options (renovating the existing building or building a new facility) but has not taken action yet.

Maintenance of recreation fields is divided between entities. The School Facilities Department maintains many fields, such as those at the High School, while the Parks and Recreation Department maintains the remainder. The School Facilities Department has

purview over closing school fields to allow them to rest. There was a general feeling though that the fields are over-used, making maintenance challenging.

The Board of Education has developed a Priority List for Use of Public Facilities for field and facilities. They feel that the policy works well. However, other town departments must pay for use of the facilities and they have identified a need for community space that can be used without a fee.

Social Services

The Social Services Department is located in the Richmond Center, Downtown. For some functions, they need to "borrow" space from the Senior Center, which is located in the same building. They have indicated that they would like to be able to perform these functions within their own space. One level at the Richmond Center is unused and would need to be brought up to code if it were to be used in the future.

The Social Services Department also expressed a desire for a community center with facilities for all age groups – youth, adults and seniors. A similar concept was raised by the Senior Center, the Parks and Recreation Department and residents; 72% of residents expressed support for a community center.

Waste Disposal

Residents contract directly with vendors for curb side waste service or they can bring waste to the Recycling Center (on Young's Field Road) and pay a per-bag fee. Residents can also dispose of bulky waste at the Center for a fee. DPW recently ran a pilot program for picking up bulky waste curb side. The program proved popular and the DPW would like to explore offering this program again. The Town will begin to offer electronic waste disposal.

According to DPW, the Recycling Center is too small to meet current demands. Should the DPW facility move to a new location, staff prefers that a new, larger Recycling Center is located with the new DPW complex.

Public Safety

Fire Protection

Fire protection in New Milford is provided by three volunteer fire companies: Water Witch, Gaylordsville and Northville.

- Water Witch Hose Company No. 2 – The Water Witch Fire House is located on Grove Street. The land, building and equipment are owned by the New Milford Fire Association. The Water Witch company also has a substation located in Lanesville (the Route 7 corridor). The Town owns the land and building in Lanesville.

Overall, the Fire Company feels that with continued upkeep, the current facilities are adequate for the immediate future. Longer term, depending upon growth in the community, a larger facility would be needed.

- Gaylordsville Fire Department – The Fire Department is located on Route 7 (Kent Road) in Gaylordsville. The Fire Department owns the land and building. The current building is old (built in the 1940s) and the Department feels the building is not large enough to meet needs. Over the short term (next 3 to 5 years), the Department hopes to complete renovations and is currently raising funds to do so.

Longer term, a larger facility may be necessary, particularly if growth occurs in this part of New Milford. The Department also noted that due to topography and the presence of steep, gravel roads, there may be a need for storing a truck in hard-to-reach areas.

There is no emergency shelter in this section of Town. If a larger Fire Department is built in Gaylordsville, that facility could include a shelter.

- Northville Fire Department – The Fire Station is located on Route 202. The Department owns the land and the

building. The Station was built in 1961 and has been renovated twice. Overall, the Department feels that the current building is large enough to meet needs and that they are well-located to serve this section of town.

The Northville and Gaylordsville Departments indicated that their largest needs are to improve the communications systems and to ensure that adequate water supplies for fighting fires are provided since public water does not extend into their areas of coverage.

The Departments mentioned the importance of reviewing development plans to ensure that emergency vehicles can access buildings and that a water supply is provided. Continued cooperation between land use boards and the Fire Marshal is important.

Finally, the Departments indicated that currently they have an adequate number of volunteers, although they have had past difficulties finding volunteers. Over the planning period, the current volunteer system seems adequate. Longer term, as New Milford grows, it may be necessary to look at whether some level of paid staffing is needed.



Northville Fire Station.

Police

The Police Station, located just outside of Downtown, was built in 1989. The Department feels that they have outgrown the facility and outlined the following improvements it would like to see: more office space, more parking, room to meet new State requirements, and a larger communications center (central dispatch). They feel that the current facility is centrally located, but the small size of the site may not be able to support an expansion unless adjacent land is acquired.

The Department also indicated that longer term it may wish to have satellite stations in other sections of New Milford, such as in Lanesville and Gaylordsville. They currently have one substation Downtown.

The Police Department indicated that the current emergency communications system should be upgraded.

New Milford Community Ambulance (NMCA)

A new facility is being constructed on Scovel Road; therefore over the planning period for this POCD, the spatial needs of the NMCA appear to be met. Similar to the other public safety entities, NMCA expressed a short term need for improved communication systems.

The NMCA has seen an increase in calls: in 1990 there were 931 calls and in 2008 there were 1,627 calls. A continued increase in calls could trigger the need for a third ambulance and a paid EMT during night hours. Currently, NMCA is able to recruit an adequate number of volunteers. Similar to the Fire Department, the long term viability of having a volunteer system may need to be re-evaluated as New Milford grows.

Community Amenities

An overarching desire to integrate recreation, senior, and youth needs into a community center emerged as a desired amenity. In addition, the proposed Library expansion has been in the planning stages for years but finding funding for the expansion has been a challenge.

Library

The New Milford Public Library has been located on the Town Green since 1898. According to the Library Director, the Library sees 180,000 to 200,000 visitors each year and they have been seeing increases in library use each year.

The most pressing need for the Library is to expand its facility. Currently, some spaces are very crowded. Because of the age and layout of the building, it can be difficult to reconfigure the existing space in ways that meet user needs and comply with building and safety codes. In 1995, to address the space issues, the Library developed a long range plan. The Library hired an architect to prepare plans for adding 24,000 square feet to the existing 18,000 square foot building. The Town deemed the initial costs to be too high; in 2008, the Library Board of Trustees developed the current plan of adding 10,000 square feet.

The Library plays an important role in attracting residents to the Downtown and the residential survey indicates that 94% felt that it was important that the Library remains downtown.

Parks and Recreation

Overall, it appears that New Milford provides residents with an array of recreational amenities. The Parks and Recreation Department maintains 18 parcels totaling just over 500 acres. There are a number of private entities (e.g., Harrybrooke Park, the Canterbury School, New Milford Sports Club, etc.) that also provide recreation facilities.

The Parks and Recreation Department identified desired improvements, but overall it appears that New Milford has adequate facilities and additional land (if needed) to meet recreational demands. Almost 75% of residents felt that the quality of sports fields in New Milford was good.

The Department would like to provide more walking trails, some additional playing fields, an indoor pool (possibly as part of a community center) and

additional indoor space (gymnasium and classrooms). Depending upon population growth, the Department could see a need to expand its beaches. They have outlined upgrades desired at existing parks and recreation facilities, such as lighting, irrigation, more parking, additional trails, etc.

In terms of the locations of facilities, the Department did note that the Gaylordsville area has few recreation amenities. Over the long term, the Town may wish to seek opportunities to provide amenities in that area of town.

Amenities for the whole community, such as a community center, would probably be best located in a central part of town.

Senior Center

The Senior Center is located in the Richmond Center with the Social Services Department. The Senior Center generally felt that their space needs could be met within the Richmond Center over the next 10 years, if they had more space. Given New Milford's demographic projections, which predict an increase in the senior population, finding additional space for the senior center could become a greater priority in the coming years.

Youth Services

Youth Services is located with the Board of Education on East Street, in an old school building. The Department feels that the facility is sufficient for their purposes, though renovations outlined by the Board of Education are desirable. Whether the spatial needs of both Youth Services and the Board of Education can be met in the existing building are uncertain and may need to be addressed.

Youth Services also runs Sullivan Farm, which provides agricultural education to youth from New Milford and surrounding communities.

Address community facility needs:

1. Continue to maintain public buildings and schools, update as needed, and improve energy efficiency.
2. Create a plan for the future use or disposal of surplus town land and buildings. Use the POCD as a guide for determining future uses.
3. When planning for new or expanded community facilities:
 - a. Look for opportunities to share facilities.
 - b. Evaluate whether the current site or the proposed new site is the best location to meet the needs of the facility.
 - c. Evaluate whether the current site or proposed new site might best serve another purpose (particularly other uses that would contribute to the tax base).
4. Consider keeping the library Downtown.
5. Continue to update and maintain parks and recreation amenities.
6. Consider building a community center for all ages.

Transportation

This section first looks at issues directly related to New Milford's roads – the road classification system, overall circulation, and local road maintenance. Then strategies for transit are provided. The section also provides recommendations for improving the ability of residents to walk and bicycle to destinations.



New Milford Train Station.



Route 7.

Road Classification System

Roads can be categorized in several ways, such as based on function, character and capacity. Roadway classification can provide guidance on the types of improvements needed based on the road's intended role. New Milford's existing road classification is based on the State's classification with modifications by DPW.

While this current classification depicts how New Milford's roads function today, it is not reflective of zoning, land use goals, context or community character.

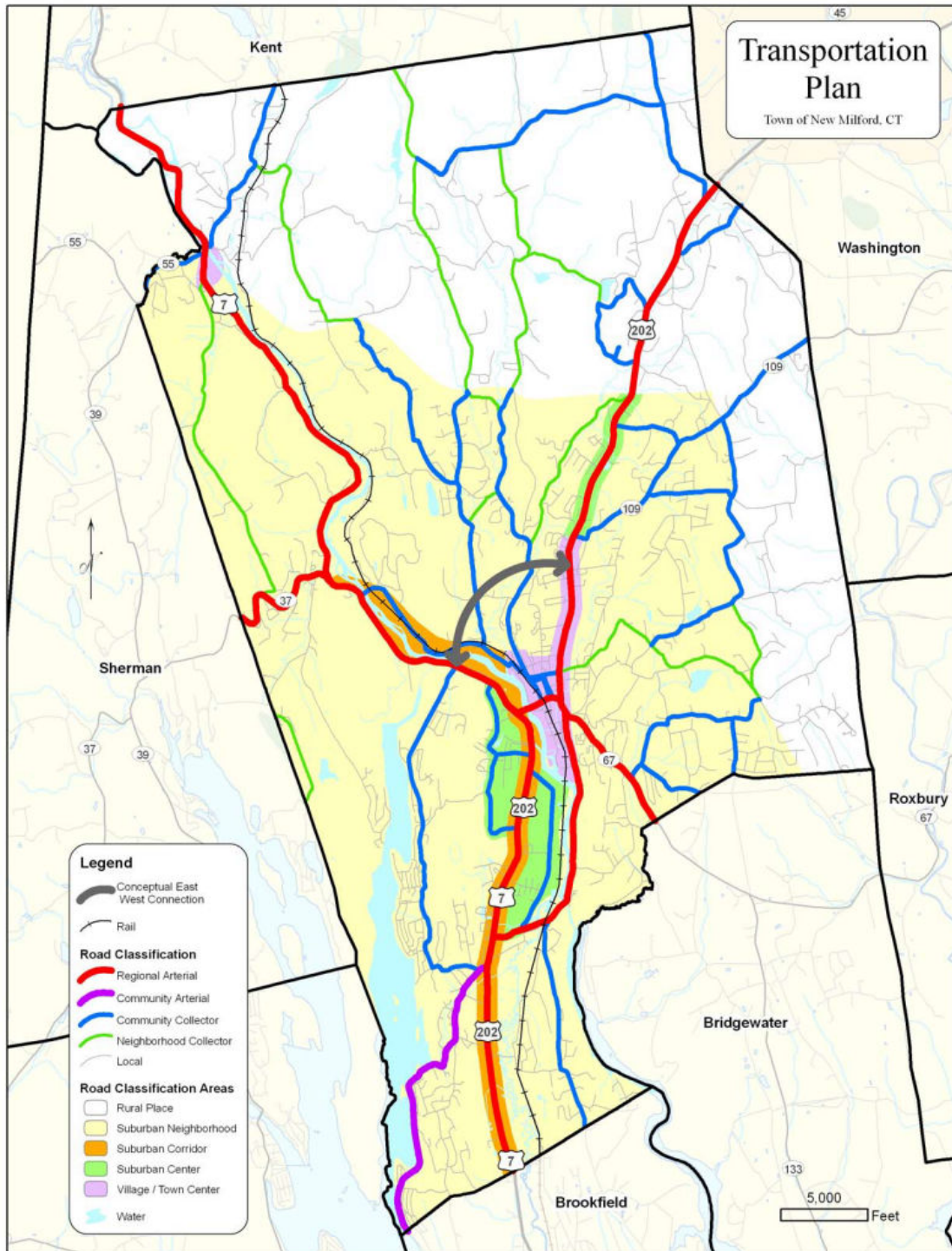
For example, the current classification system places Pickett District Road in the same category as Long Mountain Road. From a purely functional perspective, the classification of both roads as major collectors makes sense. But this classification ignores context: one road (Pickett District Road) is home to major employers, feeds directly onto Route 7, and is located in the more suburban part of town. The other, is a rural road that primarily collects traffic from low density residential areas and feeds them to another major collector. Safety improvements for these two roads could be very different, the level of future development that they can handle (or is desired in those areas) is also very different, and the character of their surroundings are not at all similar.

This POCD proposes an alternative system that is still based on the concept of arterial and collector roads, but further differentiates roads based on its context (e.g., rural, suburban, village, etc.).

Reclassifying New Milford's roads in accordance with this type of system could accomplish the following:

- Provide more nuanced guidance on the types of improvements most appropriate for a road based on the existing and desired character of the area.
- Better align the road's classification with zoning and desired development levels.

The proposed road classification system is illustrated on the following pages.



Possible Road Classification Plan

The following table could serve as a starting point for refining and adopting a context sensitive road classification system for New Milford. The road colors on the map match the row colors and the area colors match the column colors.

	Rural Place – Lowest density, roads generally lined by undeveloped land, low density development, forests, or farms.	Suburban Neighborhood – Low to medium density residential areas, might include community facilities.	Suburban Corridor – Commercial areas, might include mixed uses, usually large areas of parking, geared more towards automobiles.	Suburban Center – Generally commercial uses but less intense road, with some residential neighborhoods, with a more distinct sense of place than Corridors.	Village / Town Center – Distinct nodes with a mix of uses, varying densities, generally higher densities. Often pedestrian scale, building close to street, sometimes with on-street parking.
Regional Arterial Collectors with regional activity and regional traffic					
Community Arterial Collectors with regional activity and regional traffic	No roads identified for this classification.			No roads identified for this classification.	No roads identified for this classification.
Community Collector Collectors with regional activity and regional traffic					
Neighborhood Collector Collectors with regional activity and regional traffic			No roads identified for this classification.	No roads identified for this classification.	No roads identified for this classification.
Local Road Collector Collectors with regional activity and regional traffic			No roads identified for this classification.		

Density refers to existing or permitted densities. Classification generally based upon the Smart Transportation Guidebook, NJ and PA departments of transportation, March 2008.

Hold for back of Road classification Plan

Circulation

The Housatonic River and topography pose tremendous challenges to improving New Milford's traffic circulation. Most traffic is channeled over the two-lane Veterans Memorial Bridge which is also the gateway to Downtown. Traffic can also cross further south. However, there are no easy ways to travel east-west in the northern part of New Milford. This Downtown congestion causes an inconvenience to drivers, impacts the character of Downtown, and affects bus service.

Ideas to improve east-west connections have been developed, discussed and analyzed since at least the 1950s. The evolution in possible alignments for a limited access Route 7 expressway influenced how past town plans approached improving east-west circulation. Early planning for the expressway proposed crossing the Housatonic River south of Veterans Memorial Bridge. As such, the 1959 Town Plan accounted for this southern by-pass road and proposed another bridge, referred to as the Bennett Street Bridge, in the northern part of Downtown.

The 1972 and 1986 Plans continued to support the connector as part of the Route 7 expressway plan. By this time, the proposed expressway alignment shifted and the river crossing was placed just north of Downtown.

By the time the 1997 POCD was drafted, it was evident that the expressway was not going to be constructed. As such, the POCD no longer supported the concept of a connector. The POCD stated that the Lanesville Connector and Grove Street improvements would help address the Bridge Street traffic issues. The POCD still supported the idea of another bridge near Veterans Memorial Bridge.

Continued local support for the connector led the Town to amend the POCD in 2003 to state support for a connector in the Boardman Road area. It was thought that placing the connector here could provide better access to the nearby industrial land by rectifying problems created by the low railroad overpasses.

Development of an east-west connector requires the support of the State. The Town is strongly encouraged to work with the State to move forward with this project.

In the meantime, there are other projects and initiatives that could affect overall circulation in New Milford. These include:

- The widening of Route 7.
- The Grove Street realignment project, which is underway.
- The re-establishment of passenger rail service to New Milford.
- The desire to eliminate the Young's Field Road intersection with Bridge Street.

Some of these projects might improve circulation. The potential positive and negative impacts of these projects must be understood before determining the most effective approach to improving circulation.

Improving circulation will not be an easy task and it will require funding to implement the solution, whether the solution is a new bridge, a new road or other improvements. But addressing local circulation problems is critical. Continued congestion will negatively impact the Downtown and hinder the Town's ability to guide desirable growth to appropriate locations. The Town might re-examine through-truck bans on certain roads to help alleviate congestion in the Downtown.



Bridge Street traffic.

To move forward, the Town may need to:

- Determine likely future traffic conditions based on projects that are underway or planned.
- Show the potential impacts if no action is taken. Not addressing traffic may have negative impacts on economic development, future housing development, air quality, and quality of life Downtown and throughout New Milford.
- Re-examine past concepts including the latest ideas for the east-west connector in the Boardman Road area.
- Gain local, regional and State support for the project that will address congestion issues in the most cost-effective manner.

Determining the desired future road system is an important component in a Plan of Conservation and Development. Discussions regarding this system and how to move forward will be necessary.

Local Road Maintenance

The DPW has adopted a pavement management system which helps to determine the most cost-effective manner for maintaining roads and increasing useful life. Other than the need for continued maintenance and improvements, the other major road issues identified by DPW are the east-west circulation challenges describe above.

New Milford has designated a great number of roads as local scenic roads (see p. 51). Additional designations in conjunction with a new road classification system can help improve character and safety.

Access Management

New Milford has incorporated access management and curb cut provisions into its zoning regulations (see p. 66). The Town should continue to manage the number and location of curb cuts and encourage compliance with the *Route 7 and Route 202 Curb Cut and Access Management Plan*.

Ensure roads meet the needs of the community and support desired land use patterns:

1. Consider updating the road classification system to account for future land use goals and the character of New Milford.
2. Address congestion issues by improving circulation:
 - a. Assess the cumulative impacts that planned and proposed road projects will have on congestion.
 - b. Move forward with identifying a feasible and appropriate approach to improving east-west connectivity.
3. Continue to minimize curb cuts and implement the curb cut and access management plan.

Rail and Bus Service

The Town is well positioned to provide transit options to residents and workers with intra- and inter-town bus service and the possible re-establishment of passenger rail service.

Passenger Rail

Planning for re-establishing rail service in New Milford is underway. Passenger rail service would better connect New Milford to jobs in Fairfield County and New York City and reduce trips in single occupancy vehicles along Route 7. Current studies by ConnDOT estimate that just over 600 passengers would board at a New Milford station.

The Town shall continue to support the re-establishment of passenger rail service and work with the State to determine the best location for the station. A Downtown location would be consistent with smart growth and transit oriented development principles. It would offer many advantages - having an active railroad station in or within walking distance to the Downtown could help support the desired community structure by attracting new housing and businesses to Downtown. Issues such as traffic and parking would need to be addressed during the station planning process.

Bus and Paratransit

Housatonic Area Regional Transit (HART) provides fixed route and paratransit service (door-to-door service) in New Milford.

Fixed routes serve Downtown, the New Milford Hospital, and destinations along Route 7 such as shopping centers and the High School. Bus service also connects New Milford to Brookfield and Danbury. In recent years, HART extended service into evening hours and on Sundays to better meet workers' needs in New Milford.

The Town provides paratransit service to elderly and disabled residents. The Town's service is complemented by HART's paratransit service, called "SweetHART." Altogether, the services provide transportation to residents age 60 and over and to disabled residents.

Addressing the impacts of congestion on bus service may be the most critical bus service issue to resolve. According to HART, congestion has directly impacted bus service; they have had to adjust routes

and drop service in some locations (e.g., at Kimberly Clark) because the delays caused by congestion could not be overcome. As growth in New Milford continues, it will be critical to determine how to minimize congestion impacts on bus service (i.e., address the circulation situation). It would also be desirable to have bus service from New Milford to nearby train stations, such as in Brewster, NY. In addition, when passenger rail service is restored, there may be a need for additional bus service to bring commuters to and from the new station.

Freight Rail

The Berkshire rail line runs north - south through New Milford. ConnDOT and the Housatonic Railroad Company each own portions of the rail line. Currently, a small number of businesses transport their goods via freight trains. Two of these businesses are located in the Pickett District and one is located in the Boardman Road area.

Having the ability to ship freight via rail has benefited New Milford businesses and helps to reduce truck traffic on local roads. Analyses for the restoration of passenger service has indicated that freight service will not be disrupted. The Town should support the shared use of this rail line for continued freight deliveries and for future passenger rail service.

Support transit options:

1. The Town shall support the re-establishment of passenger rail service in New Milford.
2. Continue to support the provision of bus service and paratransit service and expand bus service as necessary.
3. Work with HART to minimize impacts of congestion on bus service.
4. Support the continuation of freight service through New Milford.

Walking and Bicycling

Outside of Downtown and some very low-traffic residential streets, New Milford's road system can be challenging for pedestrians and bicyclists. Most roads do not have large shoulders, sidewalks or pathways. In some areas, traffic volumes are light and people may feel comfortable walking or bicycling on roads. But in other areas, particularly in commercial areas along Route 7, people may not feel comfortable being outside of a car due to speeds, levels of traffic, or the number of curb cuts.

The most logical places to encourage walking are in areas where various types of uses are near one another. This may include areas where a neighborhood, school or park is located near shops or restaurants. Development in these areas should provide space for a future sidewalk or pathway along the frontage. For state roadways, the Town should encourage the State to provide pedestrian amenities when upgrades are undertaken. Zoning regulations could be updated to include criteria for when to require sidewalks (see sidebar).

In some cases, unpaved pathways can connect adjacent businesses or other land uses where it is reasonable to expect that people might walk from one property to the other.

Downtown has a comprehensive sidewalk network in place and it should be maintained. There are a few places where improvements can be undertaken. The 1996 *Downtown Plan* also recommended creating a pedestrian corridor running from Bridge Street to Boardman Avenue behind the buildings.

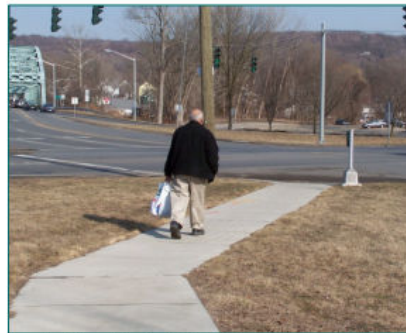
Opportunities for biking along greenways and trail corridors could be explored (see Chapter 4). Providing bicycle infrastructure in destination areas such as municipal facilities, schools, Downtown, and commercial areas, is an important component of promoting bicycling.

Potential Criteria for Requiring Sidewalks

Zoning could be updated to require the installation of new sidewalks or pathways during the site plan or subdivision review process when a parcel is:

- Located in a higher density residential zone (R-5, R-8, R-20).
- Located in the VZ, or B₁ to B₄ zones or within ¼ mile of such zone (may wish to exempt Northville commercial areas).
- Within ¼ mile of a public school.

Other factors, such as areas with past pedestrian injuries, areas known to generate pedestrian traffic, or proximity to recreational areas could also be considered.



A pedestrian at Route 7 / Bridge Street intersection.

Improve the viability of walking and bicycling around Town:

1. Maintain and expand sidewalks Downtown.
2. Look for opportunities to provide space for future sidewalks or pathways when land is developed.
3. Create greenways, trails, and bikeways that connect destinations.

Utilities

Sewage Disposal

The Sewer Commission, which serves as the Water Pollution Control Authority, oversees New Milford's sewer system. The most recent *New Milford Waste Water Facilities Plan*, approved by the CT Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) in 2006, sets the framework for expanding the sewer service area, extending sewer lines and increasing the capacity of the treatment plant.

Sewer Service Areas

The State requires sewer service area expansions to be consistent with the State Plan of Conservation and Development. The DEP generally will not approve expansions of sewer systems into conservation or preservation areas. This policy gives added importance to local sewer service planning.

In New Milford, the Sewer Commission has determined the future service areas based on economic development goals and public health issues, as outlined in their *Facilities Plan*. The sewer service area map was approved by the Planning Commission in 2006 and submitted to the State.

The sewer service area designation does not necessarily mean that all properties within the designated area have sewer service. Rather it means that it is the Sewer Commission's policy that properties within the designated area may hook up to the sewer system. Conversely, it is the Sewer Commission's policy that sewers will not be extended to areas outside of the sewer service area.

In terms of expansions within the service area, extension of sewer service south on Route 7 has been completed, except for the construction of three pump stations that have been designed but not yet built.

Outside of the designated sewer service area, 15 areas have been identified as "Areas of Need Outside of Sewer Area" due to public health concerns (i.e., septic system issues). If the sewer service area is expanded to include these areas, the Town should ensure that such extensions have controls in place so that the sewer does not induce growth in areas and at densities that are not consistent with the POCD. Controls can include a sewer allocation program, where a set amount of

sewer discharge is allocated to properties. Ideally, the allocations would be based on this POCD.

The Town should encourage the extension of the sewer service area in additional economic development areas, as appropriate.

Sewer Capacity

The current Wastewater Treatment Facility, located on West Street, is designed to handle a daily flow of 1.02 million gallons per day (mgd). The soon-to-be-built new plant will have a capacity of 2.0 mgd to accommodate flow from future residential, industrial and commercial uses and from all 15 problem areas located outside of the current sewer service area. The project will also address water quality issues by meeting or exceeding State and Federal water quality standards and reducing nitrogen and phosphorus levels.

On-Site Waste Water Disposal

All other areas of New Milford rely on septic systems and are considered to be sewer avoidance areas. According to the *Facilities Plan*, this amounts to 77% of residences in New Milford. Issues related to septic systems, such as exploring the idea of mandatory pump outs are outlined in Chapter 4.

Water

Water is provided by United Water, by private water systems or by private wells.

According to United Water, they provide water to the following number of customers in New Milford: 679 commercial and industrial customers; 37 public authorities; and 2,990 residential customers (an estimated 8,000 people).

United Water has six wells that supply water to New Milford customers. Three wells are located at the Indian Field well field, off of Route 7. The other three are located at the Peagler Hill Road well field. The Town has completed level A aquifer mapping for both well fields. United Water plans to abandon one well at Indian Field due to potential contamination from the nearby salt storage (though the salt storage is now covered). United Water does not anticipate problems adding a new well on the same site.

Water system expansions are generally funded by developers / land owners that wish to hook up to the system. Future water system projects include building a new pump station at Candlewood Point and completing the relocation and update of pipes as Grove Street is realigned. United Water also has been tying smaller community systems into its system.

United Water stated that they can meet current and future needs and, if additional water supplies are necessary, they believe that adequate supplies exist in New Milford. Overall, preventing contamination of water supplies may be the greatest long term need. As discussed in Chapter 4, protecting aquifers and future water supplies will be important to meet future water demands.

Drainage

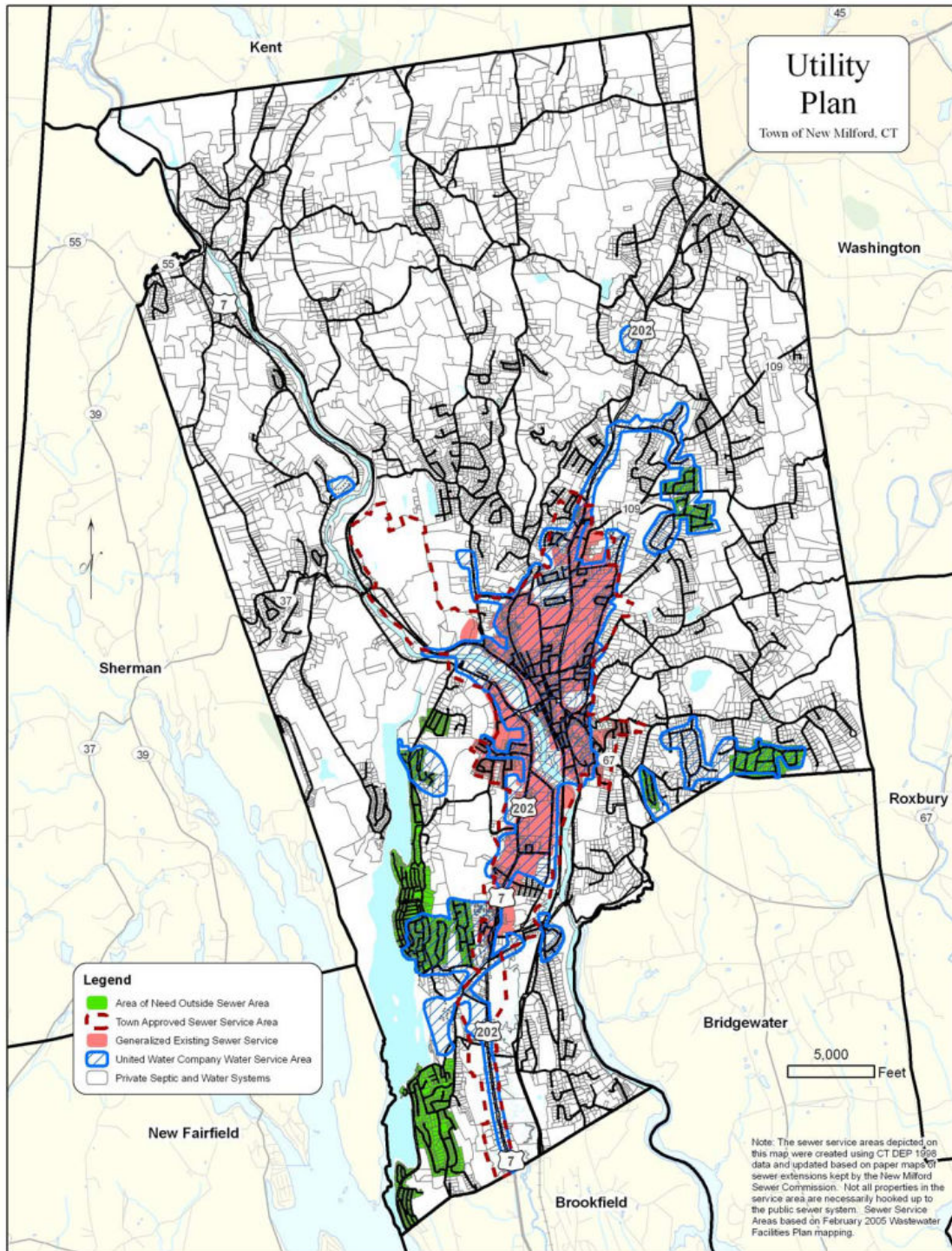
Addressing drainage in New Milford is a challenge. In addition to fragmented jurisdiction over drainage review and enforcement, New Milford's topography exacerbates drainage issues.

As discussed in Chapter 4, the Town may consider adopting a Town drainage policy to provide consistent guidance and standards to all boards and applicants. Currently, drainage requirements and standards are found in the Town Road ordinance, the subdivision regulations and in the zoning regulations.

It is important that the Town work to develop a clear drainage policy that minimizes drainage problems and provides clear and consistent guidance to local officials and applicants, and provides a universal set of standards.

Reducing the amount of storm water runoff in the Town's drainage system can also minimize problems. Techniques to reduce runoff, such as through Low Impact Development, were discussed in Chapter 4.

In terms of maintaining drainage structures, the Department of Public Works is developing a management system which will allow the tracking of maintenance needs for the Town's drainage infrastructure. This can help the Town target needed repairs and upgrades in a more efficient manner.



Electricity

Generation

The Housatonic River and its impoundments generate electricity for New England. GDF Suez owns and operates hydropower facilities that are wholly or partially located in New Milford. The facilities are:

- Rocky River – The station is located in New Milford and the water impoundment (Candlewood Lake) is located in New Milford and three other communities.
- Bulls Bridge – The station is located in New Milford, but the water impoundment is located in Kent.
- Shepaug – The impoundment (Lake Lillinonah) is located in New Milford, but the station is in Southbury.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) licenses the operation of these facilities. The latest license was issued in 2004 and provides for the continued operation and maintenance of the hydropower facilities in order to meet a projected increase in energy demand in New England. Future expansions, which have not been identified at this time, would require the FERC license to be modified. The license is complex and includes mitigation measures such as the provision or enhancement of recreation areas. It is important that the Town continue to participate in the re-licensing process when it does occur.

Transmission and Distribution

Connecticut Light and Power (CL&P) owns and operates electrical transmission facilities in New Milford. According to CL&P, New Milford generally is supplied by six feeders originating at the Rocky River substation. There are also three feeders specifically dedicated to an industrial use.

Planned short term upgrades that will directly impact customers in New Milford are: increasing the capacity of the feeders leaving the substation and rehabilitating another feeder. These projects are scheduled for completion in 2010. Longer term, based on CL&P's forecasts and load projections, the Rocky River substation will not exceed its capacity rating until 2018. To accommodate load growth in New Milford, CL&P anticipates it will install a third power transformer at Rocky River along with

associated feeders. Other than this long range plan, there are no other major substation additions or land acquisitions anticipated in New Milford.

Natural Gas

Yankee Gas provides natural gas service to the following areas in New Milford: Danbury Road as far north as Veterans Memorial Bridge; some parts of Downtown, including the New Milford Hospital; Housatonic Avenue up to Medinstill; Young's Field Road; and Pickett District. In most cases, a property owner would need to pay for an extension of the gas line to serve the property. In some cases, Yankee Gas will finance the extension if it will see a return on the investment. No long term needs or capacity issues related to natural gas service were identified.

Other Communications

Telecommunications

Residents, businesses and emergency providers will continue to depend more on wireless communications. Currently, providing full wireless coverage in New Milford is difficult due to the topography and as noted earlier, there are dead spots which impact emergency communications.

Cable Television

Issues related to cable service and availability were not identified.

Address utility needs:

1. Ensure that sewer service area expansions do not induce growth in locations and densities inconsistent with the POCD.
2. Protect existing and future water supplies.
3. Consider adopting a town drainage ordinance to ensure consistent review and standards and to clarify enforcement responsibilities.
4. Encourage the latest communications technologies to be installed / made available in New Milford.

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

7

Overview

The recommendations of each of the preceding chapters are combined into a Future Land Use Plan for New Milford. The Future Land Use Plan is a reflection of the stated goals and recommendations. It is important to note that the Plan is focused on the future – it does not imply that existing houses or businesses must “convert” to the future desired land use.

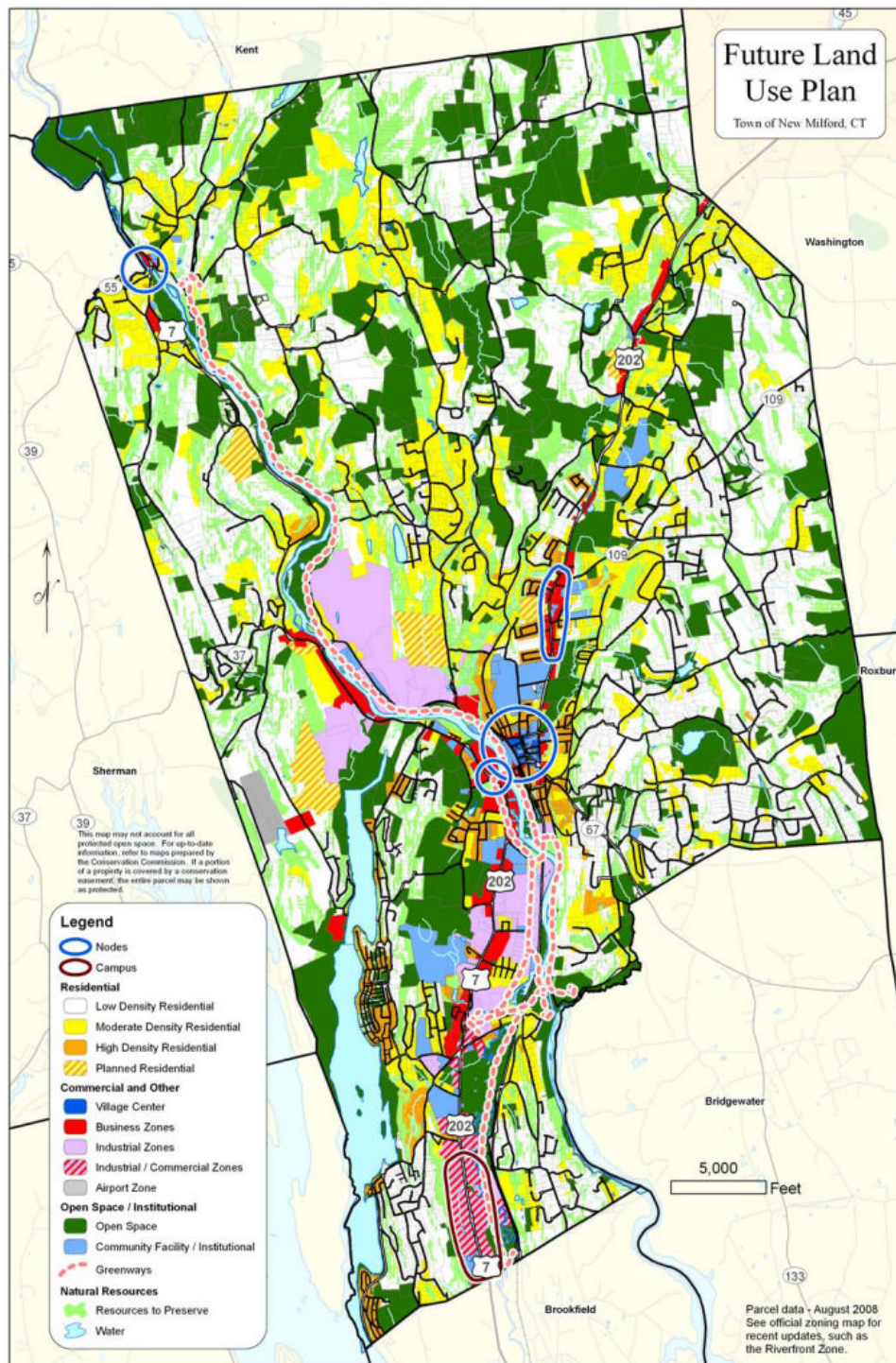
The Future Land Use Plan and the strategies in this POCD are then compared for consistency with the State Plan and Regional Plan.



Looking north with Downtown in foreground and the Housatonic River on the left.

Future Land Use Categories

Natural Resources	
Resources to Preserve	Watercourses, wetlands, very steep slopes (> 25%) and 100 year floodplain; represent the highest priorities for preservation.
Residential	
Low Density	Residential development is expected to occur at densities of 1 unit per 2 acres or less based on current zoning and ability of soils to support septic systems.
Moderate Density	Where patterns of development would result in typical densities of less than 1 unit per ½ acre to 2 acres.
High Density	Areas with infrastructure where residential densities at greater than 1 unit per half acre are expected to occur.
Planned Residential	Special residential zones that generally allow greater density and flexibility in lot layout, often in return for providing open space.
Business and Other	
Village Center and Nodes	Areas with a mixture of uses in a village setting or with village elements.
Business and Industrial Zones	Areas that have developed or are intended to develop for business or industrial purposes.
Industrial / Commercial Campus	An area for future business development that occurs in a planned campus-like setting.
Airport District	Airport and related uses.
Open Space and Institutional	
Open Space	Owned by public and private agencies and currently preserved or used for open space purposes and areas that would make a significant contribution to New Milford's open space network if preserved.
Community Facility / Institutional	Existing public facilities and institutional uses.
Greenways	Existing and desired open space corridors or pathways.



Back of Future Land Use Plan

Consistency with State and Regional Plans and Policies

In accordance with Connecticut General Statutes Section 8-23, the New Milford POCD was compared to:

- 2005-2010 *Conservation and Development Policies Plan for Connecticut*;
- 2009 *Regional Plan of Conservation and Development* (prepared by HVCEO); and,
- State Growth Principles.

State and Regional Plan Maps

The State and Regional maps are displayed on the following pages. The categories are summarized here.

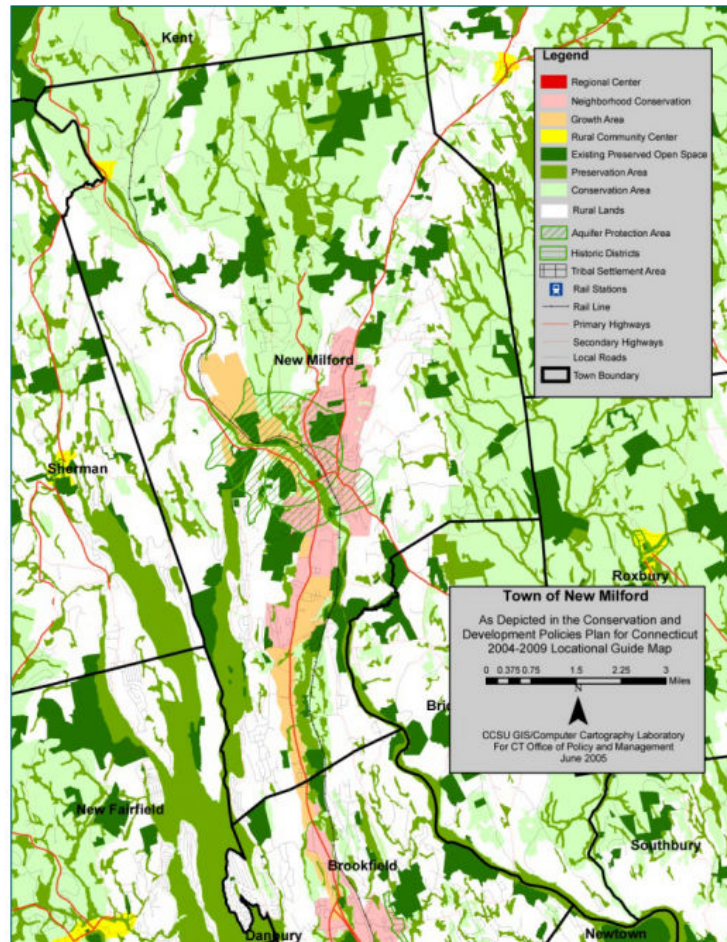
State Policy Areas

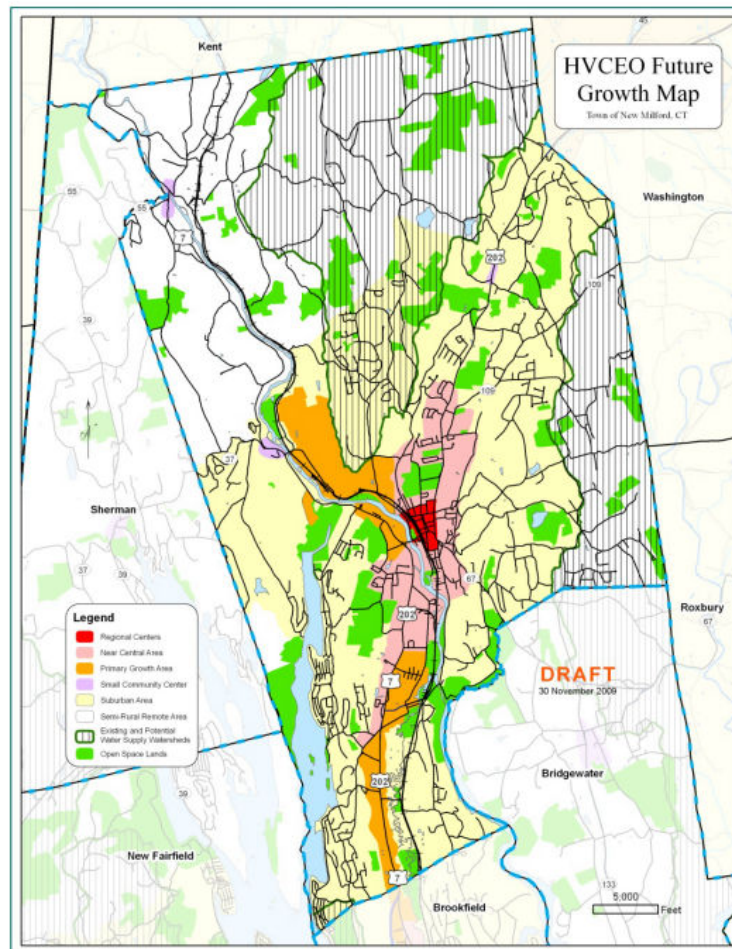
- Neighborhood Conservations Areas – Promote infill development and redevelopment in areas that are generally built up.
- Growth Areas – Support staged urban-scale expansion in areas suitable for long-term economic growth that are currently not built up, but have existing or planned infrastructure.
- Rural Community Centers – Promote concentration of mixed-use development within a village center setting.
- Existing Preserved Open Space – Public and quasi-public land dedicated for open space purposes.
- Preservation Areas – Protect significant resource, heritage, recreation, and hazard-prone areas by avoiding structural development, except as directly consistent with the preservation value.
- Conservation Areas – Plan for the long-term management of lands that contribute to the State's need for food, water and other resources and environmental quality by ensuring that any changes in use are compatible with the identified conservation value.
- Rural Lands – Protect the rural character of these areas by avoiding development forms and intensities that exceed on-site carrying capacity for water supply and sewage disposal, except where necessary to resolve public health concerns.

Regional Policy Areas

- Regional Center – Central and compact areas containing traditional core business and housing along with institutional services and facilities of regional significance.
- Near Central Areas – Already largely built up that have near central, energy efficient locations. Growth potential for mixed uses and some housing at 3 or more units per acre.
- Primary Growth Area – Usually adjacent to or extension of regional centers and near central areas, but less centralized. Has vacant land for development and capable of being served by infrastructure. Growth potential for mixed uses, some housing at 3 or more units per acre.
- Small Community Center – Best for the grouping of relatively higher intensity uses deemed necessary by the municipality.
- Suburban Area – Lower density, non-central developing areas, generally not served by water or sewer. Plan for overall density of 1 to 2 acres (at least 2 acres if in existing or potential water supply watersheds), encourage conservation subdivisions.
- Semi-Rural Remote Area – Outlying areas where densities even less than the minimums needed to sustain on-site sewage disposal are reasonable to resist growth pressures better channeled to less remote locations.
- Existing and Potential Water Supply Watersheds – As designated in State or municipal plans.
- Open Space Lands

The New Milford POCD is generally consistent with the State and Regional Plan Maps. The POCD guides future business growth generally to those areas identified by the State and Region as suitable for growth. Exception are the small pockets of rural businesses in Northville, which are not accounted for on the State or Regional Map. But these are rural business uses that tend to be smaller scale and do not require the extension of utilities and are therefore compatible with the Rural classification. The POCD also supports future higher density housing in areas near Downtown, along major arterials, and served by infrastructure.





State Growth Principles

The New Milford Plan of Conservation and Development has been evaluated for consistency with the six State Growth Principles.

State Growth Principle	New Milford POCD
Principle 1 - Redevelopment and revitalization of commercial centers and areas of mixed land uses with existing or planned physical infrastructure.	FINDING - Consistent The New Milford POCD supports the continuation of Downtown as a hub of activity. Growth is encouraged in areas with existing water, sewer and transportation infrastructure.
Principle 2 - Expansion of housing opportunities and design choices to accommodate a variety of household types and needs.	FINDING - Consistent The POCD promotes housing options and choices through the continued support of efforts by non-profit groups to provide housing, and additional strategies.
Principle 3 - Concentration of development around transportation nodes and along major transportation corridors to support the viability of transportation options and land reuse.	FINDING - Consistent The POCD encourages business development in appropriate areas such as Downtown and along Route 7.
Principle 4 - Conservation and restoration of the natural environment, cultural and historical resources and existing farmlands.	FINDING - Consistent The POCD provides strategies to protect natural resources, preserve open space, protect farms, and preserve community character, including historical resources.
Principle 5 - Protection of environmental assets critical to public health and safety.	FINDING - Consistent The POCD provides strategies for protecting natural resources, particularly water resources, in addition to other environmental assets.
Principle 6 - Integration of planning across all levels of government to address issues on a local, regional and state-wide basis.	FINDING - Consistent The POCD can be used to coordinate efforts with adjacent communities, regional organizations, and the State. Coordination and cooperation between town boards and commissions and non-profit entities will be critical.

Regional Policies

The New Milford Plan of Conservation and Development has been evaluated for consistency with growth principles contained in the Regional Plan.

Regional Plan Principles

Principle 1 - Municipalities should balance and complement one another within a regional context as recommended by the Responsible Growth definitions and Future Growth categories of this plan.

Principles 2 and 3 - Encourage efforts to provide adequate, high quality water supplies to the Region; protect the long term health of the region's water resources.

Principle 4 - Encourage coordination between local water pollution control authorities, which guide the geographic extent of local sewer development, and local planning commissions, as they prepare the municipal plan of conservation and development.

Principle 5 - Develop a transportation network for our growing region that is consistent with well planned patterns of land development and that effectively integrates energy conservation, air quality goals, environmental quality, and environmental integration.

Principle 6 - Update town plans and land use regulations to curb energy use and moderate global warming

Principle 7 - Expansion of housing opportunities and design choices to accommodate the region's variety of household types and needs.

Principle 8 - Diversified economic growth producing quality jobs and tax revenue, well coordinated with other regional elements.

New Milford POCD

FINDING - Consistent

New Milford is a regional sub-center that provides jobs, goods, and services to local and regional residents and the POCD supports a continuation of this role. The POCD also accounts for protecting resources that are critical to the well-being of the region (e.g., water) and supports the provision of housing for the region's residents and workers.

FINDING - Consistent

The POCD promotes water quality protection by reducing storm water flows and other measures and the continued protection of current and future public supplies. The POCD supports the continued protection of Candlewood Lake, the Housatonic River and other water resources.

FINDING - Consistent

The POCD highlights the importance of ensuring that sewer service area expansions do not induce growth in locations and densities that are inconsistent with the POCD.

FINDING - Consistent

The POCD supports transit options, including the re-establishment of passenger rail service and expansion of bus service. The POCD also outlines a context-sensitive approach to road classification.

FINDING - Consistent

The POCD supports patterns of development that focus residential and business growth in central areas and areas served by existing or planned public transportation.

FINDING - Consistent

The POCD promotes housing options and choices through the continued support of efforts by non-profit groups to provide housing, and additional strategies.

FINDING - Consistent

The POCD encourages business development in appropriate areas, to enhance businesses zones, and to maintain and enhance the Downtown as a hub of civic, business, and residential activity.

Regional Plan Principles

Principle 9 – Preserve ample open space and develop recreational opportunities for the Region's future population.

Principles 10 and 11 – Reintroduce into municipal zoning codes some controlled mixing of compatible land uses in select locations. Use this technique as part of transit oriented development to increase the market for rail passenger service. Reinforce, intensify, and foster mixed-use neighborhoods at existing and proposed passenger rail stations.

Principle 12 – To significantly increase sidewalk development and improve pedestrian amenities in the Region, especially in coordination with mixed use and transit oriented developments.

New Milford POCD

FINDING- Consistent

The POCD promotes the preservation of open space and greenways, continuing efforts to acquire open space and create greenways, and managing and maintaining existing open space areas.

FINDING- Consistent

The POCD supports mixed uses Downtown, which is served by bus service and may be served in the future by passenger rail service.

FINDING-Consistent

The POCD supports improving the viability of walking and bicycling around town.

CONCLUSION

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This POCD is intended to guide the Town and aid in land use decisions over the next 10 years. The POCD is intended to be flexible. Sometimes new situations emerge that were not anticipated while preparing the POCD, new opportunities may arise, or new challenges are faced. As needed, the Town can update and amend this POCD to better position itself to respond to changes.

This POCD will enhance quality of life, preserve important natural and cultural resources, provide housing opportunities and business development opportunities, and ensure that New Milford residents and workers have transportation options, among other goals. Achieving these and other goals will ensure that New Milford remains a desirable community in which to live, work, and visit.



Town Green.



Golf course, looking west with hills in background.

Acknowledgements

Planning Commission

Peter K. Eng, Chair
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George M. Pancoast (alternate), *IN MEMORIAM*
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Susan H. Bailey – Resident Representative
Joanne R. Chapin – Board of Finance
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